The magazine for collectors of UK stamps

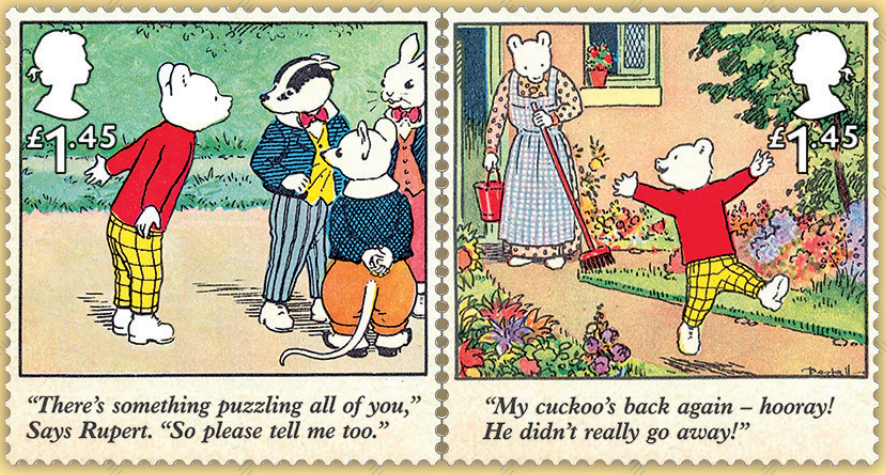
September 2020 | £2.45

Royal Mail

Philatelic Bulletin

Volume 58 No.1

Check them out



"There's something puzzling all of you," Says Rupert. "So please tell me too."

"My cuckoo's back again – hooray! He didn't really go away!"

RUPERT AND CHUMS IN THE NEW ROYAL MAIL STAMP ISSUE

AIR CRASH MAIL • POOLS AND THE POST • POWs IN THE FAR EAST IN WWII

Grand albums for your tiny works of art



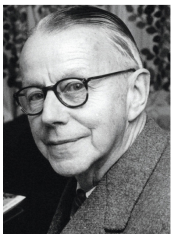
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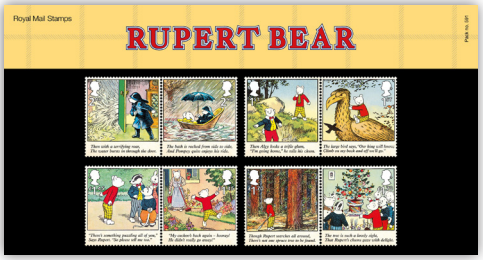
Royal Mail

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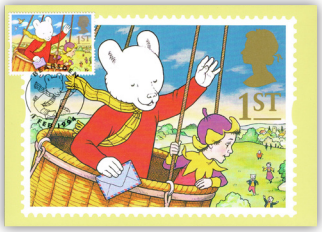


It's Rupert Bear's 100th anniversary

Royal Mail celebrates with stamps featuring Alfred Bestall's classic comic illustrations **4**



How well do you know the little bear? Test your knowledge with the Rupert Bear quiz for your chance to win one of five Presentation Packs **9**



Rupert's got previous form That's having been framed in Royal Mail stamps back in the 90s! **10**



The cheque's in the post How pools companies worked with the Post Office to pay their lucky winning punters **12**



Editor Tim Lees, Royal Mail, 185 Farringdon Road, Floor MP-03, London EC1A 1AA ● **Design and content creation** Ian Boardman, Adesso Creative Ltd ● Price £2.45 from Post Office Ltd philatelic outlets or by order from Post Office branches ● **12 months' subscriptions** £22.95 UK and Europe; £29.50 rest of the world. Send subscriptions to Royal Mail Stamps and Collectibles, PO Box 1373, Sunderland SR5 9PG, UK or subscribe online at royalmail.com/bulletin ● **Binders** (to hold 24 issues) are priced at £4.99 and are available by post or online ● Copyright and editorial rights are reserved by Royal Mail Group Ltd ● All rights reserved ● Reproduction in whole or parts is prohibited without prior permission of Royal Mail Group Ltd ● **Printed** in Great Britain by Zenith Print & Packaging Ltd ● **ISSN** 2633 2310 ● Royal Mail is a trading name and registered trade mark of Royal Mail Group Ltd. Registered in England and Wales, number 4138203. Registered office: 100 Victoria Embankment, London EC4Y 0HQ ● Stamp images © Royal Mail Group Ltd.

Air crash mail The stunning Adrian Hopkins collection – stories behind covers salvaged from disasters as the jet age advanced in the 1950s **20**



The Fall of Singapore Churchill struggled to come to terms with it, but sadly, many captured allied troops never did **28**



War and Peace End of the Second World War £5 Coin Cover, issued on 15 August 2020 – the 75th anniversary of VJ Day **30**



Rupert Bear is 100





Rupert's Rainy Adventure – Frame one
2nd Class



Rupert's Rainy Adventure – Frame two
2nd Class



Rupert and the Lost Cuckoo – Frame one
£1.45

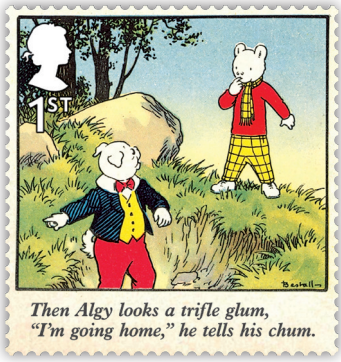


Rupert and the Lost Cuckoo – Frame two
£1.45





Rupert Bear – Stamp Specifications	
Date of issue	3 September
Number of stamps	Eight – 4 x horizontal se-tenant pairs (2 x 2nd Class, 2 x 1st Class, 2 x £1.45, 2 x £1.70)
Design	Rose
Stamp format	Portrait
Stamp size	35mm x 37mm
Number per sheet	30/60
Printer	International Security Printers
Print process	Lithography
Perforations	14.5 x 14
Phosphor	Bars as appropriate
Gum	PVA



Rupert and the Mare's Nest – Frame one
1st Class



Rupert and the Mare's Nest – Frame two
1st Class



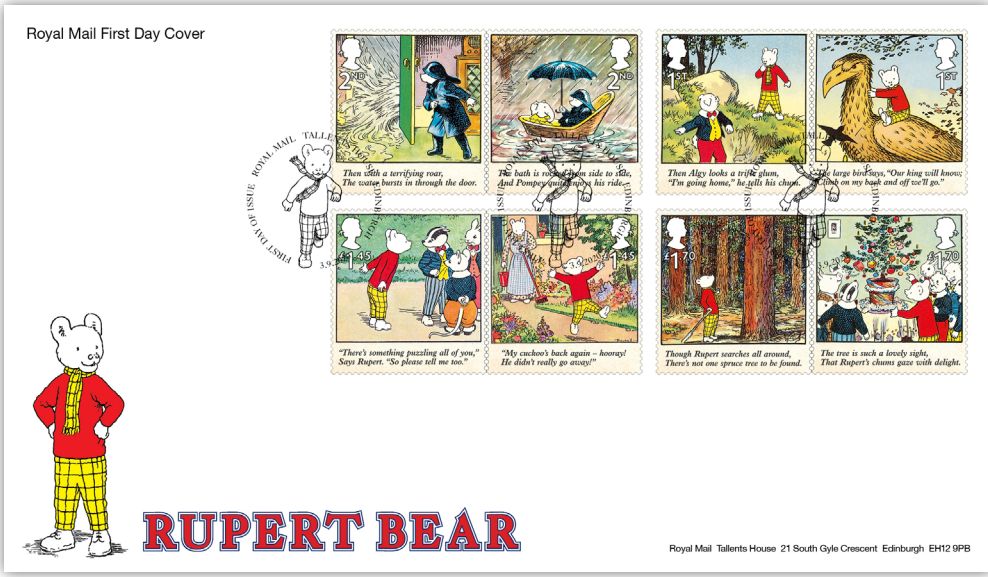
Rupert's Christmas Tree – Frame one
£1.70



Rupert's Christmas Tree – Frame two
£1.70



Rupert the Bear, everyone knows his name – at least generations of Britons do – that's ever since the little bear, dressed in check trousers and scarf made his debut in a *Daily Express* comic strip 100 years ago. The character's magical adventures continue to thrill children today, and in celebration of a remarkable centenary, the new Royal Mail stamp issue features the artwork of Alfred Bestall who wrote and illustrated more than 270 Rupert stories. For many, it's Bestall's rendering of Rupert that is considered to be the definitive version, and it's eight of his illustrations from four stories that grace the stamps that are produced in four se-tenant pairs. The Presentation Pack houses all eight stamps and gives insight into the writers and artists that created a fantasy world of humanised animals, elves and giants set in Nutwood – a fictional idyllic English village. Few could have envisaged on 8 November 1920 when Rupert first appeared in the *Daily Express* that it was the start of a journey in which simple tales with charming illustrations would ►



First Day Cover with stamps cancelled with the Tallents House handstamp. Opposite: First Day Cover with the alternative postmark. The location is Canterbury – birthplace of Rupert's creator Mary Tourtel

grace not only a daily, but a plethora of books – indeed, Rupert Bear Annuals remain popular today, and not only with children, but among collectors paying tidy sums for vintage copies. Not even the Second World War and paper rationing prevented them being printed as the government sanctioned sufficient paper for their production. They were no doubt a sense of comfort for children evacuated to rural areas in families alien to them, and perhaps even more to those that weren't – huddled in shelters – surely a cosy escape from the haunting air raid sirens and nightly bombings.

