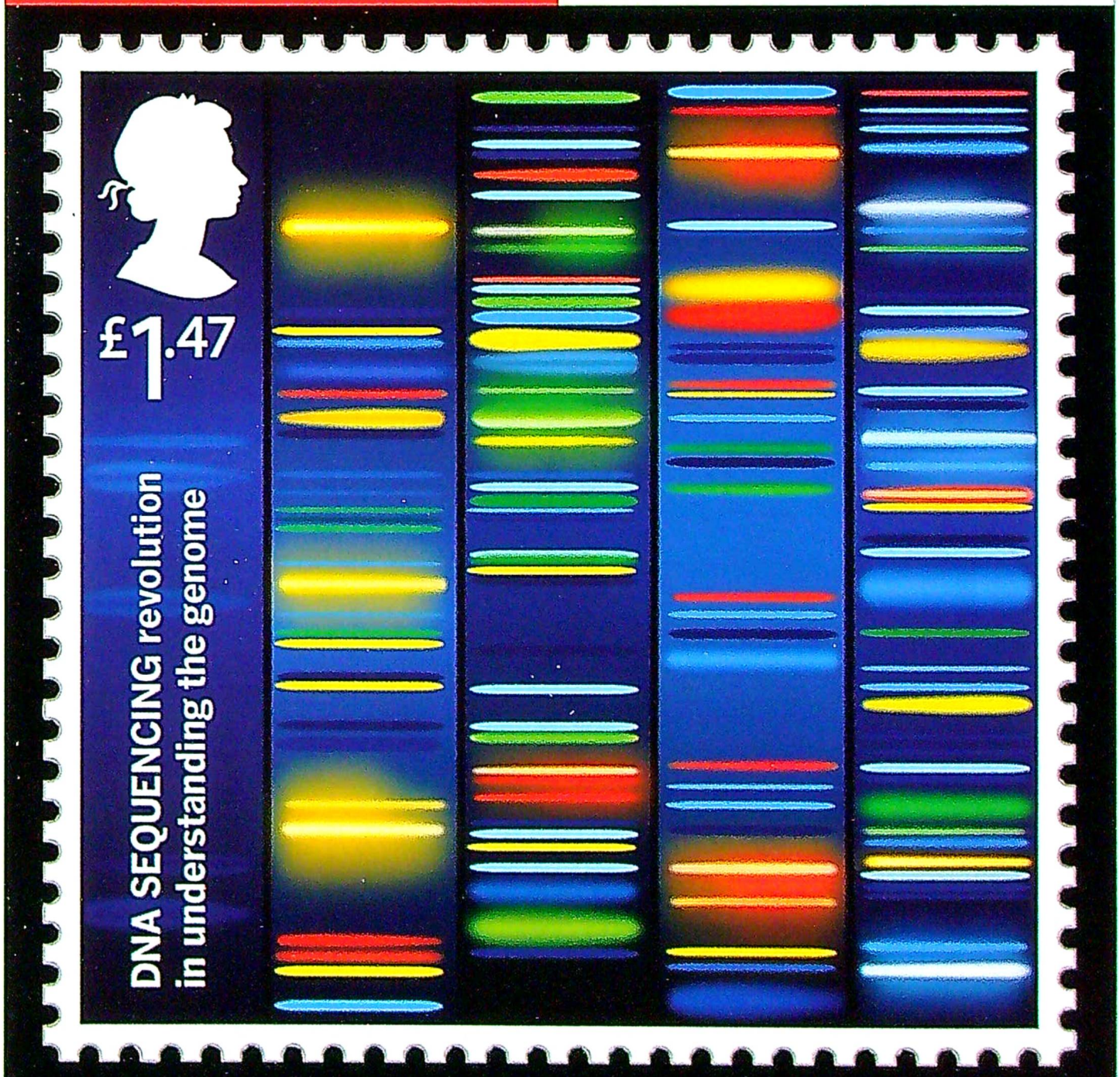
BRITISH PHILATELIC

Bulletin

The magazine for collectors of UK stamps

VOLUME 52 NUMBER 6 | FEBRUARY 2015 | £1.50

Science on stamps • Bridges
Preview • Wonderland covers



Inventive Britain – new stamps



Issues and withdrawals



Cover: stunning Inventive Britain stamps are issued on 19 February. For more details see page 176. The copyright of all stamp images is owned by Royal Mail Group Ltd unless otherwise stated.

Information about Royal Mail products is that which is available at time of going to press. Issue dates shown in advance are subject to change. Stamps are not shown to scale. Stamp sizes are listed on Preview pages. Royal Mail is not responsible for opinions and information provided by independent feature writers.

FSC
www.fsc.org
MIX
Board from responsible sources
FSC® C019670

The use of the FSC logo identifies the product which contains wood from well-managed forests certified in accordance with the Forest Stewardship Council.

Royal Mail

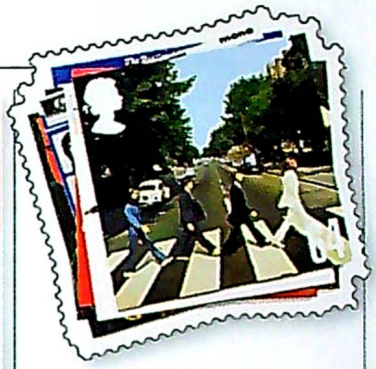
Royal Mail, the cruciform and the colour red are registered trade marks of Royal Mail Group Ltd. © Royal Mail Group Ltd 2015. All rights reserved.

4 February	**Withdrawal** Working Horses: Stamps (2 x 1st Class, 2 x 88p, 2 x £1.28), Presentation Pack, Stamp Cards (6 in set).
18 February	**Issue** Post & Go Working Sail: Stamps. Available in Collector Packs (6 x 1st Class). Preview on page 137.
19 February	**Issue** Inventive Britain: Stamps (2 x 1st Class, 2 x 81p, 2 x £1.28, 2 x £1.47), Presentation Pack, Prestige Stamp Book, Stamp Cards (8 in set). Preview on page 134.
20 February	**Withdrawal** Classic Locomotives of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales: Miniature Sheet, Presentation Pack, Stamp Cards. Stamp Books remain on sale until further notice.
20 February	**Withdrawal** Great British Railways No1: Stamps (2 x 1st Class, 2 x 97p, 2 x 67p), Presentation Pack, Stamp Cards.
20 February	**Withdrawal** Classic Locomotives of the United Kingdom: Prestige Stamp Book.
20 February	**Withdrawal** Football Heroes: 2 x Retail Stamp Books featuring Dave Mackay and John Charles Stamps.
5 March	**Issue** Alice in Wonderland: Medal Cover (cupro-nickel Medal).
5 March	**Issue** Bridges: Stamps (2 x strips of 5 x 1st Class se-tenant), Presentation Pack, Stamp Cards (10 in set).
18 March	**Issue** The Post Office Rifles: Commemorative Sheet (10 x 1st Class Union Flag Stamps).
25 March	**Withdrawal** Remarkable Lives: Stamps (2 x strips of 5 x 1st Class se-tenant), Presentation Pack, Stamp Cards.
1 April	**Issue** Comedy Greats: Stamps (2 x strips of 5 x 1st Class se-tenant), Stamp Book (2 x 1st Class Comedy Greats Stamps, 4 x 1st Class Definitives), Presentation Pack, Stamp Cards (10 in set).

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 15CDA, 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.

Contents





Historic display A new Royal Mail online gallery celebrates the 50th anniversary of Special Stamps **182**

A sticky issue Martyn Fry explains strategies that stop the reuse of self-adhesive stamps **184**

The mind set Fascinating facts behind this month's Inventive Britain set – paying tribute to the nation's finest scientific minds **176**

Issues and withdrawals Your guide to the latest issues and a last chance to buy current sets **162**

Correspondence Readers offer their thoughts on modern stamp collecting **164**

Royal Mail Update Post Office Rifles Sheet, Alice Medal Cover and Working Sail set **165**



Time span New Bridges stamps cross centuries of British engineering **167**

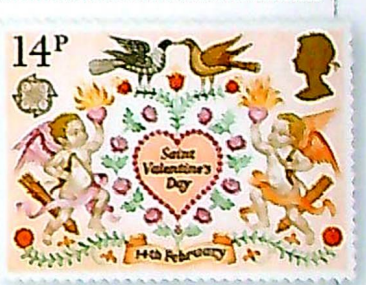
What did you think? Our reader survey reveals your verdict on the *Bulletin* **169**

Stamp Scene John Holman has all the news from the world of UK collecting **170**

Steeling himself BPMA chief Adrian Steel on preparing to deliver the Postal Museum next year **174**

Appliance of science Chris Yardley' study of brilliant boffins and breakthroughs on science stamps **178**





This Month in History John Holman revisits the delightful Folklore issue of 1981, illustrated by Fritz Wegner **186**

Covers and sheets Wonderland covers and a sheet marking 50 years in the business of philatelic covers **188**

Lab test Our stamp quiz prizes include a trip to London's Royal Mail Handstamp Centre **190**

See you in Islington It is time for Spring Stampex! **191**

● **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

Correspondence

Underprint, overprint...?

In reference to John Enfield's letter published in December's *Bulletin* regarding 'underprints' and 'overprints' on the labels [Post & Go stamps], I am of the opinion that the correct terminology is 'overprint', given that the original labels already bear the background printing.
Jarvis West, Oxfordshire

Mr Enfield's points about the apparent imprecision of terminology used for Post & Go stamps (page 100, December 2014) has prompted me to help clarify definitions, at least as I see them. I think we need to go back to basics in terms of what makes a stamp a stamp: the design, Queen's head, non-value indicator (NVI), phosphor and perforations. The preprinted elements of the Post & Go stamps carry all of the above, except for the NVI. Therefore the paper does not become a stamp until it carries the machine print string.

On the basis of the above, the definitions 'overprint' and 'underprint' are additional to the core stamp elements. For Post & Go stamps, the term 'overprint' defines the two-line additional printing used at exhibitions to commemorate anniversaries or events, and was first used in September 2011 to commemorate the centenary of the birth of Arnold Machin.

However, if we then look at a static machine location, such as a museum, the policy states that we will show a 'Location ID' on one of the two available extra text lines.

When the second line is called into use, as with 'Trafalgar Day' in addition to the Location ID for the National Museum of the Royal Navy, the term 'underprint' has been employed to help define the distinction between the two lines.

Of course, all of the above refers to the additional printing functionality provided by the Royal Mail Series II machines. These terms do not apply to the Post Office Limited SSK machines, which have a standard print layout, albeit with variable data within that layout.

Philatelists will apply terminology in whichever way they feel appropriate, but I hope the above helps collectors understand how Royal Mail defines the various printings.
Martyn Fry, Head of Production, Royal Mail Stamps and Collectibles





Memento full of meaning

I very much enjoyed the 'A gift from the Princess' article in November's *Bulletin*, which describes the story of the boxes of goodies given to frontline troops at Christmas in 1914. I do not have one of the 1914 tins, but I do have the gift tin given to my grandfather when he was in South Africa fighting in the Boer War, a memento which I cherish greatly.

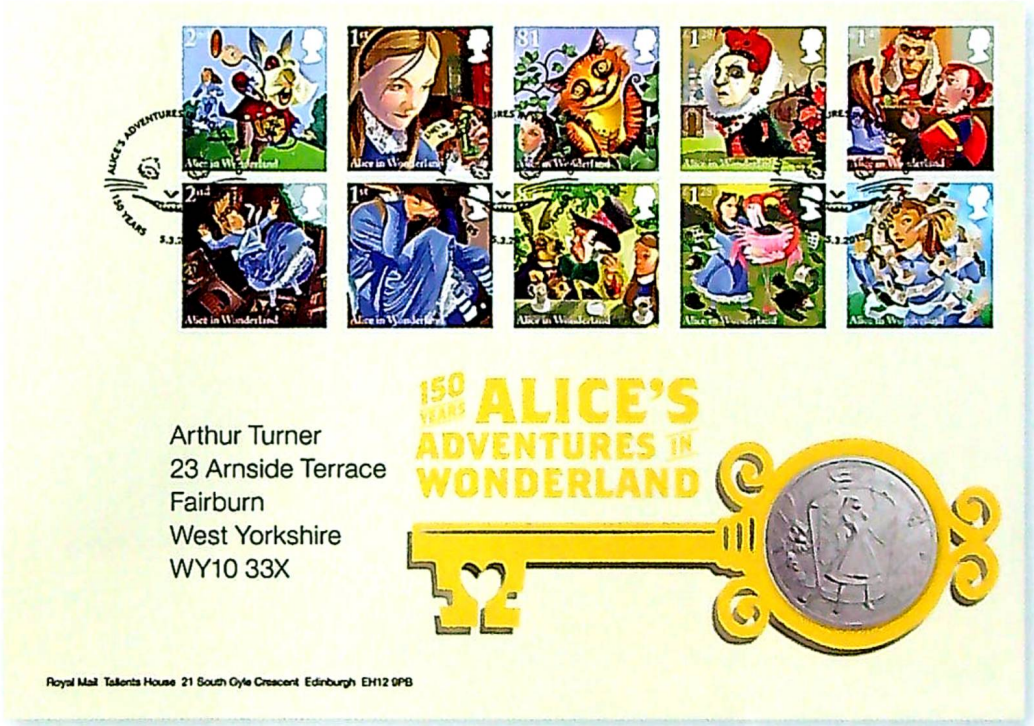
These tins were presented by Queen Victoria to our troops in South Africa in 1900 to celebrate the advent of the new century. So Princess Mary's showing consideration for troops overseas was following the example set by her great-great-grandmother. My 1900 tin still contains a block of tobacco and one and a half bars of Fry's 5 Boys chocolate.

