BRITISH PHILATELIC

Bulletin

The magazine for collectors of UK stamps

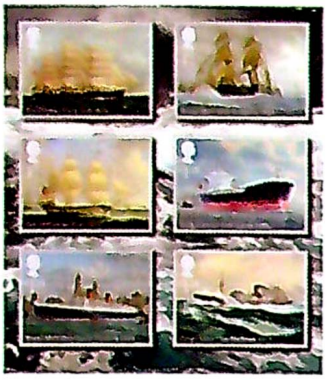
VOLUME 51 NUMBER 2 | OCTOBER 2013 £1.50

Merchant Navy • Dinosaurs • Preview: Christmas 2013



BENJAMIN BRITTEN COIN COVER • DESIGN COMPETITION SHORTLIST • WIN NEW DINOSAURS PACK

Issues and withdrawals



Cover design: recently issued Merchant Navy stamps include a popular image of the Cutty Sark, whose story is told on page 58.

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10 October	**Issue** Dinosaurs: Stamps (10 x 1st Class).
16 October	**Withdrawal** Space Science: Stamps, Presentation Pack, Stamp Cards.
5 November	**Issue** Children's Christmas: 2013: Stamps (1 x 1st Class, 1 x 2nd Class), Presentation Pack.
5 November	**Issue** Christmas Madonna and Child 2013: Stamps (1 x 1st Class, 1 x 1st Class Large, 1 x 2nd Class, 1 x 2nd Class Large, 1 x 88p, 1 x £1.28p, 1 x £1.88p), Miniature Sheet, Presentation Pack, Generic Sheet, 1st and 2nd Class Stamp Books.
5 November	**Issue** Christmas 2013: Smilers® sheets for personalisation Madonna and Child; re-issues of 1st Class Father Christmas and 2nd Class Robin.
5 November	**Re-issue** Christmas Post & Go: Robin design of 2010, only in Post Office Limited Post & Go machines.
6 November	**Issue** 2012 Annual Collections: Yearpack, Yearbook, Year of Miniature Sheets, Year of Presentation Packs.
22 November	**Issue** Benjamin Britten Coin Cover.
22 November	**Issue** Doctor Who Souvenir Cover.

To order philatelic items, including those listed above, contact Royal Mail Tallents House at the address above left. Minimum handling charge UK £1.45, Europe £1.55, rest of world (airmail) £2.15.

Many products can be ordered on the Royal Mail website: **www.royalmail.com/stamps**. Selected items are available at Post Office branches and philatelic outlets at main post offices in: Bristol, Cambridge, Chester, Colchester, Croydon, Durham, Edinburgh, Exeter, Glasgow, Grimsby, Harrogate, London (Eastcheap and Trafalgar Square), Norwich, Nottingham, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Southend on Sea, Stevenage, Stroud, Trowbridge, Truro, York and Newport, Isle of Wight.

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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 and 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 ● ©Royal Mail. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or parts is prohibited without prior permission of the Editors ● **Printed** in Great Britain by Zenith Print & Packaging Ltd ● **ISSN** 0953 8119 ● Royal Mail is a trading name of Royal Mail Group Ltd. Registered in England and Wales, number 4138203. Registered office: 100 Victoria Embankment, London EC4Y 0HQ.

Correspondence Readers' questions and favourite finds





Clarity on the Cutty Sark

I have just received your issue No 12, featuring your four-page spread on the Merchant Navy issue, which I read with great interest. However, I disagree with part of your article, when it says that the *Cutty Sark* was 'acquired for the nation in 1922'. This is not correct.

In 1922 Captain Wilfred Dowman (above) purchased, with his own money, a vessel in a very sorry state from the Portuguese called *Ferreira*. This he knew to be the *Cutty Sark* [its name had been changed after it was sold to the Portuguese].

Captain Dowman restored and rerigged the *Cutty Sark* at his own expense. In 1938, after his death, his widow Catherine Dowman presented the *Cutty Sark* to the Incorporated Thames Nautical Training College, HMS Worcester, with a trust fund for its maintenance.

In 1953 the College presented, with Mrs Dowman's agreement, the *Cutty Sark* to the nation. The Duke of Edinburgh came to Greenhithe, where she was moved to, to accept her for the nation on 28 May 1953. I had the privilege to be the officer in charge of the Armed Guard of Honour on this occasion.

C J Steere, Kent

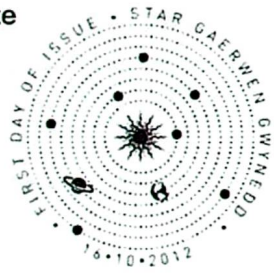
Thank you for the clarification and for the interesting information on the history of this great sailing ship. Being present when the *Cutty Sark* was handed over to the nation in 1953 must have been quite a moment! We hope that you enjoy our *Cutty Sark* background feature in this edition of *Bulletin*.

Earth calling

I was surprised to see that the first day covers for the Space Science issue were being offered with a postmark from a location (Star, Gaerwen, Gwynedd) that, technically, does not exist. Star, Gaerwen, is real, but it is on the Isle of Anglesey, which has not been part of Gwynedd for many years, having its own independent county council.

I am used to, though irritated by, mail order companies that use out-of-date address-finding software. But it is a bit much when Royal Mail seems to be using an archaic handstamp. Brilliant set of stamps, though.

Peter Schofield, Anglesey





Left: a Space Science FDC from BFDC with an unusual alternative postmark to the Star version also pictured here

Point taken and well made, though surely you will agree that the place name Star was irresistible for the alternative postmark of the Space Science issue – it is one of our favourites, too. (By the way, Mr Schofield's letter landed at Planet Editorial earlier this year, but we publish it now as a timely reminder to readers that some of the Space Science stamp products are still available – but only for a few days, as the issue comes off sale on 16 October.)

Keep the letters coming...

The Editor welcomes your letters and the senders of those published will receive philatelic delights as a thank-you. The writer of the 'First-class Letter' receives the *Bulletin* binder.

Send your letters to: William Doherty, British Philatelic Bulletin, Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB. Remember that you can also send emails to bulletin.enquiries@royalmail.com.

Distribution dilemma

As a keen reader of *Bulletin* I have been frustrated by the lack of availability of this publication in recent months.

The last edition I purchased was No 9 in May. In late June I went to the philatelic counter at Colchester Post Office but it is always the same answer: 'Sorry, no.'

I went again in July and they told me they had not seen a *Bulletin* in weeks. Are all your other 20 or so philatelic bureaux treated in the same way when it comes to distribution?

When I do get *Bulletin*, the Issues and Withdrawals are out of date, and the closing dates of competitions are long past. This is, to put it politely, annoying.
Stan Beecham, Essex



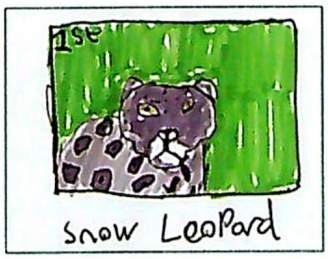
It is of course very important to the editorial team that the *British Philatelic Bulletin* is available on the high street.

The timings of *Bulletin* distribution to our Post Office Network do not always coincide with new issues. We will check arrangements at Colchester and other outlets to see how we can improve.

It is worth noting that *Bulletin* costs £1.50 over the counter but, for the moment, the price for subscribers is held at only £12.95 per year – which means that you save £5.05 by subscribing and having *Bulletin* delivered to your door every month.

An Issues and Withdrawals list appears on the first page of every edition and always includes the following month's details. For example, on page 34 of this October edition you will find details of November stamp issues.

Similarly, most competitions allow six to eight weeks for entries, as this allows overseas subscribers to take part. One recent exception is the September competition, because we hope to draw the winners during Stampex.

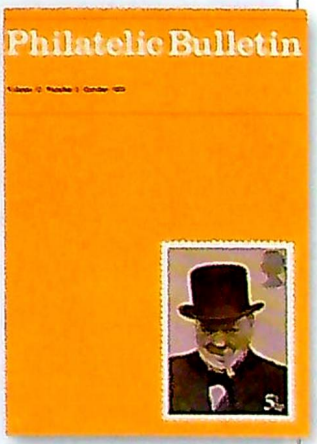


Just wild about stamps

I am very interested in the different stamps Royal Mail makes, especially the ones featuring steam trains, the Underground and the WWF, and thought you might like to see my designs for new WWF stamps.
Aled Phillips, Cambridgeshire

Thank you very much for your lovely designs, Aled. While we are always pleased to see people's ideas, there is a formal process in which the public can vote, two years in advance, for subjects they would like to see on stamps in Royal Mail's special stamp programme. The Stamp Advisory Committee makes the final decision. Readers will find a voting form in a future issue of *Bulletin* for the 2016 stamp programme.





Stateside archive

I live in the United States and have copies of *Bulletin* going back to 1974. Should you have a reader resident here in the US who would wish to have these free of charge (if they pay postage!), I would be only too pleased to send them on to them.
Peter H Palmer, Florida

Subscribers in the United States can email Mr Palmer at palmersp@verizon.net.



Royal Mail news A philatelic tribute to maestro Benjamin Britten, Christmas stamp competition finalists, 2014 special issues and Doctor Who…



Above: 50 years of *Doctor Who* are celebrated with the Tardis motif on this special postmark, which will be stamped in blue on the cover

Doctor Who Souvenir Cover This year's popular Doctor Who stamps, showing the first to the eleventh *Doctor Who* characters from the long-running BBC television series, are to make a dramatic appearance on a limited edition cover – released on 23 November. This is the first time ever that all eleven Doctor Who stamps have featured on a Souvenir Cover. The cover carries a special blue handstamp with '50 years' set within the shape of the renowned Tardis. In addition to the 50th Anniversary postmark, customers will be treated to a unique A3 poster insert. Price: £12.99 •

Stamp competition winners announced Royal Mail is delighted to report that more than 240,000 children entered the Christmas design competition, painting and drawing pictures on the theme 'What does the Christmas season mean to you?' The two winners will appear on special Christmas stamps.

Prince Charles joined the panel of judges – Royal Mail CEO Moya Greene, *Charlie and Lola* author Lauren Child, Royal Mail Head of Design Marcus James and Tasveer Shemza, who, aged six, designed one of Royal Mail's first Christmas stamps in 1966.

