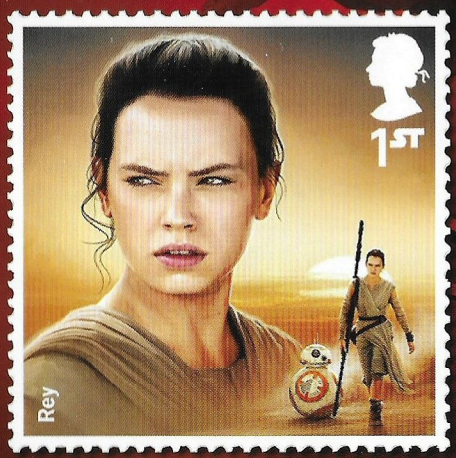
BRITISH PHILATELIC

Bulletin

The magazine for collectors of UK stamps

VOLUME 53 NUMBER 2 | OCTOBER 2015 | £1.95

Post & Go news • The 1890 Jubilee • Penny Black labels





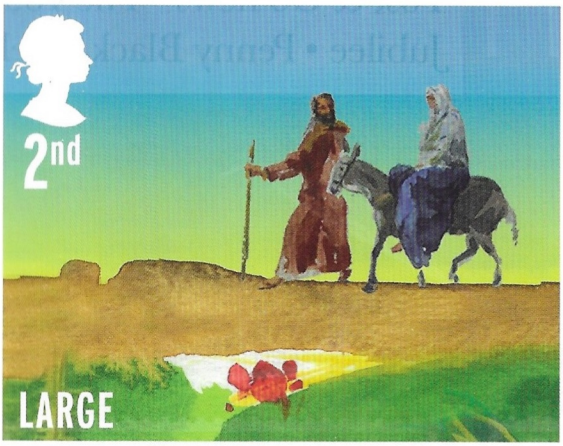
STAR WARS™

©&™ Lucasfilm Ltd.

An epic new stamp issue celebrates *Star Wars*™ films

JOHN HOLMAN STAMP SCENE • CHRISTMAS SPECIALS • LUNAR NEW YEAR MONKEY BUSINESS

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● **Royal Mail Editor** William Doherty, Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB ● **Publishing Editor** Kate Shaw, HMS President (1918), Victoria Embankment, London EC4Y 0HJ ● Price £1.95 from Post Office Ltd philatelic outlets or by order from Post Office branches ● **Annual subscription** £18.95 UK and Europe; £24.95 rest of world. Send subscriptions to Royal Mail Tallents House (address above) ● **Binders** (to hold 24 issues) £8.50, storage boxes (about 30 copies) £9.95, available by post from Royal Mail Tallents House ● Royal Mail publishes the fortnightly *British Postmark Bulletin*, giving details of forthcoming special handstamps – available on annual subscription from Royal Mail Tallents House: £12.25 UK and Europe; £24.95 rest of world ● Stamp images © Royal Mail.
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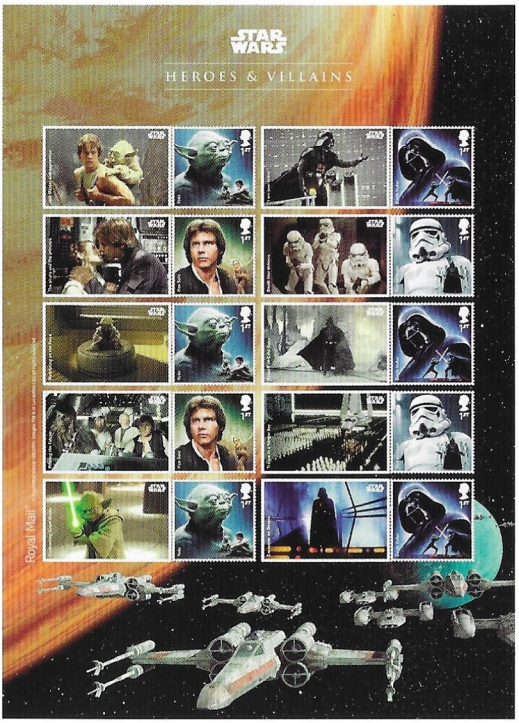
A great stamp season

Watch out for the stunning selection of Special Stamp issues coming out soon

Han-tastic news A stellar new issue celebrating the planet's favourite sci-fi movie blasts off this month. Available from 20 October, the 12-stamp *Star Wars*™ set features a selection of world-famous characters and some new faces from the much-anticipated new movie in the series – *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*, released on 17 December.

The splendid Heroes & Villains Collectors Sheet (right), carries stamps showing Han Solo, Darth Vader, Yoda and a Stormtrooper. Ten labels show action from a range of *Star Wars* movies. Scenes include Han kissing Princess Leia and piloting the *Millennium Falcon*, Vader in the dramatic confrontation with his son Luke Skywalker, Yoda wielding a lightsaber, and a menacing attack by Stormtroopers.

Also available in the issue are a Presentation Pack, Miniature Sheet, 19 Stamp Cards, four Smilers® Sheets, four Souvenir Covers and three Medal Covers. For more details and philatelic specifications, turn to page 47 ●



Above: a special issue Heroes & Villains Collectors Sheet will feature world-famous names from the *Star Wars* movies



Left: the latest Year Books are hot off the Royal Mail presses

A vintage year Enjoyed the last 12 months in philately? Then why not celebrate another great collecting year with Royal Mail's 2015 Year Book.

Each Special Stamp of every issue is featured, including Alice in Wonderland, Comedy Greats and Magna Carta.

The book is available in two versions, standard and leather-bound, and is published on 3 November. To order visit www.royalmail.com/stamps ●

Ssh! Secret sheet alert A certain much-loved cartoon family and a mischievous comic strip schoolboy – who have their 80th anniversary next year – are set to be saluted in two Stamp Sheets due out in later this year. Royal Mail is still in top-secret negotiations for the Sheets so we cannot reveal the comic heroes' identities. But we can say they are very famous in Scotland and their adventures have appeared in a Scottish newspaper since 1936! Keep an eye out for more details of the Sheets in your *Bulletin* ●





A Chinese greeting on the special postmark for the Coin Cover of the Lunar New Year of the Monkey. More details next month

Collectors will go ape over the Lunar New Year of the Monkey Generic Sheet. It comprises ten Fireworks First Class Stamps with ten illustrated labels attached.

Five labels depict colourful Chinese celebrations across the UK and five feature traditions associated with the festivities. They include pink cherry blossom and yellow daffodils, both used for decorating Chinese homes to symbolise the beginning of life and a fresh year. Also appearing on the labels are Chinese lanterns and a dragon. The Sheet is populated by cut-out illustrations of monkeys representing the elements of metal, water, wood, fire and earth.

Lunar New Year of the Monkey Generic Sheet – Specifications

Date issued	9 November
Stamp	First Class Smilers® Fireworks
Number of stamps	20
Sheet design	hat-trick
Sheet format	Landscape
Stamp size	20mm x 24mm
Printer	International Security Printers
Print process	Lithography

The Monkey is one of 12 animals in the Chinese zodiac (each year is related to an animal sign according to a 12-year cycle). People born under this sign are believed to be wise, intelligent, confident, charismatic, loyal and inventive. This Year of the Monkey lasts from 8 February 2016 to 27 January 2017.

A limited edition Coin Cover accompanies the issue, and both are released on 9 November. Watch out for more details about the Coin Cover next month •

Below: the late Baroness Thatcher and the Symbolic Flowers Post & Go Poppy





Little pieces of history This month is your last chance to buy the Special Stamp issue commemorating eight great British Prime Ministers. The stamps, which feature Winston Churchill, Clement Attlee, Harold Wilson and Margaret Thatcher, will be withdrawn from sale on 14 October. Included in the issue was a Presentation Pack and Stamp Cards •

Lest we forget In good time for Remembrance Day next month, the popular Symbolic Flowers First Class Post & Go Poppy stamp is being reintroduced, on 19 October •

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



UK diary dates

10 October Association of Sussex Philatelic Societies South of England Stamp Fair & Convention, Norfolk Pavilion, South of England Showground, Ardingly RH17 6TL, 10am to 4pm. Enquiries: Jim Etherington, 01273 471897.

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

10 October National Philatelic Society meeting, Gibraltar by John Corderoy, at Welsh Centre (right), Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8UE.



11 October Hinckley & District Philatelic Society Autumn Stamp Fair & Exhibition, John Cleveland College, Butt Lane, Hinckley LE10 1LE, 10am to 4pm. Twelve dealers, refreshments, free parking. Enquiries: R Flemming, 01455 613826.

16-17 October Scotex, Dewars Centre, Glover Street, Perth. Friday 11am to 5.30pm, Saturday 10am to 3.30pm. Enquiries: 01368 860365.

16-18 October Stampa, Serpentine Hall, Royal Dublin Society, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4 (Anglesea Road entrance), 11am to 6pm. Details: www.stampa.ie.

