

BRITISH PHILATELIC

The Royal Mail magazine for stamp collectors

Volume 48 Number 12

AUGUST 2011 £1.20

Bulletin

Three new issues previewed
• Freddie Mercury's stamps



The Crown Jewels issue
of 23 August features
some glittering gems

THE CROWN JEWELS CLOSE UP • ABPS CONGRESS REPORT • POSTBOXES

Issues and withdrawals



Cover The coronation of Elizabeth II, photographed by Cecil Beaton, courtesy of the V&A. The Crown Jewels issue is released on 23 August

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18 August

Withdrawal Stamp Books with printers' names –
12 x 2nd Class and 6 x 1st Class

23 August

Issue Crown Jewels: Stamps, Presentation Pack,
Stamp Cards, Coin Cover
Classic Locomotives Stamp Book:
4 x 1st Definitives, 2 x English Railway Stamps

9 September

Issue Aerial Post: Miniature Sheet, Press Sheet, Prestige
Stamp Book, Presentation Pack, Stamp Cards

14 September

Issue Arnold Machin Centenary Souvenir Sheet

14 September

Withdrawal Battle of Britain Generic Sheet
Withdrawal British Design Classics Stamp Books
Nos 1 – 5

15 September

Issue House of Hanover: Stamps, Miniature Sheet,
Press Sheet, Presentation Pack, Stamps Cards,
Cachet Cover

Issue Olympic and Paralympic Games:
Stamp Book No 6

Issue Kings and Queens Prestige Medal Collection No 5

Issue The Penny Red Facsimile Pack

Issue 350 Years of the Postmark: Generic Sheet

15 September

Withdrawal Medical Breakthrough: Stamps,
Presentation Pack and Stamp Cards

16 September

Issue Post & Go Stamps: Birds of Britain (4)

22 September

Issue London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games
Sports Cover Collection: Basketball and Modern
Pentathlon

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Postbox and inbox



Day out at Aardman

Royal Mail's Twitter and Facebook action in

recent weeks has been exceptionally animated, following the posting of the Aardman edit of a 'A Grand Day Out for Royal Mail Competition Winners' at www.wallaceandgromit.com/news/06/07/2011.

Thousands of people entered the competition last winter, hoping to win a tour of the Aardman HQ, in the competition organised in conjunction with the Royal Mail special issue of Wallace & Gromit™ Christmas stamps. And when the lucky winners arrived for their Day Out in April they were welcomed by life-size Wallace and Gromit characters – some even got a big Northern hug from them.

The winners also enjoyed taking the Ferry to visit the Animate It! exhibition at @Bristol, hearing animation tips from Aardman gurus including Merlin Crossingham, Creative Director of Wallace & Gromit™, and taking part in a model-making class

where they got the chance to roll their own droopy dog ears. A high def screening of 'Loaf and Death' completed the prize Day Out. All of which prompted many unbridled expressions of envy from Tweeters and Facebook followers.



ROYAL MAIL FIRST DAY COVER

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Missing the Machin master

I was pleased to see that you are re-introducing the annual Definitives Checklist commencing in May, but can I assume the checklist in January 2012 will be for 2011 and not a repeat of 2010?

That aside, as a collector of Machins in particular could you please advise why we no longer have the regular input by Douglas Myall, 'Mainly Machins', which I found very interesting as well as being very informative and useful – for example the saga of the difference between the Garamond and Matthews font in respect of the 5p and 54p values in two prestige booklets.

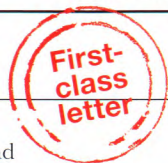
Would you please consider re-introducing Machin topics as a regular item? Or is Douglas Myall not available? If my memory serves my correctly he has in the past been the voted Favourite Feature Writer in the *Bulletin's* annual readers' poll.

J V R Eccles, Cape Town, South Africa

We are very pleased to hear from readers supporting the revival of the annual Definitives Checklist and, yes, we can confirm that a 2011 checklist is scheduled for January of next year.

As for future Machin topics, we plan to include these as you suggest. Douglas Myall is indeed a renowned Machin expert and is in great demand as a popular writer for a number of philatelic publications. We are looking at ways to cover more details and debates about definitives, including speaking to him and other potential writers.

Thank you for your interest in *Bulletin* contents. Any other suggestions from Machin collectors among our readers are most welcome.



Overdoing the Douglas factor?

On page 308 of the June *Bulletin* the caption for the 1994 Canadian stamp is incorrect.

David Douglas may well have collected many coniferous trees but the 'Douglas maple' is not a conifer. It is a Dicotyledon which has two seed leaves and is a 'Broad-leaved tree'.

Secondly, on page 310, the writer suggest 'that every other type of coniferous tree we see today was introduced by Douglas...' This is far from being correct as many other plant collectors discovered conifers in countries that Douglas never visited.

From what I understand, Japan has the highest number of different species of conifers of any country. Dr Chris Page, formerly Conifer specialist at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, visited Japan and collected specimens of around 40 of the conifers growing there.

William A Tait, Edinburgh

We asked Adrian Keppel, the author of the article in question, to reply:

I am very happy to read your letter and the interesting points raised. I have to admit that I have not been able to find much detailed

information about Mr Page, and would be grateful if you could point me to some documentation on his trips to Japan?

I acknowledge the over-confident absolute in 'every other type of coniferous tree...', and recognise that a little romanticism might be colouring my research there. Consequently, I still believe that when I go walkabout in, say, Doach Wood or Dalbeattie Forest, the coniferous trees, bar the native ones, will be Douglas's.

As for your remark on the Douglas maple, you are right of course, and I apologise for the error on my part, in the hope that I will be asked to write for *Bulletin* again in the future.



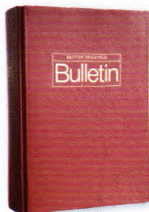
Keep the mail coming...

The Editor of the *British Philatelic Bulletin* welcomes your letters and the senders of those published will receive philatelic delights as a thank-you. The sender of the 'First Class letter' award will also receive the *Bulletin* binder. Please note that Royal Mail cannot reply to all correspondence and reserves the right to edit for length. Send your letters to:

The Editor, *British Philatelic Bulletin*,
Royal Mail Stamps &

Collectibles,
35-50 Rathbone Place,
London W1T 1HQ.

Remember you can drop us an email too, to bulletin.enquiries@royalmail.com



Win a state-of-the-art camera with the BPMA

The British Postal Museum & Archive (BPMA) has launched a nationwide photography competition, offering amateur photographers the chance to win two superb Nikon cameras and a unique opportunity to be a part of an upcoming photography exhibition *The Post Offices in Pictures*. To enter, submit an inspiring photo of 'The Post Office in the UK' via email to photocomp@postalheritage.org.uk, to arrive before 5pm on 9 September 2011. But first you'll need to read the terms at www.postalheritage.org.uk/page/photocomp.

Jenny Karlsson, BPMA



Many thanks for letting our readers know about this exciting BPMA competition. There will be more details of The Post Office in Pictures Exhibition in a future *Bulletin*.

What's new? Machin miniature sheet, seabirds and sporting heroes

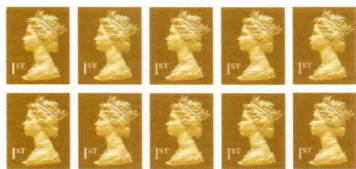
Souvenir Sheet Arnold Machin was born in September 1911 and to celebrate the centenary of his birth a Souvenir Miniature Sheet of 10 definitive stamps will be issued next month, on 14 September.

Famously the sculptor who produced the design of the profile of Queen Elizabeth II used on coins and stamps, Machin began his career at the age of 14 as a china painter at the Minton factory. He subsequently studied sculpture

and was then employed by Wedgwood where he created many famous designs. In 1946 he was elected an associate member of the Royal Academy and was appointed a Master of Sculpture (1959-1966), becoming the longest-serving member of the Academy.

