The magazine for collectors of UK stamps

August 2020 | £2.15

Royal Mail

Philatelic Bulletin

Volume 57 No.12

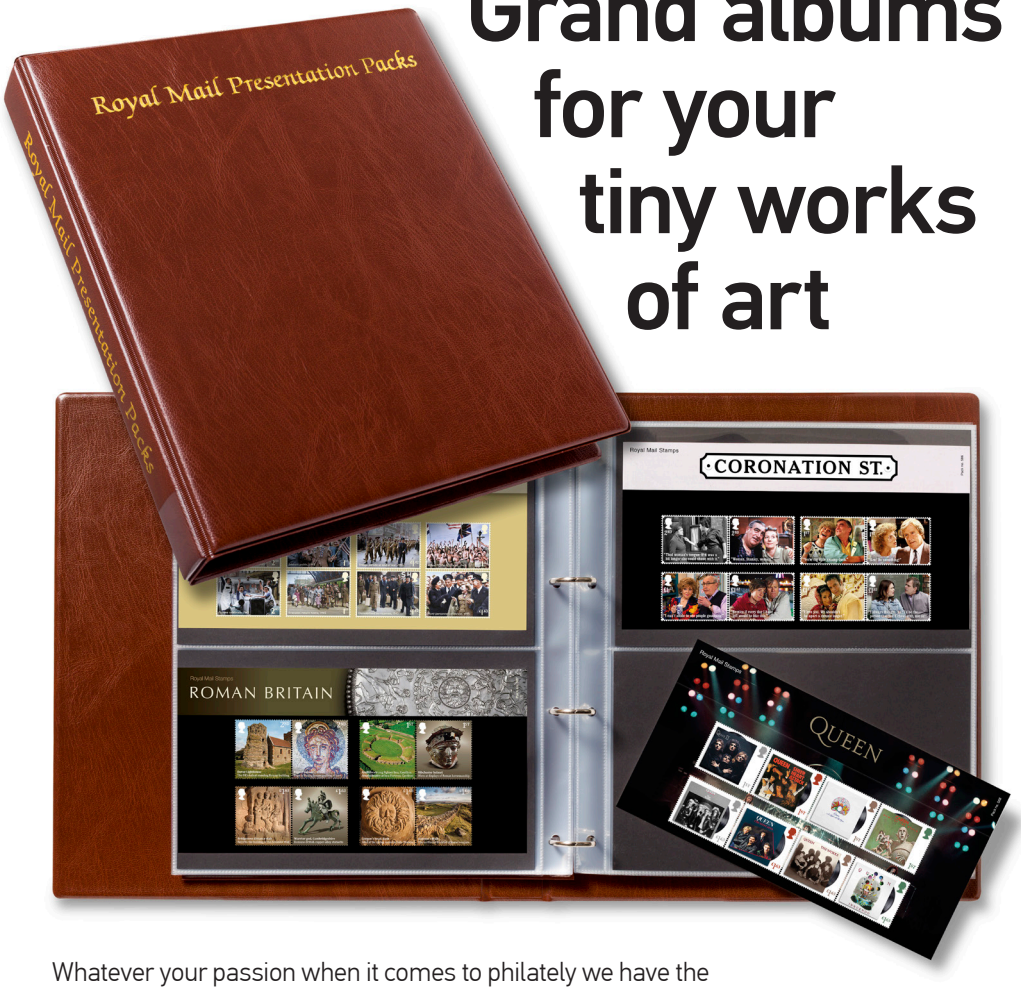


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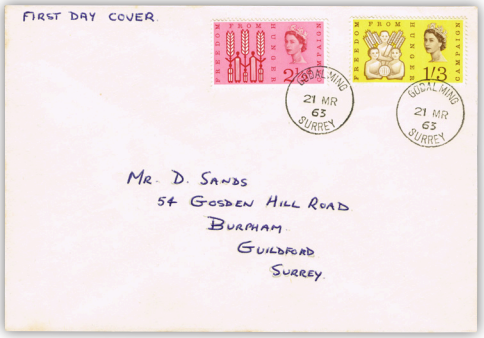
Editor Tim Lees, Royal Mail, 185 Farringdon Road, Floor MP-03, London EC1A 1AA ● **Design and content creation** Ian Boardman, Adesso Creative Ltd ● Price £2.15 from Post Office Ltd philatelic outlets or by order from Post Office branches ● **12 months' subscriptions** £20.95 UK and Europe; £26.95 rest of the world. Send subscriptions to Royal Mail Stamps and Collectibles, PO Box 1373, Sunderland SR5 9PG, UK or subscribe online at royalmail.com/bulletin ● **Binders** (to hold 24 issues) are priced at £4.99 and are available by post or online ● Copyright and editorial rights are reserved by Royal Mail Group Ltd ● All rights reserved ● Reproduction in whole or parts is prohibited without prior permission of Royal Mail Group Ltd ● **Printed** in Great Britain by Zenith Print & Packaging Ltd ● **ISSN** 2633 2310 ● Royal Mail is a trading name and registered trade mark of Royal Mail Group Ltd. Registered in England and Wales, number 4138203. Registered office: 100 Victoria Embankment, London EC4Y 0HQ ● Stamp images © Royal Mail Group Ltd.



Watching the detective Conan Doyle's famous British crime-solver is ever popular – characters from the BBC's *Sherlock* feature in the new stamp issue **372**



1963 – the year that was A new dawn for collectors as commemorative stamps became a regular feature recognising British culture and national events **378**



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Palace of Westminster

Stamps that illuminate the grandeur of one of the world's most iconic buildings



Palace of Westminster: View from Old Palace Yard – *First Class*



Palace of Westminster: Commons Chamber – *£1.68*

Eyes focus on the grand clock as its hands point to midnight, Big Ben chimes, crowds cheer on the banks of the Thames, the nation raises a glass – a New Year is heralded in. The merry enjoy the moment, the sober ponder the future – and reflect on the past. As for the Palace of Westminster, it's seen it all, and if its walls could speak, they'd tell a story or two. From the 11th century the palace has been at the heart of English monarchical and political life. The palace retains its royal status since its inception as such as the home of Anglo-Saxon King Edward the Confessor who ruled England between 1042 and 1066.

The second of the Norman kings – William Rufus built a great hall that was later renovated by the Plantagenet King Richard II in the 14th century. It survived the great fire of 1834, partly due to the thickness of the medieval walls, hence Westminster Hall with its magnificent hammer-beam roof remains in today's palace. In the 16th century the palace became home to the Houses of Parliament, then in November 1605 there was drama with the attempt to blow up King James's Parliament. The subsequent trial of Guy Fawkes took place in Westminster Hall on 27 January 1606 and led to his execution in Old Palace Yard four days later.

Following the fire, the palace was rebuilt during the reign of Queen Victoria – having been designed by Sir Charles Barry and AWN Pugin. Its existence was again threatened during the blitz of the Second World War when the palace was hit on several occasions – including a bomb that destroyed the Commons Chamber. The new chamber designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott is an intimate arena, the hub of legislative discussions, and often the scene of heated debate.

The ingenuity of British design, artistry, craftsmanship and engineering are all manifested in the ornamental exterior and interiors of the new

Palace of Westminster – Stamp Specifications	
Date of issue	30 July
Number of stamps	Six – 2 x horizontal se-tenant strips (3 x 1st Class, 3 x £1.68)
Design	Steers McGillan Eves
Stamp format	Olympic Landscape
Stamp size	60mm x 30mm
Printer	International Security Printers
Print process	Lithography
Perforations	14.5 x 14.5
Phosphor	Bars as appropriate
Gum	PVA



Palace of Westminster: River Thames view – *First Class*



Palace of Westminster: Elizabeth Tower – *First Class*



Palace of Westminster: Central Lobby – *£1.68*



Palace of Westminster: Lords Chamber – *£1.68*

palace. And to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the completion of the rebuilding of the Palace of Westminster, Royal Mail is issuing a six-stamp set that's accompanied by a Miniature Sheet featuring four more stamps. The Stamps and Miniature Sheet are available for purchase on First Day Covers, and are also both housed in the Presentation Pack.

