

Soon, very soon ...

Zernard.



Welcome to the first issue of Mr Howler's Journal for the Year of the Pensive Hare.

This issue's free stamp celebrates the new year. A unique design, with apologies to Albrecht Durer who knew a good hare when he saw it. So it's hare today and again tomorrow.

Enclosed is the latest stamp update. Thanks as ever to Helen Hill for her sterling work. We will, of course, be trying to keep her busy this coming year.

After his marathon stint in the last issue, Gavin Arnold has been given time off for good behaviour, so there is no auction update this time, but many of you are already aware of two startling ebay sales in the last couple of months.

## **Diary Dates**

The April Shower will take place in Wincanton on the weekend of April 4th and 5th, and in July we'll be celebrating the 5th anniversary of Discworld stamps with a grand birthday tea party on Saturday July 11th. Plans include a 'Walking the Walk' tournament.

The Emporium will be going on the road too, to the US Convention in August, and the Irish Convention in November.

November will also bring the opening of 'Nation' at the National Theatre in London. And, of course, Hogswatch.

#### **Comings and Goings**

The fifth year of Discworld stamps seemed the perfect time to introduce different variations of Ankh-Morpork's definitive stamps. Ringing the changes with new colours again - was really not going to cut the mustard.

So, the Patrician has moved into new surroundings, the Post Office's mission statement has been restored, the Tower of Art has lost little of its height but is a shade fatter and a lot more colourful, and the 5p Morporkia has been ousted by the Patrician.. The themes of the 2p and 10p stamps are, as ever, the city's arms and Morporkia, but both are very differently presented.

The Year of the Pensive Hare will bring plenty more comings and goings, and a fresh look with new designers and artists. And printers; the team of craftsmen who produced the letterpress stamps for us will now be taking charge of all our printing, and we are grateful for their commitment and enthusiasm. We've every confidence that our print problems of 2008 are behind us.

#### Hare Today, Gone Tomorrow

During the course of the year, the Sto Lat stamps will disappear, and it is understood that Queen Kelirehenna will commission a new design. The Two Shirts stamp will also be going out of circulation by the middle of the year. Meanwhile, several new countries are likely to join the postal community, including Quirm, Llamedos, and Überwald. Rumour has it that what appear to be stamps are emerging from Howondaland we hope to bring you samples in due course.

It would seem that inflation in the Bonk economy has led to the withdrawal of the 1 Bizlot stamp. The Genua 1 dollar has also gone out of circulation, but is likely to be replaced; by some strange coincidence, its successor is scheduled to appear around the time of the US Convention. Bad Blintz too, has plans to replace its stamp range.

Rumour has it that the Alchemists' Guild is planning to sponsor a postage stamp, and members of that Guild are busily experimenting with glues. No good will come of it. Other guilds thinking of joining the fray are the Engravers and Printers, the Musicians and the Armourers, and Mr Boggis has hinted that the Guild of Thieves will be launching a new stamp during the course of the year.

# INSIDE DUT TUO 3012/11

There have been some entertaining suggestions on the forum recently concerning stamps for the forthcoming year; Nobby Nobbs and Wuffles were amongst the suggested subjects. But consider the view of The Establishment. Would Royal Mail dedicate a stamp to a dog? OK, bad example, these days they might. But would the Royal Mail of Queen Victoria's day? And Corporal Nobbs wouldn't necessarily be the Ankh-Morpork establishment's idea of stamp material either. It's easy to imagine that Lord Vetinari would have a View on the matter. As we are often exhorted by Our Sponsor, it's imperative to think from the inside out, not the outside in.

#### **Moving On**

Kelshandra's inimitable website is on the move. She writes:

'This is due to the wonderful Mad Hamish deciding to call it a day on the Silver Horde web site (on which Mad Fans was squatting in a virtual corner). I've just registered the new domain and acquired a little corner of web space to call my own (sniff my little page is growing up...) and everything should be all set up by the time the journal comes out.'

