

BRITISH PHILATELIC

The ROYAL MAIL magazine *for stamp collectors*

Bulletin

Volume 46 Number 9

MAY 2009 £1.20

Fire Services stamps • Postal
stationery • Sherlock Holmes



**On sale 19 May: a new Action
for Species stamp issue, and
a miniature sheet celebrating
the 250th anniversary of the
Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.**



Forthcoming issues and withdrawals



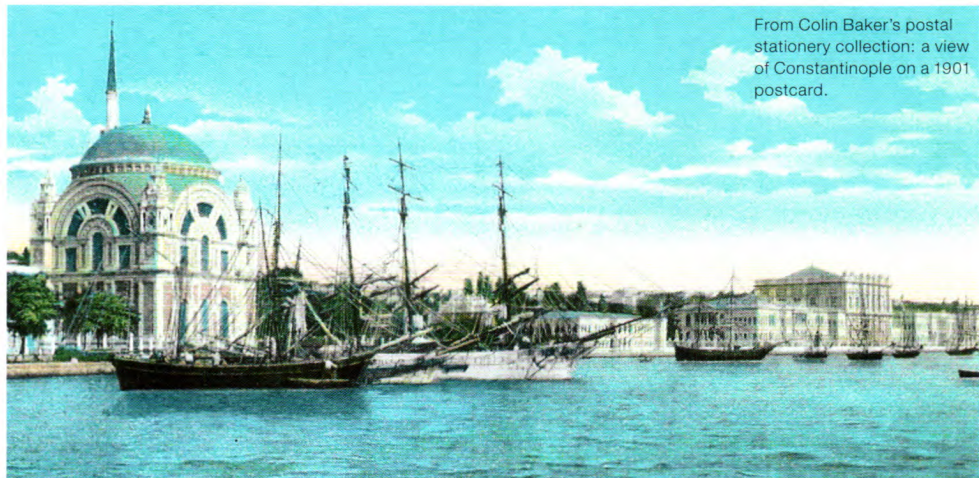
Cover The Sackler Crossing at Kew, which links the river side of the Gardens with the major sites on its south side. The Crossing is featured on one of the 81p stamps on the miniature sheet to be issued this month. The Plants issue was previewed in the January Bulletin. Photograph © Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.

Availability All items available from Royal Mail Tallents House (address below). Selected items are available at Post Office branches and Post Office philatelic outlets at the main post offices in: Bristol, Cambridge, Chester, Colchester, Coventry, Croydon, Durham, Edinburgh, Exeter, Glasgow, Grimsby, Harrogate, Lichfield, London (Eastcheap & Trafalgar Sq), Newcastle upon Tyne, Norwich, Nottingham, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Princes Risborough, Southampton (High St and Hedge End), Southend-on-Sea, Stevenage, Stroud, Trowbridge, Truro and York.

Royal Mail Tallents House 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB, UK. Telephone order line (08.30 - 17.00 Monday to Friday): 08457 641 641; from overseas +44 131 316 7483. Minimum handling charge UK £1.45, Europe £1.55, rest of world (airmail) £2.15. Some products can be ordered on Royal Mail's website: www.royalmail.com/shop

28 April	Issue Silver stamp collection No 3 – 50p Gloucester Cathedral stamp
30 April	Issue Smilers for Kids: Big Ears, Wild Cherry Flower Fairies, Jeremy Fisher, Little Miss Sunshine. Available as A5 sheets of 10 stamps in packs, or as A4 theme sheets of 20 stamps
30 April	Withdrawal Territorial Army medal cover
12 May	Withdrawal Cathedrals stamps, presentation pack, and stamp cards • Beside the Seaside stamp book
19 May	Issue Plants stamps, miniature sheet, presentation pack, stamp cards, miniature sheet press sheet; Kew coin cover; Kew maxicards with stamps from miniature sheet
21 May	Issue Stamp book, 4 × 1st definitives, 2 × Flowers, commemorating 50th anniversary of NAFAS
9 June	Withdrawal Classic Carry On and Hammer Films stamps, presentation pack, stamp cards, stamp book with Carry On advert, and stamp cards and stamp set • Scouts prepaid postcards (2007)
12 June	Withdrawal St Paul's medal cover
16 June	Issue Mythical Creatures stamps, presentation pack and stamp cards
30 June	Withdrawal 14p, 46p and 78p definitives; 2007 definitives presentation pack (16p, 48p, 50p, 54p, 78p stamps)

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This month The Editor previews this issue

MAY is a significant month for us collectors, being the anniversary of the issue of the world's first adhesive postage stamps, the Penny Black and the Twopence Blue in 1840. Next May – the 170th anniversary – will be an important month, as London will host an international stamp exhibition. In this *Bulletin* Richard West anticipates this event, highlighting some of the attractions. London 2010 Festival of Stamps will differ from its predecessors as it will comprise a number of events in London and related activities around the UK. We look forward to publishing full details of these in the months ahead.

This month's *Bulletin* includes a preview of the Fire & Rescue Service stamps (1 September) and another interesting feature on postal stationery from Colin Baker, and we commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Inverness-Kirkwall airmail service, the 40th anniversary of Concorde, and the 150th anniversary of the birth of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. I am sure there will be something in this issue to interest all readers ●

Stamp scene News and upcoming events: Glenn Morgan keeps you posted

Enquiries To arrange a visit, telephone 020 7440 4220 or email archives@bt.com. For a summary of BT's history, a visit to www.bt.com/archives is a must.

BT Archives Those readers with an interest in the telephone systems within Britain, once managed by the Post Office prior to privatisation in 1984 of course, may be interested in knowing that BT has an active archival unit based at the Holborn London telephone exchange. BT is the world's oldest communications company, with a direct line of descent from the first commercial telecommunications undertaking in the world ●

Cricket Philatelic Society
<http://www.cricketstamp.net>

Cricket Philatelic Society The interesting cricket-related displays at Spring Stampex included material from the CPS, formed in 1997. There are over 100 members from around the world and the society provides appropriate facilities to enable members to contact each other about their hobby and to buy, sell and exchange cricket philatelic material. The society also assists in the compilation of records of cricket stamps and postmarks and to periodically publish album leaves for the 'Cricket Stamp Album'. A website exists and there is a quarterly newsletter entitled *Wickets*. For membership details write to: Derek Gallimore, 30 Pinewoods Avenue, Hagley, Stourbridge DY9 0JF. Membership costs just £6 (UK) or £10 (overseas) ●

Enquiries Write to Universal Mail United Kingdom, PO Box 59318, London NW8 1DJ or see www.universalmail.co.uk

Universal Mail UK This New Zealand postal operator is currently marketing ten different hang-sell flat-sheet booklets depicting London icons for use on international letter and postcard mail leaving the UK. These may be posted in any Royal Mail pillar box or Post Office, are self-adhesive, bear phosphor lines and were printed by security printer Joh Enschedé of the Netherlands ●



200 years young A special issue of 10 stamps celebrates 200 years of postal services in Australia and reflects the contribution they have made to the everyday lives of Australians over the last two centuries. Today, Australia Post's services touch the lives of millions of people every day – from traditional letters and parcel services through to logistics, fulfilment, identity services and database management. Their press release concludes: 'After 200 years, there is no doubt that Australia Post continues to be a part of everyday life in our nation – yesterday, today and tomorrow.' The stamps, which are all 55c values, are a lovely set for anyone interested in the history of the posts.

The series comprises several formats, including gummed stamps, a FDC (gummed or self-adhesive), self-adhesive booklet, self-adhesive sheetlet, large prestige booklet including an imperforate sheetlet, postal and numismatic cover, stamp pack, chequebook of 20 sheetlets, maximum cards, coils of 100, strips of self-adhesives and a collector pack. For the one of everything collector this amounts to A\$263.55 (approximately £120).

The general public can vote for their favourite Australian stamps of all time from a choice of 150 designs, and the top five choices will be reissued as the second set in this celebratory series on Australia Post's bicentenary day (26 June). There will be a third set, details of which are under wraps at the time of writing this article.

A unique website has been created to enable people to see all the events being planned for this important milestone in the history of Australia Post. Visit <https://200years.auspost.com.au/> to learn more about the Australia Post story, bicentenary activities, details of a new book and documentary, the new stamps and coins and a schools education programme ●

The 10 stamps are, from top left: First postmaster, Early post office, Early posting box, News from home, Early Air Mail, Home delivery, Post-war immigration, Retail PostShop, Express Post (letter boxes), and Part of every day.

WORPEX For further details visit www.worpe.com

Thematix Contact Paula and Philip Cant on 01256 415699, visit www.paulacantstamps.co.uk or send an email to Bob Lee: boble@thematix.co.uk

The Thematix website address is www.thematix.co.uk

Stafford Stamp Show Visit www.jrs-stamp-shows.co.uk email info@john-rice-stamps.co.uk or telephone 01785 259350.

Enquiries See website www.sheffieldps.org.uk or phone 0114 2302020.