Artwork from a shortlist of regional winners appeared in a display at Stampex. From these, a shortlist of 24 designs (opposite) has been drawn up. From this list, two overall winners will be chosen – one to appear on the First Class Christmas stamp, and the other on the Second Class one • ▷

January to May 2014 Special Stamp Programme

- 7 January – Children's TV Classics
- 4 February – Working Horses
- 20 February – Classic Locomotives of Wales
- 25 March – Remarkable Lives
- 21 April – Buckingham Palace
- 13 May – Great British Films

Please note that the above list may be subject to change and does not include Post & Go issues, which will be confirmed in a future edition of *Bulletin*.

Images: © Royal Mail and named artists



East Midlands
Nathan Mahal, 4



East Midlands
Morgan Spink, 11



East England
Thomas Gaynham, 5



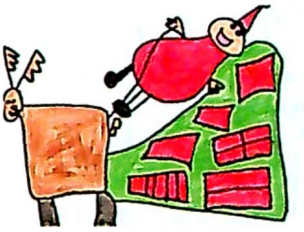
East England
Ava Reynolds, 10



London
Daniel Payne, 6



London
Natacha Simpson, 10



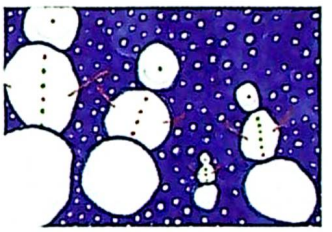
North East
Faye Hughes, 6



North East
Rowan McAlpine, 10



North West
Tia Dann, 7



North West
Adil, 10



Northern Ireland
Nial Conn, 7



Northern Ireland
Corin McCrea, 9



Scotland
Archie Hilton, 7



Scotland
Danielle Lockie, 10



South East
Molly Robson, 7



South East
Oliva Heller, 10



South West
Finn Alexander, 6



South West
Rosie Hargreaves, 10



Wales
Jayden Roberts, 5



Wales
Nicole Murphy, 9



West Midlands
Oliver Miller, 7



West Midlands
Fred Egerton, 9



Yorkshire and the Humber
Kristina Pavik, 6



Yorkshire and the Humber
Thomas Donaldson, 11



The Benjamin Britten Coin cover released this month carries the special postmark above and a mint 50p piece showing date on obverse



Celebrating a musical legend A stunning centenary coin cover, released next month, will pay tribute to the life of musical legend Benjamin Britten. The individually numbered cover, a limited edition of just 10,000, features the Benjamin Britten stamp from this year's Great Britons issue, cancelled on the anniversary of his birth in 1913 – 22 November.

It also includes a special issue 50 pence piece – the first ever 50p coin to show the date and denomination on the obverse side. The coin bears words by Alfred Lord Tennyson from Britten's 1943 composition *Serenade.* The special postmark is Aldeburgh, Suffolk, where Britten died in 1976, and features a famous quote by the great composer and conductor: 'Music has the beauty of loneliness and of pain: of strength and freedom'.

An insert card describes Britten's life and greatest compositions, including the operas *Peter Grimes* (1945), *The Turn of the Screw* (1954) and *Death in Venice* (1973), and his much-celebrated *War Requiem*, first performed at the consecration of the rebuilt Coventry Cathedral in 1962. The card also reveals his early influences and highlights the awards he received for his work.

As well as his renowned movie, radio and theatre scores, operettas and choral pieces, Britten wrote music to accompany films produced by the General Post Office Film Unit, including a collaboration with the poet W H Auden in the well-remembered 1936 documentary *Night Mail.* The Benjamin Britten Coin Cover costs £15.95 •

A Mo-mentous effort! This month thousands of Royal Mail employees are aiming to surpass their great fundraising achievement of last year in their support of the Movember Foundation – working to promote men's health and to combat prostate and testicular cancer and mental health challenges.

In 2012 Royal Mail employees raised more money – £525,000 – than those of any other single company in the world. This year we want Movember to be even more fun for everyone – now is the time for all good men to flash a moustache! •



Christmas classics We reveal all the glorious details of the beautiful new stamp set released next month in time for your Christmas post

Above: the Christmas 2013 set features classic paintings of the Madonna and Child as well as a newly commissioned picture for the £1.88 value

This year's Christmas issue features an exquisite set of paintings celebrating the Virgin Mary and the infant Jesus, in a colourful journey through the history of religious art. The seven-stamp set, released on 5 November, presents works from the early Renaissance through 19th century French art to a modern interpretation of traditional Egyptian Coptic painting. It also aims to reflect ethnic diversity in Britain – Royal Mail commissioned the Coptic picture for the set from young Egyptian-English artist Fadi Mikhail.

There are five different designs in all, with the First Class and Second Class stamps available in standard and large format. The issue comprises a Presentation Pack, Miniature Sheet, First Day Cover, Stamp Cards, Smilers®, Generic Sheet, First Class Stamp Book and Second Class Stamp Book. The regular Bethlehem, Llandeilo is the alternative postmark for the Christmas issue. All of which makes for a truly beautiful set that eloquently portrays the traditional Christmas icons of Madonna and Child...

Stamp by stamp The issue offers First Class and Second Class stamps in portrait and landscape formats, and also 88p, £1.28 and £1.88 values.

Virgin and Child with the Young St John the Baptist Some of the most ravishing paintings of the Italian Renaissance by the great artists of Florence have the Madonna and Jesus as their central subject. This work by Antoniazzo Romano, with its iconic gold background and subtle tones, is a stunning example. The picture was ▸

Christmas 2013 Stamps – Specifications

Date of issue	5 November
Number of stamps	Seven
Stamp design	Robert Maude and Sarah Davies
Stamp format – standard	Portrait
Stamp format – large	Landscape
Stamp size – standard	24mm x 28mm
Stamp size – large	34mm x 28mm
Printer	De La Rue Security Print
Print process	Gravure
Number per sheet	50
Perforations	14.5 x 15
Phosphor	Bars as appropriate
Gum	Self-adhesive



Christmas 2013 Miniature Sheet – Specifications

Number of stamps	Seven
Design	Robert Maude and Sarah Davies
Stamp format – standard	Portrait
Stamp format – large	Landscape
Stamp size – standard	24mm x 28mm
Stamp size – large	34mm x 28mm
Sheet size	146mm x 74mm
Printer	De La Rue, Gateshead
Print process	Gravure
Perforations	14.5 x 15
Phosphor	Bars as appropriate
Gum	PVA

Christmas 2013 issue – Prices

Presentation Pack	£7.25
Stamps	£6.73
Miniature Sheet	£6.73
First Day Cover Stamps/overseas	£8.55/£7.85
First Day Cover Miniature Sheet/overseas	£8.55/£7.85
Stamp Cards, set of 8	£3.60
Generic Sheet	£13.62
1st Class Stamp Book	£7.20
2nd Class Stamp Book	£6

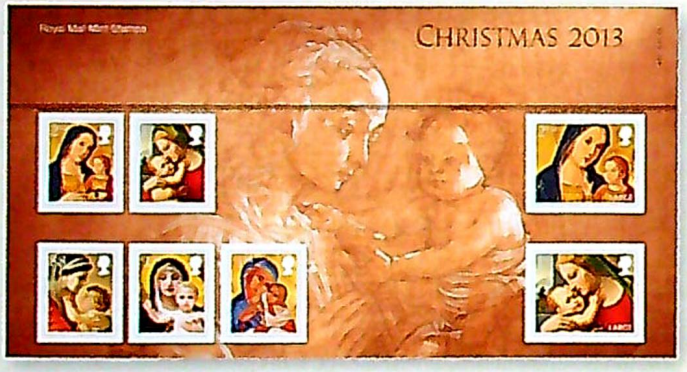
Above: Christmas Miniature Sheet with a background of burnished gold

Below: the richly designed Presentation Pack features a fascinating history of the artistic interpretation of Mary and Jesus Christ

completed between 1460 and 1480, and shows the Byzantine 'Hodegetria' pose, where Mary holds Christ on her left arm and gestures towards him with her right hand, indicating he is the way to salvation. *Second Class*

Madonna and Child In this High Renaissance picture Francesco Granacci painted the Virgin in her traditional clothes of red and blue, while the tiny bird in Jesus's hand represents the departing soul and hints at the coming Passion – Christ's final days of suffering and subsequent crucifixion. The image was painted in around 1520. *First Class*

St Roch Praying to the Virgin for an End to the Plague From the mid-18th century, as an alternative to the exuberance of Baroque, artists developed a neoclassical style stressing firm lines and controlled composition. This example, a deeply Catholic painting from 1780 by Jacques-Louis David, focuses on the Virgin Mary's role as protector. St Roch, the patron saint of plague-sufferers, appeals to the Virgin, who then intercedes with her son. *88p*



La Vierge au Lys (The Virgin of the Lilies) The Academic style, developed in accordance with the doctrines of official academies of painting across 19th-century Europe, celebrated the qualities of ancient art and classical painters. In this 1899 painting by quintessential French Academy artist William-Adolphe Bouguereau, the Madonna and

Child are seated frontally on a throne. Jesus is held close by his mother, his outstretched arms suggestive of the pose he will later adopt on the cross. *£1.28*

Theotokos, Mother of God Fadi Mikhail's icon, commissioned by Royal Mail, harks back to the art of the Egyptian Coptic Christians – a style that is over 1,000 years old. Mikhail was an enthusiastic student of Egyptian artist Isaac Fanous, who championed a revival in Coptic art. Even the title of Slade graduate Mikhail's painting resonates with tradition: Coptic artists portrayed Mary as 'Theotokos', which means 'God-bearer'. Mikhail covered a wooden panel with thin canvas treated with liquid chalk to mimic the porous limestone walls that ancient artists would have used for their work. Overlapping sheets of gold leaf were laid on the picture, which was painted with egg tempera. *£1.88*

Also in the Christmas 2013 issue The Presentation Pack is richly designed by Robert Maude and Sarah Davies and features an insightful history of the ▸







FD1322NP



FD1322PL



FD1322TH

Above: the Bethlehem alternative pictorial and non-pictorial postmarks and the Tallents House pictorial postmark

Above, left: the Christmas First Day Envelope

Left: the Generic Sheet from this year's Christmas issue



Christmas 2013 Stamp Books – Specifications	
Issue date	5 November
Book format	12 x 1st Class or 12 x 2nd Class special stamps
Stamp format	Portrait 24mm x 28mm
Printer	Walsall
Print process	Gravure

depiction of Madonna and Child by the Christian art expert Rowena Loverance.

