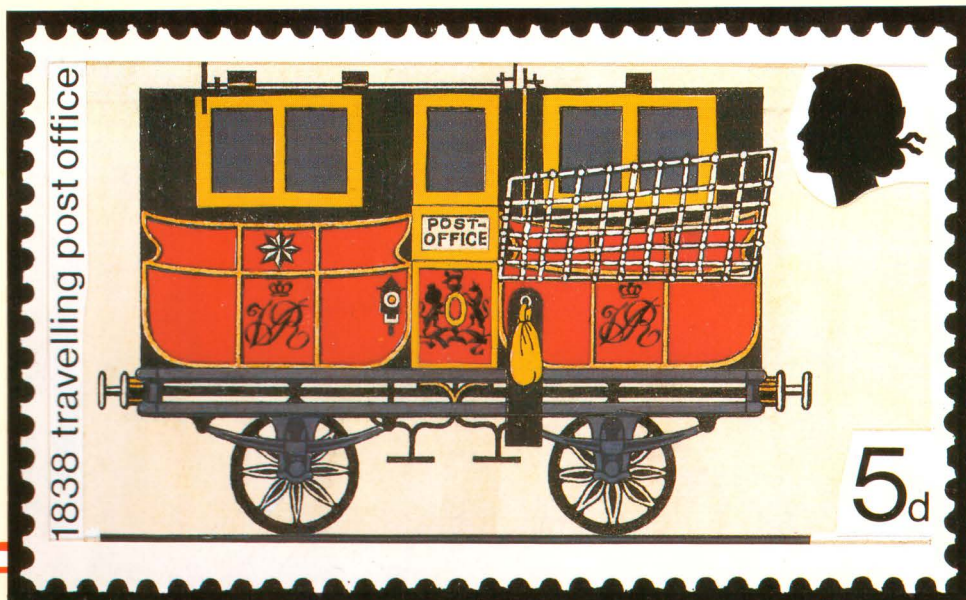




Royal Mail

National Postal Museum

The Philatelic Year 1988



The Philatelic Year 1988

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Unadopted artwork by Rosalind Dease for the 1969 Post Office Technology issue showing the 1838 TPO carriage with the Ramsay apparatus for bag loading.

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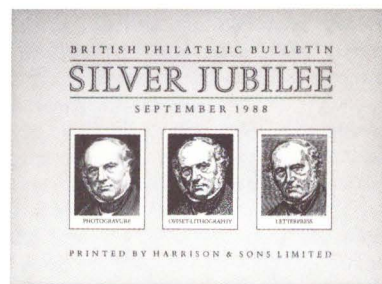
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Introduction

Stan Goron, Manager of the National Postal Museum, introduces the report on the year 1988 in the National Postal Museum, London.

IT is with great pleasure that I present the National Postal Museum's Annual Report for the year 1988. This is the first time the Museum has produced such a comprehensive report. 1988 was a busy year in which much was achieved, as will be seen from the pages that follow. Nevertheless, a great deal of work remains to be done. This applies not only to the existing collections but also to the large amount of new material arriving at the Museum each year. Future reports will detail this continuing activity. Not all of you reading this report will be acquainted with the National Postal Museum, so a few words about its history and collections may well be of interest.

The National Postal Museum was established in 1965 on the initiative of Reginald M Phillips of Brighton, a leading collector and student of British stamps, who generously donated his extremely fine collection to the Post Office in trust for the nation. The opening of the Museum took place in 1966. Three years later it was re-opened in its present premises by Her Majesty the Queen. In addition to the Phillips collection, the Museum contains the Post Office's own Public Record Collections of the artwork, essays and registration sheets of a large number of British stamps, many thousands of stamps issued 1878 from all over the world and received by way of the Universal Postal Union in Bern, and some important collections of 'postal history'* including the Frank Staff collections, and the De La Rue documentary archives. Many of the philatelic items in the Museum are unique, making the National Postal Museum one of the most important repositories of philatelic material in the world. But that is not all: the Museum is also the official Post Office depository for historical artefacts. The Letter Box collection, housed in the basement, contains some very rare examples, as does the collection of handstamps. There are also collections of slogan dies, plates and dies for stationery, stamp boxes, franking machines and other artefacts.

There is, however, no point in storing all this material unless it is properly cared for and made accessible for research and exhibition to the public. Much of the material in the Museum has Public Record status and this imposes strict requirements relating to pre-

servation, security, cataloguing and availability for research. This is reflected in the objectives for the Museum. It is our aim to adopt good conservation practice in housing and displaying the material in the collections; to mount displays that are of interest not just to the specialist or the experienced philatelist, but to all our visitors young or old, specialist or non-specialist; to develop the collections in a sensible and logical fashion.

Apart from the Phillips and Frank Staff collections, none of the collections are static. Much new philatelic material comes to the Museum from the Royal Mail each year as do thousands of stamps from the Universal

*The term 'postal history' as used by some philatelists is a somewhat confusing one inasmuch as it refers to pieces of mail sent through the post with or without postage stamps (depending on the date of mailing or service used) but with postally significant markings. To the non-philatelist the term would be understood to mean the history of postal services or even the Post Office in all its aspects and functions.

Postal Union. And then there are the artefacts. All this new material has to be accessed, catalogued, researched and, where appropriate, mounted and housed. This is a time-consuming business and results in the need to set priorities, for, as with most museums, resources and space are limited.

Our main priority as far as our visitors and the public are concerned is to put on interesting and stimulating displays not just at the Museum but also, when invited, at important philatelic exhibitions in the United Kingdom and abroad. Behind the scenes, however, our main priorities are conservation, re-organising the Post Office collection, and good documentation. These topics are taken up elsewhere in this report but suffice it to say here that the research and remounting of the existing Post Office collection alone is estimated to take at least 10 years. Add to that each year's new arrivals, then the extent of the task ahead becomes apparent.

In the second half of the year, we had to say farewell to two members of staff upon their well-merited retirement. Les Holding had been with the Museum since 1974 and in more recent years, as Chief Custodian, had become a well-known and respected figure to countless visitors. Sheila Dennett had worked at the Museum for seven years during which time she had been responsible for dealing with our mail order customers and the Museum's accounts, a job she did particularly efficiently.

On the plus side, the Museum was fortunate at the beginning of the year to acquire the services of two new specialist staff, Douglas Muir (former Editor of the *British Philatelic Bulletin*) as Curator Philately and John Holman (former Editor of *Gibbons Stamp Monthly*) to take over the editorship of both the *British Philatelic Bulletin* and the *Postmark Bulletin*. During the year the *British Philatelic Bulletin* celebrated its 25th birthday, an event described in greater detail elsewhere in this report. Later in the year Terry Brown was appointed Chief Custodian and Ron Bull took over responsibility for the mail order and Museum accounts. The Museum is fortunate in the quality and dedication of its staff, a fact borne out by the many favourable comments received from our visitors from all over the world. Long may it continue so.

Work in Progress

Most work in museums continues for a long period of time. Accessing, listing, cataloguing and mounting are always in progress and seemingly never-ending. But 1988 has also been a period of major change.

A LOT of the work in the National Postal Museum continues from one year to another. This involves accessing new material, listing that and all other items which may have been acquired in the past and lain untouched, mounting these properly described, and cataloguing albums which have been otherwise completed. Documentation such as this is extremely important for a variety of reasons. As a treatise on museum documentation makes clear there are three main principles: records must be sufficient to locate an object; identify it; and establish ownership. These are only a minimum and proper documentation can be used for much wider purposes.

Rationalisation

At the beginning of 1988 a report was produced within the Museum giving an overall view of the collections and it made recommendations for a number of changes. Throughout the year the most important of these have been put into effect. The one which involved the greatest immediate effort, and which will continue through 1989, has been the rationalisation of the various sections of the Post Office Great Britain collection. This had been subdivided into various parts for reasons of convenience, size and ease of housing but the resulting albums etc had made it very difficult for a researcher to find out all he wanted to know about one particular subject. The story of an issue of stamps was not told from the beginning through to the end. Rather the initial designs were kept separately from the essays and issued stamps and related material could be separate yet again. These divisions were largely artificial and a start has now been made to integrating this material so that everything relating to one set of stamps can be viewed together.

All the artwork and essays of QEII commemorative and special stamps from 1953 to 1983 have been brought together into over 170 albums. Most early QEII definitives have been similarly dealt with, as has all the stamp material from the George VI period. Other periods and sections will be integrated in 1989. The results of this will shortly be of benefit to all those who use the Museum's collections.

Record Collections

Another recommendation of the report was that record collections be established, for each new issue of stamps, of all the ephemeral material which is produced surrounding an issue. This consists of press releases, photographs, posters, leaflets and brochures together with more standard items such as first day covers, souvenir covers, postcards, presentation packs and anything special such as additional covers, prints or anything else. The result will be to record exactly what is produced at the time so that, in future, definitive answers can be provided about what has happened already. Efforts are being

made to extend this backwards over previous issues but it is unlikely that completion will ultimately be achieved.

Letter Boxes

The Post Office collection of letter boxes is housed in the Museum. Occasionally, it is added to and some of the newer arrivals require treatment. The beautiful Suttee box of 1856 illustrated had its crown broken. This has now been restored to its original glory. Other boxes have been repainted and this work continues.

Postal Services

Collections already exist for some postal services of the past. This is particularly true if labels or markings were applied to postal items. But there are many services which have no markings, or are new. The aim is to collect all available material relating to these such as forms (preferably used), leaflets, brochures and any labels so that should any labels or stamps be issued in the future the "prehistory" of the service will already exist in the Museum. This collection is still in its infancy.

Postmarks

The Museum now holds the Post Office's collection of special handstamp impressions which has been transferred from Post Office Archives (files known as POST 55). This is a comprehensive collection containing handstamps to the mid 1970s. The Museum is mindful of the growing significance of postmarks to thematic collectors and has, during the past year, made arrangements for the acquisition of impressions of all future special handstamps and postmark slogans of postal and/or thematic interest. The Museum obtains impressions of all special handstamps used on the first day of issue of new stamps.

Wherever possible, the Museum is also expanding its collection of operational postmarks. Slogan dies are now sent to the Museum after use and, added to those already stored, a comprehensive collection of these is now being built up.

UPU Stamps

The Commonwealth and Foreign gallery display changed little during 1988. Shown were Commonwealth stamps to about 1973 and Foreign stamps to varying periods (none later than 1969). For the most part this



display had been remounted during the period 1985–1987, but on pages which have now been discarded and without protectors. Eventually, all on display now must be remounted again on the new conservation pages and with protective shields.

Meanwhile, in 1988 all Commonwealth stamps from the UPU for the period 1974–1987 (approximately) were mounted on the new pages, given protectors, and placed in albums which are readily accessible for research.

Some foreign stamps postdating those on display have also been given the same treatment, being brought up to about 1984. Selected countries received first attention: Western Europe, USA, Russia and Romania. Currently, this work is being conducted in alphabetical order and has reached the Cs. This project will take several years, but eventually, and possibly before completion of the whole globe, the plan is to display regions of the world, providing yearly changes.

Thematics

Some attention was given in 1988 to thematic displays, the material used having been prepared originally for special exhibits in the past. To date only four subjects are covered, and all are on old-style pages. Given a rising interest in thematics by the collecting public, it is our intention to expand this display section as time permits.

Negatives and Bromides

During 1988, a long-stored stock of master negatives, photographs and bromides was examined, catalogued and re-stored for easy access. Most were related to commemoratives issued during the period 1960–1972, the bulk being bromides of unaccepted designs. But also discovered were master negatives of Edward VIII and George VI definitives, and of the first photogravure stamps of George V. These items, numbering many hundreds, have already been of research use this year.

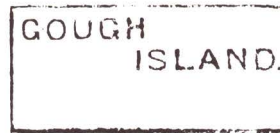
Windsor Castle – photograph by John Grierson of September 1936, used for Edward VIII Coronation essays.



Great Britain Postal Stationery

In 1988, a start was made on a proposed permanent display of the postal stationery (postcards, airmail envelopes, registered envelopes, etc) of Great Britain. Although the Museum possesses most items needed, the research involved is considerable and progress has been slow.

Chislehurst
2p P Paid



Display of British Stamps

An important accomplishment in 1988 was the commencement of a permanent gallery display of the stamps of Great Britain. Although the R M Phillips Collection covers the reign of Queen Victoria very well, the Museum has never had a straight-forward chronological display of GB stamps. As at the end of 1988 this display featured all issues of the reigns of Edward VIII, George VI and Elizabeth II. It is being kept right up to date.

As this display remains a priority, work continues, and display sheets for all earlier stamps have already been prepared. These will be mounted as and when completed.

Further details are given in the article on 'Research'.

Handstamps

Stan Goron writes:

During the year the Museum re-organised and catalogued its collection of handstamps. Perhaps 'collection' is not quite the right word as most handstamps, when no longer required, were officially destroyed so as not to fall into the wrong hands. The items that are now to be found in the Museum have fortunately escaped that fate and though the result is a somewhat unbalanced assembly of material, there are nonetheless some very important 'stamps' in the collection. The aim for the future is to ensure that at least a representative selection of operational handstamps is officially consigned to the Museum.

The handstamps have been sorted into a number of geographical and operational categories. The 'Town' stamps include a very rare wooden Twopenny Post stamp from Chislehurst, within the boundary of the London Twopenny Post (1801–1839). This straight line type replaced the earlier unframed oval.

There are also a small number of Penny Post stamps, some barred oval stamps, two barred rectangle stamps from Scotland and a barred diamond from Ireland. Several duplex stamps are also in the collection. One of the most noteworthy of the town stamps is the Greenwich squared circle stamp. These handstamps, introduced in 1879, proved unsatisfactory as the stamp edges and corners damaged the letters and packets and were

themselves prone to damage.

The small Maritime section includes a large double circle with crown Queenborough Ship Letter Stamp as well as two Falmouth stamps.

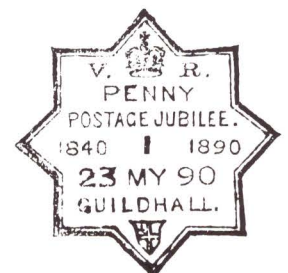
Airmails are represented by the beautifully made Croydon Aerodrome stamp with ivory and silver handle used by the Postmaster General to cancel special mail at the inauguration of the airmail service to Australia on 8 December 1934. The handstamp, which accompanied the mail to Australia, was returned to the British Post Office in 1984.

British Post Offices abroad are reflected in a number of stamps from the Rio de Janeiro office, the British Post Office in Constantinople and several post Second World War offices in Somalia. There are also the remarkable stamps from the Shackleton-Rowett Expedition of 1921–22 (Tristan da Cunha, Gough Island, Enderby Land as well as the general expedition stamp) and the 'Lahssa' stamp used during the visit of the Younghusband Military Mission to Tibet in 1904.

Special Event stamps include three for the 1890 Penny Postage Jubilee (two rubber, one metal), stamp number 2 for the First United Kingdom Aerial Post, Windsor 1911 and some for the 1925 Wembley Exhibition.

The collection contains a considerable number of stamps with directional markings including the crowned R examiner's mark, used on mail redirected within the same delivery area, and To Pay or Postage Due stamps.

There is not room to mention here all the categories in the collection but visitors to the Museum can see a selection of the more unusual stamps in one of the Main Gallery showcases.



