BRITISH PHILATELIC

Bulletin

The magazine for collectors of UK stamps

VOLUME 52 NUMBER 11 | JULY 2015 | £1.50

Battle of Britain Special • Previews: Bees and Gurkhas



The 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain Miniature Sheet is issued on 16 July

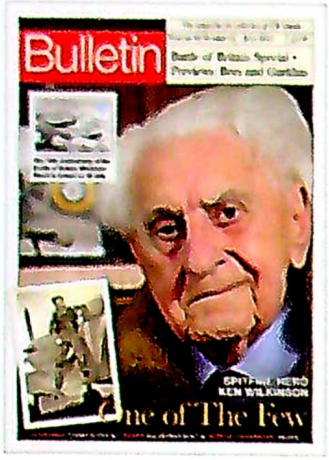


SPITFIRE HERO KEN WILKINSON

One of The Few

JR HOLMAN STAMP SCENE • C BAKER HALFPENNY POST • CRYPTIC CROSSWORD PRIZES

Issues and withdrawals



Front page: Royal Mail marks the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Britain with a commemorative Miniature Sheet, issued on 16 July. Find out more about the stamp images on page 336 and meet one of the Spitfire pilots of 1940 on page 338.

Royal Mail is not responsible for opinions and information provided by independent writers in this publication.

16 July	**Issue** The 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain: Miniature Sheet (3 x 1st Class, 3 x £1.33), Presentation Pack, Stamp Cards (7 in set). See Background story, pages 336-344 and Preview on page 295, June *Bulletin*.
16 July	**Withdrawal** Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games: Stamps (1 x 2nd Class, 1 x 1st Class, 1 x 97p, 1 x £1.28, 1 x £1.47, 1 x £2.15), Presentation Pack, Stamp Book, Stamp Cards (6 in set), Silver Coin Cover, Gold Coin Cover.
18 August	**Issue** Bees: Stamps (1 x 1st Class, 1 x 2nd Class, 1 x £1, 1 x £1.33, 1 x £1.52, 1 x £2.25), Miniature Sheet (2 x 1st Class, 2 x £1.33), Stamp Book (4 x 1st Class, 2 x Specials), Presentation Pack, Stamp Cards (11 in set). Preview on page 327.
18 August	**Withdrawal** Sustainable Fish: Stamp Book (4 x 1st Class, 2 x Specials).
20 August	**Issue** The Gurkhas: Commemorative Sheet (10 x 1st Class). See Update on page 325.
15 September	**Issue** Battle of Britain: Coin Cover (50p Brilliant Uncirculated).
16 September	**Issue** Post & Go: Sea Travel (6 designs).
17 September	**Issue** Animals of the First World War: Commemorative Sheet (10 x 1st Class, with info card).
18 September	**Issue** Rugby World Cup 2015: Stamps (2 x 1st Class, 2 x 2nd Class, 2 x £1 in se-tenant pairs), Presentation Pack, Stamp Cards, Stamp Book (4 x 1st Class definitives, 2 x 1st Class Special Stamps).

Information about Royal Mail products is the latest available at time of going to press. Issue dates shown in advance may be subject to change. Stamps are not shown to scale. Stamp sizes are listed on Royal Mail Preview pages.

To order philatelic items, including those listed above, contact Royal Mail online at www.royalmail.com/stamps or at Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB. We would advise you to quote 15CDF, the *Bulletin* media code. 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.

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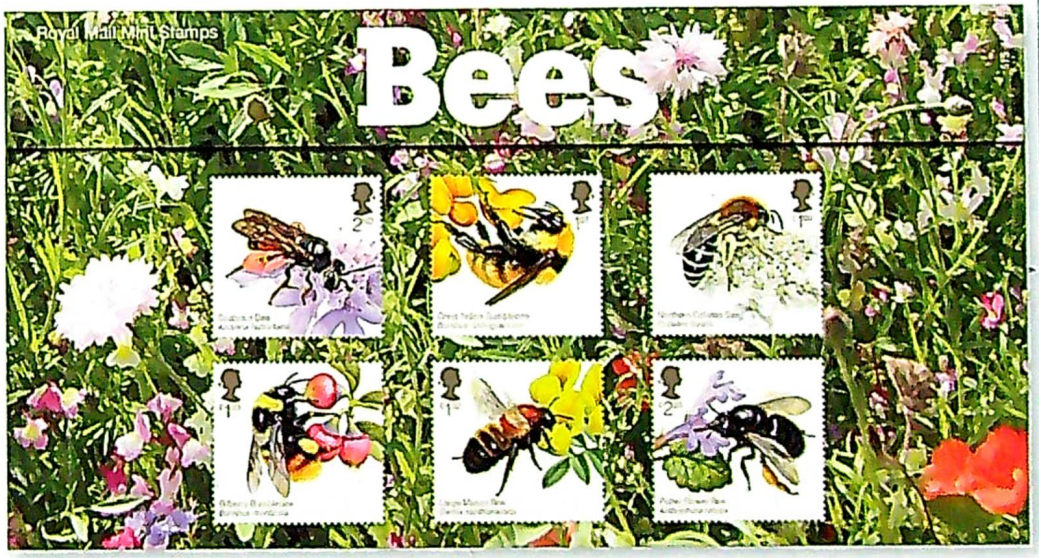
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Royal Mail

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Spot the Special Notice anything different about your local letter box? **326**

Stamp Scene John Holman keeps you up to speed on the world of UK philately **331**

● **Royal Mail Editor** William Doherty, Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB ● **Publishing Editor** Kate Shaw, HMS President (1918), Victoria Embankment, London EC4Y 0HJ ● Price £1.50 from Post Office Ltd philatelic outlets or by order from Post Office branches ● **Annual subscription** £12.95 UK & Europe, £17.95 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 ● Royal Mail publishes the fortnightly *British Postmark Bulletin*, giving details of forthcoming special handstamps – available on annual subscription from Royal Mail Tallents House: £12.25 UK and Europe, £24.95 rest of the world ● 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

BATTLE OF BRITAIN SPECIAL

New this month The 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain Miniature Sheet **336**



Hero from on high Meet Spitfire pilot Ken Wilkinson **338**

War story Presentation Pack writer Peter Devitt on the story behind the new stamps **341**

Special Stamp archive The Battle of Britain on earlier UK stamps **344**



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H is for halfpenny post Travel back to the age of the halfpenny stamp with Colin Baker **346**



This Month in History An anniversary issue of 1965 **348**



July brainbusters Your chance to win a Collectors' Album and Special Stamps **350**

Correspondence



Letting off steam

As a long-time collector (75 years) I am not given to writing in a critical mode about the many excellent stamp issues from Royal Mail, so please forgive this foray! I believe you missed a trick with the Penny Black 175th anniversary stamps, previewed in April *Bulletin*. The two stamps in the style of 1840 were cleverly adjusted for use today, but why on earth did no one suggest two different values – say, the Penny Black First Class and the Two Pence Blue Second Class. As always, I suppose Royal Mail is maximising income from first-class mailings? Witness how few times they fail to include a Second Class value in a Special Stamp issue!

My second little gripe is to say what a disappointingly dull design has been produced for the Magna Carta event. Altogether too highbrow, and lacklustre with it. Unusual for Royal Mail stamps, the Magna Carta designs, although skillfully rendered, are most dreadfully dreary – for history scholars only! My last comment concerns the habitual use for generic sheets of that gloomy (usually irrelevant) blue 'Hello' 1st Class stamps. See the recent London 2015 Souvenir Sheet – why could not the actual pictorial images of London have been used as the stamps themselves? They were all very interesting and well illustrated for the occasion – particularly for our foreign friends.

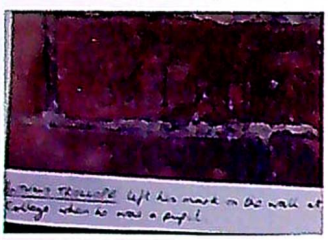
JH Witherow, Sqn Ldr (Rtd) MITD, Herts

Good news: there is a Second Class stamp in August's Bees issue (see page 327). We understand that, as a seasoned collector, there are many UK stamps that you do like. And *Bulletin* readers will surely enjoy sharing your gripes – although of course we disagree on all counts. Packed with so much history, yes, the stamps shown above could be seen as highbrow. But lacklustre? Ouch! What do other readers think? Let off your steam here!

W Doherty, Royal Mail Editor

What a brick!

In view of the bicentenary of the birth of Anthony Trollope and the tribute in the April issue of the *Bulletin*, your readers may be interested in the enclosed photograph. It shows Trollope's name carved into a brick in the grounds of Winchester College, where he was a pupil after leaving Harrow at the age of 11. Some people claim that Trollope's novel *The Warden* was based on St Cross Hospital near the College.







CW Pile, Hampshire

Thank you Mr Pile. There are many Trollope fans among readers. Winchester College is mentioned in the Anthony Trollope Presentation Pack •

Keep the mail coming...

The Editor welcomes your letters and the senders of those published this month will receive a First World War 2015 Prestige Stamp Book. Send your letters to: William Doherty, *British Philatelic Bulletin*, Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB. Remember that you can also send emails to bulletin.enquiries@royalmail.com.



Comedy Greats Winners

April Quip Quiz Winner R Harris, Bristol. *Solution* 1c, 2e, 3a, 4f, 5b, 6g, 7d *Name That Stamp Winner* J Freire-Banos, Bristol. *Solution* Tommy Cooper 1998.

Royal Mail Update Salute the Gurkhas, see stamps on post boxes and catch Sustainable Fish



Left: the new Gurkhas Commemorative Sheet celebrates 200 years of loyal service to Britain

Gurkha grit A new Commemorative Sheet Royal Mail salutes the courage and fighting prowess of the Gurkhas. The Sheet, released on 20 August, marks 200 years of the elite troops' service to Britain since the first Gurkha regiment was formed in 1815.

Ten First-Class Union Flag stamps with illustrated labels cover the many campaigns and huge variety of combat theatres where the Gurkhas served. The labels resemble a roll-call of history. The Indian Mutiny. The First World War and the Second. Borneo in the Sixties. Falklands 1982. Afghanistan today. In the Commemorative Pack the grit of these hardy heroes is revealed with the story of the Gurkhas as a people and as a ▸

The Gurkhas Commemorative Sheet – Specifications

Date of issue	20 August
Number of stamps	10 x 1st Class Union Flag Stamps
Stamp design	CDT design
Stamp format	Portrait
Stamp size	20mm x 24mm
Sheet and Pack design	Demographik
Sheet format	A4
Printer	International Security Printers
Print process	Lithography
Perforations	Die-cut simulated
Phosphor	Bars as appropriate
Gum	Self-adhesive
Words	Gordon Corrigan
Price	£14.95

fighting unit: their rugged, harsh homeland of Nepal where they stride the mountains with ease; the Gurkha selection test, which involves carrying 55lb of stones three miles over a 1,500-foot peak; the 26 Victoria Crosses they have won battling everyone from the Nazis to the Taliban.

