

National Postal Museum

The Philatelic Year 1990



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Introduction

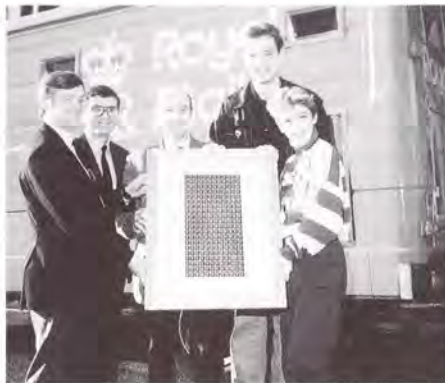
THE year 1990 was the year of the Penny Black. Introduced 150 years ago in May 1840, this, the first adhesive postage stamp, quickly became the symbol of Uniform Penny Postage, the simplified pricing system it represented. All of us who use the Post Office today should be thankful for the efforts of Sir Rowland Hill and his collaborators all those years ago who saw the need to sweep away the arcane rules, procedures and systems of an over-bureaucratic organisation so that a new, modern postal service could evolve that would serve all the nation and not just those who could afford to pay. One wonders what Sir Rowland would have thought of the 13,000,000,000 pieces of mail a year now handled by the Post Office or of the hundreds of stamp issues that are made every year all over the world.

1990 was also the year of one of the best, if not *the* best, stamp exhibition ever organised - Stamp World London 90, which took place at Alexandra Palace from 3 to 13 May. The weather was perfect, the location delightful and the displays superb. It was not surprising that over 90,000 people streamed through the doors. It will be a hard act to follow and was a marvellous boost for philately.

During the year, the 150th anniversary of Uniform Penny Postage and the introduction of adhesive postage stamps was celebrated in many ways by the Post Office and others. We at the National Postal Museum played our part to the full. It was, in fact, a very busy year.

Back in January, the unique proof sheet of Penny Blacks had been taken under stringent security to the BBC television studios to appear 'live' on the Blue Peter programme. At the same time work was progressing on the Court of Honour display for Stamp World London 90 and the Museum's own Postal Reform exhibition. The former was to be a joint display featuring treasures from the NPM, the Royal Philatelic Collection and the British Library and was to be specially designed to tell the story of the development of postage stamps and subsequent philatelic landmarks. This was a unique approach to a Court of Honour display at an international philatelic exhibition, and one which, in the event, attracted much acclaim. The display at the NPM was entitled Postal Reform and the

Stan Goron, Manager of the National Postal Museum, introduces the report on the year 1990 in the National Postal Museum, London.



At 'Blue Peter': Terry Broun, Stan Goron, and Michael Cooke, John Leslie and Yvette Fielding from the programme

Penny Black and opened in April. It, too, told the story of Postal Reform and traced the development of the first adhesive postage stamps, and in particular, the comparatively neglected Mulready stationery. This was probably the most important display the Museum had ever mounted. To do it justice, the showcases in the ground-floor and mezzanine galleries were greatly refurbished, new fibre-optic lighting was installed and the whole display specially designed. This refurbishment will stand us in good stead for future exhibitions. The Postal Reform exhibition was complemented in the main gallery by a display of material from the Phillips collection showing how the Penny Black and, equally important, the Twopenny Blue were used. All this is described in greater detail elsewhere in this report.

The celebrations, however, did not end there. 1990 was also an important year for New Zealand: it was the 150th anniversary of the signing of the treaty of Waitangi, of the setting up of the New Zealand Post Office and the founding of both Auckland and Wellington. To mark these events, the country's first international philatelic exhibition held under the aegis of the Fédération Inter-

nationale de Philatélie (FIP) was held in Auckland between 24 August and 2 September. Included in the Court of Honour there were the four registration sheets of Penny Blacks, Twopenny Blues and Penny Reds that had been shown at Alexandra Palace three months earlier. This was the first time any of these sheets had been shown outside Europe. New Zealand 1990 was a delightful exhibition, which even the wettest winter for many a year could not dampen.

The celebrations for the Penny Black lasted a year. Of much greater permanence will be Douglas Muir's fine new book entitled *Postal Reform & the Penny Black*. Beautifully designed and produced it was the result of months of fundamental research in various archives that threw up much new information. As such it is an essential reference work for all interested in the subject.

In September we were privileged to welcome to the Museum Sir William Heselting, who was retiring as Private Secretary to Her Majesty the Queen after many years' service. During the visit, Sir Bryan Nicholson, Chairman of the Post Office, presented Sir William with the gold Post Office Penny Black anniversary medal for the Royal Collection.

To end with, I would once again like to pay tribute to all my colleagues at the Museum for all their efforts during the year. This was a particularly eventful year but one that was also highly successful. The only sad point was the departure towards the end of the year of Pat Burton, the Museum secretary to take up a post elsewhere in Royal Mail Stamps. We wish her every success in her new job.



Pat Burton

Work in Progress

IN the first half of 1990 all attention was focused on the major exhibitions taking place from May. However, the day-to-day tasks of the Museum still had to be completed and work continued on the collections both to expand them and keep them up to date.

Display of British Stamps

Work on the permanent reference display of British stamps on show in the main gallery was completed during 1990 with the inclusion of the years 1902-1910. It is now possible to view virtually all officially issued British postage stamps in the one place - the Victorian ones in the R M Phillips collection and all subsequent stamps in the reference display. This is kept up to date with each new issue, often with the stamps being put on show before they have actually been issued over Post Office counters.

Part of the Phillips collection was remounted on conservation paper to ensure preservation and to improve legibility.

Postmarks, Cards and Covers

The Museum's collection of modern postmarks was kept up to date. Every special handstamp used by the Royal Mail (as listed in the *British Postmark Bulletin*) was added to the collection together with a selection of slogan postmarks submitted by the Letter District Offices. Also added were Post Office and Royal Mail commemorative covers used in association with special postmarks.

A start was made to forming a collection of modern surcharge markings, and any other instructional markings as used on mail.

Similarly, work was begun on accumulating modern Post Office markings in connection with the various Post Office businesses.

A complete collection of British Post Office Exhibition Cards from 1987 to date was mounted. This included the various exhibition cachets and cancellations.

Also a start was made to form a collection of Post Office Christmas cards. These are mostly modern but one goes back to 1889.

Penny Black Anniversary Collection

During 1990 efforts were made to acquire philatelic material associated with the 150th anniversary of the Penny Black and Twopenny Blue. This material comprises stamps, postmarks, souvenir covers and

As usual this section covers the work that continues over a long period of time such as accessing, listing, cataloguing, mounting, conservation and computerisation.

postcards and even a commemorative balloon. A particularly interesting item is a souvenir cover carried on the Royal Mail 'First Post' anniversary train from London to Kidderminster (birthplace of Sir Rowland Hill) and signed by three of the great man's descendants - Rowland G. P. Hill, Dr David Hill and Stephen Hill. Also included are invitations and souvenir covers given to guests at the anniversary banquet held at the Café Royal and relevant souvenirs from Stamp World London 90 and the international stamp exhibition held later in Auckland, New Zealand.

U.P.U. Display

The U.P.U. display of stamps of the world changed little during the year, but some progress was made in mounting previously unmounted material on conservation paper. Stamps of selected popular countries have been mounted up to date and some of these have served for special exhibits at home and abroad.

Particular help was given by some of the Association of Friends of the National Postal Museum in mounting these and other stamps - Len Newbery assisted with the U.P.U. collection and Don Staddon with the modern Machin collection. Other help was also given with proof-reading of inventories.

Thematics

Several subjects were added to the thematic display during the year and it now fills a full bank of frames. It is composed to as large an extent as possible of Great Britain material under the following headings: Roses, Safety at Sea, Letter Boxes, Charles Dickens, British Flowers, British Wildlife, British Birds, British Wild Flowers, British Butterflies, Domestic Cats, Tigers & Lions, Royal Wedding and Nineteenth Century Greetings Cards.

Letter Boxes

A large number of pillar and wall boxes

received treatment during the year. Mostly, this involved blasting and prime painting but sometimes the base was also cut and a plate fitted so that the boxes would not overbalance. When the boxes returned to the Museum they were then repainted. Some 30 wall boxes were treated together with three lamp boxes and over 10 pillar boxes.

Paper Conservation

Catherine Rickman, the National Postal Museum's conservator, here describes problems of exhibition and display as exemplified during 1990.

For the last two years my contribution to *The Philatelic Year* has focused on conservation problems and their remedial treatments. I have explained what can happen to paper, especially philatelic material, when it is stored in contact with unsuitable materials or is handled without proper safeguards and I have described the inherently self-destructive elements of some stamps and covers. In doing so, I have tried to give you an idea of the ways in which an informed collector or curator can minimise damage to their collection, and I have outlined some of the specialist treatments which may be used by a conservator to stabilise, or even to reverse, damaging processes. This year I want to consider the aspects of philatelic conservation which have helped to make 1990 a year of special challenges and achievements for the Museum: exhibition and display.

A set of ambitious displays, both at the Museum and at Alexandra Palace, celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Penny Black, had been meticulously planned to take account of the time needed to prepare exhibits (see *The Philatelic Year 1989*, pages 21 to 23). Curators at the National Postal Museum, unlike many exhibition organisers, are aware that conservation treatments cannot be rushed. However, the conservator's job doesn't end when the works selected for the exhibition have been cleaned and repaired. Mounting methods and materials, lighting, environmental conditions and transport can all have potentially harmful effects on philatelic items and ideally should be subject to conservation control.

In the wider fields of historical artefact and fine art conservation, there are conservators who specialise entirely in ex-

hibition consultancy, monitoring the condition of displays and supervising transport and packing. Their role is a protective one, increasingly a requirement of insurance policies or inter-museum loan agreements. Furthermore, the exhibitions conservator is available to minimise damage with skilled attention in the event of a mishap, like a leaking pipe, vandalism, or a picture which slips in its frame. Such first aid work may never be necessary at the National Postal Museum, but monitoring display conditions, especially lighting, remains an important part of my job.

The 1990 Penny Black display was designed for the Museum to a high standard, using custom made acid-free board mounts in secure cases fitted with fibre optic lighting. This kind of lighting is useful in museum display, where it can be used to provide comparatively bright, yet controllable illumination close to an object. Unlike conventional incandescent lighting (e.g. spotlights) the fibre optic system does not heat up show cases, because the light source is in a control box remote from the exhibits.

For small exhibits like stamps, fibre optic lighting is ideal. However, it is expensive and gives rather uneven illumination, so, for the more routine display of stamps, on an open display stand at Stamp World London 90 for example, it may not be appropriate. But, even there, the control of lighting is relevant to the preservation of philatelic material. Strong illumination, especially from daylight and unfiltered fluorescent tubes, can rapidly fade the dyes which may have been used in stamp printing inks (see *The Philatelic Year 1988*, pages 6 & 7) and will certainly damage the paper itself. Fortunately, high energy UV wavelengths can be filtered out of artificial and daylight with VE grade Perspex acrylic sheet. For display in uncontrolled conditions,

glazing with VE Perspex is therefore a good option, but it is always better to limit the light at source.

The happy tradition of keeping stamps in albums, rather than framed up on the wall, provides natural protection from light, but the damage done in a short period of exhibition may undo years of preservation. Times have changed since Ruskin wrote of the Turner watercolours exhibited at Manchester's great 1857, Crystal Palace-type *Art Treasures* exhibition "There is not one of them that is not a mere wreck of what it was", they "were virtually destroyed in that single summer by exposure to damp and sunlight ... The wonder was, under the treatment the drawings received at Manchester, that anything but soot stains on blank paper survived at all". Yet his words strike a chord today when one visits a big trade fair in London's remaining "crystal palace".

Touring the stands at Alexandra Palace I was struck not only by the overwhelming variety of stamps on open display (the Museum's exhibition was in a specially enclosed and air-conditioned area), but by the huge choice of albums and stamp mounts available to the collector. Yet I noticed not one supplier promoting acid-free or conservation quality album pages. At a comparable trade fair in the fine art world there could well be at least half a dozen companies with conservation materials on their stand, and virtually all dealers would have mounted their wares in conservation board. What is a stamp if not a very small and special work of art? So why are standards already widely accepted in the art world taking so long to filter through to philately. Even a conservation quality alternative to the old glassine hinge is still beyond suppliers, as far as I know.