Conservation

ONE of the first duties of any museum is to take care of the artefacts in its safe-keeping. This is easier to state than to put into practice if only because of the quantity of material involved. It is particularly difficult for archives and libraries as paper is amongst the most fragile of materials. So, three conservation reports have been produced by outside expert consultants for the National Postal Museum. Another is due to be commissioned in 1989.

The papers already commissioned covered environmental conditions, materials used for mounting and storage, and part of the collections.

Environmental conditions have to do with lighting levels, temperature and humidity and particulate dirt (dust). The recommendations for display and storage areas have already been put into effect. The limits recommended by conservation experts apply to the storage of private collections as much as to display in museums and are given here:

Light: not in excess of 50 lux, nor exposed to a concentration of u.v. light in excess of 75 $\mu\text{w/lumen}$ (micro watts of ultra violet light per lumen of overall light).

air temperature: stable between 15°C and 17°C

relative humidity: stable between 45% and 55%

Conservation of paper is both a craft and a science which has developed over the last 20 years. The emergence of paper conservation as a profession is partly as a result of the work done in Italy after the disastrous flooding of the Arno in Florence in the late 1960s.

All paper deteriorates over time, slowly or more quickly depending on the conditions. Refinements to conservation treatment techniques are constantly being researched and one of the problems now encountered is that of reversing what was done by amateurs some years ago. Often, work was carried out using materials which are now regarded as unsafe and greater damage was done than might otherwise have been the case if the items had been left alone. Happily, this applies much more to other museums or libraries than the National Postal Museum. It means, however, that unless the danger of disintegration is great and in the absence of professional help it is better to prevent further decay than to actively treat the item in a way that would be seen, with hindsight, as more damaging. The obvious course is to

Conservation is an increasingly important aspect of the work of the National Postal Museum. Some details of the work are given here with notes on some of the dangers.



Catherine Rickman, NPM conservatrix.

neutralise any agent at present causing, or likely to cause, deterioration. This is termed *preservation* rather than *conservation*.

A distinction must be made between the stamp itself, or the cover, and the support materials used in displaying it; i.e. album pages, backing paper, hinges and protectors. Deterioration can occur at any point and then migrate to areas previously unaffected. So, it is important that all aspects are dealt with at the same time.

There are three main causes of deterioration (other than poor handling). These are: **1.** acidity; **2.** excessive exposure to light; **3.** humidity.

According to Alan Howell, who undertook the first conservation surveys, there is "a direct correlation between an item's condition and its acidity". Equally, "acid is bad news for cellulose, the principal component of paper. ... To add to our problems, acid will travel wherever there is moisture. It can therefore migrate from poor quality mater-

ials to those that have previously been sound". The first requirement is that all materials used in conservation should be at least neutral (pH 7.0) and preferably mildly alkaline (pH 8.0 – 8.5).

The album pages that had been in use previously were marginally too acidic and black backing paper was both acidic and the dye extremely fugitive. New conservation protectors were also advisable. As a result, new album pages made from conservation paper (acid-free and of an improved design) have now been introduced, together with new protectors and these are being used for all new material mounted or any new display. Any backing paper to improve appearance is now made of conservation paper.

Paper used for the album pages is now heritage Woodfree (Bookwhite), the specifications for which are: highly refined, high alpha cellulose; acid-free with a pH of 8.5; light fast with a blue wool scale reading of 5; buffered with calcium carbonate; tub-sized/pure non-ionic farina starch; and Fourdrinier machine-made with a vellum finish. The album page protectors are made from ICI's archival and totally inert polyester (type 516 which has no static).

Although of less immediate impact new binders have also been made, also from acid-free materials. All these items are specially produced for the Museum.

Excessive exposure to light causes irreversible fading. This applies particularly to those items on long term display. However, some stamps are more susceptible than others, in particular those with aniline dyes. A more recent report to the Museum by Catherine Rickman, our present conservatrix, explains this in some detail.

"Printing inks. The penny blacks were printed with the ordinary carbon printers' ink which is made up with drying oils. This ink, and those based on earth colours (red-browns, browns and ochres) are stable in light and non-reactive with the support, unless too much oil was used, in which case the paper will be discoloured on the back.

"A careful study of the De La Rue and Co Ltd., printing ink recipe books, vols. 1 & 2 up to 1870s, would give some idea of the dyes and pigments used in particular issues later in the century. But even a quick look was quite helpful in identifying some of the inks. Often the De La Rue names do not

describe the chemical constituents of the ink but use common names which are rather vague, like 'Pale Green Ink' others can be identified because the names are well known e.g. Milori Blue is Prussian blue, others are a proper description e.g. cochineal red ink.

"In general, inks used by De La Rue that are likely to be unstable are in 3 groups. One: lead compounds, orange and red lead and white lead, which turn black when exposed to sulphur compounds. Red lead can also turn brown if exposed to strong light over a long period of time. Sample Nos. 345-347 of orange lead ink in the De La Rue books have in fact oxidised, or gone black around the edges. The second group is that of natural organic dyes such as cochineal red, also known as carmine lake or crimson lake. Cochineal fades rapidly in light. The third group contains the synthetic organic colours introduced after 1856, also called aniline dyes. Although an aniline purple is not specifically mentioned until 1902 in the De La Rue books, it is likely that these dyes were in use, perhaps in mixtures with more stable pigments, much earlier on. Their brilliant colours made them initially very popular before it was realised how rapidly they would fade in light. Therefore, any stamp printed in mauve or pink after 1856 should be regarded as potentially extremely fugitive."

In response to the recommendations in the reports lighting levels have been reduced and various items in danger have been withdrawn from open display. A new touch button system of lighting has been installed in the display cases whereby direct light is restricted. Visitors can now operate the lights in the cases themselves by touching the buttons below.

Catherine Rickman writes, for this Report:

High humidity encourages foxing, a form of mould, to appear on paper. Certain types of

Repairing paper 1: tracing the hole



mould or bacterial growth are also encouraged by acidity and when other conditions are favourable it does not take a very high level of humidity (65% relative humidity or above) for foxing to appear. Relative humidity levels over 65% are common in non air-conditioned buildings in summer in Britain; unheated storage areas, especially basements, may also be excessively humid in winter. Lack of air circulation and the presence of nutrients such as gum, paste and glue on the paper also favour the formation of foxing.

All restoration treatments intended to remove foxing or mould staining carry the risk of further damage to the paper and image, therefore foxing should be considered irremovable. It is safer to prevent the stains forming in the first place by avoiding the conditions described above.

Standard conservation treatments used to reduce stains on paper involve immersing the object in water, or at least thoroughly wetting it. In the case of stamps and covers with the original gum or water-soluble inks, wetting is out of the question. If the paper can be safely immersed in water, then it is sometimes possible to remove a proportion of the staining, but the risk of damage to embossed items or very fragile paper may preclude this treatment. All chemical bleaches commonly used to remove stains from paper work by oxidising the discolouration to convert it to colourless substances. Unfortunately, oxidation can damage cellulose, thereby weakening the paper, and possibly other substances such as inks. Again, the presence of acidity renders the process more damaging and chemicals must always be completely removed from the paper by prolonged washing, in itself a risky process. Therefore chemical bleaches should never be used on postal material. Foxed items in the National Postal Museum will be treated solely with water and deacidifying solutions when appropriate. These are treatments that should only be carried out by a trained conservator.

Rust stains, sometimes caused by metal paper clips or particles of iron in old paper,

Repairing paper 2: pricking out replacement



are also extremely difficult to remove and should be considered permanent. In the past, treatment with acids has been recommended but this can only damage the paper further. Other stains which can disfigure stamps and covers include the obvious results of accidents such as ink, food and drink spills. If these are old there is little that can be done, but a recent stain may well be removable. The collector should take the stamp or cover to a conservator as soon as possible without attempting any amateur intervention, which may serve to make the blemish permanent. Surface dirt and finger marks often make up part of the meaning of an old letter, but they can be disfiguring. When a document has been well handled over many years this kind of dirt is usually embedded in the paper fibres and cannot be removed, but a relatively recent deposit of particulate dirt and dust – often seen on the exposed margins of sheets of paper kept in a polluted atmosphere – should be cleaned off by a conservator without delay. Dirty paper should not be handled, as moisture and grease, even on the cleanest fingers, will soon fix the dirt in place. Protectors and acid-free supports now allow NPM items to be safely handled pending conservation treatment.

Paper that is torn or rubbed, badly creased or cockled, can often be repaired so that little of the original damage shows, but amateur repairs can make the damage worse. Although a professional conservator may be able to remove adhesive tapes, old glue and clumsy patches, this rarely results in restoring the paper to a pristine condition because synthetic adhesive residues are left behind. Undoing well intentioned but inappropriate repairs is very time-consuming. Simply removing Sellotape strips from a sheet of stamps will take many painstaking hours and may account for a large proportion of the conservator's bill. The technique will involve toxic solvents and should only be carried out under laboratory conditions in a fume cupboard.

Despite the complexities of professional

Repairing paper 3: placing in position

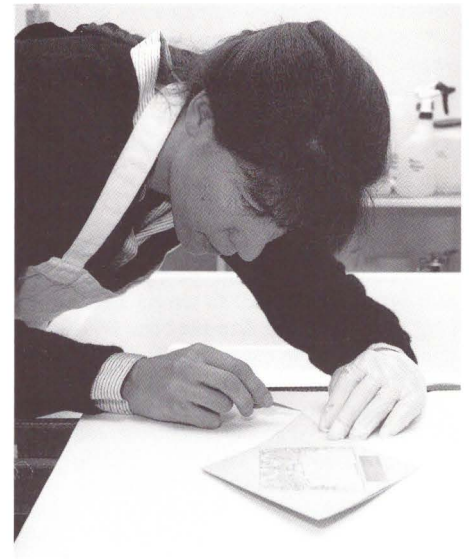




Washing in a bath



Removing to dry



Separating item from backing paper

conservation treatments for philatelic collections, there is much the non-conservator can do to safeguard valuable stamps, covers and paper documents. Choosing appropriate storage conditions is one aspect of preservation; handling the objects cleanly and carefully is another. Perhaps the most important preservation measure is to select acid-free inert enclosures, supports and mounting materials. Transferring the collection to conservation-quality albums is the one measure collectors can undertake themselves, although it is always wise to seek professional advice on the condition of individual items.

Conservation-quality paper and card can be obtained from several suppliers in the UK and abroad. Paper merchants classify the various grades of suitable materials as follows:

"Acid-free" is a general term implying that the paper or board has a neutral or alkaline pH, but it may not be the best quality.

"Conservation quality" is paper or board made of purified wood-pulp fibres with an alkaline buffer added.

"Museum quality" is more expensive and

is made of cotton fibres, often with a buffer added also. For real permanence museum quality is the best choice. This quality may also be known as "all rag".

Any paper, album page or mount board which is not made at least to conservation-quality standard is unsuitable for the preservation of valuable items, and even for the less valuable ones it represents a false economy. Inferior papers and boards contain mechanical wood pulp. Like newsprint, this rapidly discolours and embrittles due to the acidic lignin component in unpurified wood. Paper under normal conditions contains 7% water, and this is enough, along with atmospheric moisture, to allow the migration of acids from wood pulp paper to the pure cellulose paper on which stamps are printed.

There does not appear to be an acid-free hinge for stamps on the market yet. Glassine hinges or Butterfly tape are not conservation quality, but at least they are easy to remove and preferable to self-adhesive tapes. Transparent plastic sleeves or protectors should be made of polyester, not polythene or cellulose acetate, as this is an inert material and will

not stick to, or damage, philatelic items. In Britain transparent polyester film is sold under the trade name Melinex; in the United States it is known as Mylar.

Conservators are often asked to recommend publications containing advice on the care or treatment of valuable collections. Unfortunately, apart from the professional journals, there are no standard manuals on paper conservation. Books claiming to teach the reader conservation techniques are not to be trusted. Instead, specific enquiries about the conservation of philatelic material can be directed either to the Institute of Paper Conservation, whose Secretary will refer the enquirer to an expert in the field; or to a reputable conservator, who may be selected from a register held by the Museums and Galleries Commission Conservation Unit in London.

The Institute of Paper Conservation, Leigh Lodge, Leigh, Worcester WR6 5LB.

The Conservation Unit, Museums and Galleries Commission, 7 St James' Square, London SW1Y 4JU.

Cleaning surface dirt 1: adding powdered eraser



Cleaning surface dirt 2: removing powder



Testing water solubility of manuscript ink



Exhibitions

EXHIBITIONS form the most public aspect of the National Postal Museum's work. They are mounted by Tony Gammons, the Museum's Exhibitions Officer, with the help of other staff and are the focus for visitors to the Museum, both new and regular. One large exhibition runs for most of the year on the ground and mezzanine floors while more short-lived displays occupy the central part of the main gallery. Recently, there have also been changing displays in the open frames as well.

During 1988 the main display was "Railways and the Post" which ran throughout the year. Other displays included "The Genesis of the Machin Design", "Cyprus - The British Connection", "How a Stamp is Made", and "British Philately at the Olympic Games". Panels featuring the new Castles high value definitives based on photographs by The Duke of York were on temporary display in September and the artwork for the first issue of definitives for Qatar was also put on show. During the year, the display of the R M Phillips collection continued to feature Victorian Printing Methods.

"The Genesis of the Machin Design"

This display was mounted in September 1987 in the main gallery and ran until March 1988. It marked the 20th anniversary of the introduction of the Machin design for definitives and brought together for the first time in public the artwork, plaster casts, photographs and essays that were produced in the period before the stamps were finally printed. Then it showed how the work progressed from first ideas to finished design.

The centrepiece of the display was one of the original casts by Arnold Machin used in the preparation of the final stamps. It was positioned in front of the original camera used to photograph it at Harrisons. The camera was made by Kodak in the 1920s and was still in working order, though no longer used. It had been stored at the printers and was kindly transferred to the Museum by them. After repainting it a lens of the type used by Machin was added, on loan from Rod Tidman. Lighting of the cast was by various spotlights to give an impression of the different lighting conditions which were tried before the final photographs were chosen.

A number of major exhibitions took place in the Museum during 1988 some in co-operation with outside philatelic societies. A retrospective view is given here.



Arnold Machin with Sir Ron Dearing and Douglas Muir at the Machin exhibition

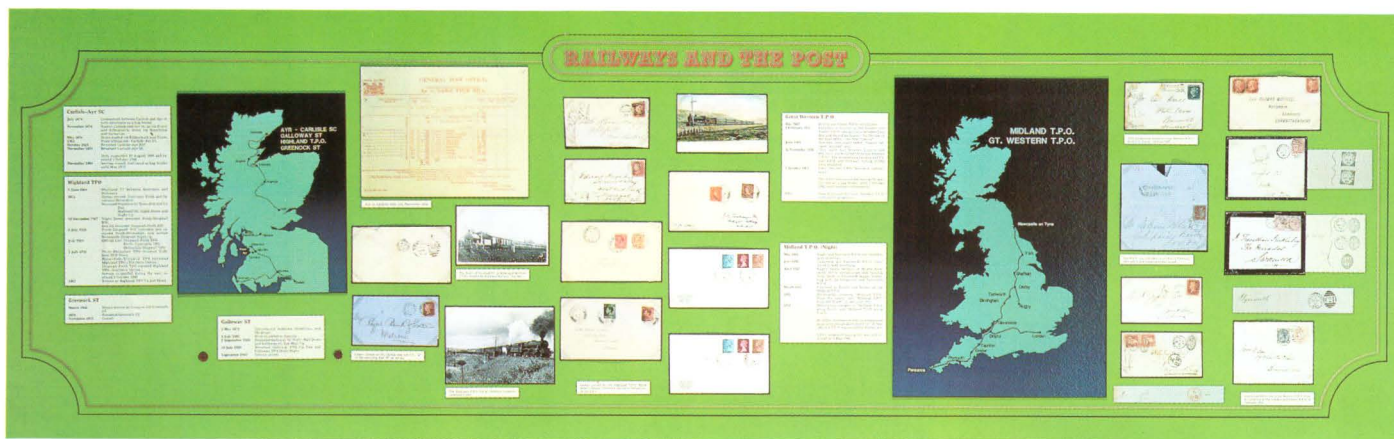
Overall view of the Machin exhibition



Around this were the display cases and frames which told the story of the work involved.

