BRITISH PHILATELIC

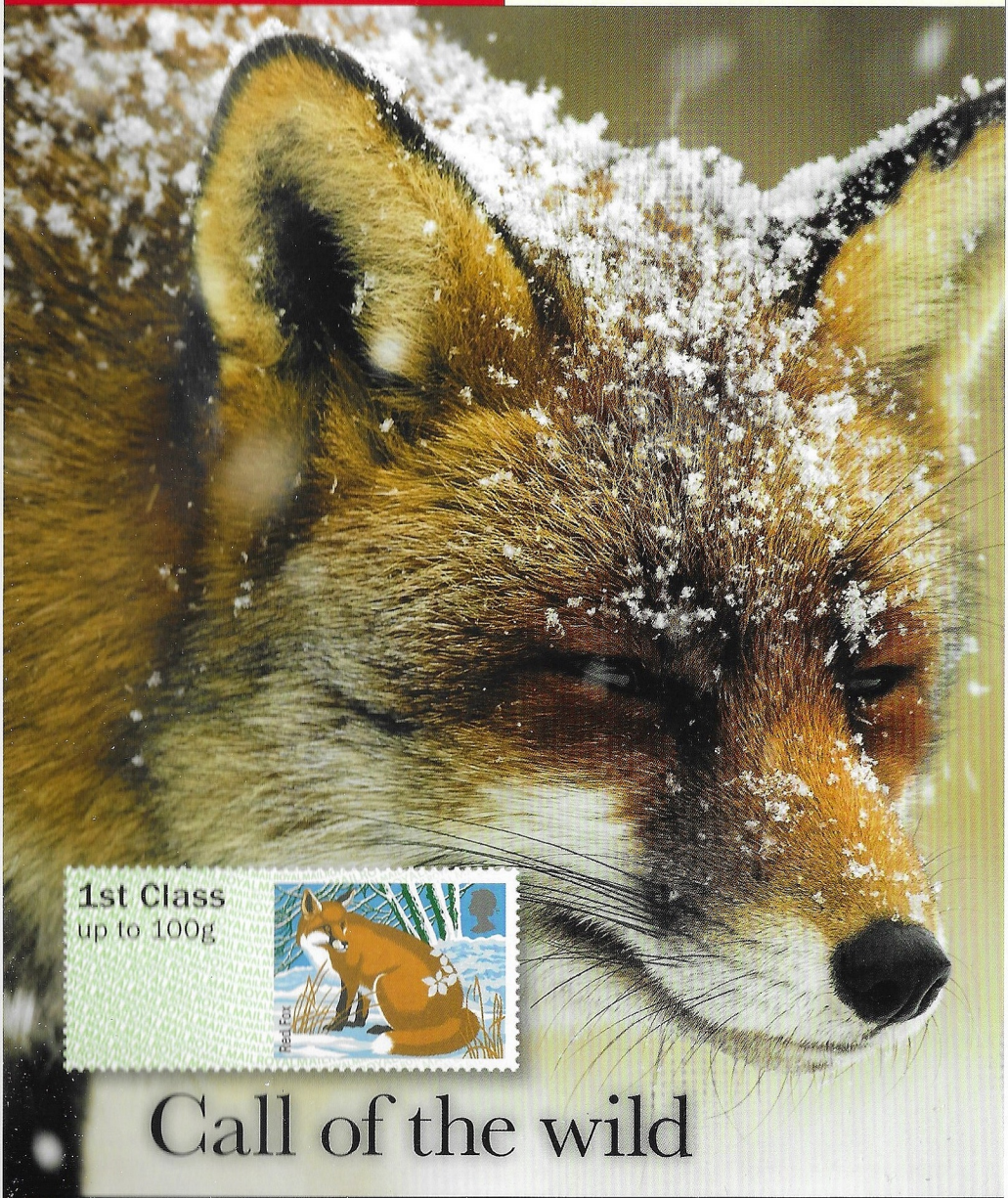
Bulletin

The magazine for collectors of UK stamps

VOLUME 53 NUMBER 3 | NOVEMBER 2015 | £1.95

Fur and Feathers Post & Go

• WWI animal heroes sheet



Call of the wild

J HOLMAN STAMP SCENE • WIN CHRISTMAS STAMP SET • STAR WARS™ PRESTIGE STAMP BOOK

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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. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or parts is prohibited without prior permission of the Editors ● **Printed** in Great Britain by Zenith Print & Packaging Ltd ● **ISSN** 0953 8119 ● Royal Mail is a trading name of Royal Mail Group Ltd. Registered in England and Wales, number 4138203. Registered office: 100 Victoria Embankment, London EC4Y 0HQ.

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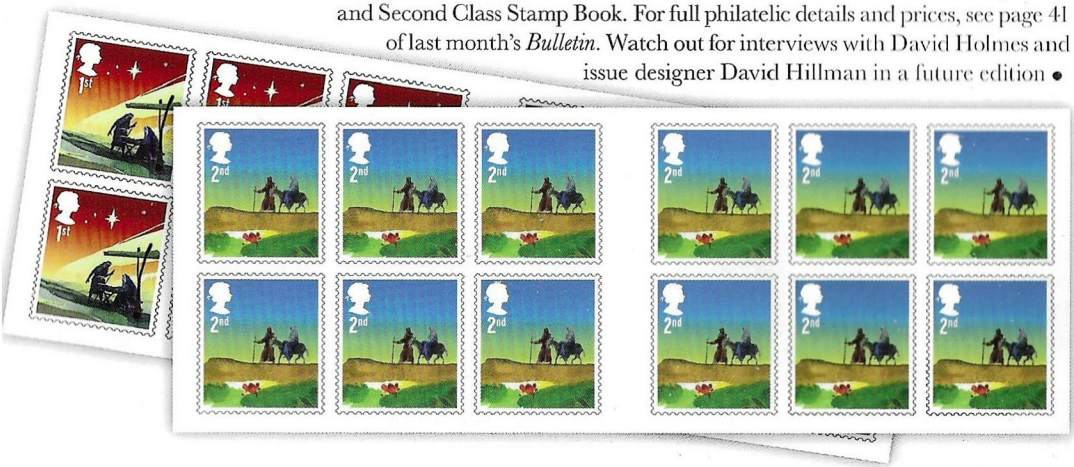
Above: this fold-out illustrated Yearpack contains all the Special Stamps from 2015

The colourful 2015 Yearpack contains all the Special Stamps of the year, presented in a folder decorated front and back with the charming theme of an art gallery displaying illustrations of 2015 stamps and stamp themes. Illustrations of people viewing the works of art reflect topics celebrated or commemorated in this year's Royal Mail special issues, including Alice in Wonderland, Battle of Britain ground crew and a beekeeper. Price: £117.

The Year of Miniature Sheets collection comprises each of the seven stunning Miniature Sheets of 2015, from the 175th Anniversary of the Penny Black through to the elegant Long to Reign Over Us, and Christmas 2015. Price: £41 •

Christmas stamps Also available from 3 November are the Christmas 2015 stamps, which this year are likely to be competing with the *Star Wars* stamps for visibility on Christmas card mail. The eight stamps carry six different miniaturised paintings by David Holmes, capturing scenes from the Bible story of the Nativity.

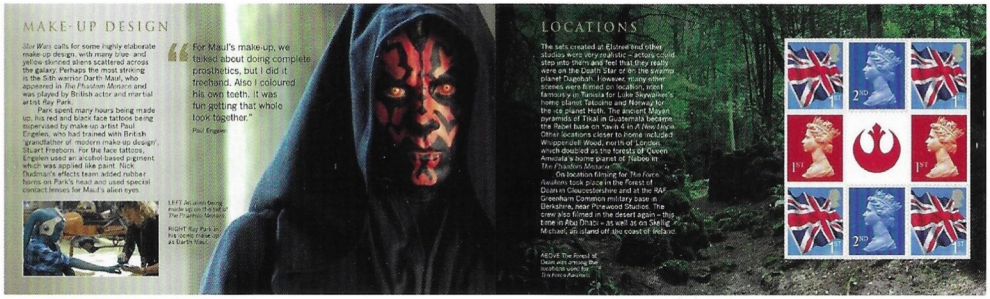
The issue also includes a Miniature Sheet, First Day Covers of Stamps and Miniature Sheet, Generic Sheet, eight Stamp Cards, First Class Stamp Book and Second Class Stamp Book. For full philatelic details and prices, see page 41 of last month's *Bulletin*. Watch out for interviews with David Holmes and issue designer David Hillman in a future edition •





Above: Royal Mail Editor William Doherty (left) looks on during filming at London's Trafalgar Square Post Office. See the action at www. royalmail.com/starwars-video-3





The Making of *Star Wars*™ – the British Story Issued on 17 December to coincide with the much-anticipated UK release of the film *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*, a 26-page Prestige Stamp Book (PSB) explores the UK's important role in the making of this world-famous movie saga.

Four stamp panes include a set that is unique to this book: an Alliance Starbird image surrounded by First Class, Second Class and Union Flag stamps. The illustrated pages facing the panes are a treasure trove for every fan of British film in general and *Star Wars* in particular. They carry a number of rarely seen production photographs and a wealth of fascinating facts about the British actors, written by Simon Beecroft. The PSB costs £16.99.