The workers: (left to right) Terry Brown, Harry Reeves, Mehmet Ali, Frank O'Neill, Carole Campbell, Tony Gammons, Henry Berry, Douglas Muir, Lionel Jones, John Holman and David Paton



I anticipate that the next few years will see a flood of conservation materials for philatelists on to the market, a change which will be brought about by the demands of increasingly well-informed collectors and museum curators following the standards set by the National Postal Museum and others like it.

For further information on paper conservation and paper conservators contact:

The Secretary
The Institute of Paper Conservation
Leigh Lodge
Leigh
Worcester
WR6 5LB
Tel. 0886 32323

The Information Officer
The Conservation Unit
Museums and Galleries Commission
7 St. James's Square
London
SW1Y 4JU
Tel. 071 839 9340

1990 Postcard Print Figures

- 10 Jan **Maxicard (MX/1)***
48,000
- 10 Jan **Postal Personalities 3 (SWL90/7-9)*** 15,000
- 3 May **Postal Personalities 4 (SWL90/10-12)*** 15,000
- 3 May **SWL90 sheet (90/1)*** 20,000
- 11 Sept **Postal Reform and the Penny Black (90/2-5)***
10,000 (sets)
- 13 Nov **Yesteryear (YY/1-4)***
10,000 (sets)
- 17 Dec **Penny Black (reprint - 89/7)***
15,000

* still on sale

Stamp World London 90

FOR the international stamp exhibition Stamp World London 90, held at Alexandra Palace from 3 to 13 May the National Postal Museum prepared a great deal in the way of material and exhibits. Combined with Post Office Archives it had a stand in the East Hall which also included a small exhibition of material previously never seen. The Museum also participated in the Court of Honour contributing some of the greatest philatelic rarities in the world. This is a chronicle of the NPM activities together with a report from Post Office Archives on what they did.

All Museum staff, in one area or another, worked hard towards the success of the exhibition or manned the stand during opening hours. Work began about two years before the exhibition opened and the striking designs of the stand and its exhibitions, and the Court of Honour (as indeed the main Royal Mail stand), were created by the small, overworked team at H & P Design, namely: Nick Coupland, Win Rogers, Mike Higgs, Carole Theobald & William Redfern. They also spent many hours, day and night, supervising the erecting of the stands and assisting with the mounting of the material.

The Museum and Archives displays were intended to show the wealth of material that both contain and at the same time to show how the two organisations differ and yet interact. The Court of Honour was a joint effort between the Museum, the British

The National Postal Museum/Post Office Archives stand



The international stamp exhibition at Alexandra Palace dominated 1990 and all activities. Work for it by the Museum and Post Office Archives is described here in three sections.



H & P Design Ltd: Win, Carole, William, Nick and Mike

Library and the Royal Collection, all combining to tell the story of the advent of the Penny Black and the various celebrations of this down the years.

Tony Gammons, the Museum's Exhibitions Officer, here reports on the research behind the two main Museum displays at Stamp World London 90.

Part of the National Postal Museum's contribution to Stamp World London 90 was to be a display entitled "Stamps That Never Were". This would feature issues that would

have gone through the design process up to, in some cases, final essay stage but were never actually put on sale to the public. The display was also to show the importance of using primary source research material from Post Office Archives in order to get the "true story". (It never ceases to amaze how few philatelists and postal historians make use of the Archives when writing up their material.) In the event the display had to be cut down to fit on the Museum/Archives stand and this article deals with the two "issues" shown.

The major part of the display dealt with the so-called "War Emergency" stamps of 1939-43. I use the words "so-called" because although most of the development work took place between those dates their origin dates back to 1936/7. At that time, A.G. Tydeman, Controller of Post Office Stores, was questioning all contractors as to the fire precautions taken at their works. Quite what prompted this exercise is not clear but I wonder if it could have something to do with the burning down of that seemingly indestructible building - the Crystal Palace.

At the end of 1936 Tydeman asked D.P.Dell, a senior Staff Officer in the Stores Department, to investigate the arrangements regarding the safety of the negatives, cylinders and positives at Messrs Harrison and Sons. In March 1937 Dell reported as follows:

"... the negatives and positives are stored in one room and the cylinders in another. Both rooms are off the main corridor of the Post Office portion of the Factory and are no more secure against fire than the paper, the machinery or the printed stock."

In fact, the Post Office had only supplied one steel cabinet to house the negatives and positives. By 1937 this cabinet could only hold about a quarter of the material, the rest being stored on open wooden racking. Dell considered that even the material in the cabinet was not safe from fire damage as the metal would become so hot in a fire that the contents, especially the glass negatives, would be destroyed.

When stamps had been printed by the letterpress process reserve printing plates were held at either the Royal Mint or Somerset House. The Mint also held the

master plates and dies from which new working plates could be easily produced at short notice. In the event of serious damage to the printing plant there would be little delay in re-starting production as there were many other printers who could take over in an emergency.

With the change to the photogravure method of printing stamps in the early 1930s the situation changed entirely. As Dell pointed out the Post Office had "all its printing eggs in one basket". He was instructed to make a more detailed enquiry into the situation and find out how long it would take Harrison to restart production after a fire or similar disaster. In September Dell wrote to W.H. Rhodes of Harrison's asking for a comprehensive report. Dell's worst fears were confirmed: it could be as long as six to eight months before printing could resume if the press was damaged. Other processes could take almost as long to replace. As Post Office Stores only kept a Postmasters' stock of two months' supply the situation was clearly unacceptable. Tydeman decided on a two-part solution: firstly to have duplicate positives stored at Somerset House, or other safe store; and secondly to revert to letterpress printing as a safeguard to fall back on and he arranged with the Royal Mint for master dies and plates to be produced for current values up to 2½d.

The current photogravure stamp was not suitable for reproduction by letterpress but the new postcard stamp design would be acceptable as an emergency measure. Postcards were, of course, printed by letterpress anyway. Although the design did not include the word "Revenue" the Post Office was of the opinion that as other issues had omitted the word the new stamp should be acceptable. The Postal Services Department, in a memorandum, agreed with the proposals with the proviso that a 6d value be added to the ½d to 2½d values already suggested by the Stores Department.

One of the first problems to face Dell was that of size. The postcard stamp was larger than its perforated counterpart (0.9" by 0.75" as against 0.885" by 0.705"). This meant that if the postcard stamp were to be reproduced full size there would be no room for the

perforations. Harrison's were of the opinion that as the emergency stamps might have to be printed on inferior machinery by inexperienced operators it was important to have the inter-stamp gutters as large as possible. After a considerable amount of discussion the Vice Controller of Post Office Stores, R. Fanshawe, wrote to Harrison's giving the proposed measurements. The stamps were to be 0.885" down by 0.7125" across. This would give a horizontal gutter of 0.095" and a vertical one of 0.0875". These sizes would produce a printing plate similar in size to those of George V, i.e. 20.15" x 10.55".

Dell instructed the Mint to proceed with engraving the ½d die. The die was to be based on the postal stationery die, Q19 [Fig. 1]. It was suggested that Eric Gill should be asked to produce drawings for the 6d and 2½d values, these being the two values which could give most problems in terms of "design space". In the event the



Fig. 1 the postal stationery die

artists at the Mint produced satisfactory drawings. J.A.C. Harrison, the Mint's engraver, began work on the ½d die in November 1938. His working drawing for the monarch's head is shown in Fig. 2. In December 1938 the Mint submitted stamp-size bromides for the 2½d value [Figs. 3 & 4]. The head was the same size as that for the postcard stamp but the surround had been reduced to bring the stamp down to the required size. The Mint thought that design "A" looked rather crowded and in "B" had painted out the white line round the head



Fig. 2 Harrison's drawing of the head

which was thought to give a more open look to the design. The Post Office approved the design with the proviso that the oval above the letter "T" be completed and instructed the Mint to start work on the dies and plates for all values using the one design.

On 19 December the Mint sent two further bromides marked "Sketch C". One was approved by Fanshawe [Fig. 5], the other had a darker background behind the head, postage and value. Dell wrote to the Mint giving approval but hoped that the head would be exactly the same as that used for the postcard stamp.

In January 1939, Fanshawe instructed the Mint to produce two master plates for each value as he understood this would incur little or no extra expense. He pointed out that the provision of the master plates was regarded as a matter of urgency and asked how soon the plates could be made ready. In fact, the Mint had stopped work on the emergency dies to concentrate on the production of postcard dies etc. The Mint assured Fanshawe that work on the emergency issue would restart as soon as possible and on 23 January 1939 submitted a bromide for the 6d value.

Fig. 3

Adhesive stamp reserve
master plates (6 notes)



Royal Mint 5.11.38

A

Fig. 4

Adhesive stamp reserve
master plates (6 notes)



Royal Mint, 7.11.38

B

Fig. 5

Sketch C
Adhesive stamps - Reserve
master plates



Royal Mint
19.12.38

Reserve Master Plates for Adhesive Postage Stamps
 Original die - soft
 See marks from original die 6/2/39
 Approved subject to raising of head see letter to P.M. 30/1/39
 Royal Mint 23.1.39



Reserve Master Plates for Adhesive Postage Stamps
 Original die - soft
 Proof A171c
 sent to R.M. Mint 7/2/39 approved
 JPB



Royal Mint 6.2.39
 Proof PD A171-b

George VI. Emergency Master Plates, 6d rate Postage
 Proof A212b
 returned to R.M. 19.5.39 approved
 JPB
 Soft Steel Working die - A.R.10.
 R.M. 16 May 1939 PD/A212c



Fig. 6

Fig. 7

Fig. 8

The closing of the oval below the head had given a somewhat pinched appearance and the Mint suggested that raising the head might cure the problem [Fig. 6]. On 6 February 1939 proofs PD/A171b/c from the "original die - soft" were submitted and approved. Proof "c" was returned to the Mint and "b" retained by Post Office Stores [Fig. 7]. The cost of producing the six master plates was £330 with a second set costing an additional £210. The Mint queried whether a second set was really necessary as it would only take a few weeks to produce a new master plate. The Post Office's view was that with such a small additional cost involved it would be sensible to have a reserve set especially as some 30 working plates would be needed to continue production. Fanshawe was of the opinion that if a second set of masters had to be produced before work on the new working plates could begin it could cause serious embarrassment to the Post Office if the result was a general exhaustion of stocks.

the Mint had noted that the 1/2d and 1 1/2d values were given priority but as the value tablets for the values had to be engraved by hand and the 6d value had been the subject of the "original die" this value working die had been produced first.

January 1942 Harrison's printed 52 sheets of the 2 1/2d value in blue. This was the only value to be proofed in colour. The sheets were delivered to the Post Office Stores in June 1942 where two blocks of six stamps were removed. The two blocks are the only remaining examples of the colour proofs, [Fig. 12], the rest being destroyed in July 1942.

In May 1939 the Mint submitted proofs PD/A212b/c taken from the soft steel working die A.R.10. Proof "b" was returned to the Mint as approved and "c" was retained [Fig. 8]. W. Whitaker, the Superintendent at

Over the next few months the Mint produced working dies for the rest of the values which were approved subject to the removal of a smudge from the monarch's cheek. In July 1939 the Post Office received proofs of dies for striking the master plates. The dies for the 1 1/2d and 2d values were approved but those for the 2 1/2d and 6d values were not. In the former the veins in the left leaf of the rose were missing and in the latter, PD/A244b/c, the hair at the back of the parting was very faint [Fig. 9]. Later in the month proofs from the corrected dies were submitted and approved. The 6d value is shown as Fig. 10.

One more plate was produced, for 1/2d and 1d rolls, but no documentation has yet been found for this plate. The lack of paperwork could be explained by the fact that as existing dies were used to produce the plate no detailed paperwork was necessary.

Fig. 9

Fig. 10

Fig. 11

modified emergency master plate die
 Approved subject to raising of head see letter to P.M. 30/1/39
 Royal Mint 23.1.39
 Proof PD A.244
 6.4.39



Emergency Postage Stamp Master Plates
 6d rate - Working die A.R.10.
 Soft Steel, after correction of the hair at the back of the parting.
 Royal Mint - 20.7.39
 PD/A244c



As well as the material mentioned in the article the Museum has pulls from all the master plates, a master die with blank duty dated January 1943, transfer roller A.R.14 with 6d and blank duty dated February 1939, master plate No. 2 6d value 29 September 1939 and the striking dies A.R.5-11 (all values).

