August 2022

Special review edition

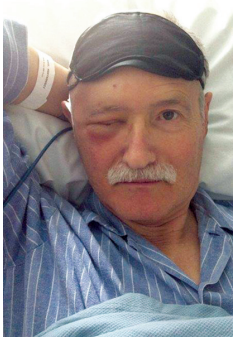
1963–2022



UPA VIP Series: **'Because' …**

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Has the time come for you… to do something different… ?



Hi, That's Me, Thankfully, a few years ago now …

Something unexpected happens: certainly, that was what happened to me when a 'blue lights' ambulance and Police car whisked me, in an induced comatose state, down the M5 to Bristol Southmead Hospital with a bleed on the brain for an emergency craniotomy operation after I fell in the garden.

Weeks afterwards at the follow-up appointment the German operating surgeon told my wife and I that as he operated, he wondered the outcome of continuing … apparently, it was likely I could have been unable to talk, eat, see or even to walk … apparently it all looked pretty hopeless, was it worth continuing?

All somewhat dramatic, traumatic but true: I'm not going to say that I experienced some form of life-changing revelation after I made a complete recovery, thanks to the quick action of my wife and the operating team that saved my life … but I am going to say that I firmly believe that as one door closes, the opportunity of another door opens ... and it is up to us whether inertia beckons OR as life's 'philatelic doors' swing, we make a simple conscious decision – perhaps to carry on collecting regardless … which is what I did (or rather I gave up collecting at the age of 18 when I entered the stamp trade – so my choice is to carry on dealing, auctioneering and hopefully serving you).

So that's the choice open to you today:

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You may never receive another Philatelic Bulletin or Stamp Magazine … but guess what – you don't need to … ***because all you have to do is* contact my company** … chances are that whatever you collect we can assist you. UPA is the only UK based philatelic company today serving collectors in no less than 6 different ways – from Beginner to Medium to Advanced/ Specialist Collector via our Mixtures /traditional Approvals business/ eBay departments/ **www.Top-upTwenty.co.uk** instant-Purchase Price-Drop System (on-line), UPA 22,000+/- lot, All Lots Guaranteed 'No Buyer's Premium' quarterly auctions/ High value sales and valuation/ buying departments …

If you, like me, are passionate about stamps, **ACT NOW** – it's so easy to open this philatelic door …

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So don't delay: Do it today, whilst you're thinking about it. **Thank you,**

UPA VIP | **Putting Collectors Like You First**

MD UPA
Philatelic Expert and Author

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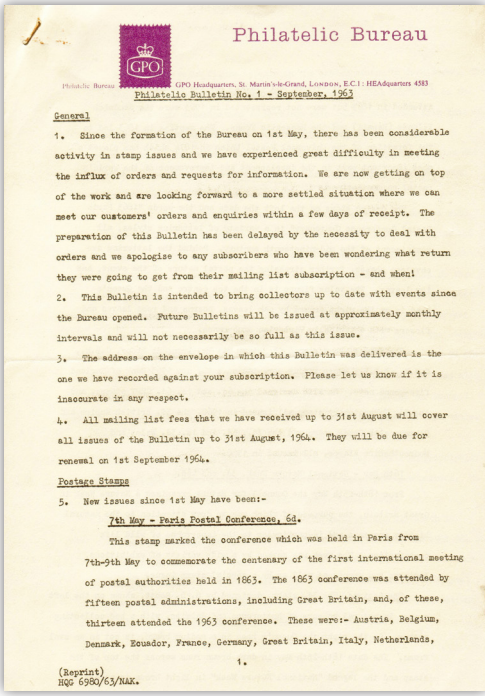
***Bulletin* favourite stamp poll 30**

1960s A new era for British stamps



Frank Langfield

The *Bulletin's* humble beginnings were synonymous with the establishing of the Philatelic Bureau at GPO Headquarters in St Martin's-le-Grand, London, on 1 May 1963. Just four months later in September the *Philatelic Bulletin No.1* was produced, and the man who played a significant part in initiating both was Frank Langfield. Five years earlier in 1958 Langfield became the 'incumbent of Stamp Duty' and as such became responsible for managing a broad range of matters relating to postage stamps. He dealt with correspondence relating to complaints, suggestions and exhibitions, he commissioned artists – having written their briefs – and he oversaw the handover of finished artwork for stamps to the Supplies Department for production. In addition, he dealt with the Palace, wrote press releases to publicise new issues, as well as promoting them around the country and overseas.



Philatelic Bureau

GPO

Philatelic Bureau, GPO Headquarters, St. Martin's-le-Grand, London, E.C.1. : HEAdquarters 4583

Philatelic Bulletin No. 1 - September, 1963

General

1. Since the formation of the Bureau on 1st May, there has been considerable activity in stamp issues and we have experienced great difficulty in meeting the influx of orders and requests for information. We are now getting on top of the work and are looking forward to a more settled situation where we can meet our customers' orders and enquiries within a few days of receipt. The preparation of this Bulletin has been delayed by the necessity to deal with orders and we apologise to any subscribers who have been wondering what return they were going to get from their mailing list subscription - and when!

2. This Bulletin is intended to bring collectors up to date with events since the Bureau opened. Future Bulletins will be issued at approximately monthly intervals and will not necessarily be so full as this issue.

3. The address on the envelope in which this Bulletin was delivered is the one we have recorded against your subscription. Please let us know if it is inaccurate in any respect.

4. All mailing list fees that we have received up to 31st August will cover all issues of the Bulletin up to 31st August, 1964. They will be due for renewal on 1st September 1964.

Postage Stamps

5. New issues since 1st May have been:-

7th May - Paris Postal Conference, 6d.

This stamp marked the conference which was held in Paris from 7th-9th May to commemorate the centenary of the first international meeting of postal authorities held in 1863. The 1863 conference was attended by fifteen postal administrations, including Great Britain, and, of these, thirteen attended the 1963 conference. These were:- Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Ecuador, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Netherlands,

1.

(Reprint)
HQG 6980/63/MAK.

The first page of *Philatelic Bulletin No 1* – September 1963. In total it comprised six sheets with pages numbered one to eleven, the twelfth being blank. Postmark slogans listings were also attached as an appendix, and an additional sheet explained phosphor treated postage stamps. Completing the mailing was a stocklist

The Liverpudlian, and Conservative MP, Reginald Bevins, who succeeded Ernest Marples as Postmaster General in 1959, had witnessed Langfield's insight and contribution to philately and was therefore his obvious choice to set-up the requirement of a Philatelic Bureau. In the *Bulletin* of May 1984 Langfield reflected on how this led to his involvement in the creation of the *Bulletin*. He explained that 'one of the more persistent complaints from stamp collectors was a lack of advanced warning about upcoming issues'. Consequently Langfield was cognitive of the need for an 'advice sheet providing the required information which subscribers could receive as of right'. And so he knew exactly what was needed: 'a speedy, accurate and complete information system produced as simply as possible and at the lowest cost'. This he felt was best achieved with an 'advice sheet' that was to be on the leading-edge of information ensuring that 'subscribers need never miss any stamp issue, postmark or first day cover opportunity through lack of information'. The communication tool would also need a title, but many of the obvious choices he felt were already in usage with other publications. Langfield considered the broad scope of postal material that would make up the content and reasoned that 'philatelic' would be a good 'umbrella' word to cover all. And adding '*Bulletin*', he felt, would suggest 'immediacy'.

However progressing the concept through to the first issue's completion wasn't achieved as promptly as Langfield would have liked; mainly due to the fact that 'initially there were only three staff for the whole Bureau project'.

So almost by default he was 'perforce author, editor, designer, et al'. Nonetheless, the first issues of the *Philatelic Bulletin* came to be – produced on a shoestring, with the publication 'priced just to cover direct costs such as materials and postage'. The first paragraph of the inaugural issue acknowledged the delay in its 'preparation' due to the newly formed Bureau being swamped with 'considerable activity in stamp issues' and having 'great difficulty in meeting the influx of orders and requests for information'. An apology followed acknowledging that subscribers must have been 'wondering what return they were going to get from their mailing list subscription – and when!'



The first stamp ever to be referenced in the *Bulletin* – the Paris Postal Conference Centenary, 6d. Although the stamp was not illustrated in the first issue, its design was explicitly described

Despite the challenges, and although looking quite bland, the first issue proved to be rich in informative content. The first mention of a stamp was in connection with the Paris Postal Conference Centenary, 6d, that was issued on 7 May. Insight was given into the centenary event held in Paris which dovetailed with the stamp's release. The *Bulletin* explained that the original 1863 Parisian conference had led to the formation of the Universal Postal Union in 1874. There was also some context given surrounding the stamp's designer, Reynolds Stone, as well as an appraisal of his work: 'The design shows on the left the date and the words "1863 Paris Postal Conference Centenary" in a variety of lettering styles, all reminiscent of the mid-nineteenth century. Behind the lettering are envelope shapes, further stressing the postal nature of the event, and ivy leaves. The value figure is in the top centre and the Queen's head is on the right framed by oak leaves, acorns and rose leaves and flowers with a typical Victorian exuberance'.







Stamps from three issues that were all referenced (though not shown) in the first *Bulletin*

Similar coverage was also given to the other stamp issues that had followed the Bureau's inception; 16 May, National Nature Week; 31 May, Ninth International Lifeboat Conference; and the Red Cross Centenary Congress issue of 15 August. Explanations were also given in relation to paper changes that started to come into effect the previous year in April 1962 for the printing of 'permanent issue stamps'. The change from cream to white was made to produce 'a more pleasing and vivid stamp'. There was also a wealth of concise information about the Isle of Man regional issues and a notification of a change of printer for Castle high values – from De La Rue to Bradbury Wilkinson. And cylinder and plate numbers were explained in relation to the production of 'special issue stamps'.

Another interesting focus under the heading 'Books of Stamps' which read: 'Pressure at Post Office counters in tourist resorts is particularly heavy during the holiday season and, in order to find out how far this could be eased by the provision of books of 2½d. stamps for picture postcards for sale from coin-operated machines, we produced an experimental book ►

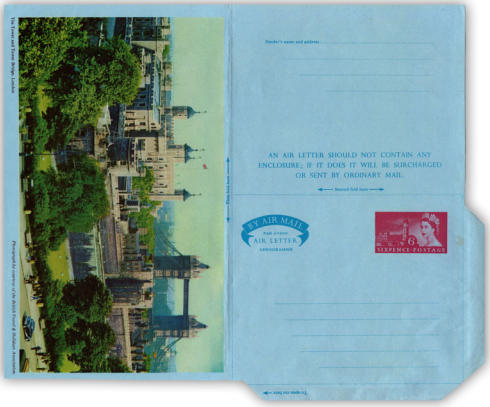


The pane referenced (but not illustrated) in the first issue of the *Bulletin* comprising 3 x ½d and 1 x 2½d. In the *Bulletin* of May 2018, Frank Walton wrote: 'From 2 October 1911 until 30 September 1955, the fee for a Certificate of Posting for unregistered mail was ½d per item. Other than mail for the blind, this service is the only way in which a ½d Wilding could be used singly'

containing mainly 2d. stamps for use at a number of holiday resorts during July-September. It was not technically feasible to modify the machines to take a half-crown so as to be able to provide all 2½d. stamps. We therefore tailored the book to fit the machine both by restricting the number of panes of stamps (its thickness is critical) and by rounding up the value to 2s.0d. with ½d. stamps. Thus, for purely technical reasons, we were obliged to produce something of a philatelic novelty, one 2½d stamp and three ½d. stamps on the same pane of stamps – the first time such an arrangement (se-tenant) has been used in Great Britain stamp issues. With the comparatively small number of books required for this experiment, the most economical way of producing the se-tenant pane was to use a flat-bed printing press instead of the normal rotary.

