BRITISH PHILATELIC

Bulletin

The magazine for collectors of UK stamps

VOLUME 53 NUMBER 4 | DECEMBER 2015 | £1.95

Star Wars™ Prestige Stamp Book • Shackleton Specials • 2016 Stamp Programme



HAPPY CHRISTMAS!

CHRISTMAS STAMP ARTIST DAVID HOLMES
WIN 2015 YEARBOOK **POST & GO** HONG KONG STRIPS



An exceptional year for stamps

Greetings from Editor William Doherty, from Royal Mail Stamps & Collectibles

Looking back over the past year I hope you agree that the Royal Mail Stamps and Collectibles team have done a great job in presenting subjects that strike a balance between appealing to seasoned collectors and attracting new ones. The recently released Christmas stamps, for example, offer a modern, painterly rendition of the traditional story of the Nativity (read our interview with the artist David Holmes on page 111).

Stamp issues marking anniversaries this year have included Alice in Wonderland (150 years since the publication of Lewis Carroll's classic) and the 175th Anniversary of the Penny Black – both of which have proved exceptionally popular at home and abroad. We also commemorated historic events that changed the world: The First World War 1915 is second in the stamp series that will surely become an all-time favourite; the Battle of Waterloo is portrayed in dramatic paintings of the confrontation between Napoleon and Wellington; the Battle of Britain Miniature Sheet focuses on personnel in supporting roles as well as on the renowned fighter pilots; and the elegant Amethyst Purple definitive stamp marks Queen Elizabeth II becoming our longest-reigning monarch.

But never let it be said that UK stamps are all about history. The Comedy Greats issue applauded some of our finest comedians; the pretty Bees stamps highlighted important ecological questions; the gritty Rugby World Cup 2015 set echoed the nation's sporting passions; and the first-ever official UK *Star Wars*™ stamps are as topical as you can get. In planning for two years, this is the first Royal Mail stamp set to herald an international film premiere. The *Star Wars* Prestige Stamp Book is issued on 17 December, the day of release of the movie *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*. And did you know that the stamps have hidden secrets, invisible to the naked eye? See page 101 for details.

Another great highlight of the UK philatelic year was undoubtedly London 2015 Europhilex in May, where we celebrated the 175th anniversary of the Penny Black and I enjoyed meeting many *Bulletin* readers at the Royal Mail stand.

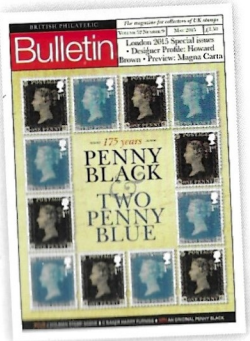
It is difficult to pick favourite designs from the varied collection of Special Stamps issued by Royal Mail over the past year, but, as is the custom, we will be asking you to do just that when you receive the Readers' Stamp Poll form with your January edition of the *Bulletin*.

Meanwhile, I hope you enjoy a happy and peaceful Christmas, and that we see lots of Special Stamps on Christmas mail! •

Below: two of my favourite sporting stamps of the year – the First World War 1915 London Irish Rifles Football and the Conversion stamp from the Rugby World Cup 2015 set; the *Bulletin* Europhilex edition, celebrating 175 years of the Penny Black



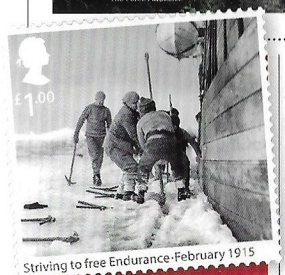




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● **Royal Mail Editor** William Doherty, Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB ● **Publishing Editor** Kate Shaw, HMS President (1918), Victoria Embankment, London EC4Y 0HJ ● Price £1.95 from Post Office Ltd philatelic outlets or by order from Post Office branches ● **Annual subscription** £12.95 UK and Europe; £17.95 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.



First (class) Noel Fifty years of Christmas on postage stamps **118**

This Month in History The 1947 11d stamp evokes childhood collecting memories for John Holman **119**



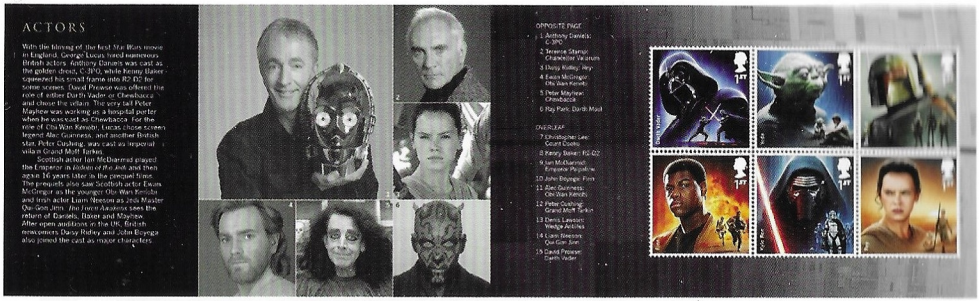
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Space ace A new Prestige Stamp Book showcases the British talent that helped make *Star Wars*™ movies a global success

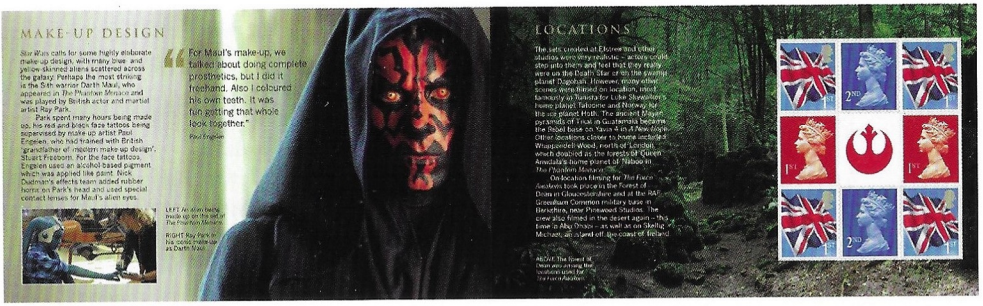
Above: Panes 1 and 3 from the Prestige Stamp Book feature famous characters from the *Star Wars* films – many of them portrayed by British actors

Opposite page: (from top) Darth Maul feature; the front cover showing X-wing Starfighters; an info page from a make-up expert

A STELLAR PRESTIGE STAMP BOOK celebrating Britain's role in the huge success of *Star Wars* launches this month – and it is out of this world. The 26-page book is issued on 17 December, the day of the UK premiere of the new movie *Star Wars*™*: The Force Awakens*. Subtitled The Making of Star Wars: The British Story, the Prestige Stamp Book (PSB) pays tribute to homegrown talent, from actors and make-up artists to set and costume designers. The panes feature all the *Star Wars* character stamps, vehicle stamps from the Miniature Sheet and Union Flag stamps and definitives. Price: £16.99.

Pane 1 Six stamps feature a gallery of *Star Wars* characters played by British actors: Darth Vader (David Prowse), Finn (John Boyega) and Rey (Daisy Ridley) from the new film, and Boba Fett (Jeremy Bulloch).
Pane 2 Four First Class Union Flag stamps, two First Class and two Second Class definitives surround the symbol of the Rebel Alliance. Accompanying the pane is information on the make-up routine necessary to create the famous red and black face of Darth Maul, played by British actor Ray Park.
Pane 3 Six stamps show the original major characters, Han Solo, Princess Leia and Luke Skywalker, with two roles played by homegrown stars: Obi-Wan Kenobi (Sir Alec Guinness) and Emperor Palpatine (Ian McDiarmid). A timeline alongside the pane covers pays tribute to four decades of British talent in directing, acting, special effects, make-up and stunt work.

Royal Mail stamps are available from Tallents House at the address on page 128 and online at www.royalmail.com/shop. Please quote the *Bulletin* media code CDK.









Pane 4 The Miniature Sheet carries famous spacecraft and fighting machines: *Millennium Falcon*, X-wing Starfighters, TIE Fighters, First Order Special Forces TIE Fighters and AT-AT Walkers.

A limited edition Prestige Stamp Book of 1,977 copies (echoing the original *Star Wars* film's release year) is also released on the same day as the film. It has a cover with silver and holographic foiling and limited edition numbering and is presented in an metal box embossed with the *Star Wars* logo. Price: £120.

Accompanying the issue of the Prestige Stamp Books are three Medal Covers. (See www.royalmail.com/shop for details) ●

Above: limited edition Prestige Stamp Book and metal box

Below: Princess Leia stamp reveals her fluorescent secret



Fluorescent Specials The *Star Wars* character stamp set issued in October holds many secrets! Each incorporates a hidden symbol printed with fluorescent ink. They are invisible to the eyes of earthlings in normal daylight, but if you shine a UV light over them a series of *Star Wars* symbols appear on the characters' faces. UV torches are easy to find on the high street and online, or turn to page 124 and you could win one – along with the 2015 Royal Mail Yearbook, framed *Star Wars* character stamps, Generic Sheet, Miniature Sheet and much more – as part of the bumper Christmas prize in our Great British film quiz ● *Star Wars* ©&™ Lucasfilm Ltd.