There were 16 frames and four display cases. The first eight frames showed the work by other artists beginning with suggestions in 1961 and 1962 for a new profile head. Artists were finally commissioned in November 1965 and their renderings of the Queen's portrait, the artwork for the stamps, and the essays prepared for some of them, filled these frames. Work by Stuart Devlin, Reginald Brill and David Gentleman was shown, together with the results of Andrew Restall's Fellowship of Minuscule Art. Nothing was extant of the drawings by John Ward, the fifth artist commissioned. Also in this section were the artwork and essays by David Gentleman based on the John Hedgecoe photographs of the Queen taken specially in June 1966. Unfortunately, at the time of the exhibition the Museum did not have in its possession the original photographs by Hedgecoe, though these did come into our care later. A final panel showed the subsequent development of Machin's "wreath" head used on commemoratives and special stamps and for some overseas territories such as Hong Kong.

The other eight frames and remaining display cases were devoted to the work of Arnold Machin. In total, there were eight



One of the panels of the "Railways and the Post" exhibition

plaster casts by Machin on show, one being one of the two final versions, and three showing the development from the cast he prepared in 1964 for coinage. The others were for lettering and the "wreath" head. The display cases contained wooden supports specially constructed to hold the casts beside the essays produced from them. Thus, the visitor could see at a glance how the work progressed.

Machin's work on the design and the work by the printers were shown in detail together with a large number of colour trials and preparatory work for the recess high values. For this it was possible to distinguish photographs taken at Bradbury Wilkinson from the few that remained of the hundreds taken at Harrisons.

Visitors to the exhibition included Arnold Machin himself in the company of Sir Ron Dearing, the then Chairman of the Post Office, and on a subsequent occasion the present day Stamp Advisory Committee.

After the end of the exhibition the material was reformed into albums and a display from this was on show at the Prague international exhibition, Praga 88, in August and September 1988.

Demonstration model of a Travelling Post Office used at the "Railways and the Post" exhibition as a postbox (with Leslie Holding, then Chief Custodian).



"Railways and the Post"

"Railways and the Post" was the main exhibition of 1988 running from 11 January 1988 to January 1989. It marked the 150th anniversary of the first Travelling Post Office and was mounted in the ground and mezzanine floors. Three postcards featuring the artwork for posters on PO railway themes from Post Office Archives were issued to coincide with the opening of the exhibition and a special postmark was in use throughout the period.

Amongst the most spectacular of the objects on view was a demonstration model of a Travelling Post Office which sat on special rails in the foyer of the Museum and acted as a posting box.

On the ground floor the early days of travel by rail and mail carriage by rail were described, largely with the aid of enlarged colour illustrations. Models and handstamps used in sorting carriages were also on display. A detailed explanation was given of the first sorting carriage in 1838 and Ramsay's bag changing apparatus.

In January 1838, the first Travelling Post Office, a converted horse-box, was put into service on the Grand Junction Railway on the

section between Birmingham and Warrington. It was declared an immediate success enabling the Post Office to "duplicate time travelling and working at the same instant".

Arrangements were soon made for the provision of four specially-designed T.P.O.s. The first was employed from Euston to a point just north of Bletchley, where the mail was transferred to a mailcoach which took the bags to Birmingham for onward transmission by rail. In September



"Mail Rail" – PO underground railway in its new livery

1838, the London and Birmingham Railway was opened throughout, joining the Grand Junction and North Union lines to give a direct service to the north.

The first T.P.O.s had no apparatus for exchanging the bags while the train was moving. The train had to slow down while the bags were thrown out, the mail guard seizing the incoming bag from the end of a pole thrust towards him. In October 1838, the first mail bag exchanging apparatus came into use, bags from the carriage being dropped down a chute on to the side of the track while incoming bags were snatched from a standard by a net fixed to the side of the carriage. One of the exhibits was an illustration of an unadopted design by Rosalind Dease for the Post Office Technology stamp issue of 1969 which showed the TPO of 1838 with John Ramsay's bag changing apparatus.

On the mezzanine floor details were given of the various T.P.O. services over the years illustrated with specially designed maps, photographs of carriages and examples of cancellations used. Many of these were loaned by Harold S. Wilson, one of the major collectors of this material.

Also on this floor were illustrated stories of how the Royal Mail went underground. Early in 1863, the Post Office inspected a new pneumatic railway in London that had been constructed by the Pneumatic Despatch Company, to see whether it might be suitable for speeding the Royal Mail underground between the company's termini at Euston Station and Eversholt Street, near the NW District Post Office. The railway cars, which ran on rails, were made of wrought iron and weighed nearly eight hundred-weight but during the trials the mails were sucked through the tube to Euston within one minute.

The Post Office's trials continued for several years and were, later in 1873, extended to a new tube opened between Euston Station and the GPO in St Martin's-le-Grand. Although found satisfactory for the Royal Mail, it gave no real advantage over existing mail cart services.

However, the Post Office's own underground railway was opened in 1927 linking six important sorting offices with the main railway termini at Paddington and Liverpool Street. It runs through 6½ miles of tunnels, eight stations and has some 20 trains rumbolling along its tracks at a speed of 35 mph. Each train is made up of four containers which can carry 15 bags of letters. During peak periods trains are sometimes connected together to carry more mail. Powered by electricity and operated by remote control, these miniature trains do not carry drivers, guards or passengers and they do much to help reduce traffic on the busy streets of London. Photographs of the early vehicles were complemented by one in colour of the latest locomotives in new Mail Rail livery.

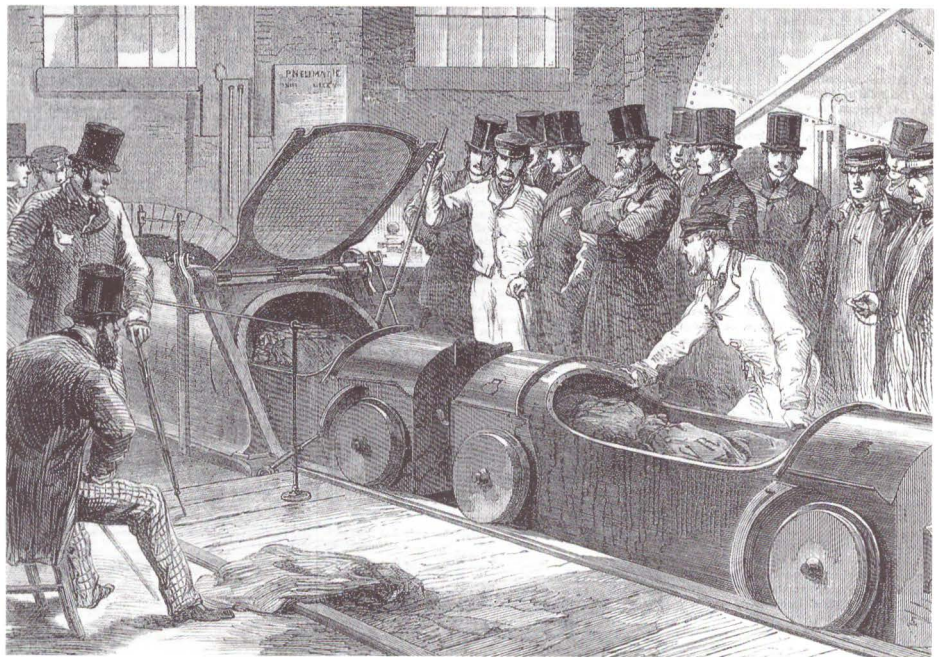
"Cyprus: The British Connection"

During April, after the end of the Machin exhibition, there was a display in the main gallery mounted by members of the Cyprus Study Circle. This display showed the major aspects of Cyprus philately which had a connection with the philately of Great Britain, from the Levant Company's ships in the 17th century to the Sovereign Base Areas today. There were some 16 frames with album pages from the collections of some of the Study Circle's main members.

The earliest items on display were ship letters from Cyprus and carried by British ships, together with mail between Cyprus and Britain. There followed stamps and postal stationery of Great Britain used abroad, especially official mail from the staff of the first Governor in 1878, and stamps of Great Britain overprinted for use in Cyprus.

In the later sections mail was included from British forces in Cyprus including "On Active Service" letters from the First World War when many survivors from Gallipoli recuperated in Cyprus. There were also prisoner of war letters and the story of the camp at Famagusta, together with censorship marks from the Enosis troubles of the 1930s and the struggle against EOKA after the Second World War.

Publicity for the exhibition was provided



The first mail being despatched through the pneumatic tube railway – Evesholt Street to Euston, February 1863 – "Railways and the Post" exhibition.

by an article in the *British Philatelic Bulletin* by an acknowledged expert on the subject, Dr Jack Goodwin, who also works in the Museum.

Displays by outside philatelic organisations will continue in the Museum, as well as joint displays when the Museum collections contain complementary material.

"How a Stamp is Made"

From the beginning of May the exhibition in the main gallery was one mounted by the Museum, entitled "How a Stamp is Made". This illustrated the various stages of stamp production, from initial choice of design, through artwork and essays, to the finished stamp. It concentrated on photogravure printing, though there were also sections on recess (intaglio) and offset lithography. Taking as its theme the Scottish Heraldry issue of 1987, the display featured in particular the 18p stamp. The display was revamped during the exhibition by the *Post Office Chairman Sir Bryan Nicholson* looking at the display "How a Stamp is Made"



ing its run to make it more compact and a large section of it subsequently went on show at the very successful exhibition "Stampway to the World" in Liverpool from September to November.

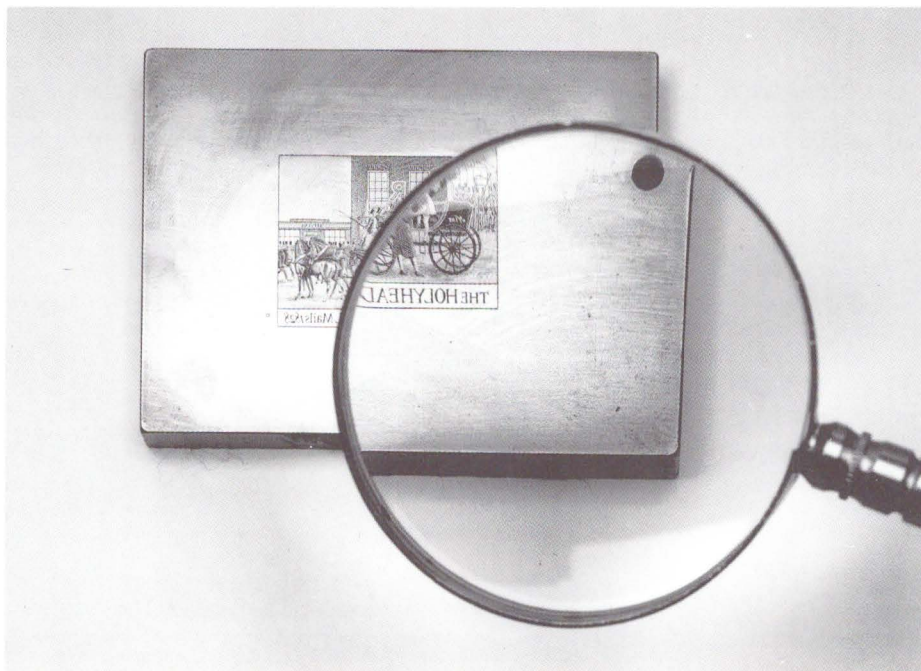
This display could not have been mounted without considerable help from Harrison and Sons Ltd, the stamp printers, and also The House of Questa. Apart from items such as sheets of progressive proofs and the film from which they were made, Harrisons also loaned a cylinder from the 1988 Armada issue and their scale model of the Jumelle press which prints gravure stamps.

To recreate and show the work that goes into printing stamps is very difficult, as much of it depends upon machinery which must remain in situ. A compromise was effected with photographs for some of the processes and examples of removeable items from the various stages.

A leaflet available during the exhibition explained in digest form the gravure printing process:

"In photogravure printing the cylinder bears the design in the form of minute square dots etched into its surface – the deeper the etch the stronger the colour printed. Each cylinder prints one colour and the dots appear to be laid on top of one another to build up the required colour tone or shade.

When the final artwork is accepted, film is made separating out the various colours to be printed, one piece of film for each printed colour. This master photograph is then duplicated on a step and repeat camera to produce a large sheet of 200 identical images – the multipositive. The design on the positive is transferred by exposure under light to a "carbon tissue", a paper covered with a film of gelatine. The tissue is transferred to the printing cylinder, developed by washing and the



"How a Stamp is Made" – one of the recess dies engraved by Slania for the Royal Mail set of 1984, printed in recess and gravure.

cylinder is then carefully etched with acid. At one of the photographic stages a fine screen is applied which creates the square dot pattern essential to tonal reproduction. Ink is applied to the cylinder and remains in the etched recesses until it contacts the paper under pressure when it prints the required image.

The gravure section of the exhibition began with the choice of design by the Post Office Stamp Advisory Committee. "Presentation visuals" – design ideas – had been commissioned from two artists, John Martin and Jeffery Matthews. Those by Matthews, produced originally at stamp size, were preferred and the work involved in producing the essays was shown in the first few frames and display cases. From the final artwork are made colour separation negatives, twice stamp size, one for each of the colours. These were sandwiched between sheets of glass and sealed with opaque tape and could be seen only by being placed on a light box. From these stamp-sized positives were made for the essays. Stamp essays are produced on special presses and the thin plates required for their progressive build-up were on display together with the requisite proofs. Each essay was printed singly and individually. First, second and accepted essays were shown in the frames.

To print the stamps multipositives of each colour and for each design are made in double sheet size. Examples of these for the 18p value were shown with the progressive proof sheets that resulted from them.

The recess (intaglio) and offset lithography sections relied upon two other recent stamp issues. In some ways these contrasted with the gravure section; in others similarities predominated. To explain the recess issue the 1984 Royal Mail set was chosen. This marked the 200th anniversary of the

first mail coach run from Bristol to London and was printed in both recess and gravure by Harrison's on the Jumelle press. The Queen's head and value tablet were printed gravure and the mail coach prints were engraved.