In case you have been hiding in your stamp cave and missed all the publicity, full philatelic details of this month's *Star Wars* stamp issue can be found in October's *Bulletin* on page 47 •

Above: Prestige Stamp Book front page and Pane 3. Pane 1 and Pane 2 each have six First Class stamps and Pane 4 carries six stamps from the *Star Wars*™ Miniature Sheet

Below: the Lunar New Year of the Monkey Coin Cover with its special handstamp





Welcome the Year of the Monkey A limited edition Year of the Monkey Coin Cover, featuring a silver proof coin, is released on 9 November along with the Lunar New Year of the Monkey Stamp Sheet. The Year of the Monkey runs from 8 February 2016 to 27 January 2017 and is associated with the elemental sign of fire. At the centre of the special handstamp is an auspicious greeting in Chinese calligraphy. Price: £90 •



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

UK diary dates

7 November National Philatelic Society meeting (annual competitions) at the Welsh Centre, Gray's Inn Road, London WC1. Details: Peter Mellor, 01582 762284, www.ukphilately.org.uk/nps.

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 WC2R 0LT. Details: Peter Tanner, 01753 887755.

5 December National Philatelic Society Christmas meeting at the Welsh Centre, Gray's Inn Road, London WC1. Details: see 7 November.

10 December Royal Philatelic Society London meeting (Jubilee Display by members of the GB Philatelic Society, 1pm), 41 Devonshire Place, London W1G 6JY. Non-members welcome by arrangement – phone 020 7486 1044.

11 December Strand Stamp Fair. Details: see 20 November.

16 December GB Philatelic Society evening reception at Stanley Gibbons, 399 Strand, London WC2R 0LX, 6pm onwards, with members' displays. Details: Peter Tanner, 01753 887755 ●

London's next international



In September it was announced that the capital's next major stamp show – the London 2020 International Stamp Exhibition – will be held at the Business Design Centre in Islington, London from Saturday 2 May 2020 until Saturday 9 May 2020. This will be a full international exhibition with competitive classes in traditional, postal history, thematic, revenue, postal stationery, aerophilately, open, literature and youth.

To ensure that as many exhibitors as possible can be accepted, there will be two stages of exhibits, with the display frames all being used twice during the week and the exhibits swapped on Tuesday 5 May.

A website – www.london2020.co.uk – has been established, and this will be developed as preparations for the exhibition progress. The UK-based Philatelic Traders Society (PTS) is fully supportive of the exhibition and is coordinating booth sales on behalf of the organising committee. Anyone interested in taking a trade stand can follow a link on the website.

The exhibition continues the tradition of an international exhibition in London every ten years, beginning in 1950. The 2010 exhibition was held at the Business Design Centre, as was the recent Europhilex, and both Spring and Autumn Stampex since 1996 ●

BPMA news

The British Postal Museum & Archive (BPMA), located at Freeling House, Phoenix Place, London WC1, near the famous Mount Pleasant sorting office, is open Tuesday to Friday, 10am to 5pm (Thursdays until 7pm) and on Saturdays 14 November and 12 December (10am to 5pm).

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. Some 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 until 21 November, and at Havering Museum, 19-21 High Street, Romford, Essex from 6 January to 26 March 2016.



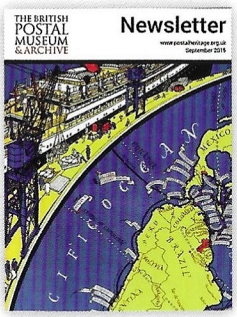
A tour of the Museum Store (right) at Imprimo Park, Lenthall Road, Loughton, Essex will be held on 4 November. A tour of the Archives takes place at Phoenix Place on 9 December. A From Pillar to Post GPO London Walking Tour will be held on 21 November. There is a charge for these tours. An Archive Open Day, The Perilous Post, is at Freeling House on 14 November from 10am to 5pm.

Talks entitled Pushing the Envelope by James Addison and Dear Santa: The History of Writing to Father Christmas by Ashley March will be held on 12 November at 7pm and on 1 December at 7pm respectively 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 www.postalheritage.org.uk or the BPMA's What's On 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 most philatelists, postal historians and the general public.

The September 2015 issue of the BPMA Newsletter includes messages from Director Dr Adrian Steel and the newly appointed Chair of the BPMA Trustees Rick Willis, who describes the BPMA as 'a magical collection of previously hidden artefacts'.



The *Newsletter* gives details of current and forthcoming BPMA events and includes some interesting articles with a nautical theme: Transporting the Mail by Sea, Mail to the Fleet, Ships on Stamps and London River Postmen. There is also a feature on postcards, illustrating some early examples from the BPMA collections, as well as two Post Office posters promoting the sending of cards. The back cover of the *Newsletter* carries an impression of the frontage of the long-awaited new Postal Museum due to open next year.

The magazine also reveals that from January the *Newsletter* 'will be coming to you in a new format, keeping you up to date with developments at the museum site, giving you a sneak peek at the contents of our interactive new galleries and bringing you the very latest on our fundraising successes' ●

Friends of the BPMA

Being a Friend of the British Postal Museum & Archive is a very practical way of helping the Museum. However, membership of the Friends also provides opportunities for behind-the-scenes visits that are only rarely available otherwise. In March, for example, the Friends had a guided tour of the London Assay Office, in June 2015 a visit to International Security Printers Ltd, and in July the London Transport Museum Depot in west London. These visits are very popular and ▸

an upcoming trip to Cartor printers in France is already fully subscribed. At the Friends AGM on 1 December there will be a presentation about the new Museum and Mail Rail and a talk by Julian Stray entitled The Post Office in 1890.

These are exciting times for the BPMA, with the new premises at Calthorpe House ready to be transformed into the new Postal Museum, and the plans to bring Mail Rail, the former Post Office Underground Railway, to life once more. A significant way to support this invaluable work is to become a Friend of the BPMA. More details can be found at www.postalheritage.org.uk/friends or by writing to: Friends of the BPMA, Freeling House, Phoenix Place, London WC1X 0DL ●

Stamp-related exhibitions



This year Royal Mail issued stamps marking the 150th anniversary of the publication of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. An exhibition, called Alice in Wonderland, opens at the British Library in London on 20 November (admission free). The exhibition will include Carroll's original manuscript with hand-drawn illustrations, alongside stunning editions illustrated by Mervyn Peake, Ralph Steadman, Leonard Weisgard, Arthur Rackham, Salvador Dali and others. An Adventures in Wonderland event takes place at the Library on the same day at 6.30pm. Taking part will be Vanessa Tait, the great-granddaughter of Alice Liddell, Carroll's inspiration for Alice. There is a charge for this event – visit www.bl.uk phone or call 01937 546 546 to book. See www.bl.uk/alice-in-wonderland for the Alice exhibition.

Stamps marking The Queen becoming the UK's longest-reigning monarch were issued on 9 September. Photographic displays entitled Long To Reign Over Us opened at the Palace of Holyroodhouse in Edinburgh and at Windsor Castle the same day and are on view until 5 January and 28 January 2016 respectively. The displays are included in the normal ticket prices ●

News from the islands



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, philatelic@guernseypost.com.

Jersey will issue My Jersey stamps on 9 November, followed by Henry Thomas Bosdet's Stained Glass Windows on 27 November. Enquiries: Jersey Philatelic Bureau, Freepost JE793, Jersey Post, Jersey JE1 1AF, www.jerseystamps.com.

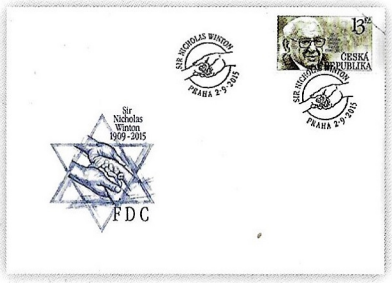
October issues from the Isle of Man featured Artwork of Bryan Kneale (left) and the Manx Prayer Book on the Christmas issue. Enquiries: Isle of Man Stamps & Coins, PO Box 10M, Douglas, Isle of Man IM99 1PB, www.iomstamps.com ●

New catalogues

Stanley Gibbons has announced the discontinuation of its 22-part standard catalogue. In its place catalogues will list stamps of just one or two countries rather than those in a geographical area. First editions of new Belgium and Luxembourg and France catalogues are now available, costing £21.95 and £34.95 respectively. In the Commonwealth Stamp Catalogue series, a fifth edition of the Hong Kong catalogue is now on sale, priced £16.95. All Stanley Gibbons catalogues are available at the Stanley Gibbons shop, 399 Strand, London WC2R 0LX, or by mail order from Stanley Gibbons Publications, 7 Parkside, Ringwood, Hants BH24 3SH. Also phone 01425 472363 or visit www.stanleygibbons.com ●

Sir Nicholas Winton

Royal Mail has announced that a stamp will be issued next year to honour Sir Nicholas Winton, the British stockbroker and humanitarian worker who saved 669 children, most of them Jewish, in Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia from transportation to concentration camps by arranging for their departure by train to the UK. (A new Czech Republic stamp, issued on 2 September, shows Sir Nicholas with children in the background. It was designed by Zdenek Netopil and printed in sheets of 50 at the Post Printing House in Prague.) Sir Nicholas was knighted by The Queen in 2002 and in 2014 received the Czech Republic's highest honour, the Order of the White Lion (1st class) ●



2016 anniversaries

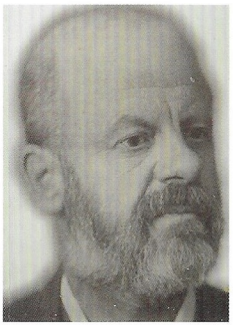
Many of the UK's local and specialist philatelic societies and stamp clubs celebrate important anniversaries during 2016. Six societies mark over 100 years of service: Plymouth PS will celebrate its 140th anniversary, Hull & District 120 years; Bath, Brighton & Hove and Caledonian PS each celebrate 110 years, and Norfolk & Norwich 105 years. Torquay and Shoreham notch up 95 and 90 years respectively, and Eastbourne & South Downs, Leytonstone, Wanstead & District and the Postal History Society celebrate 80 years.

