BRITISH PHILATELIC

Bulletin

Volume 50 Number 1

The Royal Mail magazine for stamp collectors

50TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR | SEPTEMBER 2012 £1.20

Gold standards • Cute cattle
Defining Machins • E-stamps



PREVIEW SPACE SCIENCE • WIN GOLD MEDAL WINNER STAMPS

Issues and withdrawals



Cover: golden postboxes abound! Cover image © Richard Osbourne, Alamy. Check out the locations of boxes painted in honour of local Team GB gold medallists at www.goldpostboxes.com.

All Team GB Gold Medal Winner Stamps are shown on pages 16 to 21

7 September	**Withdrawal** Aerial Post Miniature Sheet: Presentation Pack
10 September	**Withdrawal** Team GB Gold Medal Winner First Day Covers
27 September	**Issue** Classic Locomotives Stamp Book No 2: 6 x 1st Class, 4 x Jubilee definitives and 2 x Locomotives of Scotland stamp
27 September	**Issue** Memories of London 2012: Miniature Sheet 5 x 1st Class, 1 x £1.28; Presentation Pack and Stamp Cards
28 September	**Issue** Post & Go British Farm Animals 3, Cattle: Set of 6 Stamps
5 October	**Issue** Fortieth Anniversary of the Last Goon Show: Commemorative Sheet
16 October	**Issue** Space Science: Stamps, Presentation Pack, Stamp Cards
23 October	**Issue** Lest We Forget definitive-sized Poppy stamp in sheets
23 October	**Re-issue** Madonna and Child: 1st and 2nd Class Stamps

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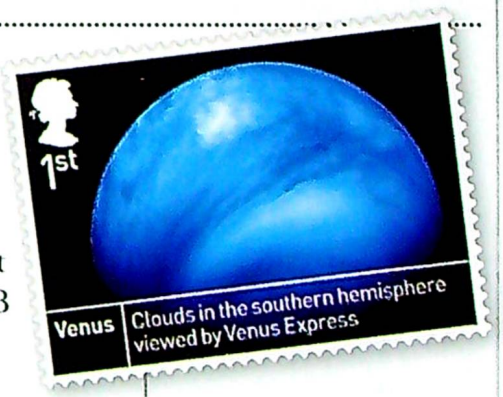
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The *British Philatelic Bulletin* is published monthly by Royal Mail, Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB ● Royal Mail Editor: William Doherty ● Price £1.20 from Post Office Ltd philatelic outlets (see opposite) ● **Annual subscription** £12.95 UK & Europe; £17.95 elsewhere. Send subscriptions to Royal Mail Tallents House (address opposite) ● **Binders** (to hold 24 issues) £8.50, storage boxes (about 30 copies) £9.95 available by post from Royal Mail Tallents House ● Royal Mail also publishes the fortnightly *British Postmark Bulletin*, giving details of forthcoming special handstamps – available on annual subscription from Royal Mail Tallents House: £12.25 UK and Europe; £24.95 rest of the world ● ©Royal Mail. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or parts is prohibited without prior permission of the Editor ● **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 & Wales, number 4138203. Registered office: 100 Victoria Embankment, London EC4Y 0HQ.

Postbox and inbox



Perforation perturbation

Thank you for the *Bulletin* Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Souvenir booklet. It's very interesting, but spoiled by the front cover and subsequent copies of the Jubilee Machin which – five months after the stamp and miniature sheet were issued – still show an artist's impression rather than the actual stamp. The Jubilee Machin has two perforations below the elongated one and your illustration (as often) shows three.
Ian Billings, Norfolk

We appreciate your comments on the recent souvenir booklet. Sorry to hear it was spoiled for you by the deviant number of perforations on the stamp artwork. Well spotted and point taken. This was an editorial choice based on size and colour.



Searching for 2008

I am hoping that you might be able to assist. I have been putting together a collection of various Stampex items including Smilers© sheets, miniature sheets and so on.

Over the years, the *British Philatelic Bulletin* has included the Stampex 'Free Entry' tickets, usually around January and August each year. I do not know what year they were first included. I am hoping to find any *Bulletin* readers who might have a copy of the Autumn 2008 and any spare copies available of the pre-2008 issues that they may be interested in disposing of, by sale if necessary.
I would be grateful if you could publish my plea.
Jarvis West, by email

Consider it done Mr Jarvis. Over to you, readers.

Happy half century – to *Bulletin*

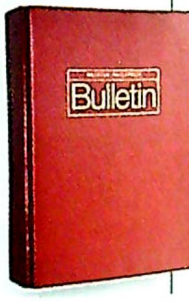
The first edition of the *British Philatelic Bulletin* was published in the form of typewritten A4 sheets of notepaper. That was in September 1963 and not long after the formation of the Post Office Philatelic Bureau on 1 May. So with this September 2012 issue we begin the 50th volume and 50th anniversary year – a good time, I hope, to introduce myself: hello, I'm the Royal Mail Stamps and Collectibles Magazines Manager and looking forward to keeping you on the philatelic frontline in the year ahead.

Bulletin Volume 50 has enjoyed an exciting start, coinciding with the history-making London 2012 Gold Medal Winner stamps. We aim to build up the celebratory mood throughout the anniversary year ahead: plans in the pipeline include an idea for a commemorative postmark, tributes to past *British Philatelic Bulletin* editors and an unashamedly nostalgic exhibition that looks back over the last half-century of UK stamp collecting. And that's where you come in...

We hope to establish a visual record of long-standing subscribers who recall the UK stamp scene before 1980. So please write and tell us how long you have been on board, what is the oldest edition you have on file, what *Bulletin* has meant to you and what changes you would like to see in our golden year ahead. Something like a 50th birthday card –with a wish list and plenty of your classic curmudgeonly comments – would be most welcome.
William Doherty, Ayrshire

Write to... The Editor, *British Philatelic Bulletin*, Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB. Or email bulletin.enquiries@royalmail.com.

Readers' letters published will receive a thank-you gift. The sender of the 'First-class letter' receives the *Bulletin* binder.



September update As collectors anticipate still more London 2012 Gold Medal Winner stamps, there's also news of some great non-sporting special issues



Left: the 29 Team GB Gold Medal Winner stamps are available in this handsomely framed collection, from Tallents House at the address on page 2 and online at www.royalmail.com/stamps Below: post boxes painted gold in the home towns of gold medallists have been celebrated across the nation



A thrilling summer for sporting stamp collectors Andrew Hammond, Director of Royal Mail Stamps and Collectibles, found himself on television quite often last month. He expressed on behalf of Royal Mail what a great honour and privilege it has been to be involved in the production of the Team GB Gold Medal Winner stamps. The ambitious plan to produce and distribute stamps within 24 hours of each Team GB gold medal win had been well rehearsed (see page 16 and *Bulletin* Volume 49 pages 296 and 297). Even though 29 gold medals was beyond most people's wildest dreams, Royal Mail delivered a stunning series of 29 different miniature sheets without hitches, perfectly capturing the various sporting triumphs of the individual winning athletes. The Gold Medal Winner stamps are available from most post offices and First Day Covers can be ordered with first day postmarks from Tallents House until 10 September •

Handover Commemorative Cover On 27 September Royal Mail is issuing a special cover to mark the handover of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games from London to Rio de Janeiro. It will carry the 'Handover' stamp from the Memories of London 2012 Miniature Sheet issued in the same week, and a special postmark. The Cover's fold-out filler card features photographs of the official handover ceremony, information about London and Rio de Janeiro, and an illustrated summary of all the host countries of the modern Olympiad up to 2016. Images are still under wraps as this *Bulletin* goes to press, so watch out for updates at www.roymail.com/stamps. The Handover Cover costs £2.50 • ▸

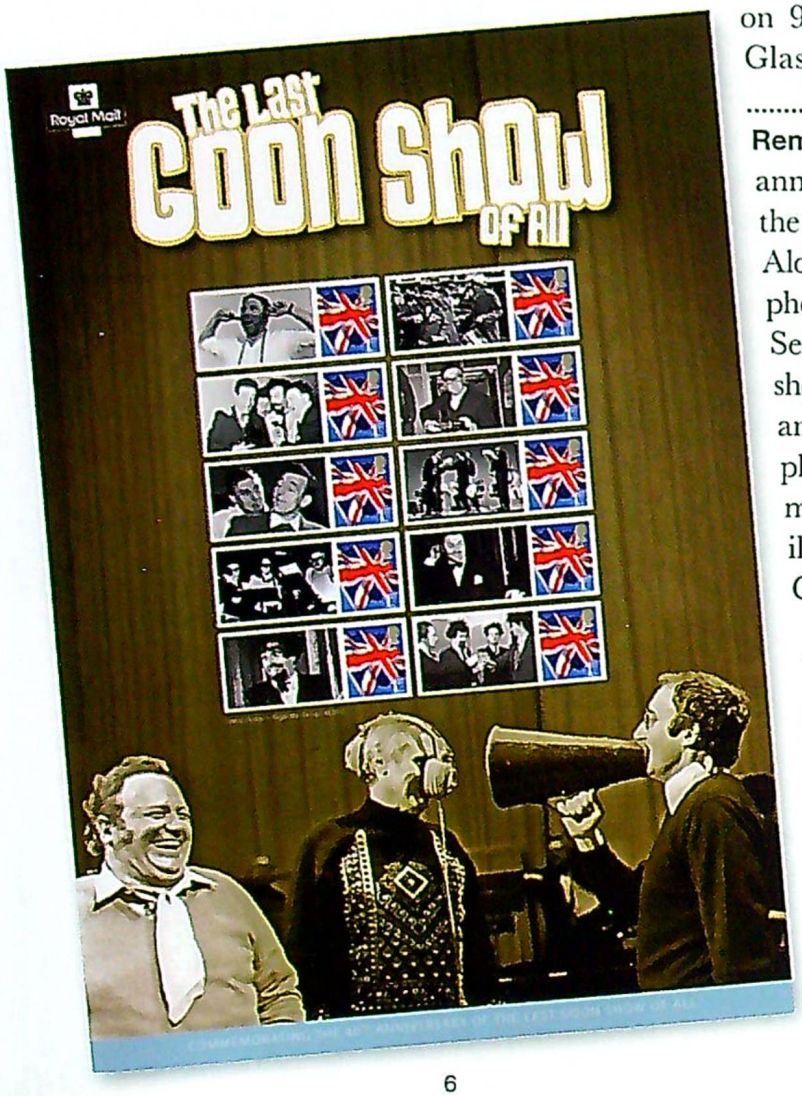


Above right: a new stamp book continues the Classic Locomotives series. Below: this stamp sheet commemorating The Last Goon Show is released on 5 October. Ten image labels feature alongside ten Union Flag stamps. Price, £14.95

Classic Locomotives of Scotland Stamp Book A new Retail Stamp Book containing six first class stamps – two Classic Locomotives of Scotland stamps and four Diamond Jubilee definitives – will be issued on 27 September and costs £3.60. The pictorial stamp is from the Classic Locomotives of Scotland issue (a Classic Locomotives of England stamp book was issued in February 2011).

Two trains are shown on the special stamp, each with its own plume of steam. They are two former North British Railway 4-4-0 'Glens', LNER and BR Class D34: Number 62471 is Glen Falloch and 62496 Glen Loy.

