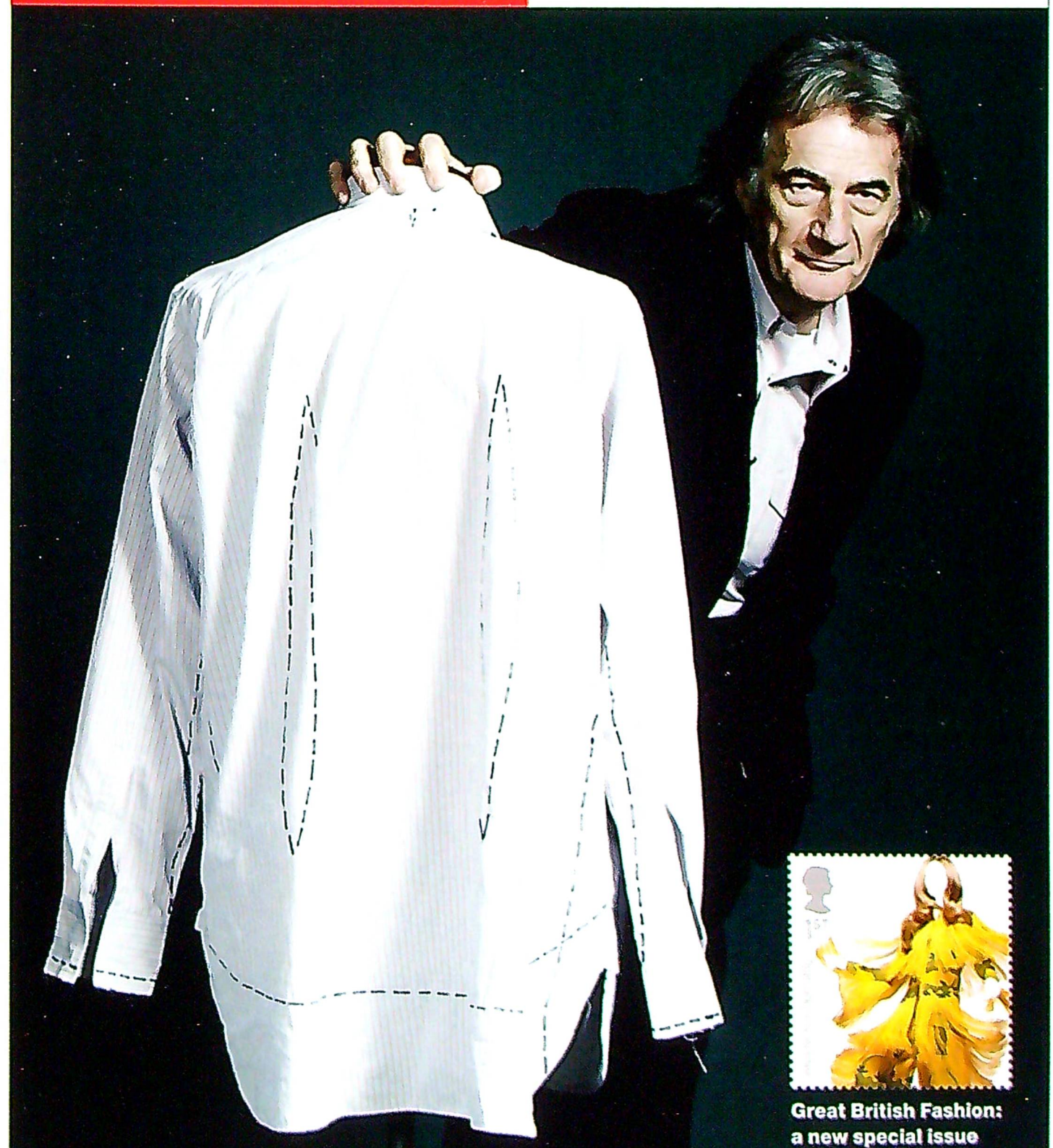
BRITISH PHILATELIC

# Bulletin

*The Royal Mail magazine for stamp collectors*

Volume 49 Number 9 | May 2012 £1.20

## Paul Smith • Douglas Myall • 2012 Definitives • Ironbridge





**Great British Fashion: a new special issue that's high on style**

**ROBERT MAUDE • PREVIEW CHARLES DICKENS • WIN JAMES BOND SHEET**

# Issues and withdrawals



**Cover** Paul Smith, maestro of men's tailoring, created the electric blue mohair suit that features among this month's Great British Fashion stamps – see page 272.
Cover photograph: Jason Hetherington

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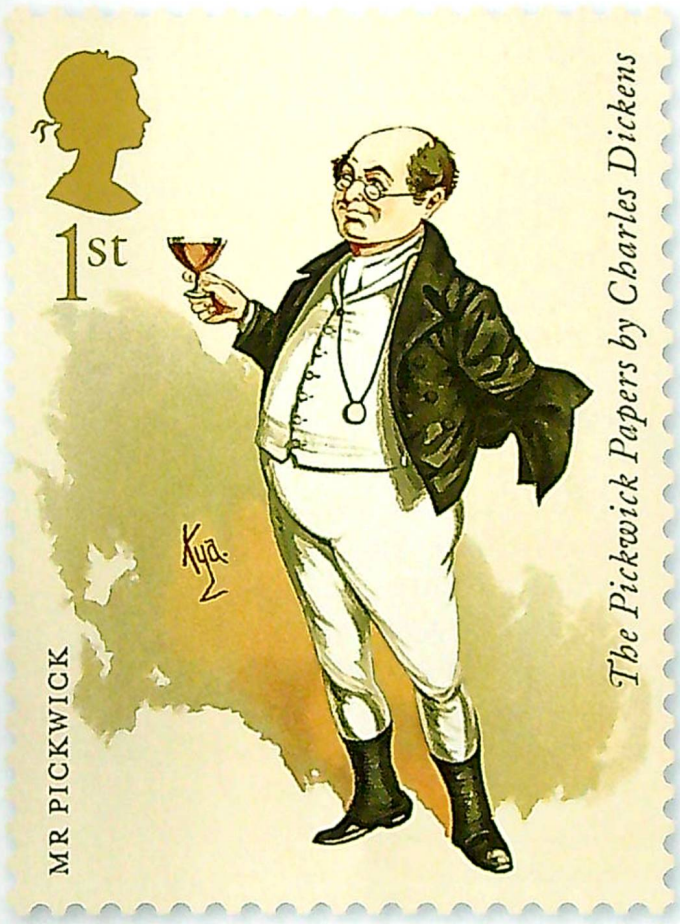
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| | |
|---|---|
| **25** April | **Issue** Definitives: 87p, £1.28 and £1.90 stamps, Presentation Pack with Large Letter Diamond Blue<br>**Issue** Country Definitives: 87p and £1.28 stamps for England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales Presentation Pack with overseas stamps<br>**Issue** Diamond Blue Jubilee Definitive: Large Letter First Class, Stamp Book 4 x 1st Large |
| **1** May | **Issue** James Bond Commemorative Sheet |
| **4** May | **Withdrawal** Morris & Co: Stamps, Prestige Stamp Book, Presentation Pack, Stamp Cards |
| **6** May | **Issue** London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Sports Cover Collection: Wheelchair Rugby and Volleyball |
| **15** May | **Issue** Great British Fashion: Stamps, Presentation Pack, Stamp Cards |
| **21** May | **Issue** Post & Go Union Flag: Stamps |
| **25** May | **Issue** Torch Relay Cachet Cover: 1 Land's End to Cardiff |
| **31** May | **Issue** The Diamond Jubilee of HM The Queen Elizabeth II: Stamps, Presentation Pack, Prestige Stamp Book, Stamp Cards, Coin Covers |
| **12** June | **Issue** London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games Sports Cover Collection: Equestrian and Table Tennis |
| **13** June | **Withdrawal** Thomas the Tank Engine™: Stamps, Miniature Sheet, Stamp Book 6 x 1st, Presentation Pack, Stamp Cards |
| **18** June | **Issue** Jakarta Exhibition: Souvenir Sheet |
| **19** June | **Issue** Charles Dickens: Stamps, Miniature Sheet, Presentation Pack, Stamp Cards, Coin Cover |
| **27** June | **Issue** London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games Souvenir Sheet, 16 x 1st, 4 x Worldwide<br>**Issue** 1948 Olympic Games Facsimile Pack |

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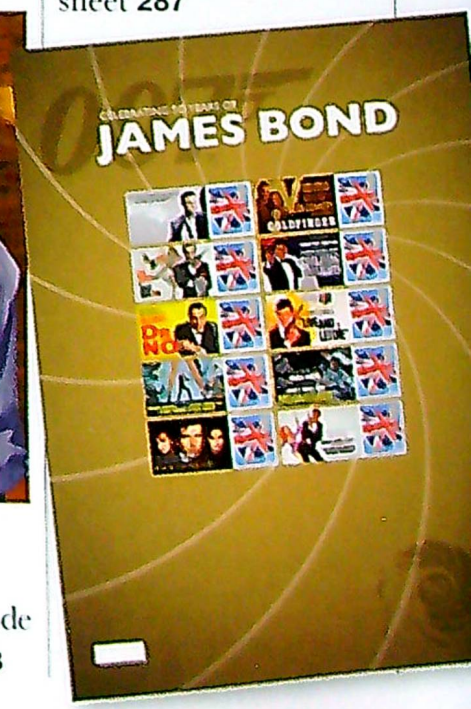
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# **Postbox** and inbox




## Letting off steam

Firstly, let me start by saying how much I love reading all the articles in *Bulletin* each month.

Now, my main point for emailing is to let off some steam. I have been stamp collecting since the age of ten but would still very much regard myself as a 'young collector' with hopefully 30 or 40 years left to enjoy this hobby. However, with the price of stamps ever increasing, collecting new issues is becoming very difficult to justify.

My main grievance is the significant increase in the number of issues of 'special' stamps. In 1990 there were eight, in 2000 this increased to 12, and in 2010 it jumped to 15, and the same this year. I have also noticed the value of stamps included in the sets are much higher – for example, is there any need for an issue to have two £1.10 stamps in the same set?

I understand that we need to continue to commemorate important events and pay tribute to the UK's achievements, but – as harsh as it sounds – Royal Mail needs to be more selective and reduce the amount of issues or the result will be that the number of people buying these will significantly reduce!

I was pleased to read in a previous *Bulletin* (December 2012) that you 'now also offer a new range of selective subscriptions tailored to your collecting interests and budget'. I mainly collect Presentation Packs but these also include the Miniature Sheet packs, which I don't want. So I thought, 'Great! I can cut down the cost by removing them from my subscription'. I phoned Tallents House and the staff are so lovely but I was told it's not possible to remove the Miniature Sheets from the Presentation Pack subscription.

My fear is that I will have to give up this hobby. This saddens me, and I'm sure I'm not alone. If there is a way to reduce annual costs, I would love to hear about it.

***Suzanne McCartney by email***

Thank you for your letter of support. In your need to let off steam about the increasing number of Royal Mail special stamp issues, you are certainly not alone. We have published a number of letters on this subject in the past. With regard to your main grievance: in a recent policy review Royal Mail has expressed a commitment to reducing the number of special issues per year. Postage values are also under review, with the objective of keeping special issues relevant and affordable for collectors.

Twelve special issues are scheduled for 2013, including the Dinosaurs issue that has been postponed from its advertised issue date of October 2011. The Space Science stamp set will now be issued on 16 October. Customers who pre-paid for this year's stamp programme with a subscription will be contacted by letter to arrange a refund.

Modesty dictates our omitting some of your comments about *Bulletin* in the first paragraph of your letter. Suffice to say they certainly jollied up our feature writers.



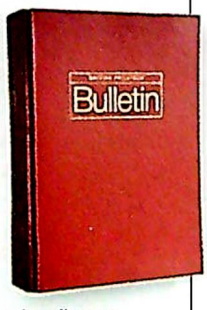

## Birds on wires

**As an avid collector of birds on stamps ever since the four 4d stamps issued in 1966, I would be grateful if your readers could help me by identifying the birds perched on the telegraph wires shown on the 35p Age of Steam Stamp of 1994.**

***P R Dawson, Stafford***

Can anyone be sure? Even when the stamp is enlarged the birds remain little black dots. We trust *Bulletin* readers will have some theories.

## Write to...




The Editor, *British Philatelic Bulletin*, Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB. Or email bulletin.enquiries@royalmail.com.

Readers' letters published will receive a thank-you gift. The sender of the 'First-class letter' receives the *Bulletin* binder.

# **May update** Three new definitives, a Large Diamond Jubilee issue plus two exotic sheets










**New postal rates** On Monday, 30 April new postal tariffs came into effect. Three new Machin definitives were released on 25 April in readiness for the changes, as follow:

- 87p 'orange' is the new Rest of the World Airmail rate for postcards and letters weighing up to 10g. This rate also covers Airmail letters to Europe weighing up to 20g.
- £1.28 'emerald green' is the new tariff for Rest of the World Airmail letters of the next weight category between 11g and 20g. Airmail letters to Europe between 21g and 40g are also rated at £1.28.
- £1.90 'rhododendron' is the new rate for Rest of World Airmail letters weighing 21g to 40g.

Also issued on 25 April were a new first class Large Letter Diamond Jubilee definitive and new country stamps for values 87p and £1.28.