The new url will be: www.discworldstampfan.info

### One for the Album

The next edition of the Stanley Howler Discworld Stamp Album will be available in the next few weeks. We are indebted to Mike (The Gonagle) Pleasants, for compiling the album, and to Helen Hill, whose stamp updates provided invaluable source material. The new album will cover all Discworld stamps issued after Hogswatch in the Year of the Reversed Ptarmigan and Hogswatch in the Year of the Three Roses, a period of time more succinctly known as 2008.

### In Trade

Readers of a certain age will remember picture cards given away in tea packets and with cigarettes, known to collectors as trade cards. Rumour has it that the next Discworld book may describe a set of cards not unlike cigarette cards that could possibly have something to do with a soccer team that might be associated with the Unseen University. Or it may not. But just in case it happens, we'll be ready.

In the meantime, we'll bring you more about trade cards in the next edition.

#### **Cabbage Trading**

Now available, a special book of Mail Coach Issue stamps, for use only on Certified Carriers on approved Mail Routes. The book of nine stamps can be exchanged for 25 green cabbage stamps.

# THE SECURING OF THE PRINT By Darren Hill

Stamps have long been used as symbols of revenue and payment, making their printing in essence a licence to print money. Indeed the evolution in the printing and securing of the methods to print postage stamps has mirrored and followed that of money. The problem of forgery is just as applicable to stamps as it is to banknotes, as the face value of some stamps is comparable to that of some notes, and the value of whole stamp sheets can be considerable. Whilst some of the countermeasures put in place for banknotes are obvious and well known (watermarks, hidden images etc), those in place for stamp production are often less so.

Indeed it often comes as a surprise to people that stamps carry any kind of security at all, and that they are produced and printed often by the very same people who print money and other official items like bank cheques and government documents. By necessity of size the features for stamps are not so obvious, but they are still present.

One of the simplest is the use of security inks. These are specially produced to have features such as being solvent sensitive, or to be invisible under normal light (but by using special illumination they appear). Other techniques available include the use of special papers (with unique properties and/or textures to make recognition of forgeries simpler) and the use in some cases of intricately etched and detailed designs, either in the foreground main image (e.g. the Queen's head on UK Royal Mail stamps) or for background images (either pictorial or intricate repetitive Guilloche designs). Any degradation in the quality of the printing used will be visible in such designs, making accurate forging of the items much more difficult and costly.

Even some of the features built into stamps for other purposes lend themselves to security and counterfeit item identification. Examples of this are the phosphors that can be used to mechanise letter sorting, and also even the perforations used to separate the stamps on a sheet. Close inspection of a stamp will show that these are not just equal regular holes, but have a different pattern.

And such security measures are always evolving. Early next year some new ones will be introduced by the Royal Mail, in the form of four small semi-circular slits cut into each stamp. These are not designed to prevent forgery, but the other revenue problem of stamp removal from the envelope and re-use. Quite what this says about the quality of franking is another matter though. These stamps will also of course feature some of the above techniques too, for example the use of an iridescent ink pattern on the background colouration around the Queens head.

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So who knows what Discworld equivalents may be featured in future books and stamps. It could be a whole new avenue for parody...

# It's Déjà vu all over again

As the fifth anniversary of Discworld stamps approaches, it's time to withdraw the original sequence of Ankh-Morpork stamps. So now, for all the Flatalists and philatelists who've had that gnawing feeling that there was something strangely familiar about some of the stamps, we can put you out of your misery....



Look carefully at this stamp for the British colony of Natal, remove Edward VII and replace him with Alan Batley's drawing of Morporkia....

Natal issued stamps from 1857, and this one dates from 1902. In 1910 it became part of the new Union of South Africa, but Natal stamps continued in use until 1913.

