BRITISH PHILATELIC

Bulletin

The Royal Mail magazine for stamp collectors

Volume 49 Number 10 | JUNE 2012 £1.20

Charles Dickens • Tennis thematic • Jubilee specials





Charming new stamps and miniature sheet mark the bicentennial of Dickens' birth.

WIN JUBILEE SOUVENIR • PREVIEW LONDON 2012 GOLD MEDAL WINNERS STAMPS

Issues and withdrawals



Cover An 1890 illustration of Mr Micawber appears on the £1.90 stamp in this month's special issue, celebrating the bicentenary of Charles Dickens' birth

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 Book, Stamp Cards, Coin Covers
6 June	**Issue** Torch Relay Cachet Cover: 2 Cardiff to Belfast
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
13 June	**Issue** Torch Relay Cachet Cover: 3 Belfast to Edinburgh
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 **Issue** 1948 Olympic Games Facsimile Pack
14 July	**Withdrawal** Thomas the Tank Engine™: Medal Cover
27 July	**Issue** Keeping the Flame Alive – British Achievements at the Olympic and Paralympic Games: Prestige Stamp Book
27 July	**Issue** London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games Sports Cover Collection: Wheelchair Tennis and Fencing
27 July	**Issue** Welcome to the London 2012 Olympic Games: Miniature Sheet, Presentation Pack, Stamp Cards
27 July	**Issue** London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games Countdown: Coin Cover No. 4
27 July	**Issue** Torch Relay Cachet Cover: 4 Edinburgh to Stratford
28 July *and onwards, we hope!*	**Issue** London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games Team GB Gold Medallists: Stamps, Miniature Sheets

To order philatelic items, including those listed on the right, contact Royal Mail Tallents House at the address below. Minimum handling charge UK £1.45, Europe £1.55, rest of world (airmail) £2.15. Some products can be ordered on the Royal Mail's website: www.royalmail.com/stamps
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Postbox and inbox

First-class letter

Well chuffed

Another great issue – I enjoyed Dugald Cameron's *Great Scot!* article in the March *Bulletin*.

On page 171 of the February *Bulletin* the 'Bon Accord', as featured in the £1 Classic Locomotives of Scotland stamp issue, was working on Miller Street in Aberdeen. But the following month, on page 219, Miller Street has moved to Glasgow.

I used to live in Aberdeen and I remember seeing these trains in the 1930s when I was a young boy. Let's see more trains on stamps!

R Taylor, Dover, Kent



The information on page 171 is correct and the caption on page 219 is an error, not made by Dugald Cameron. We're not sure how it happened. The copy editor was English. The only Bon Accord in Glasgow is a public house on North Street.

Sinking feeling

A photograph on page 251 of April *Bulletin* purports to show mail being carried aboard the *Titanic*. The ship shown is not the *Titanic*.

Douglas N Muir, Curator, Philately, BPMA

It's always good to hear from The BPMA. We studied many amazing archive images and chose one captioned 'Mail bags and trunks being loaded onto the *Titanic*', but a Father Browne photo of another ship appeared in error. Father Browne was a prolific photographer who travelled as far as Queenstown on the *Titanic* and is remembered in the Irish *Titanic* issue shown left. We recommend to readers Douglas Muir's informative text included in Royal Mail's *Titanic* commemorative sheet.





Happy Birthday sweet Sanquhar

Congratulations to Sanquhar Post Office for reaching its 300th birthday this year. It is said to be the oldest Post Office in the world as well as the oldest British one. But it appears there is a tavern with a rival claim: Fairbanks Tavern in Boston, USA is said to date from 1639!

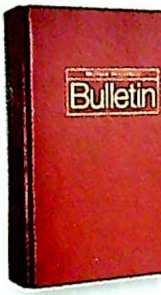
Geoffrey Lord, Edinburgh

We can confirm that the Sanquhar Post Office was being used as a Post Office in 1712, but when it was first used as a Post Office is not certain. In *Bulletin* of January 1994 (page 116) there was a detailed article on its history by the late Dr James Mackay. His later research suggested it may well have existed as a post office since the late 17th century. Can any readers confirm the bold claims of the tavern in Boston?



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.



June update Diamond Jubilee PSB, Coin Covers and 1948 Olympic Pack



Above: the Diamond Jubilee Prestige Stamp Book (£12.77)

Three generations of memories To accompany the Diamond Jubilee pictorial stamp issue released on 31 May and previewed on page 106 of April's *Bulletin*, Royal Mail has produced a beautifully illustrated Prestige Stamp Book and three highly collectable coin covers.

The cover of the Diamond Jubilee Prestige Stamp Book (PSB) is a rich royal blue, with an elegant monotone image of The Queen and cursive script. Inside are four unique stamp panes that are not available anywhere else, designed by Russell Warren Fisher and with explanatory text by Robert Hardman, journalist and royal correspondent for the *Daily Mail*. Each of the panes highlights an important event from Her Majesty's reign and each relates to a different key role of The Queen during her 60 years on the throne – as Head of Nation, Head of State and Head of the Commonwealth.

The first stamp pane (above) shows The Queen laying a wreath at the Cenotaph, Whitehall, London on Remembrance Day. It contains four First Class Diamond Jubilee Machins and four First Class Diamond Jubilee Wilding ▸



Above: the Diamond Jubilee Coin Cover with Brilliant Uncirculated Crown (£17.50). Also available are the Diamond Jubilee Silver Proof Coin Cover, in a limited edition of 500 (£82.50), and the Gold Proof Coin Cover (£2,400), limited to 50 covers

definitives. The central label bears the official Diamond Jubilee emblem designed by ten-year-old Katherine Dewar, who was chosen as the winner of a national design competition for children.

The second pane carries an image from 1996, when The Queen welcomed President Nelson Mandela on his visit to London, and includes four Diamond Jubilee stamps: £1.28 United Nations Address 1957; First Class Golden Jubilee 2002; 87p Silver Jubilee Walkabout 1977; and 87p Garter Ceremony 1997. Pane three has a picture of Trooping the Colour in Horse Guards Parade, London, with two Diamond Jubilee stamps: First Class Trooping the Colour 1967 and 77p The Royal Welsh 2007.

The fourth pane shows Her Majesty at home and carries two Diamond Jubilee stamps: 77p First Christmas Television Broadcast 1957 and £1.28 Commonwealth Games 1982 •

Diamond Jubilee Coin Covers The elegant Diamond Jubilee Coin Cover shown above is set to be a collectors' favourite souvenir of this royal year to remember. Beneath the eight Diamond Jubilee pictorial stamps, cancelled with a special handstamp, the cover holds the official £5 Diamond Jubilee Crown. Twenty thousand Brilliant Uncirculated Standard Crown covers are issued. Diamond Jubilee Silver Proof coins, struck to silver proof standard by the Royal Mint, are available in a limited edition of 500 covers. And the exquisite Gold Proof Coin version is limited to 50 covers. Visit www.royalmail.com/diamondjubilee or contact Tallents House at the address on page 290 for further details •

1948 Olympic Games Coin Cover A stunning prestige Coin Cover celebrating the 1948 Olympic Games held in London is now available, in a limited edition – of 1,948 of course! This LOCOG-endorsed product carries a full set of mint 1948 Olympic Stamps (i.e. the real thing, not replicas), a 1948 Half Crown coin and a unique cancellation mark.

The 1948 Olympics were the first to be held after the Second World War and are known as the 'austerity games'. A collection of souvenir items accompanies the Coin Cover – reproductions of a 1948 London Olympics poster and ration book, a medal chart, fascinating imagery and the full background story of the Games, including intriguing stories from athletes of the day •



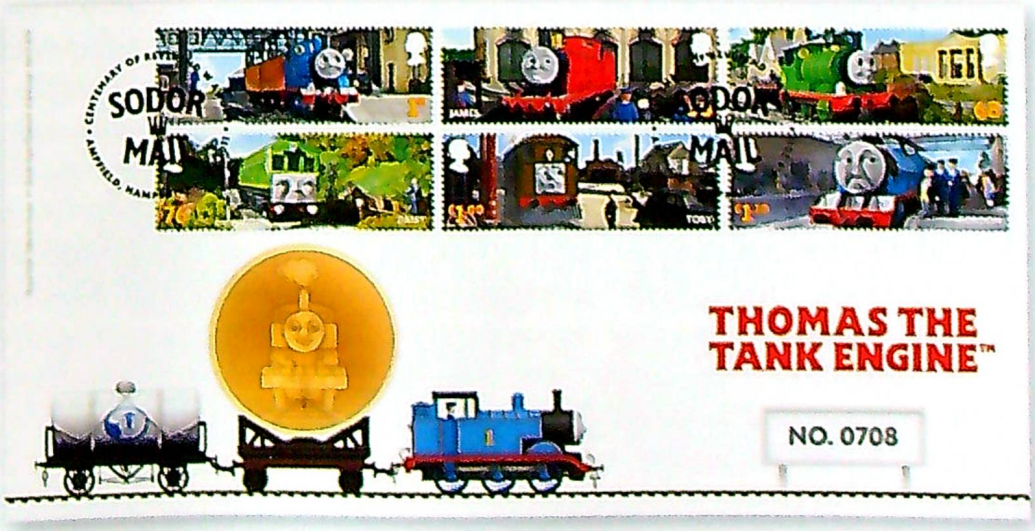
Above: the 1948 Olympic Games Coin Cover comes with a unique souvenir information pack and costs £69.95

Torch Relay Cachet Covers By the time the Olympic Torch Relay reaches its destination at the London 2012 stadium on 27 July, the noble torchbearers will have carried the Flame through more than 1,000 cities, towns and villages of the UK. To mark their progress in June, two new Torch Relay Cachet Covers are to be issued: on 6 June the Torch Relay Cachet Cover number 2 celebrates the Cardiff to Belfast run and number 3 marks the end of the Belfast to Edinburgh route on 13 June.