The new mini-sheet is simple and classic – ten First Class definitives on the traditional white background, with an image of Arnold Machin's signature, followed by his dates, 1911-1999 ●

In June 1967 Royal Mail introduced a new definitive stamp design. Arnold Machin's bas-relief portrait of HM The Queen has been acknowledged as a classic icon of British design.



Olympic and Paralympic Games Gold Medal Winners Collection A series of four unique covers each including a 24-carat gold-plated medallion of 36mm diameter, unique cancellation mark, printed signature, informative insert card and the special-issue stamp corresponding to the field of achievement of the sporting heroes featured was issued in July. The covers shown below bear the 'Tennis' and 'Cycling' stamps from the Olympic and Paralympic Games issue and celebrate Charlotte Cooper and Chris Boardman.

Charlotte Cooper, born in Ealing in 1870, won the tennis singles at the Paris Summer Olympics of 1900, the first year that women were allowed to participate in the Games. Cyclist Christopher Boardman, born in 1968 in Hoylake, won a Gold medal at the 1992 Summer Olympics in Barcelona. Other sportsmen celebrated in this Gold Medal Winners Collection so far are runner Eric Liddell (who inspired the movie *Chariots of Fire*) and swimmer Duncan Goodhew, who won Gold and Bronze medals in Moscow, 1980.

In limited editions of 10,000, each standard cover with gold-plated medallion costs £44.95. For details of how to order, see page 354 ●

Below: Charlotte Cooper and Chris Boardman are among the champions celebrated in the Olympic and Paralympic Gold Medal Winners Collection



1st Class
up to 100g



002011 9 51840 04

1st Class
up to 100g



002011 9 51840 04

1st Class
up to 100g



002011 9 51840 04

1st Class
up to 100g



002011 9 51840 04

1st Class
up to 100g



002011 9 51840 04

1st Class
up to 100g



002011 9 51840 04

Birds of Britain 4 The fourth and final issue in the Post & Go Birds of Britain Series is released next month, on 16 September, and features six birds that can be found around the coast of the UK – the puffin (*Fratercula arctica*), the gannet (*Morus bassanus*), the oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*), the ringed plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*), the cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*), and the Arctic tern (*Sterna paradisaea*).

The distinctive style of the stamps echoes that of the previous three sets, in designs produced by Kate Stephens from illustrations originated from lino cuts by the wildlife artist Robert Gillmor. They are available from Post & Go machines in selected Post Office® branches, and customers who hand in or post stamped Royal Mail First Day Cover envelopes at main Post Offices® on the day of issue will receive the pictorial BRISTOL first day postmark. Orders for Serviced First Day Covers have to reach the Royal Mail at the Tallents House address on page 354 by 16 September 2011 •

Post & Go: Birds of Britain 4 Specifications

Number of stamps	Six
Design	Kate Stephens
Illustrator	Robert Gillmor
Stamp format	Landscape
Stamp size	56mm x 25mm
Printer	Walsall Security Printers
Print process	Gravure
Perforations	Kiss die-cut simulated
Phosphor	Bars
Gum	Self-adhesive

Prices

Stamp Set	£2.76
First Day Envelope	30p
First Day Cover	£3.79

Good-buy goodbye Being withdrawn from sale next month is the striking Battle of Britain Generic Sheet, which can be bought from Royal Mail up until 14 September 2011. The Sheet represents yet another collectable reference to British history – created to mark the 70th anniversary of the event in 2010. Alongside the 20 Spitfire stamps a series of images and captions tell the story of ‘The Few’, whose numbers included some 595 non-British pilots from allied nations and neutral countries •



Post by flight We celebrate a century of the magnificent postmen in their flying machines

On 9 September, 1911 Gustav Hamel piloted a Blériot XI from Hendon Aerodrome to Windsor Castle as part of the celebrations of the coronation of King George V. This brief 15-minute flight signalled the beginning of an international service, as it was the first of 16 aerial post flights carrying commemorative post to mark the coronation. It is now recognised as the world's first scheduled airmail service (previous 'impromptu' postal flights had taken place in the US and India). One hundred years later the Royal

Mail is issuing a Miniature Sheet, Prestige Booklet, Presentation Pack and other philatelic items.

◀ This brief 15-minute flight signalled the beginning of an international service ▶

The Miniature Sheet features a border replicating the design of a publicity poster for the

inaugural flight. It tells the story of this historic flight by Gustav Hamel, featuring original photography of key events. The four-pane Prestige Stamp Book, includes more details of the events and of the organisation behind the first Aerial Post, written by Peter Lister, President of the British Air Mail Society. The PSB includes a pane comprising four 50p Windsor Castle stamps, reissued from the 2005 set of high-value definitives stamps printed in intaglio. The fully illustrated Presentation Pack contains the Aerial Post Miniature Sheet and, inside, Douglas Muir, Curator, Philately, of the BPMA takes a look at the first airmail flight.

Stamp by stamp The 1st Class stamp shows pilot Gustav Hamel receiving the mailbag for the inaugural flight at Hendon Aerodrome. The 68p stamp sees Hamel ready to take flight in the cockpit of his Blériot XI monoplane. The £1 stamp features Clement Greswell – another of the pilots who took part in the aerial post service – standing in front of a Blériot monoplane. The £1.10 stamp shows the first airmail being delivered to the Postmaster General at Windsor. A postman had been dispatched to the Frogmore Mausoleum in the grounds of Windsor Castle, where Hamel touched down. He collected the mail – and the aviator – and returned to the castle to deliver the post.

A century on we take airmail for granted but we owe those intrepid early aviators a big thank you for paving the way ●

Aerial Post Miniature Sheet Specifications

Number of stamps	Four
Size of sheet	146mm x 74mm
Design	Robert Maude and Sarah Davies
Photography	Geoff Dann
Stamp format	Landscape
Stamp size	41mm x 30mm
Printer	Cartor Security Print
Print process	Lithography
Number per sheet	Four
Perforations	14.5 x 14
Phosphor	All over
Gum	PVA

Aerial Post Miniature Sheet Prices

Miniature Sheet	£3.24
Presentation Pack	£3.75
First Day Envelope	30p
First Day Cover – Miniature Sheet	£4.36
First Day Cover – Prestige Stamp Book Pane	£3.64
Prestige Stamp Book	£9.97
Press Sheet	£74.84
Stamp Cards (5 in set)	£2.25

AERIAL POST

LONDON AERODROME HENDON

Only 41 miles from Marble Arch W.W.



9.9.20 SATURDAY NEXT, SEPTEMBER 9th

THE FIRST AEROPLANE MAIL

Aerodrome for Windsor Castle at 3.30

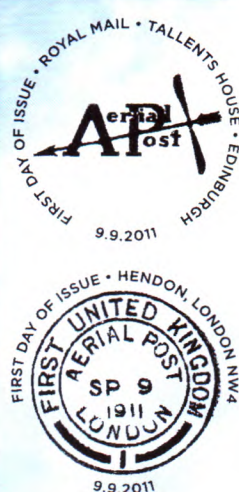
Followed at SHORT INTERVALS by further Mails carried by the leading Airlines.
Letters and Postcards may be purchased and posted at the Aerodrome.
Prices: Postcards 4 pence Royal 6d. Envelopes including Corporation 1st 11.

FIRST
UNITED
KINGDOM
AERIAL
POST



Mrs J Robinson
200 Manorbier Road
Ilkeston
Derbyshire
DE7 4AB

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



Clockwise from top: the First Day Cover,
two pictorial handstamps, Prestige Stamp
Book panes



House of Hanover The dynasty that built the Empire is celebrated in next month's issue

The fifth of the **Kings and Queens series** takes The House of Hanover as its subject. The dynasty ruled for 187 years, during which the British Empire grew to cover a third of the globe by the time of Victoria's death. Lengthy reigns characterised the Hanoverian period – there were only six monarchs during this period – and helped aid stability in Britain.