2016 sees the 75th anniversary of the Weston-super-Mare PS, and the 70th of Acton & District, Dorking & District Stamp Club, Fleet & North Hants, Ruislip, Walton & Weybridge, Wimbledon & District, London & Provincial Stamp Club, and Wessex Philatelic Federation. The Redditch PS has already celebrated its 65th year (2016) with an event in October, and Enfield and Leatherhead & District PS will both be 60.

No fewer than 15 societies were founded in 1966 so are marking their golden jubilees: Border, Bury St Edmunds & District, Coleshill, Dartmouth Stamp Club, Dumfries Stamp Club, Edenbridge Stamp & Postcard Club, Henley & District, Herefordshire & Mid Wales, Kendal & District, Kirkcudbright, Maidenhead & District, Minehead & District, Petersfield & District, South Hams and the Railway Philatelic Group.

Fortieth anniversaries will be marked by Dereham & District Stamp Club, Garstang Stamp Club, Haverfordwest PS, and the Letter Box Study Group, and 30th anniversaries by Lagan Valley, Largs & District Stamp Club, and Bird Stamp Society. The Fenland Stamp Club will be 20 years old. If secretaries of societies send in advance details of anniversary events, I will be pleased to include them in Stamp Scene at the relevant time.

Other anniversaries in 2016 include the 60th anniversary of the National Stamp Exhibition being renamed Stampex, the 50th anniversary of the Philatelic Bureau's move from London to Edinburgh, and the 160th anniversary of Edward Stanley Gibbons (right) first dealing in stamps at his father's shop in Plymouth ●



Crawford Medal

Every year the Royal Philatelic Society London (RPSL) considers recent publications for the award of the prestigious Crawford Medal, named after pioneering philatelist James Ludovic Lindsay, 26th Earl of Crawford. The silver gilt medal is awarded for the most valuable and original contribution to philately ▸

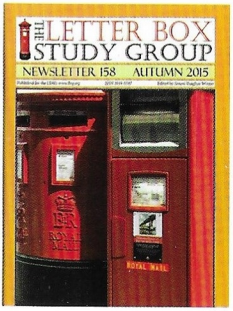
published in book form. It is open to both members and non-members of the Society. To ensure that the widest possible list of titles is considered, the Society now invites nominations of books that were published in 2014 or 2015. Brief details of books should be sent by email to secretary@rpsl.org.uk, or by letter to Royal Philatelic Society London, 41 Devonshire Place, London W1G 6JY by 10 February 2016. If a nominated book is not already held in the RPSL Library the RPSL may request the nominator to supply a copy for the Committee to consider and, hopefully, for donation to the Library ●

Society publications



The September issue of the *Newsletter* of the Welsh Postal History Society includes a lengthy report of the Society's 39th weekend meeting at Plas Tanybwlch in June, and features articles on A Private Post to Loughor in 1810, Airmail from a Crashed Aeroplane 1934, A Brief History of the Postal Service in Gorseinon 1852-1980s, and CSM Fred Barter of Cardiff Wins the Victoria Cross (a special handstamp commemorating Barter was used at Cardiff on 16 May 2015). In addition there is an interesting selection of photographs of old post offices, a look at postmarks from Caradog Road/ Roman Way PO in Caerleon, and an update of post office openings and closures. The *Newsletter* is well-produced and illustrated in compact A5 size.

The next meeting of the Society takes place at the Selwyn Samuel Bowls Centre, Parc Crescent, Llanelli on 7 November, then in Aberystwyth on 5 March, and the Weekend at Maentwrog (16 to 19 June). For details of membership and attendance at meetings contact Membership Secretary Aled Rhys-Jones, 12 St Patrick's Court, Linnet Close, Cyncoed, Cardiff CF23 7HG or see www.wps.wales.org.



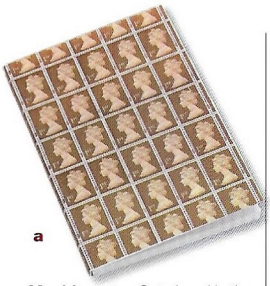
The Autumn 2015 edition of the 64-page *Letter Box Study Group Newsletter* leads with details of the publication of Royal Mail Post Boxes: A Joint Policy Statement by Royal Mail and Historic England – the result of two years' work by Royal Mail, Historic England, the BPMA and the Letter Box Study Group (LBSG). The Statement was launched at a ceremony at the House of Commons in July. It confirms that post boxes are a cherished national heritage asset and it is expected that authorities in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will soon give similar recognition.

There are interesting, well-illustrated features on post boxes in Wiltshire, boxes bearing plaques relating to special stamp issues, boxes in Ascension Island, Australia and Nigeria, and miniature boxes to collect. Gerry Cork's Over the Wires provides an intriguing look at boxes in all parts of the country and Sarah Carr's BPMA column reports, with photographs, on progress with the new Postal Museum at Calthorpe House near the present BPMA and Mount Pleasant mail centre in London. The back cover of this issue features Prime Minister David Cameron, with local postman Mark Hughes, unveiling a Churchill stamp plaque on a letter box in his Witney constituency. In terms of quality of production and visual impact, this newsletter is, in my opinion, without equal among philatelic and postal history society publications.

For LBSG details contact Val Scott, 38 Leopold Avenue, Birmingham B20 1ES or visit www.lbsg.org ●

Give a little stampiness

Perfect presents for all the collectors in your life – selected by our philatelic gift guru James Cooper



a

Machin notes Get ahead in the world of modern philately with this A6 jotter covered in Machins (**a**). Price: £2 (reduced from £3.99 'twixt you and me), www.postalheritage.org.uk/shop

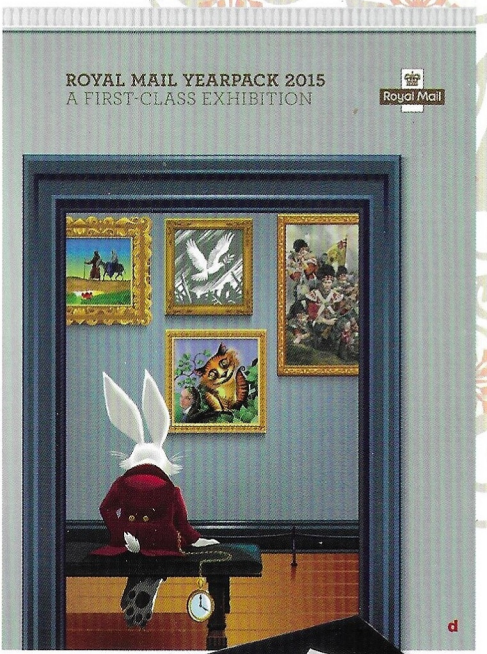
Personalised postmarks Your wedding day? Where you honeymooned? You and your beau can celebrate the date when you give him these personalised handmade silver cufflinks (**b**). Price: £85, www.nicolacrawford.co.uk

A first-class exhibition The new Royal Mail Yearpack (**d**, see also page 68) contains every Special Stamp of 2015 in a charming illustrated folder – a great idea for a new collector's Christmas present. Price: £117, www.royalmail.com/shop



e

Let there be light This LED illuminated magnifier (**e**) gives 2,5 x magnification, with a 55mm diameter lens and overall length of 210mm. It comes with a soft protective pouch, two AA batteries and a cleaning cloth. Price: £35, www.stanleygibbons.com



d



b



Treasure box What is handsome, clever and red all over? Your essential *British Philatelic Bulletin* box file (**c**) of course! Price £10.16, www royalmail.com/shop



c

Pristine album To keep your collection in perfect condition, the Royal Mail Luxury Binder with slipcase (**f**) has a padded cover and can be used to house continuation pages since the year 2000. Price: £45.96, www.royalmail.com/shop



f



g

Cool coasters This set of four coasters (**g**) from Royal Mail's Harrison collection features the classic definitive profile of Her Majesty The Queen, and sets just the right tone for your cocoa and cranberry juice moments. Price: £8.50, www.royalmail.com/shop. (Check out the special offer code VM113 if you buy the placemats too.)

