BRITISH PHILATELIC

Bulletin

The magazine for collectors of UK stamps

VOLUME 55 NUMBER 4 | DECEMBER 2017 | £1.95

Machin checklist • Christmas stamp artists • Castle Highs

HAPPY CHRISTMAS!



VOTE NOW FAVOURITE STAMP POLL • NEW STAR WARS PSB • WIN ALL THE 2017 SPECIALS

VOTE FOR YOUR FAVOURITE STAMPS OF 2017
See leaflet enclosed for full details



An exceptional year for stamps

Celebrate the very best of British philately with the 2017 Royal Mail Yearbook and Yearpack.

The 64-page Yearbook features every stamp released in the last 12 months as well as a wealth of fascinating facts and intriguing stories behind the issues – all brought to you in stunning full-colour in a limited edition run of 8,000 for £139. A luxury leatherbound version in a limited edition of 160 costs £189.

The Yearpack contains all the issues in mint condition, as well as technical specifications for each set and alternative postmarks, for £119.

Both the Yearbook and Yearpack will make spectacular Christmas presents for philatelist friends and relatives – or maybe a festive gift to yourself...

You can order the Royal Mail 2017 Yearbook and Yearpack online at: www.royalmail.com/stamps •

Contents

Favourite Stamp Poll
Remember to choose your top three Special Stamps and stamp issues of 2017. Cast your vote with the leaflet inside this edition



Vote for your favourite stamps of 2017



Editor's farewell As Royal Mail Editor William Doherty moves on to pastures new he recalls happy days at the *Bulletin* **100**

Star applause Put your hands together for the *Star Wars* PSBs and Medal Covers coming out this month **101**

Royal Mail Update Post & Go news from William Doherty and the latest on postmarks with Tony Devine **107**



Post on parade New covers honour army nurses and women of the Royal Navy **108**

Machin sure Check that your Definitive albums are complete with our comprehensive list **109**

Christmas island All the festive sets from the offshore bureaux plus another look at the Royal Mail issue **112**



Christmas stamp artists Meet the winners of the Children's Design Competition and the artist who as a six-year-old painted a winning stamp in the very first contest **114**



Castles to keep The *Bulletin* guide to the Castle High-Values collection, beginning in 1955 **116**



Stamp Scene The latest news and events from the exciting world of UK philately **118**

Correspondence Readers' views on our lively letters page **122**

Festive quiz You have the chance to win the Royal Mail Yearpack in our bumper Christmas puzzler pages **123**



Issues and Withdrawals See the current stamp sets and the new issues ready for release **127**

New for 2018 We reveal Royal Mail's Special Stamp Programme for the coming year **128**

Royal Mail Editor William Doherty, Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB ● **Publishing Editor** Kate Shaw, 26 Throgmorton Street, London EC2N 2AN **Deputy Editor** Andrew Nash **Design** Peter Devine ● Price £1.95 from Post Office Ltd philatelic outlets or by order from Post Office branches ● **Annual subscription** £18.95 UK and Europe, £24.95 rest of world. Send subscriptions to Royal Mail Tallents House (address above) ● **Binders** (to hold 24 issues) £8.50, storage boxes (about 30 copies) £9.95, available by post from Royal Mail Tallents House or see http://shop.royalmail.com ● Stamp images © Royal Mail. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or parts is prohibited without prior permission of the Editors ● **Printed** in Great Britain by Zenith Print & Packaging Ltd ● **ISSN** 0953-8119 ● Royal Mail is a trading name of Royal Mail Group Ltd. Registered in England and Wales, number 4138203. Registered office: 100 Victoria Embankment, London EC4Y 0HQ



A fond farewell As *Bulletin* Royal Mail Editor William Doherty leaves for pastures new he recalls happy days at the magazine

Welcome to the latest edition of the *Bulletin*… and the last edition for me as I head off for pastures new. Am I sad? Of course, because the magazine has been great fun to work on since I came aboard six years ago. I have met amazing people; seen many marvellous stamp sets grace the pages of the *Bulletin*; and watched as the magazine grew in stature.

A very special moment was when I appeared on the *Bulletin* front page in 2012, participating in the Olympic parade with colleagues after Royal Mail celebrated Team GB gold medalists with a glittering set of stamps. Dear John Holman, the former *Bulletin* Editor (who sadly passed away this year), rang me to joke that I must be better-looking than him as he had never been chosen as a front cover model in all his 27 years at the helm!

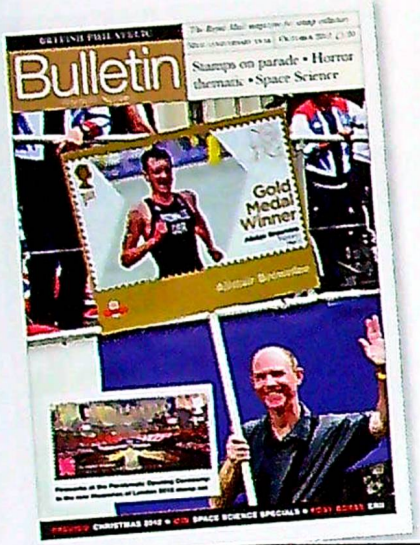
But I am happy too. Not because I am leaving, but because I am leaving the *Bulletin* in the capable hands of its editorial team led by Publishing Editor Kate Shaw. And happy because this edition is a cracker. We have, for example, a feature on the *Star Wars* set and the issue's Prestige Stamp Books and Medal Covers released this month (see opposite page); a UK Christmas stamp special on page 112, which includes the stamps designed by the winners of the Royal Mail Children's Design Competition; and on page 123 a bumper Christmas quiz spotlighting the 2017 sets, which reminds me of all the brilliant stamps that appeared here throughout the year.

We also look forward to next year, with the 2018 Special Stamp Programme on page 128. And of course, even after I have left the Royal Mail fold, I will still look forward to seeing these new stamp issues appear in the *Bulletin* month by month. Wishing you a merry Christmas, a happy new year – and many more years of fascinating philately.

W Doherty

Bulletin Royal Mail Editor

Below: William on the *Bulletin* special Olympics front page; bottom left: William stands next to John Holman at the *Bulletin* 50th anniversary celebration; bottom right: he shows *Bulletin* competition winner Gary Levitt round Tallents House







Photographs: Paul Elmes, Ian Jacobs, Michał Krawiec

The ace of space

The other-worldly wonder of *Star Wars* is revealed in a new stamp book and medal covers



Above: a detail from the promotional poster for *The Last Jedi* film due for release on 14 December

EXCITEMENT IS ROCKETING across the galaxy over two truly cosmic events this month – the UK premiere of *The Last Jedi* movie and the launch of Royal Mail's *Stars Wars* Prestige Stamp Book (PSB) and Limited Edition Medal Covers.

In tribute to this double debut on 14 December, the *Bulletin* explores both star-studded releases and the secrets behind the universe's best-loved sci-fi saga. On the following pages we tell the inside story of how the amazing *Stars Wars* species were created, as revealed in the stunningly illustrated pages of the PSB entitled The Making of The Droids, Aliens and Creatures. You will also discover fascinating facts behind three of the best-loved robots in the *Star Wars* canon with a detailed look at the Medal Covers.

Finally we focus on the huge contribution UK has made to the success of *Stars Wars*, from homegrown acting talent to special effects expertise and world-class film studios. So sit back and enjoy the story and stamps about a colourful galaxy far, far away that has been known to us for 40 years... ▶



Above: from the Prestige Stamp Book, special effects expert Neal Scanlan with his pals in the 'creature shop' at Pinewood Studios and Andy Serkis using performance capture technology to play Supreme Leader Snoke

PRESTIGE STAMP BOOKS

Animatronic monsters, digitally crafted creatures, 'Punch and Judy' hand puppets, mime artists in alien costumes – the amazing universe of *Star Wars* characters is brought to dramatic life with a magical mix of futuristic tech and old-fashioned flair. Sophisticated computer programs and digital wizards play a huge part in creating the aliens, creatures and droids who battle with or against humans across the galaxy.

Yet old-school skills have a important role, reveals expert *Star Wars* writer Tom Huddleston in The Making of the Droids, Aliens and Creatures Prestige Stamp Book and Limited Edition PSB. Species begin life as sketches, done with pencils not PCs, from drawings on old napkins to enormous wall paintings. From there the journey to full-blown character is full of tests, trials and prototypes until final perfection is achieved as a costume, puppet or CGI at the 'creature shop' special effects department at Pinewood Studios.

No wonder the process is so exhaustive. To *Star Wars* executives, the extraordinary creatures populating their movies lend the stories magic.'We invest so much love and care in every single one of these creatures,' explains *Star Wars* creature effects expert Neal Scanlan. '*Star Wars* isn't just about big spaceships. The creatures bring a special charm, an innocence.' Thousands of sketches will be done before a new character is 'built'. BB-8, for example, began life as a simple picture pencilled by *The Force Awakens* director JJ Abrams – just a circle with a dome-shaped head. Next, designers tinkered – via clay models and paintings – with various designs, including a flying drone, until settling on the final 'bouncing ball' concept.