The steps involved in choosing the designs are the same as for any stamp. But the image must be engraved by hand on to a die. The five dies for this issue, engraved by Czeslaw Slania were shown in a display case with those for the 1987 Victorian Britain issue. These master dies are engraved in reverse. From the die the image is transferred under great pressure to a molette, or roller, of softer steel (with the image now appearing as printed). The molette is then used to duplicate the image the required number of

"British Philately at the Olympic Games" – Christopher Chataway, who opened the exhibition, with Keith Fisher, General Manager, Royal Mail Stamps and Philately.



times on to the cylinder or plate by being rocked under great pressure (the image is now in reverse again). Printing then takes place from the cylinder as in gravure, on the same press, though the reels must be additionally dried. The original drawings and the various essays produced for the Royal Mail set were remounted for this display.

Unlike the gravure or recess processes, in lithography the printing surface is completely flat. There are no recessed areas. Rather, it depends on the principle of oil and water repelling each other.

The centenary of the St John Ambulance was celebrated in 1987 by a set of stamps printed by The House of Questa. On display were the presentation visuals, artwork and essays, produced on similar principles to those of gravure printing, together with the separation negatives. Each colour has a separate plate and one was shown. It is produced from a multipositive (made on a step and repeat camera) which is printed on to a thin light-sensitised aluminium printing plate, one of which for the 18p was shown.

In printing, the plate does not come into direct contact with the paper. It shows the positive image and prints on to a "blanket" or rubber wrapped round a roller (which now has a negative image). This then "offsets" on to the paper and gives rise to the name "offset lithography".

"British Philately at the Olympic Games"

"British Philately at the Olympics" was held in conjunction with the British Olympic Association and the Society of Olympic Collectors. It was opened on 18 October by the Rt Hon Christopher Chataway PC (former world record-holder in the 5000 metres, British representative in the 1952 and 1956 Olympics and Minister of Posts and Telecommunications 1970-2) and ran until the end of the year. The exhibition consisted of artwork and essays for the 1948 GB stamps provided by the National Postal Museum together with artefacts and medals from various Olympic Games on loan from the British Olympic Association and a display by members of the Society of Olympic Collectors of postcards, postmarks and stamps mainly illustrating the 1908 and 1948 Games held in London.

The first eight frames showed material supplied by the Museum. This consisted of artwork and essays leading up to the issued stamps of various sports issues produced by the British Post Office. All the material had been newly researched and freshly mounted. First came the work done in preparation for the issue of stamps for the 1948 Olympic Games held in London. All the artwork prepared for this issue and all the essays extant are on show. Some of this material had not been seen in public before. King George VI, like his father, was a keen philatelist and the essays that were submitted to him for his approval in February 1948 bear comments in his handwriting.

The artwork of other Sports issues was also on display.



Tony Gammons, with guests, at the opening of the exhibition "British Philately at the Olympic Games" – with the torch from the 1948 London Olympic Games.

In the display cases in the centre of the exhibition were artefacts from various Olympic Games on loan from the British Olympic Association. These included medals and badges from the Olympic Games held in London in 1908 and 1948; a man's beret from the Great Britain team for the 1948 Games (property of K S Duncan) and the official

from the collections of Ken Cook and Bob Wilcock with additional items loaned by Francesca Rapkin, Alan Sabey and Bob Farley. Postcards illustrated the 1908 London Olympics at the White City and stamps, postmarks and postal history told the story of the 1948 Olympics at Wembley. Final frames comprised virtually all the known British Olympic related postmarks and postal history of the last 30 years.



Man's beret from the London Olympic Games of 1948

report on the Games. Commemorative plates and gifts to the British Olympic Association on the occasion of its 75th anniversary in 1980 and various medals made up the rest of this section.

The other eight frames contained the display by the Society of Olympic Collectors

Qatar Definitive Issue

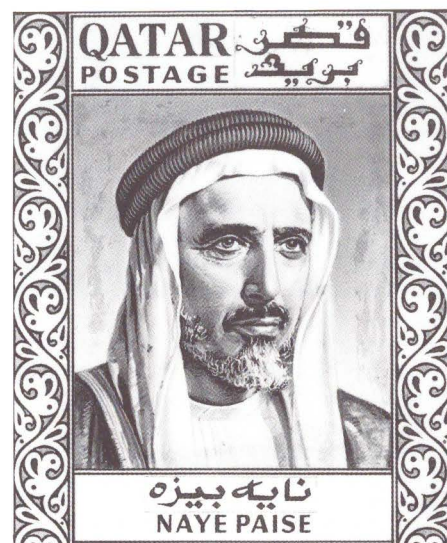
In September 1988, the artwork for the 1961 definitive issue of Qatar went on show in some of the open frames of the main gallery. This was issued at a time when the postal affairs of the Gulf states were under the control of the British Post office and the display coincided with the opening of the new postal headquarters in Doha, Qatar, built with the assistance of the British Postal Consultancy Service. The issue was of considerable interest in that it began in the reign of one sheikh but appeared in the reign of his successor, necessitating a complete change half way through.

Qatar is a peninsula in the Gulf, an independent Arab sheikhdom, but with a

British postal administration until 23 May 1963. This meant that the British Post Office was responsible for producing and supplying stamps for the use of the public. From 1957 this was in the form of British stamps overprinted 'Qatar' and the denomination in Naye Paise and Rupees. The first set of stamps to be designed and produced especially for Qatar was issued in 1961, originally having been due in 1960.

The first designs were produced by the Victor Whiteley studio but these were unacceptable as many of the Arabic inscriptions were either missing or wrong. The designs were then changed to correct these errors and to improve on the designs themselves, a different dhow was chosen and the falcon was shown facing the other way.

When the designs were decided a further change was necessary due to the abdication of the ruler, Sheikh Ali, because of ill health.

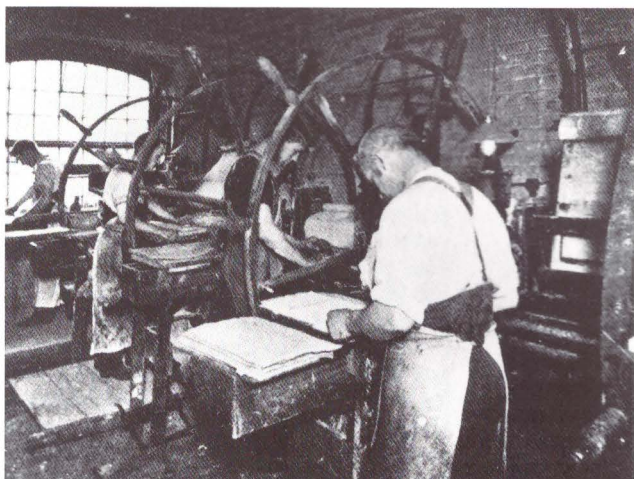


Artwork from the Qatar issue of 1960/61 with the original head of Sheikh Ali (above) being replaced by a photograph of Sheikh Ahmad (below).



The portrait of the new ruler, Sheikh Ahmad, was substituted and the stamps were finally issued on 2 September 1961.

The Qatar Post Department took over the postal services on 23 May 1963 and the British Post Office were no longer responsible for the production of their stamps. The artwork and design development for the issue has nevertheless remained in the National Postal Museum.



The printing presses of Perkins Bacon on which the 1d blacks were printed. This forms part of the exhibition of the Phillips collection – Victorian Printing Methods.

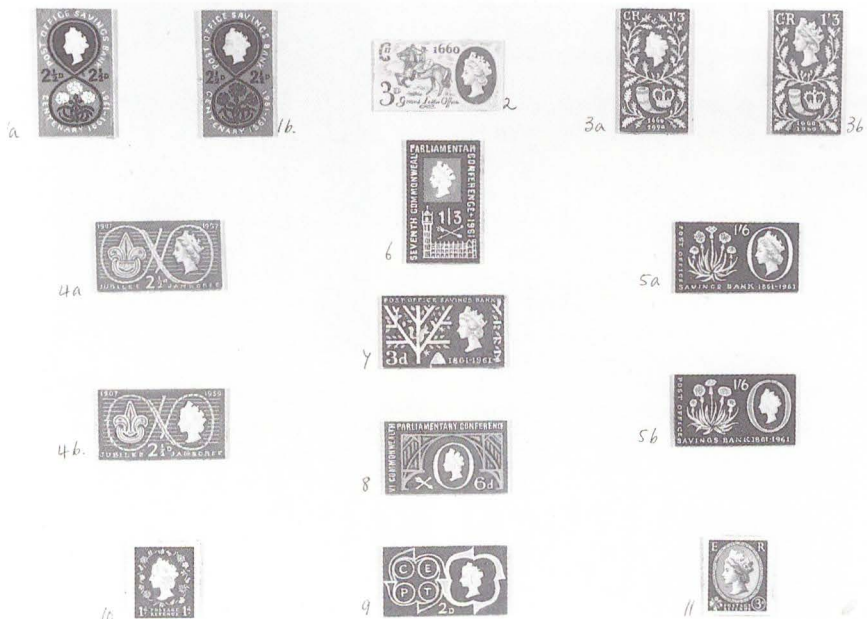
Research

RESearch is an essential part of Museum work. For every exhibition or display a lot of work must be done to ensure accuracy in the story told and in the detailed explanations of individual items. Only rarely is this information immediately to hand. More often it is scattered in reference books or simply not published at all and the files in Post Office Archives have to be consulted at length.

It is an unfortunate fact that most philatelic research that has been published is based upon the study of stamps or covers in the author's collection. Research into the background of stamp issues or postal services has seldom been done in depth. At the National Postal Museum we have the opportunity to redress this and in remounting our collections we are endeavouring to provide accurate information hitherto unavailable.

There are now a number of collections which have been thoroughly researched and which are available for consultation. These include: King Edward VII, 1924/5 Wembley Exhibition, King Edward VIII, the 1948 Olympic Issue and the "Genesis of the Machin Design", although work still continues on all of these. When completed the

Work by Faith Jacques to show the effect of a profile portrait on recent commemorative and definitive designs, 1961



Research into philatelic matters and postal history continues all the year round, though mainly in connection with exhibitions. Some undertaken in 1988 is recorded here.

aim is to publish catalogues of the various collections.

At the moment only a few researchers refer to such collections though many visitors might look at them on display. Much greater reference is made to the Correspondence and Day Books of De La Rue which are housed in the Museum. These cover the day to day production of stamps and stationery of colonial territories up to about 1940 (but entries by that time are no longer complete).

Machin Design Collection

Perhaps the most important of the collections mentioned above is that of the "Genesis of the Machin Design". This was the subject of a major display in the Museum in 1987/8 which caused a considerable upheaval in our understanding of what had happened in the period up to 1967 when the first stamps of the present definitive design were issued. A

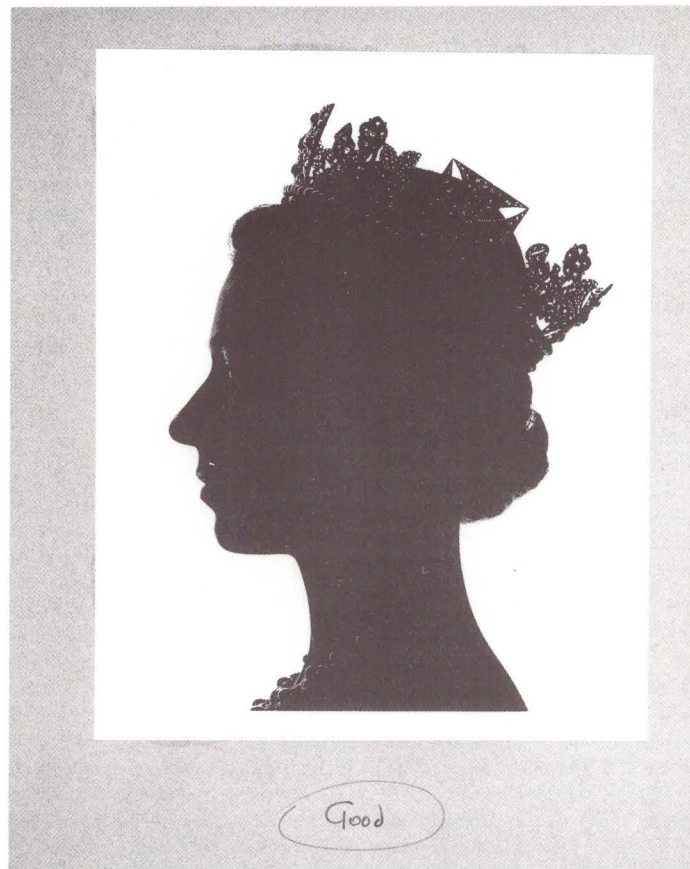
large number of items, some small, some large, were found – mainly at the printers, Harrisons – and transferred to the Museum. At the same time files, long considered to be lost, became available and these detailed the



Profile portrait of the Queen by Michael Goaman, 1962

production of every single essay. As these essays were numbered and most in the Museum's collection had pencil numbers on the reverse, it became possible to date each and every one. From this it became clear that the chronology hitherto assumed was quite wrong and a totally different picture emerged.

It was in 1961, rather than 1965, that the story began. At that time both designers and printers were unhappy at the use of the Wilding portrait of The Queen in landscape format commemorative stamps which were beginning to become more common. In its place they suggested that a profile portrait would be preferable. Faith Jacques, a stamp designer, submitted rough colour sketches of various previously issued stamps to show what effect a profile head would have and she also commented in detail on the problems. Michael Goaman was then asked to draw a profile for possible use, based upon photographs taken by Wilding in 1952. This profile head was provided in February 1962 with Harrisons producing retouched bromides during that year. All these items were attached to the newly explored files and have



June 1966. Portrait of the Queen taken by John Hedgecoe, annotated by the Queen "NO".

June 1966. Portrait of the Queen taken by John Hedgecoe, annotated by the Queen "Good".

since been transferred to the Museum.

Little seems to have happened between 1962 and 1965 though this may reflect files being kept elsewhere rather than lack of activity. Michael Goaman used his portrait of The Queen in a number of designs submitted for various stamp issues in 1965/6 but none were used and his portrait was never used on issued stamps.

This is not the place for a detailed exposition of how the Machin design came about – that would require a booklet all to itself. However, it is appropriate to mention the work carried out and the results. Because of the detailed examination of the files it was possible to put all the essays we hold into chronological order and to attribute them properly for the first time. To these were added a number of plaster casts of various renderings of the Queen's head still held at the printers. A great find, in a Post Office store in London, was a plaster cast of one of the Machin heads actually used for the issued stamps. This was all brought together in an exhibition mounted in September 1987 which ran until March 1988.

But the research was not complete and during 1988 a large number of items were added to the collection, filling out areas which had remained obscure. It is likely that this will continue for some time to come. Investigation of photographs produced a rich haul. They fell into two groups. Firstly, a number of production photographs at different stages were unearthed at the printers and by the Post Office photographic library. More are likely to be transferred in 1989.

Secondly, the photographs taken by John Hedgecoe in June 1966 specifically to provide a photographic alternative to a moulded figure were found. The essays produced from these had been known, and the artwork, but not the original photographs, and some of these had been annotated in The Queen's own hand. Clearly, this was an important addition to both the collection and our knowledge.

Still needing investigation is the work of Andrew Restall and David Gentleman, both very active at the time. The former held the Fellowship of Minuscule Art and part of his

task was to work towards a new definitive design; the latter also worked independently for the Postmaster General, Anthony Wedgwood Benn, and it is not at the moment clear how they interacted with the work carried out by Arnold Machin for the Stamp Advisory Committee. It will take some time and effort before such work is nearly complete and even then there may always be the surprise find. Other major aspects of British stamp design and production will require similar investigation, undoubtedly with similar results, which will expand the Museum's collections consider-

Two photographs of the Machin "diadem" plaster cast taken under different lighting conditions.



ably and make them even more interesting.