Midpex For more information, including a full list of dealers and societies taking part, as well as directions to the venue visit www.midpex.co.uk

Events Worcester Philatelic and Postcard Society will be holding WORPEX 2009 on Saturday 9 May between 10.00 and 16.00 at Oldbury Park Primary School, Oldbury Road, St John's Worcester WR2 6AA. There will be specialist society meetings, over 30 dealers selling stamps, postal history, postcards, albums, catalogues and accessories. Admission is 50p and there is a large free car park •

The dates for Thematix '09, national thematic show, are now confirmed as Friday 26 and Saturday 27 June at the Jester Suite, Harlequins Rugby Club, Langhorn Drive Twickenham TW2 7SX. The venue is a short walk from Twickenham Railway Station, or by road M25 junction 12 - M3 - A316. Hours of opening are Friday 10.30-18.00, Saturday 10.00-16.00 and over 20 thematic dealers will be present. It is a ground floor location and there will be ample free parking available •

Over 50 national and international dealers will attend the Stafford Stamp Show 2009 at the Staffordshire County Showground on 19-20 June. On the Saturday, the event will be hosting the Midland Philatelic Federation Spring Convention & Inter Society Competition. Open 11.00-18.00 Friday, 10.00-16.00 Saturday •

The 63rd annual convention of the Yorkshire Philatelic Association will be held at Sheffield Wednesday Football Club in the Hillsborough Conference Centre on 20 June, between 09.30 and 16.30. Over 30 dealers will be attending and there will be specialist society meetings, free admission and plenty of parking. The event is to be sponsored by Cavendish Philatelic Auctions and the British Postal Museum & Archive. The web address has 13 interesting PDF articles taken from the society's journal *Sheffield Philatelist*, which are well worth reading if Sheffield postal matters interest you. The site overall is a fine example of what a local philatelic society website can and should look like •

The newly-built Xcel Centre at Canley, in Coventry, is set to hold the largest Midpex ever with over 50 dealers and 45 specialist societies taking part. Supported by Cavendish Philatelic Auctions, Midland Philatelic Federation and the Association of British Philatelic Societies, Midpex 2009 will feature display material covering many different aspects of collecting. The ABPS will also hold its AGM and Council Meeting during the day. There will also be display meetings by the British Thematic Association, Canadian Philatelic Society, Postal Order Society, and Oriental Philatelic Society. Chairman of the Organising Committee, Bryan Jones, said 'Whatever you collect, there will be something for everyone at this show. With some of the best dealers taking part, you will surely find something to add to your existing collection but it is also a chance to talk to other collectors with different interests and to view their displays. It will not only add to your knowledge but may start a whole new collecting area for you. Midpex 2009 takes place on Saturday 11 July 2009, 10.00-17.00. Entry will be free. A shuttle bus will be available from Canley railway station. The venue will be signposted from the A45 for those travelling by car. It is expected that the event will be opened by the Lord Mayor of Coventry and there will be a special appearance by 'Rowland Hill' •



Philatelists on TV A team of philatelists may appear on BBC2 in May or June in an edition of the quiz programme *Eggheads*, usually broadcast 6pm Monday to Friday. 'The Philatelists' team, filmed in January at the BBC TV studios at White City, London, comprised Mike Brindle, Barry Feltham, John Baron, Colin Searle and Dane Garrod, against 'The Eggheads', the regular team which includes champions of *Mastermind*, *Brain of Britain* and *Millionaire*. How they fared remains secret until the programme is shown, but team members say they acquitted themselves well, and enjoyed studio banter which they hope will be used in the edited 30-minute programme •

100 years of PCGB Last month saw the publication of a book entitled *100 Years of the Philatelic Congress of Great Britain 1909-2009* by Colin Searle. I saw the pre-publication draft copy and therefore know that it promises to be an excellent publication in its final form. It is A4-sized and in full colour throughout, with at least one page being devoted to each Congress held. It contains a fascinating historical record of Congress ephemera including proofs, cancellations, labels, photographs, menus, postcards, programmes and much more besides.

Once the promised copy has been received it will be given an in-depth review here, but in the meantime why wait? It is available now directly from Colin, price £36, plus £3 P&P, for non-members of ABPS affiliated societies, or the price plummets to just £18, plus £3 P&P, to members of ABPS affiliated societies.

Most active collectors in the UK are likely to fall into the latter category and benefit from the lower price. However, if not currently qualifying for the discount, why not join a society – it is bound to be cheaper than paying the full book price, and you'll benefit from the knowledge and friendship that a specialist or local society offers. Visit www.ukphilately.org.uk/index.htm to see a database of affiliated societies •

ATA The American Topical Association has recently relocated its central office following the appointment of Vera Felts of Carterville as its next Executive Director. The new mailing address is: ATA, PO Box 8, Carterville, IL 62918-0008, USA •

PCGB enquiries Email Colin at searlecc@gmail.com, or write to him at The Old Post Office, 1 Wellesbourne Road, Barford, Warwick CV35 8EL. Cheques should be made payable to 'ABPS Ltd'. If you are claiming the discounted price, please give the name of the ABPS affiliated society of which you are a member.

ATA For membership details about the largest thematic association in the world, visit www.american-topicalassn.org



Bath Postal Museum This well-loved museum has recently put on show a part of its collection of GPO model vehicles and greetings telegrams. Fans of the BBC series *Larkrise to Candleford* may be interested to know that the research for the postal aspects of the series was carried out at the Museum.

Opening hours are: 11.00-17.00 Monday-Saturday (16.30 in winter). For enquiries, write to Bath Postal Museum, 27 North gate Street, Bath BA1 1AJ; telephone 01225 460333; email info@bathpostalmuseum.org or see www.bathpostalmuseum.co.uk •

Boots labels update Reader Robert Bostock has kindly provided details of more Boots-type labels to add to the listing in the *Bulletin* of November 2005 (with updates May and July 2006).

1996: China Stamp Exhibition Hong Kong '96 (Hong Kong), unbranded label; Indonesia '96 (Indonesia), unbranded label, numbered. 2002: Japex '02 (Japan), Boots branded. 2006: National Stamp Exhibition, Torquay 2006 (UK), unbranded label; the Machin Collectors Club also issued a sheet that apparently exists in Enschedé and Questa versions of the unbranded labels.

In addition to the above, there are at least two variants known for each of the following. 1996: Bangkok '96, two different designs on unbranded labels, at least one of which is numbered. 2001: Hong Kong 2001, silver or red overprint on Boots branded label. 2006: Washington 2006 World Philatelic Exhibition, two different designs on unbranded labels.

Finally, the Penny Black and Two Penny Blue Rushstamps labels that I included and recorded as having been issued circa 2000 were probably issued much earlier, as Robert received a mailshot from the company post-marked in December 1995 bearing the Penny Black version •



WDYT YA? The majority of readers of the *Bulletin* are philatelists, but some will also have an involvement with the hobby of family history. The same can be said of the British Postal Museum & Archive; indeed they have far more family historians utilising their resources than they do philatelists. At the end of February, the BPMA took part in the annual three-day Who Do You Think You Are? Live, the national history show at Olympia in London. When I visited on the opening day, the venue was packed and the staff members were constantly busy at their stand answering many questions from the thousands of visitors, as the accompanying photograph reveals •

British Postmark Society Following my comments in the review of the BPS website about the yellow background colour of the site being tiring on the eyes, the webmaster, John Enfield, has changed it to a much more restful pale blue. It transpires that the yellow was intended only as a short-term colour designed to represent the golden jubilee of the society. To view this useful site, go to www.britishpostmarksociety.org.uk •

Royal Mail news New issues and products

Special stamps The plate numbers for the House of Tudor stamps (21 April) are: C1 grey C1 yellow C1 magenta C1 cyan (blue) C1 black C1 phosphor. The increase in postal rates from 6 April necessitated a change in values from those shown in the December 2008 *Bulletin*. The values are 2 × 1st class, 2 × 62p, and 2 × 81p. The miniature sheet contains 2 × 1st and 2 × 90p values.

The Mythical Creatures stamps (16 June) will have images in the sheet margins. The eyes of the creatures on the stamps will be printed in the top and bottom sheet margins and also in the left and right sheets margins between the panes of 25 in the sheets of 50 stamps. Similar pictorial devices will be shown on sheets of selected special issues.

Details of this month's special issue, Plants, were given here in January. A pack containing a miniature sheet and a set of maxicards will be available from 19 May. The four cards bear the stamps from the Royal Botanic Gardens miniature sheet. The card images relate to the stamp designs, but do not reproduce the stamp designs, as on our stamp cards. The stamps will be cancelled with a special Kew postmark. Price £7.95.

This month we preview the Fire & Rescue Service issue of 1 September. The third in the military uniforms series, featuring Navy Uniforms, will be issued on 17 September, depicting: Flight Deck Officer, 2008; Captain, 1941; Superintendent WRNS, 1918; Able Seaman, 1880; Royal Marine, 1805; and Admiral, 1795. They were will shown here shortly •

Definitives The current definitive range, following the rate increases from 6 April, is: 1p, 2p, 5p, 9p, 10p, 17p, 20p, 22p, 2nd (30p), 1st (39p), 2nd Large Letter (47p), 50p, 54p, 56p, 1st Large Letter (61p), 62p, 90p and £1. The range on sale at Post Office branches may vary according to local demand.

In addition the £1.50, £2, £3 and £5 stamps are still available from Royal Mail Direct (for business customers) and from Tallents House (philatelic customers). NV1 stamps for European letters to 40g (81p), worldwide postcards (62p) and worldwide letters to 40g (£1.35) are available in books.