In *The Force Awakens* seven full-sized BB-8 models used in different scenarios and produced by very different 'technologies'. One was a remote-controlled animatronic version, another was ultra-light so actor John Boyega, who plays Finn, could lift BB-8 without doing himself an injury. But for sheer olde worlde technique, nothing beats the BB-8 model attached

A STAR-STUDDED HISTORY



1977 On 25 May *Star Wars* has its world premiere in the US, and sets a standard for ground-breaking – and award-winning – creative production techniques. The next year the movie wins no less than seven Oscars, including statuettes for best visual effects, best costume design, best set design and best sound effects for the alien, creature and droid voices.



1980 *The Empire Strikes Back* is a much-anticipated sequel to the debut movie, in which villain Darth Vader famously reveals himself to be Luke





to a wheelbarrow-style contraption and pushed around by puppeteer Bryan Herring in the blazing desert of Abu Dhabi, doubling as the planet Jakku. Poor Bryan (dressed in a 'green screen' suit so he could be digitally removed later) exhausted himself running after Boyega and Daisy Ridley (who plays Rey) as the crew filmed them fleeing First Order agents.

Indeed JJ Abrams has committed himself to what is known in the industry as 'practical effects'; these are special effects that are executed with tangible materials rather than a computer. Hence the use, for example, of puppetry – from massive creations such as the luggabeast on Jakku, operated by two performers and inspired by theatrical productions, to tiny glove puppets that would not be out of place in an old-fashioned Punch and Judy show.

Even traditional puppetry, however, can be combined with 21st century technology. Some puppets are fitted with animatronic elements, which allows creatures to sniff and snort and roll their eyes. Hand puppets can be filmed and the strings and sticks that operate them 'airbrushed out' using special software. As Neal Scanlan says: 'With the porgs in *The Last Jedi*, we made them as very simple rod puppets and the people operating them could just be removed later. It's one of the joys of working with digital ▸

Above: the Prestige Stamp Book gives behind-the-scenes insights into the use of good old-fashioned puppetry and the importance of the human factor in creating believable droid characters

Skywalker's father, and unsuccessfully attempts to persuade him over to The Dark Side.

1983 *Return of the Jedi* is released but its original title was to be *Revenge of the Jedi*. Apparently George Lucas decided to change 'revenge' to 'return' as he felt Jedi, as the 'good guys', should not be taking revenge.



1999 *The Phantom Menace*, starring Ewan McGregor as a young Obi-Wan Kenobi, is released. It becomes the first *Star Wars* film to be referred to mainly by its place in the sequence of movies – *Episode One*.

2005 Finally, in *Revenge of the Sith*, the world finds out



technology.' The PSB also reveals the use of 'performance capture' technology. Actors wear sensors that exactly imitate their movements on computers, and these are then used to animate their digitally created characters. This technique was used for actors Lupita Nyong'o and Andy Serkis, who played Maz Kanata and Supreme Leader Snoke respectively in *The Force Awakens*.

Sometimes, however, you also need the human touch. Many of the creatures are costumes inhabited by stage and film actors, ballet dancers, stilt walkers, mime artists and other performers whose body shapes and movement skills lend their characters a vibrant reality. On occasion, those performers influence the way a costume develops, as was the case with Chewbacca actor Peter Mayhew. 'Peter Mayhew was the perfect person on the planet to play this character,' says Scanlan: 'He has very wide-set eyes, a very powerful jaw, and he's over seven feet tall. The mask and the costume were built around him.'

Warwick Davis combined his small stature with his acting skills to act a variety of characters over the decades. First playing an Ewok in *The Empire Srtrikes Back* when he was just 12, Davis has been in almost every movie since. He was Wollivan in *The Force Awakens* and pig-featured rebel Weeteef Cyu-Bee in *Rogue One*. Davis's continual appearances in the movies underline the importance of the human factor in making the *Star Wars* universe; no matter how out-of-this world characters, costumes and digital creations become, the acting and artistic genius comes from Planet Earth.

Above: the Star Wars Prestige Stamp Book reveals how droids, aliens and creatures were designed in the 'creature shop' at Pinewood Studios

A STAR-STUDDED HISTORY



how Anakin Skywalker went over to The Dark Side and became Darth Vader.

2007 The city of Los Angeles declares 25 May 'Star Wars Day' to mark the 30th anniversary of the film premiere. But 4 May is now recognised by fans around the world as the 'official' day to celebrate the movie phenomenon, with the pun-perfect slogan 'May the Fourth be with you'.



2015 *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* is the fastest movie to gross $1 billion – notching up the stratospheric takings in just 12



This page: the Limited Edition Medal Covers pay tribute to three of the best-loved members of the *Star Wars* family: C-3PO, R2-D2 and BB-8

MEDAL COVERS

Four Limited Edition Medal Covers, two for C-3PO in cupro-nickel and silver proof, and silver proofs for R2-D2 and BB-8, give intriguing insights into the 'lives' of these droid favourites...

C-3PO This dapper droid is unflappable when in safety but has a love-hate relationship with danger – he is either cowering or finding deeply hidden reserves of courage. His history is convoluted: he was built on Tatooine by Anakin Skywalker who became Darth Vader, and escaped Vader to Tatooine where Vader's son Luke Skywalker became his new master.

Function C-3PO is a protocol droid whose job is to assist with inter-species etiquette and translation, and is fluent in over seven million forms of communication (which he never tires of telling anyone who will listen).

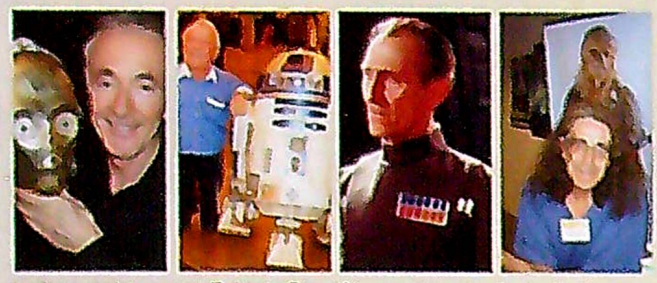
Career highlights Helping R2-D2 save Luke Skywalker from the Death Star rubbish compactor; being reassembled by Chewbacca after being ▸

days. It also becomes the biggest ever grossing film in the UK, taking £119.4 million – beating the record set by 007 hit *Skyfall*, which earned £103.2 million.

2016 In the year *Rogue One* is released, two of the *Star Wars* series' best-loved actors die: Carrie Fisher (Princess Leia) on 27 December in Los Angeles, and R2-D2 actor Kenny Baker on 13 August in Preston, Lancashire.



2017 The eighth *Star Wars* film, *The Last Jedi*, is set to premiere in the UK on 14 December; the new *Star Wars* Prestige Stamp Books and Medal Covers are released the same day.



Left to right: great British *Star Wars* actors include Anthony Daniels, Kenny Baker, Peter Cushing and Peter Mayhew

BRITS BOOST A HOLLYWOOD LEGEND

Star Wars may be the biggest Hollywood blockbuster ever, but it is a very 'British' sci-fi series. British actors have been in the main cast, British special effects gurus design the aliens and droids of the *Star Wars* universe, and Pinewood Studios handles much of the films' production.

R2-D2 and C-3PO were played by the home-grown thespians Kenny Baker and Anthony Daniels; inside Chewbacca's costume is Londoner Peter Mayhew; Alec Guinness played Obi-Wan Kenobi; Peter Cushing was Grand Moff Tarkin; today the *Star Wars* stars are Brits Daisy Ridley and John Boyega – Rey and Finn in *The Force Awakens* and *The Last Jedi*.

British-born special effects guru Neal Scanlan (pictured below) created the 'creature shop' at Pinewood Studios to build droids and aliens for *The Force Awakens* and subsequent *Star Wars* movies.

And thanks to the legendary Pinewood facility, the UK has been the unofficial home of the *Star Wars* story since its creator George Lucas shot the debut there in 1976.



shot to pieces by Imperial stormtroopers on Cloud City; being worshipped as a 'golden god' by the Ewoks on Endor and using his new-found powers to help his rebel friends against the Imperial forces.

Tech specs His gleaming gold plating may give 'Threepio' a snazzy look but he is function, not form: his cognitive powers and communication skills are down to his AA-1 Verbobrain and TranLang III communicator module.

R2-D2 Cute and cuddly he may be but 1.09m-high 'Artoo' is a hero in miniature who has battled evil throughout the universe under the command of nine masters, from Queen Padmé Amidala to Rey via Princess Leia and Luke Skywalker.

Function This astromech droid is designed to maintain spaceships and help pilots with flight controls – but his technical skills have taken him on many dangerous adventures.

Career highlights Saving Padmé from being burned alive in molten metal at the droid factory on the planet of Geonosis; escaping Darth Vader to deliver Leia's hologram message to Obi-Wan; heroically joining the Ewoks in the battle against the Empire on the forest planet of Endor.

Tech specs R2-D2's body hides tools to help him do anything from flying spaceships to hacking Imperial computers, including an inflight grasper arm, computer interface arm and utility saw.

BB-8 Astromech droid BB-8 is perhaps even more adorable than R2, yet his cute stature belies a clever design giving him swift movement: he uses a smart drive system to roll his body on magnetic casters while keeping his head in one position.

Function As rebel ace Poe Dameron's co-pilot, BB-8 is tasked with operating his starfighter's flight and power systems – and he is perfectly designed for the role, his spherical body fitting into the 'droid socket' behind the cockpit.