The first 1st Class stamp shows George I (1714-1727), descended from a

daughter of James I and the first Hanoverian monarch. His reign was marked by the Jacobite Rising and the collapse of the South Sea Company. The second 1st Class stamp features his son, George II (1727-1760), who was the last British monarch to lead his troops into battle. The two 76p stamps have George II's grandson, George III (1760-1820), whose porphyria was misdiagnosed as madness, and George IV (1820-1830), remembered for his lavish spending.

During his brief reign of seven years William IV, who features on one of the £1.10 stamps, did much to put the monarchy more in tune with the values of the public. And on the other £1.10 stamp is Victoria (1837-1901) whose unprecedentedly long reign saw the transformation of society at all levels as a result of industrialisation. Her reign is of

House of Hanover Stamps Specifications

Number of stamps	Six
Design	Atelier Works
Illustrations	George I, 1714, studio of Sir Godfrey Kneller; George II, 1744, Thomas Hudson; George III, 1761-62, studio of Allan Ramsay; George IV, c.1822, Sir Thomas Lawrence; William IV, c.1800, Sir Martin Archer Shee; Victoria, 1859, Franz Xaver Winterhalter
Stamp format	Portrait
Stamp size	27mm x 37mm
Printer	Cartor Security Printing
Print process	Lithography
Number per sheet	25/50
Perforations	14 x 14
Phosphor	Bars as appropriate
Gum	PVA

particular interest to philatelists because it saw the issue of the Penny Black, the first postage stamp, and because the British Empire at its zenith offers numerous rich veins for collectors of stamps bearing Victoria's image.

The Miniature Sheet shown below has four further stamps featuring significant individuals and events from the period – Robert Walpole, the first Prime Minister; Scottish architect Robert Adam's masterpiece Kedleston Hall, the Penny Black and Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. These are included with the six stamps in the Presentation Pack, which contains biographies of each of the monarchs and an overview of the history of the period by Professor John Clarke of the University of Buckingham.

The cachet cover features the six House of Hanover stamps and will be cancelled with a special St James's Palace cachet. The prestige medal cover features all the House of Hanover stamps and a specially struck commemorative medal ●



Opposite: the Tallents House, Edinburgh postmark
Above: the alternative pictorial postmark



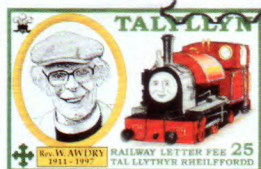
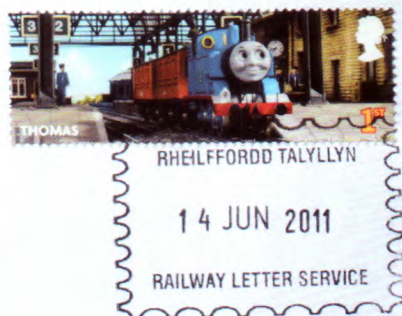
House of Hanover Miniature Sheet Specifications

Stamps	1st, 68p, 76p, £1
Design	Atelier Works
Illustrations	Robert Walpole, 1740, studio of Jean Baptiste van Loo; Robert Adam's ceiling at Kedleston Hall; Penny Black, 1840; Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, 1897, albumen cabinet card, Alexander Bassano
Stamp format	Portrait
Stamp size	27mm x 37mm
Sheet size	123mm x 70mm
Printer	Cartor Security Printing
Print process	Lithography
Perforations	14 x 14
Phosphor	Bars

House of Hanover Prices

Stamp Set	£4.64
Miniature Sheet	£2.90
Presentation Pack	£8.05
First Day Cover – Stamps	£6.04
First Day Cover – Miniature Sheet	£3.96
Miniature Sheets Press Sheet	£66.99
Cachet Cover	£9.99
Prestige Medal Cover	£44.95
Stamp Cards (11 in set)	£4.95

Stamp Scene from John Holman



John Holman
To Be Called for at
Dolgaich Station

Talyllyn Railway celebration The narrow gauge Talyllyn Railway in mid-Wales this year celebrates 60 years since the line was reopened by a preservation society. First opened in 1865, the line closed in 1950 and the society was formed to save it. To mark the anniversary, the Railway has produced four covers commemorating the inaugural meeting in Birmingham to form a society (cover serviced October 2010), the handing over of the line to the society (February 2011), the reopening from Towyn (now Tywyn) to Rhydyronen station (May 2011), and the reopening of the line to Abergynolwyn (June 2011). The line was the first in Britain to be saved by a preservation group and the first of the heritage railways to issue railway letter stamps, in 1957.

The Talyllyn Railway is associated with the Rev Wilbert Awdry, author of the *Thomas the Tank Engine*™ books, recently commemorated on Royal Mail stamps. The Rev Awdry was also one of the pioneering volunteers on the Talyllyn Railway. The Talyllyn has prepared a new exhibition in its Narrow Gauge Railway Museum at Tywyn Wharf station to celebrate the centenary of his birth. The exhibition opened on Awdry's birthday, 15 June, and will be on display until the end of the 2011 season. A special railway letter cover was launched at the opening event and quickly sold out. A further celebration on 18 June comprised an additional Children's Duncan Day – a popular family day usually held twice annually.

The Railway issued four railway letter stamps in 1998 depicting the Rev Awdry and his image was also shown on a Talyllyn railway cancellation of July 1995, marking the 50th anniversary of the first 'Railway Series' book. For details of Talyllyn stamps and covers write to: Railway Letter Service, Talyllyn Railway, Wharf Station, Tywyn LL36 9EY ●

Above: cover bearing Talyllyn Rev Awdry stamp of 1998 used with new Royal Mail Thomas stamp on 14 June
Below: one of several Nene Valley Railway stamps showing Thomas



The Royal Philatelic Society It was a double dose of 'au revoir' for the members of the Society at the meeting on 26 May. Alan Moorcroft, President for the past two years, until the AGM in June, gave a talk and display titled 'Over the Hills and Far Away 1793-1815', telling the story of the British involvement in the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. His focus was not only on some superb covers with many unusual markings, but also on the contents and poignant messages sent by those serving in these conflicts.

It was also the occasion to say thanks to Alan's son, Paul, who has left the service of the Society after nearly ten years in charge of its administration. During that time many members have benefited from his friendliness and quiet efficiency. Thanks were also expressed to Alan's wife, Linda, for her support throughout his tenure as the Society's President •



Auction news The Stanley Gibbons auction on 15 June contained much good GB material. A cover bearing a Penny Black sent to Edinburgh on 15 May 1840 went for £500 (estimate £500-600), and a superb 'Menzies' caricature of the Mulready envelope sold for £2,000 (£2,000-2,400). An imprimatur of the 1873-80 4d sage green achieved £1,600 (£1,000-1,200), and 1918 2s6d Seahorse plate proof in brown on buff paper, imperf block of four made £160 (£200-240). A rare strip of three 1912-24 1½d red-brown with control 18 (K omitted) sold at £1,400 (£1,000-1,200), and the scarce April 1912 2s stamp booklet, both ½d panes with inverted watermark, achieved £1,000 (£500-600). Another book, September 1912, went for £420 (£400-440). A new discovery, a single of the Edward VIII ½d with A36 control and cylinder number 21 no-dot went for £1,500 (£1,500-1,700), but a matching used single was unsold. One of the 1998 Joyce Grenfell stamps with the erroneous face value of 30p instead of 37p sold at £1,300 (£900-1,000) and a pack of the 1964 Shakespeare issue with stamps overprinted 'CANCELLED', including the 2s6d in jet-black, realised £900 (£400-444). For details of future SG auctions phone 020 7836 8444 or see the company's website.

On 23 May, Grosvenor sold the fine collection of Concorde covers, cards and ephemera formed by the late Charles Harrison. The French commemorative first flight cover, 2 March 1969, signed by French Test Pilot André Turcat, British Test Pilot Brian Trubshaw, and others went for £750, and the British First Flight cover, 9 April 1969, signed Brian Trubshaw and others sold at £700 (est £300-400). A cover flown on 12 January 1972 signed by Prince Philip and others flew through the £1,000 barrier to realise £1,350 (estimate £300-400).