Two Stamp Books will be available, as shown above – one with 12 First Class portrait stamps and the other with 12 Second Class portrait stamps.

Orders for Serviced First Day Covers must reach Royal Mail by 5 November. The Tallents House pictorial postmark shows Mary and Jesus. Alternative non-pictorial and pictorial Bethlehem, Llandeilo postmarks are also available (see previous page). There is a Smilers® sheet, printed with blank labels ready for customers wishing to buy personalised stamps featuring a favourite photo. These are very popular, so please order early to avoid disappointment ●

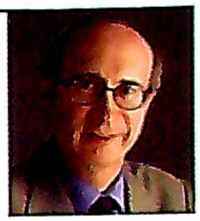
Above: the First Class and Second Class Stamp Books

Right: the Smilers® sheet is printed with blank labels ready for customers wanting to buy personalised stamps featuring a favourite photo



Detail from *Virgin and Child with the Young St John the Baptist* by Antoniazzo Romano © The Samuel Courtauld Trust, The Courtauld Gallery, London; detail from *Madonna and Child* by Francesco Granacci © The Metropolitan Museum of Art/Art Resource/Scala, Florence; detail from *St Roch Praying to the Virgin for an End to the Plague* by Jacques-Louis David © Giraudon/ The Bridgeman Art Library; detail from *La Vierge au Lys* by William-Adolphe Bouguereau – image courtesy of the Art Renewal Center®; *Theotokos, Mother of God* by Fadi Mikhail © Royal Mail Group Ltd 2012

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



UK diary dates

5 October South West Scotland Philatelic Societies Stamp & Postcard Festival, Prestwick Community Centre, Caerlaverock Road, Prestwick KA9 1HR, 10am to 4pm. Information: 01294 276990.

6 October Association of GB First Day Cover Collectors AGM and FDC Fair, Collingwood Centre, Great Barr, Birmingham B43 7NF, 10am to 4pm. Information: Ian Balcombe, 020 7586 4668.

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

12 October Manchester & District Philatelic Traders Association Stamp Fair, Sale Grammar School, Marsland Road, Sale M33 3NH.

12 October South of England Stamp Fair & Sussex Convention, South of England Centre, Ardingly Showground, RH17 6TL, 10am to 4.30pm. Includes British Thematic Association's 2013 Competitions.

18-19 October Scotex (Scottish Stamp and Postcard Fair), Dewars Centre, Perth. Friday 11am to 6pm, Saturday 10am to 4pm.

18-20 October Stampa (Irish national stamp exhibition), Royal Dublin Society, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4.

19 October GB Philatelic Society meeting, Grosvenor Philatelic Auctions, 399 Strand, London WC2. 'Postal History 1936-71' by C Harman, 'Additional ½d Mail Tax' and '1924-25 Wembley Mail' by P Denly.

25-27 October 14th Dundee Philatelic Weekend, Queens Hotel, Dundee. Bookings: Ken Norris, 30 Luss Brae, Hamilton ML3 9UT, 01698 425120.

26 October Colchester Philatelic Society Annual Stamp & Postcard Fair, Stanway Village Hall, Villa Road, Stanway, Colchester, 10am to 4pm. Parking and refreshments available.

27 October West of England Thematic Society Stamp Day, Haytor Room, Dartmoor Lodge Hotel, Ashburton TQ13 7JW. Information: 01398 331731.

8-9 November Stafford Stamp Show, Staffordshire County Showground, Weston Road, Stafford ST18 0BD. Friday 10am to 5pm, Saturday 10am to 4pm. Information: 01785 259350.

15 November Strand Stamp Fair, as above.

16 November Joint meeting of GB Philatelic Society and Postal Stationery Society at Royal Philatelic Society, 41 Devonshire Place, London W1, 11am •



Above: the Royal National Hotel, where the regular Strand Stamp Fairs take place

Stamp exhibitions

• The popular Scotex event, at the Dewars Centre, Perth, on 18 and 19 October, is organised by the Scottish Philatelic Trade Association. The location is just five minutes from Perth rail and bus stations and offers good catering facilities. • Stampa, the Irish national stamp exhibition, takes place at the Royal Dublin Society, Ballsbridge, Dublin, from 18 to 20 October. • An international exhibition will be held in Rio de Janeiro from 19 to 25 November. • The MonacoPhil exhibition of world rarities takes place in Monte Carlo from 5 to 7 December •

Society anniversaries



We are fortunate in the UK in having numerous local philatelic societies and stamp clubs, some of which have been in existence for many years. Currently celebrating its 50th anniversary is the Bexhill Philatelic Society, which meets at 7pm on the last Tuesday of each month from September to July. On 16 November it hosts a Stamp Fair and Philatelic Community Day at St Augustine's Church Hall, Cooden Drive, Bexhill TN39 3AZ. There will be free parking. The venue can be reached by Stagecoach bus service 99 and is a short distance from Collington railway station. Information: Bexhill Philatelic Society Secretary Ray Burnett on 01424 214294.

In 2014 the Falmouth & District Philatelic Society will mark its 125th anniversary, and the Sunderland Philatelic Society and the Swansea Philatelic Society are 90 and 80 years old respectively. The Exmouth Stamp Club has its 75th anniversary and it will be diamond jubilee year for the Barnet & District, Dartford & District and Yeovil & District societies. In addition, there are golden jubilee celebrations for Bexley, Dorchester & Weymouth, Frinton & District, Sudbury & District and Warminster.

Bexley Philatelic Society celebrates its 50th anniversary with a stamp fair on 17 May. Forthcoming meetings are: 'GB Queen Victoria Issues' by Mike Slamo (18 October), bourse and competition (1 November), and members' displays for subjects N-Q (15 November). The Society meets at the Freemantle Hall, Bexley. Information: Adrian Smith on 01322 559210 or adethebeak@yahoo.co.uk.

I should be pleased to hear, via the Editor, from societies holding anniversary events so that details can be published here at the relevant time •

New catalogues

The German catalogue publishers Michel have a range of new catalogues: West Africa Vols 1 (A-G) and 2 (H-Z) at €74 each; South West Europe, South East Europe, South Europe and North Europe at €59.80 each. All are available as for €10 less. Also recently published is a supplement to the 100th edition of the Germany catalogue, an Austria Specialised, Germany miniature sheets, and Postal Stationery of Eastern Europe Since 1960 catalogues. For more information: Michel, Schwaneberger Verlag GmbH, Ohmstrasse 1, 85716 Unsterschleissheim, Germany, vertrieb@michel.de or www.michel.de •

Midlands postal history catalogue



Collectors of postal history material will be well aware of *The British County Catalogue of Postal History* begun by Martin Willcocks in 1978 and continued by Barrie Jay, both now sadly deceased. The Midland (GB) Postal History Society is continuing publication for the counties in its area and its sixth publication entitled *The British County Catalogue of Postal History – Midlands Edition* covers Birmingham, Derbyshire, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Rutland, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire. In larger A4 size than the earlier *County* books, it provides a well-laid out guide to postal markings in the pre-stamp era but also lists those used after 1840 where relevant. The illustrations are of excellent quality and information is given about earliest and latest known dates of use.

There is also a value indicator, from 'A' (under £8) to 'L' (over £1,000). The listings are the work of some 30 researchers, and are brought together by John Calladine as Co-ordinating Editor. The 182-page hardbound book is available from John Calladine, 5 Skillins, Kington St Michael, Chippenham SN14 6RL. The guide costs £20 plus £6.50 postage and packing (sent at small parcel rate) •

Philatelist honoured

Our congratulations to Erene Grieve who was recently awarded a national volunteer award for museum learning for her excellent work in promoting stamp collecting in schools. A retired teacher, Erene runs the Stamps in Schools project with support from the BPMA. For more about her work, see the article by Richard West in the May 2002 edition of *Bulletin* •

October and November at the BPMA

The British Postal Museum & Archive (BPMA), located at Freeling House, Phoenix Place, London WC1, near the famous Mount Pleasant sorting office, is open Monday to Friday 10am to 5pm (Thursdays until 7pm) and on Saturday 12 October and 9 November (10am to 5pm), but closed on Monday 14 October and Monday 11 November.

On show at Freeling House are two exhibitions: the 2012 Diamond Jubilee display (until 31 December) and a Mail Rail display of photographs. The Post Office in the Community display can be seen at Blists Hill Victorian Town, Ironbridge, Shropshire, and the 25 exhibitions on the BPMA website include: Aerial Post, regional stamps, Machins, David Gentleman, postal vehicles and letter boxes.

Popular GPO walking tours, led by accredited guides, tell the story of Victorian postal reform and the growth of the GPO. The next tours are on 20 October and 23 November at 11am – phone the number below to book. Tours of the Museum Store at Debden take place on 2 October and 6 November at 1pm, and a tour of the BPMA Archive on 9 October starts at 3pm. A talk, 'Royal Mail Past & Present' by Duncan Campbell-Smith, takes place at Guildhall Library on 24 October at 7pm. A talk by Sian Price called 'If You're Reading This: Last Letters from the Front Line', is at the Phoenix Centre (alongside the BPMA) on 14 November at 7pm.

For more on BPMA displays and events, contact the BPMA for a copy of its comprehensive Events Guide. Information and bookings: 020 7239 2570, info@postalheritage.org.uk or the BPMA's website at www.postalheritage.org.uk •



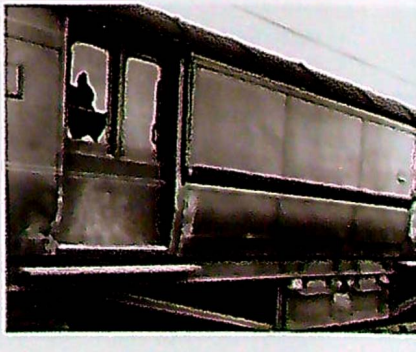
Above: this 1935 photograph, showing a postman delivering mail to a hop farm in Kent, is in the 2012 Diamond Jubilee display at the BPMA

Below: from the files of Thames Valley Police is this photo of the Great Train Robbery. The image features in the BPMA's travelling exhibition about the crime

Travelling exhibition

This year is the 50th anniversary of the Great Train Robbery, one of the most famous crimes of the 20th century, which took place on 8 August 1963. Material relating to the incident is held at the BPMA, which has arranged a touring exhibition. You can see it at: Great Central Railway, Loughborough LE11 1RW (3 to 6 October), Nene Valley Railway, Wansford Station, Stibbington, Peterborough PE8 6LR (10 to 20 October) and Head of Steam – Darlington Railway Museum, North Road Station, Darlington DL3 6ST (30 October to late December).