Career higlights Escaping from a savage First Order air raid on the Nima Outpost with explosions erupting just feet away; bravely navigating for Poe while riding the back of Poe's X-wing fighter in the attack on the First Order's Starkiller Base superweapon; teaming up with R2-D2 to complete a map that reveals the whereabouts of the galaxy's last hope for freedom: Luke Skywalker.

Tech specs BB-8's body features a variety of circular tool discs, which open up to reveal useful gear such as spanners, flame torches and cables •

Post & Go News William Doherty brings you some festive cheer with seasonal self-service stamps

For the Christmas season, Post & Go Winter Greenery stamps are reintroduced to first- and second-class stamps at the following delivery office sites: Bradford, Doncaster, Kingston, Mount Pleasant, Norwich and Queen Elizabeth II, Windsor. The first-class stamp will replace the Poppy Post & Go stamp, which was reintroduced in advance of Remembrance Sunday last month.



Above: one of the Winter Greenery designs that are reintroduced into Post & Go machines this month

The Winter Greenery designs will be available from the machine at the new Postal Museum at Phoenix Place, London WC1X 0DF (but with no Postal Museum first day covers). The Second Class will replace the Machin Second Class and feature the text overprint 'The Postal Museum' for the first time. This is the last change planned for the Postal Museum Post & Go machine this year.

The illustrations of Butcher's Broom, Holly, Mistletoe and Common Ivy are by Julia Trickey and the Winter Greenery Post & Go set was designed by Kate Stephens. It is the third in a series of the Post & Go Flora theme, first issued on 13 November 2014. For philatelic specifications, see the *Bulletin* Vol 52, page 39 •

Postmark News A new website gives you an instant view of all current special handstamps, reports Tony Devine

If you would like to choose a special handstamp for a cover or check the latest new designs that would complement your collection, you will appreciate the new website from Royal Mail that gives you a clear view of what is available. Just go to www.royalmail.com/postmarks and you will see all the latest marks, their registration numbers for ordering, sponsor details and the handstamp centres that can supply them. For example, the illustration below shows the beginning of the online segment displaying new Christmas-themed postmarks for 2017 •



Handstamp numbers, sponsor details and handstamp centres:

14371, Benham, WALES & WEST SHC
14372, Benham, LONDON SHC
14373, Benham, LONDON SHC
14374, The Westminster Collection Ltd, LONDON SHC

Amazing medics The British Forces Philatelic Service hails the dedication of army nurses

The courage and commitment of frontline nurses serving in the Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps (QARANC) are celebrated in a colourful British Forces Philatelic Service (BFPS) cover marking the 70th anniversary of the QARANC Association.

The Association provides assistance and friendship to all nurses who currently serve, as well as veterans of the Corps. The cover, out on 1 December, has a First Class Union Flag Smilers® Stamp with a label that shows QARANC's tactical recognition flash. It is cancelled by a special handstamp – BFPS 3212 – showing the Corps badge. Price: £7.50 (UK/BFPO p&p free).





Buy at www.bfps.org.uk/shop or send a cheque payable to 'BFPS CIC' to the address below •

They also serve The women of the Royal Navy are honoured in a dynamic commemorative cover



This powerful cover pays glowing tribute to the members of the Women's Royal Naval Service (WRNS) as it celebrates its 100th year. The service, known as the Wrens, was formed in 1917 so women could take over shore-based roles, freeing up more men to serve on board ship and therefore bolster the maritime war effort. However, the BFPS cover, produced with the WRNS Benevolent Trust and the Association of Wrens, also celebrates the way the WRNS helped define opportunities for women in the Royal Navy. Released on 29 November, the cover has a handstamp (BFPS 3211) with the Association of Wrens badge. Price: £7.50 (UK/BFPO p&p free).

Buy at www.bfps.org.uk/shop or send a cheque payable to 'BFPS CIC' to the address on the left •

BFPS
The Old Post Office
Links Place
Elie
Fife
KY9 1AX
www.bfps.org.uk/shop

Checklist of 2017 Definitives Here is the comprehensive list to complete your records for all the year's Definitive releases













Please note We quote Royal Mail order numbers (prefixed DS, YB etc) as given on Tallents House stock lists • Key to printers: C = Cartor, D = De La Rue, E = Enschedé, W = Walsall, ISP = International Security Printers • Printing process: G = gravure, L = litho, I = intaglio • Unless otherwise stated, definitive and country stamps are self-adhesive, have a perforation gauge of 15 x 14 (with ellipses at lower left and right sides) and two phosphor bands (2nd class standard size one band) • The dates quoted are those on which the stamps were first available from Tallents House; in some instances they may have been available at Post Offices earlier to meet postal needs.

High-value stamps

6 February £5 Sapphire Blue High Value Machin Definitive (FS626). D, G.

Low-value stamps

21 March £1.17 Sunrise Red (DS199A), £1.40 Dark Green Pine (DS199B), £1.57 Tarragon Green (DS199C), £2.27 Harvest Gold (DS199D), £2.55 Garnet Red (DS199E). D, G.



Above left: 2017 Country Definitives. Above. two stamp sheets issued in June, celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Machin defintive.
Right: three panes from the Diamond Jubilee Prestige Stamp Book. Top right: Machin pane of the Windsor Castle Prestige Stamp Book

Country definitives

England

21 March £1.17p, Oak (ES014); £1.40p, Tudor Rose (ES015). ISP, L, PVA.

Scotland

21 March £1.17p, Thistle (SS025); £1.40p, Tartan (SS026). ISP, L, PVA.

Wales

21 March £1.17p, Daffodil (WS024); £1.40p, Prince of Wales Feathers (WS025). ISP, L, PVA.

Northern Ireland

21 March £1.17p, Linen (IS011); £1.40p, Parian China (IS012). ISP, L, PVA.

Prestige Stamp Book mixed-value panes

15 February 2 x 2p, 2 x 10p, 2 x 1st Class, 2 x £1.05p and illustrated central label, Prestige Stamp Book (YB068). Machin pane W, G; pictorial stamp panes C, L, PVA.

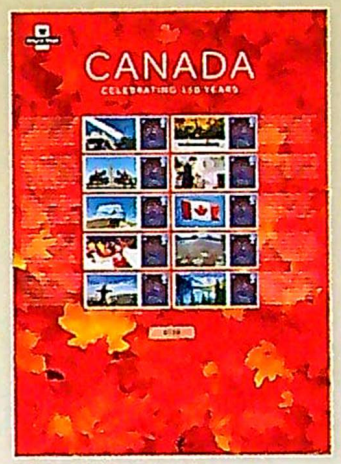
5 June Pane 3: 1 x 1p, 1 x 5p, 1 x 10p, 1 x 20p 1 x 50p, 1 x £1.00p, 1 x 2nd Class and 'gold' central label with the numeral 50; Pane 4: 2 x 20p, 6 x 1st Class and central label with the numeral 50; Pane 5: 4 x £1.00p. The Machin Definitive: 50th Anniversary Prestige Stamp Book (YB069). C, L, PVA. excepting pane 5 which is lithography and gold foil. Stamps on panes 3 and 4 have elliptical perforations; those on panes 1, 2 and 5 do not. excepting pane 5 which is lithography and gold foil.

31 July 4 x Poppy 1st Class, 3 x 1st Class Specials, 3x £1.57 Specials, 8 x 1st Class 'Barbed Wire Poppies. In First World War 1917 Prestige Stamp Book: all panes ISP, L, PVA.

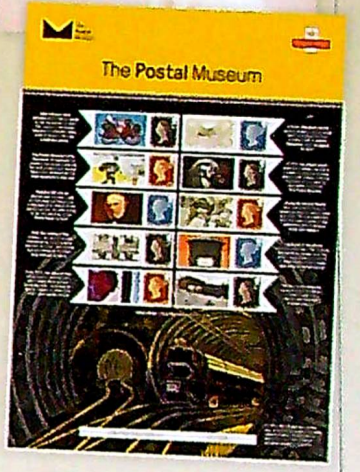
14 December Pane 1: 2 x 2nd Class, 4 x 1st Class, 2 x £1.40p and central label with image of C-3PO and R2-D2. In the *Star Wars* – The Making of the Droids, Aliens and Creatures Prestige Stamp Book (YB072). C/W, L, PVA.











Top: 4 x Royal Mail Red 1st Class definitives in the David Bowie Stamp Book, the Windsor Castle Stamp Book and the Machin Definitive Anniversary Stamp Book. Right: the Postal Museum Commemorative Sheet carries Penny Black, Blue and Red commemorative 'defintives'

Miniature Sheets

5 June 6 x 1st Class Definitives on The Machin Definitive: 50 Years of a Design Icon Miniature Sheet (MZ125). ISP, G, PVA

5 June 4 x 1st Class, 1 x 5p, 1 x 20p, 1 x £1.00p on The Machin Definitive: Golden Anniversary Celebration Miniature Sheet (MZ126). ISP, G, PVA.

Retail Stamp Books

15 February 4 x 1st Class Definitives, 2 x 1st Class Windsor Castle Miniature Sheet Pictorials (UB403). Both W, G.

14 March 4 x 1st Class Definitives, 2 x 1st Class David Bowie Pictorials (UB404) Both W, G.

5 June 6 x 1st Class Definitives – in the Machin Definitive: 50th Anniversary Retail Stamp Book (UB405) Both W, G

Pictorial (Smilers®) Generic Sheets

24 May 20 x 1st Class Hello stamps and labels depicting a variety of views of Finland: '2017 FIP Exhibition Sheet – Tampere, Finland' (AT097). C, L.