Herbert Tourtel who wrote the original stories, was an editor at the *Express* – he created Rupert to rival the *Daily Mail's* Teddy Tail (a mouse) which was the first comic strip to appear in a daily. Tourtel's wife, Mary, who was born in Canterbury in 1874 and studied art there, illustrated the original stories which were later reprinted in books. Unfortunately due to her failing eyesight she retired in 1935, but in that year, as the door closed for her, it was opened for Alfred Bestall. Having already established himself as a talented artist illustrating children's books and for *Punch* magazine, aged 42, Alfred picked up the mantle and went on to write and provide the artwork for 224 stories for the *Express,* and in addition illustrated the front covers of Rupert Annuals. It was also Bestall who started the tradition of rhyming couplets which he accompanied with supportive text. He was a master of writing lines that daily engaged children and primed their minds for the following day's adventure. To keep things fresh he introduced new characters including Tiger Lily the Conjurer's daughter, and also Pong Ping and his Dragon.

Following the retirement of Alfred Bestall in 1974, the Glaswegian, John Harrold joined a team that from 1965 had been illustrating the Rupert stories for the *Express* – their initial brief being to mimic Bestall's style. Harrold's first story appeared in the *Express* in 1976 and two years later in 1978 he

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Royal Mail First Day Cover





RUPERT BEAR

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

illustrated his first Annual front cover before establishing himself as the third official Rupert artist in 1985. There were subtle changes to the rendering of cartoons as Harrold's style became manifest in 118 new stories that he illustrated up until 2002. Freddie Chaplain and James Henderson wrote the early plots for Harrold's work, before Ian Robinson took over in 1990. The Robinson and Harrold collaboration was very fruitful, with the production of 83 new stories and the introduction of several more characters such as Ottoline Otter and The Sage of Um. These stories, originally produced for the newspaper, were then coloured for the Annuals. Since 2008, publishers Egmont have produced the Rupert Annuals. Stuart Trotter, their 'in house' artist provided all the content for the 2008 and 2009 Annuals and subsequently has produced a solitary new story and cover artwork each year. Reprints, mostly by Bestall and Harrold, comprise the rest of the Annual's content today.

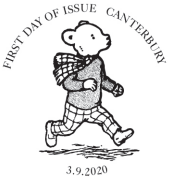
Today, fans of Rupert can join Followers of Rupert – a club that both through the post and website provide members with regular newsletters and reprints of unpublished stories. A club for Rupert enthusiasts has long been available, way back in 1932, the *Daily Express* followed the lead of other national newspapers and formed a children's club for readers – The Rupert League. The club which existed until 1937 provided members with an enamel badge and a membership certificate card.



And so, for the little bear who enjoyed his first adventure shopping for his mum in 1920, it's been an incredible journey with Bill Badger, Algy Pug, and Podgy Pig, so too for the writers, the artists, and millions of children who are also happy to number among his chums ●



FD2017-TH

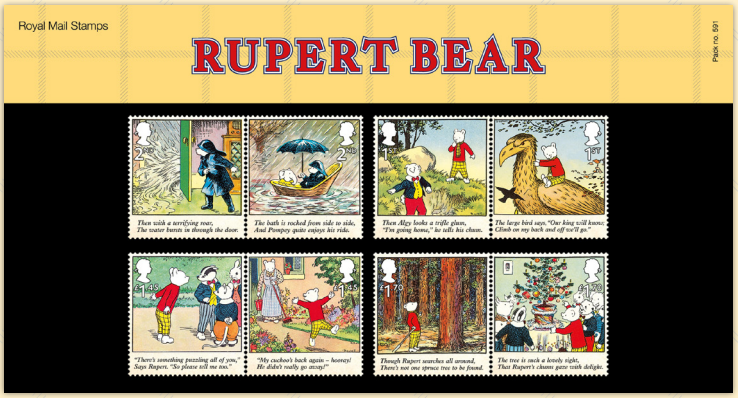


FD2017-PL



FD2017-NP

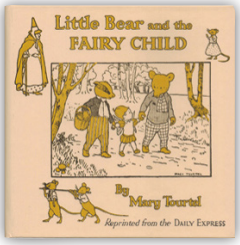
Presentation Pack: includes all eight Rupert Bear stamps and is presented in a beautifully illustrated informative fold-out pack which explores the 100 year history of Rupert Bear. The pack explains how Mary Tourtel created Rupert in 1920, and how the iconic style was developed by Alfred Bestall and evolved further with John Harrold









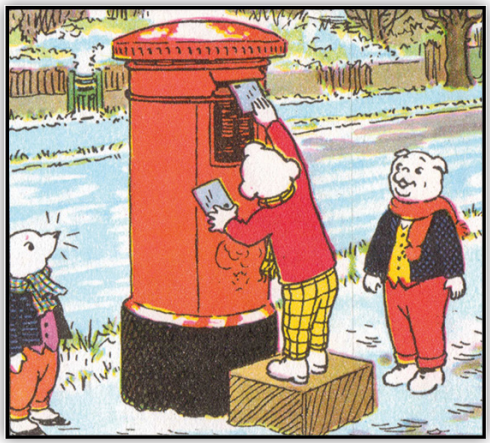


Rupert Bear – Prices	
Set of 8 Special Stamps	£9.12
Presentation Pack	£10.00
First Day Cover Stamps	£11.60
Stamp Souvenir	£11.60
First Day Envelope	£0.30
Postcards (8 in set)	£3.60
Framed Stamps	£39.99

Rupert Bear was nameless when he first appeared in the *Daily Express* on 8 November 1920 in a strip titled *Little Lost Bear.* He was however christened Rupert quite promptly – given that reprints from the daily were compiled in *The Adventures of RUPERT/The Little Lost Bear* (first edition 1921). The first edition of *Little Bear and the Fairy Child* was published the following year in 1922

Rupert Bear Quiz





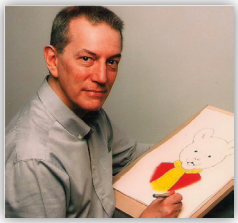
1 Who drew this illustration? a) Mary Tourtel b) Alfred Bestall c) John Harrold



2 Where was Mary Tourtel born? a) Canterbury b) Eton c) Glasgow



3 How many stories did Alfred Bestall write and illustrate for the *Daily Express*? a) 89 b) 118 c) 224



4 John Harrold's first story appeared in the *Daily Express* in? a) 1970 b) 1976 c) 1979



5 Who is Rupert's best friend? a) Algy Pug b) Bingo the Brainy Pup c) Bill Badger

How to enter Please send your answers, with your contact address or phone number, marked 'Rupert Bear Quiz', to: Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB. Or by email to tim.lees2@royalmail.com.

Prizes The first five correct entries drawn after the closing date win the Rupert Bear Presentation Pack.

Closing Date 15 October 2020.

June solutions The Corrie Quiz 1)b 2)a 3)b 4)a 5)b.

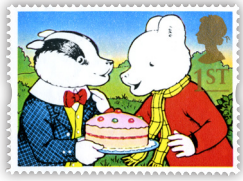
Winners Jim Stothers, Belfast; Richard Milner, Falmouth; Peter Clutton, Buckinghamshire; Mr A Harker, Oxford; Mr K C Bishop, Solihull.

Terms and conditions Promotions are open to any reader aged 18 or over, except employees of Royal Mail Group Ltd, their business associates and immediate families. Responsibility cannot be accepted for entries which are incomplete, damaged or not received. Proof of posting is not proof of receipt. Prizes must be accepted as offered; they are not transferable and there are no cash alternatives. Winners are notified within 28 days of closing date stated. 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. Royal Mail's decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into. Entry implies acceptance of these rules. Prizes are subject to 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. The winners' names are available 28 days after closing date. To receive this please send an SAE to The Editor.