Dates are subject to change so contact the BPMA through the phone number and online addresses shown above •



Thames Valley Police Museum; © Royal Mail Group Ltd 2013 (courtesy of the British Postal Museum & Archive)





This month in history John Holman recalls the first-ever self-adhesive stamps in October 1993

This month marks the 20th anniversary of the issue of Royal Mail's first self-adhesive stamp. It was an adaptation of the existing first-class Machin definitive stamp in horizontal rather than vertical format, and was sold in books of 20 at £4.80 (24p being the first-class rate at the time). It was regarded by Royal Mail as an experiment and sold in a test area – the Tyne-Tees Television region of north-east England – for a trial period of six months at both post offices and retail outlets. Outside the Tyne-Tees area, the book was available at post offices throughout the UK just on the day of issue, 19 October, so that collectors could obtain examples and prepare first day covers.

The September 1993 issue of *Bulletin* stated: 'The self-adhesive stamp is expected to be popular with small businesses and the more prolific letter writers. Once the trial has been completed Royal Mail will evaluate the future for self-adhesive issues.' The experiment proved successful and further self-adhesive stamps were issued in 1997. They are now the norm for definitive issues.

The self-adhesive book was printed by Walsall in lithography, with the stamps arranged in two panes of nine and a vertical pair, separated by the folding of the book. The stamps were perf 14 with two phosphor bands. Examples are known

Underground anniversary

In January Royal Mail issued stamps marking the 150th anniversary of the London Underground. Stamps have also been issued by Ghana, comprising a sheet of six stamps with the two cedi value and a miniature sheet of one seven-cedi stamp. Royal Mint has produced a commemorative £2 coin and I was pleased (and surprised) to receive one in my change recently. Most of the £2 coins I encounter are of the standard, non-commemorative design •

Forthcoming auctions

The next Spink auctions are: India and British Empire revenue stamps on 23 October and South Africa on 24 October. Information: 020 7563 4094. Grosvenor will auction the unusual collection of GB £1 stamps created by Ian Crane on 31 October. Information: 020 7379 8789 •

Island news

The Isle of Man Post Office issued six stamps showing Big Cats (Lion, Snow Leopard, Tiger, Cheetah, Leopard and Jaguar) on 13 September, together with a 'Journey Through Africa' miniature sheet. All bear illustrations by Jeremy Paul. The 69p Tiger stamp is the Isle of Man's contribution to the 2013 SEPAC series. Members of SEPAC (Small European Postal Administration Cooperation) issue a stamp on a particular theme every other year. The series started in 2007. Information: Isle of Man Stamps & Coins, PO Box 10M, Douglas, Isle of Man IM99 1PB or www.iomstamps.com.



Jersey's issue of 20 September, Jersey Cows, was a lovely set. On 10 October Jersey releases a miniature sheet showing The Royal Mace. This is followed on 15 October by a Nigel Mansell

with the phosphor omitted, the phosphor bands double, and with misplaced phosphor. The stamp is easily distinguishable from the later issue, in having smaller lettering and a different perf gauge – the later stamps were gauge 15 x 14.

The stamp book was also sold in a presentation pack for £5.15 and reproduced on a stamp card, which cost 21p.

First day covers were cancelled by pictorial first day postmarks at the Philatelic Bureau and at Newcastle in the Tyne-Tees area. Other handstamps were sponsored by cover producers.

The book was originally scheduled for issue on 26 October, but the date was advanced one week. This may have led to some confusion at the Philatelic Bureau and books were sent to some customers in advance of 19 October – examples are known on covers with early postmarks.

The book remained on philatelic sale until 30 April 1995, the last day of the Stamp 95 exhibition at Wembley. Unusually, a last day of sale handstamp was available for covers bearing the self-adhesive stamp posted at the exhibition. For more on self-adhesive stamps, see articles by Dr A R Lane in the March 1991 and October 1993 editions of *Bulletin* •



Above: self-adhesive stamps have become the norm after they were successfully piloted in the north-east of England

souvenir sheetlet with six stamps (opposite page). On 14 November six stamps and a miniature sheet mark the 65th birthday of The Prince of Wales and a Christmas Fayre issue of six stamps and a souvenir miniature sheet is out on 20 November. Information: Jersey Philatelic Bureau, Freepost JE793, Jersey Post, Jersey JE1 1AF or www.jerseystamps.com.

Guernsey's Christmas stamps go on sale on 30 October – seven stamps on the theme 'When Santa Got Stuck Up the Chimney' for Guernsey and a further seven for Alderney showing Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer. Information: Guernsey Philatelic Bureau, Freepost GU267, Envoy House, La Vrangue, Guernsey GY1 5SS or philatelic@guernseypost.com •

Below: Isle of Man's Big Cats issue and the Jersey Cows set from, of course, Jersey







Right: these cliffs between Lyme Regis and Charmouth were the site of major fossil discoveries in the 18th and early 19th centuries

Below: Tyrannosaurus rex, arguably the most famous dinosaur of all



Dinomania

Tyrannosaurus rex may be the dinosaur king but it was his British cousins who caused the world's first wave of dinomania. As Royal Mail celebrates these prehistoric Great Britons, Simon Ball rocks up to the UK's palaeontological pioneers

FROM BATTLING KING KONG and menacing Raquel Welch in her fur bikini to learning the alphabet with Barney Rubble, dinosaurs are now such a familiar part of our cultural landscape that it is hard to imagine that they last walked the Earth 66 million years ago. They have rampaged through our imaginations, packed out exhibitions and sold millions of pounds' worth of toys, books and films – notably Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Lost World* and Steven Spielberg's classic film *Jurassic Park*. Now the beasts are back, with their own stamp issue Dinosaurs released on 10 October.

The likes of Tyrannosaurus, Velociraptor and Triceratops have become the big star dinosaur names, but it was in Britain that other prehistoric reptiles were first excavated, identified and named. Yet just 200 years ago nobody knew what a dinosaur was. While fossils were nothing new in the 19th century, ancient bones had been explained as the remains of animals or giants killed in the biblical flood. When a riverbank collapsed in 1171, for example, the Essex chronicler Ralph of Coggleshall recorded the discovery of bones so big they belonged to a man 'who must have been fifty foot high'.

Science Photo Library

It is also worth remembering that the intellectual mindset of the early 19th century did not countenance the idea of any form of life on Earth before Adam and Eve – not even a midge, let alone a huge dinosaur. Most university academics were Anglican clergymen who still clung to the 200-year-old theories of James Ussher, a prolific 17th century scholar and Archbishop of Armagh. Citing evidence in the Bible, Ussher asserted that God had created the Earth on Sunday 23 October 4004 BC. This cosy certainty was about to be blown asunder by the discoveries of a Dorset fossil hunter, a country doctor and the future Dean of Westminster, who would help to reveal a world far older than Ussher believed possible.

Indeed, the stage had been set for further discoveries. The 18th century was a time of great enquiry into the natural world and no gentleman's home would have been complete without the cabinet of curiosities – usually displaying animal bones and horns, dried plants, exotic shells and rocks – to stimulate polite conversation. Towards the latter half of that century, the French Revolution and, later, the Napoleonic Wars effectively cut off the supply of such exotic items from continental Europe, so the collector was forced to look closer to home for his supply.

Fortunately, when 'taking the water' at the fashionable spa town of Bath, gentlemen with enquiring minds found that a ready supply of 'snake stones' (ammonites) and 'devil's fingers' (belemnites) were to be had at the nearby seaside resort of Lyme Regis. And the locals were only too happy to scour the beaches to hunt down ancient molluscs, for a price.

Revelations in Lyme Regis

Steve Davies, curator of the Dinosaurland Fossil Museum in Lyme Regis, explains the area's magic: 'Lyme Regis is probably the best place in the world for the discovery of Jurassic marine life fossils, and I think this is due to a combination of three main factors. Firstly, wonderful conditions existed in this area 200 million years ago, which supported a vast collection of marine life. Secondly, these creatures were buried and preserved in fine mud immediately after death, so there are a vast amount of fossils in the rocks at Lyme. Finally, constant natural erosion continually exposes new material with its fossil content. Put these things together and you come up with paradise on Earth, if you like fossils.'



Above: Mary Anning's work took her from local celebrity to worldwide recognition as a leading palaeontologist

Perhaps the best known of Lyme's fossil hunters was the determined and scholarly palaeontologist Mary Anning. She is credited with the discovery of three of the creatures – Ichthyosaurus, Plesiosaurus and the flying reptile Dimorphodon – featured in the Dinosaurs stamp issue. It was, however, Mary's brother Joseph who, in 1811, first came across a long skull full of interlocking teeth protruding from the cliffs. Mary located the rest of the strange fish-like creature, which turned out to be a 17-foot long Ichthyosaurus (meaning 'fish lizard'), and sold it to the local lord of the manor for the princely sum of £23. It is now on display in London's Natural History Museum.

The Ichthyosaurus naturally stirred up a lot of interest. The scientific community could not agree whether it was an ancient crocodile, a fish or even an aquatic bird. In 1821 it was finally recognised as an aquatic reptile ▸



Above: Dr William Buckland was the first academic to take a serious interest in the work of Mary Anning

Below: Plesiosaurus skeleton, artwork from the 1886 ninth edition of *Moses and Geology* (Samuel Kinns, London)

that occupied a similar zoological niche to the present-day dolphin. As more specimens emerged from Lyme's cliffs, Anning became a local celebrity. One of the first people to visit her was Dr William Buckland of Corpus Christi College Oxford. Like many Oxford academics Buckland was an ordained minister (who would become Dean of Westminster), but he was also interested in the new science of 'undergroundology', an early term for geology.

The eccentric Buckland, who shared his college rooms with a bear called Tig, a jackal and several guinea pigs, was also the Director of Oxford's Ashmolean Museum. The Ashmolean's collection featured several giant fossilised bones from a local slate quarry, including part of a jawbone full of knife-like teeth and a huge thighbone thought to have belonged to an elephant brought to Britain by the Romans. Buckland was keen to make sense of these bones, so when the renowned French comparative anatomist Baron Georges Cuvier visited Oxford he asked the great man for an opinion.