To ensure that the quality of the flat-bed printing was up to the standard achieved in rotary printing we used the coated paper normally reserved for special issues instead of the paper used for the permanent issues. This is yet another novel feature of these books. 415,000 books were printed, a sufficient stock to meet estimated demands for the period 15 July – 30 September. The books have clearly proved most successful however and by the middle of August stocks were getting low. A reprint of 50,000, identified for stock-keeping purposes by white,

The 'airletter forms' issued on 1 August 1963, two options were available; one showing the Houses of Parliament, the other the Tower of London with Tower Bridge



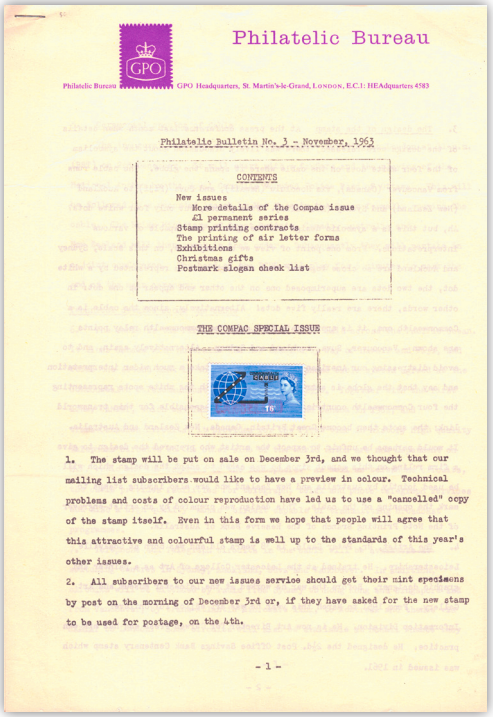


instead of the usual black, stitching was made. This was the largest quantity that could be printed in time to be of use during the sale period'.

The subject of stamped stationery was also dealt with in the first issue and specifically in relation to 'airletter forms' which had been introduced on 1 August and that featured a choice of images – 'one of the Houses of Parliament across the Thames from the Albert Embankment, and the other of the Tower of London, with Tower Bridge in the foreground. They are printed in four colours by lithographic process including the stamp, which is thus the first stamp to be produced in this process. The stamp on the present air-letter form is of the same design, but is printed in photogravure'.

The first *Bulletin* also highlighted the Bureau's first day cover service of which it said had 'been quite successful and has met a lively demand from the private collectors'. Postmark slogans were also considered in connection with the Postmaster General's concession to the tourist industry; 'that the Post Office would be willing to agree applications from Local Authorities for the use of postmark slogans for local prestige and tourist advertising. Although in many cases Local Authorities had already decided their plans for advertising for 1963, a large number were nevertheless attracted by this facility and over 40 slogan campaigns are now in operation or have been agreed'. Advice was also given in relation to ordering stamps and as to 'how to obtain particular postmarks'. And the concluding comment was: 'We hope you find this *Bulletin* of interest and we will be happy to receive any comments about it. We should be glad to consider suggestions for topics that might be dealt with in future issues'.

The first splash of colour to appear in the *Bulletin* was in the third issue, and this was by way of an actual stamp – the Commonwealth Cable 1/6 that was overprinted 'CANCELLED' and affixed to the first page. The *Bulletin* explained that 'The stamp will be put on sale on December 3rd, and ►



Philatelic Bureau

GPO Headquarters, St. Martin's-le-Grand, LONDON, E.C.1: HEAdquarters 4583

Philatelic Bulletin No. 3 – November, 1963

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New issues
More details of the Compac issue
£1 permanent series
Stamp printing contracts
The printing of air letter forms
Exhibitions
Christmas gifts
Postmark slogan check list

THE COMPAC SPECIAL ISSUE

1. The stamp will be put on sale on December 3rd, and we thought that our mailing list subscribers would like to have a preview in colour. Technical problems and costs of colour reproduction have led us to use a "cancelled" copy of the stamp itself. Even in this form we hope that people will agree that this attractive and colourful stamp is well up to the standards of this year's other issues.

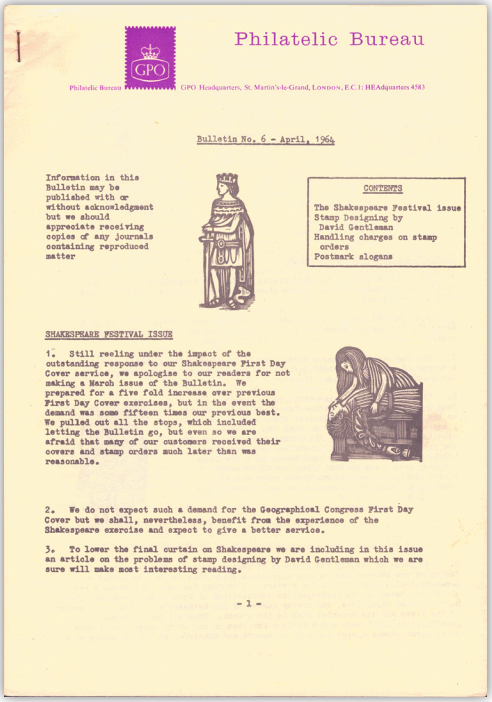
2. All subscribers to our new issues service should get their mint specimens by post on the morning of December 3rd or, if they have asked for the new stamp to be used for postage, on the 4th.

– 1 –



The November 1963 *Bulletin* offered insight into the designer of the Commonwealth Cable 1/6: 'The Artist, Mr Peter Gauld, is 38 years old and was born at Coalville, Leicestershire. He trained at the Leicester College of Art as a painter and graphic designer. Before the war he worked at the Leicester Museum and Art Gallery. From 1951 to March this year he was art editor for Unilever Information Division. He is now Art Director for Curwen Press and has his own practice. He designed the 2d. Post Office Savings Bank Centenary stamp which was issued in 1961'

Vol 1, No 3 November 1963



Philatelic Bureau

GPO

Philatelic Bureau GPO Headquarters, St. Martin's-le-Grand, London, E.C.1: HEAdquarters 4583

Bulletin No. 6 - April, 1964

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The Shakespeare Festival issue
Stamp Designing by David Gentleman
Handling charges on stamp orders
Postmark slogans

SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL ISSUE

1. Still reeling under the impact of the outstanding response to our Shakespeare First Day Cover service, we apologise to our readers for not making a March issue of the Bulletin. We prepared for a five fold increase over previous First Day Cover exercises, but in the event the demand was some fifteen times our previous best. We pulled out all the stops, which included letting the Bulletin go, but even so we are afraid that many of our customers received their covers and stamp orders much later than was reasonable.

2. We do not expect such a demand for the Geographical Congress First Day Cover but we shall, nevertheless, benefit from the experience of the Shakespeare exercise and expect to give a better service.

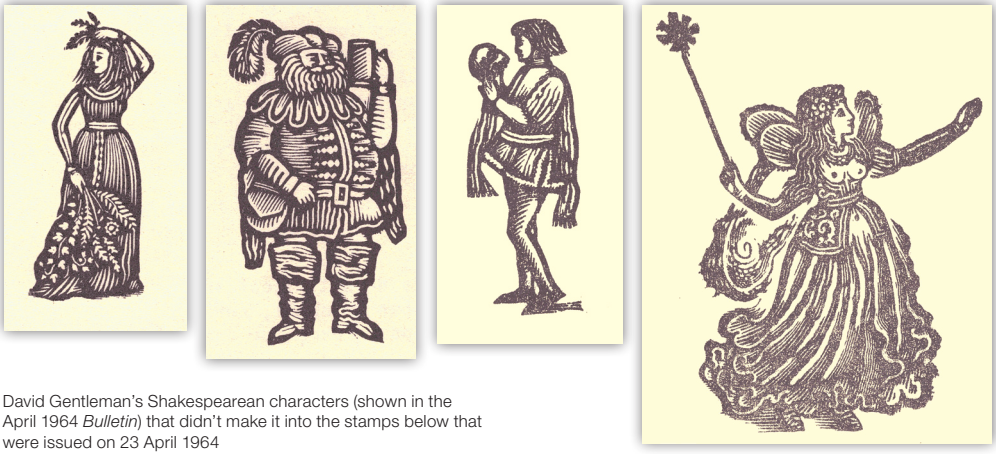
3. To lower the final curtain on Shakespeare we are including in this issue an article on the problems of stamp designing by David Gentleman which we are sure will make most interesting reading.

- 1 -

Vol 1, No 6 April 1964

we thought that our mailing list subscribers would like to have a preview in colour. Technical problems and costs of colour reproduction have led us to use a 'cancelled' copy of the stamp itself. Even in this form we hope that people will agree that this attractive and colourful stamp is well up to the standards of this year's other issues'.

Bulletin No.5 issued in February 1964 heralded in a new feature, that of illustrations. These were the woodcuts depicting Shakespearean characters produced by David Gentleman for the Shakespeare Festival issue being shown in advance of the stamps' issue on 23 April. Proud of the stamps the *Bulletin* claimed – no doubt written by Frank Langfield that 'These are the most outstanding stamps we have produced and are, we think, fully worthy of the topic – no greater claim could be made!' And it would seem he wasn't wrong, such was the demand for first day covers that the Bureau didn't have time to produce a *Bulletin* for March. The next issue in April led with an apology but you can sense the euphoria! It read 'Still reeling under the impact of the outstanding response to our Shakespeare First Day Cover



David Gentleman's Shakespearean characters (shown in the April 1964 *Bulletin*) that didn't make it into the stamps below that were issued on 23 April 1964



service, we apologise to our readers for not making a March issue of the *Bulletin*. We prepared for a five fold increase over previous First Day Cover exercises, but in the event the demand was some fifteen times our previous best. We pulled out all the stops, which included letting the *Bulletin* go, but even so we are afraid that many of our customers received their covers and stamp orders much later than was reasonable'.