Each year the Postmaster at Gloucester was required by the Auditors to confirm that he still had the plates in his possession. The odd thing about this is that the auditors' letters continued up to at least September 1967 when the file ends. The Museum has only one plate in its possession and all efforts to locate the rest have so far been in vain.

File refs: BPD/11/1 and BPD/11/7



Fig. 12 Letterpress stamps proofed in blue

The Proposed George VI "Regional" Issue, 1946/7

During the mid 1940s the Channel Islands were pressing the Post Office for a stamp issue of their own. The Post Office was unwilling to agree because, if the request were granted, Northern Ireland would also press for its own stamps. This would inevitably lead to Scotland and Wales putting forward similar proposals. The resulting "diversity of issues" would go against the current Post Office stamp-issuing policy.

However, after pressure from the Home Secretary, the Department agreed to consider the problem. J.E. Yates, Director of Postal Services, and A. Wells, Controller of Stores, came up with the idea of a full set of low value stamps incorporating the coats of arms and emblems from the various "regions". This set would presumably have replaced the existing low value definitives as I cannot see the Post Office running two identically valued sets. Although not entirely satisfied the Channel Islands agreed to work in conjunction with the College of Arms to work out an acceptable design for "their values".

The way the values were allocated was as follows: starting from the ½d value each region would be given a value. The list would then be reversed and the next six values allocated. In other words, each region would have two values. Any remaining values would bear a more general design.



Bromides for the Regional issue; left: Channel Islands; below: Scotland

Fig. 13



Fig. 14



Fig. 15



Fig. 16



Fig. 17



Fig. 18

Although the Post Office accepted the idea in principle, the Director General, Raymond Birchall, thought that England should be given the Inland letter and Airmail values.

In December 1946, the College of Arms provided a rough drawing for a Channel Islands stamp from which Harrison and Sons produced a stamp-size bromide [Fig. 13]. Harrison and Sons were provided with drawings for the coats of arms for Scotland and the Isle of Man from which they also produced bromides of various designs.

The Scottish designs, Nos. 258-261, were described as follows:

258 head with crown, lion, waves, three small thistles and a tartan background



An aspect of the Museum display

259 head without crown, then as 258

260 head without crown, lion, waves, three small thistles, plain background

261 head without crown, lion, waves, three small thistles, St. Andrew's Cross in background.

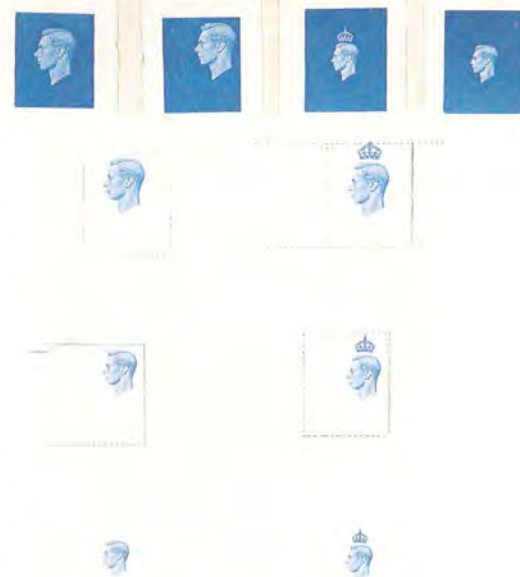
A later bromide, 263, also exists, similar to 261 but with larger head and single thistle [Figs. 14-18].

The Channel Islands were not happy with the prominence given to the monarch's head and asked if the size could be reduced as they would like a more pictorial design and submitted drawings by the local artist

Edmund Blampied to show what they had in mind. Harrison and Sons were asked to produce essays in blue on Royal Cypher paper showing the king's head in various sizes and positions within the stamp frame [Fig. 19].

The College of Arms were having trouble supplying suitable coats of arms for Wales and Northern Ireland and this, together with the fact that it was felt that the Scots, in particular, would not be prepared to use a stamp on their letters bearing the English Arms, caused this interesting idea to be abandoned. The Channel Islands continued to press for their own issue and this perseverance resulted in the "Third Anniversary of Liberation" issue of 10 May 1948.

Fig. 19





Looking towards the Court of Honour at Alexandra Palace

ALTHOUGH we have many points of contact in our daily work, the functions of Post Office Archives and the National Postal Museum are normally quite distinct. The Museum holds philatelic material and historic artefacts, and informs and entertains the public through its permanent and special exhibitions. The Archives is a repository for the documentary records of the Post Office, from the 17th century to the present day. These are public records and so, once they become 30 years old, are available to researchers who visit our Public Search Room at Freeling House. Our function is to conserve and catalogue those two miles of historic records and to make the information in them available both to Post Office managers and to the public. We also perform the records management function

Dr Douglas Fermer, Deputy Records Manager and Archivist at Post Office Archives, here describes the research, activities and products of the Archives for Stamp World London 90.



Archives staff in Victorian costume: Cathy Tully, Kevin Squelch and Melanie Rolfe

for Post Office Headquarters, which currently creates registered files at the rate of some 8,000 a year.

Whilst the Museum frequently draws on material in the Archives for the background



The miniature replica Penfold pillar box

story of its exhibits, our division of responsibilities is thus readily understood. Administratively, we are quite distinct and physically we occupy different buildings a mile apart.

We were, therefore, delighted and enthusiastic when Keith Fisher, General Manager, Royal Mail Stamps, suggested that the Archives should share an exhibition stand with the National Postal Museum at Stamp World London 90. Our brief was to join with the Museum in showing the public a rounded picture of the many facets of Post Office history and the treasure house of material available for studying it.

The story of the postage stamp is so fascinating that we can sometimes lose sight of the fact that it is only a portion of a much larger story: the history of the Post Office itself as a great public institution which has provided Britain with its internal and overseas communications for over three centuries.

It was not our purpose, given the limited space available to us, to present a tableau of the whole history of the Post Office. Our task was to convey, as briefly as possible, a sense of the richness of the different types of material available to enquirers. The Post Office has been involved in the evolution of many forms of transport through the eras of the mail coach, the railway, the sailing packet and the steamship, through to the era of the telegraph, telephone and aeroplane. It has also been the largest employer of labour in Britain. Our hope was to suggest to visitors to the exhibition that the records we hold relating to these developments are a fascinating and vital part of this country's history.

Some 18 months' hard work went into the preparation of our display by the small Archives team. Archivist Jean Farrugia, being a veteran of the 1980 exhibition, was determined that our showing in 1990 should be up to the same high standards.



An aspect of the stand showing part of the Archives display

At first there were so many ideas about the interesting items from our files we wanted to show that many agonising choices had to be made about what to exclude. One decision was taken early, namely that some of the great and unique gems from our collection, such as Rowland Hill's diary and the Whiting "Go-free", should be exhibited not on our own stand but in the Court of Honour where they would be set in historical context with the priceless philatelic items from the National Postal Museum, the British Library and the Royal Collection. No visitor to the Court of Honour is likely to forget having seen such a choice array of items exhibited together for the first time, and we were certainly proud to receive a medal from the Stamp World Committee for our contribution to that august pantheon.

For our own display we picked humbler but no less intriguing items to tell our story. Jean Farrugia's concept showed how researching the career of individual Post Office employees can bring a whole era to life. She traced, from the written records and in pictures, the careers of three people who embodied the spirit of an era. Moses Nobbs was the last serving mail coach guard who appeared, scarlet-coated and bewhiskered, as a celebrity at the Post Office Jubilee Celebration of 1890. Captain William Rogers was a packet boat captain who defied the odds in an act of incredible bravery to board and capture a French privateer. Henry Mellersh was a pioneer of the Travelling Post Offices in the railway era and distinguished himself by his handling of mail arrangements for the troops during the Crimean War. Jean's presentation was a classic example of what can be unearthed by those who are prepared to research in depth, and who have the patience to explore the individual stories behind great historical changes.

Search Room Manager Kevin Squelch extended this theme further. From his working knowledge of the unexpected tales that can emerge from rather mundane looking buff files he presented curiosities which illuminated the workings of the Post Office and the breadth of its concerns. To see the original material relating to the ill-fated rocket mail experiments of the 1930s was a graphic reminder that the benefits of high technology are not always easily won. By contrast, the remarkable success of the wartime airgraph service was brought vividly to life by exhibits which excited much interested comment. The display of the first parcel post cover in 1883 and of the quite delightful Lilliput toy postal stationery set from the turn of the century were also talking points amongst collectors.

In a humorous vein, Kevin's presentation of the stories of a horse's sick note and of a letter which went around the world in 80 days caused some merriment, and provided a reminder that historical research can be fun. More sombre was the moving and ultimately tragic story of "The Winslow Boy", George Archer-Shee, and his family's fight for justice after he was expelled from Naval College for allegedly forging a fellow student's signature

on a postal order. The original postal orders in question, from the Post Office file on the subject, were on display with material which Kevin had painstakingly collected from other sources, including letters loaned by the family.

For many weeks preparation of the exhibition took over our lives and monopolised our time, evenings and weekends included. To us the words "1990" came to mean exclusively the Stamp World exhibition, sometimes to the bemusement of visitors, who doubtless thought we were very out of touch indeed when they saw us rushing around breathlessly in mid-April proclaiming that "we've only got two weeks until 1990". Inevitably, there were many setbacks and frustrations, most particularly when we discovered only three weeks before the opening that the space allotted to us was to be only a third of what was originally hoped for and intended. We had, therefore, to re-write and re-cast the display at the

quality, carefully researched products aimed at a market which would appreciate postal history themes.

For the first time, Archives published its own set of postcards. Subjects included early postal uniforms, a mail coach scene, an elaborate early pillar box design and an airmail poster. Visitors were offered a special cachet featuring the Archives logo of a mounted postboy. We also produced facsimile sets of 14 of the many hundreds of historical notices in our collection, selecting a variety of themes and dating from the 1790s through to 1861. Collectors could buy the set at A4 size or at A5, to fit the album page.

One idea for a product emerged from Kevin Squelch's investigation of the file on Post Office arrangements for the 1890 Jubilee. Tucked at the back of it he found the original engraved steel plates showing two views of the interior of the old GPO East in 1844. These plates had been exhibited in 1890, then lost to view. We were delighted to



Part of the Archives exhibition

eleventh hour. Yet, despite some pardonable doubts en route, we were ready on schedule.

There was another aspect to our plans. We wanted visitors to our stand to be able to take away a souvenir of their visit: something pleasing and of good quality, but of wide appeal. Unlike the National Postal Museum, the Archives had not previously offered any sales products, except our catalogues for researchers. Our search room is not an apt sales point, and our staff numbers are too limited to undertake extensive retail operations. Nevertheless, it seemed a shame not to make available to the public reproductions of Archive items which have, from time to time, appeared in other publications without due acknowledgement of their origin. We, therefore, set to work on a range of high

quality, carefully researched products aimed at a market which would appreciate postal history themes. For the first time, Archives published its own set of postcards. Subjects included early postal uniforms, a mail coach scene, an elaborate early pillar box design and an airmail poster. Visitors were offered a special cachet featuring the Archives logo of a mounted postboy. We also produced facsimile sets of 14 of the many hundreds of historical notices in our collection, selecting a variety of themes and dating from the 1790s through to 1861. Collectors could buy the set at A4 size or at A5, to fit the album page. One idea for a product emerged from Kevin Squelch's investigation of the file on Post Office arrangements for the 1890 Jubilee. Tucked at the back of it he found the original engraved steel plates showing two views of the interior of the old GPO East in 1844. These plates had been exhibited in 1890, then lost to view. We were delighted to discover that they could be restored to their original condition by specialist craftsmen, and would bear the printing of a special limited numbered edition to mark the 150th anniversary of the penny postage. Kevin, assisted as he had been throughout preparations for the exhibition by Cathy Tully and Melanie Rolfe, thoroughly researched the history of the plates and was even able to identify the exact viewpoints by reference to the original building plans which have survived in the Archives. This was a very special souvenir indeed, and the prints convey as no description would the bustle of an early Victorian sorting office.