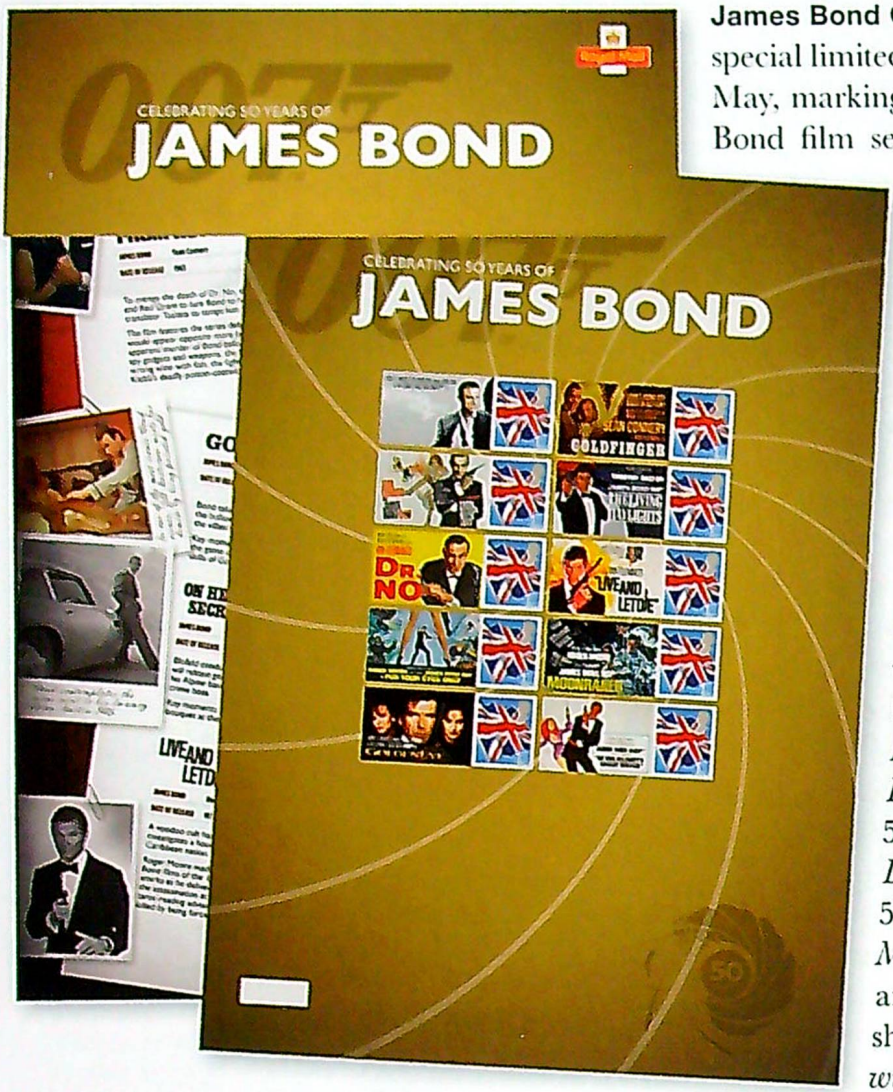
A Presentation Pack contains the three new Machin definitives, the new Large Diamond Jubilee definitive and this year's other new definitive – the first class Diamond Jubilee Machin stamp that was issued on 6 February. ▸




Top: pack containing both first class Diamond Jubilee definitives and the three new definitives. Price, £5.80. Above: pictorial Tallents House First Day postmark and the alternative pictorial Windsor postmark. Left: pack with the eight new country definitives. Price, £9.10

Serviced First Day Covers, available until April 25, bear the Large Diamond Jubilee definitive and the three new Machins. A new Country Pack contains the eight new Country definitives – 87p and £1.28 for each of the four countries: England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Serviced First Day Covers are available for each of the four countries, carrying the 87p and £1.28 values.

The following values will be withdrawn from general sale on 31 April, prior to the rate increase: 60p and 97p country stamps •




Above: this limited edition stamp sheet commemorates 50 years of James Bond films. Price £14.95

**James Bond Commemorative Sheet Collection** A special limited edition stamp sheet is released on 1 May, marking the 50th anniversary of the James Bond film series. The sheet features ten iconic Bond movie posters on labels alongside Union Flag stamps.

To help with the task of choosing ten film posters, Royal Mail invited members of the public to vote for their favourite via newspapers and websites, including www.royalmail.com, where all 22 film posters were shown.

More than 30,000 people took part and voting was quite evenly spread, with percentages of total votes cast for each film poster as follows: *Casino Royale* 7.03%, *From Russia with Love* 6.12%, *Dr No* 5.83%, *For Your Eyes Only* 5.82%, *Goldeneye* 5.40%, *Goldfinger* 5.38%, *The Living Daylights* 5.37%, *Live and Let Die* 5.04%, *Moonraker* 4.53%, *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* 4.51% – so those are the ten posters that appear on the sheet. The remainder were: *The Man with the Golden Gun* 4.48% *Thunderball* 4.48%, *Octopussy* 4.37%, *The Spy Who Loved Me* 4.17%, *Die Another Day* 3.73%, *You Only Live Twice* 3.57%, *Diamonds are Forever* 3.56%, *A View To A Kill* 3.53%, *Tomorrow Never Dies* 3.37%, *The World is Not Enough* 3.29%, *Licence to Kill* 3.25%, *Quantum of Solace* 3.17%.

Movie buffs might demur over the choice being based on poster design rather than the calibre of the films, but the top ten certainly work well visually on the stamps sheet, as shown above. The poster art is used on ten stamp labels, alongside Union Flag stamps. The sheet is presented in an attractive 'golden' anniversary pack, with a backing card carrying stills from all the Bond films featured, as well as a précis of each plot, dates of release and the names of the main characters and who played them •

**Time to vote** The 2012 Europa stamp competition is now open. The theme for this year is 'Visit...' and Royal Mail's contribution is the Victoria and Albert Museum stamp in UK A-Z Part 2, released last month. See the other contenders and vote for your favourite at www.posteurop.org/europa 2012. May the most beautiful stamp win! •




Above: the Royal Mail contender in the 2012 Europa stamp competition. Read about its designer on page 278

**Indonesia 2012 Stamp Sheet** To coincide with the Indonesia 2012 International Philately Exhibition (18 to 24 June), Royal Mail is issuing a special stamp sheet. Alongside 20 first class 'Hello' stamps, ten labels carry evocative images of Indonesia, including the bustling Ubud market, a Bali rice field, the largest flower on earth (*Rafflesia arnoldii*), traditional shadow puppets, intricate batik and other traditional images and landmarks. The background of the sheet features a typical pattern of batik •

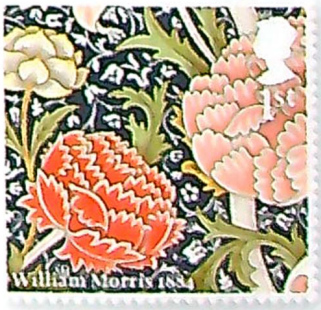



Left: a design companion to last year's Philanippon sheet, the Indonesia 2012 Stamp Sheet, issued on 18 June, price £12.50

**London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games** Wheelchair rugby and volleyball are the sports featured in the latest of the Paralympic Sports Cover Collection, issued on 6 May. For more information, visit www.royalmail.com/bethefirst.

The Olympic torch is lit from the sun's rays at the Temple of Hera in Olympia, Greece. It is delivered to the UK on 18 May and on 19 May begins the 70-day torch relay, ending at the London 2012 stadium. Royal Mail is celebrating the relay with a series of special cachet covers, marking different stages of the 8,000-mile journey. More details of these Torch Relay Cachet Covers will appear in your June and July issues of *Bulletin* •

**Last chance for Morris & Co** Coming off sale on 4 May is the Morris & Co issue, commemorating the 150th anniversary of the founding of William Morris's firm. The issue features beautiful Morris & Co designs on stamps, Prestige Stamp Book, Presentation Pack and Stamp Cards •

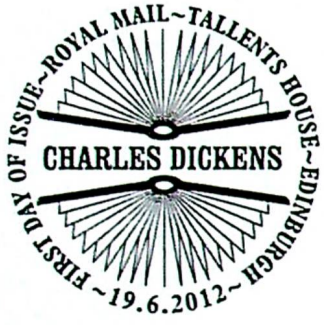



It's bye-bye to the beauties of the Morris & Co issue




# Charles Dickens' everlasting characters

## Ten new stamps celebrate the Dickens bicentenary







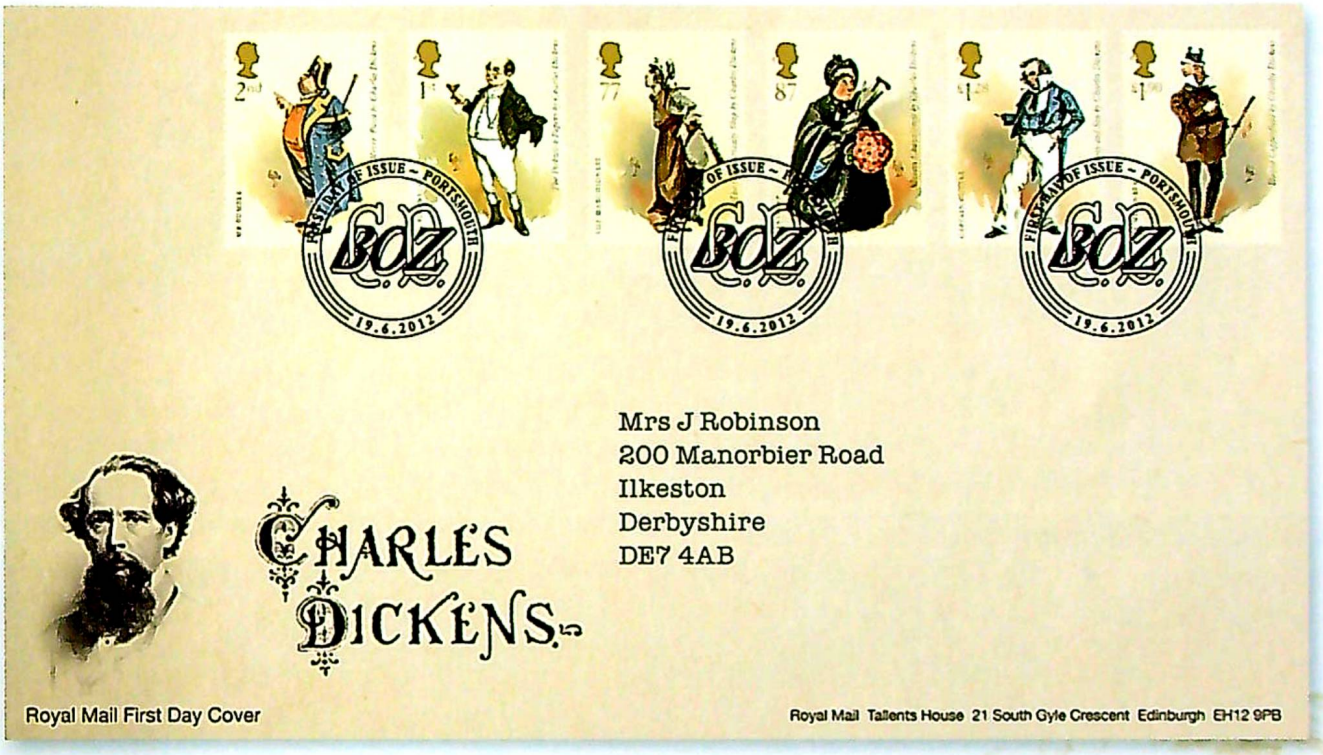
Above: the Tallents House First Day postmark and the alternative postmark, for which Portsmouth was chosen because it is the birthplace of Charles Dickens

**Released on 19 June** a special stamp issue of ten new stamps, comprising six sheet stamps and four on a miniature sheet, marks the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Dickens. The world-renowned British novelist was born on 7 February 1812 in Portsmouth, Hampshire, and was buried in Poets' Corner in 1870. He became world-famous in his own lifetime and today Dickens' novels and the numerous stage and film adaptations of them are still popular in many countries. Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*, for example, is a global best-seller, the book having been bought by more than 200 million people.

**Stamp by stamp** The six stamps shown above feature illustrations from 'Character Sketches from Charles Dickens' by Joseph Clayton Clarke, otherwise known as Kyd. They were originally published around 1890 and depict the following characters from Dickens' novels.

*Mr Bumble, second class stamp, from 'Oliver Twist'* is a parish beadle, of whom Dickens wrote, '... tears were not the things to find their way to Mr Bumble's soul; his heart was waterproof.' It was Bumble who removed the nine-year-old Oliver Twist from the orphanage where he had grown up and secured him a place in a workhouse, where the boy is cruelly treated and famously asks for more.

*Mr Pickwick, first class stamp, from 'The Pickwick Papers'* is an 'observer of human nature' and the founder and perpetual president of the Pickwick Club. He and three other 'Pickwickians' (Winkle, Snodgrass and Tupman) make coach journeys to places far away from London and report on their findings to the other members of the club. Their travels provide the chief theme of the novel.




*The Marchioness, 77p, from 'The Old Curiosity Shop'* is the nickname given to the wicked Miss Brass's maidservant by Dick Swiveller, who befriends and later marries her. There is a gentle suggestion that The Marchioness might be the illegitimate daughter of Miss Brass, possibly by the novel's villain Quilp.