It might be asked why such research is necessary. Why is everything not accurately labelled and complete? The answer lies in the day-to-day working of the various departments involved in the production of stamps, and the printers. When something is being developed the examples of the various stages are kept in working files to be referred to when necessary. These files will be kept in different places according to the requirements of the people concerned. While some material will be transferred to the Museum fairly quickly, other items will remain elsewhere for possible use. It is only when the files are eventually closed and sent to Post Office Archives – a variable period – that they can become available for the material to be collected in the Museum. The files themselves will not be generally open to the public until 30 years after their completion. Thus, the story of stamp production of a long-running development such as new definitives is not always clear until much later.

Publication

Research is never complete until it has been published and even then more may need to be added. The Museum publishes fact sheets giving background information to its major displays. When appropriate the results of research into particular stamp issues are published in the *British Philatelic Bulletin*. Recent articles include research on the 1924/5 Wembley Exhibition stamps and the detailed background to the 1948 Olympic Issue. Histories of greater length will eventually appear separately.

GB Display

Another, quite different, aspect of research was carried out by Dr Jack Goodwin in preparing the display of GB stamps for the main gallery. Display sheets for all British stamps have been prepared with information from many sources. This is being kept right up to date. The reason for the display and the listing described here is to give a Post Office view of events year by year rather than a catalogue which inevitably takes many stamps out of course and lists them by section. A more accurate, if sometimes more confusing, overall view results from our method.

Dr Goodwin reports:

A natural outgrowth of the research necessary for this permanent exhibit was the commencement of a so-called *Chronolist of British Stamps*. This sub-section of the report deals with an explanation of the proposed publication and mention of problems encountered. Because of the importance attached to this project, considerable detail is given, including a sample draft page from the *Chronolist*.

It is intended that this study appear in several volumes: 1840–1900, 1901–1950, 1951–1970, 1971–1980 and 1981 to date, with Appendices (such items as a watermark checklist, table of various types of stamps issued in each year, index of persons and companies). First drafts of volumes I, II, III

and IV have been completed. The Museum sees this work as being of value not only to its own staff but to serious GB philatelists throughout the world.

Only a small amount of “original research” has been involved – given the volumes of information provided by outstanding philatelists over the years, the term cannot generally apply. For the most part it has been a matter of gathering information on each stamp and placing each in chronological order, stamp by stamp; for this is how it happened from a Post Office point of view.

Yet many problems arise, and this is why the project remains at present in draft form. Research from sources within the Museum will be pursued, of course, but specialists in the fields noted in comment below may also assist. Going beyond matters obvious in the following sample page, we comment first upon the pertinent facts desired for each stamp.

Some of these facts are easy to come by: type of stamp (definitive, commemorative, Postage Due, et cetera); if of different design from previous and pertinent comment thereon; value; printer; printing process; such things as graphite lines and phosphor bars (including size); colour(s); watermark (or lack thereof); measurements of the stamp; perforate, rouletted or imperforate. These and many other pieces of information are available about most stamps, but questions remain:

Date of Issue: Even the year is often unclear. Date of plate registration (used in many early cases) is not close-to-accurate at times. The put-to-press dates are an improvement and “first recorded date seen cancelled” also. The ultimate would be to know precisely when a particular stamp was first sold over a post office counter.

Colour: The policy has been to note only intentional changes, hence the repeated use of “shades of” and even “many shades of”. The restrictive practice (for example, “light brown, reddish brown and yellowish brown” being listed under the single entry “shades of brown”) may be criticised, but the logic is that the many shades were usually unintentional. In this regard, and throughout, the intention is to make as few stamp entries as feasible.

Designer: In many cases the designs of stamps (especially early stamps) were created by someone in the office of the printer. Individuals did not receive credit. More information on early stamps is needed – this applies also to re-engravings and where designs are based on photographs, photographers.

Sheets of: There is a true dilemma here in distinguishing between what came off the press and what was delivered to post offices (most early sheets were guillotined before distribution). The rule applied has been to give “printers’ sheets”, for it has not been possible to go further on all issues – ideally both should be cited in the *Chronolist*. Additionally, there is the matter of format – 5 x 10 in the *Chronolist* means “5 stamps across and in 10 rows”.

Paper: How far to go here? In the early years almost every issue featured paper different in one way or another from that of the previous issue. Certainly hand-made should be distinguished from machine-made, but even this has proved difficult to verify in some cases. Bluing of early papers was unintentional and so variable within an issue as to be unmentionable except in extreme cases. More modern “coatings” are for the most part overlooked and “on white paper” usually employed – yet, further discrimination in a final version is not ruled out.

Gum: The first gums were based on potato-starch, and the PVA types came into use in the QEII period. However, most entries note “Arabic gum”. Variations of all these types are numerous (many concerning colour additives). Expert advice is needed if further clarification is to be gained. The literature contains instances of “experimental gums” – for the most part these ventures are deliberately left unchronicled.

Withdrawal Date: Each year in the *Chronolist* ends with the headings “Withdrawn” and “In Use at End of Year”. Withdrawn is intended to mean “no longer issued to post offices”. In reality the dates given in the draft are in many cases simply educated guesswork. A guide on early stamps might be a record of when the die was destroyed, but stocks may still have been going out. This is an extremely ephemeral field (with the exception of when the pre-decimal values became invalid), and assistance is required before a final *Chronolist* is published. One criterion most valuable has been to consider that a new type of a stamp was issued when the current value ran out. A study of postal rate changes has also been valuable in this respect. There are a few “withdrawal because of no stamps left” notes.

Inks: Note is made only in cases of significant changes. Further study might well be in order, especially as regards double-fugitive types.

Illustrations: Nothing extensive is intended. It is assumed that the NPM staff and others who use the *Chronolist* are either familiar with what the stamps look like or have access to catalogues. Throughout, attention is given to design changes and descriptions given when deemed advisable.

Stamps known only in imprimatur form are not included; nor are those in the “printed but not issued” category. Unintentional watermark positions are also excluded.

Reasons for certain issues are made known. Postal rates are mentioned but most mentions involve the minimum inland letter fee only.

Throughout the draft “when a change occurs” has been in mind. In that the abbreviations used in philately have not been consistent, the introduction to Volume I will contain explanations of those abbreviations used in the *Chronolist*.

A final draft copy of the *NPM Chronolist of British Stamps* is due for completion in mid-1989, and the assistance of specialists in the many areas mentioned above would be appreciated.

1910

Issued

Definitives, with the portrait of King Edward VII, who died on 6 May – stamps with his portrait were issued as late as 1913. King George V ascended the throne and the first stamps with his portrait appeared on 22 June 1911. Designs of 1910 are as previous, except that the 7d, as a new Edward VII value, is of a new type. Colours of the 2d, 10d and 1s change slightly from previous. Printed in letterpress by De La Rue. In sheets of 240 (two panes of 12 x 10). On white paper, that for all values except the 7d being chalk-surfaced. Arabic gum, size 21mm x 24mm, WM Imperial Crown, perf. 14. The inland letter rate remained at 1d for 4 ounces. The last of seven Edward VII stamp booklets (again with ½d and 1d values) was issued in 1911 – all stamps for booklets of this era were taken from sheets.

1036	4 May	7d	Shades of grey-black
1037	Jul	2d	Grey-green and scarlet
1038	Sep	10d	Dull purple (shades) and scarlet
1039	Sep	1s	Green (shades) and scarlet
1040	?	2d	Dull grey-green and red. Exact date of issue is unknown, but it appeared late in the year.

Withdrawn

NPM 1022

In Use at End of Year

NPM 961/963, 984/985, 997, 1019/1020, 1023, 1025, 1028/1029, 1031/1040.

1911

Issued

Definitives with portrait of the new king, George V (nine stamps, NPM 1047/1055 only), and of the deceased King Edward VII (others). Those of George V feature the “Downey Head”, designed by Bertram Mackennel and G W Eve from a photograph by W & D Downey. Engraved by J A C Harrison. The Downey design was not popular with the public and was soon to be replaced by the “Profile Head” (see 1912). The Somerset House printings of the Downey Head are distinguished from the Harrisons printings by the dot between letter and numeral of the control number. Designs of the Edward VII stamps are as previous, but colours are different. On 1 January 1911 the contract with De La Rue terminated and Harrisons became the new printer of low value stamps. However, the new firm had difficulty in meeting the increasing demand for stamps (as well as having problems with bi-colour printing), so Somerset House (Inland Revenue) was called upon to fill the gap. These Government printings are often called “Provisional Issues”. “Harrisons” or “Somerset” is mentioned in each entry below. Printed in sheets of 240 (two panes of 12 x 10) unless otherwise mentioned. “Also booklets” is noted under certain entries. Uncoated white paper was used, except for the 3d values (uncoated lemon) and NPM 1087 (white chalk-surfaced). Arabic gum – that used by both Harrisons and Somerset House was lighter than that used previously by De La Rue. Size 21mm x 24mm unless otherwise mentioned. WM Imperial Crown unless otherwise mentioned. Perf. 14 unless otherwise mentioned. There were three dies of the ½d Downey Head – 1A: a triangle is formed of the right-hand dolphin’s three upper body scales; 1B: the same scales are incomplete and the centre jewel looks like a crescent; 2: the beard is better defined than in the 1A and 1B dies and the top ornament has a single thick line. There were also three dies of the 1d Downey Head – 1A: the second line on the ribbon right of the crown extends across the wreath, and the line nearest the crown on the right ribbon appears as a short line at bottom of that ribbon; 1B: the second line of shading mentioned above is broken in centre, while the first is but a small dot; 2: the lion is shaded, whereas in Dies 1A and 1B it is almost entirely white. All 6d values were also used for fiscal purposes, so doubly-fugitive ink was used. The inland letter rate remained at 1d for 4 ounces.

1041	3 May	½d	Green (a wide variety of shades). Harrisons. Also booklets.
1042	3 May	1d	Shades of rose-carmine. Harrisons. Also booklets.
1043	3 May	1d	Shades of rose-red. Harrisons. Also booklets.
1044	3 May	1d	Aniline rose (some slightly fluorescent). Harrisons. Also booklets.
1045	3 May	1d	Aniline pink. Harrisons. Also booklets.
1046	Jun	½d	Bright green (easily distinguishable from the variety of NPM 1041 greens). Harrisons. Also booklets.
1047	22 Jun	½d	Many shades of green. Die 1A. The first (along with the 1d) of the Downey Heads. Somerset – this stamp and the 1d (NPM 1049) were printed prior to the Harrison printings (using the same plates), but apparently issue dates were identical. Perf. 15 x 14.
1048	22 Jun	½d	Many shades of green. Die 1A. Harrisons. Also booklets. Perf. 15 x 14 (except for a few sheets perf. 14 on an old machine).
1049	22 Jun	1d	Many shades of red-carmine. Die 1A. Somerset. See notes under NPM 1047
1050	22 Jun	1d	Many shades of red-carmine. Die 1A. Harrisons. Perf. 15 x 14.
1051	22 Jun	1d	Rose-pink. Die 1A. Harrisons. Perf. 15 x 14.
1052	?	½d	Many shades of green. Die 1B. Harrisons. Also booklets. Perf. 15 x 14. Exact date of issue undetermined, but was later than 22 June.
1053	?	1d	Many shades of carmine-red. Die 1B. Harrisons. Perf. 15 x 14. Exact date of issue undetermined, but was later than 22 June.
1054	?	1d	1d rose-pink. Die 1B. Harrisons. Perf. 15 x 14. Exact date of issue undetermined, but was later than 22 June.
1055	?	1d	Aniline. Die 1B. Harrisons. Perf. 15 x 14. Also booklets. Exact date of issue undetermined, but was later than 22 June. This is the last of the King George V Downey Heads in this 1911 list. Others are Edward VII.
1056	10 Jul	2½d	Shades of blue. Harrisons.
1057	13 Jul	1½d	Purple and green (shades of both). Somerset.
1058	13 Jul	1½d	Deep plum and deep green. Somerset.
1059	13 Jul	1½d	Purple (shades) and green (some of the green is fluorescent). Somerset.
1060	13 Jul	4d	Shades of orange. Harrisons.
1061	17 Jul	1s	Green and scarlet (shades of both). Somerset.
1062	24 Jul	9d	Reddish purple and light blue. Somerset. In sheets of 160 (eight panes of 5 x 4).
1063	7 Aug	5d	Reddish purple and blue (shades of both). Somerset.
1064	7 Aug	5d	Deep plum and cobalt blue. Somerset.
1065	8 Aug	2d	Deep dull green and carmine. Somerset.
1066	8 Aug	2d	Deep dull green and red. Somerset.
1067	3 Sep	9d	9d deep dull reddish purple and deep bright blue. Somerset. In sheets of 160 (eight panes of 5 x 4).

continued on page ...

Major Acquisitions

THE National Postal Museum acquires material from a variety of sources. Collections are never static, other than those donated in their entirety such as the R M Phillips, and are constantly being added to and can thus never be regarded as complete. This is particularly true of the Post Office collection of Great Britain material and the postal history collections.

Modern material comes to the Museum from three sources. Artwork for new special stamps comes from the department responsible for design; essays come from the production department; and the issued stamps come from the supplies department. The last includes registration sheets of all new printings and examples from all new plates or cylinders.

Older material comes from quite different sources. These are from files deposited in Post Office Archives and finds in Post Office Stores and similar places. There are also a few donations of artefacts and items which are bought on the philatelic market to supplement the collections. All items added to the collections involve considerable documentation so that proper records can be kept and the National Postal Museum follow good museum practice.

During 1988, one major collection was transferred to the Museum. This was the collection of the local postal history of Croydon formed by Dr Brian de Burca and accepted by the Head Postmaster of

During the year a large number of items were acquired by the Museum, by transfer, gift and purchase. Some of the more important ones are described here.



Plates for printing booklet covers of 1972 and 1973

Croydon in 1978. With the reorganisation of The Post Office the collection was gifted under certain conditions to the Museum as the best place of deposit.

The collection consists of several volumes of postmarks of the Croydon area together with a comprehensive collection of pictorial postcards. Special album pages have been printed for this collection and when time



permits it will be remounted and placed on display. Interest in local postal history has grown considerably in recent years but this area is not well represented in the collections of the National Postal Museum. The Brian de Burca collection is a good foundation and fine example of current collecting interests.

From Post Office Departments

One interesting recent transfer was a total of some 17 original printing plates for stamp book covers. Among these were several from the early period of decimalisation when books were still stitched. For the 30p book there was a series of illustrations featuring British Birds, designed by Harry Titcombe. The plates are made of metal with the designs in relief for letterpress printing (and of course in reverse). Three of the plates are illustrated here featuring the oystercatcher, kestrel and black grouse. The actual stamp books were issued in 1972 and 1973.

Typical postcard of a Croydon post office from the Dr Brian de Burca collection





Artwork (unadopted) by Victor Ambrus for the 1985 issue marking Royal Mail – 350 Years of Service to the Public.