The first of this Torch Relay Cachet Cover series was issued on 25 May, commemorating the start of the relay, from Land's End to Cardiff. The fourth cover, highlighting the Edinburgh to Stratford final leg and the arrival of the torch at the London 2012 Stadium, will be released on 27 July, when a boxed set of all four Torch Relay Cachet Covers will also be available •

Toodle-pip Thomas On 13 June we wave a fond farewell to the Thomas The Tank Engine™ issue. The Reverend Wilbert Awdry's train characters, first created in 1943 to amuse his son Christopher, are now legendary. Many grown-up fans will treasure these stamps and pass them on to future generations along with Awdry's wonderful stories. The Thomas The Tank Engine™ Medal Cover comes off sale on 14 July, a month later than the stamp issue •

Below left: Thomas The Tank Engine™ Medal Cover. The stamps are withdrawn this month. Below: Wilbert Awdry in 1988 with one of his creations 'Peter Sam' – in real life 'Edward Thomas', a train on the Talyllyn Railway, Wales





2012



The London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games are almost here. Prepare to celebrate!

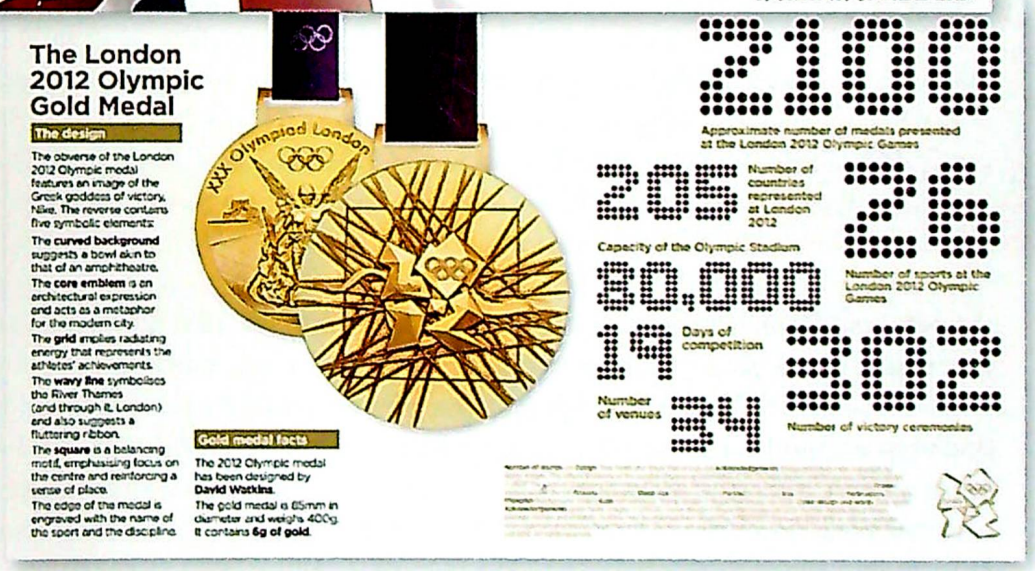
Sporting souvenirs Royal Mail has been looking forward to London 2012 for more than three years. The philatelic countdown to the Games began in October 2009 with the release of the first set of ten stamps, with the sub-set title of 'The Journey to 2012'. The stamps were issued in two se-tenant strips of five first class stamps, setting the format and high artistic standard to be echoed in the subsequent sets of 2010 and 2011. This year has seen the issue of unique London 2012 definitive stamps, as well as the Sports Cover Collection, the series of London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games Countdown Coin Covers and Torch Relay Cachet Covers. Now Royal Mail is delighted to announce that the last couple of years have also been spent preparing to celebrate gold medal success for Team GB in every sport.

While the winners cannot, of course, be predicted, philatelic tributes to gold medallists are ready and waiting: a series of commemorative First Class



Right: London 2012 Gold Medal Winners Miniature Sheets are already prepared – minus the images. Top: the official London 2012 Compendium (£20) makes an informative companion to the Games and is tailor-made to hold your Team GB Gold Medal Winners Stamp Collection







London 2012, Olympic Park, London E20, d.m.2012

Left: First Day Cover London 2012 Gold Medal Winners Miniature Sheets will contain a fact-packed insert. Due to the unique next-day timing, the covers will not be personalised but will feature the Olympic Stadium address and the unique postmark shown above. These Miniature Sheets and Covers can be pre-ordered by phone on 08457 641 641

Miniature Sheets have been printed in advance, using special gold inks, and almost as soon as the results are announced they will be finished with the name, sport and image of every Team GB Gold Medal Winner.

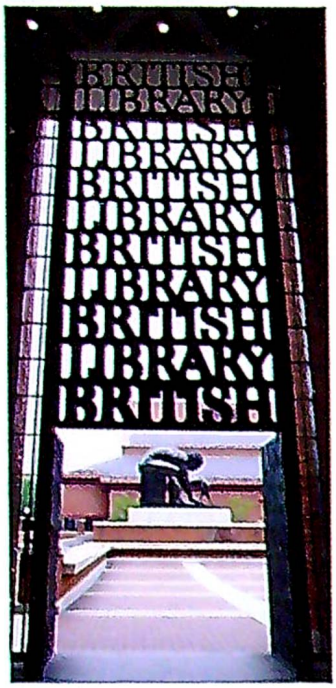
First-ever 'next day' stamps Images of each Team GB win will be sent to Royal Mail, where designers will have about an hour to choose the one that best defines the winning moment and create artwork to send to our printers. A number of printers across the country will work overnight to print the stamps ready for Royal Mail to put on sale by noon the next day – in less than 24 hours after the featured athlete or team has won gold for Team GB! Unique First Day Covers will comprise the Miniature Sheet affixed to a special cover featuring a unique postmark, the Olympic Stadium address and a fact-packed insert.

An Official London 2012 Compendium is also available, with a foreword by Sir Steve Redgrave and designed to keep your Team GB Gold Medal Winners Stamp Collection safe for posterity •

London 2012 Olympic Gold Medal Winners Miniature Sheet – Specifications

Number of stamps	Six
Size of sheet	192mm x 74.25mm
Design	True North and Royal Mail
Stamp format	Landscape
Stamp size	60mm x 30mm
Printer	Walsall Security Print and six regional printers
Print process	Lithography + digital overprint
Perforations	14.5 x 14.5
Phosphor	Screen
Gum	Self-adhesive

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



Two famous London venues for philatelists. Above: The British Library in London, where Olympex will be held. Below: The Royal Philatelic Society's headquarters in Devonshire Place



Olympic exhibitions Olympex will be held from 24 July to 9 September 2012 at the prestigious British Library in London, as part of the cultural programme of the Games in London. The exhibition may not be as grandiose as previous ones, owing to a more limited budget, but it will be a must for Olympic collectors. Olympex exhibits will be based on the London Games of 1908, 1948 and 2012.

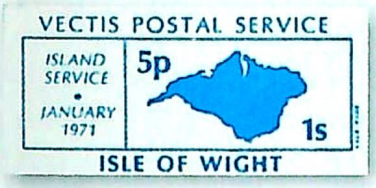
'The Olympic Journey: The Story of the Games' exhibition at the Royal Opera House at Covent Garden in London will run for the duration of the Olympic Games, from 27 July to 12 August. It aims to transport visitors back to ancient Greece, the original home of the Olympics, and follows a journey tracking some of the iconic Olympic athletes and stories of the last hundred years. Staged in collaboration with London 2012 partner BP, the exhibition will include unique artefacts, graphics, film and audio from The Olympic Museum in Lausanne, together with a collection of all the Olympic medals since 1896 and all the Olympic Torches since 1936. There will also be a 'Hall of Champions' featuring the stories and inspirational achievements of great Olympians from the modern Games •

Society meetings There are two meetings of the Royal Philatelic Society London this month. On 7 June Patrick Frost presents 'Great Britain Postage Due Mail since 1839' and on 21 June a selection from the Society's collections will be on display from 1pm followed by the AGM at 5pm, ending the 2011-12 programme. The 2012-13 season will start in September. Visitors are welcome at most meetings, at 41 Devonshire Place, London W1, by prior arrangement with the Society's Administration Office on 020 7486 1044.

The National Philatelic Society meeting on 9 June will comprise the AGM followed by an auction and members' displays on the themes of 'Diamond' and 'Jubilee'. NPS meetings are held at the Phoenix Centre, alongside The BPMA building in London. A 'country' meeting will be held at 1pm 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 e-mail nps@ukphilately.org.uk.

