BRITISH PHILATELIC

Bulletin

50th Anniversary Year 2013

The Royal Mail magazine for stamp collectors

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Coronation celebration • 1953 Aerogrammes • Nicky Philipps



Latest stamp issue: Six Decades of Royal Portraits

WIN NEW ISSUES AND MORE • JOHN HOLMAN UK STAMP SCENE • PREVIEW BUTTERFLIES

Issues and withdrawals



Cover Study for the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II by Terence Cuneo, 1953 © Royal Collection Trust/all rights reserved. Stamp issue: Her Majesty The Queen: Six Decades of Royal Portraits. Stamp details were featured in page 262 of May *Bulletin*. Read more about the portraits on page304. The copyright of all UK stamp images in this publication is owned by Royal Mail Group Ltd.

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30 May	**Issue** Her Majesty the Queen – Six Decades of Royal Portraits: Stamps (1st class, 2nd class, 78p, 88p, £1.28, £1.88), Presentation Pack, Stamp Cards, Coin Covers.
2 June	**Issue** Her Majesty the Queen – Six Decades of Royal Portraits: Commemorative Document.
18 June	**Issue** Classic Locomotives of Northern Ireland: Miniature Sheet (1st, 78p, 88p, £1.28); Stamp Book (4 x 1st Class Machins, 2 x 1st Class Locomotives of Northern Ireland).
18 June	**Withdrawal** Charles Dickens: Stamps, Miniature Sheet, Presentation Pack, Stamp Cards.
25 June	**Issue** Post & Go, Freshwater Life II – Lakes: Stamps.
30 June	**Withdrawal** Diamond Jubilee Pictorials: Stamps, Prestige Stamp Book, Presentation Pack, Stamp Cards. Diamond Jubilee Definitives: Stamps, Stamp Books (except UB355), Miniature Sheet, Stamp Cards.
30 June	**Withdrawal** Kings and Queen series: Stamps, Miniature Sheets, Presentation Packs, Stamp Cards.
11 July	**Issue** Butterflies: Stamps (10 x 1st Class), Presentation Pack, Stamp Book (4 x 1st Class Machins, 2 x 1st Class Butterflies), Stamp Cards.
2 August	**Issue** Bangkok 2013 World Stamp Exhibition: Exhibition Stamp Sheet.

Royal Mail

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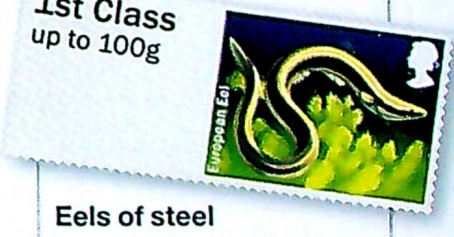


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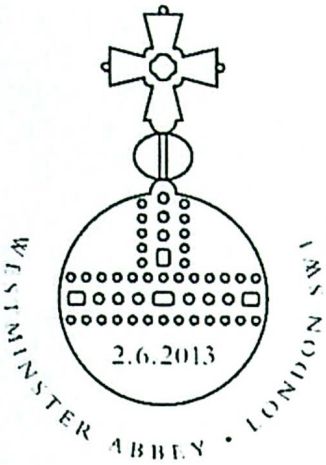
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The *British Philatelic Bulletin* is published monthly by Royal Mail, Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB ● Editor: William Doherty ● Price £1.50 from Post Office Ltd philatelic outlets (see opposite) ● **Annual subscription** £12.95 UK & Europe; £17.95 elsewhere. Send subscriptions to Royal Mail Tallents House (address opposite) ● **Binders** (to hold 24 issues) £8.50, storage boxes (about 30 copies) £9.95 available by post from Royal Mail Tallents House ● Royal Mail also publishes the fortnightly *British Postmark Bulletin*, giving details of forthcoming special handstamps – available on annual subscription from Royal Mail Tallents House £12.25 UK and Europe; £24.95 rest of the world
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June update Commemorative Document to complement the Royal Portraits issue





Right: the special Westminster Abbey handstamp created for the new Commemorative Document will feature a line drawing of the Royal Orb

'Throughout all my life and with all my heart I shall strive to be most worthy of your trust.' This simple yet eloquent promise was made to the nation by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, then 26, in the Coronation Broadcast on 2 June 1953. The quotation appears next to the earliest and most recent paintings of The Queen depicted in the Six Decades of Royal Portraits issue on the beautifully illustrated Commemorative Document. Fittingly, it is released on 2 June – 60 years to the day when she was officially crowned.

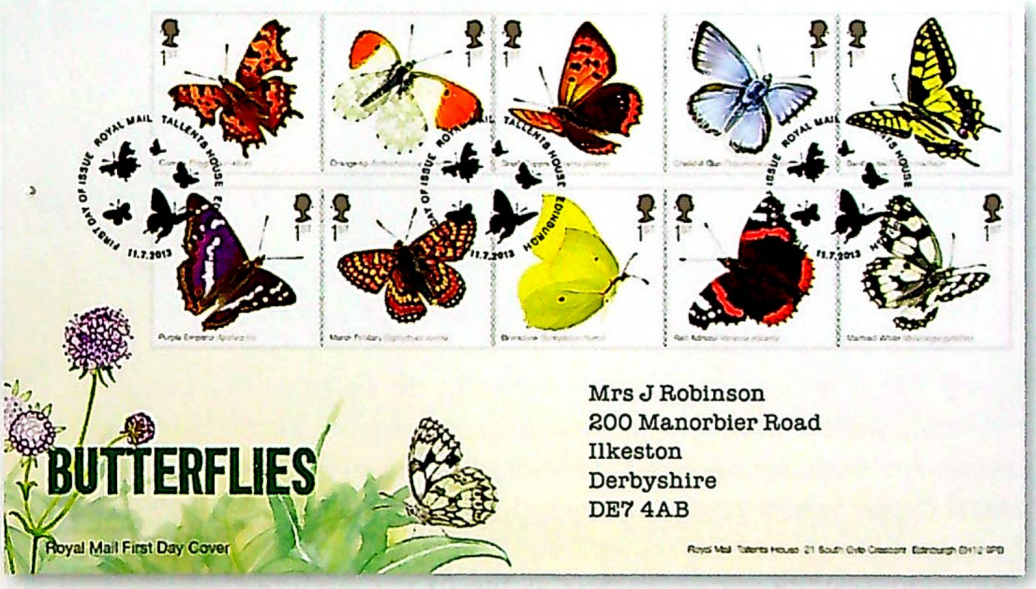
The limited-edition Commemorative Document, with a run of just 15,000 copies, marks this special 60th anniversary and focuses on key milestones, including the Golden and Diamond Jubilees. The two stamps are cancelled with a special Westminster Abbey handstamp. Inside, more photographs and elegant calligraphy illustrate special moments in Her Majesty's life.

The Royal Portraits Commemorative Document costs £9.95. It is available from Tallents House at the address on page 290 and online from shop.royalmail.com. Philatelic specifications of the stamps are on page 262 of last month's *Bulletin*. You can also read more on page 304 of this edition •



Change of printer for definitives The printer of 78p, 88p and £1.88p definitives has changed from Walsall to De La Rue. If you have a regular order for Visible Changes, you will receive your order on or around 2 August •

Butterfly time A first glimpse of the beautifully illustrated special stamps to be issued in July, featuring ten British butterflies





FD1317 TH



FD1317 PL

Above: Lulworth Camp, Wareham, Dorset was chosen for the alternative pictorial and plain first-day postmarks. Lulworth has the Lulworth Skipper butterfly named after it and is the location of the Butterfly Conservation charity

NOTHING IS MORE LIKELY to inspire us to stop and stare than a glimpse of a colourful butterfly. The Red Admiral and common Cabbage White are widely known by name but you may be surprised to learn that there are about 60 resident species of butterfly in the UK. Ten of these are celebrated in the Butterflies stamp issue, released on 11 July, just before the National Butterfly Count campaign run by charity Butterfly Conservation.

The Butterflies issue features illustrations by Richard Lewington, whose passion for butterflies is also reflected in his writing of the Presentation Pack and information card within the First Day Cover.

Stamp by stamp Ten First Class stamps each feature a different butterfly: *The Comma* has distinctive ragged-edged wings with white comma-shaped marks on their undersides. It was once a rarity but can now be widely seen in its habitat of woodlands, gardens and hedgerows. ▶

Butterflies – Specifications	
Date of issue	11 July
Number of stamps	10 x 1st
Stamp design	marc&anna
Illustrations	Richard Lewington
Stamp format	Landscape
Stamp size	37mm x 35mm
Printer	Cartor Security Printing
Print process	Lithography
Number per sheet	25/50
Perforations	14 x 14.5
Phosphor	All over
Gum	PVA

Butterflies – Prices	
Stamps	£6
Fresentation Pack	£6.50
First Day Cover UK	£7.68
First Day Cover overseas	£6.40
Stamp Cards	£4.50
Stamp Book, 2 x Butterflies, 4 x 1st Class	£3.60

Top: the Butterflies First Day Cover is designed by marc&anna





FD1317 NP

Orange-tip Along with the Comma butterfly, the Orange-tip is one of the few butterfly species that are increasing in number in the UK. Males have distinctive bright orange wingtips with marbled undersides.

Small Copper sports bright orange wings with nine spots on the forewing. Living in open spaces, especially rough grasslands, the males are particularly territorial. They are found throughout the UK, except parts of Scotland.

Chalkhill Blue Appears in high summer, in the chalk and limestone hillsides of southern England. Males have pale silvery-blue wings with a distinctive black and white border.

Swallowtail The forked appearance of the Swallowtail's wing when resting has given rise to its common name. The largest species in the UK, it can be found skimming reed beds and open water. Its favoured habitat is open fenlands.

Purple Emperor Males have a striking purple sheen. All adults have dark brown wings with white bands and spots, and a small orange ring on each hindwing. They are found in broadleaved forests of central and southern England.

Marsh Fritillary Attractively chequered, this is one of the UK's fastest-declining butterflies. Marsh Fritillary butterflies are found in damp meadows and flowery downland in western parts of the UK and parts of Northern Ireland.



Brimstone One of the first butterflies to appear in the spring. Males are sulphur yellow and the female white with a greenish tinge, but both have an orange spot on each wing. They are found throughout the UK countryside.

Red Admiral Found throughout the UK, these creatures are immigrants from southern Europe and North Africa. Dramatically coloured, they are attracted to garden flowers such as buddliea.