However the April issue was excellent with more of David Gentleman's woodcuts – those that did not make it into the final stamps. There was also a very insightful interview with Gentleman in which he said that despite being very busy his enthusiasm compelled him to answer the GPO's call to submit designs for the Shakespeare Festival issue. In the rest of his article, which is reproduced below, he writes about the design process and specifically this stamp issue. In addition, to complement the April *Bulletin*, prints of a selection of the commended designs for the Shakespeare stamps were mailed out. These included some impressive designs by Edward Bawden, Shirley Thompson, Reynolds Stone, Enid Marx, Lynton Lamb and Michael Goaman. ►



David Gentleman's woodcuts showing Puck, Bottom and Henry V from July 1963. All three were shown in the *Bulletin No.5* of February 1964. The *Bulletin No.6* was mailed out with prints showing the rejected designs below



David Gentleman



Shirley Thompson

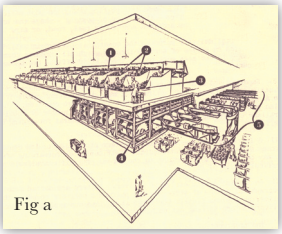


Michael Goaman

Stamp Designing by David Gentleman

Designing is largely the business of making choices. The biggest decision facing me was between the various approaches which this subject suggested – topographical and historical for a start. I thought for some time about a set of designs based on the Shakespearean associations of Stratford-Upon-Avon; the half-timbered birthplace, the pretty garden of Ann Hathaway's cottage, the theatre by the river and the memorial bust in the church. They all had pictorial possibilities and I made rough designs for them in one of my large layout pads whose clean sheets always stare up so smooth and unhelpful at the beginning of a job. In the end I felt these ideas were too obvious; too much within the province of the travel poster. I also worked on roughs for an historical set showing reconstructed exterior and interior of the Globe Theatre in Southwark, a detail of the stage, and the poet himself – who appeared on one value only. Oddly enough, I was already working on illustrations for a book about theatrical history so I was not completely unfamiliar with the Elizabethan stage. I went in search of more pictorial sources from the London Library – a long established private library in a rambling and intricate old building in St James's Square, where members can not only borrow a generous number of books at a time but can also browse among the shelves for particular needs. I often find its large resources of nineteenth and eighteenth century illustrated works more stimulating to an artist than its more standard and up-to-date authorities. The London library provided me with a heavy load of references on the mediaeval and Elizabethan drama and its connections, but here – perhaps luckily – I had to pause before pursuing these purely historical subjects any further. I had then to go to North Wales to make a watercolour drawing. That year the Welsh summer was appalling, and when I got near my subject it was usually hidden in wet cloud or drenched in driving rain. I spent a great deal of time sitting in my car by a mountain stream hemmed in by ferns and boulders and mossy stunted oak trees, reading about early theatrical scenery, masques and triumphs, and the various attempts at reconstructing (from very flimsy evidence) the Globe stage. Later when the weather cleared enough for me to climb up to my painting subject and then again changed, forcing me to shelter under an enormous rock ledge, listening to the weather forecast on the transistor – then all these ideas germinated. Gradually a design took shape in which appeared centrally a conventionalised stage with a suggestion of scenery, and figures from the plays flanked on one side by the Queen's head and on the other by that of Shakespeare.

Now there arose a new problem. I was anxious to reproduce the poet's head from an original source and not to redraw it myself. There were two main possibilities – the bust at Stratford which is thought to date from only a few years after his death in 1616, and the portrait engraved by Martin Droeshout for the title page of the First Folio edition of the plays in 1623. Several other portraits do exist but are either of unconfirmed or of extremely doubtful provenance whereas both the bust and the engraving could be the work of people who had seen Shakespeare act and had set down his most striking characteristics for the judgement of those who had known him personally. The bust


Fig a

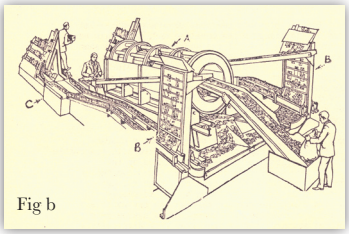


Fig b

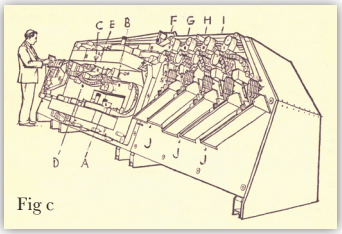
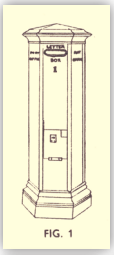
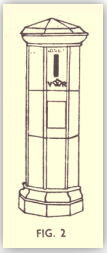


Fig c


FIG. 1


FIG. 2

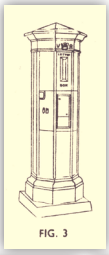

FIG. 3



FIG. 4


FIG. 5

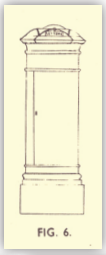

FIG. 6.


FIG. 7

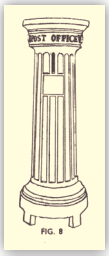
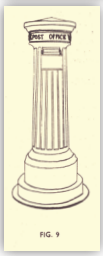


FIG. 8


FIG. 9

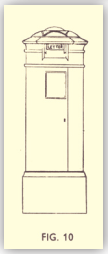
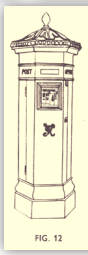
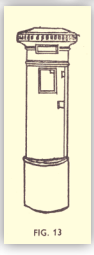

FIG. 10



FIG. 11


FIG. 12


FIG. 13

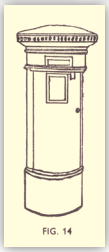

FIG. 14


FIG. 15


FIG. 16


FIG. 17

at Stratford has a rather plump, slightly pudding-faced look and I preferred the engraved head – partly for its rather stylised, flat qualities (which help to distinguish it clearly from the photographic nature of the Queen's portrait), and partly because the nervous intensity in the deeply shadowed eyes conveys so well a powerful and intense mind. This portrait has been the target for scholarly comment including a persistent belief that it has two right eyes – a contention rich in symbolic possibilities but which is visually quite groundless.

Apart from Britannia herself, no one, other than an English Monarch or Consort, had previously appeared on British stamps. The Post Office brief had not excluded the possibility of portraying Shakespeare but it had stipulated the use of a version which did not directly echo the treatment of the Queen's portrait. In my set of stamps, the poet's head appears throughout in black on the left and the familiar Dorothy Wilding photograph of the Queen is printed on the right in the main background colour of each stamp. So that these paintings should have enough strength to give full tonal power to the photograph, they are in deep, rich colours - olive, brown and deep blue – instead, of the primaries. Only the 3d. stamp – in subdued violet – has something of the colour traditionally associated with this value. These subdued backgrounds allowed me to colour the little actor-figures brightly and gaily, so that they dominate the scene despite their small size.

The choice of four plays for the set was naturally an arbitrary one and I looked for recognisable characters and familiar situations which would not depend on captions. I also kept in mind the need for a unified set of stamps with a variety of costume and setting, suggesting the broad range of mood of the plays. Personal affection played a part: for instance, although some Scottish Loyalists have suggested in Parliament that 'Macbeth' was omitted by the G.P.O. with the sinister purpose of wounding Scottish pride, in fact I left it out because it has always been for me a boring and dismal play. Comedy is represented by 'Twelfth Night' – with the philosophical Feste reminding us of Shakespeare's other Fools as well. Henry V is seen in his tent on the eve of Agincourt, from a play which Olivier's film must have brought to many who may never have gone to a stage production. Although for the tragic element I did make a 'Hamlet' design, the committee preferred my 'Romeo and Juliet' alternative which had given me the chance to set the figures in the balcony scene, derived from the two-storey Elizabethan stage. I chose 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' for the idyllic fantasy theme – and also because it held particularly vivid memories for me. I had seen the play as a child in the Open Air Theatre in Regent's Park, and can still recall the dark shrubbery glittering with tinsel costumes while above a Munich-period barrage balloon loomed in the dusky sky.

My wife Rosalind, having watched the designs develop from a safe distance, was no longer allowed to keep free of them. We worked together on research into the figures and their settings, choosing costumes which would evoke the imaginary periods of the plays themselves rather than the contemporary costumes worn on Shakespeare's own stage. Puck we clothed in the leaves of Robin Goodfellow – the mediaeval wood spirit who appears in several guises on the sculptured Gothic capitals of Southwell Minster; Bottom the Weaver's ass' head comes from the animal head-dresses worn by mediaeval mummers; Romeo and Juliet we dressed in much simplified versions of costumes from fifteenth century north Italian frescoes; Henry V's steel armour derived from an English

Forward to *Bulletin No.8* issued in June 1964, and another good read with most of the issue dedicated to the 'Mechanisation of the Postal Services'. This was in response to 'many inquiries about the purpose of our phosphor-lined stamps'. An article based on a talk given by Brigadier K S Holmes CBE, Director of Postal Services followed. Its opening paragraph read: 'Roughly 40 per cent of the cost of mail is attributable to sorting office costs and it is here that mechanisation is most needed. New coding and automatic letter sorting techniques show great promise. Although the postal service is the oldest of our communication services, it has proved much more resistant to mechanisation than the others. Even today it is operated very largely on the basis of manual effort: roughly 70 per cent of its costs are staff costs, a large part of the remainder being charges for conveyance of the mails'. Holmes then addressed several factors pertaining to the mechanisation processes, three of which were illustrated; the parcel sorting installation at Leeds (fig a); a segregating machine (fig b); the facing machine (fig c).

The second volume of the *Bulletin* was also produced as A4 sheets, and many readers would have enjoyed the focus on pillar box designs in the No.3 issue. The history of the boxes was traced back to 'road side posting boxes' in France, and how in November 1851 Anthony Trollope, then a Surveyor's Clerk in the Post Office suggested, as part of his proposals for improving the postal services in Jersey, that the scheme operating in France be tried in St Helier, Jersey. Trollope's report reads: 'There is at present no receiving office in St Helier... postage stamps are sold in every street and, therefore, all that is wanted is a safe receptacle for letters... Iron posts suited for the purpose may be erected at the corner of streets in such situations as may be desirable, or probably it may be found more serviceable to fix iron letter boxes about 5 feet from the ground, wherever permanently built walls, fit for the purpose can be... Should the Postmaster General be willing to sanction this experiment, I would recommend the four sites marked on the enclosed map of the town...'. The subsequent designs of 17 pillar boxes were illustrated as shown opposite ●

fourteenth century wall painting; and the Fool's motley was drawn from a variety of references for this ancient costume.

All these figures are rather small. They were engraved on boxwood, to give them a character quite distinct from the rest of the design. Although photogravure – with its tonal possibilities – might not be thought an ideal process for reproducing wood engravings, its limitations were useful as a reminder to keep them simple, for they had to be bold enough to reduce cleanly from the four-times enlarged originals. On the figures of Romeo and Juliet and of Henry V, gravure allowed me to vary the density of colour over the engraved print itself, and also to print the figures of Bottom and Puck in full strength over a paler tint of their own colour. I kept the engravings broad in treatment by using the coarser tools – round scorpers as well as the more finely pointed gravers.

The finished woodblocks were then printed on my table Albion. This is a tiny Victorian proofing press – a curious blend of classical ornament adapted to cast-iron and enlivened by steel mechanism, a mahogany handle for applying the pressure and a copper-plate engraved brass cylinder at the top which contains the return spring. It is excellent for taking pulls of smallish engravings but no use for long-run printing. On this occasion the pulls were proofed up with watercolour inks instead of the more usual linseed-oil based printing inks. I then cut out the proofed figures quite freely with a surgical scalpel and mounted them on to the already completed backgrounds. My seven-year old daughter, Fenella, had been watching this part of the process with great fascination and afterwards she spent an hour or two happily sorting out the mass of rejected prints into neat little heaps of Henry's, Puck's, 'Vestys', and so on – with her own future uses in mind for them.

The finished designs, surrounded now by printing instructions, colour swatches and transparent typographical overlays, spent their final night in our studio being flattened in the document press – another item of Victorian cast-iron used by bookbinders which works on a simple screw system. After packing that night, my daughter and I drove off early the next morning to Liverpool and the car ferry, for Ireland where I had another watercolour to paint. Rosalind stayed behind to write and type out the synopsis, instructions and play quotations, and then took a taxi and delivered the designs to the G.P.O. headquarters – that spacious monument to Victorian public enterprise near St. Paul's Cathedral – before rushing on to catch the boat train and join us on the boat in Liverpool dock. I was still in Eire when a letter arrived to say that my designs were among those provisionally accepted by the G.P.O., and were to be essayed. However, it was not until a few days before Christmas that my own set of stamps was finally officially approved by the Queen. After that, Fenella, who had been referring darkly to The Secret which had occupied Rosalind and myself during the summer, was able at last to tell her school friends what it had all been about.