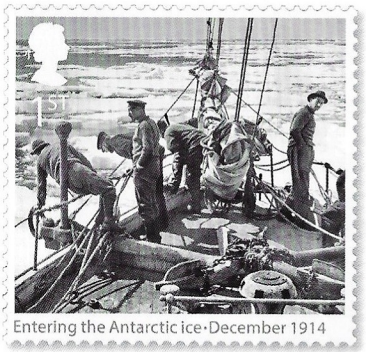
Stop press: For a limited period only, Royal Mail stamp albums are available at special prices (regular prices shown in brackets): Prestige Stamp Book album £10.99 (£15.99), First Day Cover album £14 (£19), Presentation Pack album £13 (£19), Miniature Sheet album £10.99 (£15.99), Smilers® album £9.99 (£14.99). Better hurry, as these offers end on 31 December ●

Supreme survival skills January stamps celebrate the achievements of Ernest Shackleton and his incredible 28-man Antarctic expedition

The Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition sailed out of Plymouth harbour aboard the *Endurance* in August 1914, as Great Britain entered the First World War. The objective was to become the first expedition to cross Antarctica, but what followed has gone down in history as one of the greatest survival stories of all time.

By January 2015 the *Endurance* had become trapped in Antarctic ice and so Shackleton and his men began a struggle for survival which was to continue for 16 freezing months. A century on, on 7 January 2016, Royal Mail will issue a Special Stamp set – Shackleton and the Endurance Expedition – in tribute to the exemplary courage, loyalty, determination and leadership qualities which have earned the expedition epic status.

Stamp by stamp The voyage was recorded by a pioneering photographer named Frank Hurley, whose original glass photography plates have been used in the stamp design to tell the chronological story of survival against all odds.
First Class, Entering the Antarctic Ice – December 1914. The *Endurance* Four months into their journey, the expedition entered the frozen seas of the Antarctic.
First Class, Endurance frozen in pack ice – January 1915. Only 80 miles from



Entering the Antarctic ice·December 1914



Endurance frozen in pack ice·January 1915



Patience Camp·December 1915–April 1916



Safe arrival at Elephant Island·April 1916

its destination, the expedition came to a frozen halt when *Endurance* was trapped in pack ice (caused when drifting ice comes together in a large mass).

£1, Striving to free Endurance – February 1915. The men stayed on the ice with their ship and laboured for weeks to free it. Hurley's photograph shows a group working with ice picks and axes. But their best efforts were in vain.

£1, Trapped in a pressure crack – October 1915. The expedition had been living on the ice for nine months when the *Endurance* slipped into a pressure crack – and with it went all hope of reboarding and sailing to safety.

£1.33, Patience Camp December – 1915-April 1916. Provisions had been dragged from the *Endurance*, and these helped the group survive on drifting ice for another six months. This photograph shows the 'kitchen' stove, a man preparing fish and in the background one of three small boats salvaged from the ship.

£1.33, Safe arrival at Elephant Island – April 1916. When the ice beneath Patience Camp started to break up, Shackleton ordered the boats to set sail for the uninhabited Elephant Island. They arrived there, but still had no hope of rescue.

£1.52, Setting out for South Georgia – April 1916. Shackleton modified a boat with a sail and selected five of his crew to sail with him 800 miles across the Southern Ocean towards South Georgia (the most remote outpost of the British Empire).

£1.52, Rescue of Endurance Crew – August 1916 After one of the most celebrated feats of navigation of all time, they reached an inhabited whaling station a years after they had left the ice. From there Shackleton organised expeditions to rescue the remainder of the crew, which was achieved in 1916. *Continued overleaf* ▶



FD1601-PL



FD1601-TH



FD1601-NP

Above: the alternative pictorial postmark with a map of Antarctica indicating the location where the *Endurance* became trapped in pack ice; the Tallents House postmark has the Shackleton family motto



Striving to free Endurance·February 1915



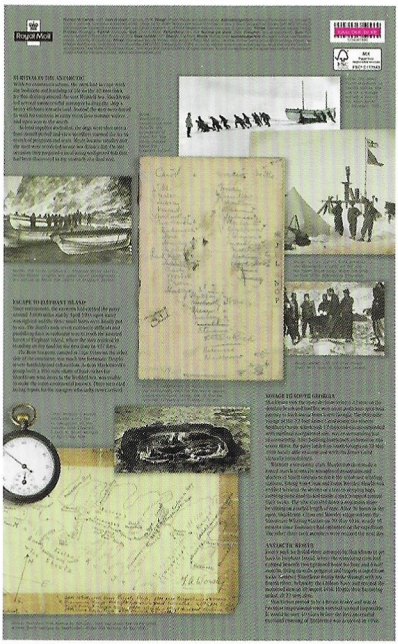
Trapped in a pressure crack·October 1915

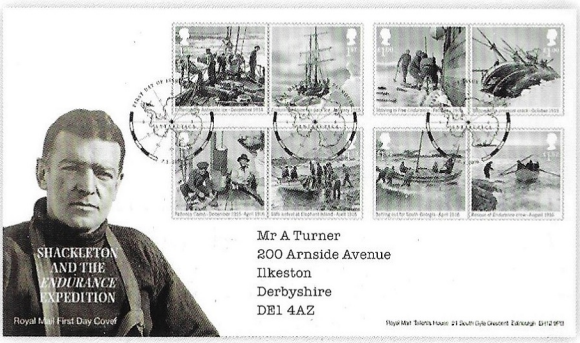


Setting out for South Georgia·April 1916



Rescue of Endurance crew·August 1916





Philatelic specials The fact-packed Presentation Pack (left) is designed by True North, using a number of Frank Hurley's photographs and ephemera that were kept from the voyage. Text by polar exploration author Michael Smith describes the type of extreme challenges faced by Shackleton and his crew.

Also available is a First Day Cover (shown above), designed by True North with a striking portrait of Ernest Shackleton.

The Tallents House, Edinburgh postmark is designed with a map of Antarctica, pinpointing the location where the *Endurance* was marooned in the ice. The alternative pictorial alternative postmarks shows the Shackleton family motto of *Fortitudine Vincimus* – by Endurance we Conquer.

The location for plain and pictorial postmarks is Plymouth. Orders for serviced First Day Covers must reach Royal Mail 7 January. Customers may also send stamped envelopes on the day of issue to Royal Mail, Tallents House (address on page 98) for the Tallents House, Edinburgh postmark •

Shackleton and the Endurance Expedition – Specifications

Date of issue	7 January
Number of stamps	Eight
Stamp design	Robert Maude and Sarah Davies
First Day Cover design	Truth North
Stamp format	Over-square landscape
Stamp size	37mm x 35mm
Printer	International Security Printing
Print process	Lithography
Number per sheet	30/60
Perforations	14 x 14.5
Phosphor	Bars as appropriate
Gum	PVA

Shackleton and the Endurance Expedition – Prices

Stamps	£8.96
Presentation Pack	£9.50
First Day Cover	£11.23
Stamp Souvenir	£11.23
Cover envelope	30p
Stamp Cards, set of 8	£3.60

Acknowledgments Entering the Antarctic ice, *Endurance* frozen in pack ice, Safe arrival at Elephant Island, Setting out for South Georgia and Rescue of *Endurance* crew – all © Royal Geographical Society (with IBG). Striving to free *Endurance*, Trapped in a pressure crack and Patience Camp © Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge.



Post & Go Update Martyn Fry reports on a production experiment involving Hong Kong 2015 Collectors Strips

Royal Mail is trialling a new print process in a bid to boost the quality of Post & Gos. It used a four-colour digital press to produce November's Hong Kong 2015 Collectors Strip stamps in place of the original gravure method. The aim was to assess the digital process's viability in terms of improved quality but also to examine its potential for shorter production runs of specific designs.

Organised by the Hong Kong Philatelic Society, Hong Kong 2015 was the 31st Asian International Stamp Exhibition. To mark the occasion, Post & Go Hong Kong and Union Flag Collectors Strips were available at the Royal Mail stand and collectors can still purchase GB versions from Tallents House (at the address on page 99).

The Hong Kong Collectors Strip – GB version (shown right) features the Hong Kong image from the Sea Travel issue. It consists of six rates: First Class up to 100g, First Class Large up to 100g, Euro 20g/World 10g, Europe up to 100g, Worldwide up to 20g and Worldwide up to 100g. This product carries the 'Hong Kong November 2015' overprint and is only available from Tallents House by mail order. Price: £7.68 per strip, order code ZS040.

The Union Flag Collectors Strip – GB version comprises six rates: First Class up to 100g, First Class Large up to 100g, Euro 20g/World 10g, Europe up to 100g, Worldwide up to 20g and Worldwide up to 100g. Each stamp has the 'Hong Kong November 2015' overprint. The strip is only available from Tallents House by mail order. Price: £7.68 per strip, order code ZS041 ●





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

UK diary dates

5 December National Philatelic Society Christmas meeting at the Welsh Centre, Gray's Inn Road, London WC1. Enquiries: Peter Mellor, 01582 762284.