The Pack also explains the work of the Gurkha Welfare Trust, which aims to alleviate hardship suffered by veterans – a thank-you for their bravery and loyalty to Britain •

Acknowledgements: All imagery provided courtesy of The Gurkha Museum, Winchester, except for: *Assault on the Kashmir Gate* © Jason Askew (Indian Mutiny label); *Storming of the Heights of Dargai* by Vereker Hamilton courtesy of and © The Gordon Highlanders Museum (Battle of Dargai label and backing card); the image used on the Afghanistan label was produced by the Ministry of Defence. © Crown copyright. Reproduced under the terms of the Open Government Licence; Gurkha soldier monument, India © Sherab/Alamy; Gurkha Welfare Trust image and Gurkha 200 logo kindly provided by The Gurkha Welfare Trust; quotation from A Comparative and Etymological Dictionary of the Nepali Language (Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., Ltd,1931) by Ralph Lilley Turner MC, MA.
Backing card All imagery provided courtesy of The Gurkha Museum, Winchester, except for: Machapuchare mountain, Nepal – Robert Harding Images; Himalayan village © salajean; *Assemblage of Gurkhas*, 1820, James Baillie Fraser (1783–1856) (after)/Private Collection/Photo © Christie's Images/Bridgeman Images; Gurkha troops at San Carlos Bay, Falkland Islands – Martin Cleaver/PA Archive/Press Association Images; veteran Gurkha image and Gurkha 200 logo kindly provided by The Gurkha Welfare Trust; the Regimental Insignia of the Brigade of Gurkhas is a trade mark registered in the name of the Secretary of State for Defence and is used under licence.



Coming to a post box near you? To celebrate 50 years of Special Stamps, Royal Mail is installing 50 plaques with images of some of the most popular stamps on 50 post boxes across the country. The locations chosen are cities, towns and villages that have a special connection with the featured stamp.

Last month the WWF Polar Bear stamp was unveiled on a postbox in Woking – where WWF UK's Living Planet Centre is based – to coincide with WWF's 50th anniversary celebrations. Other stamps on postboxes include Winston Churchill, Bagpuss, Dylan Thomas, Robert Burns, the Giant's Causeway, York Minster and Sherlock Holmes.

A total of 2,663 Special Stamps have been issued since July 1965. They have featured many landmarks and landscapes, and mirrored many changes in UK society and culture. If you think one of them has a connection with your hometown, why not write and tell *Bulletin* about it? If there is enough demand, then your local post box could be chosen for a second wave of Special Stamp plaques •

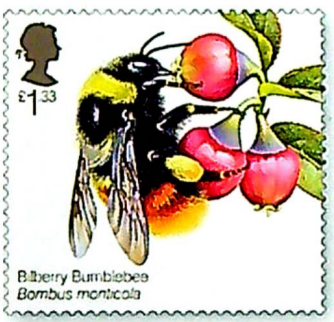


On your marks... A year ago Royal Mail celebrated the sporting glory of the Glasgow 2014 XX Commonwealth Games with a special issue comprising six Special Stamps, Presentation Pack, Stamp Book and Stamp Cards. There is just time to catch them before they are withdrawn from sale on 16 July •















Pretty precious Coming soon – six bees from different parts of the UK. Do you know your locals?

BEES ARE OUR ANCIENT ALLIES in towns and in the countryside, and unacknowledged partners in agriculture. They play a vital role in the pollination of food crops, keeping farms in business, and in helping parks, gardens and hedgerows to thrive. Yet bees are in decline in their numbers and their range, so Royal Mail is paying tribute to their vital work with a Bees Special Stamp issue on 18 August, comprising a set of six Special Stamps, Miniature Sheet, Presentation Pack, Stamp Cards and a Stamp Book.



FD1520-PL

Stamp by stamp

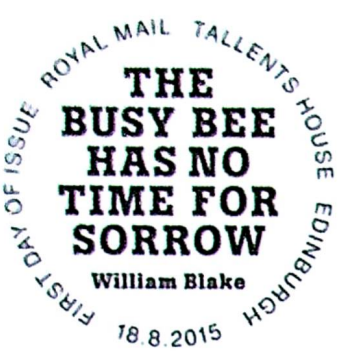
The Special sheet stamps portray two bumblebee species and four 'solitary' bees. They are chosen to represent a range of species, habitats and different UK regions.

SCABIOUS BEE (*Andrena hattorfiana*). Most likely to be seen in South West England, but with other populations found in East Anglia and South Wales, this bee lives in sandy or open grassland where there are scabious flowers. *Second Class*

GREAT YELLOW BUMBLEBEE (*Bombus distinguendus*). Believed to have declined from 80 per cent of its historic range in the UK, this bee is a focus of ▸

Bees Stamps – Prices	
Stamp set, AS19B	£7.27
Miniature Sheet MZ109	£3.92
Presentation Pack Code AP406	£11.70
First Day Cover Stamps/overseas, AF395	£9.20/£7.67
Stamp Cards (set of 10) Code AQ225	£4.95
Retail Stamp Book, Code UB384 (see page 330)	£3.78

Bees Stamps – Specifications	
Date of issue	18 August
Number of stamps	Six (individual sheets)
Design	Anna Ekelund
Illustration	Richard Lewington
Stamp format	Over-square landscape
Stamp size	37mm x 35mm
Number per sheet	25/50
Full sheet size	380mm x 202mm
Printer	International Security Printers
Print process	Lithography
Perforations	14 x 14.5
Phosphor	Bars as appropriate
Gum	PVA



FD1520-TH

Postmarks: alternative location St Bees (see previous page); Tallents House postmark with a quote from William Blake (above); non-pictorial with St Bees location (see page 330)

conservation in Scotland. It lives in grassland where it can forage on clover, vetch and knapweed. *First Class*

Northern Colletes Bee (*Colletes floralis*). Its UK population is 50 per cent of the global total, so is very important. It prefers a sandy, coastal environment and forages on many flowers, including the carrot and parsley family. In 2003 this species was seen in Northern Ireland for the first time in 70 years. £1

Bilberry Bumblebee (*Bombus monticola*). Concentrated in North East England but also in the South West and in Wales, this bumblebee prefers to live in higher altitudes. It forages on bilberries as well as brambles, raspberries, bell heather, sallow and legumes such as clover and bird's foot trefoil – which means that it can have a vital role in pollinating nitrogen-fixing plants in agriculture. £1.33

Large Mason Bee (*Osmia xanthomelana*). Found at only two sites in Wales, this is Britain's rarest solitary bee. Females collect fresh water from cliffs and use it to make mud for building nests. The Large Mason forages nectar mainly from horse shoe vetch, bramble and bugle. £1.52

Potter Flower Bee (*Anthophora retusa*). This is a 'flower bee' that has the appearance of a bumblebee but is solitary. Numbers have declined severely and today it can be seen in just a few sites in South East England. Its preferred habitat is sandy soils such as dunes, cliffs and commons, where it forages from ground ivy, vetches, clovers and bird's foot trefoil. £2.25

All six Special Stamps are available in the Presentation Pack, designed by Anna Ekelund and shown on the facing page, which incudes an informative insert card written by Dave Goulson.

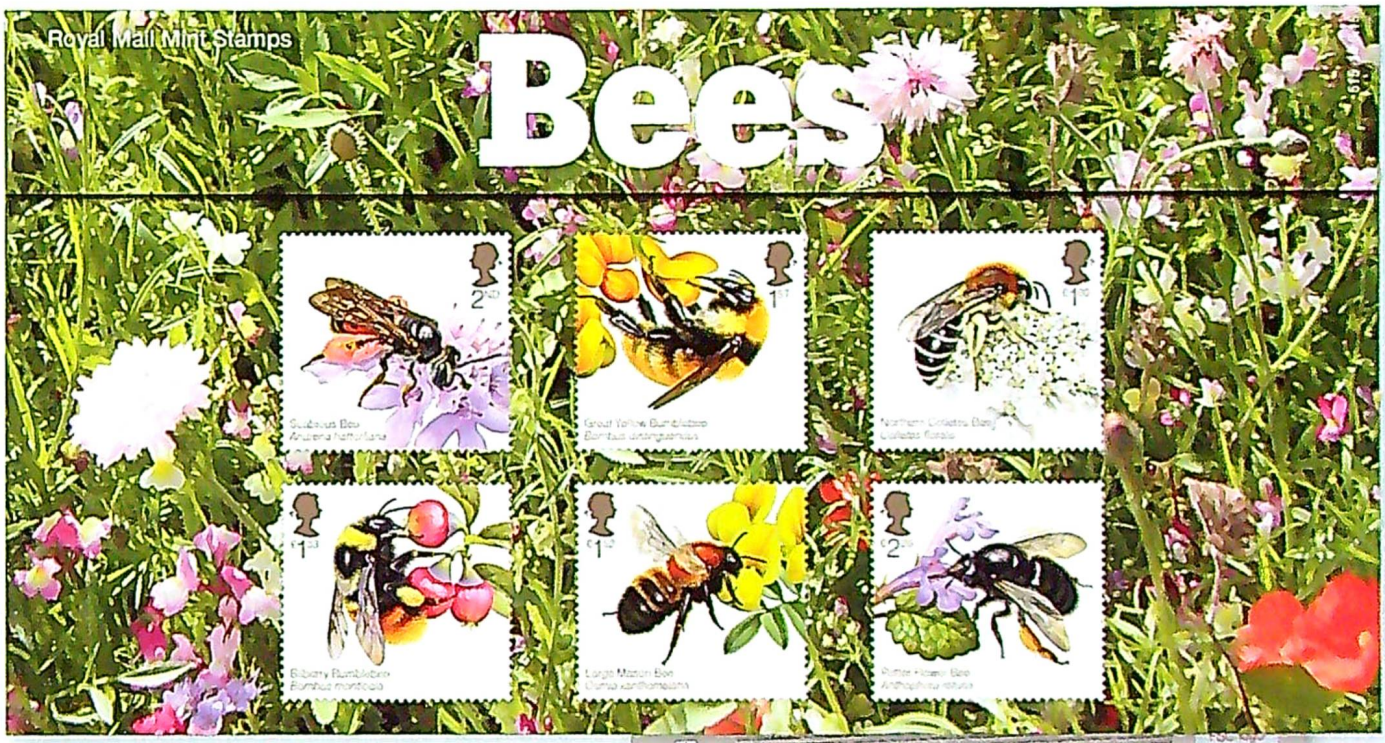
Bees Miniature Sheet – Specifications

Date of issue	18 August
Number of stamps	Four
Design	Interabang
Illustration	Andy English
Stamp format	Over-square landscape
Stamp size	37mm x 35mm
Miniature Sheet size	179mm x 74mm
Printer	International Security Printers
Print process	Lithography
Perforations	14 x 14.5
Gum	PVA

Four Miniature Sheet stamps

The Honeybee Miniature Sheet focuses on the Western Honeybee, *Apis mellifera*. The four stamps portray different aspects of apian behaviour: the waggle dance, pollinating, making honey and tending the young, as shown below on the Bees Miniature Sheet First Day Cover. ▷









Above: the colourful Bees Presentation Pack contains an informative illustrated insert card, with text from expert writer Dave Goulson



Above: First Day Cover of Bee Stamps, with special postmarks dated on the first day of issue, 18 August

First Day facilities

Serviced (i.e. stamped and postmarked) Royal Mail First Day Covers for the Bees Special Stamps and Miniature Sheet are available by mail order from Royal Mail Tallents House at the address on page 322.