'Nature red in tooth and claw'

From his examination of the teeth, Cuvier decided that the bones belonged to a carnivorous reptile similar to a modern-day monitor lizard but very much bigger, up to 40 feet long. Of course, these assumptions were based upon an incomplete skeleton and with no other comparative reference points than contemporary reptiles. So when Buckland finally published his description of the mighty Megalosaurus ('big lizard') in 1824, its imagined form was far more lizard-like than the bipedal killer we know it to be today.

This was also the case with the creature discovered by country doctor Gideon Mantell. Mantell was another keen amateur geologist, who would search for interesting rocks while out making visits to patients in the Sussex Weald. He had already discovered several bones belonging to a large predatory reptile similar to those in the Ashmolean, but in 1822 he found some teeth among stones being used to repair a road. (Some historians credit his wife Mary with finding them.) He was convinced that the teeth must have belonged to a huge, extinct herbivorous reptile.



Above: Gideon Mantell, a doctor whose passion for palaeontology made him famous. This portrait was engraved from a painting by Samuel Stepney and appeared in Mantell's 1849 book *Thoughts on a Pebble*

Initial reaction to Gideon Mantell's discovery was not encouraging. Cuvier thought the teeth belonged to a rhinoceros, Buckland thought they belonged to a fish. Mantell sought out the quarry that the road gravel had come from and over the next few years acquired several more fragments of bone belonging to the creature. His breakthrough occurred in 1824, after sending further samples to Cuvier in Paris. Cuvier wrote back to say he had changed his mind and that the teeth definitely belonged to a giant herbivorous lizard. Mantell set off for London where he hoped the reptile collection in the Hunterian Museum would reveal a match. As luck would have it, assistant curator Samuel Scutchbury had just finished preserving an iguana from Barbados and remarked that it had very similar dentition. Mantell called his creature Iguanodon ('iguana tooth') when he announced his discovery to the Royal Society in 1825.

Naturally, as more and more of these curious animals were unearthed from the long distant past, the news fired the imagination of the public. But it was the discovery of fossilised Ichthyosaur droppings (coprolites), containing the

Science Photo Library

remnants of marine reptiles and fish they had eaten, that inspired the popular illustrations of prehistoric beasts savagely tearing each other apart. It is from such violent imagery that Tennyson, himself a keen fossil hunter during his residence on the Isle of Wight, is believed to have coined the phrase 'nature, red in tooth and claw' in his poem *Canto 56*.

Anatomist Richard Owen was to forge the next step forward in our understanding of the world of prehistoric reptiles. Owen had begun his career as an anatomist while working as a surgeon's assistant, performing autopsies on the former inmates of the prison at Lancaster. Showing some flair for the job, he went on to study at Edinburgh University and the Royal College of Surgeons. After graduating from the Royal College, Owen was appointed as an assistant to William Clift the conservator at the Hunterian Museum.

At the Hunterian, Owen got to dissect any animal that died at the Zoological Gardens (the forerunner of London Zoo) and this experience of comparative anatomy proved invaluable to his understanding of extinct animals. By the 1840s he was a well-known if controversial figure in the field, with a reputation for using his position of influence to damage his rivals' reputations and even claim their work for his own.

When Owen presented his *Report on British Fossil Reptiles* to the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1841, Mantell had a very public falling-out with him. In his report, Owen divided the fossil reptiles into four main groups: the marine reptiles or Enaliosauria, the flying reptiles, the crocodilians and the Lacertians – the group that included Megalosarus and Iguanodon. Mantell was very unhappy that Owen had seemed to pass off some of Mantell's observations about Iguanodon as his own, but Owen was saved much potential embarrassment when Mantell was hurt in a carriage accident that left him too debilitated to pursue the issue.

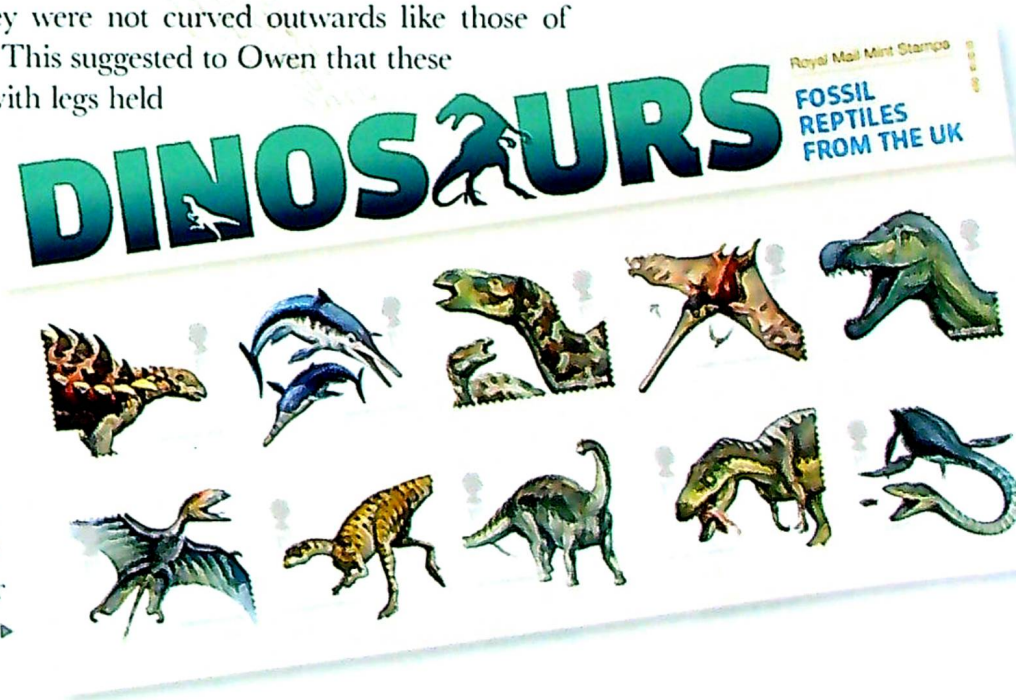


Above: the famous 'Mantell piece', a rock slab containing the most complete set of articulated dinosaur bones discovered up to that time. The drawing is by Dinkel, lithographed by Sharf and appeared in Mantell's book *Wonders of Geology* in 1838

Below: the Dinosaurs stamp issue launches on 10 October

Owen's thighbone breakthrough

By the time Owen's report was published the following year, he had made another major breakthrough. Study of the thighbones of both Megalosaurus and Iguanodon revealed that they were not curved outwards like those of a modern-day crocodile or lizard. This suggested to Owen that these creatures had not scuttled about with legs held to either side, but had instead stood upright in a rather more mammalian pose.



The serendipitous discovery in 1841 of an almost complete Iguanodon sacrum (the lower back vertebrae), in a quarry on the Isle of Wight, supported Owen's theory by showing that the dinosaur's sacral vertebrae were fused just like the vertebrae of a mammal. Owen was better able to see what these animals ▸











Above: 1991 dinosaur stamps celebrated the work of Owen



Top: Benjamin Waterhouse Hawkins' dinosaur sculptures at Sydenham in 1854

would have looked like in life. Although he never got them quite right, his reconstructions no longer dragged their bellies through the undergrowth. They stood tall, noble and proud. Whether this caused him to rename his Lacertians as Dinosauria, or 'fearfully great lizards', is open to conjecture.

Models at the Great Exhibition

But these new, powerful, majestic images of dinosaurs certainly gripped the Victorian imagination. Owen was invited to join the committee organising the Great Exhibition of 1851 and successfully lobbied for a new Museum of Natural History to be built upon its vacated site when the Crystal Palace was moved to south east London. For the new Crystal Palace, the sculptor Benjamin Waterhouse Hawkins built a set of prehistoric creatures for the ornamental lake. Working closely with Owen, he had 15 different extinct species in position by 1854, where they have stood ever since as silent testimony to the Briton who 'invented' dinosaurs.

However, the work of these palaeontological pioneers goes beyond making these creatures live within our imaginations. They, together with geologists such as William Smith and Charles Lyell, helped to demonstrate the true antiquity of the Earth and paved the way for the work of Charles Darwin, as Dinosaurland's Steve Davies explains: 'The finds that were made in the early 19th century were really important. William Smith was starting to use fossils to produce the first geology map of Britain – there was no concept of evolution, just that finding the same fossils in rock strata indicates that they are the same age. This was the most brilliant insight. This is where Mary Anning and Gideon Mantell, among a whole host of others, came in. These discoveries were there as evidence for Charles Darwin to provide clarity and understanding when he published his theory of evolution in 1859.'

With the fourth Jurassic Park movie, *Jurassic World*, about to enter production, it seems our love affair with dinosaurs has not abated. What makes these long-dead creatures so fascinating, especially to the young? Maybe it is because they are the ultimate safe scare. As the leading child psychologist Sheldon White put it, dinosaurs are 'big, fierce and extinct' •

Dinosaurland Fossil Museum in Lyme Regis is run by palaeontologist Steve Davies and his wife Jenny. It is housed in a former congregational church where Mary Anning worshipped. For more details visit www.dinosaurland.co.uk

Science Photo Library: miniature colour print by the George Baxter patent process of multiple ink blocks. Original print in the collection of Paul D Stewart





Mark of a Mann Meet the handstamp hero who ensures your pristine first day covers are postmarked to collectable perfection

THEY HANDSTAMP mountains of first day covers every year and their thousands of customers include Her Majesty, Italian sailors, tourists from all over the world, and of course you, dear reader. Life is indeed hectic for the five-strong team at Royal Mail's Special Handstamp Centre in London.

The heart of the postmark action is a third-floor room above the Mount Pleasant Sorting Office, sprinkled with colourful stamp posters and verdant plants. Here centre manager Pritpal Mann and four colleagues pump out those first day covers (sometimes referred to as FDCs) with their special marks, using both the manual stamp method a century old and a rather zippy modern gizmo called the PAD Cancel Machine.