The GB Philatelic Society (GBPS), founded in 1955, is the main society for collectors of GB stamps, especially pre-Elizabeth II issues. At the next meeting of the GBPS, at Devonshire Place, London on 16 June, Alan Holyoake displays 'Secured Delivery of Mail 1450-1862' (11am), followed by the AGM and Members' Displays at 2pm. A special 'George V' meeting will be held at Autumn Stampex on 29 September. For GBPS details contact Peter Tanner, 13 St Hubert's Close, Gerrards Cross, Bucks SL9 7EN or visit www.gbps.org.uk •

Strike posts display Next month the Cinderella Stamp Club is holding a display of strike post stamps, such as the private postal service stamps shown above right, by John Armstone at the RPSL on 7 July. The display







marks, albeit belatedly, the 40th anniversary of the 1971 postal strike and includes the stamps shown above. For details of the Club, see its website at www.cinderellastampclub.org.uk. Or contact David Gottesmann at memberssec@cinderellastampclub.org.uk •

Forthcoming auctions Cavendish's auction on 13-14 June includes 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. Catalogues can be seen at www.cavendish-auctions.com or contact Cavendish at 153-157 London Road, Derby DE1 2SY. You can also telephone 01332 250970 •

The Talyllyn Railway has issued railway letter stamps since 1957. Two new 25p stamps, issued on 1 April 2012, feature locomotives Nos 1 and 2 in a se-tenant pair. Covers bearing pairs of stamps were carried on 1 April to be posted at Abergynolwyn. Price £4 plus postage. Further covers will be carried on both the Talyllyn and Corris Railways on 3 June 2012, and to mark the return of locomotive No 6 'Duncan' to the railway. Orders and enquiries: Postmaster, Talyllyn Railway, Wharf Station, Tywyn, Gwynedd, LL36 9EY. For more on TR stamps see *Bulletin* May 1997 and August 2007 •



Auction results Offering over 1,300 lots from across the globe, the Stanley Gibbons auction on 22 March exceeded the company's expectations with a final realisation of more than £840,000. A consistently full room saw China material selling well with a used copy of the very rare 1968 'The Whole Country is Red' stamp (shown left, SG 2403a) selling for £57,500 (estimate £50,000-60,000).

An outstanding Denmark collection, believed to be one of the best collections of Denmark offered intact, aroused considerable interest during viewing. Estimated at £10,000, the collection made £34,500 after frantic telephone bidding. The sale also featured a superb collection of Falkland Islands material with all lots finding new homes. A 'Black Frank' 'on piece', estimated at £1,100, sold for just under £2,000, while an excellent lower left corner marginal example of the 1964 Battle of the Falklands 1s value with watermark inverted sold for a remarkable £2,760.

Some 600 lots of GB material were offered, with 1840 1d blacks proving ▸

Diary dates

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 at Royal National Hotel, Russell Square, London WC1. 20-30 dealers. Enquiries: 020 8946 4480 or see www.stampshows.net

18-24 Indonesia 2012 international exhibition, Jakarta.

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

JULY

4 Strand Stamp Fair, as above.

6-7 Thematix '12 (National Thematic Stamp Show) at King George Field Indoor Bowls Club, Jubilee Way, Chessington, Surrey. Fri 10.30am-5pm, Sat 10am-5pm. Enquiries: 01256 415699 or www.thematix.co.uk.

20-21 York Racecourse Stamp Fair, York.





desirable, both on and off cover, as well as surface printed issues. GB collections proved as popular as ever; a fine collection of FDCs in 29 albums sold for almost £15,000 against an estimate of £10,000. The George V section included a remarkable collection that had been donated to the Christian charity, 'Tearfund'. There was strong competition for the 300 lots, with the single value collections hotly contested. Collections of the 1d values sold for well above estimate, and a 1935 Silver Jubilee Prussian Blue sold for £9,700 (est £6,000). For more information regarding Stanley Gibbons auctions in June, September, and December visit www.stanleygibbons.com or contact Richard Watkins or Ryan Epps on 020 7836 8444.

Royal portraits exhibition An exhibition of Royal portraits by photographer Marcus Adams is on show at Harewood House near Leeds until 17 June, and then at the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery & Museum in Bournemouth, 29 June to 16 September. Adams' portraits were used on a number of stamps including the GB stamps for The Queen's 60th birthday in 1986. See March 2011 *Bulletin* •



Above, from top: stamps showing Crown Jewels – 1953 Coronation stamp, 1978 25th anniversary of the Coronation and 2011 St Edward's Crown from the Crown Jewels issue

Crown Jewels A new display of the Crown Jewels was opened at the Tower of London by HRH The Princess Royal on 29 March. The Crown Jewels are, excuse the pun, the jewel in the crown of any visit to the Tower. They were featured on eight Royal Mail stamps issued last year which remain on sale until 22 August 2012. The Imperial State and St Edward's Crowns, the Sovereign's Orb and other items of the Crown Jewels have also featured on stamps for the 1953 Coronation, 1978 25th anniversary of Coronation, 1992 40th anniversary of Accession, and 2003 50th anniversary of Coronation. The White Tower – the central feature of the Tower of London – is shown on a stamp in the Historic Buildings set of 1978 and the London 1980 exhibition 50p stamp. For details of Tower opening times visit the Historic Royal Palaces website – www.hrp.org.uk •

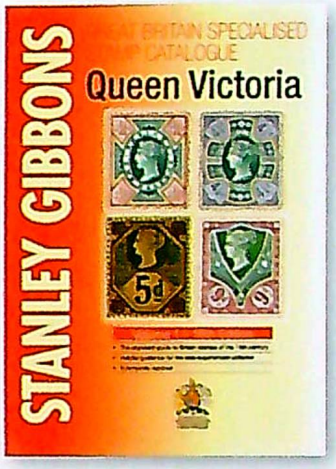


Above: this £10 hologram stamp is part of Jersey Post's Diamond Jubilee stamp range

Island news As part of Jersey's Diamond Jubilee celebrations, Jersey Post has collaborated with Jersey Heritage to produce a £10 stamp which features 'Equanimity', the first holographic stereogram portrait of Her Majesty The Queen by artist Chris Levine and holographer Rob Munday. The hologram reproduced on the stamp – a unique achromatic digital embossed holographic stereogram, thought to be the first of its kind in the world – was created especially for Jersey Post by Rob Munday and will be issued on 1 June 2012. The same portrait also features on Jersey's new £100 note.

Also on 1 June Jersey Post will issue a Limited Edition Commemorative Folder, offering the unique opportunity to buy a suite of products with corresponding serial numbers. As well as the stamp, the Folder also includes informative text about Her Majesty's visits to Jersey, the making of the hologram 'Equanimity' and detailed technical specifications of the £100 note. All the stamp products can be ordered through the online shop at www.jerseystamps.com. Enquiries about the Limited Edition Commemorative Folder and £100 Presentation Wallet should be directed to: stamps@jerseypost.com or telephone +44 (0) 1534 516320 •

New Queen Victoria reference book Among new catalogues recently published by Stanley Gibbons is the 16th edition of the GB Specialised Catalogue Volume 1 Queen Victoria (£44.95). Additions and improvements have been made to the listings of Parliamentary envelopes, 2d Mulready envelope, Maltese Cross postmarks, Penny Black and Penny Red printings from plate 5, 1d Venetian red, postal fiscals, and protective overprints and underprints. For further details contact Stanley Gibbons on 01425 472363 or e-mail orders@stanleygibbons.com •



Above: the new GB Specialised Catalogue of Queen Victoria, from Stanley Gibbons

Obituary We are sorry to record the death in March of Radford Henry Dagnall, always known in philatelic circles as Harry Dagnall. Born in 1914, Harry was educated at King's College London and followed a career as a technical editor. He collected, studied and extensively wrote about GB postal stationery and almanac and newspaper duty stamps. He was a Fellow of the Royal Philatelic Society London and in 2002 signed the Maurice Williams Roll of Notable Cinderella Philatelists. Best known of his many publications are: *John Dickson & his Silk Thread Paper*; *The Evolution of British Stamped Postcards & Lettercards*; an authoritative history of the Stamp Office *Creating A Good Impression: Three Hundred Years of The Stamp Office and Stamp Duties;* and *The Taxation of Paper in Great Britain 1643-1861: A History and Documentation.* An interview with Harry, to mark his 90th birthday, was published in the *Bulletin* in November 2004 •

This month in history John Holman recalls the popular Maritime Heritage stamps of 1982

Thirty years ago we celebrated the end of the Falklands War. By chance a set of British Maritime Heritage stamps went on sale at the time, sometimes mistakenly regarded as an issue to mark the end of the war in the South Atlantic. The five stamps featured famous Navy ships and personages connected to them. The 15½p first class stamp depicted Henry VIII and his flagship *Mary Rose*, the remains of which were raised a few months later. The four stamps for overseas mailings featured Admiral Blake and *Triumph*, Nelson and *HMS Victory*; Lord Fisher and *HMS Dreadnought*; and Viscount Cunningham and *HMS Warspite*. The stamps, designed by Marjorie Saynor, with the images of the ships by master engraver Czeslaw Slania, were printed in photogravure and recess (intaglio) by Harrisons in six colours. Some used examples are known of the 15½p stamp lacking the recess printing of the ship, and both 15½p and 26p values exist imperf.

The stamps were issued to mark both Maritime England Year – the bicentenary of the Livery Grant by the City of London to the Worshipful Company of Shipwrights – and the raising of the *Mary Rose* from Portsmouth Harbour. Collectors used the stamps on mail to receive special postmarks commemorating the Falklands War and the raising of the *Mary Rose*. The individual stamps sold in large quantities, ranging from nearly 9 million of the 29p to over 43 million of the 15½p. Had there been a *Bulletin* 'Favourite Stamp Poll' in 1982, this set would have scored well! •

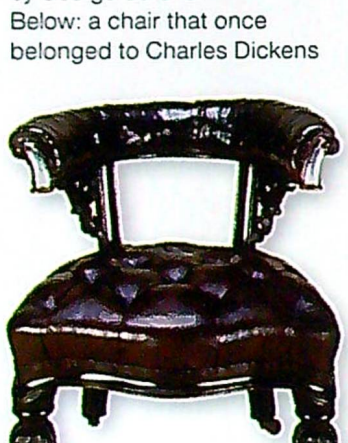




A Victorian superstar

Charles Dickens is Britain's brightest literary superstar and has been an inspiration to generations of writers. But story-telling is only the tip of his creative genius, says Simon Ball

Above: signed photo of Dickens by George Gardner
Below: a chair that once belonged to Charles Dickens



AS WINTER draws to a close in 1841, a crowd gathers on the harbour at Manhattan Island's Battery Park. In the growing light, eyes are straining, looking out into the grey Atlantic, hunting for a telltale plume of smoke. They are searching for the British mail packet carrying from London the long awaited Chapter 71 of *The Old Curiosity Shop*. The excitement is palpable by the time the ship steams into view. By the time it is close enough for the crowd to see the captain come on deck, some 20,000 people have gathered on the quay. Almost as one the cry goes up, 'Is Little Nell dead?' The captain's solemn face confirms their very worst expectations.