Orders for Serviced First Day Covers should reach Royal Mail by 18 August. You may also send stamped envelopes on the day of issue to Royal Mail, Tallents House for the Tallents House, Edinburgh postmark. Customers who hand in or post stamped Royal Mail First Day Cover envelopes at Post Offices with a philatelic counter on the day of issue will receive the pictorial St Bees first day postmark.

Alternatively, customers may also send stamped envelopes to any of the Special Handstamp Centres for the pictorial or plain St Bees postmark quoting the appropriate reference number, as shown on these pages.

Bees book Also available on 18 August is a Stamp Book containing six First Class stamps: four Royal Mail Red definitives and two Great Yellow Bumblebee stamps from the new issue ●

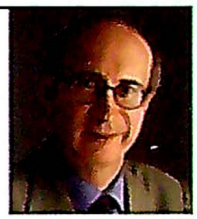
Bees Stamp Book – Specifications	
Issue date	18 August
Book format	4 x Royal Mail Red 1st Class Machin definitives, 2 x 1st Class Bees Great Yellow Bumblebee
Definitive Stamp format	Portrait 20mm x 24mm
Special Stamp format	Over-square landscape 37mm x 35mm
Printer	ISP
Print process	Gravure
Phosphor	Bars as appropriate
Gum	Self-adhesive



FD1520-NP



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



UK diary dates

3 July Strand Stamp Fair, Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way, London WC1, 9am to 4pm. Details: 020 8946 4480, www.stampshows.net.

4 July Midpex, Warwickshire Exhibition Centre, Leamington Spa CV31 1XN. See 'UK exhibitions' below.

4 July Magnapex, Addlestone Community Centre, Addlestone. See below.

11 July Telford Stamp, Card and Coin Fair, Belmont Hall, Wellington Centre, Telford TF1 1LU, 10am to 3pm. Free entry, good range of stalls, free valuations, buy and sell. Details: Bob Hemmings, 01694 720192.

11 July National Philatelic Society AGM and members' displays, Welsh Centre, 157 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8UE, 11am (auction starts 1pm). Details: P Mellor, 01582 762284.

12 July Kent Federation Day, Maidstone Great Danes Hotel, Hollingbourne, Maidstone ME17 1RE, 9.30am to 4pm.

17-18 July York Racecourse Coin & Stamp Fair, The Grandstand, York Racecourse, York YO23 1EX. Friday 11am to 6pm, Saturday 10am to 4pm. Admission free. Includes York National Postal History Competition. Details: C Rainey, 01793 513431, www.stampshows.net.

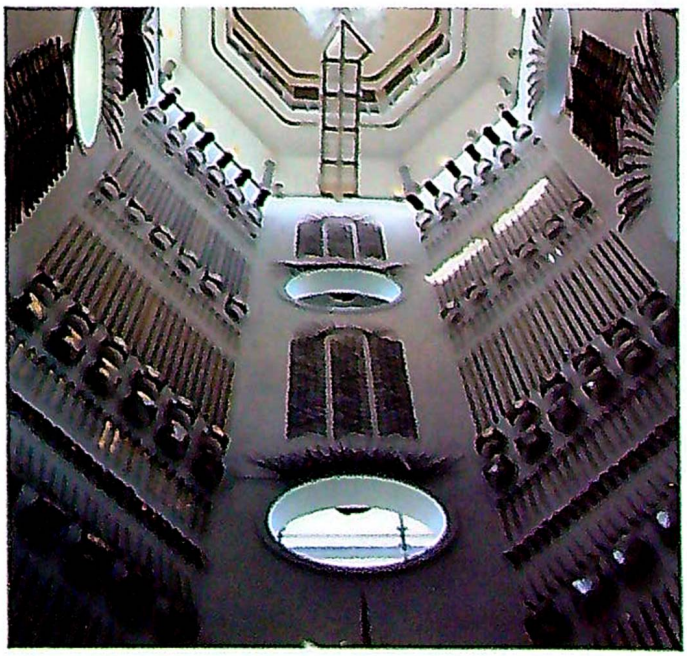
6-9 August Philatelic Congress of Great Britain, Queens Hotel, Leeds. Details: P Gaywood, gaywood@hotmail.co.uk.

7 August Strand Stamp Fair: for details see above.

8 August National Philatelic Society display: Ethiopia (Tristan Brittan), Welsh Centre, 157 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8UE •

Philatelic Congress of Great Britain

The theme for this year's Congress will be '1890', this year being the 125th anniversary of the Leeds Philatelic Society, *Gibbons Stamp Monthly* and the Uniform Penny Post Jubilee of 1890. It takes place at the Queens Hotel, Leeds LS1 1PJ from Thursday 6 August to Sunday 9 August. There will be talks about the city of Leeds combined with a display of Leeds Philatelic Society, the Royal Armouries in Leeds, early years of Stanley Gibbons and *Gibbons Stamp Monthly*, and postal services in 1890. There will be a display of 1890 Postal Jubilee material, and the Kay Goodman Lecture on Philatelic Auctions.

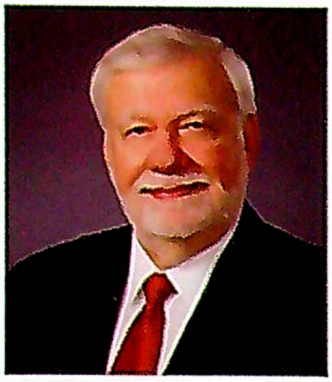


The Congress banquet is at the Royal Armouries (right) and there will be a walking tour of the city, which is the third largest in England. Leeds is two hours 20 minutes by train from London King's Cross and the Queens Hotel is opposite the railway station.

Four philatelists will sign the prestigious Roll of Distinguished Philatelists at the Congress on ▸

the Friday. They are: Frank Walton from the UK, Jorgen Jorgensen of Denmark and Dr James Mazepa and Stephen D Schumann from the USA. Frank Walton is best known as Editor of the Royal Philatelic Society London's journal *The London Philatelist* from 2001 until 2014. And he is currently President of the Society. All signatories are Fellows of the Royal Philatelic Society London.

For details of the Congress see www.gbcongress.org. Contact Paul Gaywood at gaywood@hotmail.co.uk to book your place and hotel accommodation •



James Mazepa



Jorgen Jorgensen



Stephen D Schumann



Frank Walton

UK exhibitions

Midpex, at the Warwickshire Exhibition Centre, Leamington Spa CV31 1XN on 4 July (10am to 5pm), is a popular event, and was first held in 1995. Attended by collectors from across the UK, it brings together 40 specialist societies and 70 stamp and postcard dealers. Among the societies taking part will be the Great Britain Philatelic Society (display of GB line-engraved at 3pm), British Postmark Society, TPO & Sea Post Society, Railway Philatelic Group and Cinderella Stamp Club. The Stamp Active group will hand out philatelic goodie bags to young visitors and hold activities with prizes to win. Royal Mail will provide Post & Go machines. For more information see www.midpex.wordpress.com.

The *Magnapex 2015* stamp fair and exhibition, celebrating the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta, will be held at the Addlestone Community Centre, Garfield Road, Addlestone KT15 2NJ on 4 July, from 10am to 4pm. Attractions include dealers, stamp displays and competitions. Telephone Mike Wilson on 01932 844215 or email mikewwilson@virginmedia.com for further information.

Autumn Stampex is at the Business Design Centre, London N1 from 16 to 19 September. Scotex 2015, organised by the Scottish Philatelic Trade Association, takes place at the Dewars Centre, Glover Street, Perth on 16 and 17 October •

International exhibition

The next international stamp exhibition will be *Singapore 2015*, from 11 to 16 August, marking the 50th anniversary of the country's independence.

The famous British Guiana One Cent Magenta stamp, sold last year for £5.5 million, will be on show at Monte Carlo's *MonacoPhil 2015* exhibition, which runs from 3 to 5 December. The show includes exhibitions of 100 world rarities and Polar philately, as well as 80 postal administration and dealer stands. For more details visit www.monacophil.eu.

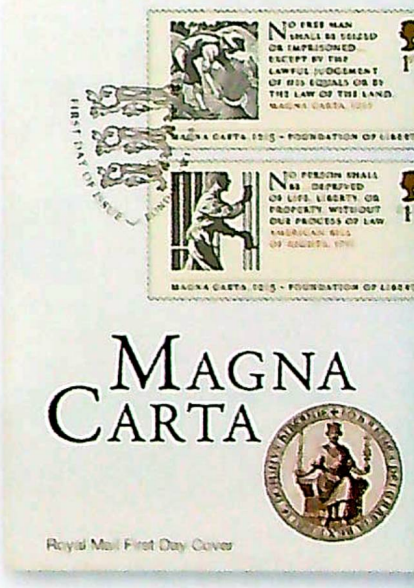
The *World Stamp Show-NY2016* will be held at the Javits Center in New

York City, from 28 May to 4 June next year. About 3,800 frames will display entries in all 13 FIP-recognised philatelic categories, including, for the first time, first day cover exhibits in the Experimental Exhibiting Group. For show information see www.ny2016.org.

A General World Stamp Exhibition, Philataipei 2016, organised by the Chunghwa Post and Chinese Taipei Philatelic Federation, takes place at the World Trade Centre in Taipei, Taiwan from 8 to 13 October next year ●

Special Stamp-related events and exhibitions

2015 is a year of many anniversaries, celebrated by exhibitions and events. Stamps marking the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta went on sale on 2 June. A Magna Carta exhibition – called Law, Liberty, Legacy – is on at the British Library in London until 1 September. Visit www.bl.uk/magna-carta for details.



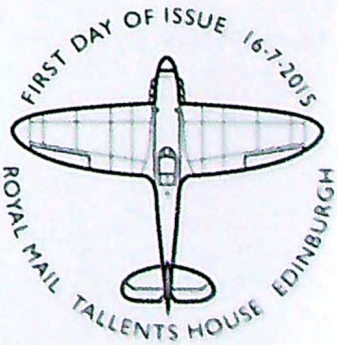
The Death of a Hero exhibition, marking the 50th anniversary of the death of Sir Winston Churchill, is on at Chartwell, his country home in Kent, until 1 November. The show includes a photograph of Churchill on VE Day signed by all members of the Royal Family pictured with him, and the silent typewriter used by his secretaries so he could give dictation without distraction from the clatter of keys. Visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk/chartwell or phone 01732 868381 for information. An exhibition called Churchill's Scientists is at the Science Museum in London until 1 March 2016. Blenheim Palace, his birthplace at Woodstock in Oxfordshire, hosts the Winston Churchill Exhibition and Trail. Visit www.blenheimpalace.com or phone 01993 810530 for details.

Stamps commemorating the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo were issued on 18 June. At Windsor Castle, a 'Waterloo at Windsor' themed trail displays prints, drawings and archive material exploring the battle and its aftermath. Objects on show include Napoleon's red cloak presented to King George IV, and letters written by Wellington and Napoleon. The attraction is open until 13 January 2016. An online exhibition of Waterloo artefacts is at www.waterloo200.org.