Commemorative Sheets

13 June 10 x 1st Class Union Flag stamps and labels telling the life story of Princess Anne: 'Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal: Thirtieth Anniversary' (AV047).

30 June 10 x 1st Class Fireworks greetings and labels featuring a variety of images of Canadian life: 'Celebrating Canada' (AV048)

13 September 10 x 1st Class Pictorial Definitives (4 x Penny Black, 3 x Twopenny Blue, 3 x Penny Red): 'The Postal Museum Commemorative Sheet' (AV046) •



Issuing you with comfort and joy

We hope you have a very merry Christmas with plenty of festive philatelic fun – and here is our pick of UK Yuletide stamps to help you celebrate the season

• Royal Mail – Christmas 2017

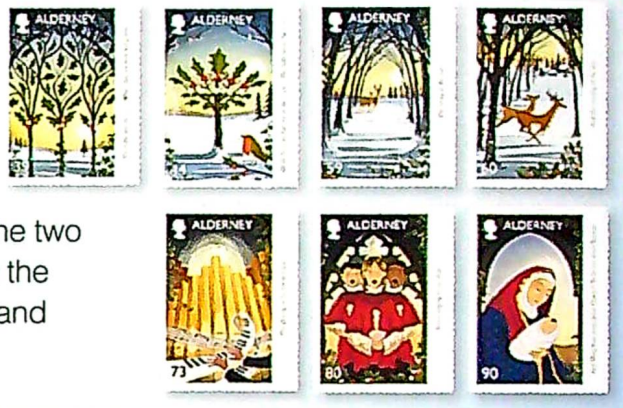
Issue date: 7 November Size: Standard 24mm x 28mm/ Large 34mm x 28mm Design: Royal Mail Group Ltd Printer: De La Rue Security Print Mint set: £12.31 (Special Stamps) £9.36 (Miniature Sheet)

This year's festive offering from Royal Mail richly illustrates the loving bond between Mary and Jesus and presents charming children's interpretations of Christmas. The Madonna & Child Miniature Sheet features an exquisite series of paintings of Mary and Christ by great artists such as Raphael. The Special Stamp Set features the winning pictures from the Royal Mail Children's Design Competition. Details and orders: www.royalmail.com/christmas2017.



• Alderney – A Christmas treet

Issue date: 8 November Size: 40mm x 30mm
Design: Keith Robinson
Printer: Cartor Security Printing Mint set: £4.45



Alderney has branched out with a beautifully illustrated set focusing on the much-loved carol *The Holly and the Ivy*. The two 'Christmas trees' feature in all seven stamps, as do lyrics from the song and Christmas icons, including Mary and Jesus, a choir and a robin. Details and orders: www.guernseystamps.com.



• Guernsey – Gifts from a king

Issue date: 8 November Size: 40mm x 30mm Design: Keith Robinson Printer: Southern Colour Print Mint set: £4.45

The Christmas spirit is graphically captured by this Guernsey Stamps set telling the moving story of generous-hearted King Wenceslas who braves the winter cold to bring firewood, meat and drink to a desperately poor peasant. Details and orders: www.guernseystamps.com.

• Jersey – Nostalgic Noel

Issue date: 20 November Size: 30mm x 40mm Design: Ruth Palmer Printer: Cartor Security Printing Mint set: £5.87



A traditional Christmas of yesteryear is lovingly portrayed in this charming retro-style stamp set designed by Ruth Palmer, who unsurprisingly has illustrated for Ladybird books. Ruth's nostalgic images conjure up a more innocent era, with iconic Christmas scenes such as decorating the tree, carol singing, and the school Nativity play. Details and orders: www.jerseystamps.com.



• Isle of Man – Delightful dozen

Issue date: 19 October Size: 32mm x 32mm
Design: EJC Design Illustrator: Catherine Rowe
Printer: Lowe Martin Mint set: £5.64

In a vibrant and colourful parade of stamps adorned with holly, mistletoe, snow and stars, artist Catherine Rowe illustrates everybody's festive favourite *The Twelve Days of Christmas*. And in tribute to the Isle of Man, Catherine has woven the Manx Tartan into the 'pipers piping' stamp and the Three Legs of Man into the 'drummers drumming' stamp. Details and orders: www.iomstamps.com

Young stamp designers at Clarence House

The winners of the Royal Mail Christmas Stamps Design Competition are presented with their prizes by Prince Charles





Arwen Wilson, age 9



Ted Lewis-Clark, age 10

WELL DONE ARWEN AND TED! From more than 200,000 pictures depicting 'What the Christmas Season Means To Me' received by Royal Mail in the Christmas Stamp Design Competition, the winning entries were designed by Ted Lewis-Clark from Frome in Somerset, and Arwen Wilson from Dudley in the West Midlands.

The children were thrilled with the news of winning. As Ted, 10 says: 'It's incredible! I couldn't believe that I had won a competition that had over 200,000 entries,' he said. 'And that now my design will be sent all over the world as the Christmas stamp!'

The two winning designs are: 'Snow family' by 9-year old Arwen, who goes to St Chad's Catholic Primary School in Dudley, that appears on the 2nd Class Christmas stamp; and 'Santa Claus on his sleigh on a starry night' by Ted, and a pupil at Oakfield Academy in Frome, that appears on the 1st Class Christmas stamp. They have each won £1,000 plus £1,000 for their school and the names and ages of the young artists are printed across the foot of the stamps.

His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales chose the two winning designs from a shortlisted selection. Then they had to be approved by The Queen as do all UK postage stamp designs.

> 'It's incredible.... my design will be sent all over the world!'
> TED LEWIS-CLARK

Last month the winning artists were invited to



‘Prince Charles was very kind... Iam so happy that my stamp design won’
ARWEN WILSOM

the prize-giving at Clarence House, where they were presented with a framed copy of their stamps.

‘It was a little nerve-racking at the start,’ says Tim of the prize-giving event. ‘But once Prince Charles came into the room it was so obvious that he was a nice person that I relaxed immediately.’

Arwen comments, ‘When I went to Clarence House it was so exciting. Prince Charles was very kind when he spoke to me and gave me a framed copy of my stamp design. It was a great day and I am very happy my stamp design won’

Other marks of the children’s success are the special slogans featuring on mail delivered to addresses nationwide.

A set of Madonna stamps covering other postal rates (see page 112) has also been issued for Christmas.

All Christmas 2017 stamps are available at www.royalmail.com/christmas2017, by phone on 03457 641 641 and in 7,000 Post Offices throughout the UK •



This is only the fourth time in Royal Mail’s 500-year history that children have designed Christmas stamps. The first ever was in 1966 when the six-year-old Tasveer Shemza was the joint winner. Her stamp, showing a King (above) has sometimes been referred to as the King Wenceslas stamp, but Tasveer has a different memory: ‘It was actually a portrait of my father, with a crown instead of the hat that he always wore to keep his bushy hair in place.

And she gave us the photograph above to show the similarity •

Philatelic Christmas souvenirs signed by Tasveer Shemza are available from Buckingham Covers, tel 01303 278137.

High on Castles

Kate Shaw examines the addictive allure of the 1955 Castle High Value design that has withstood the test of time as an enduring favourite for UK collectors

THEY ARE KNOWN AFFECTIONATELY as 'Castle Highs' and 'affectionately' is certainly the word. For niche collectors have been drawn by the allure of the 'Castle High Value' set of UK definitive stamps since their first appearance in 1955. Indeed the issue of the first four-stamp set quickly laid firm foundations for a collecting niche that has survived more than 60 years. For the many schoolboy collectors of the time, the £1 value represented an enormous investment – in 1955 pocket money was measured in pennies not pounds. *Bulletin* readers have recalled, as boys, their excited anticipation of queuing at the Post Office to buy a Castle stamp for the first time; the high cost was an important factor in the initial popularity of Castles and they were sought after by all kinds of collectors.

However, it is surely their timelessly handsome intaglio-printed designs that have made Castle Highs so addictive to collectors for so long. The four castles featured today are the same castles that appeared on the stamps issued in the 1950s: Caernarfon, Carrickfergus, Edinburgh and Windsor; therein also lies a particularly regional appeal. Meanwhile, in the six decades that Castle stamps have been available, there have inevitably been changes to printing methods and security devices. So there have been variation in shade, glaze and security print detail, which offer added interest for collectors.



Lynton Lamb self-portrait 1938 courtesy the Ruth Borchard Collection

Lynton Lamb (1907-1977)

Born in India and educated in Somerset, Lamb studied at evening classes at Camberwell School of Art studying before entering the Central School of Arts and Crafts.