The new rates affect values previously announced for the Endangered Species/Plants issue (19 May). They are now: set of stamps £3.90; miniature sheet £2.58; pack £7; FDC £4.95 UK, £4.31 overseas; FDC miniature sheet £3.43 UK, £2.99 overseas •

Commemorative and exhibition sheets Three new commemorative sheets are in preparation – 40th anniversary of first Moon landing (July), 150th anniversary of 'Big Ben' (September) and 800th anniversary of the University of Cambridge (October). Exhibition sheets are planned for Thaipex 2009 (August), Italia 2009 (October) and Monpex 2009 (December). Further details will be published shortly •



One of the four maxicards in the Kew Gardens pack to be issued on 19 May.

Please note: the new books of 1st and 2nd class stamps with security features, on philatelic sale from 31 March, are printed by Walsall, not De La Rue as stated in March (page 169). DLR printed the sheets of stamps.



Catharine Brandy and Marcus James (2nd and 4th from left) at the Design Week Awards.

for a large stamp perforation frame printed on vinyl that could be mounted on Post Office counters. The judges said: 'An immediate winner'. Royal Mail Design team members Marcus James and Catharine Brandy collected the award at the event ceremony at London's Hilton Hotel •

1st Class
Up to 100g

020511 1-08445-01



eries Post Office in Bristol. The stamps bear the code number of that machine – 020511. The pack contains separate stamps – they are not printed in a se-tenant strip as can be produced from the Post & Go machines. The pack, price £3.08, is available only from Tallents House •

Post & Go stamps pack A pack is now available containing one of each value of the Post & Go machine stamps, introduced in October 2008. The stamps are: 1st class (standard), 1st class Large Letter, Europe to 20g, and Airmail to 10g and 20g. The stamps, printed in gravure by Walsall, are reproductions of the stamps printed by the first machine to go into use, at the Gal-

Ordering Smilers on Facebook A new Royal Mail Smile Calendar application enables users to record important dates in their lives – like birthdays, anniversaries, weddings and family gatherings. It also allows for the attachment of photographs to the events, which you can then print out as stamps from the Royal Mail Smilers site. Links to the Smilers Application on the Royal Mail website are provided on our Smile Calendar •

Coming off sale The 14p, 46p and 78p definitives come off sale on 30 June, also the pack with 16p, 48p, 50p, 54p and 78p definitives (issued 27 March 2007). The Cathedrals stamps, pack and stamp cards, also the Beside the Seaside stamp book (with self-adhesive stamps) come off sale on 12 May; the St Paul's medal cover remains on sale until 12 June. The Carry On and Hammer Films issue (including stamp book) will be withdrawn on 9 June •

2009 First day postmarks The special issues for the rest of 2009 are listed below, with the alternative First Day of Issue postmarks •

19.05 Endangered Species – Plants: Kew, Richmond, Surrey

16.06 Mythical Creatures: Dragonby, Scunthorpe

18.08 Post Boxes: Wakefield

18.08 Treasures of the Archives prestige book: London EC1

01.09 Fire & Rescue Services: Hose, Melton Mowbray

17.09 Royal Navy Uniforms: Portsmouth

08.10 Best of British: Britannia, Bacup

03.11 Christmas: Bethlehem, Llandeilo

Smilers for Kids Following the launch of this series last October, four more sheets are available from 30 April. These feature Big Ears (Noddy), Wild Cherry (Flower Fairies Friends), Jeremy Fisher (World of Beatrix Potter), and Little Miss Sunshine (Mr Men – Little Miss). The sheets, containing 10 stamps and labels, are available in packs, price £7.95 each. The stamps/labels will also be available in 'theme sheets' of 20 stamps at £8.50 each. The packs are available from Tallents House and selected Post Office outlets, the theme sheets from Tallents House only.

The Flower Fairies sheets contain the Flower stamp (*Gazania splendens*), the Noddy and Mr Men – Little Miss sheets the balloons stamp, and the Beatrix Potter the 'Hello' stamp. The sheets are designed by Magpie design group, and printed in lithography on self-adhesive paper by Cartor. The packs include items designed to appeal to children, such as writing paper and envelopes, colouring-in sheets, bookmarks, and stickers. The Jeremy Fisher pack includes baby announcement cards •



The BPMA Freeling House, Phoenix Place, London WC1X 0DL (near Mount Pleasant). Phone 020 7239 2570 or see www.postalheritage.org.uk

British Postal Museum & Archive A new exhibition opens on 6 May, featuring the work of the eminent stamp designer David Gentleman, who has designed more than 100 issued stamps for Royal Mail since 1962. The exhibition will feature the artwork for many of these, and some designs which have never been seen in public before. It will also focus on the revolutionary 'Gentleman Album' of 1966, which had so much influence on British stamp design – see Douglas Muir's article 'Off with Her Head!' in the June 2007 *Bulletin*. David Gentleman will give a talk at the BPMA at 19.00 on 14 May – to book a place phone or e-mail the BPMA – details at left.

The BPMA contains the collections of the former National Postal Museum and Post Office Archives. Open Monday-Wednesday and Friday 10.00-17.00, Thursday 10.00-19.00, also certain Saturdays – see website for dates, also details of BPMA lectures and other events •

Submitting covers Readers are reminded that when submitting covers for special handstamps to Royal Mail's Special Handstamp Centres, the outer cover must bear full postage. Mail posted without payment, marked 'Free-post' (which does not apply to SHCs), or sent in the Royal Mail plastic 'see-through' envelopes used for the return of covers to collectors, may be

subject to delay and refusal. Readers are also reminded that covers and cards submitted for handstamping must bear a return address – Royal Mail reserves the right to return any unaddressed items uncanceled. The address can be typed, handwritten (in ink or pencil), rubber-stamped, or by using an address label. However 'Post It' notes should not be used for this purpose as they can easily become detached.

The addresses of Royal Mail's Special Handstamp Centres are shown opposite •

London Special Handstamp Centre Royal Mail, Mount Pleasant, London EC1A 1BB

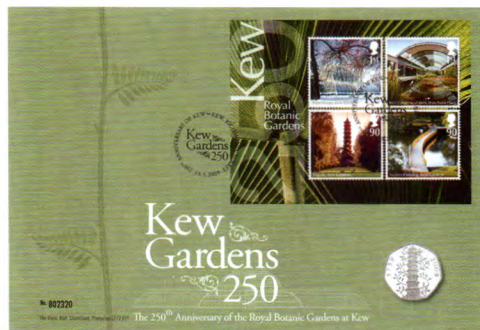
Wales & The West Special Handstamp Centre 220-228 Penarth Road, Cardiff CF11 8TA

Scotland & Northern Ireland Special Handstamp Centre Rutherglen DO, Duchess Place, Rutherglen, Glasgow G73 1BT

Northern England Special Handstamp Centre South Shields DO, Keppell Street, South Shields NE33 1AA

Midland Special Handstamp Centre Birmingham Mail Centre, St Stephens Street, Birmingham B6 4AA

Bulletin back issues Glenn Bushell has a run of the *Bulletin*, 1990 to 2008, offered free to any reader willing to collect or pay postage. Contact him on 01603 410581 •



Prize draw Win a coin cover

FOR THIS MONTH'S DRAW, we have the new Kew coin covers as the main prize for the senders of the first two cards to be drawn on 29 May. Four runners-up will be sent the Kew miniature sheet maxicard sets. To enter, simply write your name and address on the back of a postcard and send to: Kew Draw, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 35-50 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1HQ, to arrive no later than •

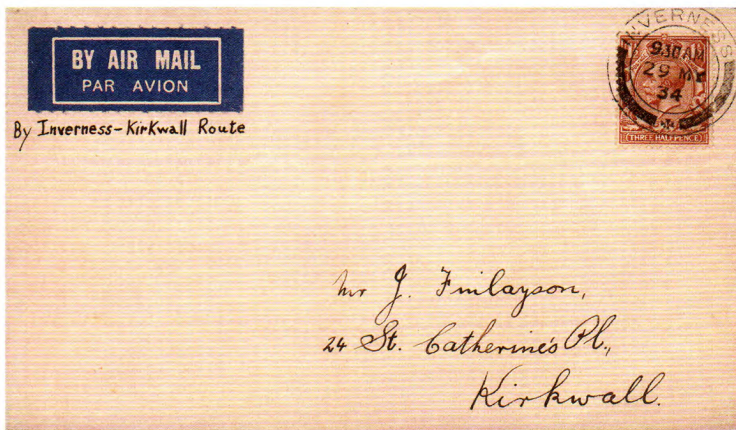
Orkney airmail Anniversary of the UK's first inland service

THIS MONTH marks the 75th anniversary of the start of the air mail service from Inverness to the Orkney Islands. On 29 May 1934, Highland Airways introduced the service having been awarded a contract by the GPO for the carriage of fully paid letters without surcharge every weekday, in both directions.