So I empathise completely with the feelings of the owners of the 1914 gift boxes described in the *Bulletin* article: my grandfather joined the First World War in 1916 at the age of 41. And to have the 1900 tin (and his diary of the Boer War) means everything to me.
Stewart Kempster, Kent

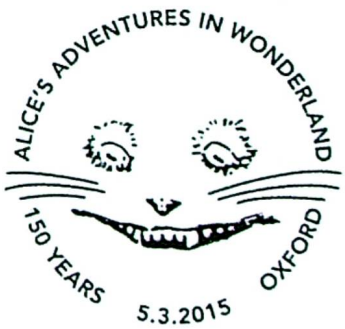
Keep the mail coming...

The Editor welcomes your letters and the senders of those published will receive a Prestige Stamp Book as a thank-you. Send your letters to: The Editor, *British Philatelic Bulletin*, Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB. You can also email: bulletin.enquiries@royalmail.com.

Waiting in the wings William Doherty brings you an early glimpse of three niche Royal Mail products to watch out for next month – and bids a fond farewell to a fine fleet of locomotives







Clockwise from left: Alice's Adventures in Wonderland Medal Cover, Cover postmark for World Book Day 2015, and the fact-packed insert card

Medal Cover on World Book Day Following Royal Mail's Alice's Adventures in Wonderland stamp issue, a delightful limited edition Medal Cover with all ten Special Stamps is released on 5 March, the date for World Book Day 2015, to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the publication of Lewis Carroll's famous work. In keeping with the Wonderland theme, the Medal Cover is imaginatively designed to contain:

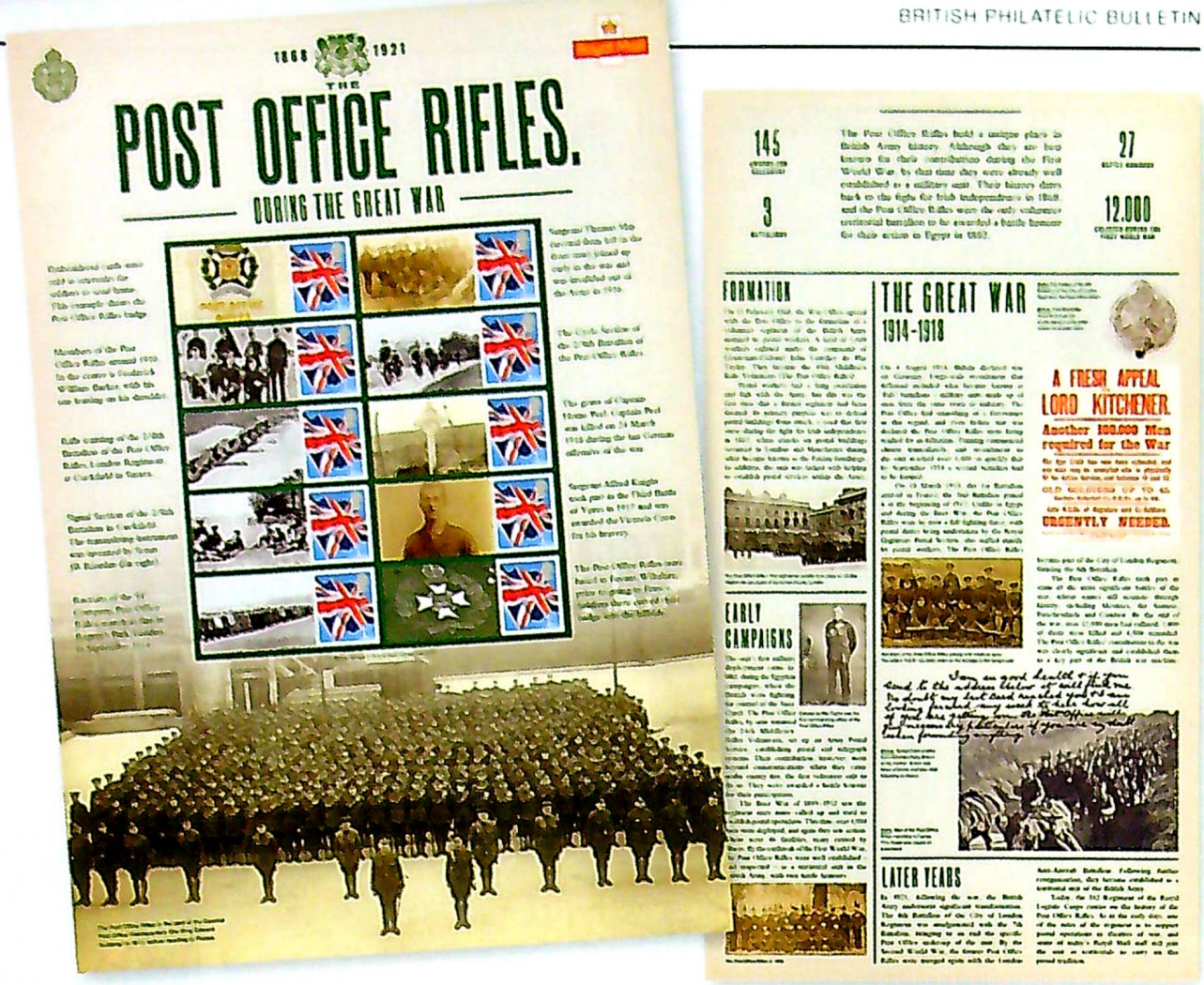
- A specially struck medal made by the Royal Mint, which is mounted within a key illustration. The obverse design shows a miniaturised Alice, the White Rabbit and the famous 'drink me' bottle. The reverse has a smiling Cheshire Cat.
- Insert with text by Carroll expert Selwyn Goodacre and notable illustrations of the last 150 years.
- Examples of nonsense verse by Lewis Carroll ●

Setting sail at Stampex Launching on 18 February is the Post & Go Working Sail issue – six designs available in Collector Packs. There will be a special exhibition First-Day cover facility at Stampex. For Preview details, see page 137 of January *Bulletin* ● ▸

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland Medal Cover	
Date of issue	5 March
Limited edition	9,000
Number of stamps	Ten*
Design	Intrabang
Paper-cut artwork	Rebecca Sutherland
Printer	Zenith Print & Packaging Ltd
Medal designer	Lee R Jones
Diameter	38.45cm
Weight	28.28g
Alloy	Cupro-nickel
Quality	Brilliant uncirculated

* For stamp specifications see page 111 of December *Bulletin*

Medal © The Royal Mint Limited 2015. All rights reserved Cover design: © Royal Mail Group Ltd 2015. All rights reserved





Post Office Rifles Commemorative Sheet Released on 18 March, this Royal Mail Sheet pays tribute to the courage of the unit of postal workers in the First World War. It comprises ten First Class Union Flag stamps, with attached labels that tell the story of the Post Office Rifles, a 12,000-strong force that fought at the Somme, Passchendaele and Ypres.

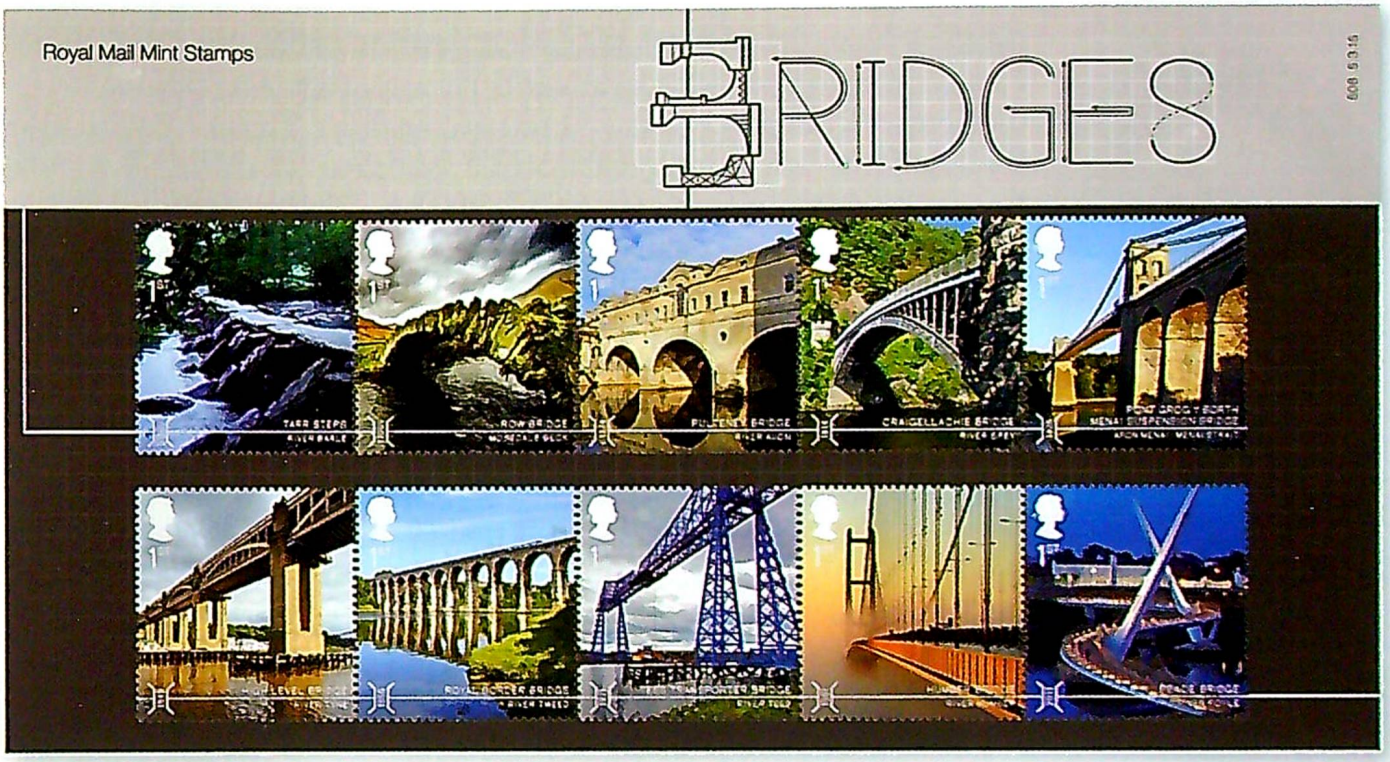
Members of the two battalions of the Rifles won some of Britain's most important medals for courage, including the Victoria Cross and the Military Cross. The Sheet also gives a concise account of the fascinating history of the unit before 1914, when it fought the Boers and defended postal buildings against Irish freedom fighters. The backing card details the Post Office Rifles' key First World War operations, and enclosed in the pack is an A3 facsimile of a 1915 Rifles recruitment poster.

Watch out for more background details on the Post Office Rifles and your chance to win this handsome Sheet in next month's edition of the *Bulletin* ●



Catch the last train This month is your final chance to buy Royal Mail's steam locomotive stamp collections before they go off sale. The Classic Locomotives of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales sets, featuring Miniature Sheets, Presentation Packs and Stamp Cards, will be withdrawn on 20 February. The Classic Locomotives of the United Kingdom Prestige Stamp Book (pane shown left) is withdrawn the same day. The Classic Locomotives Stamp Books, however, remain on sale for the time being ●

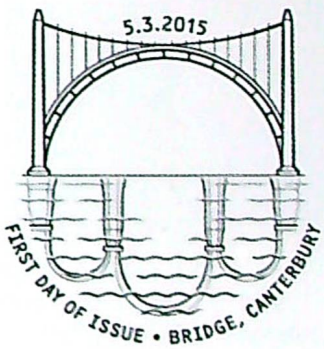
You can order products shown on these pages by phone, by mail and online – all contact details are on page 162. Please quote the Bulletin code 15CDA.



Time span Centuries of brilliant bridge designs are showcased on new stamps issued next month

GREAT TRIUMPHS of British engineering are celebrated in the new Bridges stamp issue released on 5 March. The set spans over 600 years of design and construction, from a 15th century stone crossing to leviathan landmarks such as the Humber Bridge, once the world's longest. It examines the vast range of materials used – limestone, gritstone, steel, cast iron and wrought iron. And a variety of construction styles are also featured, including stone arch, suspension and bowstring girder designs.

Accompanying the issue, produced by leading stamp designers GBH, are a Presentation Pack, with insert written by architectural historian and broadcaster Dan Cruickshank, and set of ten Stamp Cards. Seven of the stamp images are commissioned pictures by architectural photography agency Hufton + Crow.



FD1507-PL

Above: alternative Bridges handstamp with the location of Bridge, Canterbury

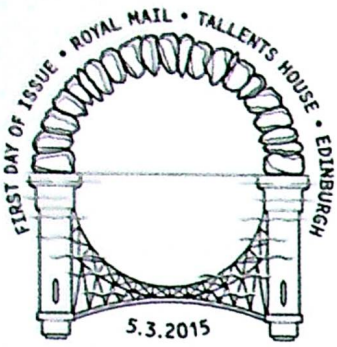
Top: the Bridges Presentation Pack contains fascinating facts about the bridges

Stamp by stamp The ten First Class stamps are arranged in chronological sequence, plotting the narrative of British bridge building over the centuries.