'93

Rupert Bear in the 90s

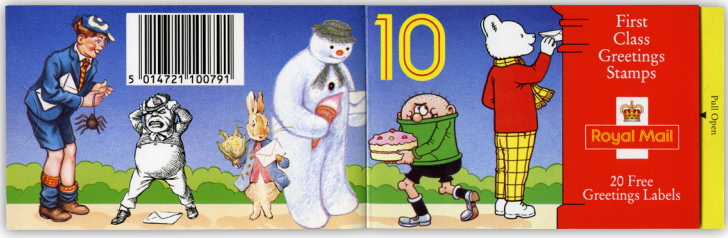
This month's delightful Rupert Bear stamps are not of course the first in which the little bear has made an appearance. Many collectors will remember the ten First Class Greetings Stamps of 1993 and 1994 which featured Rupert and familiar characters from children's literature. Ten labels were also produced for both stamp sets – horizontally bisected by perforations, and themed to complement each stamp. In addition, Presentation Packs, Stamp Books, Maximum Cards and a range of covers with a variety of handstamps accompanied both issues, all of which are regularly exchanged among collectors of GB stamps and Rupert Bear fans alike ●



Bill Badger and Rupert Bear, First Class, illustration by John Harrold

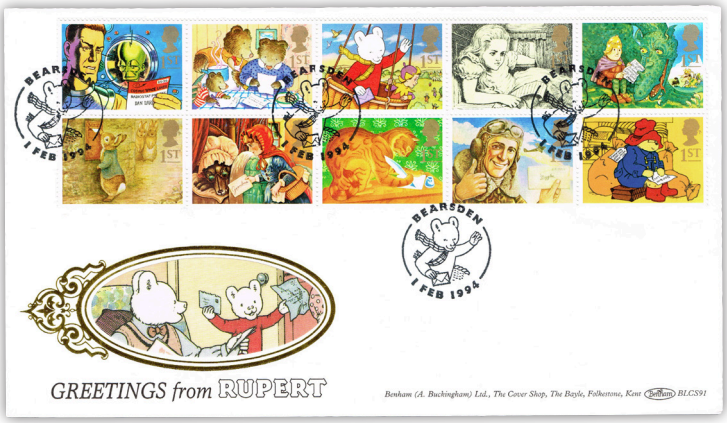


First Day Cover, 2 February 1993, ten First Class: Long John Silver and Parrot; Tweedledum and Tweedledee; William; Mole and Toad; Teacher and Wilfrid; Peter Rabbit and Mrs Rabbit; Snowman and Father Christmas; The Big Friendly Giant and Sophie; Bill Badger and Rupert Bear; Aladdin and the Genie



The Stamp Book housing ten First Class Stamps and ten bisected labels





'94

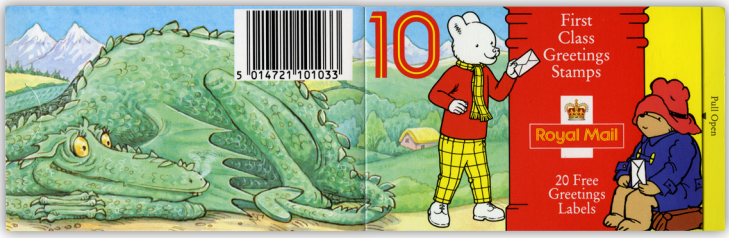
First Day Cover, 1 February 1994, produced by Benham (A Buckingham) Ltd



Rupert Bear, First Class, illustration by John Harrold



First Day Cover, 1 February 1994, ten First Class: Dan Dare and the Mekon; The Three Bears; Rupert Bear; Alice (Alice in Wonderland); Noggin and the Ice Dragon; Peter Rabbit posting Letter; Red Riding Hood and Wolf; Orlando the Marmalade Cat; Biggles; Paddington Bear on Station



The Stamp Book housing ten First Class Stamps and ten bisected labels



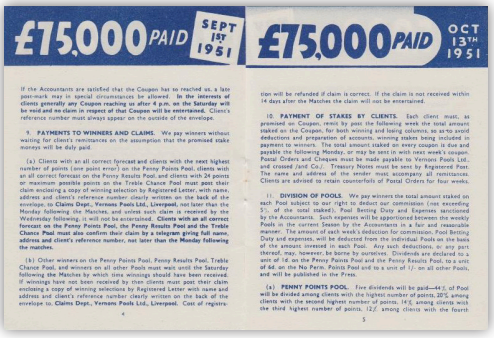
Part two

The Pools and the Post

Part one of this article last month described the growth of the 'football pools' as a national institution, and outlined the ways in which the Post Office adapted to handling the huge quantities of coupons and advertising material that the pools companies sent out. Part two this month follows up by looking at the arrangements for the mail they received, as well as the use of Post Office facilities for paying 'dividends' to the winning punters, and the process for overseas entrants.



1952: two extracts from a Vernons advertising leaflet sent out with coupons, illustrating some of the extensive postal arrangements for receiving coupons at their Liverpool HQ, and the rules for sending money and claiming wins



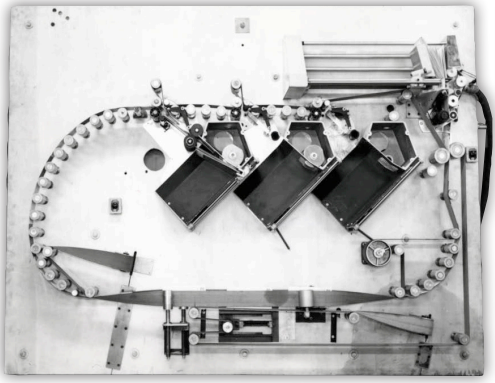




1965: unusual mail to Cope's Pools – one sent Recorded Delivery (a claim?), the other from a Forces PO in Cyprus. Both are perforated along the bottom – perhaps for the same reason as Zetters Pools, who perforated all incoming mail as a security measure for postal orders

Returning the Coupons The converse of the large outward mailings of the pools promoters was the vast amount of mail addressed to them with completed coupons and payments. Littlewoods, who handled half the country's pools business, had six large halls with thousands of clerks checking the coupons. Claims for winning entries made use of other postal services. Many readers will doubtless remember the announcements made after the 'classified results' were read out on TV's *Grandstand* and *World of Sport* on Saturday evenings (with the Treble Chance score noted against each match) – 'claims by telegram' where there were expected to be few winners, 'claims by registered mail only' if more were likely, and 'no claims' on days when there were lots of score draws and hence many all-correct entries. Special machines were installed in Liverpool in 1968[1] to sort *'fixed odds, business reply pools and mail order letters by reading a bar code which will be printed on the envelopes by the firms concerned at the manufacturing stage'*. It was considered that this would be a worthwhile *'interim measure to speed up the handling of this correspondence and improve efficiency until coding/sorting is introduced'*. The latter phrase referred to the main mechanisation programme based on the use of postcodes and phosphor dots; two of the medium speed sorting machines already ordered for the pioneering Mechanised Letter Office at Croydon were adapted to use optical reading heads, with the intention of converting them again when the new Liverpool Letter Sorting Office was completed (in about six years' time). The manufacturer, Thrissells, had considerable trouble in getting them to work, with a planned go-live date of May 1968 eventually pushed back to December. Even then, there seem to have been teething troubles, but the discussion in the archive file ends in February 1969 so presumably these were eventually resolved. ►

[1]POST 153/198, *Buildings and Mechanisation Schemes: North Western Region – Liverpool. High Speed Sorting Machine to sort Liverpool and Traffic.*



© The Postal Museum



Illustrations from the archives: a photograph with a caption on the back reading 'Prototype Auto-Pools Separator' (catalogued as POST 118/15518) and an example Littlewoods Pools envelope for this 'Liverpool X' mail

All POST citations in this article pertain to The Postal Museum archives

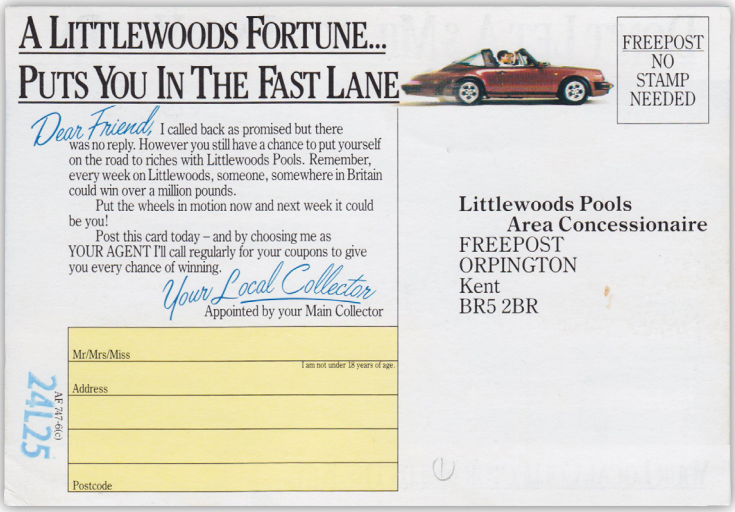


Collector Service The alternative to using the post directly was to use the pools company's 'collector service'. Agents called on punters in their area each week, to collect their entry and payment (and supply a coupon for the next week). These were delivered to a regional office, which dispatched them to the head office. This arrangement offered the punter extra convenience, as most of the work was done for them by the collector, and also saved them some money (in postage to send the coupon, and the extra cost of poundage on a postal order). Conversely, there was the chance of a collector defaulting – which happened sometimes[2] – and as the collector was legally the agent of the entrant not the company, if it did they were out of luck.

[2] e.g. in 1994 a syndicate lost £2.3 million when the collector kept the money instead of handing in the coupon. See www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/student-jailed-for-cheating-pools-syndicate-1601089.html for details.

A common alternative to posting your own coupon was to submit it via an agent, who would collect entries in a particular area and submit them in bulk via the promoter's courier network. There was specially printed stationery for the use of agents, such as this Freepost reminder card from the 1990s





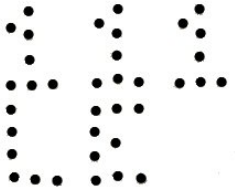
In the late 1960s postal pools business dropped off considerably, for two reasons: the companies moved from weekly postings to sending three coupons every three weeks to save postage, and the 'collector service' had become increasingly popular. It resulted in the setting up of a Post Office Pools Study Group *'to consider the services provided by the Post Office for pools firms and to determine what new services and modifications to existing services were required'*. Their first interim report was issued in April 1973[3], although the later reports do not seem to be available in the archives.