If you think this sounds like a scenario that combines the tension of 'who shot JR Ewing?' fever with the passion of Beatlemania, you would not be far wrong. In the previous instalment of Charles Dickens' *The Old Curiosity Shop*, the heroine, Little Nell had been left poised between life and death – a cliff-hanger every bit as gripping as the one that captured the world's imagination regarding the South Fork villain's assassin in 1980. But without

Main photo: © Trustees of the Watts Gallery, Compton, Surrey/Bridgeman. Chair: Bridgeman

24-hour television news, telephones or the internet, Dickens' fans had little choice in 1841 but to line the quays and wait to discover Little Nell's fate from the mail brought by the packet ship. Such was the power of Charles Dickens' nail-biting ending to each chapter of his serialised novels. Each chapter was first read aloud to an eager audience by Dickens in person, in such a polished performance that some people took notes on his intonation and dramatic pauses to help them copy the author's delivery when relating or reading the story to their friends and family.



Above: The Marchioness, a character from *The Old Curiosity Shop*, is on one of the six new Charles Dickens stamps issued on 19 June, with illustrations adapted from *Character Sketches From Charles Dickens* by Joseph Clayton Clark – originally published around 1890

Two centuries of success Charles Dickens, whose 200th birthday is celebrated with a special stamp issue and a Miniature Sheet on 19 June, certainly understood how to keep his readers hooked. Unlike contemporary authors, he also had the luxury of being able to respond to the public reaction to his works as they were serialised in magazines such as *Household Words*, which he also edited. However, the strength of his writing far extends beyond the genre of the monthly soap opera: the fact that his works remain an inspiration to writers, film directors, songwriters, politicians and even comedians of today is testimony to its phenomenal enduring quality.

Michael Moorcock, acclaimed contemporary British author, put it quite succinctly to me: 'Dickens remains important because of his extraordinary prose, narratives and characters. No other English novelist has yet matched him and I think only Balzac is his equal. He has given life to a vast number of creations – more than any writer I can think of, including Shakespeare. He has made us believe in the incredible and sympathise with the unsympathetic. His own sympathy with the weak, downtrodden and marginalised is probably his greatest quality and sets him apart from almost every other great English writer. It's probably what ultimately makes him the best.'

It's easy to see what Moorcock means. Dickens had the ability to create wholly believable worlds where downtrodden heroes navigate paths through dreadful adversity and wanton cruelty, grotesque villains plot and scheme, unexpected acts of kindness from strangers occasionally offer great succour, and eventually justice is done, romance found and fortunes made.

Below: John Mills in the 1946 film version of *Great Expectations*.
Barry Humphries and Nathan Lane in a 2002 film version of *Nicholas Nickleby*



Drawn from life Much of Dickens' fiction drew directly on events and exeriences in his own life and put them under the insightful focus of his creative genius. Dickens was born into a relatively affluent family on 7 February 1812. His childhood in Kent was, by all accounts, mostly very happy. His father, John Dickens, was a clerk in the Navy Pay Office and was able to afford a few years of private education for Charles at William Giles' School in Chatham. But John Dickens was to become the inspiration for the character of Wilkins Micawber in *David Copperfield* because, like Micawber, he lived beyond his means.

By 1824 John Dickens' dire financial management had resulted in imprisonment for most of the Dickens family in Southwark's Marshalsea Debtors Prison. Charles was forced to leave school and work at a boot-blacking factory for six ▸

Film stills: moviestorecollection.com







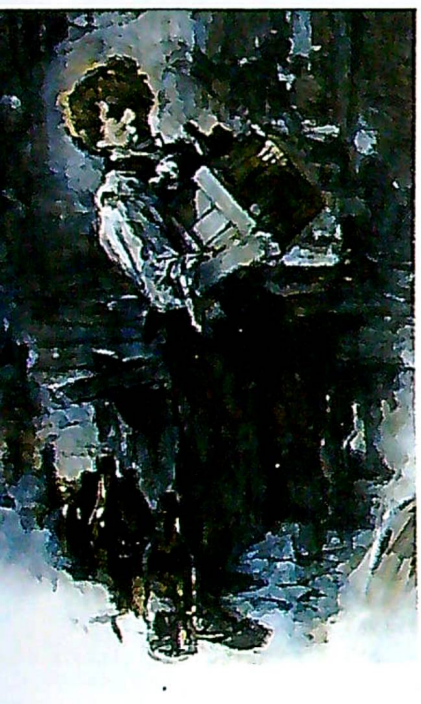
Above: Mr Micawber on the £1.90 stamp in this month's Charles Dickens issue. Centre: painting of an alley in Marshalsea, Southwark, London, by G Hassell, 1832. Above right: a contemporary engraving of John Dickens, Charles Dickens' father

shillings a week. This isolation from his imprisoned family at such a young age probably inspired the creation of those orphan heroes such as Oliver Twist and Pip in *Great Expectations*, who have to make their own way in the world until rescued by happy circumstance. Meanwhile the shabby living conditions forced upon the adolescent Dickens in south London's rookeries provided a first-hand introduction to the meanest rungs of Victorian society. Here he probably encountered the models for Oliver Twist's word-mangling beadle, Mr Bumble (on the second class stamp) and the alcoholic nurse Sarah Gamp (77p) from *Martin Chuzzlewit*, who kept her gin in a teapot.

The dreadful conditions and cruelty that Dickens endured, working ten hour shifts pasting on labels at Warren's Blacking Warehouse, must have made a deep impression on the 12-year-old, no doubt forming the nucleus of the interest in social reform and labour conditions that would emerge during later years in books such as *Hard Times*.

Dickens used Marshalsea Prison as one of the settings for *Little Dorrit*, when the impecunious William Dorritt and his family are imprisoned for debt (illustrated on one of the first class stamps of the Miniature Sheet). The Dorritts, like the Dickens family, are eventually released from custody when a relative dies and leaves them enough money to cover their debts. Just like the fictional Mr Micawber's, John Dickens' faith that 'something will turn up' finally paid off.

Below: a 20th-century depiction of Dickens as a 12-year-old Dickens at work in a boot-blacking factory, by Neville Dear

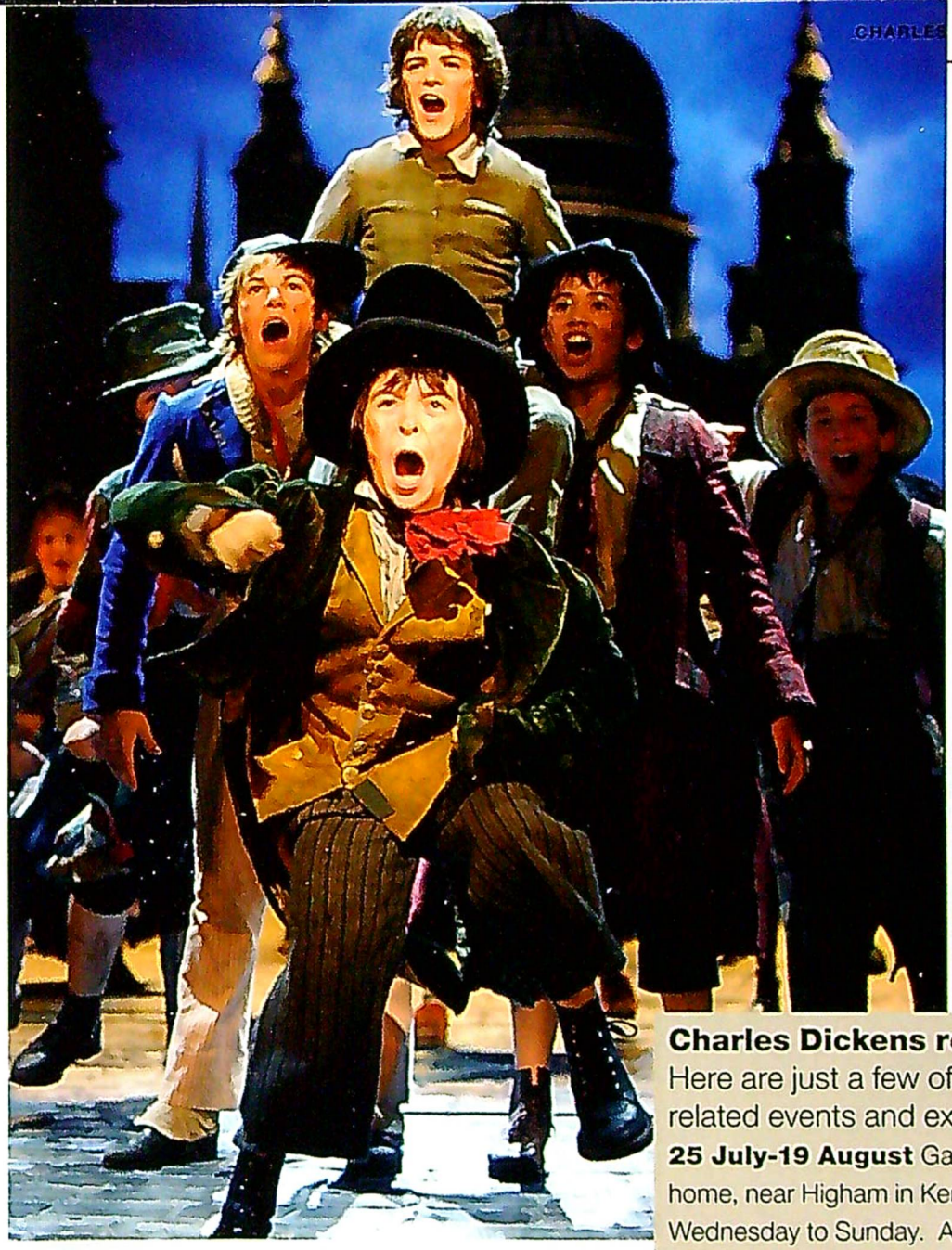


Good times follow bad After the family's release from Marshalsea, young Charles was sent to Wellington House Academy to complete his education. Wellington House became the model for Mr Creakle's Establishment in *David Copperfield*, while the sadistic punishments meted out to the students by the headmaster must surely have influenced the brutality of Dotheboys Hall's Wackford Squires in *Nicholas Nickleby* (illustrated on the first class stamp of the Miniature Sheet).