Both trains were built by the NBR at Cowlairs between 1920 and 1921, to the design of WP Reid. The photograph is recorded as having been taken on 9 May 1959, on the West Highland Line from Glasgow to Fort William and Mallaig •



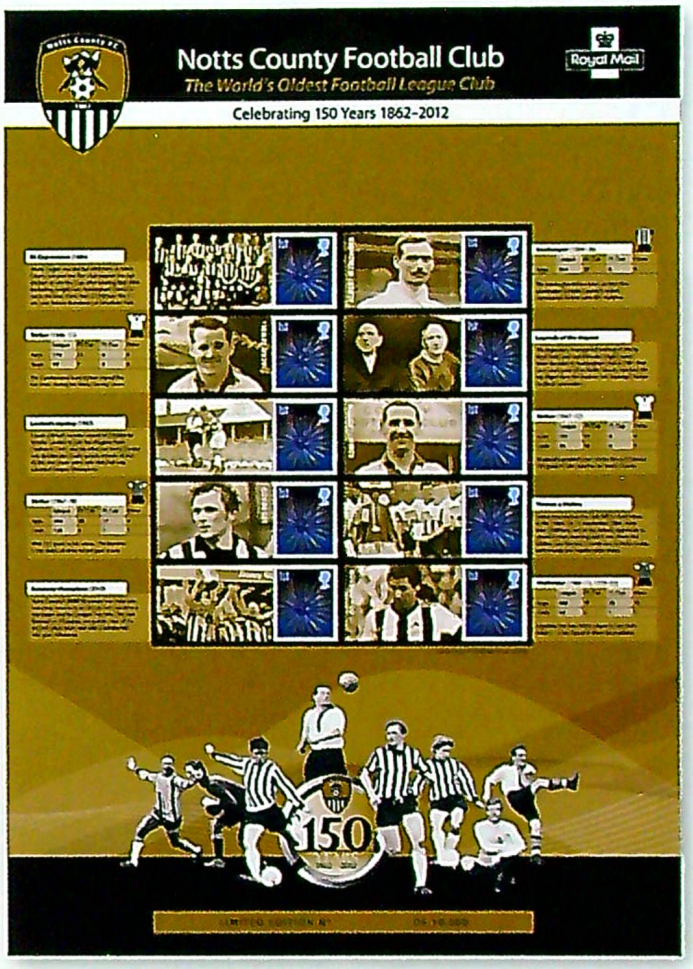
Remembering the Goon Show To mark the 40th anniversary of the last *Goon Show*, Royal Mail is issuing the Commemorative Sheet shown left, on 5 October. Alongside Union flag stamps, it includes ten labels with photographs of Michael Bentine, Spike Milligan, Peter Sellers and Harry Secombe. Accompanying the stamp sheet is a fact-packed insert that explores the conception and development of *The Goon Show* and features photographs, quotes and stories about the Goons, the main characters in the show and some of its most illustrious fans, including His Royal Highness Prince Charles and Sir Noël Coward.

As many *Bulletin* readers will fondly remember, *The Goon Show* was a ground-breaking radio series that ran from 1951 until 1960 and is now widely recognised as playing a unique and significant role in the history of British comedy.

The show's popular characters – Ned Seagoon, Eccles, Bluebottle, Major Bloodnok, Minnie Bannister, Henry Crun, Grytpype-Thynne and Moriarty – all helped to communicate a ludicrously funny view of the world •

Notts County Commemorative Released on 8 November, a striking Commemorative Sheet celebrates the 150th anniversary of the world's oldest football league club. The sheet carries key facts and figures about Notts County and features notable past players and managers, as well as a wealth of images and fascinating stories about the club since its formation in 1862. It also explains the historic relationship between Notts County and Juventus, the current Serie A champions.

Individually numbered in a limited edition of 10,000, this sheet is a must-have for all football aficionados – whether they are interested in the history of the beautiful game in general or the Magpies in particular. Price: £14.95 •



Above: the forthcoming stamp sheet commemorating Notts County Football Club (aka the Magpies). Formed in 1862, Notts County is the oldest of all the professional clubs in the world

Dedicated postmark website A new Royal Mail website gives all the information you need about postmarks and Royal Mail's postmarking services. It explains in detail the different types of postmarks available, how you can go about getting a special postmark and the rules around their application.

In the near future we plan to upload onto the site the range of postmarks available for specific stamp issues, for ease of reference. Why not take a look and let us know what you think? Just log on to www.royalmail.com/postmarks •

STOP PRESS More gold medal moments Following the great success of Team GB at the London 2012 Olympic Games and the popularity of the Gold Medal Winner stamps, Royal Mail has decided to commemorate the achievements of the Paralympian team, ParalympicsGB, in the same way.

Gold Medal Winners stamps are being produced for each individual and team ParalympicsGB gold medal win, to go on sale as quickly as possible, in 518 dedicated post offices across the UK. This means that Royal Mail is expecting to issue even more individual stamps than the 29 printed during the Olympics fortnight.

Andrew Hammond, Director of Royal Mail Stamps and Collectibles, says: 'This will be the greatest logistical challenge in stamp production ever undertaken by any postal administration. We will get the stamps on sale as quickly as possible to a network of post office branches around the country. Just as our Olympians outperformed expectations, we are confident that ParalympicsGB will also outperform.'



Above: template with chevron to accommodate action images of ParalympicsGB gold medal winners

We hope the ParalympicsGB winners' stamps are rolling off the presses as you read this page! Meanwhile on page 16 we give you a report from Marcus James and the Gold Medal Winner Stamp Makers •

Out of this world Six fascinating new stamps celebrate Britain's role in space science

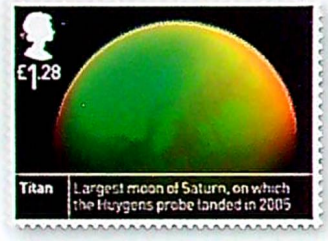




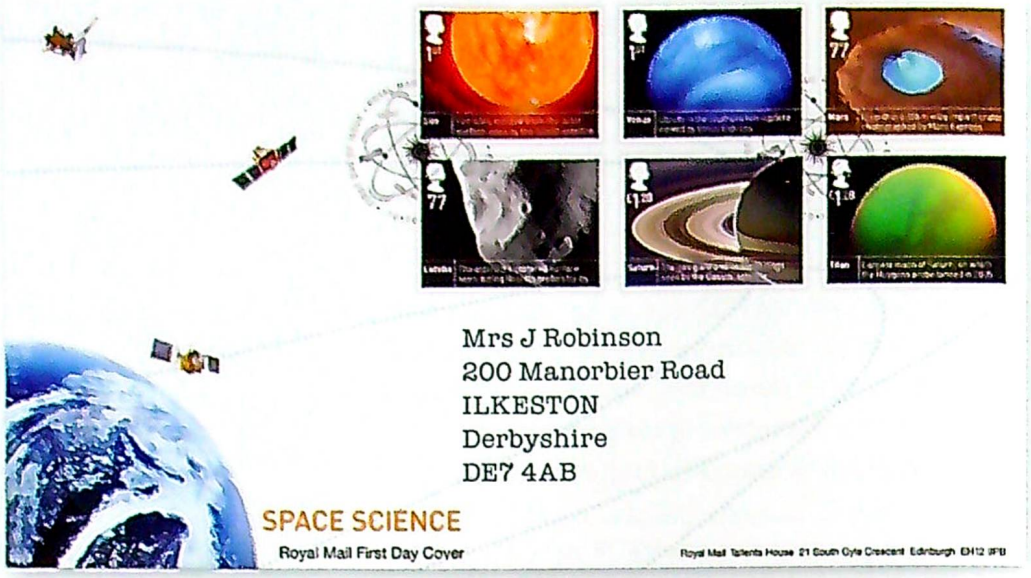








Above: the six stunning stamps of next month's Space Science issue celebrate the 50th anniversary of Ariel 1. Top right: the First Day Cover for 16 October



The Space Science special stamp issue is released on 16 October. It marks the 50th anniversary of the launch of Ariel 1, the first British satellite, in 1962. All the images were chosen from those captured by satellites and probes from the European Space Agency (ESA). Britain is a member of the ESA and our scientists, universities and companies have made significant contributions to its space missions, including the Mars Express and the Cassini-Huygens probe to Saturn. One of the most exciting developments was the landing of the probe on Saturn's large moon, Titan, revealing a landscape remarkably similar to that of the earth.

Stamp by stamp Half a century ago, the six images shown on the new stamps had never been seen by the human eye...

1st Class – Sun: this image was gathered from the ESA's Solar and Heliospheric Observatory (SOHO) midway between the Earth and the Sun. It shows particles being ejected from the solar surface.

1st Class – Venus: taken from the ESA's Venus Express probe, the photo shows clouds in the southern hemisphere of the second planet out from the Sun.

77p – Mars: a large area of ice within a 35km-wide impact crater on the red planet was photographed by the ESA's Mars Express probe.

77p – Lutetia: on route to a meeting with the comet Churyumov-Gerasimenko the ESA probe Rosetta came within 800km of the Lutetia asteroid, located in the asteroid belt between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter.

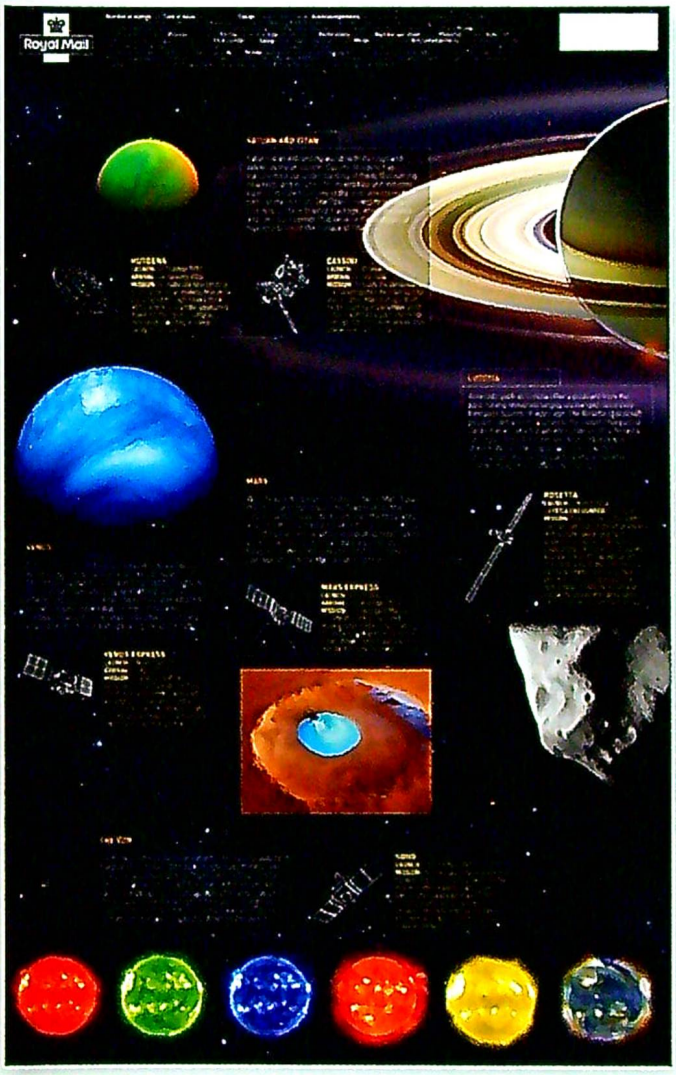
£1.28 – Saturn: illuminated by the Sun behind, the beautiful rings of Saturn were photographed by the Cassini probe.

£1.28 – Titan: in 2005 the ESA's Huygens probe parachuted through the atmosphere of Saturn's largest moon to land on Titan's surface. The image captured here was taken on the way to this historic encounter.