Making Payments The typical structure of pools payouts was a very few large sums, a number of medium-sized payments, and lots of relatively small amounts. For many years the latter were paid with postal orders, which ►

[3]POST 28/55, *Report of Pools Study Group.*



c.1960: a postal order for winnings of… er, sixpence. Presumably the amount was so low that it was kept as a souvenir instead of being cashed! The two-line format of the 'perfin' had the date on the upper line (here 111 or 11 January) and an office/machine identification below (here 'LE' for Liverpool machine E)



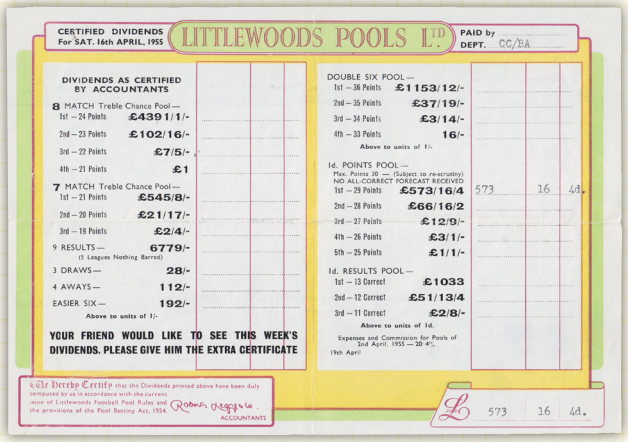


1977: postal order for a dividend of 56p (the fixed value postal orders could be uprated to produce odd values by adding postage stamps). Stamped with Totometer mark of Liverpool (there was a 'T' at the base of the datestamp, although somewhat unclearly struck on this example)

1956: a substantial win of £573 16s 4d on Littlewoods Pools (equivalent to about £14,000 today based on RPI, or £33,000 based on wage rates). It was advised by Greetings Telegram. The cheque (opposite) and congratulatory paperwork (below) were sent out by registered letter (opposite) – it was posted at the head office, so the 'sub-office' number of 223 appears to have been one used by Littlewoods (bulk posters of registered items could be allocated their own number, to allow them to prepare as much of the paperwork as possible in advance)





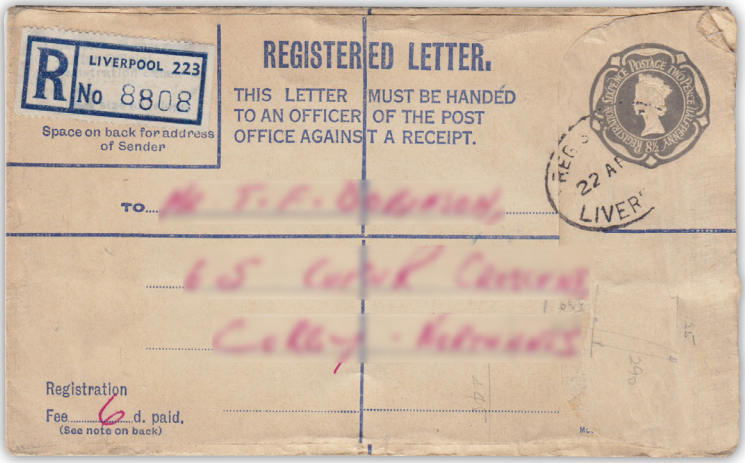


posed a problem as they had to be stamped with the date. In the late 1930s a machine was invented to do this by perforating the space for the 'sorting office stamp'[4] instead of using a handstamp. By the 1970s these had been replaced with 'Totometer' machines that printed a circular datestamp at 90 degrees[5]. Larger amounts were paid by cheque, and seem to have merited a congratulatory telegram sent in advance. By the late 1970s 'data processing' (now there's an old-fashioned IT term for you) in business use was sufficiently common for all payments to be made by computer-printed cheques.

As noted above, for many years payment for stakes – or as the pools firms preferred to call them, 'investments' – was also typically made by postal order, as the sums involved were relatively small (and even where they were not, many people did not have bank accounts that would have allowed payment by cheque). Various 'oral histories' in The Postal Museum archives mention 'pools day' when people came to buy their postal orders, sometimes with queues stretching out of the door. Consideration was occasionally given to producing a special 'pools postal order' that incorporated the postage as well, but this never came to anything – it would indeed have been somewhat superfluous. ►

[4] POST 33/5310, *Postal orders: substitution of machine perforation for hand date stamping for large batches of orders, i.e. football pool firms, adopted suggestion.*

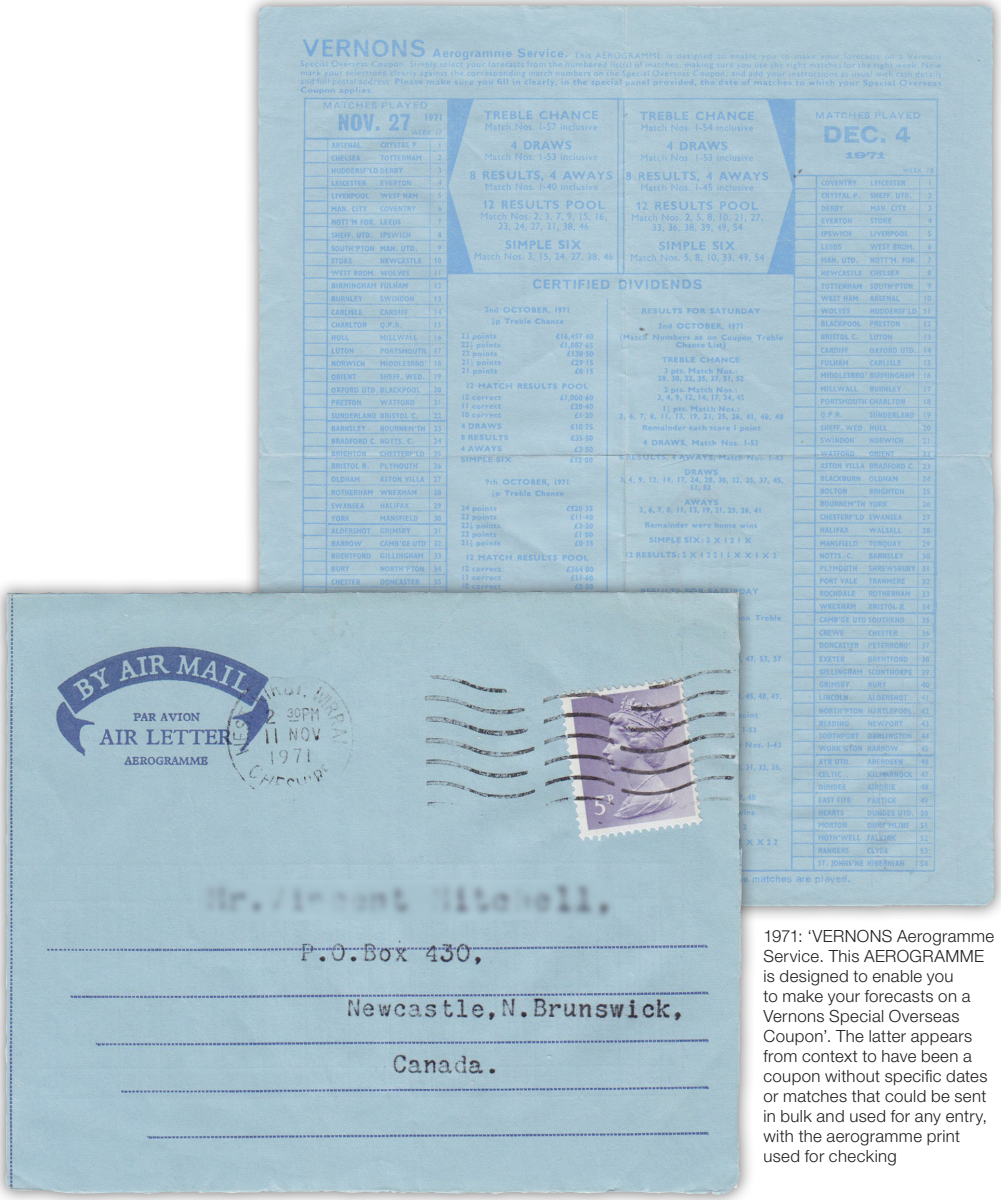
[5] The 'Totometer' machines were originally produced for rapid counting of banknotes and postal orders. From 1957, the Post Office used adapted versions with an added printer to stamp PAID marks on address labels for bulk postings (and sometimes other stationery; a trial was in fact carried out on pools mail in Liverpool in 1959, but this was judged unsuccessful). Date stamping the postal orders as well as counting them was a later use.



1978: computer-printed cheque for the lowest (6th) dividend, in this case only 25p (again, low enough that it was probably kept as a souvenir). The address is printed onto the attached counterfoil and was presumably automatically placed into a window envelope with a Postage Paid Impression



Playing Away As the illustrated envelope sent from a soldier in Cyprus suggests, the pools companies also accepted entries from overseas. Some indeed ran competitions in other countries using local fixtures, but we can pass those by here. It's worth noting however that there were special arrangements to help overseas competitors get their forecasts in, including coupons printed in airletters and even special forms for entries by ship-to-shore radio telegram!