Grosvenor's auction on 28-29 September will feature Kuwait (collection of Francis Kiddle); Ceylon King George V Key Types (John Sussex); fine New Zealand (Peter Lay); 'Steamship Lines to the Caribbean' (Michael Rego); and The 'Joyce' find of Bahrain. For further information contact Grosvenor on 020 7379 8789 or visit www.grosvenorauctions.com • ▶

Diary dates

August

13 BPMA Archive Open Day, 'Culture and Diversity; What's Your Story', Freeing House, 10am-5pm.

15 BPMA Summer Family Fun Day at the Archive, Freeing House, 10am-4pm.

20 BPMA walk: 'From Pillar to Post', starting at Farringdon Station, 11am-noon. Fee £6.

For more details of BPMA events, phone 020 7239 2570 or email info@postalheritage.org.uk

Through the month

• 'Treasure of the Archive' display, Freeing House, as above.

• 'The Museum of the Post Office in the Community', Victorian Post Office, Blists Hill Victorian Town, Ironbridge, Shropshire.

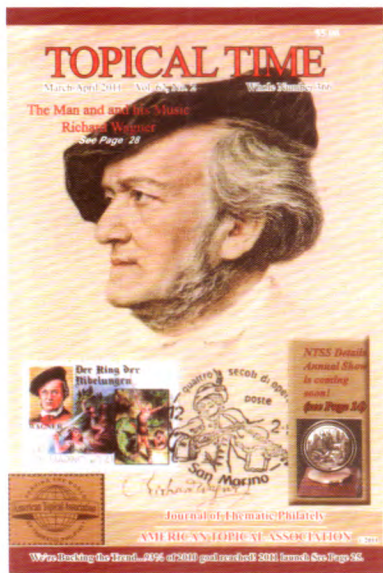
September

14-17 Autumn Stampex, Business Design Centre, N1

October

15 Hampex 2011 Hampshire Federation, Wickham Community Centre, Mill Lane, Wickham PO17 5AL. www.hpf.hampshire.org.uk/hpfhpx.htm

Autumn exhibitions We are heading towards the exhibition season again. Autumn Stampex will be held at the Business Design Centre, London N1 on 14-17 September. Scotex, the popular stamp fair in Scotland, takes place at the Dewar Centre, Perth on 14-15 October, and readers in Northern Ireland will be pleased to know that a major philatelic event – organised by the new North of Ireland Philatelic Federation, under the auspices of the ABPS – takes place in the province from 25 October to 4 November. The exhibition will be held at Bangor Museum, Bangor, Co Down ●



Above: the journal of the American Topical Association – *Topical Time* is always a good read for thematic collectors

Society publications The British Royal Portraits Stamp Group publishes an engaging newsletter for all interested in royalty (British and overseas) on stamps. The Spring 2011 issue includes information on recent releases marking the 85th and 90th birthdays of The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh, as well as the Royal Wedding. For details of the Group contact Allan Rendle, 23 More Close, St Paul's Court, London W14 9BN, email allanrendle@hotmail.com.

The Insurance & Banking Philatelic Society of Great Britain this year celebrates its 60th anniversary. The May issue of its well-produced and always informative newsletter, includes a history of the Society and an article on the 1964 International Botanical Congress stamps. On a sad note, there is an appreciation of the Society's President Alan Randall Jones who died in January. For details of the Society contact the Membership Secretary, Dudley Baker, 25 Bunbury Way, Downs View, Epsom KT17 4JP, e-mail dudley.baker1@ntlworld.com.

The Summer issue of TPO, journal of the TPO & Seapost Society, contains features on TPO and seapost services worldwide. Of particular interest to collectors of British material are notes on the Up Special TPO Mail Crash, a preserved TPO coach at Sible Hedingham, Essex, a review of *Signal Red*, a book about the Great Train Robbery of 1963, and markings found on mail from vessels belonging to Elders & Fyffes. The Society has published *The Postal History of the Union Castle Line including Union & Castle Lines* by Mike Dovey. It is available from Keith Morris, 1 St Marys Drive, Fairford GL7 4LQ, price £19.95 (£17.95 for members), plus postage – £2.25 UK, £4.15 Europe, £4.15 rest of world. For details of the Society contact Chris Bartlett, Woodrich, Quarry Lane, Gorsley, Ross-on-Wye HR9 7SJ or see website www.tpo-seapost.org.uk.

The well-produced and long established *Topical Time*, journal of the American Topical Association, is always a good read. The March-April 2011 issue includes articles on Richard Wagner, Pitcairn Islands as well as the usual reports on exhibitions and activities by the Association's numerous chapters and units. There are plentiful reviews of books and journals which will keep you up to date with developments and publications in the world of topical (thematic) collecting. For ATA information write to ATA, PO Box 8, Carterville, IL 62918-0008, USA or see website www.american-topical-assn.org.

The British Thematic Association (BTA) publishes *Themescene* and the June 2011 issue includes articles on Major Milestones in Manned Spaceflight, Coats of Arms, German Armed Forces Occupation of the Channel Islands 1940-45, as well as many useful reports of events and news of interest to thematic collectors. For details of the BTA and its activities contact Peter Denly, 9 Oaklands Park, Bishops Stortford CM23 2BY, e-mail peter.denly@uwclub.net or see BTA website www.brit-thematic-assoc.com ●

Tribute to Derek Williams It is with great sadness that we report the sudden death of Derek Williams, Hon Life President of the Association of Great Britain First Day Cover Collectors (GBFDC) on 15 May 2011 aged 84 years. He leaves a daughter, Ruth, and a son, Stephen. Derek's contribution to popularising First Day Cover collecting was probably unparalleled, as he founded GBFDC; he was an occasional contributor to the *Bulletin* and he produced his high-quality covers under the name of GB Covers. These were works of art and were produced until May this year. He will be a major loss to First Day Cover collecting in the UK and will be remembered fondly ●

Australia to host 2013 International An FIP international stamp exhibition is planned for Melbourne in Australia on 10-15 May 2013. The six-day event will mark the centenary of Australian Commonwealth stamps. It will be held in the Royal Exhibition Building in Melbourne, set within the beautiful Carlton Gardens, which was completed for the Melbourne International Exhibition in 1880-81. The exhibition will feature 3,200 frames, and about 150 standholders, a Court of Honour, Championship Class, Literature area, meeting rooms and a dedicated Patron's Lounge area. Application forms can be found at the website www.australia2013.com ●

Below: the Royal Exhibition Building in Melbourne – venue for the 2013 International Stamp Exhibition – is portrayed on this 2006 Australian stamp



This month in history Duke of Edinburgh Award

Thirty years ago this month Royal Mail issued four stamps marking the 25th anniversary of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. In a recent TV interview, to mark his 90th birthday, the Duke spoke of the satisfaction the Award Scheme has given him, although he eschewed the word pride. Film footage showed him with young people who have won the Award, some of whom spoke movingly of how the Award had changed their life.

The 25th anniversary stamps (shown right) were designed by Philip Sharland and were the first special issue printed in litho by John Waddington Security Print Ltd of Leeds, which later took over Questa.

Four designs featured different aspects of the Award Scheme – Expeditions, Skills, Service and Recreation. The stamps were each printed in six colours, including the colours of the Awards – silver (14p stamp), gold (18p and 22p), and bronze (25p). Quantities of stamps sold in this issue ranged from 9.5 million of the 25p to over 43 million of the 14p, then the 1st Class UK letter rate.



Blood and the jewels

An audacious attempt to steal the crown jewels could have lost the monarchy three of its most precious pieces, Kathryn Reilly discovers



Above: what was Captain Blood's hold over Charles II?

THIS IS A STORY THAT beggars belief, whose twists and turns become more and more outlandish as it goes on. It concerns one 'Captain' Thomas Blood, an English-educated Irish officer, who opportunistically switched sides during the civil war when it became apparent that Oliver Cromwell was going to win. He was rewarded with land and the position of JP but upon the Restoration he lost it all and had to flee to Ireland. Blood was bitter and penniless, and blamed the monarchy and its servants for his predicament. He wanted revenge.