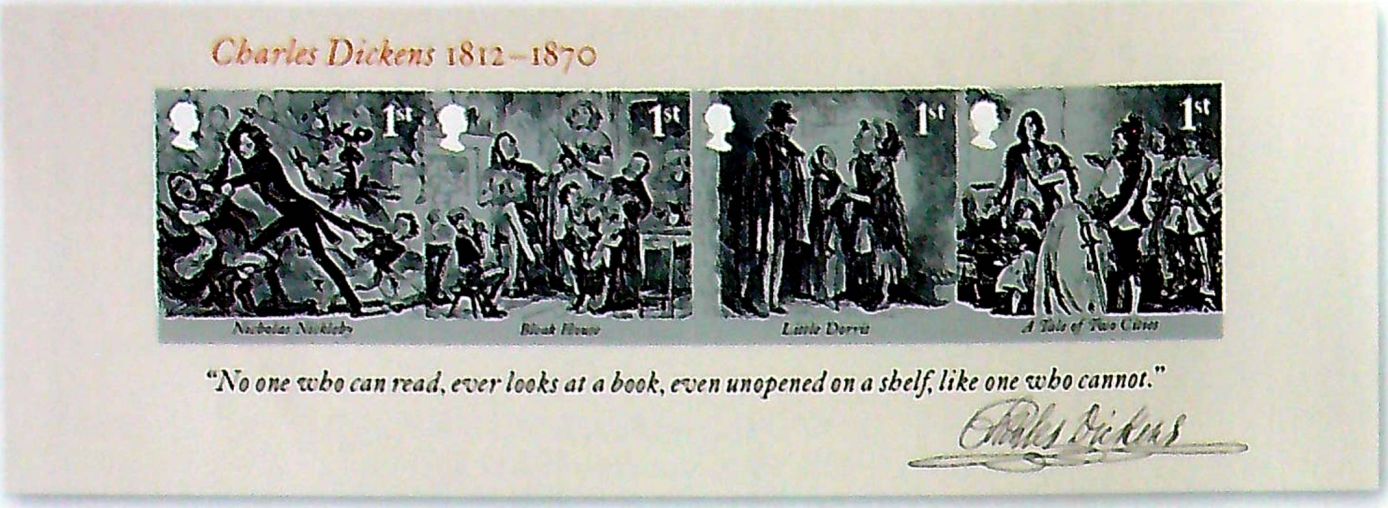
*Mrs Gamp, 87p, from 'Martin Chuzzlewitt'* is a dissolute nurse with a drink problem, a notorious Victorian stereotype before the reforms of campaigners such as Florence Nightingale. The character sketch was so popular with the British public that umbrellas became known as 'gamps', after Mrs Gamp's own umbrella, which was displayed with 'particular ostentation'.

*Captain Cuttle, £1.28, from 'Dombey and Son'* is left in charge of Solomon Gill's maritime instrument maker's shop while Solomon goes off in search of his nephew. Dombey's daughter lodges with Cuttle when she runs away from her father.

*Mr Micawber, £1.90, from 'David Copperfield'* was modelled on Dickens' father, John Dickens, who like Micawber spent some time in a debtors' prison. Micawber is a rather comical figure who addresses his debts with long bouts of hyperbole. He is remembered for his constant assurance that 'something will turn up'. ▸

| Charles Dickens Stamps Specifications | |
|---|---|
| Number of stamps | Six |
| Design | Howard Brown |
| 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 | All over |
| Gum | PVA |

| Charles Dickens Prices | |
|---|---|
| Stamp Set | £5.92 |
| Miniature Sheet | £2.40 |
| Presentation Pack | £8.85 |
| First Day Cover, stamps, UK | £7.58 |
| First Day Cover, overseas | £6.32 |
| First Day Cover, mini sheet, UK | £3.36 |
| First Day Cover, mini sheet, overseas | £2.80 |
| First Day Envelope | 30p |
| Coin Cover | £15.95 |
| Stamp Cards | £4.95 |

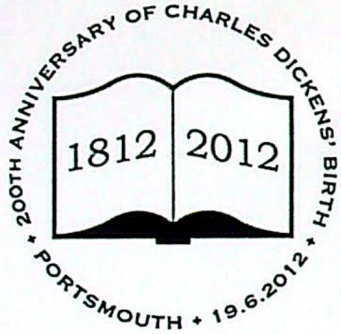



| Charles Dickens Miniature Sheet Specifications | |
|---|---|
| Number of stamps | Four |
| Size of sheet | 190mm x 67mm |
| Design | Howard Brown |
| Stamp format | Landscape |
| Stamp size | 37mm x 35mm |
| Printer | Cartor Security Printing |
| Print process | Lithography |
| Perforations | 14 x 14.5 |
| Phosphor | All over |
| Gum | PVA |

**Charles Dickens Miniature Sheet** The Miniature Sheet is made up of four new first class inland letter rate stamps featuring illustrations by Hablot Knight Browne (aka Phiz) that were used to illustrate the original novels. Browne and Dickens met in 1836, when Dickens asked him to illustrate *The Pickwick Papers*. The creative partnership proved such a success that they worked together for 23 years, until the publication of *A Tale of Two Cities*, when Dickens felt that the mood of Browne's illustrations did not work well with the changing style of his writing.

The sheet's border carries a famous quotation from *Our Mutual Friend* by Charles Dickens: 'No one who can read, ever looks at a book, even unopened on a shelf, like one who cannot.'

Above: four illustrations by Hablot Knight Browne (1815-82) feature on the Miniature Sheet.
Below: the pictorial postmark featured on the Charles Dickens Coin Cover




**Miniature Sheet, stamp by stamp** On the first stamp *Nicholas Nickleby* is shown giving Whackford Squeers a taste of his own punishment – caning. Squeers is the bullying headmaster of Dotherboys Hall school.

*Bleak House* is depicted by another illustration from Phiz that perfectly captures a moment in the novel. It is entitled Mrs Bagnet is Charmed with Mr Bucket.

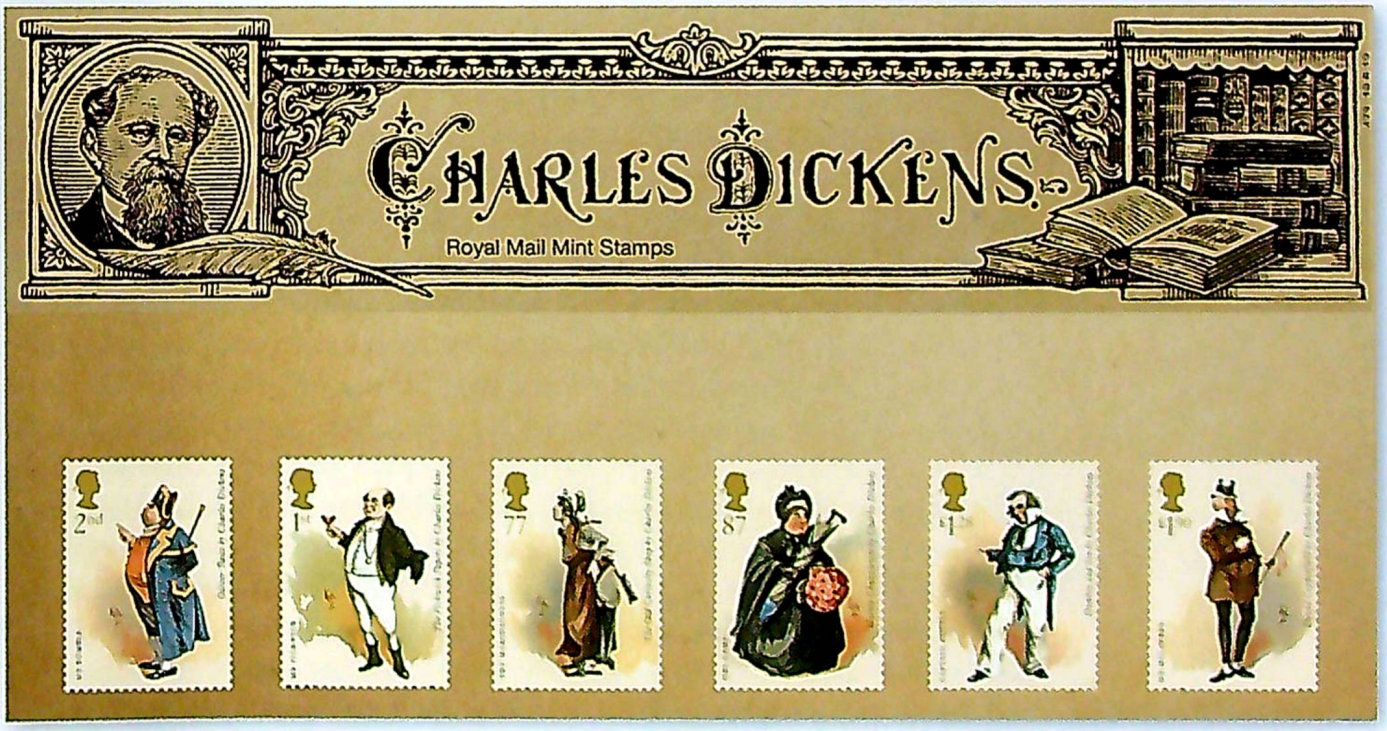
Early editions of *Little Dorrit* included the Phiz illustration on the third stamp of the Miniature Sheet, showing the moment when Dorrit introduces Maggy, the granddaughter of her old nurse, to Arthur Clennam outside Marshalsea Debtor's Prison.

On the final stamp is an illustration from *A Tale of Two Cities*. It depicts Charles Darnay being arrested by French revolutionaries.

**Dickens' great-great-great granddaughter's view** The lavishly illustrated Presentation Pack contains the six Charles Dickens stamps and the Miniature Sheet. Inside the pack, Lucinda Dickens Hawksley relates details of her great-great-great grandfather's life.

A separate illustrated carrier bears a map of London, with notes explaining the significance of various locations in Dickens' work and life. These include his boyhood home in Lant Street, Southwark and Wellington




Street in Covent Garden, where the offices of Dickens' magazines were located. The Presentation Pack is designed by Interabang and printed by Walsall Security Printers.

**Charles Dickens Covers** The First Day Cover Envelope was designed by Interabang. The envelope is printed by Dobson and Crowther Ltd and the filler card was designed by Interabang. As an alternative to the Tallents House, Edinburgh postmark, a pictorial Portsmouth postmark will also be available, chosen because Portsmouth was the birthplace of Charles Dickens.

Orders for Serviced First Day Covers have to reach Royal Mail by 19 June 2012. Customers may also send stamped envelopes on the day of issue to Royal Mail, Tallents House for the Tallents House, Edinburgh postmark •

Top: Chares Dickens Coin Cover reminds us of the importance of pen and ink in Dickens' time

Above: Charles Dickens Presentation Pack, with fascinating reading inside

# **Stamp Scene** John Holman reports on recent and forthcoming events

**Society anniversary** The Southampton & District Philatelic Society celebrates its 80th birthday this month. A birthday party will be held at the afternoon meeting on 10 May, followed by the annual competitions and a display of items from the Society's archives on 15 May. On 29 May Ian Shapiro will display 'Royal Family and Household Postal History'. For details of the Society contact Jack Hindson on 0238 0266431, email jackhindson@waitrose.com •

Above: Happy birthday Southampton & District – 80 this month

**Society meetings** There are two meetings of the Royal Philatelic Society London this month. On 10 May Patrick Flanagan presents 'The Rhodesias: The Early Explorers to Independence', followed on 24 May by 'The King's Other Head', a display by the Society's President Brian Trotter about the evolution of the George V 'King's Head' postage stamp and postal stationery of South Africa. Visitors are welcome at the meetings, at 41 Devonshire Place, London W1, by prior arrangement with the Administration Office on 020 7486 1044.

At the National Philatelic Society meeting on 12 May, Cdr George Gibson will talk on 'Travels with a Donkey – 25 Years in the Royal Navy'. The display at 2.45pm is preceded by an auction (for members only) at 12.50pm. NPS meetings are held at the Phoenix Centre, alongside the BPMA building in London (address on page 271). A 'country' meeting will be held at the Priory Centre in York on 23 June. For details of NPS membership and activities write to National Philatelic Society, c/o BPMA, Freeling House, Phoenix Place, London WC1X 0DL, phone 020 7239 2571, or email nps@ukphilately.org.uk.