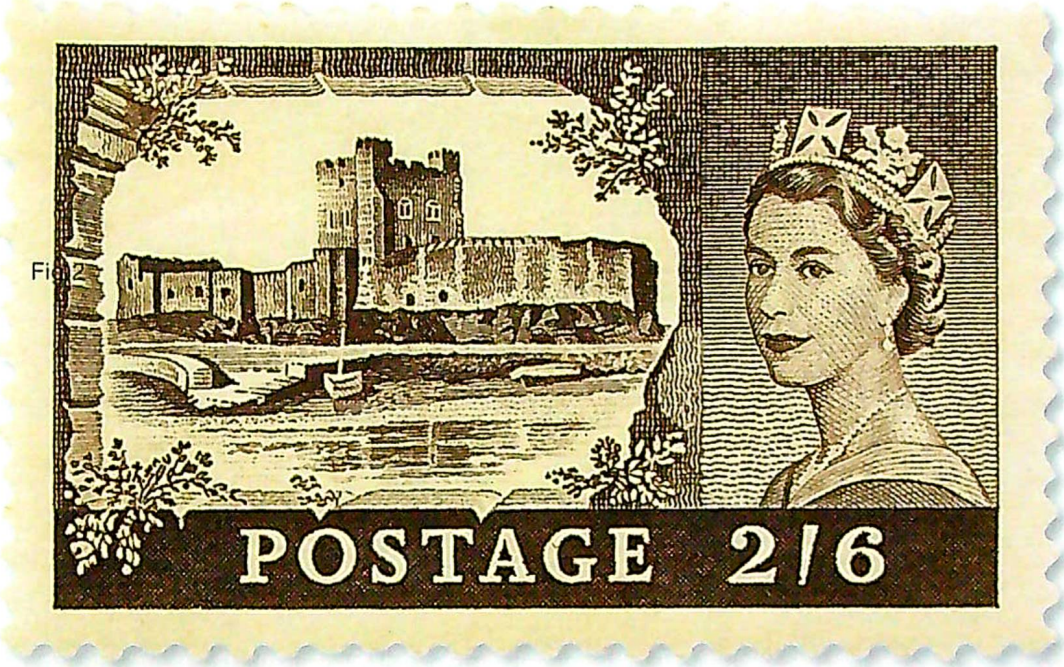
Lamb became a successful artist-designer, author, lithographer and illustrator. While very active as a painter, he is remembered chiefly for book jacket and postage stamp design.

In addition to his art work, Lamb also wrote the Inspector Charles Glover detective stories.

Three years in the making The accession of Queen Elizabeth II in 1952 meant, of course, that new stamp designs bearing her image had to be prepared. For the high values the General Post Office (GPO) decided that artists invited by the Council of Industrial Design should be free to suggest new images to replace those issued in 1951 with the profile of King George VI, and illustrations of *HMS Victory* and the White Cliffs of Dover. New designs were submitted at the beginning of 1953, but Postmaster General Herbrand Sackville and the Council of Industrial Design were happy with none of them. Inspired by Mary Adshead's tries, which used less allegorical images and some castles, they asked a number of artists to work over the summer with Waterlow and Sons printers to create essays using famous buildings that had links to the Royal Family.

The resulting proposals were: the Tower of London for the 2s 6d green, Caernarfon Castle for the 5s red, Edinburgh Castle for the 10s blue and Windsor Castle on the £1 brown. Home Secretary David Maxwell Fyfe was consulted on the matter; he suggested that a castle from Northern Ireland should replace the Tower of London image. Carrickfergus Castle, situated to the north of Belfast Lough on the east coast of Northern Ireland, proved a popular choice.

Dorothy Wildings' portrait had already been chosen for the regular definitive stamps of the new Queen's reign, and Waterlow engraver H J Bard reproduced the Wilding portrait to use on the High Values. On 25 October 1954 Herbrand Sackville approved the design concept created by artist Lynton Lamb,





Above: the first Castle High Value stamps of 1955. Lynton Lamb's design device earned the nickname of the 'broken grotto', because the castles are observed through a hole in an old stone wall

and brought the tries to the Council of Industrial Design in November; they were approved by Queen Elizabeth in March 1955. Lamb and Waterlow's created the master die for the printing in intaglio. The stamp set was accepted by The Queen on 29 June 1955. The first two Castle Highs issued were the 2s 6d brown Carrickfergus Castle and the 5s red Caernarfon Castle, on 1 September 1955; the 10s blue Edinburgh Castle and the £1 black Windsor Castle went on sale on 23 September.

Changes of printer For the 1955 and 1958 printing, Waterlow and Sons used paper watermarked with the cypher 'E 2 R' and St Edward's Crown. In 1959, the printing went to De La Rue and a crowned watermark used. In 1967 the contract passed to Bradbury Wilkinson, which did not use watermarked paper. The four stamps were discontinued on 15 May 1970, one year after the issue of Machin high value stamps. The 2s 6d, 5s and 10s values were declared invalid on 1 March 1972, but the £1 value continued to be valid for use on mail.

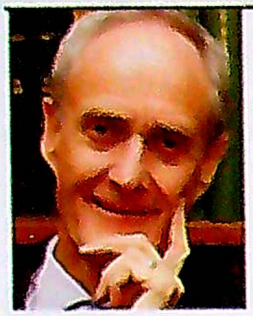
Overseas Castles British postal agencies overseas were issued with 2s 6d, 5s and 10s stamps with overprints signifying the country of use. The Castle stamps printed at Waterlow and Sons and De La Rue were used for this kind of overprinting, but the later printings by Bradbury Wilkinson were not. Overprints included Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and the Trucial States. For some countries, stamps needed to carry a different denomination – Indian rupees, for example, and later 'Gulf rupees'.

Castle stamps from Tangier, Morocco are quite interesting to collect. The three lower values were issued at the British post office there in 1955. When the office closed in 1957, a new overprint celebrated its centenary – '1857-1957'. Some Castle stamps are known without the hyphen or with one printed, thanks to a third overprint •

Next month: the second set of Castle Highs, created from photographs taken by Prince Andrew, Duke of York, and featuring interesting errors to watch out for

Below: stamps such as this one, overprinted for Morocco agencies, could be used on mail posted in the UK since they did not carry a French or Spanish denomination





Stamp Scene Dane Garrod keeps you posted on events and activities in the philatelic world

2 December Beckenham Stamp and Postcard Fair, Azelia Hall, Croydon Road, Beckenham BR3 4DA, 9am to 3pm, 12 dealers, refreshments. Enquiries: Ray McQuade, 0208 395 9285.

2 December Liverpool Stamp Fair, St. Columbia Church Hall, Hillfoot Road, Hunts Cross, Liverpool L25 0ND, 10am to 3.30pm. Enquiries: Fred O'Reilly, 01226 765069.

2 December Leicester Stamp Fair, Holiday Inn, St. Nicholas Circle, Leicester LE1 5LX, 9.30am to 3.30pm. Enquiries: John Suschitzky, 0116 235 0441.

2 December Redbourne Stamp Fair, Redbourne Village Hall, 63 High Street, Redbourne AL3 7LW, 10am to 4pm. Enquiries: Graham O'Hara, 07710 683122.

2 December Rawreth Stamp Fair, Rawreth Parish Hall, Church Road, Rawreth SS11 8SH, 10am to 4pm, 10 dealers, refreshments, free parking. Enquiries: Steve Search, 01702 323682, stevesearch@hotmail.com.



2 December National Philatelic Society Christmas Meeting – Members' Displays – The Welsh Centre, 157-163 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8UE. Displays at 2.45pm preceded by Members' Auction at 12.50pm. Enquiries: Allen Wood, nps@ukphilately.org.uk.

3 December Hopton Stamp Fair, Hopton Village Hall, Station Road, Hopton NR31 9BE, 10am to 3pm. Enquiries: Terry Allaker, 01502 563759.

3 December Bedford Stamp Fair, St. Mark's Church Hall, Calder Rise, Bedford MK41 7UY, 10am to 4pm, 11 dealers, free parking. Enquiries: Paul Harris, 01623 621143.

3 December Braintree Stamp Fair, The Bocking Arts Centre, 15 Bocking Road, Braintree CM7 9AE, 9.30am to 3.30pm, 8 dealers, free parking. Enquiries: Lorne Webb, 01424 751518.

3 December Oxford Stamp Fair, Botley W.I. Hall, North Hinksey Lane, Oxford OX2 0JS, 9am to 1pm. Enquiries: Tristan Brittain, 07957 158299.

3 December Taplow Stamp Fair, Taplow and Hitcham W.I. Hall, Institute Road, Taplow SL6 0NS, 10am to 4.30pm. Enquiries: David Milton, 01895 637283, david.milton139@gmail.com.

8 December Strand Stamp Fair, Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way, London WC1H 0DG, 9am to 4pm. Admission free. Enquiries: Kate Puleston, 020 8946 4489.

9 December Preston Stamp Fair, Barton Village Hall, Garstang Road, Preston PR3 5AA, 10am to 4pm, 12 dealers, refreshments, free parking. Enquiries: John Roberts, 07943 174958, john.roberts591@virginmedia.com.

9 December Middlewich Stamp Fair, Community Centre, Civic Way, Middlewich, CW10 9BX, 10am to 3.30pm, free admission and parking. Enquiries: Fred O'Reilly, 01226 765069.

9 December King's Lynn Stamp Fair, Gaywood Church Rooms, Gayton Road, Gaywood, King's Lynn PE30 4DZ, 10am to 3pm. Enquiries: Tony Hender, 01328 829318.

DIARY DATES
DECEMBER 2017 JANUARY 2018



9 December Cardiff Stamp, Postcards and Collectors' Fair, Cardiff City Hall, Cardiff CF10 3ND, 10am to 4pm, 40 dealers. Enquiries: Malcolm Harrington, 01792 415293, malcolm.harrington@hotmail.co.uk.