View from Old Palace Yard – *First Class*

Depicted here radiant in sunlight is a section of the stunning Gothic styled palace. Pugin's external decoration is captured from Old Palace Yard which lies between the palace and Westminster Abbey. The yard connected the (original) palace with the abbey during the reign of Edward the Confessor. The site was also the spot at which Guy Fawkes (in 1606) and Sir Walter Raleigh (in 1618) were executed.

River Thames View – *First Class*

The magnificent palace in all its glory as viewed from south of the river. The original 11th century palace was actually encircled with water – built on an eyot which was formed by rivulets of the River Tyburn, which entered the Thames nearby.

Elizabeth Tower – *First Class*

The 315 foot tower is a British cultural icon recognised globally. Formerly the Clock Tower, it was ►



Palace of Westminster: Norman Porch – *First Class*



Palace of Westminster: Chapel of St Mary Undercroft – *First Class*



Palace of Westminster: St Stephen's Hall – *£1.63*



Palace of Westminster: Royal Gallery – *£1.63*

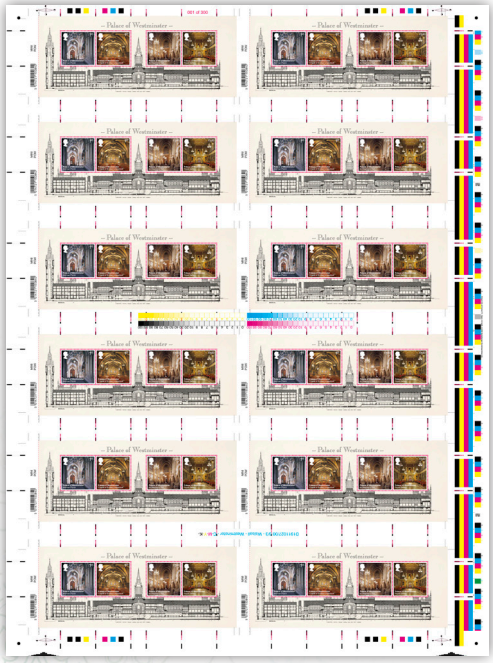
Miniature Sheet First Day Cover: with the alternative postmark. London SW1 is the location of the Palace of Westminster. The illustration depicts the Elizabeth Tower clock face displaying the time the clock stopped for the first and only ever major breakdown at 3:45am on 5 August 1976. Opposite: First Day Cover with the Tallents House postmark. The crowned portcullis is the emblem of both Houses of Parliament



Miniature Sheet: 2 x First Class, and 2 x £1.63 value stamps that show views of the spectacular architecture and design of the Palace of Westminster. The stamps are set within a drawing of the longitudinal section through the palace by the architect Charles Barry



Palace of Westminster – Miniature Sheet Specifications	
Date of issue	30 July
Number of stamps	Four (2 x 1st Class, 2 x £1.63)
Design	Steers McGillan Eves
Miniature Sheet size	192mm x 74mm
Stamp format	Square
Stamp size	34.7mm x 34.7mm
Perforations	14.5 x 14.5
Printer	International Security Printers
Print process	Lithography
Phosphor	Bars as appropriate
Gum	PVA



Press Sheet (limited edition of 300): features 12 Miniature Sheets





FD2015-TH



FD2015-PL



FD2015-NP

renamed the Elizabeth Tower to mark the diamond jubilee of The Queen in 2012. The four dials which each measure 23 feet in diameter, are made from cast iron and each one contains 324 separate pieces of pot-opal glass, a type of glass with an opaque finish.

Commons Chamber – *£1.68*

Following the destruction of the Victorian Chamber in the Second World War, architect Sir Giles Gilbert Scott designed a new chamber with modern heating, light and ventilation. The galleries were enlarged to accommodate more seats – especially for the press and public. The green benches and furnishings uphold a tradition that goes back 300 years.

Central Lobby – *£1.68*

The octagonal lobby is at the heart of the palace and was designed by Charles Barry as a meeting place for Members of both Houses, and where MPs can meet their constituents. The patron saints of Great Britain and Northern Ireland are depicted in mosaics. The Tudor monarchs Henry VIII and Elizabeth I are among the statues displayed there.

Lords Chamber – *£1.68*

Surely the most lavishly-decorated room in the palace, and appropriately so, given that it's where Parliament's key elements – the Sovereign, the Lords and the Commons come together. Bronze figures of the Magna Carta barons of 1215 are housed in the Lords Chamber – signifying the role played by the lords in limiting royal power.

Norman Porch – *First Class*

At the base of the Victoria Tower is the Sovereign's Entrance which is used by The Queen when entering the palace. Steps from there that lead to the Norman Porch are known as the Royal Staircase. This route is the only one the Sovereign is allowed to take when he or she comes to the House of Lords.

Chapel of St Mary Undercroft – *First Class*

King Edward I completed the Chapel of St Mary Undercroft in 1297. However it was further developed under Edward II, with its final completion in around 1365 during the reign of Edward III. ►

Presentation Pack: the pack gives an overview of the history of the palace and explores in detail some of the key areas of the building. Various aspects of the architecture and design are also focused on. The full set of Special Stamps and Miniature Sheet are housed in the pack







Palace of Westminster – Prices

Set of 6 Special Stamps	£7.32
Miniature Sheet	£4.78
Presentation Pack	£13.00
First Day Cover Stamps	£9.45
First Day Cover Miniature Sheet	£6.40
Stamp Souvenir	£9.45
Stamp Sheet Souvenir	£6.40
First Day Envelope	£0.30
Postcards (11 in set)	£4.95
Press Sheet	£63.10
Framed Stamps and Miniature Sheet	£29.99

View from Old Palace Yard © Peet Simard/Getty Images; River Thames view © Olavs Silis/Alamy Stock Photo; Elizabeth Tower © Tim Graham/Alamy Stock Photo; Commons Chamber and Central Lobby © David Levene; Lords Chamber © UK Parliament. Miniature Sheet: Norman Porch © Hulton-Deutsch Collection/Corbis via Getty Images; Chapel of St Mary Undercroft, St Stephen's Hall and Royal Gallery © UK Parliament; Longitudinal section drawing, 1850 © RIBA Collections

St Stephen's Hall – *£1.63*
The hall is located on the site of the royal Chapel of St Stephen's, which is where the House of Commons sat until 1834 when the fire destroyed the Chapel. The Commons utilised the hall on the first day of each session between 1945 and 1950 whilst the Commons Chamber was being rebuilt after being destroyed in the blitz.

Royal Gallery – *£1.63*
This is the largest room in the palace – formerly called the Victoria Gallery. The ceiling, wallpaper, wood panelling and floor tiles are all extravagantly decorated and appropriate for state receptions, dinners, parliamentary ceremonies and other important occasions for which it is used ●

Westminster question time

1 The old Commons Chamber, designed by Charles Barry, was destroyed by a bomb in which year? a) 1939 b) 1940 c) 1941



2 Who was found guilty of treason on 27 January 1606 in Westminster Hall? a) Sir Walter Raleigh b) Charles I c) Guy Fawkes

3 Which room is the Sovereign not allowed into? a) The Lords Chamber b) The Commons Chamber c) The Robing Room

4 What is the largest room in the palace? a) The Royal Gallery b) The Central Lobby c) The Lords Chamber

5 On what date was the great fire of 1834 that burnt down the palace as painted by Turner? a) 6 October b) 16 October c) 26 October



How to enter Please send your answers, with your contact address or phone number, marked 'Westminster question time', to: Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB. Or by email to tim.lees2@royalmail.com.
Prizes The first five correct entries drawn after the closing date win the Palace of Westminster Presentation Pack.
Closing Date 15 September 2020.
May solutions End of WW2 Quiz 1)b 2)b 3)c 4)a 5)c 6)a.
Winners John Edmundson, Halifax; Jim Clayton, Derby; Mr Peter Almond, St Albans; Diane Murray, Kirkcaldy; Mrs Elaine Emery, Portchester.