17 October Redditch Stamp Fair, St Benedict's School, Alcester B49 6PX, 10am to 4pm. See below. Includes GB Philatelic Society regional meeting – Members' Displays (11am to 3.30pm).

17 October Hampex (Hampshire Federation Stamp and Postal History Fair), Wickham Centre, Mill Lane, Wickham PO17 5AL, 10am to 4pm. Details: www.hantsfederation.org.uk or contact Julian Jones on 01794 514902.

18 October Great Britain First Day Cover Association FDC Fair, Collingwood Centre, Great Barr, Birmingham B43 7NF, 10am to 4pm. Ten dealers. Enquiries: Terry Barnett, 0151 486 2610.

24 October Essex Federation Convention, Stanway Village Hall, Villa Road, Colchester CO3 0RH.

24 October Kent Federation Convention, Langley Park Boys School, South Eden Park Road, Beckenham BR3 3BP.

29 October Royal Philatelic Society London, Scottish Postal History 1591-1711 by Malcolm Fenning, at 41 Devonshire Place, London W1: display from 1pm, talk 5pm. Non-members may attend by prior arrangement – call 020 7486 1044.

31 October GB Philatelic Society meeting at Royal Philatelic Society London, 41 Devonshire Place, London W1: Pre-Adhesive Mail by Colin Narbeth, 11am; The Franking Privilege by Chrissie Baker, 2.15pm.

6 November Stuart Rossiter Postal History Lecture at Royal Philatelic Society London (see overleaf for how to obtain ticket).

7 November National Philatelic Society meeting, Annual Competitions, at Welsh Centre. See above for details.

20 November Strand Stamp Fair, Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way, London WC1H 0DG, 9am to 4pm. Details: 020 8946 4480, www.stampshows.net.

21 November GB Philatelic Society meeting (Channel Islands members' displays, 11am and 2.15pm) at Grosvenor Auctions, 399 Strand, London WC2 ● ▶

British Postal Museum & Archive



The British Postal Museum & Archive (BPMA), located at Freeling House, Phoenix Place, London WC1, near the famous Mount Pleasant sorting office, is open Monday to Friday 10am to 5pm (Thursdays until 7pm) and on Saturdays 10 October and 14 November (10am to 5pm), but closed the following Mondays. Visit the BPMA website (www.postalheritage.org.uk) for details of the Post Office in the Community exhibition at Blists Hill Victorian Town, Madeley, Telford, Shropshire. Around 25 exhibitions can be seen online, including Aerial Post, regional stamps, Machins, David Gentleman, postal vehicles and letter boxes.

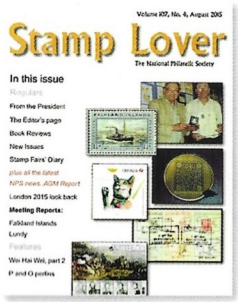
A temporary exhibition, Pop it in the Post: Your World at the End of the Street, is on show at Mansfield Museum, Leeming Street, Mansfield, from 3 October to 21 November, and at Havering Museum, 19-21 High Street, Romford, from 6 January to 26 March 2016.

Tours of the Museum Store at Imprimo Park, Lenthall Road, Loughton, Essex will be held on 7 October and 4 November. Tours of the BPMA Archives at Phoenix Place take place on 14 October and 9 December. From Pillar to Post GPO London Walking Tours are on 25 October and 21 November. There is a charge for these tours.

Talks entitled A Noble War? (First World War Letters of Sir Anthony Eden) by Aaron Manning, Pushing the Envelope by James Addison, and Dear Santa: The History of Writing to Father Christmas by Ashley March take place on 29 October (6pm), 12 November (7pm) and 1 December (7pm) respectively. The 29 October talk is at the Guildhall Library, London EC2, and the other two at the Phoenix Centre, alongside the BPMA in Phoenix Place. A charge applies. Book in advance as a limited number of tickets are available on the night.

See the BPMA website or *What's On*, the BPMA events guide, for further details of tours, talks and other events. Call the BPMA on 020 7239 2570 or email info@postalheritage.org.uk for a copy of the events guide or to book tours or talks. The BPMA's online shop offers a wide range of products: cards; DVDs and CDs; gift sets; homeware; Mail Rail prints; philatelic items; postcards; publications and maps; replica GPO posters; and stationery. There are items to interest philatelists, postal historians and the general public ●

Societies



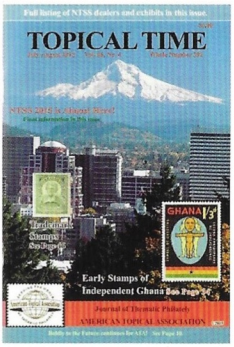
The National Philatelic Society's bi-monthly journal, *Stamp Lover*, was awarded a silver medal in the Literature section of London 2015 Europhilex. The editor, Michael L Goodman, said it was very much a team effort and thanked everyone involved in the writing, layout, production and distribution. The NPS's autumn programme includes displays of Gibraltar by John Corderoy on 10 October, the annual competition on 7 November, and a Christmas meeting on 5 December. The Society meets monthly on Saturdays at the London Welsh Centre, 157-163 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1. The displays are preceded by a 600-lot room and postal auction that starts at about 1pm.

The August issue of *Stamp Lover* includes articles on Wei Hai Wei – the last Treaty Port of Hong Kong – and perfins used on P&O Banking Corporation mail, as well as reports on Europhilex and NPS meetings, comprehensive book reviews, a look at new issues from Ascension, Australia, Belgium,

Canada, Jersey and the Netherlands, as well as a useful two-page listing of forthcoming stamp fairs with dates, times and contact telephone numbers.

NPS membership costs from £20 a year. Contact Peter Mellor at 10 Gilpin Green, Harpenden AL5 5NR, telephone 01582 762284, or visit www.ukphilately.org.uk/nps.

The main feature of the June 2015 issue of *Eastern Angle*, the journal of the East Anglia Postal History Society, is a well-illustrated 16-page round-up of news on post office openings and closures from local newspaper reports. There are articles and notes on Chelmsford to Stowmarket 'Bye Bag', Post Office Rifles, Norfolk Penny Posts, Fleet Penny Post, and postmarks and post offices of Sproughton, South Elmhan and Burn Fen. For details about the Society contact John Copeland at 20 The Vale, Brentwood CM15 4UP, call 01277 218128, or visit www.eaphsc.webs.com.

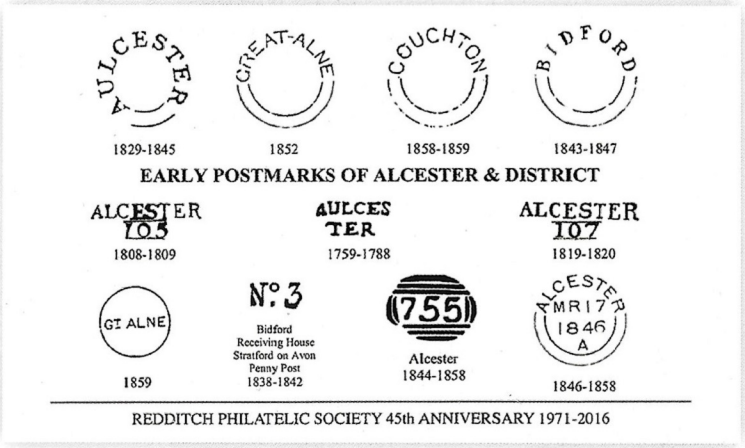


The July-August 2015 issue of *Topical Time*, the well-produced magazine of the American Topical Association (ATA), includes features on Corny Pictorial Postmarks, meter marks relating to cars, early years of Ghana stamp issues, cinderella trademark stamps and stamp artwork. There are extensive reports on the activities of topical (thematic) organisations, publication reviews and details of forthcoming exhibitions. For ATA details write to ATA, PO Box 8, Carterville IL 62918-0008, email americantopical@msn.com, or visit www.americantopicalassn.org ●

Redditch Stamp Fair

Redditch Philatelic Society is holding a Stamp Fair at St Benedict's High School, Kinwarton Road, Alcester, Warwickshire on 17 October. Visitors will receive a free gift – something that every stamp collector will find useful. Entrance to the fair is free and plenty of free car parking is available.

A special postcard, showing 'Early Postmarks of Alcester & District' (shown below), will be available at the fair, priced at 50p. As well as a carefully chosen selection of national and regional dealers selling all types of stamps and philatelic material, the individual 16-sheet competition entries of the Midland Philatelic Federation will be on display. Young stamp collectors ▸



are encouraged to come along, sort stamps and collect freebies at the Stamp Active stall. Societies planning to hold meetings during the day include the Scandinavia Philatelic Society, Midland (GB) Postal History Society and Great Britain Philatelic Society. The Midland Philatelic Federation will hold its Autumn Convention at the fair, where delegates from all the constituent societies meet to discuss the future of philately in the Midlands.