Marbled White Distinctively chequered, this butterfly can be seen flitting about the flowery grassland, woodland rides and verges of England and southern Wales during the summer months •

Butterflies Stamp Book (UB363) – Specifications

Issue date	11 July 2013
Book format/s	4 x Royal Mail Red 1st Class definitives; 2 x special stamps – Chalkhill Blue and Comma
1st Class stamp format Butterfly special format	Portrait 20mm x 24mm Landscape 37mm x 35mm
Printer	Walsall
Print process	Gravure

Stamp images © Royal Mail Group Ltd

An historic sale

A unique selection of stamps will be auctioned to help raise funds for a new, big and beautiful centre for the British Postal Museum & Archive







11 JULY 2013 will see the most important archival sale of stamps ever to take place. The auction will comprise material duplicate to the archive collection of the British Postal Museum & Archive (BPMA) and collectors have a choice of selected issues from the reigns of King George V (the much-loved 'Seahorses' stamps), King Edward VIII definitives and King George VI definitives.

Proceeds will benefit the £4.25 million building project to provide the BPMA with a state-of-the-art museum, visitors centre and educational facilities at Calthorpe House on the Mount Pleasant site in London, which is scheduled to open in 2016. The auction has 191 lots and estimates predict that it will bring in more than £5 million.

Above: 1923 Bradbury Wilkinson 'Joynson' Paper 10s blue, the unique complete Registration sheet of 40. Estimate £100,000 to £120,000 (Lot 4)

Commenting on the collection of stamps to be offered for sale, Sotheby's Worldwide Philatelic Consultant Richard Ashton said: 'This selection of material from the British Postal Museum & Archive includes numerous items that are of the utmost rarity. Now in my 50th year as a professional philatelist, I have never seen such an important sale of its type. Many are the only examples of their kind ever to come on to the market. Quite aside from their rarity, these extraordinary stamps are also of great beauty – engraved to the highest standard by leading masters of the day. Collectors will never again be presented with such a unique opportunity.'

BPMA Director Adrian Steel is impressed with the amount of public support shown for the new building project: 'Since we first announced our project to open a new first-class home for Britain's postal heritage in London ▸

Right: 1936 set of four marginal singles from the left of the sheet, values ½d to 2½d. Estimate £2,000 to £2,500 (Lot 13)



Below: 1936 set of four in unique horizontal registration blocks of 48, values ½d to 2½d, spanning the sheet. Registration certificate. Estimate £100,000 to £120,000. (Lot 18)



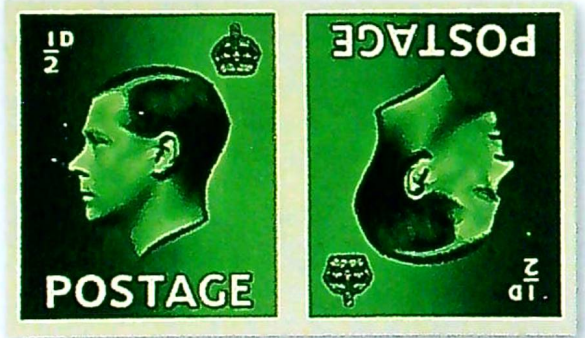


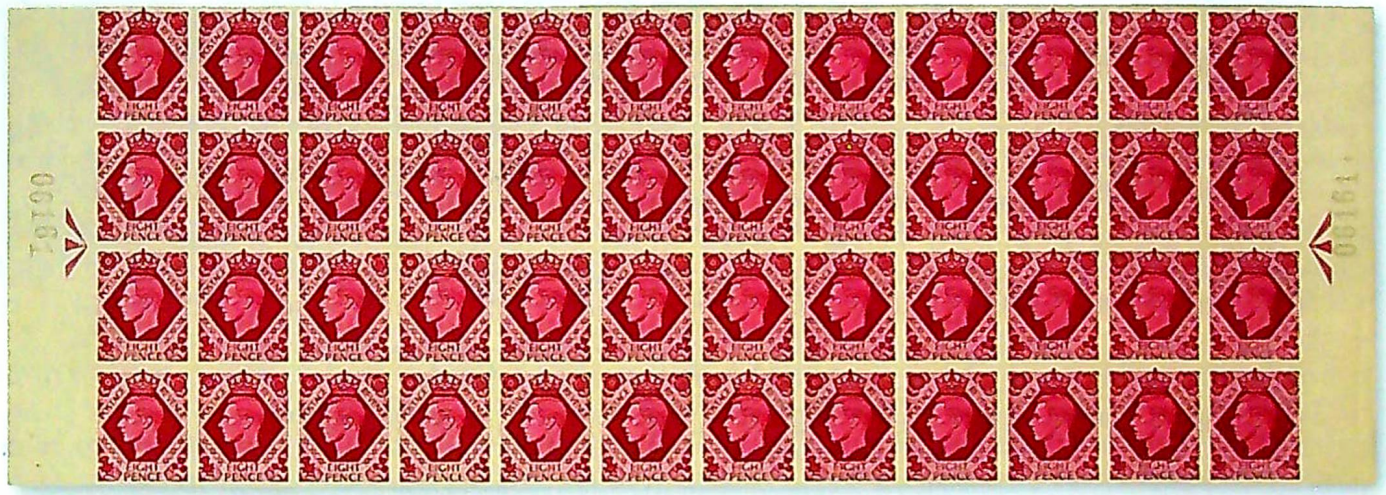
last year, we have received widespread support. Following the announcement of this sale, it has been great to receive encouragement from those who want to play their part in our fundraising campaign by participating in the auction.

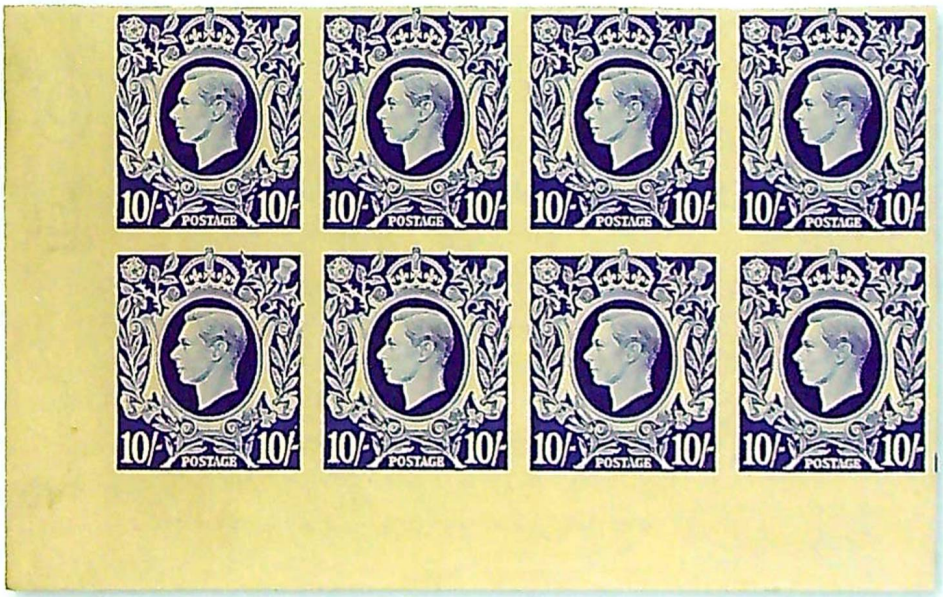
'The BPMA's collections are of the utmost richness in iconic British heritage and engaging personal stories. From family historians to families who want to immerse themselves in something new as part of a day out in London, our new centre will offer something sparkling with fascination and enjoyment for everyone. It will safeguard all our collections into the future, and by taking up the chance to own the rare philatelic specimens on offer at Sotheby's, all potential buyers can feel proud that they are helping to safeguard the originals and all our world-class collections, from Penny Blacks to packet ship records, for the nation and the world to enjoy.'

A second sale, comprising entirely different material, is scheduled for February 2014 •

Below: one of three in a set of 1936 horizontal tête-bêche pairs. Estimate £7000 to £9,000 (Lot 19)







Above: 1937 to 1947 block of 8d stamps, part of a unique set of ½d to 1s stamps in 17 horizontal marginal registration blocks spanning the sheets. Registration Certificate. (Lot 47)

Left: 1939-48 Ten shilling block from a set of six horizontal marginal blocks or strips of eight, 2s 6d to £1, Estimate £85,000 to £110,000. (Lot 85)





Above: 1941-42 unique set of six horizontal marginal registration blocks spanning the sheet, of values ½d to 3d. Registration Certificate. Estimate £85,000 to £100,000. (Lot 94)
Left: 1951 Festival of Britain unique set of 4 horizontal marginal registration blocks of 12 spanning the sheet, values 2s 6d to £1. Registration Certificate. Estimate £85,000 to £100,000. (Lot 178)



Stamp Scene John Holman keeps you posted on events and activities in the philatelic world

Diary dates

8 June Swinpex, St Joseph's School, Ocotal Way, Swindon, 10am to 4.30pm. About 50 dealers, specialist societies.

15 June GB Philatelic Society display 'GB Essays, Trials, Proofs & Specimens' (Edward Klempka), Royal Philatelic Society, 41 Devonshire Place, London W1: 11am, followed by AGM at 2pm.



Above: a 1969 postcard showing the promenade, sands and pier at Redcar, host town for this month's Annual Convention of the Yorkshire Philatelic Association

21 and 22 June Stafford Stamp Fair, Staffordshire County Showground, Weston Road, Stafford. Friday 10am to 5pm, Saturday 10am to 4pm. Information: 01785 259350.

27-30 June Philatelic Congress of Great Britain, Hallmark Hotel, Matson Lane, Gloucester. For bookings call 01772 713917 or gaywood@hotmail.co.uk.

29 June Yorkshire Philatelic Association Annual Convention, Rye Hills School, Redcar Lane, Redcar TS10 2HN. Information: 01904 701464.

6 July Midpex, Warwickshire Exhibition Centre, Fosse Way, Leamington CV31 1XN, 10am to 5pm. Information: www.midpex.co.uk.

12 July Strand Stamp Fair, Royal National Hotel, Russell Square, London WC1. Information: 020 8946 4480 or www.stampshows.net.

12-13 July ThematiX (UK's National Thematic Stamp Show), King George Field Indoor Bowls Club, Jubilee Way, Chessington KT9 1TR. Friday 10.30am to 5pm, Saturday 10am to 4pm. Call 012566 415699 or visit www.thematix.co.uk.

19-20 July York Racecourse Stamp & Coin Fair, York Racecourse, York YO23 1EX, Friday 11am to 6pm, Saturday 10am to 4pm •

BTA widens scope

The British Thematic Association (BTA) is adopting open philately, social philately and postcard collecting to broaden its appeal beyond the traditional thematic community, making it the UK's first national society for all theme-based collectors. The BTA is taking this positive step in response to the increasing popularity of theme-based collecting – collecting around a theme or story and especially disciplines which encompass non-philatelic material or material with a social connection. In particular, themes and philatelic subjects are increasingly supported by or feature personal and family stories with connected material, including letters, photos and postcards alongside traditional philatelic items.