Terms and conditions Promotions are open to any reader aged 18 or over, except employees of Royal Mail Group Ltd, their business associates and immediate families. Responsibility cannot be accepted for entries which are incomplete, damaged or not received. Proof of posting is not proof of receipt. Prizes must be accepted as offered; they are not transferable and there are no cash alternatives. Winners are notified within 28 days of closing date stated. For prize draws where readers must answer a question, winners will be the senders of the first correct entries drawn at random by an independent person after the closing date. Royal Mail's decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into. Entry implies acceptance of these rules. Prizes are subject to availability. The promoter reserves the right to a) substitute a prize of equal or greater value if circumstances so demand and b) to suspend or cancel or hold void any of the competitions or prize draws at any time without notice. The winners' names are available 28 days after closing date. To receive this please send an SAE to The Editor.

Part one

The Pools and the Post

As a collector I tend to accumulate oddments on various topics, and one of the odder ones is postal items connected to the football pools, originally acquired without any particular plan on my part. (This may sound familiar.) The Post Office's relationship with the pools companies is however a significant topic in its history – even before World War II pools business had grown to contribute about 3% of its gross revenue[1] (with postage on the enormous number of coupons sent out and returned, and poundage on postal orders, either paying for stakes or sent out as prizes to winners). The subject does not appear to have received much prior attention, so this article is a 'first cut' at telling the story based on the evidence of archive files and items collected.

Readers younger and/or less plebeian than me may be scratching their heads and wondering what the 'football pools' actually are, so here's a brief explanation. The general idea is a betting pool based on predicting the results



1964: a typical pools posting envelope, in this case from one of the smaller companies (albeit one claiming to have invented the 'Treble Chance'). It was addressed by 'Addressograph' and had a tuck-in flap, gummed and printed with the promoter's address, which could be folded over the original address to allow the completed coupon to be returned sealed in the same envelope

of football matches, with the top prize going to the most accurate entry (shared if more than one), and subsidiary prizes for less accurate ones. Typically, 25-50% of the entry fees would be returned to the players as prizes. The first significant pools company in the modern sense was Littlewoods, founded in 1923 by John Moores; this was followed by Vernons in 1925, Zetters in 1933, and Brittens in 1946, although there were others. Entries were cheap and the potential winnings high. They offered several different games, but the 'Treble Chance' introduced in 1946 (players aimed to pick the matches that finished as a score draw) offered the biggest jackpots, and soon became the most popular.

Since large-scale lotteries were generally illegal at the time, the functional equivalent of 'winning the pools' was the only realistic path to wealth for many people – even premium bonds (introduced in 1957) never had as high a jackpot. In principle the pools were games of skill, not chance, but given the difficulty of predicting results for multiple matches this was something of a polite fiction, and indeed the rules stated that transactions were 'binding in honour only', in true gambling fashion. Because of this the companies were generally regarded with some distaste by the authorities, and although their contribution to Post Office revenues and the number of jobs they provided made an outright ban impractical, they were heavily taxed at 40% of turnover. They did however make a contribution to the war effort in World War II when regular football leagues were suspended and paper severely rationed: the ►

[1] *Hansard*, 5 April 1939, reply to Commons question. The figures given – 1934-35 = 1.4%, 1935-36 = 2.7%, 1936-37 = 2.9%, 1937-38 = 3.2%, 1938–39 = 3.5% – show the rapid growth in popularity of the pools.





The hazards of winning? The sender of this of-its-era comic card, one 'Charles', wrote 'no woman has caught hold of me and not likely too' (sic!). The amount of the 'win' was probably chosen to be slightly less than the then record of Nellie McGrail from Stockport, who won £205,235 in 1957 (the card was posted in 1964)

main seven firms joined forces to form a 'Unity Pools' with coupons printed in newspapers, and unused company premises in Liverpool were used for mail censorship operations to protect national security (letter mails in the Littlewoods building in Edge Lane, parcels in the Vernons building in Aintree)[2].

Competition Postings Pools 'coupons' (i.e. lists of fixtures, with spaces to mark the player's entry) and associated material were of course generally posted in bulk, as was general pools advertising. As you probably gathered above, Liverpool was 'Pools Central', with the largest promoter Littlewoods based there, and from 1935 their major competitor Vernons as well. Files in The Postal Museum archives[3] record some of the problems this caused as the office struggled to adapt to the growing volume of pools mail. During the 1937-38 season, there was a weekly average of 6.2 million items outward and 3.6 million inward (an increase of 35% over the previous year). More than 300 temporary staff had to be employed, with a new Chief Superintendent position for the Competition Section '*which in size and importance is now at least equal to and from an output point of view greater than the main sorting office*'.

As normal for bulk mailings, postage was paid for the whole despatch rather than individually by sticking stamps on each item. Envelopes were impressed with a PAID mark in red using a stamp cancelling machine (as this was much faster than handstamping, and the machines incorporated a counter of the number of items processed, which made charging easier). Three machines were actually installed on the Vernons premises in Aintree in 1937 with a staff of 18 to work them, enabling the envelopes to be marked, filled, and despatched without requiring a diversion to the main sorting office. It is thought that similar arrangements were made with other large pools companies (although I have not yet found more than implied confirmation of this in the archives).

[2] *British Empire Civil Censorship Devices World War II United Kingdom*, by A.R.Torrance and K.Morenweiser, Civil Censorship Study Group, first edition 1991. [3] POST 33/4317, Liverpool: Littlewoods' football pools postings, extra staff, diversion of mails.

[3] POST 33/4317, *Liverpool: Littlewoods' football pools postings, extra staff, diversion of mails.*



images courtesy of Paul Carter

1937-8: a selection of pre-war examples from Liverpool, home of Littlewoods and Vernons Pools. Multiple different machines were in use – note the different code letters and datestamp styles

Dates were defined by 'CP' (Competition Posting) periods from 1 to 53 each year, corresponding to the Saturday matchdays (in the British close season, Australian fixtures were used). The bulk postings meant bulk deliveries as well, especially in larger towns, as a high proportion of the local citizens would be 'doing the pools'. (A delegate to the 1955 Union of Post Office Workers conference noted that the Inland Section was particularly stretched, '*in addition to London pool promoters they were at the receiving end for what Liverpool sent*'.) These deliveries could be spread over a number of days as long as they were completed by a target date. In consequence the dater portion of the machine dies had just the year, with the date given only by a slug with 'CP' and the number. For each 'CP', specifics of which companies were posting on which dates, and when the items had to be delivered, were announced to postal staff several ►



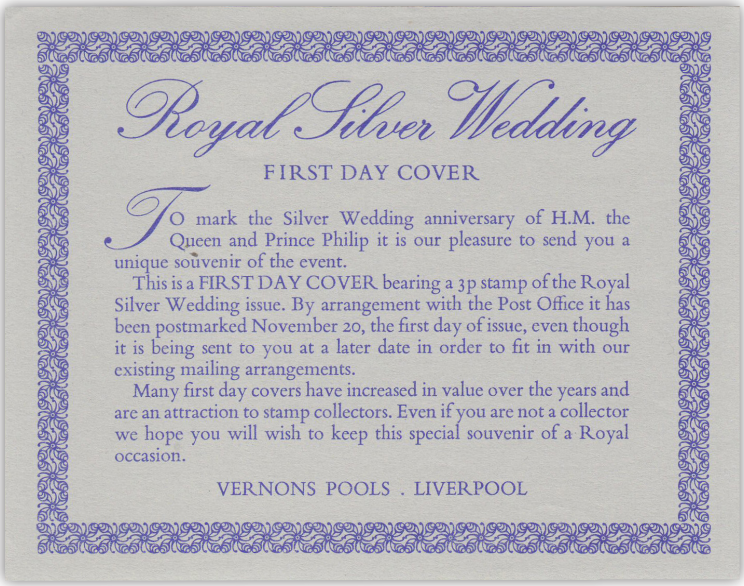
image courtesy of Paul Carter

A code 'CP99' was also sometimes used, apparently for 'out of the ordinary' despatches. This one was part of a CP34 period posting of larger than usual envelopes, and the announcement in the *Post Office Circular* of 20 July 1966 specifically noted that it would have a CP99 date stamp. Possibly the distinction was that it was a general mail-shot partly hand-addressed to simply 'The Occupier', and so subject to different rules?