The 150th anniversary of the publication of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* was commemorated by stamps in January. The Alice Look exhibition, examining how Alice has influenced style and fashion over the past 150 years, is at the Victoria & Albert Museum of Childhood, Bethnal Green, London E2 until 26 September. Alice in Cartoonland is at the Cartoon Museum, 35 Little Russell Street, London WC1A 2HH from 15 July until 1 November. An Alice exhibition opens at the British Library in London in the autumn.

Stamps marking the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Britain go on sale on 16 July. A new £3.5 million visitor centre was opened by The Queen at the Battle of Britain Memorial, Capel-le-Ferne, Folkestone, Kent in March. The Centre is open daily 10am to 6pm until 30 September, then 10am to 4pm until 28 February 2016. For the Battle of Britain Special Stamps story, see page 336.



Alexander McQueen's 'Black Raven' dress, which featured on a stamp in the Great British Fashion set of 2012, can be seen at the Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty exhibition at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London until 2 August. McQueen died in 2010. ▸



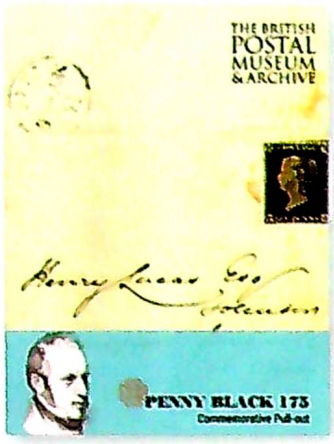
Last September's Seaside Architecture issue included a first-class stamp showing Llandudno Pier, the longest in Wales and known as the 'Queen of Welsh Piers'. The pier has recently been sold for £1.5 million to Adam Williams, of Tir Prince Raceway, who has vowed to ensure the future of the structure •

British Postal Museum & Archive

The BPMA, located at Freeling House, Phoenix Place, London WC1, near the famous Mount Pleasant sorting office, is open Monday to Friday, 10am to 5pm (Thursdays until 7pm) and on Saturday 11 July and Saturday 8 August (10am to 5pm), but closed the following two Mondays.

On show at Freeling House until 7 August is an exhibition marking the 175th anniversary of the Penny Black.

Visit the BPMA website for details of the Post Office in the Community exhibition at Blists Hill Victorian Town in Madeley, Telford, Shropshire. Some 25 exhibitions can be seen online, including Aerial Post, regional stamps, Machins, David Gentleman, postal vehicles and letter boxes.



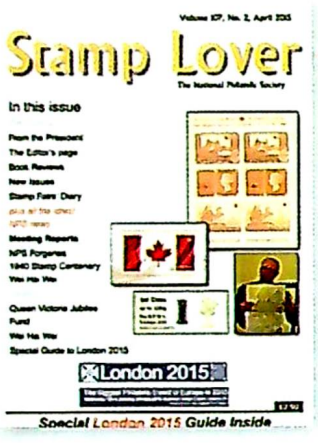
Also see the website – www.postalheritage.org.uk – or the BPMA Events Guide for details of tours of the Archive and Museum Store, talks and other events. (A charge applies to some events.) Contact the BPMA for a copy of the Events Guide: phone 020 7239 2570 or email info@postalheritage.org.uk.

The May issue of the *BPMA Newsletter* is, not surprisingly, a Penny Black 175th anniversary edition, with reports on 3D scanning of Mail Rail and Post Office Architecture. A 12-page special supplement illustrates many of the key items in the Penny Black story •

Society journals

The Spring 2015 issue of *TPO* – journal of the TPO & Seapost Society – includes features on the cessation of TPO services during the Second World War and their restoration after it, the Bristol Sorting Tender/Carriage, GPO 1 (the first mobile post office, from 1936) and late fee mailings for carriage by rail of letters destined for the USA. For details of the Society contact Julian Jones, 19 Richmond Lane, Romsey SO51 7LB or visit www.tpo-seapost.org.uk. The Society will have a table at Midpex on 4 July.

The Stamp Lover has been published by the National Philatelic Society (NPS) since 1908. The April 2015 issue includes features on Queen Victoria's Jubilee Fund Association, Wei Hai Wei – the last Treaty Port of Hong Kong, and Europhilex. The meeting reports include an interesting account of the NPS 'Black Museum' and the GB Stamp Centenary issue. There are a number of lengthy and well-written reviews of recent books, a look at new issues from Australia, Canada, South Georgia and Sweden, and a useful two-page listing of forthcoming stamp fairs. In his message to readers, Editor Michael Goodman tells of his participation in a phone-in on London Broadcasting Radio in February when he talked about the rise of social philately, the importance of collecting letters and the fact that every cover tells some sort of story. Membership of the NPS is £32 (£28 if living over 60 miles from London), overseas £24. There is a special introductory offer for new members. Contact the society at nps@ukphilately.org.uk or visit www.ukphilately.org.uk/nps for further details.



The March-April issue of *Topical Time*, the magazine of the American Thematic Association (ATA), includes articles on pirates on postmarks with

some British examples, collecting meter marks, Nelson and Trafalgar and Chinese poetry masters, as well as reports of events and activities of the ATA and its chapters and study units – as always, a good read for thematic collectors. Details: ATA, PO Box 8, Carterville IL 62918-0008, americantopical@msn.com or www.americantopicalassn.org.

The Newsletter of the Welsh Postal History Society (formerly the Welsh Philatelic Society) is a well-produced 36-page journal. The May 2015 issue includes articles on 'Duplex' datestamps of Swansea, the postmarks of Croesfforddd Marli, Flintshire, Welsh post offices of yesteryear, inscription in datestamps of offices in Monmouthshire/Gwent, South Wales, and postal history of Builth Wells. Ken Smith provides his regular update on post office openings and closures in Wales, and there is an interesting piece on spoof 1953 Coronation stamps for Mumbles Head (Swansea) and St Margaret's Island (Tenby). This is essential reading for anyone interested in Welsh postal history. Society enquiries: Neil Prior, 20 Heol y Sheet, North Cornelly, Bridgend CF33 4EY, www.wps.wales.org •

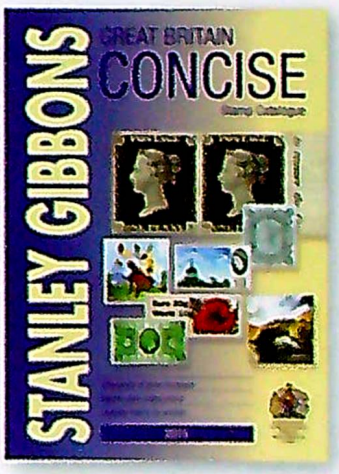


Philatelists honoured

The Association of British Philatelic Societies (ABPS) has awarded the 2015 Congress Medal to Bryan A Jones, the Chairman of the Midland Philatelic Federation and the Midpex Organising Committee. He has been President, Chairman and Secretary of the Solihull Philatelic Society and Editor of the Pacific Islands Study Circle. ABPS Awards of Merit go to John Baron (nominated by Thatcham & District Philatelic Society), Malcolm Barton (Falkland Islands Philatelic Study Group), Kenneth Brown (Leeds Philatelic Society) and Tony Tudor (Shropshire Philatelic Society). Congratulations to all five on this recognition of their work in the philatelic community •

New publications

The 2015 edition of the Stanley Gibbons *Great Britain Concise Stamp Catalogue* is now available and costs £34.95. It lists British stamps from the Penny Black to April's Comedy Greats set. Post & Go stamps are included as are generic sheets and Royal Mail commemorative sheets. A review will appear here next month. Also recently published is a new (14th) edition of the *GB Specialised Catalogue Vol 2* Edward VII to George VI, with rewritten introduction to the George V section, new sections covering Edward VII essays, Postage Due trials and proofs and essays, proofs and trials of booklet covers. Checklists relate specialised numbers to standard Stanley Gibbons numbers as given in the *GB Concise Stamp Catalogue*. It costs £47.95, or £89.95 in a deluxe leather-bound edition.



Two new 3rd editions of the sectionalised *Commonwealth Catalogue* have been published – Eastern Pacific (Cook Islands, Aituaki, Rarotonga, Penrhyn Island, Niue, Pitcairn Islands, and Samoa – £19.95) and Bangladesh, Burma, Pakistan & Sri Lanka (£21.95). In the main catalogue series a new 8th edition of Part 22 United States of America (including Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Palau, and United Nations – New York) is now available at £45.95. All catalogues are on sale at the Stanley Gibbons shop at 399 Strand, London WC2R 0LX and by mail order from Stanley Gibbons, 7 Parkside, Ringwood, Hants BH24 3SH, freephone (UK) 0800 611622, or email help@stanleygibbons.com •



The 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain

is commemorated in this six-stamp Royal Mail Miniature Sheet issued on 16 July.

In July 1940 the Germany army was just 20 miles from our shores, Europe had fallen and Britain faced the *Luftschlacht um England* – the sustained aerial bombing campaign waged by Germany over southern England which was to last until the end of October.

Beginning in July, coastal naval convoys and shipping ports were attacked. In August Royal Air Force bases became the main targets, then factories and supply chains. Eventually the Luftwaffe used 'terror bombing' to attack regions of political significance and damage morale. The Battle of Britain was the first major war campaign fought solely by air forces.

Germany's objective of destroying Britain's air defences was thwarted; by maintaining overall air superiority the Royal Air Force prevented Operation Sea Lion, the amphibious invasion planned by Adolf Hitler. Consequently, the Battle of Britain is seen by historians as the first major defeat of Nazi Germany and a key turning point in the Second World War.

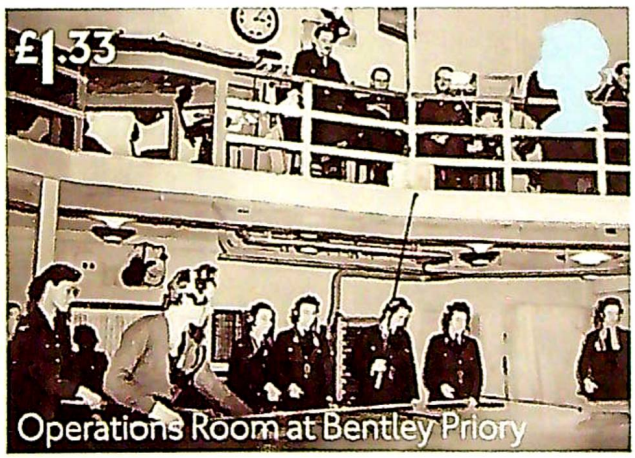
The six stamps of the Miniature Sheet feature photographic imagery from this period to commemorate the battle and the people involved, including pilots, ground crew, observers and operations room staff:

Pilots scramble to their Hurricanes
The German airforce was continually frustrated by Britain's highly developed radar system, which enabled controllers to order pilots to 'scramble' and intercept the incoming enemy at a greater distance.

Supermarine Spitfires on patrol
A photograph from the Imperial War









Museum shows Supermarine Spitfires of 610 Squadron, based at Biggin Hill, patrolling the skies in close formation.

Armourer replaces ammunition boxes
Fred Roberts rearms a Spitfire while the pilot, Sergeant Bernard Jennings can be seen in the background.

Spotters of the Auxiliary Territorial Service ATS recruits at their first lesson in identifying enemy aircraft.

