

Agatha Christie

£6 Prestige Stamp Book

19 March 1991

The 1991 Prestige Stamp Book will be issued on 19 March and will feature the life and times of Agatha Christie. The book, designed by Trickett and Webb Limited and printed by The House of Questa Limited, contains four new stamp panes and three new single stamp variations.

The book contains details of a competition to win a trip for two to Paris on the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express, the train made famous in one of Agatha Christie's works.

Stamp Panes

There are four panes of Machin definitive stamps, each with an illustrated stub: (1) 6 x 17p; (2) 9 x 22p; (3) 6 x 22p, 2 x 33p and 1 label; (4) 6 x 17p. Panes 1 and 4 will contain stamps with a central phosphor band; panes 2 and 3 will be on phosphor coated paper. All stamps cover basic inland postal rates: 17p and 22p — second and first class letters up to 60g, 33p — first class letters between 60 and 100g.

All panes have selvedge, giving a miniature sheet effect, and also have a vertical column of rouletting near the binding margin for ease of removing the complete stamp pages from the book if desired.

Stamp Variations

The book will yield three new stamps:

1. 17p Litho, centre band
2. 22p Litho, PCP
3. 33p Litho, PCP

First Day Cover

A Royal Mail first day cover envelope will be available from the British Philatelic Bureau, "Collections" centres, philatelic counters and most main post offices approximately two weeks before 19 March, price 19p. The usual facilities will be provided on 19 March at offices with first day posting boxes.

The British Philatelic Bureau will provide its usual first day cover service and there will be two pictorial postmarks, one for the Bureau and one for Marple, Cheshire. The Royal Mail cover, addressed to the destination required, bearing the mixed value pane cancelled with the



Bureau or Marple pictorial postmarks will be serviced by the Bureau. Application forms, available from the Bureau and main post offices, should be returned not later than 19 March.

Customers requiring only the special pictorial postmarks may obtain them under the reposting facility by sending on 19 March covers bearing the new stamps/panes under a stamped outer cover endorsed "Pictorial First Day Post-



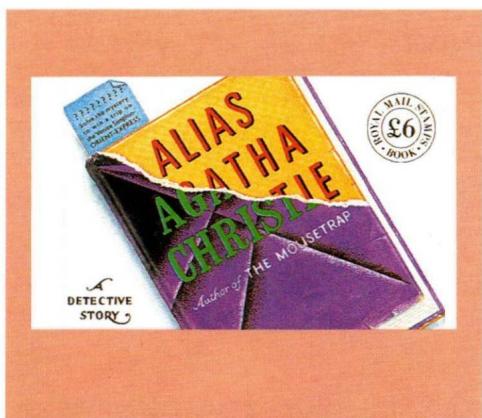
mark - Agatha Christie" to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH EH3 5TT (Bureau postmark) or Northern England Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail House, Forth Street, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE NE1 1AA (Marple postmark). Collectors wishing their first day covers to be returned under a protective cover should provide an addressed envelope of suitable size. This need not bear additional postage stamps, the postage being already paid by the stamps affixed to the covers for postmarking.

Agatha Christie

Agatha Christie, Britain's best-known and most-loved crime writer, was born Agatha Mary Clarissa Miller at Torquay, Devon on 15

September 1890. As a young girl she lived in something of a "world of her own" and she remained a very private person to the end of her days. She rarely gave interviews and when she did gave very little away. Her first marriage to Colonel Christie ended in divorce in 1928 but her second marriage (in 1930) to the archaeologist Max Mallowan was happier and she accompanied him on many of his explorations.

Under the name Agatha Christie she wrote over 70 mystery novels and nearly 20 plays, becoming the best-selling author ever. Her first book *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* was published in 1920 and a two-hour film version was shown on London Weekend Television to mark the centenary of her birth. Television and cinema keep Agatha Christie's work in the public eye. Successful films have been made of *Death on the Nile* and *Murder on the Orient Express* and the television plays featuring her best-known characters Miss Marple and Hercule Poirot, attract huge audiences. Her most famous play *The Mouse Trap* is still running at the St Martin's Theatre in London - the longest running play in the west end, having started at the Ambassadors Theatre on 25 November 1952. Her books are never out of print and although sales dwindled after her death, the TV series and centenary celebrations have increased sales and interest.



Agatha Christie was awarded the CBE in 1956 and created a Dame in 1971; she died in 1976. She would no doubt be amazed by the interest her centenary has aroused but pleased that her books and plays still give so much pleasure to millions. With the vogue for nostalgia - the charm of village life, steam railways and detective work without the aid of computers - her works look like giving that pleasure for many years to come.

Student Stamp Designs

The Royal Society of Arts travelling exhibition of student designs will be at the Bournemouth & Poole College of Art & Design, Wallisdown Road, Poole, Dorset, BH12 5HH from 18 February to 8 March and at the Staffordshire Polytechnic Flaxman Gallery, College Road, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 2DE from 18 to 29 March. Details of the 1989-90 RSA Student Design Competition and exhibition were published in the July 1990 *Bulletin*.

Shown here are 1989-90 competition designs for World Student Games stamps by Emma Wiegold of Croydon College.



Shakespeare will be the theme for the Postage Stamp section of the 1990-91 design competition sponsored by Royal Mail Stamps. Students may interpret The Bard in any way they wish; they might bear in mind that the Shakespeare Globe Centre, Bankside, London is to open in 1993 - the 400th anniversary year of *Titus Andronicus* and *The Taming of the Shrew*. The winners of the competition will be announced at the award ceremony in London in May and it is hoped to illustrate some of their work in the *Bulletin*.

Correction

In the preview of the Country stamps in the November *Bulletin* we stated that the colours are as the equivalent values of the national definitives. In error we referred to the 19p flame instead of 22p flame. The current first class rate is of course 22p; 19p was the first class rate from September 1988 to October 1989; 19p stamps were also of flame colour.