Themescene, the BTA's magazine, has pages that specifically cater for open, social or postcard collectors. There will also be workshops and seminars, and the BTA will stage special events when the pictorial classes form part of Spring Stampex (as they will in 2014). The BTA is running a social competition called the John Fosbery Trophy, which has no rules apart from a requirement for 16 sheets inside protectors, – perfect for those who want to show something innovative and gain experience of competing. It will be held at the Sussex Showground on 12 October. For entry forms see www.brit-thematic-assoc.com •

Postcard image courtesy Redcar and Cleveland Libraries

Philatelic Congress

The 2013 Philatelic Congress of Great Britain is being held at the Hallmark Hotel, Matson Lane, Gloucester on 27 to 30 June. The theme of the talks and displays is Africa, covering the stamps and postal history of Gambia, Transvaal, Belgian Congo, Sierra Leone, Sudan and Rhodesia. The Congress includes a banquet and the ceremony of signing the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists. It may still be possible to book a place – contact Paul Gaywood on 01772 713917 or email gaywood@hotmail.co.uk.

The first Congress was held in Manchester in 1909, and the Gloucester event will be the 95th.

The Roll of Distinguished Philatelists was established in 1921, and each year a number of eminent philatelists are invited to sign. Adding their names this year will be Douglas Muir from the UK, Portugal's Luis Frazao, Alexander Ilyushin from Russia, Renate Springer from Germany and Anthony Virvilis from Greece. Douglas Muir was Bulletin Editor from 1986 to 1988. Since then he has been Curator Philately at the British Postal Museum & Archive. For more on Douglas's career and philatelic interests see the April 1998 Bulletin (pages 243 to 248) •



Above: postcard showing a rare registered cover with postmark celebrating the first Congress of 1909

Stamp-related exhibitions and events

Royal Mail stamps featuring Six Decades of Royal Portraits are now on sale, issued to coincide with the 60th anniversary of The Queen's Coronation (see page 304). There are a number of exhibitions marking the occasion too. 'Coronation!', in the Chapter House at Westminster Abbey until September, features archive pictures of the 1953 Coronation and images of the extensive building work to prepare Westminster Abbey for the Coronation. Free admission, no booking required. The Coronation Chair, used in most coronations since the 14th century and recently restored, can now be seen in a new display in St George's Chapel. In the Abbey's museum you can view a rare collection of Coronation Chair miniatures made in 1953.

The robes and jewellery worn by The Queen at the Coronation are to be the centrepiece of the annual summer opening of Buckingham Palace from 27 July to 29 September. Also on show will be robes worn by the Duke of Edinburgh, The Queen Mother, Princess Margaret, Prince Charles and Princess Anne. For more information, call 020 7766 7300•

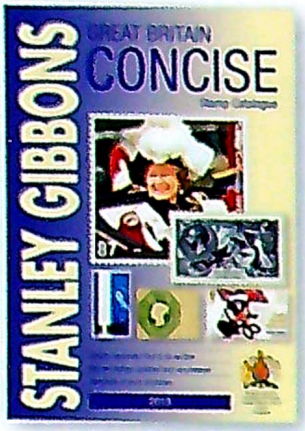
Britain's greatest innovations

A number of innovations that have featured on stamps have taken top place in an online poll on Britain's greatest technological wonders and discoveries. Of the 100 innovations listed and voted for by the public, the top five were: Turing's Universal Machine (24 per cent of votes), the BMC Mini (23 per cent), the X-ray crystallography technique (13 per cent), discovery of pulsars (six per cent) and the Mallard steam locomotive (five per cent). Concorde was in ninth place and the Double Helix in tenth. Go to www.topbritishinnovations.org for the full listing. The poll was organised to mark National Science and Engineering week, in association with the Department for Business Innovation & Skills, the Royal Society and the British Science Association, among others •



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New catalogues



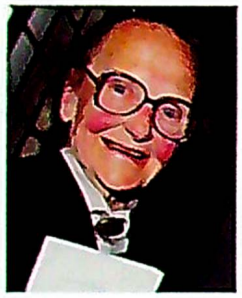
Michel has published a supplement volume and CD for its 2008 Railway Thematic Catalogue. The supplement volume and CD costs €39.80 or €49.80 with the 2008 catalogue. The catalogue and supplement together list railway stamps worldwide, with around 5,500 colour illustrations. A second supplement volume and CD is also available for the 2007 Birds catalogue. They contain information on bird stamps issued in Europe since 1919, with about 14,000 updated price quotations and 3,000 illustrations. Information: Schwaneberger Verlag GmbH, Ohmstrasse 1, 85716 Unterschleissheim, Germany, vertrieb@michel.de or www.michel.de.

The 2013 edition of the popular GB Concise Catalogue is now available (price £32.95 from Stanley Gibbons on 01425 472363 or email orders@stanleygibbons.com). It lists all GB stamps from 1840 to early 2013 •

Obituaries



Dorothy Martin



Katharine Stewart



Alan Sabey

It is with sadness that we report the deaths of two remarkable ladies, within a few days of each other, and both in their 99th year. Dorothy Martin was a prominent collector in the North East, noted for her wonderful collection of Christmas stamps. Every year from 1997 to 2009 she contributed an interesting article on a Christmas theme to *Bulletin*. These articles were popular with readers and Dorothy much enjoyed writing them. However, she will be best remembered as the organiser of the North East Philatelic Weekends which started in 1975. I was invited to give a display at the 2000 event, which was a most enjoyable occasion. Dorothy was a joy to meet or talk to on the phone – she was always cheerful and looking forward to a philatelic event. She said it was philately that kept her young at heart. Born in Cambridge, she worked as a seed analyst before taking jobs in the confectionery industry, and took up stamp collecting in retirement. For more on Dorothy's interests and philatelic activities, see Richard West's profile of her in the December 2004 *Bulletin*.

Katharine Stewart settled with her family in a remote croft at Abriachan near Inverness in 1950. Her husband ran the tiny post office there, as did Katharine after his death. She also taught French at Inverness High School. In 1997 she published a delightful book, *The Post in the Hills*, based on her experiences and archive research. A review of the book by Colin Peachey, with a picture of Katharine meeting Royal Mail's then managing director at the National Postal Museum in London, was published in the November 1998 *Bulletin* (page 92). Her other books include *A Croft in the Hills*, *The Crofting Way*, *A Woman of the Highlands* and *Cattle on a Thousand Hills*. She also wrote articles for newspapers and magazines and featured on BBC radio. When I visited Katharine in 2005 she was still full of life and busy on her latest book. Sadly the post office at Abriachan closed in 2008. In recent years Katharine campaigned against a controversial wind farm and was patron of the Abriachan Forest Trust.

I am also sorry to report the death in April of Alan Sabey, aged 71. Alan was a noted collector of the 1924-25 Empire Exhibition and 1948 Olympic issues – indeed anything connected with Wembley and its environs. He was a prominent member of the Exhibition Study Group and Society of Olympic Collectors. With D R Knight, he wrote the excellent book *The Lion Roars at Wembley* (1984). His displays received a Large Vermeil medal at Stamp Show 2000 in London, and Gold at Belgica 2001. Last year he contributed to the Olympex exhibition at

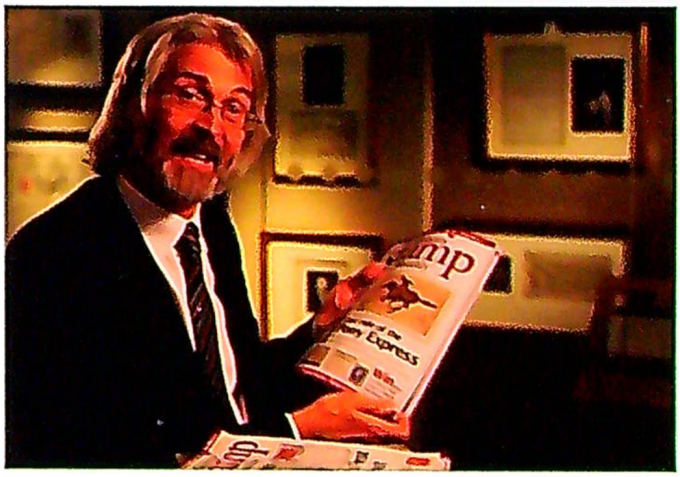
the British Library. Readers will recall his interesting booklet on the 1924-25 Empire Exhibition stamps, *Bulletin* Publication No. 6 (1999). Alan, who worked in local government, was also deeply interested in genealogy and active in the life of his local church as server, sacristan and archivist •

Retirement

Hugh Jefferies, Editor of *Gibbons Stamp Monthly* since 1988 and of the Stanley Gibbons Stamp Catalogues since 2003, retired last month.

The SG Catalogues are the main source of reference for stamp collectors in the UK and most English-speaking countries. The catalogue range is now extensive, comprising over 50 volumes. It is important that the Catalogue Editor has wide philatelic knowledge and interests, and, as a fourth-generation stamp collector, Hugh Jefferies has been ideal in that position. As a member of local philatelic societies, he regularly meets collectors and understands their needs and requirements in the stamp catalogues. This has manifested itself in additional material being listed in the catalogues since he became Editor and the inclusion of useful information to help collectors get more from using the catalogues and greater enjoyment of their hobby.

Work on the catalogues is unrelenting and Hugh has frequently worked long hours on them, at weekends and even when on holiday. His own philatelic knowledge and research is incorporated into improvements to the catalogues and his contributions to the magazine. This is particularly true of British Empire stamps of the reigns of George V and George VI, which are probably his main personal collecting interest.



Hugh Jefferies has retired from Stanley Gibbons

Hugh is a Fellow of the Royal Philatelic Society London, and, more perhaps than other senior staff at Stanley Gibbons, is the face of the company in the philatelic community. He has represented Stanley Gibbons in radio and television broadcasts and in the national press. His appearance on The Alan Titchmarsh Show on ITV show was reported on *Bulletin* in July 2012 (page 330). Hugh has been regularly found on Stanley Gibbons stands at stamp exhibitions and fairs, in order to meet its customers and to get ideas from them about improving Stanley Gibbons catalogues and the magazine. He clearly enjoys meeting fellow collectors at all levels and they too benefit from his advice and knowledge. Hugh has expanded and improved Gibbons Stamp Monthly, increasing its circulation. His editorials express his views to readers in a friendly and often humorous way. Hugh is a trustee of the privately-run Bath Postal Museum (a registered charity), and one of two philatelists on Royal Mail's Stamp Advisory Committee which selects the designs of special stamp issues for approval by The Queen. He will continue to be involved with the SG catalogues on a part-time basis, but will now have more time for his own collecting and study.