Royal Mail is producing a First Day Cover (FDC), Presentation Pack, Stamp Cards and handstamps to accompany the Space Science stamp issue. The FDC

Stamp images: Sun – courtesy of SOHO/EIT consortium; Venus – ESA 2007 MPS/DLR-PF/IDA; Mars – ESA/DLR/FU/Berlin (G. Neukum); Lutetia – ESA 2010 MPS for





Space Science Stamps – Specifications

Date of issue	16 October
Number of stamps	Six
Stamp design	Osborne Ross Design
Stamp format	Landscape
Stamp size	30mm x 41mm
Printer	Cartor Security Printers
Print process	Lithography
Number per sheet	25/50
Perforations	14.5 x 14
Phosphor	All over
Gum	PVA

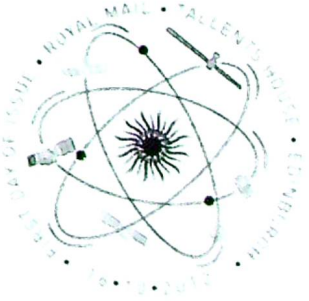
Space Science Stamps – Prices

Stamps	£5.30
Presentation Pack	£5.80
First Day Cover UK	£6.84
First Day Cover overseas	£5.70
First Day Envelope	30p
Stamp Cards, set of 6	£2.70

Left and below: the illustrated Presentation Pack contains the six Space Science stamps and information about the solar system and the ESA probes that have explored it, written by Dr Stuart Clark. Right: pictorial and plain special postmarks and Tallents House postmark

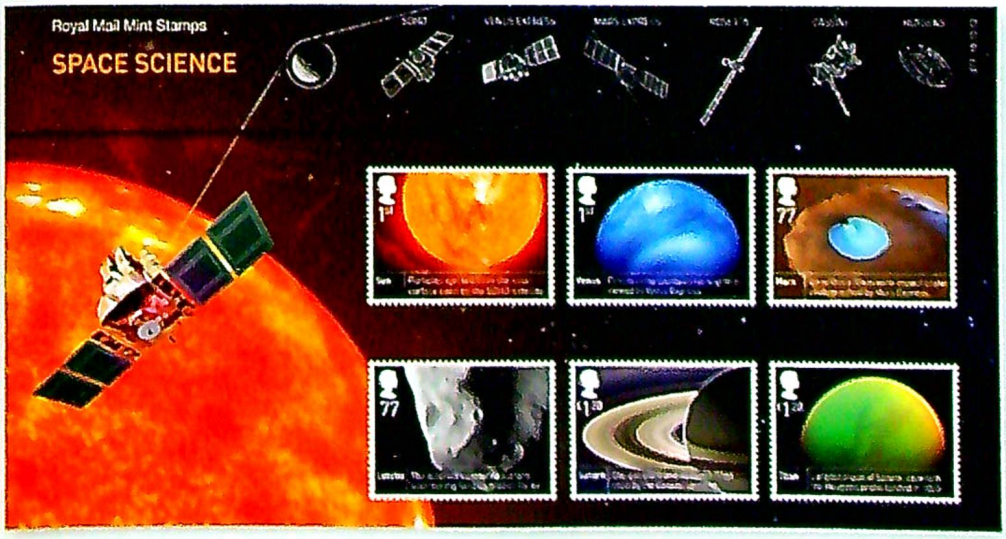






and Presentation Pack are designed by Team Publishing, with insert information written by astronomy journalist Dr Stuart Clark. Alternative pictorial and non-pictorial and plain STAR, GAERWEN, GWYNEDD postmarks will be available.

Watch out for background details of the space science that inspires these beautiful stamps of our time in next month's edition of *Bulletin* •



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



Above: Arnold Machin creating the famous cast of Queen Elizabeth II. One of the casts was recently bequeathed to the RPSL by David Cunard.
Below: special Stampex handstamp for 28 September

Machin at the Royal It is believed that six casts of the Machin head, as used on definitive stamps, exist. Some are in the BPMA, one was presented to HM The Queen, and one is now in the possession of the Royal Philatelic Society London (RPSL). This was put up for auction by a friend of Arnold Machin in 2009 and purchased by David Cunard, an Englishman living and working in California, who, although not a philatelist, was a keen collector of all things British. He was an important figure in the music industry and the first British producer nominated for a Grammy award. He paid £21,105 for the cast.

In September 2011 David contacted Douglas Myall, the esteemed Machin authority, saying that he was seriously ill and asked where the cast might find a suitable home after his death. Douglas suggested the Royal Philatelic Society London, being the world's oldest philatelic society with HM The Queen as its patron. David readily agreed, only a month before he died. The cast has now been placed, along with a plaque of the Wyon head of Queen Victoria as used on stamps (also given by David Cunard), in a display case in the Society's meeting room. This was announced to members by President Brian Trotter at the Society's meeting on 7 June.

Douglas Myall went to the Society's meeting on 28 June to see the Wyon and Machin casts and to display 12 sheets of Machin material which showed different methods of printing Machin stamps, trials and the Machin head as used on overseas stamps. Of particular interest were some rare items relating to the lasergravure experiment of 1980. Also on display were the unissued Machins designed to help the disabled, as described by Glenn Morgan in his *Bulletin* article of June 2004. The Machin head has been used on stamps from 28 countries, from Antigua to Tristan da Cunha, but Douglas's display concentrated on the Hong Kong issues of 1992 to 1996.

Non-members are welcome to attend most meetings of the RPSL by prior arrangement with the administration office – phone 020 7486 1044 •



Autumn Stampex From 26 to 29 September inclusive, Autumn Stampex will be held at the Business Design Centre, London N1. There will be a display of Australasia (see below). In a departure from previous Stampex exhibitions, there will be dealers' stands, rather than display frames, on the 'Village Green' area and the displays will be relocated around the Centre.

Opening hours are: Wednesday 11.30am to 7pm, Thursday and Friday 10am to 6pm, and Saturday 10am to 5pm. Admission is free.

The Business Design Centre is near London's Angel underground station (Northern Line) and the area is well served by buses. Refreshments are

available at the exhibition and there is a wide range of places to eat nearby. Here are some of the Stampex highlights:

• The British Society of Australian Philately, the New Zealand Society of Great Britain, and the Pacific Islands Study Circle are organising 'Australasia 2012' as part of Autumn Stampex. Exhibits of Australasian material have been invited from all FIP-affiliated countries. Competitive exhibits will be displayed in relevant classes (Traditional, Postal History and so on). A new 100-page book, *Gems of Australasian Philately* will be on sale at Stampex (price £10).

• A talk on Captain Cook will be given by Alwyn Peel at 2pm on 28 September. On 27 September the meeting at the Royal Philatelic Society London will feature a display of New Zealand 'adsons' by Robin Gwynn. Visitors are welcome if they contact the Society in advance on 020 7486 1044. For more information on 'Australasia 2012' e-mail info@australasia2012.org.

• Royal Mail will have its usual stand at Stampex selling the full range of stamps and related products. The Olympic & Paralympic Games Memories stamps go on sale on the second day of the exhibition (27 September) followed by a new set of Post & Go Farm Animal stamps the next day (28 September). As usual, posting boxes will be provided for special Stampex handstamps.

• The Stampex customised sheet marks the 60th anniversary of John Cobb's attempt to break the world speed record on the waters of Loch Ness in September 1952 (Cobb died in the attempt). The sheet bears ten first class Union Flag stamps with attached labels showing Cobb, his vehicle 'Crusader' and Sir Malcolm and Donald Campbell (see page 363, August, Volume 49).

• The Stampex postcard, included in the exhibition programme, reproduces an unused design for a 37p stamp in the 1998 Land Speed Record Holders set. It features Cobb's famous Railton Mobil Special •







Above: Post & Go pictorial stamps, British Farm Animals 3, Cattle are issued during Stampex on 28 September. Special posting facilities will be available. For further details about Stampex, phone 01273 594110 or e-mail info@philatelic-traders-society.co.uk

Stampa, the popular Irish national stamp exhibition, will be held at the Royal Dublin Society, Ballsbridge, Dublin (shown right) from 12 to 14 October.

Since 1976 members of Stampa have received exclusive philatelic souvenirs, which usually take the form of limited edition overprints (by authority of the Department of Posts and Telegraphs up to 1983 and by An Post since 1984). Because of the very small quantity issued, these collectors' items have become much sought after. See the archive at www.stampa.ie •



Diary dates

SEPTEMBER

Until 9 Olympex. The British Library, 96 Euston Rd, London NW1 2DB. Phone: 01937 546060.

26 to 29 Autumn Stampex at the Business Design Centre, London N1 0QH. See previous page for details.

29 The popular British Postal Museum's GPO Walking Tour starts at 11am. Cost £6 (£5 concessions, £4 Friends of BPMA). Phone 020 7239 2570 to book, or request a copy of the BPMA Events Guide.

OCTOBER

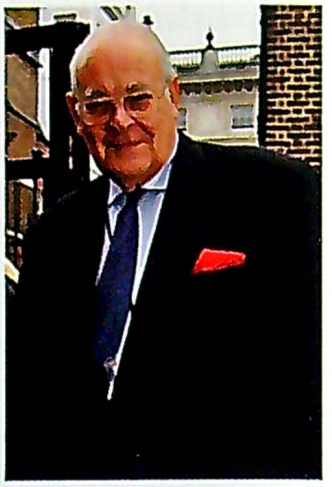
9 GB First Day Covers Fair, Collingwood Centre, Great Barr, Birmingham.

13 Trevor Harris displays Edward VII Varieties and Curiosities at The Welsh Centre, 157 Gray's Inn Rd, London WC1.

20 to 22 94th Philatelic Congress of Great Britain, Queen's Hotel, Perth.

ABPS National Exhibition, under the auspices of the Association of British Philatelic Societies, will be held at the Dewar Centre, Perth, on 19 and 20 October, followed by the 94th Philatelic Congress of Great Britain at the Queen's Hotel, Perth, on 20 to 22 October. Perth is one of the new cities created to mark The Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

The exhibition will be open on Friday 10am to 5pm and Saturday 9am to 4pm. As well as a range of dealers, there will be a display from the Royal Philatelic Collection, and a BPMA exhibit entitled 'Off with Her Head' is based on essays of unadopted designs for Elizabeth II stamps up to 1970. There will be some 400 frames of entries by collectors in the National and Interfederation Competitions, and an Open Competition for young collectors will be on the theme of Olympic sports.



Congress will include the usual mix of discussions, displays and visits and the ceremony of signing the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists at St John's Kirk on 21 October. This year's signatories are: Jamie Gough (USA), Robin Gwynn (New Zealand), Patrick Maselis (Belgium), and Michael Sefi (UK, pictured right).

Douglas Muir, a former *Bulletin* editor, will give the Kay Goodman lecture, entitled 'Returned from Czechoslovakia' based on his own collection of returned to sender labels. Hugh Jefferies, editor of the Stanley Gibbons catalogues and *Gibbons Stamp Monthly*, will talk on how and why things do or do not get listed in the catalogues, the challenges faced by catalogue editors and changes ahead in the field of electronic publishing.

Delegates will be able to see a standing display of Scandinavian material on the Sunday and displays by local society members on Monday. This is only the fifth time Congress has been held in Scotland. Previously it was held in Edinburgh in 1913 and 1993, Glasgow in 1924, and Renfrew in 2006.