1971: 'VERNONS Aerogramme Service. This AEROGRAMME is designed to enable you to make your forecasts on a Vernons Special Overseas Coupon'. The latter appears from context to have been a coupon without specific dates or matches that could be sent in bulk and used for any entry, with the aerogramme print used for checking



THE MARCONI INTERNATIONAL MARINE COMPANY LIMITED
A GEC—Marconi Electronics Company

RADIOMARITIME (SLT) LETTER
(BY RADIO TO SHORE—BY POST TO DESTINATION)

CHARGES
Mobile Station
Land Station
Land Line
Surcharge
STAKE
TOTAL £

Prefix SLT | Office of Origin | No. | No. of Words | Date filed | Time filed
Service Instructions | Sent by | Sent to | Date Sent | Time Sent

To =SLT= VERNONS LIVERPOOL

(STAKE IN WORDS) (PERM/PLAN) (NUMBER IN LETTERS)
MARCONI WEEK

(INITIALS & NAME IN BLOCK LETTERS)
(SENT & COUNTED AS ONE WORD)

This message will be regarded by Vernons as void and will not be accepted by the Marconi International Marine Co. Ltd., unless signed by the sender. I am not under 18 years of age. I accept the conditions as printed overleaf.

Signature of Sender.....

Form S.24A Printed in England

1980s? A Marconi 'Radiomaritime (SLT) Letter' form for entries radioed to a shore station and sent on by post, pre-printed with Vernons address code. The reverse has detailed instructions for the sender on how to enter their forecasts on the form

Decline and Fall As previously mentioned, large-scale lotteries had long been illegal in Britain (although Acts of 1934, 1956 and 1976 allowed for small ones), which opened the door for the success of the football pools. This all changed in 1994 with the commencement of the National Lottery. The prizes on offer outstripped those available from the pools and it was easier to enter, with a result that the number of pools entrants dropped dramatically, from 10 million in 1994 to 700,000 in 2007. A series of takeovers and mergers of the various companies resulted in an online-only business[6]. This remains today, but is a mere shadow of the glory days when 'doing the pools' was part of the national consciousness. So these articles may well have brought back memories for many readers!

[6] www.footballpools.com, as you might expect.

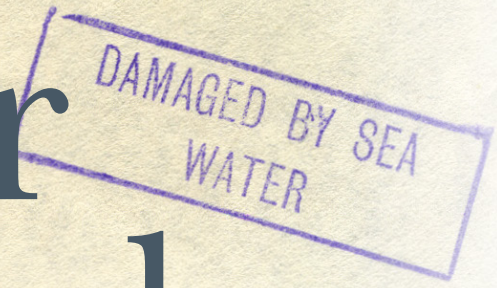


I've included this item – however I'm not sure what it was used for! It's a 3d stamped to order envelope, with a gummed flap so probably paid for the 1957-65 letter rate. Items of this type are known for several firms, stamped for successive letter rates from 2½d to 5d. It may have been for the use of collectors, or for the convenience of customers paying large stakes or for a significant period in advance

*By Maurice Buxton a long-term collector, and webmaster for the Great Britain Philatelic Society – **www.gbps.org.uk***

1950s Air crash mail







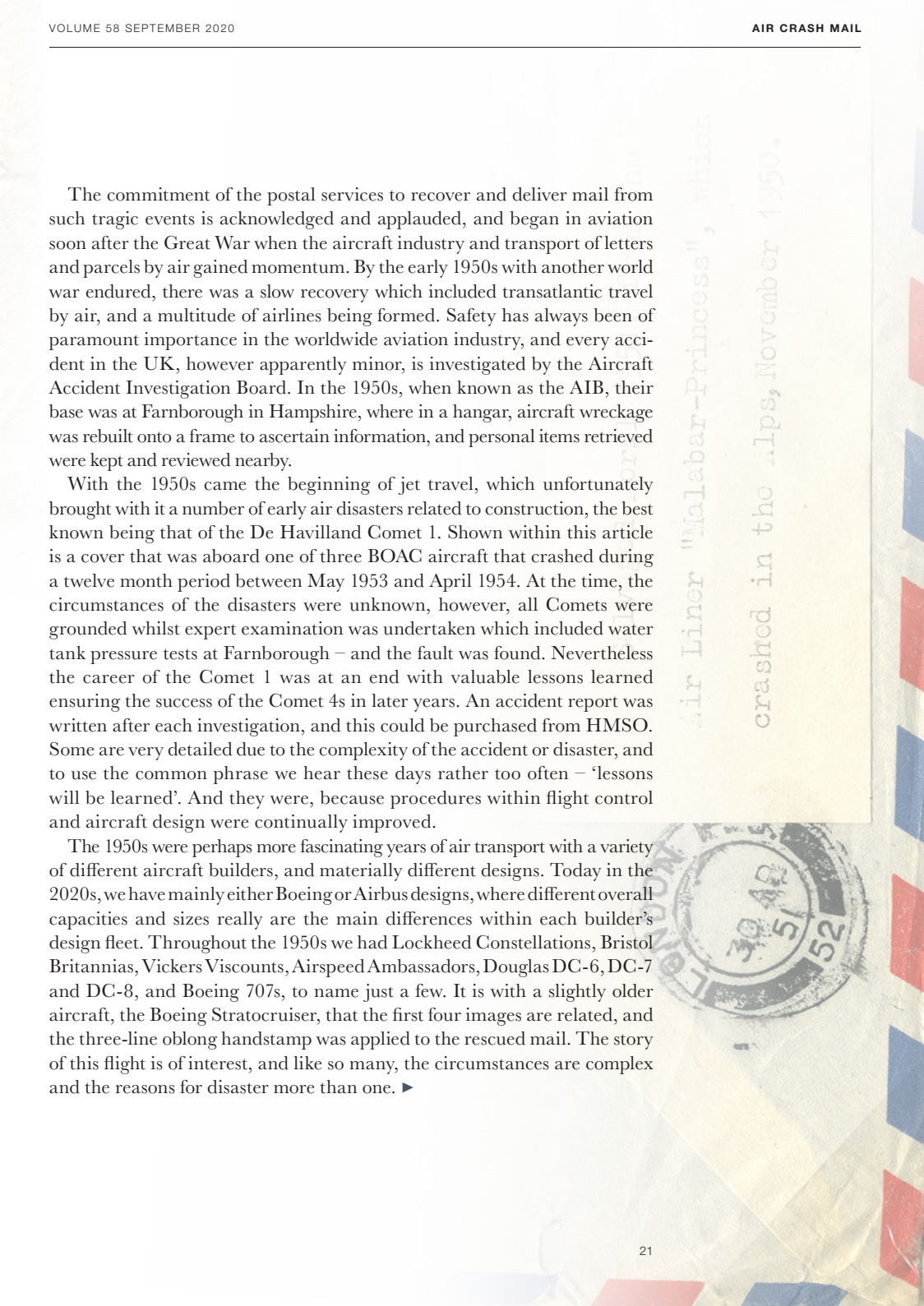
The remarkable Adrian Hopkins collection – all items were recovered and delivered by postal services

Air crash mail, the study of the cancellations by postal authorities, is enhanced by the stories behind the surviving items – the rates, routes, the senders and receivers, and the flights and aircraft concerned. Together with, of course, why the items became air crash mail at all. There are, and have been, a number of specialist collectors of these postal covers, none more so than the late Major Adrian Hopkins whose collection now resides on loan with the Bath Postal Museum. We are indebted to the museum for allowing us access to his collection and the images shown here. Adrian Hopkins made a study and collection on the subject, writing a book – *A History of Wreck Covers* – dealing with ship-wreck and air crash mail, to and from England, published in 1966. Fighting in the First World War, he was seriously wounded, but went on to become not only Mayor of Bath on three occasions, but also a presenter of his collection as a raconteur and a lively wit.

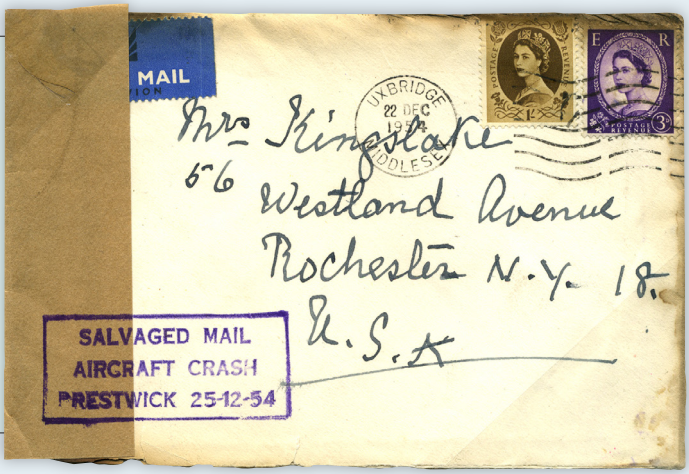
The commitment of the postal services to recover and deliver mail from such tragic events is acknowledged and applauded, and began in aviation soon after the Great War when the aircraft industry and transport of letters and parcels by air gained momentum. By the early 1950s with another world war endured, there was a slow recovery which included transatlantic travel by air, and a multitude of airlines being formed. Safety has always been of paramount importance in the worldwide aviation industry, and every accident in the UK, however apparently minor, is investigated by the Aircraft Accident Investigation Board. In the 1950s, when known as the AIB, their base was at Farnborough in Hampshire, where in a hangar, aircraft wreckage was rebuilt onto a frame to ascertain information, and personal items retrieved were kept and reviewed nearby.