weeks in advance in the *Post Office Circular*. From the early part of the 1966-67 season, the major pool firms moved to using the Printed Postage Impression system for their mail, which simplified things considerably as it no longer had to be run through the stamping machines. 'CP' numbers no longer appeared on individual items, although they remained in use on the bag labels for the information of postal staff. While the Post Office tried to persuade the promoters to collectively spread the load by staggering their despatch dates, whether this happened was largely a matter of chance. However, from the 1957 season they agreed to stagger some postings: '*all*



November 1972: promotional Vernons mailshot sent as a First Day Cover of the 3p value of the Royal Silver Wedding issue – the envelopes were clearly stamped in advance of posting 'in order to fit in with our existing posting arrangements'. (20 November, the date of issue, was a Monday – Vernons seem to have more commonly posted on Wednesdays)



References

[4] POST 122/5984, Football Pool Correspondence: *Notes of meeting between Director of Postal Services and Pool Promoters Association at headquarters on Thursday 20 June 1957.*

[5] The 'Addressograph' machine (patented 1896) printed addresses on envelopes using plates made of typeset rubber attached to a rotating band, and was extensively used in commerce. See Gary W. Loew, *The Addressograph and Postal History* (https://www.academia.edu/36837232).

[6] POST 153/221, *Post Code: experiment at Norwich; co-operation of Pools Promoters.*

[7] POST 122/3827. *Inland Postage Rates: Football pool postings. Solicitors advice as to whether it is legally permissible to discriminate against pool firms by increasing postage on their postings.*

[8] POST 122/6415, *Postage Stamps. Enquiry into Reducing Cost of Selling Stamps: Postmaster General's enquiry regarding eliminating postage stamps. Pool clients postings. Report of a meeting with Pool Promoters Association to consider ways for them to avoid using stamps to pay postage.*

supplementary postings, i.e. "lapsed clients" and advertisement postings, to be made in alternate weeks to those for regular clients[4]. This helped, although the 'lapsed client' mailings dropped off considerably once the cup competitions started and the exact fixture lists became uncertain. There were special sorting arrangements as well. For example, in 1937 Littlewoods provided the Post Office with their Addressograph plates[5] for London addresses (approximately a million of them), to be sorted into the ten main London area postal districts. Mail was then sent direct from the Littlewoods depot in Bootle to the districts concerned. Conversely, when the first experimental postcodes were introduced in the Norwich area from 1959, the pools companies – as the largest users of the post, sending thousands of letters to the area weekly – agreed to modify their address plates to incorporate the codes, an important step[6]. Archive files and the *Post Office Circular* imply that other special arrangements applied in various circumstances.

Rebate Postings The large quantity of mail processed on behalf of the pools led to calls for both increasing and reducing the postage rates they were charged. The former came from the *Manchester Guardian* in 1955, but the conclusion of the Post Office solicitor was that the postal laws made it infeasible[7]. Pressure in the other direction naturally came from the pools companies themselves.

The Post Office thought they were particularly worried about another increase in the printed paper rate (raised from 1d to 1½d in 1951, then to 2d in 1956). In the event, rebate posting was introduced from 1 October 1961, compensating for the new printed paper rate of 2½d of the same date. Initially, rebates were allowed on any posting of more than 4,500 items, on a sliding scale with 25,000 or more packets earning a 20% reduction in postage (i.e. the effective rate remained at 2d). When the rate was raised again to 3d on 17 May 1965, an extension gave a 25% reduction (an effective rate of 2¼d) to postings of at least 250,000 packets – the kind of *really* large mailings frequently made by the pools companies, but more seldom by others.

One topic raised at a meeting in 1960[8] was the possibility of the Post Office offering delivery of unaddressed advertising material to all houses in a particular area (pools advertising was done at the time by agencies). This was subsequently introduced on 20 January 1964 as the 'Household Delivery Service' ●

*By Maurice Buxton a long-term collector, and webmaster for the Great Britain Philatelic Society – **www.gbps.org.uk**.*

In next month's *Bulletin*, part two of the pools feature will focus on coupon returns, collection services, making payments and overseas participators.



Typical unaddressed advertising for Littlewoods Pools in a booklet of 1969 – the kind of material for which the Household Delivery Service would have been suitable (although it's not possible to say exactly how this particular one was delivered!)



Vernons envelope from 1995 (presumably trying to drum up business in the early days of the National Lottery). The 'delivered by hand by your postman' slogan confirms it's Household Delivery

Award-winning issues

Judges have been suitably impressed with Royal Mail's stamps and products – the creative minds behind the successes share their experiences

The Drum is a global media platform and the biggest marketing website in Europe. Its Roses Awards recognise creative excellence in a number of categories with Gold, Silver and Bronze accolades. The Fresh Awards – 'an independent and run for passion not profit' operation, likewise bestows prizes for artistic works of distinction

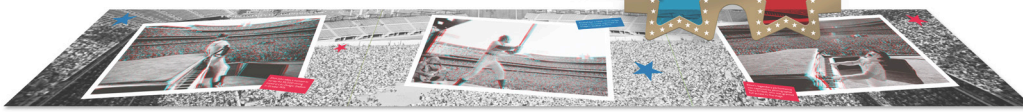
'…A bit of paper just large enough to bear the stamp, and covered at the back with a glutinous wash' – that was how Rowland Hill described his concept of the first postage stamp. Its fundamental aesthetic continues to be the basis for many definitive stamps globally, and bears testimony to its quality of design. And so likewise, as stamp themes broaden out to embrace diverse subject matter, the standard of the creative work in today's British stamps remains very high – as recognised at this year's Drum Roses and Fresh awards.

Elton John Dodger Stadium Souvenir Booklet The brief specified the use of black and white reportage photography of Elton's famous Dodger Stadium concert – taken by photographer Terry O'Neill. In response, The Chase agency were obviously keen to highlight them to maximum effect, and create a pack that captured the mood and atmosphere of the concert. To achieve this, images were converted to produce a 3D experience when viewed with the appropriate glasses. Echoing Elton's love of over-the-top eyewear, the agency designed and commissioned some cardboard star-shaped glasses which were included within the pack. Richard Scholey, the creative director at The Chase commented 'it's not that often that the perfect marriage of design ideas and function fit so seamlessly. The 3D imagery made you feel like you were at the gig, and given that Elton John is famed for his love of unique glasses, we were delighted that we were able to produce a bespoke 3D star-shaped pair. Then everything just fell into place, there really couldn't have been a better solution!'

Curious Customs Jonny Hannah, the artist behind the zany award-winning illustrations explains his inspiration and the complexities of the project: 'Curious Customs stamps were a challenge, especially the size (literally, as young people







Roses Awards The Elton John Dodger Stadium Souvenir Booklet, created by The Chase agency was honoured with the silver prize in the Direct Mail category **Fresh Awards** The booklet also won bronze for Diversity

say, the size of a postage stamp). Adding all the ingredients on to such a small 'blank canvas' was a bit like doing a jigsaw where you had to cut the pieces to fit. And I always create my own hand-made lettering, so that had to be squeezed in too. But after moving stuff around, it all seemed to work. The pure joy of this commission was the subject matter. I've been inspired by folk art, tales, songs, heroes and devils for a long time now. Folk comes from the ground up – entertainment often by, and for the masses, in a home-grown, DIY manner. The Victorians did their best to sanitise it and repackage it for their booming middle class, but it's great that in the 21st century, it remains a hands-on process, like chasing a cheese down a scary hill in your tracky-bottoms and trainers, or making costumes for your Halloween parade. And it's an ongoing process, with new 'traditions' and customs, like bog snorkelling. You couldn't make that up, it's so brilliant and bonkers. But, very importantly, it's not a scriptwriter's concept for passive viewing. It's out there, on the streets and dramatic landscapes of our disunited kingdom. So let's have some more of them... start your own curious custom, right now... then I can make another set of stamps about them!'