Kidnap and murder

In 1663 Blood led some Cromwellian collaborators on a raid on Dublin Castle and attempted to capture the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, the Duke of Ormonde. It was a disaster and, although Blood escaped to the Netherlands, many of his fellow conspirators were executed. This was a man who bore a grudge and so, despite still being a wanted man, Blood returned to England in 1670 where he took the name of Ayloffie and practiced as a doctor at Romford market. This gave him a base to study the daily routine of his nemesis, the Duke, who was then living in Clarendon House. On 6 December, Blood, together with his henchmen, managed to take the Duke and took him on horseback to Tyburn where they planned to hang him – ostensibly for his role as a Royalist and for once having been top dog in Ireland. Amazingly, the Duke escaped – and so did Blood, who was never publicly accused of the crime.

It was an outrageous escape and may well have inspired his next daredevil enterprise – an attempt to steal the crown jewels. On the 9 May, Blood, disguised as a parson and accompanied by three young men – one of whom he claimed was his nephew – visited the Martin Tower within the Tower of London to see the jewels. He had been there for reconnaissance purposes a few days earlier, with a woman he claimed was his wife. It was a cunning ruse. The woman pretended to be taken ill and was attended to by 77-year-old Talbot Edwards, the Master of the Jewel House, who lived at the Tower. He took the ailing woman upstairs to be looked after by his wife. This gave Blood the perfect excuse to visit again – to say thank you. He visited several times after this, ingratiating himself with the Edwards family. As well as taking them gifts of white gloves, Blood suggested a marital match between his fictional wealthy nephew and the Edwards' daughter. So when he visited again with this fake nephew, Edwards naively thought little of showing them the jewels. In his defence, Edwards was officially allowed to show people the jewels for a small fee to supplement his wage.

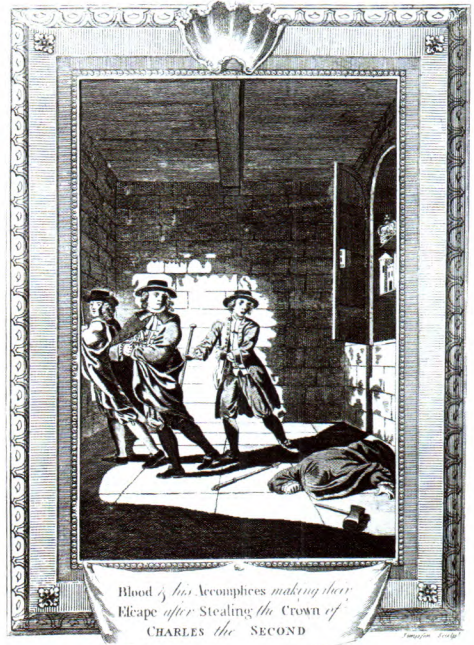
A heinous crime

Unsurprisingly, as soon as the group entered the jewel chamber, Blood threw a cloak over Edwards and hit him over the head with a mallet. He was then bound, gagged and possibly stabbed before the men got to work on their theft.

Blood seized the St Edward's Crown and tried to flatten it with the mallet in order to hide it in his clerical coat. One of his accomplices hid the Sovereign's Orb in his breeches and the other two men filed the Sceptre with the Cross in half. While this was going on, Edwards refused to be quiet and may well have made enough noise to alert his son, Wythe, who then interrupted proceedings. ►



Above: the Tower of London shown on the 1978 Historical Buildings issue
Below: a historical imaging of the events at the Tower



© V & A, Printed by G. & B. 1708



Above: Blood liked to be called 'Captain' but there is no proof that he actually reached this rank in the army
Below: 1978 stamps featuring the crown jewels



As Blood and his gang fled to their horses at St Catherine's Gate they dropped the Orb and the Crown although some gems had become dislodged and were never recovered. He was captured, along with two of his accomplices but didn't go down without a struggle, shouting: 'It was a gallant attempt, however unsuccessful! It was for a crown!' The jewels were recovered but were badly damaged.

A royal pardon

Here the story becomes even more extraordinary. Blood refused to speak to anyone but Charles II. After a private interrogation, far from being punished Blood was spared his life, pardoned and given back his land in Ireland worth £500 a year. Many were staggered at the outcome, not least Lord Ormonde. Shortly after Blood's pardon, the diarist Evelyn met him at Whitehall, and wrote: 'How he ever came to be pardoned and ever received into favour, not only after this but several

other exploits almost as daring, both in Ireland and here, I never could come to understand. This man had not only a daring, but a villainous unmerciful look, a false countenance, but very well spoken, and dangerously insinuating.' Some believed that Charles had made a political move, fearing an uprising in Ireland if Blood were punished. But others think that Charles' financial problems at the time may have had more to do with it. Or was Blood hired as a spy?

A lesson learned

Sadly the Jewel House Master, Talbot Edwards, was not treated so well and despite being promised a reward of £200, he never received a penny and died shortly afterwards from his wounds. But the result of the daring if ridiculous raid was increased security around the jewels. An armed guard was posted at the door of the chamber in Martin Tower, where they were housed until 1841 when the building was destroyed by a serious fire. A new building was built specifically to keep them safe and the current Jewel House is one of the most secure and impregnable buildings in the world. There have been no more attempts to steal the crown jewels.

Blood died in 1680 after a period of much influence and favour at court. Typically, his burial wasn't simple and he was interred twice. The story goes that he was exhumed in order to prove he really was under the ground at last – many people thought he had faked his own death. Presumably, the authorities were satisfied that Blood was dead. He was then buried for a second time with this epitaph: *Here lies the man who boldly hath run through, More villainies than England ever knew; And ne'er to any friend he had was true. Here let him then by all unpitied lie, And let's rejoice his time was come to die* ●



The Sovereign's Sceptre with Cross



St Edward's Crown



Rod and Sceptre with Doves



Queen Mary's Crown



The Sovereign's Orb



Jewelled Sword of Offering



Imperial State Crown



Coronation Spoon

From past to present...

Most of the original crown jewels were melted down or taken apart and sold during Cromwell's reign. The only surviving pre-Cromwellian piece is the Coronation Spoon (£1.10 stamp), which dates from the 12th century. However, individual gems from the older jewels were saved and re-set when Charles II commissioned a new set of jewels in 1661 – the ones Blood tried to steal – which included:

- ❖ St Edward's Crown (1st class), which has 444 precious stones and is the one with which monarchs are crowned when they ascend the throne. It is reputed to have been made with gold recovered from the crown of Alfred the Great.
- ❖ The Orb (76p), which is a religious symbol representing the Monarch's role as Defender of the Faith and Supreme Governor of the Church of England.
- ❖ The Sceptre with Dove (68p), held in the monarch's left hand during the coronation ceremony, was also recreated in 1661.

Later jewels include:

- ❖ Originally made in 1661, the Sceptre with Cross (1st Class) was redesigned in 1905 to incorporate the second largest cut diamond in the world.
- ❖ The Rod with Dove dates from the coronation of William and Mary in 1689, when we had a joint monarchy – Mary used the Rod at the ceremony. (Both Rod and Sceptre with Doves are shown on the 68p)
- ❖ Queen Mary's Crown (68p stamp) was made for the coronation of King George V where it was worn by his consort. It was only ever worn by her.
- ❖ Between the anointing and the investiture, the sovereign places a sword on the altar in an offering to God. One of the monarch's own weapons served this purpose until, in 1820, George IV commissioned a magnificently ornate sword to be the permanent Sword of Offering (76p stamp).
- ❖ The Imperial Crown of State (£1.10 stamp) was made in 1937 for King George VI. Among its stones are the Black Prince's Ruby, the Cullinan II diamond, Edward the Confessor's sapphire, and pearls worn as earrings by Elizabeth I. This priceless crown contains in all 2,783 diamonds, 17 sapphires, 277 pearls, 11 emeralds and five rubies.