The death of Little Nell is also believed to have been derived from an event in Dickens' own life. In 1837 his wife's 17-year-old sister Mary moved into the Dickens' house at 48 Doughty Street, London. Charles and Mary became very close, but after a short illness she died in his arms.

An early career as a legal clerk, followed by a stint as a freelance court reporter, inculcated a distrust of the legal system which Dickens believed to be stacked against the interests of the poor. This is another common theme in his novels, notably in *Nicholas Nickleby* and *Bleak House* (both first class on the

Neville Dear gouache on paper and John Dickens engraving: Mary Evans Picture Library. G Hassell painting: Heritage Images



Left: Robert Madge as as the Artful Dodger in a 2009 production of *Oliver!* – Lionel Bart's musical version of Dickens' *Oliver Twist* has travelled the world and its songs have in turn become classics.
Below: Roman Polanski directed this 2005 film version of *Oliver Twist*, starring Barney Clark, Ben Kingsley and Jeremy Swift



Oliver! photo by Nigel Norrington at Arenapal/TopFoto
Oliver Twist © moviestorecollection.com
Doughty Street postcard by Goldwin of Rochester © Mary Evans/Grenville Collins Postcard Collection

Miniature Sheet). From journalism it was a short step to becoming a published author and his fiction first appeared in monthly periodicals. In 1836 *The Pickwick Papers* was published and he became editor of *Bentley's Miscellany*. Dickens continued to edit and contribute to journals for the rest of his career.

A characterful legacy As an author Dickens has given us more that just a collection of classic novels and short stories. Even people who have never read any of his books use language derived from them. No one likes being called a Scrooge, a Gradgrind or a Miss Havisham!

However, Dickens' greatest linguistic legacy surely must be the adjective 'Dickensian', which is used to describe almost anything to do with Victorian culture. Moreover, the effect of ▸

Charles Dickens remembered

Here are just a few of the many Dickens-related events and exhibitions this summer:

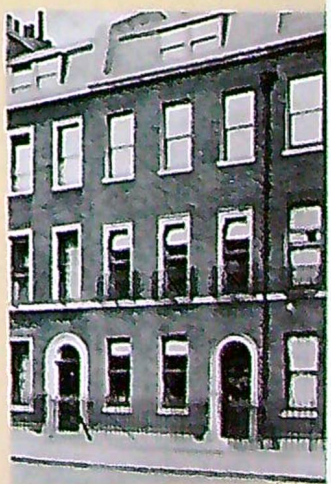
25 July-19 August Gad's Hill Place, Dickens' last home, near Higham in Kent, offers guided tours, Wednesday to Sunday. Admission £12, pre-booking required. Email events@dickensmuseum.com

8-10 June Dickens Summer Festival, Rochester, Kent. For details of special events see www.rochesterdickensfestival.org.uk.

Until 10 June 'Dickens and London' at The Museum of London.

Until 4 November 'A Tale of One City' at City Museum in Portsmouth, the birthplace of Dickens.

December reopening 48 Doughty Street (right) houses the Dickens Museum, which reopens in December following a £3 million redevelopment.



Dickens' work in exposing the horrors of Victorian inequality and oppression cannot be underestimated. Another resident of Victorian London, Karl Marx, said that Dickens '...issued to the world more political and social truths than have been uttered by all the professional politicians, publicists and moralists put together...' and the popularity of his novels made it difficult for the Victorian public to ignore these issues.

For details of all ten of the stamps in this month's Charles Dickens issue, please see the Preview on page 264 of May *Bulletin*

Even in his first book, the otherwise comic *The Pickwick Papers*, his description of the conditions endured by Mr Pickwick (who graces the new first class stamp) while jailed at Fleet Prison is thought to have been a major contributing factor in the prison's closure. And *Oliver Twist* was instrumental in the clearance of south London's infamous crime-ridden slum of Jacob's Island.



The Phiz factor

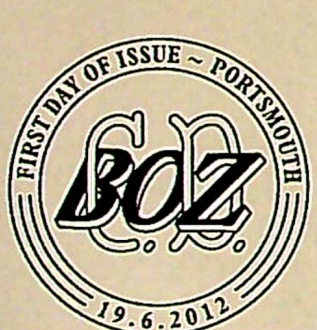
Dickens' early success owed much to his creative partnership with the illustrator nicknamed Phiz, whose work is featured on all four stamps of the Charles Dickens Miniature Sheet, shown below.

'Phiz' was the pseudonym of Hablot Knight Browne (1815–82), a brilliant illustrator who met Dickens in 1836. At that time Dickens' pen name was Boz, and 'Boz and Phiz' formed a creative partnership. The winning combination of Phiz's pictures and Dickens' words lasted for 23 years and ten books – until Dickens' writing style began to change. *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859), the last of Dickens' books that Phiz illustrated, was a more serious, psychological work and Phiz's witty style was no longer such a perfect fit.

In his biography of Dickens, Peter Ackroyd comments on the abrupt end to their working relationship: 'Dickens no longer needed Browne to give visual strength to his imaginative conceptions, and Browne had ceased to develop and enlarge his range in response to Dickens' own progress as an artist.' Dickens went on to write three more novels and died in 1870, 12 years before Phiz.

Christmas classic In 1993 Royal Mail marked the 150th anniversary of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* with stamps illustrated by Quentin Blake. This tale of the miser's journey from damnation to redemption through the visions of the ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Future, was described by Dickens' contemporary William Makepeace Thackeray as 'a national benefit, and to every man and woman who reads it a personal kindness'.

Historian Ronald Hutton credits *A Christmas Carol* with spearheading the revival of pre-Christian festive celebrations, such as feasting on seasonal food and drink, dancing and gift-giving that had been suppressed by Puritan authorities in the 17th century. Whether that is true or not, *A Christmas Carol* has handed down to us the two seasonal expressions: both 'Bah! Humbug!' and 'Merry Christmas'. So not only is Charles Dickens arguably Britain's greatest writer, a giant influence on the social reform movement and a source of inspiration to generations of creatives, but he is also the man who revived the spirit of Christmas: in Tiny Tim's words, 'God bless us, one and all' •



Charles Dickens 1812–1870



"No one who can read, ever looks at a book, even unopened on a shelf, like one who cannot."

Charles Dickens

Hablot Browne engraving: Mary Evans Picture Library

Another view Douglas Myall examines recent issues following this year's tariff changes

New postal rates came into effect on 30 April. The increases in basic inland rates were not as great as some pundits were forecasting. Indeed we still compare very favourably with our continental cousins, when you consider the so-called Universal Service Obligation which requires Royal Mail to maintain a six-days-a-week delivery to more than 29 million addresses in the UK at a uniform rate. Many of the changes were met by existing non-denominated stamps but three new Machins were issued in counter sheets on 25 April. These were: 87p orange to pre-pay the 20g letter rate to Europe, £1.28 emerald green for the European 40g rate and £1.90 rhododendron for the 40g rate to the rest of the world. They were printed as self-adhesives by De La Rue from cylinders D1 (colour) and D1 (phosphor). Cylinder blocks of six include the colour name in the margin.

An official first day cover was supplied for the three stamps and the Large Letter First Class Diamond Jubilee stamp that was issued on the same day. The value stamps on the cover have sideways direction of print – what printers call 'machine direction'. This means that they were laid down sideways on the cylinder and printed in sideways delivered coils. The precision and regularity of their placement on the covers indicates that all three were on the same coil. That would make good sense as they could be lifted off the substrate and deposited onto the covers in one operation. (The Jubilee stamp would have had to be dealt with separately.) In the pre-Machin days, when our stamps were printed on watermarked paper, those with a sideways watermark were very collectible. The machine direction serves the same purpose for today's specialists. So the three stamps on your cover are distinguishable. The coils were not made available to the public and they do not exist from any other source or in mint condition.

Below and overleaf: the latest Country Definitives, with the spot in the grid on the margin indicating sheet postion



In the Country Definitives pictorial range the 87p and £1.28 stamps were issued for each of the four countries. The designs are unchanged except for the new denominations. They were printed in lithography by Cartor from plates which are all numbered C1. If you collect cylinder blocks of six of each of these eight stamps you will have some very interesting items. At one time, a printer's sheet produced two counter sheets of 100. These were printed from the same cylinders but were distinguished by adding a full stop to one of the panes, usually the right-hand one. From 31 March 2009, the no-dot/dot convention was dropped and a two-position grid system was adopted instead. A ▸



large spot in either the left or the right box indicated which side of the printer's sheet it came from. The same quantity of stamps was not required from every country and the two panes might have stamps of different values or even from different countries. In that year, for example, the Scotland 56p (left) was paired with the Wales 90p (right).