As a relief from other, now more pressing, design problems, she and I then built a toy theatre together. On its cardboard stage she moves the tinted, cut-out figures (kept by her from the stamp roughs) against a backcloth made from a photostat print of the contemporary Hollar engraving of the Globe theatre, and she has concocted and written down a complicated drama for them to act out – which, apart from her garbled names for the Dramatis Personae, owes nothing at all to Shakespeare.

A magazine is born

Coinciding with the set up of the philatelic bureau was an expansion of the stamp issuing programme both in terms of broader subject material and regularity of issues. It was a process accelerated with the appointment of Tony Benn as Postmaster General in October 1964. Many believe that as far as objectives around British stamps were concerned, Benn had moved the goal posts – well he certainly moved them further apart. He championed a wider scope of themes that 'celebrate events of national or international importance, to commemorate appropriate anniversaries and occasions, and to reflect Britain's unique contribution to the arts and world affairs'. He was also instrumental in establishing the National Postal Museum and he collaborated with David Gentleman in new proposals for stamp design. Gentleman felt that The Queen's head was compromising the impact of designs – given the limited space to work with, and suggested the monarchs head be removed from stamps. Some believe that it was because of his socialist leanings that Benn encouraged Gentleman to submit his designs without the monarch. However, replacing the Queen's head with 'Great Britain' or 'UK Postage' was eventually rejected by Her Majesty.

With all this activity and expansion going on in the philatelic arena the *Bulletin* had to be responsive, and it was, with a new format – a 16 page A5 magazine. The introductory copy of the inaugural publication of September 1963 explained that 'The newly designed *Bulletin* will, we hope, receive our readers' approval and be seen as a more attractive monthly presentation of matters of interest to philatelists'. And now with a circulation of over 15,000, readers were assured: '...we shall do our best to provide in future issues interesting articles and information'. Well, the first magazine showed promise, with two colour printing for the cover and the inside pages remaining mono, the eight Battle of Britain stamps were shown, and their controversy explained. This was in relation to a debate in the House of Commons on 4 August 1965 when there were dissensions over depicting a swastika on one of the 4d values, in fact five MPs wanted the stamp to be withdrawn. But with Benn very supportive of David Gentleman and his work, he rejected their pleas. The *Bulletin* noted Benn's reply: 'The stamp referred to is one of a block of six designs depicting different aspects of the Battle of Britain. The



The first *Philatelic Bulletin* magazine; Vol 3 No 1. But printed 'Volume 2: Number 6', (I assume planned for issue in January 1965). Page 4 shows the Battle of Britain stamps



Vol 3, No.2
October 1965



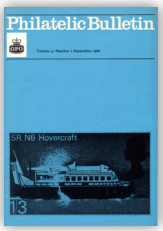
Vol 3, No.3
November 1965



Vol 3, No.4
December 1965



Vol 3, No.10
June 1966



Vol 4, No.1
September 1966



Vol 4, No.4
December 1966

broken swastika, half covered by the sea is shown on the shattered tail fin of a Luftwaffe bomber that has been shot down and is sinking in the English Channel. Above, four RAF fighters ride triumphant. Since this is what the Battle of Britain was all about I do not propose to withdraw the stamps.' So well done Mr Benn! I'm sure Mr Gentleman was impressed!

Page 11, of the first *Bulletin* of volume 3, had the heading: 'A Brighter Picture for British Stamps', and it reproduced an article from the *Financial Times* dated 28 July 1965. It highlighted what has now become 'an old chestnut' among many collectors – the challenge of keeping up with the number of stamp issues. The writer lamented: 'No sooner were the 6d and 2s 6d special stamps honouring the 700th anniversary of Simon de Montfort's Parliament out for sale last week than the design for the next issue, publicising the Commonwealth Arts Festival, was shown to the public'. And that was to be the subject of an ongoing debate very much still alive today.

The 60s also saw the introduction of the iconic Machin stamps with the 4d gracing the cover of the April 1967 *Bulletin*. The appraisal of the stamp proved to be an astute one: 'These magnificent stamps show a new profile portrait of The Queen, and as the words 'Postage' and 'Revenue' have been omitted the overall effect is one of dignity and simplicity, reminiscent of its famous forebear the 1d black'. The issue also housed an insert headed 'STOP PRESS – IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS' (right) that pertained to first day cover services for the new definitive stamp issue ●



Bulletin's first full colour cover – Vol 6, No.2, October 1968

STOP PRESS - IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

For the new Definitive stamp issue on the 5th June, 1967, additional First Day Cover services will be available from the Bureau which will give a "Windsor, Berks." postmark. Both the full Service A and servicing of customers own covers (Service B) will be provided.

Our Deposit Account customers with standing orders for First Day Covers will receive the Edinburgh cancellation, but we are sending out forms for their use if they should require additional Windsor covers.

The connections between the Royal Family and Windsor are too well known to require elaboration and we are pleased to be able to make special arrangements for our customers to obtain these additional Covers which will be postmarked "First Day of Issue 5th June, 1967, Windsor, Berks."

ALL ORDERS FOR FIRST DAY COVERS MUST BE RETURNED TO EDINBURGH AND NOT TO WINDSOR.

A special philatelic posting box for the use of customers who prefer to prepare and post their own covers will be provided at Windsor Head Post Office on the 5th June, 1967.

New smaller One Inch diameter date stamps will be used, together with a fast drying ink, to cancel First Day Covers posted in all special philatelic posting boxes or serviced at the Philatelic Bureau, for the "British Flora" stamp issue and all subsequent First Day Cover services.

A special philatelic posting box will be placed at Barnstaple, Devon on 24th April 1967 for the "British Flora" stamp issue.



The Postmaster General, Edward Short, in Vol 4, No 8, April 1967



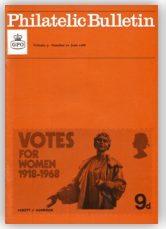
Vol 4, No.8
April 1967



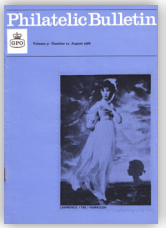
Vol 4, No.9
May 1967



Vol 4, No.10
June 1967



Vol 5, No.10
June 1968



Vol 5, No.12
August 1968



Vol 5, No.6
February 1968

1970s Decimalisation, Philympia...



New Decimal Stamps

These are Britain's first decimal stamps and 'To Pay' labels which have been on sale since 17 June 1970.

The low-value decimal stamps will be issued on D Day – 15 February 1971.

10p 20p 50p 10p TO PAY 20p TO PAY 50p TO PAY £1 TO PAY

12

The *Bulletin* of July 1970 showing the recently issued (17 June) new decimal stamps. The following month's August *Bulletin* plugged the new Presentation Pack – enthusiastically assuring readers that 'the pack will be one of the most successful we have ever issued as it contains full-colour reproductions of the various high value stamps issued since 1867 and full details of them. No collector will wish to miss this unique opportunity of having such a compact record'

Decimalisation had a significant impact on British stamps and the Post Office, and was the subject of an excellent study in the February and March 2021 issues of the *Bulletin*. The two part article written by Maurice Buxton dealt with several aspects of the Post Office's involvement and the introduction of decimal definitives, postage dues and stationery. Preceding this by over 50 years, and well in advance of 'D-Day' on 15 February 1971, the *Bulletin* was readying collectors for the new stamps. In the March 1970 magazine readers were informed that 'The basic designs are unchanged from the sterling equivalents, the only change being newly designed decimal figures. To avoid confusion with the current 2s 6d and 5s stamps, which will continue to be valid for prepayment of postage after 17 June, the 10p and 20p will be printed in cerise and in olive green respectively. Both the 50p and 10s stamp (which also remains valid after 17 June) will be blue... In addition to new postage stamps we are also introducing some decimal 'To Pay' labels, the high value equivalent of postage due labels, on the same day. The new labels will be 10p, 20p, 50p and £1 denominations in a completely new design by Jeffery Matthews...'.

Although in the early part of the seventies there was good coverage of the decimal stamps, not to be overlooked was the Philympia 1970 International Stamp Exhibition which was held under Fédération Internationale de Philatélie (FIP) patronage. The venue was the Empire Hall, Olympia, London from 18 to 26 September 1970. The *Bulletin* of that month primed readers with a special Philympia Souvenir



Vol 8, No.1
September 1970



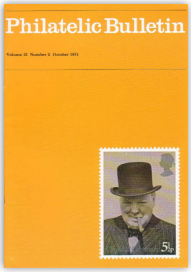
Vol 8, No.8
April 1971



Vol 10, No.3
November 1972



Vol 10, No.7
March 1973



Vol 12, No.2
October 1974

Edition which dedicated the bulk of the magazine to various facets of the show. The introduction was written by the Chairman of the Post Office, Viscount Hall of Cynon Valley. He wrote 'While we treasure our history, the Post Office of today is concerned with its present and looking to the future in its business of world-wide communications. Our stamps are our ambassadors: they tell our correspondents at home and overseas something worthwhile about life in Britain. It is our intention that they should tell a story in a meaningful way and, judging from the reception they receive from philatelists everywhere, I believe we are achieving this'.

The Queen's Royal Silver Wedding stamps were issued on 20 November 1972, and that month's *Bulletin* featured the two stamps on the front cover. Several of the inside pages were dedicated to the issue, including the Royal Family's visit to the printers Harrison & Sons Ltd. The following year Princess Anne and Captain Mark Phillips had two stamps issued in celebration of their wedding on 14 November. Later in the decade on 11 May 1977 there was another Royal issue; the celebration of The Queen's Silver Jubilee. May's *Bulletin* was a special souvenir edition which included an interview with the designer of the stamps, Richard Guyatt, who wrote 'My aim in the design of the Silver Jubilee Stamps was threefold – to celebrate the occasion, to centre on Her Majesty herself and to reflect the English love of tradition and Royal ceremonial'.

A feature of the seventies running until 1993, was 'Gems from the RM Phillips Collection', the gem (right) from the March 1976 *Bulletin* was – 'A Remarkable Experimental Perforation'. The block of 16 x 2/- brown of 1880 'is imperforate but across it there are four lines of perforation... and is probably unique' ●





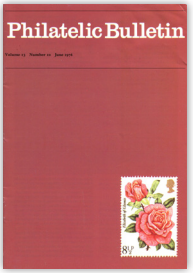
The Royal Family inspect the first sheet of Silver Wedding Stamps at Harrison & Sons Ltd

This is how six of the twelve low value decimal stamps that were issued on 15 February 1971 were featured in the previous month's January *Bulletin* – along with the six 'To Pay' labels that were issued on the same day





Vol 12, No.5
January 1975



Vol 13, No.10
June 1976



Vol 14, No.9
May 1977



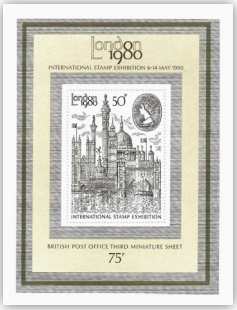
Vol 16, No.1
September 1978



Vol 16, No.10
June 1979

1980s Two weddings and an Expo





The London 1980 International Stamp Exhibition 50p stamp designed by Jeffery Matthews that was issued on 9 April 1980. And the miniature sheet that incorporated the stamp that was released at the show

The most prominent focus for the *Bulletin* in the early part of the new decade was the International Stamp Exhibition London 1980. The first magazine assured visitors that 'Many of the finest stamp collections in the world will be on show including exhibits from the collection of Her Majesty the Queen and the National Postal Museum'. In advance of the Earls Court Exhibition Centre show in May, the March *Bulletin* gave notice of the Montage of London Buildings, 50p stamp, to be issued on 9 April, and that it would also be released as part of a miniature sheet at the show on 7 May.