With the 1950s came the beginning of jet travel, which unfortunately brought with it a number of early air disasters related to construction, the best known being that of the De Havilland Comet 1. Shown within this article is a cover that was aboard one of three BOAC aircraft that crashed during a twelve month period between May 1953 and April 1954. At the time, the circumstances of the disasters were unknown, however, all Comets were grounded whilst expert examination was undertaken which included water tank pressure tests at Farnborough – and the fault was found. Nevertheless the career of the Comet 1 was at an end with valuable lessons learned ensuring the success of the Comet 4s in later years. An accident report was written after each investigation, and this could be purchased from HMSO. Some are very detailed due to the complexity of the accident or disaster, and to use the common phrase we hear these days rather too often – 'lessons will be learned'. And they were, because procedures within flight control and aircraft design were continually improved.

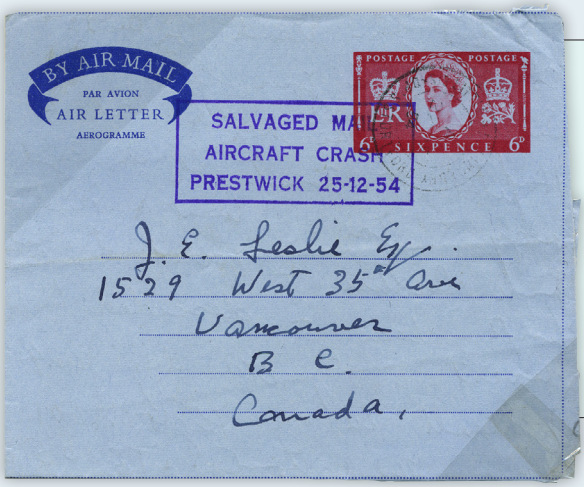
The 1950s were perhaps more fascinating years of air transport with a variety of different aircraft builders, and materially different designs. Today in the 2020s, we have mainly either Boeing or Airbus designs, where different overall capacities and sizes really are the main differences within each builder's design fleet. Throughout the 1950s we had Lockheed Constellations, Bristol Britannias, Vickers Viscounts, Airspeed Ambassadors, Douglas DC-6, DC-7 and DC-8, and Boeing 707s, to name just a few. It is with a slightly older aircraft, the Boeing Stratocruiser, that the first four images are related, and the three-line oblong handstamp was applied to the rescued mail. The story of this flight is of interest, and like so many, the circumstances are complex and the reasons for disaster more than one. ►



The purple handstamp states 'SALVAGED MAIL / AIRCRAFT CRASH / PRESTWICK 25-12-54', and the mail for the USA and Canada was to have been carried from London/Heathrow airport to New York/Idlewild, with two stop-overs en route, the first at Manchester/Ringway, and the second at Prestwick. Due to the bad weather on the evening of Christmas Eve 1954, it was decided to fly directly to Prestwick. Having left Heathrow, the crew found there was a landing-gear fault and returned for the problem to be fixed, after which the BOAC owned Boeing 377 Stratocruiser G-ALSA took off at past 1am on Christmas Day. By now the captain was well over his on-call time, but offered to continue as he felt it would be very unfair to call up another crew so late on Christmas Eve. At about 3.30am in poor visibility at Prestwick, the landing was mis-managed by the pilot by attempting to land at too steep an angle and the First Officer

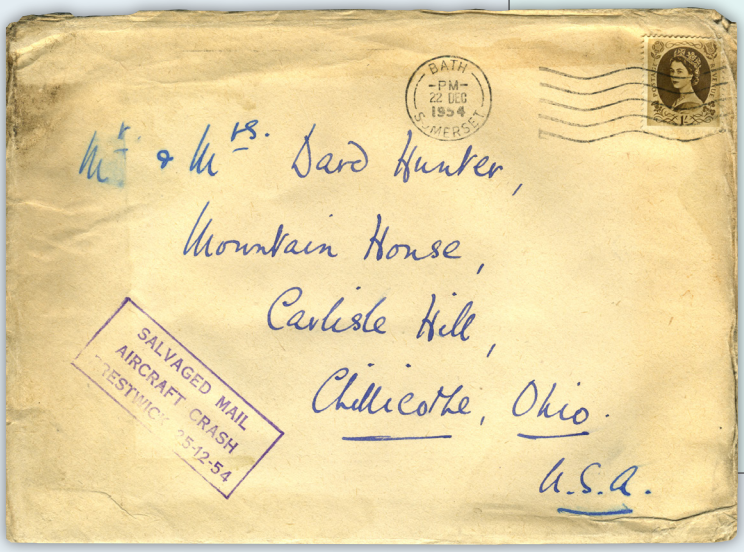


Posted in Uxbridge three days before Christmas on 22 December 1954 and bound for Rochester in New York State, USA, this cover was in one of the 250 mail bags on the BOAC flight bound for New York/Idlewild that were partly consumed by fire during landing at Prestwick in the early hours of Christmas Day. Some packets allegedly contained diamonds, but this one was not one of them! The purple oblong handstamp shown was the one applied to all the surviving covers and packets, confirming place and date, before being re-sent on a successful flight across the Atlantic Ocean



An air letter that contained a Christmas message to a resident in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, having been posted on 21 December 1954. Loaded with others into mail bags at London/Heathrow and placed inside the luggage hold of BOAC Boeing 377 Stratocruiser G-ALSA, it did not leave the UK as the aircraft suffered a landing accident at a stage stop at Prestwick. Unlike some other mail salvaged from this disaster, it does not show signs of fire, but does have the 'SALVAGED MAIL / AIRCRAFT CRASH / PRESTWICK 25-12-54' handstamp applied before re-posting on a later BOAC transatlantic flight. There is no evidence of how long the delay would have been, but expectations of Christmas greetings would have been dashed, and only later realised

failing to turn on the landing lights. The aircraft was destroyed by fire, but some of the mail from the 250 mailbags, although damaged, was saved. However, there's more. Within the 250 bags was allegedly postal packets containing uncut diamonds. Only about 300 diamonds were recovered, although the authorities removed all the top soil from the crash site to search, at the request of Lloyds of London who carried the insurance on the stones. The addresses on these four illustrated covers do not lead us to any known name, but they are varied in destination and form, from a usual envelope to an air letter, and to an ambulance cover that contains the damaged remains of a postal item. ►



After travelling by rail from Bath to London/Paddington and into the London postal system, this surviving cover was at London/Heathrow within two days of being posted, and was bound to Ohio state in the USA. It joined the other thousands of items of mail that were in the mail bags on board the BOAC Boeing 377 Stratocruiser G-ALSA, many of which would have been carrying seasonal greetings at this time in late December 1954. Unfortunately, transit was interrupted at Prestwick airport in Scotland prior to onward flight westbound. An attempt to land was tragic with a crash, fire, and death of many passengers – all in the early hours of Christmas Day. With the boxed cachet to denote salvage and resulting delay, the cover was re-posted and was then retained, and serves to show the story of this event



Many of the envelopes and packets in the mail bags of the Prestwick Christmas Day 1954 air crash survived the fire to varying degrees but some would have been partly or even totally consumed. These details are not known, but some of the surviving mail from this accident had to be placed inside what is known as an 'ambulance cover' – that is, an envelope to contain the remains so that they can be posted on to the intended recipient. This ambulance cover was addressed on to the Panama Canal Zone, but due to the initial delay, the cover had to chase after the intended recipient at a number of addresses in San Francisco. It was searching for the whereabouts of a passenger whose ship had left the Canal Zone before this envelope arrived



Creasing and oil stains from the aircraft often appear on salvaged mail rescued, let alone scorch marks or worse. Sent in January 1954 from the Osaka branch of The Bank of Tokyo to the Overseas Department of Lloyds Bank in London is this slightly damaged air mail envelope. En route to England, Philippine Airlines Douglas DC-6 PI-C294 was attempting to reach Rome/Ciampino but the engines caught fire and exploded whilst trying to make a forced landing on the outskirts of the city. The cover to London was not burnt, but has the creasing and oil stains that marked much of the mail that was recovered, which was only a part of the total on board. Two cachets were applied, one in Italy and one in England. In black is stated 'Correspondenza recuperata in seguito / incidente aereo dei - 14 GEN 1954', and later was added 'DAMAGED IN / PAL-AIRCRAFT CRASH'



1954 was not a particularly bad year for air crashes producing salvaged air mail but it seems that items have survived within postal history collections, and another is here represented. The two affixed New Zealand postage stamps are reduced with burning but can be seen to feature King George VI. Postage was on 7 March 1954, only six days after the Queen Elizabeth II definitives were first issued, so it would be some time before stocks were exhausted. Air mail to Southampton was required and flight was with BOAC and their Lockheed 749A Constellation registered G-ALAM and named 'Belfast'. The aircraft was destroyed when it undershot on landing at Kallang, Singapore, on 13 March 1954, but most of the mail was saved. Mail for the UK received the red boxed three-line cachet 'SALVAGED MAIL / AIRCRAFT CRASH / SINGAPORE 13.3.1954'. Due to the severity of damage, many covers were placed inside an individual ambulance cover, as was this charred one illustrated. The ambulance covers also received a cachet advising salvaged mail