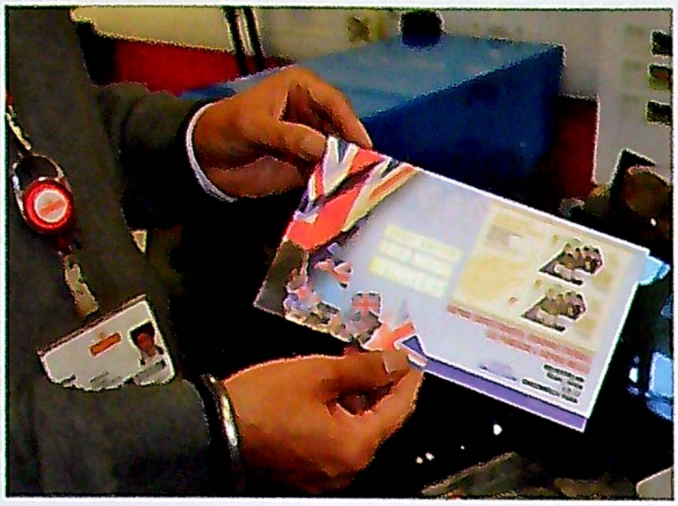
Below them, via an industrial-sized lift, the sorting operation clatters away in a vast open-plan hall packed with postal machinery and rattling trolleys. But here in the Handstamp Centre all is calm – even though Pritpal's team serves 850 branch offices, stamping special issues that can have more than 10,000 collectors clamouring for their covers at any one time.



Top: Pritpal Mann holds an unusual piece of 'postal art' from the Heatherwick Studio, with a bespoke handstamp

Above: a tray of handstamps ready for postmark action and the PAD Cancel Machine

Demand for specially stamped philatelic covers is indeed high and Pritpal explains the biggest difference he has seen since he first became the centre's manager 12 years ago: 'The main change has come with the development of special stamps,' says Pritpal, who has three handstamp operators and one administrator working alongside him. 'This has greatly broadened the scope of our work because people with different special interests are drawn to different styles of philatelic covers and special postmarks.' And the interests are wide, from sport to design to pop music and beyond. Pritpal reveals ▸



Above: one of hundreds of specially handstamped covers designed to celebrate Britain's 2012 Olympic and Paralympic victories

Below: a member of Pritpal's handstamp team hard at work on a customer's FDC





that the 2009 British Design Classics issue was one of the more popular series, as well as the Rolling Stones stamp from the Classic Album Covers set of 2010.

But what has been the most popular subject for a cover? Pritpal smiles. 'Without a doubt the Olympics and Paralympics of last year: 63 stamps were issued in total – 29 for Team GB and 34 Paralympics GB stamps. Thousands of covers had to be handstamped and we needed to bring in extra staff to cope with the demand.' Although the summer of 2012 was a hectic period, it is clear that Pritpal and his team are delighted to have been involved in a unique national event. 'It was an unforgettable experience,' he says.

Collectors rightly expect perfection on their first day covers – each identical and pristine, with postmarks precisely placed – and the careful process of handstamping ensures they get it. Pritpal explains the drill: after the artwork for a special stamp has been agreed by Yvonne Hamilton at Tallents House, a foil is issued with a laser etching of the special alternative handstamp. The foil is then inserted into the base of the PAD Cancel Machine, and placed just below an inkwell. The inked impression is transferred onto a rubber roller and then onto the cover. The handstamp operators are able to see on a screen precisely where the impression will fall. A foot control positions the handstamp exactly where required. Next to each machine is a funnel that extracts the fumes generated by the inking process.

It is also possible for customers to ask for handstamping in the old-fashioned way, quite literally by hand. On the hand-held rubber stamp, known as a 'rolling handstamp', you can change the date manually, ink it by rolling it over an inkpad and then stamp the mail. This 'rubber dye' method is over 100 years old. One of the rubber stamps used regularly at this handstamp centre states the location 'Mount Pleasant' and the date. While it does not provide quite such a solid impression as the machine stamping, handstamping is still popular, particularly with collectors requesting a specifically designed handstamp in a limited edition.

Handstamp centres also exist in Birmingham, Cardiff, Glasgow and South Shields, but the central London location of the Mount Pleasant Special Handstamp Centre means that Pritpal's team undertakes many of the more unusual jobs, from a particularly varied range of customers...

'We get a good number of tourists visiting us,' says Pritpal. 'We once had members of the Italian Navy come to see us with their map of Europe for us to handstamp and post on!'

Satisfied customers come from all over the world, including Europe, the USA, Canada and Australia. And there is one very important British customer just down the road: every first day cover is specially handstamped at Mount Pleasant and sent to the Post Office at Buckingham Palace.

Photography: © Kate Shaw and Paul Elmes Interview: Sarah Fordham

So, rather like the British Library receiving a copy of every book that is published in Britain, The Queen receives for her pleasure every first day cover issued by Royal Mail.

Monarchs apart, customers of the London handstamp centre fall into three categories – dealers, branch offices (where individuals have asked for the handstamping of special covers), and collectors asking for a specific handstamp and using the re-posting facility. (This is when customers send in their own stamped covers and ask for a specific postmark. Once cancelled, the cover is posted back to the customer in the self-addressed, stamped envelope they provide.) With prior notice, Pritpal's efficient team can send back a specially ordered cover on the same day as receiving the envelope.

'If we don't provide a good service, small dealers may fail,' says Pritpal. 'We take pains to be conscientious about looking after the needs of small dealers, so as to keep alive their business.'

The team works very hard to fulfil the needs of all its customers. The turnaround time for first day covers is seven working days, and re-posts up to 14 working days. Pritpal and his colleagues take great care and pride in approaching each customer individually and making sure their specific requirements are addressed as closely as possible: 'Our customers greatly appreciate receiving work that is totally up to their specification,' says Pritpal.

To anyone who observes the running of the Mount Pleasant Handstamp Centre, it is clear that Pritpal leaves nothing to chance. He goes out of his way to buy spare stamps so there is a back-up supply in case anything should go wrong with a cover. He usually contacts customers in person if there is the slightest ambiguity or problem with their specifications.

After the issue of new Royal Mail stamps, as many as 12,000 covers may arrive for stamping. The covers will receive the pictorial first day of issue handstamp – or non-pictorials by special request – and are then placed in a transparent envelope sleeve to avoid damage while in the post.

In a very hectic schedule, what part of his busy job does Pritpal Mann like the most? He answers without hesitation: 'The learning. The background to each stamp set is fascinating. I also love the personal interaction with our customers. This job is unique because it combines three different aspects – interest in the stamps themselves, technical knowledge of the handstamping process and an understanding of customers' requirements. All of these dynamics work together to make it a very satisfying job.

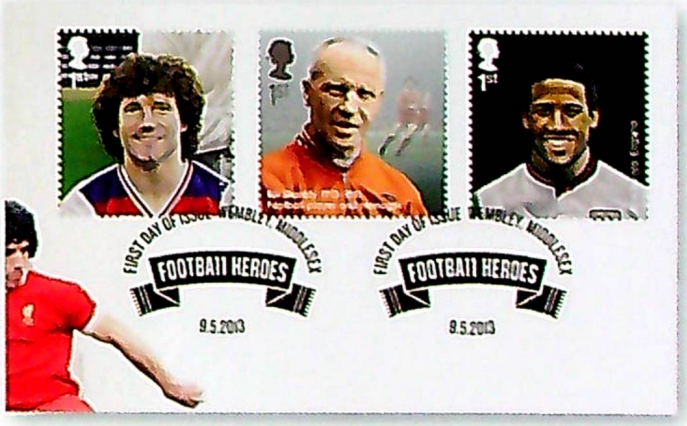
'And, of course, it is very rewarding to see the results of our work physically in the finished product of the handstamp' •

Find out more about first day covers from their creators and collectors in future Bulletin 'Cover Stories'



Above: the plate of the Union Flag postmark, which is often used with the stamps and labels from Commemorative Sheets featuring the Union Flag stamp

Below: Pritpal's team saved the day when they spotted that a small cover producer used a Bill Shankly Great Britons stamp to complete a Liverpool-themed cover alongside FDC Football Heroes. An alternative postmark (12852) sponsored by Benham was used





Sail of the centuries

Welcome on board the legendary Cutty Sark – star of the Merchant Navy issue that pays tribute to two colourful centuries of British sailing endeavour…

TREACHEROUS SEAS, DEADLY ICEBERGS, MURDER AND MUTINY – the legendary life of the *Cutty Sark* was packed with adventure. And the legend sails on for maritime enthusiasts and philatelists alike. The world-famous tea clipper appeared on a classic David Gentleman-designed stamp in 1969. Now it is back, starring in the Merchant Navy issue launching on 19 September, which celebrates two centuries of British sailing history (see preview Vol 50 pp360-62).

This splendid vessel – 280 feet long and almost 1,000 tons – has recently been restored, and is on show by the Thames at Greenwich, the only surviving tea clipper in existence. And what a majestic show. Her 152-foot main mast soars into the sky, towering over visitors to this grand London landmark. Walking under the powerful hull in the special viewing room gives you a sense of her enduring strength – *Cutty Sark* was a working ship for some 50 years. And just imagine the clipper in full sail. She must have been a spectacular sight, zipping through the Indian Ocean at almost 20 knots to bring back tea from China.



Below: *Cutty Sark* as she is today with the glass viewing canopy so visitors can see her in all her glory

iStock







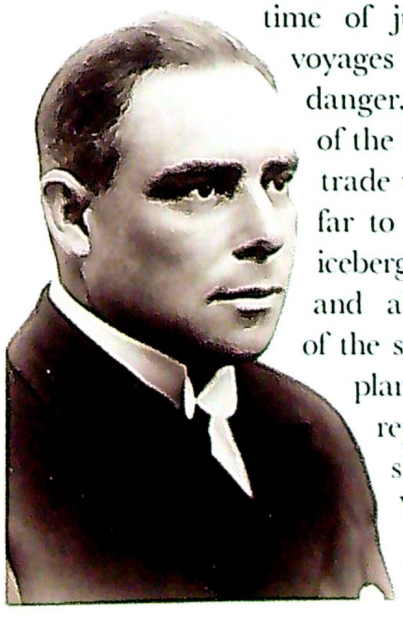
Above (clockwise from left): *Cutty Sark* from the new Merchant Navy issue; the clipper featured on a stamp in the British Ships series of 1969; a plaque marks the spot where Capt James Wallace jumped to his death

Below: Capt Wilfred Dowman saved the ship for the nation

Sailing into adventure This was a ship destined for adventure when she first launched from Dumbarton, Scotland, on 22 November 1869. For eight years *Cutty Sark* raced rival clippers to return to Britain first in order to secure premium prices in the London tea market. In one extraordinary dash, the crew rebuilt her storm-damaged rudder twice in a bid to regain their lead over a competitor.