More gifts ideas overleaf

For Christmas and beyond...



h

Luke at this Add a dash of futurism to your decor with a framed *Star Wars*™ Miniature Sheet (**h**). Its stamps are also mounted individually. In the background the iconic X-Wing attacks the Death Star. Price: £55, www.royalmail.com/shop



k

Definitive dining Placemats from the Harrison Collection (**k**) feature definitive stamps in cosy colours. Price: £16.99 for four, www.royalmail.com/shop



i j

Posted to the kitchen Bright, hard-working and pretty enough to hang on the wall. What more can one ask of a tea towel (**j**)? Price: £11.99 for two, www.royalmail.com/shop

Stamp nation Artist Mel Piagesti entitles this work (**m**) British Isles Map Artwork Inspired by Faith. The print is 55cm x 66cm, in a limited edition of 50. Mel is an 'official licensee' of Royal Mail. Price: £150? www.melpiagesti.com



m

Something to declare Six words and a first-class stamp create an eloquent statement of devotion (**n**). 27cm x 23cm. Price: £20, www.royalmail/shop



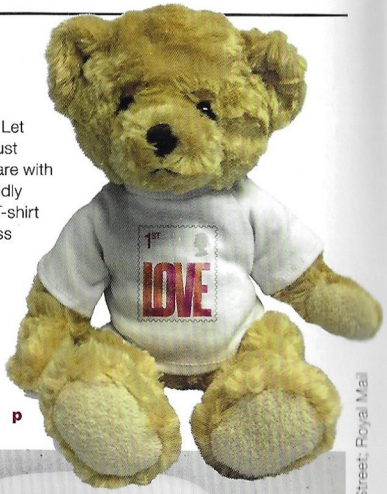
n

Bright idea Silk scarves designed with colour-themed postage stamps are a speciality of Inca Starzinsky (**o**). This red square costs £110. See more gorgeous examples at www.notonthehighstreet.com



o

Bear necessity Let someone know just how much you care with this cute and cuddly bear (**p**), whose T-shirt carries a first-class message of love. Price: £14.99, www.royalmail.com/shop



p



q

Sitting pretty (q) Personalise your memories with this postmark cushion. Price: £30

Best for guests This message box (**r**) works as a fun guest book (58cm x 26cm). Price: £135. Get both the above at www.notonthehighstreet.com



r

Please note: postage and packing rates vary. Images © Not On The High Street; Royal Mail



Post & Go update Martyn Fry reports on the exhibition season and the return of the Post & Go Poppy for Remembrance Day



Above: Post & Go Sea Travel stamps were issued during Autumn Stampex

Exhibition update Royal Mail Post & Go machines are touring the globe as the exhibition season gets into full swing. They have already enjoyed successful appearances at Autumn Stampex in London in September and the Sindelfingen 2015 show near Stuttgart in October. Now they are off to Paris for the Salon Philatélique d'Automne and to Hong Kong 2015, the 31st Asian International Stamp Exhibition, in November.

At Autumn Stampex, Machines A006 and A008 carried the newly issued Sea Travel Post & Go stamps, along with the Machin design with a special 'Queen Elizabeth II Longest Reign' overprint. Machine A009 carried Sea Travel as well as the Lion design from Heraldic Beasts Post & Go set issued in May.

During the Internationale Briefmarken-Börse show at Sindelfingen, which ran from 29 to 31 October, Machine A008 carried the Union Flag and Machin, while A009 carried the Lion and Poppy designs.

European Collector strips of four stamps (First Class, Euro 20g/World 10g, Europe 100g and Worldwide 20g) were introduced for the first time. The overprint was 'Sindelfingen October 2015'.

This month's travels Royal Mail Post & Go will be attending the Paris exhibition from 5 to 8 November. Machines A008 and A009 will carry the same stamp combinations as those at Sindelfingen, and the same European Collector strips will be available. The overprint is 'Paris November 2015'.

At Hong Kong 2015, on from 20 to 23 November, Machine A007 will carry the Union Flag and the Hong Kong design from Sea Travel. The overprint will be 'Hong Kong November 2015'. Gibraltar Machine GI04 will also attend, carrying Gibraltar Flag stamps. ▶



The Poppy design from the Symbolic Flowers Post & Go set was reintroduced on 19 October. The stamps will be available from Post & Go post offices, the BPMA, and Royal Navy and Enquiry Office machines



The BPMA's Machine A001 introduced the Lion design from the Heraldic Beasts issue on 16 September. The Lion design has been temporarily replaced by the Poppy stamp until 15 November. The Lion will be reintroduced along with the Winter Fur and Feathers stamps on 16 November

Production change Royal Mail has recently moved Post & Go product and pre-order printing to Tallents House. This has necessitated a change to the production process previously employed. Stock is now produced in bulk and batched in sets of 40 Collector strips/sets. Stock is then passed to the fulfilment team for order processing. As a consequence of this change sequential session numbers cannot be guaranteed within specific orders.

Winter Fur and Feathers On 16 November the Winter Fur and Feathers Post & Go stamps will be issued. These were previewed on page 45 of last month's Bulletin. There are two designs for multi-value reels and two Second Class designs. The Second Class designs will carry '2nd Class' wording in the background text. Stamps will be available from Post & Go post offices as well as BPMA and Enquiry Office machines.

All ship shape Printings at the four Royal Navy sites have been updated to replace the current museum abbreviations and add a location-specific logo graphic to the Machin stamp design from 16 November. The Union Flag stamp will just have the abbreviations replaced. The new printings are as follows:

The NMRN changes to Royal Navy plus logo (Machin only)
The RMM changes to Royal Marines plus logo (Machin only)
The FAAM changes to Fleet Air Arm plus logo (Machin only)
The RNSM changes to RN Submarine plus logo (Machin only)

All four Royal Navy machines will carry the Poppy stamp alongside the Union Flag design until 15 November. Celebrating Trafalgar Day this month, the Royal Navy and Royal Marines machines are carrying a 'Trafalgar Day' underprint on the Union Flag design until 15 November ●



Fantastic myths of fox

The fox's appearance on the Winter Fur and Feathers set inspired us to explore the facts and fiction of his wicked reputation...

DEMONISED, HUNTED AND DAMNED, the fox has been dismissed for at least 200 years as a devil in red fur, a cunning thief, lone killer of farmers' lambs – and now urbanites' cats. In *Aesop's Fables*, *The Gingerbread Man*, Beatrix Potter and countless other stories he is portrayed as a bloodthirsty confidence trickster. In Medieval Britain ecclesiastical artists painted him as an evil spirit, giving false sermons disguised as a priest. In history, folklore and literature, he is a badass.

In reality, the red fox's tough reputation comes from his tough constitution. He is a born survivor. If that means sly, then the fox lives up to his legend.

First, he is a high-calibre hunter. He kills to survive and is physically fine-tuned to kill efficiently. Targeting prey is simple. A fox can hear a watch tick over 100ft away, so woe betide a mouse or rabbit that steps on a leaf at ten paces. His night vision would impress a sniper. A reflective strip behind a fox's retinas gives his eyes a boosted image of other creatures, dosing them with extra light to pinpoint their profile in the gloom of the night.

Not many in the wood can outpace a fox when his blood is up. He can run at almost 30mph. He can leap 6ft in the air. He takes out small rodents with a deadly high pounce. So yes, the fox is a smart killer, but he is also an omnivore. Not all his victims wear fur; waste food from human households, berries, gulls' eggs, beetles, fruit and worms are regulars on his menu. Contrary to legend, lambs and chickens are rare dishes. Research suggests only around five per cent of lambs lost by UK farmers each year are killed by predators – foxes *and* other hunters. As for henhouse massacres-for-kicks, foxes habitually 'cache' or bury ▸

- A fox has whiskers on its legs as well as its face to aid navigation.
- Foxes can jump up to ten feet when pouncing to catch prey.
- A group of foxes is called a 'skulk' or 'leash'.
- A member of the canidae – dog – family, the fox is the only 'dog' able to retract its claws like a cat.
- Fox cubs are also known as 'kits' or 'pups'.
- In the UK there are 33,000 urban foxes and 225,000 rural foxes, according to most recently published estimates.



Wild in winter

Accompanying the red fox in the Fur and Feathers issue are the mountain hare, red squirrel and redwing – all tough little creatures who can brave the British winter

MOUNTAIN HARE

Fur your information The indigenous mountain hare, a brilliant white in winter, is native to the Highlands of Scotland but can also be spotted in northern England.

Animal instinct During the mating season a female hare is often chased by a number of males – and if she gets fed up with the attention she boxes with her suitors to send them packing.

Animal magic The mountain hare's wide, thickly furred back feet act like snow shoes, spreading the hare's weight to prevent it from sinking into deep, soft snow ●

REDWING

Fur your information The smallest thrush in the UK is a winter bird, visiting our shores every year in September, foraging in hedgerows and fields.

Animal instinct The redwing is a restless migrant. One winter it will fly 500 miles across the North Sea from Scandinavia to the UK, the next year the bird will spend the winter in Iran or Georgia.

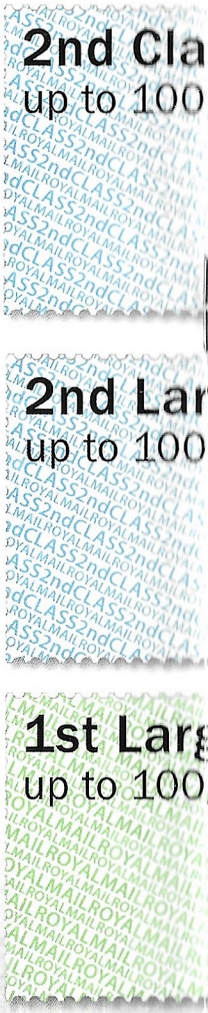
Animal magic On a clear autumn evening listen out for the redwing's high, plaintive chirrup as migrating flocks of them call to each other through the cool, dark air ●

RED SQUIRREL

Fur your information Britain's native red squirrels have survived over 100,000 years here only to fall victim to the bigger, stronger breed of grey squirrel introduced into the country 150 years ago. Now there are only 400,000 red squirrels in Britain compared to some two million greys.