As we can see from the illustrations of these mail items from the original collection of Major Hopkins, they are varied in many ways. However, what is clearly visible is the evidence of fire and destruction that has afflicted these salvage items, as most incidents occur during the landing procedure leading to fire due to the fuel. Also remembering that in many aircraft accidents the mail bags are either lost deep at sea or destroyed by fire in an instant. With every item of air crash mail there is a story beyond the stamp, postmark and additional cachet for the salvage. The letter may have been removed forever, but with an air letter, the full message is there and can portray a different way of life and understanding of those years in the 1950s when so much was beginning to change, mostly for the better ●



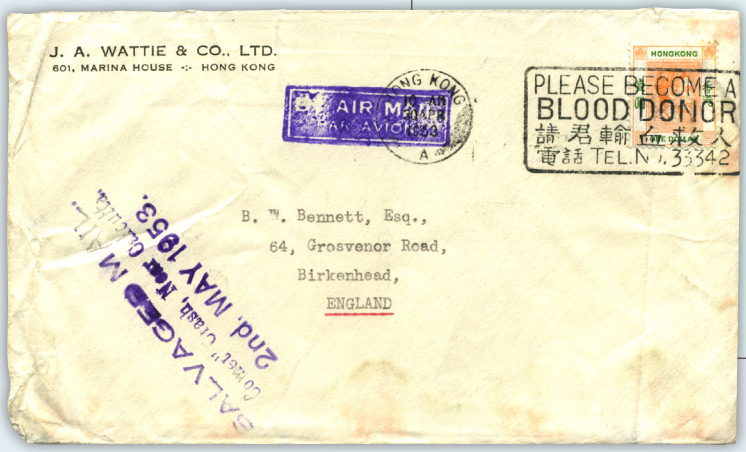
The three Comet disasters between May 1953 and April 1954 are perhaps the best known from the 1950s, and the surviving salvaged mail is a reminder of lives tragically lost. When BOAC D.H.106 Comet 1 G-ALYY disappeared suddenly into the sea north of Stromboli after departure from Rome/ Ciampino on 8 April 1954. Only two mail bags floated to the surface, and this cover posted in Swindon two days earlier was onward bound to the Middle East Land Force in Sudan. The Italian authorities added the two line explanation for delay with a handstamp stating 'Correspondenza recuperata in seguito / incidente aereo dei' and a separate date stamp with '8 APR. 1954'

A further cover addressed to Sudan, but to a Corporal at RAF Khartoum, was recovered from the Comet 1 crash near Stromboli on 8 April 1954. Postmarked with a roller cancellation in Leicester on 6 April and showing distinct signs of water damage, it received the same handstamp with the date apparently added afterwards. This was because someone had made an error and turned the dials to 'MAR' rather then 'APR'. Thankfully, Corporal H. Bishop retained the damaged cover with a letter that may, or may not, have been readable due to salt water erosion





A wrapper rather than an envelope can often sustain more damage and be less survivable, as shown by what is left of this item salvaged from BOAC Canadair C-4 Argonaut G-ALHL. On the night of 21 September 1955 in poor visibility and strong winds, the aircraft struck trees some 1,200 feet short of the runway at Tripoli/ King Idris airport in Libya. An error of judgment on the part of the captain was the cause, as written in the Accident Investigation Board report. Apparently addressed to someone in Nigeria in West Africa, nothing more can be seen or is known. However, the oval handstamps do reveal the sender as The Bank of British West Africa in Fenchurch Street, London EC3, and that suggests the recipient was to be a bank in Nigeria

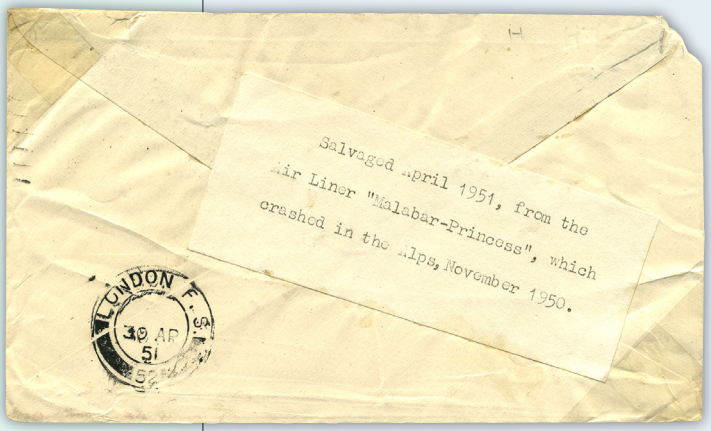


The slogan postmark is somewhat ironic being 'PLEASE BECOME A / BLOOD DONOR', something very necessary in the situation that salvaged mail such as this item are found. BOAC D.H.106 Comet 1 G-ALYV was returning to the UK from Hong Kong on 2 May 1953 and after take-off from Calcutta, a hurricane was encountered and a crash was followed by fire. Before being placed in a relief aircraft, the surviving mail was handstamped with a three-line purple cachet - 'SALVAGED MAIL / "Comet" Crash, Near Calcutta, / 2nd. MAY 1953.' This cover was posted in Hong Kong two days earlier on 30 April from J.A. Wattie & Co., Ltd. a company formed in 1910 to handle financing and registration of small businesses in South East Asia



A pre-printed envelope addressed to a London company with Dutch connections did not make the successful journey over the North Sea in the darkness of the early morning of 2 February 1950, but received the oblong purple cachet 'DAMAGED BY SEA / WATER'. KLM Royal Dutch Airlines Douglas DC-3 Dakota PH-TEU left Amsterdam/Schipol for London with no passengers, but just a crew of seven on a night mail flight. Shortly after take-off and 40 miles from the coast, the Dakota caught fire and crashed into the sea at 4.45am. There were no survivors, except for the mail, of which this cover is an example

Flying over mountainous terrain is always hazardous due to not only height, but wind conditions that can be sudden and severe, as well as snowstorms. Air India's Lockheed 749 Constellation VT-CQP with 40 passengers and eight crew was flying the Bombay-Cairo-Geneva-London route on 3 November 1950. When near Mont Blanc in France, the Geneva flight controller gave warning to climb immediately. The crew acknowledged the message but soon after struck the mountain in a snow-storm 200 metres below the summit. The exact cause of the accident remains undetermined, but probably the aircraft was caught in gusts while trying to overfly the summit. A rescue party recovered one mail bag soon after the crash. Several more mail bags were recovered five months later in April 1951, and these items received a typewritten three-line note stuck to the reverse of the covers in London, together with a two-ring black ink handstamp 'LONDON F.S. / 30 AP / 51'. Illustrated are two examples of the later salvaged items with the handstamp, and the note which reads 'Salvaged April 1951, from the / Air Liner "Malabar-Princess", which / crashed in the Alps, November 1950.' That was not the end, because a further bag of mail was discovered at the bottom of the melting Bossons Glacier nearly 28 years after the aircraft crashed







POWs in the Far East in WWII

It was 'the worst disaster and largest capitulation in British history' – those were the words of Winston Churchill following the Fall of Singapore on 15 February 1942. The Prime Minister struggled to come to terms with how around 80,000 allied forces could capitulate to a Japanese army approximately half its size. Over 5,000 RAF personnel numbered among the tens of thousands that were captured by the Japanese in WWII.

The Asia–Pacific theatre of war was ignited with the attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, and the Japanese invasions of Malaya and Hong Kong on 7 and 8 December 1941. As the invading forces advanced through Malaya, all airfields were evacuated as RAF servicemen retreated to Singapore. From there, by mid-January 1942 the evacuation to the Netherlands East Indies island of Java had begun. Several ships carrying civilians and troops from Singapore were sunk off Sumatra – leading to the capture of several RAF men that were then taken to Bangka Island. On 28 February 1942, now with vast numbers swelling the ranks of the RAF in Java, the Japanese invaded the island and proved far superior to the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army (KNIL). Their defence of the island was short-lived, with the Dutch surrendering on 8 March, resulting in approximately 4,600 men being taken into captivity.

Although the Japanese signed the Geneva Convention, they failed to ratify it, and despite promises to abide by it, they didn't. Contravening it, they used POWs for slave labour, in fact the wide abuse of POWs is well documented: a government report (HMSO CMND 6832) dated June 1946 records that 1,714 RAF men captured in the Far East were 'killed or died in captivity'. Most died of disease and malnutrition. And sadly a great many died either by execution or murder or as a result of brutality – leaving those that did survive managing trauma long after hostilities had ended.