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

11 December Strand Stamp Fair at the Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way, London WC1H 0DG, 9am to 4pm. Admission free. Enquires: Kate Puleston, 020 8946 4489, www.stampshows.net.

16 December GB Philatelic Society Evening Reception at Stanley Gibbons, 399 Strand, London WC2R 0LX, 6pm onwards, with Members' Displays. Enquiries: Peter Tanner, 01753 887755.

8 January Strand Stamp Fair, as 11 December above.

15-16 January York Stamp & Coin Fair at the Grandstand, York Racecourse, YO23 1EX. Friday 11am to 6pm, Saturday 10am to 4pm. Admission free. Enquiries: Kate Puleston 020 8946 4489, www.stampshows.net.

30 January GB Philatelic Society meeting – Royalty and the Mails at Windsor by Phillip Lindley, 11am; Society competitions, 2.15pm – at Royal Philatelic Society London, 41 Devonshire Place, London W1.

17-20 February Spring Stampex, Business Design Centre, London N1. Enquiries: 01342 830225, info@thepts.net ●

British Postal Museum & Archive

This year the British Postal Museum & Archive (BPMA) was awarded two funding grants, from Viridor Credits and AIM Biffa Award, in support of its plans to open Mail Rail – the old Post Office Underground Railway – to the public for the first time as part of The Postal Museum. Rick Wills became Chair of Trustees, as the BPMA moves into the delivery phase of The Postal Museum and Mail Rail, a 'new, national visitor attraction shining a light on five centuries of Britain's social and communications history'.

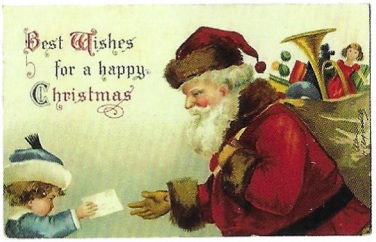
Transport engineering specialist Severn Lamb has been brought on board to develop and construct the train for the Mail Rail ride visitor attraction, as part of the planned new Postal Museum. Severn Lamb has almost 70 years' experience creating train rides for the leisure industry, largely abroad, with clients that include Disneyland Paris and Drayton Manor Theme Park. It will be responsible for the creation of the train and associated ride system for the Mail Rail attraction,



Photograph: Miles Willies

from design, through construction, to the completion of the project when The Postal Museum and Mail Rail open in central London in 2016.

The BPMA is currently located at Freeling House, Phoenix Place, London WC1, near the famous Mount Pleasant sorting office. Opening hours are Tuesday to Friday from 10am to 5pm (Thursdays until 7pm) and there is a Saturday opening on 12 December from 10am to 5pm. The Search Room is currently closed on Mondays to facilitate the preparation of the BPMA collections for the move to new premises.



A tour of the Archives at Phoenix Place will be held on 9 December. A talk, entitled Dear Santa: The History of Writing to Father Christmas, will be given by Ashley March on 1 December (7pm) at the Phoenix Centre, alongside the BPMA in Phoenix Place. It is advisable to book a ticket, but a limited number are available on the night.

The Post Office in the Community exhibition is at Blists Hill Victorian Town, Madeley, Telford, Shropshire. And some 25 exhibitions can be seen online at www.postalheritage.org.uk, including Aerial Post, Machins, David Gentleman, postal vehicles and letter boxes.

A temporary exhibition Pop it in the Post: your World at the End of the Street will be on show at Havering Museum, 19-21 High Street, Romford, Essex RM1 1JU, from 6 January to 26 March 2016. There is an online version of the Pop it in the Post exhibition, hosted by the Google Cultural Institute and accessible at the BPMA website. Also online is a useful What's On events guide. For a printed copy of the events guide or to book for tours or talks, phone 020 7239 2570, or email info@postalheritage.org.uk ●

Friends of the BPMA

Being a Friend of the British Postal Museum & Archive is a very practical way of helping the Museum. Membership includes opportunities for behind the scenes visits that are only rarely available otherwise. In 2015 the Friends had guided tours of the London Assay Office, International Security Printers Ltd and London Transport Museum Depot. These visits are very popular and the future visit to Cartor in France is already fully subscribed.

The Friends AGM on 1 December will include a presentation about the new Museum and Mail Rail and a talk by Julian Stray on The Post Office in 1890. See www.postalheritage.org.uk/friends or write to: Friends of the BPMA, Freeling House, Phoenix Place, London WC1X 0DL for more details ●

Stamp-related exhibitions

Stamps marking The Queen becoming the UK's longest-reigning monarch were issued on 9 September. Photographic displays entitled Long To Reign Over Us are on show at the Palace of Holyroodhouse in Edinburgh and at Windsor Castle until 5 January and 28 January 2016 respectively. The displays, in inner quadrangles of the two residences not normally on the visitor route, are included in the standard ticket prices.

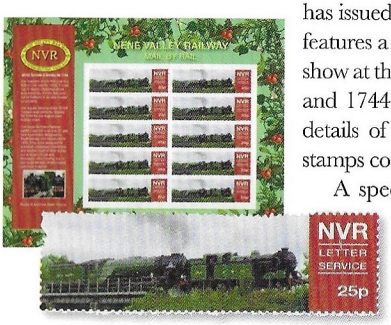
In January Royal Mail issued stamps marking the 150th anniversary of the publication of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. An exhibition Alice In Wonderland at the British Library in London until 17 April 2016, ▸

includes Carroll's original manuscript with hand-drawn illustrations, alongside stunning editions by Mervyn Peake, Ralph Steadman, Leonard Weisgard, Arthur Rackham, Salvador Dali and others. Visit www.bl.uk/alice-in-wonderland for further information. Stamps featuring Winnie the Pooh book illustrations by E H Shepard were issued in October 2010. An exhibition of his illustrations from the trenches of the First World War is on show at the House of Illustration, Granary Square, King's Cross, London N1C 4BH, open Tuesday to Sunday 10am to 6pm (admission charge). The House of Illustration is the UK's only public gallery dedicated solely to illustration, with a programme of exhibitions, talks and events. It was founded by Sir Quentin Blake and opened in 2014. Sir Quentin's illustrations of characters from Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* were shown on the 1993 Christmas stamps. For further information about the House of Illustration phone 020 3696 2020 or visit www.houseofillustration.org.uk ●

New catalogue

The 2016 edition of *Stanley Gibbons Collect British Stamps* has recently been published, covering all British issues from the Penny Black to the 2015 Christmas issue. Price: £14.95. It is available from Royal Mail Tallents House as well as from Stanley Gibbons' shop on the Strand and by mail order from Stanley Gibbons Ltd, Parkside, Ringwood, Hants BH24 3SH ●

Railway letter stamp



The Nene Valley Railway (NVR), which runs from Peterborough to Yarwell, has issued railway letter stamps since 1986. A new stamp, issued on 3 November, features a 60163 Tornado and Gresley N2 1744. Both these locomotives were on show at the Railway's August Bank Holiday event, including double headed 60163 and 1744. The 25p stamp is printed in sheets of ten and the margin includes details of the locomotives. FDCs with two Royal Mail First Class Christmas stamps cost £5, or £13.95 with full set of Christmas stamps.

A special Christmas Eve cover will be serviced by advance order only. Orders/enquiries for NVR stamps and covers should be sent to: Nene Valley Railway (Stamps), Wansford Station, Stibbington, Peterborough PE8 6LR. Telephone 01780 784440. The minimum order should be £5, plus £1 post and packing ●

Forthcoming auction

Cavendish's December auction will include the Windsor collection of Irish stamps and postal history, plus 'excellent offerings' of GB Postal History. Enquiries: 01332 250970 or 020 8785 7750, or visit www.cavendish-auctions.com ●

News from the islands



Jersey's set of eight stamps, issued on 27 November, features stained glass windows in Jersey churches by Henry Thomas Bosdet who was born 150 years ago, in 1856. Enquiries: Jersey Philatelic Bureau, Freepost JE793, Jersey Post, Jersey JE1 1AF, or visit www.jerseystamps.com.

October issues from the Isle of Man featured Artwork of Bryan Kneale RA. Works by Mr Kneale, whose drawings of dinosaurs featured on a Royal Mail issue in 1991, can be seen at The Tate in London, New York's Museum of Modern Art, and in the Manx Museum in Douglas on the Isle of Man, where he was born. Orders and enquiries to: Isle of Man Stamps & Coins, PO Box 10M, Douglas, Isle of Man IM99 1PB, or visit www.iomstamps.com ●

Obituary



Francis Kiddle, who died on 21 October 2015, was described as 'philately's Renaissance man' when he received the Smithsonian Philatelic Achievement Award in 2006. The citation noted that 'His research, service, and promotion of philately encompass every philatelic discipline – and amazingly, he does it worldwide'. Francis was born in 1942 and started collecting aged six, encouraged by his older brother Charles; an Egyptian stamp showing King Farouk made an impression on him as a young collector. Although he went on to form a number of specialised collections, he always believed in general collecting and advised young collectors not to start with new issues of a particular country but to start with a packet of 1000 worldwide stamps and 'play with the stamps... and eventually something will catch the eye' so interest will grow in certain areas.