Animal instinct One of the squirrel's favourite foods is the pine cone: it gnaws off a cone's scales to get to the seeds.

Animal magic Prince Charles is such a fan of the red squirrel that he agreed to become Patron of the Red Squirrel Survival Trust, saying: 'The red squirrel is one of the most utterly charming and irresistible of British native mammals' ●



prey they cannot eat, digging it up later when they are hungry. Killing is for food, not for fun. The fox survives because he adapts his diet according to his environment, not by focusing on the farmyard. Therein lies a lot of his cunning.

Dr Dawn Scott, Head of Bio Sciences at the University of Brighton, sees urban foxes as superbly adaptable. 'I honestly don't think the fox's bad reputation is deserved,' she says. 'To call them cunning is to apply a human attribute. What we can fairly say is that they are intelligent, agile animals and incredibly adaptable to different habitats. Red foxes are the most widespread carnivore in the world, found from polar regions to deserts. It is the way they adapt to the behaviour of humans that makes us aware of them and negative press compounds the sense of conflict.'

Can we learn anything from the red fox? 'In addition to their adaptability, foxes are adept at communicating across groups,' says Dr Scott. 'They use a large vocal





repertoire, as well as scent, and their social interactions are complex.' Indeed, foxes deploy a range of up to 12 calls for different situations and use 28 sound groupings to communicate. There are different calls, for example, for playing with cubs or sounding out other foxes approaching one's territory to check if they are friendly or hostile. And that blood-curdling shriek that rattles you from your bed at 3am might sound like someone dying, but it is likely to just be a vixen calling to attract a mate.

As for the legend of the lone killer with a heart of ice – well, a fox may go hunting alone but he may be taking any prey he catches back to his missus and the kids. Also helping the father could be other members of the family group who will return to the den with food for the cubs – including aunties and older cubs from previous litters who have stayed on at home. Who would have thought Mr Fox would turn out to be a responsible family man? ●

Post & Go Winter Fur and Feathers stamps are issued on 16 November. For more details, see the philatelic preview on page 45 of October's *Bulletin*

Archive selection Animals in winter



1


2



3


4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11



12



13



14



15



16



17



18



19



20

Four Seasons: Wintertime 1992: **1** Redwing. **2** Fallow Deer. **3** Fox. **4** Welsh Mountain Sheep. **5** Hare. **Christmas 1993: 6** A Christmas Carol 1843 – The Prize Turkey. **Christmas 1995: 7-9** European Robins. **Christmas 2001: 10** Christmas Robins. **Christmas 2004: 11** Celebrating The Sunrise. **12** Sheltering From Hailstorm Behind Chimney. **Woodland Animals 2004: 13** Fox. **14** Red Squirrel. **Christmas 2006 15** Reindeer. **Action For Species – Birds 2007: 16** Bittern. **Christmas 2010: 17** Gromit Posting Christmas Cards. **Christmas 2012: 18** Reindeer. **19** Penguin And Snowman. **20** Father Christmas And Robin.

What are your favourite stamps depicting animals of the festive season and species that flourish in the British winter? Email rmbulletin@rocketmail.com and tell us the sets that mean the most to you.

Checklist 2015 Royal Mail's list of definitives issued from January to December this year, to help with your records



Please note We quote order numbers (prefixed DS, MZ and so on) from the Royal Mail online shop.

Key to abbreviations Printers: D = De La Rue, E = Enschedé, ISP = International Security Printers (comprising C = Cartor and W = Walsall.) • Printing process: G = gravure, L = litho, I = intaglio • Unless otherwise stated, definitive stamps are self-adhesive, have a perforation gauge of 15 x 14 (with ellipses at lower left and right sides) and two phosphor bands (2nd Class standard size one band). • Dates are when stamps were first available from Tallents House. Order numbers for December issues are unconfirmed at time of press.

Counter Sheet Definitives/

24 March £1.33p Amber Yellow,
£1.52p Orchid Mauve,
£2.25 Plum Purple,
£2.45 Spruce Green,
£3.15 Aqua Green,
£3.30 Rose Pink.
All D, G, SA.
Mint set £14 (DS976)

9 September Long To Reign Over Us, 1st Class Amethyst Purple. D, G, SA.



Country Definitives

24 March England, Oak £1, Tudor Rose £1.33 (ES012). Northern Ireland, Linen £1, Vase £1.33 (IS0009). Scotland, Thistle £1, Tartan £1.33 (SS023). Wales, Daffodil £1, Prince of Wales Feathers £1.33 (WS022). All C, L, PVA.

Prestige Stamp Book mixed-value panes

19 February Inventive Britain £14.65 (YB056). Pane 1: definitives, 2 x 1p, 3 x 2p, 1 x 81p, 2 x 97p. C, L, PVA.

14 May First World War 1915 £13.96 (YB057). Pane 4: definitives 2 x 5p, 2 x 1p, 2 x 1st, 2 x £1.33. C, L, PVA.

18 June Battle of Waterloo £14.47 (YB058). Pane 4: definitives 2 x £1, 2 x 50p, 2 x 10p, 2 x 5p. C, L, PVA.

17 December *Star Wars*™ £16.99 (YB059). Pane 4: definitives 4 x Union Flag, 2 x Royal Mail Red 1st Class definitive, 2 x 2nd Class definitives, 1 label. C, L, PVA.

Miniature Sheets

20 January Smilers® Miniature Sheet £5.04 (MZ105), 8 x 1st. Well Done, Mum, New Baby, Wedding, Happy Birthday, Dad, Grandparent, Love. ISP, L, PVA.

May 175th Anniversary of the Penny Black £2.52 (MZ106), 2 x Penny Black, 2 x Twopenny Blue, all overlaid with 1st Class values. ISP, L, PVA.

9 September Long To Reign Over Us £3.56 (MZ110). Definitive 1 x 1st Class Amethyst Purple, Specials 2 x 1st Class, 2 x £1.52. C, G (Specials intaglio), PVA.

Stamp Books

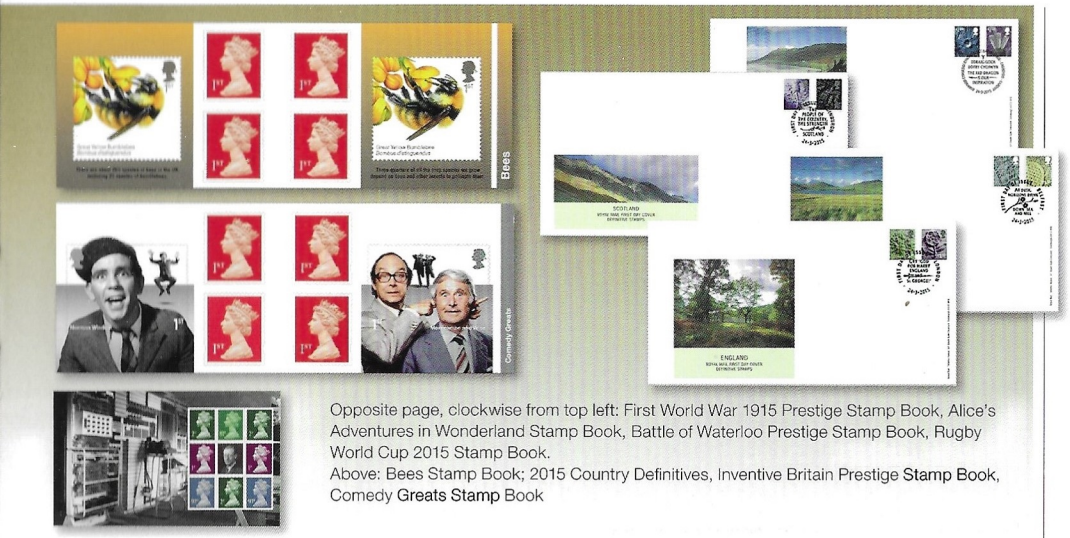
6 January Alice's Adventures in Wonderland £3.78 (UB380), includes 4 x Royal Mail Red 1st Class definitives and 2 x 1st Class Specials. W, G, SA.

20 January Smilers® Year of Celebrations, £7.56 (UB381), includes 12 Special Stamps including 8 x 2015 Smilers®. W, G, SA.

1 April Comedy Greats £3.78 (UB382), includes 4 x 1st Class Royal Mail Red definitives and 2 x 1st Class Special Stamps. W, G, SA.

6 May Penny Black (sold out), includes 6 x 1st Penny Black Specials. W, G, SA.

18 August Bees £3.78 (UB384), includes 4 x 1st Class Royal Mail Red definitives and 2 x 1st Class Special Stamps. W, G, SA.