Fresh Awards The Curious Customs issue caught the judges' eyes with 'The Big F' being awarded for Best in Show. Gold awards were also given for Illustration and Writing for Design categories





NB Studio designed the Curious Customs stamps which were beautifully illustrated by the sublimely talented Jonny Hannah

Top: Steve Roud's excellent copywriting complemented with stylish typography clinched the gold award for Writing for Design



Fresh Awards The Romantic Poets issue also struck gold for its traditional linocut illustrations by Scottish artist Linda Farquharson

The Romantic Poets Linda Farquharson, creator of the delightful linocuts, shares the experience: 'I was initially contacted by Ben Casey, a designer at the Manchester design group – The Chase – asking if he could use some of my linocuts in a pitch of ideas for a collection of stamps for Royal Mail. I was flattered and delighted and said 'yes' thinking it was nice to be asked, never for one moment thinking the illustration commission would come my way! When Ben shared the full design brief with me I thought it was innovative and daring. I hadn't seen 'black and white' stamps published by Royal Mail in recent times except for a commemorative issue of the Penny Black. Ben proposed using letterpress for the lines of poetry, another relief process which really complemented the linocut illustrations and vice versa. He obviously likes letterpress and I realised he understood the linocutting process – that it's not the quickest method of creating black and white illustrations! The process of creating the linocuts was spread over six months during which time we experimented with layouts, designs and cuts for each stamp and by the end I had cut over 50 blocks in order to achieve the harmonious result you see produced. I really enjoyed working with Ben and Stuart Mitchell – they were patient, understanding that cutting and printing took time and it was often easier to recut a block than try to make alterations. We all got frustrated at times when designs didn't work but there was a great feeling of teamwork and lots of humour which I really enjoyed. When the job was completed everything went silent until the stamps were issued in April – I really missed all the phone chat – it was a great job which I loved.'

Fresh Awards Runner-up in the Illustration category with silver was Robert Ball's artwork for the Visions of the Universe issue



Visions of the Universe Artist, Robert Ball, gives insight into his award-winning illustrations: 'The challenge with the stamps was treading the line between drama and scientific accuracy while conveying some of the wonder of space – at a very small size, but with scientific rigour. As I looked for reference images I found that a lot of them were computer renders created to explain theory, and could be thermal imaging explaining energy transference, for example. In short, some of the elements were 'your guess is as good as mine', although I have to point out that the stamps were checked over by experts to make sure I wasn't being too whimsical! Because the stamps are simple compositions, colour was very important and led to the question: what colour is space anyway? I've always been a fan of lurid, retro sci-fi films in the vein of *Forbidden Planet* and I'm sure some of that colour approach filtered through. One hiccup that's amusing (in retrospect) is that the artwork for the Black Hole stamp was being finalised as an actual photograph of one became headline news. My Black Hole artwork was rendered in a range of turquoises and aquas – quite a soothing image like a whirlpool in a stream. The photograph however was all blazing oranges so it was a case of back to the drawing board. A case of scientific breakthrough outstripping artistic interpretation. It would be lovely to think that all my stamp images will be debunked in the same way as we continue to explore the stars!'

Video Games Sam Dyer – creative director at Bitmap Books worked in collaboration with Jamie Ellul of Supple Studio – he explains: 'We started working on the Video Games stamps around May 2018. The process for getting the game images onto a stamp started on a PC, where we could 'emulate' the desired system and take high-resolution freeze frames of the games. From here, the screenshots could be exported into Adobe Photoshop and be made print-ready. Quite often what looks good zoomed in on screen, looks wrong when printed out at stamp size. This meant that for each game, we took literally hundreds of individual screenshots of gameplay, and then it was a case of trial and error to see which image would work at scale. We also had to consider the elements on the stamp such as the value and Queen's head. When it came to the game titles and dates on each stamp, we chose not to use the logos but instead worked with an expert who could extract the game's typeface from the games files. This typeface was then used in most cases in the design. When choosing the final image, we needed to make sure it was from a popular or iconic part of the game. An example of this would be the Sensible Soccer stamp which shows the goalkeeper at full stretch, just about to concede a goal!'



Fresh Awards The Video Games stamps by Bitmap Books and Supple Studio was awarded silver in the Diversity sector



Sherlock

Stamps for fans of the supersleuth



Sherlock: The Reichenbach Fall – *First Class*



Sherlock: A Study in Pink – *First Class*

This issue is far from elementary, my dear reader – it's a sophisticated thriller of a set that celebrates the screen's most portrayed fictional character of all time. The stamps will clue you up on Sherlock – a globally recognised British cultural icon – on the 10th anniversary of the TV series with Benedict Cumberbatch in the title role. The six-stamp main set, out on 18 August, features some of the BBC show's finest episodes, which are clever spins on Conan Doyle's stories, with word plays on the original titles, like *A Study in Pink*. In a high-tech touch the TV Sherlock would love, shining UV light over the stamps reveals hidden words hinting at each episode plot. A four stamp Miniature Sheet shows scenes from the books, including *The Adventure of the Speckled Band* and *The Red-Headed League*. Accompanying the issue is a Presentation Pack, Stamp Souvenir, Medal Covers and more.

The series salutes Conan Doyle's classic creation, delivering neat modern twists on the original, who appeared in four novels and 56 short stories. Benedict Cumberbatch's Sherlock texts instead of sending telegrams as his literary forebear did. Conan Doyle's Dr Watson was shot in the shoulder while serving as an assistant surgeon in the Second Anglo-Afghan War in 1880; Martin Freeman's army doctor John Watson returns from modern Afghanistan after also being hit in the shoulder – he appears on a First Class stamp showing the first episode *A Study in Pink*. The other First Class stamp shows *The Reichenbach Fall* episode, where Sherlock confronts James Moriarty (Andrew Scott) on the top of London's St Bart's hospital – and fakes his own death falling from the roof so, 'resurrected', he can clandestinely roll up Moriarty's criminal network. This *Sherlock* plot is a smart nod to Conan Doyle's own resurrection of Holmes. The sleuth also survived his own 'death' after plunging off Switzerland's Reichenbach Falls while fighting Moriarty in the 1893 short story *The Final Problem*.

Sherlock – Stamp Specifications

Date of issue	18 August
Number of stamps	Six – three vertical se-tenant pairs (2 x 1st Class, 2 x £1.42, 2 x £1.68)
Design	So design consultants
Stamp format	Olympic Landscape
Stamp size	60mm x 30mm
Number per sheet	18/36
Printer	International Security Printers
Print process	Lithography
Perforations	14.5 x 14.5
Phosphor	Bars as appropriate
Gum	PVA



Sherlock: The Great Game – *£1.42*



Sherlock: A Scandal in Belgravia – *£1.68*



Sherlock: The Empty Hearse – *£1.42*



Sherlock: The Final Problem – *£1.68*

The author had wanted to kill off Holmes, as he pined for success with more 'literary' novels. Yet he was forced to bring the detective back to life in the 1903 tale *The Adventure of the Empty House* after a national outcry over Holmes's death: men went about with black armbands and even The Royal Family were distraught (King Edward VII greatly admired the stories). Indeed, the facts behind the original books and the TV show are as extraordinary as the tales and characters Conan Doyle created. For example, *Sherlock* star Benedict Cumberbatch and Conan Doyle are distant relations – 16th cousins through common ancestry with John of Gaunt, a 14th century Duke of Lancaster, according to researchers. And the author's inspiration for Holmes was Edinburgh surgeon and medical lecturer Joseph Bell, Conan Doyle's professor when he was a student of medicine. Bell amazed his students by discerning facts about patients using his extraordinary observational skills – just as the Baker Street sleuth would go on to do. He could tell by a sailor's tattoo where he had travelled. He is said to have correctly concluded that a man was a cobbler by the way his trousers were worn on the inside of his knee, as a result of the position he sat in repairing shoes. Bell rightly ►