The 93rd Philatelic Congress of Great Britain



Above: *HMS Victory*, a highlight of the seaside setting of this year's Congress in Southsea, Portsmouth

The main meeting of philatelic minds of the year took place at the 93rd Philatelic Congress of Great Britain, held from 16-19 June at the Queen's Hotel in Southsea. The Chairman and Vice Chairman of this year's Congress were Mel Doyle and Barry Phillips, respectively.

Medals and merit Each year the Philatelic Congress honours one delegate with the ABPS Congress medal in recognition of dedication to the hobby over many years. The 2011 Congress Medal was awarded to John Davies FRPSL, best known for his work in youth philately. John has inspired hundreds of children to collect stamps, compiling the starter packs for young collectors that launched the Stamp Active Network programme in 1990. He has also been involved with encouraging young people to attend Stampex, with the introduction of the popular Stamp Active Network stand.

Another ABPS award – the Award of Merit for outstanding voluntary service to British Philately – was given to Stephen Parkin and David Page.

As well as displays from members of local societies, there was a programme of presentations

on a wide variety of specialisms from leading philatelists including: Lt Cdr Michael J Hill on 'Portsmouth Postal History', Graham Booth on 'Antarctic – Admiral Byrd', Colin Tabcart FSPH on 'Australia and New Zealand Mails', Len Stanway FRPSL on 'Mail under London', Gerald Marriner FRPSL (Congress Committee Chair) on 'Antique Writing Instruments', RDP signatory Koichi Sato on 'First Day Cover of Tasmanian Courier 4d' and Stephen Parkin on 'Edinburgh Mail by Rail'.

The Stanley Gibbons Congress Cup was presented to Ashley Lawrence



Photographs: Dana Garrard - Shutterstock

for his talk, 'Les Ballon Montes', which charted the development of messages sent by manned balloon flights during the Siege of Paris, 1870-71.

'The standard of talks this year was incredibly high,' said Colin Avery of Stanley Gibbons, who took part in the judging. 'It is never easy to pick just one winner, but Ashley's talk focused on an unusual aspect of philately and he had some very interesting supporting materials.'

The ceremonial segment The signing of the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists was held in Portsmouth Guildhall. This year's signatories were our own Gavin Fryer, Koichi Sato from Japan, and Raymond Todd of Australia.

Gavin Fryer has served as President of the Royal Philatelic Society, as Chairman of the Philatelic Advisory Panel to the BPMA, and as a Trustee of the Stuart Rossiter Trust, which organises lectures and publishes books on postal history. He has taken a keen interest in promoting the hobby to young people, and is the author of *Blindman's Mail: How the Blind have been served by the Post* (2010).

Koichi Sato has built up a prestigious collection of Tasmanian stamps about which he has published various articles. He was Vice President of the Philatelic Federation of Japan and has served as an exhibition commissioner.

Raymond Todd has formed major collections of airmails and postal stationery and is a founder member of the Australian Philatelic Federation. His work in promoting philately earned him the Order of Australia Medal in The Queen's birthday honours list.

Next year, the 94th Philatelic Congress of Great Britain is to be held on 18-20 October at the Queens Hotel, Perth. It will be hosted by the Association of Scottish Philatelic Societies and displays have been invited from the Scandinavian Philatelic Society. The ABPS National Exhibition is to be held in Perth at the same time. Go to the ABPS website (www.abps.org.uk) to keep abreast of registration details and further announcements •

The history of the Congress

The first Philatelic Congress of Great Britain was held at Hulme Town Hall in Manchester in February 1909, at the same time as a stamp exhibition organised by Manchester Junior Philatelic Society.

The Roll of Distinguished Philatelists (RDP) comprises three pieces of parchment that carry lists of signatories, chosen each year for their contribution to the hobby through research or expertise. The first signature on the printed parchment is that of philatelist King George V, followed by the names of 46 philatelists given the honour posthumously.

For more details of developments over the years, see Colin Searle's comprehensive history of the Congress – *100 Years of the Philatelic Congress of Great Britain*, which was published in 2009.

Congress moments, from left: John Baron chats with guests of honour at the Saturday banquet; Lesley Marley, whose exhibit *A Tale of Whales* won a Gold medal; Ashley Lawrence gives his talk on 'Les Ballon Montes'; Mr and Mrs John Davies; the three new RDP signatories; Lord Mayor of Portsmouth, Cheryl Buggy, who welcomed delegates at the opening of the Congress





Built-in beauties Martin Robinson looks at the origins of the Victorian wall box



1

1 1857 First national standard, at Tintagel, Cornwall
Top: National Trust souvenir cover, 1971. Sadly the wall box in the postmark bears little resemblance to the actual box

PILLAR BOXES SITUATED AWAY FROM POST OFFICES were introduced in 1852 in the Channel Islands and the following year on the mainland. The novelist Anthony Trollope, who was also a Post Office Surveyor, had suggested their adoption, having seen them in use on the Continent. Before this, letters had to be taken to a post office – but with the rapid expansion of letter writing as a result of the introduction of the Penny Post in 1840, the public needed a more convenient service. Some people, however, were reluctant to consign their letters to a pillar box, as Trollope himself playfully commented in his 1869 novel *He Knew He Was Right*: ‘Miss Stanbury carried her letter all the way to the chief post-office in the city, having no faith whatever in those little subsidiary receiving houses which are established in different parts of the city. As for the iron pillar boxes which had been erected of late years for the receipt of letters... she had not the faintest belief that any letter put into one of them would ever reach its destination.’

Smaller and neater Before long, though, pillar boxes became a familiar and welcome part of daily life, but at first they were only provided in towns, where the volume of use was likely to justify their expense. It soon became clear that to meet growing demand smaller letter boxes would be needed for villages and other rural sites. In 1857 the Post Office Surveyor for the Western District of England had sample boxes made and these were to be fitted into walls or brick pillars. After approval, three of these were installed in villages in the Plymouth area. They were made of zinc by Messrs Phensaul Brothers of Plymouth, but sadly none of the boxes nor details of their construction have survived, so we have no idea what they looked like.

Also in 1857 the District Surveyor of Birmingham obtained permission to have an iron wall box made by Messrs Smith & Hawkes, and after some



2



3



4

2 1859 First national standard with added pediment and hood to protect mail from rainwater, at Marton, Shrewsbury

3 Smith & Hawkes box, circa 1860, with the higher door

4 Larger version of the above, at Wickhambrook, Suffolk

modification 25 of these were put into use. After satisfactory reports a further 250 were made and a dozen or more of these first standard wall boxes still exist. The box has POST OFFICE and LETTER BOX above and below the aperture, then above the door the royal cipher and crown and the words CROWNED AT, with a space for a collection plate. The door itself is in the centre (1).

However, reports were received about letters getting wet, so within a couple of years a design consisting of a pediment and hood was added to some boxes to prevent rainwater dripping down the flat surface of the box and finding its way inside. Examples of this modification also survive (2).

In 1859 Smith & Hawkes tendered for a new version of the box, which incorporated the improvements made to the first box plus a wire guard to prevent letters falling out when the door was opened. By April 1860, 500 of these had been installed and another 100 were on order. Sixty or more are still in service in various parts of the country today. The door is higher than on the earlier model and the crown, cipher and collection plate are set within it (3). Sometimes holes were drilled along the bottom to release any water. In later models the hood over the aperture was extended by an inch to give even more protection. In fact, these boxes were made in two sizes (32x10in and 29x10in) but only one example of what was probably the larger size still exists (4). Examples of the first and second standard wall boxes were sent to Ireland to be copied by H & C Smith of Cork, and some of these may still be seen in the Irish Republic •

In the next article of the series, we look at wall letter boxes between 1861 and 1881.

Prize photograph This month I have chosen a photo (right) from Mrs Barbara McTaggart of Ayrshire. It shows a non-standard private posting box at Traquair House, Innerleithen, which looks as though it was made by a local blacksmith. Please send your photographs to The Editor at the address on page 355.

We regret that we cannot promise to return photographs.

