

BRITISH PHILATELIC

The Royal Mail magazine for stamp collectors

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Bulletin

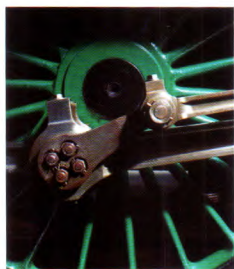
New Post & Go issue • FAB
in detail • Mastering the web



The Classic Locomotives of
England issue continues a series
celebrating our much-loved trains

PLUS THE STANLEY GIBBONS STORY, DEFINITIVES NEWS AND PRIZE FDCS

Issues and withdrawals



Cover: steam locomotive at the York Railway Museum by Paul Berriff (www.paulberriff.com)

Royal Mail Talents House
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6 January

Withdrawal Classic Album Covers: stamps, Souvenir Sheet, Presentation Pack, Stamp Cards, Prestige Stamp Book

11 January

Issue FAB The Genius of Gerry Anderson: stamps, Miniature Sheet, Presentation Pack, Stamp Cards, Stamp Book including two *Thunderbirds* stamps, Medal Cover

24 January

Issue Post & Go Stamps: Birds of Britain 2

25 January

Withdrawal Smilers® Business and Consumer Stamps 2010: Miniature Sheet, Presentation Pack, Stamp Cards and Generic Sheet. Stamp Books 6 x 1st, 12 x 1st issued 31 March 2009

1 February

Issue Classic Locomotives of England: Miniature Sheet, Presentation Pack, Stamp Cards, Loco name badge; Railway Heritage Portfolio No 2

1 February

Withdrawal Girlguiding UK stamps: Miniature Sheet, Presentation Pack, Stamp Cards

12 February

Issue Indipex Smilers Exhibition Sheet

24 February

Issue Musicals: Stamps Presentation Pack and Stamp Cards. British Heart Foundation Stamp Book, including 2 x Medical Breakthroughs stamps

24 February

Withdrawal The Royal Society stamps, Presentation Pack, Stamp Cards, Prestige Stamp Book

28 February

Withdrawal Castles of the UK Generic Sheets including England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

Contents



A FAB New Year with Gerry Anderson Stand by for a spectacular stamp launch on 11 January, as 2011's first special issue pays tribute to the creator of *Thunderbirds* **138**

Issues and withdrawals

Ring in the new issues and grab golden oldies coming off sale **130**

Readers' letters

Airing and sharing your views **132**

Royal Mail news

Latest details of special issues, including handstamps chosen for FAB: Gerry Anderson, plus 2011 special stamp programme **134**

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Stamp Scene

Notable events for your diary from the wider world of philately **140**

Machins ahead

A definitive view of the coming year **144**

Rail's glory days

An important arrival for railway philatelists: the Classic English Locomotives special stamp issue is due on 1 February **145**



Thematics:

prestigious pigeons

A family history of the Collared dove, featured in this month's new Post & Go issue **148**

In search of Stanley

The life and loves of a world-famous founding father of philately, Stanley Gibbons **152**

Online

Philately on the net: a back-to-basics collector's guide to the wonders of the web **156**

Commemoratives

A selection of special-interest covers **158**

New Year teasers

Puzzle prizes of First Day Covers and other fine philatelic goodies to be won **159**

Postbag The Editor answers your letters



New year, new blood?

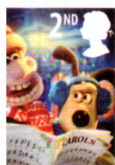
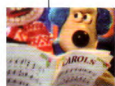
Looking back over the exhibitions I visited in 2010, there's one image that stands out in my mind: at the Portugal 2010 World Philatelic Exhibition in Lisbon I saw a group of teenagers sprinting through the FIL Exhibition Centre in their eagerness to see the competition exhibits. Though certainly 'streetwise' in appearance, the youngsters were not disorderly, but simply bursting with an enthusiasm for philately that I have never before seen demonstrated in the rather library-like atmosphere in most international exhibitions. Also in Lisbon I noticed that the Exhibition was a popular day out for families. It was held on a public holiday and the long queue that had formed before the doors opened was made up mostly of parents and their children. Once inside they made a beeline for the stand selling special labels at 1 each to mark the occasion – apparently these are traditional must-have souvenirs in other countries too. Are there any Portuguese *Bulletin* readers who can pass on some tips on inspiring young people, to those of us who are concerned for the future of philately in the UK?

James Cooper, Blackburn

Seeking the cylinder

Bulletin articles about new stamp books no longer carry reference to their cylinder numbers, notably for those containing non-definitive stamps or 'mixed' stamps. I was led to believe that non-definitive books were no longer to carry cylinder numbers, but I see they are included on the Christmas book. I appreciate that some information may not be available to meet your print deadlines, but a later note would help.

Philip Ramsden, Coventry



Dear Mr Ramsden,
Not all books carry cylinder numbers because these numbers appear at intervals on the large sheets at print stage, so when the sheets are guillotined the numbers will appear on some books – like the one on the left – and not others. It all depends on where the book is cut from the sheet.

Matrix demystified

In the November issue of *Bulletin* we published two images of the 2009 1st Class Christmas stamps, sent in by Adrian Bradbury of Leicester. One of the sheets showed the matrix stripped, the other showed the matrix intact. Mr Bradbury asked if readers had any idea whether this was a regular occurrence or something of a rarity.

We received no responses from readers, so are obliged to point out that the only difference between the sheets is how they were issued. The stamps on both are identical. Stamps on sale to the public are Matrix Stripped, ie with the self-adhesive white paper around the stamps – known as the matrix – removed before sale. This serves simply to help customers detach the stamps from the backing paper.

Matrix Intact stamps are those that have the self-adhesive white paper around the stamps left on the sheets, which helps if they are to be guillotined into smaller strips before they are distributed.