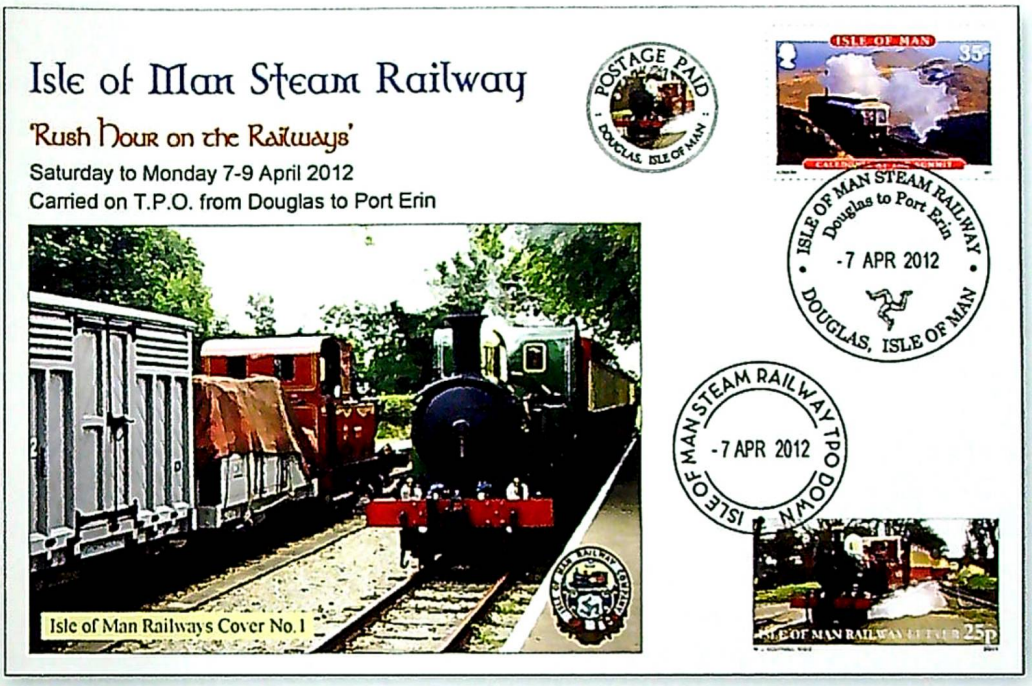
The GB Philatelic Society, founded in 1955, is the main society for collectors of GB stamps, especially pre-Elizabeth II issues. At the next meeting, at the Royal Philatelic Society London, 41 Devonshire Place, London W1, on 19 May, Ian Harvey will display 'Booklet Production and Promotion – Four Kings' and Philip Mackay will present 'GB Postal History & Line-Engraved to 1870'. The meeting starts at 11am. The Society is planning a special 'George V' meeting at Autumn Stampex on 29 September. For details contact Peter Tanner, 13 St Hubert's Close, Gerrards Cross, Bucks SL9 7EN or visit www.gbps.org.uk •

Below: Sir Cyril Humphrey Cripps (1915-2000), whose collection has caused a stir in a series of sales at Spink



**Forthcoming auctions** Spink auctions the George V section of the GB collection of Sir Cyril Humphrey Cripps on 3 May. In February a reunited block of 12 (4 & 8) of Plate 1 2d Blue from the collection sold for £420,000 (including buyer's premium). Enquiries: phone 020 7563 4074 or visit www.spink.com.

Cavendish's auction on 13-14 June includes some fine GB and British Empire material, as well as the John Whiteside collections of European and China Inflation Period issues, Danzig postal history, and Afghanistan adhesives. Auction catalogues will be available online at www.cavendish-auctions.com. You can also contact Cavendish at 153-157 London Road, Derby DE1 2SY or by phoning 01332 250970 •




**Railway stamps** Isle of Man railway letter stamps were used on four special covers last month. The stamps were first issued by the Isle of Man Steam and Manx Electric Railways in August 2011. The two covers, bearing the Manx Electric Railway stamps, marked the reintroduction of the railway letter service on the Snaefell Mountain Railway. The covers bear an MER 25p stamp tied by a Snaefell Summit Station handstamp, Isle of Man postage stamps cancelled by a Snaefell Mountain Railway, Laxey datestamp, and 'Snaefell Summit' and 'Carried from Summit to Laxey' cachets. Two covers were carried from Douglas to Port Erin and Port Erin to Douglas during the Easter weekend on the Isle of Man Steam Railway's 'Rush Hour on the Railways' event (see above). The railway stamps are cancelled by TPO datestamps and IOM postage stamps by an Isle of Man Steam Railway, Douglas postmark. All four covers can be ordered at £4.75 each from Ramsey Philatelic Services, 5 Windsor Road, Ramsey, Isle of Man, IM8 3EG. Email mikesouthall@manx.net or boomland@manx.net •

**Island stamps** A new Lundy issue, scheduled for May 2012, will feature scenes from the island's history from the 13th to the 20th century. The stamps are designed by Sarah Lewis, a student at Petroc School, winner of a Lundy stamp design competition. One of the five stamps will depict the Royal Family in front of the 'Old Light' (lighthouse) during their Silver Jubilee visit to the island in 1977. Enquiries: Lundy Post Office, Lundy, Bideford, Devon, EX39 2LY.

On 31 May the Summer Isles, off the north west coast of Scotland, issue stamps featuring flag designs for islands in the group: 15sg Eilean a Char, 30sg Cairn Deas, 35sg Tanera Mor, 60sg Carn Iar, 1PS Tanera Beg, and 2PS Eilean Fada Mor. They feature the work of Callum Innes, a noted contemporary artist. The Flag stamps will be available mint, CTO and on FDC. Enquiries: Summer Isles Philatelic Bureau, West Croftnuisk, Edradynate, Aberfeldy, Perthshire PH15 2JU. Further details of this issue will be given in a future *Bulletin* •

## Diary dates

### MAY

**9** Strand Stamp Fair, Royal National Hotel, Russell Square, London WC1. Enquiries: 020 8946 4480 or see www.stampshows.net

**11-12** Scottish Philatelic Congress, Dewar Centre, Perth

**19** Federation of South Wales Philatelic Societies Annual Convention at Princess Royal Theatre, Civic Centre, Port Talbot, 10am to 4.30pm. Admission 50p. Dealers in stamps, postcards, postal history and a children's activity area.

### JUNE

**8-17** Salon du Timbre, Paris

**9** Swinpex at St Joseph's Catholic College, Ocotal Way, Swindon, 10am to 4.30pm. Admission £1. About 50 dealers, specialist societies.

**13** Strand Stamp Fair, as above.

**18-24** Indonesia 2012 International Philately Exhibition, Jakarta

**22-23** Stafford Stamp Fair at Staffordshire County Showground, Stafford




Above: the 1s 9d Primrose and the 9d Dog Violet designs by Mary Grierson, from the Wild Flowers set issued on 24 April, 1967.
Below: Landscape set by Leonard Rosoman, issued on 2 May 1966. Also issued in alternative phosphor set




**Obituary** Two former stamp designers have recently died, both at a great age. Mary Grierson, who died in January, nine months short of her 100th birthday, designed the 9d and 1s 9d stamps in the 1967 British Flora issue. She was an internationally renowned botanical artist, and the resident artist at Kew until her retirement in 1972. She was awarded the Royal Horticultural Society's Victoria Medal of Honour in 1997.

Leonard Rosoman, who died on 21 February, aged 98, designed the 1966 Landscapes set – the first set of British 'special' as opposed to 'commemorative' stamps, in that they depicted British life but did not mark any particular event or anniversary. The four stamps show scenes in the four countries of the UK (see below left).

Rosoman was only the fourth designer to have his name printed at the foot of each stamp. This practice started with the Post Office Tower stamps in 1965, designed by Clive Abbott, and finished with the Concorde stamps in 1969. The stamps were also the first to bear the cameo head of The Queen (previous commemorative stamps included the Wilding head as shown on the definitive stamps). For more on this interesting issue see 'A major philatelic first' by James Mackay in the *Bulletin* of May 2006.

Rosoman was better known outside the philatelic world as the last of the official artists of the Second World War, and as a lecturer at the Royal College of Art where he taught David Hockney. Rosoman's works were exhibited in London and New York and can be seen in the National Portrait Gallery and the Imperial War Museum. He was elected to the Royal Academy in 1960 and appointed OBE in 1981.

Robin Startup, who also died in February, was an outstanding scholar of New Zealand philately and especially of the country's postal history. He was the author, or joint author, of over 60 books and monographs and over 90 other manuscripts and limited published works. He was Director of Administration of a hospital in New Zealand before he retired. While still at school Startup became interested in New Zealand postmarks and later the stories behind the post offices, their names, the carriage of mails and the postmasters.

Over many years he built up a major New Zealand postal history collection and undertook extensive research. He was Editor of the journal of the Postal History Society of New Zealand and signed the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists in 2009 •

**New catalogues** Among new catalogues recently published by Stanley Gibbons are the 16th edition of the GB Specialised Catalogue Vol. 1 Queen Victoria (£44.95), Australia (£27.95), Falkland Islands (£15.95), Western Europe Simplified (£37.95) and Part 5 – Czech Republic, Slovakia & Poland (£28.95). The 2012 edition of the popular GB Concise Catalogue is due out this month. Enquiries to Stanley Gibbons on 01425 472363 or email orders@stanleygibbons.com •

**BPMA moves to Calthorpe House** Plans for a new home for The British Postal Museum & Archive (BPMA) were recently announced by The BPMA, Royal Mail Group and the Department for Business, Innovation

and Skills. The new centre will be at Calthorpe House on London's Mount Pleasant site, where the country's oldest mail centre is located. It is close to the existing home of The BPMA at Freeling House in Phoenix Place, London, where space for exhibitions and displays is very limited. The new Postal Museum will provide far better access to The BPMA's unique collections of 400 years of postal, social and design history, including photographs, posters, vehicles, pillar boxes, employment records of millions of people and a world-class stamp collection.

The 'Post Office in Pictures' exhibition (held in Swindon last year) can now be seen at The Lumen, 88 Tavistock Place, London WC1 from 19 May to 31 August, open Monday to Friday 9am to 4.30pm. The BPMA's 'Post Office in the Community' exhibition is on permanent display at Blists Hill Victorian Town, Ironbridge, Shropshire (see page 283).

Readers unable to visit London or Ironbridge can view 25 online exhibitions on The BPMA website at www.postalheritage.org.uk •



This painting of a sail-powered mail packet by Captain Victor Hawes is one of several in The BPMA's collection portraying postal service modes of transport

## **This month in history** John Holman recalls the Queen's Silver Jubilee stamps

In May 1977 the Post Office issued four stamps to mark The Queen's Silver Jubilee. The colourful and pleasing designs, by Professor Richard Guyatt (1914-2007), who had previously designed the 2s 6d Parliament stamp of 1965, were reminiscent of those for George V's Silver Jubilee 42 years earlier. The main feature of the stamps was the inclusion of a new head of The Queen set within an octagonal frame flanked by the Royal cipher 'ER'. At first glance the designs appear the same, but a closer look reveals differences in the decorations within the silver initials of the cipher.

The stamps were clearly inscribed 'SILVER JUBILEE' at top, with the dates '1952 1977' at base, and each printed in five colours by Harrisons. Owing to an increase in the first class letter rate, a 9p value was added to the set on 15 June. Supplies of the stamps remained on sale at post offices for longer than normal for use on mail during The Queen's Jubilee Tour of the country. The Post Office produced souvenir covers in four designs for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, for use with special postmarks in 24 cities and towns on the Tour, from 17 May to 11 August. For some collectors these Tour covers are more interesting than the FDCs for the stamps. The Post Office also issued a souvenir book as well as the usual presentation pack and stamp cards.




All five stamps are known imperf although no missing colour errors are recorded. Quantities sold ranged from 17.7 million of the overseas rate 13p value to nearly 74 million of the 8½p first class UK stamp. Supplies of the 13p stamp sold out prior to the withdrawal date in May 1978.

For more information on this issue see article in the *Bulletin* of May 1977 •

# A cut above

## Four of the iconic British designers featured in this month's new stamp issue continue to influence fashion across the world today. We explore what makes them great




Above: the Paul Smith stamp from this month's new set. 'It is a real honour to be included in the Great British Fashion stamps. I think they look fantastic,' says Paul. Below: stamps designed by Paul Smith for London 2012 Olympic Games Isle of Man Stamp Collection







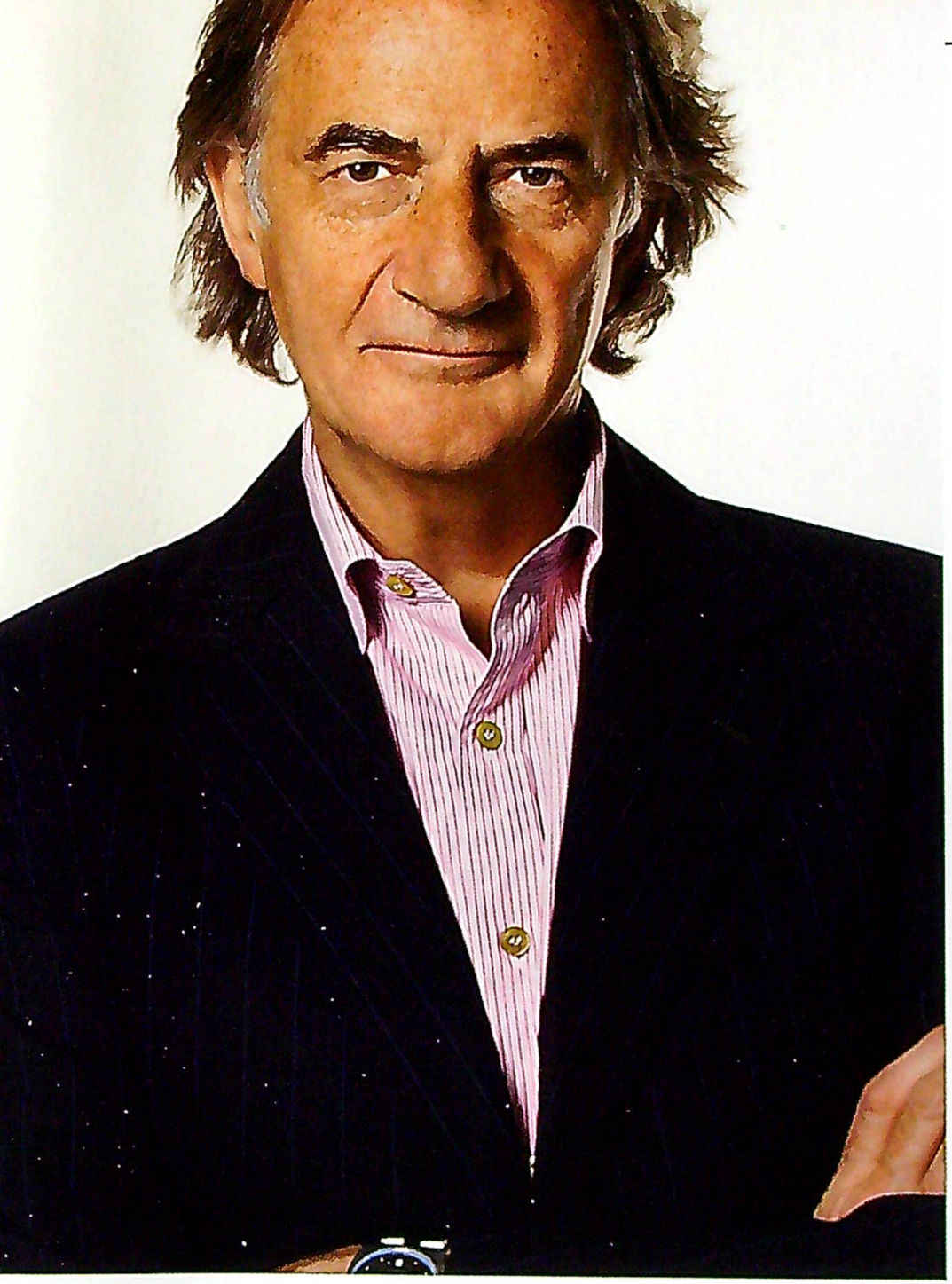
THE TALL, SPARE FIGURE of Sir Paul Smith CBE strides the globe, his business empire stretching from New York to Tokyo via his home town of Nottingham. Japanese kids love his jeans. Style-savvy city boys (and girls) from Threadneedle Street to the Frankfurt bourse sport his legendary, beautifully tailored suits. Rock stars have partied in Smith's designs for 30 years. Mick Jagger still pops into Smith's Covent Garden studio for a chat.