For more information Contact the Letter Box Study Group at 38 Leopold Avenue, Handsworth Wood, Birmingham B20 1ES or via www.lbsg.org.



The Mercury collection

Rock legend Freddie Mercury would have been 65 next month. To mark this occasion we tell the story behind his unique collection



Far right: The 'Mercury's Magic' stamp in the Millennium Series – The Entertainer's Tale Special Issue. The stamp features a live photo of Freddie by Denis O'Regan, taken from the 'Hammer To Fall' video. The stamp was designed by Sir Peter Blake

WHEN FREDDIE MERCURY's stamp album was bought for the National Postal Museum, they secured one of the few things left in the world that Mercury had actually touched. His father reportedly burned most of Freddie's possessions after his death in accordance with the family's Zoroastrian beliefs. So, while the collection is not in itself of great monetary value, to millions of Mercury's fans the collection is of infinite worth – they are able to connect with their idol through one of his treasured possessions.

Freddie Mercury started collecting at the age of nine, inspired by his father – a British Colonial Office cashier named Bomi Bulsara – who himself compiled a collection of British Commonwealth stamps (now housed at Christie's). Bomi did not give his son spares from his own collection, but took him out to buy stamps with his pocket money and encouraged him to make his own choices.

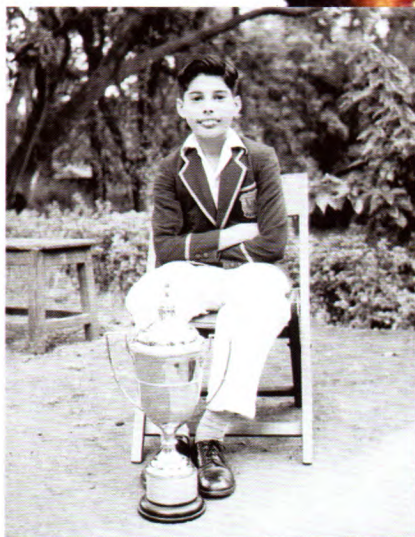
The Bulsara family lived in Zanzibar, an island in the Indian Ocean, and Farrokh (later Freddie) was born on 5 September 1946. As followers of the Zoroastrian religion, the Bulsara's forbears had to leave their birthplace in Persia (now Iran) to escape persecution. Farrokh was sent to St Peter's, an English-style boarding school in Panchgani, India, when he was eight years old. It was here that he acquired the name Freddie, and also where he took up the hobby of stamp-collecting.

At the age of 12 he won a school trophy for his achievements as a Junior All-rounder. A creative schoolboy, he loved art and often made sketches for friends and relatives. Freddie returned to Zanzibar in 1962 when he was 16 and there completed his last two years of school at St Joseph's Convent School.

A flair for colour Freddie Mercury's stamp album comprises 54 pages (one blank) with material from more than 35 countries, including many British Commonwealth countries as well as Poland and Russia.

Stuart Aitken, Collections Assistant at The BPMA, has experience of the Mercury collection, and observes, 'While the British Colonial theme is perhaps to be expected, most of the pages in Freddie's album are quite unique to him in their creative style of display. He chose black album pages rather than the traditional white. All the stamps are organised by country but each page is carefully arranged in different way – overall geometric shapes with an emphasis on balancing colours and sizes. On a few of the album pages the stamps are organised in unusual formations, such as the letter F.'

'The Zanzibar fiscals are the only stamps of any monetary value. The worth of this collection is not defined from a philatelic standpoint, but ►



Freddie at eight years old in 1953. Were he still alive he would be picking up his bus pass next month





Above and opposite: pages from Freddie Mercury's stamp album, of relatively little philatelic value, but – as part of the only known personal possession of Freddie Mercury's still to exist in the public domain – it is priceless

rather as an important piece of postal history for millions of Queen fans. 'There's nothing quite like it anywhere else in the world.'

Stamps across the seas In 1964, at the age of 18, Freddie Mercury found himself unexpectedly in England. The Bulsaras had been forced to leave Zanzibar due to political turmoil, and they arrived on our shores with only two suitcases, one of which contained the family's stamp collections. The Bulsara family – Bomi, his wife Jer, Freddie and his younger sister Kashmir – moved into a terraced house in Feltham, Middlesex. By now Freddie was displaying a keen interest in art and in 1966 he enrolled at Ealing College of Art to study graphic illustration. At this point Bomi decided to hold on to his son's stamp album for safekeeping. It was in Freddie's student days that Queen was formed – and the rest, as they say, is history.

An act of charity At the time of Freddie's death on 24 November 1991, Bomi decided to auction the collection, along with his own, to raise money for the Mercury Phoenix Trust (the AIDS charity set up by Mercury's friends, including former band mates and Mary Austin. Freddie's stamp album was bought by Royal Mail on 17 December 1993 for the collections of the National Postal Museum (NPM) for £3,220 plus VAT, and is now housed by The BPMA. The entire Bulsara family philatelic collection raised a grand total of £8,090 for the Trust.

Touching connection The Mercury collection was displayed between 1994 and 1999. The NPM even produced special certificates, for which there ►





Above: Stuart Aitken of The BPMA holds the Mercury stamp album, open at the page that shows stamps arranged to make 'F' for Freddie

Top right: stamps from Dagestan (2001) and the Ivory Coast (2003); Freddie Mercury remains a popular subject for stamps worldwide

Below: 'We Will Rock You', the London hit musical based on the music of Queen, is celebrated in one of this year's Musicals special issue stamps from Royal Mail



was great demand, stating on acid-free stamp album paper: 'This is to certify that [name] viewed and touched the Freddie Mercury Stamp Album on [date]. During 1994 alone a total of 825 people viewed the album, many being fans who made a pilgrimage to the museum. Some even left behind red roses.

Further travels in a suitcase Freddie's stamp collection drew still larger crowds when the NPM showed it at philatelic exhibitions around the world. Its first outing was for the exhibition Stamp '95 at Wembley, and it was subsequently loaned to the tenth anniversary convention of the Queen Fan Club, held in Southport in the same year. Because of the collection's surprising popularity, the NPM decided to produce a limited print run of sets of four postcards showing images from the Mercury collection, which are in themselves collectible. Derrick Page took the collection around the world in a suitcase – just as it had first arrived in the UK. After being shown at Stamp 1996 at the NEC, it travelled to Australia for the Australia 1999 World Philatelic Exhibition in Melbourne. There it drew thousands of visitors a day, far outnumbering those viewing the Royal Philatelic Collection in the show's Court of Honour.

'We still get occasional requests from people wanting to see the collection in London,' says Aitken. 'I particularly remember a French couple, the husband was a philatelist and they were both Queen fans. Philatelists who visit the Archive usually get involved in the detail and want to look closely at every stamp, but this couple were different – I sensed that they really loved the music of Freddie Mercury and were moved by the very sight of his stamp album.'

Charity commemoratives Such was the adoration inspired by Freddie Mercury's music and colourful personality that many sets were issued to honour his memory shortly after his untimely death. And so 'Freddie stamps' have become a popular theme for collectors the world over. The philatelic bureaux of many countries have continued to use his image on stamps that aim to keep alive the creative spirit of this much-loved entertainer. One can only imagine how the young Farrokh would have displayed them in his album •

The new BPMA website: the next best thing to a national postal museum, Adrian Keppel believes

Who is the website for? The site www.postalheritage.org.uk from the BPMA is for those who are interested in the rich heritage of Britain's postal service.

What is the site's heritage? The BPMA introduced its first site five years ago but it was due an overhaul. This new site, designed by Mind Unit, has an incredible amount to offer with some 900 pages containing much more than before, and with clearer navigation. There is also more focus on social media, with links to the BPMA's Twitter, Facebook and YouTube presence – check out the blog too.