The stamp's designer Jeffery Matthews offered some interesting insights into the embryonic concepts and creative process in the development of the stamp as recorded in the May issue of the *Bulletin*: 'London has its foundations in the mists of antiquity, and despite continual development it contains unchanging architectural features which are recognisable throughout the world. Over the centuries it has been the focal point for traders and visitors, and in a sense the city grew out of the River Thames. I have tried to convey something of this feeling in my design...' Matthews' brief was for a line engraved stamp, a printing process he explained that is 'best confined to fine lines or dots and not broad areas of solid colour', and consequently he 'decided to make a design containing a considerable amount of detail'.

And given the event's location he added 'As London, on this occasion, was to be the focal point receiving attention from all over the world, I chose to use some of the city's most universally recognizable landmarks. I knew that for the sake of clarity many monuments and buildings would have to be omitted, and I eventually elected to use those which seemed to me to be most well-known and at the same time spanned the ages from Norman times to the present day. Whilst I thought it most apt to include the Post Office Tower, an outstanding contemporary building, I deliberately did not include any of the featureless multi-storey blocks which could represent any modern city in the world'. Matthews also admits to exercising a measure of artistic licence in the creation of the montage: 'I have taken liberties with the scale and with geographical location one to another, but in general the individual elevations are true to their originals. My mind's eye viewpoint was from the south bank of the River Thames'.



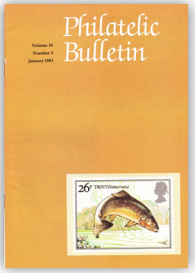
Vol 17, No. 11
July 1980



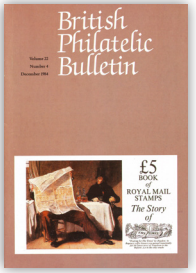
Vol 18, No. 11
July 1981



Vol 19, No.6
February 1982



Vol 20, No.5
January 1983



Vol 22, No.4
December 1984

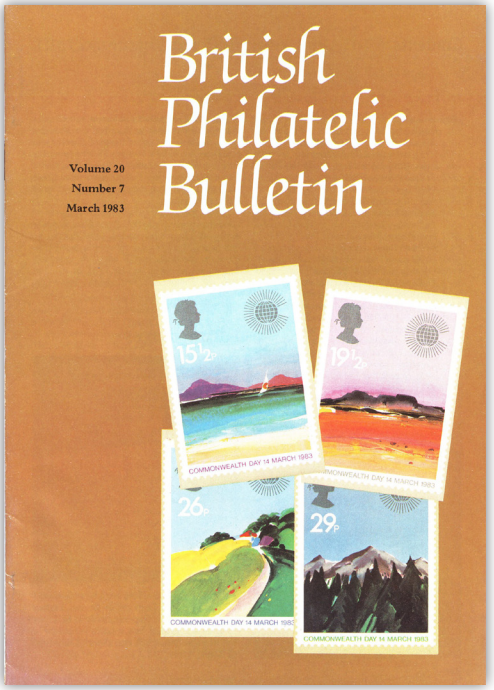
The July 1981 issue of the *Bulletin* opened with – 'A Royal Wedding: a handsome and charming Prince, a beautiful and elegant young bride – a happy royal occasion in which the nation will rejoice. A special stamp issue to commemorate the happy event – of course'. And so there was, a 14p and 26p value issued on 22 July a week in advance of the grand wedding. Readers were primed for the big day with a little history; 'On 29 July 1981 Prince Charles follows his grandfather's example and takes as his royal bride a girl from the landed aristocracy (Lady Diana Spencer). In 1923 the then Duke of York, later to be George VI, married the Scottish Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon who still retains our affectionate regard in her present role of Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother'.

Five years later in 1986, again in July, the *Bulletin* gave upcoming details of stamps celebrating another Royal Wedding, that of HRH Prince Andrew and Miss Sarah Ferguson. The 12p and 17p values were issued on 22 July, a day before the wedding at Westminster Abbey.

In 1983 the British Philatelic Bureau was in its 20th year, with the *Bulletin's* anniversary in September. In recognition, the magazine gave an update on progress: 'The Bureau has 165,000 regular subscribers – satisfies around 50,000 casual customers every year – processes over 2 million orders per year – despatches around 900,000 copies of the *Philatelic Bulletin* per year – has a revenue of several million pounds (if it were a private company it would rank in the top 4% of UK firms) – exports to over 100 countries world-wide and gets 35% of its income from abroad – employs 260 permanent staff – has the most sophisticated computing installation in the Postal Business' ●



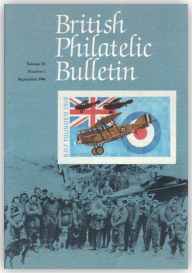




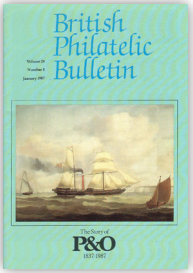
Vol 20 No.7, March 1983, with 'British' added to the title



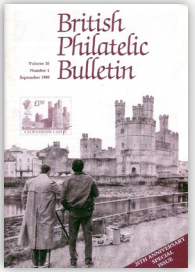
Vol 22, No.6
February 1985



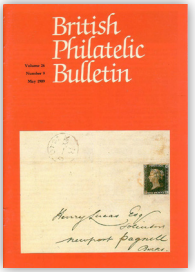
Vol 24, No.1
September 1986



Vol 24, No.5
January 1987



Vol 26, No.1
September 1988



Vol 26, No.9
May 1989

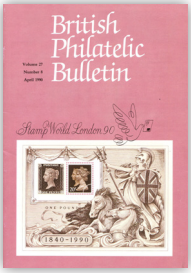
1990s Stamp World London 90, Royal and D-Day anniversaries



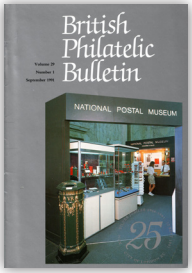
The April 1990 *Bulletin* noted: 'The highlight of Royal Mail Stamps & Philately's programme for 1990 must be the Penny Black Miniature Sheet to be issued on 3 May. The sheet is the third in the series of sheets issued to support the "Stamp World London 1990" exhibition and marks the 150th anniversary of the issue of the Penny Black. The sheet includes the 20p value of the Penny Black Anniversary definitive series (issued 10 January) and will sell at £1. Fifty pence of the premium will be used specifically for the Stamp World exhibition; further sums will be used in support of British philately. In addition to the 20p special definitive, the sheet includes a reproduction, without lower corner letters, of the Penny Black itself and has as the background a detail from the famous Seahorse design of 1913

Stamp World London 1990 was the big UK philatelic event to kick-off the nineties between 3-13 May, and in that month's *Bulletin* anticipation was heightened for the show with the news that three of Britain's stamp printers would be showcasing their work at the venue – Alexandra Palace. At the Harrison and Sons Ltd stand, 'an engraver and artists can be seen working'. And with the promise that for full appreciation 'their work will be enlarged upon a video screen'. In addition, 'Stamp production at The House of Questa will be told in "story-book" fashion on their stand, visitors will be able to enjoy a video showing modern stamp booklet production for the Royal Mail, for which Questa has installed new equipment'. It was also announced that Walsall Security Printers Ltd would have a presence too; '...already much use has been made of its expertise in packaging, notably in stamp booklet production. Visitors to their stand can see a specially produced video which explains the production of a postage stamp'.

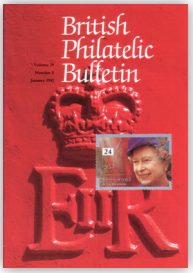
The event also dovetailed with the 150th anniversary of British stamps, and Keith Fisher serving as General Manager, Royal Mail Stamps & Philately, contributed to the May *Bulletin* with an appraisal of the stamp production that he was overseeing: 'In planning and producing our special stamps we try to find subjects and designs that commemorate important events and anniversaries and reflect the British way of life – its culture, industry and commerce, arts and literature, flora and fauna, organisations and achievements. British stamps should be noticed by the senders and receivers of mail at home and overseas, and that is our aim. We cannot of course please everybody with each new issue but I am sure you will agree that our stamps are never dull – the designs are as often thought-provoking and controversial as they are nostalgic or celebratory. We owe a great deal to the skill and dedication of our Stamp Advisory Committee. The public interest in our stamps is naturally pleasing, and constructive criticism is always welcome. The impact and pride



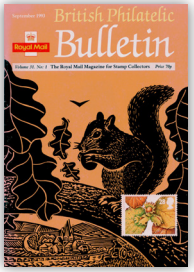
Vol 27, No.8
April 1990



Vol 29, No.1
September 1991



Vol 29, No.5
January 1992



Vol 31, No.1
September 1993



Vol 31, No.9
May 1994

felt in British stamps is shown by the fact that each year over 1,000 individuals and organisations ask us to issue stamps for particular events or anniversaries. The choice of subjects is a daunting annual task!'

January's *Bulletin* of 1992 announced: 'Five stamps under the title "Happy & Glorious" will be issued on 6 February; they mark the 40th anniversary of The Queen's accession to the throne. The stamps – all at 24p – portray Her Majesty in her various roles as Head of State, of the Church of England, of the Royal Family, of the Armed Forces, and of the Commonwealth'.

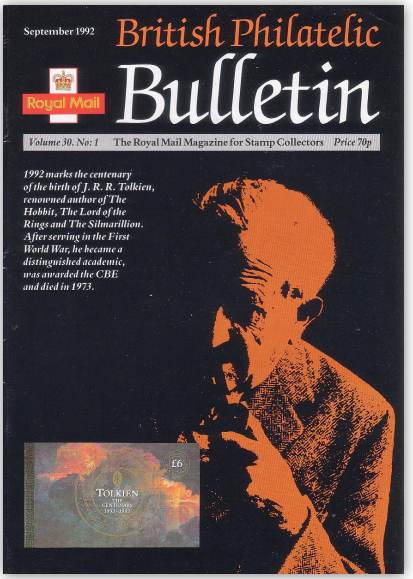
January '92's *Bulletin* explained: 'The portraits show The Queen in state robes, Garter robes, with baby Prince Andrew (now Duke of York), in military uniform, and on one of Her many Commonwealth tours. All stamps include the dates "1952 1992" and the inscription FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ACCESSION'



To mark the 50th anniversary of D-Day, Royal Mail issued five 25p value stamps on 6 June 1994. A month prior, in the May *Bulletin* the designs were described: 'Groundcrew reloading RAF Bostons; coastal bombardment by *HMS Warspite*; commandos landing on Gold Beach; infantry regrouping on Sword Beach; and advancing inland from Ouistreham'. The front cover (below, opposite) showed a photograph of paratroopers synchronising watches, the image also appeared on a £1.35 value issued on 6 June 2019 marking the 75th anniversary of the largest amphibious assault in history.



