

## **PUTTING THE 'BOOTS TO MACHIN**

### **SYNOPSIS**

This exhibit focuses upon the mini-sheet Machin first class stamp issued first for Boots Chemists and then in a plain format.

There are 2 major versions of the 'Boots' mini-sheet. The first (1994 version) was available through the Post Office while the second (1995 version) was made available only to Boots Chemists. This makes the second version a lot rarer and I have not seen one on or off cover used (I have been collecting these over 10 years). The plain versions were available from 1995 on. There are no records about how many of each Boots Chemists bought and therefore subsequently sold.

The format lent itself to over-printing and these are, for the most part, attributable to one stamp dealer in Great Britain. While this dealer was able to get a very few of these over-printed sheets onto appropriate covers for philatelic exhibitions for the most part this was not the case and the covers in the exhibit represent all I have been able to identify. The dealer, Rush Stamps, has not, in my experience offered additional covers.

While many of the mini-sheets are available, with effort, in mint format today, some were issued in such limited quantities they are rarely seen. In some instances, surplus stock was used as postage so it may be easier to find a used version, usually off cover and cancelled after the event or exhibition in question.

The availability of these items on cover is limited by two factors: most of the 'Boots' cards were mailed from and to non-stamp collectors, the over-printed versions tended to be mailed to Rush Stamp clients who are collectors and likely kept these for their own collections (most of the cancels on the sheets over-printed are for Southampton or Lyndhurst and one is the location of Rush Stamps and the other the nearest major centre).