9 December Canterbury Postcard and Collectors' Fair, Westgate Hall, Westgate Hall Road, Canterbury CT1 2BT, 10am to 3.30pm, free admission. Enquiries: Clive Baker, 01843 862707, ukoldpostcards.com.

10 December Chelmsford Stamp and Postcard Fair, Old Chelmsfordian Club, Roxwell Road, Chelmsford CM1 2LY, 9am to 3pm. Enquiries: Steve Burnell, 01708 229763.

10 December Bexley Stamp Fair, Freemantle Hall, Bexley High Street, Bexley DA5 1AA, 9.30am to 3pm, 7 dealers. Enquiries: Lorne Webb, 01424 751518.

10 December Wokingham Stamp Fair, St. Crispin's Centre, London Road, Wokingham RG40 1SR, 9am to 3pm. Enquiries: Tristan Brittain, 07957 158299.

13 December Great Britain Philatelic Society – Evening Reception at Stanley Gibbons, 399 Strand, London WC2R 0LX, 6pm onwards with Members' displays. Enquiries: Phil Waud, 07484 629171, secretary@gbps.org.uk.

16 December Thatcham Stamp and Postcard Fair, Thatcham Memorial Hall, Bath Road, Thatcham RG18 3AG, 9.30am to 2.30pm, 10 dealers, free admission, refreshments available. Enquiries: Paula Cant, 01256 415699, paula@paulacantstamps.co.uk.

17 December Slip End Stamp Fair, Village Hall, Markyate Road, Slip End, Luton LU1 4BU, 10am to 4pm. Enquiries: Graham O'Hara, 07710 683122.

23 December Addlestone Stamp Fair, Community Centre, Garfield Road, Addlestone KT15 2NJ, 10am to 4.30pm. Enquiries: David Milton, 01895 637283, davidmilton139@gmail.com.

27 December Aylesbury Stamp Fair, Holiday Inn, Aston Clinton Road, Aylesbury HP22 5AA, 10am to 4pm. Enquiries: Graham O'Hara, 07710 683122.

5-6 January Beckenham Stamp and Postcard Fair, Azelia Hall, Croydon Road, Beckenham BR3 4DA, 9am to 3pm, 12 dealers, refreshments. Enquiries: Ray McQuade, 0208 395 9285.

6 January Charing Cross Market, 1 Embankment Place, Villiers Street, London WC2N 6RH, 7am to 3pm. Enquiries: Bridget Petticrew, 01252 842906, bridget@charingcrossmarket.com.

6 January Rawreth Stamp Fair, Rawreth Parish Hall, Church Road, Rawreth SS11 8SH, 10am to 4pm, 10 dealers, refreshments, free parking. Enquiries: Steve Search, 01702 323682, stevesearch@hotmail.com.

12 January Strand Stamp Fair, London, as before.



13 January North Wales Stamp and Postcard Fair, Ysgol Eirias, Eirias Road, Colwyn Bay LL29 7SP, 9.30am to 3.30pm. Enquiries: Steve Chapman, 01745 826434.

13 January Telford Stamp and Card Club, Belmont Hall, Tan Bank, Wellington TF1 1LU, 10am to 3pm, 15 dealers, refreshments, free parking. Enquiries: Richard Camp, 01952 405458, mail@richardcamp.cp.uk.

13 January Charing Cross Market, 1 Embankment Place, Villiers Street, London WC2N 6RH, 7am to 3pm. Enquiries: Bridget Petticrew, 01252 842906, bridget@charingcrossmarket.com. ▷

13 January Stamp Collectors' Fair, Trinity Church Hall, Sandgate Road, Folkestone CT20 2UQ, 9am to 1.30pm, free parking and entrance. Enquiries: Peter Barrett, 01304 829827.

13 January Margate Collectors' Fair, Union Church, Union Crescent, Margate CT9 1NR, 10am to 3pm, free admission. Enquiries: Clive Baker, 01843 862707.

19-20 January York Stamp and Coin Fair, The Grandstand, York Racecourse, York YO23 1EX, Friday 11am to 6pm, Saturday 10am to 4pm, 96 stamp dealers, free admission, car parking, buffet and bar. Enquiries: Chris Rainey, 01793 513431.

20 January Charing Cross Market, 1 Embankment Place, Villiers Street, London WC2N 6RH, 7am to 3pm. Enquiries: Bridget Petticrew, 01252 842906, bridget@charingcrossmarket.com.

20 January Basingstoke Stamp and Postcard Fair, The Costello School, Basingstoke RG21 4AL, 10am to 3pm, 12 dealers, free parking and admission, refreshments. Enquiries: Paula Cant, 01256 415699, paula&paulacantstamps.co.uk.

21 January Glasgow Postcard Fair, Bellahouston Leisure Centre, 31 Bellahouston Drive, Glasgow G52 1HH, from 9.30am. Enquiries: 01290 551122 (office hours), restenlake@stenlake.co.uk.

27 January Charing Cross Market, 1 Embankment Place, Villiers Street, London WC2N 6RH, 7am to 3pm. Enquiries: Bridget Petticrew, 01252 842906, bridget@charingcrossmarket.com.

27 January North West Kent Postcard Club Postcard Fair, St. George's Church Hall, Gravesend DA11 0TB, 9.30am to 3.30pm. Dealers and displays, car parking nearby, free admission, refreshments available. Enquiries: Julie Lester, 01474 325507.

28 January Leicester Postcard Fair, Ramada Leicester Stage Hotel, 299 Leicester Road, Wigston, Leicester LE18 1JW, 10am to 4pm, free parking, refreshments available. Enquiries: David Neill, 0116 243 2236, dn@davidneill.net •

Society meetings

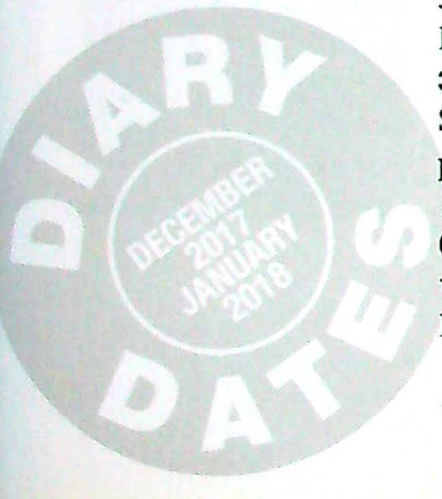
2 December National Philatelic Society Christmas meeting at the Welsh Centre, 157-163 Gray's Inn Rd, London WC1X 8UE. Enquiries: Peter Mellor, 01582 762284.

5 December Royal Philatelic Society London Christmas meeting, 41 Devonshire Place, London W1G 6JY. Talk entitled Your Very Loving Madeline by Dane Garrod, 5pm

13 December GB Philatelic Society evening reception at Stanley Gibbons, 399 Strand, London WC2R 0LX, 6pm onwards, with members' displays. Enquiries: Peter Tanner, 01753 887755.

3 January Great Britain Philatelic Society meeting at the Royal Philatelic Society London, 41 Devonshire Place, London W1G 6JY. 11am presentation by Richard Hobbs – British Propaganda Envelopes of the 19th Century, 2.15pm society competitions. Enquiries: Phil Waud, 07484 629171, secretary@gbps.org.uk.

13 January GB Philatelic Society meeting, at Royal Philatelic Society London, 41 Devonshire Place, London W1G 6JY. 11am: British



Propaganda Envelopes of the 19th Century by Richard Hobbs; 2:15pm: society competitions. Enquiries: as above •

Special Stamp-related events

New Star Wars movie *The Last Jedi* premieres on 14 December – the same day as the release of Royal Mail's 'The Making of the Droid, Aliens and Creatures' Prestige Stamp Book and Star Wars Limited Edition Medal Covers (see page 101).



The Museum of London is hosting an exhibition called Votes for Women, which celebrates the 100th anniversary of the victory of the suffragette campaign in 1918 (www.museumoflondon.org.uk). The show launches on 2 February, closely followed by the release of Royal Mail's Votes for Women Special Stamp issue, out on 15 February (see the Special Stamp Programme for2018 on page 128 and Preview in the January issue of the *Bulletin*).

The Museum is also running a display that looks behind the scenes of new movie *Paddington 2*, released last month. The display, up until 19 December, features outfits and props from the film, including the little's bear's famous duffel coat and hat. Paddington Bear has appeared in three stamp issues: Messages (1994, right) Animal Tales (2006) and Classic Children's TV (2014).



The Imperial War Museum North, which appeared on a stamp in July's Landmark Buildings issue, has an exhibition called Wyndham Lewis: Life, Art, War, which features more than 160 of the artist's pictures and paintings, books and journals. Details: www.iwm.org.uk •

The Postal Museum

Postal Museum storyteller Olivia Armstrong reveals the tale of the first Christmas greetings card in three festively fun children's sessions in the London museum's Learning Space on 2 December. Two family 'write a letter to Santa' sessions take place the following day. On 5 December the Royal Mail Choir stages an evening of Christmas carols, postal-themed pop songs, mince pies and mulled wine. Details: www.postalmuseum.org.'s Learning Space on 2 December. Two-family 'write a letter to Santa' sessions take place the following day. On 5 December the Royal Mail Choir stages an evening of Christmas carols, postal-themed pop songs, mince pies and mulled wine. Details: www.postalmuseum.org •

Handstamp Centre News

The Northern England Special Handstamp Centre in South Shields is due to close down for a while, because it is situated in an area that is part of an urban redevelopment programme. If you usually request special covers from the South Shields office, you are advised to send them to Tallents House instead, until further notice (address on page 99) •

UK Events 2018

14-17 February Spring Stampex, Business Design Centre, 52 Upper Street, Islington, London N1 0QH.