Special handstamps will be used on 19 and 21 October for the exhibition and Congress. The design of the postmarks reproduces the famous Perth 'Lamb' fancy postmark used in 1750, Britain's first pictorial postmark. (Examples are now priced at £600 in the recently published *Collect British Postmarks* – see *Bulletin*, February 2012, page 188).

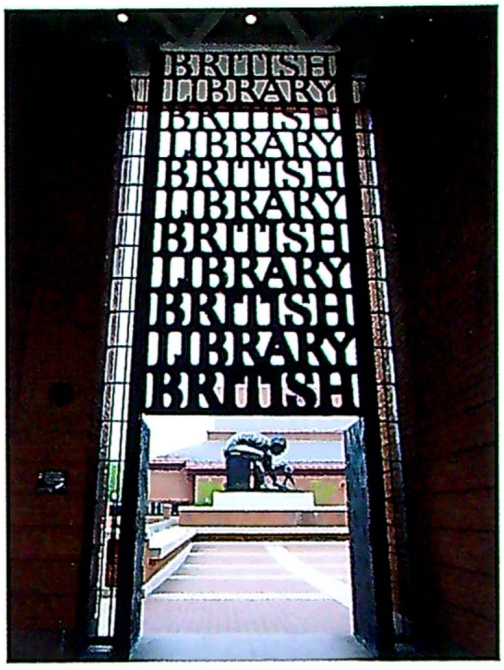
Information on how to submit covers and details of the special handstamps for the 94th Philatelic Congress will be included in the *British Postmark Bulletin*, our companion publication •

Philatelists honoured Our congratulations to two well-known philatelists who were awarded the MBE in The Queen's Birthday Honours List.

Richard West, a former editor of *Stamp Magazine*, and a former president of the National Philatelic Society, is a regular contributor to *Bulletin* and a member of Royal Mail's Stamp Advisory Committee.

David Beech, a former president of the Royal Philatelic Society London, is the Head of the Philatelic Collections at the British Library in London •





Left: part of the Olympex exhibition and the iconic entrance to The British Library in London, which houses a great philatelic collection – well worth a visit

Olympic exhibition Olympex, on show at the British Library in London until 9 September, aims to encourage new collectors with highly arresting visual displays. Displays show Olympic stamps, postcards and postal history for 1896, 1908, 1948, 2012 and Olympic sports, as well as the Paralympics. Touch screens enable visitors to see all the exhibits and more in high definition and with close-up zoom facilities. Olympex displays include all the submitted stamp designs for the 1948 Olympics, from the BPMA. See www.bl.uk/olympex2012 for more details. At a 'Collectors Cabin' on the piazza outside the Library a commemorative cover is available. In addition, a special handstamp is being used throughout the exhibition.

The British Library is situated beside St Pancras Station, where you can take the Javelin train service to the Olympic Park. Visitors will have an opportunity to look at the British Library's own philatelic collection •



Exhibitions Royal portraits by photographer Marcus Adams are on show at the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery & Museum in Bournemouth until 16 September. Adams' portraits were used on a number of stamps, including The Queen's 60th birthday issue in 1986. See March 2011 *Bulletin* for further information. An exhibtion called 'The Queen: Sixty Photographs for Sixty Years' is on show at Windsor Castle until 28 October.

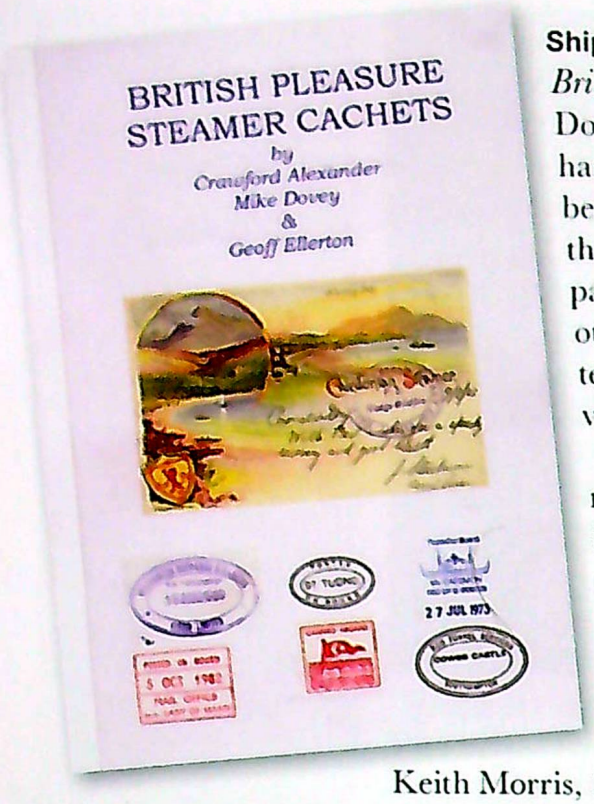
Visitors to the state rooms at Buckingham Palace (open until 7 October) can see an exhibition, 'Diamonds: A Jubilee Celebration', including the George IV diadem worn by The Queen at the State Opening of Parliament. This is of course well known to philatelists as The Queen is shown wearing it in the Wilding and Machin portraits on definitive stamps. The exhibition also features on some banknotes and coins. The diadem, which contains more than 1,300 diamonds, was shown in *Bulletin* in July 2003 (page 331).

'A Tale of One City', an exhibition of life in Portsmouth during the lifetime of Charles Dickens is on view at Portsmouth's City Museum until 4 November. Stamps marking the bicentenary of Dickens's birth were issued in June • ▸



Above: the George IV diadem in the Wilding stamp portrait and worn by Queen Alexandra, consort of Edward VII – photographed here with her daughters Louise and Victoria

Steve Cadman, Paul Elmes



Ship cachet book The TPO & Seapost Society has published *British Pleasure Steamer Cachets* by Crawford Alexander, Mike Dovey and Geoff Ellerton. Many British steamer cachets are hard to find and in many cases only one or two examples have been recorded. Many of these, from the earliest recorded until the present day, are applied by favour at the request of passengers, or to cards before sale on board the steamer, while others are applied only to mail actually posted on board. The term 'steamer' has been used to cover any significant British vessel, whether powered by steam or diesel.

The authors have also included cachets from smaller mailboats, other craft and static vessels where they consider it appropriate. The book seeks, for the first time, to provide a comprehensive listing and illustration of more than 550 known cachets and ship marks from around 1880 to the present day. The 75 pages are profusely illustrated with covers, cards and ship pictures. Price: £17.95 (£15.95 for Society members), postage UK £2.25, overseas £4.15 from Keith Morris, 1 St Marys Drive, Fairford GL7 4LQ. For details of the TPO & Seapost Society contact Chris Bartlett, Woodrich, Quarry Lane, Gorsley, Ross-on-Wye HR9 7SJ, or visit www.tpo-seapost.org.uk •

Auction news Spink auctioned more of the Queen Victoria line-engraved stamps from the 'Chartwell Collection' of Sir Humphrey Cripps on 5 July. Totalling £828,820, prices realised ranged from £65 to £65,000. Some 15 lots each achieved over £10,000. Top realisation was for a sheet bearing 20 stamps for fugitive ink trials. Four of the stamps were produced in fugitive ink without oils, the remaining 16 with oil. It was described as 'a stunning and magnificent historical document written in the hand of Perkins Bacon'. Estimated at £80,000 to 100,000, it went under the hammer for £65,000. A fine block of six Penny Black Plate VI in an intense shade with right sheet marginal inscription 'In Wetting the Back be careful no...' made £55,000 (est £60,000 to £80,000). An attractive album page bearing Penny Red-Brown stamps cancelled by the distinctive Dublin Maltese Cross (both types), including a pair and single used on large piece, made £380 (est £400 to 450).

Spink will auction the Edward VII, George VI and Elizabeth II sections of GB stamps from the 'Chartwell Collection' on 12 September. A GB stamps specialised sale takes place the following day. Enquiries: 020 7563 4000 or e-mail info@spink.com or visit www.spink.com.

Cavendish's auction in Derby on 19 to 20 September includes the D G J Charlesworth collection of Jamaica postal history 1676 to 2002 and GB Counties postal history with a fine group of Penny Black covers. For information phone 01332 250970, e-mail stamps@cavendishphilauc.demon.co.uk or visit www.cavendish-auctions.com.

Stanley Gibbons will auction the second part of the Arnhold Collection (British Empire apart from Africa) in September. Contact the SG Auction team on 0207 836 8444 or check the Stanley Gibbons website for details •

FDC Fair The Association of Great Britain First Day Cover Collectors is holding a GB First Day Cover Fair at the Collingwood Centre, Great Barr, Birmingham B43 7NF on 7 October. It is open to both members and non-members from 10am to 4pm, admission free. A number of FDC dealers will attend. The Association holds pub meetings at The Ship & Shovel, Craven Passage, London WC2 and The Bowling Green, Shaw Lane, Stoke Prior, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire. For details of the London meetings contact Richard Park on 07747 803220, and for the Bromsgrove meetings, Joseph Bevan on 07969 311 003 or 0121 477 9924 (weekdays 7pm to 10pm). The Association, formed in 1994, has over 250 members, publishes a useful newsletter *First Day Coverage*, and produces its own limited-edition FDCs. For more information about the fair and the Association contact Terry Barnett, 7 Mackets Lane, Hunts Cross, Liverpool L25 0QA, phone 0151 486 2610, or visit www.gbfdc.co.uk •

National Philatelic Society Trevor Harris will display GB Edward VII Varieties & Curiosities at the meeting at The Welsh Centre, 157 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1 at 2.45pm on 13 October. This is followed by a county meeting at Christ Church United Reformed Church, Chelmsford, at 1.30pm on 27 October. For further details visit www.ukphilately.org.uk/nps •

This month in history John Holman recalls a philatelic tribute to university architecture of the 1960s

In September 1971 Royal Mail issued four stamps depicting modern buildings at British universities. The 3p value (the then first class UK letter rate) depicted the Physical Science Building of the University College of Wales in Aberystwyth, designed by architects Sir Percy Thomas & Son. The Faraday Building of Southampton University, on the 5p value, was the work of Sir Basil Spence, also the designer of Coventry Cathedral and honoured by one of the Britons of Distinction stamps in February 2012. The Engineering Department of Leicester University, on the 7½p stamp, was designed by Stirling and Gowan, and the Hexagon Restaurant of Essex University, on the 9p stamp, by C K Capon of Architects Co-Partnership.

The four stamps were designed by Nicholas Jenkins (born 1939), a freelance graphic designer then teaching at the Royal College of Art – they are his only set of stamps. The stamps were printed in three (7½p), four (5p and 9p) or five (3p) colours by Harrisons, and overprinted with two phosphor bands. All exist with the bands missing (5p is the rarest), and the 3p is known with one broad band and with the lemon and black colours omitted, missing black resulting in no windows in the building. The date of issue was 22 September, although the 3p is known postmarked at Darlington the previous day. Special postmarks were used for each university site.