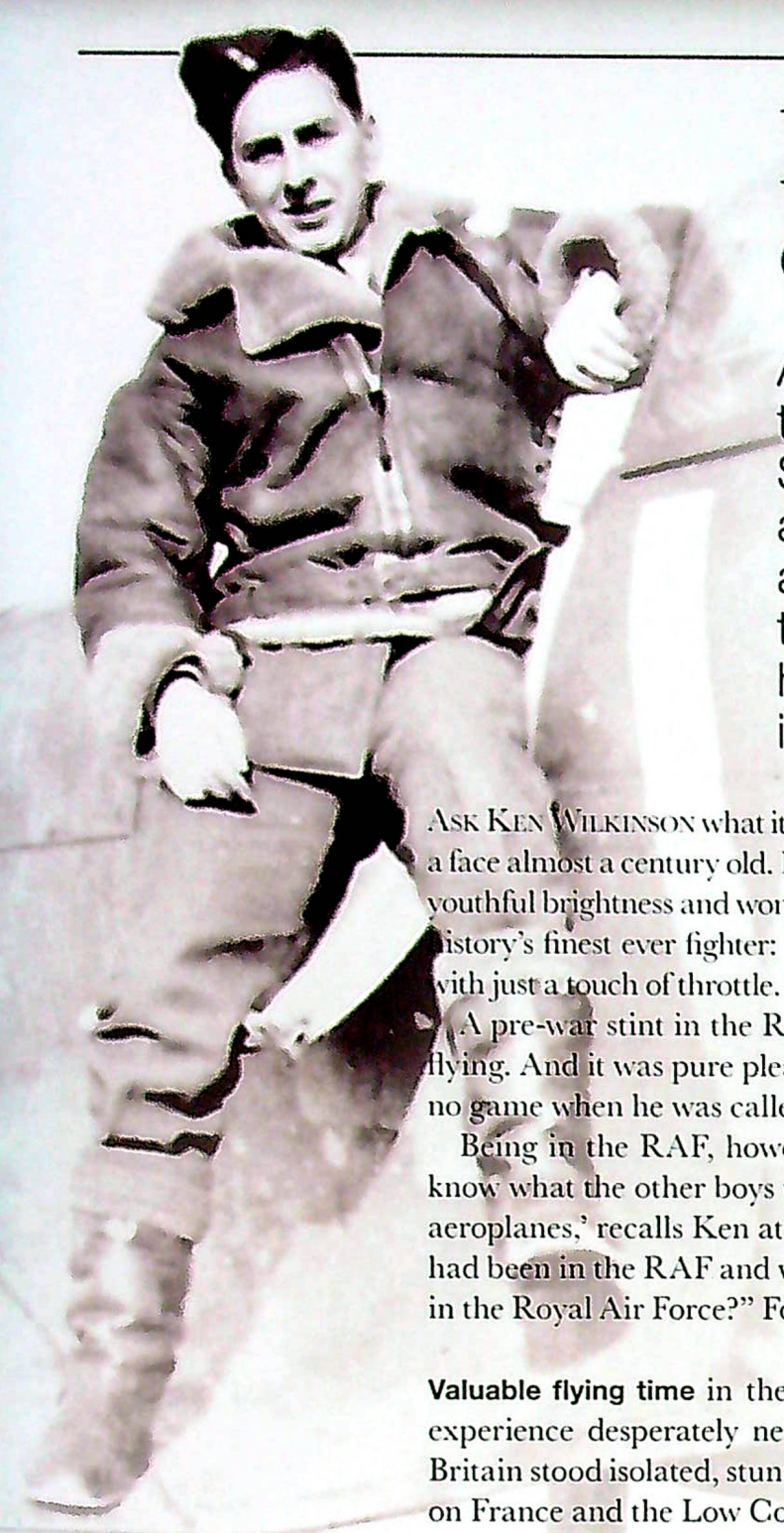
Operations Room at Bentley Priory
As headquarters of Fighter Command, Bentley Priory played a crucial role in the air defence system. The site is now a museum and includes a Grade II listed officers' mess.

Pilots of 32 Squadron await orders
Fighter pilots snatch a moment of relaxation at RAF Hawkinge in Kent. Air Chief Marshal Sir Hugh Dowding, Commander-in-Chief of RAF Fighter Command in 1940, had hoped to allow each squadron one day's rest per week, but this was rarely possible.

The sheet's border features Prime Minister Winston Churchill at a coast defence position near Hartlepool on 31 July 1940, alongside his famous quotation about 'The Few' ●

Acknowledgements Pilots and Hurricanes photo © William Vandivert/The LIFE Picture Collection/Getty Images; Supermarine Spitfires photo © IWM CH741; Armourer photo © IWM CH1458; Auxiliary Territorial Service photo © Associated Press/Daily Mail/Rex Features; Operations Room photo © IWM C0018701; 32 Squadron photo © Fox Photos/Getty Images; Winston Churchill photo © IWM H2628; Winston Churchill quotation reproduced with permission of Curtis Brown Ltd, London, on behalf of The Estate of Winston Churchill.

For the full philatelic preview of this issue, see page 295 of June *Bulletin*



Hero from on high

As the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain Miniature Sheet pays tribute to the young airmen who defended the nation against the Luftwaffe we talk to a veteran Spitfire pilot about his memories of the conflict high in the violent skies of 1940

Ask Ken Wilkinson what it was like to fly a Spitfire and the years fall away from a face almost a century old. He smiles a young man's smile. The eyes widen with youthful brightness and wonder. Suddenly Ken, 97, is 22 again, in the cockpit of history's finest ever fighter: 'The Spitfire was astounding – it shot into the sky with just a touch of throttle. It was a beauty, that aircraft, an absolute beauty.'

A pre-war stint in the RAF Volunteer Reserve gave Ken his first taste of flying. And it was pure pleasure. But he knew the conflict to come would be no game when he was called up on 1 September 1939.

Being in the RAF, however, was a schoolboy dream come true. 'I don't know what the other boys were drawing at school but I was always drawing aeroplanes,' recalls Ken at his home in Solihull, West Midlands. 'My father had been in the RAF and when I was 17 he asked me, "Would you like to fly in the Royal Air Force?" For me there was only one answer to that question!'

Valuable flying time in the Volunteer Reserve had given Ken the level of experience desperately needed by a nation fighting alone in 1940. Then Britain stood isolated, stunned by the fall of Poland, Hitler's lightning assault on France and the Low Countries, and the Dunkirk disaster.

The battle for Europe was soon over. The Battle of Britain then began. And Sergeant Pilot Ken Wilkinson of 19 Squadron was in the thick of it. Based at Fowlmere then Duxford, Cambridgeshire, 19 was the first squadron to be equipped with Spitfires. The unit was part of Douglas Bader's Duxford 'Big Wing'. The Wing comprised two Spitfire squadrons and three Hurricane squadrons fighting together as part of the RAF's large-formation strategy. The Spitfires' job was to engage the Luftwaffe's Messerschmitt Bf 109 fighter escorts so Bader's Hurricanes could attack the German bombers heading for industrial targets in the Midlands, Yorkshire and Lancashire.

> 'The Spitfire was astounding – it shot into the sky with just a touch of throttle'

We may be marking the 75th anniversary of the campaign this year but for Ken the Battle was yesterday. And the memories are vivid. 'The first time

Spitfire image: iStock

you see that gaggle of German bombers coming towards you, you think: how on earth are we going to deal with them? There were so bloody many, an awful lot.

'At Duxford we were often scrambling at noon, climbing up over the Thames Estuary with the midday sun in our faces – that made us vulnerable so the Germans often engaged us as we were still climbing and couldn't spot them.'

Ken's role was 'tail end Charlie', weaving left and right at the back of the squadron, scanning the sky above and to the rear for 109s attempting an ambush. 'In that position you'd be the first to get the chop so you keep your eyes open,' he explains.

When the Germans were spotted the British planes broke formation and engaged: 'Within a matter of seconds you split up and you are either attacking or being attacked. You're not looking around for a beautiful sunset. You are just concentrating as hard as you can on the business of either being on the tail of a German or getting away from a German who's on your tail.

'In the Spitfire we were able to turn inside the Messerschmitt 109. This tight, steep turn meant you could get out of the 109's way, and then try to get back on his tail. The whole aircraft shook as you swept round and you'd have partial visibility thanks to blackout caused by the Gs.'

Ken well remembers the constant scream of the engines, the clatter of ▸







From top: Ken Wilkinson at home; Supermarine Spitfires on a stamp in the Battle of Britain Miniature Sheet; a Spitfire in elegant flight









From top: Ken today with his original flying jacket, boots and parachute bag; Ken in his RAF uniform; the Battle of Britain stamp shows a Spitfire from 19 Squadron – Ken's old unit; Ken shakes hands with *Bulletin* writer Andrew Neish

the guns, and the sheer speed of combat: 'Flying at 200mph or so and firing on enemy aircraft at a range of 200 yards and you have just seconds to make your attack. I remember in one fight I went into a steep turn and came out if it and I was all alone. One moment the air had been full of planes and noise, the next I was flying in empty silence.

'Because I'd been going so fast out of the turn, the battle had just moved across the sky. So you have to just turn round again and get stuck back in.

'Occasionally one of our boys would shout out "I've been hit". A flight commander would find him and fly along with him to make sure that he was all right. Sometimes they were okay and sometimes they weren't. Well, you would think, that was it – that was the price of war. Some people didn't come back.'

A chance to even the score came in January 1941 when, in the wake of the Battle of Britain, The Few took the war to the Luftwaffe, attacking German airfields in occupied France. Ken was there, escorting RAF Blenheim bombers on their missions, and he remembers his Spitfire being buffeted by German flak.

'The German gunners were very good. The ack-ack would burst fairly near us on both sides. You could see the burst and feel the bump of the explosions. It was only a pin prick we were making, but it felt good bringing the battle to the Germans.'

After the war Ken got on with his life: 'I left the RAF one Saturday night in 1945 and by Monday I had a civilian job. That was it, the war was over.'

He later qualified as a quantity surveyor and had a successful business in the Midlands. Now a widower, he is the proud father of daughter Penny, who accompanies him to RAF functions, one grandson and four great-grandchildren. Yet, like all of us, he remembers: 'I still think about the men who didn't make it in 1940. I remember some of the chaps I was very friendly with for a while. But it was sometimes just for a while, you see, because they didn't always come back.'

Despite losing comrades, Ken is generous to his former enemies. In the Seventies, he and friends were attending a dinner at Grosvenor House in London. They stopped for pre-dinner drinks at a club off Piccadilly, and Ken got talking to a German at the bar. 'He had been a Luftwaffe bomber pilot and we worked out that on one day in 1940, we had shared the same parcel of sky as he was on a bombing raid to Liverpool and we were trying to stop him and his friends.'

So did he feel any animosity towards his old foe? 'No, not at all,' says Ken quietly. 'The war was long over. I had a drink with him' •

Interview by Andrew Neish. Portrait photography by Dave Evitts.

War story Stamp issue expert Peter Devitt tells the tale of the Battle of Britain

Historian and RAF Museum curator Peter Devitt was commissioned to write the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain Presentation Pack and has worked closely with Royal Mail editors in the development of this historic commemorative set. Here Peter reveals his involvement with the issue and his thoughts about the Battle of Britain and its heroes...