The *Bulletin* team wishes Hugh a happy and healthy retirement •



Coronation commemoratives

John Holman revisits the UK stamps that have marked previous anniversaries of The Queen's Coronation in June 1953

25th Anniversary of the Coronation, 1978

On May 31, 1978, two days before the actual anniversary, four stamps were released to mark the 25th anniversary of the Coronation, following the well-received issue for The Queen's Silver Jubilee in the previous year. The 25th Anniversary of the Coronation stamps were designed by Jeffery Matthews and featured four symbols most associated with Coronation Day – the State Coach (9p), St Edward's Crown (10½p), the Sovereign's Orb (11p), and Imperial State Crown (13p) all printed in gold against rich background colours of Royal blue, carmine-lake, deep green, and reddish violet. As with all Matthews's designs, the stamps were clearly captioned – with the words '25th Anniversary of the Coronation' and with the names of the items shown. The Queen's head was the pleasing half-tone type introduced on the Bridges stamps of 1968 and last used on the Robert Burns set of 1996. This being a royal issue, it was shown somewhat larger than on other special issues.

Above: The Queen wears the Imperial State Crown, shown on the commemorative 13p stamp of 1978.

Below: 1953 souvenir edition of London's *Evening Standard* newspaper



TO-DAY IN PICTURES

Evening Standard

CORONATION SPECIAL

THE CROWNED QUEEN

Pages of dramatic pictures

The Queen sits on King Edward's Chair, wearing the Crown, in Westminster Abbey to-day. The Crown has been placed on her head by the Archbishop of Canterbury, who now stands facing her. On her right is the Bishop of Durham, on her left the Bishop of Bath and Wells. The supreme moment of the ceremony has been reached.

From the Abbey the Queen drove in her golden coach home to Buckingham Palace. The streets were packed with millions of cheering people who had waited for hours in blazing sunshine and in bitter rain to share the glory of the day. Beverley Baxter, M.P., reports the Abbey ceremony on Page Two.

The stamps were printed in sheets of 100 by Harrisons. Only one set of cylinders was used for each value – 5A-2B (9p), 3A-1B (10½p), 6A-2B (11p), and 3A-1B (13p). A phosphor P62 cylinder number is present on sheets of three values, with P69 reported for the 11p value.

Printing quality was good with no major errors found, although a number of interesting constant varieties are listed in the SG Specialised Catalogue. A cluster of white dots over the letters 'at' of 'Coronation' are found on the 9p, a chunk missing from the crown, an extra pearl on the orb, and a white retouch under 'the Cor' on the 11p, and a white spot on the back of The Queen's neck and a damaged letter 'a' in Coronation on the 13p. Although of no great monetary value, they are worth looking out for and add interest to a display of the stamps.

The stamps were also available in a well-written presentation pack and a 16-page souvenir book, both illustrated with scenes from the Coronation. The designs were reproduced on a set of 'PHQ'

stamp cards. The Post Office first day cover featured the Royal Arms. The Coronation Chair featured on the First Day of Issue postmark used at the Philatelic Bureau, while the alternative postmark for London SW1 depicted the twin towers of Westminster Abbey. In addition there were a number of sponsored handstamps relevant to the issue, plus others not directly associated but also applied to covers bearing the stamps. The handstamp used for the Cameo Stamp Centre, London WC2 featured the Coronation coach. A Coronation Anniversary handstamp was used at the British Library from 31 May until 21 November.

Covers bearing the handstamps of Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle are very desirable as are ones with the datestamp for Scone in Scotland, the famous Stone of Scone then being located under the Coronation Chair in Westminster Abbey (the stone now resides at Edinburgh Castle).



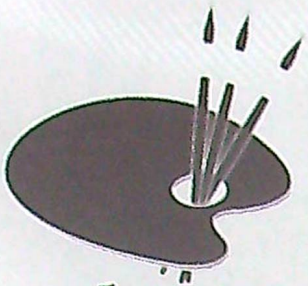
Above: the 25th Anniversary of the Coronation stamps were designed by Jeffery Matthews and printed by Harrisons

The background story of the issue is interesting. Jeffery Matthews was one of four designers commissioned to produce designs for the 1977 Silver Jubilee set. His heraldic designs were liked by the Post Office, but it became difficult to find appropriate symbols to bind the set visually. Eventually Richard Guyatt of the Royal College of Art came up with the finally issued designs.

But the work Jeffery had done became the starting point for his Coronation Anniversary issue. Two other artists were also commissioned, all three coming up with good work. Jeffery's designs 'showed the Regalia in a more stylized way, using part elevation drawings', causing the witty comment that he had produced a 'half crown stamp'. He 'felt that for this occasion the Queen herself should be given far more prominence and quite deliberately made her head fairly large'. He used the toned head, 'which looks younger, and which is uncrowned and this helped to create a rather nostalgic view of twenty-five years ago'. He liked 'the fact that the rest of the stamp, being printed in gold, is rather elusive – it comes and goes as you move it – made the Queen's head the most dominant unchanging feature and gave her the pre-eminence she deserved'.

Designs showing the St Edward's Crown, Orb and Sceptre with Cross, Rod & Equity & Mercy, Sword, and the Ampulla and Spoon, and also the finished artwork (minus The Queen's head) for the issued stamps are illustrated in *Royal Mail Stamps: A Survey of British Stamp Design* by Stuart Rose (published 1980). Other designs, not dissimilar to those of Jeffery, by Peter Hatch and Roger Denning are also shown. Two of Jeffery Matthews's sketches were featured on the souvenir sheet for the 2003 Thematica exhibition; these showed a 10p stamp with Sceptre with cross and Rod of Equity & Mercy and a 10½p design of the Imperial State Crown against a white background.

▸ *continued on page 306*



Six decades, six portraits

The Queen has been painted by some of the finest portrait artists and Royal Mail's unique new issue celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Coronation brings together a selection of the crème de la crème. Six Decades of Royal Portraits is a glorious parade through Her Majesty's reign – from Terence Cuneo's classic Coronation picture of 1953 to Nicky Philipps' 2013 work specially commissioned by Royal Mail. A very majestic art collection indeed…

Study for The Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II by Terence Cuneo, 1953 © Royal Collection Trust/all rights reserved; 2013 © Royal Mail Group Ltd 2013. Portrait by Andrew Festing, 1999 © Royal Hospital Chelsea. Portrait by Pietro Annigoni, 1955, Camera Press London/ The Bridgeman Art Library. Portrait by Sergei Pavlenko, 2000 © The Drapers' Company. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II by Richard Stone, 1992 © Richard Stone (presented to Colchester Borough Council by the artist).

For full details of the Six Decades of Royal Portraits stamps, see page 262 of the previous edition of the British Philatelic Bulletin.

1953 TERENCE CUNEO

Second Class stamp



Commissioned by Lord Lieutenants of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The big picture This is a preparatory oil sketch for Cuneo's huge, cinematic interpretation of the Coronation. The Queen wears the St Edward's Crown and an Imperial Mantle of gold cloth embroidered with the traditional emblems of the realms.



Inside story Cuneo prepared meticulously, attending all eight Coronation rehearsals. He began working in the early morning on the big day, sketching for eight hours in a row •

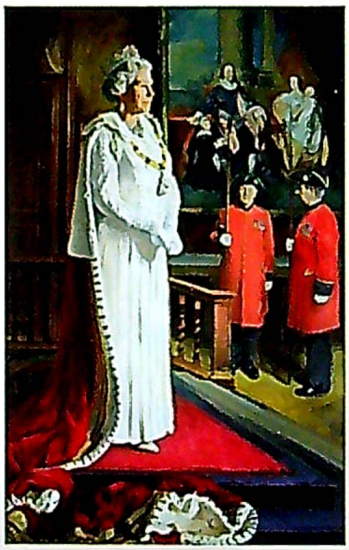
1999 ANDREW FESTING

78p stamp

Commissioned by the Royal Hospital Chelsea.

The big picture The Queen wears regalia for the State Opening of Parliament – the Parliamentary Robe of State and the Diamond Diadem. She is portrayed as a guest of the Royal Hospital, standing on the steps leading to its Council Chamber with two Chelsea Pensioners in attendance.





Inside story A former army officer, Festing is no stranger to capturing public figures on canvas. He produced a picture of the Royal Family to celebrate The Queen and Duke of Edinburgh's golden wedding anniversary •

1955 PIETRO ANNIGONI
88p stamp

Commissioned by the Worshipful Company of Fishmongers for their imposing hall by the River Thames next to London Bridge.
The big picture For many this was the definitive painting of The Queen, which delighted the public when it first appeared and brought Annigoni worldwide fame.





Inside story At first Annigoni was in awe of his Royal sitter – until Her Majesty started chatting with him in French and related how, as a young girl, she would watch the outside world from the windows of Buckingham Palace •

1992 RICHARD STONE
£1.88 stamp

Commissioned by the town of Colchester – Richard Stone's home town – to celebrate the 800th anniversary of its Royal Charter. The portrait hangs in Colchester's Moot Hall.



The big picture Stone's style aims to match the grandeur and dignity of the golden age of British portraiture, yet there is a reflective element to this study.



Inside story The Queen seemed pleased by the end result, saying of the painting: 'It will make a good stamp' •

2000 SERGEI PAVLENKO
£1.28 stamp

Commissioned by the Worshipful Company of Drapers to mark the 50th anniversary of The Queen being made a Freeman of the Company.



The big picture Dressed in robes of the Order of the Garter, Her Majesty appears to greet the viewer as she stands near the top of the Grand Staircase at Buckingham Palace. She also wears the Drapers' brooch, presented to her in 1947.



Inside story The Queen unveiled Russian-born Pavlenko's portrait at Drapers' Hall in November 2000. It hangs over the chimney-piece in the Hall's lavish Court Dining Room •

2013 NICKY PHILIPPS
First Class stamp

Commissioned by Royal Mail specially for the Six Decades of Royal Portraits issue.
The big picture In this confident, brilliant image, The Queen wears Order of the Garter robes, chosen for their rich colour, and is accompanied by her corgis.





Inside story Philipps selected Buckingham Palace's Chinese Dining Room for the sitting because north light coming from a single window gives a good balance of illumination and shadow. The corgis were Philipps' idea – they add an intimate touch to this majestic painting •



Above: Summer Isles stamps marking the anniversary of the Coronation, designed by Stuart Rose

continued from page 303 ▸ The Post Office was not alone in producing stamps for the Coronation anniversary in 1978. Local stamps (local carriage labels) were issued by Lundy Island in the Bristol Channel and the Summer Isles off the west coast of Scotland. Lundy's four stamps showed Windsor Castle and Marisco Castle on Lundy, with reproductions of four of Lundy's stamps for the 1953 Coronation. These were not among Lundy's best designs, but the set for the Summer Isles were more pleasing. Designed by Stuart Rose, former Post Office Design Director, they featured aspects of Scottish heraldry – the Thistle, Unicorn, Saltire, and Lion Rampant in bold, colourful designs. They were produced by Moore & Matthes Ltd, the then printers of the *Bulletin*.