The presentation pack can be found with an insert card printed in German or Japanese. The stamps were withdrawn from sale after one year, quantities sold ranging from 5.6 million of the 9p to nearly 58 million of the 3p value. Just over 87,000 packs were sold •



Above: architecture reflecting the optimism of new university buildings of the Sixties



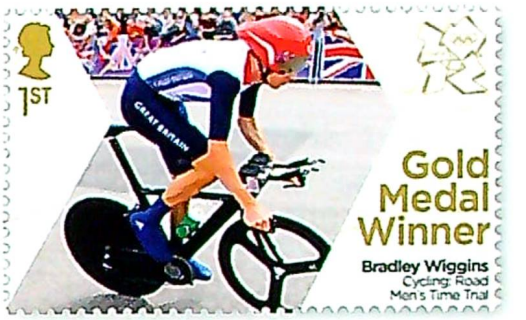
Gold standard Marcus James tells how Royal Mail scored a world first by issuing next-day stamps of Team GB gold medal winners

As Team GB celebrates an amazing 29 gold medals in the London 2012 Olympic Games, Royal Mail's Stamps and Collectibles department is also feeling jubilant and a little dazed after an unprecedented two-week marathon of round-the-clock production of the Gold Medal Winner stamps. Without a doubt, this was simply the biggest challenge that the team and I had ever faced in our careers.

Delivering next-day stamps was a creative and logistical challenge that demanded a huge amount of planning, clear thinking and rigorous practice. I had been involved in planning the design delivery of this project for about two years. In the last 12 months we had been focusing particularly on a weekly

Photography: Conor Masterton







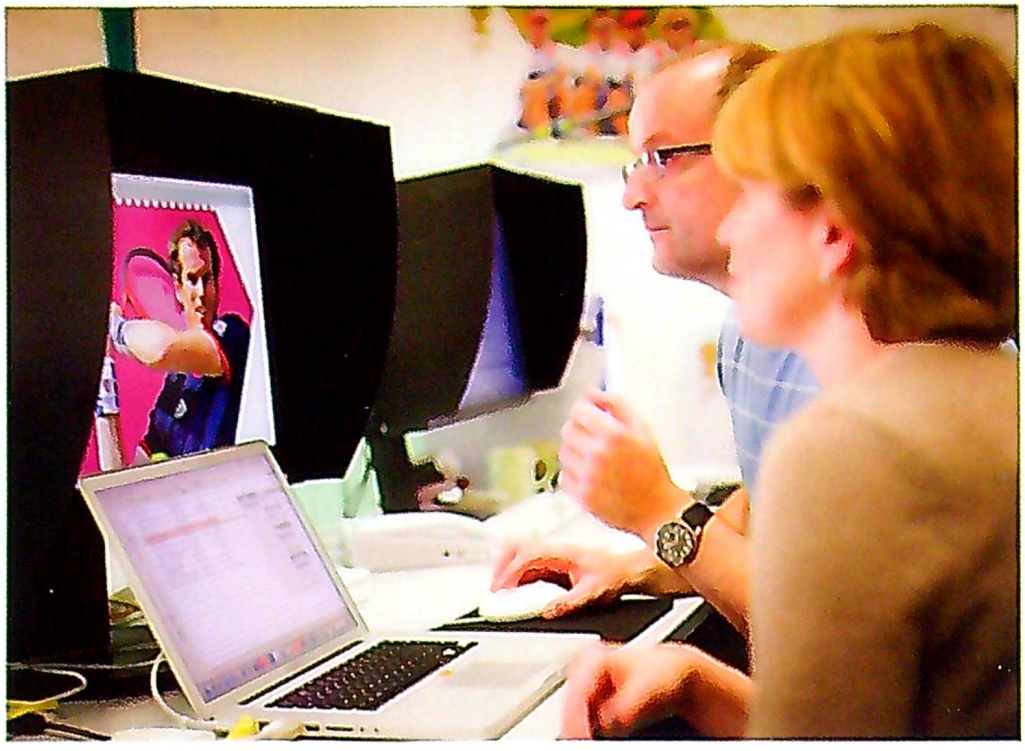




testing of the process. For this, the team looked at thousands of images from previous Olympic Games, including Sydney, Athens and Beijing, and conducted practice runs, using images of every possible event to ensure that we were ready for the summer. Robust contingency plans also had to be put in place – I had to consider how to deal with internet failure or a major power cut and what would happen if a member of the team was ill. All these potential problems could compromise delivery and demanded tried and tested solutions. We also needed a team rota that covered every minute of the 16 days of events.

A standard Royal Mail stamp issue takes an average of 18 months from commission to appearing in post offices: eight months is normally devoted to design development, six weeks to approvals from various parties and the rest of the time is taken up with printing and distribution. Clearly, this would not be possible for the Gold Medal Winner stamps. We would have just one hour to design these! For this reason, the process and the stamp design templates were pre-approved and all departments prepared for something ▸

Members of the Royal Mail Stamps and Collectibles department involved in the Gold Medal Winner stamps programme, photographed on 10 August 2012.
Left to right: Clare Shedden, Lisa Breen, Sophie Paynter, Dean Price, Sarah Jones, Helen Cumberbatch, Stewart Tyson, Eliza Marciniak, Lee Ellwood, Julietta Edgar, David Gillespie, Philip Parker, Marcus James, Cat Hill, Catharine Brandy, Andrew Hammond, Kim Cruickshank, Alastair Pether, Julie Murray, Mick Fletcher and Martyn Fry



‘The medal is what the athletes work for, yet they seemed genuinely excited to see their image on a stamp. That was very motivating – it was a privilege to contribute that something extra to each win’

Catharine Brandy, Design Manager, pictured with Marcus James, right

completely different from anything previously undertaken by Royal Mail. We usually art-direct and manage other designers and writers. But many hours of rehearsing meant that the team was well prepared and everyone stepped up to the challenge to ensure they were ready for each day.

The biggest worry was always the quality of photographs. As we were using action photographs taken on the day of the event, we had no idea what we would get until they arrived from the picture agency, Getty Images. When working on a normal stamp issue, picture researchers have months to find the best images. For the Gold Medal Winner stamps we had a 30-minute window to select the image, crop it, balance the colour and carry out any necessary specialist retouching.

‘An intense experience! This project is bound to make a contribution to our cultural milieu’ **Eliza Marciniak, Editorial Manager**

‘It has been an absolute privilege to work with such fantastic colleagues; the best two weeks of my career’

Helen Cumberbatch, Editorial Manager



Also critical to our success was a huge amount of scheduling, record-keeping and research. We needed to know which heats Team GB had qualified for, familiarise ourselves with the athletes and understand all the different sports. Part of this task fell to the editorial team, whose meticulous research and planning ensured we were well prepared.

We were making stamp history – this was the first time anyone had issued next-day stamps using photos taken of the actual events the gold medallists had won. So, unsurprisingly, tension began to rise as the Games drew near. There were equal amounts of nervous expectation and excitement. But as we spent more time considering potential images and practising our retouching skills, the mood in our office in Old Street, London, was ▸





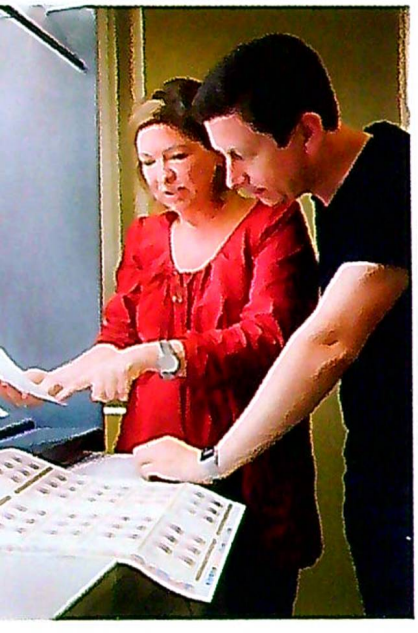
London 2012, Olympic Park, London E20 2.8.2012

Above: special postmarks dated according to each of the 29 gold medal wins are available from Tallents House until 10 September

‘The highlight for me was watching rower Katherine Copeland yelling with joy at Sophie Hosking in their moment of triumph: “We’ve won... we’re going to be on a stamp”. Minutes later I was putting their photographs on that stamp’

Alastair Pether, Design Manager

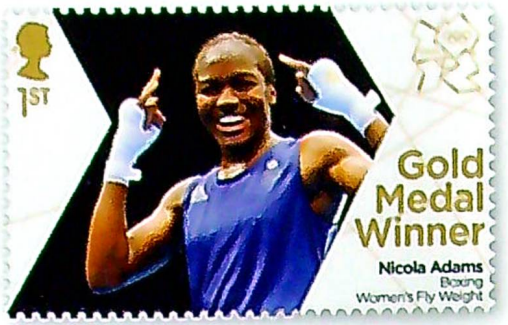
This is the first time that next-day stamps have been issued by Royal Mail. Australia Post was the first to achieve this in 2000, followed by Hellenic Post in Greece in 2004. Our world first lies in the fact that these new stamps will make the UK the only host country to have used action shots for gold medal stamps and issued them to such a large network of post offices during the Games within 24 hours of the event



'I'm very proud of everybody involved. Moments of pressure were handled with good humour and the results have been fantastic'

Sarah Jones, Design Manager, pictured with Lee Ellwood

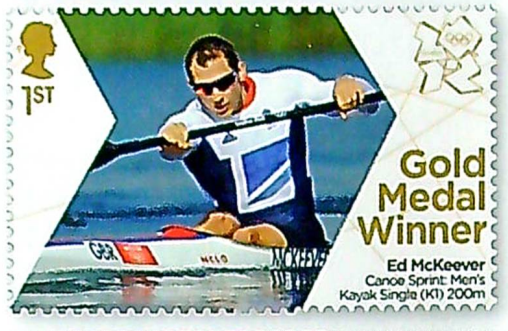




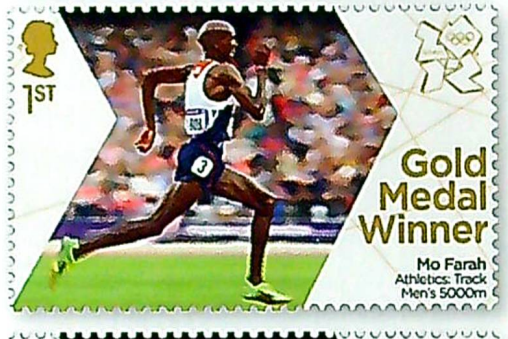




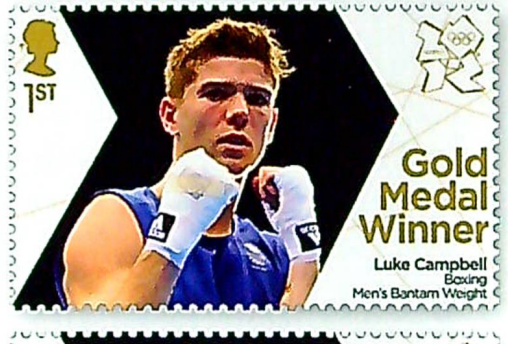




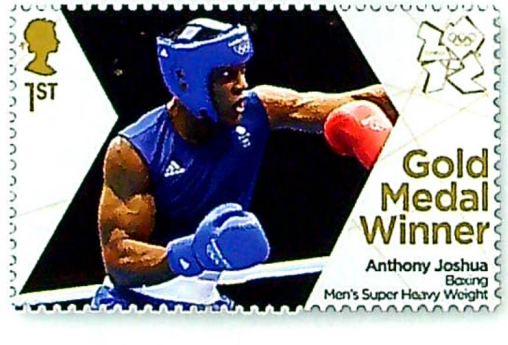






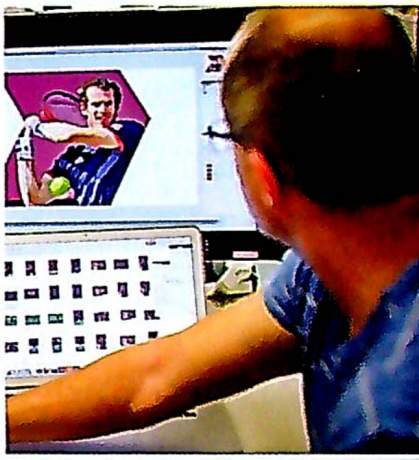






very positive. Our vision was always to create Gold Medal Winner stamps that were completely different from what had gone before. I wanted to capture a moment that precisely represented that gold medal being won – the exact moment of crossing the line, a last-second burst of physical and mental endeavour, an expression of jubilation or triumphant determination, an action image that captured both the essence of the sport and the character of the individual athlete.