Opposite page, clockwise from top left: First World War 1915 Prestige Stamp Book, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland Stamp Book, Battle of Waterloo Prestige Stamp Book, Rugby World Cup 2015 Stamp Book.
Above: Bees Stamp Book; 2015 Country Definitives, Inventive Britain Prestige Stamp Book, Comedy Greats Stamp Book

9 September Long To Reign Over Us £3.78 (UB385), with 6 x 1st Class Amethyst Purple definitives. W, G, SA.

18 September Rugby World Cup 2015 £3.78 (UB386), incudes 4 x 1st Class Amethyst Purple definitives and 2 x 1st Class Specials. W, G, SA.

Smilers® Sheets

20 January Smilers® Refresh has all new 2015 Smilers Stamps – 20 x 1st Class. C, L, SA.

6 May 175th Anniversary of the Penny Black has 10 x 1st Class Penny Black, 10 x 1st Class Twopenny Blue. C, L, SA. (Also with blank labels for personalisation: half Sheet of 10 x 1st Class Penny Blacks £10.20 and Sheet of 20 x 1st Class Penny Blacks £18.75.) C, L, SA.

20 October Star Wars™ £6.80 has 10 x 1st Class Specials. (Also with blank labels for personalisation: Smilers® Sheet of 10 x Stormtrooper £10.20 and Smilers® Sheet of 10 x Yoda £10.20.) C, L, SA.

3 November Christmas 2015 has 8 x 1st Class, 8 x 2nd Class, 1 each £1, £1.33, £1.52 and £2.25. C, L, SA.

9 November Lunar New Year of the Monkey £13.10, (AT089) 20 x 1st Class Smilers® Firework stamps. C, L, SA.

Commemorative Sheets

18 March The Post Office Rifles – the centenary of their arrival in France £14.95 (AV031), 10 x 1st Union Flag Stamps. C, L, SA.

24 April Anthony Trollope – bicentenary of birth – £14.95 (AV032). 10 x 1st Class Union Flag Stamps. C, L, SA.

20 August The Gurkhas £14.95 (AV039), 10 x 1st Class Union Flag stamps (AV039). C, L, SA.

17 September Animals Of The First World War £14.95. 10 x 1st Class Union Flag stamps. C, L, SA.

Exhibition Sheets

13 May 2015 FIP Exhibition Sheet – London Europhilex £13.10 (AT086). 20 x 1st Class Hello stamps. C, L, SA.

You will find details of all Royal Mail stamp issues and withdrawals, at least four weeks in advance, on the back cover of your *Bulletin*. Information on these pages was that available as this edition went to press ●

This Month in History John Holman rewinds 50 winters to revisit a special aerogramme innovation

Fifty years ago, on 1 November 1965, the Post Office issued its first Christmas stamps. Before you write in to correct me, they were not adhesive stamps but imprinted designs on a new series of Christmas aerogrammes, or air letter forms as they were officially described. They were announced thus in the *Philatelic Bulletin* of October 1965 (Vol. 3 No. 2): 'Britain's first-ever Christmas stamps – a red and blue sixpenny – will appear on 1st November 1965. They will be printed on the first pictorial Air Letter forms to be produced by the Post Office for sending Christmas greetings overseas.'



Above: the Nativity and Snowflake designs of the Christmas aerogrammes

One aerogramme bore a red-coloured stamp with a stylised snowflake and the star of Bethlehem. The front and back panels of the aerogramme respectively featured an angel and the Nativity scene at Bethlehem. This was the work of eminent stamp designer Michael Goaman. The blue stamp on the second aerogramme featured a geometrical representation of a snowflake, the aerogramme panels showing another snowflake surmounting a conventionalised Christmas tree (front) and ornamental pattern of stylised snowflakes (back). This was designed by Richard Negus and Philip Sharland. Mr Sharland later designed three of the 1969 Anniversaries stamps, and the 1975 Charity, 1976 Telephone Centenary and USA Bicentenary, and 1981 Duke of Edinburgh's Award stamps.

The stamps on both aerogrammes carried the familiar Dorothy Wilding head of The Queen and the value 6d. These are the only Christmas aerogrammes with the Wilding portrait and of 6d value. The 1966 Christmas aerogramme carried a silhouette of The Queen based on the coinage head by Mary Gillick and was of 9d face value.

The Christmas aerogrammes, officially termed 'Nativity' and 'Snowflake' designs, cost 10d each. This was 4d above the aerogramme postal rate. I assume they were withdrawn from sale at post offices on Christmas Eve, but remained available from the Philatelic Bureau until 15 April 1966. Errors occurred in the multicoloured printing: the Snowflake design is recorded with blue and yellow omitted and the Nativity design with missing blue and yellow, or mauve. Both aerogrammes exist with SPECIMEN overprints, which were sent to the press.

Christmas aerogrammes carried their own distinctive stamp designs until 1989, after which the generic Machin head design was then used. Bilingual Welsh Christmas aerogrammes were introduced in 2001. The October 1965 *Bulletin* revealed that in the last financial year sales of aerogrammes came in at just over 70 million. In addition, an estimated ten million private aerogrammes, produced under licence from the Postmaster General, were posted each year.

With the growing use of telephones, faxes and later emails and texts, the number of aerogrammes sold and used declined sharply from the late 1990s. The last Christmas aerogramme was issued in 2006 and reissued each November until 2010. It was withdrawn from sale at Tallents House on 24 December 2010. Ordinary aerogrammes were withdrawn from general sale at post offices in February 2012 and from Tallents House on 31 March 2012. For further information on the story of Christmas aerogrammes, see Colin Baker's article in the November 2013 edition of the *Bulletin* ●

Creatures of courage

Andrew Neish explores stories of instinctive bravery that inspired the stamp sheet saluting animals who served in the First World War



ON FOUR LEGS, two legs and two wings, carrying munitions, men and messages, the animals serving in the First World War battled as bravely as their human masters. As the new Royal Mail Commemorative Sheet, Animals Of The First World War, pays respectful tribute to those furry and feathered heroes, we explore the story of their courageous service.

And what a story. It tells of determination and derring-do amid much suffering, from wounds inflicted by the enemy's guns and bombs, disease and exhaustion. As the conflict quickly settled down into the dreary, deadly duel of trench warfare, both sides recruited thousands of animals as well as men. For communication work, transport, comfort and companionship. And for the important task of killing disease-carrying rats that infested the trenches (dogs were the experts for this vital operation).

Even glow worms, it is said, were used to illuminate officers' maps in the darkness of the trenches! And animals often became unit mascots – cats, dogs, goats, even a black bear and a lion. But the commonest animals in the ranks were horses, dogs and pigeons. They served and died in their thousands next to their human comrades...



War horses The hard realities of trench warfare soon taught the high commands of both sides that the age of cavalry warfare was close to reaching its end. Charging on horseback across bomb-flattened terrain into the jaws of enemy machinegun fire meant mass slaughter. While cavalry actions still took place, horses were mainly used for transport. At the start of hostilities the British Army had 23,000 horses. By the end it had almost 500,000, taken from British farms to Flanders, France and beyond, or imported from the USA and Canada. Under shell and gas attack, in mud that could drown them, they dragged artillery, bullets, bandages and food to the front. They brought back the dead and the dying and the wounded. ▶

Above: Royal Mail's Animals Of The First World War Commemorative Sheet, previewed in August *Bulletin*
Top: the Animals In War Memorial on Park Lane, designed by sculptor David Backhouse





Man's best comrade Dogs got stuck in at the front. Strong and fearless, man's best friend became his unswervingly loyal comrade in battle. Dogs were excellent message carriers – with orders stuffed into collar-mounted canisters, they ran three times faster than humans and their lower profile made them less vulnerable to German snipers.

They ventured into no man's land loaded with medical supplies and water for the wounded. And they returned with medical teams to rescue them. Some dogs were trained to lay telegraph wire, others were guard dogs, and, of course, they gave thousands of British soldiers a boost with their natural loyalty and endearing shows of affection.

Remembering heroic animals...

Every November millions gather round memorials across the country to salute the dead of the First World War and other conflicts. Their animal comrades are also remembered.

The Animals In War Memorial on the edge of Hyde Park in central London pays homage to the creatures who fell serving Britain in the front line.

Its Portland stone wall features a menagerie of animal heroes in bas-relief: horses, dogs, goats, even camels and elephants. Nearby bronze statues of two pack mules, a horse and dog stand testament to the fallen.

The Remembrance For Animals In War service is at 3pm on 8 November, at Brook Gate, Park Lane, London W1 – on the edge of Hyde Park,●

Three animal medal winners



ANIMAL HERO: HORSE

WARRIOR OF THE CAVALRY

Service record This thoroughbred gelding was just six when he arrived on the Western Front in August 1914 with his owner, the British cavalry general Jack Seely. Warrior saw action on the first day of the Somme and at Passchendaele; was almost buried alive when a German shell landed feet away; faced enemy gunfire when stuck in the mud of France; and was twice trapped in burning stables when they were smashed by artillery. He became such a celebrity that when he died in 1941, the *Times* published Warrior's obituary.

Ultimate mission Warrior took part in one of the world's last cavalry charges at the battle of Moreuil Wood near Amiens in March 1918. General Seely led the assault up a hill into a swarm of enemy bullets, and a furiously galloping Warrior forced squads of Germans to flee. Seely's men won the day, and in doing so helped to blunt the enemy's final major offensive of the war.