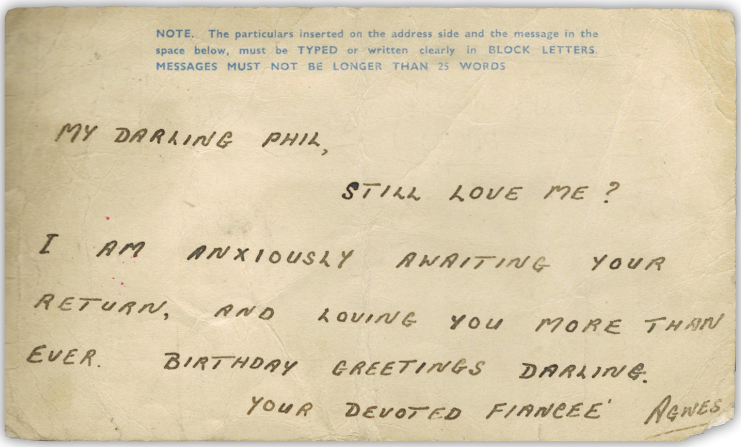
The cover here helps to tell the story of Fred John Philpott who was born on 20 May 1917, a year before the Royal Air Force was formed for which he enlisted at Padgate between September 1939 and February 1940. During WWII he served in the medical unit at the RAF base in Sembawang, Singapore. As Japanese troops advanced in Malaya, Fred Philpott numbered among fellow RAF ground staff that fled to Java. Fred was also one of the vast number of RAF personnel that were subsequently captured on 8 March 1942 after the resistance of the KNIL (Koninklijk Nederlands Indisch Leger) was quashed. The air mail card and war records suggest that Fred was initially interned in a camp at Bandoeng (Bandung) before being moved to Bicycle Camp in Batavia (Jakarta). Fred was finally liberated on 27 October 1945.

Two POW numbers appear on the specially printed KGVI 3d violet 'PRISONER OF WAR POST' Air Mail Postal Card – 11052 in manuscript and cachet 5365, the cds denotes 'THROCKLEY/NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE/27 MY/44'. It's also censored with a British crown 'PASSED P W 4924' cachet. Fred's Service No. 976319 and Rank AC.2. (Aircraftman 2nd Class) are also shown. On the reverse Agnes Carruthers, writing from Newcastle-

on-Tyne used her full allocation of 25 words to offer birthday greetings to her beloved Fred – 'Phil' (Philpott). She also expresses her love, and seeks reassurance that the feeling is still mutual. No doubt the words warmed the heart of Fred who prior to the war lived with his widowed mother Kate and sister Ruby – his father having died a year after his birth. Tragically by the time Fred was imprisoned in Java, the war had already heaped huge grief upon him. His mother aged 50, and his only sibling, 25 year old Ruby were killed in their East London home on 15 November 1940 – victims of a bomb from a German air raid. And so in the dark days in harsh conditons interned in Java, this card brought 'Phil' joy as he longed to be reunited with Agnes. How do we know? Within two months of his return to England, in December 1945 he married Agnes, and they went on to have four children one of whom he named Ruby – a touching tribute to his sister. The final chapter of Fred John Philpott's story closed when he passed away in Epping aged 74 – surely with many happy memories to help mask the mental and emotional scars inflicted by the war ●

Article by Ian Boardman with special thanks to Margaret Martin for her research in connection with this article. Margaret is the Secretary and Welfare Officer for the Java FEPOW Club (FEPOW is the acronym of Far Eastern Prisoner of War). The club offers support to FEPOWs and their wives or widows. www.thejavafepowclub42.org




NOTE. The particulars inserted on the address side and the message in the space below, must be TYPED or written clearly in BLOCK LETTERS. MESSAGES MUST NOT BE LONGER THAN 25 WORDS

MY DARLING PHIL,

STILL LOVE ME ?

I AM ANXIOUSLY AWAITING YOUR RETURN, AND LOVING YOU MORE THAN EVER. BIRTHDAY GREETINGS DARLING.

YOUR DEVOTED FIANCEE' AGNES

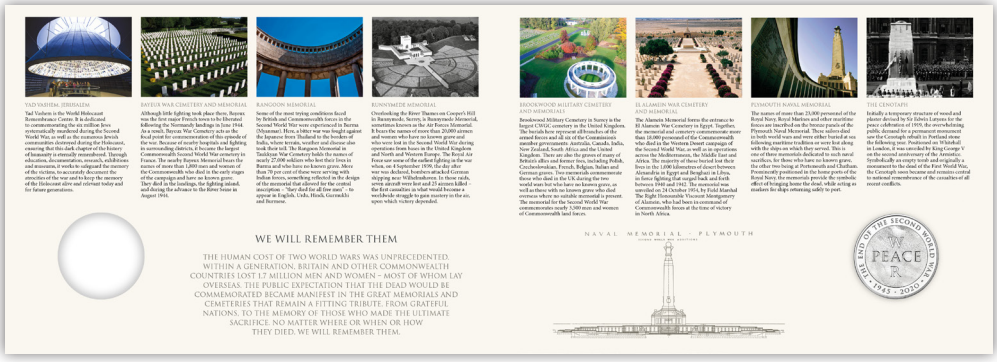
Images courtesy of HipStamp

End of the Second World War £5 Coin Cover



End of the Second World War £5 Coin Cover priced at £19.95

Royal Mail's limited edition End of the Second World War Coin Cover was issued on 15 August – the 75th anniversary of VJ Day. It's the perfect setting for The Royal Mint's newly issued Brilliant Uncirculated £5 Coin. The Miniature Sheet is cancelled with a special and exclusive peace-themed handstamp commemorating the anniversary. With content curated by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, this beautifully illustrated pack explores the significance of memorials around the world which honour the servicemen and women who made the ultimate sacrifice serving their country in the Second World War. The Yad Vashem memorial in Jerusalem is also featured which commemorates the victims of the Holocaust ●



End of the Second World War £5 Coin Cover Insert Inner



1-3 October 2020

Virtual Stampex is the world's first virtual International Stamp Show

SPINK
Where History is Valued

Virtual Stampex is driving the philatelic revolution capitalizing on the resurgence of the hobby due to the global pandemic. Buy, sell, learn, explore, network, showcase and enjoy a philatelic experience all from the comfort of your own home. Visitors will enter via an interactive lobby open 24 hours a day from 1-3 October 2020, connecting globally through embedded text, audio and video with Stampex stand holders, PTS Members, auction houses, philatelic societies, postal administrations, museums, experts and social influencers – completely free of charge. The organisers are also planning a range of events including ten Virtual Stampex Talks, Stamps in the Attic, live philatelic chat rooms, competitor exhibits and a Court of Honour celebrating the world's leading philatelists.

For further information on the show and to be first to hear the latest news, sign up to our e-newsletter at

www.stampex.vfairs.com

Changes to postmarking facilities from 1 October

As a result of Covid-19 and the restrictions that were placed on individuals' movements, Royal Mail took the decision at the end of March to extend its postmarking facilities for all Special Stamp issues until further notice. We promised that we would announce at the appropriate time when this extension would end and give customers sufficient notice of the cut-off period for accepting covers retrospectively. With these restrictions now being gradually eased throughout the UK we will revert to the normal postmarking rules from Thursday, 1 October. This means that Royal Mail First Day Covers for the following Special Stamp Issues will come off sale at midnight on that day and any covers submitted for postmarking including from Post Office branches that bear any of these stamps must be received by Special Handstamp Centres by this date.

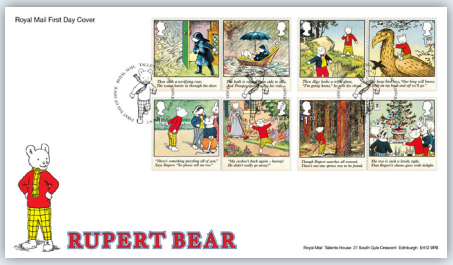
The Romantic Poets • End of the Second World War • Coronation Street • Roman Britain Queen • Palace of Westminster • Sherlock • Rupert Bear

The normal postmarking rules will apply to the Brilliant Bugs stamp issue which means that the Royal Mail First Day Covers will be available up until midnight on the First Day of Issue, 1 October.

New Issues and Withdrawals

Information correct at the time of going to press

3 September — **Issue** Rupert Bear: Stamps (2 x 2nd Class, 2 x 1st Class, 2 x £1.45, 2 x £1.70 – 4 x horizontal se-tenant pairs). Presentation Pack. First Day Cover. Stamp Souvenir. First Day Envelope. Postcards (8 in set). Framed Stamps.



18 September — **Withdrawal** Roman Britain: Stamp Souvenir.



1 October — **Issue** Brilliant Bugs: Stamps (2 x 1st Class, 2 x £1.45, 2 x £1.70 – 3 x vertical se-tenant pairs). Presentation Pack. First Day Cover. Stamp Souvenir. First Day Envelope. Postcards (6 in set). Framed Stamps.

5 October — **Withdrawal** Commemorative Sheets: The Post Office Rifles. Animals of the First World War 1914-1918. ANZAC. Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal Thirtieth Anniversary. Canada – Celebrating 150 years.





9 October — **Withdrawal** Queen: Stamp Souvenir. Stamp Sheet Souvenir.



30 October — **Withdrawal** Palace of Westminster: Stamp Souvenir. Stamp Sheet Souvenir.

You can order any of the Royal Mail stamp products listed above, by visiting **www.royalmail.com/shop** or from Royal Mail Stamps and Collectibles PO Box 1373, Sunderland SR5 9PG, UK. (Overseas subscribers will need to use a stamp.) Or use the Royal Mail telephone order service on 03457 641 641 (08.30 – 17.00 Monday to Friday). For overseas customers: +44 3457 641 641. Minimum handling charge UK £1.45, Europe £1.55, rest of world (airmail) £2.15.

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