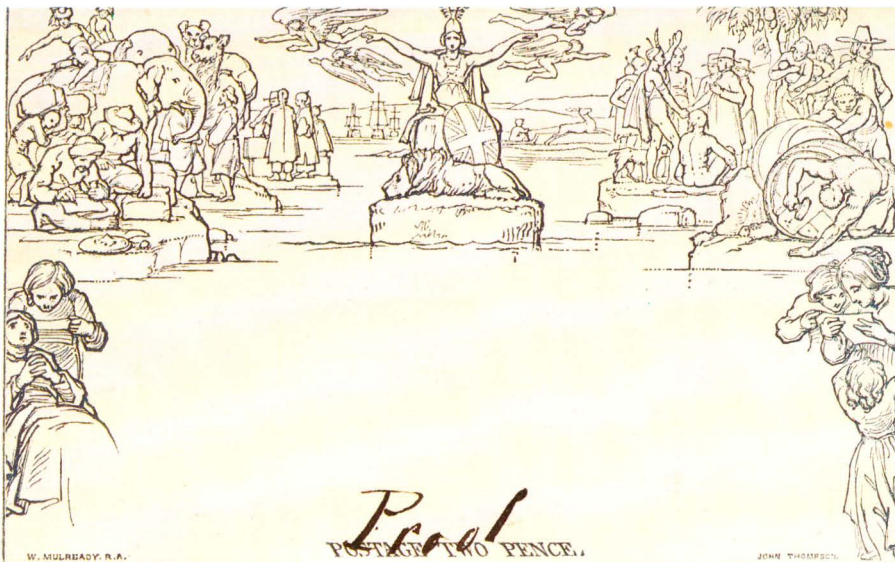
Perhaps the most important items deposited in the Museum in any year are the pieces of original artwork of adopted and unadopted designs for special stamp issues. There are normally about eight special issues each year with four or five stamps per set. The number of artists invited to submit designs is normally about three or four so the number of presentation visuals produced is

quite substantial – up to about 150 for each year. Added to this are the pieces of final artwork used by the printers. Especially in more recent years, these can be quite bulky and rather difficult to store. Special hanging frames have had to be purchased to house and protect some of the larger pieces.

During 1988 a considerable number of pieces of artwork were transferred. Among

the most interesting were those illustrated here. They were submitted as possible designs for the issue in 1985 marking Royal Mail – 350 Years of Service to the Public. The six designs were submitted by Victor Ambrus (with typography by Keith Bassford). Although his designs were not chosen Victor Ambrus later designed the aerogramme for the 1984 Christmas stamps. All





opportunity was taken to purchase them while it was still possible.

Some of the most interesting and important pieces are various Mulready proofs which are required for possible use in 1990. In the R M Phillips collection there is an excellent range of proofs of the various stages of the development of the Mulready envelopes and lettersheets. For exhibition purposes, however, there is little available and 1990 sees the 150th anniversary not only of the Penny Black but also the Mulreadys. At the time, indeed, it had been thought that the envelopes would be more important than the stamps but the design gave rise to such derision that they had to be withdrawn.

Many proofs were taken of the Mulready design, mostly on thin "India" paper and these were shown or sent to many interested parties, often by Rowland Hill himself. Some of these showed only the central design, others the entire printing with the various side panels. One of the items purchased in 1988 was a Twopenny Lettersheet with cast number a 97. This is annotated

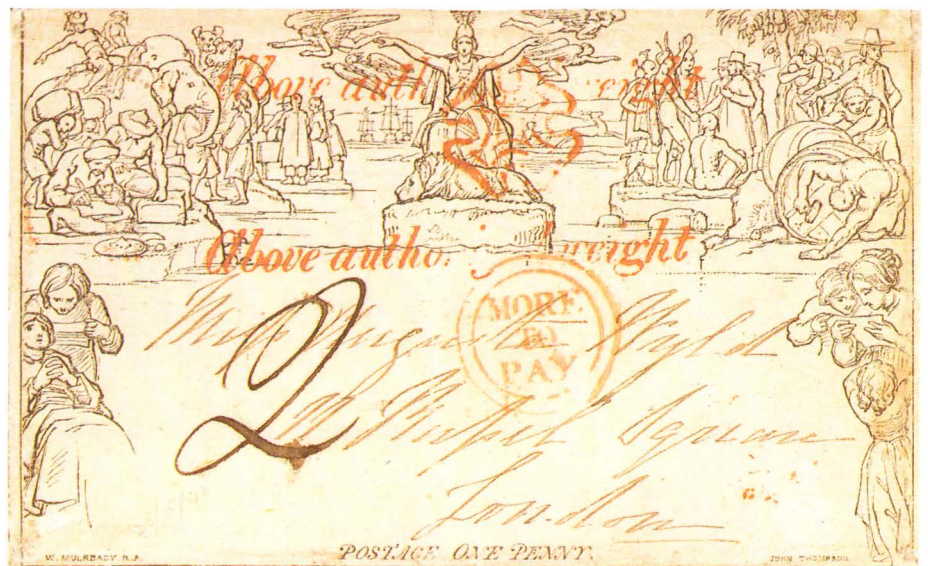
the designs are large, some 14 in x 10 in, and were submitted in August and September 1984. They show Royal Mail services through the ages from a 1613 Footpost, and a mounted postboy of 1647 to more mechanical means of transport such as an Irish steam packet of 1831, "Transferring" *sic* mail in 1940 from a TPO carriage to a mailvan and two versions of the modern Datapost plane of 1984 in special livery.

Other items of note transferred from Post Office departments include a large number of essays for stamps, both old and very modern. From printers have come various items used in exhibitions and displays and of particular note the five original dies by Czeslaw Slania for the Maritime Heritage issue of 1982.

From Other Sources

A large number of other items came into the Museum during the year from other sources including the philatelic market. These were mainly postal history covers which were required to extend the collections. Sometimes they were deliberately sought for some particular purpose; on other occasions material became available for the first time and the

Proof of the Mulready 2d lettersheet (above) and 1d Mulready used "above authorised weight" (below)



Below: Rare skeleton postmark used at the Christian Endeavour Convention on 26 May 1931 (the only date known)

"Proof" in manuscript and is one of a pair which originally came from Thurston Thompson, son of John Thompson, the engraver of the Mulready. Other items obtained at the same time include proofs signed by Rowland Hill, together with some from rare stereotypes and others addressed to prominent postal reformers. Research is continuing before these are eventually mounted and properly described.

One particularly attractive example used bears the marking "Above authorised weight" and "More to Pay". At the time 1d prepaid only half an ounce and any excess weight had to be prepaid by affixing adhesive stamps. This example must have contained some enclosure to have taken it above the limit but the markings applied make it very attractive, and that much more interesting.

Other than Mulready envelopes some of the most interesting material came from a huge accumulation formed by George King, a hitherto virtually unknown collector, who seems to have spent almost all his life sending



If the Receiving Officer be a Head Postmaster, this portion of the Letter Bill must be forwarded to the A.G.D. with his Letter Bill Docket, &c., but if the Receiving Officer be a Sub-Postmaster it must be sent by him, together with the other portion of the Bill by the first opportunity of the day following its receipt, to his Head Postmaster, by whom it will be forwarded to the A.G.D.

Letter Bill to *London Aerodrome*
Despatch No. 2

UNPAID POSTAGE on Letters, &c.

Including Letters, &c., for the Office to which the despatch is made and for Sub-Offices subordinate to and served by that Office, but excluding all others.

DESPATCHING OFFICER			RECEIVING OFFICER		
Ordinary			Registered		
£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.

The amount entered in the Receiving Officer's column must be accounted for by Head Postmasters by means of Postage Stamps affixed to the Letter Bill Docket (see note 2 at the back of the Docket), but Sub-Postmasters who receive "direct" bags from London or a Travelling Post Office, must account for the amount by means of Postage Stamps affixed to this Bill in the space provided below, or if not sufficient from there, to be continued on the space provided on the back of this section of the Letter Bill. The Sub-Postmasters referred to must carefully attend to the following instructions:—
 1. If the Postage on any unpaid Letters included in this Bill cannot be collected the amount brought in respect of such Letters must be obtained from the Head Postmaster.
 2. Half of the unpaid Letters referred to require to be at once returned for delivery "direct" to London, a Travelling Post Office, or any Head or Sub-Office other than the Head Postmaster's Office, the "D" portion of the Blue Claim Form must be filled up and forwarded to the Head Postmaster in place of the unpaid Letters, but in all other cases the unpaid Letters themselves must be forwarded to the Head Postmaster as vouchers for the Claim.
 3. Each Postage Stamp affixed to this Bill by the Sub-Postmaster must be cancelled by a single and distinct impression of his dated stamp.

This portion of the Bill must be retained by the Head Postmaster of the Receiving Office for two years.

To *London Aerodrome*
Despatch No. 2

Registered Letters (Ordinary and Express), Registered Letter Bags and Cash on Delivery Packets.

OFFICE OF POSTING	Registration Number	Destination*
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		

The entries to be continued, if necessary, on the back of this section of the Bill, the word "over" being written here 1

* To be filled in only when despatched to a T.P.O., a Sorting Carriage, or the H. & K. Packet.

Express Letters (unregistered), Registration or Parliamentary Notices, Ballot Papers, &c. (when any), to be advised here.

EXTRA BAGS should be advised here

Signatures of Despatching Officer and Receiving Officer, with circular postmarks from Windsor and London Aerodrome.

for the second despatch of 17 September, carried by Gustav Hamel. The bag label was obviously attached by the Post Office to the outside of the mailbag and described the contents. Inside the bag would be the letter bill (prepared by the Post Office despatching officer) which indicated that there were no registered letters or mail which was underpaid. Handed to the pilot was the way bill produced specially for the Aerial Post. This indicated to him the weight of the bag, crucial for safe flying.

The flight took place on 17 September at 5.20pm, but the mail had been datestamped on 16 September. On the way bill the datestamp has been altered in manuscript to 17. Details shown on these bills may indicate the cause of some confusion in postal history circles at the time. It was announced that the weight of Bag No. 2 was 23 lbs 12oz which is what appears on the bag label, but on the way bill this appears as 21 lbs. No doubt this is why the figures did not add up!

These are only some of many additions to the collections during the year.

Letter Bills, bag label and Way Bill from the second bag of mail from Windsor to Hendon of the 1911 Coronation Aerial Post.

letters to postmasters requesting first or last examples of use of particular postmarks. Where the great interest lies is in the fact that no-one else was doing this at the time, at least not to the extent that King did. Quite how he found out about some of the temporary handstamps is not clear. Many were not gazetted officially at the time, either before or in retrospect, and yet King managed to get letters cancelled on the first day. As a result of his vast accumulation gradually coming on the market a lot of new information has come to light and dates have been extended for the use of those already well known. Many of the cancellations were only used on registered mail and the Museum has been fortunate to acquire a number of covers with temporary skeleton postmarks. One of these is illustrated here for the Christian Endeavour Convention (26 May 1931 is apparently the only known date) and another is shown on the Contents page for the Royal Lancashire Show, Blackburn of 3 August 1929 (apparently hitherto unknown). This latter came with the appropriate Certificate of Posting slip as well, normally destroyed or at best divorced from the item itself.

Artefacts are not only envelopes and postmarks. They also come in the form of dies, plates, molettes, uniforms, machines and many more. Most collectors are unable to keep such items but museums can. Background items and information help to explain more conventional covers.

Three such were obtained to add to the collection of 1911 Coronation Aerial Post material which was already extensive. These concerned the return flights from Windsor to Hendon on 17 and 18 September 1911. They are a letter bill, a way bill and the bag label

To be handed in at the Post Office 248, the Broadway, Cicklewood on arrival at Hendon

On His Majesty's Service.

AERIAL POST

WINDSOR TO LONDON

G. P. O. WEIGHT 23. 12

Nº 2.

Manufactured by MILLINGTON & Sons Ltd., Rudge Row, London, W.C.



AERIAL POST.

Way Bill of despatch from Windsor to London (Aerodrome) on Sunday the 17th day of September, 1911.

A copy of this Way Bill in duplicate to be sent by each aeroplane conveying Mail Bags.

Bags conveyed	Consecutive No. of bag.	Weight of Bag.
Windsor to London	# <u>2</u>	<u>21 lbs</u>

Signature of Despatching Officer [Signature]

Actual time of despatch from the Windsor Post Office 4-15 pm

Actual time of arrival at the Windsor Station landing Place 4-45

,, ,, ,, despatch from ,, ,, 5-20

Name of Aviator G. Hamel

Frama Machine

ON Friday, 6 May (National Stamp Day), the Museum put into operation its latest acquisition. This was a stamp vending machine manufactured by Frama AG of Lauperswil, Switzerland, the same as those in experimental use by the British Post Office for a year in 1984/5. A special design had been prepared for the occasion and visitors were able to produce their own specimen labels by inserting the appropriate coins. Apart from frequent stoppages and breakdowns the machine has proved a considerable attraction ever since.

History

This type of vending machine was invented by Frama AG and first put into service in August 1976 in four places in Switzerland. It enabled customers to obtain any value of label required and since it was positioned outside post offices the public could get the labels as and when they wanted them even if post office was closed. The British Post Office were interested in the experiment from the beginning but required the machine to be altered to meet British conditions and their different needs.

As finally delivered the machines differed in several ways from the standard Swiss machines. First of all the casing had been considerably strengthened to hinder vandals. More obviously, the number of standard values had been reduced to two, instead of three, and the top value was restricted to the first class letter rate. Coins accepted by the machine were those in circulation at the time the machines were ordered. These were ½p, 1p, 2p, 5p, 10p and 50p.

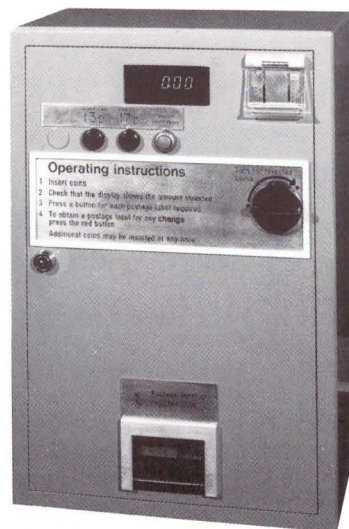
However, when the seven machines in red Post Office livery were delivered they were not immediately installed. There were discussions as to locations, problems with the acceptance of the principle of such vending machines, operational problems with the machinery itself and difficulties with the design of the label to be printed.

Experiments took place with clichés designed along the lines of the standard meter mark. Each bore the words POSTAGE PAID and GREAT BRITAIN, a crown and a distinguishing number. Practical difficulties immediately occurred because the crown was too small for the detail to print and so had to be enlarged. The number (1001 to 1006) was to distinguish each machine and so to isolate

A Frama vending machine was installed on 6 May 1988 and dispenses specimen labels. A report on its operation is given here together with the Museum's other holdings.

which machine might be causing any particular problem. It was later decided that this was not necessary and that the meter mark appearance of the design was not acceptable. Further designs were commissioned from Martin Newton based on a linear arrangement with the Queen's profile head. These, and other, problems caused considerable delays before the machines were finally put into commission. For instance, by the time the experiment was ready to start there were two extra coins in circulation (the 20p and £1) and the first and second class rates had changed at least three times.

The machines were installed in four locations, and not six as originally intended. These were: Cambridge, London Chief Office, Southampton (Shirley BO) and Windsor, the first day being 1 May 1984. They remained in operation for one year, being withdrawn on 30 April 1985. Philatelic sales of the labels, termed by The Post Office 'Royal Mail Postage Labels', continued for a



The NPM Frama machine.

further year. The labels sold over philatelic counters were produced on three separate printers held at the Stores Department in Hemel Hempstead.