The first four days were really strange. After the terrific London 2012 opening ceremony, we sat down to watch each and every potential gold GB win on television screens, with a rota of different team members ready and waiting to act on each win. Everyone was cheering on Team GB and raring to go... and we won no golds. It was a really tense time. Then on the first Wednesday, 1 August, a dramatic change of gear came with the first gold medal win.



Above: the chevron used on the stamp templates was inspired by the London 2012 logo. The strong graphic shape suggests movement and helped focus attention on a striking image of the athlete

'We've won gold!' The cry went up across the land. Helen Glover and Heather Stanning had won the women's rowing pairs and a whooping cheer from our whole team kicked off the most nerve-racking stamp of them all – the first one. Our well-rehearsed plans went live and the clock started ticking. Editors prepared the text files listing the athletes' names and other caption information. The designers started watching out for the best image to capture that magic moment. The last year of practice prepared us for finding the photograph that works in the stamp's chevron design and also shows the win in the most engaging way. Once the image was pulled into the stamp design, it was a race against time to select the best crop and do any retouching needed to make the image as strong as possible. Then the stamp was flowed into the miniature sheet format and the A4 stamp sheet, ready for a final editorial check. The image was e-mailed to LOCOG for approval and files handed to the production team, ready for the printers.

> ‘We have been training for this stamp marathon for a long time. I feel proud of the results and proud to be involved in celebrating the amazing achievements of world-class athletes’
> **Clare Shedden, Design Manager**

Saturday 4 August was the greatest challenge of all. Six wins in one day: Jessica Ennis at around 21.09, Greg Rutherford at around 21.27 and Mo Farah at about 21.55 – all in 45 minutes! The memory of creating those three stamps in such quick succession will stay with me always. Seeing the team react in such a calm and professional way was brilliant! The months of planning had paid off. They swept into action and created six stunning stamps that day, each within an hour of the win; printers were at the ready; the team at Tallents House despatched pre-ordered stamps at an amazing rate; and the Swindon depot swung into action for next-day distribution of six special deliveries to post offices.

The process of design, production, fulfilment and next-day availability has reaffirmed Royal Mail's international reputation for innovation and excellence. The teamwork across all departments has been exceptional, and everyone played an integral part in this success. A universal sense of commitment and good humour has made this a truly rewarding experience. Everyone involved feels extremely proud and honoured to have been part of this once-in-a-lifetime event. We hope you like the stamps! •

Marcus James is Head of Design and Editorial, Royal Mail Stamps and Collectibles

A meaty story

Simon Ball gives you the beef on the brilliant breeds appearing in the new Post & Go series



Above: White Parks are believed to be the UK's oldest breed of cattle

THE BRITISH FARM ANIMALS series of Post & Go stamps reaches its finale with the release of the Cattle issue on 28 September. Wildlife artist Robert Gillmor's lino-cuts beautifully illustrate six of the breeds that make up the UK's 9.7 million-strong herd, just a fraction of the global cattle population of around 1.3 billion. As with the Sheep and Pigs issues, the starting point for choosing the breeds to be illustrated was to select the British breed closest to the original ancestral cattle stock – White Parks – and then choose a further five regional breeds to complete the set.

Mythical beasts Reputed to be the cattle mentioned in *The Cattle Raid of Cooley*, a 2,000-year-old legendary tale from early Irish literature, White Parks are the UK's oldest breed. Whether they were those rustled at Cooley cannot be proved. But under the laws of the ancient Welsh kingdom of Deheubarth, White Parks were used to pay fines and penalties over 1,000 years ago, so it is clear they held much value. Handsome animals with curved horns, White Parks were common when cattle were 'emparked' on

© Tim Flach, Getty Images

large estates. They fell victim to changes in farming practices when these cattle parks went out of fashion in the late 19th century. By the Seventies there were only 60 in the UK. But White Parks have staged a comeback and their ability to convert coarse grazing into good-quality beef makes them popular with organic farmers.

Polls apart Hornless Red Polls are deep red with a touch of white on the tail and udder. They are a dual-purpose cow producing both milk and meat, although the majority of Red Polls found on British farms are kept for meat. Red Polls are newcomers compared to breeds such as the White Park or the Irish Moiled. They were created in the 19th century by crossbreeding Norfolk Red beef cattle with Suffolk Dun dairy cattle (both now extinct).

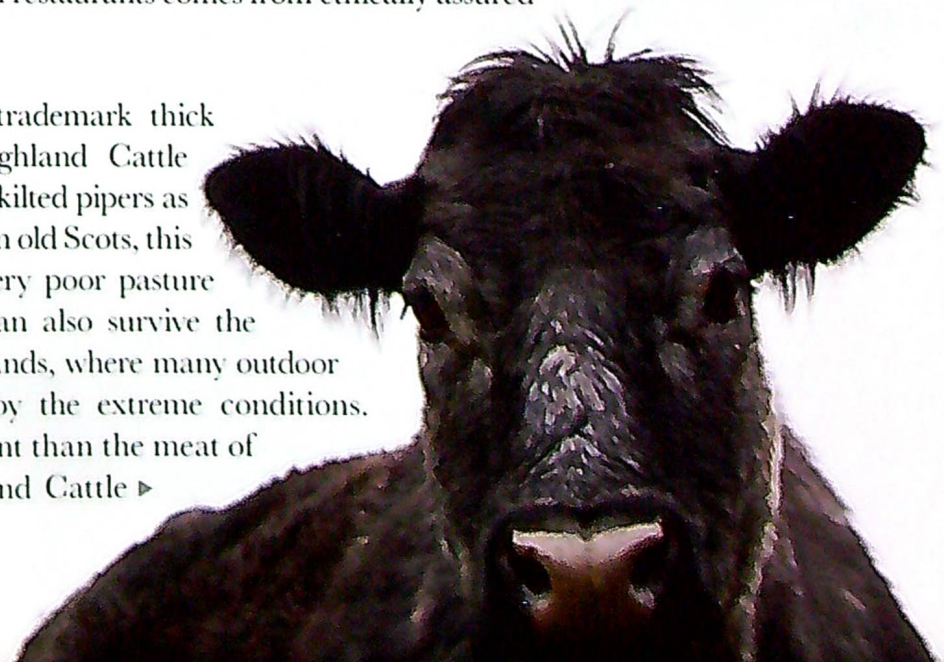
The expert perspective Someone who knows a thing or two about farming heritage breeds is Jimmy Doherty, whose campaign to introduce ethically farmed 'value range' meat products to Tesco was the subject of Channel 4's *Jimmy and the Giant Supermarket*. On his Essex farm, Jimmy keeps the polled (hornless) version of the White Park and Red Polls.

'I think preserving traditional rare breeds is so important because it's part of our living heritage, part of our culture,' he says. 'The more we support them the longer they'll be around. Everyone should at least go out and taste a steak from a Red Poll or a British Park, because if we don't use them we will lose them.'

Jimmy's enthusiasm for the quality of heritage breed meat is shared by former MasterChef champion and restaurant owner Tommi Miers. Tommi says: 'Rare breed cattle are part of Britain's heritage and make for delicious eating. They can only be a good thing.' Tommi practises what she preaches. All the beef used in her Wahaca chain of Mexican restaurants comes from ethically assured Scottish farms.



Above: Jimmy Doherty, here with a Red Poll, campagins to preserve ancient breeds. Below: a hairy and hardy Aberdeen Angus



Highland and mighty With their trademark thick shaggy coats and long horns, Highland Cattle compete with Edinburgh Castle and kilted pipers as icons of Scotland. Known as 'kyloes' in old Scots, this hardy breed successfully converts very poor pasture into top-quality meat. The cattle can also survive the tough weather of the Scottish Highlands, where many outdoor reared breeds would be defeated by the extreme conditions. Highland beef has a lower fat content than the meat of most other breeds because Highland Cattle ▸

© BBC Photo Library: © Cody Johnson, iStockphoto









Top: a hardy, handsome Highland 'kyloe'.
Right: Irish Moiled cow and calf. Above: Highland, Welsh Black and Irish Moiled breeds also featured in the British Cattle stamps issue of 1984

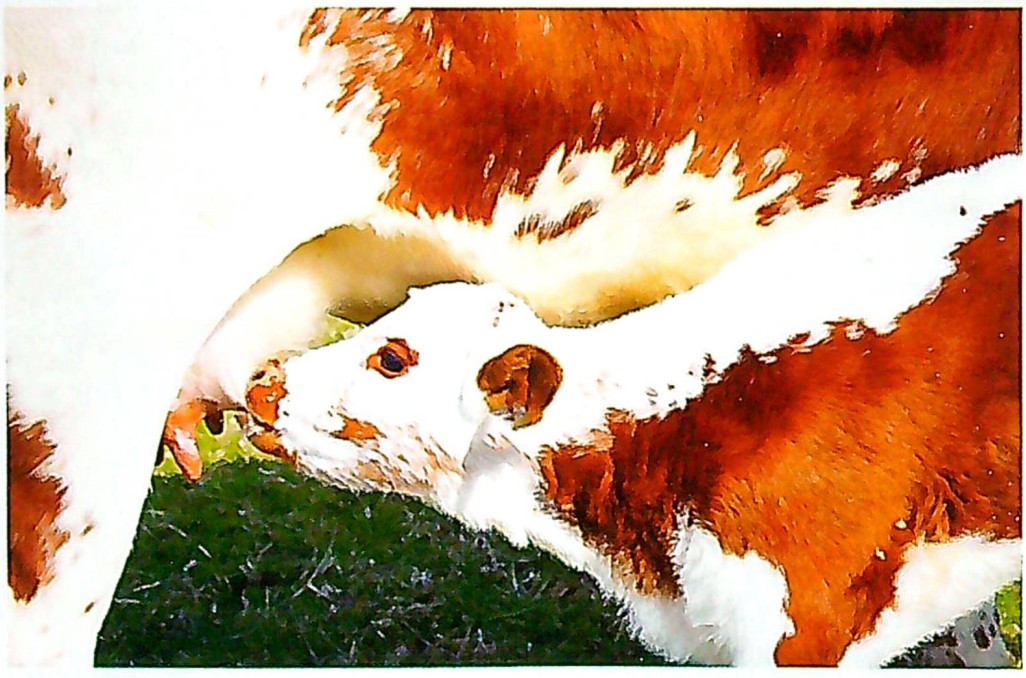
rely on their thick coats for insulation rather than subcutaneous fat.

Scotland's other famous beef cow breed is the Aberdeen Angus. These naturally polled cattle can be either a solid black or a solid red. Most true breed Angus cattle are descended from Grey-Breasted Jock and his mate Old Granny, owned by breed founder Hugh Watson in the 19th century. Prior to Watson, Aberdeenshire and Angus hornless cattle were called Angus Doddies.

The comeback breed Another ancient breed that has staged a remarkable comeback is the Irish Moiled. The name Moiled is derived from the Gaelic word 'maol', which refers to the breed's domed and naturally polled forehead.