British Philatelic Bulletin *What message did you want to express in the Battle of Britain history you wrote for the Presentation Pack?*
Peter Devitt The main message must be how important the Royal Air Force had been in the Second World War. In the 16-week campaign that was the Battle of Britain, the only thing stopping this country – and civilisation – from going under was RAF Fighter Command, The Few, less than 3,000 young men against an enemy that outnumbered them by about three to one in terms of aircraft. It was an extraordinary achievement by any standard.

BPB *You make the point that this was The Few supported by 'the many'.*
PD Yes, and it shows on the stamps too. The young men in the air were supported by brave, committed men and women on the ground. Women in the WAAF working in the operations rooms, being bombed themselves and earning medals for gallantry, often listening to the aircraft radio traffic of their boyfriends fighting. And, in one case I know of, ▸



Above: the insert card in the Battle of Britain Presentation Pack carries a timeline of the Battle and expert information from historian Peter Devitt



THE RAF MUSEUM

The post code NW9 was chosen as the alternative postmark of the new Miniature Sheet because the Hendon site was once the HQ of a Battle of Britain Hurricane squadron (see overleaf).

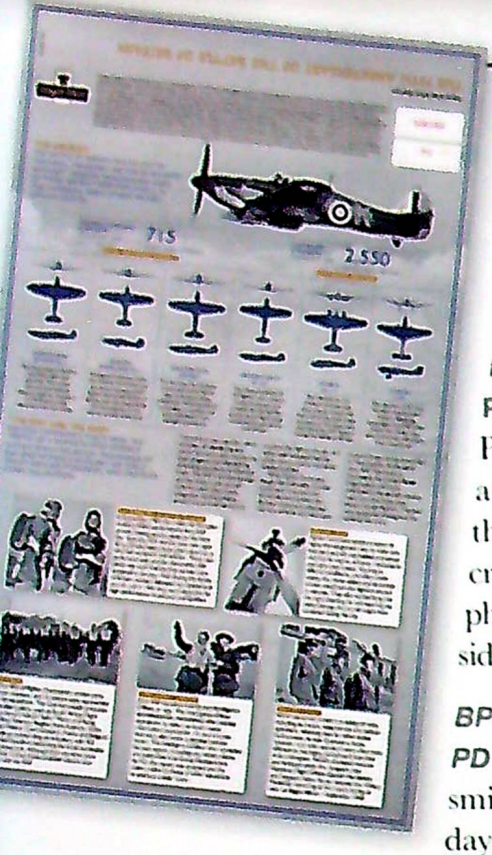
And the past lives on in the Battle of Britain Hall, which houses all the legendary aircraft types that took part in the conflict: the Hurricane (pictured in the museum, right) and Spitfire, Messerschmitt 109 fighter, and the Junkers 87 and 88 bombers. Even now, the two sides are kept apart, split by the visitors' walkway. But the British and German planes are nose to nose, and seem almost raring to have a go at each other again.

The Hall's *Our Finest Hour* movie presentation recreates the drama of the conflict, and yards of



compelling information panels reveal details of strategy and tactics, the heroes and villains, and of course the fighting machines of the Battle of Britain.

A permanent exhibition, Art of the Battle of Britain, is on the Hall's Mezzanine Level. It includes a portrait of Battle of Britain Spitfire pilot Ken Wilkinson, who is interviewed on page 338.



hearing him being shot down [see 'A WAAF's poignant memoir' on page 343]; the ground crews keeping the fighters ready for battle; Auxiliary Territorial Service personnel scanning the skies for enemy aircraft; Bomber Command also in action against German airfields in France or destroying invasion barges intended for Hitler's proposed attack on Britain.

BPB *And The Few were made up of many nations...*

PD Exactly. A fifth of aircrew in the Battle of Britain were from overseas – Poles, Czechs, Australians, New Zealanders, fliers from the Caribbean, Irish and American volunteers. It was a British show but people came from all over the world to help. 303 (Polish) Squadron was the most successful in the Battle, credited with shooting down 126 enemy aircraft in 42 days. There's a brilliant photograph on the Presentation Pack of 303 Squadron pilots walking side by side towards the camera and they look like the Wild Bunch.

BPB *Which of the 75th Anniversary stamps most captures the Battle of Britain spirit for you?*

PD It's the £1.33 stamp with 32 Squadron pilots reclining, sharing a joke, smiling, sitting next to their Hurricane aircraft between sorties. It's a sunny day, a beautiful summer's day in England, but at any moment these young



RELICS OF WAR

This selection of artefacts from the RAF Museum's collection conveys the triumph and tragedy of the conflict.

Spitfire Mk I

The machine that for many encapsulates the Battle of Britain sits elegantly opposite its arch enemy – the Luftwaffe's Messerschmitt 109 fighter – in the hangar at the RAF Museum commemorating the conflict. This particular example, from 609 Squadron, had a half-share in the shooting down of a German Junkers 88 bomber in 1940.

Peter Devitt says: 'People make a very good case for the Hurricane being the best aircraft, but my heart belongs to the Mk I Spitfire. It's a beautiful, beautiful aircraft but it also epitomised the British war effort, it was a symbol of hope. It sounded as beautiful as it looked: when we started attacking German installations on the Continent, French people could hear the Spitfire's Rolls-Royce Merlin engine racing over. It was a reminder that there was a hope of liberation.'

Hurricane engine and control column remnants

Built on the site of a Battle of Britain airfield, the RAF Museum truly rests on hallowed ground. For from this very spot at 11.23am on 15 September 1940, one of the great heroes of the Battle took off with his comrades of 504 Squadron. Within minutes, Hurricane pilot Sergeant Ray Holmes had carried out an act of extraordinary courage when 504 entered central London to engage a swarm of Dornier 17 bombers. Just as he had run out of ammunition over Hyde Park, Holmes spotted a Dornier heading for Buckingham Palace. He rammed it, cutting off its tail, the Dornier's remains plunging into the forecourt of Victoria railway station. After Holmes baled out, his Hurricane slammed into the ground at 400mph and was buried.

Peter Devitt says: 'These mangled remnants of Ray Holmes's plane sum it all up to me. The Dornier was off to the Palace and Holmes couldn't have that. So he acted. When he baled out Holmes lost his flying boots on the way down and landed barefoot in a dustbin in a garden in Chelsea. He saw two young women in the next garden

Images courtesy RAF Museum (www.rafmuseum.org.uk)

men will be called to action, to take their aircraft up, and it's by no means certain that they will all come back. There are carefree smiles here but you know that behind the smiles there's a quiet courage. It's a poignant, compelling image.





***BPB** What feelings do you want RAF Museum visitors to leave with when they have seen your Battle of Britain exhibition?*

PD Informed and entertained, of course, but also I'd like them to feel inspired. Inspired by a story that's not just about the Royal Air Force, the pilots, but about a nation pulling together when everything we stood for was at stake •





and he was so delighted and relieved to be alive that he vaulted the fence and kissed them both in true fighter boy style. Years later, Ray was invited to attend the excavation of the Hurricane, and was handed the control column. The gun button was still set to 'fire', just as he'd left it when he'd baled out all those years ago.'

A WAAF's poignant memoir

A manuscript held by the RAF Museum's research department tells of a young WAAF's grief when, while working as a plotter in a Battle of Britain operations room, she heard of her fiancé's death as he was shot down in a battle against Junkers 87 Stuka dive-bombers on 11 November 1940 (a Stuka is pictured in the museum, right). In the manuscript, for her book *Memoirs of a Wartime WAAF*, Edith Heap recalls the moment she realised her Hurricane pilot boyfriend Denis Wissler of 17 Squadron – call sign Blue 4 – had been hit. The news came into the ops room via the communications link following the pilots' radio chatter: 'Just before we came off at 1200 hrs there was a cry of "Blue 4 going down into the drink". I was paralysed... I *knew* who had gone into the drink, though I could hardly believe it and allowed myself to hope.'

Peter Devitt says: 'This is one of the more harrowing items I have come across as a curator at the RAF Museum. The Battle of Britain was of course fought on our doorstep and the loved ones of those who fought in it could be very close to the action, as happened in these terrible circumstances.'



Archive selection Battle of Britain

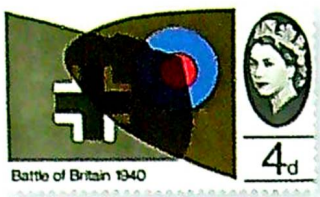
25th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain Special Stamps 1965: **1** Flight of the Supermarine Spitfires. **2** Pilot in Hawker Hurricane Mk 1. **3** Wing-tips of Supermarine Spitfire and Messerschmitt Bf 109. **4** Supermarine Spitfires attacking Heinkel HE 111H bomber. **5** Supermarine Spitfire attacking Junkers Ju 87B 'Stuka' dive-bomber. **6** Hawker Hurricane Mks1 over wreck of Dornier Do-17Z Bomber. **7** Anti-aircraft artillery in action. **8** Air battle over St Paul's Cathedral. History of the Royal Air Force 1986: **9** Lord Dowding/Hurricane. Europa, Peace and Freedom 1995: **10** St Paul's cathedral and searchlights. British Aircraft Designers 1997: **11** Mitchell-Supermarine. Royal Air Force Uniforms 2008: **12** Plotter WAAF 1940. British Design Classics 2009: **13** Supermarine Spitfire, used in **14** 70th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain, 2010 Smilers® Sheet. Britain Alone 2010: **15** Air raid wardens.



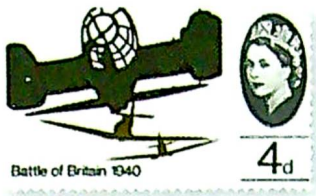
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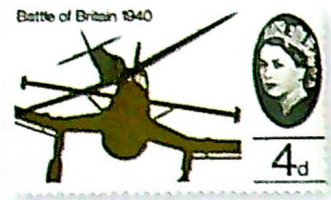
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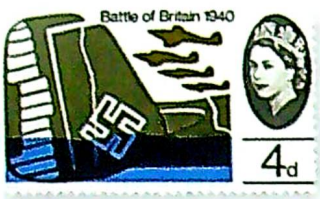
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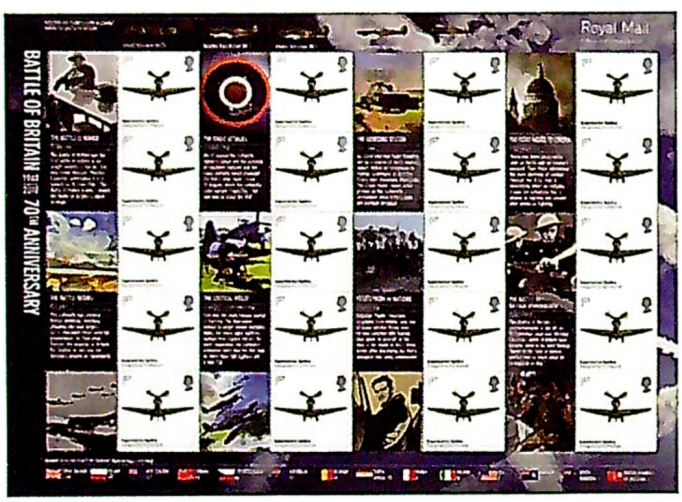
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What are your favourite Special Stamps? We welcome views and any memories evoked by delving back into modern UK stamp history. Just email rmbulletin@rocketmail.com or write to the address on page 322. You can jog your memory by viewing all Royal Mail Special Stamps from the last 50 years at www.rmspecialstamps.com.