Another little known masterpiece kept on our shelves is John Cary's *Survey of the High Roads from London*, with its exquisitely

coloured strip maps of the roads out of London as they existed in 1790. We were delighted to find a modern cartographic press capable of faithfully reproducing Cary's work at a price collectors could afford, and our expectation that many people would love to have framed on their wall a map of their locality as it appeared two centuries ago was not disappointed.

Most popular of all were the 1/19 scale die-cast metal replicas which we introduced under the title of the "Post Office Historical Miniatures Series". Our aim was to present the public with really high quality models of historical Post Office subjects, and so we approached one of the leading model companies in the country to undertake the commission. The result was what is probably the finest miniature reproduction of the Penfold pillar box that has ever been produced. Number two in the series is a figurine of a London letter carrier of the 1860s, and perhaps we need only say that the response to these products was such that we can safely announce that there will be more in the future.

When Stamp World London 90 exhibition opened there were some misgivings as to whether all our efforts would produce much benefit. Some Jeremiahs were predicting a low turn-out. Our stand was at almost the far end of the exhibition, by the ice rink in the East Hall, where perhaps only the hardiest and most inquisitive would penetrate. Nor, alas, was our stand signposted, so casual browsers might miss us altogether.

We need not have worried. The turn-out was heart-warming, and the response to our display and sales items very gratifying. Indeed, though by the end of the exhibition everyone was exhausted, we found that we could not rest. Our postbag in the following months showed that we had indeed succeeded in spreading some awareness of what can be found in the Archives, and that it is worth coming to find.

For us the 10 days of the exhibition were a very happy event. Kevin Squelch, Cathy Tully and Melanie Rolfe put aside their normally demure roles as librarians and transformed themselves into sales people and information givers as if they had been born to it - and notwithstanding that their heavy Victorian costumes made them feel more like Turkish bath attendants.

But perhaps the most pleasant memories of those hectic May days are of the friendly and easy co-operation we enjoyed with our colleagues in the National Postal Museum. Two units sharing the same exhibition stand and working at the same counter could have presented difficulties, but from the start Stan Goron and David Paton showed a strong sense of working towards a common goal which carried us forward as if we were one team. This spirit carried right through, and to share a counter with the hard working custodians of the Museum proved a real pleasure. Our exhibition displays were, as they should have been, complementary in presenting the varied character of postal history. Tony Gammons' selection of material in itself suggested how serious philatelic researchers could draw on file

material in the Archives to explore the story behind stamp issues of the past. This, we hope, will encourage a healthy interchange of visitors between our two institutions.

The arrangements for Stamp World London 90 are now part of an official file which has been tied with white tape and will, in due course, itself become part of the Archives. Looking through it, we are reminded of all the co-operation we received, not only from the National Postal Museum staff but from the Post Office co-ordinators, Frank White, Baji Kapadia and Richard Keeling, and of course the tireless team at H & P Design Ltd who designed our stand and endured our tantrums. To all of these we pay tribute.

But Stamp World is not quite history. Some panels of our display can still be seen at Freeling House by those who had no opportunity to visit Alexandra Palace. We also still have stocks of the souvenir items on sale at the exhibition to mark Archives' participation in what was a very special and exhilarating event.



The Court of Honour

FOR the first time in the history of international stamp exhibitions the Court of Honour set out to tell a story with items selected from a few main collections. The story to be told was that of the Penny Black and the main collections involved were those of the National Postal Museum, the British Library and the Royal Collection, though material was also loaned by a number of individual collectors. It was the first time that many of the pieces had been brought together and it was a remarkable venture, unlikely to be repeated for many years to come. Planning had taken a very long time, not only to decide upon the contents but also the precise method of display to best advantage. Within the constraints of space and money an ingenious design was created by H & P Design, the

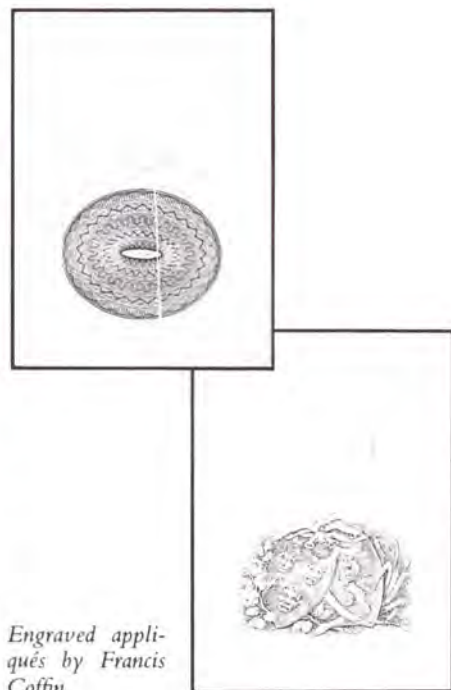
intention being to attain the high standards expected in any major art exhibition.

The history of the post in Great Britain was first sketched in from the time of Sir Brian Tuke, with remarkable letters, some loaned by the Public Record Office. There followed the build-up to postal reform in the 1830s and then the main sections covering the Treasury Competition, the introduction of uniform postage and the design and printing of the Penny Black. A section on overseas imitations of Britain's invention was contributed by the British Library and final sections illustrated the various celebrations in 1890, 1940 and 1990. From the National Postal Museum came the centrepiece of the whole exhibition - the proof sheet of the Penny Black but this was only one of a very large number of great rarities of unquestioned philatelic importance.

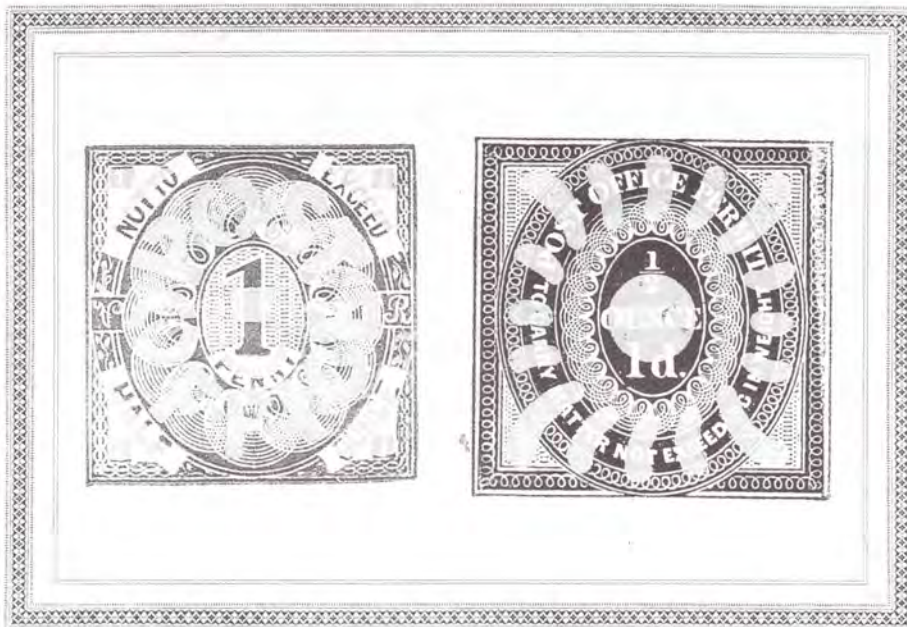
It would be impossible here to give a complete description of the Court of Honour, or even of the Museum's contribution, but some of the highlights can be mentioned.

The Treasury Competition

Nearly all of the items selected from the extant entries to the Treasury Competition came from the Royal Collection. However, all the material was remounted and descriptions were based on the new research carried out by the Museum. Two major items were added from our collections - the entry of Francis Coffin who was one of the joint prizewinners. The two engravings were specially cleaned by our conservator, making the designs clear for the first time. Both might be described as appliquéés - they were to be attached to the letter by the upper part of the label and sealed through the circular hole. One of the designs consisted of an engine-turned device in the form of a transverse oval. The other showed two armorial shields surrounded by flowers and ribbons. Both were printed in black on a lead white glazed card.



Engraved appliquéés by Francis Coffin



Above: Charles Whiting essays compound-printed as his Treasury Competition entry (shown on NPM postcard 90/3); Below: 1939 pull from the Penny Black master die.

The Penny Black

The Museum's main contribution to the Court of Honour came in the central section devoted to the production of the world's first stamps and the Mulready postal stationery. For the first time in many years, in some cases the first time ever, unique, priceless sheets of Penny Blacks left the National Postal Museum to go on show elsewhere. Displayed in specially constructed cases were the proof sheet and registration sheets of the Penny Black, the VR Penny Black intended for use by government officials, the Penny Red and the Twopenny Blue (the second type as none exists of the first). All the sheets had conservation treatment before going on show and were protectively mounted on acid-free board. Also on show were the original master die for the penny labels and the registration sheets for the Mulready stationery. Registration sheets were also loaned for some of the subsequent embossed issues.

1940 Centenary

All the material for the six frames on the 1940 centenary came from Museum resources and entailed a considerable amount of research in stamp production files in Post Office Archives. From this it was discovered that quite a number of essays previously assumed to have been related to the 1937 definitives issue were, in fact, produced in preparation for the Centenary commemoratives.

Work began in early 1938 with the proposal that bicoloured stamps be considered and Edmund Dulac produced some hand-painted essays in March based on one of the values for the George VI low value definitives and his No. 2 '1840' design which had been rejected for the same. Following his suggestions for colour combinations some 80

Alternative unadopted artwork by Edmund Dulac for the Centenary issue.

N° 140



different colour trials were produced on 22 April. However, the idea for bicoloured stamps was subsequently dropped.

Commemorative stamp issues were still very infrequent in those days and so it was quite normal to invite a large number of artists to submit designs. Clear instructions were given to them all including the proviso that the King's head should appear no smaller than on the current definitives. This obviously restricted the design considerably. Some 19 artists responded with designs, including the print firms of Waterlows and Harrisons. There were a number of famous names amongst them - George Bellew, Edmund Dulac, John Farleigh, Eric Gill and Eric Ravilious.

Most of the ideas were quickly rejected. Officials thought that Gill's design, for example, was "a good and original design which would print well. It is not, however, in harmony with British ideas of stamp design, and is also reminiscent of peace stamps issued in another country". One design, not commented on, incorporated all the monarchs' heads since Queen Victoria including that of Edward VIII which would have been much too sensitive for inclusion in any stamp design of that period.

Two designs were chosen for further work. Both were based on the concept of dual heads of Queen Victoria and George VI - one by Dulac and the other by Harrisons. Dulac's original design was based on a silhouette of Victoria and his own drawing of George as it appeared on the definitives. Essays were produced from this design but it was then further refined, firstly by changing Victoria's head from silhouette to toned and then to engraved to imitate the Penny Black. A pull was taken from the 'Old Original' master die to assist in the drawing but Dulac misinterpreted his brief and not only made an engraved drawing of Victoria's head but that



of George as well.

Essays were produced in July and August from the various designs prepared by Dulac as well as variations of Harrison's dual head design. Here again they were asked to change Victoria's head so that it gave an engraved appearance. No decision had been made as to the relative merits of these designs when war broke out in September, 1939. This brought all work on the issue to a halt and the issue was dropped as was the idea for an international stamp exhibition in London.

However, in January 1940, the idea for a commemorative was revived though now there was considerably less time available to print the stamps. Harrison produced more variations of their dual head design, separating the two heads. This last 'plain' design was approved by the King at the end of January 1940. Minor refinements were made, especially to the value figures and because of impending rate changes, six values were printed rather than four as originally envisaged. These appeared on 6 May 1940, exactly 100 years after the Penny Black became valid for postage.

The suggestion for an issue of stamps had come in the first place from Sir John Wilson, Keeper of the Royal Philatelic Collection. Another of his ideas which was mocked up in February 1940 was to have a miniature sheet incorporating the issued stamps but with a contribution to the Red Cross Fund. Because of lack of printing time available this idea was abandoned but two possible designs were prepared.