The Paul Smith style is 'classic with a twist': jackets in smart charcoal and navy but with vivid green, purple or pink linings; crisp white shirts with the inside of the cuffs cheekily patterned in multi-coloured stripes. And his range extends way beyond the signature suits. Paul Smith also designs casual wear, women's separates, pens, perfume, luggage and rugs. Philatelists might particularly appreciate the emblem of a map made up of postage stamps, which adorns a range of Paul Smith wallets, flight bags and skirts.

'I have always liked stamps,' Paul explains. 'They represent so many things that I'm interested in – design, travel, colour – so I have used them in prints on bags and small accessories.' This interest in stamps has led to Smith's recent commission to design the Isle of Man Olympic Stamp Collection: 'Many people know about my love for sport, particularly cycling. Also, the Olympic cyclist Mark Cavendish is a good friend of mine and he's from the Isle of Man. I worked on the stamp designs for a year because the job was quite complicated – including the design of the display packs. I love designing items for products outside of my field, as it's very challenging and exciting.'

Despite the multi-million pound turnover and knighthood, Sir Paul remains admirably grounded. And unlike normal multi-millionaires he has kept his sense of humour. While his PR people brand his style 'classic with a twist', he likes to call it 'Savile Row meets Mr Bean'. To his staff, he is simply 'Smithy' – to his face too. Indeed Smith, now 65, is no egomaniacal fashionista. He talks about 'clothes' in the office, never 'fashion'. And his career in fashion was an accident. Literally. As a teenage bike racer he dreamed of becoming a pro but a cycling smash at 17 put him in hospital for six months and destroyed his budding career. It was a huge blow for the young Smith, but Northern grit and pure talent has kept him stylishly in the saddle ever since.

**Smithy's CV** *1970* First Paul Smith shop opens in Nottingham. It's only 12ft square. *1976* Smith's first Paris show. *1993* First women's collection launched. *2000* Knighted for services to British fashion. **Paul says** *On business:* 'The reason I've been successful is because I know that VAT means Value Added Tax, not vodka and tonic.' *On judging books by their covers:* 'I don't care what people wear. If







Main picture: the wild hair, rumpled face and suit cut to perfection that is Paul Smith. Above: two items from the Stamped Objects Exhibition, which has attracted worldwide interest and participation

a person is nice and has good manners, I couldn't give a damn if he's wearing a shellsuit.' *On celebrity designers:* 'I wouldn't bring in a celebrity to work at Paul Smith in a million years. Actually, make that a trillion.' **Heroes** Yves St Laurent, Coco Chanel. **Shops** 14 Paul Smith stores in the UK, over 200 in Japan. His ranges are sold in other stores in 35 countries. **Life is strange** For 20 years a secret admirer has posted Smith unwrapped objects with stamps stuck on them, including a scooter, a surfboard and a skull. Smith put them into his Stamped Objects Exhibition in 2009. Since he made a remark about rabbits bringing him luck, fans send him up to 20 bunnies a week. **Famous fans** Sam Cameron wore a Paul Smith wool suit on a visit to the Highland Games. Gary Oldman and Daniel Day-Lewis have been booted and suited in Smith for Oscar ceremonies. Smith has dressed Manchester United and a brace of Olympic cyclists. Bowie and Brian Ferry wear him. And a new generation of pop stars – Kasabian and Kaiser Chiefs included – are now wearing 'Smithy' •






Above: a Celia Birtwell print on an Ossie Clark dress features in this month's new stamp issue.
Top: an early Birtwell print – her designs have moved easily into the 21st century.
Main picture: Birtwell stands before her younger self in the Hockney painting *Mr And Mrs Clark And Percy*



OSSIE CLARK AND CELIA BIRTWELL were the king and queen of Sixties and Seventies British style. Elizabeth Taylor was a devotee. So was Twiggy. Ossie's exquisitely cut, sexy chiffon dresses made the world gasp. And the prints on them, designed by wife Celia, made them true legends.

The floral, feminine, nature-inspired patterns – with names like Mystic Daisy and Candy Flower – capture the new spirit of the age. Birtwell, David Hockney's muse, and Ossie famously star in Hockney's iconic painting Mr And Mrs Clark And Percy.

From a humble upbringing in Prestwich near Manchester, Birtwell became one of the world's most famous designers. And she is still a star at 71 (she and Clark divorced in 1974 and he died in 1996). The collection she designed for Topshop in 2006 sold out in just six minutes. In 2010 she launched a line of clothes and homewares at John Lewis. She moved into home textiles in the Eighties and has a studio in ever-cool Ladbroke Grove. Her fabrics hang in Claridge's and Dubai's uber-luxe Burj Al Arab. **Celia's CV** *1954* Studies textiles at Salford Technical College. *1959* Celia meets Ossie at a coffee bar in Manchester. *1965* They move into a flat in Notting Hill and start working together. *1970* Hockney paints that picture. *1984* Celia starts designing home fabrics. *2011* Awarded a CBE for services to fashion. **Celia says** *On being a teenager in Salford:* 'I remember my father walking behind me in the street because he was too ashamed to walk beside me in my white winkle-picker shoes.' *On still being trendy:* 'It's quite something to see a teenager wearing your dress on the Tube.' *On pensioner fashion:* 'I've seen people my age wearing vintage Ossie and thought, "Oh dear!" You can't wear frills and flutter past a certain age. You have to behave yourself and be a bit clever about your styling.' **Heroes** Coco Chanel, Sonia Rykiel. **Shops** Celiabirtwell.com sells vintage Clark and Birtwell clothes and her fabrics, wallpaper and soft furnishings. **Life is strange** Lifelong friend Hockney sends Celia iPad pictures of his curtains he's drawn from his bed. Percy the cat in Hockney's painting was actually called Blanche but the artist thought Percy sounded better. **Famous fans** Marianne Faithfull, Bianca Jagger, Jane Birkin, Paloma Picasso •

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ZANDRA RHODES likes her hair pink, her clothes all colours of the rainbow, eye make-up in the style of Cleopatra and necklaces the size of tank tracks. At 71 she is as striking as the clothes she designs.

Zandra's punk-to-hippy-and-beyond designs have delighted fans since the Seventies. She has dressed the famous, from Jackie O and Princess Diana to Freddie Mercury, Kate Moss and Kylie Minogue.

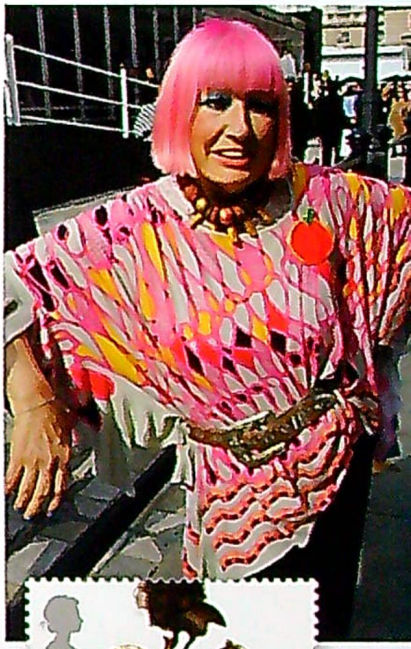


The latest Zandra Rhodes collection showed at this year's Paris Fashion Week – five decades after she graduated from the Royal College of Art. She has also created lines for Topshop and M&S, designed opera sets, and founded London's Fashion and Textile Museum.

**Zandra's CV** *1969* Launches first collection. *1997* Awarded CBE. *2003* Opens Fashion and Textile Museum. **Zandra says** *On being old:* 'I'll never stop dyeing my hair. I don't want to look like a grey-haired old lady.' **Shops** Designs sold in New York, Milan and St Tropez. **Life is strange** When Zandra was staying in Beverly Hills Diana Ross phoned at 3am asking to come over and try on her designs •

VIVIENNE WESTWOOD is fashion's eternal rebel with a cause. The original Queen of Punk, Westwood revolutionised couture with feisty fetish clothes as subversive as her attitude. These days the safety pins and rubberwear are behind her and her designs focus more on glam corset dresses. She uses her collections to promote causes – publicity around her spring/summer 2012 show champions the rainforest. She blogs on human rights too. Westwood, 71, has also written a pro-art, anti-consumerism manifesto featuring Pinocchio, Hitler and Aristotle. You just have to admire Viv's verve.

**Viv's CV** *1976* Designs for the Sex Pistols. *1981* First runway show Pirate launches New Romantic look. *1992* Awarded OBE. **Vivienne says** *On being a punk:* 'I was in rubber negligées and stilettos when other people were wearing denims and platforms. I knew I looked good.' **Hero** Julian Assange. **Shop** World's End, Chelsea. **Famous fans** Tracey Emin, Meryl Streep, Rihanna. **Life is strange** Westwood is a fan of Prince Charles's campaigns to halt climate change •

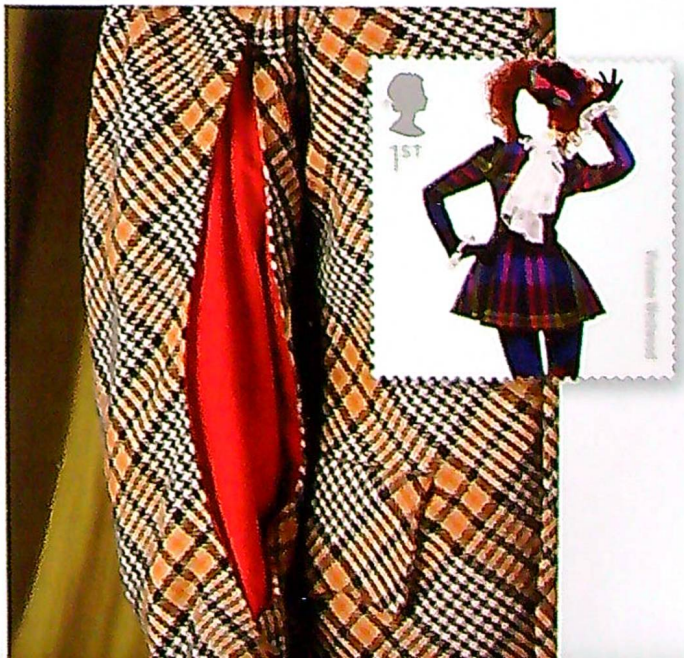





Above: the Great British Fashion issue features this elaborately pleated corset dress.
Top: Zandra Rhodes in the pink, totally.
Top left: Rhodes' response to the punk era

Below: the new stamp shows a typically Westwood take on tartan. Another Westwood signature style is traditional British fabric slashed to reveal brightly lined plackets.
Below left: Westwood at home on a public platform






© Victoria and Albert Museum, London © Richard Young /Rex Features

# **Another view** Douglas Myall looks at some recent issues

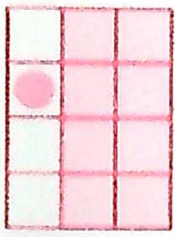
**Royal Mail's stamp-printing contracts** are periodically put out to tender and this can result in the same product being printed by more than one firm. The most recent example of this occurred in January when the contract for printing business sheets passed from De La Rue (DLR) to Walsall Security Print (WSP). As a result, the Jubilee definitive has been printed in this form by both firms. Business sheets contain 100 definitives in five panels in a concertina fold. The top panel contains a row of four stamps, the Royal Mail cruciform logo, a barcode and some text. Each of the other four panels has 24 stamps in three rows of eight. Every stamp has a hidden source code consisting of the letter B, for Business, somewhere in the iridescent overprint. On standard definitives, it replaces the A of MAIL just above the diadem but on the Diamond Jubilee stamp it replaces the O of DIAMOND just behind the hair bun. These features are the same on each printer's product but the stamps are not identical. Here's how to tell them apart.