The Adventure of the Speckled Band – *First Class*



The Red-Headed League – *First Class*

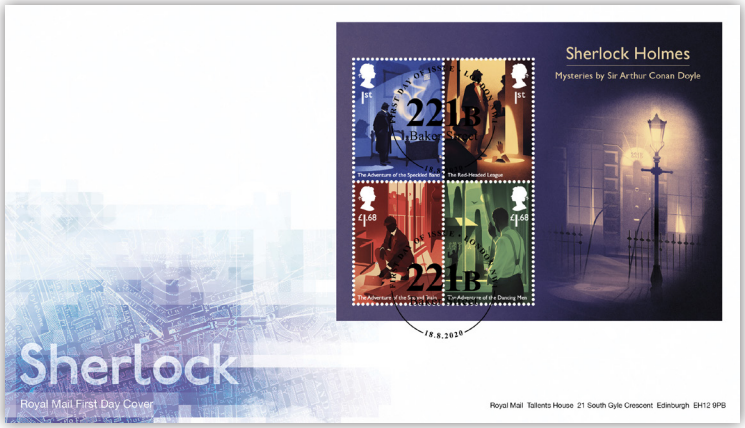


The Adventure of the Second Stain – *£1.68*



The Adventure of the Dancing Men – *£1.68*

Miniature Sheet First Day Cover with the alternative pictorial postmark – 221B Baker St is the address of the Sherlock Holmes character





FD2016-TH



FD2016-PL



FD2016-NP



Presentation Pack: contains the Special Stamps and the Miniature Sheet. The Presentation Pack Inner gives insight into the making and success of the Sherlock series. The Presentation Pack Outer has a summary both in text and visually on each of the episodes featured in the main stamp set

Sherlock – Miniature Sheet Specifications

Date of issue	18 August
Number of stamps	Four (2 x 1st Class, 2 x £1.68)
Design	NB Studio
Miniature Sheet size	115mm x 89mm
Stamp format	Portrait
Stamp size	26.8mm x 36.5mm
Perforations	14 x 14
Printer	International Security Printers
Print process	Lithography
Phosphor	Bars as appropriate
Gum	PVA



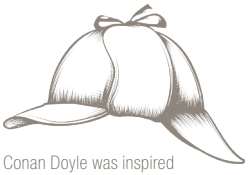
Miniature Sheet: features 2 x 1st Class, 2 x £1.68

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First Day Cover with Tallents House handstamp – 'The game is afoot' is a much-quoted line by Sherlock. Below: Retail Stamp Book





Conan Doyle was inspired to use the Reichenbach Falls in Switzerland as the location for Holmes's death when he took his wife Louisa there, hoping the clear mountain air would help her TB



In *Sherlock* psychopathic killer James Moriarty demonstrates his capacity for dark humour as much as murder: the ring tone on his mobile is *Stayin' Alive* by the Bee Gees



Conan Doyle never used Holmes's famous response 'Elementary, my dear Watson' in his books; 'Elementary' and 'my dear Watson' appeared separately. The full phrase debuted in P G Wodehouse's 1909 novel *Psmith, Journalist*



Edinburgh medical professor Joseph Bell, who inspired the character of Holmes, was Queen Victoria's private surgeon when she travelled in Scotland. She'd been impressed by his treatment of children during a diphtheria outbreak

concluded an elephantiasis patient was a recently discharged Highland regiment NCO. His evidence? He had a Scottish accent; was respectful to the gentleman surgeon, so likely to be non-commissioned; didn't remove his hat – quite usual in the army – so hadn't yet learned the manners of civvy street requiring him to take off headwear indoors; and his elephantiasis was a disease of the West Indies, where Scottish units were currently stationed.

Conan Doyle almost called the legendary detective Sherrinford Holmes. Cheekily, the *Sherlock* writers used it as the name for the high-security island prison holding Sherlock's deranged sister Eurus in *The Final Problem* episode, shown on one of the £1.68 values. A devoted cricket fan, Conan Doyle is said to have settled on Sherlock by combining the names of two Nottinghamshire players, Mordecai Sherwin and Frank Shacklock. *Sherlock*, perhaps more than Conan Doyle's work, is a struggle between Sherlock and James Moriarty. While this Moriarty is a merciless murderer, Conan Doyle's inspiration for Holmes's arch-enemy was Adam Worth, the criminal mastermind of Victorian times but not a killer: Worth, an expert safe cracker, jewel thief and forger, and his network of villains rang rings round the world's police forces for decades. Scotland Yard dubbed him the 'Napoleon of Crime', a title Conan Doyle borrowed for his own evil genius. Worth famously stole a Gainsborough painting of Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, from a London gallery in 1876, cutting it from its frame. Conan Doyle was no less an adventurer ►



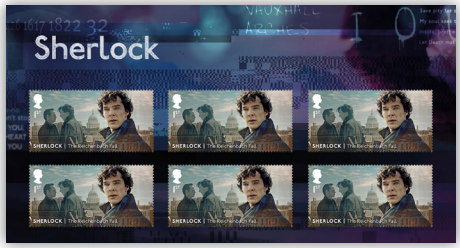


Sherlock & Moriarty Limited Edition Medal Cover. The handstamp has the quote 'This little game of ours' – Moriarty said this to Sherlock in the episode *The Great Game*. Opposite: The Genius of Sherlock Holmes Limited Edition Medal Cover. The handstamp's location – Crowborough, was Conan Doyle's home for 23 years and where he died

Sherlock – Prices	
Set of 6 Special Stamps	£7.72
Miniature Sheet	£4.88
Presentation Pack	£13.50
First Day Cover Stamps	£9.90
First Day Cover Miniature Sheet	£6.50
Stamp Souvenir	£9.90
Stamp Sheet Souvenir	£6.50
First Day Envelope	£0.30
Postcards (11 in set)	£4.95
Retail Stamp Book	£4.56
Collector's Sheet	£11.95
Sherlock: The Reichenbach Fall Stamp Set	£4.90
Sherlock: The Great Game Stamp Set	£8.80
Sherlock: Character Stamp Set	£8.00
Framed Stamps	£29.99
Stamp Mount	£19.99
Framed Miniature Sheet	£29.99
Framed Collector's Sheet	£29.99
Collector's Sheet Mount	£19.99
Sherlock: The Reichenbach Fall Framed Gallery Print	£75.00
Sherlock: The Great Game Framed Gallery Print	£75.00
Sherlock: A Study in Pink Framed Gallery Print	£75.00
Sherlock & Moriarty Medal Cover	£19.99
Sherlock & Moriarty Silver Medal Cover	£99.99
The Genius of Sherlock Holmes Medal Cover	£19.99
The Genius of Sherlock Holmes Silver Medal Cover	£99.99
Sherlock Ultimate Fan Bundle	£25.50



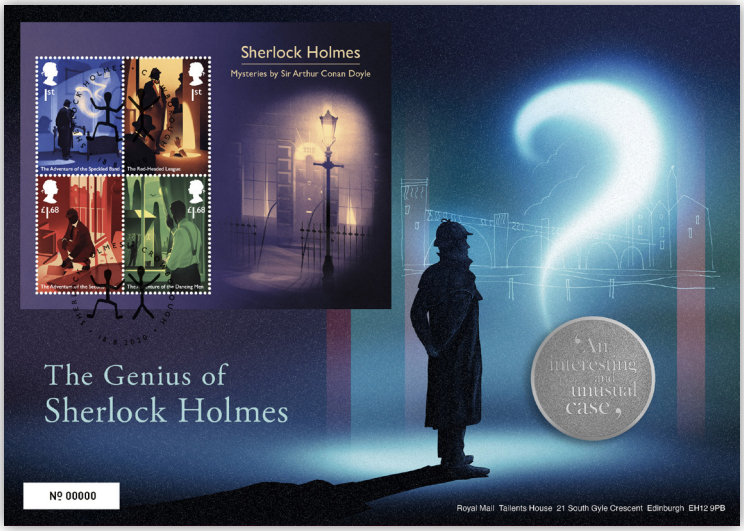
Sherlock Character Stamp Set



Sherlock: The Reichenbach Fall Stamp Set



Sherlock: The Great Game Stamp Set



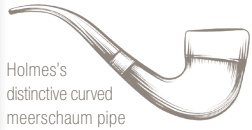


Reverse of all three Stamps Sets' Carrier Card





That trademark deer stalker was created not by Conan Doyle but artist Sidney Paget – he added the hat into illustrations of Holmes (based on his brother) that appeared with the stories in *The Strand* magazine