All of the stages of the design process were described and illustrated in the display in the Court of Honour, though for space reasons not all the unaccepted artwork was

Right: Dulac dual head No. 4 with both heads engraved; Below: Harrison's first dual head design.



shown. Some of the essays were also used as the basis for one of the attractive Stamp World London 90 souvenirs.



1990 Celebrations

There were two main Royal Mail issues in 1990 celebrating the 150th anniversary of Uniform Penny Postage and the Penny Black. First came the Penny Black anniversary definitives and then the miniature sheet for Stamp World London 90. Two frames were allocated at the end of the Court of Honour to show some of the work that had gone into these two issues.

The first showed the many combinations by Jeffery Matthews of heads of Queen Victoria and Queen Elizabeth, not only that from the Penny Black and the Machin head, together with the chosen design for the small-sized definitives. These designs had been generated on computer.

The second showed initial pencil ideas for the miniature sheet and then proofs from various stages of the printing. This was of particular interest in that the design was printed recess and incorporated a newly minted Penny Black for which pulls had been taken from dies held in the Museum. Added to this was the Penny Black Anniversary definitive printed in gravure.

Publications

UNDoubtedly the most important publication during the year was the book *Postal Reform & the Penny Black: A New Appreciation* by Douglas N. Muir investigating the introduction of the world's first stamp and its background. Not only the Museum collections were examined but also many archives including those of the Public Record Office at Kew. A lot of information was published for the first time, as were a number of new illustrations.



For the main exhibition in the Museum on Postal Reform and the Penny Black a catalogue was produced containing all the text in the exhibition panels and small illustrations of many of the items.

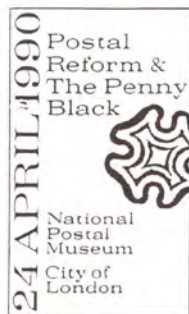
Some 16 new cards were issued six of which continued the theme of Stamp World London 90. Also issued was a reprint of a 1989 card featuring the penny black.



Replacement Maltese Cross cancellation in use from 10 January to 31 December

Factsheets were also produced for some of the displays in the Museum and were made available free to visitors.

New Museum publications in 1990 included a book on postal reform and the penny black and an increased number of postcards with associated postmarks, together with a catalogue and factsheets about exhibitions.



NPM/MX/1 Maximum card for one of the Penny Black Anniversary definitives issued on 10 January 1990.



Stamp World London 90

NPM/SWL90/7 Sir Rowland Hill, 1795-1879, educationalist and postal reformer. Responsible for the introduction of 'Uniform Penny Postage' in 1840. Appointed Secretary to the Post Office in 1854, he was knighted in 1860 and granted the Freedom of the City of London in 1879. (Post Office Collections)





NPM/SWL90/8 Robert Wallace, 1773-1855, first Member of Parliament for Greenock. Postal reformer, he was the chairman of the committee charged with the examination of Rowland Hill's penny postage scheme. (Rendition by Clive Abbott)

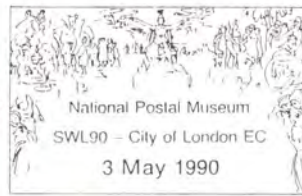


NPM/SWL90/9 Sir Henry Cole, 1808-1882, Senior Assistant-Keeper at the 'Record Office' in 1838; successful entrant in the 'Treasury Competition', he assisted Rowland Hill in the production of the Penny Black postage stamp and Mulready postal stationery. (Rendition by Clive Abbott)



NPM/SWL90/10 Penny Black/William Wyon RA, 1795-1851, chief engraver to the Royal Mint. Engraved the City Medal. Line drawings of the Queen's head on the medal were used as the basis of the Penny Black. (Rendition by Clive Abbott)

NPM/SWL90/11 Twopenny Blue/Charles Heath, 1785-1848, engraved the portrait of Queen Victoria on the master die for the Penny Black in January 1840. (Rendition by Clive Abbott)



NPM/SWL90/12 Mulready Stationery/William Mulready, 1786-1863, designer of the postal stationery which bears his name. The design consisted of Britannia sending winged messengers to all quarters of the globe. The 'Mulreadys' were not popular and were soon withdrawn from sale. (National Portrait Gallery, London)

Other Cards

90/1 The miniature sheet issued by Royal Mail Stamps on 3 May 1990 to mark the 150th anniversary of the Penny Black.

90/2 Postal Reform and the Penny Black. Charles Fenton Whiting's proposed 'go-free' of 1 February 1830, a suggested printed frank or wrapper to prepay enclosed newspapers, etc. (Post Office Archives)

90/3 Postal Reform and the Penny Black. Two Treasury Competition entries printed by Charles Whiting in the bicolour compound printing method invented by William Congreve, September, 1839.

90/4 Postal Reform and the Penny Black. Coloured print showing the interior of the Inland Office of the General Post Office, 1840.

90/5 Postal Reform and the Penny Black. Caricature of a Mulready letter sheet by John Leech, May 1840.



Yesteryear 90/1 GPO Posters - Post Early: photograph of original artwork by West One Studios. (Post Office Archives)

Yesteryear 90/2 GPO Posters - Shop Early-Post Early: photograph of original artwork, source not recorded. (Post Office Archives)



Yesteryear 90/3 GPO Posters - Post Early-minimum postage for cards 2d: photograph of original artwork by Saxon Artists. (Post Office Archives)

Yesteryear 90/4 GPO Posters - Post your Christmas mail Early for Europe: photograph of poster, source of artwork not recorded. (Post Office Archives)



New Acquisitions

THE year has produced for us some very fine pieces of postal history which have been keenly sought to fill significant gaps in our collections.

The majority of items are, however, gifts from other Post Office departments. The following listing gives an idea of the diversity and quantity of material accessed:

Stamp artwork (adopted & unadopted)	361
Registration sheets of stamps etc	136
New cylinders & plates	121
Three dimensional objects	138
Books and documents	27
Handstamps	45
Proofs and essays	191
Postal history items	2666

In addition there have been some 1,260 sheets of stamps (181,000 single stamps) and other items such as slogan dies for the Museum's collections and reserve stocks.

Three dimensional objects

Of the three dimensional objects two have been selected here as of particular interest. The first illustrated is a postbus ticket machine produced by Ticket Issue Machines Ltd (TIM) of Cirencester. Some four machines were actually used on experimental

A large number of acquisitions were made during 1990. Some of the more important and interesting ones are described here.



Postbus ticket machine produced by Ticket Issue Machines Ltd of Cirencester

routes at Llanidloes, Honiton, Penrith and Dunbar. All were withdrawn on decimalisation in February 1971. This machine was held in reserve and came to the Museum from Milton Keynes. It is housed in a purpose-made tin case.

The other object is a 'working' model in wood of the Coventry to Chester mail coach



1817 Returned Letter Office wrapper with the enclosure, returned because it had been refused.



Returned Letter-Office.

of c. 1820. It is approximately 9in. high by 14in. long, apparently made to scale in the correct colours. All the wheels rotate, the front axle pivots, the doors are hinged, the whip is detachable and there is a working brake for the rear wheels. It is slightly damaged and so during 1991 it is intended that necessary repairs will be carried out.

Amongst the more unusual and unexpected items arriving at the Museum during the year was a three-handled pewter vessel with glass bottom, measuring 7½ inches high and 7 inches across the base. This is a goblet of three pint capacity inscribed "Presented to the 'E' company of the XLIX Middlesex Regiment Post Office Volunteers Western (Vere Street) District by Messrs Lambert of Coventry St. West. 1873."

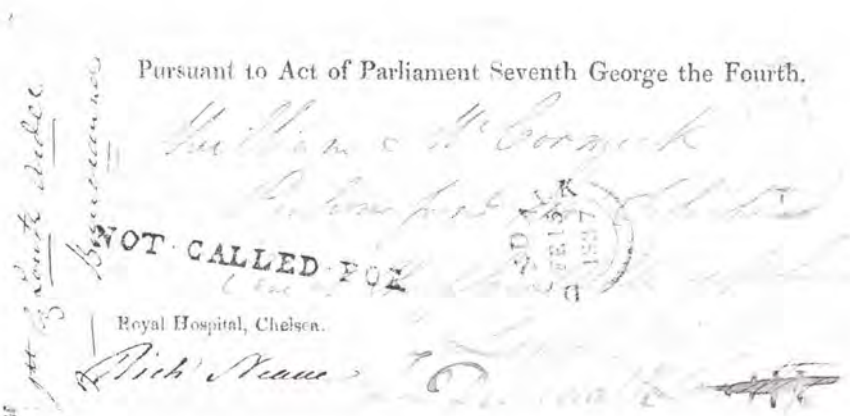
The goblet was competed for twice yearly by shooting at ranges of 200, 500 and 600 yards and at intervals of not less than six months. The cup could only become the property of a winner who had three consecutive wins to his credit. It finally came to rest



Working model of Coventry to Chester mail coach



Irish Postal History. Above left: 1746 entire from Carrick to Dublin endorsed 'Free B.C. St. John' but with the Dublin FREE mark crossed through and marked 'COUNTERFEIT'. Above right: 1799 entire to London with a large red 'IRELAND' marking indicating its origin. Below: Printed paper from the Royal Hospital Chelsea sent free to Lough Swilly, Louth but not delivered and endorsed 'Try Dundalk' - there the handstamp 'NOT CALLED FOR' was applied (believed unique).



interest to researchers during the year so the addition of in excess of 200 of these have been beneficial.

Several early pamphlets and Post Office Acts were also acquired to make more complete various projects or displays planned during 1990.

Missent Markings

We now have a very useful collection of these particular postal markings which show varied means of indicating the overcarrying or missending of a mail or individual items to places other than those for correct delivery.

The earliest item in the collection is dated 1789 and bears the one line manuscript endorsement in red ink 'Missent to Burford'. It does not appear to follow that the earlier marks were all in manuscript nor that the manuscript endorsements were necessarily from the smaller offices of receipt. The colour of ink used pre 1840 seems to be limited to either red or black although we have an example from Halifax using green and dated 1838. The ink used during the 1840s seem to have been without exception red or black but moving into the 1850s black or green predominate.

Boxed ovals and rectangles would seem to be the pattern being set for instructional markings from the 1850s although there is still evidence of manuscript and unboxed types.

Some of the artwork acquired in 1990 is shown opposite.

with a Sargeant R.R. Hoad who won it five times in all.

Postal History

Throughout the year there was a continual flow to the National Postal Museum of items of pre-stamp and more modern postal history importance.

A great number of the 2,660 new pieces falling into this category were especially purchased to make more continuous and meaningful the material already in the Museum's custody. The items accessed have made it possible to construct at least one new volume each of the following: Air Mails - Inland, Directional Marks, Express Post, Fifth Clause, Inspectors' Marks, Irish pre-

adhesive, Maritime, Mileage Marks, Military (World War I and II - mainly censor marks), Missorts, Parcel Post (receipts etc), Postage Due (& customs), Penny Posts, Railway letter stamps, Registered Mail, Returned Letter Branch, R.S.O.s (341 of these), Scottish pre-adhesive mail, Town Marks, Uniform Penny marks.

There was also a small but very attractive selection of Victorian Valentines, two with their stamped envelopes intact.

In addition to this important material we have obtained large quantities of, in the main, envelopes bearing Duplex, Hooded Circles, Single Circle, Skeletons, Spoons and Squared Circle postal markings. Squared Circles have been the subject of considerable

1839 entire from Glasgow with an inspector's mark in red changing the rate.

1826 entire from Mere to Daventry, missent to Salisbury and also missent to Northampton.





350th Anniversary of the Post Office, 1985. Three finished visuals by Trickett and Webb showing historical aspects of the postal service.

Toys & Games, 1989. Presentation visual by James Marsh for a miniature sheet intended for Stamp World London 90.

Christmas, 1989. Two designs by Martin Newton showing aspects of Ely Cathedral.



Exhibitions

'Postal Reform and the Penny Black' was the major exhibition during 1990, though a number of smaller ones were also put on. A retrospective view is given here.

AS 1990 saw the 150th anniversary of the Penny Black it was clear that the Museum should mark this by a major exhibition. Many of the main treasures of the NPM concerned the printing of the world's first stamp and some of them had been requested for the international exhibition at Alexandra Palace. However, this would only last some 10 days and it was thought unfortunate that other interested visitors during the year would have no opportunity to view these priceless items. So, from its own resources, the Museum decided to create a "court of honour" illustrating the story of "Postal Reform and the Penny Black" and incorporating all the latest research about to be published in book form.

