

Postal Stationery Update

Robert Louis Stevenson Aerogramme

A new Scottish aerogramme – the 39th in the series started in 1974 – will be available from post offices in Scotland, the British Philatelic Bureau, Collections, Post Shops Plus and Philatelic Counters from 22 March. This will mark the centenary of the death of one of Scotland's greatest writers, Robert Louis Stevenson.

Stevenson was born Robert Lewis Balfour Stevenson at 8 Howard Place, Edinburgh in 1850. (Howard Place is but a short distance from the Bureau in Brandon Street.) His father, Thomas, and grandfather, Robert, were both engineers and it was expected that RLS would follow this career. Grandfather Robert (1772-1850) was responsible for many Scottish lighthouses including that on the Bell Rock (1807). One of his sons Alan, was engineer for the Skerryvore Lighthouse, on a lonely rock 10 miles west of the island of Tiree. This has been described as “the world's most graceful lighthouse” and featured on a Scottish aerogramme issued in 1986.

Young Robert started to train as an engineer at Edinburgh University but later switched to law and qualified as an advocate in 1875. He travelled in Europe during the late 1870s, and in 1880 married Fanny Osbourne in the USA. He returned to Scotland and one of his famous books, *Treasure Island*, began as a story for his stepson, Lloyd Osbourne, whilst on a family holiday at Braemar. From 1885 to 1887 RLS and his family lived in Bournemouth in a house named “Skerryvore” after the famous lighthouse. The house was demolished in 1943. At “Skerryvore” he wrote several of his best-known works including *More Arabian Nights*, *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and *Kidnapped*.

Much of the inspiration for the stories came from Scotland and Scottish folk. The regions of Appin and around Kingshouse, Argyll are described in *Kidnapped*, as is Cluny's Cage near Dalwhinnie, Inverness-shire. The Old Kirk at Glencorse, Midlothian and Braxfield House, Lanark feature in *Weir of Hermiston* and

Ballantrae, near Ayr, in *The Master of Ballantrae*. Stevenson spent several holidays at Swanston, Midlothian – the area features in both *St Ives* and *Weir of Hermiston*. His childhood days amongst Edinburgh's wynds, closes and lands form the backdrop for some of the stories. Stevenson dedicated his book of verse *A Child's Garden of Verse* to his Edinburgh nurse Alison Cunningham. Stevenson memorabilia can be seen in The Writers' Museum in Edinburgh and there is a memorial tablet in St Giles Cathedral.

Stevenson spent relatively little time in London. He lodged in Hampstead in 1874 and was a member of the Savile Club. His fondness for the delight of childhood days endeared him to the toy Theatre sheets published by Pollock. He once wrote “If you love art, folly or the bright eyes of children speed to Pollock's”. He had a penchant for the bohemian, reflected in growing his hair long and wearing velvet coats. Although some of his works show great originality, he confessed to “playing the sedulous ape” to other writers.

Stevenson's health was never robust and in 1887 he left Britain for warmer climes, settling on the Vailima estate on the Pacific island of Samoa. There he continued to write, in collaboration with Lloyd Osbourne; producing *The Wrong Box*, *The Wrecker* and *The Ebb Tide*. Although his health improved, he died suddenly from a ruptured blood vessel in the brain on 3 December 1894.

Samoa has paid tribute to RLS on its stamps since 1935. Some have featured Stevenson alone or with characters from his books, and his house at Vailima. British philatelic commemoration has so far been limited to a 1993 Greetings stamp featuring Long John Silver from *Treasure Island*, and the inclusion of his portrait (by Girolamo Nerli, 1892) on a Scottish aerogramme of 1989. This marked the centenary of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, other portraits shown included writers Sir Walter Scott, Robert Burns and Sir Compton Mackenzie, and Mary Queen of Scots and Prince Charles Edward Stewart (Bonnie Prince Charlie).

Robert Louis Stevenson

1850-94



Born into a famous Edinburgh engineering family, Robert Louis Stevenson forsook a career as a lawyer to make his name as a writer, leaving behind the Victorian restrictions that had cramped his life in Edinburgh for freedom in London and Paris.

Marriage to Fanny Osbourne in 1878 fired his creative genius in *Treasure Island*, *Kidnapped*, and *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, which have enthralled generations of readers.



Although a lively and energetic man, Stevenson was dogged by illhealth, until he settled in Samoa where he gained a temporary respite. He died there in 1894, loved and honoured by the Samoans who called him 'Tusitala', the teller of tales, but RLS achieved a fame, both as novelist and poet, that was truly worldwide.

Top: Robert Louis Stevenson, National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh.
Centre: One Captain from *Pirates Street*, an illustration from *Picturesque Notes*.
Left: Long John Silver, an illustration from *Treasure Island* by Osbert Dill.