Francis will always be remembered for his love of philatelic literature, cinderella and revenue stamps. For many years he was Hon. Librarian of the Royal Philatelic Society London in charge of the thousands of books and journals on some 5,000 feet of shelving. At home, his own philatelic library amounted to 500 feet, to which he added at least two new books each week and the journals of some 40 societies. He was elected President of the Royal in 1994, was Chairman of the Cinderella Stamp Club from 1991 to 2005, and elected to the Club's Roll of Notable Cinderella Philatelists in 2006. With brother Charles he wrote 'Cinderella Corner' for *Stamp Magazine* for many years. In recent times he had been researching tramway stamps, contributing an important article on the stamps of Dublin tramway companies in *Railway Philately* shortly before he died.

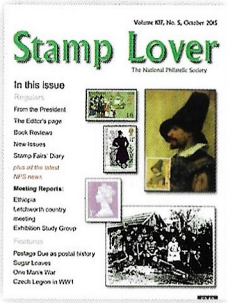
His services to organised philately were legion. He joined the British Philatelic Trust in 1985 and became its Chairman in 1997. He was also Chairman of the British Philatelic Federation (forerunner of the ABPS) and Chairman and President of the Revenue and Literature Commissions of the FIP, philately's international governing body. He served on juries of national and international exhibitions from 1975, and was President of the International Jury for the London 2010 exhibition, and again, recently at Europhilex in May.

By profession Francis was a scientist/civil servant, retiring in 1997 as Assistant Director of Space Technology at the government's Defence Evaluation and Research Agency. Even when he was working full time, and raising a family, he found time for six hours a week on his collection, yet managed a staggering 30 hours a week helping to run philatelic organisations – all unpaid and for the benefit of his fellow collectors. Not surprisingly he was elected to philately's top honour – the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists – in 1995, and received a Rowland Hill Special Award in 2001. He gave numerous talks and displays to local societies, judged competitions, and took part in seminars on philatelic exhibiting. All this public work was sometimes surprising as he was of a somewhat reserved disposition. He overcame this with a sense of humour and a distinctive mischievous streak.

Undoubtedly one of the major players in UK and international philately for the past 35 years, Francis will be greatly missed, particularly by the Royal Philatelic Society and Cinderella Stamp Club. Asked in 1996 which stamp he would take if cast away on a desert island, he chose the 1866 1d Stamp Duty issue of Queensland for its 'glorious design with endless possibilities for plating, checking flaws and shades' ●

For more on Francis Kiddle's remarkable philatelic life see 'In My View...' in the *Bulletin* of January 1996, pages 132 to 135.

Society publications



The October 2015 issue of *Stamp Lover*, journal of the National Philatelic Society (NPS), includes interesting features on Postage Due as postal history, sugar loaves on stamps and postcards, and Czech Legion Second World War material, as well as the usual extensive book reviews, and survey of new issues from around the world including definitives depicting the new King of Spain, Felipe VI, stamps from Ascension, Bahamas, British Virgin Islands, Falklands and Tristan da Cunha, commemorating the anniversary of Magna Carta, and the Australia, New Zealand and Singapore joint issue marking the Singapore 2015 international philatelic exhibition and 50th anniversary of independence for Singapore.

The NPS was founded, as the Junior Philatelic Society, by the famous philatelist Fred Melville in1899; *Stamp Lover* was first published in 1908. For details of the society and its activities contact Peter Mellor on 01582 762284 or see www.ukphilately.org/nps.

The September 2015 issue of *Eastern Angle*, journal of the East Anglian Postal History Society (EAPHS), contains articles on Colchester Town Sub Offices, Chelmsford PO, Boxford PO and Village Stores, Railway Letter Stamps of Northamptonshire and an unusual account of misconduct by postmen in Wisbech, 1893-1904. Derek Smeathers reports on a unique square-circle Parcel Post handstamp used at Peterborough with recorded period of use from February 1893 to October 1912.

For collectors of modern postal history material, the 12 pages of 'Roundup of Postal News of East Anglia' and 'Post Office Movements' are essential reading. The Society will hold its AGM on 2 April 2016. For details of the EAPHS contact John Copeland at 20 The Vale, Brentwood CM15 4UP, call 01277 218128 or visit www.eaphsc.webs.com.

The Modern British Philatelic Circle (MBPC) resulted from the merger of the Great Britain Decimal Stamp Book Study Circle and the British Decimal Stamps Study Circle in 2006. The new Circle's scope was extended to cover all GB stamps and related material issued during the present reign. Its award-winning *The Bookmark Journal* (see below) is published six times a year, and other publications available for members to purchase include the *Bookmark Catalogue of British Decimal Postage Stamp Books*. In addition, the Circle holds six postal auctions per year and regular meetings twice a year, with a number of modern GB dealers in attendance. For further information, visit www.mbp-circle.co.uk.



The October 2015 issue of *The Bookmark Journal* contains 52 pages stuffed full of interesting and useful data on recent issues, with plenty of background information on the stamps' subjects as well as philatelic detail.

The Catalogue Editor writes on pre-decimal booklets, there are news reports on recent definitives, business sheets and Horizon labels, a three-page Post & Go update, a feature on a design agency that adapts the Machin design, a preview of the *Star Wars* issue, details of Circle auctions and reports of MBPC activities, including the AGM in August 2015. The journal ends with a miscellany page entitled 'Bits and Pieces' ●

Correction In the November issue we published an incorrect website for the London 2020 International Stamp Exhibition. The correct web address is www.london2020.co. Apologies for any inconvenience caused ●



Going Holmes for Christmas

Artist David Holmes was the go-to guy for capturing the magic of Christmas. Andrew Neish meets the man whose palette painted the greatest story ever told for this year's festive stamp issue



Dandyishly fashionable, consummate modern artist David Holmes does not look like the kind of man to use archaic paint adored by the old masters over half a millennium ago. Amiable, amusing, attentive (when I arrive he paternally guides me over the slippery bridge in his Japanese garden), this year's Christmas stamp artist has the manners of David Niven. He is dapper in a style decades younger than his 82 years. Trademark cream linen trews handmade in Singapore, two-tone brogues and braces ▶

Right: David's workbench overlooks his Japanese garden

Below: rare lapis lazuli pigment; an early try for the Nativity scene with a close-up of Mary; the Annunciation stamp









lend this watercolour master more than a whiff of 80s Bowie from his *Let's Dance* period. 'I quite like the idea of being a bit daffy,' he shrugs, grinning down at his £200 classic correspondents by Shipton & Heneage.

Daffy indeed, but David's quirky approach, encapsulated in the use of very rare paint beloved by the ancients, lends his Christmas stamp work an extra paletteful of magic. Rare, expensive ultramarine pigment made from crushed lapis lazuli stone, first mined in Afghanistan over 7,000 years ago, was a colour of choice for the cloak of the Virgin in religious paintings of the Renaissance. Titian and Raphael loved it. Michelangelo did as well but could not afford it. David Holmes lashed out on some (it can go for over £300 an ounce) to lovingly apply to Mary's robe on the First and Second Class stamps.

The 'Lapis Lazuli Dark' paint is a delightfully authentic touch that channels centuries of religious art into David's 21st century interpretation of one of history's most famous stories – the Nativity. 'This was a gesture to the painters of the past,' says David at his studio in Primrose Hill, north London. 'The pigment is very rare and much treasured by artists. It seemed very appropriate given the very special nature of the subject.'

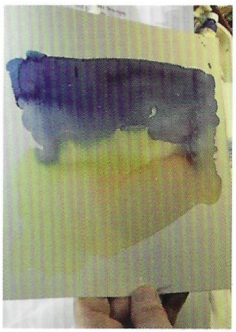
And he had achieved a very special result. The eight-stamp issue (David also painted for the Presentation Pack) is exquisite. In each watercolour image, tiny human figures – Mary and Joseph, the three wise men, the shepherds – are poignantly dwarfed by a shimmering sky full of revelations: angels speak to the Virgin and the shepherds, a new star guides the wise men and settles over the new-born Messiah.

It is as if the sky itself holds all the secrets of this most extraordinary narrative. As David explains: 'The figures are virtually silhouettes in this story, as though the light in the sky is just as important as the characters themselves. I expect people will look at these stamps and remember that light, the extraordinary atmosphere of something important about to happen, the bright piece of magic that suddenly surrounds them.'

The paintings are beautifully composed and sensitively drawn. Yet they are executed surprisingly quickly. Indeed David likes to work fast, believing







Above: David painted these early tries for a camel, palm tree and background at the beginning of the year, experimenting with different elements that could be brought together in the stamp designs

creativity comes from an instinctive touch. I ask him how it would take, for example, to paint the palm that appears on the £1 Animals of the Nativity stamp.