For information about the Redditch Philatelic Society and the stamp fair, visit www.redditch-philatelic.org.uk, or call 01789 765385 ●

Memorial lecture

The Stuart Rossiter Memorial Lecture for 2015, entitled Theory v. Practice in Postal History, will be given by Ben Palmer at 5pm on 6 November at the Royal Philatelic Society London, 41 Devonshire Place, London W1. For a free non-transferable ticket contact Rex Dixon at rexdixon@btinternet.com. Early application is advised ●

New from the islands

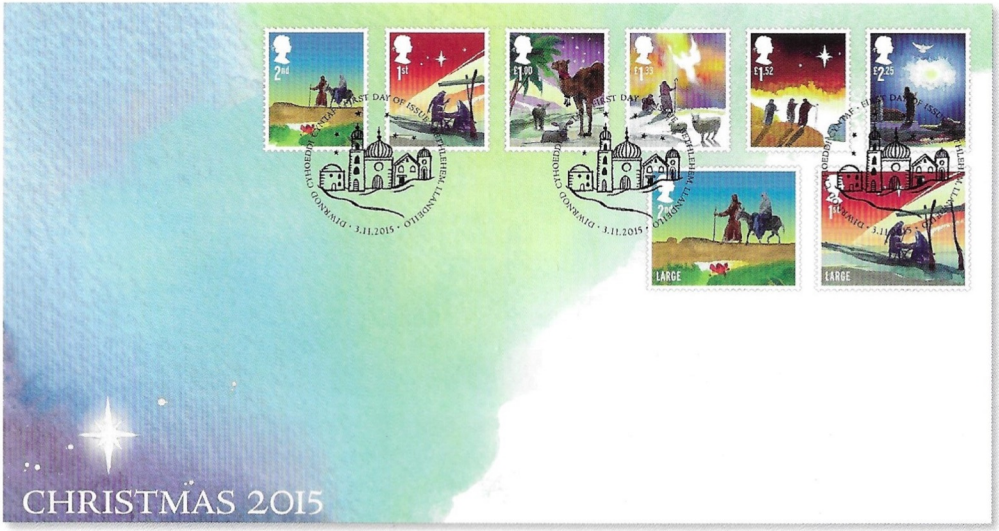
Jersey issues stamps featuring autumn on 15 October and a My Jersey issue goes on sale on 9 November. Henry Thomas Bosdet's Stained Glass Windows follow on 27 November. Enquiries: Jersey Philatelic Bureau, Freepost JE793, Jersey Post, Jersey JE1 1AF or at www.jerseystamps.com.

Christmas issues for Guernsey and Alderney go on sale on 6 November. Enquiries: Guernsey Philatelic Bureau, Freepost GU267, Envoy House, La Vrangue, Guernsey GY1 5SS, email philatelic@guernseypost.com.

In October the Isle of Man releases stamps featuring the work of local-born artist Bryan Kneale (presentation pack shown below) and the Manx Prayer Book on the Christmas issue. Orders and enquiries to: Isle of Man Stamps & Coins, PO Box 10M, Douglas, Isle of Man IM99 1PB or see www.iomstamps.com ●







A holy birth in Bethlehem Six celebrated Nativity scenes on a new stamp set issued next month herald the coming Christmas season

The story of the Nativity is portrayed on this year's Christmas stamps, from Mary and Joseph's journey from Nazareth to the arrival of three kings following a bright star to Jesus's birthplace. And, as is the Royal Mail tradition, BETHLEHEM, LLANDEILO is the happy choice of location on the alternative pictorial and non-pictorial postmarks for this issue.

Above: the Christmas 2015 Stamp Souvenir with the 'Bethlehem' first day postmark on an illustrated envelope without address

The deceptively simple and eye-catching stamp illustrations are painted by David Cecil Holmes, specially commissioned by Royal Mail. Studio David Hillman are responsible for the overall design (their last stamp project was the 30-stamp series celebrating sports of the Olympic and Paralympic Games from 2009 to 2011).

In addition to the Special Stamps, the Christmas 2015 issue comprises a Presentation Pack, Miniature Sheet, Generic Sheet, personalised Smilers® Sheets, First and Second Class Stamp Books, Stamp Cards and Stamp Souvenir (shown above).

Christmas 2015 Stamps – Specifications

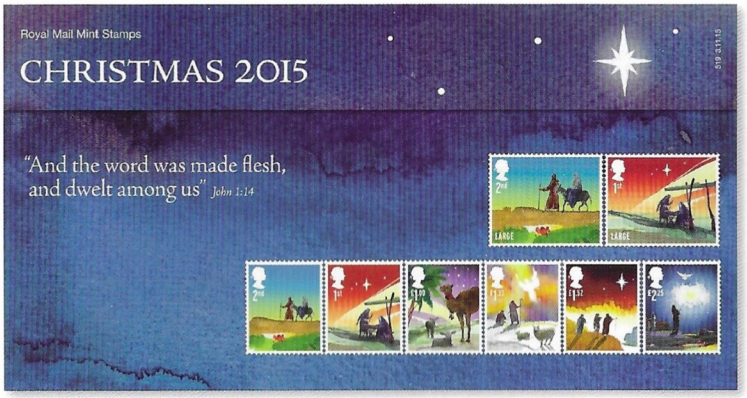
Date of issue	3 November
Number of stamps	Eight
Stamp design	Studio David Hillman
Stamp illustration	David Holmes
Stamp format – standard	Portrait
Stamp format – large	Landscape
Stamp size – standard	24mm x 28mm
Stamp size – large	34mm x 28mm
Printer	De La Rue Security Print
Print process	Gravure
Number per sheet	50
Perforations	14.5 x 15
Phosphor	Bars as appropriate
Gum	Self-adhesive

Stamp by stamp

The journey to Bethlehem Mary is heavily pregnant when her husband Joseph receives a decree from the Roman Governor to register for a census. ▶

Right: the Christmas 2015 Presentation Pack

Facing page: the Christmas 2015 issue's Stamp Sheet Souvenir, the insert card and special postmarks



This is the reason for their 111km journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, popularly depicted, as the stamp shows, with Mary on a donkey being led by Joseph. *Second Class and Second Class Large*

The Nativity Luke's Gospel reports that because there is no room for the couple in the inn, Mary gives birth and places Jesus 'in a manger'. The Nativity is often depicted as a stable scene, because a manger is a feeding box for animals, but they could well have been celebrating the birth, as the stamp depicts, under a makeshift structure or a clear night sky. *First Class and First Class Large*

The Animals of the Nativity No animals are mentioned in biblical accounts. But the scene on the stamp is easy to imagine, as camels would have been the favoured mode of travel for the wealthy Wise Men, and the shepherds had hurried to the scene after leaving their flocks unguarded in the fields outside Bethlehem. *£1*

The Shepherds According to the Bible, it was the shepherds who had the most startling angelic encounter – they witnessed a glorious birth announcement, as the stamp shows, and afterwards nothing less than a 'multitude of the heavenly host' praising God. They left their flocks and made their way into Bethlehem to see if what they had just heard was true. *£1.33*

Christmas 2015 issue – Prices

Presentation Pack	£9.50
Stamps	£8.96
Miniature Sheet	£8.96
First Day Cover Stamps	£11.23
First Day Cover Miniature Sheet	£11.23
Stamp Souvenir	£11.23
Stamp Souvenir Sheet	£11.23
Stamp Cards (set of 8)	£3.60
Generic Sheet	£15.20
1st Class Stamp Book	£7.56
2nd Class Stamp Book	£6.48

Christmas 2015 Miniature Sheet – Specifications

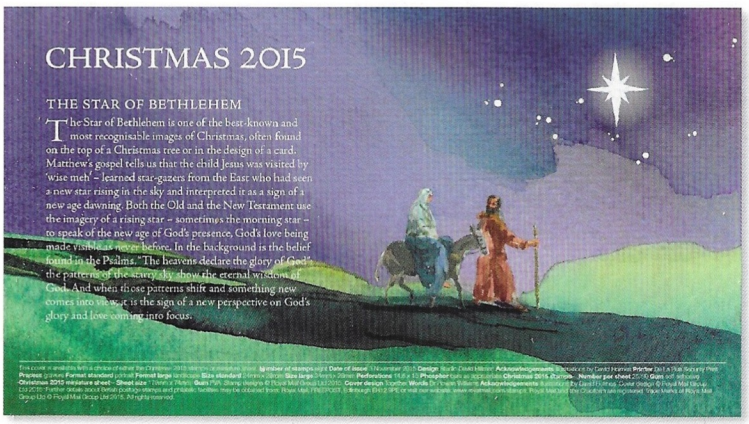
Number of stamps	Eight
Design	Studio David Hillman
Stamp illustration	David Holmes
Stamp format, standard	Portrait
Stamp format, large	Landscape
Stamp size, standard	24mm x 28mm
Stamp size, large	34mm x 28mm
Sheet size (without barcode)	179mm x 74mm
Printer	De La Rue
Print process	Gravure
Perforations	14.5 x 15
Phosphor	Bars as appropriate
Gum	PVA



The Three Wise Men We know that three gifts were presented to Jesus, but not that there were three wise men. These mystical men from the east introduce dramatic intrigue into the story – they follow a star, meet evil King Herod and are nearly duped by him, pay homage to a heavenly King and then receive divine guidance to go home by a different way to avoid an enraged Herod. £1.52

The Annunciation The word 'annunciation' means announcement. Mary hears from the angel Gabriel that she is going to bear a child and asks how this is possible as she is a virgin. Gabriel says that it will be by the Holy Spirit, symbolised in the stamp as a dove, 'For nothing will be impossible with God'. £2.25

Presentation Pack Designed by Together and illustrated by David Holmes, the Presentation Pack includes seasonal meditations by Dr Rowan Williams, former Archbishop of Canterbury and Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge. ▸





FD1525-PL



FD1525-TH



FD1525-NP



Christmas 2015 Stamp Books – Specifications	
Issue date	3 November
Book format	12 x 1st Class, 12 x 2nd Class Special Stamps
Stamp format/size	Portrait/24mm x 28mm
Printer	International Security Printers
Print process	Gravure

First Day Cover facilities Orders for stamped, postmarked and addressed First Day Covers have to reach Royal Mail by 3 November. Customers may also send stamped envelopes on the day of issue to Royal Mail, Tallents House for the Tallents House, Edinburgh postmark (the address is on page 64). 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 Llandeilo first day postmark.