Letting off steam

Bulletin has come of age with the note of criticism of Royal Mail issuing policy being allowed to enter its pages. While recognising the publication serves partly as a publicity vehicle, I am sure that most readers would respond to Mr Montford's letter (Vol 48, page 37) with 'and so say all of us!' The current issuing policy is enough to deter anyone from serious collecting and has become ruinously expensive if one started collecting in a more prudent age of issue. Some things I would like to see reintroduced are low-value booklets with se-tenant panes and booklets with large commemorative labels, all in gummed form – collectors abhor self-adhesive horrors.
JR Went, Harpenden, Herts

Dear Mr Went,
Your most welcome letter gives us an opportunity to remind readers that Royal Mail now offers a range of selective subscriptions tailored to different interests and budgets. To find out more about a package that might suit you, call the customer care line on 08457 641 641. We're sorry that you 'abhor' self-adhesive stamps but find it hard to understand why. Perhaps fellow 'abhorers' would write to explain the appeal of gum over the convenience of self-adhesion – or vice versa?

Withdrawn but not forgotten

Could you please explain what is meant by the term 'withdrawn' in regard to stamps listed every month in the *Bulletin*? Does this mean that these stamps can no longer be used to post a letter? I often buy large quantities of stamps whose design I like and use them over time, beyond the withdrawal date. Is this a practice I should stop?
Phillip T Beeton, Colchester, Essex

Dear Mr Beeton,
'Withdrawn' simply means that the stamps are taken off sale, ie any remaining stock at Post Office counters is recalled. However, the value stays with the stamp once it is bought, so withdrawn Royal Mail stamps can be used indefinitely and hold their value in UK currency. For example, a 66p stamp will always be worth only 66p and inflation is not taken into account. A 1st Class stamp is always a 1st Class stamp and, once purchased, can be used whatever the price of a first-class stamp at the time of posting. The stamps shown below are some of the many withdrawn issues we have recently enjoyed receiving on readers' mail.



Keep the mail coming...

Karin Ward, Editor of the *Bulletin*, welcomes your letters and has a topical selection of philatelic delights to give as a thank-you to the senders of those published. The sender of the First Class letter will receive the *Bulletin* binder and Penny Black tie shown left. Please note, however, that Royal Mail cannot reply to all letters and reserves the right to edit for length. Please include an email address if possible. Send your letters to: The Editor, *British Philatelic Bulletin*, 35-50 Rathbone Place, London WC1 1HQ.



What's new? Codes, special issues and news

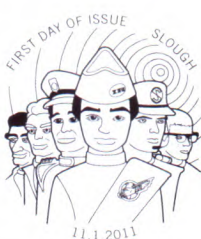
New year, new Machin Machin collectors can look forward to the first issue of 2011 on 11 January, issued in a new retail booklet containing four first-class gold security Machin definitives and two first-class *Thunderbirds* stamps from The Genius of Gerry Anderson issue (see below). Printed on self-adhesive paper by Walsall Security Printers in gravure, the definitives will carry the new security code of C and MA11 •



Special issues There are two issues of stamps this month. Firstly, FAB: The Genius of Gerry Anderson stamps, which are released on 11 January and previewed on page 138. As well as the six stamps, the issue comprises a Miniature Sheet, Retail Stamp booklet, Presentation Pack, First Day Cover, Miniature Sheet First Day Cover and set of 11 Stamp Cards.

As an alternative to the Tallents House, Edinburgh postmark, pictorial and non-pictorial (plain design) SLOUGH postmarks will also be available for this issue, chosen because Slough was the location of the studio where many of the Gerry Anderson shows were filmed. All first-day-of-issue postmarking offices will be supplied with the alternative pictorial first-day-of-issue postmark. This will mean that all First Day Covers posted at the Post Office® counter will be cancelled with the same pictorial postmark regardless of where they are posted.

FAB: The Genius of Gerry Anderson postmarks. First day of issue – Tallents House, Edinburgh Ref No FD 11 01. Alternative postmarks, Slough Ref No. FD 11 02, SLOUGH Pictorial Ref No FD 11 02, SLOUGH Non-Pictorial Ref No FD 11 02NP



Birds of Britain 2 The second stamp issue of this month will be the Post & Go Birds of Britain 2, issued on 24 January to coincide with the RSPB's Big Garden Bird Watch. Following on from the first set of Post & Go Birds of Britain, which was launched at autumn Stampex last year, this is the first of three sets to be issued this year. It features six different birds: the blackbird, chaffinch, collared dove, greenfinch, magpie and long-tailed tit. Each of the Post & Go stamps will be overprinted with one of five value indicators: 1st Class, 1st Class Large up to 100g, Europe up to 20g, Worldwide up to 10g and 20g. The Birds of Britain 2 issue is also available as single stamps or in strips of up to five, of the same value, or of different values.

Selected letter tariff and code numbering are printed on demand by the Post & Go machines in the 30 Crown Post Offices® in Belfast, Birmingham, Bristol, Cambridge, Cardiff, Colchester, Croydon, Durham, Edinburgh, Exeter, Glasgow, Grimsby, Harrogate, Liverpool, London, Luton, Milton Keynes, Norwich, Nottingham, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Southend-on-Sea, Stevenage, Truro, Walsall and York. Unstamped Royal Mail FDC Envelopes (price 30p) are available in the week before the stamps go on sale.