'I could do you one now, before you finished a sentence of 30 words,' he answers with a chuckle.

And he does. A quick few dabs of watery cobalt blue and yellow coalesce to form a canopy of green palm leaves. From a handful of pencil strokes grows a sinewy trunk. A mini masterpiece is born.

Will he add more detail when these first daubs are dry? 'Oh no,' says David, 'because as the paint dries it gives you treasures you can't see when it's wet. The paper and the water and the really good pigment create gifts for you. Just do it, and see what effect you get afterwards. I could do four of those palm trees, let them dry, then pick the best one.' He adds: 'You don't labour things too much. You can do stuff by not thinking too much. If you ponder, sometimes you ponder an idea away. You lose the spontaneity.'

With David's sense of spontaneity comes a sense of fun. Among his pro Derwent pencils and Winsor & Newton paints lurks what he calls 'my secret weapon' – a children's novelty colouring pencil with a multihued nib that produces lines like rainbow toothpaste. He will often wangle a line or two from it into his work, like a visual in-joke. Look carefully at the £1 Animals of the Nativity stamp, for example…

Yet for all this spontaneity and humour, David planned carefully for the end result, exploring different options for the compositions of pictures in the stamp issue. Detailed planning, by the way, is a legacy from his days as ▸

HOLMES ON ART AND INSPIRATION

Fantasy commission
'I've just done it – the Christmas stamp issue. It's the best job any illustrator can be given. If I fall into my garden pond tonight and drown, my last gurgle would be: "Well, I did the Christmas stamps!".'

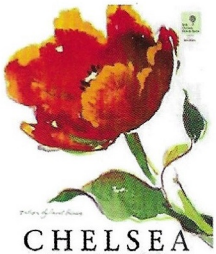
Artistic inspiration
'A deadline is always excellent inspiration. Otherwise, my Japanese garden. In the summer, when the door is open, and the leaves are on the trees. It's very tranquil – just right for thinking.'

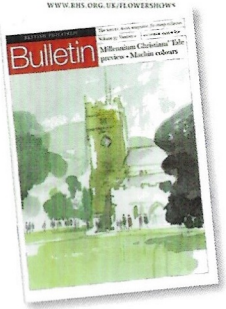
Creative relaxation
'My wife Marie and I hire a cottage in Sussex. She makes quilts so she'll be doing that and I'll simply paint away.'

Hero painter 'Alfred Wallis, an uneducated Cornish fisherman and rag and bone man-turned-artist who never went upstairs again after his wife died but just sat in his kitchen and painted boats all the time – boats, boats, boats – on bits of cardboard. He is my hero because he was untrained but had the passion to paint obsessively' ●









the co-founder of an extremely successful advertising agency and more recently as an illustrator working for a string of high-profile clients, including Harvey Nichols, the Chelsea Flower Show (examples on left), Mulberry, Whittard teas and Raffles of Singapore.

He also painted one of the 2009 Olympic and Paralympic Games stamps for Royal Mail, and produced a cover picture for the *Bulletin* to illustrate a preview of the 1999 Millennium Christians' Tale issue (below left). Having agreed his interpretation of the client brief, the execution must be perfect.

David reveals his visual journey through its planning and trial stages by showing me a series of 'tries' – sketches and paintings that did not make the final cut. The original Nativity stamp painting, for example, shows Mary and Joseph seen through the doorway of the stable, tending Jesus, complete with lowing cattle and tree breaking the skyline.

But it is too distant, too cramped a composition. David decided on a simplified, intimate tableau sans stable to focus more immediate, more emotional attention on the point of the story – the birth of Baby Jesus.

An early drawing of the £1.52 value features the three wise men before a palm tree. David painted the final scene without the tree to allow the Star of Bethlehem to play the central visual role.

In preliminary sketches for the £2.25 Annunciation stamp and the Second Class Journey To Bethlehem stamp, and in a painting of Mary for the Nativity design, the protagonists are writ large in full close-up. In the event, as we have seen, David's approach was to let a big sky full of portent tell the story.

David was also careful to paint different elements separately within the pictures, so they could be moved about easily if stamp issue art director and designer David Hillman or the designers at Royal Mail Stamps and Collectibles department wanted to adjust the composition. They were then scanned onto his Mac. This would save David painting an entire picture

Photographs © BPB





Above: David framed his initial idea of the soaring bird to represent the speed of badminton, next to the final stamp design
Left: a decorative hatrack suggests a man of many talents

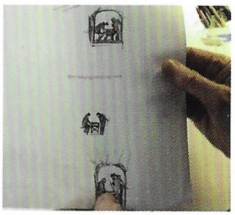
NEED FOR OLYMPIAN SPEED

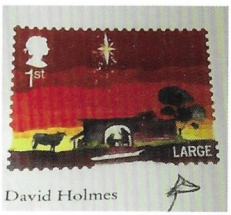
David's watercolour for the 2009 Olympic and Paralympic Games issue neatly captures the fluid play of badminton – but the final design was quite different from his original (both versions shown above), which initially introduced a 'soaring bird' shape into the background after a briefing from issue designer David Hillman.

'David Hillman said we're doing badminton and it's about speed. Do something speedy,' the artist remembers. 'Well, another name for the shuttlecock is the "bird" so I thought: I know, speed, I'll do it as a bird. In the event Royal Mail wanted a solid background and that's how it ended up.'

Yet David's final painting retains his vision of speed. There remains a deft swiftness in those shuttlecock feathers thanks to his light touch with the brush. And the addition of a dynamic diagonal court line emphasises the rapid trajectory of the shuttlecock.

You will also see David's trademark visual 'joke' – the use of a children's rainbow-hued colouring pencil on the frame of the racquet ●





Above: the development of the First Class Nativity stamp – from early sketches and dummy stamp with the figures seen at a distance in a stable, to the more intimate image of Mary and Joseph (below) in the open air



again. Hence Mary and Joseph are one entity distinct from the landscape in the nativity stamp; the wise men are separate from their sky; the Star of Bethlehem David painted individually, so it could be dropped into the sky of the First Class and £1.52 values.

On the Nativity stamp, for example, David originally placed the star on the left to balance with other elements of the painting. Royal Mail asked David if he could move it centrally over Mary and Joseph, which was easily done; now the star sits pivotally over the climax of an extraordinary story.

And, of course, the artist is aware of this story's extraordinary significance and the responsibility that goes with telling it: 'I am delighted to have been able to paint such an important subject. It's a pleasure but also a privilege' ●

Turn the page see David Holmes's paintings on Royal Mail's Christmas 2015 stamps

All set to bring you glad tidings

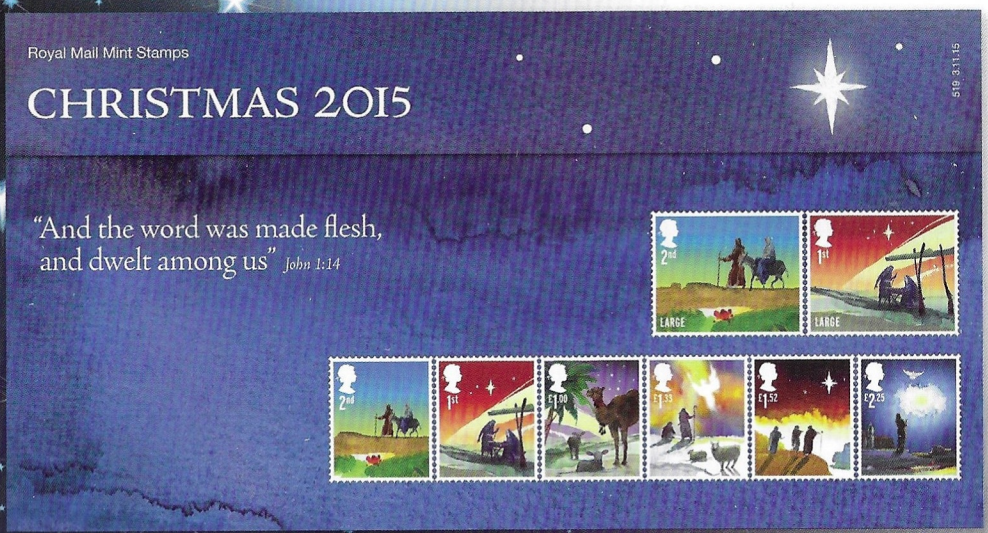


We present this beautiful collection of UK Christmas stamps with best wishes for a joyful Christmas and happy new year packed with all the pleasures of philately

• Royal Mail – Christmas 2015

Issue date: 3 November
Size: Standard 24mm x 28mm/Large 34mm x 28mm
Illustrator: David Holmes Designer: Studio David Hillman
Printer: De La Rue Mint set: £8.96

Eight stamps tell the Christmas story in six images: Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem, the Nativity, animals of the Nativity, the shepherds, the Wise Men, and the Annunciation. Orders: www.royalmail.com/christmas2015, by phone on 03457 641 641 or from 8,000 Post Offices across the UK. Full specifications are on page 41 of your October *Bulletin*. Read an interview with set artist David Holmes on page 111 of this issue.