In 1878 *Cutty Sark* switched to mixed cargoes, including jute and coal, whisky, gunpowder and even buffalo horns, and the adventures continued. In 1880, the first mate murdered a member of the crew and was confined to quarters, but the captain, one James Wallace, helped him escape. The furious crew were close to mutiny, refusing to work until the captain, wracked with guilt, hurled himself overboard into the Java Sea. A pack of sharks appeared where Wallace fell and he was never seen again.

In 1883, *Cutty Sark* began collecting wool from Australia and went on to dominate the wool trade for ten years. Beating rivals back to Britain by up to a month, she achieved a record-breaking journey time of just 73 days. Such voyages were riddled with danger. To take advantage of the fast Roaring Forties trade winds, she ventured far to the south, dodging icebergs round Cape Horn and also surviving some of the stormiest seas on the planet, while earning a reputation as the fastest ship in the wool trade. Yet all of *Cutty Sark*'s adventures could well have counted for ▸

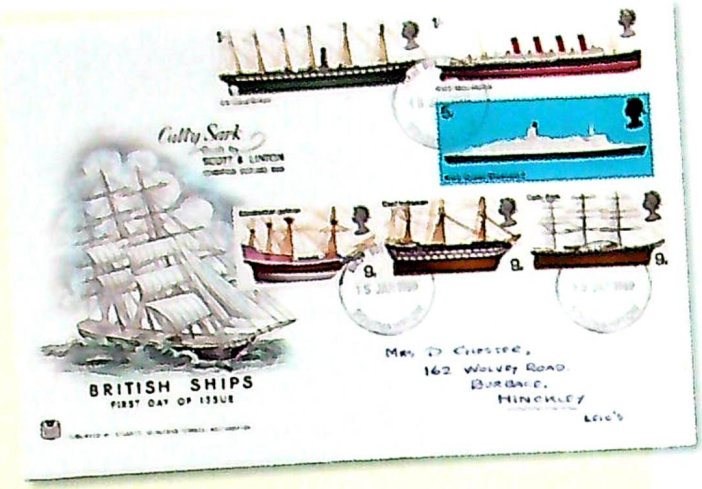


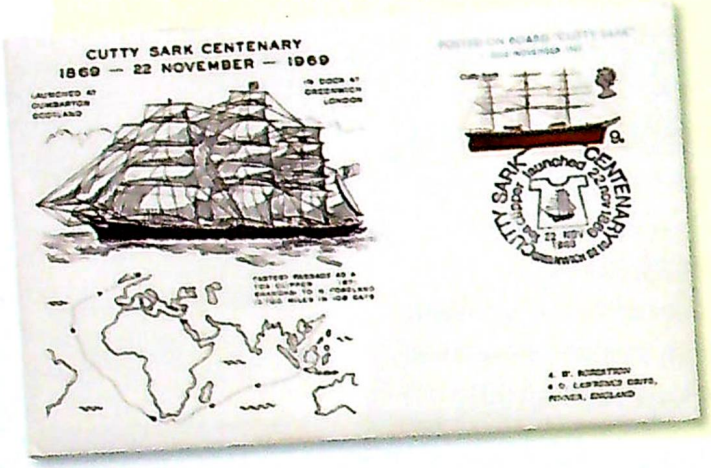
From witches to heavy metal: the strange life of Cutty Sark

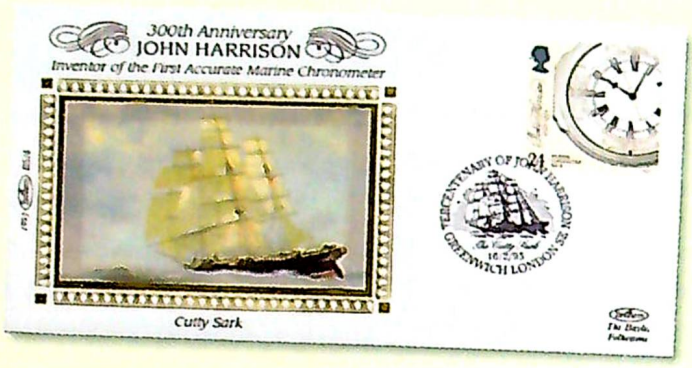
- *Cutty Sark* has 32 sails using 32,000 sq ft of fabric.
- The ship was originally built for fleet owner Jock Willis – known as 'White Hat Willis' because he always sported a white top hat.
- *Cutty Sark* was named after the short nightdress – 'cutty sark' in old Scots – worn by Nannie the witch in Robert Burns' famous poem *Tam O'Shanter*. Nannie is portrayed as the prow figurehead.
- There are 11 miles of rigging on *Cutty Sark*.
- The ship could hold 600,000kg of tea in a single voyage – enough to make 200 million cups.
- More than 1.5 million people visit *Cutty Sark* in Greenwich every year (www.rmg.co.uk/cuttysark).
- Cutty Sark is also the name of a German heavy metal band from the Eighties.

A sea adventure in stamps

In 1969, the centenary of *Cutty Sark*'s launch, a first day cover, complete with special handstamp, was sold at the ship (below right), and could be posted on board during the anniversary day – 22 November. *Cutty Sark* also featured on a first day cover of the British Ships issue the same year (right) and for the 1993 Marine Timekeepers issue (below). It celebrated the 300th anniversary of the birth of John Harrison, inventor of the first practical marine chronometer.









naught. She was sold to a Portuguese company in 1895, taking cargoes to Rio de Janeiro, New Orleans, Mozambique and Angola. On one such voyage in 1916 *Cutty Sark* was dismasted and badly damaged in bad weather off Africa. In 1922 she was then damaged again during a gale in the English Channel.

Wilfred Dowman, a retired British sea captain and the owner of a training ship, bought *Cutty Sark* in the same year, saving it for the nation, and restored her to something of her original appearance as a tea and wool clipper. After stints as a training ship at Falmouth and on the Thames at Greenhithe, she moved to Greenwich in 1954. However, despite repeated conservation attempts, *Cutty Sark* slowly rotted. Finally, in 2006 she was closed to the public for six years for a £50 million restoration programme, completed successfully even after a fire on board in 2007.



Above: a special framed picture of *Cutty Sark* with the six new Merchant Navy issue stamps is also available; the cover of a book of regular stamps in 1968

Preserved for posterity 21st-century renovation work has included replacing the keel and main deck; strengthening the weakened ironwork using specialist painting techniques to protect it against more decay; and restoring the weather deck and rigging to their original specification. *Cutty Sark* has also been raised 11 feet into the air and then supported, to take the weight of the ageing ship off the keel and so protect it. The glass canopy installed at waterline level defends the hull against the elements while also giving us the opportunity to admire, up close, the ship that represents a golden age of British sail •

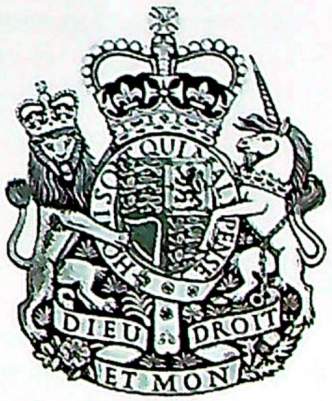
Memories of '63 Looking back over 50 years of *Bulletin*, we asked John Holman to choose his favourite stamp from the year our story began

1963 WAS AN IMPORTANT YEAR FOR COLLECTORS OF BRITISH STAMPS, with no fewer than 12 commemorative stamps issued, the setting up of the Philatelic Bureau and launch of *Bulletin*. The stamps issued in March and May 1963 were all colourful and of imaginative design, though the remaining four stamps of the year, Red Cross and Compac, issued in August and December, were, I found, somewhat disappointing in comparison. I liked the Nature Week 4½d and Lifeboat stamps, but my favourite remains the 6d Paris Postal Conference stamp designed by Reynolds Stone (1909-1979), a descendant of the sister of the painter Sir Joshua Reynolds.



As well as a successful designer, typographer and painter, Stone was also an internationally renowned wood engraver. He worked for a while for Eric Gill, the famous typographer and designer, and was a great friend of Benjamin Britten whose centenary we have celebrated this year (see page 38); he also designed Britten's tombstone in Aldeburgh, Suffolk. Stone's Paris Conference stamp is an exemplar of how to incorporate the three key elements of a British stamp design – The Queen's head (in place of the country name), value and the reason for issue. The lettering of the inscription echoes the style of theatre posters and the typography of the word CENTENARY is similar to that used on 'wanted' posters in the American Wild West. James Watson, a one-time *Bulletin* contributor, thought the design 'brought a whiff of cigars and the Moulin Rouge to imaginative collectors...' The subtle colours add to the dignity of the stamp.

Above: the 1963 Paris Postal Conference stamp designed by Reynolds Stone, who also engraved The Royal Coat of Arms for the 1953 Coronation Order of Service (below)



The day of issue, 7 May, is one I remember well. I was then a schoolboy, and during the morning had been to Moorfields Eye Hospital to be given the 'all-clear' after a nasty eye infection. As a treat my mother took me over to the then London Chief Post Office to buy the new stamp and post myself a first day cover. At the King Edward Street counter I was told about the new Philatelic Bureau across the road in the old Central Telegraph Building. We climbed the stairs to the Bureau at the top of the building and it was here that I bought the new stamp with phosphor bands to add to the plain version from the Chief Post Office.

Years later I told Frank Langfield, who had been manager of the then brand-new Bureau, about my visit. He said it was probably him who served me on Tuesday, 7 May 1963, as the Bureau then only had a handful of staff. Later that year Frank set up *Bulletin*, and was its first editor. Little did I think that 25 years later I would be the editor myself! •

John R Holman was the editor of the 'British Philatelic Bulletin' from 1988 until 2010 and is now a regular contributor and author of the Stamp Scene pages. John has been a philatelist since 1957 and is a Fellow of the Royal Philatelic Society London. His collecting interests include British private posts, postal stationery, postal labels, postmarks and government mail.

Win the Dinosaurs special issue and more! Get your teeth into these puzzles for your chance to win the complete Dinosaurs stamp set and more. All quiz answers are close to your claw tips in this edition of *Bulletin*…



GREAT DINO PRIZES The new Dinosaurs Stamps, Presentation Pack and Stamp Cards, plus *The Dinosaur Hunters* by Lowell Dingus and Mark Norell, not forgetting a T-Rex cuddly toy! That's the prize waiting for the senders of the first correct entries drawn in each section. Three runners-up in each category will also receive dino prizes.