For such a major exhibition we decided to ask H & P Design Ltd., already involved in Stamp World London 90, to come up with a concept which would allow the items to be displayed to their best advantage. The result was a complete refurbishment of the ground and mezzanine floors of the Museum. Because of the fragile and precious nature of many of the exhibits lighting had to be kept to a minimum. Thus, a whole new lighting system was installed in the display cases based on fibre-optics which not only reduced the lighting levels, while still allowing the items to be seen and appreciated, but also eliminated many of the harmful constituents



Proof of the first die and the second background of the Penny Black



Bellman of 1820

of natural or fluorescent light.

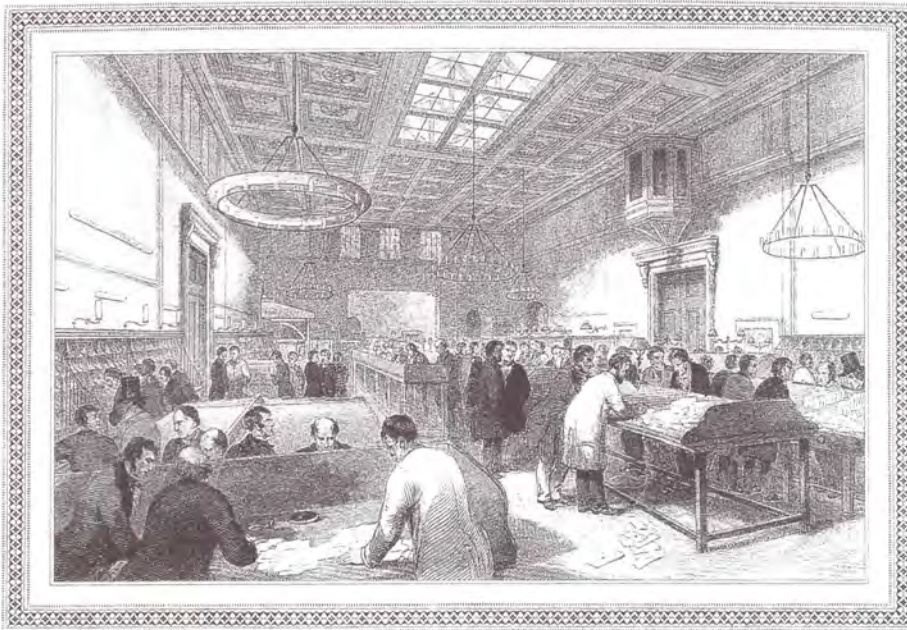
In the cases new backing boards were installed together with panels above and below to concentrate the viewers' attention on the items on display. Introductory panels were designed to lead in to each section giving simple, clear information in as concise a form as possible so that the visitor could be informed of all relevant background but spared the boredom of tedious detail. The items themselves were very strictly selected - the finest of each to build up into an uncluttered story. By dint of utilising every single display area, including the stairway, some 14 sections were accommodated without any feeling of cramped space. Much of the success of this is due to the considerable efforts of Mike Higgs of H & P Design Ltd who was largely responsible for the design.

The story to be told was complicated and at times confused. In the exhibition the aim was to simplify this without losing accuracy

The entrance to the 'Postal Reform' exhibition

Penny Black and Mulready production in the 'Postal Reform' exhibition.





Above: Inland Sorting Office of 1840 as seen on NPM postcard 90/4

or causing distortion, so that the interested public, specialist or layman, could learn and find things of interest.

Although there were 14 sections the exhibition broke happily into two main parts. On the ground floor was illustrated the unreformed Post Office up to 1839 and included suggestions entered in the Treasury Competition to replace this. The mezzanine floor was devoted to the production of the adhesive postage labels and the postal stationery used to prepay postage in Hill's uniform penny postage scheme.

Highlights included a beautiful model mail coach centrally placed on the ground floor symbolising the old form of transport. This was supplemented by prints - one of a bellman, or postman, collecting the mail in the streets - and examples of very high rates of postage due to the number of sheets contained and the distance carried. Then came the first suggestion for reform (from Post Office Archives): Charles Whiting's 1830 "go-free", an idea for a pre-paid wrapper. This, the fountainhead of all other ideas for prepayment, was also to be seen at Stamp World London 90 and to be reproduced on an NPM postcard.

Hill's seminal pamphlet, shown in two editions *Post Office Reform: Its Importance and Practicability* set off a remarkable campaign masterminded by Robert Wallace MP and Henry Cole and examples of their propaganda led into the result of their success - beautiful suggestions by the public as to the form of prepaid postage. These Treasury Competition entries were drawn from the Phillips Collection, the Museum's own and from the Public Record Office (on loan).

The implementation of Hill's reforms was illustrated on the stairway and the mezzanine floors with examples of the "Uniform Four-penny" and "Uniform Penny" posts, enlivened by letter scales, prints, posters and Rowland Hill's *Journal*. Perhaps the finest part of the exhibition followed with the design and printing of the Penny Black and the Mulready envelope and lettersheet. Here

Below: Setting up the 'Postal Reform' exhibition (at great speed!)



Whiting's 'go-free' of 1830 (from Post Office Archives) as seen on NPM postcard 90/2



were proofs of the Wyon medal (on show for the first time) and the development of the Penny Black design illustrated by proof material from the Phillips collection. Then, specially prepared, were three magnificent sheets of Penny Blacks - the unique, complete proof sheet, and the registration sheets for plate 1 and the VR government stamp which was never issued. Never before had such a valuable group been put on show.

Of less monetary value, though no less interest, was the development of the Mulready - a story never told before. Many of the most crucial pieces are held in the Henry Cole papers in the Victoria & Albert Museum and were unavailable. Nevertheless, with the addition of the original woodblock carved by John Thompson to proof material in the Phillips Collection and the registration sheets the Museum was able to tell a representative story. Several new facets were put on show including a picture of one of the steam printing presses at William Clowes used to produce the envelopes and lettersheets.

A feature of the entire exhibition was the combination of medals, portraits and posters added to the more expected (if quite exceptional) postal history, proof and stamp material.

The last small section was devoted to William Wyon's embossed head and the troubles encountered before finally it replaced the Mulready design on stationery in 1841.

Running from before Stamp World London 90 through till April 1991, the exhibition was accompanied by a free catalogue reproducing all the text and illustrations of nearly all the exhibits, some in full colour.

The Life and Work of Rowland Hill (1795-1879)

The first exhibition of the year fittingly portrayed the life and work of Rowland Hill and his family. It opened on 10 January, the 150th anniversary of Hill's introduction of uniform penny postage in 1840.

This display followed Hill's life from his birth on 3 December 1795 at the family home in Kidderminster through his years as a teacher and educational reformer to his greatest achievement, the introduction of uniform penny postage, which revolutionised the British postal system, and the Penny Black, the world's first adhesive postage stamp. Hill was also an artist, draughtsman, self-taught architect and inventor. Perhaps the greatest of his mechanical inventions was a rotary printing press which could have revolutionised the printing of newspapers as early as 1835 but for the Treasury's insistence that each page had to be separated for the 1½d tax stamp to be impressed before the news could be printed on it. He formed, with his brothers Edwin and Frederic, a small society for furthering inventions.

The second half of the display concentrated on his campaign for postal reform and the Hill family's involvement with the Post Office. On show were Hill's drawing instruments, a watercolour painted at 13 years of age, his journal and part of his "autobiography" which was edited by Birkbeck Hill and published as *The Life of Sir Rowland Hill ... and the History of Penny Postage*.

Also on show was the Museum's collection of Rowland Hill Commemoration Plate, donated to the Museum in 1947.

1890 Jubilee

From May an exhibition in the main gallery marked the centenary of the Celebration of the Jubilee of Inland Uniform Penny Postage held during 1890. This illustrated the main events and their participants with both facsimiles and original material.

In June 1889 the Post Office organised a *conversazione* at the Grosvenor Gallery in London and it was at the committee meetings for this event that plans were made for the various Jubilee celebrations to be held in 1890. The first, being a dinner for past and present officers of the Post Office, was held



'Pearls for All': the NPM contribution to the Swedish Postal Museum's exhibition.

on 15 January in the Venetian Chamber at the Holborn Restaurant. Among the 300 or so present were the Postmaster-General (Mr Raikes) and Pearson Hill.

The Corporation of the City of London asked the Post Office to co-operate in arranging for an important *conversazione* at the Guildhall on 16 May. There the great hall contained a fully equipped post office and the representation of a post office of 1790, while in an enclosure visitors were able to see how letters, papers and parcels were sorted and made up into despatches in the Post Office.

At the other end of the room telegraphic apparatus of all descriptions was exhibited, and communication was established with cities as distant as Paris and Berlin. The art galleries were used for the exhibition of models of travelling post offices, and mail steamers and of a large and valuable exhibition of pictures, books, stamps, letters, State papers and curiosities illustrating the history of the Post Office. The exhibition was kept open on 17 and 19 May and musical entertainments were given on each day.

A special Jubilee postcard was issued for sale at the Guildhall *conversazione* for the benefit of the Rowland Hill Benevolent Fund, and it was so popular that the entire issue of 10,000 was bought up in less than three hours.

The official celebration of the jubilee of penny postage took the form of a grand *conversazione* at the South Kensington Museum on 2 July when some 4,000 people attended. Again, a special Jubilee envelope was issued, costing 1s, the excess proceeds going to the Rowland Hill Benevolent Fund.

Overseas

There were three important overseas displays which were mounted during the year. The

The opening of the Sir Rowland Hill exhibition with Colin Hey (biographer of Hill), Dr David Hill and Stan Goron



Museum was invited to attend the international exhibition at Auckland, New Zealand and showed some of the sheets of Penny Blacks and Penny Reds which had been displayed at Stamp World London 90. This was the first time that any of the sheets had been shown outside Europe and provided one of the highlights of the exhibition.

To celebrate its 20th anniversary the Musée d'Histoire des PTT d'Alsace in Riquewihr (Reichenweiher) held an exhibition entitled *Parfum d'Europe*. The title derived from a collaboration with a firm of perfumery consultants whereby associated with each country's exhibit was a perfume container which could be activated

by visitors and which released a perfume said to be typical of the country in question. The exhibit comprised a selection of postal and telephonic artefacts from no fewer than 12 EC countries.

On show from the National Postal Museum was material relating to the Coronation Aerial Post of 1911.



Penny Blacks in New Zealand: Sir Paul Reeves (Governor-General of New Zealand) with Stan Goron

The exhibition lasted from March till November and was located in a former palace of the princes of Württemberg. This is one of a number of French regional postal museums.

In the Swedish postal museum from September there was an exhibition entitled *Pärlor för alla* (Pearls for all) to mark the 150th anniversary of postage stamps. This contained a wide variety of philatelic exhibits from specialist displays of Swedish stamps to individual items of special significance to their owners. Pride of place went to the Penny Black and the Mulready stationery with the National Postal Museum providing material specially selected.

Other displays were given in both Belgium and Japan.

Letter Box Collection

THIS box (PB 01/03) appears from photographs as having come from Ventnor Railway Station (Box No. 25), Isle of Wight (LBSG photo No. 5).

In July 1854 the Southern District surveyor (Newman) was instructed by the Secretary, John Tilley, to obtain three pillar boxes from Butt of Gloucester. The cost of £3 19s 6d for its construction at Gloucester and conveyance as far as Southampton was authorised on 5 July 1854 (Post 35 Vol. 148 min.4376).

It was erected near the junction of Melville Street and the Strand in the week commencing 23 October 1854 according to the *Isle of Wight Observer* & the *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* of Saturday 28 October, 1854. Very few Butt boxes were erected in south east England. It is almost certain that this box was erected later at Ventnor Station and finally resides in the NPM collection. As such this box is the oldest surviving mainland pillar box.

The National Postal Museum holds the Post Office's official collection of letter boxes. This listing has been compiled with the help of Andrew Smith who here describes one of the oldest boxes.