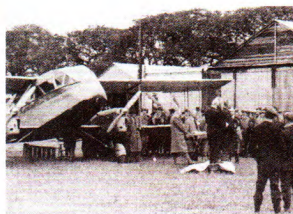
At a ceremony in Inverness Airport, Sir Frederick Williamson, the Director of Postal Services, presented Captain E E Fresson, Managing Director & Chief Pilot of Highland Airways, with the first internal service Royal Mail Air Pennants – a small one for the aircraft and a larger one to be flown at the airport. Captain Fresson took off for Wideford Aerodrome, Kirkwall, in a de Havilland Dragon G-ACGE, carrying over 2000 letters. The Royal Air Mail Pennant, introduced by the Postmaster General, Sir Kingsley Wood, with the approval of King George V, had first been presented three days earlier, when an Imperial Airways airliner left Croydon with the Indian mail.

Highland Airways started the Inverness-Wick-Kirkwall service in May 1933, flights being timed to connect at Inverness with trains to and from the south. In 1934 Aberdeen-Kirkwall and Orkney inter-island services were started, and flights to Shetland began in 1936. In 1937 Highland Airways became part of Scottish Airways, later absorbed into BEA and British Airways.

Special covers and postmarks commemorated both 40th and 60th anniversaries of the Orkney airmail service in 1974 and 1994, and a commemorative Scottish airletter was issued for the 50th anniversary in 1984. Articles were published here in the *Bulletin* in February 1987 (by J C W Field), May 1994 (by Richard Beith), and May 2004 (by James Mackay). A few copies of *Scottish Airmails*, the standard work on this subject, are still available from author, Richard Beith, 7 Corum Place, Blackford, Aucterdar PH14 1PU, priced £10 including UK postage •



First scheduled UK inland air mail flight 1934



Left: a cover sent from Inverness to Kirkwall 29 May 1934. Above: the Inverness Airport inauguration ceremony, 1934. Below: a panel from the 1984 anniversary aerogramme.



London 2010 Richard West's report on the



WITH JUST one year to go before the doors of the Business Design Centre in London open for the international stamp exhibition, how are plans developing? The exhibition, from 8-15 May, is just one aspect of a year-long celebration, called London 2010: Festival of Stamps. The Business Design Centre (BDC) is well known to many collectors, at least in part. Most have probably seen only one of the halls, but in fact there are two, with inter-connecting areas. The entire complex is being used for the exhibition.

The BDC, in Upper Street, Islington, is served by many bus routes and is a short walk from Angel Station on London Underground's Northern Line. It is within easy reach of London's key stations – plus other parts of London if sightseeing and shopping are on your agenda. The area has many shops, and plenty of eating-places to suit all tastes and pockets.

International stamp exhibitions in London have a reputation for attracting collectors and dealers from all parts of the world, and 2010 will be no exception. There is provision for 2500 frames of competitive exhibits, but applications were received for over twice that number – inevitably many will be disappointed. The organisers are adopting the untried idea of showing exhibits in two halves, each of 1250 frames. Entries in the Traditional, Revenues, Postal Stationery and One-frame classes will be on display during the first four days; the remainder (Postal History, Aerophilately, Thematic Philately, Youth) will be on show during the final four days. A team of experts from around the world will form the judging panel.

Trade stands Dealers and postal administrations are equally enthusiastic to take part – all stands were reserved as soon as they were made available just over two years ago, but the stand holders have only recently been asked for the first non-refundable payment. Given the 'doom and gloom' around the world, there were fears that many might no longer wish to participate. In fact, only a handful have withdrawn, and their places have been immediately taken up by those on the waiting list (and a list of dealers still wanting stands remains). The main stand will naturally be that of Royal Mail.

Team effort Behind the scenes, a large team is working hard to ensure that every aspect of the event runs smoothly, and queries from participants and visitors need to be answered. The electronic age has not dispensed with the need for careful records: in some ways it has made the situation more acute.

The display frames being used were initially built for the London 1980 exhibition, and have served well in 1990 and 2000, plus many other events in between. To replace them would require an investment that simply cannot be entertained at this juncture. They are therefore being refurbished to ensure they maintain the high standard required. Careful thought is being given to ensure the frames are adequately lit.

In the build-up and during the exhibition many volunteers will be required to undertake a myriad of tasks: fortunately there has been a magnificent response to the call for volunteers.

developing plans for next year's international

Running costs Funding such a major project presents challenges. Although entrants pay to exhibit, the fees do not cover the cost of providing frames, lighting, and the space occupied, so philatelic societies have been invited to sponsor frames, at £10 per frame. The response has been magnificent, but as yet not all the frames have been sponsored; societies sponsoring frames will be listed as having done so. The organisers also invited those keen to maintain London's reputation for hosting a superb 'international' every 10 years to become 'Patrons'. Again the response has been magnificent, with many offering to donate £250. If you would like to be a Patron, or to sponsor display frames, please contact London 2010 International Stamp Exhibition, Suite 101, Business Design Centre, 52 Upper Street, London N1 0QH.

Funding has also been provided by Royal Mail, and, for specific projects, by the British Philatelic Trust.

What to see Attractions will include a youth activity area (organised by the Stamp Active Network), a literature area, where entries in the Literature Class can be inspected (arranged by the National Philatelic Society), and a special 'invited' area featuring material of the reign of King George v.

Philatelic societies can hold meetings during the exhibition, or can book tables from which to promote their membership: details can be obtained from the address already given.

The exhibition is just one event of a year-long Festival, and no one coming to London at the time should miss the exhibition by the British Postal Museum & Archive (BPMA) and the Royal Philatelic Collection at Guildhall Art Gallery, 7 May - 25 July. This is being called 'Empire Mail: George v and the GPO' and will feature material never previously seen in public.

The BPMA, together with the Association of British Philatelic Societies, is also assisting with events to be held throughout the UK. Every year most regional federations hold special days: with the BPMA's help and encouragement, it is planned that these will be even more special in 2010. The BPMA is also co-ordinating a programme of displays that can be seen in prime locations across London, including the Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Museum, Marylebone Cricket Club Museum at Lords, and the British Museum. Each of these displays will be tailored to its venue.

The British Library Philatelic Collections will mount special displays at the Library (Euston Road, NW1), and the Royal Philatelic Society London will hold displays in its meeting rooms (Devonshire Place, W1) on 6-7 May.

Find out more As the days count down to May 2010, more details will become available of all these attractions, but do take the occasional look at www.london2010.org.uk in the meantime. If you would like to help, as a Patron, sponsoring display frames, or as a volunteer, write to the address above. But, above all, make sure nothing impedes your coming to London in May 2010 – you will not want to miss all that is being planned •

Fire and Rescue Services A special issue



SIX COLOURFUL STAMPS honouring the brave men and women of Britain's fire and rescue services go on sale at Post Office branches and philatelic outlets and at Royal Mail Tallents House on 1 September. The stamps, which were designed by Rose Design of London, feature action photographs of firemen undertaking a range of rescue duties: 1st class Firefighting; 54p Chemical Fire; 56p Emergency Rescue; 62p Flood Rescue; 81p Search and Rescue; and 90p Fire Safety.

The stamps are printed in gravure by De La Rue, size 37 × 35mm. The issue marks the 300th anniversary of the first purpose-built fire station in the UK, at Chester. Details of a medal cover will be published shortly.

FIRST DAY FACILITIES Orders for serviced first day covers must reach Tallents House (address given below) by the date of issue. Collectors may send stamped covers on the day of issue to: Royal Mail Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB (for Tallents House postmark), or to one of Royal Mail's Special Handstamp Centres (Hose, Melton Mowbray) marking the outer envelope 'FD0923' (Tallents House), or 'FD0924' (Hose). Covers can be posted or handed in at main Post Office branches for the Hose postmark. A non-pictorial Hose postmark is also available from Special Handstamp Centres, request 'FD0924 NP'.

For details of sponsored handstamps and addresses of the Handstamp Centres see the *British Postmark Bulletin* – available on subscription from Tallents House (£12.25 UK/Europe; £24.95 elsewhere). For a sample copy write to: The Editor, British Postmark Bulletin, Royal Mail, 35-50 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1HQ.

to mark the 300th anniversary of fire stations

Fire and Rescue services on stamps This is the second issue to be dedicated to the fire service. Four stamps, designed by David Gentleman, were issued in 1976 to celebrate the bicentenary of the Fire Prevention (Metropolis) Act and featured fire appliances of 1766, 1830, 1863, and 1904. Other sets relating to a rescue theme include 1963 Lifeboat Conference, 1972 Anniversaries – Coastguard, 1985 Safety at Sea (lifeboat), 1987 St John Ambulance service, and 2008 Rescue at Sea (lifeboats) •

Fire and Rescue Services prices

Set of stamps	£ 3.82
Presentation pack	£ 4.35
FDC envelope	£ 0.30
Serviced FDC (UK customers)	£ 4.86
Serviced FDC (overseas)	£ 4.23
Stamp cards set	£ 2.34
Medal cover	£14.95

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE A DAY IN THE LIFE

08.50

ARRIVAL

This is an important time for the incoming watch as it prepares for handover. It's also when the two Watch Commanders exchange information.

08.58

"ON THE LINE"

The buzzer sounds and the new watch, along with its equipment, prepares to line up for parade and roll call.

09.00

NIGHT INTO DAY

This time the buzzer sounds twice, signalling the start of the day watch and the moment when the outgoing watch finally removes its equipment from the station's tenders or pumps.

The Watch Commander takes the roll call, which is given to a watch usually consisting of 12 or 13 people.

Each of the two crews is allocated its rows for the watch, based on the breathing apparatus team test and load their equipment, while the drivers check over their appliances.