A mint set of Birds of Britain 2 Post & Go stamp labels will also be available from Tallents House in a card carrier that includes details about each bird, and illustrations of their eggs. All values in the Pack are 1st Class and carry the branch code of 002011, and are printed gravure. As Bristol was the location of the first Post & Go machine trial, BRISTOL postmarks will be available for this issue, as an alternative to the Tallents House, Edinburgh postmark, pictorial and non-pictorial (plain design) • ►



First day of issue: Tallents House, Edinburgh Ref No FD 11 03. Alternative postmarks, Bristol Ref No FD 11 04. Alternative postmarks, BRISTOL Pictorial Ref No FD 11 04. BRISTOL Non-Pictorial Ref No FD 11 04NP

1st Class
up to 100g

002011 1 51840 02



1st Class
up to 100g

002011 1 51840 02



1st Class
up to 100g

002011 1 51840 02



1st Class
up to 100g

002011 1 51840 02



1st Class
up to 100g

002011 1 51840 02



1st Class
up to 100g

002011 1 51840 02

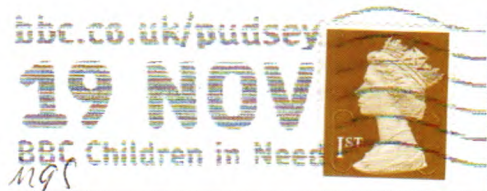




New exhibition sheet Next month Royal Mail is to issue an exhibition sheet shown above, in celebration of Indipex, the international stamp exhibition taking place in New Delhi's Pragati Maidan Exhibition Complex from 12 to 18 February 2011 inclusive.

The A4 sheet, which will be issued on the first day of the show, includes 20 Union Jacks on self-adhesive stamps beside labels featuring images of old and new Delhi as well as a reproduction of the Mahatma Gandhi Centenary stamp issued on 13 August 1969. The Gandhi stamp was the first to be issued by the British Post Office to commemorate an overseas leader and was requested by Lord Mountbatten, the last Viceroy of India. It was designed by Biman Mullick, an Indian-born graphic designer and illustrator. The sheet will be perforated down the centre and priced £8.50. For more information about Indipex visit www.indipex2011.com •

The collectable Pudsey postmark, below



Pudsey postmark As employees got up to some strange yet enjoyable antics in support of BBC Children in Need in November (and raised more than £450,000), Royal Mail produced the slogan postmark left, which was applied by inkjet machines on 19 November 2010. A number of celebrity signatures on covers also exchanged hands between philanthropic philatelists on eBay in support of the fundraising day, which raised more than £18 million in total •

Impact of VAT on postage Change to VAT charges will affect postal service prices from 31 January. While most regular UK letter and card rates remain unchanged, delivery of many online purchases will be affected because domestic Parcelforce, International Airsure, Special Delivery by 9am, and Royal Mail Tracked services become subject to VAT at 20 per cent. Services which will not attract VAT include first and second class postage (including stamped, franked and PPI services), Special Delivery, Standard Parcels, Recorded Signed for, and International Airmail •

Farewells Coming off sale on 2 February are the Girlguiding UK Miniature Sheet (MZ063, £2.44), Presentation Pack (AP325, £3.20) and three Stamp Cards (AQ146, £2*). The Coin Cover (AN063 £15.45*) is to be withdrawn on 2 March. On 24 February 2011

The Royal Society issue is to be withdrawn, with the exception of the Medal Cover (AM030, £14.95*), which comes off sale on 24 March 2011. The Royal Society stamp issue comprises Stamp Set (AS561, £4.10), Presentation Pack, shown above, (AP326, £4.60*), Stamp Cards (AQ147, £4*) and Prestige Stamp Book (YB041 £7.96). *Please note: some prices may be subject to change due to the VAT increase •



The year ahead A new Classic Locomotives of England stamp set is issued on 1 February (see preview on page 149) and next month also sees the delayed issue of the Musicals series on 24 February 2011 – more details in your next *Bulletin*. March is a good month for special issues, too; we hope the whole year ahead has something for all clubs and collectors to enjoy. Do remember that collectors can now choose our selective customer theme option •

2011 Special Stamp Programme (dates after February are unconfirmed)

- 1 January FAB: The Genius of Gerry Anderson – Stamps and Miniature Sheet
- 24 January Birds of Britain 2 – Post & Go
- 1 February Classic Locomotives of England Stamps and Miniature Sheet
- 24 February Musicals – Mint Stamps
- 8 March Magical Realms – Stamps
- 22 March WWF – Stamps, Miniature Sheet and PSB
- 12 April The Royal Shakespeare Company – Stamps and Miniature Sheet
- 5 May Morris & Co – Stamps and PSB
- 19 May Birds of Britain 3 – Post & Go
- 14 June Thomas the Tank Engine – Stamps and Miniature Sheet
- 27 July Olympic and Paralympic Games – Stamps
- 23 August The Crown Jewels – Stamps
- 9 September Centenary of Aerial Post – Miniature Sheet and PSB
- 15 September The House of Hanover (Kings and Queens 5) Stamps + Miniature Sheet
- 16 September Birds of Britain 4 – Post & Go
- 13 October A to Z of Britain (1) – Stamps
- 8 November Christmas 2011 Stamps and Miniature Sheet

Exhibitions

Two of the exhibitions specially prepared for the Festival of Stamps are still on show.

The 'Treasures of the Archives'

Exhibition at the British Postal Museum & Archive, London WC1 remains until April 2011 and includes the unique proof sheet and printing die of the Penny Black. Other exhibits include the flintlock pistol used to protect the mail coaches from highwaymen, and original investigation files from the Great Train Robbery of 1963. For more details phone 020 7239 2570.

The Bath Postal Museum's display on

George V stamps and postal history is on show until 8 January 2011. This includes material from the Coronation Aerial Post flights of September 1911, the centenary of which will be celebrated later this year. An article on the exhibition was included in the April 2010 *Bulletin* (page 248). Enquiries 01225 460333.