The Barnes Cross (Dorset) box is a later box from Butt of Gloucester varying in minor detail. In the Western District the surveyor visited the district and erected boxes in a set pattern, starting with Gloucester and Cheltenham (July 1854), Cornwall, Devon, Somerset and into Dorset in January 1857, Dorchester March 1857 (2), Weymouth January 1857 (2) and Sherborne April 1857.

Walter Rutter, Head Postmaster, Sherborne, informed the *Sherborne, Dorchester & Taunton Journal* on Thursday, 29 January 1857 that a pillar box was to be erected in



Lamp boxes made by Carron with the Scottish crown and the EIIR cypher.

Sherborne. The *Poole & South Western Herald* reported on Thursday, 30 April 1857 that "A pillar letter box has arrived for the use of the inhabitants of Sherborne and it will be erected in some spot in the upper part of the town." This box was possibly re-used at a later date at Barnes Cross, south of Sherborne.



WB 091



PB 01/13



PB 01/09



PB 01/08



PB 01/03

The NPM Official Letter Box Collection

Description	Manufacturer	Date	Cat. No.	Notes
Lamp Boxes				
VR, "LETTERS" above aperture	Handyside	1896-1901	LB 201	
VR, "LETTERS ONLY" above aperture	Handyside	1896-1901	LB 202	"Dovaston"
EVIIR, open cypher, small tablet	Handyside	1901-10	LB 203	1039 Stonehill
EVIIR, curled cypher, small tablet	Handyside	1901-10	LB 204	246 Green End
EVIIR curled cypher, large tablet	Handyside	1901-10	LB 205	
GR (small), with crown	Handyside	1910-	LB 206	367 Church Lane Quy
GR (large), no crown, no maker's name on box, full door			LB 208	153 Hardmead
GR, 1897 pattern, small door, no crown	W.T.Allen	1933-35	LB 210	large wide cypher, 413 Stillington Road plate
GR (large), no crown, small door	W.T.Allen	1933-35	LB 210	175 Allum Lane
GR, 1935 pattern	W.T.Allen	1935-7	LB 211	203 Brookville plate
GR, 1935 pattern	W.T.Allen	1935-7	LB 211	St. Looe
GVIR, 1935 pattern	W.T.Allen	1937-49	LB 212	158 Barrow Hill
GVIR, 1940 pattern	W.T.Allen	1945-52	LB 213	819 Spencer Ave.
1940 pattern [EIIR] but with the Scottish crown	W.T.Allen	1952-55	LB 214 (S)	
EIIR, 1940 pattern in fibre glass	?	c. 1963	LB 215/P	
EIIR, 1940 pattern, maker's name 3 ⁷ / ₈ " x 1 ⁵ / ₁₆ "	Carron	-1976	LB 216/1	
1940 pattern [EIIR], but with Scottish crown, maker's name 3" x 1 ³ / ₁₆ "	Carron	1974-76	LB 216/2 (S)	688 Aston Hill
EIIR, 1940 pattern, maker's name 3 ³ / ₈ " x 1 ¹ / ₄ "	Carron	1969-74	LB 216/3	832
Ludlow Wall Boxes				
GR, with collection plate, (38" x 14")	Ludlow	1910-36	LWB 155/2	large, front casting only
ER [EVIIR], small (27" x 14"), with collection plate	Ludlow	1901-10	LWB 164/1	No. 2 box; additional capacity for letters at base
ER [EVIIR], small (29" x 14"), with no collection plate	Ludlow	1936	LWB 167/2	No. 4 box; enlarged capacity for letters at rear
Pillar Boxes				
VR, early mainland, western district	Butt	1854-59	PB 01/03	From Ventnor Station, Isle of Wight?*
VR, fluted, vertical aperture	Smith & Hawkes	1856-7	PB 01/08	
VR, fluted, horizontal aperture	Smith & Hawkes	1857	PB 01/09	
VR, Scotland, vertical aperture	Suttie	1856-7	PB 01/13	
VR, London Ornamental (Science & Arts)	Smith & Hawkes	1857-9	PB 02	Serial No. 126, from Greenford Green, Harrow, Middx.
VR, London Ornamental (Science & Arts)	Smith & Hawkes	1857-9	PB 02	Serial No. 112
VR, First National Standard, small	Cochrane	1859-66	PB 04/2	Dated 1861
VR, Penfold first type, small (8 ¹ / ₂ ")	Cochrane Grove & Co.	1866-71	PB 06/3	original pattern with small metal hood above aperture
VR, Penfold, first modification, low aperture (10 ¹ / ₂ "), early plate holder	Cochrane Grove & Co.	1871-2	PB 07/1	Plate: 85 South Walks Road - from Dorchester (Dorset)
VR, Penfold, replica of first modification, small (1871-2)	Machan	1988-	PB 07/4	dated 1988
VR, Penfold, large, low aperture (10 ¹ / ₂ "), second modification	Cochrane	1872-9	PB 08B/1	later plate holder
Anonymous type A (large), high aperture	Handyside	1879-83	PB 10/1	Handyside signature type 1
Anonymous type B (small), high aperture	Handyside	1879-83	PB 11/1	Handyside signature type 1; widened aperture
Anonymous type B (small), low aperture	Handyside	1883-7	PB 13	Handyside signature type 1
VR, type A (large), 7" x 1 ¹ / ₂ " aperture	Handyside	1887-	PB 14/1	Handyside signature type 1; no door strip
VR, type A (large), 7" x 1 ¹ / ₂ " aperture	Handyside	-1900	PB 14/2	Handyside signature type 1; door strip added
VR, type B (small), 7" x 1 ¹ / ₂ " aperture, door strip added	Handyside	-1900	PB 15/2	Handyside type 1 signature, door strip added
EVIIR, type B, small door, curled cypher	Handyside	1901-4	PB 18/3	Handyside signature type 3; 150 plate
GR, type A, high cypher; "McD.S. London & Glasgow"	McDowall Steven & Co., Glasgow	1911-22	PB 24/1	Replacement collection plate replacing original curved plate holder

Description	Manufacturer	Date	Cat. No.	Notes
GR, type A, high cypher, "McD.S. London & Glasgow"	McDowall Steven & Co., Glasgow	1911-22	PB 24/1	original curved plate holder replaced with pattern used on modified airmail boxes
GR, type B, low cypher, "Carron" on front, curved collection plate	Carron	1927-35	PB 27/1	
GR, type D (Post Office - one line), oval with stamp vending machine (large)	Derby Castings	1931-3	PB 29	experimental type
GR, type E (Post Office in two lines), oval with stamp vending machine (small)	Derby Castings	1931-3	PB 30	experimental type
EVIIR, type A	McDowall Steven & Co., Falkirk	1936-7	PB 32	from Station Road, Harrow, Middx.
EVIIR, type B	Carron	1936-7	PB 33	from Tring Avenue, Wembley, Middx.
EIIR, type C, double 10" apertures, Lion on the front	Lion Foundry	1964-	PB 43/3	
EIIR, type F, rectangular sheet steel	Vandyke	1968	PB 44/1	from Brent Street, London NW4
EIIR, type F, rectangular sheet steel	Vandyke	1968	PB 44/1	from Woolwich SE,
EIIR, type F, rectangular sheet steel (twin boxes with a common top), cast cypher added	Vandyke	1968	PB 44/4	Box 416, from St. Pauls, London EC4

Wall Boxes

VR, First Standard	Smith & Hawkes	1857-9	WB 072/1	
VR, Second Standard No. 2 (small)	Smith & Hawkes	1859-61	WB 075/1	minus hood
VR, Second Standard No. 2 (small)	Smith & Hawkes	1859-61	WB 075/2	modified hood
VR, No. 2 (small), 30 1/4" x 10" (as later type C)	Smith & Hawkes	1861-71	WB 078	
VR, type C (small), name incised - "BERND P WALKER, EAGLE FOUNDRY BIRMINGHAM"	B.P.Walker	1873-9	WB 083/2	
VR, type C (small), raised lettering "EAGLE RANGE & FOUNDRY COMPY, BIRMINGHAM"	Eagle Range & Foundry Co., Birmingham	1879-81	WB 083/4	
VR, type A (47" x 19"), low cypher, low aperture, no door pull	W.T.Allen	1886-1901	WB 084/2	
VR, type B (33" x 13"), low cypher, low aperture	W.T.Allen	1886-1901	WB 085/2	no door pull
VR, type B (33" x 13"), low cypher, 6 1/4" aperture	W.T.Allen	1886-1901	WB 085/3	with door pull
VR, type C (28" x 10"), 6 1/4" aperture, high cypher	W.T.Allen	1882-5	WB 087/1	with door pull
VR, type C (28" x 10"), low aperture, low cypher 2 1/8" from the top of the box	W.T.Allen	1886-1901	WB 087/2	from 146 North End Ravenstone
VR, type C (28" x 10"), low cypher, modified aperture	W.T.Allen	1886-1901	WB 087/2M	door pull
EVIIR, type C, early cypher (plain)	W.T.Allen	1901-4	WB 090	
EVIIR station box, free-standing (54" x 26") with pointed roof surmounted by a ball-scroll cypher	W.T.Allen	1901-4	WB 091	
EVIIR, type B, scroll cypher	W.T.Allen	1904-10	WB 093	
GR, type B, small high cypher 7 1/2" from bottom of door, low aperture, gaps around the crown	W.T.Allen	1910-30	WB 097/2	
GR, type C, small cypher, high crown (GR 1 3/4" high)	W.T.Allen	1910-30	WB 098/1	
GR, type E (medium), no plate or tablet, small cypher, gaps around the crown	W.T.Allen	1910-30	WB 100/2	
GR, type F (small), small cypher, low crown (GR 2" high)	W.T.Allen	1910-30	WB 101/2M	modified aperture
GR, type B, large cypher (4" high 5 3/8" from bottom of the box)	W.T.Allen	1933-6	WB 103/3	Box 398
GR, type B, large cypher (4 5/8" from bottom of box)	W.T.Allen	1933-6	WB 103/4	later plate holder
GVIR, type B	W.T.Allen	1937-52	WB 110	numbered Box 70
EIIR, type B, 10" aperture, large hood	W.T.Allen	1957-	WB 116/1	
EIIR, type B, 10" aperture, small hood	W.T.Allen	1957-65	WB 116/2	

Aperture Pieces

VR aperture piece

EVIIR cast aperture piece

possibly from WB 084/2 or /3

LAST year was an interesting year for collectors – with the celebration of 150 years of British stamps and the much-praised Stamp World London 90 international exhibition at Alexandra Palace in May. The “double-head” definitive stamps proved popular, and with straight-forward stamps from sheets and the variations to be found in stamp books, gave scope for study and the building-up of a worthwhile specialised collection. The anniversary celebrations and the exhibition were recorded in the *Bulletin* together with the usual previews of each issue of special stamps, articles on past issues, thematic collecting, book reviews, etc, etc. Indeed, there was so much to report that extra pages were needed in April, May and August.

Special Issues and Stamp Design

Barbara Last continued her ever popular background features on recent special stamp issues – writing about “Animal Welfare” (RSPCA stamps); “Royal Kew”; “Nine Royal Decades” (Queen Mother); “Courage” (Gallantry) and “Celestial Bodies” (Astronomy). “Cruising Down the River” – a survey of London buildings shown on stamps, published in April – was of particular interest to readers visiting London for the

The British Philatelic Bulletin, the Post Office’s magazine for stamp collectors, is compiled and typeset at the National Postal Museum by John Holman who reviews the issues of 1990.



John Holman, Editor

Stamp World exhibition.

British special issues are very popular with thematic collectors and in September we began a series of thematic articles by G E Drabble, starting with Aircraft and continuing with Literature in November. The series continues in 1991.

In January readers were asked to vote for their favourite set of special stamps of 1989. Some 2,260 replies were received and the poll results published in June. The favourite set was, as expected, Birds, followed by Industrial Archaeology; Food & Farming; Microscopes; Anniversaries; Lord Mayor’s Show; Christmas; and Games & Toys. The Bird stamps were praised for their clean and uncluttered appearance. Many readers said that the Food & Farming stamps made them feel hungry; on a more serious note comments were made about food hygiene and hunger in the third world. It was pleasing that the stamps gave “food for thought” on such important matters. The firework dis-

plays on the Anniversaries stamps were considered a clever idea but the following issue, Games & Toys, was heavily criticised – most thought the designs cluttered and jumbled. Those who did like them found them vivid and eye-catching.