Brave beast Warrior was awarded the Dickin Medal – dubbed the 'animals' Victoria Cross' – in 2014, the centenary year of his entry into front line service. He was the first animal participating in the First World War to receive the award ●



Air support Thousands of pigeon lofts lined British trenches on the Western Front, from where these tough little birds flew off to deliver messages to and from command headquarters. During these hazardous missions, they had to evade natural enemies such as hawks and falcons and man-made dangers such as German rifle fire and poison gas. Flying in the air made pigeons a much tougher target than their canine counterparts on the ground, but they were still killed and wounded in action. More than 100,000 pigeons served with the British during the war, and they were not the only bird species to take part in the conflict – canaries transferred their skills from mines to the underground tunnels of the trench system, giving troops early warning of poison gas attacks ●

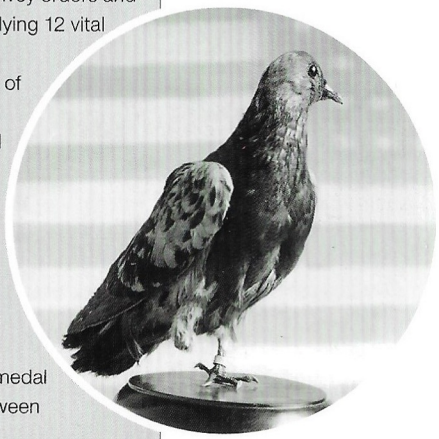
ANIMAL HERO: BIRD

CHER AMI THE CARRIER PIGEON

Service record Cher Ami ('Dear Friend' in French) was a British pigeon used by the US Army Signal Corps to convey orders and messages between American positions on the Western Front, flying 12 vital missions through enemy fire in 1918.

Ultimate mission On her final sortie, Cher Ami saved the lives of 200 troops of the US 77th Infantry Division who, surrounded by the enemy and without ammunition, were also being bombarded by their own guns as artillery commanders were unaware of their position. Cher Ami, the 77th's last carrier pigeon, was sent back to HQ 25 miles away with a message requesting an end to the barrage. The plucky pigeon was hit in the chest and leg by enemy gunfire but managed to deliver the note, so saving the beleaguered troops. Cher lost her shattered leg but medics fitted her with a false one carved from wood.

Brave beast Cher Ami was given the French Croix de Guerre medal for her gallantry in flying messages on hazardous missions between Allied forts in the American sector at Verdun ●



ANIMAL HERO: DOG

Service record Stubby, named after his short tail, was the mascot of the US 102nd Infantry Regiment. He took part in 17 battles in France, and was once wounded in the leg by a German grenade. He saved lives because he could hear incoming artillery shells before his human comrades.

Ultimate mission Stubby once caught a German spy trying to map the layout of US trenches. He bit him on the leg and gripped on to the man's trousers until soldiers arrived to take him prisoner. Stubby was promoted to sergeant for his action.

Brave beast Stubby won a clutch of medals including a Purple Heart and the République française Grande Guerre medal. He was also 'awarded' the Iron Cross taken from the captured German spy ●



Photographs courtesy the Smithsonian Institution Archives Collections. Jack Seely and Warner painting by Sir Alfred Munnings, 1918



Fig 1

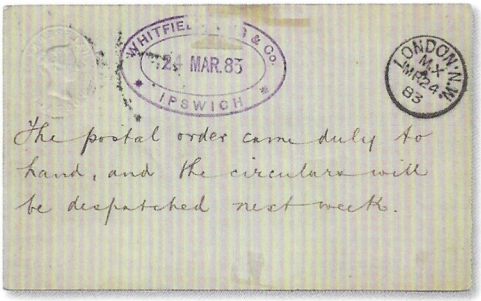


Fig 2



Fig 3

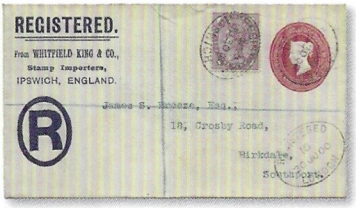


Fig 4

K is for... the King of dealers

Colin Baker explores the rich postal stationery legacy of global stamp seller Whitfield King & Co

Fig 1 ½d postcards with fancy headings were produced in three different colours

Fig 2 The reverse with the Whitfield King & Co cachet

Fig 3 A ½d postcard with the heading in an alternative colour

Figs 4 and 5 Two of the special envelopes for sending stamps to collectors

TOWARDS THE END OF THE 19TH CENTURY stamp collecting became a very popular hobby and numerous stamp dealers established businesses across the country. Some opened shops in towns and cities, but all sold stamps and philatelic accessories by post. Whitfield King & Co was one of the largest of these dealers, selling to collectors not just across the British Isles but all over the world.

It did not just deal in stamps, of course, but sold albums, stamp mounts (hinges), tongs (stamp tweezers), magnifying glasses, collectors' purses (pocket stock books) and just about anything collectors might need to fulfil their hobby. King & Co also produced a world stamp catalogue with its own prices for stamps, making it easy for collectors to order by post.

The company obviously wanted to please its customers so tried to use as many different stamps as possible to pay the postage on packets and parcels. Unfortunately, only the standard definitive issue was available at the time as Britain did not issue a commemorative stamp until 1924.

One alternative was for King & Co to use embossed stamps of various values struck on envelopes, postcards and parcel post labels. Only the embossed stamps of Queen Victoria were used on postcards and envelopes, and once these were replaced by King Edward VII stamps, no more of these were produced.



Fig 5

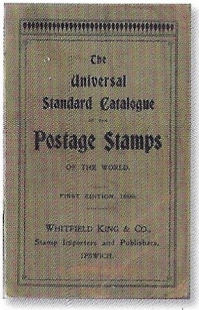


Fig 6

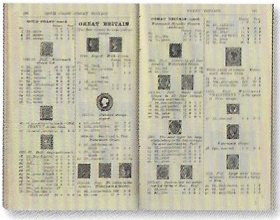


Fig 7



Fig 8

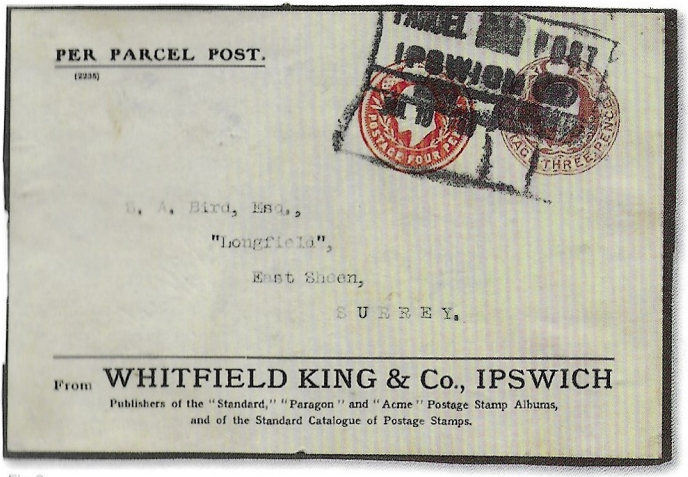


Fig 9



Fig 10

However, this was not the case for parcel post labels, which continued into the reign of King George V. In addition, Whitfield King & Co used stamps cut from postal stationery once it became legal to do so in 1905, after this facility had been withdrawn in 1870. Although King & Co only used ½d postcards, which was the inland rate for postcards at the time, it had the postcards printed with fancy headings in three different colours.

It also used envelopes and parcel post labels that were printed with embossed stamps in a wide range of values, allowing for all manner of postage rates regardless of weight or destination. But the one thing King did not do was to embellish any of its stationery with pictures or advertising material.

Keen to make a profit wherever possible, Whitfield King sold some of its envelopes and postcards to collectors, which is why we are able to buy mint copies today of many of the items used by the company. Whitfield King was not alone in using postal stationery, and there were other stamp dealers that also used embossed stamps and cut-outs. I will look at these later in the A-Z series •

Next in Baker's A to Z of Postal Stationery series comes L for Letter Sheets. Colin Baker is Secretary of the Postal Stationery Society. He welcomes enquiries about the Society by email at pss.secretary@gmail.com.

Fig 6 The 1899 edition of Whitfield King's Universal Standard Catalogue

Fig 7 Pages from the Great Britain section of the catalogue pricing a used Penny Black for just 4d (about 1.5p)

Fig 8 Adverts in the Whitfield King & Co catalogue for a range of philatelic accessories

Fig 9 One of King's specially prepared parcel post labels with 7d in embossed stamps

Fig 10 A ½d newspaper wrapper stamp used as a cut-out to pay for the postage

Correspondence

Stamp of significance

I would find it really difficult to choose just one favourite from 50 years of Royal Mail Special Stamps. But one of this year's stamps will certainly stay with me as an important souvenir of 2015. For me, the Inventive Britain stamp set, issued in February, has it all: design, colour and content. And the DNA stamp is going to be an all-time favourite of mine. The subject portrayed on the stamp is undoubtedly the gateway to an unknown future.



The design comprises a myriad vibrant pulsating colours, representing the DNA 'bars'. This small but striking representation of the science that we have seen on television documentaries places DNA firmly in our everyday lives. How appropriate, as the subject is just that – life itself.