FABulous stamps Celebrating the genius of



Each week nine-year-old Joe would download special skills from the Big Rat computer to carry out secret missions



Spectrum agent Captain Scarlet and his colleagues saved the world in 32 episodes broadcast from 1967 to 1968



From their island hideaway, International Rescue co-ordinated amazing rescue missions with their fantastic machines

It's HARD TO IMAGINE THAT the 50th anniversary of *Supercar* and the development of Supermarionation is upon us. It seems like only yesterday that Gerry Anderson's distinctive puppets were entertaining us every Saturday. It all started in 1961 when a new children's programme burst onto British TV screens. Commissioned by cigar-chomping TV mogul

Low Grade, the *Supercar* series pioneered a combination of sophisticated puppetry and state-of-the-art special effects produced with the full range of filming techniques normally used in live-action features. The process was known as Supermarionation and featured fibre-glass puppets controlled by fine wires instead of strings, and with moving eyes and the ability to lip-synch dialogue. Combined with a fast-moving sci-fi plot and a number of uniquely futuristic super-vehicles, the show become an instant success and launched Gerry Anderson's career.

Family favourites Anderson went on to produce for television 39 episodes of *Supercar*, 39 each of *Stingray* and *Fireball XL5*, 32 episodes and two feature films of *Thunderbirds*, 30 episodes of *Joe 90*, and 32 episodes and two films of *Captain Scarlet*, over the next decade, garnering a loyal cult following.

Triggering happy memories alongside the stamps are a fully illustrated Presentation Pack (£7.50) containing the six Gerry Anderson stamps and the Miniature Sheet on a separately

FAB: The Genius of Gerry Anderson stamps.

Technical details

Number of stamps	Six
Design	GBH
Acknowledgements	Licensed Rights as follows: Joe 90™ & © ITC Entertainment Group Ltd 1969 & 2011; Captain Scarlet™ & © ITC Entertainment Group Ltd 1967, 2001 and 2011; Thunderbirds™ & © ITC Entertainment Group Ltd 1964, 1999 & 2011; Stingray © ITC Entertainment Group Ltd 1964, 2002 & 2011; Fireball XL5™ & © ITC Entertainment Group Ltd 1961, 2002 & 2011; Supercar © ITC Entertainment Group Ltd 1959, 2002 & 2011. All licensed by Granada Ventures Limited. All rights reserved.
Stamp format	Landscape
Stamp size	41mm x 30mm
Printer	Cartor Security Printing
Print process	Lithography
Perforations	14.5 x 14
Phosphor	All over
Gum	PVA

Supermarionation pioneer Gerry Anderson



Supercar featured the inventor Mike Mercury and his amazing vehicle, first broadcast between 1961 and 1962



Troy Tempest and Phones of the World Aquanaut Security Patrol dealt with various threats from beneath the ocean



Together with his robot sidekick Robert, Colonel Steve Zodiac kept the Earth safe from interplanetary threats

designed carrier. Anderson expert Chris Bentley talks to Gerry Anderson about how the shows were devised. And the Sheet's Carrier Card explains how the microlenticular technology works in the words of *Thunderbird's* boffin Brains.

The Pack also contains a four-page folded 'comic' in the style of the 60s publication, *TV Century 21*. The insert was illustrated by Gerry Embleton, one of the original *TV Century 21* illustrators, and written by Stephen la Riviere, and tells the story of how *Thunderbirds* came about.

Also available are a First Day Envelope (30p), First Day Cover (£5.46 in the UK), Retail Stamp Book (£2.46) which features two 1st Class *Thunderbirds* stamps together with four gold Machins – an 11-card postcard set (£4.95), and a limited-edition *Thunderbirds* medal cover (£14.95). Pictorial and non-pictorial SLOUGH postmarks commemorate the location of the studios in which many of the TV shows were made (see page 134).

The minisheet The 1st Class stamp on this specially printed sheet shows Thunderbird 4, Gordon Tracy's submarine, which was often transported in one of Thunderbird 2's pods. The 60p stamp shows Thunderbird 3, which was piloted by Alan Tracy. The 88p stamp features Thunderbird 2, Virgil Tracy's big bird. And the 97p stamp shows Thunderbird 1, Scott Tracy's machine, which was always first on the scene of a rescue ●

The miniature sheet (£2.86) is printed using microlenticular technology so that when tilted the stamps show each vehicle's launch sequence



FAB minisheet technical details

Number of stamps	Four
Size of sheet	115mm x 89mm
Design	GBH
Stamp format	Landscape
Stamp size	41mm x 30mm
Printer	Cartor Security Printing, Meaucé, France and Outer Aspect Ltd, Auckland, New Zealand
Print process	Microlenticular
Perforations	14.5 x 14
Phosphor	Border
Gum	PVA

New Year's Stamp Scene from John Holman



York Racecourse Stamp & Coin Fair is on 21 and 22 January – not far from York Minster, one of the world's largest Gothic cathedrals, celebrated on the 5d stamp from the British Architecture issue of May 1969.



2011 Main events There are some exciting events already scheduled for 2011. Spring Stampex will be held, as usual, at the Business Design Centre, London N1, from Wednesday 23 to Saturday 26 February and will include a display by the Postal History Society to mark its 75th anniversary. As always there will be a Royal Mail stand offering the full range of current issues and products. A posting box will be provided for collectors to post covers in order to receive the special Stampex handstamps. These can also be obtained by sending covers to the Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Mount Pleasant, London EC1A 1BB. Details of the Stampex handstamps will be published in Royal Mail's *British Postmark Bulletin*.

Philatex, the popular stamp fair, takes place at the Royal Horticultural Halls (Lawrence Hall), London SW1 (a short walk from Victoria Station) on Thursday 24 to Saturday 26 February. More than 80 dealers will have stands. Another well-attended event is the *York Racecourse Stamp & Coin Fair* which takes place at the Racecourse in York on 21 and 22 January. Some 95 stamp dealers and 60 coin dealers will be present. The hours are 11am to 6pm on Friday 21 January and 10am to 4pm on Saturday 22 January.