Alternatively, customers may send stamped envelopes to any of the Special Handstamp Centres for the pictorial or plain Llandeilo postmark quoting the reference number (see previous page) of the postmark required ●

Above: the Christmas 2015 First Class and Second Class Retail Stamp Books

Right: the Christmas 2015 Generic Sheet has 20 stamps and gospel verses from the King James version of the Bible



Hardy animals who brave the frosty British winter will appear on new Post & Go stamps next month

Winter Fur and Feathers Featuring the mountain hare, red fox, redwing and red squirrel, a new Post & Go pictorial stamp set is ready for release on 16 November. The issue is designed by the Osborne Ross agency, with colourful illustrations created by leading wildlife artist Robert Gillmor, who also illustrated the 2012 British Farm Animals Post & Go series.

Stamp by stamp Fur and Feathers Post & Go stamps will be available from Post & Go terminals in 146 branches of the Post Office and on a First Day Cover and in a six-stamp Collectors Pack overprinted with First and Second Class values.

MOUNTAIN HARE This is a true alpine mammal, who lives in upland areas over 500 metres high. From October onwards its coat transforms in colour from brown to pure white for the duration of the winter weather.

REDWING The smallest member of the thrush family, the redwing migrates to Britain for the winter months, and first makes its appearance at the end of September. With its distinctive red flanks, the redwing visits domestic gardens during harder winters, on the hunt for berries and other food.

RED FOX One of Britain's most common wild animals, the red fox is comfortable in many environments, both rural and urban, and is on the increase in our towns and cities.

RED SQUIRREL Although it is increasingly rare ▸

Below: the Fur and Feathers Collectors Pack contains the new Post & Go set in sheetlet form, as available from Tallents House, overprinted with four values. An insert card carries information about the animals



Post & Go Winter Fur and Feathers – Prices	
Stamp Set	£2.86
First Day Cover	£3.92
First Day Envelope	30p

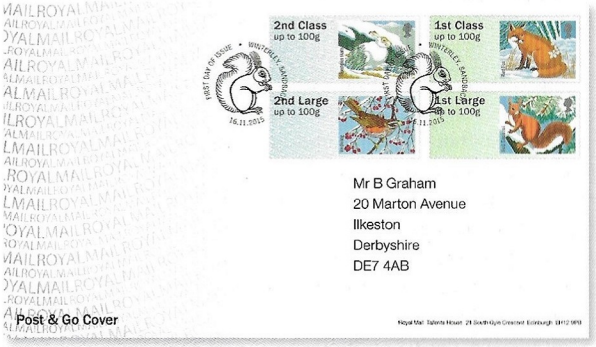
Post & Go Winter Fur and Feathers – Specifications	
Date of issue	16 November 2015
Number of stamps	Four
Stamp and Carrier Card design	Osborne Ross
Stamp and Carrier Card illustration	Robert Gillmor
Stamp format	Landscape
Stamp size	56mm (w) x 25mm (h)
Printer	International Security Printers
Print process	Gravure
Perforations	Kiss die-cut simulated
Phosphor	Bars as appropriate
Gum	Self-adhesive

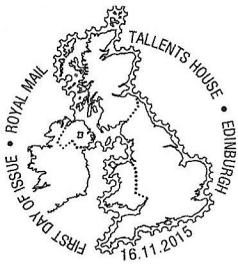


Right: the four designs of the Winter Fur and Feathers Post & Go stamps, to be issued next month.
Post & Go First Day Cover with the alternative pictorial postmark

Below: the Tallents House postmark and alternatives with the location Winterley

Below right: the filler card of the Collectors Pack





FD1526-TH



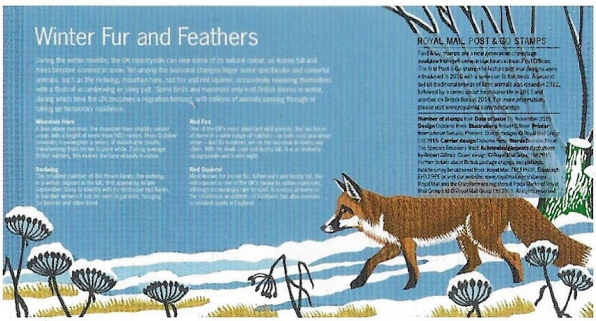
FD1526-PL



FD1526-NP

to observe, the red squirrel remains one of the country's favourite native mammals. It is most at home in the coniferous woods of Scotland but also survives in more remote locations in England.

First Day Cover To order serviced First Day Covers, contact Royal Mail at Tallents House (address on page 64), quoting the *Bulletin* code CDI. Customers may send stamped envelopes on the day of issue to Royal Mail, Tallents House for the Tallents House, Edinburgh postmark – the generic Post & Go design showing a map of the British Isles. The alternative postmarks have the location of Winterley, Sandbach, chosen for its seasonal name. The pictorial version shows a red squirrel ●



The Force Awakens! Your preview of an epic new stamp issue that celebrates the major British contribution to the *Star Wars*™ film series

Royal Mail launches a galactically good stamp issue into orbit next month to celebrate *Star Wars*™ – the planet's (and maybe the universe's) best-loved sci-fi movies. The release, out on 20 October, heralds the new film in the series, *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*.

The *Star Wars* films began in 1977, quickly becoming an all-time world favourite: the first movie won seven Academy awards and earned $775 million. So far there have been two *Star Wars* movie trilogies and for the next, Disney has decided to return to a British studio and crew, whose expertise contributed to the success of the earlier films. *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* has been created at Pinewood Studios in Buckinghamshire and brings together again the three principal actors from the original trilogy – Carrie Fisher, Mark Hamill and Harrison Ford.

To mark this headline event in filmmaking, Royal Mail has produced the Star Wars issue in close consultation with Disney and Lucasfilm.

Designed by Interabang, the issue comprises 12 First Class stamps, a Miniature Sheet, Presentation Pack, Stamp Souvenir, Stamp Sheet Souvenir, three Medal Covers, Generic Stamp Sheet, four Souvenir Covers, five Character Stamp Sets and four Character Smilers® sheets. Framed sets are also available for those who wish to keep these iconic stamps on display. In addition, a Prestige Stamp Book will be released in December to coincide with the film's premiere.

Star Wars Specials: stamp by stamp

Malcolm Tween's brilliantly rendered illustrations depict nine of the most popular characters from the first six blockbuster films and three new characters from the forthcoming *The Force Awakens*. Incorporated into each stamp is a secondary image of a character or classic scene:

Darth Vader; Luke Skywalker in corner image Once a Jedi Knight but lured to the dark side, Darth Vader realised the tragedy of his life only moments before his 'death'.

Yoda; Yoda and Luke Skywalker in corner image Small in stature but supremely powerful in the Force, Jedi Master Yoda trained a number of Jedi Knights.

Obi-Wan Kenobi; Obi-Wan Kenobi and Luke Skywalker in corner image A Jedi Master of great skill and bravery, Obi-Wan Kenobi trained Anakin Skywalker and was one of ▸



Above: the new *Star Wars* Stamp Set presents the heroes and villains of the classic sci-fi adventure in vivid detail

the few to escape Anakin's purge of the Jedi Order. Obi-Wan initiated Luke Skywalker into the ways of the Force.

Stormtrooper; Darth Vader and Stormtroopers in corner image The white-armoured shock troops of the Empire, the original Stormtroopers were clones of the legendary warrior Jango Fett. Non-clone recruits swelled their numbers in the days of the Empire.

Han Solo; Chewbacca in corner image A smuggler by trade, Han Solo lived on his wits until he met young Luke Skywalker and Princess Leia Organa and was then persuaded to join the Rebel Alliance.

Rey; Rey and BB-8 in corner image Three decades after the Battle of Endor, Rey makes a living by scavenging on the desert planet Jakku. However, she soon finds herself at the heart of a new crisis in the galaxy.