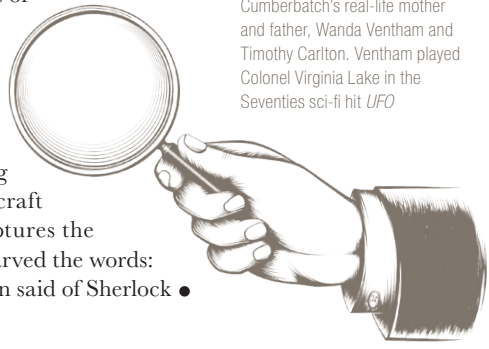


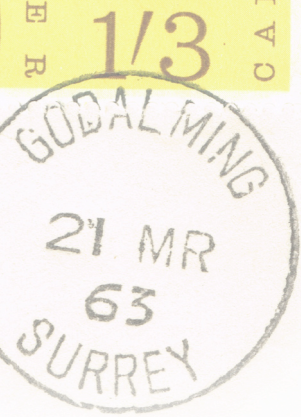
Holmes's distinctive curved meerschaum pipe wasn't Conan Doyle's invention. William Gillette, an early 20th century actor and the first to play Holmes on stage, used a meerschaum as it strained his jaw less during lengthy performances



Holmes's parents in *Sherlock* were Benedict Cumberbatch's real-life mother and father, Wanda Ventham and Timothy Carlton. Ventham played Colonel Virginia Lake in the Seventies sci-fi hit *UFO*

than his fictional hero. While a 20-year-old medical student, he worked as a ship's surgeon on an Arctic whaler, and became an expert harpooner. He served in the Boer War, battling to save the lives of soldiers cast down by typhoid. At 55 he tried to join up in 1914, but was denied. Writing a book about fighting in France and Flanders, he got himself to the front line, and witnessed German and Australian troops slaughter each other in a battle by the Somme river. Before the war he drove fast cars, went ballooning and flew in experimental planes in an era when aircraft were often death traps. Conan Doyle's epitaph captures the measure of the man and his life – on his grave are carved the words: 'Steel true, blade straight'. The same could have been said of Sherlock ●



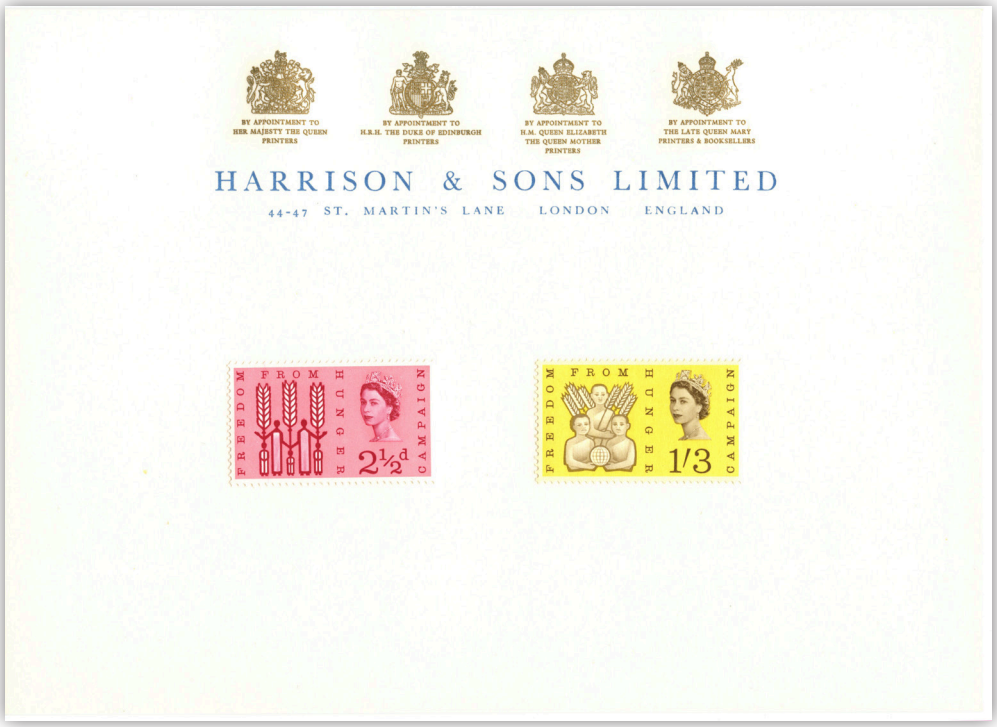


1963 – Beginning of the Commemorative Programme

We are fortunate that Royal Mail has an organised and fascinating programme each year of stamp issues on many themes, together with a comprehensive variety of products and collectibles within every issue that explain and clarify the story each time. It hasn't always been like this, and way 'back in the day', as the modern phrase goes, there was some resistance to commemorating and acknowledging events and themes. There had been specific issues, yes, such as the two stamps in 1924, and again in 1925, for the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley, and the four stamps for the 1948 Olympic Games held in London. But apart from a few other isolated issues and, of course, a Coronation issue for the present Queen, and one for her father before that, there was no concerted effort to consider and recognise our British culture and national events.

Eventually, thankfully, this was to change, and what took place from 1963 and continues to this day is a Royal Mail programme that considers and describes what could well be 'our way of life', which includes both past events and current happenings. A continuation of collecting and studying British stamps both now, and in the future, is enhanced by adding those that went before, and this first article of a short series is going to look at the early and formative years in the 1960s.

The presentation card from the printers, Harrison & Sons, with the two Freedom from Hunger Campaign stamps issued on 21 March 1963



Heavy snowfall in the winter of 1962/63 hampered delivery services – some roads were impassable for postmen travelling in Morris Minor vans



© The Postal Museum


© Bridport Museum Trust

We know well enough that these years coming two decades after the Second World War brought change in all walks of life, so let us look what 1963 was to bring following two commemorative issues in 1960, three in 1961, but only one in 1962. These all comprised either two or three stamps per issue. It was time for change, but it didn't begin too well as the 'Big Freeze' continued from the previous year, and made delivery of the postal services nigh on impossible in many areas. The first issue of the year was part of a world-wide co-operative effort to focus attention on the problem of hunger and malnutrition.

Issued on 21 March 1963 – a Thursday – were two stamps for the issue entitled 'Freedom from Hunger', a 2½d (two and a halfpenny) crimson and pink stamp, and a 1s 3d (one shilling and threepence) bistre-brown and yellow stamp. Apparently, the 2½d value was accidentally pre-released on the previous day at the post office in Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire. Someone, somewhere, probably has a first day cover from there on that day, but doesn't realise the significance. The images are shown here, and are the Campaign Emblem and Family on the lower value, and Children of Three Races on the higher value, both designed by Michael Goaman (1921-2009). There were two issues of each stamp, one with phosphor bands applied by flexography – one band on the ►



Plate block with cylinder numbers 1D. and 1H. of the Freedom from Hunger Campaign 2½d stamp

lower value and three on the higher value – and the other so-called 'ordinary' – without phosphor bands. Sales of the phosphor stamps were always going to be less, and limited, which explains the higher price of these today. Withdrawal of the issue took place just over a year later, on 1 May 1964. If we compare the numbers sold, we can see the disparity. For the 2½d stamp, 97 million ordinary and under three million phosphor. For the higher value, nine million phosphor and only 624,000 ordinary. This long term experiment with phosphor bands came to an end within a few years when all commemorative issues were banded with phosphor lines. The printers were Harrison & Sons which had a limited issue of presentation cards with the two stamps thereon, one of the cards being shown (p378).