The role of Duty Person is also announced, and he or she will be expected to answer the phone, help the cook in the kitchen and make the tea – taking of which...



09.30 TEA AND TOAST



11.20 TESTING TIME

The number of people applying to join the ranks of the UK's Fire and Rescue Services remains as high as ever, but what makes them put pen to paper? Is it the image of the pump-ho hero thundering down the road with lights

flashing and sirens blaring? Possibly, but most apply because they want to do a job that's worthwhile and highly valued by the community. The heroes and heroines involved in this kind of work carry a heavy responsibility, and

are more than prepared to deal with the harsh realities of life as a firefighter. Here's a typical shift at one of Britain's provincial fire stations – but, just like firefighting, it's subject to change at any minute...



09.30 DRILL

09.10

TEA AND TOAST

The time may vary, but tradition dictates that at some point it's all off to the mess room for a quick bit of 'T and T'. This is also when the Watch Commander brings the crews up to date on the day's tasks and drills, as well as sharing any handover information from the night shift.

11.00

STAND EASY

The Fire Service still maintains many of its historic naval links and 'stand easy' is another time-honoured phrase used for this mid-morning re-fuelling break.

11.20

TESTING TIME

13.00

PORTION CONTROL

Firefighters need plenty of energy to do their job, but when it comes to calories they are the ones doing the counting. This is because lunch, dinner and all other food is very much under the control of each watch, which, at the start of each four-day tour appoints a Mess Manager who buys in supplies for their two days and two nights at the station.

Despite the disruptive nature of their work, firefighters still need to plan their meals on a healthy, but practical, level with the foremost consideration being: can it be reheated?

14.00

OUT AND ABOUT

When you see firefighters at a local school, peering down a hydrant or visiting a hospital or large factory, they are carrying out GFS or Community Fire Safety work. This can see crews installing free smoke alarms during a home visit, reminding schoolchildren of the importance of fire safety, or carrying out operational risk assessments in places where large numbers of people are employed.

16.45

LAST BREAK

There's just time for a quick cup of tea before the watch prepares the station for the 8 p.m. handover.

17.00

SPICK AND SPAN

One of the golden rules is that you



Royal Mail First Day Cover

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

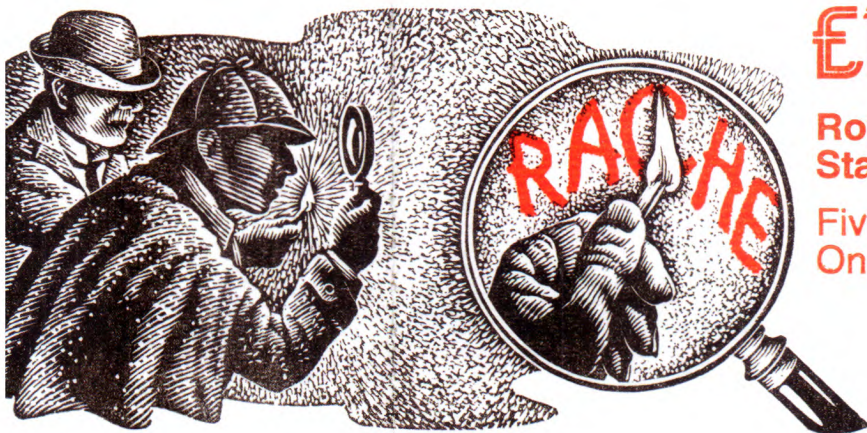


Mrs J Robinson
200 Manorbie Road
Ilkeston
Derbyshire
DE7 4AB

Royal Mail Talents House 21 South Gyle Crescent Edinburgh EH12 9PB

HOS

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle Brian Sole recalls



£1

Royal Mail
Stamps

Five at 18p
One at 13p

Above: one of a series of four booklets illustrated by Andrew Davidson issued in 1987-88 (shown here enlarged).

Opposite: one of the five 1993 stamps illustrated by Andrew Davidson (enlarged).

22 MAY 2009 will mark the 150th anniversary of the birth of Arthur Conan Doyle. He studied at Edinburgh University, received his MD degree in 1881, and began practising in Southsea. After undertaking postgraduate work in Vienna he decided to specialise in ophthalmology and commenced to practise as an oculist in London's West End in 1891. To pass the time between patients, he began writing short stories and novels. A series of 12 monthly Sherlock Holmes articles was published in *The Strand Magazine*, commencing in July 1891. The fictional character, Sherlock Holmes, was modelled on Joseph Bell, a surgeon who had taught him at Edinburgh University.

Four novels and 56 stories Conan Doyle hankered after writing more serious novels, so he killed off Holmes in *The Final Problem*, published in 1893. However, no other works achieved the success of the Holmes and Watson epics, so Conan Doyle gave way to popular demand in 1901-02, and wrote a full-length Sherlock Holmes novel, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, which was set before Holmes' 'death' at the Reichenbach Falls. He reintroduced Holmes in *The Adventure of the Empty House* in 1903, in order to supplement his income. A total of four novels and 56 stories involving the famous duo were published.

Conan Doyle was a man of many talents, in addition to story writing. He was a historian, with a particular interest in the Boer and First World Wars. In 1902 he received a knighthood for his work in connection with the Boer War. He had published a pamphlet, *The War in South Africa*, justifying England's participation in the War. In addition he was an inventor and an innovator. He first advocated steel helmets for soldiers and introduced skiing in Switzerland. Later on, he became a dedicated spiritualist, writing extensively on the subject and lecturing in Europe, the United States and Australia. He died in Crowborough on 7 July 1930.

the author of the Sherlock Holmes mysteries

Conan Doyle's first successful story was *A Study in Scarlet*, published in *Beeton's Christmas Annual* in 1887. The first part was written in the first person, with Dr John H Watson as the narrator. The opening chapter describes how Watson began his army career as an Assistant Surgeon in India, and was struck down by enteric fever while convalescing from a bullet wound in the shoulder. Watson was repatriated to the UK, granted sick leave, and struggled to make ends meet on his Army pay in London. A chance meeting with a colleague led to an introduction to Sherlock Holmes, who was also looking for a fellow with whom to share digs. The two of them inspected the apartment at 221b Baker Street, which proved to be desirable. They accepted the moderate terms offered and entered into possession immediately.

In *A Study in Scarlet*, Holmes and Watson investigate the murder of Enoch Drebnar, at the request of Tobias Gregson of Scotland Yard. A key clue is the writing of the letters 'RACHE' in blood on the wall of a room. During the investigation with Gregson and Inspector Lestrade, a second murder takes place. Part II is written in the third person and describes the tragic circumstances of people living in the Mormon community in Utah with a connection to the two deaths. The mystery is solved by Holmes' analysis of the clues but the police are given credit for the successful outcome.

Conan Doyle had difficulty in finding a publisher for his next Sherlock Holmes novel, *The Sign of Four*, which was eventually published in 1890 in *Lippincott's Magazine*. Maybe this was due to the description of Holmes' drug habit in the opening chapter.

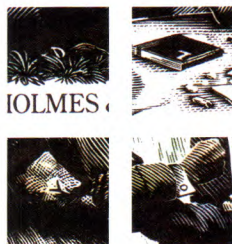
The Adventure of the Speckled Band was first published in *The Strand Magazine* in February 1892. A woman, who is engaged to be married, seeks out Holmes' help, because she fears that she will suffer the same fate as her sister and be killed before her wedding. Holmes sets up a late-night vigil in the frightened woman's room, where the sister had died. In the middle of the night Holmes hears a strange noise and strikes dead a swamp adder, with his cane. This is depicted on the £1 stamp booklet, no 3 in the Sherlock Holmes series. Holmes is then able to explain the meaning of the sister's dying words and goes on to resolve the mystery.

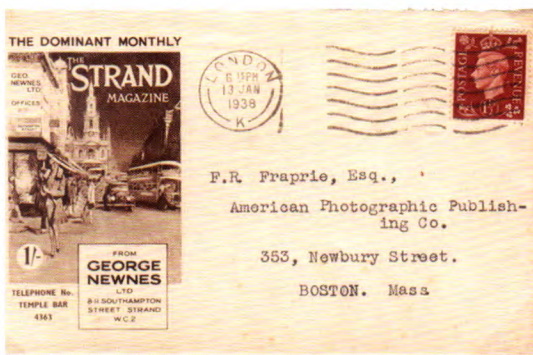
In June 1893, *The Strand Magazine* carried the story *The Adventure of the Reigate Squire*. Dr Watson, who acts as the narrator, explains that Holmes has gone to Colonel Hayter's home to recuperate following a strenuous



SHERLOCK HOLMES & DR. WATSON "THE REIGATE SQUIRE"

One letter of the word 'Doyle' is hidden on each of the five 1993 stamps – from left to right in the set: E *The Reigate Squire* (above); D *The Hound of the Baskervilles*; L *The Six Napoleons*; Y *The Greek Interpreter*; and O *The Final Problem*.





Above: a 1938 cover featuring *The Strand Magazine*, which published some of the earliest Sherlock Holmes stories.

Opposite: material from Brian Sole's collection.

investigation. His visit is interrupted by a series of robberies and a murder. Holmes cannot resist examining the dead body, and finds the torn corner of a note, clutched in the dead man's hand. With a combination of skills, Holmes traces the rest of the note and solves the mystery. To Watson's surprise, Holmes returns to Baker Street, much invigorated.