Princess Leia; R2-D2 and C-3PO in corner image Adopted as a baby, Princess Leia became a senator for Alderaan. Though single-mindedly dedicated to leading the Rebel cause, she fell in love with Han Solo.

The Emperor; Anakin Skywalker in corner image At first Palpatine appeared a kindly politician, but his secret identity as a deadly Sith Lord, Sidious, was finally revealed when he took control of the galaxy.

Luke Skywalker; Obi-Wan Kenobi and Luke Skywalker in corner image The son of Anakin Skywalker, Luke was hidden from his father on Tatooine until he met Obi-Wan Kenobi and learned the ways of the Jedi.





FD1524-TH



FD1524

***Star Wars* Special Issue – Prices**	
Mint Stamp Set	£7.56
Character Stamp Set (new)	£7.76
Miniature Sheet	£3.78
Stamp Sheet Set (new)	£3.98
Stamp Set and Miniature Sheet Presentation Pack	£12.35
First Day Cover Stamps/overseas	£9.55/£7.96
First Day Cover Miniature Sheet/overseas	£5.02/£4.18
First Day Envelope	30p
Stamp Souvenir (new)	£9.55
Stamp Sheet Souvenir (new)	£5.02
Generic Collectors Sheet, 10 x 1st Class with labels	£6.80
Smilers® Sheet of 10 with Personalised labels – 4 versions: Yoda, Han Solo, Darth Vader, Stormtrooper	£6.50 each
Medal Cover, Battles	£15.50
Medal Cover, Vehicles	£15.50
Stamp Cards, set of 19	£8.55/

***Star Wars* Stamps – Specifications**	
Date of issue	20 October
Number of stamps	Twelve
Stamp design	Interabang
Illustrations	Malcolm Tween
Pack text	Simon Beecroft
Stamp format	Square
Stamp size	35mm x 35mm
Printer	International Security Print
Print process	Lithography
Number per sheet	30/60
Perforations	14.5 x 14.5
Phosphor	Bars as appropriate
Gum	PVA

Above: the gallery of original and new *Star Wars* characters from the Presentation Pack and the set's special postmarks
Right: the *Star Wars* First Day Cover with the Tallents House postmark that bears the Imperial Crest of the dreaded Empire



Boba Fett; Fellow Bounty Hunters Dengar, IG-88 and Bossk in corner image A genetic clone of his father Jango Fett and one of the most feared bounty hunters in the galaxy.

Finn; Rey and Finn in corner image Finn was a Stormtrooper until he got stranded on the planet Jakku. His unlikely alliance with a local scavenger, Rey, begins a chain of events that affect the fate of the entire galaxy.

Kylo Renn; Captain Phasma in corner image As the First Order emerges from the remnants of the defeated Empire, Kylo Renn is a new symbol of terror – and a master of the latest three-bladed lightsaber.

Miniature Sheet: stamp by stamp

The six First Class stamps on the Miniature Sheet feature detailed images of the six iconic *Star Wars* vehicles, brought together in front of a spacescape background showing the dreaded Death Star:

X-wing Starfighters (two stamps) The modern incarnation of a classic design, the Incom T-70 X-wing fighter is the signature combat craft of the Resistance forces in their war against the fleets of the First Order.

Millennium Falcon Famed for being the fastest hunk of junk in the entire galaxy, Han Solo's craft, the *Millennium Falcon*, is an extensively modified Corellian light fighter.

TIE Fighter Carried aboard Imperial Star Destroyers and battle stations, ▶



FD1524-PL







TIE fighters are single-pilot vehicles perfect for fast-paced dogfights with Rebel X-wings and other starfighters.

First Order Special Forces TIE Fighters The elite of the First Order, starfighter pilots have access to specialised craft, such as these two-seater TIE fighters fitted with enhanced weapons and sensor systems.

At-At Walkers A massive all-terrain armoured transport, the AT-AT Walker is an armour-plated, four-legged transport and combat vehicle used by the Imperial ground forces.





Also in this issue The fully illustrated Presentation Pack contains all the stamps and the Miniature Sheet. Its colourful information card gives an overview of each generation of the *Star Wars* trilogies, expertly written by Simon Beecroft.

Character Stamp Sets feature mint stamps presented on a stunning presentation card. For full details of the characters available see www.royalmail.com/starwars. Another covetable collectors' item is the *Star Wars* Generic Sheet, shown on page 35.

Stamp Souvenirs and Stamp Sheet Souvenirs based on the First Day Cover format but unaddressed and cancelled with a blue Rebel Alliance Starbird design are available for 90 days after the issue date.

Released to coincide with the launch date of the new *Star Wars* film is a fact-packed Prestige Stamp Book and three Medal Covers. The Characters Medal



Cover is shown on page 50, above it special blue postmark. Watch out for full philatelic details of these December items in a future edition of *Bulletin*.

First Day Cover To order serviced First Day Covers, contact Royal Mail at the Tallents House (address on page 64), quoting the *Bulletin* code CDI. Customers may send stamped envelopes on the day of issue to Royal Mail, Tallents House for the Tallents House, Edinburgh postmark, which shows the Alliance Starbird, emblem of the Rebel Alliance. The alternative pictorial postmark carries a graphic representation of the Imperial Crest and all three alternative postmarks have the location of Elstree, Borehamwood (see pages 48 and 49).

Facing the Force You could find yourself travelling around the planet face-to-face with Hans Solo, Darth Vader or a Stormtrooper! All you have to do is choose a photograph of your choice to use on one of the Smilers® Sheets of ten *Star Wars* stamps with personalised labels alongside. Four different versions are available at www.royalmail.com/smilers. Or you can simply upload your selfie on the Smilers® phone app. Turn over the page for more inspiration ●

***Star Wars* Miniature Sheet – Specifications**

Number of stamps	Six 1st Class
Sheet size	192mm x 74mm
Design	GBH
Stamp format/size/perforations: X-wing starfighters (two stamps): landscape/60mm x 21mm/14.5 x 14 AT-AT walkers: landscape/41mm x 30mm/14.5 x 14 TIE fighters (new): portrait/27mm x 37mm/ 14 x 14 TIE fighters (classic): portrait/35mm x 37mm/ 14.5 x 14 Millennium Falcon: landscape/60mm x 30mm/ 14.5 x 14.5	
Print process	Lithography
Phosphor	All over
Gum	Self-adhesive

Acknowledgements: images ™ and © Lucasfilm Ltd: all rights reserved. Pack design © Royal Mail Group Ltd 2015



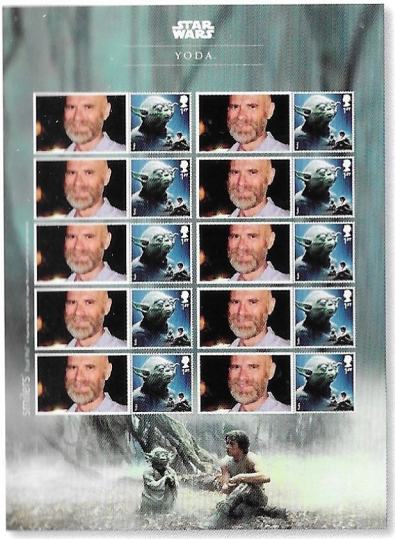
Getting personal In this age of selfies and smart phones it is easier than ever to create a philatelic gift with a unique personal touch

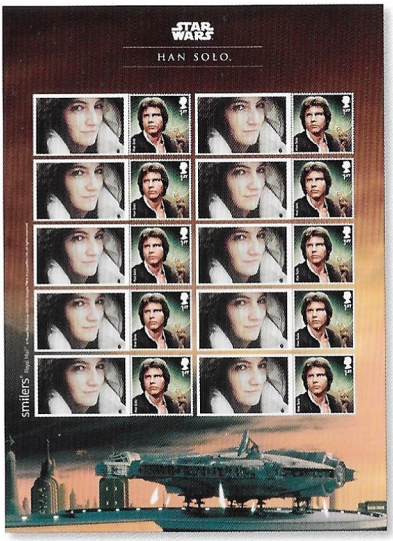
Stamps mean friendship as well as philately – just look how these personalised Smilers® sheets can make messages to loved ones much more intimate. You can design your own label using a photograph to accompany the stamps on Smilers® Sheets. Whatever the nature of your greeting, you are likely to find a Smilers® Sheet to suit, as they are available in a wide variety of themes.

And it is so easy. Simply choose your sheet at www.royalmail.com/stamps and upload a photo for the label. If you have a smart phone, you will enjoy the special Smilers® app, which enables you to upload a photo and create a stamp sheet just seconds after you have taken the image with the camera on your phone.



Clubs and charities A personalised sheet need not be for friends and family. It is also a smart and creative way for businesses, charities and other organisations to mark anniversaries and promote themselves. For example, the Penny Black sheet makes a fitting Smilers® partner (left) for the emblem of the Leeds





Philatelic Association, founded in 1890 the year of the Golden Jubilee of the Uniform Penny Post. Also shown here are Union Jack sheets created for the The Peckham War Horse Project, which this year recreated a local street scene from a 1915 postcard showing horses being prepared for action in the First World War.