The Ankh-Morpork 2p owes much to this German empire stamp which dates to the same period as the Natal stamp. Again, replace the central icon with Alan's versio





And while we're spilling the beans, the Twoshirts stamps look very like this stamp used throughout German colonies in east Africa and south Pacific

To save you the trouble of searching for references for the new Ankh-Morpork stamps, the new Patrician is a hand-drawn version of the Victorian ten shilling stamp in circulation between 1867 and 1883, and the 2p is freely adapted from the Dominica 5 shilling stamp of 1903 with a new version of the coat of arms. As for the 5p and 10p, the frame around Alan Batley's portraits of Morporkia and Vetinari was inspired by a 1930s Grenada stamp combined with elements from the USA 15c Lincoln stamp of 1866. But don't tell Teemer and Spools they think they designed it!

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### Hogswatch 2008 how rare is rare?

There has been some speculation about the relative rarity of some of the more unusual combinations of this stamp, so here is the definitive answer. To simplify the descriptions, we'll call the standard

large stamp the 'bath towel', as someone

affectionately dubbed it on the forum. The version that was perforated into three sections we'll call the triptych.



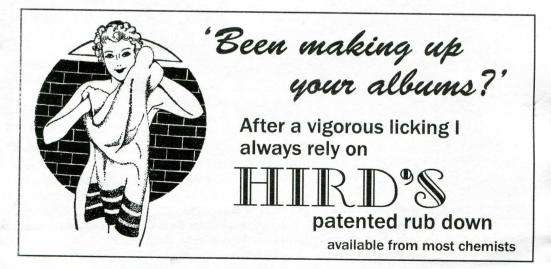
Ten sheets of triptych stamps were separated and distributed across the 1000 Hogswatch Event Limited Edition LBEs. This brought 270 common 'thirds' and 30 sport 'thirds' into circulation, all of them mint.

Out of the 250 First Day Covers produced, ten will carry the joined triptych common stamp. These will not be sold, but will be given as prizes. Another five have the common bath towel plus the joined triptych sport, and these will be reserved for very special prizes.

In addition, 25 mint joined triptych commons and 5 mint joined triptych pairs have been reserved for future prizes.

But absolutely no mint triptych sports have been or will be released, other than those that went in the limited edition LBE, so if you are the proud owner of one of these thirds it is a rare beast indeed. The only thing you might consider is teaming up with the owners of the other two parts and arranging joint custody!

As for the 'bath towel sport', we calculate that fewer than 200 have gone into circulation.





In the earliest days of stamp collecting, innocent new philatelists didn't have much in the way of handbooks or magazines to keep them on the straight and narrow. They happily collected anything that looked like a stamp including labels, telegraph stamps,

fiscal issues, bogus stamps, even complete forgeries. In the 1870s a new term was coined for what we now call Cinderellas they were known as 'album weeds'.

Between the 1930s and 1970s a pair of brothers wrote a series of books on stamp collecting. In one book written especially for young collectors, Norman and Maurice Williams listed a range of Cinderella stamps and were unambiguous in their advice. These', they declared,

# 'have no place in a stamp album'.

This puritanical approach was particularly surprising as the brothers were joint editors of 'The Cinderella Philatelist' for many years, and were both keen collectors.

The earliest stamp collector is thought to have been Dr John Gray, Keeper of the Zoological Department of the British Museum. He bought several Penny Blacks on their date of issue on 1 May 1840, some Twopenny Blues a week later, and was evidently hooked for life. In 1862 he was responsible for one of the earliest catalogues of stamps. But of course he was disadvantaged as a collector by having to wait for postage stamps to be invented before he could collect them, allowing the first recorded Cinderella collector to steal a march of nearly 70 years.

This was John Bourke, who had been appointed Receiver-General of the Stamp Duties in Ireland. In 1774 revenue stamps were introduced to Ireland, and Bourke's collection began.



The brothers Williams at their stamp album. Note: the younger, Norman, has stuck a stamp to his finger, the twat.

Kel's Crafty Corner:

Things to do with partially franked stamps #321

PAPER BEADS .....

Have a big pile of partially franked stamps spare but you don't know what to do with? How about turning them into beads and make some unique jewellery.