Introducing Holmes' brother *The Adventure of the Greek Interpreter* was published in the September 1893 issue of *The Strand Magazine*. The story introduces Mycroft Holmes, who has even greater

deductive powers than his brother, Sherlock. Mr Melas, a neighbour of Mycroft, is a translator, with knowledge of many languages. He relates to Holmes and Watson his experience of being taken to a strange house, to translate the words of a fellow Greek, held hostage against his will. A newspaper advertisement by Mycroft produces a response, which identifies the location of the house, but which also alerts the wrongdoers. Mr Melas is kidnapped but rescued from death by Holmes and Watson, although the perpetrators of the plot escape.

Adventure series *The Adventure of the Empty House* is the first of a series of Adventures first published in *The Strand Magazine* from October 1903 to December 1904, and subsequently published, with other adventures, under the title *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*. The Honourable Ronald Adair is found dead in the front room on the second floor of the house he shares with his mother and sister. Watson attempts to use Holmes' deductive skills to resolve how Adair could have been shot in the head, in a room locked on the inside, with no sign of a weapon anywhere, but he fails. On returning home from the scene of the murder, he accidentally bumps into an elderly deformed man, and knocks some books out of his hands. To Watson's astonishment, his maid shows the same bookseller into his room within a few minutes of arriving home. Watson looks away from the stranger, and when he turns back, Sherlock Holmes, no longer in disguise, confronts him. For the first time in his life, Watson faints. Holmes revives him with a drop of brandy and then explains his absence of some three years. After Professor Moriarty had slipped from Holmes' grasp and fallen into the water below, Holmes had deliberately 'disappeared' by travelling through Tibet and spending some days with the Head Llama. He continued to Persia and onto France, before returning to England. Watson was overjoyed to be reunited with his old colleague, and they proceeded to work together for the next 25 years.

Many films of the novels have been made, and societies have been formed worldwide to perpetuate the memory of Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson. Conan Doyle's fictitious address of 221b Baker Street has remained immortalised for 150 years! ●

Acknowledgements

The Philatelic Adventure of Sherlock Holmes by Larry Dodson (ATA Handbook 139)
Sherlock Holmes Complete Illustrated Novels (Chancellor Press, 1987)
Sherlock Holmes Illustrated Omnibus (Schocken Books, USA 1976. Published in GB in 1978 by John Murray Ltd and Jonathon Cape Ltd).

Articles on Conan Doyle and Sherlock Holmes were published here in October 1993 (Jean Matheson) and January and February 1998 (James Negus).

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle M.D. Crime Writer

Born 22 May 1859 in Edinburgh; Died 7 July 1930 at Crowborough
 Sherlock Holmes, who was arrogant, omniscient, self-absorbed and a drug user, brought Conan Doyle fame.



A series of 4 £1 stamp booklets was issued by Royal Mail in the period April 1987 to January 1988.

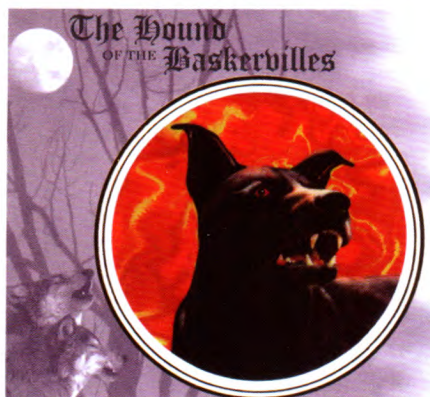


ABOVE: "A Study in Scarlet" and the letters on a wall, in blood!

UNDER: "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" & the swamp adder.



F. B. SOLE ESQ.
 3 STOCKFIELD ROAD
 CLAYGATE, ESHER
 SURREY
 KT10 0DG



Postal stationery overprints Colin Baker

Other articles by Colin Baker about postal stationery were published in September 1994 - April 1995, September 1995 - August 1996, November 1996 - March 1997, January-June 1998, October & November 2004, January, September & October 2005, and February 2008.

GREAT BRITAIN was the first country in the world to issue postage stamps and pre-paid stationery. It also set the standards for postal reform in 1840, which other countries were to follow. But despite this, British stamps and postal stationery were normally only valid when used within the British Isles. However, as with most things, there are always exceptions. For more than a hundred years it was possible to use British postal stationery in foreign countries, and making a collection of items used outside the UK can be both fascinating and rewarding.

It is fairly easy to find examples of British postal stationery legitimately used in foreign countries, and perhaps the easiest are the reply halves of postcards. Reply paid postcards are two postcards joined together, one card being for the outward journey and the other for the reply. Unlike single postcards which could have nothing attached to them, their reply paid cousins could be sent as they were sold, ie joined together, or separated into single postcards.

Foreign reply paid postcards The idea of selling reply paid postcards came from continental Europe and following public pressure they were adopted by the British Post Office in 1882. At first, reply paid postcards were only valid for use within the British Isles. They were printed with two 1/2d stamps, one for the outward journey and the other for the reply. But a year later, following agreement between all the member countries of the Universal Postal Union, (UPU) 1d + 1d reply postcards were created. In this case the first 1d paid for the postcard's journey to any member country of the UPU. The other 1d paid for the reply back to the UK. However, although the reply halves of these postcards could be used from more or less anywhere in the world, they were only valid when posted back to Great Britain and not to any other country.

Entrance to the British post office in Tangier in the 1930s (a photograph from *The Post Office Magazine* July 1937, published by the GPO).

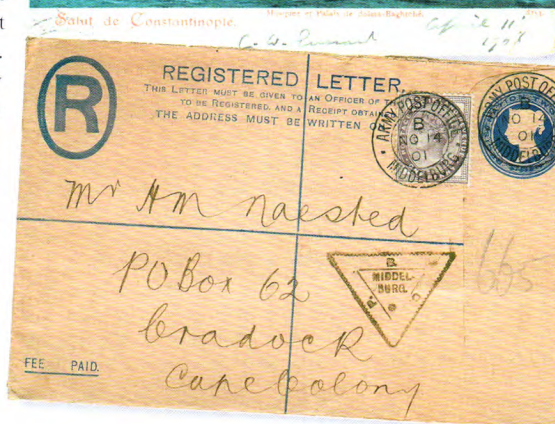
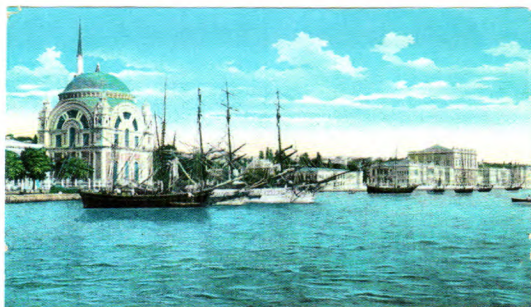


The British postal agencies To find British postal stationery which has been sent from one foreign country to another we have to look at British postal agencies abroad. Foreign trade has always been very important to Britain, with the importing of raw materials and foods being balanced by the exporting of manufactured goods and services. Communications played an important role in our foreign trade. Not all of the countries in the world were quite as organised as we were, so sometimes their postal services could be a little chaotic. The British Government persuaded such countries to permit us to set up our own post offices to handle the mail. After all, it was in everyone's best interest to make sure that international trade not only continued, but also developed.

on British posts used abroad

There were British post offices in nearly all of the South American countries, the West Indies, and in the Mediterranean. A few post offices were also established in the Far East and in some of the Gulf States in the Middle East. Other countries, notably those in Western Europe, also set up their own post offices abroad, often in the same city where the British post office was located. These not only served their own national interests, but also challenged the post offices of other nations. There was great rivalry between them, and they used the stamps and postal stationery from their own countries.

Post offices set up by the British Government used British stamps where possible, and sometimes also used British postal stationery. Mail could be sent from these offices to anywhere in the world, not just to the UK. Although postal stationery used from South America and the Far East is very rare, there are many examples of postcards and envelopes sent from Africa and the Mediterranean region.



Overprints for newly emerging countries Towards the end of the 19th century the British Empire was expanding rapidly, particularly into West, Central and Southern Africa. Countries were being colonised for two major reasons: to ensure a supply of raw materials and foodstuffs, and to prevent other European countries from taking control of them. These new territories were sparsely populated. Few local inhabitants could read or write and there were few settlers. Apart from communications between traders and missionaries, there was little need for some postal services. However, each country needed its own stamps and stationery. It made sense for supplies of postal stationery running into a few hundred to be made by overprinting British stationery with a simple heading, rather than producing only a handful of new items. The country's name was usually printed in a prominent position directly over the existing text. This was carried out for countries such as the Gold Coast and Oil Rivers (later renamed the Niger Coast and then Nigeria), and the Southern African countries of Zululand and British Bechuanaland (now Botswana). In the case of British Bechuanaland, the stamps were also overprinted to amend the value, although British currency was retained. As demand for postal stationery increased in these countries, individually designed postcards, plain envelopes and registration envelopes were produced. In a relatively short number of years, each country had its own specific stationery. ►

View of Constantinople on a contemporary postcard, and British postal stationery used from Middleburg to Cape Colony, South Africa, 1901.