Although Royal Mail requires all standard definitives to be printed as self-adhesives in gravure, each contracted printer has a different make of press. WSP acquired an American Chesnut press in 1997 and an account of it was published in the *Bulletin* of March that year. DLR has a French ATN press, originally acquired by Questa in 1998 and used at Byfleet. An account of this was published in the *Bulletin* in February and March 2000. Shortly after DLR acquired the firm in 2004, the press was moved to Dunstable.

DLR's Jubilee business sheet was printed on its ATN press on 5 December 2011 and issued on 6 February 2012. Walsall's Jubilee business sheet was printed on one of its Chesnut presses on 18 January and was first reported on 5 March. With a x10 glass (every serious philatelist must have one!) it is possible to differentiate the stamps from these presses. The easiest way is to look at the security cuts. Sometimes called 'paperclips' because of their shape, these are die cut ovals at the left and right sides of the stamps and are intended to provide some security against forgery. They are applied on press at the same time that the simulated perforations are cut. On DLR stamps the gap at the centre of the top and bottom curves is tiny, a mere dot. On WSP stamps it is a clear gap. Also, the DLR cuts are placed slightly higher than those from Walsall.

It so happened that the second class business sheet had to be re-printed on 19 January after the contract changed hands. Consequently, this stamp also exists from both printers and in this case it is easy to tell them apart. Another code hidden in the iridescent overprint on nearly all self-adhesive definitives consists of the last two digits of the year. This is almost invariably the year of printing and it changes whenever a reprint is made after the year's end. (It doesn't occur on Diamond Jubilee stamps, as they are intended to last only one year.)

The first year code was seen in January 2010 when the figure 10 replaced the letters IL of MAIL left of The Queen's forehead. Last year, it appeared as MA11 on some issues and as M11L on others. DLR's stamp with source code B has the year code M11L; WSP's has M12L. At the time of writing, the year code M12L has also appeared on Walsall's book of 12 x second class NVI and






Above: the grid on the left margin of counter sheets of the 76p with year code M12L suggests that £1.10 and £1.65 values have appeared with the same year code

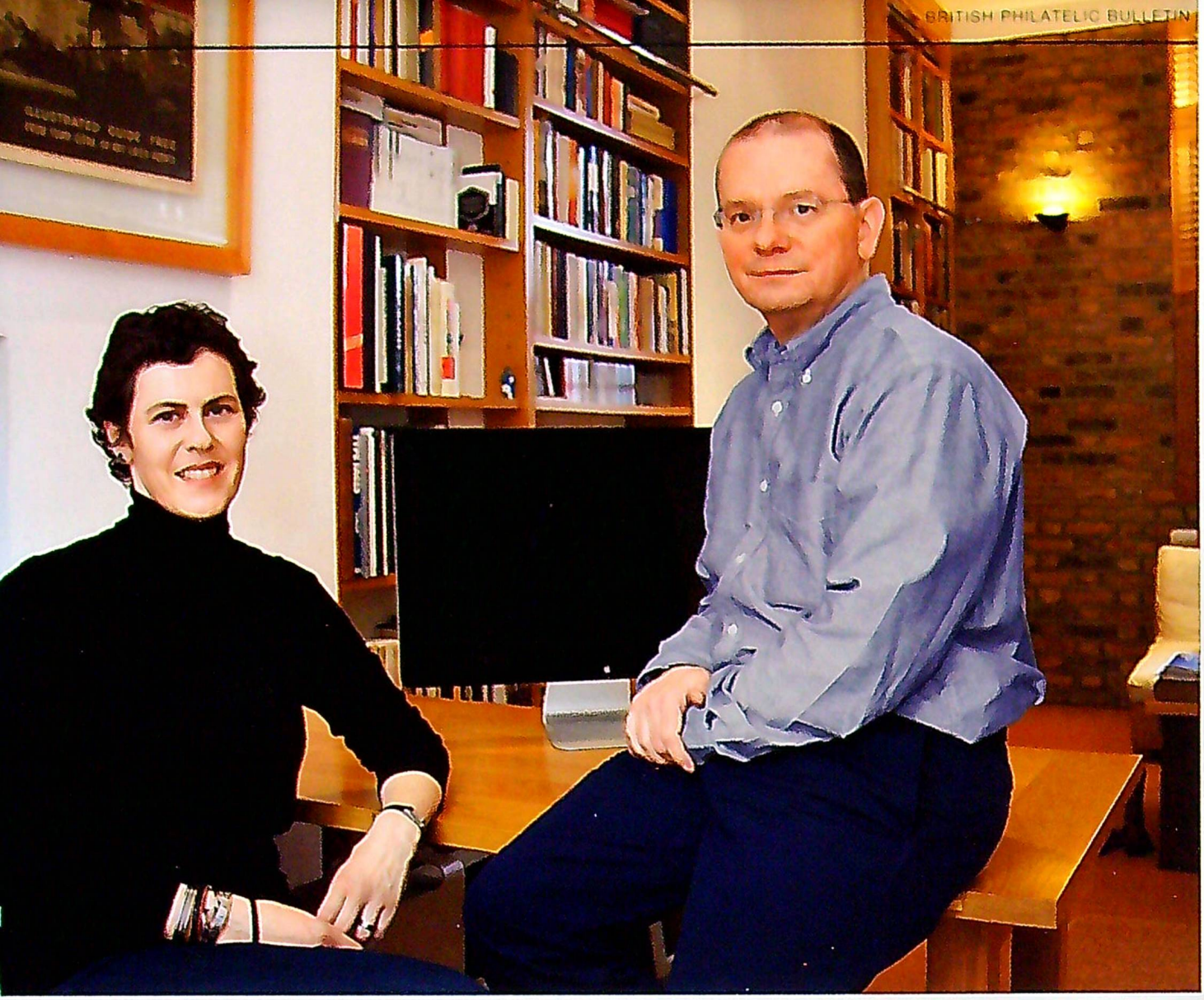
on DLR's counter sheets of 68p and 76p. The booklet stamp has the source code T (for Twelve) and now exists with year codes MA10, M11L and M12L. Counter sheets do not have source codes.

**The 76p from counter sheets** with year code M12L is particularly interesting. This value was printed by DLR and first issued on 29 March last year in accordance with tariff changes; it had the year code M11L. It was printed from a common set of cylinders along with the new £1.10 and £1.65 values. This can be seen from the grid box that appears in the left margin of each counter sheet of 25 stamps. This system indicates the original positions of counter sheets on the much larger printer's sheet which comprise 12 counter sheets. The grid shows 12 squares in three columns, with two of them 'greyed out'. The first column printed four counter sheets of the 76p; the second printed four counter sheets of the £1.10 and the third column did the same for the £1.65. It is likely, therefore, that the reprint also produced these two values with the new year code. Reports of their existence would be welcome. The same method was used to print the 2p, 5p and 20p but these are permanent make-up values and do not have an iridescent overprint.

There are further Jubilee definitives in the pipeline. The larger version for use on large letters will be issued soon and I hope to write about them when I have seen them. Later in the year, the smaller stamp will be issued in a book of six with source code S (for Six, naturally), code C (for Custom books that contain four definitives and two special issues) and code P (for Prestige book). From these you can compile a nice collection of Jubilee stamps.

Hidden codes indicating the source and printing year of definitives are not a ploy to get collectors to spend money. Indeed, they are not publicised and you cannot order them from Tallents House; they are for internal purposes only. That, of course, has never deterred us from wanting them. Indeed, it is all part of the pleasure of collecting Machins. Have fun! •

*The* Bulletin *team is delighted to welcome back Douglas Myall, by popular demand. Readers can once again look forward to his regular expert contributions.*



# Partners in design

## We catch up with designers Robert Maude and Sarah Davies, who live together, work together and share a passion for stamps

Above: Robert Maude and Sarah Davies in their North London studio, where the recent UK A-Z stamp issue took shape

SINCE HIS FIRST COMMISSION FROM Royal Mail in 1996 Robert Maude has become one of the UK's leading stamp designers. His first stamps, the Endangered Species series, were released in 1998, highlighting endangered flora and fauna. Four years later Robert designed the London Bridges stamps, working closely with his wife and partner Sarah Davies, who has since collaborated with him on the Aerial Post centenary stamps and the UK A-Z sets.

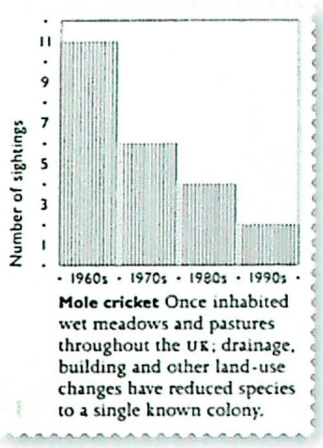
Robert was also responsible for the design of *Bulletin* for 14 years, until April 2010. Like many talented creatives, he claims that he just drifted into graphic design: 'I studied both illustration and design at college, because I didn't know what I was going to do when I finished the course.'

Robert studied at the Berkshire College of Art for three years, but before that, having come to live in the UK at the age of 18, he had experienced

Photograph: Geoff Dann

setbacks in getting into to art school. 'That was a tough time,' he remembers. 'My parents are English and were happy to be returning home from the States, whereas I had grown up in California. I had received offers from colleges in America, yet I found I couldn't get into art college in England. My qualifications were unheard of here and it felt rough to hear colleges saying they didn't want me. But my parents always encouraged me to choose a creative path and gave me confidence that everything would sort itself out.'




Above: Robert Maude's unadopted proposal for a graph on the reverse of the Endangered Species stamps, showing declining numbers of endangered species. Above left: an early proposal for the Brown Hare stamp. The background format was adopted but the hare was not used

So Robert took an enforced 'gap year' which proved a useful introduction to the world of typography and deadlines: 'When I saw an ad in a paper for a job in an art department, I didn't realise the 'art' meant paste-up and typesetting for a town centre printers. I got the job and sometimes I actually got to work the machines when the printers were having a smoke. I learned a lot about printing, typesetting and design in that really hyper-commercial way – as in "We need an illustration this afternoon", that kind of deadline. By the time I went to art college I understood time was important. I wasn't there just to hang around.'

**The lucky break** Nearing the end of his final year at art college, Robert was recruited by Pentagram, one of London's most influential design agencies.

'Paul Piech, an American printmaker, was a tutor of mine at college and we got on really well. He mentored me and helped me understand how the design industry worked. He knew Alan Fletcher [founding partner of Pentagram] and he managed to get me an interview with him in my last year at college. So I went down to the Pentagram offices in London, but Alan was out when I arrived and I met Mervyn Kurlansky, another partner, who just happened to be looking for help that same day. I had shown him a type sheet in my portfolio – with an upper and lower case alphabet, numerals and punctuation marks from 6pt to 72pt that I had traced at college – and he said, "I could use some of that now." I spent the rest of the day doing some detailed hand lettering of locations on a map of the world, and I ended up staying at Pentagram for a week or so. On the last day they gave me my train fares and asked me if I'd like to work there for a bit longer. I said yes if my college would allow it – I thought that taking work at Pentagram might stop me getting my qualifications! I just didn't know how prestigious Pentagram was. Of course, my college let me go and I finished my coursework in the evenings.'

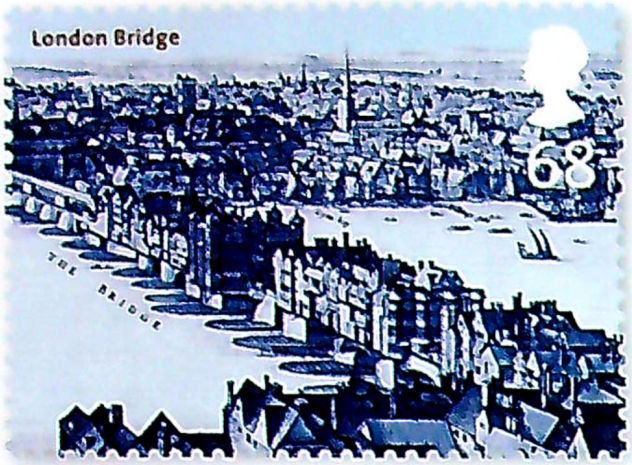
Meanwhile Sarah had been facing her own obstacles, as her school did not consider art as a serious subject for study. But a family friend recommended that she go to art school. Sarah's first two jobs after college were both with leading graphic designers – Michael Peters and Tor Pettersen – and her next move was to the publishers Collins & Brown.

**First steps towards stamps** Robert stayed with Pentagram for six years, then took the leap into freelance work in 1985. Sarah suggested he contact Royal Mail: 'Sarah and I would look at stamps and say, "Oh, that's beautiful." I ▸




In contrast to an earlier version of the Dormouse in its natural habitat (above), for the Endangered Species series Robert wanted to focus on the 'character' of each animal











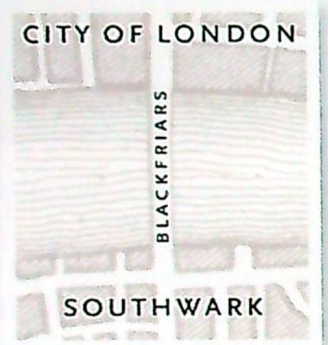







Above: London Bridges stamp series, the first that Robert and Sarah officially worked on together. Below: an early try for the Blackfriars Bridge stamp and a visual exploring the idea of a map to be micro-printed within the design




love the detail of distilling the design down to a tiny stamp size and we're both very interested in history. But I knew that Royal Mail must be overflowing with great designers. It was Sarah who kept on nudging me in that direction, until eventually I went to see them and was told that they needed someone to do a Presentation Pack at shortish notice, for Michael Wolff's 1996 Cartoons Greetings Stamps. So that was my first commission. And the next thing I knew they were asking me to redesign *Bulletin*.'