• Alderney – Helping the children

Issue date: 6 November Size:
41mm x 36mm Designer: Two Degrees North
Printer: Southern Colour Print Mint set: £3.99

Christ's love for children is revealed in a set that is also dedicated to Alderney resident Anne French who helped youngsters around the world. The seven stamps show scenes from a stained glass window at St Anne's Church, Alderney commemorating her charity work with children. Details: www.guernseystamps.com.



• Jersey – A vivid Christmas tale

Issue date: 27 November
Size: 45mm x 26.53mm
Photography: Andy Le Gresley
Printer: Cartor Security Printing
Mint set: £5.45

The Nativity unfolds in heavenly colour with a gallery of Victorian stained glass windows by Jersey-born artist Henry Thomas Bosdet. The stamps show the Annunciation scene from eight of Bosdet's windows in parish churches on the island. Orders: visit www.jersey stamps.com or call 01534 516320.





• Guernsey – The art of worship

Issue date: 6 November Size: 47mm x 32mm
Designer: Two Degrees North
Printer: Cartor Security Printing Mint set: £3.99

The birth and life of Jesus are portrayed by Art and Crafts guru William Morris. The stamps show Morris-designed stained glass windows from Guernsey's St Stephen's Church. Scenes include the Annunciation and Adoration of the Magi. Orders: www.guernseystamps.com or 01481 716486.



• Isle of Man – Words of wonder

Issue date: 23 October Size: 32mm x 26mm
Designer: Julia Smyth-Ashby
Printer: Lowe Martin Group Mint set: £6.58

The Isle of Man celebrates the 250th anniversary of the first Manx Gaelic prayer book with stamps featuring local terms for words that reflect the spirituality of Christmas. They include 'grayse' (grace) with Mary and Jesus on the 77p stamp, 'shee' (peace) on a 93p stamp showing a dove, and 'graith' (love) and an angel on the £1.24 value. For more details about the issue visit www.iomstamps.com or call 01624 698430.









Christmas Cards Adrian Bradbury presents four Commemorative Stamp Cards that span half a century

This year's Christmas 2015 stamps are the 50th issue of Royal Mail Christmas stamps – and this was my inspiration for designing these four A4 commemorative stamp cards which feature all of the Christmas stamp designs from each year. Seeing them all together conjures up memories of Decembers past. It is interesting to recall and compare the variety of creative approaches – so many different ways of capturing the spirit of the season at stamp-size – as well as spotting the work of one's favourite designers and recalling the postmarks.

Printed on high quality card, each bears one of this year's stamps with a Bethlehem postmark. The reverses show all of the Royal Mail Christmas Presentation Packs, FDCs, Stamp Books and Miniature/Generic Sheets ●

Above: four commemorative stamp cards, available in a limited edition of 200. Each card costs £19.95, or you can buy the set of four for the price of three – £59.25. Both prices include worldwide postage and packing. Order online at www.bfdc.co.uk/cards or send a cheque payable to BFDC Ltd, 3 Link Road, Leicester LE2 3RA



This month in history

Recalling the launch of the 11d stamp in 1947 brings back childhood memories of collecting for expert John Holman

Above: George VI 11d stamp of 1947 and pair of Elizabeth II 11d with 'MM' perfin (perforated initials)

In December 1947 the Post Office issued the first of only two stamps with a face value of 11d. It represented an addition to the definitive series and was the only stamp issued that year. The stamp was made necessary by the increase in the cost of sending a parcel weighing between 3lb and 4lb from 9d to 11d on 29 December 1947, the day the stamp went on sale. The use of the stamp was reduced after this rate was further increased to 1s from 31 July 1950, but it came back into fashion when the minimum rate for parcels (up to 3lb) was increased from 10d to 11d the following July. It remained the minimum parcel rate until 7 April 1953.

The stamp was in the same design as the George VI 7d, 8d, 9d and 1s stamps issued in February and May 1939. The design was by Edmund Dulac, a well-known artist and stamp designer. Originally he had suggested an octagonal design, based on the Tasmanian stamps of 1858, but later produced essays showing The King's head set in a solid hexagonal background surmounted by the Tudor crown, with the national floral emblems in the four corners. The wording 'POSTAGE REVENUE' is positioned diagonally to the upper left and right of The King's head, balanced below by trellis work – a feature of many of Dulac's stamps. The value, in words rather than figures, was positioned below the portrait. The design was approved by George VI in July 1938.

The 11d stamp was printed in the colour plum by Harrisons in sheets of 240 from a single cylinder, number 1, existing with and without dot from the double pane printing. The *Stanley Gibbons GB Specialised Catalogue* lists two varieties – a tail to the letter N in 'REVENUE' and a spot in the letter G of 'POSTAGE', the former priced considerably more than the latter. The stamp can be found with Specimen overprint and with the thick black bars on stamps used at Post ▸

Office staff training schools. Imperforate stamps are from imprimaturs from National Postal Museum auctions.

George VI died in February 1952 and the first definitive stamps depicting Elizabeth II were issued in December of the year, followed by five further instalments until the low-value definitive series was completed in February 1954. The last batch was of new 9d, 10d and 11d stamps in the same design as the 8d issued in July1953. The design, by Mary Adshead, features the Wilding head of The Queen in a solid oval frame containing the inscription 'POSTAGE REVENUE' and the value given in figures. The national floral emblems are positioned in the four corners of the stamp and the design surrounded by what resembles printed perforation. The head is larger on Adshead's design than on the four others in the series.

The new stamp was printed in brown-purple by Harrisons in sheets of 240 using a single cylinder, number 1, with and without dot from the two panes. Initially the stamp was on paper with Tudor Crown watermark, but this changed to the St Edward's Crown in October 1955. Just one minor constant variety is recorded, but not given catalogue listing, in the *Stanley Gibbons Specialised Catalogue.* Imperf imprimaturs from National Postal Museum auctions exist, as do stamps with the PO training school black bars overprint.

The Tudor Crown watermarked stamp exists overprinted 'TANGIER' for use in the British Morocco Agencies. The St Edward's watermark stamp exists with '1857-1957/TANGIER' overprint marking the centenary of the British Post Office in Tangier. This commemorative set was issued shortly before all stamps overprinted TANGIER were withdrawn on 30 April 1957.

The issue of the Elizabeth II 11d stamp is a little surprising as by February 1954 the minimum parcel rate had increased to 1s, but the 11d stamp could still be used with a 1s stamp to pay the rate for higher rate parcels (between 7lb and 8lb and later between 4lb and 5lb) until January 1956. The 11d stamp remained on sale at post offices into the 1960s, and was included in the trial presentation packs available at stamp exhibitions in 1960. These were sold at 10s 6d in the UK and at $1.80 in the USA; they are now scarce items. The 11d (St Edward's Crown watermark) was available from the new Philatelic Bureau when it opened in May 1963. Many collectors and dealers then stocked up, so the St Edward's Crown version is of much lower catalogue value than its Tudor Crown predecessor. Supplies of the stamp had become exhausted by the time the October 1964 Bureau stock list was published.

This was not the end of the story, however, as in May 2003 the design and colour of the 11d Wilding returned, transformed into a 34p stamp in a miniature sheet marking the 50th anniversary of the Wilding series.

I still have a soft spot for the George VI and Elizabeth II 11d stamps. As a schoolboy collector I liked the colours of the 8d and 11d Wilding stamps and I can recall buying my first 11d value at a local sub post office when the rather formidable sub-postmistress informed me: 'We don't sell many of that stamp.' Many used copies, especially of the George VI 11d, will have parcel post postmarks denoting their intended use. Watch out for examples used on pieces with full parcel post datestamps and for stamps with perforated initials ('perfins') of companies and organisations •



1d Wilding with 'E' perfin, ordinary 11d stamp, and 34p value from the 2003 miniature sheet in the design and colour of the 11d Wilding

From Aunty at Sea Dane Garrod dives into the stories behind a postcard from *RMS Ivernia* with a 1960 paquebot mark

THE MOST WELL KNOWN DEFINITIVE STAMP OF THE 1950s was the twopenny-halfpenny (2½d) red, simply because it was used by millions of people to send postcards home from the seaside. Although the borders of this definitive stamp series were designed by five different artists, they all bore the same portrait from a photograph by Dorothy Wilding, so – as many collectors will know – the series became known as the Wildings and stayed in use until the advent of the Machin series in 1967.

The 1960 postcard shown here has the twopenny-halfpenny Wilding, and the picture side features a Cunard passenger liner – *RMS Ivernia*, built in 1955 by John Brown & Company in Clydebank, Scotland for the Cunard Line's trans-atlantic passenger service between the UK and Canada. The year before the card was posted, the *Ivernia* made an appearance in the Peter Sellers film *The Mouse That Roared*, in which she is attacked by bows and arrows of the Grand Fenwickian army. Two years after this 1960 posting, the ship was rebuilt and renamed *RMS Franconia*.