The Strand Stamp Fair has been held in London since 1969, but now at the Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way, London WC1, near Russell Square Tube station. Between 20 and 30 dealers attend each month. The first fair of 2011 will be on Wednesday 5 January, the next on Wednesday 9 February.

The national exhibition, under the auspices of the Association of British Philatelic Societies (ABPS) takes place at the Pond's Forge International Sports Centre in Sheffield, on Friday 6 to Saturday 7 May and is being

sponsored by Grosvenor, Corbitts and Spink auctions. There will be major exhibits of George V stamps from the Royal Philatelic Collection, to mark the centenary of the King's coronation, and of the History of the Olympic Games by John Crowther.

Two international philatelic exhibitions are scheduled for 2011 – Indipex 2011, New Delhi, India (12 to 18 February), and Philanippon 2011, Yokohama, Japan (28 July to 2 August) •

News from the societies The National Philatelic Society, founded as the Junior Philatelic Society in 1899, is second only to the Royal Philatelic Society London in terms of national significance. For full details of NPS activities see its website, write to National Philatelic Society, c/o BPMA, Freeling House, Phoenix Place, London WC1X 0DL, or e-mail nps@ukphilately.org.uk.

To mark its centenary last year the Aberdeen Philatelic Society visited the Royal Philatelic Society London on 11 November. On show was a fine display of material from the Aberdeen Society's archives and of stamps and postal history from members' collections. These covered a wide range of interests, including Royal Travel 1901-39; Postal History of Gambia to 1869, GB £1.25 folded counter booklets 1982-84, Historic Flights, 1912 Ideal Stamp Design, Kobenhaven Bypost 1879-89, Malaria on Stamps, Canada Edward VII definitives, Scottish Halfpenny Mail Coach Tax, Finland Arms-types 1875, and Royal Balmoral. In thanking Aberdeen members for the display, Alan Moorcroft, President of the Royal Philatelic Society, said it included 'something for everyone'.

Also to mark its centenary, the Aberdeen Society has published *A History of Philately in Northeast Scotland*, by Jeffrey C Stone. (The book is available from Dr Stone at 20 Springfield Road, Aberdeen AB15 7RR, price £12 plus £1.50 postage, remittances payable to 'Aberdeen Philatelic Society'.) The Society's next meetings are on 6 January for the 'Alphabet Night: Z is for ---', and on 20 January for a presentation by Stewart Gardiner on Philatelic and Advertising History. Meetings are held at the Rubislaw Church Centre, Fountainhall Road, Queens Cross, Aberdeen, starting at 7.30pm. For details contact the Secretary, Mrs S Den, telephone 01224 317512.

The Norwich & Norfolk Philatelic Society celebrates its centenary this year. It meets at the United Reformed Church Rooms, Princess Street, Norwich, from 7pm. The next meetings are on 11 January, an Informal Sales Evening, and 25 January for Burns Night Scottish theme displays. The annual subscription is £5. See the Society's site for more information •

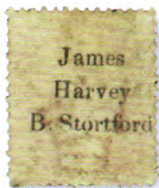
Auction round-up Grosvenor's Specialised GB Stamps and Covers auction on 11 to 12 November including many modern GB errors. A block of the 1966 Christmas 1s 6d with gold head omitted on one stamp but with the ▶



Yokohama in Japan is preparing for its international philatelic exhibition in August

A block of 1966 Christmas 1s 6d stamps with a misplaced gold head recently sold for £4,500 at auction





Above: the underprinting on a Victorian 1d lake-red, plate 173, which fetched £320 at a recent auction



Above: Jersey buses and coaches, released this month

head printed in the sheet margin due to a paper fold, made £4,500 (estimate £4,000-5,000). A unique cylinder block of four of the 1968 1s 9d Paintings stamp with gold omitted realised £2,500 (£2,500-3,000), and cylinder block of six of the 1969 5d Ships (QE2) with red inscription and phosphor omitted achieved £500 (£500-600). A traffic light block of nine of the 9d Ships stamp with blue omitted went for £5,200 (£5,000-6,000). Among older items, a nice Victorian 1d lake-red, plate 173 with 'James/Harvey/B. Stortford' underprint made £320 (£120-150). For details of future auctions contact Grosvenor on 0207 379 8799.

The Corbitts auction on 11 November including some interesting GB material. A VR Penny Black made £5,000 (estimate £5,500), and a collection of Edward VII basic stamps, as per the SG GB Concise catalogue comprising 59 stamps in unmounted mint condition, stated to be catalogued at more than £11,000 went for £3,800 (estimate £3,500). A collection of George V controls, said to be catalogued at £7,500, realised £1,300 (£1,000), and a George V 1913 £1 (SG 403) sound used with oval Registered handstamp went for £320 (£250). A sheet of 20 of the 1948 Silver Wedding £1 with minor faults reached £230 (£250), and a 2007 generic sheet with Isle of White error went for £160 (£150). A scarce 1964 Forth Road Bridge presentation pack realised £230 (£220), and a collection of packs in four albums, 1964-86 went under the hammer at £420 (£350). Corbitts holds four auctions a year – for details contact Corbitts, 5 Mosley Street, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 1YE, telephone 0191 232 7268, or email collectors@corbitts.com

Spink will hold a winter stamps auction in London on 12 to 13 January, followed by an auction of Mongolian stamp on 23 January. For details see the Spink website or phone 0207 563 4000 •

New from Jersey On 11 January Jersey issues six stamps showing island buses and coaches from the 1920s to 1960s, and on 8 March four stamps mark Women of Achievement – Dame Margot Fonteyn, Florence Nightingale, Marie Curie, and Mother Teresa.