Tarr Steps Spanning the River Barle in Exmoor National Park, this 15th (or possibly 16th) century crossing is constructed of big slabs of gritstone that weigh up to two tons each. The 55-metre bridge is held together by weight alone – no mortar has been used. *First Class*

Row Bridge This 18th century bridge over Mosedale Beck at Wasdale Head, Cumbria is typical of a design found across Western Europe to facilitate trade routes. Row bridges were narrow – and so cheap and quick to build – as they only needed to accommodate packhorses in single file. *First Class.*

Pulteney Bridge Based on a blueprint by an iconic Italian designer, Robert Adam's 1774 'inhabited' bridge in Bath is the UK's finest example of its kind. Now with shops, it originally offered living space as well. Pulteney, straddling ▸



FD1507-TH



FD1507-NP

the River Avon, followed a design by the great 16th-century architect Andrea Palladio, planned for the Rialto in Venice but never built. *First Class*

Craigellachie Bridge Legendary structural engineer Thomas Telford, who pioneered iron as a construction material, completed Craigellachie in 1814. Its single 46-metre span stretches across the River Spey in Moray, Scotland. The cast iron arch was ground-breaking because, unlike masonry, the metal could achieve a long, shallow individual arch. *First Class*

Pont Grog Y Borth/Menai Suspension Bridge The world's first great suspension bridge, this 305 metre-long beauty linking Anglesey to the Welsh mainland is another Telford triumph. It was built 30 metres above the water to let tall-masted ships pass underneath. *First Class*

High Level Bridge Robert Stephenson's masterpiece of the 19th century is one of the most visually stunning bridges of Britain's Railway Age. The 408-metre two-tier bridge was designed to take both road and rail traffic across the Tyne, thus connecting Newcastle upon Tyne with Gateshead. *First Class*

Royal Border Bridge This 1850 Robert Stephenson design of traditional masonry construction was an essential element in Britain's expanding rail network and connected London with Edinburgh. The 658-metre bridge comprises 28 semi-circular headed arches that march across the River Tweed between Berwick-upon-Tweed and Tweedmouth. *First Class*

Tees Transporter Bridge Middlesbrough's 1911 lattice steel Tees Transporter is a novel engineering design that uses a suspended electric-powered 'gondola' car to take people and vehicles across the River Tees. *First Class*

Humber Bridge Built in 1981, the Humber was for 16 years the world's longest single-span suspension bridge. The bridge is huge – 2,220 metres long in total, with a central span measuring 1,410 metres. Its opening was the inspiration behind Philip Larkin's poem *Bridge for the Living. First Class*

Peace Bridge Reaching across the River Foyle at Derry Londonderry in Northern Ireland, this 235 metre-long suspension bridge features two tall masts whose network of cables overlap in the middle to create a symbolic handshake of peace and unity. Completed in 2011, the bridge takes pedestrians and cyclists. *First Class*

Orders for Serviced First Day Covers should reach Royal Mail at Tallents House (address on page 162) by 5 March, quoting the *Bulletin* code 15CDA. The Tallents House alternative postmark has a drawing of two bridge designs that echo the Row Bridge and Craigellachie Bridge. An alternative pictorial handstamp carries the location of 'Bridge, Canterbury' and features a drawing of two bridge designs similar in style to the Menai Suspension Bridge and the Royal Border Bridge •

Bridges Stamps – Specifications	
Date of issue	5 March
Number of stamps	Ten
Stamp design	GBH
Stamp format	Portrait
Stamp size	35mm x 37mm
Number per sheet	25/50
Printer	International Security Printers
Print process	Lithography
Perforations	14.5 x 14
Phosphor	Bars as appropriate
Gum	PVA

Bridges Stamps – Prices	
Stamp set, Code AS71A	£6.20
Presentation Pack, Code AP399	£6.70
First Day Cover Stamps/overseas Code AF390	£7.92/£6.60
Stamp Cards (set of 10), Code AQ218	£4.50

Your verdict Just in! The thought-provoking results of the 2014 *Bulletin* Reader Survey

THE BULLETIN EDITORIAL TEAM would like to thank all the readers who took the time to respond to the Reader Survey distributed with your September edition. Here is what you told us...

Your reading habits 84% of respondents say that the main reason they read the *British Philatelic Bulletin* is for details about Royal Mail issues and 15% read it to keep their finger on the 'pulse of philately'. So it follows that Previews of new stamps are the most popular Royal Mail pages, which are read 'always' or 'usually' by 96% of respondents. Features about Special Stamps score highest among the regular editorial pages, too – read 'always' or 'usually' by 88%. Other popular sections are Stamp Scene and Correspondence (letters page), both regular reading for around 85% of respondents.

We will do our best to act on your suggestions for subjects you would like to read more about in the magazine. Votes are fairly evenly spread across a wide range of subjects, but GB stamp designers (66%) and specialist collectors of UK stamps (44%) are the topics most favoured in the survey.

No prizes for guessing whose writing inspired most votes – Machin expert Douglas Myall is the favourite *Bulletin* contributor for 53% of respondents, with John Holman a close second. Colin Baker and Richard West tie for third place and Andrew Neish is welcomed, as a newer contributor, in fourth place.

Positive opinions A reassuring 87% of our survey respondents expressed an overall opinion of the *Bulletin* as 'good' or 'very good'. Compared with the 2011 survey results there is a 21.5% increase in the proportion of respondents who are likely to recommend the *Bulletin* to friends and colleagues. This is rather encouraging, as a quarter of readers say that they are unlikely to discuss their hobby with friends or associates!

Collecting Few surprises here for a magazine for collectors of UK stamps: 29% of respondents collect GB definitives, 21% Machins and 21% historic stamps. Your thematic interests cover quite a wide spectrum: history and transport top the list (voted for by 46% and 45%), closely followed by animals and birds, then plants and trees, and in fifth place landscapes.

Value for money We are happy to report that 86% of survey respondents say the *Bulletin* gives value for money – 58% believe it is 'very good' value and 28% think the magazine is 'good' value for money.

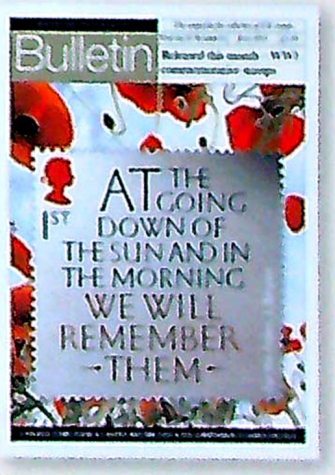
And a dash of demographics 89% of survey respondents are male and 86% live in the UK. A significant number (61%) of respondents have subscribed to the *Bulletin* for more than 20 years and 10% for five years or less. 508 people took part in the survey (6% of total distributed)

Thanks again and let us know if you have any questions about the results •

86% of respondents think *Bulletin* gives value for money. 'Nothing else keeps me up to date so completely,' says one

66% want to read more about GB stamp designers, past and present, so more profiles of them have now been scheduled

88% read background features always or usually. 'I enjoy learning about the background to stamp design and the history of philately,' one reader enthuses



Above: the July 2014 issue of the *British Philatelic Bulletin* stands out most in the memory of Reader Survey respondents



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

UK diary dates

6-7 February Liverpool 2015 stamp fair, Liner Hotel (formerly Gladstone Hotel), Lord Nelson Street, Liverpool L3 5QB. Friday 10.30am to 5pm; Saturday 10am to 4pm. For details and a free programme, contact Fred O'Reilly, 01226 765069 (mobile 07774524518); or Terry Barnett, 0151 486 2610 (mobile 07762 360575) or terryhuntsc@tiscali.co.uk.

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

18-21 February Spring Stampex – see Exhibitions section below.



19 February Royal Philatelic Society London: displays by GB Collectors Club of the USA, RPSL, 41 Devonshire Place, London W1 (pictured left), 1pm. Non-members welcome by prior arrangement. Information: 020 7486 1044.

7 March Streetley Philatelic Society Stamp Fair, Collingwood Centre, Pheasey, Birmingham B43 7NF, 10am to 4.30pm. 14 dealers, Society displays, car parking, refreshments. Admission: adults 20p, children 10p. Information: Brian Hyner, 0121 357 5340, brianhyner@googlemail.com.

7 March Welsh Postal History Society meeting at Aberystwyth. Information: Peter Brindley, 01248 352682, peter@wps.wales.org.

14 March GB Philatelic Society display: Penny Reds Explained (B Barrell and M Williams), RPSL, 41 Devonshire Place, London W1, 11am onwards. Information: Peter Tanner, 01753 887755.

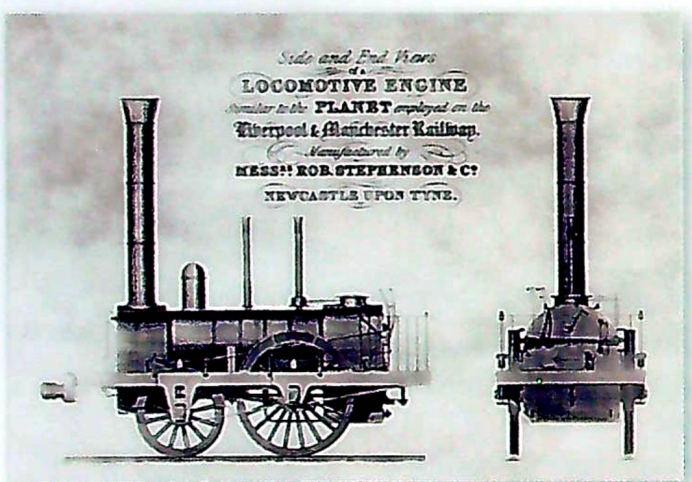
14-15 March Salisbury Stamp Show, Andover Leisure Centre, West Street, Andover SP10 1QP. Information: www.salisburystampshow.co.uk.

20 March Strand Stamp Fair – details above.

28 March Westbex 2015, Thatcham & District Philatelic Society Stamp & Postcard Fair, Kennet School, Stoney Lane, Thatcham RG19 4LL, 10am to 4pm. 22 dealers, parking, refreshments. Includes country meeting of National Philatelic Society at 1.30pm. Information: G Stewart, 01635 866942 •

Exhibitions

Spring Stampex, at the Business Design Centre, Upper Street, London N1, from 18 to 21 February, will include a display marking the 60th anniversary of the Great Britain Philatelic Society (see below). Royal Mail will have its usual sales stand and Post & Go area. Inventive Britain Special Stamps and Working Sail Post & Go Stamps will be issued during the exhibition.



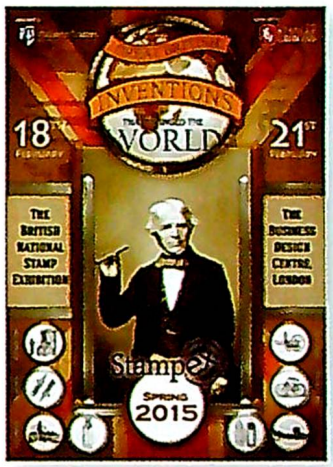
Visitors receive a free programme of the exhibits and standholders, which contains a free postcard (shown left) that can be posted at the Royal Mail stand to receive the exhibition postmark. The Stampex Customised Sheet, entitled Great British Inventions That Changed The World, will be on sale at the exhibition information stand. The Sheet

bears ten First Class crown seal Smilers® Stamps with adjoining labels (see January *Bulletin*, page 140, for more details).

Stampex is open Wednesday 11.30am to 7pm, Thursday and Friday 10am to 6pm, and Saturday 10am to 5pm. Admission is free. The Business Design Centre is a short walk from Angel underground station (Northern Line) and served by many bus routes. For more information about the show, email office.pts@btinternet.com or phone 023 9283 2289.

London 2015 Europhilex will be the biggest philatelic event in Europe this year. It is on from 13 to 16 May at the Business Design Centre, home of Stampex, and venue for the international exhibition in 2010. It commemorates 175 years of postage stamps, 150 years of Stanley Gibbons Catalogues and 125 years of international exhibitions in London.

The first day (13 May) is for ticket holders only and tickets, at £10 each, are now available by visiting www.london2015.net. Alternatively, send a sterling cheque payable to 'SWE London 2015' to Deborah Gooch, London 2015 Europhilex, Greystones, Green Lane, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 2BX. Tickets are also available from the London 2015 stand at Spring Stampex. Enquiries: email Deborah at londonstamps2015@gmail.com •



Stamp-related exhibitions and events

The main anniversary of 2014 was of course the centenary of the start of the First World War. The first in a series of Royal Mail stamps commemorating the Great War was issued on 28 July. An exhibition, The First World War and the Bank of England, is at the Bank of England Museum, London EC4 until March 2015. It is open Monday to Friday, 10am to 5pm. Enquiries: 020 7601 5545. For details of local exhibitions, see the Imperial War Museums website at www.iwm.org.uk.

A series of events and exhibitions mark the 800th anniversary of the Magna Carta during 2015. An exhibition called Law Liberty Legacy at the British Library in London will display Magna Carta along with its American descendants, the Declaration of Independence and Bill of Rights. The exhibition will run from 13 March until 1 September (there is an admission charge). Visit www.bl.uk/magna-carta for information. Royal Mail Special Stamps marking the Magna Carta anniversary go on sale on 2 June.

Sherlock Holmes has featured on stamps of many countries, including Royal Mail's 1993 five-stamp issue, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle on an Eminent Britons stamp in 2009 and Peter Cushing as Holmes on a Great Britons stamp of 2013. An exhibition, Sherlock Holmes: The Man Who Never Lived and Will Never Die, is at the Museum of London until 12 April (admission charge applies) •



Important GB display

Members of the Great Britain Philatelic Society (GBPS) are mounting a major display at Spring Stampex to mark the society's 60th anniversary. The GBPS was founded in 1955 as a small but enthusiastic group of collectors wishing to promote, encourage and contribute to the advancement of the philately of Great Britain. Since then it has grown steadily and now has more than 700 members in the UK and abroad.