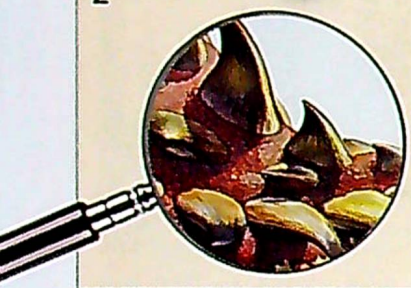
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2



3



NAME THAT STAMP
From the detail shown on the left, give the name of the dinosaur featured on the stamp and its date of issue.

DINOSAUR QUIZ Just write down the key letter of the correct answer to these three questions and send to the address below.

1 The Baryonyx appears in the new Dinosaurs issue. What does 'Baryonyx' mean in English?
a) Heavy claw **b)** Heavy jaw **c)** Baron X

2 The Hypsilophodon was the victim of mistaken identity. Which creature did palaeontologists first think it was?
a) Iguanodon **b)** Iguana **c)** Terrapin

3 The Triceratops was in a 1991 Royal Mail issue that celebrated the work of which famous expert?
a) Owen **b)** Bowen **c)** Darwin

HOW TO ENTER Send your answers, marked October Bulletin 'Dino Quiz', 'Name That Stamp' and/or 'Crossword' to: Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB.
Closing date: 21 November 2013.

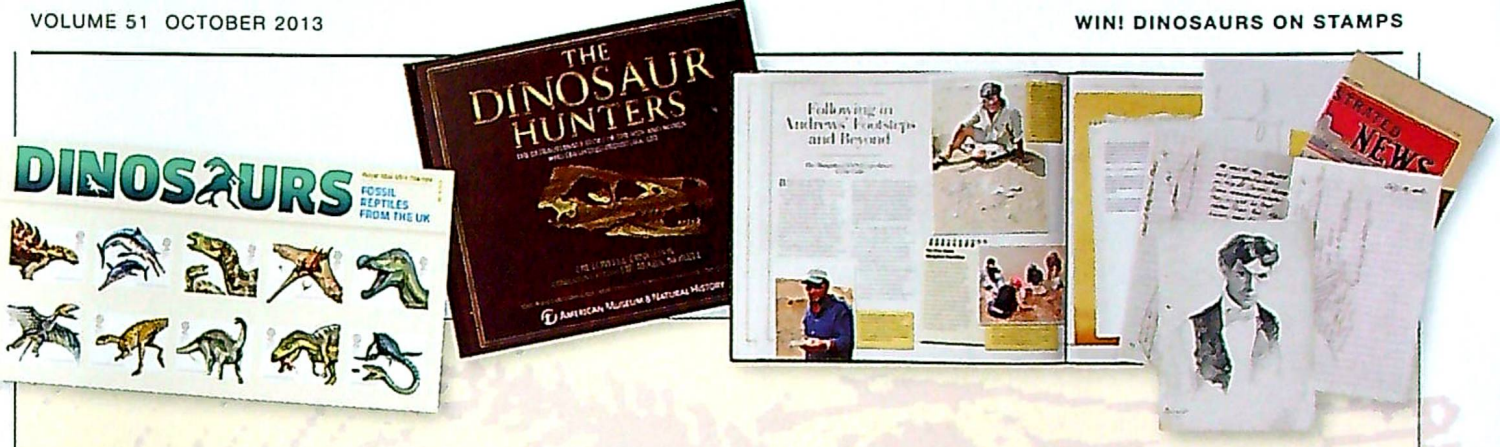
August solutions and winners

Hot Summer Quiz Key word: BPMA. 1) Badger. 2) Daisy, Buttercup. 3) Plant a Tree in '73. 4) W G Grace. 5) Sissinghurst. 6) Lyme Regis. 7) British Fairs. 8) Benedictine. 9) Kew Gardens. 10) Beatrix Potter. 11) Apple, pear, orange, tomato, lemon. 12) Glenfinnan Viaduct. 13) Mayflower. 14) Richard Lewington. 15) Anax imperator.
Winners F Welburn, North Yorkshire; Colin Beard, Shropshire; Anthony Laxon, Wiltshire; Malcolm Brown, Norfolk; Elaine Emery, Hampshire; Elizabeth Bowater, Worcestershire; Keith Hatch, Berkshire; J M Williams, Hertfordshire; John Bruce, Aberdeenshire; Aubrey Ratcliffe, Derbyshire.

July solutions and winners

Butterfly Quiz a) Forked wings. b) Africa and Europe. c) Gordon Beningfield. d) Comma.
Winners Alastair Fagg, Hertfordshire; M Candlish, France; Elizabeth Bowater, Worcestershire; J Blackledge, West Midlands; S Cherrington, West Midlands; D P James, Edinburgh; C J Barber, Derbyshire; M Ryan, West Yorkshire; Anthony Laxon, Wiltshire; M Burfield, Cumbria.
Crossword
ACROSS 1 Riot Act. 5 Asia. 10 Oil. 11 Overreach. 12 Throb. 13 Petite. 15 Summer. 17 Bridge. 18 Propel. 20 Choir. 23 Trattoria. 24 Ass. 25 Tidy. 26 Hampers.
DOWN 2 Idler. 3 Trouble spots. 4 Cheap. 6 Slanted. 7 Ache. 8 Contest. 9 Writer's cramp. 14 Repress. 16 Mermaid. 19 Larva. 21 On air. 22 Stet.
Winners D Slater, Cheshire; Allan Downey, Fife; M Burfield, Cumbria.
Name That Stamp Brimstone, Butterflies, 11 July 2013.

For more details of dinosaur book, toy and badges (not shown here), visit www.royalmail.com/stamps



CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

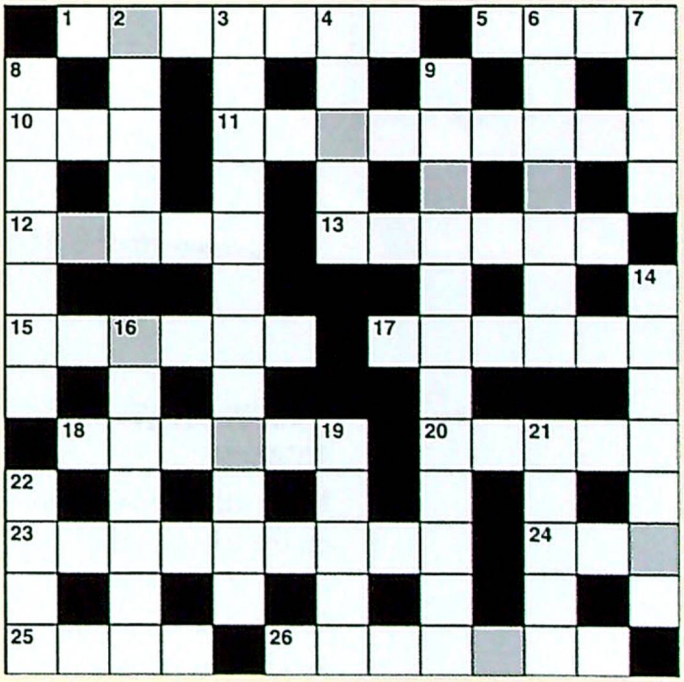
Complete the puzzle then rearrange the letters in the grey squares to form a stamp-related word. Send that word, with your name and address, to 'October Crossword' at the address shown in How to Enter on the oppposite page.

Clues across

1 Said to abandon pudding (7)
5 Strike-breaker's wound mark (4)
10 Choose broken pot (3)
11 Benefit from a point scored on the tennis court? (9)
12 In Salem, I am in US city (5)
13 Surreal as a dirge, calmly and evenly (6)
15 Leaving former partner, party gets back with us (6)
17 Some of boot's mud gets to make blurred mark (6)
18 Man in study, writing up evil deed (6)
20 Almost prosper with wooden peg (5)
23 During another Sabbath he embraced biblical woman (9)
24 Tune sounds like one that will succeed (3)
25 First of the athletes pass extended finishing line (4)
26 Apply changes in French safety enclosure (7)

Clues down

2 Lesser actor, giving more (5)
3 Palatial quality as cousin passes out (12)
4 Wandered and drove about (5)
6 Delighted many caused injury (7)
7 War – dreadful bore! (4)
8 Rome and Rio could be more extensive (7)
9 Agent put me below with log (12)
14 Traders upsetting leaders (7)
16 Single's favourite comes back for dance (3-4)
19 Bombard mollusc's casing (5)
21 We hear the moan of Moby-Dick (5)
22 Border on an objection (4)



Winners S Hosking, London; R Drake, Yorkshire; T Holmes, Kent; F Read, Norfolk; J Cooper, Lancashire; J Hodges, Essex; M Brett, Hampshire; Charles Reich, Australia; R Sayers, Essex; Anthony Laxon, Wiltshire.

June solutions and winners

Coronation Quiz a) 22 June 1911. b) Seaforth Highlanders and Welsh Guards. c) Edmund Dulac's. d) Daffodil, rose, thistle, shamrock. e) Chinese Dining Room. f) St Edward's Crown and Imperial State Crown.

Winner Roberta Hanson, Spain. *Runners-up* Anthony Harker, Oxfordshire; Anthony Philbin, Cheshire; A H Scott, Greece; Elaine Emery, Hampshire; J Lucas, Lincolnshire.

Name That Stamp Her Majesty The Queen, Six Decades of Royal Portraits, Second Class, 30 May 2013.

Winner A F Parker, Greece. *Runners-up* T L Pearce, Devon; Zach Bowater, Worcestershire; Anthony Laxon, Wiltshire; L Bowater, Worcestershire; Elaine Emery, Hampshire.

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 a question, 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.

Dinosaurs Medal Cover:
£14.95 – order at
www.royalmail.com/stamps



Dinosaur medal cover

Just jaw-dropping This sharp-looking medal cover shows the big beasts of the Dinosaurs issue at their razor-toothed best. The limited edition of just 9,000 features the ten stamps plus a special Royal Mint medal of a Megalosaurus seemingly about to chomp on his dinner. An insert card reveals the fascinating story of how the dinosaurs were unearthed and the postmark celebrates the discovery of the Iguanodon in 1822. Go on, snap it up…

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BRITISH PHILATELIC

Bulletin



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