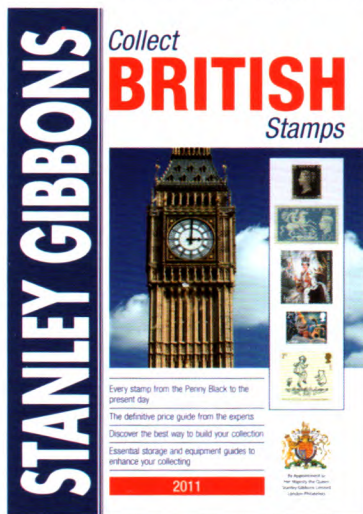
The theme of Jersey's 2011 Europa issues is 'Forests'; and Jersey Post will issue four stamps on 8 February 2011 depicting the foliage of trees found on the island. The trees featured are: silver birch, English oak, beech, and lime •

Island bound Last September we published an article to mark the 40th anniversary of the first local stamps (local carriage labels) for the Summer Isles off the north-west coast of Scotland. A further set of stamps is scheduled for May 2011 to commemorate Sir Frank Fraser Darling who lived on Tanera Mor, the largest of the Summer Isles, and wrote the books *Island Farm* and *Ireland Years*. For details of Summer Isles issues visit www.summer-isles.com or contact Summer Isles Philatelic Bureau, West Croftnuisk, Edradynate, Aberfeldy, Perthshire PH15 2JU.

The Shetland Islands have been chosen among the best ten places in the world to visit in a survey in the *Best In Travel 2011* publication. The Shetlands have featured on British stamps – on the 68p value of the 2003 British Journey: Scotland issue, and Haroldswick post office (formerly the most northerly in

the British Isles) on the 20p in the Post Offices set of 1997. Haroldswick closed in 1999, and Baltasound now has that distinction. A special Most Northerly Post Office postmark is used there, and also applied at Royal Mail's Special Handstamp Centre in Glasgow. A Shetland pony featured on one of the Horses stamps of July 1978. To mark the Viking Fire Festival, Up

Helly Aa, staged every January in Lerwick, the Shetlands' capital, a special Up Helly Aa postmark has been used each year since 1975 •



New catalogues The 2011 edition of Stanley Gibbons' ever-popular *Collect British Stamps* is now available, listing British stamps from the Penny Black in 1840 to the Wallace & Gromit Christmas stamps of 2010. Post & Go and Service Specific stamps are also included. There is a useful article on George V stamps and advice on building a collection.

More than four million copies of *Collect British Stamps* have been sold since it was first published in 1967. Price £12.95 from Stanley Gibbons Strand shop, or by mail order from Stanley Gibbons in Ringwood – phone 01425 472 363 or email orders@stanleygibbons.co.uk Supplements to all SG catalogues are published in *Gibbons Stamp Monthly* •

This month in history

John Holman recalls the postal strike of 1971

Decimal currency was introduced in the UK on 15 February 1971 (known as D Day). The Post Office spent a great deal of time and effort preparing for this, including the issue of new definitive stamps in 12 values from 1/2p to 9p. However the changeover did not go smoothly, as D Day fell during a prolonged postal strike which started on 20 January 1971. Most post offices were closed and very limited postal services were available.

Private services were allowed to operate during the strike, and hundreds of private strike stamps were issued, some now rather elusive. These varied enormously in quality of design and printing and at least one operator showed the Queen on its stamp. Catalogues have been produced of strike stamps and members of the Cinderella Stamp Club are still studying the issues and reporting new findings in the Club's journal. In my view the stamps are best collected used on genuinely carried covers. The strike ended on 8 March 1971.



Top stamp tweets

A round-up of the best philatelic tweets of recent months:

- The BPMA

@postalheritage

Followed the sale of Patrick Eppel collection of Russian stamps at Cherrystone's in New York. We will report on the sale in the next *Bulletin* and await with interest to learn the price fetched for the 1913 Romanov Tercentenary Issue with double impression.

- On the 30th anniversary of John Lennon's death, The Smithsonian Institution tweeted about his first stamp album, which isn't on public display but can be seen here: www.postalmuseum.si.edu/lennon. It's enough to give serious philatelists heart failure – Lennon was already nifty with the pen!

Definitive developments from John Holman

2011 WILL SEE CHANGES TO SOME DEFINITIVE VALUES that are currently printed in sheets of 200 and gummed with PVA. The 1p, 2p, 5p, 10p and 20p values will convert from gummed to self-adhesive with the security ovals, but without the iridescent overprint. They will be produced in sheets of 25 stamps. They are not regarded as new stamps so no 'First Day of Issue' services will be provided. However there will be a first day of availability from Tallents House and Post Office philatelic outlets on 8 March 2011. Gummed sheets of 200 of these values will remain on sale from Tallents House until further notice.

New values to be issued following the next tariff change will also be self-adhesive with the iridescent overprint, and printed in sheets of 25. No details of tariff changes and new values and date of issue are available at present.

New country stamps for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland resulting from the next tariff change will also be printed in sheets of 25 but will remain as PVA gummed. The print process will change from gravure to litho, and the printer from De La Rue to Cartor.

Sheet size and gum changes

Small size definitive stamps were originally printed in sheets of 240, beginning with the Penny Black in 1840 so that a full sheet of stamps cost £1 (240d). On decimalisation in 1971, the sheet size became 200. Self-adhesive 'business sheets' of 100 stamps were introduced in 1998, and there was a further change in February 2009 when 2nd, 1st, 50p, £1, £1.50, £2, £3, and £5 stamps were issued in sheets of 50, all self-adhesive.