The 81 exhibits at this month's Stampex are a must-see for UK collectors. With 319 frames covering Traditional (mostly stamps), Aerophilately, Postal History, Postal Stationery, Revenue and Open Class, as well as some Non-competitive ▸

displays, there are exhibits to please all collectors of all types of GB material. The exhibits in the Traditional group are: Die II Alphabet, 1855-64; A Penny Black: One in Sixty Eight Million; The Advertiser Voucher Book of Stamps 1908-43; 1867-81 1d Purple Fiscal Series; George V Downey Head Plates, Paper & Perforation; 1½d Letterpress Definitive of 1924-34; Sample Stamps of Queen Victoria 1840-1902; Evolution of British Stamp Perforation 1840-80; GB Army Officials; Machin 2/6, 5/-, 10/- and £1 values; Shades of Queen Victoria 1d Star Die II; Arms High Values 1939-48; Irish Definitive Coil Stamps 1922-40; the Collection of Postage Due Fees in Ireland 1914-25; Victoria Imperforate Line Engraved Stamps from the Plate Position 'CG'; British Postal Mechanisation from Transforma to the Modern Era; Denominated Machin Series 1967-2013; George V Commemorative Issues; GB Telegraph Stamps; One Penny Stars 1855-62; Elizabeth II errors; and Telegraph Stamps of GB and British Empire.

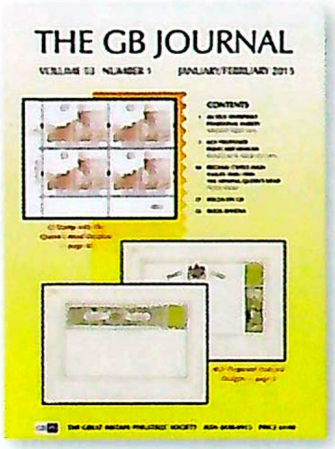
Postal History displays include: Herm Island Prior to the Local Stamp Issues; Spoon Cancellations; Handstruck Town Marks of Scotland in the 18th Century; Anglo-French Mail 1570-1877; Origins of Express Mail; Early GB First Days; Maltese Cross; Penny Black Mail to and from Edinburgh; Parcel Post 1883-1908 and 1882-1935; Postal Reform 1837-40; and the Reign of George VI 1937-51.

Among exhibits in the Postal Stationery category are: George VI Stamped to Order Postal Stationery; Penny Pinks; Mulready Forme 1 Locating Stereo A76; and one intriguingly entitled Is This The Biggest Ever GB Post Office Stamp?

The Revenue display comprises Guernsey World War II Sales Tax, with Aerophilately represented by British Airmail Letter Rates to Africa and Asia 1931-46, and Early Airmail from the Channel Islands.

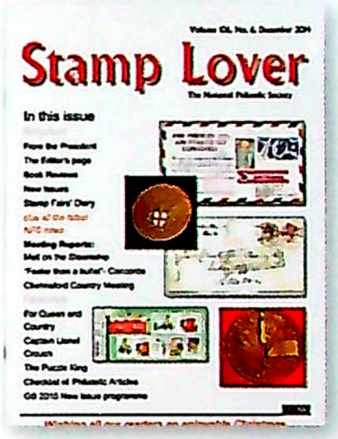
In the Open Class category visitors can enjoy Introduction of the Telegraph Service to the Channel Islands; Isle of Man before Postal Independence; Jubilee Reminiscence: the Conversazione at the Guildhall; Ocean & Imperial Penny Postage 1840-1918; and Battle of Coronel & the Falkland Islands in the First World War 1914.

The Non-competitive displays are: British Postal History & Postal Reforms 1175-1842; Adhesive Receipt, Draft & General Duty Revenues 1853-83; Proofs & Essays of Embossed Stamps Used on Postal Stationery 1841-1970; Edward VII: First Day to Funeral; Postal History in Miniature; George VI Arms High Values: Use to Overseas Destinations; and Branch Offices of London. In addition there will be PowerPoint presentations covering stamp and postal history subjects on the Wednesday, Thursday and Friday during Stampex.

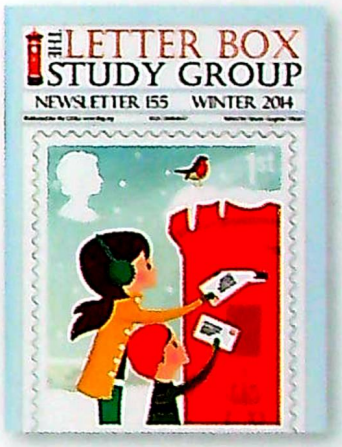


The GBPS publishes *The GB Journal* and *GBPS Newsletter*, which includes excellent illustrated reports of society meetings. After Stampex, the next GBPS meeting, on 14 March, will be Penny Reds Explained, with displays by Bill Barrell and Mike Williams. For full information on GBPS membership and activities, contact Peter Tanner: 13 St Hubert's Close, Gerrards Cross SL9 7EN, 01753 887755, or petertannerHS13@talktalk.net (or enquire at Spring Stampex). Membership costs £25 UK, £27 Europe, and £33 Rest of World airmail (or £27 by seamail) •

Philatelic publications



The December 2014 issue of *The Stamp Lover*, journal of the National Philatelic Society (NPS), includes features on Captain Lionel Crouch, philatelist and war hero; Gregor Melikov: The Puzzle King; reports of NPS meetings and activities; extensive book reviews; a good review of 2014 Europa issues and new stamps from Hungary, Norway, Singapore and Spain; and most useful listings of forthcoming stamp fairs and of articles published in UK stamp magazines (including the *Bulletin*) in the first half of 2014. For details about the NPS, contact Peter Mellor: 01582 762284 or npsmemsec@ukphilately.org.uk. Membership is £32 London, £28 country, or £26 overseas (an e-version of *The Stamp Lover* is also available).



The Winter 2014 edition of the *Letter Box Study Group Newsletter* is another fine issue, with 52 pages packed with superb colour illustrations. Features include: Victorian boxes in Aberdeen; 'Jana' boxes; the post box collection of Ken Dodds in Newcastle upon Tyne; gold-painted Olympic/Paralympic boxes; boxes in Vietnam, Japan and Tasmania; and an interesting section on post boxes shown on stamps, postmarks and other philatelic material. The front cover bears an enlarged reproduction of the 2014 First Class Christmas stamp showing mother and child posting letters in a pillar box. The Letter Box Study Group (LBSG) is holding its spring meeting at the Holiday Inn Hotel, Queensferry Road, Edinburgh on 18 April. For details of the LBSG, contact Val Scott: 38 Leopold Avenue, Birmingham B20 1ES, membership@lbsg.org, or www.lbsg.org.

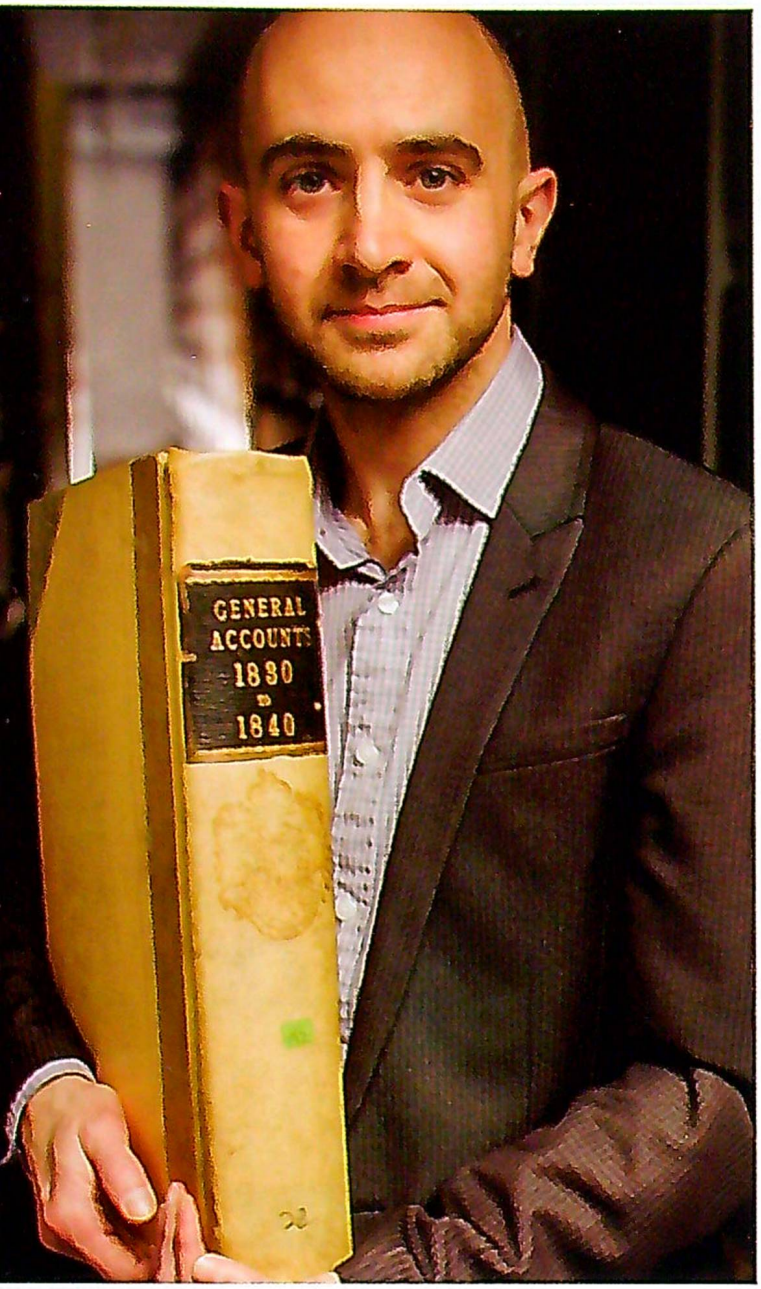
The December 2014 *Newsletter* of the Insurance & Banking Philatelic Society of Great Britain includes short features on Swedish Military Postal Stationery, GB Post Office Training Stamps and London & Manchester Assurance labels (assumed to have been produced for the Coronation in 1953), as well as details of the activities of the Society. The Society is open to those who are employed in, or have retired from, the financial services industry. For a copy of a recent *Newsletter* and application form, contact Dudley Baker: 25 Bunbury Way, Downs View, Epsom KT17 4JP, Dudley.baker1@ntlworld.com.



Many *Bulletin* readers will be familiar with the twice-monthly *Postmark Bulletin*, which has been produced since 1971 and provides a guide to upcoming British commemorative postmarks. For collectors wishing to personalise first day covers but not wishing to buy a personalised postmark, the *Postmark Bulletin* also carries a useful list of Permanent Special and Pictorial Postmarks. These depict different towns and cities around the UK and can be obtained from the Special Handstamp Centres •

New catalogues

Stanley Gibbons has recently published new editions of two parts of its main catalogue. The 8th edition of Part 2 covers Austria & Hungary (price £35.95), and the 11th edition of Part 7 lists Germany, German States, Occupation issues and German colonies (£39.95). They are available from the Stanley Gibbons Strand shop, or by post from Stanley Gibbons Publications, 7 Parkside, Ringwood BH24 3SH, by calling 0800 611 622 (UK only), or emailing orders@stanleygibbons.com •



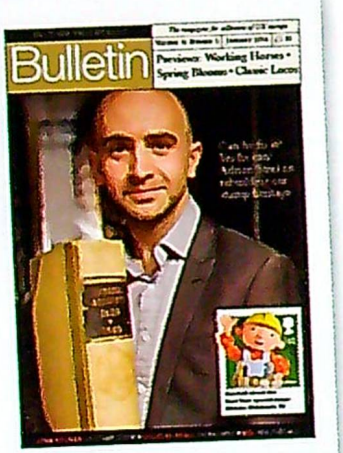
The date draws near! We can soon have a national Postal Museum to be proud of, says BPMA Director Adrian Steel

IT IS HARD to believe that it has been a year since I last spoke to the *Bulletin* about progress with our plans for the British Postal Museum & Archive (BPMA), though much has happened since then. As many of you may well have seen, the Heritage Lottery Fund approved our application for £4.5 million back in May, adding a substantial cash injection to our fundraising campaign. I am pleased to say that, thanks to the hard work of staff and all our supporters, we have closed our fundraising gap to just under £1 million at the time of writing.

The great news is that we are now in a position to start building works early next year and to deliver The Postal Museum and Mail Rail for an intended opening in late 2016. Fundraising will continue throughout 2015 to secure the remaining shortfall to ensure that, alongside our unique archive, we can populate the museum with state-of-the-art facilities for philatelists that will set it apart in its field.

Our plans for philately are ambitious. We have always striven to open our collections as widely as possible, and to ensure that not being physically able to visit our museum does not preclude engagement with our treasures: over the past year we have added more philatelic records to our online catalogue, and have been undertaking some exciting 3D scanning trials with philatelic objects – which could enable digital engagement with our archive in greater detail than ever before, including the ability to zoom in on different parts of printing plates and dies.

> ‘Our unique archive and state-of-the art facilities will set the museum apart in its field’



Next year our plans will move into the delivery phase. Work on The Postal Museum is due to commence in the first quarter, with builders moving on site to remove everything except the external structure of the current building. Over the road in Mail Rail, builders are scheduled to begin on site in July. It has been a long journey, and it is not over yet, but we are now in a position to say that, all being well, our new museum and ride will open next year. That is an achievement that fills my colleagues and me with great pride, and we look forward to sharing the rest of our journey with you through the *Bulletin* •

Read more about the future of the BPMA in the transcript of Adrian Steel's Stuart Rossiter Memorial Lecture, downloadable from www.rossitertrust.com. For details of current events and how to be a Friend of the BPMA, visit www.postalheritage.org.uk.