15-16 April 89th Annual Scottish Philatelic Congress, The Dewars Centre, Glover Street, Perth PH2 0TH.

26-29 July 100th Philatelic Congress of Great Britain, Jurys Inn, Gateshead NE8 3AE.

Watch out for further details of these prestigious events nearer the time •

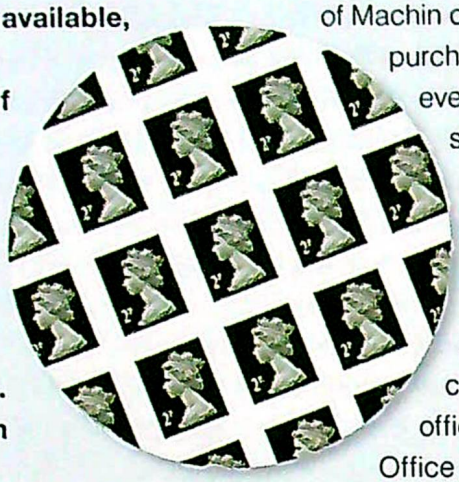
Correspondence

Getting visible

I have some queries for you. Firstly, each year definitive stamps are produced with a date code and some with a source code; these annual changes are obviously visible, so why are they not obtainable from Tallents House as new issues with visible changes for collectors? Every time I have requested them, I am told they can only send what stock is currently available, which is infuriating.

Secondly, dealers have stock of these items almost immediately after release. How are they able to obtain them? My local post office – the largest in Bristol – never has these items, and only has last year's issues! I hope you are able to answer the above. I love the *Bulletin* and read it from cover to cover.

Mike Stuthers, Bristol



Customers who regularly order 'visible changes' will receive all definitives when source codes change each year. Only stamps with a new design element – such as, in the case of definitives, colour or overprint – are classified as new issues. A change in elements of security printing, which includes the date positioning in the background, does not constitute a new issue. And for obvious reasons, changes in small details and techniques of security printing are not widely publicised.

However, the change of date might be considered in a separate category, owing to the large number of Machin collectors who, like you, seek to purchase the complete set of variations every year. We have passed on this suggestion to Tallents House.

As to your second question, dealers obtain mint stamp stocks by ordering them from Royal Mail. Now that Post Office Ltd and Royal Mail Group Ltd are separate companies, stamps stocked in post offices are determined by what the Post Office orders and not by what Royal Mail would like to supply. So the only way to achieve a better service there is for customers to keep asking and ordering through their local post office.

Thank you for your comments about the *Bulletin* – we are happy to hear you find the editorial of interest.

Kate Shaw, Bulletin Publishing Editor



Message from our art editor

As the person who designs the *Bulletin*, I have a great interest in the design of the stamps themselves. So I want to encourage readers to vote for their top stamps of 2017 in the *Bulletin* Favourite Stamp Poll entry form enclosed with this magazine. If you have not received the entry form or would like to have some extra copies, please email rmbulletin@rocketmail.com. By the way, *Bulletin* readers were disappointed when we ended the voting for favourite stamp set as well favourite individual stamps, so we have reinstated it.

Note that this poll is open to the general public and we would therefore very much appreciate you encouraging your family and friends to vote. This kind of feedback is also very welcome by the Royal Mail Stamps and Collectibles team who design and produce your stamps.

Peter Devine, Bulletin Art Editor

Shock to the system

I would like to draw your attention to the problems that the new Royal Mail Stamps and Collectibles computer system is causing me and my *Bulletin* subscription. I have been a subscriber for over 50 years, so why do I now have to renew my subscription every year? In addition, I have had to set up a new account to renew – why does the new system not allow me to do it through my existing account?

And I would like to ask why I did not get a reminder about renewing the subscription. Why does the Royal Mail website not have a 'renewal' button for the *Bulletin*? I also have a problem with the way in which my *Bulletin* is delivered. Previously the magazine came in a 'normal' envelope; so why does it now arrive in a window envelope with a folded A4 sheet of paper? This is not environmentally friendly.

S Langton, by email

We have received other letters outlining problems with the new computer system used to despatch stamp orders and *Bulletin* subscriptions from Royal Mail, so we recognise that unfortunately you are not the only one experiencing such issues.

You make many other points in your letter which we did not have space to print. But we have forwarded your letter to Stamps and Collectibles who say you will receive a reply to every point. We look forward to seeing their response as much as you do.

William Doherty, Royal Mail Editor

It's good to hear from you...

The Editor welcomes your correspondence – you can send it either by email to rmbulletin@rocketmail.com or by post to Tallents House (see address on page 128). Senders of letters that are published will receive one of the latest Royal Mail Presentation Packs as a thank-you.



WIN GREAT STAMPING PRIZES

You have THREE chances to win the Royal Mail 2017 Yearpack containing every single Special Stamp released this year:



1 ENTER the Bumper Christmas Quiz overleaf.
2 NAME That Stamp on page 125.
3 VOTE in the *Bulletin* Favourite Stamp Poll 2017.

The winner in each puzzle will be the first correct entry drawn at random after the closing date.
Ten runners-up will receive Royal Mail Presentation Packs.

How to enter Send your answers to the puzzles on pages 124 and 125, along with contact address or phone number, marked 'Bulletin Christmas Quiz' and/or 'December Name That Stamp' to Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB.

Quiz and Name That Stamp closing date
10 January 2018.

The *Bulletin* Favourite Stamp Poll prize will be awarded to one voter drawn at random from all participants in the Poll (please see leaflet enclosed with this edition).

How to vote Please follow the guidelines on the enclosed leaflet to vote by mail, email or online.

Poll closing date 17 February 2018.

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. 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.

October solutions and winners *Robot Quiz Solution* 1c, 2a, 3b, 4a, 5c. *Winners* Alan Adcock, Chris Bird, S Cherrington. *Runners-up* Dr E Andersen, Z Bowater, T J L Browne, J Jobbins. *Name That Stamp Solution* Cyberman, 50 Years of Doctor Who, 2013. *Winners* Sadot Bermudez, P Bowater, A D Laxon. *Runners-up* T J Bowater, Peter Chitton, Edward Paton, Dr Robert Spencer.



Bumper Christmas Quiz

JANUARY

1 Our ancestors' artistic flair and technological innovation were showcased in a fascinating stamp issue in January. What was it called?

a Little Britain
b Ancient Britain
c Benjamin Britten

FEBRUARY

2 The February cover of the *Bulletin* showed the design duo behind the Windsor Castle issue. What is their company's name?

a Up
b Down
c Round and Round

MARCH

3 David Bowie's brilliant final album was on one of the stamps in March's issue that paid tribute to the superstar. The album is called…

a *Rock Star* **b** *Shooting Star* **c** *Blackstar*

APRIL

4 At the Grand National in April, a statue was unveiled which celebrated a three-times National winner who also appeared in the Racehorse Legends set. What was the horse's name?

a Shergar
b Red Rum
c Desert Orchid

MAY

5 Holding a smartphone over one stamp in May's Songbirds issue will activate an animation of the bird and a recording of its call. Which bird can you hear?

a Nightingale
b Song Thrush
c Skylark

JUNE

6 In June the Royal Philatelic Society London appointed its first President from overseas. What is his name?

a Patrick Mower
b Patrick Maselis
c Patrick Swayze

JULY

7 UK philatelists Alan Holyoake and Colin Tabeart signed the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists at a special ceremony in July. Where was it held?

a Llanfihangel-y-Creuddyn
b Llanfair-yn-Neubwll
c Cardiff

AUGUST

8 What place name was used in the postmark for August's Classic Toys issue?

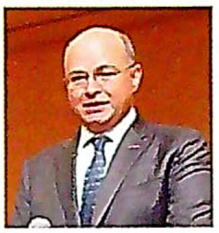
a Acton Man
b Toys Hill
c Dollis Hill

SEPTEMBER

9 When did The Postal Museum's Mail



5



6



7



9



8



10



11

Rail attraction open to the public?
a 24 September
b 14 September
c 4 September

OCTOBER

10 What island inspired the cute Porgs that star in October's Star Wars set?
a Isle of Wight
b Canvey Island
c Skellig Michael

NOVEMBER

11 What amazing milestone achieved by The Queen did the stamp world celebrate with on 20 November?
a Golden wedding anniversary
b Platinum wedding anniversary
c 60 glorious years of corgi ownership

DECEMBER

12 Two stamps in the Christmas issue featured pictures produced by winners of the Royal Mail Children's Design Competition. How many children entered the competition?
a Over 200,000
b Three million
c Ooh, I would say at least 20

Name That Stamp

From the detail under the loupe below, identify the illustrator of the stamp and its date of issue



WIN every Special Stamp of 2017!

See page 123 for details of prizes, how to enter and rules

EXCLUSIVE OFFER FOR BULLETIN SUBSCRIBERS

RESIDING IN THE UK, USA, WEST EUROPE, AUSTRALIA, CANADA & NZ.



Put Your 1st £55 FREE towards a high value !

ATTENTION BULLETIN SUBSCRIBERS:

Is Your Collection Complete? Are You Missing Earlier GB Stamps?