Self-adhesive stamps were pioneered by Sierra Leone in the 1960s, but the first British issue was in October 1993 when a 1st Class Machin in horizontal rather than vertical format was issued in books of 20. This was followed by 1st Class and 2nd Class stamps (again in horizontal format) from coils in 1997 and then in vertical format, also from coils, a year later. All 1st and 2nd Class definitives in sheets, business sheets, and books are now self-adhesive, plus the overseas rate stamps in books, 50p, £1 and high values, and the Recorded Signed For and Special Delivery stamps •





Rail's glory days

England's steam trains are fondly remembered by many and now commemorated philatelically

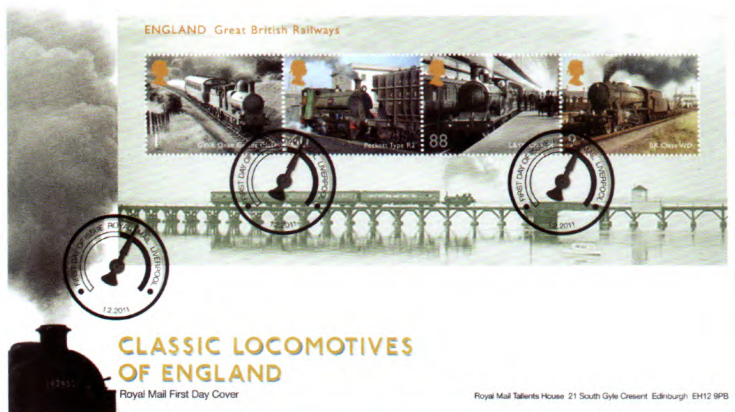
IT'S 181 YEARS since the world's first mainline railway opened and it was, of course, in Great Britain. The Liverpool to Manchester was a natural result of the Industrial Revolution and the burgeoning manufacturing economy, which meant that goods and people needed to move about more than at any time before. And, as other lines sprang up, a huge army of workers was employed to keep the network running. The numbers of drivers, firemen, engineers, mechanics, porters, ticket office staff and cleaners working on the railways has meant that most UK families have a railway connection somewhere in their history.

Glamour and grease

Those who worked on the railways were proud to do so. Back then the cutting-edge technology, coupled with the glamour associated with travel, cast a beguiling aura over this particular mode of transport. And at the heart of it all were the locomotives themselves. Now Royal Mail pays tribute to these ►

The four stamps featured on the minisheet issued on 1 February





The First Day Cover with Liverpool handstamps

workhorses of the railways, many of which had working lives of several decades before diesel and electric technology took over in the 1960s.

The steam dream

Classic Locomotives of England is the first in a new series of miniature sheets featuring steam locomotives, which were used not just on the public railway network but also in many industrial locations such as factories, quarries and docks. Working in collaboration with railway expert Professor Colin Divall of the National Railway Museum, Brian Delaney of Delaney Design Consultants, trawled through thousands of photographs to find these period images of steam locomotives in England. A second Railways Heritage Portfolio is also being issued, featuring high-quality art prints of each of the four locos, with its appropriate stamp affixed and cancelled.

Classic Locomotives of England Miniature Sheet technical details

Number of stamps	Four – sold as minisheet only
Design	Delaney
Acknowledgements	BR Dean Goods No. 2532 – photo Russell-Smith Collection reference 441 © National Railway Museum; Peckett R2 Thor – photo and © Geoff Plumb; L&YR 1093 No. 1100 – photo unknown © National Railway Museum/Science & Society Picture Library reference 10444570; BR WD No. 90662 – photo Keith Pirt © Book Law Publications; miniature sheet background – photo Paul Riley © The Restoration & Archiving Trust
Stamp format	andscape
Stamp size	179mm x 74mm
Printer	Cartor
Print process	Lithography
Perforations	14.5 x 14
Phosphor	All-over
Gum	PVA

Stamp by stamp

British Railways local service Dean Goods Class locomotive at East Garton photographed in 1951 graces the 1st Class stamp. These sturdy Victorian goods locomotives saw a great deal of use in both world wars, but by the 1950s they had been relegated to light duties, such as hauling passenger trains on rural branch lines. The 60p stamp shows a Peckett 1689, named Thor, which was built in 1925 for the Tunnel Cement company of Purfleet, Essex. Compact, powerful and rugged, industrial locomotives were the all-purpose workhorses of plants such as Tunnel Cement and many were used continuously for several decades.



The loco spent its entire life at Thurrock – where the photo was taken – and it was scrapped there in March 1965.

The 88p stamp has a Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway locomotive photographed at Liverpool Exchange Station in 1909, pulling the 2.10 to Hull. From the middle of the 19th century, British companies offered integrated travel to continental Europe, combining rail services with steamships, which sailed from ports around the United Kingdom. On the 97p stamp an ‘austerity locomotive’ is featured – during the Second World War, these heavy-freight locomotives were built for military service, to transport goods and troops. Before the Normandy Landings, the Army had very little use for these locomotives, so they were loaned to the ‘Big Four’ railway companies. After June 1944, they were shipped out to France. Eventually British Rail owned 733 of them.

The illustrated Presentation Pack contains the Classic Locomotives of England Miniature Sheet stamps alongside commentary from railway expert David Rooney, Curator of Transport at the Science Museum. There is also an FDE, FDC, three handstamps and a set of five stamp cards.