What we can be sure of is that we have no idea where this breakthrough in understanding will lead to in the coming decades or centuries. Already DNA sequencing has greatly assisted with cold-case crimes and confirmed the identity of the skeleton of King Richard III, found under a Leicester car park in 2012. That is what we know about DNA sequencing already, and there is surely going to be much more to learn...

I have purchased a block of four DNA stamps, which are splendid – maybe Santa will be bring me a half sheet framed to hang on the wall.
Dane Garrod, Oxfordshire

The biggest one

Here is a simple question, the definitive answer to which is hard to find, yet I am confident that this will be an easy one for many of the very knowledgeable members of your team and/or readers of the *Bulletin*: what is the largest stamp ever issued in Britain? My money is on the stamps from the 1994 Channel Tunnel issue as they were pretty sizable, but has there been anything bigger?





Talking about size, I wish Royal Mail would return to producing larger stamps at Christmas. This is the one time of year when almost everybody will use Special Stamps and looks forward to the new designs. Spotting a pictorial stamp on Christmas post becomes more special if the stamp is larger than the standard definitive. Christmas stamps used to be bigger. Was the change based on saving costs? Bring back the larger festive stamps please!
Steve Wedgbury, by email

The consensus among the team at Tallents House is that the Britannia £10 stamp, which went on sale on 2 March 1993, may well be the largest stamp we have issued.

John Holman agrees this could be the case, but has also suggested that the 1882 £5 orange might win by a fraction of a millimetre. (We have not yet been able to get hold of a £5 orange to measure – watch this space.) Do *Bulletin* readers have any other contenders?

As for the Christmas stamps being changed to definitive size, they are easier to handle in sheet format and in traditional stamp booklets, which are popular at Christmas. The smaller stamp size also allows a larger photo area next to the stamp on personalised Smilers®.

Stamp images not shown at same size or to scale



The debate: Arnold the Great?

Stan Davies wrote to the *Bulletin* last month (Vol 53, p29) suggesting that it is time the Machin head was replaced by a fresh design. His letter prompted some spirited responses from readers. Here is one letter from each side of the Machin barricade.

A true classic for keeping

Stan Davies' opinions beg a lively discussion – not everyone will agree with him. The definitive design to me is a true classic and its spare, uncluttered effect is intrinsic in its appeal. It should never be changed during The Queen's lifetime. The Wildings in comparison strike me as dreadfully cluttered, but of course are the classics of their day.

Prestige Stamp Books deserve the accolade, but I do wish that the rather silly central label of the definitive pane could be replaced with a stamp.

I am sure most collectors would agree with Mr Davies about gummed stamps and booklets. Is it so very inconvenient or disgusting to actually lick a stamp today? The graphic designer-illustrated series of previous years are indeed a delight in my own collection. Meanwhile we must increasingly realise the Royal Mail Special Stamp programme only targets collectors and, however beautifully designed, most of the Special Stamps will never see the postman. Will stamps inevitably be phased out altogether?

Now there is a prospect for us all to consider.

J R Went, Hertfordshire

A vote for variety

I totally agree with Stan Davies' viewpoint regarding the Machin definitives. They are boring and out of date. For me, the Wilding designs are far better.

I have been thinking about the potential for adapting for use as definitives the UK A-Z Special Stamp series issued in 2011 and 2012 (I much prefer these to the British Journey issue of 2003 to 2006). They are bright, well designed and the 26 stamps showcase so many areas across the UK. As definitives they might cause a revolution in the way stamps are used.

As for the gum question, I think self-adhesive stamps are with us to stay.

Paul Kirsten, London



A great Machin moment

I feel I must congratulate you on the elegant cover of September's *Bulletin*, a worthy tribute to the beautiful stamps produced to commemorate 9 September 2015.

Mary Pugh, Canada



Keep the letters coming...

We welcome your letters... Write to the Editor, *British Philatelic Bulletin*, Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB. You can also email: bulletin.enquiries@royalmail.com. The senders of letters published here receive a *Star Wars*™ Presentation Pack as a token of our thanks.

Three little words Spot the festive robins and try out the crossword – you could win Christmas stamps and a classic album cover

NAME THAT STAMP Can you identify the year of issue of the three stamps beneath the magnifiers below?

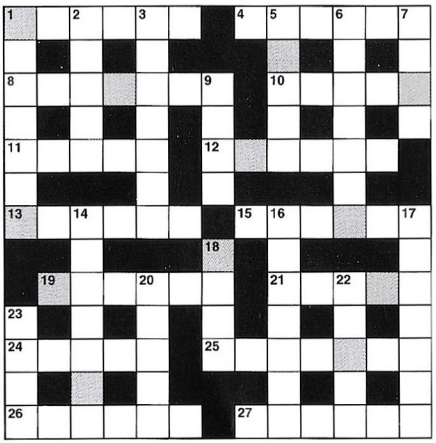


How to enter Send your answers and contact details to 'Bulletin November Robins/Crossword', to Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB or email rmbulletin@rocketmail.com. **Closing date** 10 December 2015. **Prizes** The senders of the first correct entries drawn in each section will win the Christmas 2015 issue and a *Bulletin* Special Cover. Ten runners-up will receive the stamp issue ●

August solutions and winners *Name That Stamp solution* National Nature Week, 1963; Insects, 1985. *Winner* J Perthen, Brentwood. *Crossword solution* Richard Lewington. *Winner* J Swan, Huntly. First prize winners receive the Bees Presentation Pack and a Royal Mail album. Eight runners-up receive Presentation Packs. *Crossword Across* 1 Mutter. 4 Toss-up. 8 Wellies. 10 Slain. 11 Impel. 12 Lately. 13 Hoarse. 15 Tropic. 19 Cruise. 21 Occur. 24 Point. 25 Extinct. 26 Tremor. 27 Appear. *Crossword Down* 1 Mawkish. 2 Tulip. 3 Edibles. 5 Onset. 6 Scallop. 7 Pang. 9 Silt. 14 Airline. 16 Rooftop. 17 Curator. 18 Mere. 20 Intro. 22 Canoe. 23 Spat.

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 words of a November reminder.



ACROSS

1 Nurse a relative (6)
4 Evil, terrible sailor (6)
8 Departed with Ronald some time after (5,2)
10 Gold garland below raised window (5)
11 Country where plane repaired (5)
12 No lies about the injury (6)
13 Bit of garden ought to be sufficient (6)
15 Seize contents of a nest (6)
19 Small mammal found by West Stand (6)
21 Clergyman won't start fire-raising (5)
24 Some catarrh in one animal (5)
25 Takes retribution for Geneva's collapse (7)
26 Pigpen was first to be fashioned (6)
27 Lost, like salver (6)

DOWN

1 Be quiet after bringing in the Parisian (7)
2 Become alert when it is dropped into drink (3,2)
3 Listener's temporary block! (7)
5 Shackles golf clubs (5)
6 Financially rescue Lou, having been consumed by temptation (4,3)
7 Daughter taking drink to valley (4)
9 Invalid back in hall, unharmed (4)
14 Being overweight, do as told about rest (7)
16 Commanders may be dodgy dealers (7)
17 Candour of beloved saint taken in (7)
18 Said to escape biter (4)
20 Poles rolling over side of hill (5)
22 End of asparagus returned as a sweetener (5)
23 Sir is displaying a flower (4)

Have you ever thought about collecting earlier stamps or First Day Covers?

Here at Mark Bloxham Stamps Ltd, we have large stocks for sale on our website: www.philatelic.co.uk
Here are a few genuine Penny Blacks for sale:



M104791



M114468



M140027



M140037



M140044



M140980



M162984



M164025



M167068

M104791	Penny Black (TL) tear but attractive	£60
M114468	Penny Black (CI) Un-plated Four margin (Creased)	£65
M140027	Penny Black (MI) Three margins	£55
M140037	Penny Black (RE) Plate Ten P converted to R (Heavy thin)	£46
M140044	Penny Black (MD) Black cross (creased)	£46
M140980	Penny Black (RD) Space Filler	£37
M162984	1840 Penny Black (FL) Plate 1a Very Fine Four margins	£345
M164025	Penny Black (GA) Superb four margins with Red Cross	£275
M167068	Penny Black (EH) Four close to large margins with fine red maltese cross	£130

Contact us for more details of these and others.

MARK BLOXHAM
STAMPS LTD

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Royal Mail stamp issues and withdrawals

3 November **Issue** 2015 Annual Collections: Yearbook, Yearpack, 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), Stamp Cards (9 in set), Presentation Pack, Stamp Books 12 x 1st and 12 x 2nd Class.



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).

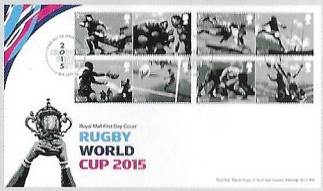


13 November **Withdrawal** Post & Go British Flora I Spring Blooms, II Symbolic Flowers and III Winter Greenery.



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

17 December **Withdrawal** Rugby World Cup 2015 Stamp Souvenir.



31 December **Withdrawal** 2013 Annual Collections: Yearbook, Leatherbound Yearbook, Year Pack, Year of Miniature Sheets, Year of Presentation Packs.

31 December **Withdrawal** Long to Reign Over Us: Stamp Sheet Souvenir (2 x 1st and 2 x £1.52 Special Stamps, 1 x 1st Class definitive).

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 **15CDJ**, 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.

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