Ronald Maddox’s Industrial Archaeology set reminded many readers of holiday visits to the sites depicted; there was also much praise for his artistic skills. The designs of the Microscope stamps were considered unusual but not unattractive but fewer liked the Lord Mayor’s Show designs which were thought jumbled by many voters. Others commented that the busy designs clearly reflected the spirit of the procession. Many welcomed David Gentleman’s return to stamp design with the Christmas stamps and few objected to the charity surcharge on four of the five stamps. The poll for the 1990 special issues was announced in the December issue, with a closing date of 31 January 1991; by the end of December over 1,300 voting forms had been returned.

Royal Mail Stamps sponsors the Stamp Design section of the annual Student Design Competition of the Royal Society of Arts. The subject of the 1989/90 stamp competition was the Student Games due to be held in Sheffield in 1991. Some of the winning designs were featured in July and November.

Closely allied to stamp design is the choice of printing process to be used. Some of the world’s finest stamps are intaglio (recess or line-engraved) printed and in the August issue, Richard Wiggins wrote enthusiastically about stamps printed in intaglio in combination with other methods. Included in his survey were British stamps so printed, for example the 1973 Parliamentary Conference and 1987 Victorian Britain issues.

Machin Issues

Notes and news on Machins were published throughout the year with specialised articles on window books by Len Newbery in February, March and December. Len also wrote about the 1990 Greetings book in the April issue. In May, Don Staddon reviewed “British Stamp Printers Today” – Harrisons, Questa and Walsall, all three companies had much-visited stands at Stamp World. A listing of Definitive and Country stamps issued during 1990 was published in the

British Philatelic Bulletin

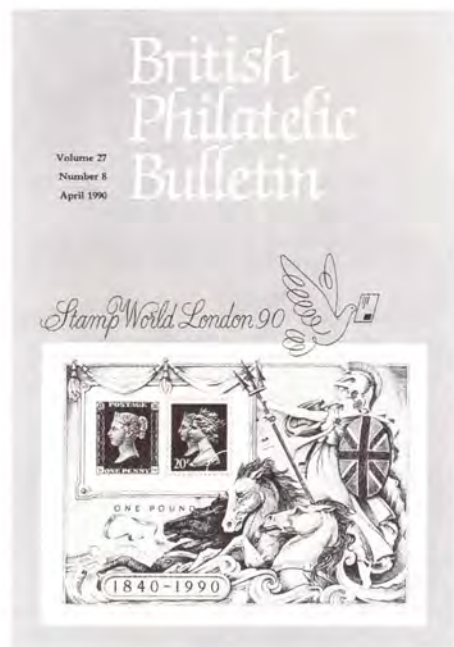
Volume 27
Number 10
June 1990



December *Bulletin* – the listing ran to some three and a half pages.

Exhibitions & 150th Anniversary

News about Stamp World was published early in the year, together with Parts 4 and 5 of James Negus's "Exhibition Retrospect" dealing with the 1970 and 1980 internationals at Olympia and Earl's Court. His survey of Stamp World appeared as the final instalment in the series in August.



The special exhibitions at the Museum were reported on and the "Gems of the Phillips Collection" dealt with some of the magnificent items in that collection relating to the 1839/40 postal reforms and the introduction of adhesive postage stamps. The Museum loaned material to the postal history museum in Riquewihir, France and to the international exhibition in Auckland, New Zealand – recorded in October and December.

Articles about personalities related to the 150th anniversary of stamps were published in April and May – Tony Gammons wrote about "The Wyon Dynasty" and Colin Bennett about "Henry Corbould – Penny Black Artist". In December James Mackay began a two-part survey of some of the many stamps commemorating the Penny Black issued during the year. 1990 also marked the 150th anniversary of the birth of Edward Stanley Gibbons – the subject of a biographical essay by Michael Briggs (of *Gibbons Stamp Monthly*) in July.

Regular Features

Ken Chapman's "Philatelic Terms Explained" series continued with articles on Dickinson Silk-Thread Paper, Prince Consort Essays, Treasury Roulettes and Ship & Packet Letters. The ever-popular "British Special Issues", by Francis Kennedy, dealt with six issues – from Motor Industry (October 1982) to Army Uniforms (July 1983). Readers continued to submit photographs for the "Posting Boxes" feature; sadly many

had to be returned as a considerable number await publication. The prize competition continued to attract about 1,500 entries each month.

Three new features were introduced – "Six Month Digest" (listing stamp issues for the past and forthcoming six months); "Post-bag" (a commentary on a selection of readers' letters) and "Picture Post" (photographs of postal events, buildings or personalities).

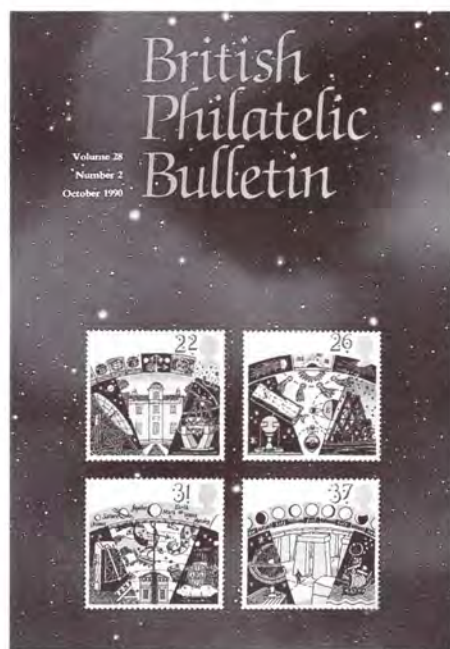
Bulletin Questionnaire

In March readers were asked to complete a simple questionnaire about the contents of the *Bulletin*. We were delighted that over 3,800 readers took the trouble to respond and the comments have proved useful in planning future issues. A number requested more articles on Post Office history and archives so we were pleased to publish, in September and October, on "Historic Engravings of the GPO in 1844" and "John Cary, Mapmaker" by Keven Squelch and Dr Douglas Ferner of Post Office Archives.

General

As always I must thank colleagues in Royal Mail Stamps (Turnmill Street headquarters, British Philatelic Bureau and the Museum) for their help throughout the year; in particular Paul Burnett of Turnmill Street who supervises the printing of the magazine. Paul works closely with freelance designer Angus Mathieson and printers Moore & Matthes to ensure an attractive and well-printed end product. Dr Jean Alexander continues her expert work on the index; that for Vol. 27 was published in August.

1990 seemed more hectic than usual – with extra work involved in Stamp World and maintenance work in the Museum's "Work Room" where the *Bulletin* is compiled and typeset. Much-needed air conditioning was installed – resulting in much noise and dust for several weeks; followed by an enforced move out of the office while the room was painted (first time for 20 years!).



The cleaning of the outside of the building caused scaffolding and canvas sheeting to block out natural light from May to the end of the year. It is to be hoped that in 1991 working conditions will more resemble an editorial office than a building site!

Postmark Bulletin

The compilation of this *Bulletin* was transferred from the British Philatelic Bureau to the Museum in June 1988. The *Bulletin* is published fortnightly and gives advance information of special handstamps and postmark slogans. It is despatched to subscribers from the Bureau in Edinburgh. Early in 1990 the booking, manufacturing and applying of special handstamps was transferred from the 64 Royal Mail letter district offices to seven Special Handstamp Centres. This has provided a better service for the collector and more effective notification of handstamps for publication in the *Bulletin*. Details of slogans are still supplied by the letter district offices.



An example of the British Postmark Bulletin.

The layout of the *Bulletin* has been improved and arrangements have been made for short articles by leading collectors on postmarks, past and present, to be included in future issues.

Working on this *Bulletin* gives me the opportunity to obtain examples of all special handstamps, and some slogans, to add to the Museum's collections. From 5 January to 16 September 1990, all machine postmarks were applied in red ink and we have examples from most offices as well as a few applied in error before and after the official dates of use. Some covers bearing special handstamps used on days of issue of new stamps are displayed in the Museum's main gallery.

I must record my thanks to Mrs Pat Burton who, until her move from the Museum to Royal Mail Stamps in December 1990, patiently turned my hand-written text into presentable typed copy from which the *Bulletin* was printed.

Association of Friends

The Association of Friends of the National Postal Museum was formed in 1985. Last year was perhaps their most successful yet. Here, the Secretary, Ray Pottle, reports on their activities.

THE highlight for any philatelic society in the United Kingdom last year must surely have been Stamp World London 90 at Alexandra Palace. It certainly was so for the Association of Friends of the National Postal Museum. Our planning in Council had, of course, taken many months of preparation prior to the actual event in May.

The editor of *Cross Post*, Douglas Myall, produced a 36-page edition which must surely rank as one of our best, with articles by Jeffery Matthews FCSO (one of Britain's leading stamp designers), Rev. Christopher Beaver (on mail coach routes), John Parker (the driver of the Post Office's preserved mail coach), J. W. M. Stone (part 9 of the Peover Papers saga), John Harley of Harrison & Sons (the second part of How a Stamp is Made), and a delightful article by James Negus on the Penny Postage Jubilee of 1890. This was a well balanced edition with something of interest to most collectors, and beautifully illustrated.

David Rutt, our Public Relations Officer, produced two items for the exhibition: an introductory leaflet "Celebrate with Friends", and a most unusual map taken from the viewpoint of the terrace of Alexandra Palace looking south towards London, the London of 1840, highlighting all the places, people and events connected with the genesis of the Penny Black.

The Friends were in attendance at the National Postal Museum stand at Alexandra Palace throughout the entire period of the exhibition when these publications sold very well and we were able to recruit 116 new Friends at the same time.

The Friends' year commenced with a visit to Bruce Castle Museum, one time home and workplace of Rowland Hill in his pre postal reform and penny post days. Rachel Hasted, the Curator, gave a talk on this lesser known period of his life. The Museum also houses the Morten collection containing items of postal history from the old coaching days. This was a most memorable day for all Friends who attended.

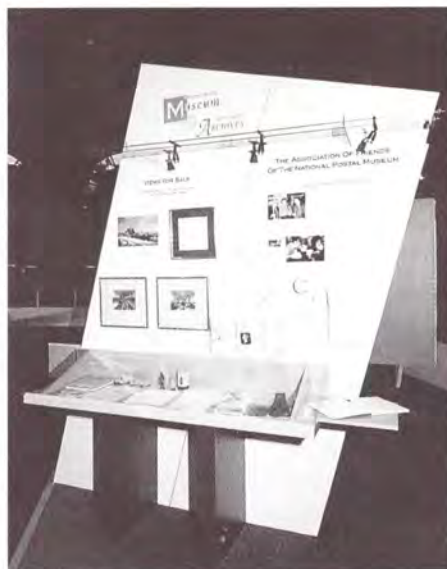
September saw over 40 Friends visiting the Post Office Research Establishment at Dorcan, near Swindon, Wiltshire. Dr. Tim Lane, the head of the Materials Research and Quality Assurance Laboratory, and his staff entertained the Friends to a day-long visit. A most interesting introductory talk was pro-

vided by Colin Pawson of Royal Mail Stamps. We then toured, in small parties, the various laboratories both before and after a superb lunch. In two years' time we are hoping for a return visit.

Finally, our AGM saw 80 Friends and guests assembled, first for the formal proceedings which produced a very interesting question and answer period. Our two main speakers were from Stanley Gibbons Ltd: Hugh Jefferies, the editor of *Gibbons Stamp Monthly* and David Aggersberg, assisted by his wife Susan, displaying some of the company's treasures amassed over the 125 years since the publication of their first catalogue.

Hugh delivered an amusing account of the life and work of Edward Stanley Gibbons, surely the best-known name in philately. After lunch David produced a library of catalogues from the first slim edition of just a few pages to the heavy tomes which have become the norm as stamp issues have multiplied. Every Friend attending received a signed cover as a memento of the occasion.

Information about the Friends can be obtained from the Secretary, Association of Friends of the National Postal Museum, National Postal Museum, KEB, King Edward Street, London EC1A 1LP.



The Friends part of the stand at Alexandra Palace

Friends at the Research Centre listening to Ian Fraser talking about cancelling machines