Something for everyone This month's exciting new Star Wars™ issue includes Smilers® Sheets with the characters of Yoda, Han Solo (shown above) and Darth Vader. Traditional Smilers® stamp themes include the Robin, Santa, Snowman, Teddy Bear, Balloons, Flower, Celebration, Best Wishes, Happy Birthday, Thank You, Well Done, Big Bang, Wedding, Europe airmail bird, Heart, 'Hello', 'Love', 'Mum', 'Dad', Grandparent, Present, Saltire Flag, Glorious Scotland, Glorious Northern Ireland, Welsh Dragon, Glorious Wales, Glorious England, Rule Britannia and the St George's Flag •

Visit www.royalmail.com/smilers and www.royalmail.com/starwars to create a personalised sheet – a unique message from you

Smilers® sheets are available in sheets of 10 and 20, with blank labels for the image of your choice. Examples, clockwise from far left: Posting Christmas Cards with a festive selfie; Star Wars™ Yoda and Han Solo Character Smilers chosen by husband and wife film fans from Toronto; two Red, White and Blue sheets created by the Peckham War Horse Project to show the same street in 2015 and 1915; Penny Black Smilers with the emblem of the Leeds Philatelic Association



Picture credit

This Month in History

John Holman looks back to 1965, when Jeffery Matthews was an exciting new name in the world of stamp design

FIFTY YEARS AGO, on 25 October 1965, the Post Office issued stamps marking the 20th anniversary of the United Nations – the first issued stamps designed by Jeffery Matthews who went on to become one of the most distinguished British stamp designers.

The two stamps are of similar design, with the backgrounds giving the impression of a flag or banner. The irregular panel shapes were deliberate, not just a design whim. Having had his concepts for the 1960 Post Office Tercentenary, 1961 PO Savings Bank, 1962 National Productivity Year, and 1963 Lifeboat Conference issues rejected, Jeffery decided on a 'now or never' attitude. So with the United Nations artwork he went for innovative free-shaped solid panels that would help the printers with the registration of a multicoloured design.



Jeffery drew them freehand so they did not have to match up tightly with one another and could tolerate a slight colour shift. Such shifts were common in multicolour photogravure printing at that time. He recalls that the design briefs supplied at that time by the Post Office to designers were somewhat perfunctory, and that he often talked direct to the printers to ascertain if a particular design concept was likely to work. For the UN stamps, designers were required to show the familiar UN globe emblem and the logo of the UN-designated International Co-operation Year, 1965; it was necessary to devise an interesting way to include them within the overall design.

The 3d stamp features the UN globe emblem superimposed on the figure '20', with the caption '20th ANNIVERSARY UNITED NATIONS'. The 1s 6d depicts the clasped hands International Co-operation Year emblem superimposed on the abbreviation 'UN', with the caption 'UNITED NATIONS 1945-1965'. The Dorothy Wilding portrait of The Queen and values are positioned to the right of the main design.

Jeffery was paid £525 for the two designs, which he thought generous at the time. This equates to at least £9,000 in today's money.

Both stamps were printed by Harrisons in three colours – black, yellow-orange and light blue for the 3d, and black, bright purple and light blue for the 1s 6d – from one set of cylinders, 1A-1B-1C. They were produced in plain and phosphor-lined versions; the 3d has a wide (8mm) centre band, the 1s 6d three bands. Some nice errors and varieties exist. Three creased copies of the 3d plain exist imperf between stamp and top margin resulting

from a paper fold. A single sheet of the 3d plain was found with the yellow-orange colour almost completely omitted on one stamp, and partially omitted on two others. The Woodstock catalogue recorded a single stamp advertised with the upper half of the black colour completely left off.

Dry prints of the black affect the 3d, in extreme cases leaving little of the UN emblem and Queen's head still visible. The 1s 6d plain is known with shifts of the black and blue colours, respectively 2.5mm and 2mm to the left.

Imperf stamps are imprimaturs from National Postal Museum archive sales. The 1s 6d (plain and phosphor) exists with watermark inverted – only one used example of the plain version is recorded. The 1s 6d is known with phosphor printed on both sides.

The 1s 6d stamp is listed with two rather than three phosphor bands, and the 3d is known (but not listed) with the phosphor band positioned at left rather than in the centre; a number of sheets were found at a post office in an area of Scotland that did not use phosphor-lined stamps. No significant shade variations are recorded, though there are minor shades in the yellow-orange colour of the 3d stamp.

Three nice constant varieties are listed in the *Stanley Gibbons Specialised Catalogue* on the 3d value, comprising a break in the circle in the UN emblem, a 'lake' in Russia, and a 'flying saucer' flaw above the word 'ANNIVERSARY', which was retouched during printing.

The Post Office did not provide a first day cover for the United Nations issue, and covers were not serviced by the Philatelic Bureau. Posting boxes were provided at around 64 main post offices for dealers and collectors to post covers for local first day of issue handstamps. Particularly sought-after are covers with London SW First Day postmark, the location of Central Hall Westminster where the first General Assembly of the UN took place in 1946. (Central Hall was home to Stampex from 1953 to 1968.) Covers with the International Co-operation Year slogan used at Reading (26 June to 31 December 1965) are especially desirable.

Some 20 unused designs for the UN issue were reproduced in the *Bulletin* of March 1966. These were submitted by Frank Arriss, David Caplan, Peter Gauld and Peter Ray, and by stamp printers Bradbury, Wilkinson and Harrison & Sons. Twelve featured the UN and International Co-operation Year emblems, others included stylised globes, people, and the dove, while Caplan favoured interlocking the letters 'u' and 'n'. Also shown was Jeffery Matthews' 1s 6d design but with the value 1s 3d. Peter Gauld's designs are quite pleasing, but I think the Post Office made the right choice with Jeffery's pair of designs.

The UN stamps were withdrawn eight months after issue, on 30 June 1966. Sales amounted to 50.6 million plain and 4.5 million phosphor of the 3d stamp, and 5.5 million and just over one million of the 1s 6d value.

Jeffery's UN stamps were reproduced, along with three other of his stamp designs, on the souvenir sheet for the Thematica exhibition of 2005 (shown on facing page). Earlier unused designs for the 1960 Post Office Tercentenary issue were shown on a souvenir sheet prepared by the Friends of Thematica for the Midpex exhibition in 2009 ●



Above: stamps designed by Jeffery Matthews – they were issued 50 years ago to mark the 20th anniversary of the United Nations

Jeffery Matthews was awarded the MBE for his postage stamp designs in 2004, and in 2005 he received the Phillips Gold Medal for Stamp Design and the Rowland Hill Outstanding Achievement Award. Several articles on Jeffery and his stamps have been published in the *Bulletin* over the years, notably an assessment of his work by Glenn Morgan in October 2005.

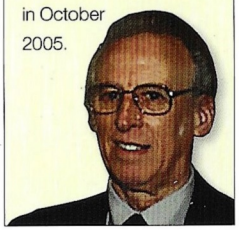


Fig 1



Fig 2

J is for... the Jubilee of 1890

The 50th anniversary of the Penny Post was a cause for celebrations and collectable souvenirs

THE POSTAL REFORMS of 1840 changed the way that the public paid for their letters – from payment on delivery to prepayment using postage stamps, the first of which was, of course, the famous Penny Black. This marked a tremendous leap forward in communications across Great Britain, but the Penny Post also heralded a revolution in global communications.

Half a century later, it was decided that the 50th anniversary of the event ought not, in the words of the City Corporation of London, 'to be allowed to pass without some indication of the feelings which must actuate all who looked back at the great reform introduced in 1840'.

Although plans for a commemorative stamp were abandoned, several events marking the jubilee of the Penny Post took place. These included an exhibition at the Guildhall and an exuberant 'conversazione' at South Kensington Museum, the official Post Office celebration. Both exhibitions captured the interest of the nation and produced a mass of philatelic material that remains a rewarding hunting ground for collectors. 1890 saw the introduction of the first use of special event cancellations, cachets and commemorative postal stationery, which, in a similar way to the Mulready envelopes of 1840, was often imitated.

1890 Guildhall Jubilee Exhibition The three-day exhibition at the Guildhall, in Gresham Street in the City of London, was a great success. The show, held in May, included a working post office, equipment for sending and receiving telegrams, musical bands and documents and philatelic exhibits taken from the Post Office's store. A special 1d postcard was printed and



Fig 3



Fig 4

Fig 1 When the supply of special postcards sold out at the Guildhall, other postal stationery was bought to obtain the event handstamp

Fig 2 The 1d postcard sold at the Guildhall Jubilee Exhibition with the event handstamp

Fig 3 A Penny Pink envelope featuring extra stamps and three cancels of the Guildhall event handstamp

Fig 4 This special 1d postcard was cancelled with the Guildhall event handstamp and then taken to the South Kensington Exhibition where more handstamps were collected

sold for 6d, with all profits going to a charity for postmen and their families. Although nearly 12,000 cards were printed, they quickly sold out on the first day so that the public had to use other stamps and stationery in order to get the special exhibition handstamp.