Conor Masterson

Island stamps Battle fronts, Alice and more



Isle of Man Three new Isle of Man issues go on sale on 17 February: Battle Fronts (shown above), a collection of six litho-printed stamps honouring the centenary of the First World War; a miniature sheet marking the 70th anniversary of VE and VJ Day; and a Penny Black 175th anniversary set. For details of Isle of Man issues, visit www.iomstamps.com or write to Isle of Man Stamps & Coins, PO Box 10M, Douglas, Isle of Man IM99 1PB •



Jersey is set to issue definitives featuring the crest of Jersey and Protected Species Post & Go stamps (shown above) on 18 February, to coincide with Spring Stampex in London. The Traditional Toys of Jersey Europa issue is due out on 24 March. Enquiries: Jersey Philatelic Bureau, Freepost JE793, Jersey Post, Jersey JE1 1AF or visit www.jerseystamps.com •

Guernsey The 150th anniversary of Lewis Carroll's classic children's novel *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is being celebrated by Alderney with a pictorial stamp issue released on 5 February. The new issue comprises a set of six stamps and a miniature sheet (shown right). To enquire about stamps and first day services, contact Guernsey Philatelic Bureau at Freepost GU267, Envoy House, La Vrangue, Guernsey GY1 5SS or email philatelic @guernseypost.com •



Science on stamps

The mind set

COLOSSUS

Inventor
Tommy Flowers



The lowdown WWII secret weapon Colossus, the world's first electronic computer, deciphered coded messages sent between Berlin and battlefield commanders via the Germans' Lorenz cypher machine. Flowers, a Post Office engineer based at the Research Station in Dollis Hill, London, constructed the first Colossus in December 1943.

How it works Scrambled characters of German messages could only be decoded if the settings of the 12 code wheels on the Lorenz machine were known. Colossus used statistical analysis on intercepted messages (fed into it at a rate of 5,000 characters a second) to determine the settings.

Why so good Ten Colossus machines revealed a huge amount of German military strategy, which is considered to have shortened the war by two years.

STAINLESS STEEL

Inventor
Harry Brearley



The lowdown In 1914 Brearley created the first commercially viable corrosion-resistant stainless steel – a mix of iron, carbon and chromium. He originally called it 'rustless steel'.

How it works The base metal in the mix is iron, which gives the steel its strength, but it is the chromium (at least 11 per cent) that makes the steel 'stainless'.

Why so good Stainless steel is astonishingly versatile, with an immense variety of applications: from heart valves and scalpels to everyday uses in cutlery, washing machine drums, buildings, road tankers and razors.

Inventor
Tim Berners-Lee



The lowdown A software engineer at CERN in Switzerland in the Eighties, Berners-Lee realised visiting scientists to the laboratory were limited in ways they could share information. He saw the internet as the key to achieving data sharing.

How it works Berners-Lee created the technology that forms the basis for the World Wide Web – the massive collection of documents and resources that we access via the internet. Protocols he developed include HTML, the computer language to create and link internet pages.

Why so good Quite simply the World Wide Web has shrunk the planet, revolutionising communications and the sharing of knowledge between billions of people.

CARBON FIBRE

Inventor
William Watt



The lowdown Carbon fibres are thin filaments integrated into resin and baked to create a reinforced plastic much stronger but much lighter than metal. US scientists were researching how to produce carbon fibre in the Fifties and Sixties but it was Scotsman Watt who manufactured a superior version of the substance in 1964.

How it works The plastic is produced by heating the carbon material to very high temperatures – up to 3,000°C. This process enables the carbon atoms to join together to create extremely tough, non-brittle material.

Why so good Eminently flexible, the plastic can be moulded into a variety of high-stress uses where toughness is paramount: spacecraft, commercial aircraft, wind turbines and racing cars.

Background image © CLIPAREA.com

Inspiring this month's Inventive Britain stamps is the amazing world of scientific discovery. To celebrate the new issue Andrew Neish reveals fascinating facts behind the great British geniuses and innovations that have changed the way we live

CATSEYES



Inventor
Percy Shaw

The lowdown Shaw, owner of a road-surfacing business, invented Catseyes road studs in 1934 but they only took off a decade later when demand soared during Second World War blackouts.

How they work The studs are just four glass beads covered with a reflective layer that captures the glow of headlights and beams it back out. The beads are set in rubber housing inserted in a cast-iron base.

Why so good Their ingenious simplicity: the Catseyes' flexible rubber casing allows the reflectors to sink down into the road surface when driven over, so protecting them from damage and at the same time cleaning them with any rainwater caught in the base.

FIBRE OPTICS



Inventors
Charles Kao and George Hockham

The lowdown Fibre optic cables form a global communications network that transmits massive amounts of digital information – internet, phone calls and email – at amazingly fast speeds. It is the technological foundation of the internet. Kao and Hockham first demonstrated the possibilities presented by fibre optics in 1966.

How they work The cables comprise bundles of optical fibres – extremely thin purified glass pipes that carry pulses of laser light containing 'packets' of digital information.

Why so good The cables have enormous capacity. The first trans-Pacific copper cable could handle less than 100 phone calls at the same time. Today's fibre optic system can carry over a billion calls simultaneously.

DNA SEQUENCING



Inventor
Frederick Sanger

The lowdown In the Sixties and Seventies Nobel Prize-winning biochemist Dr Sanger developed a ground-breaking method of mapping DNA, the chemical code in our cells containing the instructions for creating life-building proteins.

How it works Most DNA molecules are organised in a double helix. By splitting this helix, then rebuilding the strands of DNA and analysing them, Sanger was able to discern the DNA sequence. As a consequence scientists have now been able to sequence the human genome – the complete set of genetic material in our cells.

Why so good Being able to read the human genome will help transform modern medicine, with enhanced treatments for genetic disorders and 'smart' drugs tailored precisely to individual patients.

I-LIMB



Inventor David Gow

The lowdown
A revolutionary bionic hand, the i-limb boasts a rotatable thumb and individually articulated fingers. Invented by Gow, a former NHS employee, it was launched in 2007.

How it works A user merely has to think about a hand movement to transmit an electronic signal from their brain to manipulate muscles in their arm. Electrical pulses from the muscles are sent to a computer in the hand, which creates the movement.

Why so good The i-limb accurately replicates the countless subtle varieties of movements a real hand can perform.

19 February is the issue date for Royal Mail Inventive Britain stamps. Philatelic Preview details are on page 134 of January *Bulletin*.

Turn over for more science on stamps ▶

Science on stamps

Stamp design: the art of science

As the release of the Inventive Britain issue approaches, collector Chris Yardley traces the history of science and scientists on UK stamps

UNTIL I STARTED researching my doctoral thesis, about science on stamps, I had no real interest in thematic collecting. A collector for more than 40 years, my main hobby had been to complete the specialist catalogue listings of the definitive and commemorative stamps of six countries, including and especially the wonderful Machins.

I had not appreciated previously the implications of Postmaster General Tony Benn's 1965 submission to The Queen that Royal Mail introduce stamps that did other than represent the Monarchy or country in some form. When The Queen approved of stamp subjects reflecting significant aspects of British life and culture, science became a regularly appearing theme on pictorial stamps. Today one in every ten stamps issued by Royal Mail and indeed the whole world features a scientist or a scientific subject.

Half a century ago As Royal Mail is currently celebrating the 50th anniversary of Special Stamps, it is a good time to look back at UK stamps with a scientific theme and to examine the different approaches to their design over the decades. For the purpose of this article, I have chosen stamps that I consider to convey a scientific message by context or celebrant.

The first British science stamps of this type were issued in 1965, quickly following the change of policy. They celebrated the centenary of Joseph Lister's discovery of antiseptic surgery, and they were sufficiently popular to establish an early issuing pattern, with sets of four in subsequent years. In 1966, the year



1965: the stamp marking the 100th anniversary of Lister's discovery of antiseptic surgery

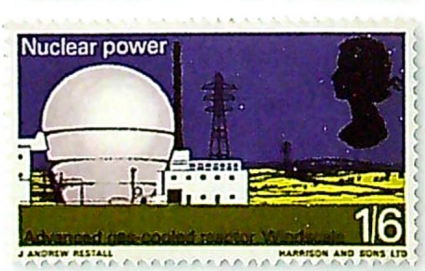


1966: the issue that pays tribute to British technology











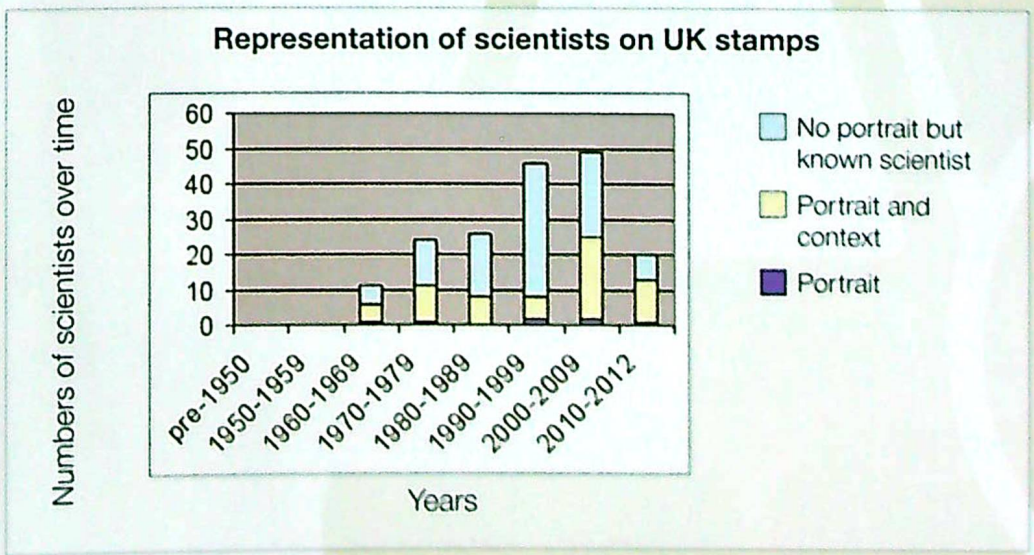


1967: the British Discovery and Invention issue

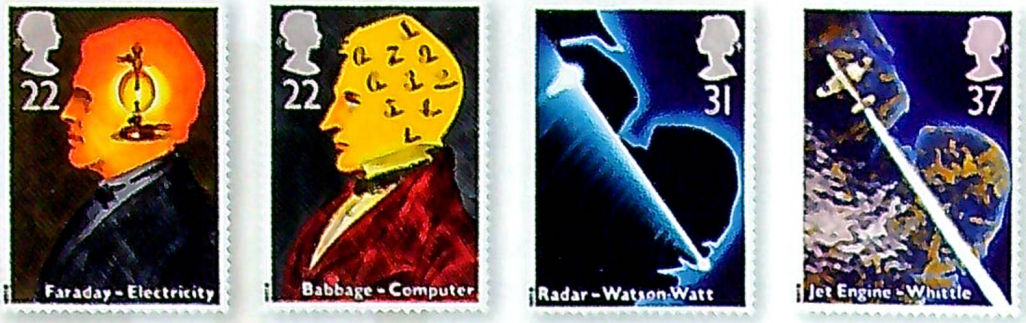
following the Joseph Lister set, Technology stamps paid further tribute to the country's scientific and engineering know-how. The stamps were rich in context, showing Jodrell Bank telescope, an E-Type Jaguar and Mini cars, a hovercraft, and the Windscale nuclear reactor. Only one of the scientists behind all this technology had a name that might generally be known by the public: Sir Christopher Cockerell, engineer and inventor of the hovercraft.

Choice of title Four significant achievements are celebrated in the 1967 British Discovery and Invention series. On the 4d stamp is a representation of radar (invented by Sir Robert Watson-Watt, 1892-1973). The one shilling stamp has a petri dish containing penicillin (discovered by Sir Alexander Fleming, 1881-1955). The 1/6 stamp bears an image of the jet engine (designed by Sir Frank Whittle, 1907-1996). Television (pioneered by John Logie Baird, 1888-1946) is the subject of the 1/9 value and is represented in a bold design on the only portrait-shaped stamp in the set. The names behind these achievements are not shown on the stamps. The stamp titles are likely to have been chosen because they carried more immediate impact. The meaning of 'jet engine', 'radar' and so on were recognisable to everyone, whereas some of the scientists' names were more famous than others. And I doubt that the overseas viewer would have linked a British name to all the inventions.

Point of differentiation For this study, having decided to look at how science is shown on stamps, I needed a differentiator and came up with the following observation: approximately half of all stamps focus on a scientific message and do so by celebrating a scientist; the other half shows the science as a bigger picture. The graph below illustrates how the number of scientists being named on British stamps is increasing, with a distinction as to ▸



Science on stamps



1991: Scientific Achievements

whether the scientist's image is shown in addition to their achievement. Some scientists get a continuing acknowledgement without a portrait. For example, in the 1991 Scientific Achievements issue, Robert Watson-Watt and Sir Frank Whittle are honoured again, with diagrams of the functionality of their work. Within the same set, however, two portraits are shown and the context of the discovery – Michael Faraday (1791-1867) and Charles Babbage (1791-1871) in the fields of electricity and computers.