The well-designed 6d stamp for the Paris Postal Conference Centenary showing the two colours. The rare green omitted variety is shown for comparison with the flowers and border appearing white



Just two months after the first commemorative stamps of 1963, there were three more special issues in May! How times had changed, and for us as collectors, for the better. A postal conference was held in Paris to commemorate the centenary of the first international meeting of postal authorities held in 1863, and so a 6d (sixpenny) stamp designed by Reynolds Stone in green and mauve was issued on 7 May to a total of 20 million sold, of which 1½ million had phosphor lines. Here again we can see the disparity. The period of availability was just over a year, until 1 June 1964, and an acknowledged variety was the error of the omission of the green in the printing – now very highly priced and prized.

Nine days later on 16 May 1963 came two stamps upon which were written the words 'National Nature Week'. A multitude of colours were now in the designs of a posy of flowers, and woodland life. The 3d (threepenny)

First Day Cover for the National Nature Week issue of 16 May 1963 – this one with two handstamps applied at Cowley post office in Oxford



in yellow, green, brown and black, was designed by S D Scott of Waterlows, and the 4½d (fourpence halfpenny) in black, blue, yellow, magenta and brown-red, designed by Michael Goaman. It sounds terribly gaudy, but they're not, as I hope the images shown on a First Day Cover will confirm. Having purchased the two stamps on the first day and affixed them to a home produced envelope, I approached the counter. Being of small stature for a 15-year old and with elbows on the local post office counter in Cowley, Oxford, the sub-office postmaster probably thought of 'Oliver' as he heard me say 'Please sir, may I have…'. He duly obliged with two carefully applied handstamps, and returned it to me without committing it to the postal system. It remains this collector's first foray into philately beyond the acquisition of single stamps. The issue had been made to recognise that The Council for Nature had organised a Nature Week from 18 to 25 May in order to draw attention to the natural history movement and the importance of wildlife conservation. Harrison & Sons, the printers, again issued a limited number of cards with the two stamps affixed, the 4½d being the first stamp in Great Britain to be produced in five colours.



The Ninth International Life-Boat Conference issue of three stamps showing rescue at sea, a 19th-century lifeboat and three lifeboatmen

The last day of this busy philatelic month – 31 May 1963 – brought three stamps in respect of the Ninth International Lifeboat Conference which was being held from 3 to 5 June in Edinburgh. Three values of 2½d (twopence halfpenny), 4d (fourpence) and 1s 6d (one shilling and sixpence) of between three and five colours, showed 'Rescue at Sea', '19th-century Lifeboat' and 'Lifeboatmen', all being designed by an artist with a name familiar to us all, David Gentleman. Issued in both ordinary and phosphor varieties, the numbers sold were, as ever, vastly different, ranging between over 81 million for the ordinary 2½d to 840,000 for the phosphor 4d. Most interestingly, all three stamps are known to have been pre-released on 30 May. Again, someone, somewhere…

That left two issues for the remaining months of the year. The 15 August brought three stamps to commemorate the Red Cross Centenary Congress which was to open in Geneva on 2 September. We have a value difference here, with one low value (3d – threepence) for what one might call daily letter postage, and two higher values (1s 3d – one shilling and threepence – and 1s 6d – one shilling and sixpence) not far apart in amount. All three naturally showed the 'Red Cross', the words, the value and The Queen's ►





A simple design of three variants for The Red Cross Centenary Congress issue of three stamps, two being of high value with no intermediary

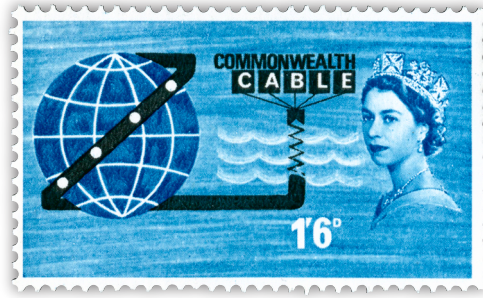


A doctor blade flaw of red ink on a pair of 3d Red Cross Centenary Congress stamps. These would usually be found on inspection before issue, and the sheet destroyed

portrait, and were designed by H Bartram. The 3d stamp was sold to a total of 167 million, some of which had the red omitted. Not many it would seem, as the catalogue value is £16,000 each.

December did not bring a Christmas stamp issue, something we have enjoyed for many years now – it began in 1966. But, a single commemorative stamp at a high (for the time) 1s 6d (one shilling and sixpence) value was issued on 3 December. In blue and black, and with no lower values for internal daily letter post, it was designed by P Gauld and was entitled 'Commonwealth Cable'. The Trans-Pacific Cable (COMPAC) was the first telephone cable to be laid across the Pacific Ocean, linking Canada with Australia and New Zealand by way of Hawaii and Fiji, and this stamp in blue and black was issued as a commemorative for this communication event. Unsurprisingly, the quantities sold were lower at just under nine million for both varieties, ordinary and phosphor. So there we have it, a stamp issuing policy that was moving forward in a constructive way, and that we will endeavour to continue to cover in a future issue, explaining 1964 and beyond ●

Article by Dane Garrod



The single stamp issue that was the last for 1963, commemorating the laying of the Commonwealth Cable – the first telephone cable link across the Pacific Ocean



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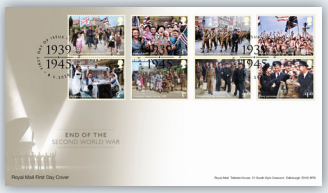
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New Issues and Withdrawals

Information correct at the time of going to press

6 August — **Withdrawal** End of the Second World War: Stamp Souvenir. Stamp Sheet Souvenir.



15 August — **Issue** End of the Second World War: £5 Coin Cover (BU/Silver/Gold).

18 August — **Issue** Sherlock: Stamps (2 x 1st Class, 2 x £1.42, 2 x £1.68 – 3 x vertical se-tenant pairs). Miniature Sheet (2 x 1st Class, 2 x £1.68). Presentation Pack. First Day Cover Stamps. First Day Cover Miniature Sheet. Stamp Souvenir. Stamp Sheet Souvenir. First Day Envelope. Postcards (11 in set). Stamp Book. Collector's Sheet. Sherlock: The Reichenbach Fall Stamp Set. Sherlock: The Great Game Stamp Set. Sherlock Character Stamp Set. Framed Stamps. Stamp Mount. Framed Miniature Sheet. Framed Collector's Sheet. Collector's Sheet Mount. Sherlock: The Reichenbach Fall Framed Gallery Print. Sherlock: The Great Game Framed Gallery Print. Sherlock: A Study in Pink Framed Gallery Print. Sherlock & Moriarty Limited Edition Medal Cover. Sherlock & Moriarty Limited Edition Silver Medal Cover. The Genius of Sherlock Holmes Limited Edition Medal Cover. The Genius of Sherlock Holmes Limited Edition Silver Medal Cover. Sherlock Ultimate Bundle.

24 August — **Issue** James Bond: Coin Cover (BU/Silver).

28 August — **Withdrawal** Coronation Street: Stamp Souvenir. Stamp Sheet Souvenir.



3 September — **Issue** Rupert Bear: Stamps (2 x 2nd Class, 2 x 1st Class, 2 x £1.42, 2 x £1.63 – 4 x horizontal se-tenant pairs). Presentation Pack. First Day Cover Stamps. Stamp Souvenir. First Day Envelope. Postcards (8 in set). Framed Stamps.

18 September — **Withdrawal** Roman Britain: Stamp Souvenir.



You can order any of the Royal Mail stamp products listed above, by visiting **www.royalmail.com/stamps** or from Royal Mail Stamps and Collectibles PO Box 1373, Sunderland SR5 9PG, UK. (Overseas subscribers will need to use a stamp.) Or use the Royal Mail telephone order service on 03457 641 641 (08.30 – 17.00 Monday to Friday). For overseas customers: +44 3457 641 641. Minimum handling charge UK £1.45, Europe £1.55, rest of world (airmail) £2.15.

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