Robert Louis Stevenson

1850-94

Designed by Richard Smith
 Printed by McCorquodale Envelopes Limited
 for the British Post Office

TO OPEN, SLIT HERE / GUS A FOSGLADH, GEARR AN SEO

By air mail
Par avion
 Aerogramme

Air post-adhar
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Postcode/
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An aerogramme should not contain
 any enclosure / Na cuir call air bronn
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
 All illustrations (including photographs of
 the spines of books) by R.L. Stevenson
 by permission of the Trustees of the
 National Library of Scotland



Designed by Richard Smith
 Printed by McCorquodale Envelopes Limited
 for the British Post Office

FIRST FOLD HERE / SEO AN CIAD FILLIADH



Spines of Robert Louis Stevenson's books, from left to right: *The Master of Ballantrae*, illustration by W.H. Paget Cassell & Co., London, 1911; *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (The Bodleyhead, London, 1900); *Treasure Island with a Donkey on the Cevennes* (Chentle & Worsell, London, 1912); *Castle Rock* (illustration by A.C. Michael Cassell & Co., London, 1915); *A Child's Garden of Verses* (Longmans, London, 1907); *Memories & Writings of Robert Louis Stevenson* (New York, 1887); *The Black Arrow*, illustration by Cyrus Cuneo Cassell & Co., London, 1915; *Kidnapped*, illustration by W.H. & Stuart Cassell & Co., London, 1915; **Front Cover:** *Treasure Island*, illustration by John Emmon Cassell & Co., London, 1915; **Background:** Stevenson's map of *Treasure Island*.



The Stevenson aerogramme (22 March 1994) is a worthy addition to the series of Scottish aerogrammes which over the past 20 years have commemorated much that is good in Scottish history, flora, fauna and culture. The aerogramme, designed by Richard Smith and printed by McCorquodale Envelopes, will cost 45p. This includes aerogramme postage of 36p.

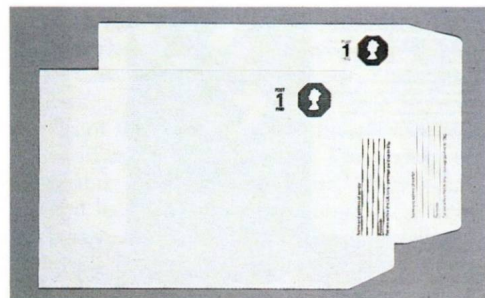
A special Edinburgh "First Day of Issue" postmark will be available on 22 March 1994 when the aerogramme goes on sale. Collectors should send the aerogramme, with envelope for return if required "under cover" to: Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, George Square, GLASGOW G2 1AA. Ask for Stevenson Aerogramme Handstamp. Please submit aerogrammes as soon as possible on or after 22 March.

To mark Stevenson's centenary numerous events are being staged in Scotland this year, including three exhibitions in Edinburgh – "Jekyll or Hyde" (City Art Centre, July-October), "Pictures of the Mind" (National Library of Scotland, July-October) which is receiving financial support from The Scottish Post Office Board and "Treasure Islands" (Royal Museum of Scotland, August 1994 – January 1995). Details can be obtained from the RLS Centenary Co-ordinator, National Library of Scotland, George IV Bridge, EDINBURGH EH1 1EW, Tel. 031-226 4531 ex. 4411.

The second Scottish aerogramme of 1994, commemorating the bicentenary of the Gordon Highlanders, will be issued on 19 July

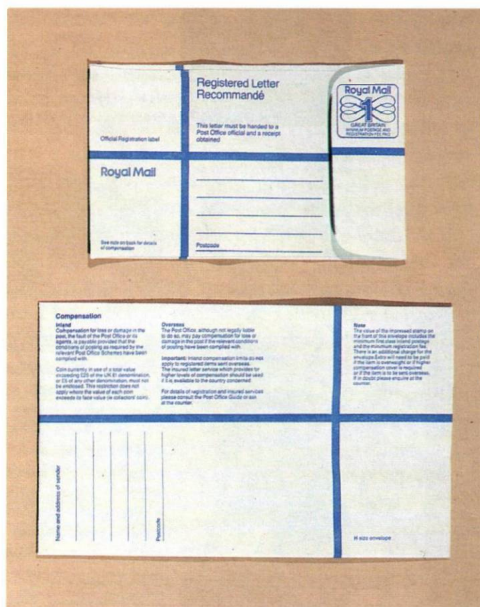
New C5 Stamped Envelope

A new series of 1st and 2nd class pre-stamped envelopes bearing a Machin head silhouette of The Queen were introduced in 1991 and have proved popular particularly with small businesses. Packs of envelopes are available to



businesses from the Post Office Supplies Department at Hemel Hempstead, collectors can obtain single envelopes or packs from the Philatelic Bureau.

A new version of the C5 size envelopes, pre-paid within the UK to 60g instead of 100g has been available since 15 February, price 31p (1st class) and 25p (2nd class). This, plus the C5 100g version, are shown here.



Last call for Old-Style Registered Envelopes

The G, H and K size registered envelopes, first issued in 1986, will be withdrawn from sale at the British Philatelic Bureau on 31 March 1994. The envelopes were replaced last summer by new-style Guaranteed Delivery and Registered Plus envelopes. The three obsolescent envelopes cost £2.30 (G), £2.35 (H) and £2.45 (K). Shown here is the front and back of the G and H sizes.

Specialist collectors of postal stationery will note that there are variations in the printing of the G and H envelopes. These were detailed, by Andrew Whitworth, in the *Bulletin* of January 1991 (page 114).

One of the new Registered Plus envelopes was illustrated here in July 1993 (page 272). One of the new Guaranteed Delivery envelopes will be shown next month. The new envelopes are available from main post offices and the British Philatelic Bureau – details and prices are given in the Bureau's stock list.