In Wales the Festiniog Railway issued definitive railway letter stamps on 31 May to coincide with the Post Office stamps. They were cancelled with a 'Long Live The Queen' handstamp showing the crown, sceptre and FR crest.

Visitors to the Windsor Stamp Exhibition in June 1978 could buy a souvenir sheet depicting a Coronation ceremony photograph, produced by stamp printers Bradbury Wilkinson.

50th Anniversary of the Coronation, 2003

To mark the 50th anniversary Royal Mail issued a set of ten first-class (then 28p) stamps and a Prestige Stamp Book. Five of the stamps reproduce colour photographs of the Coronation ceremony and procession and the others black and white images of children celebrating the event. The images were selected by Kate Stephens, and the stamps printed in sheets by De La Rue. Eight of the stamps were also included, printed by Walsall, in the prestige book along with a pane of definitive stamps and decimal valued Wilding definitives and the 1s 3d Coronation stamp reissued as a £1 value.

Below: in the annual Bulletin poll, the Cecil Beaton portrait of The Queen was the most popular individual special stamp of 2003

The Coronation Day ceremonial stamps depict: guardsmen in Coronation procession, The Queen seated in the Coronation chair flanked by the Bishops of Durham and Bath & Wells, The Queen in her Coronation robes in the famous Coronation portrait by Cecil Beaton; the Coronation coach passing through Marble Arch, and the Coronation Coach outside Buckingham Palace. This was the first depiction on a British stamp of the Coronation chair although it had been shown on the first day postmark for the 1978 25th Anniversary issue. The Coronation coach had previously been shown on the 9p stamp in 1978.



The children stamps feature: East End children reading a Coronation Party poster; children in Holy Croft School in Plymouth working on a Royal montage of pictures of the Royal Family; children's race at as East End street party; children in fancy dress in front of a terraced house with pictures of The Queen and Prince Philip in the window; and children at a London street party.

All but one stamp had The Queen's silhouette

printed in gold at top left, but this was not necessary on the Cecil Beaton portrait stamp where The Queen is the main image. All stamps were helpfully captioned 'THE CORONATION 1953' down the right-hand side and the service indicator '1st' was positioned bottom left.

This Coronation issue was voted the fourth most popular set of 2003 in the annual *Bulletin* poll. The Cecil Beaton portrait of The Queen was the most popular individual special stamp of the year, although none of the others from the set were in the top ten.

First day covers received a Tallents House postmark showing the royal cipher, EIIR, and national floral emblems; that for London SW1 included the wording 'Your undoubted Queen'. Two other special handstamps were provided by Royal Mail, primarily for use on coin and special covers. In addition there were over 30 sponsored handstamps, many of emblematic designs, others featuring Westminster Abbey and Buckingham Palace. Collectors were certainly spoiled for choice.

The front cover of the Prestige Stamp Book, entitled 'A Perfect Coronation', was designed to resemble the magnificent gold embroidered train worn by The Queen. The interesting text told the story of Coronation Day – at 9am the peers put on their robes, at 10am BBC staff finalised their preparations, at 10.30 the Coronation coach left the Palace en route to Westminster Abbey where seating was provided for 7,600 guests and where 2,200 square yards of carpet have been laid. The ceremony commenced at noon and 34 minutes later the Archbishop of Canterbury placed the St Edward's Crown on The Queen's head to the sound of trumpets and a 62-gun salute at the Tower of London. After the Coronation lunch (with Coronation chicken on the menu), the Royal Family greeted the crowds from the Palace balcony; street parties were held from 6pm, and at 11pm a spectacular firework display lit up the River Thames. Images of all these moments features in the Prestige Stamp Book.



Colour and monochrome images are juxtapositioned to good effect in the 2003 stamp set marking the 50th anniversary of the Coronation

The first stamp pane in the book contained 1st and 2nd class Machin definitives with a central label featuring the crown with the dates 1953/2003. The border of the pane featured Norman Hartnell's gown worn by The Queen to which he had, unbeknown to Her Majesty, sown a lucky four-leaf shamrock ▸



Above: 1983 Prestige Stamp Book panes tell the story of Coronation day from beginning to end

on to the skirt. The second and third panes contained the eight Anniversary stamps, and the final pane 47p and 68p Wildings in the designs and colours of the 1s and 1s6d stamps of July and November 1953, plus a £1 stamp in the design and colour of the 1953 1s3d Coronation stamp. This featured Edmund Dulac's acclaimed full-face drawing of The Queen in Coronation robes against a tapestry background reminiscent of a portrait of Elizabeth I. This £1 stamp has two phosphor bands whereas an earlier version in a miniature sheet in 2000 was on phosphorised paper. The £1 stamp from the Prestige Stamp Book is now catalogued at £50 mint and £45 used.

The Royal Mail Special Stamps 2003 Yearbook includes an interesting chapter on this issue, with fine pictures of London decorated for the Coronation and street parties of 1953 and 2003 – the difference in the types of food and drink, and people's clothing and expressions is rather telling. We learn that Kate Stephens examined thousands of evocative photographs and she considered a sheet of 100 different stamps reproducing images of The Queen's role during 50 years, but it was decided to limit the images to Coronation Day itself. The next task was to source images of 'how ordinary people spent the day'. In 1953 colour photography was in its infancy and it was not easy to find photographs of good quality and,in particular, one of the gold state coach. Kate double-checked from film footage to ensure the photographs selected had not been flipped the wrong way and the ceremonial colour photos were digitally cleaned up for use on the stamps.

The children's day images were all in black and white and sourced in numerous picture libraries. The stamps were printed in a block of 10, the ceremonial and children images being alternated to great effect. One of this year's 60th anniversary stamps uses the Cecil Beaton Coronation portrait again.

Kate Stephens is a graduate of the Brighton College of Art & Design. Most of her work on the 2003 Coronation Anniversary issue was done at her home near Dartmouth in Devon. Kate has now designed many stamps for Royal Mail, beginning with the Great Tudor (Henry VIII) set of 1997. For more on her work, see the article 'Diamond Designer' in the November 2012 *Bulletin*.

The September 2003 issue of the *Bulletin* included a souvenir sheet to mark the magazine's 40th anniversary. The sheet featured definitive and special stamps of 1963 and 2003. Representing 1963 were a se-tenant pair of ½d and 2½d Wilding definitives from the 2s 'Holiday book' and the 1s 6d COMPAC stamp with 'CANCELLED' overprint. The 2003 stamps shown were the se-tenant pair of 8p and 68p stamps from the second Wilding Anniversary miniature sheet and the 1st class special stamp showing Beaton's portrait of The Queen in Coronation robes •

Next month: Richard West looks at stamps from previous Coronations.

Portrait of the artist

For its first ever royal portrait commission, Royal Mail chose Nicky Philipps



IT IS A COMMISSION nerve-racking enough to put even Picasso off his brush stroke. Her Majesty The Queen, probably the busiest woman on the planet, has given three hours of her pricelessly precious time to stand in heavy robes while you try to create the masterpiece of your career. Nervous? No one would blame you…

One could, then, forgive artist Nicky Philipps for a slight case of the jitters as she travelled to Buckingham Palace for the first of three one-hour audiences with Her Majesty to capture the world-famous face on canvas. ▸

Above: Nicky at her studio, with the completed portrait

But cometh the hour, cometh the woman and Nicky was not found wanting in this rare commission from Royal Mail to produce a new painting for the Six Decades of Royal Portraits issue.

Just look at the fruit of her labours. Stately, gracious, with a hint of a regal smile, Nicky's Queen Elizabeth looks out benignly from the First Class stamp. Majestic by anyone's standards. The viewing public has also received an exciting bonus: while the stamp image must be by necessity a facial portrait, Nicky decided on a full-length picture, which allows us to see Her Majesty in all her pomp and, endearingly, those famous corgis.

A great privilege This commission was for Nicky a dream come true. She says: 'It's a great privilege to be among those famous painters who have painted The Queen. It has been a wonderful experience.'

But all that meticulous preparation, selecting the right location in Buckingham Palace to achieve exactly the right light, choosing the correct attire (Her Majesty wears the robes of the Order of the Garter), and finally meeting The Queen herself. Surely a tense, gruelling process?

Perhaps for some, yet Nicky already has Royal 'form', having famously painted the double portrait of Prince Harry and Prince William for the National Portrait Gallery, which was very well received. Indeed, she may well have got rid of any jitters with this first Royal commission, which came after entering a self-portrait into the National Portrait Gallery's BP Portrait Award in 2005.

Nicky did not win, but two years later she found herself being interviewed for the Prince William and Prince Harry commission. The enormity of what would be involved hit home when at 6pm one Friday evening she was advised by telephone that she had been selected. 'It was suddenly a terrifying thought!' Nicky admits.

With two princes under her belt, surely a ruling monarch would not seem quite so daunting... And, of course, Nicky had a solid background of experience to draw upon. A portrait painter for over 20 years, Nicky first enjoyed painting horses in oils at college in London. She was later introduced by famous equestrian artist Susan Crawford to Studio Cecil-Graves Studio in Florence, run by the American painters Charles Cecil and Daniel Graves. The studio invites only a limited number of students a year, and Nicky was personally supervised by Cecil and Graves. The teaching was based on the 'sight-size' technique where the subject is constantly viewed from a distance three times the height of the canvas.



Above: Nicky Philipps' portrait is used in the new stamp issue, Six Decades of Royal Portraits, previewed on page 262

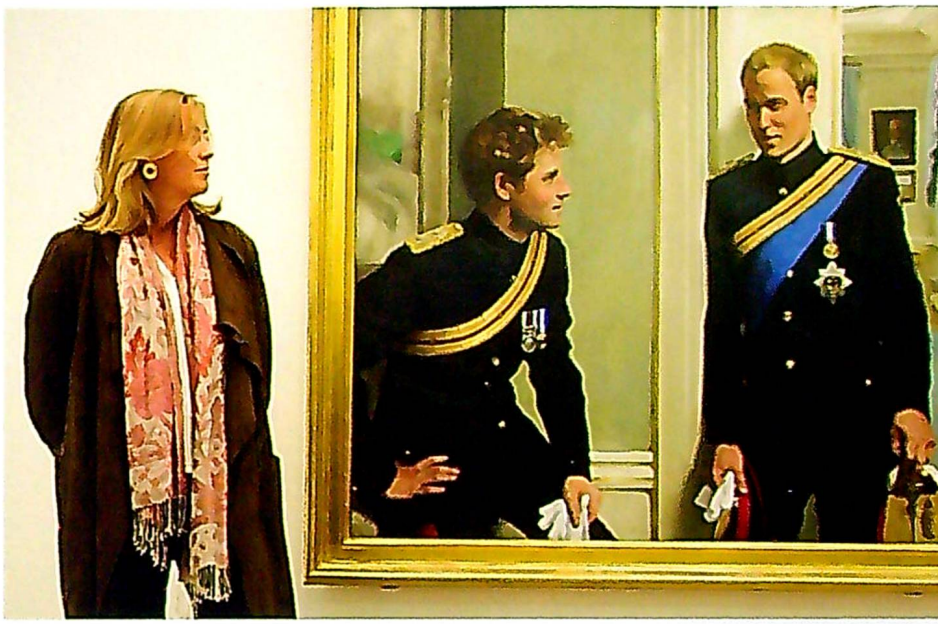
The course is rigorous and painstaking, progressing from life drawing to cast drawing (drawing of plaster casts), through to the 'oil room' where still life and portraiture are developed. But Nicky found she enjoyed the portraits, and while it had never been considered as a career, that is what it became.