Below: the reverse side of a 4d Bechuanaland registered envelope. Making registration envelopes was expensive; the 4d was never issued in Britain, although the one produced for use in Bechuanaland used the British 4d stamp.





British postal stationery revalued for use in the Levant: an Edward VII registered envelope (left), and a Queen Victoria 40 paras envelope.

British Levant and the Mediterranean In the Mediterranean and the Levant it was a very different story. The Levant is not a country, but a region covering an area from Greece to Lebanon. Britain had five post offices here from Salonica in Greece, down to Beyrout (now Beirut) in Lebanon. Other European countries had many more offices: Austria had 37, and France 24.

Until 1885 British stamps were sold in the five Levantine British offices. When the Turkish currency devalued, it became possible for British stamps bought in Turkey to be sold in the UK at a profit. To prevent this, stamps sold in the Levant from 1885 onwards were overprinted 40 paras (there were 100 paras in a Turkish piastre), invalidating them for use anywhere else. In 1893 when the 2½d foreign rate envelope went on sale in the region, it too was overprinted 40 paras, so that it could only be used in the Levant.

Other postal stationery sold in the region was not overprinted until much later. In 1902 registration envelopes were overprinted with a registration fee of 40 paras, later increased to 1 piastre and then to 7½ piastre as Turkish currency continued falling in value and worldwide inflation caused universal price rises. It was not until 1905 that newspaper wrappers and foreign rate postcards were finally overprinted. There was no revaluation of these items, but it prevented them from being brought back and used in the UK.

In 1880 newspaper wrappers, postcards and registration envelopes were all overprinted for use in Cyprus. British ½d inland postcards and 1d newspaper wrappers bore no country name, so needed only 'Cyprus' adding to make them valid there. This was done in the same colour as the original printing. Similarly, the 2d registration envelopes were overprinted 'Cyprus' on either side of the registration fee stamp, using a similar blue to the main envelope. However the 1d and 1½d postcards needed 'Great Britain' to be deleted, so the whole of the overprint on these was carried out in black.

A little over a year after these overprintings were first released, new postal stationery was produced for use only in Cyprus, and the short-lived overprinted British stationery was withdrawn. Although mint postal stationery can be found reasonably priced, almost no used examples exist. It is one of those countries that we must accept can only be collected unused.



Morocco Agencies Britain also ran a number of post offices in Morocco. Initially these were administered from Gibraltar and the postal stationery of that country was used, overprinted 'Morocco Agencies', but in 1907 the responsibility for running the post offices in Morocco was transferred to London. British stamps and postal stationery were issued, but were overprinted in the Spanish currency, centimos. In 1917 the region was divided into French and Spanish zones, giving rise to the need for stamps and postal stationery re-valued in French centimes. With only one letter difference between the two currencies, collectors need to keep a sharp eye open.

In 1923 Tangier was declared an international zone, but it was not until 1950 that registration envelopes were issued with a 'Tangier' overprint, the only type of stationery created specifically to be used in Tangier. Morocco gained its independence in 1956, and the foreign postal agencies were shut. There were still large numbers of overprinted stamps and stationery available, and those that had not been overprinted, but retained their original British currency, were allowed to be used in the UK. However, many of the items now available are philatelic creations.

When British overprinted stationery was in use in foreign countries, the philatelic dealers in Europe went to a great deal of trouble to obtain used examples. Many postcards in particular, as well as some other stationery items, were sent through the post for the sole purpose of collecting as many handstamps as possible to make them appeal to collectors. However, please do not ridicule these creations. In some cases, it is only the philatelic items that exist in any great number. Had it not been for the hard work of these dealers all those years ago, our collections would be much poorer and our pockets more empty as we chase the elusive commercially used stationery.

So how do you tell the difference between the philatelic and commercial? It is normally easy to spot these, as most of the postcards carry no message or perhaps a very simple one, and are often addressed to the same person. There are exceptions, and we will never know for certain in some cases whether a piece of postal stationery was sent for a truly commercial reason, or just to create something to fill the albums of stamp collectors. ►

Left: a view of Tangier, from a Morocco postcard. Above: an Edward VII Morocco 1d + 1d reply postcard re-valued in the Spanish currency centimos.



Above: airletters overprinted for use in British post offices in the Middle East: Gulf States George VI; Bahrain used; and Gulf States Elizabeth II mint.

Postal Stationery Society
Enquiries to: Colin Baker, 4
Greenhill Gardens, Sutton
Veney, Warminster BA12 7AY
or see www.postalstationery.org.uk (reviewed in *Philately Online*, February 2004).

The Persian Gulf Oil was the important factor in the Middle East region. Following the end of the Second World War Britain operated postal agencies in several Gulf States. Many British stamps were overprinted for use in this area, but the only type of postal stationery to be issued in this way was the airletter. These went on sale in 1952 using the 6d issue of King George VI. When airletters were issued in Great Britain for the coronation of our present Queen in 1953, these were also overprinted for use in the Middle East. Qatar, Bahrain and Kuwait all received their own specially overprinted airletters, but the other states of Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Muscat were given a general issue which was overprinted with a new value, but no country name. Qatar was late having its own issue, and used the general issue of airletters until 1957. Each of the Gulf States took over control of their own postal services during the 1960s and the overprinted British airletters were eventually phased out.

Towards the close of the Second World War, forces registration envelopes were also overprinted for use by services personnel in East Africa. They were not re-valued but the registration fee stamp carried the letters EAF, standing for East Africa Force. Some envelopes were additionally overprinted BMA Somalia. These registration envelopes were in use for only a few years and consequently relatively few have survived.

Overprints for official use Finally in this look at overprinted stationery, we must not forget the official overprints produced by Government departments in Great Britain. Only one department, the Admiralty, overprinted the stamp on postal stationery, and there are two versions of this. In King Edward VII's reign the 1/2d inland postcard was overprinted ADMIRALTY OFFICIAL. The reason for doing this is quite simple: it was to prevent the fraudulent use of government property. The two versions of the overprint are easily distinguishable. There is a distinct difference to the middle point of the 'M' in ADMIRALTY. In one case it is short and pointed, and in the other it is long and blunt.

Other Government departments added headings to envelopes, postcards, and newspaper wrappers, once again to try to stop them being used by civil servants for private purposes. The Inland Revenue produced many examples, as did the Board of Trade, later becoming the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries. Many of these are quite rare and it goes without saying that they are difficult to find and therefore expensive.

The use of postal stationery by the Government departments should have come to an end when the Crown Free Circle was introduced at the beginning of the 20th century. However, both the Board of Agriculture & Fisheries and the Privy Council continued the use of postal stationery well into King George V's reign. Even today, postal stationery with the 'On Her Majesty's Service' heading, combined with the Machin head first class indicia, is being used. Something to look out for when going through dealers' boxes of modern covers.

Below: some examples of stationery overprinted for use by government departments: Edward VII Admiralty; George V Board of Agriculture and Fisheries; Edward VII Board of Agriculture; and a modern Elizabeth II OHMS envelope, used by the census office.

Forming a collection If you have enjoyed reading about overprinted postal stationery, perhaps you would like to join the many collectors who make it part of their hobby. It is still possible to form a collection of these today. They can either stand alone, or form part of a bigger collection of one or more countries, or perhaps a theme. However, with the limited numbers of postcards and envelopes available when first issued, many prices for individual items can be quite high, especially if they are commercially used. You will also find a large hole in your wallet if you buy any of those that were philatelically inspired, in spite of their somewhat ignoble creation. Fortunately, mint or unused stationery generally costs much less. In some cases, it is probably the only way any of us can include examples in our albums, such is the rarity of some used stationery. But, as with any other branch of philately, hunting for these and perhaps finding a bargain, is all part of the fun. ■



Concorde at 40 Brian Asquith's collection

CONCORDE'S FIRST FLIGHT was from Filton to its future flight test base at Fairford, on 9 April 1969. Concorde had no 'flaps' to slow it down, so came in at a high angle, using the entire wing as a brake. The pilots were 35ft above the runway when they touched down, so needed to rely on the radio altimeters to judge their height. Unfortunately both the main altimeter and the back-up failed but, with great skill, they still managed to land safely. To mark this year's anniversary, Concorde featured in the Classic Design issue in January, and a Concorde generic sheet went on sale on 2 March •

Two covers for the first flight of the British prototype, on 9 April 1969, both signed by the pilot, Brian Trubshaw. The cover below is one of the few reputed to have been carried on the flight – the cancellation is suspect, but the signature is genuine.

FASTER THAN A BULLET - The Concorde Story
002, G-BSST, First Flight
9 April 1969

Special Handstamp



Crew Signed,
Official British Aircraft Corporation Cover,
including Brian Trubshaw, the pilot,
who also signed it on the back.

FASTER THAN A BULLET - The Concorde Story
002, G-BSST, First Flight
9 April 1969

Flown Cover



Concorde Study Circle For details contact Brian Asquith, Alandale, Radcliffe Gardens, Carshalton Beeches SM5 4PQ.