Sheets of the season These colourful London 2015 Europhilex souvenir sheets are both available in a limited edition of 1,000



Enjoyed London 2015 Europhilex as much as we did? Then remember the big event with these stunning Souvenir Sheets. One has a background of European flags and the other celebrates the 800th anniversary of the Magna Carta. Each sheet carries ten Union Flag stamps with labels captioned FEPA.

The Federation of European Philatelic Associations was patron of the exhibition, which took place at London's Business Design Centre in May. Even if you did not attend, the sheets make a timely addition to any commemorative collection.

Ben Palmer, the Exhibition Marketing Adviser, explains, 'The sheets were produced by Barry Briggs with direction from the Organising Committee of London 2015 Europhilex, in order to assist in the funding of the Exhibition. The working authority of London 2015 Europhilex is entirely voluntary and we very much appreciate all past and future sales of these Souvenir Sheets' •

Orders and enquiries

FEPA sheets
For further details or to arrange your preferred payment method, please contact by email, quoting 'Bulletin CDF': secretary@rpsl.org.uk
Post-exhibition sales are managed by the Royal Philatelic Society London.

Prices excluding p&p
Flags London 2015: £20
Magna Carta London 2015: £20

H is for... Halfpenny Post



Fig 1

How the Post Office underestimated the power of the public's desire to save a halfpenny

Fig 1 1870 postcard – the first design of postcard to be made available in Great Britain

THE POSTAL REFORMS of 1840 dramatically reduced the cost of sending a letter. The Penny Black established a 1d rate for a ½ ounce letter sent anywhere in the UK, which was affordable for everyone. However, that did not stop the public from asking for an even cheaper service for short messages and printed circulars. The Post Office tried to resist such a move, but in the end had to make concessions in several different ways, the first being the introduction of the postcard.

Britain was not the first country in the world to make postcards available to the public. That honour fell to Austria in 1869, but just one year later on 1 October 1870, the British Post Office issued their own version (Fig 1). These carried a printed ½d stamp and were available in two sizes, both costing just a ½d each. At first only postal stationery postcards sold at post offices enjoyed this low rate of postage. But two years later, following pressure from the stationery trade, stamped-to-order postcards were allowed, and, although they too could be sent for ½d, they still had to use a printed stamp (Fig 2). It was not until 1894 that plain postcards using adhesive stamps could be sent through the post for ½d. That reform kick-started the age of the picture postcard.

When the Post Office introduced postcards they did not believe they would be well used – who on earth would want their correspondence to be seen by everyone from the postman to servants? But people were far less shy than the Post Office imagined. Postcards were extremely popular from the start and



Fig 2



Fig 3

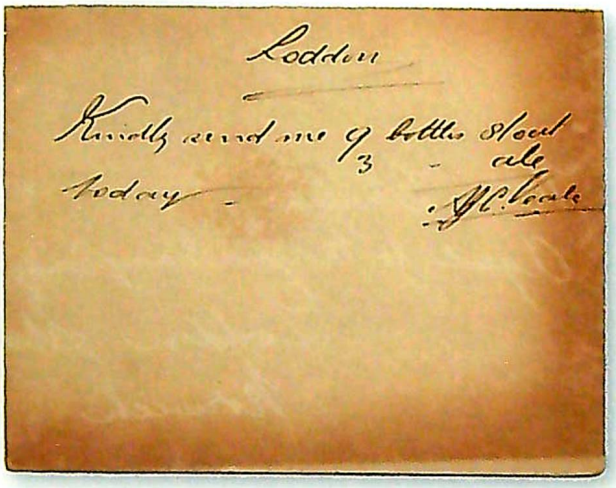


Fig 4



Fig 5

more than half a million were posted on the very first day of their introduction, used for all sorts of short messages and advertisements (Fig 3). Their popularity continued well into the 20th century; it was not until after the First World War that the use of prepaid postcards declined. In the early years, with numerous deliveries in the large towns and cities, postcards were sometimes used for short messages. Thus it is not unusual to find cards carrying a message relating to the day it was written, such as the urgent request for a bottle of ale in Fig 4.

The halfpenny postcard was only valid for use to inland addresses. If sent abroad it had to be uprated to the appropriate postage rate (Fig 5). It lasted for nearly 50 years, until 1918 when the financial burden of the First World War pushed the postcard rate to 1d. But that was not the end of the ½d postcard. The printed paper rate, fixed at ½d for 2 ounces in 1870, remained in force 70 years, except for a two year period when it rose to 1d in 1920 and then fell back to ½d in 1922. Although no more than five words of writing were allowed, the printed paper rate postcard could be printed with as much information as could be squeezed on the back. These ½d cards remained valid until 30 April 1940 when yet another global conflict pushed postage rates to a new level •

Next in Baker's A to Z of Postal Stationery: Part 2 Halfpenny Post – Printed Papers.

Colin Baker is Secretary of the Postal Stationery Society. He welcomes enquiries about the Society by email at pss.secretary@gmail.com.

Fig 2 front of message card

Fig 3 Advert card – from 1897 advertising was allowed on the fronts of ½d postcards providing it did not interfere with the address

Fig 4 A same-day message on a postcard used in 1901, asking for stout and ale to be delivered that day

Fig 5 uprated to Germany; the first issue postcard used to Germany. The postage rate at the time was 1½d



This month in history

John Holman looks back half a century to an interesting set of stamps marking the 700th anniversary of Parliament



Above: Sir Winston Churchill stamps of July 1965

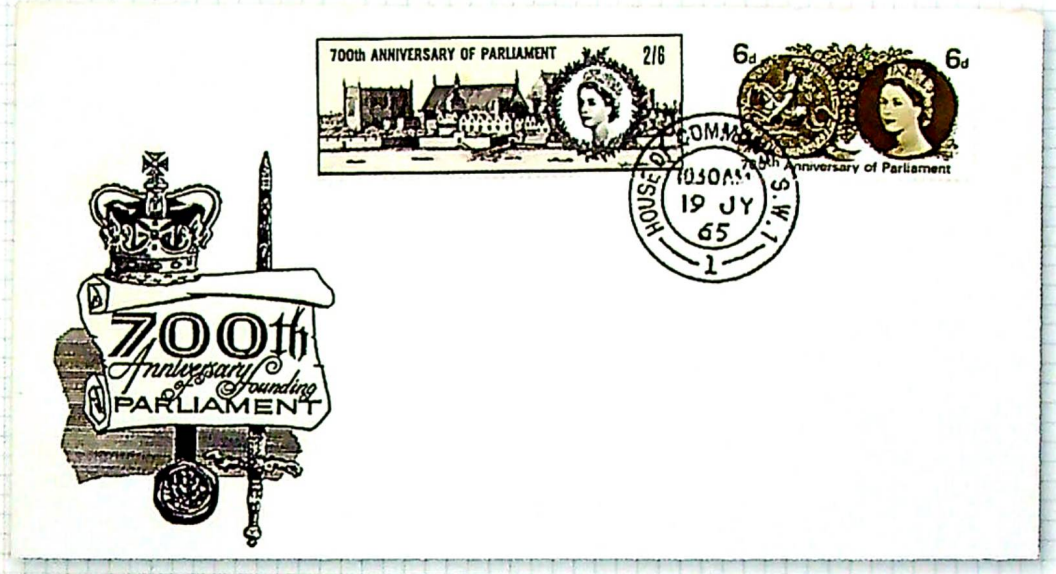
TWO ISSUES OF SPECIAL STAMPS were issued 50 years ago in July 1965. On 8 July two stamps were issued in honour of Sir Winston Churchill who had died six months earlier (see the *Bulletin* January 2015), followed on 19 July by a further two marking the 700th anniversary of Simon de Montfort's Parliament. Both sets had been delayed by industrial disputes – they had been intended for release on 24 May and 10 June respectively.

The 6d Parliament stamp, designed by Stewart Black, featured de Montfort's seal at left balanced by the Wilding portrait of The Queen in a similar-sized circle at right, the two separated by a floral motif. The stamp was printed in olive-green in plain and phosphor editions. This was Black's only issued stamp, though he submitted designs for other sets in 1965, 1966 and 1970.

The more interesting 2s 6d stamp was three times the width of a definitive stamp, instead of the usual double size, and reproduced a 17th-century engraving by Wenceslaus Hollar of the Parliament Building and the River Thames in 1647. Prague-born Hollar came to England in 1637, and his panoramic view of London from Southwark after the Great Fire is an important topographical record. (A Hollar image of London Bridge, from around 1670, featured on the 68p stamp in the 2002 Bridges of London set.)

The Queen's head, smaller in size than on the 6d, was contained in a floral wreath on the right side of the stamp. The design was by Professor Richard Guyatt, who also designed the 1977 Silver Jubilee issue. The 2s 6d was printed in three colours – black, grey and pale drab, in a non-phosphor version only.

Both stamps were captioned '700th Anniversary of Parliament' and printed in photogravure by Harrisons. The 6d was produced in sheets of 120, the



Above: Philatelic Bureau and House of Commons postmarks on Post Office and British Philatelic Association first day covers

normal size for special stamps, and the 2s 6d in sheets of 80. No cylinder numbers were shown on sheets of the 2s 6d; the 6d was produced from a single cylinder, number 2. The 6d plain version exists imperforate between stamp and top margin from blocks bought at a Bristol post office. The 2s 6d can be found with a major downward displacement of The Queen's head and with inverted watermark. A fair number of sheets of the watermark error exist, many having been sold by the Philatelic Bureau. No significant constant varieties are catalogue-listed, though a few minor ones are noted in Stanley Gibbons *Great Britain Specialised Catalogue* (Vol. 3).

AN ELEGANT FIRST DAY COVER from the Post Office showed de Montfort's seal. Covers ordered from the Philatelic Bureau received a Bureau First Day handstamp. Posting boxes were provided at 57 main post offices for local First Day postmarks and one was specially provided at Evesham, Worcestershire where, in 1265, de Montfort was killed in battle against a royalist army.

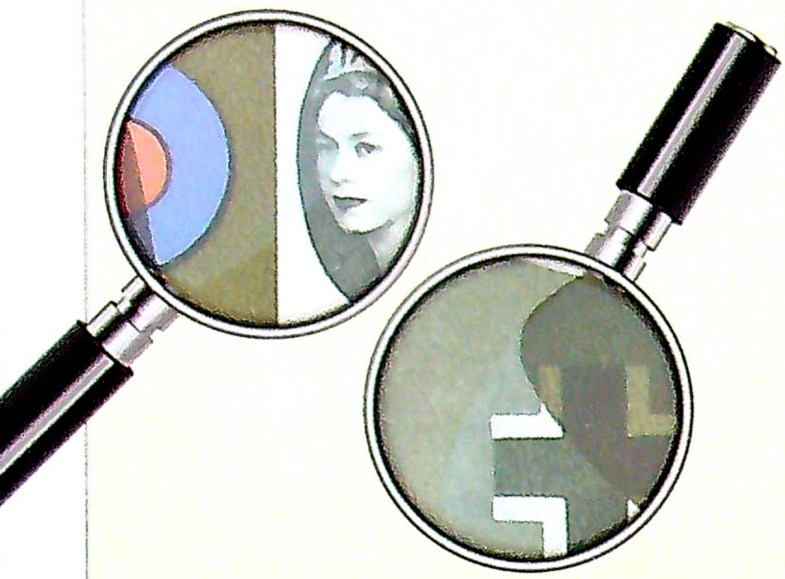
Covers were posted by dealers and collectors for the House of Commons and House of Lords postmarks, and also Parliament Street Post Office, London SW1 – all now of quite high catalogue value. The *Specialised Catalogue* notes that both stamps were accidentally released in several post offices in the London area on 8 July, the date of issue of the Churchill stamps. Covers are known with both values cancelled by the Bureau First Day cancel dated 8 July. A presentation pack was also issued.