The plates used for this year's country stamps print eight counter sheets of 25 (5 x 5) with margins all round. The original position of every sheet is indicated by a large grey spot in an eight-position grid box printed by the black plate in the bottom left margin. An empty box means that the same stamp was printed in that position. A greyed-out box indicates that a different stamp was printed there. This year's grids are illustrated here and this is what they reveal.

England: each value occupies four spots and the two stamps were printed side by side, 87p at the left and the £1.28 at the right, corresponding to the former no dot and dot panes respectively.

Scotland: the same as for England.

Wales and Northern Ireland: each of the four stamps occupies two of the eight spots. They were printed together from a common set of plates. The two Northern Ireland stamps are at the left and the two Wales stamps are at the right.

It is not usually possible to determine the machine direction of lithographed stamps but the layouts show that it was parallel to their long sides. The same phosphor plate was used on all eight values. It printed two bars on each stamp with a combined width of 13mm. The reason that this is wider than the standard width of 9mm on the Machin issues is because, being pictorial designs, the bars are vignetted over the extra width to reduce the visual impact on the image.

The First Class Large Letter Diamond Jubilee stamp was officially issued on 25 April although some offices released them a few days early. As well as the counter sheets, there were business sheets of 50 and books of four, both printed by Walsall. The counter sheet stamps do not have a hidden source code but those from business sheets have a B replacing the first E of JUBILEE right of the hair. The book stamps have an F in the same place. On all of the Jubilee definitive stamps, the iridescent overprint which contains the code does not, unlike on the gold stamps, cover the portrait. This greatly improves the appearance of these beautiful stamps and I hope that the same policy will be adopted when the time comes to revert to the standard issue.

As I am sure you know, there is another code hidden in the iridescent overprint, except for the Jubilee issue. This has the last two digits of the year replacing two letters from the word MAIL. The three new Machin stamps have this in the form M12L above left of the diadem. The 87p and £1.28 were printed on 08/02/12 (the form that dates are printed in the sheet margins); the £1.90 on 10/02/12. It is normal for the hidden date to be the same as the year of printing but there have been some exceptions. For example, the £1 ruby was printed on 12/01/12 and on 15/03/12 but the first has M11L and the second M12L •



Left: an airletter stamped by a Mobile Post Office at Wimbledon in 1963. The MPO canceller used for registered mail has the time of day missing. Also missing, on the top postmark, is the full stop at the end of the postcode S.W.19 – which identifies it as a second canceller used in the Croydon office in 1963
Below: a French stamp showing Charles D'Orleans, who introduced tennis to England after his capture at Agincourt. His captor Henry V, shown here in a stamp from the recent Royal Mail Kings and Queens series, also played *jeu de paume*

Anyone for tennis?

Ron Backhouse presents extracts from his award-winning thematic exhibition – to get you in the mood Wimbledon

THE PRECISE ORIGINS of tennis are obscure, but can be traced back to the 13th century, when French monks played handball (*jeu de paume*) in the privacy of their cloisters. In the 14th century the game was taken up by the French aristocracy – records show that Jean le Bon (1319-1364) lost 144 crowns gambling on his game, Charles V of France (1338-1380) had a court specially constructed inside the Louvre and Philippe le Bon (1396-1467) built a court at Coudenburg – so I have enjoyed finding for my collection stamps featuring portraits of these early tennis fans. The arrival of tennis in England is believed to have coincided with the Battle of Agincourt in 1415, because Charles d'Orléans was captured and taken to England, where he is said to have introduced *jeu de paume*.



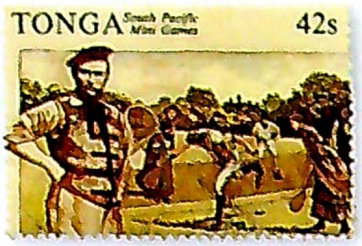
The game remained popular with the English royal family – accounts record Henry VII's significant losses in 1490. His son Henry VIII was an undisputed champion of the game. The tennis court at Hampton Court Palace was commissioned by Henry VIII in 1529 and refitted in 1660 by Charles II.



By the 16th century, the French aristocracy had taken up handball as a popular form of exercise and, especially when the nobility of Europe followed suit, it became generally known as Court Tennis or the Royal Game. But it was not until the 19th century that the game was played outdoors. The beginning of lawn tennis as we know it today – played on grass with a ball that bounces – was heralded by the invention of the lawn mower in 1830 and the vulcanisation ▶



Above: a stone-paved 'Tennys Courte' in the grounds of a 16th-century castle, one of a superb History of Tennis series from Hungary



Above: this 1989 Tonga stamp, celebrating the South Pacific Mini Games, shows tennis pioneer W C Wingfield and some unusual attire.

Right: WH Gaze and Sons Ltd advertised hard tennis courts in GB stamp books from 1919 to 1924





Above: an illustration of 1930s 'tennis whites' from a set of stamps publicising a planned 'International Spartacist Games' in Moscow in 1935. The event never took place

process (which improves strength and elasticity of rubber) in 1839. Then the game became popular with the Victorian upper classes and was further encouraged in 1873, when Major WC Wingfield patented a kit for use on lawns. It included the rules of tennis but was marketed under the name 'Sphairistike'! Wingfield subsequently claimed to be the inventor of tennis and is commemorated for this achievement in a 1989 stamp from Tonga. I have in my collection a rare cromalin proof of this stamp and a printers' proof, used for checking at Walsall Security Printers in London and released from the Tonga archives in 1999.

By the early 1900s the game had definitely moved outdoors and became known as lawn tennis. From 1913 to 1923 the Wimbledon Championships were called 'The World Championships on Grass' by edict of the International Lawn Tennis Federation (ILTF). Today the word 'lawn' has been dropped from the name and tennis is played on a variety of surfaces. But since the rules were standardised in 1875, in time for the first Wimbledon Championships held in 1877, the game has changed little apart from the colour of the balls, the shape of the rackets and court attire.





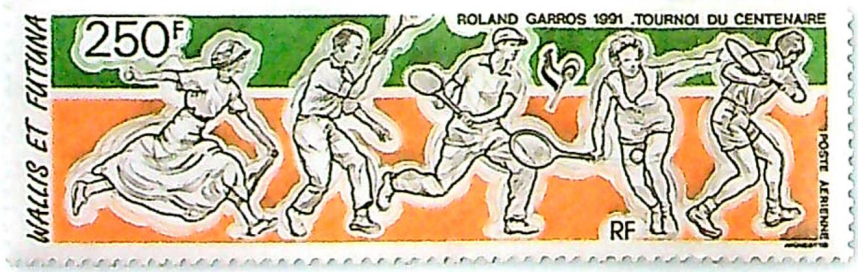
Above: colour trial for a 1948 Nicaraguan stamp showing the new trend of men's shorts and a popular St Vincent stamp, nicely illustrating the move to ultra-short hemlines for women players.

Right: styles of tennis attire from the 1950s to the present day

Changing fashions in court attire

As tennis clubs began to implement the newly standardised rules, they tended to introduce rules governing gentlemen's dress on court. White or cream woollen trousers, known as flannels, and a white shirt were required, but rolled-up shirt sleeves soon became acceptable, for obvious reasons. By the 1930s men had begun to wear shorts, which almost completely took over from flannels in the 1950s. White remains the order of the day and it is still a requirement of the All England Club of Wimbledon.

The changes in women's tennis attire have been more dramatic. Victorian ladies who wanted to play tennis had to deal with the limitations of long sleeves, high necklines, nipped-in waists and ankle-length skirts, beneath which ▶



6.4 The Olympics - In 1988 tennis returned to the Games.

As the distinction between amateurism and professionalism had become so clouded in many sports, in 1988 tennis was reinstated as an Olympic discipline with the proviso that entrants may not play for money during the period of the meetings.

Seoul 1988



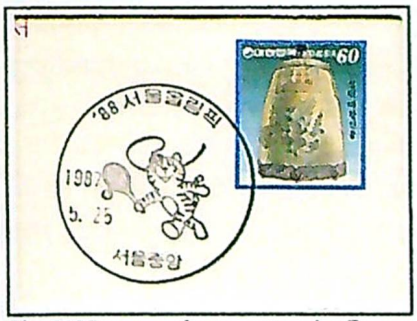
Monochrome Proof



A fund raising issue featuring Steffi Graf postmarked with the Games' logo.



Specimen distributed to advertise the issue.



The 1987 postmark promoting the Games.



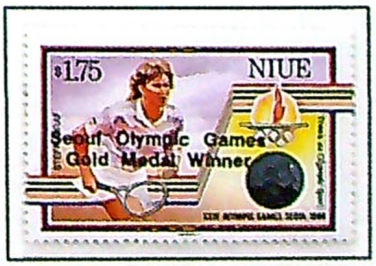
The stamp was issued on the 11th August 1988.

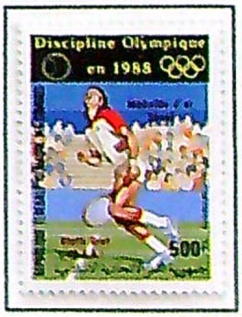


The postmark used during the Games.

Miloslav Mercir, Cs and Steffi Graf, Ge. were winners of the gold medals for singles.