And what a career. She has painted the likes of Downton Abbey star Hugh Bonneville, author Ken Follett, former Governor of the Bank of England the late Lord George, and a US Ambassador to London. Art is in the blood, too. Two of Nicky's grandparents and her parents painted (her mother professionally), and so does her sister.

The admiration that greeted the princes portrait doubtless resulted in

another approach about two years ago, when Nicky was asked how she would paint a woman. Nicky believes that 'portraits should be dignified', and thus 'not necessarily smiling'. Royal Mail then advised that the portrait was to be of The Queen, and that they were seeking a happy portrait. Nicky heard nothing more.

Then the approach came from Royal Mail, seeking to commission its own portrait of The Queen for one of the stamps in the Six Decades of Royal Portraits issue to mark the 60th anniversary of the Coronation.



Above: Nicky Philipps' portrait of Prince Harry and Prince William hangs in the National Portrait Gallery, London

Nicky was relieved to discover that Royal Mail wanted a formal portrait that would, she says, evoke 'a regal feeling with all the paraphernalia', a picture that would truly reflect The Queen as monarch. The fee offered by Royal Mail was for a painting of just Her Majesty's face. Nicky, however, wanted to paint a full-length portrait and so offered to do so for no additional payment. She was given carte blanche to work as she wished.

Questions of light Nicky wanted to ensure the result was majestic so preparation was all. There had to appear in the picture a glimpse of Buckingham Palace, and the Queen would be wearing quite heavy and restrictive robes. In particular, the positioning of the Royal hands had to be comfortable.

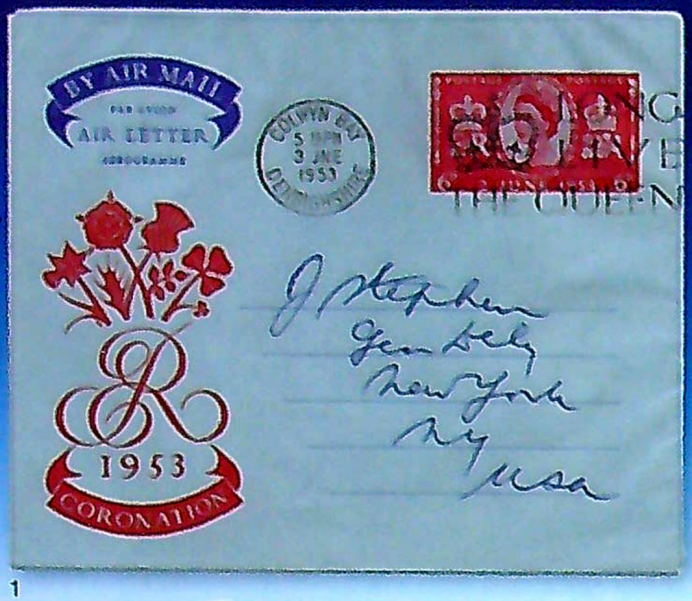
Highly efficient, helpful Buckingham Palace staff made the process easier. Nicky was shown various rooms. She settled on the Chinese Dining Room as the setting, for the pure north light coming from just one window, creating pleasing shadows. With the help of The Queen's dresser and diary secretary, the Garter robe was chosen because of its beautiful blue hues.

Nevertheless, the experience was inevitably a little daunting, particularly the first of the three one-hour sessions. The initial ten minutes were spent with a photographer taking reference photographs, as even three hours is insufficient time. First he set up full lighting, so achieving brilliant sunlight, totally the wrong effect. Without the artificial lighting, the results were perfect.

> 'Her Majesty was very helpful... though not all the corgis were co-operative'

And The Queen, of course, was as far from being a stern monarch as you would wish her to be. 'Her Majesty was very helpful and easy,' says Nicky. Indeed, The Queen used her delightful sense of humour to make the artist feel comfortable and relaxed.Nicky asked if the corgis could be included in the painting, as they are so much a part of The Queen's life. For this they were separately photographed ('Though not all were entirely co-operative,' admits Nicky), rather than Nicky having to cope with them and face Her Majesty at the same time. Now that would have been stressful •

© Leon Neal/AFP/Getty Images



1



2

Air and graces Colin Baker looks at the commemorative air letter that celebrated the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II

SIXTY YEARS AGO, at the time of the Coronation, the idea of texting someone in a far away country or sending them an email was unheard of. The age of digital communications was a long way off. It was possible to telephone or send cables, but electronic communications were analogue and therefore slow and expensive. For everyday situations, the only real means of communication for most people was by post.

Air letters had been introduced in Britain during the Second World War as a way for families to keep in touch with loved ones serving overseas. Costing just 6d, they gave plenty of space for telling all the family news, asking how servicemen were bearing up and expressing emotion. Photographs or other papers were not usually enclosed, as this would have meant an increase in the postage to an expensive 1s 3d.

After the end of the war in 1945, air letters continued to be widely used by families whose relatives had emigrated to Australia, Canada and other Commonwealth countries. They also helped people stay in contact with friends living far away. The air letter's importance in people's personal lives was reflected by the decision to introduce a commemorative version to accompany the new set of postage stamps celebrating The Queen's Coronation in 1953. Several ideas for a new stamp to be used on the air letter were investigated, including a design similar to the King George VI issue but carrying, of course, a portrait of The Queen. This was considered to be too small and it was decided to use the 1s 6d stamp from the adhesive set, revalued to 6d.

All the stamps in the Coronation set included the words 'postage – revenue' in the design, as they could be used for either purpose. But postal stationery stamps could only pay for postage. The Treasury insisted that if one of the adhesive stamps was used, the design had to be changed to reflect this. Thus the wording on the 1s 6d stamp was changed to 'postage – postage' (to balance the design) and the value was altered to 6d.



3



4

The Coronation motif on the air letter was designed by Stuart Rose, who subsequently became the Design Director at the Post Office. It incorporated symbols representing the four countries of the United Kingdom – the daffodil, rose, thistle and shamrock – set over the Queen's monogram. It was printed in red, closely matching the colour to be used to print the stamp itself.

The blank air letters were printed in sheets of eight by McCorquodale & Co Ltd on its rotary press at Wolverton. The press was only capable of printing in two colours – the blue for the printed instructions and the red for the motif on the front panel. The sheets were then sent to Harrison and Sons in High Wycombe, who added the specially modified 6d Coronation stamp. Once the stamps had been printed, the sheets were returned to McCorquodale for gumming and cutting.

In the final production stage, after McCorquodale had received the air letters back from Harrison and Sons, two shapes of knives were used to guillotine the letters into single units.

Previously, the corners of the flaps on the King George VI air letters had always had curved ends in order not to infringe the patent of air letter inventor Douglas Gumbley. But at a fairly late stage, a different shape of corner was decided on for the Coronation air letter. However, to prevent production being held up, the old cutting knives were used at the beginning of the production run until the new knives were ready – giving two distinctive types of air letter for collectors to find.

There are also differences in the setting of the instructions on the front panel, and Coronation air letters can be found overprinted for use in some Gulf States where Britain had post offices at the time.

Although the date on the Coronation stamp is 2 June 1953, the first day of use for the air letters is the following day, 3 June, as all post offices were shut on Coronation Day.

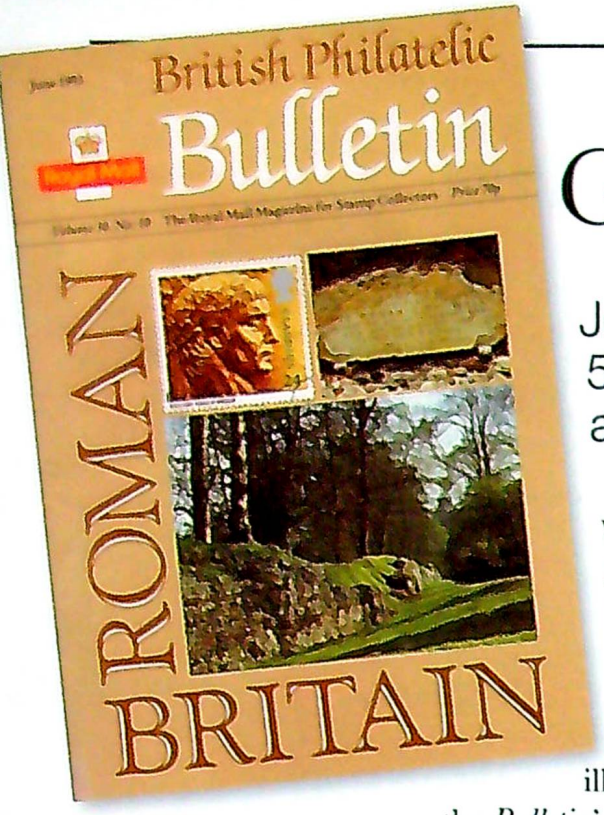
The Coronation air letter was the second commemorative issue produced by the Post Office. It was on sale for the remainder of 1953, then succeeded by a new issue without the Coronation motif and with a further modification to the Coronation stamp – with the date replaced by the word 'sixpence' •

Fig 1 The first day of issue was actually the day after the Coronation as all post offices were closed on the day of the ceremony itself

Fig 2 Mint example showing front panel layout

Fig 3 – The Coronation air letter design became the standard issue for the remainder of 1953, but was replaced by a new issue from 1 January 1954, omitting the red Coronation motif and with an amended 6d stamp

Fig 4 One of several different overprints on the Coronation air letter, this example revalued to six annas and used in Muscat, Oman



5 decades of **Bulletin**

Golden years: 1993

John Holman continues our celebration of 50 years of *Bulletin* with fond memories of a Roman moment in the nineties…

WE CONTINUE with our look-back over the past five decades of the *British Philatelic Bulletin*, with a review of the issue for June 1993. The front cover features one of the Roman Britain stamps issued that month together with Roman walls in London and St Albans. The Royal Mail stamps previewed were the colourful Inland Waterways set (20 July) designed by Tony Lewery. The article illustrated some hand-painted canal boat memorabilia sourced by the *Bulletin's* then designer, the late Angus Mathieson. The Waterways stamps came third in the *Bulletin* readers stamp poll for 1993.