The stamps were withdrawn from sale, along with the Churchill and Salvation Army issues, on 28 February 1966. Numbers sold were: 6d plain 12.97 million, phosphor 1.53 million, 2s 6d 4.05 million. Some 24,450 packs were sold.

Fifteen unaccepted designs for this issue, by Reynolds Stone, Stewart Black, Peter Gauld, Justin Todd and Barbara Jones, were shown in the *Bulletin* of May 1967. Personally I rather like some of Todd's unused designs, but still find the issued stamps pleasing to the eye •

July brainbusters Pick up a pen and get puzzling, for two chances to win the latest Special Stamps and deluxe album

NAME THAT STAMP From the details shown below, identify the name and year of issue of the stamp beneath the magnifiers.

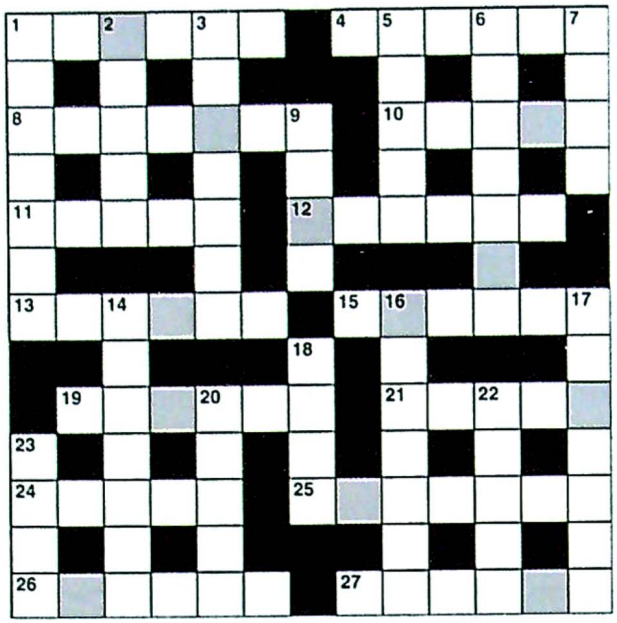


How to enter Send your answers, with your contact details, marked 'July Name That Stamp' and/or 'July Crossword' to *British Philatelic Bulletin*, Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB or email rmbulletin@rocketmail.com. **Closing date** 10 August.

Prizes The first correct entries drawn in each section after the closing date win the Battle of Britain Presentation Pack and Royal Mail album, shown on page 352. Four runners-up win stamps. April solutions and winners are on page 324.

Prize draw rules and regulations 1 Promotions are open to all readers aged 18 and over, except employees of Royal Mail Group Ltd, their business associates and immediate families. 2 Responsibility cannot be accepted for entries which are incomplete, damaged or not received for any reason. Proof of posting is not proof of receipt. 3 Prizes must be accepted as offered; they are not transferable and there are no cash alternatives. 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) suspend or cancel or hold void any of the competitions or prize draws at any time without notice. 9 Winners' names are available 28 days after closing date; send an SAE to The Editor, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB. The promoter is Royal Mail Group Ltd, 100 Victoria Embankment, London EC4Y 0HQ.

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD Complete the puzzle, then rearrange the letters in the grey squares to form a stamp-related phrase.



CLUES ACROSS

1 Cavort, returning part of pencil or fountain pen (6)
4 Desert has receded for Arab endlessly (6)
8 Once more take steps to improve the tyre (7)
10 Railway station workers overheard (5)
11 Some bat's on a ride with its guidance system (5)
13 Last objective on river (6)
15 Shakespearean king during October only (6)
19 Block that is housing politician and journalist (6)
21 Android British in origin (5)
24 Glowing, he is slender (5)
25 Soft soap and cloth (7)
26 Teased about being staid (6)
27 Determined to find camper here? (6)

CLUES DOWN

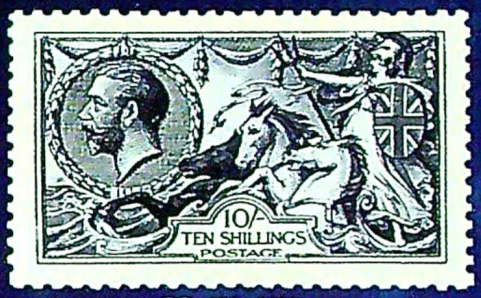
1 Predict number and letter aloud (7)
2 Frequently tenderise, though not initially (5)
3 Renoir upset king by mistake (2,5)
5 Bill's car vandalised in African port (5)
6 Eve rang round for righter of wrongs (7)
7 Copies part of tapestries (4)
9 Cut off part of harbour (4)
14 Public protest by boy is downgraded (7)
16 Reduced rate of pub profit (7)
17 Memo from public school returning with permit (7)
18 Unable to hear fade out (4)
20 Discard, not initially, then throw out (5)
22 Begin new bout of indulgence (5)
23 A final unending cry of woe (4)

Puzzle page sponsored by CORBITTS

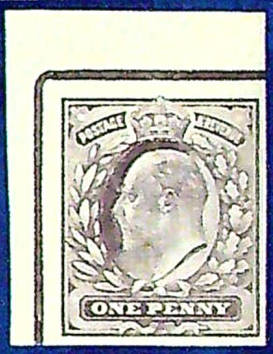
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SG. 113 £50



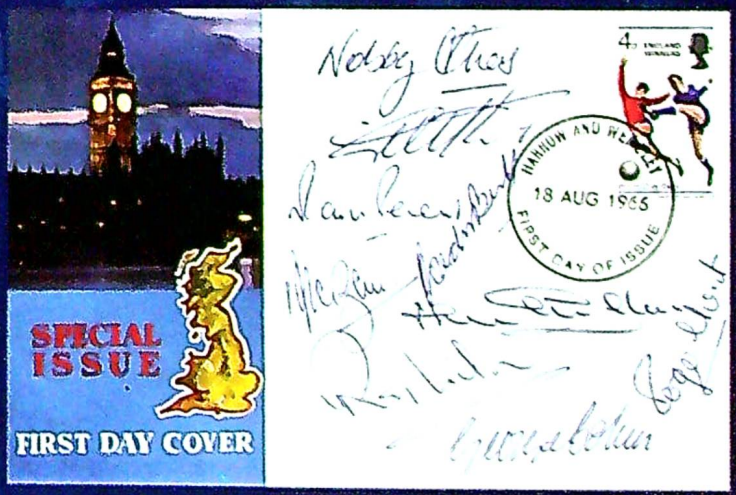
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Inverted Wmk.
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SG. O52 (Cert)
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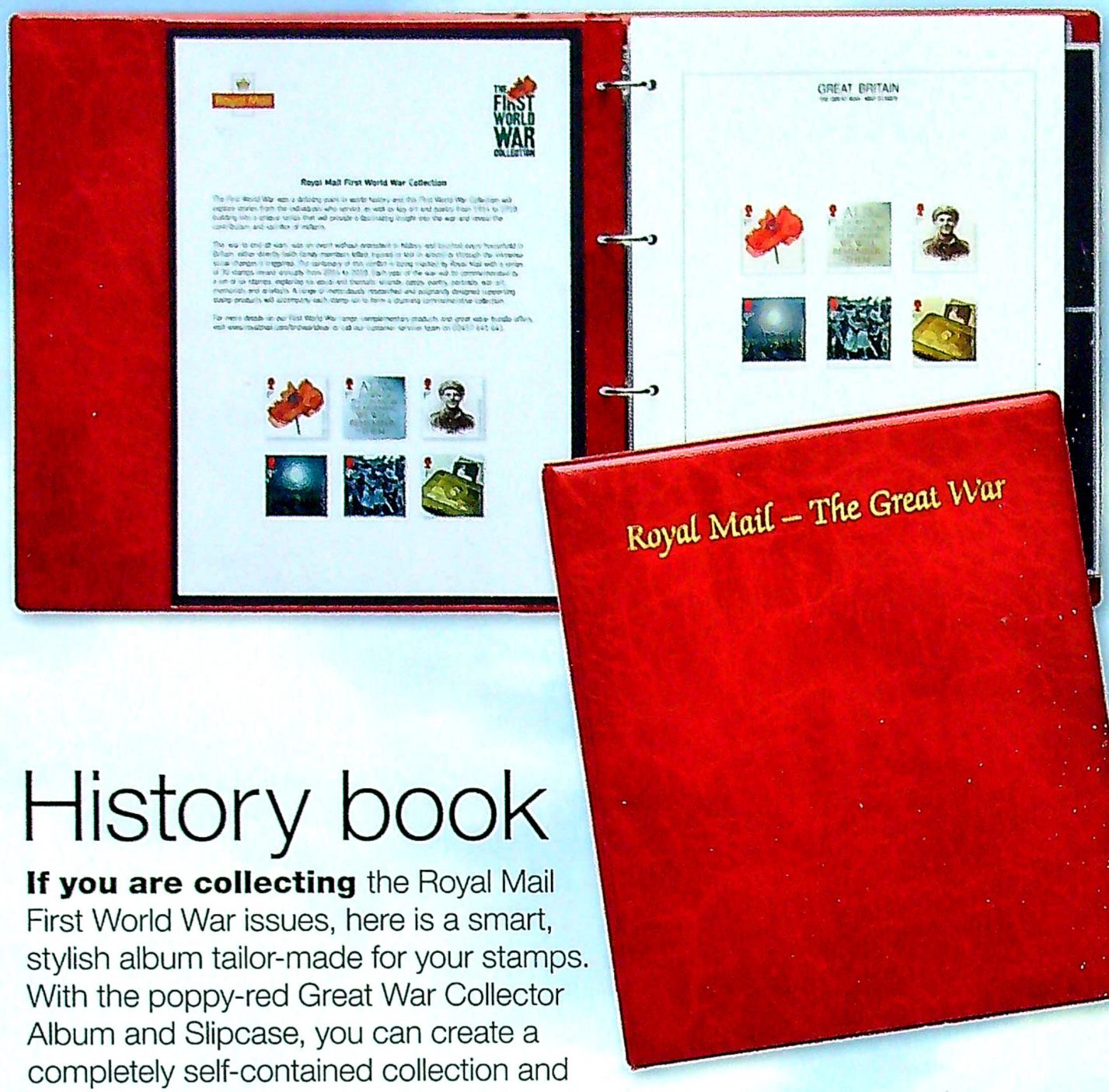


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