Portrait plus context The landmark Royal Society set of 2010 celebrated 350 years of the organisation. Ten scientists and their achievements were each selected to represent 35 years of the Society's existence.

The scientists and their disciplines are: Sir Robert Boyle (1627-1691), chemistry; Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727), optics; Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790), electricity; Edward Jenner (1749-1823), vaccination; Charles Babbage (1791-1871), computing; Alfred Russel Wallace (1823-1913), evolution; Joseph Lister (1827-1912), antiseptic surgery; Ernest Rutherford (1871-1937), atomic theory; Dorothy Hodgkin (1910-1994), crystallography; and Sir Nicholas Shackleton (1937-2006), earth science.

This set typifies the genre I describe as scientists' portrait and context. The design device employed incorporates black and white portraits of the scientists and a graphical representation of the discipline in colour. The style of the portraits gives a subtle indication of the era in which the scientist lived and the colourful illustrations lie across the top of their heads, indicating the fruits of their lively minds. I was pleased to see that Russel Wallace was

2010: The 350th Anniversary of The Royal Society



chosen to represent evolution as Charles Darwin had been acknowledged with ten stamps the year before, celebrating his birth bicentenary. Both Lister and Babbage had already been honoured in 1966 and 1991, as mentioned above.

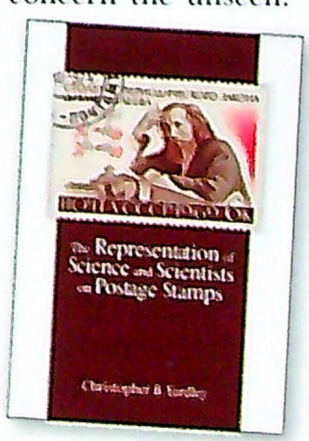
Graphic meaning More recent stamps have developed to emphasise context to tell their message. The Medical Discoveries set of 2010 illustrate six of the most significant medical breakthroughs of the last 100 years. They pay tribute to the achievements of James Black, Alexander Fleming, John Charnley, Harold Ridley, Ronald Ross and Godfrey Newbold in the respective fields of cardiovascular medicine, drug therapy, transplant surgery, ophthalmology, parasitology and medical imaging.

The stamp titles are detailed, including a description of the discovery as well as the name of the scientist most closely associated with it, even though this necessitates very small type. The images, too, are more sophisticated. How different, for example, is the plain petri dish on the 1967 stamp and this one which turns mould into a thing of intriguing beauty. Children of the Swinging Sixties had not heard of a hip replacement; today many of them will be waiting for one, for it has become one of the most common operations in the country.

There is an implication here that the general public is becoming more aware of the science being conveyed in pictures, and readier to enjoy more complex images. The Space Science stamps, issued in 2013, continues in this vein of intrigue. Six stamps, celebrating Britain's contribution to space exploration, feature photographic images from space missions. The science behind these stamps is complicated but, like works of art, the stunning images encourage viewers to explore the background story.

At the time of writing, an early glimpse of the Inventive Britain stamps released this month reveals a return to the small-type titles that include the context and the inventor's name (see page 176). It appears that the current approach to representing science on stamps is to inspire awe and wonder. Despite its miniature size, the illustration of the i-limb artificial hand, created by David Gow, conveys more than enough detail. Other illustrations in the set are more conceptual but all draw they eye and inspire a desire to learn more.

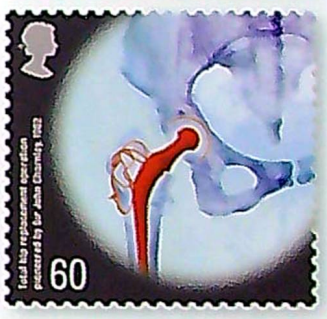
Then and now Sixties Britain was still in the first generation of television owners and the majority of people had not travelled by aeroplane, so to see those things on stamps reflected exciting changes in family life. Scientific breakthroughs of today, however, are more likely to concern the unseen. Depicting graphics that convey advances in computer software, fibre optic cables, micro surgery and genetics is a challenge to which stamp designers have risen with aplomb. And, for the moment at least, pictures of British scientists are reserved for the stamp series such as Britons of Distinction, which draw together portraits of high achievers from all walks of life •



Next month: Chris Yardley reveals more of the intriguing story of science on stamps. His thesis is published online and in hard copy by the Australian National University Press.









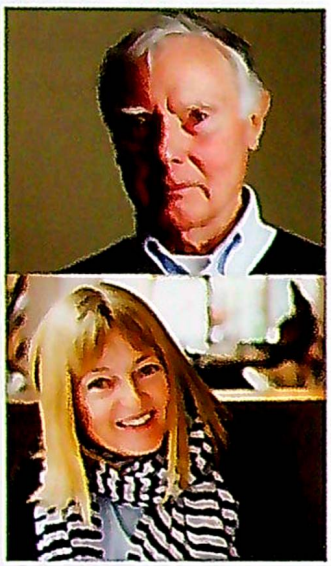






50 years of Special Stamps

For Royal Mail Stamps and Collectibles department, 2015 marks a special anniversary, celebrated in an online stamp exhibition of unique interest to thematic collectors across the world. Stamp Strategy Manager Philip Parker reports



Above: David Gentleman, a driving force for modernising stamps in the 1960s. And Kate Stephens, the UK's most prolific female stamp designer

THESE TINY design icons have told the story of Britain in miniature for 50 fascinating years – so in 2015 we are very excited to celebrate the golden anniversary of Special Stamps. To launch the celebrations, Royal Mail has created an online gallery of all the 2,663 Special Stamps issued since July 1965.

The gallery, at www.rmspecialstamps.com, starts with David Gentleman's classic Winston Churchill and Battle of Britain stamps of 1965, taking us on a journey through British philatelic history up to the present.

Special memories No doubt some of *Bulletin*'s senior readers will have collected all or most of these Special Stamps. We would be delighted to know your favourites from the last five decades – *Bulletin* readers can email the address below to tell us their top designs in 50 to 100 words and we will publish as many as we can. I have listed some of my own favourites here (see facing page).

While we are marking the 50-year milestone, we are also commemorating the groundbreaking change in stamp design policy initiated by Postmaster General Tony Benn back in 1965. Previously, of course, there had been few commemorative stamps, and they celebrated only significant anniversaries and royal and postal occasions. But all that changed with Benn. And the great David Gentleman. He contacted Benn to suggest strategies for modernising stamp design. A keen moderniser himself, Benn was delighted, and worked with Gentleman to transform British stamps.

Special criteria Benn created his now-famous criteria for the commemorative stamps of the future. They were to:

- Celebrate events of national or international importance
- Commemorate appropriate anniversaries and occasions
- Reflect Britain's unique contribution to the arts and world affairs
- Extend public patronage to the arts

Fascinating subjects

Who and what are the most featured subjects on Special Stamps over the last 50 years?

People... The Queen has featured on the most British stamps (and that does not include counting The Queen's head silhouette!). The next most popular person is the Duke of Edinburgh, then William Shakespeare. **Animals...** Birds have made the most frequent appearances, followed by dogs, horses and cats. **Places...** The most featured building is Buckingham Palace, followed by Kew Gardens and St Paul's Cathedral.



Conor Masterson; Dan Froude

Gentleman's 1965 Churchill issue, in recognition of the statesman's passing that year, was the catalyst for the modern new look. This was the first time a contemporary individual, other than a member of the Royal Family, had ever been featured on a British stamp. The Churchill stamps were also the first to carry no words.

The Special Stamp Programme was effectively born and the rest is history – philatelic history, and the history of Britain too. For 50 years now, Special Stamps have celebrated Britain and Britons, our way of life, our national character. Our contributions, our tribulations, our achievements.

Such a wide remit has allowed an extraordinary variety of subjects – people, places, events, inventions. Prime Ministers and pop stars, famous battles, brilliant buildings. Butterflies and birds, flowers, trees, and the very landscape in which we live.

Each issue is like a lens. Take a look and, decade by decade for half a century, you will see how stamps offer a fascinating focus on the changing life and times of Britain. In the late 1960s, issues showcased British innovation, like the 1966 set that featured the Jodrell Bank radio telescope, hovercraft and the British car industry. In 1971 the British Architecture series brought you Modern University Buildings. Ten years later we celebrated with the Royal Wedding stamp design, and in 1983 the British Gardens issue revealed the beauty of national heritage icons Blenheim and Sissinghurst.

The Channel Tunnel issue of 1994 marked the opening of the gateway to Europe. In 1999 and 2000 the Millennium stamps charted Britain's past and future at a landmark stage in its history.

The London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games Gold Medal Winners and the 2013 Andy Murray Wimbledon victory set applauded a revival of Britain's sporting fortunes.

Whichever stamps you admire, one claim can be made for them all: they are part of a narrative for the nation, in themselves an extraordinary philatelic story •

Philip's favourites

Philip Parker selects three notable Special Stamp sets issued in the last 50 years.



British Wildlife 1977 This set, designed by top wildlife painter Patrick Oxenham, featured the hedgehog, brown hare, red squirrel, otter and badger. The issue was so popular that Oxenham's paintings were reproduced as fine art prints.

The Great Tudor 1997 Marking the 450th anniversary of the death of Henry VIII, this was Kate Stephens' first stamp commission. She meticulously researched every painting of Henry and his queens to create a set featuring the monarch and his six wives.

The 100th Year of Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother 2000 In a very special commission, photographer John Swannell set up a temporary studio in the Throne Room of Buckingham Palace to photograph The Queen Mother, The Queen, Prince Charles and Prince William together. The photograph was reproduced as a unique commemorative miniature sheet.



The Beatles 2007 This ten-stamp set, marking 50 years since John first met Paul, is our biggest selling Special issue of the last ten years. It is also notable for showing living people. Before 2007, identifiable living people other than members of the Royal Family were rarely depicted on stamps. Six of the stamps were also notable for their unusual irregular shape (below).



What are your favourites?

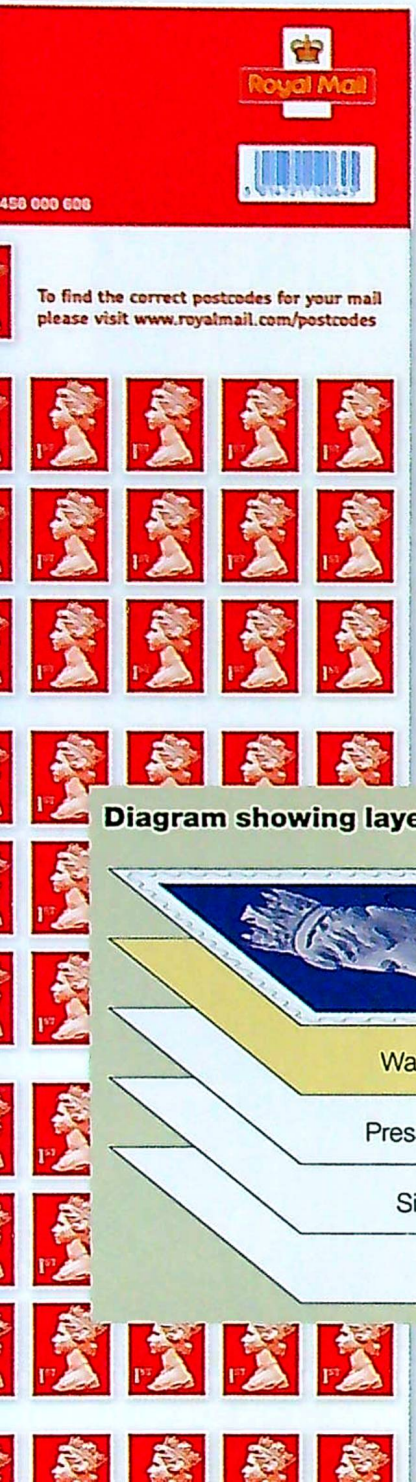
We want to hear from the experts – and that of course is you! First of all we would like to hear about your favourite science-themed Special Stamp of the last 50 years. You can jog your memory at www.rmspecialstamps.com. We welcome views and any postal or personal memories evoked by delving back in modern UK stamp history. Just email rmbulletin@rocketmail.com.



A sticky issue

In the second part of his series Royal Mail Stamps and Collectibles Head of Production Martyn Fry explains how our postal service beats the cheats who reuse stamps

Below: the backing material between the die-cut stamps is stripped off after printing. This process is known as matrix stripping and complies with the Disability Discrimination Act of 1995



ONE OF THE biggest concerns for Royal Mail is the potential reuse of stamps. Royal Mail is partly at fault for not cancelling stamps as effectively as it could, and work is underway to improve that particular situation.

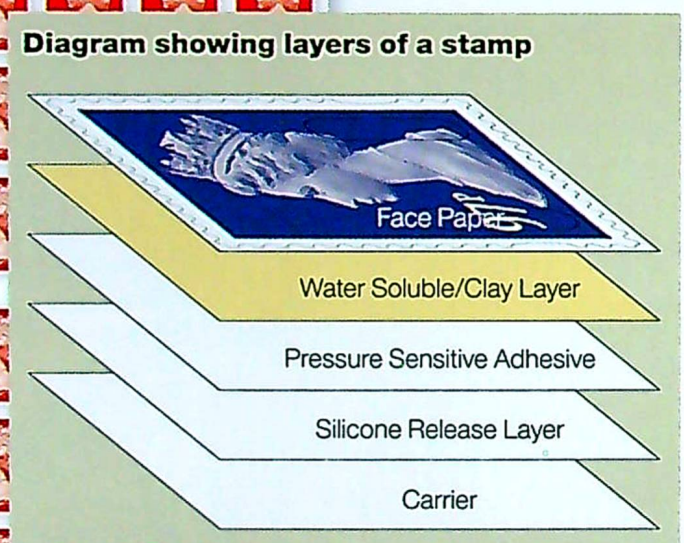
Heavy questions about gum A number of years ago some investigations took place into increasing the frangibility of the stamp by adjusting the structure of the paper – in other words, to weaken it and make it tear more easily, and therefore more difficult to reuse.