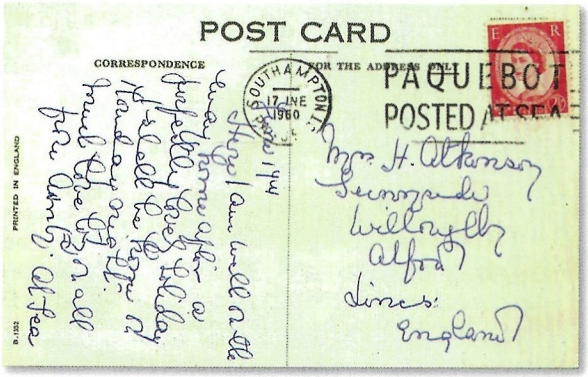
The message on the card concludes with 'From Aunty At Sea', and she would have passed it to the purser's office. When the ship docked, the accumulated mail collected on board was taken to the Southampton sorting office where the postmark PAQUEBOT/ POSTED AT SEA was applied. (The French word *paquebot* translates as 'passenger ship'.) The date on which 'Aunty' wrote and the date of the postmark are the same – 17 June 1960 – so land was probably in sight as she penned her card at the end of her 'perfectly lovely holiday'.

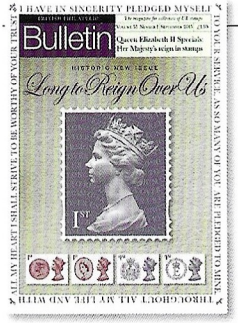
The Cunard postcard was sometimes supplemented by a folding letter card with the same image, which allowed a much longer message to be written.

Until the mid-1950s, there was a service of cancellation of mail with paquebot handstamps on Cunard liners while at sea, but by 1960 that service had ceased; when cruiseliners docked, all mail went to the nearest sorting office for cancellation and onward transmission •

Please email your questions or comments to info@CoverDetective.london







Acknowledged

I am disappointed that the October *Bulletin* contains no mention of the incorrect values shown on the Long to Reign Over Us miniature sheet on the September front page. This may not have been avoidable, but surely you should set the record straight.

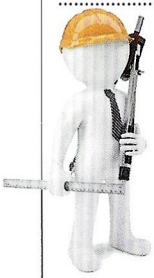
I noticed that the image of the September cover that is used on page 63 has the correct stamps on it. Revisionist history at work?

Larry Rosenblum, California

Always good to hear from you, Mr Rosenblum; we appreciate your disappointment and indeed share it. £1.52 is the value of the stamps showing the Badge of the House of Windsor and The Queen's personal flag on the Long to Reign Over Us Miniature Sheet. We were supplied with and used erroneous artwork showing values of £1.33. (The correct values were shown on page 13.)

And yes, with so much spoken about this error in UK collecting circles, we jumped at the chance to show a corrected version of the said front page in November, alongside the first letter we received about the September edition – a compliment on its design, most unexpected in the circumstances.

There will also be a note about this matter with the *Bulletin* Reader's Favourite Stamp Poll, coming to you with next month's *Bulletin*. KS



Mr Aitken rules ok

Last month Steve Wedgbury asked us to name the largest stamp ever issued in Britain. The Tallents House team agreed on the Britannia £10, while John Holman wondered whether the 1882 Orange may be a little larger.

To settle the matter, here we have the exact measurements and other facts about these two contenders, thanks to Stuart Aitken, Archivist (Philately) at the British Postal Museum & Archive...



The 1993 £10 Britannia stamp measures 60mm x 41mm. At the time of its issue – 2 March 1993 – it was the highest face value postage stamp to date, a result of the increasing rates required for overseas parcels. The stamp was the size of two £5 stamps at the time.



The 1882 £5 Orange measures 57mm x 34mm. This measurement was taken from an imperforate stamp, so the dimensions could be slightly off the exact size, but only by approximately 1mm.

The £5 Orange was issued on 21 March 1882 and was originally introduced in 1877 as a Telegraphs stamp, to pay for bulk telegraphs or those of individual high cost. All Telegraph stamps were withdrawn in October 1881 and were adapted for postage use the following year. The printing plate was changed by replacing the word TELEGRAPHS with POSTAGE ●

● Good news for *Bulletin* subscribers... Royal Mail has announced that the price increase is postponed until January 'to align with changes in systems being put in place at Tallents House'.

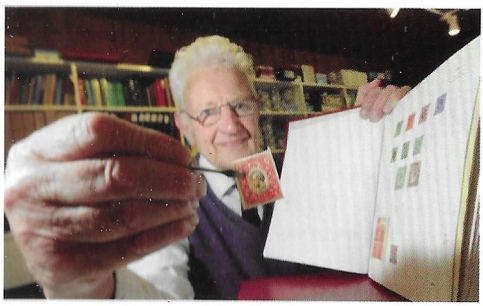
1971–2015 BULLETINS
Ian Fletcher of Newcastle upon Tyne kindly offers to pass on a run of Bulletins going back to 1971. Interested? Email ianfletcher2@googlemail.com

New Norfolk stamp shop

I thought your readers might be interested to know that volunteers working for the National Trust have opened a stamp shop at Blickling Hall at Aylsham in Norfolk – a first for the Trust. It has so far raised over £40,000 for renovation work to the walled gardens at the house.

The shop relies entirely on sales of donated stamps, albums, catalogues and so on, and we have some 500,000 stamps to browse through, with prices ranging from 2p to several hundred pounds. Visitors to the Trust property have free access to the shop, which is open from 11am to 3pm, Monday to Sunday, all year round.

Mike Carter, Blickling Hall Shop Manager



Above: collector David Musson with some of the stamps that are being sold to help to raise funds for renovation work at Blickling Hall at Aylsham in Norfolk

Photographs: Antony Kelly, National Trust

Keep the letters coming...

The Editor welcomes your letters and the senders of those published will receive the Shackleton and the Endurance Expedition Presentation Pack as a token of our thanks. Send your letters to: The Editor, *British Philatelic Bulletin*, Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB. You can also email: bulletin.enquiries@royalmail.com.

Astronomical figures

For the Endangered Species stamps of January 1998 the *British Philatelic Bulletin* announced that 'Six stamps were required to do justice to this theme; thereafter issues will revert to the usual four- or five-stamp sets'. Few philatelists back then could have imagined that by 2015 Royal Mail would consider 18 stamps, including the Miniature Sheet stamps, necessary to do justice to the *Star Wars* theme!

Paul Mudge, Staffordshire

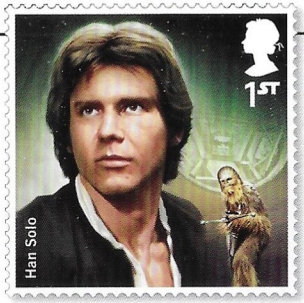




We take your point, Mr Mudge. Yet who in 1977 would have imagined that the first *Star Wars* film would have generated enough worldwide interest to be celebrated in such large measure by Royal Mail almost 40 years on? And as we note on page 100, the British contribution to the *Star Wars* series has been huge – a fact well worth celebrating. Most years, of course, there are more stamps featuring nature than the film industry. KS























Great British film quiz

Settle down to a filmic journey through world-favourite British movies on stamps, answer a few simple questions and you could with a whopping prize from the *Bulletin* Santa…

1 David Niven's charm oozes from a 1985 British Film Year stamp. What was the title of Niven's first volume of autobiography?
a) The Moon's a Balloon
b) The Loon's a Tycoon
c) The Tune's a Lampoon

2 In 1963 Alfred Hitchcock, posing here on a stamp in the 1985 British Film Year set, directed a film in which a group of animals turn deadly. What were they?
a) Hamsters
b) Birds
c) Kittens

3 Loveable rogue Han Solo is the wisecracking action man in *Star Wars*. How does he make his living?
a) Smuggling
b) Betting on the gee-gees
c) As a benefit fraudster

4 Mighty midget Yoda helped Luke develop his Jedi skills at their first meeting. Where was it?
a) Darlington
b) Dagenham
c) Dagobah

5 A 2014 Remarkable Lives stamp shows Kenneth More starring in a movie named after his character's car. What was it called?
a) Genevieve
b) Janet
c) Sandra

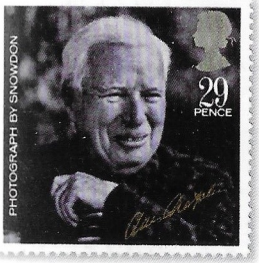
6 What deadly weapon is Dumbledore holding in the stamp from the 2011 Magic Realms set?
a) Elder wand
b) Better wand
c) Wiser wand

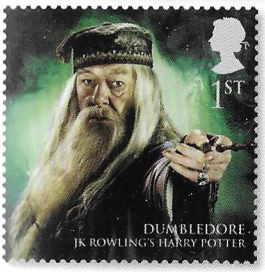
7 Charlie Chaplin poked fun at a moustachioed maniac in one of his best films. Who was it?
a) Adolf Hitler
b) Joseph Stalin
c) Clark Gable

8 Legendary movie comic Norman Wisdom, grinning on his 2014 Comedy Greats stamp shown above, starred in the film *The Early Bird* in 1965. What role did Wisdom play?
a) A bouncer
b) A lion tamer
c) A milkman

9 *Chariots of Fire* features in 2014's Great British Film issue. Where did the training run opening scene take place?
a) In a nightclub
b) On a beach
c) At Tesco







10 Who is the actor in our 100 Years of Going to the Pictures stamp?
a) Laurence Olivier
b) Laurence Harvey
c) Jennifer Lawrence

11 The Mini Sheet of the 2014 Great British Film issue paid tribute to the seminal work of:
a) The BFI Film Unit
b) The BGG Film Unit
c) The GPO Film Unit

12 How many times has Vivien Leigh appeared on Royal Mail Special Stamps?
a) Two
b) 38
c) Three ●

ALL THIS TO THE LUCKY VICTOR...