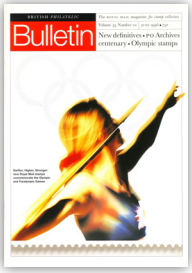
The September '97 *Bulletin* announced that there would be four stamps commemorating the golden wedding of The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh – for 7 October 1997. However the issue was delayed until Thursday 13 November due to the tragic death of Diana, Princess of Wales. 1999 was quite prolific with the publication having to keep pace with the Millennium Series stamps being issued every month, and also covering stamps for another royal wedding; that of Prince Edward and Miss Sophie Rhys-Jones ●



September 1992:, and a change in typography creating space for the Royal Mail logo. June 1996 saw radical typographical changes and the logo moved to the reverse



Vol 32, No.5
January 1995



Vol 33, No.10
June 1996



Vol 35, No.3
November 1997



Vol 35, No.6
February 1998



Vol 36, No.5
January 1999

2000s Millennium stamps and a new Royal Keeper









In advance of the issue on 4 April 2000, the March *Bulletin* introduced the Life and Earth stamps: 'The 2nd Class stamp marks the ECOS project on the River Braid flood plain in Ballymena, the 1st Class represents the Web of Life building at London Zoo, which provides a window on a unique collection of endangered species. And the subject of the 45p value is Doncaster's Earth Centre, where the possibilities for a green and sustainable future are explored. The 64p stamp depicts Project SUZY at Nature's World in Middlesbrough'

In 2000, the Millennium Collection stamps of 1999 were succeeded by the Millennium Projects series. The March *Bulletin* explained that the 12 issues were inspired by Millennium projects throughout the UK. The Life and Earth stamps were the specific focus, with insights given into the four projects.

In 2003, the March *Bulletin* notified readers that there was a new Keeper of The Royal Philatelic Collection – Michael Sefi. In an interview with Richard West he explained that an area he was going to give particular attention to was the preservation and conservation of the Royal Collection: 'Many collectors complain about the levels of lighting at exhibitions, and not only of The Royal Philatelic Collection. However, it must be remembered the impact that light has on philatelic material, and that the effects are cumulative'.

The September 2003 *Bulletin* celebrated the publication's 40th birthday, and paid tribute to many of its contributors including its six editors. It explained that for the first 16 years the editor did not receive credit for his work, and that his name was not published until August 1979. Originally the editor was based at the Philatelic Bureau, later at various Postal Headquarters buildings in London, and from 1986 to 1992 at the National Postal Museum. Many people had contributed in the 40 year period, involving writers, designers and printers of the magazine. Distinguished writers included Barbara Last, James Negus, Len Newbery, James Watson, and Norman Williams. In its 40th year, regular contributors included James Mackay, Dorothy Martin, Glenn Morgan, Douglas Myall, Ron Negus, and Richard West. Jean Alexander provided an annual index for the *Bulletin* – at that time the only one of the 'Big Four' UK philatelic magazines to do so.



Vol 37, No. 12
August 2000



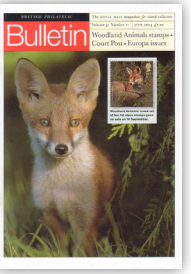
Vol 38, No. 11
July 2001



Vol 39, No. 5
January 2002



Vol 40, No. 7
March 2003



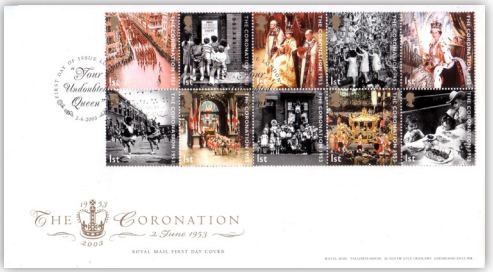
Vol 41, No. 11
July 2004



Stamps marking the 150th Anniversary of the Crimean War were issued on 12 October 2004, and James Mackay offered some context to the issue in an article that he wrote in that month's *Bulletin*: 'The war of 1854-56 which engaged Britain, France and Sardinia on the side of Turkey against Russia is commonly known as the Crimean War, because most of the action took place there, but it was accompanied by a naval campaign in the Baltic, a side-show which is all but forgotten. At this remove in time, it is hard to understand why the two leading powers in western Europe should undertake a campaign in such a remote, little known place. Even at the time, the causes of the conflict were confusing and barely understood' ●



The First Day Cover to mark the 50th anniversary of the accession of The Queen issued on 6 February 2002. The January 2002 *Bulletin* showed The Queen's Golden Jubilee stamps which were designed by Kate Stephens and issued on 6 February. The photographers of the portraits were detailed: 2nd Class – Dorothy Wilding (1952); 1st Class – Cecil Beaton (1968); 37p – Lord Snowdon (1978); 45p – Yousef Karsh of Ottawa (1984); and 65p – Tim Graham (1996)'.



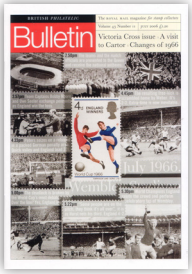
The First Day Cover to mark the 50th Anniversary of the Coronation issued on 2 June 2003. In the previous month's May *Bulletin* the ten stamps were previewed; 'Five stamps show colour photographs of the Coronation procession and ceremony, and five show, in black and white, scenes from Coronation events and street parties around the UK. The Queen's profile is in gold at top left on all stamps except that reproducing Cecil Beaton's portrait'



Bulletin Editors, the first 40 years. Top row; Frank Langfield (1963-64), John Holman (from 1988), John Memmott (1980- 83), Douglas Muir (1986-88), and Archie Page (1965-80). Bottom row: Charles Gowen (1983-85) and Assistant Editor Frank Brench (1974- 85), and contributors Jean Alexander and Len Newbery



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March 2005



Vol 43, No. 11
July 2006



Vol 44, No. 10
June 2007



Vol 45, No. 11
July 2008



Vol 46, No. 8
April 2009

2010s Festival of Stamps, iconic British landmarks, and 'lest we forget'



London 2010 Festival of Stamps Miniature Sheet which was featured in the March 2010 *Bulletin*, and issued on 6 May

The first *Bulletin* of the decade primed readers for the London 2010 International Stamp Exhibition, at the Business Design Centre, Islington, on 8-15 May. Richard West explained that the show was part of a 'Festival of Stamps' which was a year-long series of events to mark the centenary of the accession of King George V to the British throne. Richard assured readers that the show 'will offer superb exhibits and a fine array of dealers and auctioneers from around the world. Such is the demand to have a stand at an international stamp exhibition in London that there is a waiting list of dealers hoping that an opportunity may arise that a stand will become available'.



In May 2011 the *Bulletin* featured stamps marking the marriage of Prince William of Wales to Miss Catherine Middleton. The stamps had been issued on 21 April with the wedding taking place on 29 April

In the *Bulletins* of 2011 and 2012 there was coverage of the A-Z of British stamps which was a two part issue that was an impressive 26-stamp, alphabetical odyssey featuring iconic landmarks around the UK. There were also seven issues and some 89 stamps pertaining to the London 2012 Olympic (and Paralympic) Games – all featured in the *Bulletin*. The April 2012 magazine also showed The Queen's Diamond Jubilee stamps and gave some context to the issue: 'During her reign, Her Majesty has met every world leader, conferred more than 400,000 honours, had two million people to tea, travelled millions of miles and shaken hundreds of thousands of hands. She is without doubt the most famous monarch in the world'.

The September 2013 *Bulletin* was of course the 50th anniversary issue, and John Holman who had been the editor between 1988 and 2010 reflected on its early years. John recalled how as a schoolboy he had visited the Bureau a week after it had opened in 1963, and that he became a subscriber to the *Bulletin* the following year. It was to be the start of a long engagement with the magazine – he reminisced: 'I did not think then that I would later become its editor for 22 years'. He also expressed heartfelt gratitude to have known all the editors – past and present, and hoped to be around when the *Bulletin* celebrated its 75th anniversary! Sadly, John didn't enjoy such longevity, and



Vol 48, No.3
November 2010



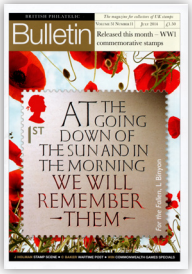
Vol 48, No.12
August 2011



Vol 49, No.8
April 2012



Vol 51, No.1
September 2013



Vol 51, No.11
July 2014

after contributing so much in the philatelic arena, he passed away aged 67 in June 2017. The following month's *Bulletin* paid a tribute to him for his incisive, fact-packed writing style, and wry humour.

The title of the *Bulletin* changed again in August 2018, and with more emphatic branding it became the *Royal Mail Philatelic Bulletin*. Contributing articles and designing the newly styled magazine up to the current one is Ian Boardman – supported with an excellent pool of writers with a wealth of philatelic and contextural knowledge – with Dane Garrod, Andrew Neish and Maurice Buxton providing the lion's share of it.

The *Bulletin* focused on several war themed stamp sets through the decade, including five stamp issues marking the centenary of WWI. In 2015 there was July's Battle of Britain issue and in March 2018 The RAF Centenary stamps. In June 2019 the *Bulletin* gave good coverage of the D-Day issue, and the following month's July magazine gave insight into the incredible courage and commitment of the Army Postal Services operating during Operation Overlord ●



The Queen's Diamond Jubilee stamps that were issued on 31 May 2012. The month before in the April *Bulletin* this stamp was said to be depicting The Queen 'cementing her position as a world states-person' as she addressed the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1957





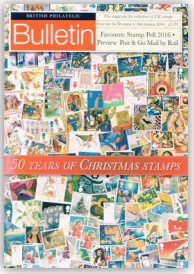
The Poppy, July 28, 2014. The centenary of the First World War was marked with five stamp sets issued each year between 2014 and 2018. The *Bulletin* featured all 30 stamps and gave broader context to them. The stamps were visually and emotionally engaging through poetry, portraits, war art, memorials and artefacts



The 50th anniversary issue of the *Bulletin* reflected on yesteryear, specifically here, the *Bulletin* 25th anniversary reception of 1988. Left to right: Keith Fisher (General Manager Royal Mail Stamps); Frank Langfield (Editor 1963-1965); John Holman (Editor 1988-2010); Stan Goron (Manager National Postal Museum); John Memmott (Editor 1980-1983); and Douglas Muir (Editor 1986-1988)



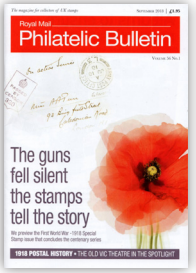
Vol 52, No.9
May 2015



Vol 54, No.4
December 2016



Vol 54, No.9
May 2017



Vol 56, No.1
September 2018



Vol 57, No.4
December 2019

2020s Bantams, Birkenhead Drill, bestowals and barcodes



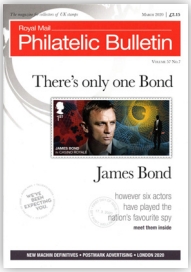
The January 2020 *Bulletin* showing essays prepared by De La Rue and proofs by Perkins Bacon for the ½d 'Bantam'



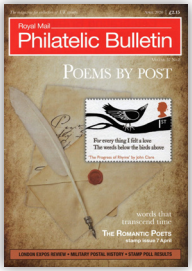
The cover containing a letter from Alex Seton to his mother dated 4 January 1852. The letter is quoted on page 129 of *A Deathless Story of the Birkenhead and its Heroes* by Addison and Matthews, 1906, as having a 'foreboding' of what was about to happen

The January 2020 edition of the *Bulletin* delved back into the Victorian era and told the story of the development and production of Britain's first ½d denomination stamp. Issued on 1 October 1870, the 'Bantam', it was explained, was produced after prolonged liaison between what were primarily three parties: the Board of Inland Revenue, Perkins Bacon and De La Rue. The 'jostling for the ½d contract' which ensued was highlighted, and the article also explained how the period was synonymous with the transition from line engraved printing to surface printing.