This involved maintaining the coating weight while reducing the material weight. Test results were fairly positive but there was not sufficient improvement to justify the additional costs involved in implementing such a change. At the same time we considered adding security slits to the edges of the stamp but this idea effectively died with the frangible paper.

Gum weight is a key element in preventing reuse of stamps – clearly, the faster the stamp is held to the posted item, the harder it will be to remove without tearing. Some postal administrations use 23g of Pressure Sensitive Adhesive (PSA) on their laminate, whereas Royal Mail uses 18g to 20g. The reason for the lower PSA weight in the UK is simply that we need to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act. Royal Mail stamp sheets have the matrix stripped to allow easier removal of the stamps for people with limited dexterity. (Matrix stripping is the removal of the waste material – matrix – left between die-cut stamps, to leave just the stamp affixed to the carrier and facilitate easy removal.)

If we were to increase the gum weight we would have production issues such as adhesive bleed. The effect of this is that die-cuts effectively heal themselves and the edges of products become sticky and cause blocking.

Diagram showing layers of a stamp



Self-adhesive 'grab' The self-adhesive laminate used on today's stamps consists of five specific layers. As in the past, the top two layers are effectively the traditional water-soluble gum and the stamp face paper.

The water-based gum acts as a barrier against migration of the adhesive up through the face paper, which would potentially cause discolouration over time. (The discolouration issue was a problem associated with the early adhesives rather than

modern ones.) Collectors were habituated to using the gum – as it made it easy to soak off the stamps.

Peeling or soaking off used stamps and putting them in a collection is fine. However, in some cases this has been taken a step further – not only peeling or soaking but also washing the stamp to remove evidence of cancellation marks.

In 2009 we therefore introduced a few changes. With 98 per cent of all UK stamps now being self-adhesive, it was important to stop organised operations involved in stamp reuse. So we re-engineered the laminate to remove the water-soluble layer and replace it with a clay layer (see diagram on facing page) to help prevent the soaking-off of stamps. This is not universally popular with stamp collectors, because 'soaking off' stamps has been the traditional approach for generations of philatelists – but it did spark a lot of discussion about how to get around the problem!

Changes to the laminate can only make it more difficult to reuse stamps. They do not totally solve the problem because, to a large degree, the efficacy of any adhesive varies considerably depending on the supporting material. The ability of an adhesive to adhere to a given material (substrate) depends on the level of penetration of the adhesive into the surface of the material. Plastics and other harder surfaces reduce the effectiveness of the adhesive 'grab'. So Royal Mail cannot depend on laminate alone as a security measure; the laminate works in tandem with other security features such as the oval security slits.

How successful have the 2009 changes been? It is still rather hard to tell. The security slits are proving to be less effective than Royal Mail would like. However, as with the PSA weight, we need to consider the level of the stamp/lozenge friability against a number of production issues.



Above: lozenge-shaped security slits have been used on self-adhesive definitives since 2009 as an added security measure

Future developments Clearly we need to continue to add obstacles to defeat the would-be counterfeiter, fraudster and stamp-washer. Stamp forgeries are becoming more effective. In response, Royal Mail will need to add more levels of complexity. One potential change is to underprint the stamp laminate. This can only be done at the laminate manufacturing stage. The print goes under the silicone layer and therefore allows the print to run under the stamps.

Soluble inks are another option open to us. These can be either solvent-soluble or water-soluble. I would stress that water-soluble does not mean that the ink would run off in the rain, but that prolonged soaking would damage the stamps.

In the next part of this series, I take a look at the different inks used by Royal Mail – including ones designed to counter the reuse fraudsters •

Watch out for more of Martyn Fry's series on stamp printing in future editions of the Bulletin.

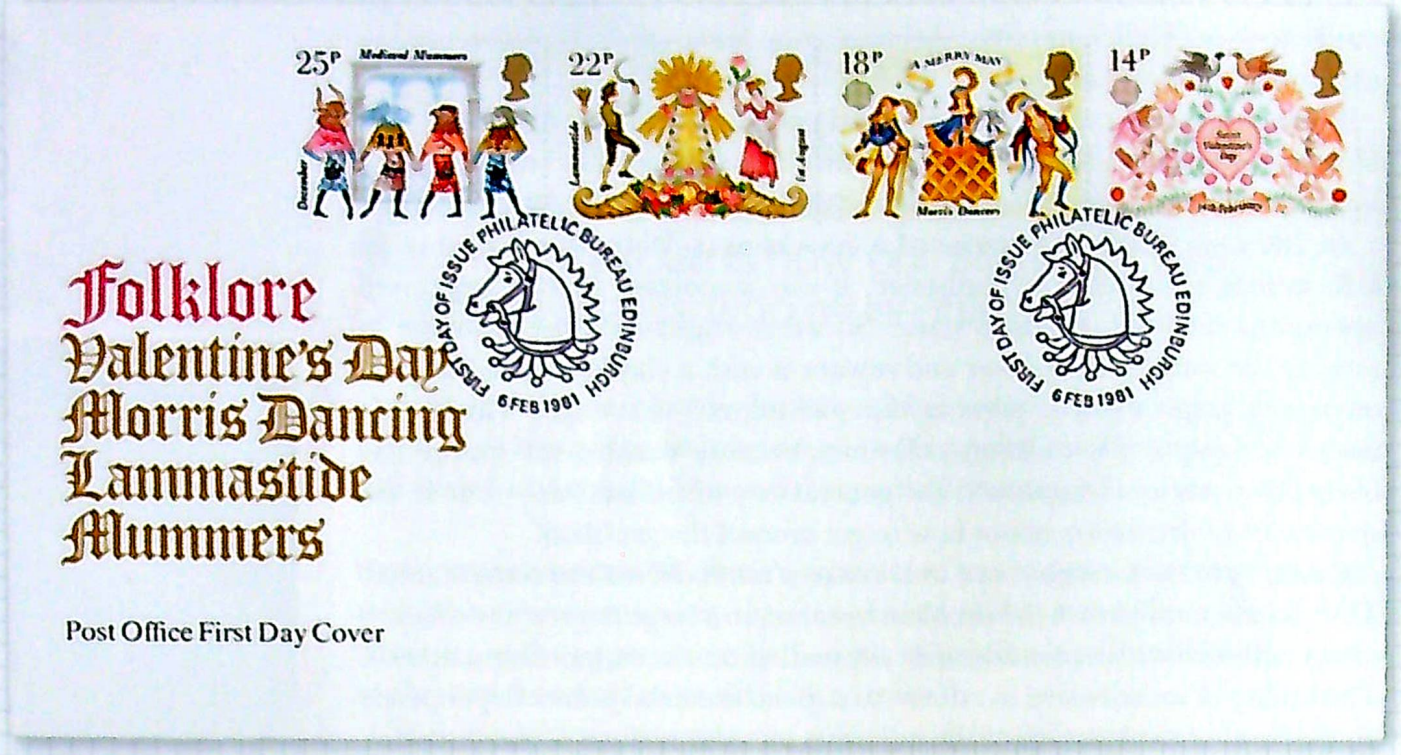
The green stamp of approval

One of the challenges involved in changing over to self-adhesive stamps is managing the environmental impact: the silicone in the release layer is the main issue as it is not biodegradable.

To offset this, we have converted all of our stamps and philatelic products to material accredited by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). For the stamps, this only covers the stamp itself rather than the whole laminate, because the carrier is a mixture of recycled and new material.

The FSC is only one of a number of similar bodies operating chain-of-custody certification schemes for the supply of raw materials, to ensure all are sourced from sustainable forests. Royal Mail was the first postal administration in the world to make this change.

FSC
www.fsc.org
MIX
Board from responsible sources
FSC™ C019670



This Month in History

John Holman recalls an issue designed by illustrator Fritz Wegner that includes an appropriate Valentine's Day stamp

ON 6 FEBRUARY 1981 the Post Office issued the Folklore stamp set, which covered four traditional celebrations held across the year: Valentine's Day, May Morris Dancing, Lammastide on 1 August, and Medieval Mummers in December.

The colourful set was designed by Fritz Wegner, who was born in Vienna in 1924 and came to Britain in 1938. His first stamps were the 1969 Christmas issue, and he produced eight subsequent sets up to 1984. Wegner also designed some stamp book covers in 1979.

Wegner's Folklore stamps depict the following: on the 14p is a heart surrounded by flowers, cherubs and lovebirds; on the 18p is a performance by three Morris dancers in traditional costume, copied from a 16th century window at Leigh Manor in Shropshire; the 22p value shows a man and women in 18th century dress with wheatsheaf and fruit; and the 25p features Mummers from a 14th century manuscript. (Four unadopted designs for this Folklore issue, by Juan Wijngaard, were shown in the *Bulletin* of July 1982).

Folklore was the theme of the 1981 Europa stamps, and so below the value at top left on the 14p and 18p values the CEPT posthorn emblem is featured. (CEPT is the acronym for the European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations, established on 26 June 1959 as a coordinating body for European state telecommunications and postal organisations. The acronym actually derives from the French version of the



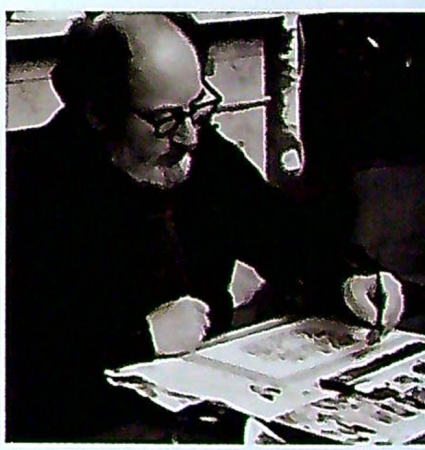
organisation's name: Conférence Européenne des Administrations des Postes et des Télécommunications). The Folklore stamp issue was printed by Harrisons in five colours, as well as gold for The Queen's silhouette at the top right of each value in the set.

The *Stoneham Great Britain Catalogue* lists the 14p value with missing gold Queen's head, valued at £7,500, and a perforation shift of 5mm to the top and major shifts of several colours on the 22p, valued at £125. Two significant constant varieties are listed on the 14p value in Stanley Gibbons' *Great Britain Specialised Catalogue*. These comprise missing leaf at bottom left of design, and sliced top to upper wing tip of the bird at right.

Special pictorial first day of issue postmarks were used at the Philatelic Bureau and London WC, respectively showing a horse's head and wheatsheaf. Local first day postmarks were provided at over 200 offices, and eight relevant special handstamps are listed in first day cover catalogues. These include one for the small village of Lover near Salisbury, from where many Valentine's Day cards used to be posted each year.

Also in 1981, the National Postal Museum issued a commemorative postcard featuring a reproduction of a 1938 Valentine Telegram Form. The design showed an impression of an 18th century post office. The Museum and the British Library sold an ornate reproduction of a Victorian Valentine's card in matching envelope (for details see page 287 of the February 1981 *Bulletin*). The cover could be posted for the 'Valentines at the British Library' special handstamp or National Postal Museum Maltese Cross postmark.

The stamps were withdrawn one year after they were issued. Numbers sold ranged from 10.8 million of the 25p airmail rate stamp to 47.5 million of the 14p denomination for UK first-class letters •



Above: illustrator Fritz Wegner, who produced nine sets of GB stamps

Top: Fritz Wegner's 1969 Christmas and 1981 Valentine's Day stamps; British Library/National Postal Museum Valentine card and envelope, and NPM postcard

Go Wonder cover The Alice's Adventures in Wonderland issue, the first Special Stamps of 2015, has inspired a brace of brilliant covers

Orders and enquiries

Benham Covers
01303 762 050
0044 1303 762 054 (overseas)
www.benham.co.uk
orders@benham.co.uk

Cotswold & Stuart Covers
PO Box 100
York YO26 9SS
01423 333962
www.cotswold-first-day.co.uk
em@postmark.co.uk

Buckingham Covers
FREEPOST RRGJ-THAJ-YZAG
Buckingham Covers
Warren House,
Shearway Road,
Folkestone
Kent CT19 4BF
(no stamps required)
01303 278137
www.buckinghamcovers.com

FD Covers
020 8941 3481
www.hc.fdcovers.com
harriet@fdcovers.com

The Stamp Centre
0207836 2341

Royal Mail
See Tallents House address and contact details on page 162.

Please mention *Bulletin* when ordering covers or sheets.