Museum Artefacts

The machine in use in the Museum was transferred by Ron Garside from the Research Department in Swindon. It was not, in fact, one of the machines used in the public trial but rather a reserve machine used in experiments in the Research Centre. This was the only machine whose electronics were still operational. The others had all "died". Together with this reserve machine came the actual machine from Southampton which could be, and indeed was, used as a source of replacement parts.

During the year other parts and clichés were also transferred and a complete list of artefacts now held in the Museum is as follows:

Machines etc

- 1 reserve machine (in use)
- 1 machine ex Southampton
- 1 instruction wall plate
- 1 manual

Clichés

- 3 clichés with NPM Specimen die
- 6 normal stamp die clichés (unused)
- 4 normal stamp die clichés (used)
- 1 cliché ex Cambridge machine
- 1 cliché ex London Chief Office machine
- 1 cliché ex Southampton machine
- 1 cliché ex Windsor machine

Trial Clichés

- Original GREAT BRITAIN design clichés (5) numbered 1001, 1002, 1003, 1004, 1005 (but not 1006)
- 1 stamp die with Queen's head in outline

Essays

- Various trial labels including one from a mutilated die (still held in Swindon)

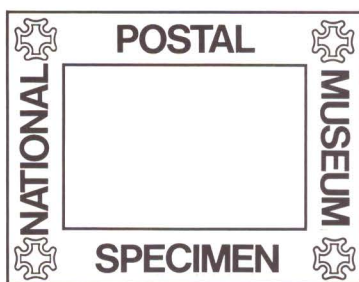
Use of the Machine

The machine in use in the Museum is in the state of the other machines at the end of their trial period. In other words, labels can be obtained in denominations of 1p to 17p, but no higher, and the standard two values are 13p and 17p, second and first class rates at the time. At the beginning of the public trial period the labels were from ½p to 16p but

this increased with postage rates to 17p on 28 August 1984. The ½p values were no longer obtainable after the end of December 1984 and this is true today, even though space exists for the printing of the ½.

The Museum labels were specially designed and bear the word SPECIMEN to emphasise that they have no postal validity and are merely souvenirs. There are two slots in the machine; one takes 1p and 2p coins, the other 5p, 10p and 50p. The standard buttons will produce labels of 13p or 17p denominations provided sufficient money has been inserted. A third red button will produce a label of whatever value has been inserted up to 17p. Should there be more than 17p inserted, then by pressing this button the visitor will receive a series of 17p labels plus a make-up value adding up to the total amount.

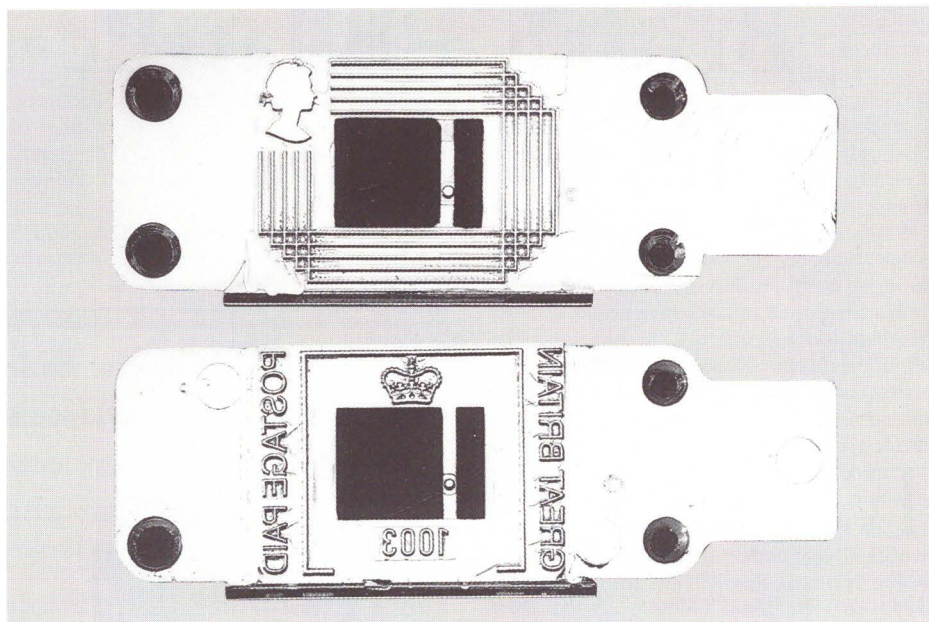
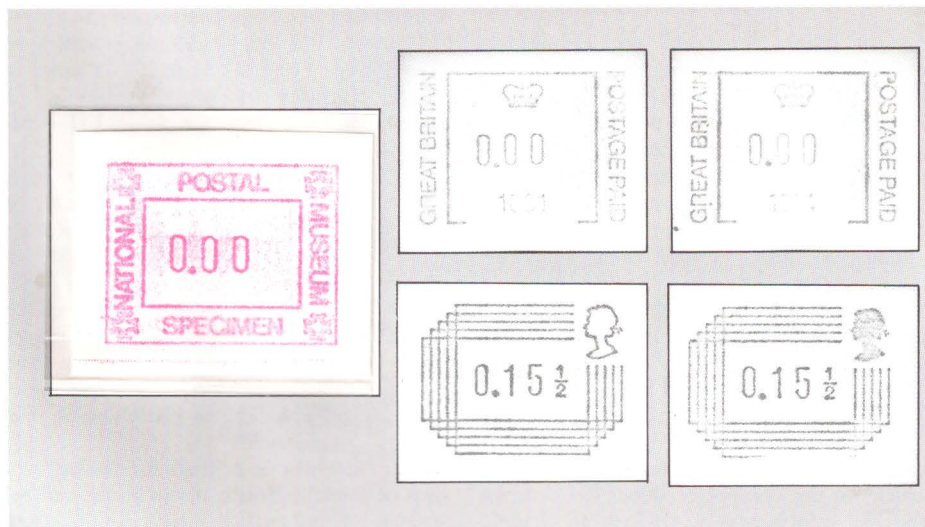
Artwork for the NPM label



Specimen Labels

The design of the label had to conform to the shape of the cliché. This basically means that it had to be a narrow rectangular border with the centre left free to print a varying denomination. It was decided to base the Museum design on the wording NATIONAL POSTAL MUSEUM SPECIMEN with the Maltese Cross (a symbol used often in Museum signs) in each of the four corners. The design was conceived by members of the Museum staff but the final artwork was done by the Illustration Studio of The Post Office. This was then converted into three identical clichés by Scriptomatic, the agents for Frama

Labels both as issued and trials



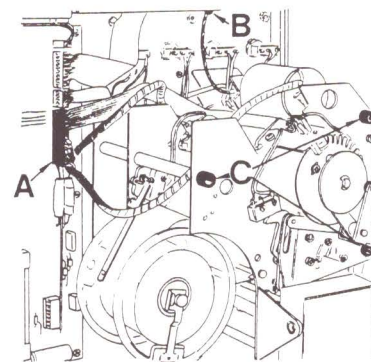
Clichés for the issued Royal Mail Postage Label and an earlier trial meter-style label.

in the United Kingdom.

With the machine came a number of rolls of paper to use in it. These were of a type supplied originally but not used in the public experiment. In the latter, phosphor-coated paper was used overprinted with a security design by Harrisons. The paper used in the Museum is coated but bears no security printing. Each roll can produce about 1,500 labels.

When the machine was installed the ink ribbon was new, as obviously was the cliché. This resulted in a magenta shade of printing that was fairly heavy. With use, however, the impression became fainter. A fault developed with the machine in August which could not be easily rectified and so the main parts of the machine from Southampton were installed in place of those that were faulty. Inadvertently, this also included the roll of paper in the Southampton machine. This was a test paper without coating and with PVA gum rather than PVA Dextrin. The replacement cliché was new and the ink a different shade (less red). Thus, for two

days on 9 and 10 August a different type of label was produced, doubtless of some interest to collectors of such things. When the roll ran out and was replaced on 11 August the old paper returned, though of course the ink remained in its slightly different shade. Three varieties therefore exist.



Interior workings from the instruction manual – showing the paper roll in the printing unit

Considerable interest has been shown in the machine and the labels it produces. Up until mid December 1988 about 20,000 labels had been dispensed. No exact figure can be given as numbers produced from one roll vary and the electronic memory is unreliable. A large number of rolls of paper (all of the one type) still remain but it is planned to have a new type prepared when they run out, probably with an NPM overall security printing. Interested collectors will be informed before the change takes place, though this will depend upon the continued functioning of the machine.

The Museum has received a large number of requests (including several from overseas) to supply labels by mail order. These, unfortunately, cannot be fulfilled as the use of the machine is intended for Museum visitors only. However, a specimen label is included in this report.

British Philatelic Bulletin

EVERY month over 50,000 collectors read the British Post Office's *British Philatelic Bulletin*. How many, one wonders, realise that this is edited and typeset at the National Postal Museum? In September, the *Bulletin* celebrated its 25th anniversary with a special issue and a reception at the Museum.

In March 1963, the Postmaster-General, Reginald Bevins, announced the setting up of a Philatelic Bureau at Post Office Headquarters in London. This was to provide not only a sales counter but a mail order service for collectors and dealers throughout the world. The Bureau opened for business on 1 May and very quickly recruited a considerable number of customers, especially for its first day cover service. The small staff soon realised the need for a magazine of some kind to supply information to their customers; the pressure of work processing orders made it difficult to answer all the letters asking for information. In September the first issue of the *Philatelic Bulletin* was published – a simple, duplicated production of 11 pages, designed “to bring collectors up to date with events since the Bureau was opened”. It was an immediate success and within a year there were some 3,000 subscribers.

With the first issue of Volume 3 (September 1965) the *Bulletin* changed to a printed magazine style and has remained the same basic shape ever since although it now has rather more pages and colour as opposed to black & white illustrations.

Douglas Muir, who had been working at the Museum, took over as Editor with effect from the January 1986 issue which had a new style and layout. In order to have greater control over the appearance and production of the magazine Douglas made a case for installing at the Museum a computer typesetting system and each edition of the *Bulletin* has been typeset “in house”.

Douglas was appointed to the new post of Curator Philately at the Museum with effect from 18 January, his post as *Bulletin* Editor being taken over by John Holman three weeks later. The first issue of the *Bulletin* under Mr Holman's editorship was dated April 1988.

Much of the information for the *Bulletin* is supplied by colleagues in Post Office departments, principally the Post Office Designs Section and Royal Mail Stamps and Philately, the unit responsible for the produc-

The British Philatelic Bulletin, the Post Office's magazine for stamp collectors, is produced at the National Postal Museum. Here the Editor, John Holman, reviews the journal's contents, its production and silver jubilee.



Frank Langfield and John Holman

tion of stamps for postal use and for all philatelic matters including the running of the British Philatelic Bureau and the National Postal Museum. Details of new issues of definitive, country and special stamps, as well as books, postal stationery and related items, are sent to the *Bulletin* Editor as soon as finalised so that he can compile articles giving collectors the information they require, ranging from such basic information as the values and the date of issue to specialist data such as the type of paper used, cylinder and plate numbers. The *Bulletin* aims to provide information for all levels of collector – from the novice to the specialist.

Once the Editor has “knocked the raw information into shape”, he can typeset the article on the computer. When it is known that the information is unlikely to change,

the setting can be transmitted over the telephone system to the main office of the Typeshare system and film produced that will be used to print the magazine. The film is delivered to the Museum and held, in protective tubes, until the copy is ready to pass to the printer. However, not all information is so certain not to alter, in which case the setting will not be transmitted immediately but held in the computer file and updated and amended as necessary. This quite frequently happens with articles about forthcoming issues of definitive stamps as the stamps are often not printed when the initial information is supplied and the details need amending once the finished stamps are examined. On occasions, the stamps are not printed until almost the moment the *Bulletin* goes to press and arrangements have to be made to get the information published as a stop press announcement or even as a late insert. Both collectors and dealers rely on the *Bulletin* for accurate information and every effort is made to supply this in advance of the each new issue of stamps.

In addition to the features on forthcoming issues, the *Bulletin* contains articles on past issues, on postal history and thematic collecting written by collectors and philatelic journalists outside the Post Office. Amongst the most regular and best known are Don Staddon, L F Newbery, Kenneth F Chapman, Barbara Last and Francis Kennedy. The annual index is compiled by Dr Jean Alexander, a noted collector of British stamps and a member of the Post Office Stamp Advisory Committee.

During 1988, Mr Staddon has written on the ‘Machin Head on Stamps’ – a series of specialist articles detailing the variations in the Machin portrait used since 1967. Mr Staddon had previously written nine articles on ‘The Genesis of the Machin Design’ published in the *Bulletin* between April 1986 and September 1987. The Machin stamps remain a major area of study for serious collectors, a fact recognised by both the *Bulletin* and the Museum. Much research has been undertaken by Museum staff, culminating in the Machin exhibition which ran from September 1987 to March 1988 and about which details are given elsewhere in this report.

Mr Newbery is perhaps the leading student of modern British stamp books and has written articles on this subject for 35 years.

During 1988 he provided the *Bulletin* with detailed accounts of the £5 **Financial Times** book and a review of books issued from October 1986 to October 1987. Further articles are in preparation.

A number of Post Office staff have contributed articles during the year. Barry Robinson, PO Design Adviser, wrote on 'Design Matters' – looking behind the scenes at the selection and printing of special stamps. The articles in this series will continue into 1989. David Dale, Manager Definitive Stamps, has written about changes to the definitive series and in particular on the PO policy as regards window books and Greetings stamps. A similar article on the renewed interest in stamp books was published in the May issue, penned by Ken Walker, the then Consumer Marketing Manager of Royal Mail Letters. This article was referred to, and praised by, writers in other philatelic magazines.

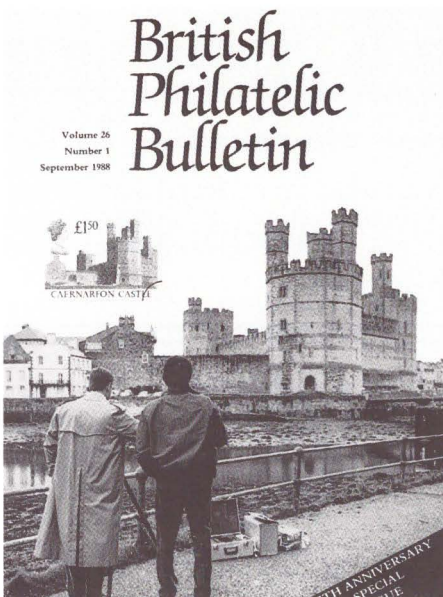
Three members of the NPM staff wrote articles based on their researches: Douglas N Muir on the 1924/5 Wembley Exhibition issue and on 'Museum Excavations' – a look at some of the unadopted designs for British special stamps of the 1960s recently unearthed amongst the "material ... stored in basements and safes, unlooked at for many years". The article also reported the discovery of many original photographs as recorded elsewhere.

Dr Jack Goodwin contributed a useful postal history article 'Cyprus – the British Connection' which was published in the April issue, coinciding with the exhibition of that title held in the Museum. Tony Gammons submitted two articles, one on the 'Proposed Anglo-French Postage Stamp' of 1940, the other on 'The World of the GPO Poster Advisory Group' in the 1930s.