This is one of the few covers reputed to have been carried on the first flight of the British prototype. Although the cancellation is suspect the signature of Brian Trubshaw

Commemorative covers New this month



Buckingham Covers Queen Elizabeth I FDC, bearing Tudor Kings & Queens stamps, postmarked Hatfield, Elizabeth's childhood home. The image is from the BBC series *Elizabeth*, starring Glenda Jackson, who has signed a small number. **Price** £10.95, £29.95 signed ●



GB Covers FDC (an edition of 40 signed and numbered), featuring Watt's steam engine, cancelled with a special 'INDUSTRY' (cog-wheel and spanner) handstamp. **Price** £16.50 postpaid. Remittances to GB Covers ●



Cambridge Stamp Centre Large-format FDC for the 40th anniversary of the first flight of the British-assembled Concorde, bearing a 1st class definitive cancelled by anniversary postmark, signed by Concorde test pilot Captain Peter Baker. **Price** £24.95 plus postage ●



M Tanner Hand-made cover (35 numbered) featuring Longbridge workers with the Union Jack Mini which went to the Montreal World's Fair. A Mini stamp is postmarked Austin Rise, Longbridge, 13 January 2009. Free postcard of overall image. **Price** £15.99, worldwide postage £1.50. Postcards ordered separately are 60p plus postage. Similar 6 x 4 maximum card with different postmark (12 numbered) £10 plus postage. Send SAE for Bus/Spitfire cover/maxi details ●



Bletchley Park Post Office One of a range of cricket covers (edition of 1000) marks the 75th anniversary of India v England in Calcutta, bearing a 1st class England country stamp with attached label featuring C K Nayudu and Douglas Jardine. Cancelled by special Lord's Cricket Ground 5 January postmark. **Price** £10 plus £1.50 UK postage ●

Orders and enquiries

Bletchley Park Post Office

The Mansion, Bletchley Park,
Milton Keynes MK3 6EB.
Telephone/fax 01908 631797.
www.bletchleycovers.com

Buckingham Covers

Warren House, Shearway Road,
Folkestone, Kent CT19 4BF
Telephone 01303 278137.
www.buckinghamcovers.com

Cambridge Stamp Centre

9 Sussex Street, Cambridge
CB1 1PA. Telephone 01223
363980. www.cambridge-covers.co.uk

GB Covers

102 Regal Way,
Kenton, Harrow HA3 0RY. e-mail derek@gbcovers.co.uk

M Tanner

180 Whitehorse Road, West Croydon CR0 2LA. Fax/Answerphone 020 8684 9757 (credit card orders only)

Cover producers wishing to announce a recent or forthcoming cover should submit copy of up to 75 words in the style above. The text should briefly describe the cover, state the stamps and postmarks it will bear, and give retail prices and an address for orders and enquiries. Announcements are published on a first-come-first-served basis and may be modified or shortened at the Editor's discretion. Copy for consideration for the July *Bulletin* should be sent to The Editor (address on p259) by 8 May. Copy for August should arrive by 8 June. The Editor regrets he cannot enter into correspondence or telephone conversations concerning covers announced here.

Competitions Enter for a chance to win the 2008 Yearbook



February identify The detail was from the British Journey Wales 1st class stamp. The winner was P Thomas, South Wales.

February knowledge The answers: 1) grey; 2) Body & Bone; 3) 1939. The winner was D Nash of Canada.

Runner-up prizes were also sent for each competition. Our thanks to all who entered.

FIRSTLY, identify the stamp from the detail above. Send your answer to May *Identify* Competition. Secondly, test your philatelic knowledge by answering the questions below. Send your answer to May *Knowledge* Competition.

- 1 In which year were the first stamps designed by David Gentleman issued?
- 2 What colour was the George V 10d definitive?
- 3 Name two of the castles on the English Castles generic sheet.

Send your answer (addressed to either the May *Identify* competition or the May *Knowledge* competition), name and address on a postcard or back of a sealed envelope to: British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 35-50 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1HQ. The senders of the first cards drawn in each competition on 12 June will receive a Yearbook. Runners-up in each competition will receive presentation packs, FDCs or stamp cards. Royal Mail employees are not eligible for the competitions •

Events

2 May Federation of South Wales PS 40th Annual Convention at Princess Royal Theatre, Civic Centre, Port Talbot 10.00-16.30. Admission 50p. 15 dealers, annual competition entries, Kids Activity Area, souvenir card (see Commemorative Covers April). **Enquiries** G N Prior, 01656 740520.

6 May David Gentleman exhibition at British Postal Museum & Archive. For details, see page 268.

6 May Open Afternoon at BPMA Store, Debden, Essex, 14.00. **Enquiries** See page 268.

6-10 May Ibra 2009 at Essen.

9 May Worpex 2009, Worcester Philatelic & Postcard Society annual stamp and postal history fair at Oldbury Park Primary School, Oldbury Rd, St Johns, Worcester, 10.00-16.00. 30 dealers. **Enquiries** R Clegg 01905 640541, www.worpex.com

14 May 'Design into Print', talk by David Gentleman at BPMA. See page 268.

22-24 May North East Philatelic Weekend, Swallow Hotel, Gateshead. **Enquiries** 0191 3861931.

28 May Tour of Royal Mail Archives, Phoenix Place, London WC1, 17.45. **Enquiries** 020 7239 2570, e-mail info@postalheritage.org.uk

1 June Open Evening at BPMA Store, Debden, Essex, 18.00. **Enquiries** 020 7239 2570, e-mail info@postalheritage.org.uk

3 June Open Afternoon at BPMA Store, Debden, Essex, 14.00. **Enquiries** See page 268.

6 June Ringpex 2009 stamp and postcard fair at Greyfriars Community Centre, Ringwood, Hants, 10.00-16.00. **Enquiries** C Mount, 01452 474310 •

Late news

Mythical Creatures stamps The cylinder numbers and colours of the Mythical Creatures stamps (16 June) are: D1 magenta D1 yellow D1 cyan (blue) D1 black D1 phosphor. There are four positions of the numbers on the 1st class stamps, two each on the 62p and 90p. The stamps have 'all-over' phosphor and vertical gutter pairs •

Post & Go installations Machines have recently been installed at Post Office branches in Ashford (in Kent), Farnham, Hastings, Haywards Heath, Horsham, Nailsea, Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells, and Yeovil. Further machines are scheduled to be installed over the next few weeks at branches in Basildon, Darlington, Eastbourne, Manchester, Portsmouth, Solihull and Southport •

BPMA news Tony Conder, the Chief Executive of the British Postal Museum & Archive, retired in April, having led the establishment of a combined archive and museum collection based at Freeling House, Mount Pleasant, London, and increasing public access to its collections of more than 300 years of postal history. He commented: 'Royal Mail's bold step to establish a charitable trust to manage its archive and take on the running of its museum collection has been a fascinating challenge. It has been a privilege to be part of the development and lay a foundation on which others can build'. Until a new Chief Executive is appointed, Adrian Steel, Head of Projects and Programmes, will fulfil the role.

Items on loan to the Museum of London (formerly the London Museum) since 1912 have now been returned to the BPMA. These include a 'time plate' from one of the first six London post boxes of 1855 (none survive), truncheons issued to postal staff in 1843 in response to the Chartist riots; a Mail Coach guard's horn; a coffee house date-stamp; and a flintlock pistol and timepiece (complete with key) used by Mail Coach guards and staff on the Travelling Post Offices. The unique collection plate, now at the BPMA Store, Debden, Essex, can be viewed during the scheduled Open Afternoons and Evenings, and at the Discover

Session on Square Pillar Boxes on 19 September. See www.postalheritage.org.uk for further details. Julian Stray, Assistant Curator of the BPMA, commented: 'We are delighted to bring these wonderful postal artefacts back into our collection after so long. They offer a glimpse of mail practices long since abandoned, and can hopefully now find a new audience'.

The BPMA's second postcard in their London 2010: Festival of Stamps series, will be distributed at shows organised by member federations of the Association of British Philatelic Societies around the UK throughout 2009. The limited edition card features an essay for an Edward VIII Coronation stamp, showing St James's Palace, and the photograph on which it was based. Coronation stamps were being developed until three days before the King's abdication. The first card in this series, issued at Autumn Stampex 2008, featured a 1984 Mailcoach stamp, engraved by Czeslaw Slania •

Henry VIII exhibitions Readers interested in our recent Tudor Monarchs special stamps may wish to visit exhibitions relating to the 500th anniversary of the accession of King Henry VIII. These are on show at the British Library, London SW1 (23 April - 6 September), the Tower of London (until 17 January 2010), Hampton Court Palace (until 31 December), Windsor Castle (until 18 April 2010) and the Whitgift Conference Centre, Nottingham Road South Croydon (until 7 August). The Whitgift exhibition is of artefacts found on the *Mary Rose*, Henry VIII's flagship which is featured on one of the four stamps in the Tudor miniature sheet •

New GB catalogue The 2009 edition of the popular Stanley Gibbons *GB Concise Catalogue* has recently been published, listing all GB stamps from 1840 to March 2009. Priced at £27.95, it is available from the Gibbons Strand shop, or by mail order from Stanley Gibbons Publications, Parkside, Ringwood BH24 3SH; mail order freephone (UK) 0800 611622 •

Brilliant Britain!



This new pack uniquely features all four of the Country miniature Sheets (Celebrating England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales) within beautifully designed packaging. The pack also contains a stunning full-size map of the British Isles, a composite of six faithfully reproduced historic maps from the British Library's archives. As a delightful extra, a Royal Mail branded compass is included, representing a truly unique collectible opportunity.

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