

# 124. Cycling Centenaries, 1978

The pleasures of cycling — past and present — were abundantly illustrated by the four stamps issued by The Post Office on 2 August 1978, marking the centenaries of the Cyclists' Touring Club and the British Cycling Federation, founded in the year (1878) of the world's first national cycling competitions. The Federation is the outcome of the amalgamation of the original National Cyclists' Union with the British League of Racing Cyclists formed in 1942, and its objects are to encourage, promote, develop and control the sport and pastime of cycling in all its aspects throughout Great Britain. It also supports and protects cyclists' rights and privileges in general, particularly safeguarding its members' interests, private members and those

belonging to affiliated clubs. The Federation is the supreme authority on road and track racing, and promotes regular national and local, professional and amateur championships.

The stamps, designed by Fritz Wegner, show (9p) a 'penny-farthing' of *circa* 1880, also known as an 'ordinary', with its enormous front wheel and direct pedal-drive, with a so-called 'safety' bicycle of 1884 with rear chain drive and what was to become the standard diamond frame. Note also the recognised cyclists' garb of the period — cap or helmet, jacket, knickerbockers and high boots for the gentlemen, a fashionable hat and crinoline dress for the lady. The 10½p stamp depicts a couple with touring bicycles of the 1920s, while the 11p shows modern small-wheel cycles of the Moulton type introduced in 1962. Road-racers of the present time are shown on the 13p stamp — after a lapse caused by the advent of the motor car, cycle racing was revived in 1942 when the annual 14-day Tour of Britain ('Milk Race'), organised on the lines of the famous Tour de France (first held in 1903), was started. Incidentally the most prolific use of the bicycle today is by The Post Office whose staff maintain some 30,000 machines.

The stamps were printed in sheets of 100 (two panes of 50, 10 x 5) on unwatermarked paper with 'All-over' phosphor. Quantities issued: 9p, 44,990,000; 10½p, 12,760,000; 11p, 11,980,000; and 13p, 10,980,000.

JAMES WATSON

## New Stamp Books with Illustrated Covers

On 14 January 1986 two new stamp books, priced at £1.20 and £1.50, will go on sale. The £1.20 book will contain 10 x 12p stamps and the £1.50 book will contain 6 x 17p and 4 x 12p stamps. The covers will depict postboxes, continuing the theme started with the 50p and £1.70 books.

The two books will carry the 'Write Now' letter pack offer, as featured on BBC television. The pack comprises an attractive envelope-shaped folder which contains a set of 11 full colour reference cards with hints on composing a variety of letters covering a range of themes. The stamp books are designed by Michael Thierens Design Ltd.

### Technical Details

Both the stamps and stamp book covers are printed by Harrison & Sons Limited; the stamps in