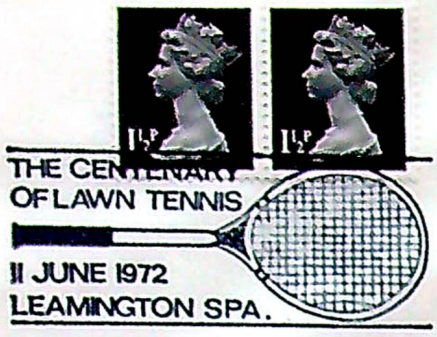








Above: display sheet on tennis at the 1988 Seoul Olympics. Left: a player dressed in Victorian court attire, on a 1983 red London meter that was used in offices of the LTA, advertising the Tennis Museum at the Wimbledon All England Club.



petticoat, stockings and corsets were *de rigueur*. After the Second World War, fashion trends were reflected in ladies' tennis gear and by the 1950s knee-length skirts were acceptable. In the 1960s styles became more varied and shorter. By the 1970s tennis skirts were above the knee and the mid-1970s saw hemlines rise as high a possible – where they have stayed.

Balls and rackets

King Louis XI of France was largely responsible for standardising tennis balls. In 1480 he passed a law forbidding them to be made of anything but leather stuffed with soft wool or hair. Some four centuries later, in 1876, rules were adopted to standardize weight and size, stipulating that tennis balls should be hollow, made of India rubber, and, in fine weather, covered in a white cloth. To illustrate this long tradition I have collected some stamps featuring sheep sheering, the history of rubber plantations and Columbus, who saw children playing with balls made of gum from rubber trees, on his voyage of discovery to America in the 1490s.

The tradition of white tennis balls continued until 1973, when the ILTF sanctioned the use of white or yellow balls, as the latter had higher visibility. Yellow balls became the norm as soon as Wimbledon opted for them in 1986.

In 1583 solid paddles were replaced by wooden rackets, cross-strung with sheep's gut. By 1900 rackets had evolved to a shape similar to that used today. In the 1980s manufacturers began to employ modern materials instead of wood and gut. There are many meter marks from manufacturers of tennis equipment in my collection, including one from Slazenger in 1930 which is the first to have in its text the words LAWN TENNIS.



Top: a 1972 cancellation marking the centenary of lawn tennis. It shows a wooden racket, at the time state-of-the-art. The first English club formed exclusively for lawn tennis was founded at Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, in 1872. Above: KGV Ceylon stamp showing a rubber tree. Seeds from Brazil were first brought to London in 1876 and used to grow plants that were taken to Ceylon to be matured

Tennis gets organised

British tennis players began to get together to form clubs in the 1870s. Tennis was first played at The All England Croquet Club in Wimbledon in 1875 and two years later it became The All England Croquet and Lawn Tennis Club. Such



Right: this 1947 postmark was the first to refer to the 'All England LTC'. It was only used in the Mobile Post Office at Wimbledon and only for registered mail, which was costly – so very few exist

was the popularity of the game that at the turn of the century tennis clubs were springing up all over the world, leading to the formation of national associations to act as regulating bodies. The first national association was founded in New York in 1881 and the Lawn Tennis Association of Great Britain was founded in 1888. The universal game needed universal rules, so the International Lawn Tennis Federation was formed in 1913 to administer the game worldwide. Fearing invasion by the Nazis, in 1939 the ILTF in Paris sent its funds to London, where the Federation has been based ever since.

Postmarks celebrating anniversaries of tennis associations are to be found across the world. My favourites include the Federation Française de Tennis with its address in Avenue Gordon Bennett and a meter mark of Middlesex County Lawn Tennis Association when it moved from London W13 to W3 in 1998. Pitney Bowes supplied W13 and the erroneous mark was used for five weeks.



Top: crossed wooden rackets and the words 'England's oldest tennis court' appear in this first-day cancellation on the Hampton Court stamp from Royal Mail's historic buildings set of 1978. Henry VIII commissioned the court and had tournaments organised there

Premier international team event

The prestigious Davis Cup, the most important team competition in men's tennis, began in 1900 as a challenge between Britain and the US. By 2007, 137 nations took part in the tournament. There is a rich seam of philatelic material connected with the Davis Cup in countries all over the world, which space does permit me to share in this article.

A theme for 2012

Similarly, collecting Olympic material on tennis is a delight, but would make an article in itself. Lawn tennis was played at the inaugural 1896 Olympic Games in Athens but was dropped after the Paris Games of 1924. It was re-introduced as a medal sport at the 1988 Seoul Olympics, since when it has been played at every Olympiad – which offers plenty of scope for thematic collectors. I have chosen just one Olympic sheet to illustrate (on page 312). It includes an interesting fund-raising issue featuring Steffi Graf and the 'tennis' logo of the Seoul Olympics. The Steffi Graf stamp issued by Tonga on 11 August 1988 is displayed alongside its monochrome proof and a specimen distributed to advertise the issue. On the same sheet are the winners of the Seoul Gold Medal for singles.

This year, of course, I am very much hoping that the Team GB Medal Winners stamps will include one for tennis.



Ron Backhouse's 'Anyone For Tennis?' exhibit was awarded Large Vermeils in Italia 2009 and Portugal 2012, and Gold in 2012 Spring Stampex. He gives displays to clubs and local organisations. Ron is a life member and past president of the Insurance & Banking Philatelic Society and Librarian for the British Thematic Association. His passion for tennis began in 1981 on joining his local tennis club, where he still plays three days a week. Between games Ron gives advice to thematic collectors via email at Ron@ 10nis.fsnet.co.uk •

Letter box jubilee Martin Robinson looks at post boxes bearing the cipher of Elizabeth II



1

Above: type A pillar box with eight-inch aperture

IN EARLIER ARTICLES we have looked at some aspects of the letter boxes of the present reign – for example the use of the Scottish crown, modern rarities and some types of lamp boxes. But to celebrate The Queen's Diamond Jubilee we now take an overview of developments in all types of letter boxes made since her accession in 1952, from the largest dual aperture pillars to wall boxes and the smallest lamp boxes.

Let us begin with pillar boxes, or at least those made for use in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. We have already referred to the fact that boxes made since 1952 for use in Scotland bear the Scottish Crown instead of the usual royal cipher. When EIIR boxes were erected north of the border, Scottish nationalists were quick to point out that the first Queen Elizabeth reigned before the 1707 Act of Union.

Because we see them in the street every day, it would be easy to assume that modern pillar boxes are standard items, with no details worth a second look. But in fact they have as much variety as the earliest boxes of Queen Victoria's reign (which we shall also be looking at in a future article). From 1952 they were made in three sizes, as they were in previous reigns: A (large), B (small) and C (dual aperture). Now only sizes A and C are made.

Aspects of apertures From 1900 onwards, pillar boxes had an eight-inch posting aperture (1), but as posting of larger envelopes became more common, this was found to be inadequate. So from 1957 boxes were made with a 10-inch aperture. At first this was curved, but from 1958 a jutting, straight-edged aperture became the standard form, which gave better protection from rain (2). Because it was made for only a short time, the ten-inch curved aperture is comparatively rare.

Another thing to look at is the rim of the cap, which can have different types of fluting, later without the lower rim (2), or with no fluting at all on some boxes made in 1979/80 (3). Boxes made from 1991 have ROYAL MAIL instead of POST OFFICE on the door below the royal cipher (4).

The names of many different manufacturers can be spotted at the base of this range of boxes, on the front or rear: McDowall, Steven & Co, Falkirk; Carron Co, Falkirk; Carronade Engineering, Falkirk; Machan Engineering, Denny; Lion Foundry, Kirkinilloch; Meadow Foundry, Mansfield; Abbot Engineering, Paisley; and Hillsyde Foundry, Newcastle, Staffordshire. Of all these manufacturers, Machan Engineering is now the





2, 3

Right: the ten-inch jutting aperture, with fluting on the outside of the lower edge. Far right: aperture with no fluting round the rim







4, 5, 6

Above left: Type C pillar box with ROYAL MAIL instead of POST OFFICE
Above centre: posting box for metered mail
Above: prototype pillar and lamp boxes

only one that still produces traditional cast iron letter boxes for Royal Mail.

From 1980 to 2001 the Type K box was made (see reader's letter, below), still cylindrical but of an altogether different design and looking to my eye rather like a torpedo. This has variations in the details, beloved of specialists, and the earliest castings have a commemorative plaque on the rear. Since 1995 readers will have noticed special boxes intended for the posting of metered mail (5), often found on industrial estates and in commercial areas of towns. There are also sheet steel boxes with a rounded top, often with an advertising panel on the front, found commonly at garages. Both the latter are made by Romec, Royal Mail's own engineering company.

In a previous article about modern rarities, we covered the experimental boxes of the period, which included the rectangular Type F (made of sheet steel) and Type G (cast iron) and boxes of various shapes and sizes made of polypropylene and fibreglass, the latter often intended for sheltered locations like shopping malls and airports. Since that article was written new prototype boxes have come to light, also made by Romec in 2010. These are of sheet steel with a special finish to inhibit the corrosion that was a problem with earlier sheet steel boxes. They come as large or small pillars (the larger one hexagonal) and lamp boxes (6). The small pillar box has been given a street trial but it remains to be seen whether the two others will enter public service.

In the next article we will look at other sorts of EIIR letter boxes.

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

Readers' letters: British pillar boxes can be found in other parts of the world. Mr Brian Austing writes to say that letter boxes in the Channel Island of Guernsey have been painted blue since postal independence was granted in 1969. He sends a photo of a 1980 Type K pillar box on The Bridge at St Sampson's.
Please send your photographs to The Editor at the address on page 292
We regret that we cannot promise to return photographs.