1890 Conversazione, South Kensington Museum In July a one-day exhibition was staged at the South Kensington Museum, now the Victoria and Albert Museum. The Post Office organised three post offices representing the past (1790), the present (1890) and the future (1990). Once again telegrams could be sent to and from the exhibition, and a novel feature was the ability to ask ▸

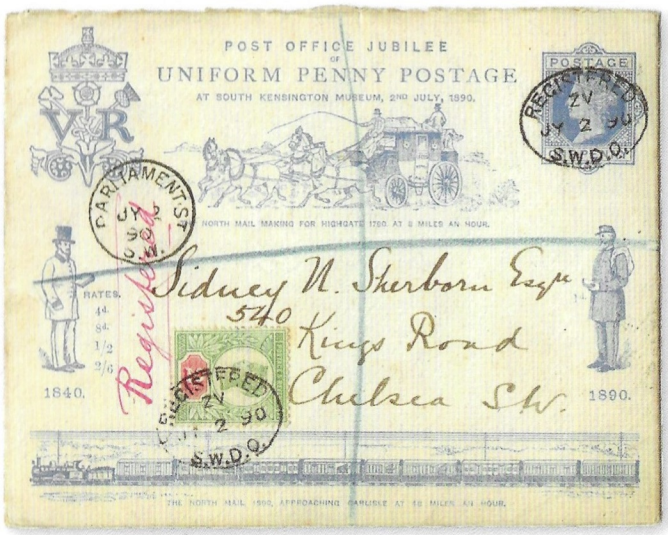


Fig 5



Fig 6

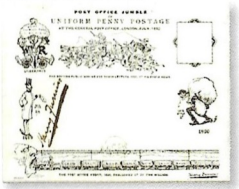


Fig 7

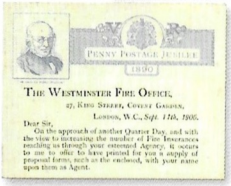


Fig 8

Fig 5 The South Kensington 1d envelope sent registered from a London post office

Fig 6 The card from inside the envelope paid ½d – but it should not have been allowed as only postal stationery postcards were acceptable at the ½d rate

Fig 7 A proof copy of the Post Office envelope signed by the artist, Harry Furniss

Fig 8 Unsold envelopes and cards were used by insurance firms for advertising

questions via tube mail, despatched along vacuum pipes running across the exhibition building. There were also many static displays, similar to those that had been shown at the Guildhall event.

At this exhibition, special 1d postal stationery envelopes were sold with an insert card for a message. They cost one shilling to buy, and as before all the profits went to the postmen's charity. This time the Post Office was determined it would have sufficient supplies and printed a quarter of a million envelopes, making it easy today to find both mint and used copies.

There were also two caricature envelopes privately produced, one in support of postmen who sought better pay and conditions, and the other a commercial venture to sell jubilee envelopes at 1d each rather than 1s.

The centenary of the introduction of the Penny Post occurred in 1940 when many countries were at war, including of course Britain, and this prevented any repetition of the celebratory events of 1890. But in 25 years' time in 2040, when the 200th anniversary comes along, perhaps the UK will once again be able to remind the world that it was the Penny Post of 1840 that laid the foundations of the important revolution in worldwide communications •

Next in Baker's A to Z of Postal Stationery: King stamp dealers. Colin Baker is Secretary of the Postal Stationery Society. He welcomes enquiries about the Society by email at pss.secretary@gmail.com.



Repro alert Collecting Penny Post cards? Then watch out for reproductions. You might come across a 1966 copy of the 1890 Guildhall postcard. Its coat of arms, shown here to the right of the original, is different from the 1890 mark. Vertical lines on the thistle head and the pearls on top of the crown are less defined than the original. The copy also lacks the notch on the left of the crown's lower band.

Happy and glorious Sumptuous new covers salute the record-breaking reign of The Queen



This stylish four-stamp First Day Cover from Jersey Post focuses on great milestones in The Queen's reign: her Coronation and Silver, Golden and Diamond Jubilees. Queen Elizabeth II: The Longest Reigning British Monarch costs £4.36.



The magnificent ceremonial occasions and duties of The Queen's tenure are featured in the Isle of Man's colourful Pomp & Circumstance cover. They show the Coronation, the Investiture of Prince Charles, Trooping the Colour, the Jubilees, the State Opening of Parliament and the Order of the Garter. Price: £7.46.



Royal Mail's elegant Long to Reign Over Us Stamp Souvenir pays tribute to the traditions of the British monarchy: the stamps show the Wyon medal, the Wilding portrait, the Badge of the House of Windsor and The Queen's Personal Flag. (For details and philatelic specifications, see last month's *Bulletin*, page 12.) Price: £6.40.

Orders and enquiries

Jersey Philatelic Bureau
FreePost JE793
Jersey Post
Jersey JE1 1AF
01534 516320
stamps@jerseypost.com
www.jerseystamps.com

Isle of Man Stamps & Coins
PO Box 10M
Douglas
Isle of Man IM99 1PB
www.iomstamps.com

Royal Mail
Tallents House
21 South Gyle Crescent
Edinburgh EH12 9PB
03457 641 641
www.royalmail.com/stamps

Correspondence



Stamps of significance

THE QUEEN ELIZABETH 11D PLUM is a stamp that gave me great pleasure as a young collector. I remember placing it my album with a sense of pride and years later I found some of the graphites to go with it.

I started collecting in the 1950s at the age of five or six. I suspect that my parents wanted me to have a fairly quiet hobby for health reasons. Apart from the occasional lucky dip of the 'mixed packet', most of my early stamps were used British and Commonwealth, carefully stuck into my album with traditional stamp hinges. Most schools had a stamp club in those days and my father's work gave me some interesting 'swaps' to take along. He worked for a glove firm in London's Regent Street that had a French parent company. So he brought home French stamps and I was introduced to the delights of French commemoratives, with subjects such as French art.



My father left the glove company in the 1960s at about the same time as British commemoratives began to appear. And from then on British stamps, mint and used, became my sole interest. Collecting first day covers with the alternative philatelic handstamp was a natural progression. By the 1990s I could not decide how to specialise. I was avidly buying mint, stamp books, PHQ cards, National Postal Museum cards and first day covers, including many commercial ones.

As a history teacher I bought lots of extra covers and cards of certain Royal Mail issues – the 1988 Spanish Armada, for example. As a railway enthusiast living in Kent, I bought many Eurotunnel covers. For the 1998 Lighthouses set I have a large collection, as the issue features the Eddystone lighthouse and I am a part-owner of 'Eddystone', a West Country Light Pacific steam engine. The late 1990s saw the huge series leading up to the Millennium and I thought: enough is enough. For one thing, where could I put all the material I was collecting? In the year 2000 I stopped all my Royal Mail orders, except the *Bulletin*. I still subscribe. I enjoy its style and layout and for me the *Bulletin* is an invaluable source of information, especially about new issues. For a few years I watched what was issued and bought nothing, but – a collector is always a collector – in recent years I have started to buy the odd stamps that I particularly like, including the early Post & Go British Birds and the wonderful Classic Children's TV set. And I still cannot resist the railway themes. I also have some of the reissued definitives and the Penny Black anniversary ones released this year.

So I have taken a step back, though I do not feel detached from philately. I believe that our stamps are beautifully designed, imaginative and varied. Not all of them necessarily appeal to me – we all have different tastes – and I am not a 'completist' collector, but I am a collector nonetheless.

Roger Hawkins, Kent



Left: as the first prize winner of our 'Lab Test' quiz earlier this year, Roger Hawkins, left, enjoyed a visit to the London Handstamp Centre and was greeted by its Manager Pritpal Mann

40 volumes for you?

A cared-for collection of British Philatelic Bulletin volumes going back as far as 1976 is looking for a new home.

If you are interested, email johnwfox47@gmail.com.



Food for fort

I thought your readers might enjoy the attached photo of an original Penfold post box located at Chiddingstone Castle in Kent. The post box, which is still in daily use, was moved from St Pancras in London, though I do not know exactly when. Are there any other post boxes in daily use in the grounds of an ancient castle?

The castle itself dates back to the 16th century, has undergone many changes over the centuries, and was once owned by Lord Astor. Chiddingstone is now open to the public and holds many outdoor functions during the summer. Back in the 1930s my aunt used to attend Brownie meetings every Saturday inside the castle rooms. She would cycle some ten miles over the Kent North Downs for the pleasure.

Mike Potter, by email

Counter argument

I have recently returned to stamp collecting after an absence of some 40 years. My first stamps purchased were the Battle of Britain designs from 1965 when I was 11 years old. My collection grew over the following years until I joined the RAF in 1972. It was put aside until recently, when my father passed and I acquired his collection.