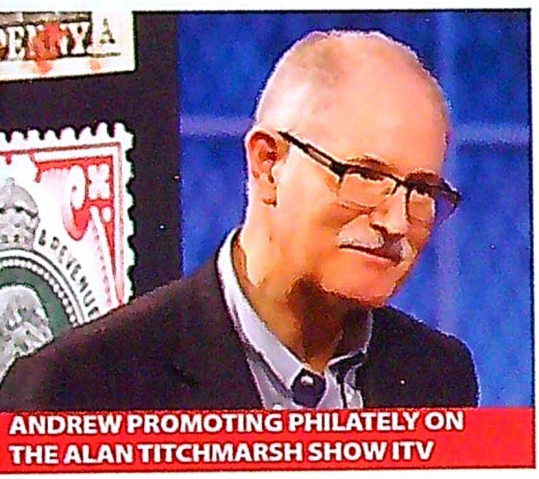
3,000+/- LOTS GB TO CHOOSE FROM !



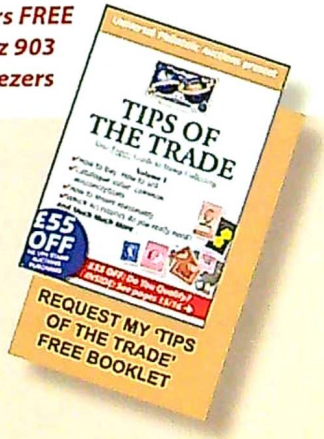
Contrary to popular opinion earlier GB Stamps like these don't have to cost a fortune if you win them at my Universal Philatelic Auctions...

Which is why, If You Want to add affordable earlier GB Stamps missing from your collection, I'll give you your 1st GBP£55 Auction Winnings FREE so you can test my Auction.

All You Have to do is...Simply Request Your Next FREE Catalogue Now and I'll send you my FREE Tips of The Trade PLUS Your FREE Complimentary pair of Tweezers which are exactly the same as we professionals use in the office -


ANDREW PROMOTING PHILATELY ON THE ALAN TITCHMARSH SHOW ITV


Yours FREE Prinz 903 Tweezers



JUST REQUEST YOUR FREE CATALOGUE NOW while you're thinking about it and we'll send your tweezers immediately –

Contact my Team: ***www.upastampauctions.co.uk*** – go to auctions or call us on:

+44 (0)1451 861111 Fax: +44 (0)1451 861297

– e-mail: ***info@upastampauctions.co.uk*** quoting 'Bulletin Tweezer Mail: UPA, (BulletinTCat Offer)

4 The Old Coalyard, West End, Northleach, GL54 3HE, England

Royal Mail stamp Issues and Withdrawals

14 December **Issue** *Star Wars* – The Making of the Droids, Aliens and Creatures: Prestige Stamp Book (pane 1 has 2 x 2nd Class, 4 x 1st Class, 2 x £1.40; panes 2, 3 and 4 all have 4 x 1st Class Special Stamps). Prestige Stamp Book First Day Cover (with pane 1), Limited Edition Prestige Stamp Book (limited edition of 1,977), Medal Cover: C-3PO in limited edition of 15,000, Silver Proof Medal Cover 1: C-3PO, Silver Proof Medal Cover 2: BB-8, Silver Proof Medal Cover 3: R2-D2 (all Silver Proofs in limited edition of 750). Details: pages 4, 36, 45, 76.



17 January **Withdrawal** Ancient Britain: Stamps (2 x 1st Class, 2 x £1.05, 2 x £1.33, 2 x £1.52, se-tenant pairs), Presentation Pack, Stamp Souvenir, Postcards (8 in set).









23 January **Issue** To be announced. Details: page 132.

23 January **Issue** Smilers® Album Continuation Pages, Standard Album Continuation Pages.

6 February **Withdrawal** 65th Anniversary of the Accession of HM The Queen: £5 Large Sapphire Blue Machin Definitive, Presentation Pack.

14 February **Issue** Royal Mail Heritage – Mail by Sea: Post & Go Stamps (6 designs overprinted).

14 February **Issue** Racehorse Legends: Framed Shergar Stamp and Stamp Enlargement signed by the trainer Sir Michael Stoute. Limited edition of 100. UK only.

15 February **Issue** Votes for Women: Stamps (2 x 2nd Class, 2 x 1st Class, 2 x £1.40, 2 x £1.57 in horizontal se-tenant pairs), Presentation Pack, Postcards (8 in set), Stamp Souvenir, Coin Cover.

15 February **Withdrawal** Windsor Castle: Stamps (3 x 1st Class, 3 x £1.52), Limited Edition Exhibition Miniature Sheet only available at Stampex (2 x 1st Class, 2 x £1.33), Miniature Sheet (2 x 1st Class, 2 x £1.33), Press Sheet (16 Miniature Sheets), Presentation Pack, Stamp Book, Prestige Stamp Book, Stamp Souvenir, Stamp Sheet Souvenir, Postcards (11 in set), Medal Cover.



Order all philatelic items, including the stamp products listed above, at www.royalmail.com/stamps or from Royal Mail Stamps and Collectibles PO Box 1373, Sunderland SR5 9PG, UK. (Overseas subscribers will need to use a stamp.) Telephone order line (08.30 to 17.00 Monday to Friday) 03457 641 641. From overseas: +44 131 316 7483. Minimum handling charge UK £1.45, Europe £1.55, rest of world (airmail) £2.15. Please quote 17BUL12, the *Bulletin* media code. Selected items are available at Post Office branches and philatelic outlets at main post offices.

FSC www.fsc.org MIX Paper from responsible sources FSC® C018670

Information about Royal Mail products is the latest available at the time of going to press. Royal Mail is not responsible for opinions and information provided by independent writers in this publication

Royal Mail

The cruciform and the colour red are registered trade marks of Royal Mail Group Ltd. © Royal Mail Group Ltd 2017, all rights reserved. All stamp images © Royal Mail Group Ltd
Any use of stamp images must be cleared with the Royal Mail Intellectual Property department – see www.royalmail.com/intellectual-property

Royal Mail

2018 SPECIAL STAMP PROGRAMME

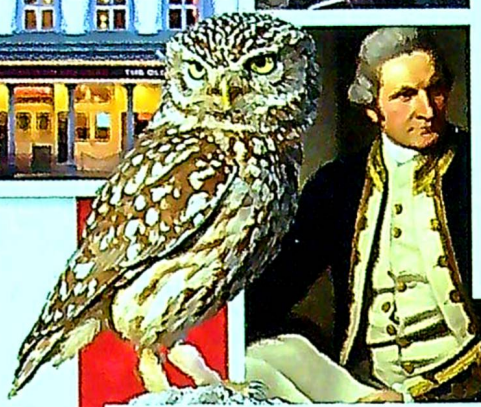


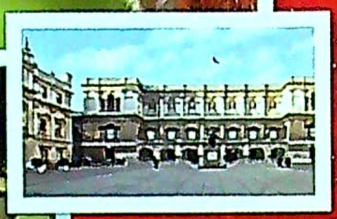


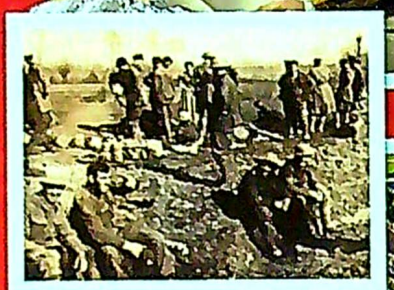


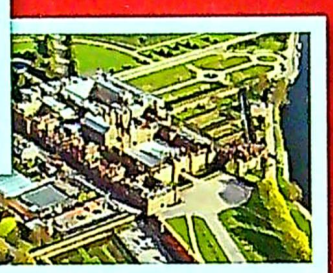


















2018

Special Stamps

15	February	Votes for Women
20	March	The RAF Centenary
17	April	Reintroduced Species
11	May	The Old Vic
5	June	Royal Academy of Arts
26	June	Dad's Army
31	July	Hampton Court Palace
16	August	Captain Cook and the *Endeavour*
30	August	Owls
13	September	The First World War 1918
16	October	To be announced
1	November	Christmas
14	November	HRH The Prince of Wales 70th Birthday

Post & Go Stamps

23	January	To be announced
14	February	Royal Mail Heritage: Mail by Sea
12	September	Royal Mail Heritage: Mail by Bike

Stamp Sheets

20	March	The RAF Centenary
1	June	150th Anniversary of the Trades Union Congress

Issue dates and names are subject to change.
All information is correct at the time of going to press.

Collectors' note

Prestige Stamp Books are planned for the following issues: RAF Centenary, First World War1918 and the Special January and October issues.Watch out for philatelic specifications and background details in the *British Philatelic Bulletin.*
To subscribe, visit https://shop.royalmail.com

Please quote media code 17BUL12 when ordering philatelic items listed here – online, by phone or by post.
Online: www.royalmail.com/stamps
By post: Royal Mail Stamps and Collectibles,
PO Box 1373, Sunderland SR5 9PG, UK
(overseas subscribers will need to use a stamp)
By telephone: 03457 641 641.
From overseas: +44 131 316 7483
Order lines are open from 08.30 to 17.00 Monday to Friday. Minimum handling charge UK £1.45, Europe £1.55, rest of world (airmail) £2.15.