This dual-purpose cow originated in the counties of Leitrim, Sligo and Donegal, and it is now found throughout Northern Ireland and in parts of England. As recently as 1970, however, only 30 Irish Moileds were clinging on to survival in the UK. The quality and flavour of its meat, as well as the efforts of breeders and rare breed conservationists, has ensured the breed's renaissance.

Creating a cash cow The ancestors of Welsh Black cattle were the prized possessions of Celtic chieftains forced to retreat to Wales in the face of the Anglo-Saxon settlement of England. Later, a booming trade developed in the other direction, with Welsh Blacks being driven back over the border to reach the markets of Hereford and Gloucester. On the way home, drovers needed to keep their earnings safe from highwaymen, and so the Bank of



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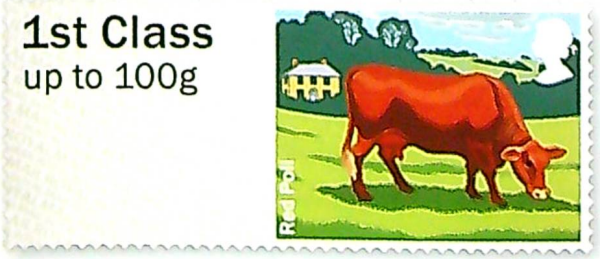


Above: Welsh Black cattle at home in the Welsh valleys

the Black Ox was founded in 1799. Issuing banknotes bearing images of Welsh Blacks, the Black Ox was the last independent bank in Wales until Lloyds, the 'black horse bank', bought it in 1909.

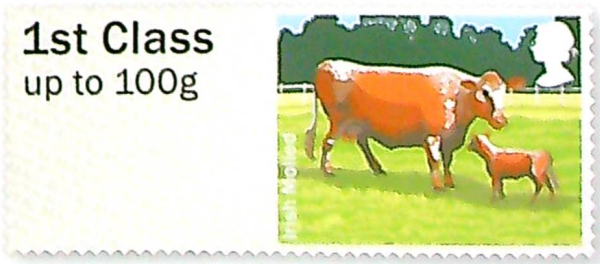
Our cousins the cattle Our relationship with cattle goes back to the Neolithic period. In fact, genetic scientists working with archaeologists have now established that the world's entire domestic cattle stock probably originated from as few as 80 aurochs (wild oxen, now extinct) that were domesticated in south-eastern Turkey and northern Iraq 10,500 years ago.

It is extraordinary to think that the 1.3 billion cattle in the world today are descended from fewer than 100 animals. It is also extraordinary, for laymen at least, that when scientists mapped the cattle genome in 2009, they discovered humans share 80 per cent of their genetic make-up with that of the humble bovine – which puts a whole new spin on the saying 'you are what you eat' •









© Tim Graham, Getty Images

Another view Douglas Myall takes a look at what defines a definitive



1



2



3



4



5



6

THE DISTINCTION between definitives and special issues has become blurred. In the reign of Queen Victoria all issued adhesive stamps were definitives and were inscribed 'Postage' (1) – even the £5 orange, although that was more likely to have been used for revenue purposes. A set of new designs was issued in 1887, the 50th year of her reign, and became known as the 'Jubilee' issue. They, too, were treated as definitives. Interestingly, the marginal rules at the bottom of the sheets became known as 'Jubilee lines' and this description lasted until they were abolished in 2003.

All the stamps of King Edward VII (2) were definitives. So, too, were those of King George V until Britain's first commemoratives were issued to mark the 1924 British Empire Exhibition at Wembley (3). This set was reissued the following year and was quickly (for those days) followed by a set of five to mark the holding of the Postal Union Congress in London in 1929 (4). No commemoratives were issued in the short reign of King Edward VIII but the coronation of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth was marked by a single stamp in 1937 (5). Others followed for the centenary of the penny black, the Victory issue of 1946, their majesties' silver wedding in 1948 (6), the London Olympic Games the same year and a couple more before Queen Elizabeth acceded to the throne in February 1952.

And so the pattern continued, with important national and international events increasingly being marked by pictorial issues. In 1966 there was an innovation when a set of four stamps depicting British birds was issued. These did not commemorate anything and when similar issues appeared for British wild flowers the following year and other general subjects after that, it was clear that the word commemoratives no longer sufficed to describe them. A new term, special issues, was coined by Royal Mail to embrace both commemoratives and other pictorial non-definitives.

However, matters did not remain so simple. In 1990, a set of five stamps was issued to mark the 150th anniversary of the Penny Black (7). They were termed 'special definitives' by Royal Mail, a somewhat ambiguous name some may think.

Enter the smiling stamps 1990 saw the introduction of what Royal Mail call its Smilers® range, another innovation that did not fall squarely into the category of either special issues or definitives. These had their origin in what were named at the time as Greetings stamps. The first Greetings stamps were issued on 31 January 1989 in books of ten and the five images depicted Cupid, a rose (8), a yacht, a bowl of fruit and a teddy bear. These were accompanied by a dozen little labels reading 'Happy Birthday', 'Thank you', 'Congratulations' and similar sentiments. The first Greetings stamps were previewed in the December 1988 issue of *Bulletin*, where their purpose was stated to be to 'promote the sending of postcards and greetings cards' and to 'complement the card or letter inside the envelope'. The announcement added that they would be on

long-term sale and that 'collectors will have to make their own decisions about how, where and whether they fit into their GB collections'. To me this indicated that they were neither definitives nor special issues and I named them Social stamps.

The second book of Greetings stamps was issued in 1990. It featured famous smiles, among them Punch, the Mona Lisa, the Cheshire Cat and the Laughing Policeman (9), again with a set of appropriate labels. These proved to be popular with the public and a second set of Smilers® with the same designs was issued the following year. The name was later used generically to refer to this kind of stamp and was registered as a trade mark in 2003.

The first Occasions stamps were issued in sheets on 6 February 2001 (10). The five NVIs featured 'hallmarks' on the themes of Love, Thanks, ABC, Welcome and Cheers. They were intended for use on social mail in the manner of Greetings stamps. Others followed in subsequent years with themes such as New Baby, Hello and Love. Some of these have also been issued as Smilers® sheets.

The large format Greetings stamps were reduced to definitive size in September 2005, when Royal Mail first began to call them definitives.

Celebratory stamps This year's London 2012 Olympic (11) and Paralympic Games (12) stamps are also called definitives, although, according to official statements, they were issued 'to celebrate London's Olympic Year'. So are they definitives or not? The question is important, because if you have special issues on standing order with Tallents House you will not have received the Games stamps and will have to order them specially.

In 1994 Royal Mail published *The Story of Definitive Stamps* written by two eminent authors, Richard West and Douglas N Muir. The book's glossary defines 'definitive' as: 'stamp on long-term sale, not issued for any special occasion'. That must rule out many of the issues which are now sold as definitives. I have not been able to come up with a definition that would include them without also including stamps that nobody would call definitives, such as the NVIs depicting views of Britain.

In my view, an important feature of a definitive is that the main element of the design must be a portrait of the monarch. The Diamond Jubilee of The Queen's reign is being celebrated this year by the issue of two first-class NVIs (13 and 14). There can be no doubt that these are definitives because, although they were issued to mark a very special occasion, they consist almost wholly of the Machin portrait and replaced the standard NVIs which were withdrawn while they are on sale.

Finally, I have seen it suggested that the two Olympics stamps pre-paying the worldwide 20g rate (12) are unique in having the portrait facing right. There is nothing new under the sun and some of the Castles high values (15) had the portrait facing that way. Indeed, on two of them, the £1.50 and £5 issued on 18 October 1988, it was the engraved version of the Machin head •



7



8



9



10



11


12



13



14

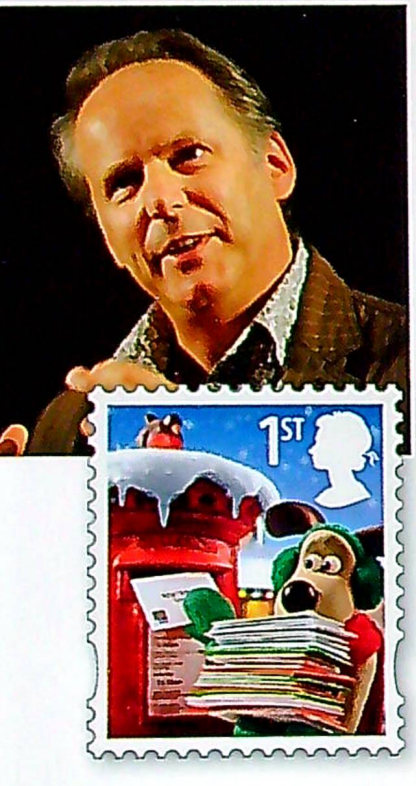


15

Intelligent stamps In the first of a series of articles about Royal Mail stamps and technology, Bob Fothergill revisits 'intelligent' stamps



Above: if you have the Junaio app on your smartphone, just point it in the face of the Siberian tiger (WWF issue, 2011) and see Miranda Richardson in an informative film.
Below: 2010 Christmas stamps reveal a video of Nick Parks



Stamps have of course always been beautiful pictures. Now they are being made into exciting movies thanks to extraordinary smartphone technology.

Today's 'intelligent' stamps contain digital data used to launch a video on your phone simply by your pointing the handset at it. It certainly gives new meaning to the term picture postcard.

This innovation has been pioneered by Royal Mail, which launched the world's first intelligent stamp in 2010 as part of the Great British Railways special stamps issue. It allowed smartphone users to view a video of Bernard Cribbins reading W H Auden's poem *Night Mail*, made famous in the Post Office's own iconic film of 1936. Since then, Royal Mail has released more intelligent stamps employing this image recognition technology.

Last year's stamp series marking WWF's 50th anniversary featured endangered species. The Siberian tiger and African elephant stamps launched a film about the animals, narrated by Miranda Richardson. And the Wallace & Gromit Christmas stamps of 2011 featured a video of Nick Park showing us his stamp album and touring the works where the stamps were printed.

Image recognition technology opens up all sorts of exciting possibilities for collectors. As Bernard Cribbins noted at the time of the Great British Railways stamp issue: 'W H Auden wrote his *Night Mail* poem in 1936 for the Post Office's own blockbuster film of the same name, which has, for years, remained in the hearts and minds of many. I'm excited to be bringing it to a brand new audience and to help take Royal Mail stamps into a new era by using state-of-the-art interactive technology.'

Royal Mail's own Philip Parker was equally enthusiastic, saying: 'This is the first time a national postal service has used this kind of technology on their stamps and we're very excited to be bringing intelligent stamps to the nation's post. Intelligent stamps mark the next step in the evolution of our stamps, bringing them firmly into the 21st century.

'Royal Mail's special stamps mark key events and anniversaries in the UK's heritage, through a programme which aims to be both educational and informative. Through intelligent stamp technology, our stamps will open up a whole new world of information, interest and fun to collectors and the millions of people who receive them on letters.'

The technology is sophisticated but simple to use. A stamp's 'intelligence' is activated using the Junaio app (for iPhones 3GS and above, iPads from iPad 2 onwards and many Android phones), which is downloadable from iTunes and Android Market. Simply tap on the Junaio icon and place your phone's camera over the stamp to trigger the online content. The camera sends information to a dedicated server that uses special image recognition software to see what your phone is 'looking at' and wants to view. The server then activates the video on your phone. Technologically, things have moved on since 2010 but

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it is interesting to reflect on the pioneering role played by Royal Mail.