At that time Robert's portfolio included brochures and magazine work for his corporate clients. He had also redesigned WH Smith's entire range of diaries, and an in-house magazine for Reuters. Royal Mail was obviously impressed and decided that this typographical experience made him the right person to create a new-look *Bulletin*: 'I was asked to produce a dummy issue to meet the scheduled date for submission of artwork. I knew that other designers were also being considered for the work, and I was delighted to be chosen – although our first issue received a lot of criticism in letters from readers!'

Then, as now, the editorial team responded to readers' letters and it was decided to 'tone down' some of the most innovative aspects of the new design. The current *Bulletin* team was interested to hear that some 15 years ago the design brief for *Bulletin* held the same design challenge as today: Robert recalls, 'The brief was to broaden its appeal and to develop a magazine that would stand alongside other traditional collectors' magazines that you might see in a newsagent, rather than a philatelic journal for specialists that was available only by subscription. I was in favour of that because I didn't want to design some dry dusty old journal. I wanted to make it more interesting and maybe make it appeal to people who had a passing interest in the subject of the stamps and who then might be drawn into philately as well. I respect philatelists and the concerns that they have. I never wanted to disregard readers' preferences, although at the same time I had to follow the brief in aiming to broaden appeal.'

**Gathering experience** His 14 years designing *Bulletin* and working closely with the editor John Holman gave Robert valuable experience of the philatelic world: 'Over the years our heads became full of visual references while designing *Bulletin*, which really helps in our work now.'

When asked to name a favourite stamp, Robert says, 'I'm always bowled over

'Blackfriars Bridge and St Paul's' by William Marlow ©Guildhall Art Gallery, City of London

by the quality of the Victorian stamps. I don't think we could do those today. From a design point of view I admire the skill and intricacy of the Victorian engravers. Their stamps are just fantastic – absolutely beautiful!'

Although Robert and Sarah would discuss each other's design commissions and collaborate, the first stamps that they officially worked on together was London Bridges (see left).

'In the last ten years we've worked mostly on projects together,' Sarah recalls. 'Certainly since our daughter Alexandra was born I've not gone out to look for projects to run independently. And we always attend pitch and planning meetings together.'

Robert adds, 'We also do the research together and develop a shared idea of what the end result is going to look like. It may be that I put it together at the end of the day but that is a practical thing because I am quicker with the technology.' Sarah laughs on cue and says, 'But seriously, we have the same basic aesthetic taste. We might disagree over details and come to a compromise, but often it's about the kind of thing that doesn't matter to the client – we may have been arguing about options A and B and the client might prefer option C anyway.'

**The A-Z years** The couple's most recent stamp project was the UK A-Z Parts 1 and 2, which involved exceptionally lengthy pitching and planning processes to achieve a balance of region, country and character among the 26 famous landmarks beginning with each letter of the alphabet.

Sarah says, 'It was good to be involved at an early stage of a project. We were presenting ideas for the Aerial Post Centenary stamps at the Rathbone Place offices of Royal Mail when the UK A-Z issue came up in conversation. We mentioned that some years earlier we had done a research project which eventually led to the London Bridges issue, and this may be one reason we were considered for the A-Z stamps. Royal Mail naturally tends to see designers as suited to certain types of design, and I don't think they saw us as associated with the kind of big photographs that were involved.'

Robert continues, 'We were thrilled to be asked to do the UK A-Z issue. We love landscape photography. We buy it when we can, we have favourite landscape photographers whose work we will actively seek out and have done for years. Royal Mail didn't specify that we had to use photographs initially, but because we like landscapes we went for photography as the basis of the design options we first proposed.'




Above: Manchester Town Hall was chosen to represent the letter M in the UK A-Z Part 2 issue.

Below: Murrayfield Stadium was also a contender



Choosing the different locations had by no means been simple for Royal Mail. Stamps for adjacent letters were not to look similar – for example, there should not be two castles side by side. The stamps series also had to include a number of images representing Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales and England.

As Sarah remembers, 'A long time had been spent considering the list in terms of not just where the places were, but how they looked. Are there too many examples of any particular type of landmark? Or too few? By the time we got started on Part 2, we were able to have a bit more influence on the list of locations because we had been through the process once already with letters A-L.'

While the landmarks suggested by Royal Mail for the stamps were all iconic and popular, some turned out to be not very photogenic. Sarah recalls, ▸

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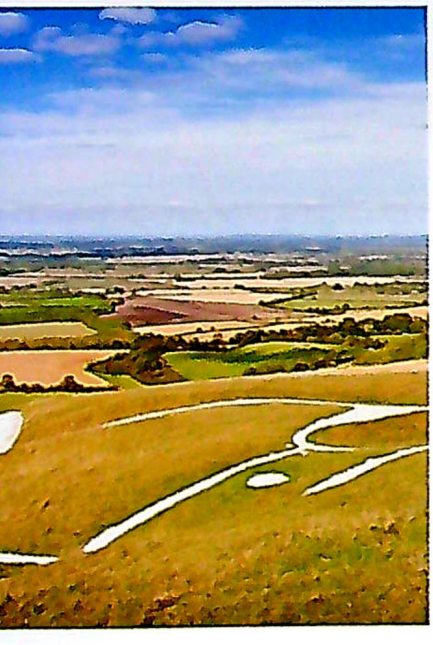
'Murrayfield Stadium was proposed for the letter M and we liked the idea of including the grand home of Scottish rugby. But in the end we weren't satisfied that photographs would do the stadium justice at stamp-size. So we suggested that Murrayfield be replaced by Manchester Town Hall, which would bring a beautiful Victorian civic building into the set. This was a practical solution, but it meant that we now had to find somewhere else in Scotland.'

Robert came up with Urquhart Castle, on the banks of Loch Ness and one of Scotland's most visited sites, and this in turn solved the problem of the original proposal for the letter U: 'The Uffington White Horse was a great location to photograph from above,' Robert explains, 'but we couldn't suddenly use an aerial shot when everything else had been taken at eye level. So some great locations had to be ruled out because they didn't fit the overall design approach.'

**A leap of faith** In commissioning the photographs for the UK A-Z series, Robert and Sarah worked with leading landscape photographers Joe Cornish, David Noton and Charlie Waite. Each photograph was to show the landmark at eye level, from the perspective of an approaching visitor. Robert explains: 'This was a wonderful opportunity to work with top photographers whose work we admire. Charlie Waite was abroad when we asked him, but he still sent us an email straight back saying yes.




Above: this inviting shot of Urquhart Castle took over the 'U' stamp when the Uffington White Horse, below, proved unsuitable for an eye-level photograph



'The difficulty with this kind of landscape shot is that the photographer generally only gets one crack at it: if the weather was bad, we couldn't pay for him to stay there for a week until the sky cleared! You put yourself totally in the hands of these photographers, you trust their portfolio, you trust in their professionalism. But it's a leap of faith – until the work starts to come in you can't be sure.'

The couple recall enjoying a well-earned break in Southwold, sitting on the beach and trying not to worry about the weather that David Noton might be experiencing in Wales. Robert remembers, 'David sent his photo of Harlech Castle to Sarah's mobile phone. We heard the phone bleep and looked at it together – it was such a beautiful shot and we had that feeling – *yes*, this is going to work, it's going to be a lovely stamp set!'

Sarah says, 'That was a memorable moment. I still feel it's a tremendous privilege to be able to work with Royal Mail and have the opportunity to work with the best people – like Catharine Brandy [Design Manager at Royal Mail] and her colleagues – and with our favourite photographers and illustrators. It's just marvellous to be able to call upon such a wealth of talent and for them to say, "Yes I would love to" immediately.'

We asked Robert what was the best piece of design advice he had ever been given and he told us, 'Never take yes for an answer. That is something I always remember being told by John Gorham – a graphic designer and illustrator I met when I was at Pentagram and admired very much. He told me to keep on working at a design… take it into the client and if the client says, "Yes, that's fine", take it away and keep on working on it. Take it to the client again and if they say, "I thought we agreed this!", then you say, "Yes, but we've improved it." We keep that advice in mind and follow it whenever we can. If we think we can improve something we'll keep refining it until the time runs out' •






# **Blists Hill Post Office, Ironbridge** First in our series of UK exhibition venues that make philately and postal history fun for all the family

STANDING AT THE WOODEN COUNTER, postmistress Lynne Whitehead has a friendly welcome for all who enter the Post Office on Canal Street, Blists Hill. She enjoys answering all manner of questions and talking about Rowland Hill to anyone who cares to ask the identity of the gentleman in the framed portrait on the shelf behind her. It is easy to imagine Lynne as a near contemporary of Hill's, as she evidently shares his enthusiasm for the postal service.

No modern-day Post Office, this. We are visiting a charming reconstruction of a Victorian Post Office at the Blists Hill Victorian Town site, which is populated by 'staff demonstrators' like Lynne, in period costume. It is one of the ten family-friendly Ironbridge Gorge Museums in Shrophshire. To cross the threshold of the Post Office is to step back 100 years, to the time when philately was in its infancy and when the local Post Office was an important focal point of the community – a place to pick up local news and perhaps a little gossip as well as dealing with postal business. To many *Bulletin* readers, the original fittings at Blists Hill will stir childhood memories, as the wooden counters and shelves built by the Victorians lasted for three generations or so in many areas. But to youngsters this is another, ancient and computerless world.

Above: Lynne Whitehead as postmistress.
Top left: Blists Hill Post Office on Canal Street.
Below: a photograph from the BPMA exhibition of postman William Gates, who received four 'good conduct stripes' for exemplary service between 1872 and1914



**A stroll through history** The replica Victorian Post Office and the contemporary exhibition in the rooms above it were opened in 2009, having been developed by The British Postal Museum & Archive (BPMA) in a joint venture with the Ironbridge Gorge Museums Trust (IGMT). A £126,000 grant from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Wolfson ▸

Foundation helped in the building of an entire new street. So now visitors can turn off Blists Hill High Street into Canal Street, which features a drapers, sweet shop, photographers and – handily just opposite the Post Office – a fried fish dealers (they were not called fish and chip shops until later). All of these premises have been carefully reconstructed to appear as they might have done in the late Victorian or early Edwardian period. Traditional goods are sold by costumed staff who are also able to answer questions from visitors about the various shops and workshops, as well as about everyday life between 1890 and 1910. Lynne Whitehead also works in the Duke of Sutherland Cotttage and the chemist's shop, where she has become an expert in the use of cyanide to treat gangrene.

In creating the authentic detail of the Blists Hill Post Office, The BPMA and the Museum's Project Team consulted a file from the Royal Mail archive on the Post Office that was once in Shifnal, a nearby market town (see February 2012 *Bulletin*). Period shop fittings were sourced from around the country, including the authentic counter and the sorting office equipment. Such is the attention to detail that even the bricks and window frames were specially commissioned. A period fireplace and bentwood chairs welcome visitors to the stationery section, where we sat down to write a few postcards.



Above: part of The BPMA's The Post Office in the Community, an exhibition in the rooms above Blists Hill Victorian Town's Post Office

**The Museum of the Post Office in the Community**

The stairs behind the Post Office take visitors back into the modern world on the first floor, where a permanent exhibition produced by The BPMA explores The Post Office in the Community, from its beginnings with the General Post Office and letter-receiving houses of 17th-century London to the present day. There are informative displays on the evolution of counter services and methods of mail delivery, showcasing a variety of items from the Royal Mail Archive and Museum Collection of visual, physical and written records of 400 years of postal history. On our visit these included an 1871 telegram, a 1935 decorated telegram, a radio licence from 1941 and a dog licence dated 1911. Objects are periodically refreshed and displays changed.

Visitors can sit down in booths and don headphones to listen to sound recordings from real postal workers of the past. For example, John Nicholas talks about being a telegram messenger at the age of 14, Mark Aiken recalls a rural Post Bus in the 1970s and Rob Jones remembers being attacked by dogs on his rural delivery route. An interactive display is based around the development of the design elements of Penfold pillar boxes.

Other intriguing items include a replica of the Pentacycle, also known as the Hen and Chickens. This experimental five-wheel bicycle was invented and patented in 1882 by Edward Burstow, an architect from Horsham. When the Horsham delivery service tried out the pentacycle, postal workers supported their local inventor and wrote to Mr Burstow praising its performance. Less favourable reports were received elsewhere, however, describing excessive wear

on postmen's trousers, discomfort on cobbled streets and perilous performance on tight corners. The Post Office decided against its general use.

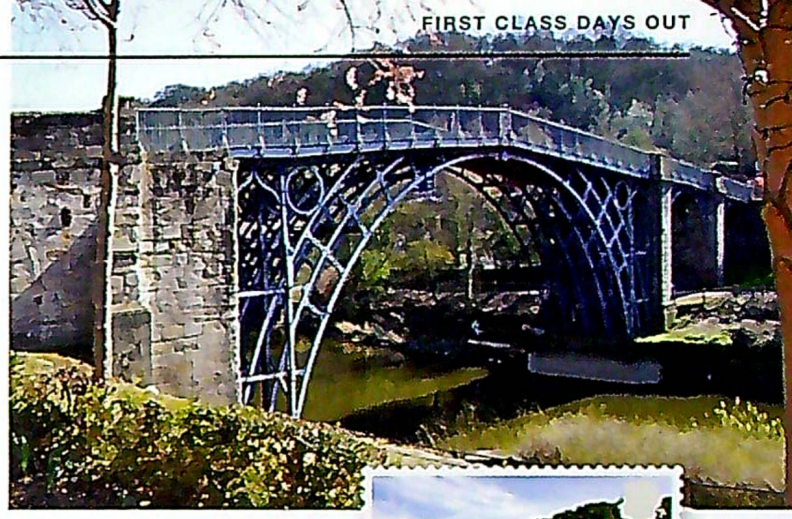
**Beyond Canal Street** Although a whole afternoon can happily slip away on Canal Street, it is just one part of the Victorian Town experience, and we don't have enough space here to itemise the many attractions on the adjacent High Street. We particularly enjoyed a demonstration of Henry Smith Cropper's printing press (invented in 1860), but Blists Hill has something to appeal to most people's interests – horses, a fairground, an iron foundry, wood-turning and, importantly, a good choice of places to eat, with the option of learning to sing a rousing Victorian song along with groups of schoolchildren in the charming Victorian public house.