The sender of the first correct entry drawn from the postbag after the closing date wins all the prizes shown here and listed on page 126. Nine lucky runners-up will receive *Star Wars* Royal Mail Presentation Pack Stamp Albums.



HOW TO ENTER Send your answers, with your contact details, marked 'Bulletin December Movie Quiz', to Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB or email rmbulletin@rocketmail.com.
CLOSING DATE 16 January 2016.
PLEASE TURN OVER for full prize description, competition rules and regulations and your cryptic crossword.

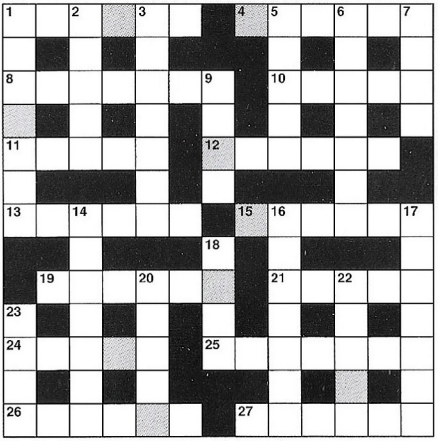
Crossword Crack the cryptic clues and you could win a Royal Mail album for First Day Covers and Presentation Packs

CLUES ACROSS

1 Rotter has nasty urge (3,3)
4 Some broad avenue up in America (6)
8 Hogs' ire combined is monstrous (7)
10 Devious males in witch hunt town (5)
11 Jeers at headless artists' garments (5)
12 Country boy almost entering small lake (6)
13 Tease small hole in steak (3-3)
15 Deny North East access to the garden (6)
19 Play about gifted eccentric (6)
21 Listen to trumpet at first, then organ (5)
24 Capital city's Kyoto? That's wrong (5)
25 Reason to ease cub out (7)
26 Former European politician takes time to be excused (6)
27 Assert that a shelf is sound (6)

CLUES DOWN

1 Rose, perhaps, makes a silly mistake (7)
2 Cord I knotted in Greek style (5)
3 Forbidding sulphur alongside port (7)
5 Supporter of artistic work? (5)
6 Is missing from a legendary city, and a state capital (7)
7 Start ascent, climb Mount Everest summit (4)
9 Wealthy people grabbing excessive publicity (4)
14 Hod carrier is a good sort, I note (7)
16 I enter ruined chalet, being moral (7)
17 In context, remembered as severe (7)
18 What's left when objections are raised? (4)
20 Team to be promoted around end of year (5)
22 Divert a source of inspiration (5)
23 Bit of a nasty eye infection! (4)



HOW TO ENTER Complete the puzzle, then rearrange the letters in the grey squares to form the name of an upright lady, a mail star born in 1680. Send your answer and contact details to 'Bulletin December Crossword', Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB or email rmbulletin@rocketmail.com.
CLOSING DATE 16 January 2016.

Your Cryptic Crossword is sponsored by Mark Bloxham Stamps Ltd

WIN GREAT PRIZES

- The sender of the first correct crossword solution, drawn at random after the closing date, wins a Royal Mail album for Presentation Packs and First Day Covers, and the Shackleton and the Endurance Expedition Presentation Pack. Four runners-up receive Shackleton and the Endurance Expedition Special Stamps.
- The sender of the first correct entry in the Great British film quiz (see previous page), drawn at random after the closing date, wins the bumper Christmas prize of three framed sets of *Star Wars* stamps – Character Stamps, Generic Sheet and Mini Sheet Vehicles Stamps, *Star Wars* Prestige Stamp Book, UV torch, Kylo Ren Deluxe Lightsaber, the Royal Mail 2015 Yearbook, *British Philatelic Bulletin* box file, and a cuddly Love Bear. Ten runners-up win Star Wars Presentation Packs.

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.

September Brain Reign solutions and winners

Name That Stamp solution Long to Reign Over Us, 2015; Coronation issue, 1953. *Winner* L Bowry. *Runners-up* B Messer, G Mapp, J Miller, D Nash. *Crossword solution* House of Windsor. *Winner* H Richardson. *Runners-up* A Tooze, R Cronin, G Coates, R High. *Across* 1 Adonis. 4 Enigma. 8 Hacksaw. 10 Tutor. 11 Rural. 12 Modest. 13 Suture. 15 Impala. 19 Calico. 21 Lunge. 24 Adieu. 25 Attempt. 26 Eaglet. 27 Gander.
Down 1 Adheres. 2 Oscar. 3 Insular. 5 Noted. 6 Go to sea. 7 Airy. 9 Wimp. 14 Teasing. 16 Militia. 17 Abettor. 18 Sofa. 20 Inure. 22 Nomad. 23 Cane.

Royal Air Force Signed Covers.

Here at Mark Bloxham Stamps Ltd, we have large stocks for sale on our website: www.philatelic.co.uk/product-tag/collection-id-138847

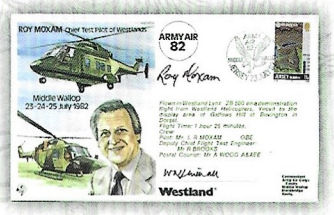
Here are a few examples:



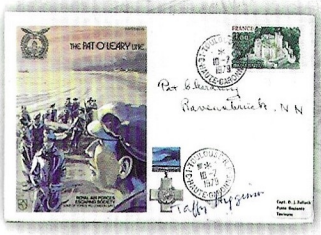
M106594



M106607



M106766



M159188



M106925



M159265

M106594	AC6aA Jersey First Successful Ascent of Manaslu North East Napal Signed Cover	£6.95
M106607	RFDC76 49th Ann of the Battle of Britain Signed by B.J. Randle & P. Spellward	£4.95
M106766	TP24c Roy Moxam Chief Test Pilot of Westland Signed Roy Moxam	£4.00
M159188	ES22c Pat O Leary Cover Signed by P. Chermany & T Higginson	£19.95
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M159265	HA8c Lord Dowding of Bentley Priory Signed by Muriel Dowding & Pilot	£8.95

Contact us for more details of these and others.

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Royal Mail Special Stamp Programme 2016

7 January	Shackleton and the Endurance Expedition
17 February	Royal Mail 500
15 March	British Humanitarians
5 April	Shakespeare
21 April	HM The Queen's 90th Birthday
17 May	Animail
21 June	First World War – 1916
7 July	Music Giants
28 July	Beatrix Potter
16 August	Landscape Gardens
2 September	The Great Fire of London
15 September	Agatha Christie
20 October	To be announced
8 November	Christmas 2016

Post & Go Stamps

17 February	Royal Mail Heritage
14 September	Ladybirds
14 November	Hibernating animals



Issues and withdrawals

8 December — **Withdrawal** Long to Reign Over Us: Stamp Sheet Souvenir (2 x 1st Class, 2 x £1.52 Special Stamps, 1 x 1st Class definitive).
Details: September *Bulletin* page 20.

17 December — **Issue** *Star Wars*™: Prestige Stamp Book (4 stamp panes, 26 pages).
Details: page 100.

17 December — **Withdrawal** Rugby World Cup 2015 Stamp Souvenir.
Details: August *Bulletin* page 359.

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



Withdrawal Alice in Wonderland: Stamps (2 x 1st Class, 2 x 2nd Class, 2 x 81p, 2 x £1.28, 2 x £1.47), Stamp Book (4 x 1st Class, 2 x Special Stamps), Presentation Pack, Stamp Cards (10 in set).
Details: December 2014 *Bulletin* page 20.

7 January — **Issue** Shackleton and the Endurance Expedition: Stamps (2 x 1st Class, 2 x £1, 2 x £1.33, 2 x £1.52, se-tenant pairs), Presentation Pack, Stamp Cards (8 in set). Preview: page 102.

7 January — **Issue** Annual Collection: Smilers® Continuation Pages and Standard Album Continuation Pages.

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 **15CDK**, 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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