The British Postal Museum and Archive

For the family with a philatelist, The BPMA is a must-visit venue for a Jubilee outing in the capital





London 2012 and The Queen's Diamond Jubilee are of course London's biggest attractions this year and this double dose of historic events gives philatelists plenty of new material to consider for their collections. Now on at The British Postal Museum & Archive is a show to mark the Jubilee, in addition to the regular exhibitions, talks and walks on offer. Here is *Bulletin*'s guide to The BPMA's brilliant events this summer and beyond.



Above: The British Postal Museum and Archive in Phoenix Place, London – new premises are on the drawing boards.
Top: Mary Gillick's plaster model of The Queen's portrait and an early proposal from Sedley Place for the Diamond Jubilee Definitives Miniature Sheet artwork – both on show in the current BPMA exhibition

Diamond Jubilee Exhibition The BPMA is currently celebrating The Queen's extraordinary reign with a new exhibition entitled 'Diamond Jubilee: Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 1952-2012'.

Says Douglas Muir, Curator of Philately at The BPMA: 'The Queen on stamps is an iconic image all over the world. This exhibition will be a unique chance to see some fascinating items from The BPMA's collection and follow the design processes of some of our best-known stamps, coins and banknotes.'

The free exhibition includes the intriguing stories of unadopted artwork and the design stages of the two stamps, two coins and two banknotes featured on the Diamond Jubilee Definitives Miniature Sheet, from initial concept to issue on February 6 this year. It also offers exclusive insight into the design and production of the new pictorial stamps issued in celebration of the Diamond Jubilee. A note to new visitors: don't expect an art gallery. The exhibition is small but perfectly formed – imagine a walled opera box and you have, roughly, the dimensions and the sense of hushed excitement inspired by the exhibits.

No booking is necessary for individuals or small groups, but for groups of ten or more, please contact The BPMA at the address on page 318.

Walking tours of postal history The BPMA's monthly walks are a very pleasant way to explore 350 years of London's postal history, from the coffee houses of the 17th century to the electronic communication of today. All the tours are led by accredited guides and include the story of Victorian postal reform, the growth of the GPO and the development of post boxes and telephone kiosks. The walks start at Farringdon Station at 11am and last about two hours. Forthcoming dates are: 23 June, 22 July, 25 August, 23 September, 20 October, 25 November. There is no need to book, just turn up at Farringdon station and meet your guide who will be wearing the appropriate guiding badge. See BPMA website for prices.



Family events A series of BPMA family activity sessions take place this summer at the Lumen Centre, 88 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RS. All sessions are from 2pm to 5pm and again you can simply turn up – no need to book.

- 25 July Create a magazine cover based on the Post Office magazines in the exhibition. Dress as a postman or woman and star in your own magazine!
- 1 August Find out about the animals in the exhibition and make your own 'postal animal' to take away.
- 8 August Design and write your own vintage-style Greetings Telegrams.
- 15 August Create posters using stencils based on images in the exhibition.
- 22 August Make greetings cards to take away.
- 29 August Make your own mini photo albums.

These family events are organised as part of The Post Office In Pictures – a BPMA exhibition at the Lumen Centre (address above) that showcases a ▸



Top: the statue of Sir Rowland Hill features in walking tours. Above: family activities. Below: the architect's impression of the planned new BPMA premises on London's Mount Pleasant Site

Plans for a bigger and brighter building

The BPMA is to have a new home to house its collections of postal, social and design history – photographs, posters, vehicles, pillar boxes, employment records and, of course, the world-class stamp collection.

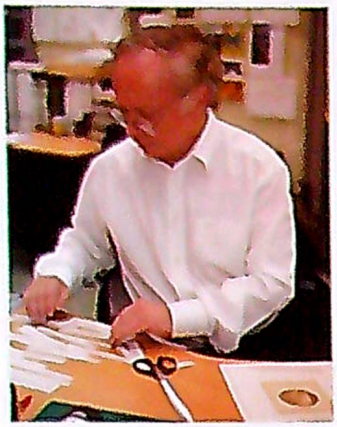
The new centre will be at Calthorpe House on London's Mount Pleasant site, where the country's oldest mail centre is located. It is close to The BPMA's existing home at Freeling House, which has limited space for exhibitions and displays.

Agreements have been signed with Royal Mail and Post Office Ltd for a £6 million long-term, low-interest loan to fund the conversion of Calthorpe House. Royal Mail and Post Office Ltd are also providing a £500,000 grant.

The BPMA will shortly launch a campaign to raise the remaining funds needed to create a modern museum and visitor facility.

'We are aiming to create a state-of-the-art, sustainable home for a unique part of our national heritage,' says BPMA Director Dr Adrian Steel. The new centre will showcase the UK's pioneering role in developing postal communications, which has shaped the world we live in.'









Above: Douglas Muir, Curator of Philately. Right: two of his books available online. Below: if you are in London on August 18, you can enjoy an evening of music organised in association with The BPMA at the Lumen Centre. The Solent Male Voice Choir, originally the Portsmouth Post Office Choir, was first formed in 1961 by a group of postmen who enjoyed singing while sorting mail



selection of intriguing archive photographs chosen from the Royal Mail Archive.

Online exhibitions The BPMA has excellent online exhibition material at www.postalheritage.org.uk, including online versions of recent exhibitions and pod-casts. So if you cannot make it to London for any of the talks or exhibitions that take your fancy, or want to check over some details, just log onto The BPMA website and enjoy them the virtual way. Subjects include The World's First Scheduled Aerial Post, Gentleman on Stamps and Empire Mail. A variety of expert reference books are also on sale online as well as at Freeling House.

Archive tours On 6 June, from 10am to 11am, visitors to Freeling House can enjoy an introduction to The BPMA and a behind-the-scenes tour of its historical collections, which are stored on some two and a half miles of shelving! The tour is free but it is advisable to book in advance for the summer tours. (We do our best to announce the dates of these tours in advance on *Bulletin*'s Stamp Scene pages.)

For more information about these and other events centred on stamps write to: The BPMA, Freeling House, Phoenix Place, London WC1X 0DL, email info@postalheritage.org.uk or telephone 0207 2392576. Also available by letter and email is information about postal history, arrangements for research, loans of museum objects, events for schools and becoming a Friend of The British Postal Museum and Archive.

THE BRITISH POSTAL MUSEUM & ARCHIVE

BPMA background *Bulletin* subscribers will be familiar with The BPMA, but for new readers here are some background facts. ➢ The BPMA is the leading resource for all aspects of British postal heritage. Its collections include stamps, staff records, poster design, photography, transport and telegrams. ➢ A combined museum and archive brings together the Royal Mail Archive and a museum store in three sites: the Archive at Mount Pleasant sorting office, London; a Museum Store in Loughton Essex; and the Museum of the Post Office in the Community, at the Post Office in Blists Hill Victorian Town, Ironbridge. ➢ The 1838 Public Records Act was the first step in organising government archives, including what is now known as The Royal Mail Archive. By 1896 the first archivist was appointed. ➢ In 2004 Royal Mail handed the management of the 'heritage unit' to an independent charitable trust and it became known as The British Postal Museum & Archive – The BPMA – which now receives an annual payment from Royal Mail Group for managing The Royal Mail Archive. Although the archive is part of The BPMA, ultimate responsibility for it lies with Royal Mail Group because it is a public record. ➢ The BPMA records are officially recognised as being of national importance and are available to all researchers at Freeling House in London.

Prize draws Diamond Jubilee teasers

a 

b 

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d 

e 

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g 

Diamond Jubilee Quiz

Answer the following questions about the images shown above and you have a chance of winning a commemorative set of Diamond Jubilee stamps.

a) Name the crown worn by The Queen on this 2003 stamp marking the 50th anniversary of the Coronation. (Clue: it appears in the Crown Jewels special issue of 2010.)

b) Name the artist who created this portrait of The Queen for the £5 banknote. It features among this year's Diamond Jubilee Definitives.

c) When were the first stamps with the Machin head issued?

d) In what year did this 3p stamp celebrate The Queen's Silver Wedding anniversary?

e) and f) These 2005 and 2012 stamp images show the Trooping the Colour. Name the horse ridden by The Queen in both.

g) Name the stamp set that includes this image of King George VI, The Queen's father.



Identify Puzzle From the detail shown magnified below, identify the stamp, its value and year of issue.

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

Closing date: 2 July 2012. The first correct entry drawn after the closing date in each competition wins Diamond Jubilee stamps. Five more winners drawn receive philatelic prizes •

April solutions and winners *Identify*: Christmas, 1984. Winner: A Downey, Dunfirmline. *Knowledge*: a) Post Office Tower. b) *Children Coming Out Of School.* c) Kate Stephens. Winner: D Bowcock, Leeds. *Crossword*: Across: 1 Closure. 5 Stub. 10 Dab. 11 Ambulance. 12 Trash. 13 Insist. 15 Rising. 17 Oscars. 18 Height. 20 Elder. 23 Entrances. 24 Bin. 25 Teem. 26 Osmosis. Down: 2 Libya. 3 Smash and grab. 4 Rabbi. 6 Tunisia. 7 Beef. 8 Editors. 9 All systems go. 14 Tsarina. 16 Spectre. 19 Tacks. 21 Dubai. 22 Lest. Solution: unmounted. Winners: B Messer, London; I Miller, Chesham; J Cherrington, Tipton

Prize draw rules and regulations

1 The closing date is 2 July 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, 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.



London 2012 – stamps are forever!

To see the complete Royal Mail collection for London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, remember to visit www.royalmail.com/london2012stamps.

As well as the unique stamp series, you'll find a wide range of stamp-themed gifts and collectable items.

Royal Mail

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