How is it organised? The easy navigation bar at the top is subdivided into two, with the main four sections – Exhibitions & Events, History & Learning, Collections & Catalogue and Visiting – in the upper bar, and the remainder of the sections, such as the shop and contact details, in the lower bar. There are more than 95,000 records in the online catalogue and an efficient search function can be used to find specific items there, as well as in The Phillips Collection, of more than 2,200 pages. Other new additions include extra articles in the History section, photo galleries and access to bigger images.

What are the best bits? There are many interesting articles to read on all things postal, from various exhibitions right through to the cats officially 'employed' between 1868 and 1984! Then there are the major collections held by the BPMA, also well illustrated. The site is a portal to the organisation's archives, and so serves as a good starting point for any research to be carried out at their premises. A detailed page of frequently asked questions about visiting the Archives is also handy. Many of the archived collections are illustrated as well, in the Online Catalogue section, making this a site to return to time and time again for general browsing. Also the excellent Join the Conversation section allows you to view and take part in conversations on Facebook and Twitter and to see the latest blog postings all on one page.

What could be improved? Purchases from the shop section can only be made by creating a Google Checkout account. A PayPal link would be useful. But this launch is just the beginning; new features and information will be added to the site in the near future, including an improved shop, and a timeline of key dates.

In conclusion A site that's rich in information and illustrations and easy to navigate. As the BPMA has been forced to shelve plans for a proper postal museum, this site is the next best thing and, with the inclusion of its blog, merits regular visits ●



Above: the new content-rich site is packed full of fascinating bits and pieces and some arresting images



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Liverpool, L25 0QA

The Centenary of the First Aerial Post is celebrated in this Buckingham cover, available in limited numbers signed by Air Marshall Macfadyen, Constable and Governor of Windsor Castle. **Price:** £13.95 unsigned or £24.95 signed. This cover and a commemorative sheet will be flown on a centenary flight next month ●



A limited run of 80 – another celebration of the centenary of the first aerial post, this Philatelic Traders' Society cover will feature a special PTS postmark and the special issue Miniature Sheet to be released by Royal Mail next month. In a limited edition of 80 covers, each is offered post-free and will also be available at Autumn Stampex next month. **Price:** £15 ●

The Civil Defence Association produced a limited edition cover and insert, with a Smilers® stamp and postmark for 10 July 2010. The postmark features the National Memorial Arboretum near Alrewas, which was dedicated in 2001. The 2011 version is now ready and there will be another in 2012.

Price: £12.50 including UK p&p ●



The Battle of Britain 70th Anniversary

Anniversary Farrukh Jamil has produced this A4 cover featuring the Battle of Britain Generic Sheet, offered in a limited numbered edition of ten covers and cancelled with a corresponding handstamp: The Battle of Britain, 70th Anniversary, Biggin Hill. **Price:** £22.50 including p&p worldwide ●

Cover producers wishing to announce a recent or forthcoming cover should submit copy of up to 75 words and an image of the cover. Announcements are published on a first-come-first-served basis or around a theme, at the discretion of the editor. Please send submissions for October *Bulletin* to the address on page 323 to arrive by 30 August.

Prize draw rules and regulations

1 The closing date is 1 September 2011. 2 Promotions are open to all readers aged 18 and over, except employees of Royal Mail Group Ltd, their business associates and immediate families. 3 Responsibility cannot be accepted for entries which are incomplete, damaged or not received for any reason. Proof of posting is not proof of receipt. 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. 5 For prize draws where readers must answer a question or solve a crossword, winners will be the senders of the first correct entries drawn at random by an independent service 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 Melanie Williams, *British Philatelic Bulletin*, Royal Mail 1st Floor, 35-50 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1HQ. The promoter is Royal Mail Group Ltd, 100 Victoria Embankment, London EC4Y 0HQ.

Prize draws Seaside stamp teasers and a cryptic crossword

Identify and Knowledge

1 *Identify* the stamp from the detail, right, with its name and year of issue.

2 Test your *Knowledge*:



- a) What centenary was celebrated by the seaside stamp shown left?
- b) How many stamps of the British Seaside Weather series of 2003 showed the sun?
- c) What is the official maximum weight of a British beach donkey?

Send your answers, marked 'August *Identify*' and/or 'August *Knowledge*', to Bulletin Draw, 1st Floor, 35-50 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1HQ.



Closing date: 1 September 2011. The first correct entries drawn after the closing date win a selection of August special issue stamps. See facing page for rules and regulations •

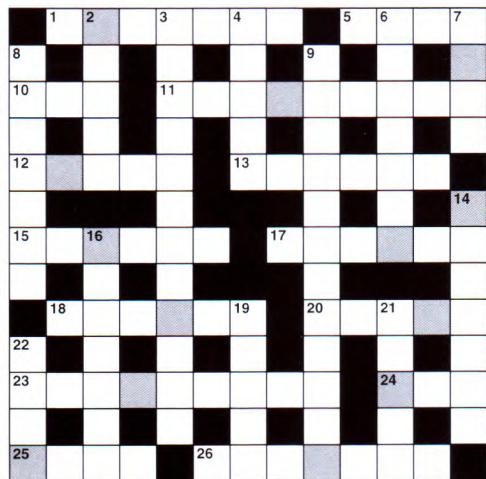
June solutions and winners

Knowledge: a) 171 (The Penny Black was introduced on 6 May, 1840, so was 171 years old in May 2011). b) Sodor is the name of the fictitious island home of Thomas the Tank Engine. c) RDP inaugurated in 1920. **Winner** C Barber, Chesterfield. **Identify:** 28p, 1984 Greenwich Meridian Commemorative stamp set.



Winner Chris Roberts, Shrewton. **Crossword Across:** 1 Enforce 5 Amok 10 Etc 11 Turning in 12 Proof 13 One-way 15 Clothe 17 Edited 18 Stable 20 Uncap 23 Nocturnal 24 Les 25 Nile 26 Tensing. **Down:** 2 Nacho 3 Out of the blue 4 Cargo 6 Migrant 7 Kent 8 Respect 9 Mixed doubles 14 Adipose 16 Optical 19 Ernie 21 Colon 22 Anon. **Solution:** booklet. **Winner** M Stiff, Hamilton.

CROSSWORD Complete the puzzle below, then rearrange the letters in the grey squares to form a stamp-related word. Send that word, with your name and address and marked 'August Crossword', to the address above. The first correct entry drawn after 1 September wins items from the Aerial Post special issue.



CLUES ACROSS

- 1 Policeman fronts epic turn in the spinney (7)
- 5 Fool left in small bed (4)
- 10 Tar wrecked craft (3)
- 11 Astronomy student – the best (4, 5)
- 12 Which individual language is repressed? (5)

- 13 Old policeman to strip King Edward? (6)
- 15 Clearly show outline of part of fish in the river (6)
- 17 Macho man, over ten, in artist's room (6)
- 18 Start of a river of ketchup, we hear! (6)
- 20 Sat with head of paper, very big editor (5)
- 23 Progressing – in years, perhaps (7, 2)
- 24 Five getting on an industrial vehicle (3)
- 25 Team gave deep breath, audibly (4)
- 26 Tungsten found in crumbling Orkney city (3, 4)

CLUES DOWN

- 2 Frequently decimal? (5)
- 3 Food of emotion on date, perhaps (7,5)
- 4 Confine ringleader in settlement (5)
- 6 Get the message and derail broadcast about power (3, 4)
- 7 Story's end read out (4)
- 8 Tom reportedly did some gardening at terminal (7)
- 9 A beautiful girl gets a large sum (1, 6, 5)
- 14 Forgive a swindle that's over (7)
- 16 Drifted and loafed about capital of Thailand (7)
- 19 Bird, but not a birdie! (5)
- 21 Cut off south for all time (5)
- 22 Food for hen parties? (4)



See you at Stampex!

Autumn Stampex runs from 14-17 September at the Business Design Centre, 52 Upper St, Islington London

More than 100 exhibitors and 6,000 visitors, special displays and the National Senior and Junior Competitions make Stampex the perfect place to indulge your collecting passions. Meet old philatelist friends, make new contacts and use the special postboxes for First Day Covers of new special issues – available at the Royal Mail stand.



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