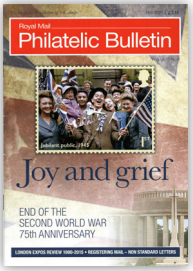
The following month's February *Bulletin* showcased some delightful items of postal history relating to the *Birkenhead* disaster of 1852. It also related details of the account 'of chivalry that's inspired painters and poets as well as setting the standard for seafaring captains and officers into the 21st century'. Under the heading 'Women and children first!' the compelling story was told of how a British troopship – *HMS Birkenhead* – struck a submerged rock off aptly named Danger Point near Gansbaai, South Africa. The ship's hull was torn open, and seawater flooded the lower troop deck taking the lives of hundreds of soldiers. The surviving men scrambled to the deck where the most senior officer on board, Lieutenant-Colonel Alex Seton serving in the 74th Royal Highland Fusiliers took charge of military personnel in what was a desperate situation; due to poorly maintained lowering gear, two of the *Birkenhead's* lifeboats were rendered inoperable, leaving just the cutter and two other small boats – woefully inadequate for everyone to escape to safety. Consequently the naval tradition of 'women and



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March 2020



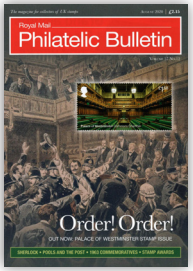
Vol 57, No.8
April 2020



Vol 57, No.9
May 2020



Vol 57, No.11
July 2020



Vol 57, No.12
August 2020

children first' was inaugurated with several being rowed away to safety... with the ship now breaking up Captain Salmond ordered men to jump overboard and swim for the lifeboats. However Lieutenant-Colonel Seton knew that adding more weight to the small lifeboats would result in them being perilously overloaded, and so he shouted to his men: 'the cutter with the women and children, it will be swamped, I implore you not to do this thing, I ask that you stand fast'. Consequently, as the ship broke up around them, Seton's troops bravely stood to attention in what became known as the 'Birkenhead Drill'. A surviving officer Captain Edward Wright of the 91st Regiment wrote 'everyone did as was directed and there was not a murmur or cry among them. All received their orders and carried them out as if they were embarking instead of going to the bottom'. The *Birkenhead* disaster is the first documented example of using the protocol 'women and children first' when loading lifeboats – the general principle endures and is globally recognised – that aid be given to the most vulnerable first.

The August 2020 issue of the *Bulletin* paid tribute to the creatives that were responsible for some of Royal Mail's award winning work. Roses Awards and Fresh Awards both bestowed honours for Royal Mail stamps and products pertaining to the The Chase's Elton John Dodger Stadium Souvenir Booklet; Jonny Hannah's zany illustrations for the Curious Customs stamps; Linda Farquharson's delightful linocuts for The Romantic Poets issue; Robert Ball's Visions of the Universe illustrations; The Video Games stamps by Bitmap Books and Supple Studio. Art directors, designers, artists and copywriters that were recipients of awards shared their experiences in the processes as told in the article.

23 March 2021 was a landmark date for postal services with the issue of the first barcoded stamp. The April *Bulletin* explained that as part of its modernisation drive, Royal Mail was piloting the addition of unique barcodes to a limited number of 2nd Class Stamps – 'The barcodes will ensure that the stamps in question can be uniquely identified, in a move that could pave the way for innovative customer services in future. The initiative forms part of Royal Mail's ongoing modernisation drive aimed at bringing even greater convenience to its customers'. The Christmas 2021 First and Second Class stamps also had stamps with and without barcodes. NVI definitives have followed this year as have low value, high value and international tariff definitives – all with barcodes. ►



The End of the Second World War stamps were issued on 8 May 2020. The *Bulletin* explained that the photographs taken 75 years previously were black and white but skilfully coloured-up by Cardiff-based colourist Royston Leonard



The October 2020 *Bulletin* emphasised the importance of our Brilliant Bugs: 'They help to "feed the world"... That's the major contribution of pollinators that number among more than five million different species of insect, with which we share our unique planet'

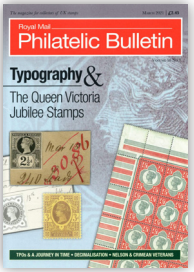




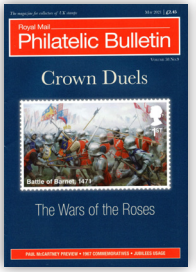
Vol 58, No.2
October 2020



Vol 58, No.5
January 2021



Vol 58, No.7
March 2021



Vol 58, No.9
May 2021



Vol 58, No.11
June 2021

2020s QV Jubilees, TPOs, and a lifetime in stamps



A spread from the April 2021 *Bulletin* showing colour trials from The Postal Museum's Phillips Collection, and a full pane of 20 green and scarlet 4½d stamps from the QV Jubilee stamp issue

The March 2021 *Bulletin* commenced a two part study of the 1887 'Jubilee' stamps which explained that the year of issue which coincided with Queen Victoria's fiftieth anniversary of her accession was more luck than judgment. The real catalyst for the development of a new stamp set was primarily born out of concerns in 1884 that the Inland Revenue had in relation to the Unified Issue's poor identification of denominations. The lack of colour distinction between stamps commonly known as the 'lilac and greens' being a contributory factor, particularly in poor light. The article written by Ian Boardman not only considered the development of the Jubilee issue, but also some of the circumstances that led to the founding of the Stamp Committee. In addition there was insight given into the relationship between the Inland Revenue and De La Rue. All the discussion points were well illustrated with several images of essays, die proofs, and the final printed stamps.



Dane Garrod's article featured this early, if not one of the first, four-wheeled Royal Mail tender or van, showing the overall length of just under 18 feet, as well as the frame to catch the mailbags whilst travelling

The March magazine also had an excellent focus on Travelling Post Offices. Dane Garrod explained the background to their establishment: 'In England, mail had first been carried by rail as early as 1830, but that was just for transportation purposes. Eight years later began the first sorting of transported mail whilst the train was actually in transit. It started with an idea from a provincial Post Office Surveyor, George Karstadt, who proposed that a railway carriage – four wheeled at that time like a road mail coach, but on rails – could be utilised as a travelling postal sorting office. With his son Frederick as one of three clerks, they began the on-board sorting of letters and parcels on a new railway between Birmingham and Warrington in what was a four-wheeled horse box converted for their use with many rows of compartments known then, and now, as pigeon-holes. So successful was this new idea that within a year and the completion of the railway from Birmingham



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September 2021



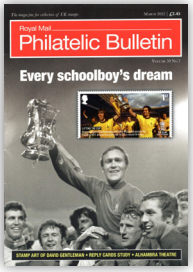
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November 2021



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December 2021



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February 2022



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March 2022

to London, a Travelling Post Office (TPO) was marshalled within trains between these cities and onto Warrington. This was known originally as the Grand Northern Railway Post Office...'

In the following August's magazine Richard West wrote an article headed ' A lifetime in stamps' in which he warmly reflected on almost 65 years in the philatelic arena. Richard, a Fellow of the Royal Philatelic Society London, was awarded the Congress Medal, and in 2012 he received an MBE for Services to Philately. He revealed that it all began after seeing his next-door neighbour's stamp collection, and then aged ten, in 1956, his sister bought him an album, the 'Blue Lagoon', and a packet of stamps from Woolworths. His passion for collecting grew and he was very much engaged with developments 59 years ago, he recalls: 'visiting the newly opened Philatelic Bureau in London and seeing the issues planned for 1963 on display; bolder designs and colours certainly made them appealing'. Enthused by this, he started a stamp club at his school, and the following year in 1964 attended Stampex. Richard revealed that it was never his ambition to seek a career in philately but things changed after meeting a stamp wholesaler in Brighton, W Ramsay Strachan, who was closely involved with the Philatelic Traders' Society and Stampex. It was through that association that Richard became increasingly connected in the philatelic community, and subsequently started writing for the philatelic press.

Richard reflected of many joys of his lifetime in stamps, and touchingly recalls: 'A fond memory will always be the international stamp exhibition London 1980. The Queen visited the exhibition: I had the honour of being introduced. I was involved in the years of planning. I shall never forget that as soon as the public had left on the final day, and the doors closed, the contractors came in and began demolishing everything. I sat down and cried'●



In Memoriam: HRH The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh Miniature Sheet. July 2021's *Bulletin* paid tribute to The Prince as the longest-serving royal consort in British history; he had loyally supported The Queen – being by her side on more than 250 overseas tours and completing over 20,000 official engagements



The *Bulletin* of August 2021 featured an article by Maurice Buxton entitled 'A Snapshot of 1855' that showed a cover with three cancellation styles and two types of perforation gauge



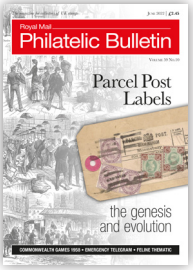
The February 2022 *Bulletin* featured the The Queen's Platinum Jubilee stamps and reflected on her glorious reign



Vol 59, No.8
April 2022



Vol 59, No.9
May 2022



Vol 59, No.10
June 2022



Vol 59, No.11
July 2022



Vol 59, No.12
August 2022

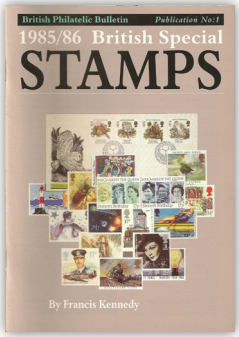
Bulletin special editions



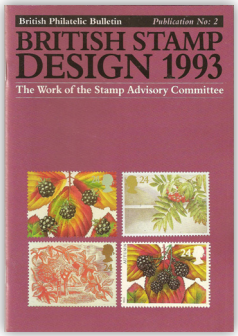
Interpex Souvenir Edition : New York March 1968

Having established the *Philatelic Bulletin* in its new magazine format, there were from time to time sister publications produced to complement it and offer more insight into specific areas of philately. For example, in March 1968, the Interpex Souvenir Edition was produced by the GPO. This was in conjunction with the tenth anniversary of Interpex, New York's annual spring stamp show at the Americana hotel in New York.