**The Ironbridge Gorge** In addition to Blists Hill Victorian Town site, the Ironbridge Gorge offers no fewer than nine other family-friendly museums, all well worth a visit. The Gorge cuts through Shropshire along the course of the Severn river and is a region of great natural beauty. But 200 years ago it was a hive of industry and the most industrialised region on earth.

It was the development of coke production in the area that helped kick-start the Industrial Revolution. The nearby blast furnace of Coalbrookdale, built in 1708, has been preserved, along with many of the mines, factories, warehouses, workers' housing and the transport infrastructure that rapidly followed its success. At the heart of the Gorge is the village of Ironbridge, which takes its name from the famous Iron Bridge (pictured above), the first cast iron arch bridge in the world. Spanning the deep river gorge, the Iron Bridge is 30 metres wide and was built near the Darby family foundry between 1777 and 1779. It allowed easier movement of materials and labour to increase metal production in the region and quickly became a symbol of innovation and progress.

In recognition of this unique heritage, Ironbridge Gorge was among the first sites in England to be awarded UNESCO's World Heritage status in 1986. Today the Iron Bridge and the Ironbridge Gorge are known throughout the world as symbols of the Industrial Revolution that heralded some of the most far-reaching changes in human history •

*For details about visiting Blists Hill Post Office, phone 01952 433424 or see the Ironbridge Gorge Museums information leaflet at www.ironbridge.org.uk/plan_your_visit. Resources for children are downloadable from www.postalheritage.org.uk. Visitors who are registered disabled have a 50% discount on entry prices.*






Above: the Iron Bridge at Ironbridge in the recent UK A-Z series Part 1 and, below, on the 1989 Industrial Archaeology Miniature Sheet and an attractive cover. The Iron Bridge also appeared on a Swedish-style folded stamp book of 1979, in an illustration by Norman Battershill






# Collecting British First Day Covers

## John Holman reviews the 2012 edition of Adrian Bradbury's comprehensive catalogue




THE LATEST, 31ST EDITION OF 'Collecting British First Day Covers' has been published by Adrian Bradbury. The catalogue lists all first day covers that have been produced for all Royal Mail stamps and is widely regarded as a major reference work on the subject of British first day covers. Printed in colour throughout, all types of first day covers (FDCs) and postmarks are listed in an easy-to-follow format. The illustrations are necessarily small and are intended to give a general overview of what is available. More illustrations – some 30,000 – are featured online at www.bfdc.co.uk, a website which offers an excellent research resource for use in conjunction with this book.

The General Notes on page 1 answer the most common questions about the hobby of collecting first day covers, including a useful explanation of the distinction between first day covers and commemorative covers (also known as souvenir covers) – a common area of confusion for new collectors.

The main body of the book consists of first day covers for commemorative stamps, listed in date order, up to and including covers with the 2011 Christmas issue. The various types of definitive covers are included in a separate section at the end of the catalogue, which has been formatted for easy reference. Sub-sections of definitive covers include Stamp Books, Prestige Stamp Books (PSBs), Regionals and Varieties (covering changes to perforations, papers and phosphors), with many of the special postmarks and covers illustrated. The prices quoted in the catalogue should be treated as a guide only, for good, clean covers carrying the full set of stamps.

Prices for special handstamps are presented in a two-column price structure – i.e. prices for ordinary (or commercial) covers (e.g. Stuart, Royal Mail, Cotswold etc) and for the official (or sponsored) cover. There are also detailed listings of relevant Circular Date Stamps (CDS) and Slogan Postmarks on first day covers. With thousands of special handstamps detailed in this catalogue, there are far too many to illustrate. However, for each commemorative stamp issue there are now comprehensive online files illustrating all of the handstamps which were available for each issue – these can be downloaded free from the resources section of Adrian Bradbury's website at www.bfdc.co.uk/postmarks.



Above and below: cover and typical pages from the 2012 edition of *Collecting British First Day Covers*

The catalogue is available through all good stamp shops. However, in case of difficulty, send £20 (includes postage) to the publisher: A G Bradbury, 3 Link Rd, Stoneygate, Leicester LE2 3RA, or order online at www.bfdc.co.uk (Stock Code 37923). At the beginning of his foreword, Adrian Bradbury apologises in advance for the 'hike in price' for this edition, but its devotees will appreciate that, given its increase in size and scope, the price increase is clearly justified •

# **Prize draws** May your grey matter blossom



**Identify and Knowledge**

**1** *Identify* the stamp from the detail, right, with its name and year of issue. Clue: it portrays a Dickens novel.

**2** Test your *Knowledge*:

**a)** The first Penny Black was sold on 1 May, in what year?

**b)** A May Morris embroidery features in this year's Britons of Distinction special stamp issue. What kind of tree is embroidered?

**c)** Which of this month's Great British Fashion stamps features the work of two iconic designers?

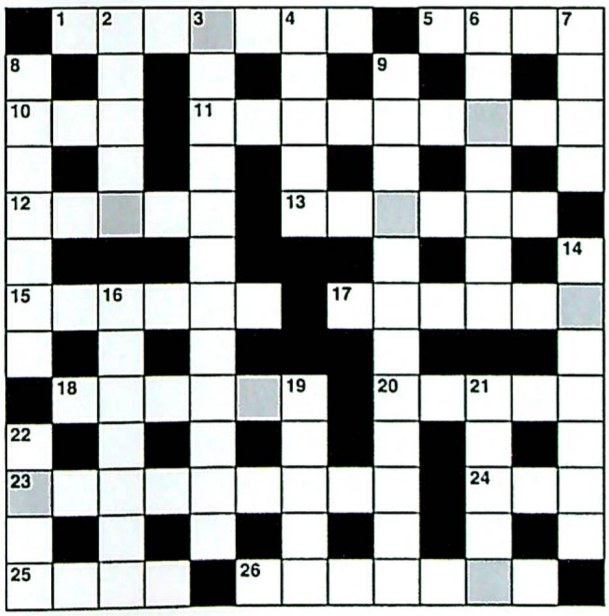
**How to enter** Send your answers, marked 'May Identify' and/or 'May Knowledge', to: Bulletin Prize Draws, Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB.

**Closing date:** 1 June 2012. Senders of the first five correct entries drawn for each puzzle after the closing date win the Great British Fashion issue •

**March solutions and winners** *Identify*: Hare stamp, The Four Seasons Wintertime, 1992. Winner: D Squires, Warrington. *Knowledge*: a) Dorothy Wilding portrait. b) Greetings Stamp 1990. c) Kate Stephens. Winner: J Bruce, Alford. *Crossword* Across: 11 Tally-ho. 5 Ha-ha. 10 Ali. 11 Announcer. 12 Haiti. 13 Yeomen. 15 Allege. 17 Stayer. 18 Imbibe. 20 Email. 23 Patchouli. 24 Own. 25 Soda. 26 Reality. Down: 2 Alibi. 3 Leading light. 4 Honey. 6 Alchemy. 7 Awry. 8 Fathead. 9 Run of the mill. 14 Praline. 16 Limited. 19 Exude. 21 Afoot. 22 Opts. Solution: Phosphor. Winner: JD Sparham, Margate




**Cryptic 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, to 'May Crossword' at the address above. The first three correct entries drawn after 1 June win the James Bond Souvenir Sheet



**CLUES ACROSS**

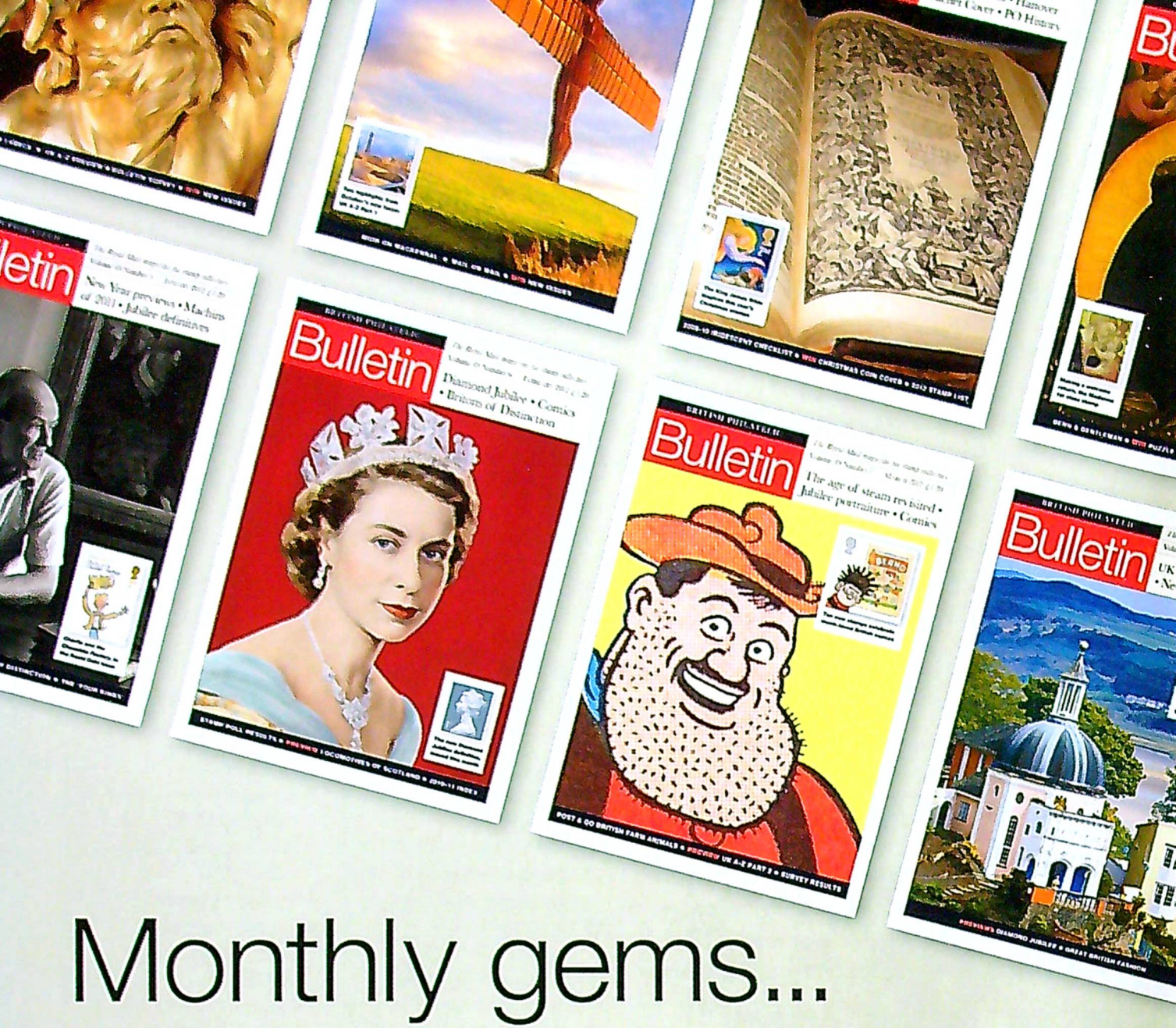
**1** Replace bottle containing dummy drug (7)
**5** Make progress without head in college (4)
**10** Posh navy vessel (3)
**11** Find recent health resort through *The Times*, perhaps (9)
**12** T-torn river (5)
**13** Informer isn't disturbing church (6)
**15** Small pieces of bread – crikey! (6)
**17** Sea mammals in the country, we hear (6)
**18** Part of New York where Mahler composed (6)
**20** Nuisance with old Italian sauce (5)
**23** Poorly made Roman notes (9)
**24** Unfashionable to be away from home (3)
**25** Number of French is swelling (4)
**26** Surprise with a noise when holding end of foot (7)

**CLUES DOWN**

**2** Thrust forward and dive, losing head (5)
**3** Scam run by coastal police (12)
**4** Pitches for game (5)
**6** Current change of second letter is normal (7)
**7** Geek some winner? Doubtless! (4)
**8** Only diamonds get fair treatment (7)
**9** Honest instrument? (7,5)
**14** Costers attacked chaperones (7)
**16** Shifting dune engulfs limb that's unprotected (7)
**19** Makes money with sweets (5)
**21** Wife shortly about to pass out (5)
**22** Sign of no soldiers? (4)

**Prize draw rules and regulations**

1 The closing date is 1 June 2012. 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 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.




# Monthly gems...

**2012 is a momentous year** for stamps, marking national celebrations that attract worldwide attention: the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II, London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and the bicentenary of one of our most famous writers, Charles Dickens.

*Bulletin* gives readers advance information about new UK stamp issues and details of their design and historical background, as well as regular updates on definitive stamps and the wider world of philately. We hope you agree that £1.20 is a low price for a 32-page journal, and we would much prefer to gain more subscribers than have to increase the price.

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Royal Mail

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