Above: Romans claimed the cover of the June 1993 edition

Days of 'the Bureau'

Another main feature marked the 30th anniversary of the Philatelic Bureau, with Margaret Barrett explaining the service offered to collectors. Technology at the Bureau, then located on Brandon Street in Edinburgh, produced some 35,000 presentation packs a day and machinery could affix and cancel the stamps on FDCs at a rate of 40 covers a minute. The Bureau had over 250,000 individual and dealer customers in over 130 countries. Some 6.5 million items of mail were sent out annually, and every new issue involved the Bureau in fulfilling over 280,000 orders.

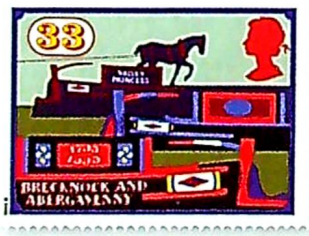
Martin Robsinson looked at the variety of collectable material associated with Royal Mail postbus service – tickets, postcards, and postmarks. Following four experimental routes introduced between 1967 and 1968, a further 200 postbuses served rural areas in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland – a valuable service in areas devoid of other public transport. Sadly now postbus services are all but extinct.

Douglas Muir of the National Postal Museum (NPM, now BPMA) wrote on Britain's first postal stationery – the Parliamentary Envelopes issued in January 1840. As well as showing one of the envelopes, he illustrated the instructions for their use housed in the Post Office Archives. Another postal stationery subject was covered in Peter Jennings's article marking the

Below: the colourful Inland Waterways stamps proved one of the year's most popular sets









golden jubilee of GB air letter with an impressed 6d stamp. The *Bulletin* also included a report on the Eur-Apex display of airmail material as part of Spring Stampex. The Court of Honour displays included material from the National Postal Museum as well as items of the 1911 Coronation Aerial post and the development of British External Services, 1907 to 1934. Shown in the article was a picture of BBC Foreign Affairs Editor John Simpson at the Royal Mail stand at Stampex.

Royal Mail News of July 1993 announced new variations of Scottish and Northern Ireland stamps, new machine books, a new Scottish aerogramme, and a change to the 1993 special stamp programme following postponement of the Channel Tunnel stamps. A new Chairman (Paul Hopper) and five new members of the Stamp Advisory Committee were announced – these included TV presenter Floella Benjamin and former union leader Brenda Dean, now Baronesses Benjamin and Dean of Thornton-le-Fylde.

Stamp card launch

Barry Burke, then Royal Mail's Product Manager, wrote about Royal Mail stamp cards, noting that when launched in 1973 were intended to 'be used as postal stationery rather than become collectors' items, kept pristine and virginal in the postcard enthusiast's album.' Giles Finnemore, another Royal Mail manager, gave details of the changes to priority services from 28 June 1993 resulting in new postal stationery for Special Delivery and Registered mail.

The Stamp Scene section reported on the discovery of a copy of the very rare Edward VII 2d Tyrian Plum in a box of stamps bought by mail order. The purchaser found an old torn envelope and was about to throw it onto a coal fire when a stamp fell out onto the carpet – the stamp, a Tyrian Plum, realised £4,370 at auction (2013 catalogue value is £110,000).

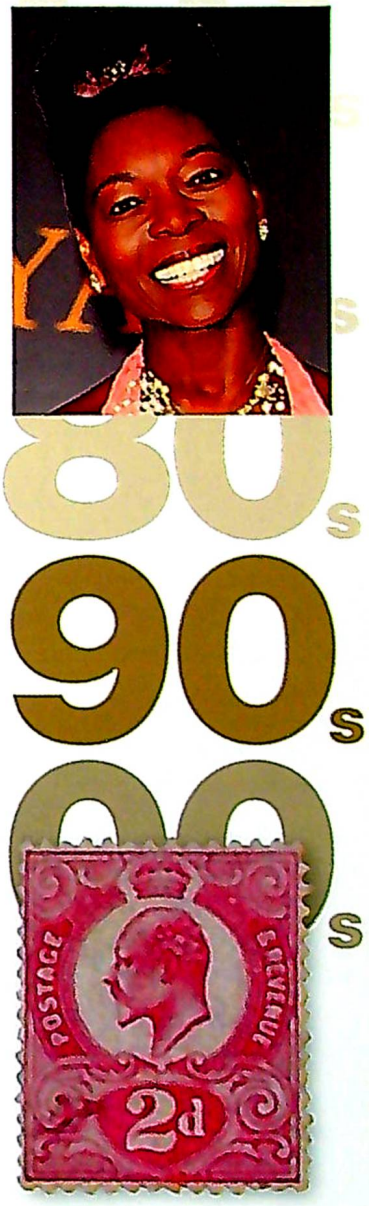
New Festiniog Railway letter stamps were reported and a preview given of the Thematica exhibition – regrettably no longer held.

A prophetic letter

In September 1992 we had published a lengthy article giving ideas on how adults could help encourage more young collectors and the 'Postbag' section included readers' suggestions. Mr Fraulo wanted to encourage youngsters to philately through football – issuing stamps showing league champions and cup winners at British and European level. He might well approve of the recent Football Heroes stamps. Mr Hawke wanted more stamps to be used for postage to increase the supply of used stamps available to youngsters. He argued against the proliferation of 'obscure varieties' of stamps which would make the young collectors' task 'more difficult than it need be.'

Two popular regular features were 'Posting Boxes' and 'Gems of the R M Phillips Collection' in the NPM. The former featured boxes in the Scottish Highlands and Islands, the latter looked at designs for a farthing stamp in 1874.

I welcomed this opportunity to look again at the June 1993 *Bulletin* and enjoyed re-reading the articles and recalling *Bulletin* days at 76 Turnmill Street, London EC1 – one of the six addresses I worked in during my 22 years as Editor, from 1988 to 2010 • *Next month: 'Bulletin' of July 1983*



Above: in 1993 Floella Benjamin became a member of the Stamp Advisory Committee and a rare 2d Tyrian Plum was discovered

Images © Alamy, stamp images © Royal Mail Group Ltd



Eels of steel

From June's new Post & Go stamp set of Freshwater Life we select the noble European Eel for special scrutiny

IN THE MIDDLE of a wild, stormy night when you are fast asleep, millions of creatures are slithering away under cover of darkness on an incredible journey. It is the annual migration of the European Eel, when the adult fish wriggle over 5,000km across the Atlantic to spawn and ensure the race's survival. Each eel has waited its entire life, up to 40 years, for this appointment with fate. And what a poignant moment: they are returning to the Sargasso Sea in the Bermuda Triangle from whence they came. To mate just this one time, and then to die.

Above: spotting an eel is quite rare – they usually keep themselves to themselves and avoid danger

The newborn leave their doomed parents behind, floating as larvae back across the world to Britain and much of Europe to continue what must be one of the most extraordinary cycles of life and death Nature has to offer. Eels are amazing survivors – just look at their chosen time to begin that gruelling migration: with steely determination they move downriver to the ocean on rain-lashed moonless nights, undetected, protected by the ferocity of the storm.

Below: with a common purpose, elvers climb a wall at Henllan Bridge, Wales



There are other secrets to their survival, such as changing colour to escape predators and even taking to the land in a determined bid to find freshwater habitats. And the European Eel *(Anguilla anguilla)* survives against terrifying odds: most of the eel larvae die on the way from the Sargasso, and the number of eels reaching Europe is thought to have declined by some 90 per cent since the 1970s, thanks to overfishing and parasites, among other factors.

Their tenacity and their mystery – why *do* they choose such a distant destination to be born and to die? – make theirs a fascinating story, so they rightly star in the latest Freshwater Post & Go issue, Lakes, released on 20 June.

For centuries eels have played an intriguing part in our history and culture. They were considered sacred by the ancient Egyptians, believed by Aristotle to generate spontaneously from mud, used in medieval Britain as currency, turned into trousers for Victorian trendsetters, jellied into an East End

Freshwater life at risk

The number of eels returning to Europe has plunged by 90 per cent since the 1970s. And annual catches have declined from 40,000 tonnes in the 1980s to just 20,000 tonnes today.

The exact reasons for such devastation are not confirmed, but it is believed that over-harvesting, man-made obstructions to waterways, pollution, a decline in freshwater habitats, parasites, and natural changes in the currents that bring eels here have played their part.To combat the decline, EU member states have put in place a number of eel management plans. In the UK, the Environment Agency tightly controls eel fishing, which is licensed.

Images © Juniors Bildarchiv GmbH/Alamy; Sinclair Stammers/Science Photo Library

culinary masterpiece. Customs and legends apart, however, the stranger-than-fiction life cycle of the European Eel is perhaps the most compelling story...

The mystery begins at birth. Why be born in the Sargasso at all? It has been described as a biological desert, almost bereft of food. Not a great start in life when the little ones have such a long journey to make. Still, the barren waters contain few predators, so perhaps the tiny leaf-shaped larvae, just 5mm long, can focus on foraging for food rather than on avoiding being killed as they begin their trip. And what an epic. Relying solely on ocean currents, the larvae take between one and three years to drift the 5,000km to reach rivers and lakes in Britain and Europe. Most starve to death or are taken by predators on the way.

When they close in on coastal waters, the larvae change shape, metamorphosing into transparent glass eels, sometimes so clear you could read a book through them. And still the struggle for safety is not quite over. As young, now-pigmented eels, or elvers, they will even climb up rockfaces and waterfalls to get to the lakes and rivers which they will call home for the next few decades or so.

And then, after such a violent, wild, risk-laden start to their lives, European Eels go all domesticated. Known at this stage as yellow eels because of their often yellow bellies, they have a quiet, solitary existence, snuffling about alone in the dark waters, hiding under rocks and in crevices by day, venturing out mainly at night. They can go on for 30 years or more like this. (Some eels trapped deep inland will reach 50. Rarely, eels aged 90 have been found.)

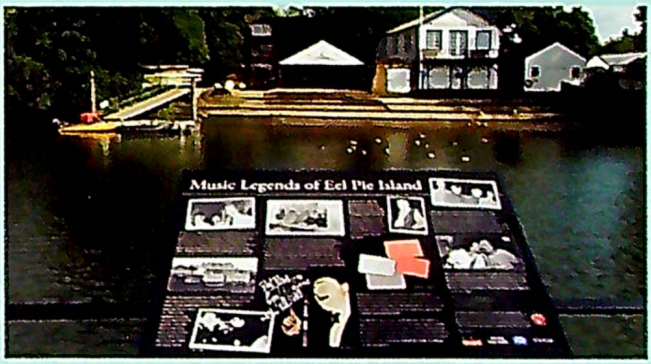
Some of the many amazing uses for eels...

Money In the 11th century eels were so valued that they were used as currency. The stone to build Ely Cathedral cost 8,000 eels a year from Peterborough Abbey, which owned quarries.