The *Bulletin* gives advance information about all Museum exhibitions and has during 1988 published accounts of the Railways, Cyprus, 'How a Stamp is Made' and Olympic exhibitions. The latter was staged in conjunction with the Society of Olympic Collectors, one of the officials of which, Bob Wilcock, wrote three articles dealing with the philatelic aspects of the Winter Olympics and the 1908 and 1948 Games held at the White City and Wembley.

The first of a regular monthly competition was included in the September issue. Readers were asked to answer a number of questions about British stamps, the answers to which could be found in the *Bulletin*. Nearly 900 entries were received and the number has increased for each successive competition. The winner of the September competition was sent the 1963 (plain and phosphor) and 1988 special stamp issues.

To commemorate the *Bulletin's* 25th anniversary the September issue was increased from 24 to 40 pages and featured on the front cover The Duke of York and Gene Nocon at Caernarfon Castle taking the photograph used on the £1.50 high value



stamp. Photographs of the Duke at Carrickfergus, Edinburgh and Windsor were reproduced inside the magazine and the photographs as used on the stamps were printed as a centre-spread. Included in this anniversary issue was a non-postal miniature sheet, designed by Clive Abbott and printed by Harrisons in three stamp-printing processes – photogravure, offset-litho and letterpress. The design comprised a portrait of Sir Rowland Hill and the artwork for this sheet was displayed at the 25th anniversary reception held at the Museum on 16 September.

The reception proved a successful and enjoyable occasion for the 60 or so invited guests – contributors, representatives from the printers, the philatelic press, staff from various PO departments and philatelists. A 25th birthday cake reproducing the front cover of the September issue was cut by the present Editor together with Frank Langfield, the founder Editor back in 1963. John Holman in welcoming the guests spoke of the growth of the *Bulletin* from its news-sheet beginnings in 1963 to its present colour magazine format. He thanked his predecessors and the many people involved in the production and design of the magazine, principally Paul Burnett of the PO Design Division, Angus Mathieson, freelance designer and David Jardine of Moore & Matthes, printers. Ken Chapman, doyen of philatelic magazine editors, recalled the early days of the *Bulletin* and spoke highly of its role in promoting and recording British stamps. Keith Fisher, General Manager of Royal Mail Stamps & Philately, said the Post Office was proud of its magazine and praised the early work of Frank Langfield and his colleagues. He was sure the *Bulletin* would continue to maintain its high standard in the future.

In addition to the enlarged September issue and the Rowland Hill miniature sheet, the 25th anniversary was also commemorated by the use of a special postmark slogan at the London East Central District Office throughout September. The slogan was worded 'British Philatelic Bulletin 1963–1988 25th Anniversary' set within a simulated perforations border. (A similar slogan was used in 1983 to mark the *Bulletin's* 20th anniversary.) Guests at the anniversary reception were given two souvenir covers, each reproducing the front cover of the September *Bulletin*, one bearing a stamp cancelled with the anniversary slogan, the other had the stamp franked by the Museum's Maltese Cross handstamp (both 16 September date).

Postmark Bulletin

In the early days the *Philatelic Bulletin* contained information about forthcoming special handstamps and postmark slogans. Gradually, this information came to occupy a large section of the *Bulletin* and, being a monthly, it was not always possible to give adequate advance notice. Thus in 1971 the *Postmark Bulletin* was introduced, published fortnightly. Until June 1988 the *Postmark Bulletin* was compiled at the British Philatelic Bureau but is now edited by John Holman at the Museum. Information on new postmarks is submitted to the Museum by the Special Postmark Duties at the 64 Letter District Offices throughout the country. At the Museum the information is put into the standard format and a master copy typed. This is sent to Royal Mail Engineering in Edinburgh for printing and is despatched to subscribers on alternate Mondays from the British Philatelic Bureau. Whenever possible the new postmarks are illustrated. Samples of most postmarks are obtained for the Museum collections.




Typesetting equipment for the *Bulletin*

Publications

THE National Postal Museum has published various books and booklets in the past but none appeared during 1988. Some four sets of postcards were issued, some in connection with exhibitions or stamp issues, others illustrating material from the Museum's collections. These are all detailed below.


Other publications included a new information leaflet about the Museum and its collections. This gives brief details about Museum facilities and the extent and range of material held.



Royal Mail

National Postal Museum

POSTAGE



A ONE PENNY A

London Chief Post Office
(near St Paul's Cathedral)
King Edward Building
King Edward Street
London EC1A 1LP
Telephone 01-239-5420

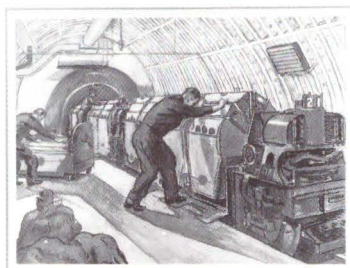
Open:
Monday to Thursday 9.30 am to 4.30 pm
Friday 9.30 am to 4.00 pm
Admission Free

Factsheets were also produced for each of the main exhibitions held in the Museum. These were printed "in-house" and were made available free to visitors. There were also factsheets about several philatelic societies, especially those who had collaborated with the Museum in mounting displays.

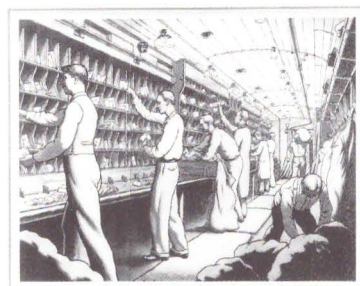
New Museum publications have mainly been postcards, sometimes with associated postmarks. A new information leaflet was also produced and various factsheets about exhibitions.



88/1 *Loading Mail on the Post Office Railway* poster by Archibald Ziegler ARCA, commissioned by the Post Office Poster Advisory Group, c. 1938 (from the Post Office Archives Poster Artwork Collection)



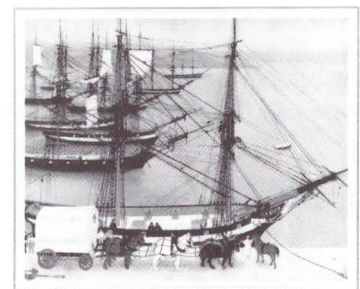
88/2 *The Interior of a Travelling Post Office* poster by George Charlton NEAC, commissioned by the Post Office Poster Advisory Group, c. 1935 (from the Post Office Archives Poster Artwork Collection)

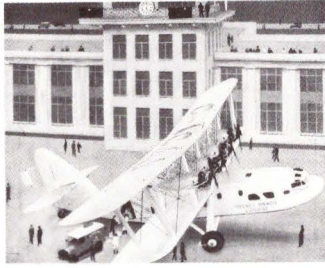


88/3 *Loading Mails at Euston Station* poster by Grace Golden ARCA, commissioned by the Post Office Poster Advisory Group, c. 1938 (from the Post Office Archives Poster Artwork Collection)

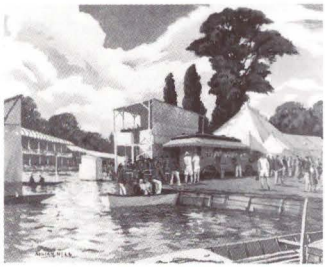


88/4 *Mails for the Packets arriving at Falmouth (1833)* poster by H S Williamson, Principal of the Chelsea School of Art, commissioned by the Post Office Poster Advisory Group, 1934 (from the Post Office Poster Artwork Collection)

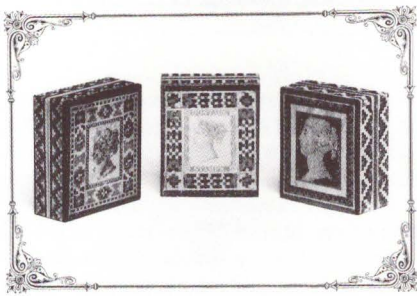




88/5 *Loading the Mails for the Empire, Croydon 1934*, poster by H S Williamson, Principal of the Chelsea School of Art, commissioned by the Post Office Poster Advisory Group, 1934 (from the Post Office Poster Artwork Collection)



88/6 *Mobile Post Office at Henley Royal Regatta c 1937*, poster by Adrian Hill RBA (from the Post Office Archives Poster Artwork Collection)



88/7 Tunbridge Ware stamp boxes of the 1860s - 1870s. Designs made from tiny pieces of wood, the centre box with a glazed stamp replica (height 40 mm).



88/8 Ormolu hexagonal stamp box compendium, c. 1880. Six segmented spurs open to reveal stamp compartments and the hinged dome top covers an ink well. (height 135mm).



88/9 Silver cigarette case in envelope form (hallmarked London 1881). This bears an enamel replica of Queen Victoria 1d lilac stamp, postmarks and address added in 1885 (width 100 mm).

88/10 Stage 3 of J A C Harrison's Downey head die of King George V, 1911.



88/11 A photograph of King George VI by Bertram Park, the source of Dulac's drawn portrait used on definitives.



88/12 A photograph of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth by Dorothy Wilding, the source of Dulac's drawn portraits used on the 1937 Coronation stamp.

NPM Postcard Print Figures 1985

- 8 Jan **Bicentenary of The Times** (SS29)
15,000
- 22 Jan **Great Western Poster of Lands End c 1904** (SS30)
15,000
- 2 May **GB Overprints Exhibition - Map of the Levant Area in 1900** (SS31A)
15,000
- Map of the Persian Gulf Area in 1965** (SS31B)
15,000
- 18 June **Ralph Vaughan Williams 1872/1958** (SS32)
15,000
- Safety at Sea Exhibition - Ninth International Lifeboat Conference** (SS33)
15,000
- 7 Oct **Film Festival** (SS34)
15,000
- 14 Oct **R M Phillips new presentation** (SS35)
15,000

1986

- 14 Jan **Motor Cars** (SS36)
15,000
- 21 April **Queen's Birthday - Wilding portrait** (SS37)
20,000
- 6 May **Anglo-French Exhibition** (SS38)
15,000
- 20 May **Nature Conservation** (SS39A/B)
10,000 (of each)
- 23 June **India UK Mails** (SS40)*
12,000
- 16 Sept **Royal Air Force Exhibition** (SS41)
11,000
- 14 Oct **BPE - Von Angeli portrait of Queen Victoria***
20,000

1987

- 6 Jan **Queen Victoria "Jubilee" Exhibition** (87/1-3)*
16,000 (of each)
- 6 May **Monarchs Heads** (87/4-6)*
15,000 (of each)
- 8 Sept **Pillar Boxes** (87/7-9)*
7 & 9 - 16,800; 8 - 40,000

1988

- 11 Jan **Travelling Post Office** (88/1-3)*
12,500 (of each)
- 6 May **Transport and Communications** (88/4-6)*
18,000 (of each)
- 8 Aug **Stamp Boxes** (88/7-9)*
10,000 (of each)
- 7 Nov **Monarchs Heads** (88/10-12)*
10,000 (of each)

*Still on sale

The Year Ahead

THE year ahead, 1989, will be a period of considerable effort in the National Postal Museum. Work on the collections will continue as before but there will be a lot of extra involvement preparing for the international exhibition at Alexandra Palace in 1990. This will mark the 150th anniversary of the Penny Black and the opportunity is being taken to reassess the Museum's collection of related material. As a result of this, displays throughout the year will be limited, other than the major exhibition on Transatlantic and Polar mail.

Research will mainly concentrate on the history of the Penny Black and the situation and events which gave rise to it. Various untapped sources will be explored and a book will be published in 1990 in time for the exhibition.

Plans for the international exhibition are not finalised at the time of writing but the National Postal Museum, in collaboration with the Royal Collection and the British Library, will be devising a display at the exhibition on the Penny Black story with very important material on show.

During the latter half of 1989 and into 1990 the Museum will be issuing sets of cards publicising Stamp World London 90 with portraits of appropriate postal history personalities.

Exhibitions

The main exhibition in the Museum will be on Transatlantic and Polar mail. Entitled "The Atlantic Ocean", it will open on 14 February and run for the rest of the year. It marks the 300th anniversary of the Falmouth packet but is not restricted to the North Atlantic. The display opens with the Portuguese sailors who made voyages of discovery to the Atlantic islands and down the west coast of Africa, and the voyages of Columbus. Also featured are the exploration and colonisation of the Americas together with the efforts made to find a North West Passage to China and the exploration of the polar regions.

The Antarctic story begins with the first recorded crossing of the Antarctic Circle by Captain Cook in 1773 and ends with the British Graham Land Expedition of 1934-7. The Arctic part of the exhibition includes the voyages of Sir John Franklin, Sir James Clark Ross and Captain George Nares.

In 1990 the international stamp exhibition Stamp World London 90 takes place and a lot of work in the Museum in 1989 will be in preparation for this.

Other displays during the year will include the award-winning collections of classical Turkey and the postal history of Istanbul of Otto Hornung which will be on show during March and April. In May this will be followed by a display of Post Office uniforms which will remain (with some variations) for the rest of the year.

Postcards

There will be sets of postcards for the Transatlantic exhibition and for the uniform display. At the same time as the May issue of cards there will be a card for the British Philatelic Federation Congress being held in Brighton which will feature photographs of the Brighton "Transorma", the first successful letter sorting machine installed in the United Kingdom. Subsequent cards will be

The Association of Friends of the National Postal Museum was formed in 1985. Here the Secretary, Ray Pottle, reports on their year.

1988 was a good year for the Friends of the National Postal Museum – a year which saw the best annual programme to date in the Friends' existence. We had a superb Saturday meeting on the British Travelling Post Office. Two Wilsons, Nigel from the London TPO Section and Harold collector and historian, gave talks and displays. Peter Johnson who travels on TPOs armed with camera and who spends hours in his quest for facts also gave a talk.

There was a delightful evening with John Harley, the Archivist of Harrison and Sons

on the postal history personality theme for Stamp World London 90.

Other Developments

Perhaps the most important development in 1989 will be the introduction of computers to the Museum. These will be used, amongst other things, to catalogue all the Museum's holdings and initially will involve a lot of training and trial efforts. Over a period of years, however, this should enable the Museum to provide a much better service to researchers and documentation will be much enhanced.

Another improvement will be the installation of a "reader-printer" for the microfilms which have been made of all the De La Rue records. These will no longer be available in the original for conservation reasons but the "reader-printer" will enable researchers to read all the records and have photostatic copies of any section that they require. This will result in the books being much better preserved.

Efforts will, of course, continue to improve all aspects of the collections in terms of content, research and presentation and all opportunities will be grasped to achieve this.

Limited, printers, whose connections with the British Post Office go back to the 1830s. The hare, the trade mark used on all their sheets of stamps, is part of a 16th century pun on the name Harrison – the hare shown in a sheaf of rye beneath a sun: Har – ri – sun!

Another evening the stamp designer Jeffery Matthews gave a charming talk illustrated by slides. His prolific work goes back to the 1965 United Nations 20th anniversary issue but he has specialised in Royal issues and heraldry. His most recent work has been the new colours for the Machin definitives.

Following the November AGM Francesca Rapkin of the Society of Olympic Collectors, supported by Sandy Duncan of the British Olympic Association, explained the display mounted by them in the Museum.

Museum postcards are of course free to Friends and we also had two excellent issues of *Cross Post* which provides the link with overseas Friends and keeps them in touch with proceedings here.

Why not join us for 1989 as we have more "goodies" on the way?