Now that I am collecting again, I have found it difficult to get the recently issued Retail Stamp Books from my local post offices and have resorted to purchasing via the web – at a premium. Surely it would benefit the Post Office to make all Royal Mail issues available. As well as encouraging more use of Special Stamps on mail, this would also expose more people, especially children, to the attractive variety of stamp designs – and maybe stimulate an interest in stamps, thus growing our hobby.

A further point, which I feel Royal Mail has missed, is the withdrawal of the A4 advertising cards once displayed to advertise new issues. These now form a collecting niche of their own.

Steve Wedgbury, by email

We heartily agree with all your suggestions, but these days the Post Office is a separate commercial entity from the Royal Mail Group, which can only offer Special Stamps for order and not, of course, compel post offices to stock them. Many collectors prefer to sidestep the Post Office completely and order stamps online from www.royalmail.com/stamps.

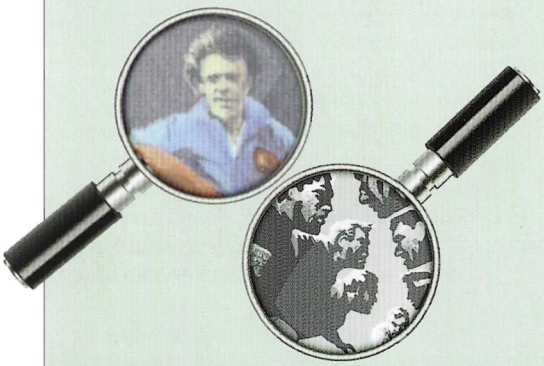
Drop us a line

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



Have a try Tackle our sporty puzzles and you could win the Rugby World Cup issue and a collection of rugger covers

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



How to enter Send your answers and contact detail to 'Bulletin October Draws', Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB or email rmbulletin@rocketmail.com.

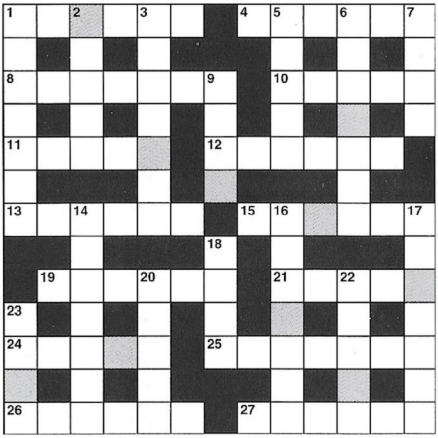
Closing date 10 November 2015.

Prizes The senders of the first correct entries drawn in each section win the Rugby World Cup 2015 issue and a Royal Mail Presentation Pack Album. Ten runners-up will receive the stamp issue ●

July solutions and winners *Name That Stamp solution* 1965, 25th Anniversary of The Battle of Britain. *Winner* Mr A Harker. *Crossword solution* Two Pence Blue. *Winner* Mrs J Constantine. First prize winners receive the Battle of Britain Presentation Pack and Great War Collectors Album. Ten runners-up also receive prizes. *Crossword Across* 1 Frolic. 4 Sahara. 8 Retread. 10 Crewe. 11 Sonar. 12 Change. 13 Endure. 15 Oberon. 9 Impede. 21 Robot. 24 Lithe. 25 Flannel. 26 Sedate. 27 Intent. *Crossword Down* 1 Foresee. 2 Often. 3 In error. 5 Accra. 6 Avenger. 7 Apes. 9 Dock. 14 Demoted. 16 Bargain. 17 Notelet. 18 Deaf. 20 Eject. 22 Binge. 23 Alas.

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

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD Do the puzzle, then rearrange the letters in the grey squares to form the name of a famous rugby stadium.



ACROSS

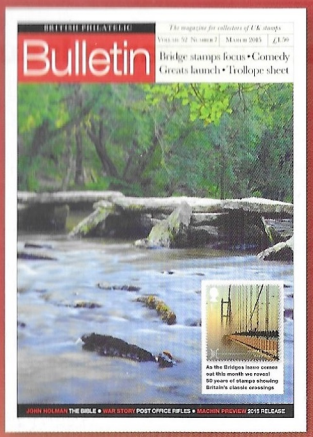
1 Sport expanding, though not originally (6)
4 Pick at new version of Bible (6)
8 Choice meat for the champion team? (7)
10 Fires, plunders and bags (5)
11 Big, but somewhat regular gemstones (5)
12 Only one not married (6)
13 Good person beams at lost animals (6)
15 End of argument – viewpoint creating confusion (6)
19 Bad temper observed involving write up of album (6)
21 Lead found by the French tree (5)
24 Instant food after tea starts (5)
25 Finished everything in protective gear (7)
26 Possibly extras for so long (3, 3)
27 Shoulder covering, new, was pilfered (6)

DOWN

1 Startle about babies' toys (7)
2 Cleaner wire bent round top of plug (5)
3 Innocently hold a live broadcast in New York (7)
5 Dramatist with glib sense of display (5)
6 Support record arrears of work (7)
7 Relief from sea serpents (4)
9 Eats out where the Sun rises (4)
14 Salesman with part of roof is cold blooded creature (7)
16 Illness seen by tail wagging around people (7)
17 Aztec, he longs to keep level (7)
18 Enthusiastic about one ton building (4)
20 Infantrymen easily holding up foe (5)
22 Make use of a disguise, we hear (5)
23 Try lifting nocturnal creatures up (4)

You can browse Royal Mail Special Stamps by decade at www rmspecialstamps.com













A good read and a good deal

Just £1.95 per issue and £18.95 for 12 issues – that is the current cost of the *British Philatelic Bulletin*. We hope you agree that £1.95 is a low price for a 32-page journal, yet it costs even less when you subscribe to 12 issues for just £18.95 including postage and packing. For readers outside the UK, an annual subscription of £24.95 includes worldwide postage.
It is easy to subscribe by mail to Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB.
Or online at www.royalmail.com/bulletin.

Coming next month

• Your philatelic preview of the *Star Wars* Prestige Stamp Book being released in December • 2015 Machin round-up • The heroic stories behind the Animals of the First World War Commemorative Sheet • John Holman's Stamp Scene, Post & Go news and Christmas gift ideas for stamp collectors

Royal Mail stamp issues and withdrawals

14 October — **Withdrawal** Prime Ministers: Stamps (2 se-tenant strips of 4 – 4 x 1st Class, 4 x 97p), Presentation Pack, Stamp Cards (8 in set).



19 October — **Issue** Lest We Forget: reintroduction of the self-adhesive definitive-sized 1st Class Poppy Stamp at POL only.

19 October — **Issue** Symbolic Flowers – Poppy: reintroduction of Symbolic Flowers Poppy Stamp, available from selected Post & Go machines.



20 October — **Issue** Star Wars™: Stamps (12 x 1st Class in 2 x se-tenant strips of 6), Miniature Sheet (6 x 1st Class), Generic Sheet (10 x 1st Class), Presentation Pack, 3 x Personalised Smilers® (Yoda, Darth Vader, Hans Solo), Stamp Cards (19 in set), Souvenir Covers, Battles Medal Cover, Vehicles Medal Cover, Character Stamp Set (all 12 mint stamps), Boba Fett Stamp Set (10 x Boba Fett stamps), Darth Vader Stamp Set (10 x Darth Vader stamps), Han Solo Stamp Set (10 x Han Solo stamps), Yoda Stamp Set (10 x Yoda stamps), Stamp Sheet Set (1 x Miniature Sheet).

3 November — **Issue** 2015 Annual Collections: Yearbook, Leatherbound Yearbook, Year Pack, Year of Miniature Sheets, Year of Presentation Packs.

3 November — **Issue** Christmas 2015: Stamps (1 x 1st Class, 1 x 2nd Class, 1 x 1st Class Large, 1 x 2nd Class Large, 1 x £1, 1 x £1.33, 1 x £1.52, 1 x £2.25), Miniature Sheet, Generic Sheet (8 x 1st Class, 8 x 2nd Class, 1 x £1, 1 x £1.33, 1 x £1.52, 1 x £2.25), Presentation Pack, Stamp Cards (9 in set).



4 November — **Withdrawal** Christmas 2014: Stamps, Miniature Sheet, Presentation Pack, Generic Sheet, Stamp Cards.

9 November — **Issue** Lunar New Year – Year of the Monkey: Generic Sheet (20 x 1st Class), Coin Cover (Silver Proof).

13 November — **Withdrawal** Post & Go British Flora I Spring Blooms, II Symbolic Flowers, and III Winter Greenery.



16 November — **Issue** Post & Go Winter Fur and Feathers: Stamps (4 designs).

To order philatelic items, including all those listed above, contact Royal Mail online at www.royalmail.com/stamps or at Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB. We would advise you to quote 15CDI, the *Bulletin* media code. Telephone order line (08.30 to 17.00 Monday to Friday): 03457 641 641. From overseas: +44 131 316 7483. Minimum handling charge UK £1.45, Europe £1.55, rest of world (airmail) £2.15.

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

Royal Mail

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