Materials needed:

- Spare stamps (you can also use any other spare papers around)
- Paper
- PVA Glue (also know as white glue in some parts)
- Scissors or a sharp knife
- Pins or knitting needles or wire (anything thin and smooth will do)
- Varnish

To make small beads, cut a stamp into a long triangle or trapezoid. Cover the plain side of the stamp with glue. Starting with the wide end of the stamp, curl the end around the wire to form the bead. Make sure the end is securely stuck down, then slide the bead off.

For larger beads, use plain paper as a base. Stick the stamp to one end of the paper and cut out a long, thin triangle or trapezoid with the stamp at the narrow tip end. Make the bead as above. Feel free to experiment with the size and shape of the paper that you cut out- different shapes will produce different shaped beads and the longer the paper, the larger the finished bead will be.

Completed beads can be varnished or painted with a solution of one part white glue to 3 parts water. This will help to strengthen them. Once dry you can use your beads as you wish. Have fun!



Miss Tickle of accounts wearing her paper beads





This wooden posting box is still in its original position in the wall of a building which was the town post office in Lyme Regis, Dorset, from 1799 until 1853. It's believed to be one of the oldest surviving postboxes in the country.

Mr Stanley Howler would welcome photographs of other old or interesting postboxes.



 Snailed – Mary White, of Frinton, with her mail. Picture: TERRY WEEDEN (78908-1)

Snail Mail

We're grateful to Caroline Parkinson for sending us this cutting from the Colchester Gazette.

SNAIL MAIL: Snails munched through mail after invading a pillarbox in Little Bentley.

# **Competition** Corner

With the demise of the Tupenny Upright and the introduction of the Fourpenny Horizontal, it seemed appropriate for the Journal 16 Competition to invite suggestions for nicknames for Discworld stamps.

Perhaps inevitably, there was a particular interest in stamps released by the Guild of Seamstresses. Consistent with the 'commercially salacious, suggestive thinking associated with the Tuppeny Upright and Fourpenny Horizontal', Brian Delaney thought the Seamstress Farthing stamp might be called the 'Farthing Optical', because 'it's just worth a look'. Keith Matthews thought it could be nicknamed the 'Diamond Trembler' because it's standing on one corner and difficult to stay balanced, of course. George Billman mooted a stamp as yet unpublished, to be known as the 'Full Frontal', but hastens to point out that this would be because the patrician's portrait would not be in profile, but full face.

Nigel Rogers confided that the fourpenny horizontal will, for him, 'always be the Heidi as I am sure I recognise the model as being one of Mrs Palm's favourite girls (and mine) Heidi Sausage'. This one had to be explained to Mr Howler, as did Nigel's suggestion that the Tower of Art could be called The Stonky.

Martyn (Doc Brown) Ransom had three suggestions: The Australian Convention sport could be known as the 'What the XXXX?', the 50 bizot Bad Blintz could be 'Just Peachy', and the Leshp \$1 is the 'Here today, gone.....'

Keith Matthews thinks the Bonk 100 could be called the 'Bloody Bat'.

The Hyams, as usual, made several references so steeped in British cultural\* icons as to be unintelligible to our overseas readers. Sorry, Muppets, I can't bring myself to outline to our colonial cousins why the Unseen University penny farthing sport could be called the 'Larry Grayson', but at least the 08 Convention 'hurtling turtle' requires no explanation. They also proposed that the Genua 1 cent be called the 'Cock-a-doodle-do' and its grisly sport the 'Cock-a-leekie'. Yuk.

(\* In some cases, I have used the word 'cultural' in its loosest sense.)

Steve James notes that the Bad Blintz 10 bizot showed a light shining out. As the light had been extinguished in the sport, he suggests that an air raid must be expected, and has nicknamed the sport the 'Blitz'.