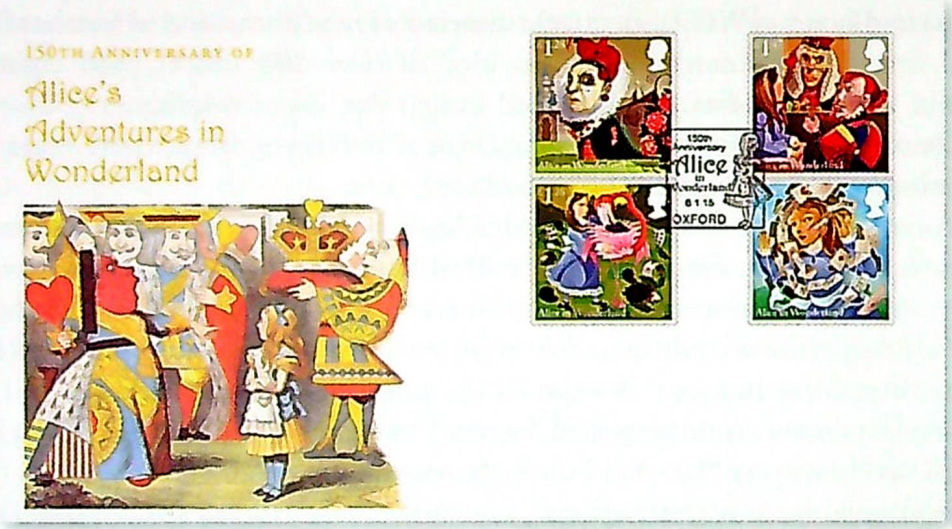
Cover producers wishing to announce a recent or forthcoming cover should submit copy of up to 75 words and an high-resolution image of the cover. Announcements are published on a first-come-first-served basis or around a theme, at the discretion of the Editor.
A special Covers and Sheets insert is under discussion for our May edition.
Please send submissions for April *Bulletin* by 20 February to the address on p162 or email rmbulletin@rocketmail.com



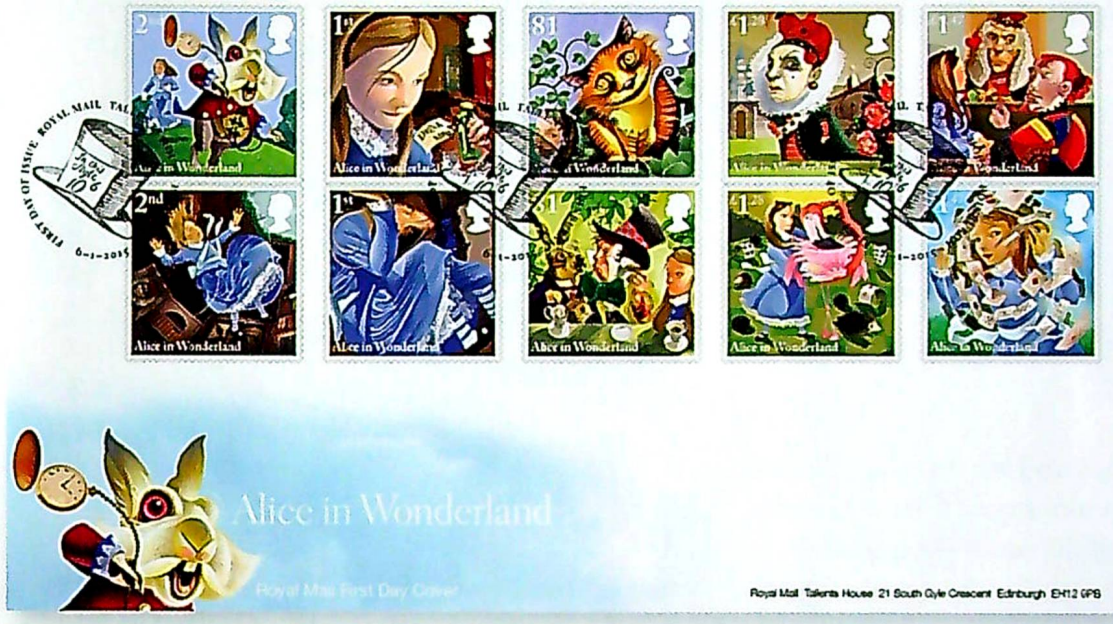
Good as gold The Benham Gold 500 numbered limited edition cover features an image of a magnificent Cheshire Cat with its famously inscrutable smile, elegantly framed in a delicate 22ct gold-blocked design. **Price** £22.50 including p&p (quote GOLD620) ●



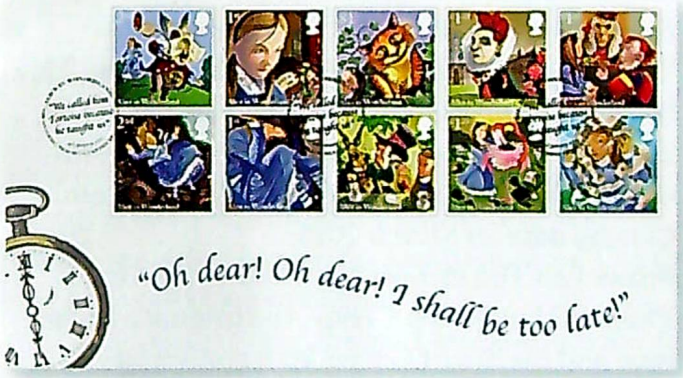
Caterpillar cover
An intaglio printed illustration showing Alice meeting the Caterpillar adorns this Cotswold First Day cover. The handstamp is 'Daresbury', Cheshire – the birthplace of author Lewis Carroll. **Price** £13.50 plus £2.50 p&p ●



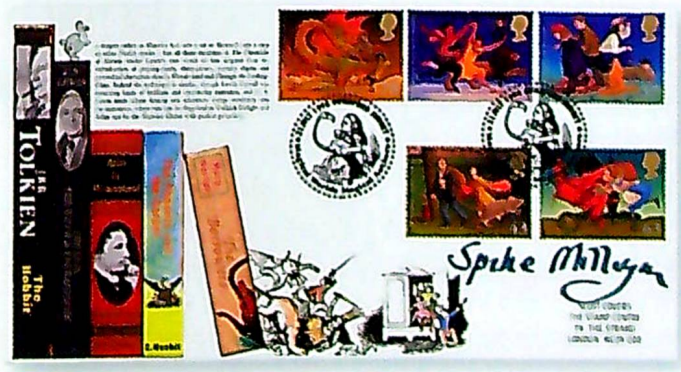
Very original This celebratory cover from Buckingham Covers shows a John Tenniel illustration from the original 1865 edition of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. The postmark is Oxford, home to Lewis Carroll **Price** £15.95 plus £2.45 p&p (quote BC516) ●



Royal tale The official First Day Cover from Royal Mail shows all ten stamps from the Alice in Wonderland issue that tell the story of Carroll's masterpiece ●

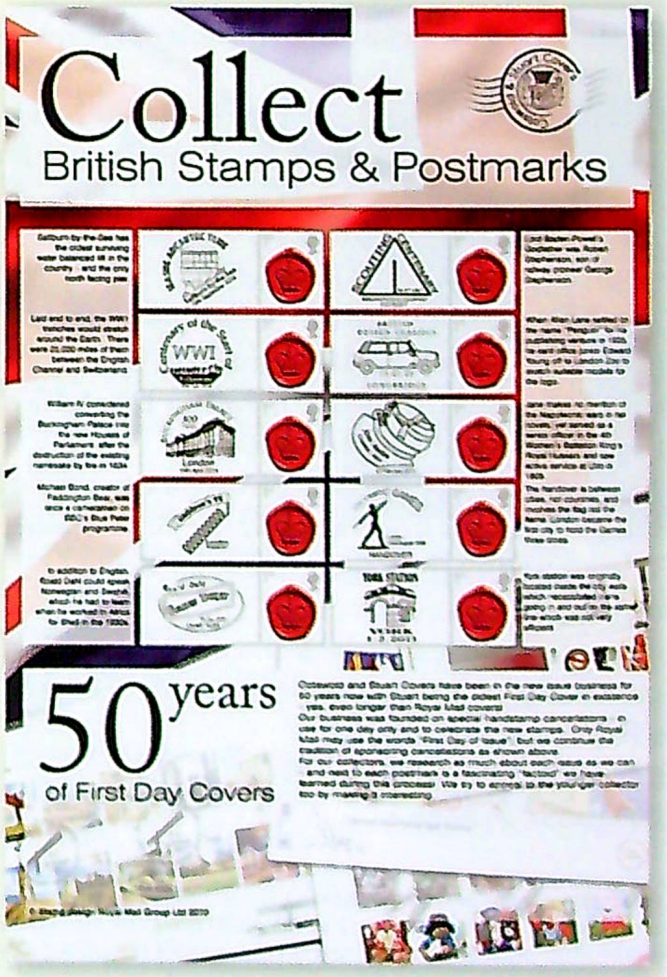


Watch the clock The White Rabbit's pocket watch features on this charming FD Cover, the first from Harriet's Collection, in a limited edition of 500. Inside, at the Mad Hatter's Tea Party, you will discover a recipe! The postmark is The Chestnuts, the house where Carroll wrote *Through The Looking-Glass*. **Price** £24.95 plus £2 p&p ●



Simply magic The Alice stamp from the 1998 Magical Worlds set appears on this Stamp Centre cover signed by Spike Milligan. The postmark is Oxford, birthplace of the Alice novels, where Carroll was a maths don and met Alice Liddell, who inspired the books. **Price** £50 including p&p; overseas £3.95 p&p ●

Stuart Covers 50th birthday sheet



Stuart stalwart To celebrate 50 years of producing quality First Day covers, Stuart has brought out this limited edition ten-stamp Customised Sheet showing various postmarks sponsored by the company. **Price** £45 plus £3.50 p&p ●

Science on stamps **Lab test** Win a special tour of a handstamp centre



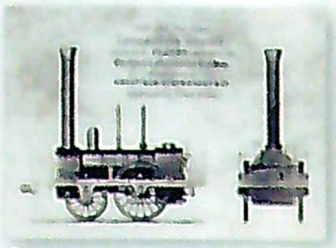
1



2



3



4



Get your thinking caps and lab coats on, *Bulletin* brainboxes – our ingenious quiz is here to mark the new Inventive Britain issue and celebrate brilliant British boffins. Solve the brain-bogglers below about science-themed stamps and you could win a fascinating tour of Royal Mail's Special Handstamp Centre in London, the complete Inventive Britain issue and the customised sheet for the 50th anniversary of Stuart Covers (shown on previous page).

Clue: answers are close to the digits of your hand.

1 The Colossus computer on this Inventive Britain stamp cracked Nazi codes. Which hero GPO engineer designed it? **a** Tommy Flowers **b** Frankie Freesia **c** Peter Pansy

2 This stamp from the 1966 British Technology issue shows a smart bit of scientific kit. What is it? **a** A Sky TV package **b** Darth Vader's Death Ray Cannon **c** Jodrell Bank telescope

3 William Watt's wonderful invention appears on this £1.28 stamp from the Inventive Britain issue. What is it? **a** Carbon dating **b** Online dating **c** Carbon fibre

4 What is the name of the steam engine manufacturer on this Stampex Souvenir Postcard? **a** Robert Louis Stevenson **b** Messrs Rob. Stephenson & Co **c** Pamela Stephenson

Name That Stamp Identify the stamp value and name of the stamp specimen magnified on the lab slide above.

How to enter Send your answers, marked 'February Lab Test' and/or 'February Name That Stamp' to: Bulletin Prize Draws, Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB, or email them to: rmbulletin@rocketmail.com.

Closing date 20 March 2015.

Prizes Lab Test first prize is a tour of the Mount Pleasant Handstamp Centre, the Inventive Britain issue and the Stuart Covers 50th anniversary stamp sheet. The Name That Stamp winner receives the Inventive Britain issue. Two runners-up in each section win the Inventive Britain PSB.

November solutions and winners *Poppy Puzzler solution* Q1: 6, Q2: Somme, Q3: 50, Q3b: 300, Q4: 'arma' and 'stitium', Q5: Post & Go Symbolic Flowers, Q6: 2006, 2007, 2008. *Winners* P Clutton, J Constantine, A Harker, E Parton, D Slater. *Name That Stamp solution* Poppy, F Strickland, First World War 1914, 28 July 2014. *Winners* J Blackledge, M Kahlbow, Khoo Kean Hu, S Kempster, A Laxon •

Prize draw rules and regulations 1 Promotions are open to all readers aged 18 and over, except employees of Royal Mail Group Ltd, their business associates and immediate families. 2 Responsibility cannot be accepted for entries which are incomplete, damaged or not received for any reason. Proof of posting is not proof of receipt. 3 Prizes must be accepted as offered; they are not transferable and there are no cash alternatives. The cost of transport to and from a prize venue, where applicable, is not included. 4 Winners are notified within 28 days of closing date stated. 5 For prize draws where readers must answer a question, winners will be the senders of the first correct entries drawn at random by an independent person after the closing date. 6 Promoter's decision on any aspect of the promotions is final. No correspondence will be entered into. 7 Entry implies acceptance of these rules. 8 Prizes are subject to suitability and availability. The promoter reserves the right to a) substitute a prize of equal or greater value if circumstances so demand and b) to suspend or cancel or hold void any of the competitions or prize draws at any time without notice. 9 Winners' names are available 28 days after closing date; send an SAE to The Editor, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB. The promoter is Royal Mail Group Ltd, 100 Victoria Embankment, London EC4Y 0HQ.

Stamp images: © Royal Mail Group Ltd

presented by

THE Philatelic Traders SOCIETY

sponsored by

Est 1856 STANLEY GIBBONS

GREAT BRITISH INVENTIONS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

18TH FEBRUARY

21ST FEBRUARY

Stampex



SPRING 2015

THE BRITISH NATIONAL STAMP EXHIBITION

The Business Design Centre, Islington, London



Where will curiosity take you?

Take yourself to Wonderland with Royal Mail's enchanting collection of Alice's Adventures in Wonderland illustrated stamps. Get to know Alice and her curious friends through a whole new range of stamp gifts and collectibles, celebrating 150 years of one of Britain's best-loved stories.

To order, visit www.royalmail.com/wonder
or call 03457 641 641 quoting code 15CDA

5 014721 138992 >

Royal Mail