As a technical consultant who has assisted Royal Mail in developing the intelligent stamp, I attended a number of conferences where the *Night Mail* stamp was cited as an example of how the then fledgling but nonetheless ground-breaking technology was gaining acceptance. Since then it has come on in leaps and bounds, yet with stamps some interesting challenges remain. For a start, stamps make small and complex vehicles for image recognition – an issue further complicated by the fact that the franking process has the potential to destroy the image by rendering it unreadable.

To combat this obstacle, we use masking techniques that turn the stamp's features into a 'point cloud' – a sequence of dots that can survive the franking process. Sometimes franking completely destroys the underlying image, so we try to make the process work on 95 per cent of images scanned. This is repeated so the stamp can be viewed by a phone's camera upside down, from the right and from the left. At a recent stamp exhibition in China, I viewed all the stamps upside down for an Australian visitor!



Above: old locomotives, Bernard Cribbins, the 'Night Mail' film and a sleek smartphone – a steamy combination of cultural delights and, perhaps, the future of stamp appreciation

We also work within the limitations of cameras on phones and other devices. The image recognition technique requires motion tracking, to take account of the fact that a camera or image can move. This allows us, once we have locked onto an image, to track its movement in relation to the camera. But some cameras do not support this feature. Then we have to fit the video resolution to the various devices being used. That is a challenge when those settings change – for example, the screen resolution on the latest iPad is different from that of the iPad 2. However, we have overcome these technical challenges to ensure that stamps today are more exciting, more engaging than ever.

Fans of stamp technology are certainly growing in number. For example, we have recently developed the Post Danmark Intelligent Stamp App (on iTunes and Google Play) to be used with selected intelligent stamps, including a Danish series focusing on traditional winter pastimes and another featuring Chinese themes. And a number of this year's Europa stamps made use of links to tourist information.

The *Night Mail* video was viewed by at least 194,000 people worldwide and more than 10,000 stamp and technology enthusiasts have downloaded the Junaio application so far. And it is still in use today on iPhone (3GS and above), iPad (2 and 3) and a large number of Android phones. Now a new app for Royal Mail intelligent stamps, using the latest techniques, is planned and will be launched shortly. So watch this space – and keep your phone charged! •

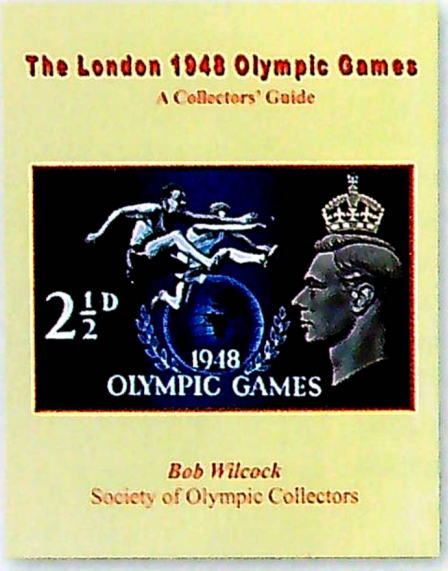
Bob Fothergill is the owner of Intelligent AR Limited

Reading matters John Holman reviews an excellent philatelic companion to London 2012

To coincide with Olympex, the Society of Olympic Collectors (SOC) has published *The London 1948 Olympic Games* by Bob Wilcock, who has written several Olympic articles in *Bulletin*. The book is aimed at collectors and would-be collectors of the stamps and postal history of the London 1948 Olympic Games. It demonstrates how, through collections, the story of the Olympic Games can be told and recalled, how memories can be preserved.

The first section is a comprehensive account of the 1948 stamps, a reprint of an article by Douglas Muir of the BPMA first serialised in *Bulletin* in February to April 1989. It reproduces the unadopted designs, some of which collectors may find more appealing than some of the issued stamps. Tables show the numbers ordered from the printers, the numbers delivered (wastage was quite high) and sold. Only a small quantity of the 2½d stamp remained unsold when withdrawn in January 1949, although some 862,875 of the 1s value were left in stock.

After this account we move on to sections on the Olympic airletter (aerogramme), the overseas territories overprints, and a well-illustrated listing of the varieties and flaws that can be found on the stamps. Although presentation packs were not produced for collectors in the 1940s, the issue can be found on an interesting range of packs and cards produced by the printers and the GPO for publicity purposes.

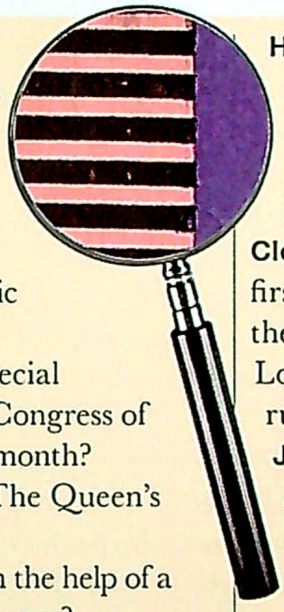


Bob Wilcock's *The London 1948 Olympic Games* can be ordered by post from SOC, 24 Hamilton Crescent, Brentwood, Essex CM14 5ES. Postpaid prices: £19 UK, £21 (25 Euro/US$33) Europe & Worldwide surface mail, £25 (US$40) worldwide airmail

The section on First Day and Commemorative Covers will interest many collectors, with some fine examples illustrated, some no doubt now quite difficult to find. The postal arrangements at the Olympic venues and villages are described with details of the number of items posted. The GPO estimated that 250,000 FDCs would be posted at the Games post office and arrangements were made accordingly. This, however, proved a gross over-estimate and 66,475 were recorded. Over the whole period of the Games total mail sent was 182,529 items. The postmarks and registration labels used at the venues are carefully recorded here and we are shown the rare experimental parcel post label and a telegram sent to the Richmond Park Olympic Village. Meter impressions are not overlooked, and there is a fascinating section on philatelic souvenirs of the torch relay and opening ceremony.

A sizeable section deals with other countries' stamps relevant to the 1948 Games, both those issued at the time (Korea, Monaco and Peru) and subsequently. Postmarks and postal stationery are also included here. Many feature well-known athletes such as Fanny Blankers-Koen of the Netherlands and Emil Zatopek of Czechoslovakia. Postcard collectors are catered for by a 22-page section, followed by 11 pages showing cigarette and other collectors' cards. Collectors of Cinderella stamps will enjoy the section on vignettes and labels which includes a number of stamp exhibition souvenir sheets. The book concludes with a section on ephemera such as information sheets, headed notepaper, maps, guides and souvenir brochures, tickets and programmes •

Prize draws Special stamps of summer 2012 to be won!



Name that stamp
From the detail shown magnified, right, identify the stamp, its value and its year of issue. Clue: a construction at your fingertips.

Knowledge
Find the answers to three philatelic posers in this *Bulletin*

1 What animal features on the special postmark of this year's Philatelic Congress of Great Britain, held in Perth next month?

2 Name a 2012 stamp on which The Queen's portrait faces right.

3 Whose voice could be heard, with the help of a smartphone, on 2010 Christmas stamps?

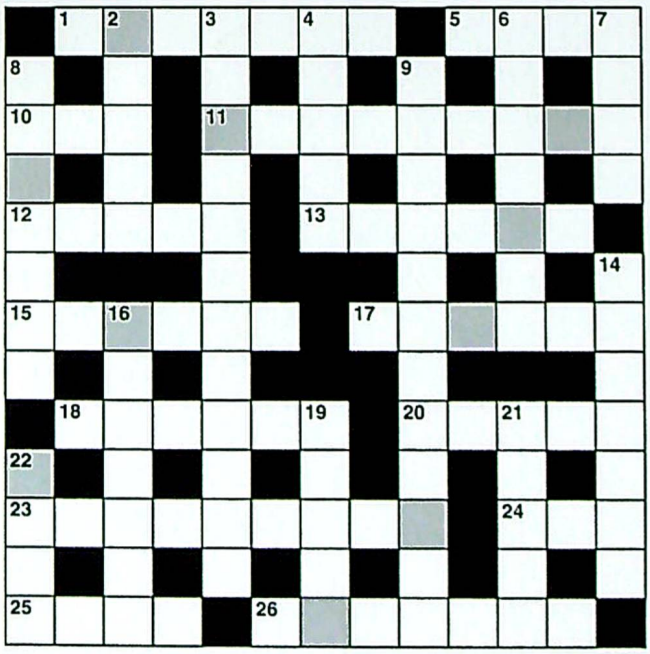
How to enter: send your answers, marked 'September Name that Stamp' and/or 'September Knowledge', to: Bulletin Prize Draws, Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB.

Closing date: 1 October 2012. Senders of the first correct entries drawn for each puzzle after the closing date win a very special selection of London 2012 stamps. There will be two runners-up prizes in each section •

July solutions and winners

Sports stamp quiz: a) Wolff Olins. b) Boccia. c) Triathlon. d) Korea. e) National Space Centre f) Diving. Winner: A Harker, Oxford. *Identify*: 1948 Olympic Games, 3d. Winner: E L Gilbert, Bishop's Stortford.

Cryptic Crossword Complete the puzzle below, then rearrange the letters in the grey squares to form a stamp-related word. Send that word, with your name and address, to 'September Crossword' at the address above. The first three correct entries drawn after 1 October win Space Science stamps (see page 8)



CLUES ACROSS

1 Unwanted soul dismissed players (7)
5 Talk of bird (4)
10 Objection overturned to large plant container (3)1
11 When exaggerated they become mountains (9)
12 Some extra dealing, buying and selling (5)
13 Seen in bistro, beautiful flashing light (6)
15 Meal tapers off (6)
17 Clay worker to wander idly (6)
18 One editor agreed (6)
20 Lie about textile (5)
23 Father grasps bird warning of curious things (9)
24 I will shortly be unwell (3)
25 Nation loses southern gallery (4)
26 Polluted clouds smothering family? Quite possibly! (7)

CLUES DOWN

2 Rumba cast a shadow (5)
3 Indemnity for wronged Minnesota cop (12)
4 In these, one should pay less for beer on board ship (5)
6 Fish for Henry I, however (7)
7 Heist a skilful inside job (4)
8 Height of artist's work about right (7)
9 Hot vessel? Mother's off to Florida to enquire (7,5)
14 Neat medical worker? (7)
16 Caustic joke offered by fellow (7)
19 Vision of armed revolution (5)
21 Scottish child I found in farm building (5)
22 Hits back, given minor argument (4)

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; send an SAE to The Editor, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB.
The promoter of 'Identify' and 'Knowledge' is Royal Mail Group Ltd, 100 Victoria Embankment, London EC4Y 0HQ.

Win a night of luxury...



Blakes is a sumptuous boutique hotel in South Kensington, loved by film stars and musicians. Now you could win a night in one of its luxurious rooms and enjoy the glamour of the restaurant and bar, famous for exclusive style, service and the best Martini in London.

The prizewinner and a guest can stay in a luxury double room on Friday 28 September, perfect if you want to catch the final days of Autumn Stampex*, or on another date, subject to availability.

How to enter Don't delay, there's only a couple of weeks to enter, so post your name and contact details to: *BPB*/Blakes Draw, HMS President, Victoria Embankment, London EC4Y 0HJ or email bpbdraw@rocketmail.com with 'Blakes' in the subject line.

Closing date Thursday 20 September. The first entry drawn wins the prize as described and will be contacted on 21 September. Entrants must be 18 or over. Full terms and conditions apply, as page 31 •

** Autumn Stampex is held at the Business Design Centre, London N1, from 26 to 29 September. See page 10 for further information*

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