Jonty Hird reported how the original 'smoking' Wahoonie stamp drew the attention of a pressure group, Residents Against Tobacco, Swearing, Hedonistic practices, Intoxicating substances, and Teenagers. (As this is a family journal, we'll not go into what that acronym stands for). This group petitioned the Patrician, arguing that citizens were already in danger from Street Crime, without the added promotion of Tobacco. The smokeless Wahoonie should therefore be known as 'The Politically Correct No Smoking' Stamp. Larry (Lazzagami) suggested that the blurred Patrician sport could be 'given the nom de plume of 'Optician's Delight' by said Guild due to their sudden increase in business. No point in giving their motto, he says, as everyone knows it's "you ain't seen nothing yet".'

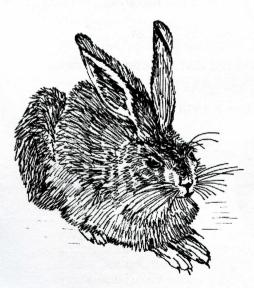
Our first competiton entry constructed in three languages came from René Despert who notes that the 1p Sto Helit's latin device is 'faber is quisque fortunae suae', and quotes the French President's exhortation to work harder to earn more. He therefore suggests that it be known as The Hard Worker, or rather 'L'ouvrier'.

Mark Holloway combined three Merchants' Guild stamps the butchers 50p, the grocers penny farthing, and the greengrocers 2p to create the fiftythree and a quarter pence stamp to be known as the BLT, the bacon, lettuce and tomato.

Nigel Rogers suggested that the two Sto Helit stamps could collectively be known as 'Beauty and the Beast'. The more obvious pair, the Koom Valley commemoratives, could be called the 'Hi Ho', 'as in Hi Ho, Hi Ho, it's off to work we go, and the Ho Hum, as in the expression of inevitability of the result of riling a bunch of trolls'.

Congratulations everyone, prizes are on their way.

JOURNAL 17 COMPETITION



For the start of the Year of the Pensive Hare, the competition is to describe in not more than 40 words and/or one picture, what the hare is thinking about. The picture must work in grey scale.

Entries can be emailed or posted, and must be received by the 31st of March.

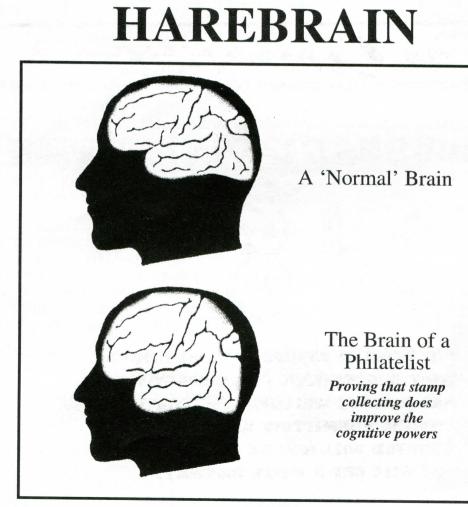
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# THIS ISSUE'S EXCLUSIVE OFFER:

A perforated proof sheet featuring five of the special stamps which have appeared on mail from Wincanton in the past few months:

St Tourettes, St Asperger, The People's Republic of Wincanton twinned with Pyong Yang, the Year of the Ox, and the  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent virtual added tax stamp.

The proof sheet costs £6.00 and can be ordered on the website. The username, as ever, is: subscriber And you will need the password:



# Your Editorial Team Editor in Chief Mr Stanley Howler

Editor in Chief Mr Stanley Howler Sub-editor Hilary Daniels Roving reporter Darren Hill Records department Helen Hill Picture Desk Bernard Pearson Small Ads Isobel Pearson

The Competition



MR HOWLER WISHES IT TO BE KNOWN THAT SUGGESTIONS FOR COMPETITIONS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME. UNFORTUNATELY, ANYONE SUBMITTING AN IDEA THAT IS ADOPTED WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ENTER, BUT WILL GET A PRIZE ANYWAY.





2008

ALL ABOUT STAMPS FROM THE HOME OF STAMPS



The Year of the Pensive Hare commemorative stamp





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If any of these items are missing from your Journal, please contact the editor, who will make the usual excuses.

Kindly address all correspondence, abuse, valedictory communications, or marriage proposals to:

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