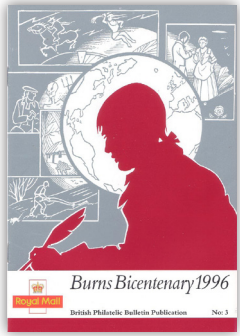
In the 1980s a series of publications began numbering 1-16, the first of these was written by Francis Kennedy which focused on the British Special Stamps of 1985/86. The following publication was entitled *British Stamp Design 1993* which focused on the work of the Stamp Advisory Committee. No. 3, *Burns Bicentenary 1996* was an adaptation of a previous booklet *Robert Burns 1759-1796* that was published by the GPO. The Scottish writer and philatelist James Mackay wrote No 4 which was a concise overview of British Victorian



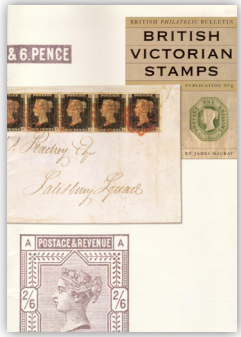
No. 1 British Special Stamps



No. 2 British Stamp Design 1993



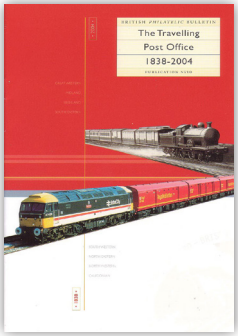
No. 3 Burns Bicentenary 1996



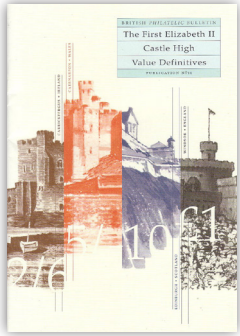
No. 4 British Victorian Stamps



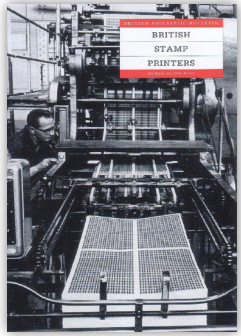
No. 9 The Wildings – The First Elizabeth II Definitives



No. 10 The Travelling Post Office 1838-2004



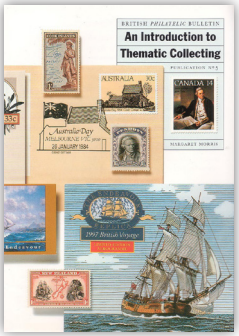
No. 11 The First Elizabeth II Castle High Value Definitives



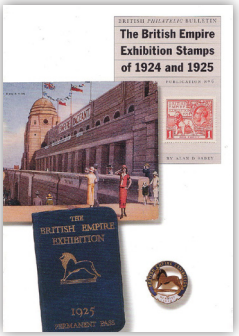
No. 12 British Stamp Printers

stamps. The magazine is beautifully illustrated with several images from the Royal Collection and The National Postal Museum's Reginald M Phillips Collection. The fifth in the series was written by Margaret Morris who offered many suggestions in relation to creating thematic collections. Alan Sabey wrote No. 6 which focused on his passion which was entitled; *The British Empire Exhibition Stamps of 1924 and 1925*.

At the turn of the millennium many collectors were grappling with the possibilities that the World Wide Web would open up for philately. A keen philatelist and computer management consultant himself, Ron Negus wrote No. 7 to show 'how many thousands of collectors throughout the world use computers to help them increase the enjoyment of their stamp collections'. Richard West encouraged collectors to broaden their horizons and examine alternative ways of collecting in No 8. Numbers 9-11 dealt with Wildings, TPOs and Castle High Values respectively. The next focus was on British stamp printers, the author Glenn Morgan offered insights into stamp production and stamp tendering. A 40 year timeline for Machin collectors came next, followed by a study on pre-decimal regional stamps. The penultimate publication in the series was Alan Moorcroft's *The George V Royal Cypher Issue 1912-24* magazine. In conclusion for No. 16, in 2012, *Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee* was the title of the booklet that featured the new First Class Machin stamp on the front cover ●



No. 5 An Introduction to Thematic Collecting



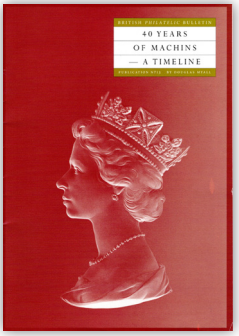
No. 6 The British Empire Exhibition Stamps of 1924 and 1925



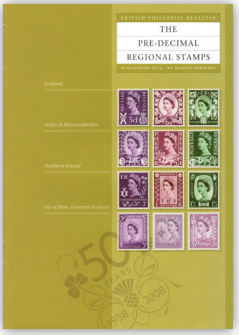
No. 7 New Technology for Stamp Collectors



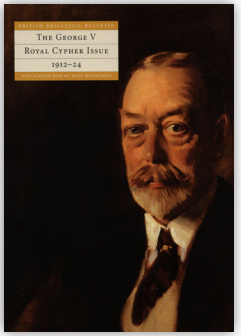
No. 8 Alternative Ways of Collecting



No. 13 40 Years of Machins – A Timeline



No. 14 The Pre-decimal Regional Stamps



No. 15 The George V Royal Cypher Issue 1912-24



No. 16 Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee 2012

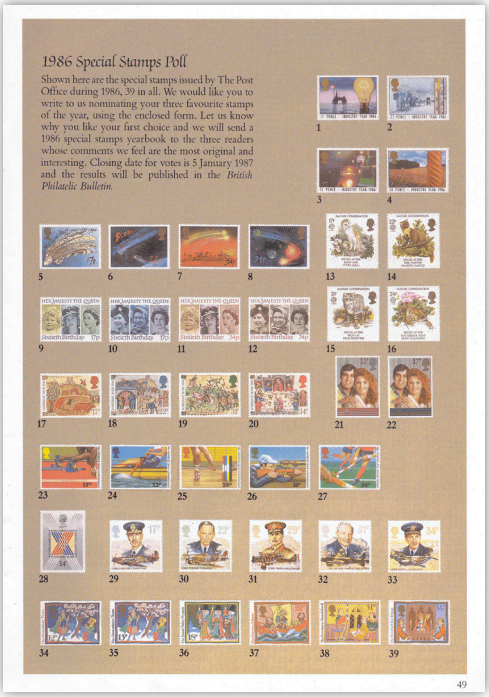
Bulletin favourite stamp poll

A very important event in the *Bulletin's* calendar is the annual stamp poll. Douglas Muir, the editor at the time, inaugurated this in 1986 by asking readers to vote for their favourite stamp sets issued during the year. Participants were also encouraged to: 'Let us know why you like your first choice and we will send a 1986 special stamps yearbook to the three readers whose comments we feel are the most original and interesting'. The results of the poll were subsequently published in the April 1987 *Bulletin* along with winners of the yearbooks. Wildlife conservation was what particularly engaged readers with the Species at Risk issue receiving the most votes. The four stamp set featured Barn Owl, Pine Marten, Wild Cat and Natterjack Toad. The Royal Airforce issue was in second place and third the Royal Wedding of HRH Prince Andrew and Miss Sarah Ferguson. This proved to be an interesting cameo into the profile of *Bulletin* readers and their appreciation for wildlife, the British military and the Royal Family. Subsequent stamp issues on these themes continued to be popular.

There were just ten stamp issues in 1986 comprised of 93 stamps, last year in 2021 a total of 147 stamps were issued (including the 2nd Class barcoded definitive), but that was still short of the peak number of issued stamps in 2012, which included the Olympic and Paralympic gold medal winners, and definitive issues. It wasn't until 1996 that readers were encouraged to vote for their favourite individual stamps, and in 2016 voting for stamp sets was not facilitated, however, as a result of popular demand this was reintroduced the following year.

John Holman became the *Bulletin* Editor in 1988 and he was encouraged to stimulate feedback from readers and publish their views on stamp design. John explained that in response, and relating to the poll of 1989, voters did not hold back. In the December 2016 issue of the *Bulletin*, he explained: 'Some comments were pithy, some verbose, others were well reasoned artistic criticism. I read all the comments on the voting forms, between 1,800 and 2,300 each year, and a selection of comments were published annually for the Polls of 1989 to 1994. I looked at some comments recently and found them interesting and in some cases amusing. One reader voted for the 1991 Dinosaurs stamps as they reminded him of his mother-in-law! My favourite comment came from a lady who waxed lyrical over a Christmas issue, saying that every time she looked at the stamps she noticed something new in the design, possibly with a hidden meaning. She found the stamps fascinating though her husband 'didn't see it, but then he's a daft old sod!'' ●

Favourite Stamps
1996 Wildfowl & Wetlands 19p; **1997** The Great Tudor 26p; **1998** Endangered Species 20p; **1999** Scientists' Tale 64p; **2000** Above & Beyond 19p; **2001** Flags and Ensigns 1st (Union Jack); **2002** London Bridges 1st; **2003** Coronation 1st (Cecil Beaton Coronation portrait); **2004** Woodland Animals 1st (Red Squirrel); **2005** Trooping the Colour 1st; **2006**, **2007**, **2008** Lest We Forget (Poppy); **2009** British Design Classics 1st (Concorde); **2010** Mammals 1st (Dormouse); **2011** Royal Wedding 1st; **2012** Lest We Forget (Poppy); **2013** Royal Portraits 1st; **2014** First World War 1st (Poppy); **2015** Bees 1st; **2016** First World War 1st (Poppy); **2017** First World War 1st (Poppy); **2018** Reintroduced Species 1st (Butterfly); **2019** Forests 1st (Westonbirt); **2020** Brilliant Bugs 1st (Painted Lady Butterfly); **2021** Wild Coasts 1st (Grey Seal)



The choice of stamps for the first poll in 1986



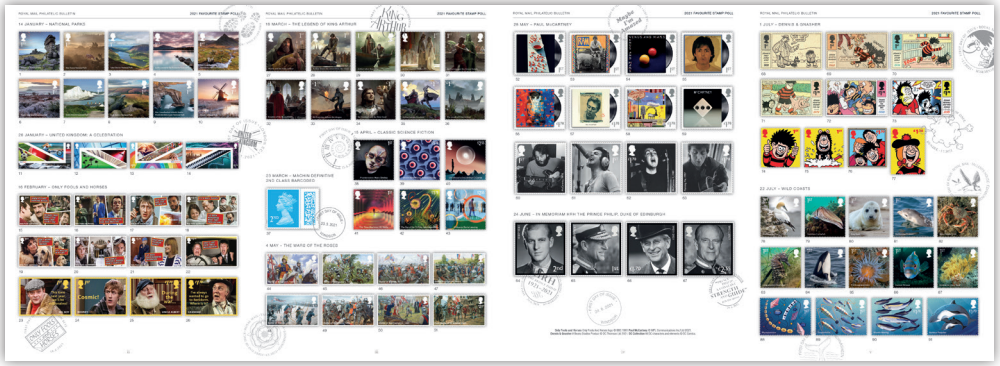
Favourite Stamp Sets

1986 Species at Risk; **1987** Flowers; **1988** Linnean Society; **1989** Birds; **1990** Queen Mother; **1991** Maps; **1992** Wintertime; **1993** Autumn; **1994** Age of Steam; **1995** Christmas; **1996** Wildfowl & Wetlands; **1997** The Great Tudor; **1998** Lighthouses; **1999** Scientists' Tale; **2000** Tree & Leaf; **2001** Weather; **2002** London Bridges; **2003** Extreme Endeavours; **2004** Woodland Animals; **2005** Trafalgar; **2006** Brunel; **2007** Birds; **2008** Cathedrals; **2009** Design Classics; **2010** Great British Railways; **2011** UK A to Z Part 1; **2012** UK A to Z Part 2; **2013** Butterflies; **2014** First World War; **2015** Bees; **2017** Windsor Castle; **2018** Owls; **2019** Forests; **2020** Brilliant Bugs; **2021** National Parks

The year's stamps presented in the *Bulletin* for the 2006 stamp poll



To accommodate displaying the year's complete set of stamps, from 2015 the invitation to vote has been presented with an A5, eight page concertina supplement. Shown here is last year's facility to vote in the 2021 poll





Royal Mail

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Philatelic Bulletin

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