Fashion trend Fish can hardly be called stylish but eels managed it in the Victorian era. In the 1880s extremely tight eel skin 'masher' trousers were hot. 'Masher' was a term for a dandy.

Cockney icon East End favourite jellied eels originate from eel pie, an 18th-century street food sold by roving piemen from portable ovens. The eels were fresh from the Thames. When eel prices rose, beef pies were sold with jellied eels on the side.

Pop history Eel Pie Island on the Thames (below) is so named because boat trippers from London were attracted by the food served there. In the Sixties, Eel Pie Hotel was a must-see music venue.



Yet all the time the impulse to migrate ticks away inside them. Until that rainy night when Nature compels them to take their final journey while the world sleeps. Then they metamorphose again, their sides changing colour to silver, the shimmering profile making it difficult for predators to spot them. Their eyes grow bigger and the pigment develops to help them see in dim ocean waters.

Until this stage they are, amazingly, 'pre-pubescent'. It is only for their three-month journey to the Sargasso that they sexually mature.

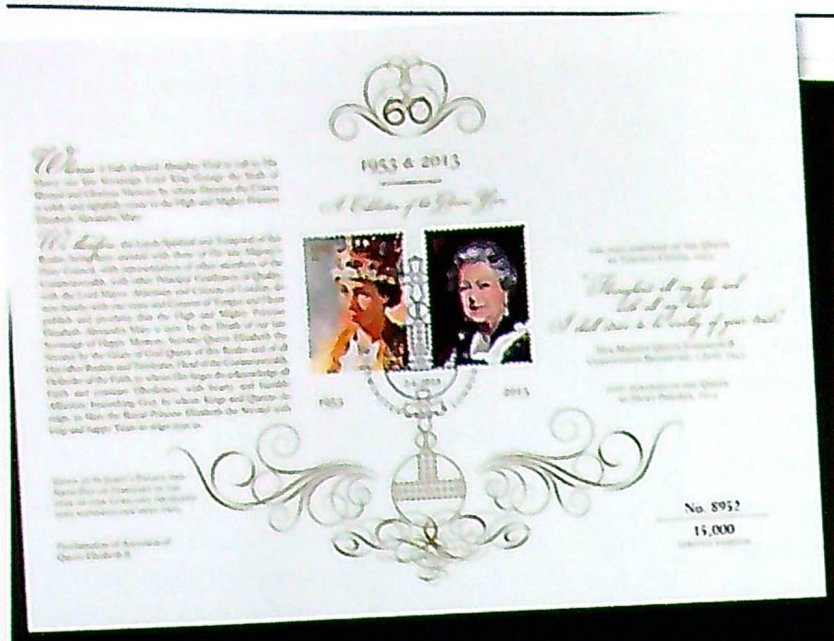
The girls, as ever, leave nothing to chance. They are packed with over a million eggs. Both genders stop feeding, focusing on readying themselves for spawning, relying solely on stored fat from feeding.

It is as though they have lived all their lives simply preparing to die, with a brief flicker of sexual awakening before Nature takes them in their prime. It must be like dying at 16. At least they leave behind a legacy: billions of offspring returning to the never-ending struggle for survival... •

Below: this year an eel stamp was issued by Denmark – good news for thematic collectors of eels on stamps.



Images © Homer W Sykes Alamy, Post Danmark





Prizes galore: enter now and you could win the new Commemorative Documents (see page 292). Other prizes include, clockwise from above right: Stanley Gibbons Coronation Commemorative Stamp Sheet; a Royal Mint Coin Cover, a complete album of 1953 GB and Commonwealth stamps; 'The Treasures of Queen Elizabeth' by Tim Ewart; and items of memorabilia











Coronation days

We celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Coronation with special prizes for winners of our two quick quizzes. So pick up a pen, hasten to your stamp cave and test your knowledge



a





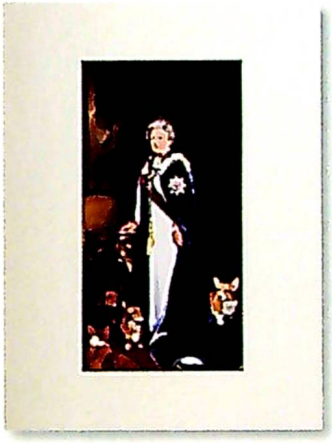
b



c



d



e



f

Coronation Quiz Answer the following questions about the stamps shown above and you could win a great prize.

a) Definitives were issued on the day of George V's Coronation – what was the date and year?

b) Only definitives were produced for Edward VIII, as of course he abdicated before his coronation could take place. But Harrison and Sons had prepared designs with The King wearing two military uniforms. What units did the uniforms represent?

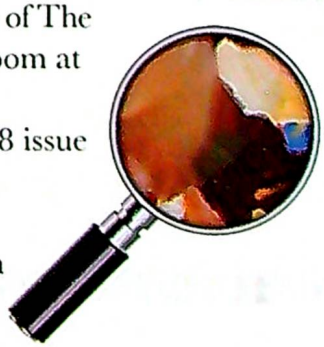
c) Eric Gill's designs for the Coronation stamp of King George VI were rejected. Whose design was chosen instead?

d) Name four plants shown on the 1d Coronation stamp of1953.

e) Nicky Philipps painted the Royal Mail-commissioned picture of The Queen in the Six Decades of Royal Portraits issue. Which room at Buckingham Palace was chosen for the painting's setting?

f) What are the names of the two crowns depicted in the 1978 issue marking the 25th anniversary of the Coronation?

Name That Stamp Identify the stamp from the detail shown right, with its name and year of issue.



How to enter

Send your answers, marked 'June Coronation Quiz' and/or 'June Name That Stamp' to: BPB Prize Draws, Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB.

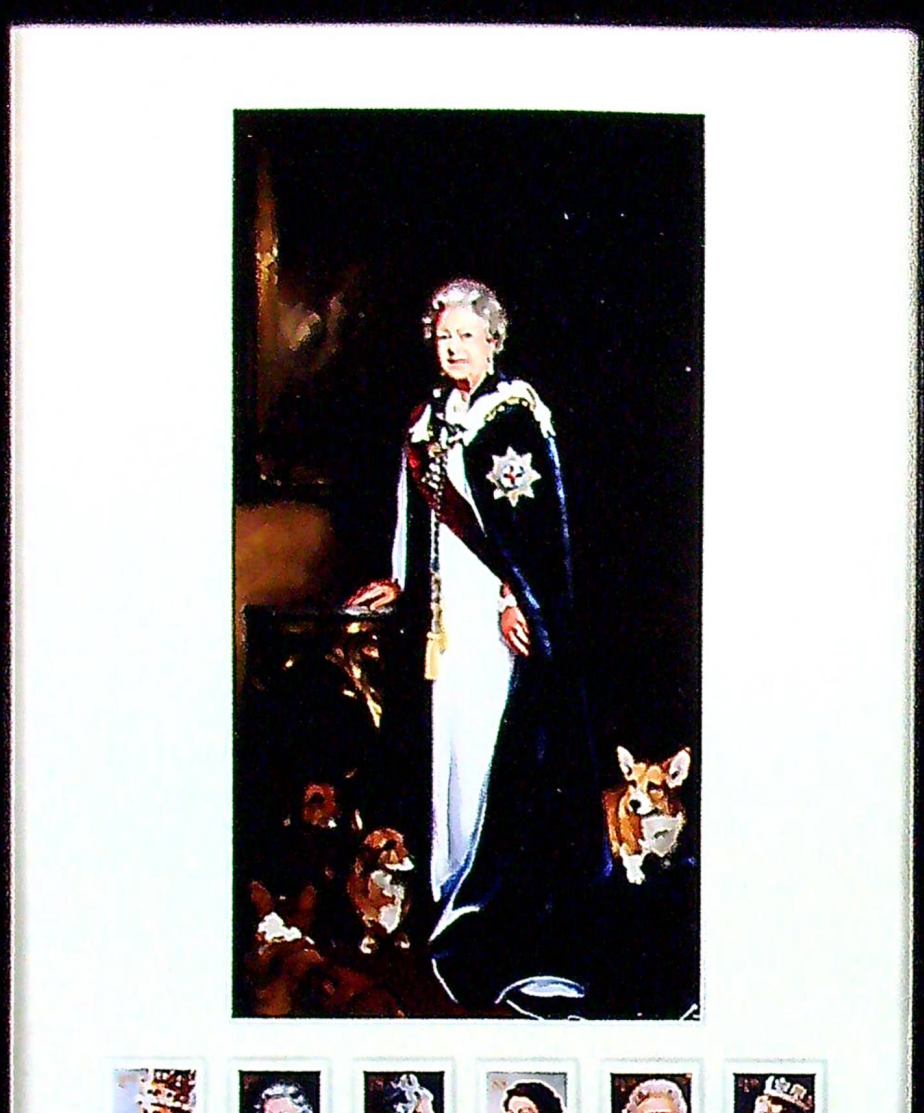
Closing date: 29 July 2013.

Prizes: the first correct entry drawn in the Coronation Quiz after the closing date receives the Six Decades of Royal Portraiture Commemorative Document, a Royal Mint Coin Cover and the book 'The Treasures of Queen Elizabeth'.

The Name That Stamp winner receives the Commemorative Document, the Stanley Gibbons 60th Anniversary Stamp Sheet and 1953 Album shown. Runners-up receive Coronation stamp-themed prizes.

Prize draw rules and regulations 1 Promotions are open to all readers aged 18 and over, except employees of Royal Mail Group Ltd, their business associates and immediate families. 2 Responsibility cannot be accepted for entries which are incomplete, damaged or not received for any reason. Proof of posting is not proof of receipt. 3 Prizes must be accepted as offered; they are not transferable and there are no cash alternatives. The cost of transport to and from a prize venue, where applicable, is not included. 4 Winners are notified within 28 days of closing date stated. 5 For prize draws where readers must answer questions, winners will be the senders of the first correct entries drawn at random by an independent person after the closing date. 6 Promoter's decision on any aspect of the promotions is final. No correspondence will be entered into. 7 Entry implies acceptance of these rules. 8 Prizes are subject to suitability and 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. 9 Winners' names are available 28 days after closing date.

April Decade Quiz solutions: a) David Gentleman. b) Post Office Strike. c) None. d) 26p. e) 2007. April winners will be announced next month.



Your crowning glory

Framed print and stamps Here's a glorious way to celebrate the extraordinary reign of Elizabeth II and be among the first to own the new offical portrait: a fine-quality print of leading artist Nicky Philipps' painting of The Queen, set above mounted stamps of the Six Decades of Royal Portraits issue and presented in a simple black box frame. Price: £75.

To order the framed print and stamps, shown above, visit **www.royalmail.com/stamps** or write to Tallents House at the address on page 290. Also available are unframed prints and limited-edition prints signed by the artist

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