The workers’ view

Looking at these magnificent machines, one can imagine the roar of the steam and the hoot of the horn, and wonder what it was like in the days when railway work was a great deal more physical. An exhibition currently at the National Railway Museum in York (and running until 19 June) is entitled ‘Driver, Draughtsman, Cleaner, Clerk: Running Britain’s Railways’ and takes its material from the logbooks and diaries of the workers. Visitors will come ‘face to face’ with characters such as Bill Starvis (pictured on page 149) from Camden, a driver for British Rail whose fascinating diaries are on display. And he’s one of many. The exhibition works so well because it shares personal and unexpected stories that speak powerfully of the past •

For collectors – other GB railway stamps

1975 Anniversary of Public Railways; **1980** 150th Anniversary of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway; **1985** Famous Trains; **1999** Millennium Series, The Travellers’ Tale (Victorian Railway Station 43p); **2003** Classic Locomotives; **2006** Brunel (Royal Albert Bridge 1st, Box Tunnel 40p, Paddington Station 42p, Maidenhead Bridge 68p); **2007** World of Invention (Steam Locomotive 1st); **2009** Pioneers of the Industrial Revolution (George Stephenson and Locomotion 56p) **2010** Great British Railways

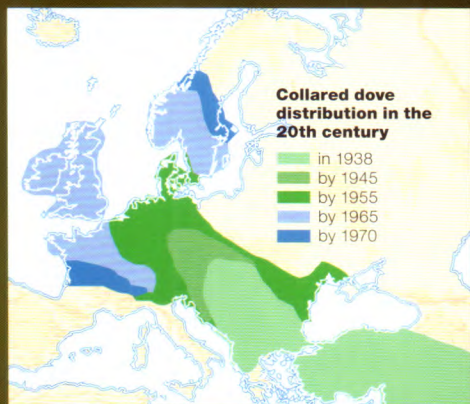
“The railways used to be the biggest employer in Britain, so this new exhibition is exploring the stories of people’s uncles, aunts, grandfathers and grandmothers through the rich treasure trove of archive material they left behind. Through mundane items such as course papers and course notes, the stories of generations of railway workers can be explored.”

Tim Procter, curator of Library and Archive Collections at the NRM



The Collared dove — a family history

Harry Wright's pigeon collection inspired this profile of the Collared dove, a bird that appears on the stamps of many nations



IN THE WINTER PROGRAMME of the National Philatelic Society, between Allen Wood's display of Ethiopia and RDP Brian Trotter's Aspect of British Borneo came Harry Wright's enlightening midweek display of pigeons. Why enlightening, a pigeon non-cognoscenti may ask? Because, as well as leading its thematic field in quality, scope and beauty (Wright was invited to display at the 2010 Birdpex exhibition in Antwerp), the form of the display gently coaxes the viewer, indeed rather like offering morsels of beautiful food to a nearby bird, into considering a number of fundamental questions about the human condition. The display is divided into two main sections: 'Pigeons as Man has managed them' and 'Pigeons as God made them' and thus we are happily engaged in matters philosophical and ecological as well as philatelic and ornithological. As one member put it, 'You think you are going to look at a few pigeons; you come away with your head full of Darwin and saving the planet.' Which is surely the kind of all-consuming process that lures stamp collectors into thematics in the first place.

A properly representative selection from Wright's display would be impossible to fit into *Bulletin*, so we consulted him about one much-loved member of the pigeon family, the Collared dove, which features on this month's Post & Go Birds of Britain 2 issue. And a dove, as everyone knows, is just a pale and interesting pigeon...

The Columbidae lineage

There is no strict distinction between pigeons and doves, which share certain features, including rounded head and body shape, small slim bills with a fleshy pad at the base, a dense feather formation, short legs, and a distinctive call.

The rock dove is the wild ancestor of domestic pigeons all over the earth, and has been domesticated for a millennium or more, chiefly to provide food. In the BC period, Egyptians found that when they took pigeons to sell to someone a few miles away, the sold birds arrived home before they did. And once this homing instinct was identified, the rock dove also became popular as pet and messenger. It was when the rock dove 'escaped' to return to the wild that many different species developed, whose genetic powers of adaptability inspired Darwin's research into the theory of evolution.

Ancestral origins

The scientific name for the Collared dove is *Streptopelia decaocto*, because its coo-coo-coo call is phonetically similar to the Greek 'decaocto' (meaning '18'). Some UK football fans prefer to hear the rhythm of the word 'United', and it is ►



A pretty *Streptopelia decaocto* from Bahrain, 1991

Collared dove details

Scientific name	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>
Common name	Eurasian collared dove
Size	30-33cm long from tip of beak to tip of tail
Wingspan	47-55cm
Weight	125-240g
Colouring	Buff-grey to pinkish-grey, with blue-grey patch under wing
Distinctive marks	Black half collar, edged with white (in adults)
Legs	Short, scaly, red
Bill	Black
Eyes	Reddish brown iris, black pupil
Feeding	Feeds on ground but readily perches on roofs
Society	Usually seen in pairs but may feed in parties
Flock size	Most commonly 10-50; up to 10,000
Breeding	Within a kilometre of human habitation. Both parents share duties of incubation and feeding
Nest	A flimsy platform of twigs
Eggs	White, oval, about 31mm x 23mm

1st Class
up to 100g

002011 1 51840 02





Above: the Eurasian Collared dove on stamps from Japan's First World Walking Festival Book in 1977

Below: from the Belgian Birds on Stamps series of 2002. The Collared dove also appeared on the Belgian Magritte 5v sheet in 2008



certainly a easily recognisable call of three distinct syllables.

The Collared dove is believed to have originated in Asia, where it was widespread from the Red Sea to Korea. We are not sure why it started spreading westwards but by the 16th century it had reached Istanbul, and by 1900 had a foothold in Europe, in Turkey, Albania and Bulgaria. Then in 1930 there was a big increase in the numbers of Collared doves and the species spread northwest across Europe at a rapid rate, reaching Germany by 1945.

First over Dover

Collared doves 'invaded' the UK in the mid 20th century – the first pair was recorded as breeding in England in 1955-56. The northwest movement continued until the birds could go no further – it is likely that many perished at sea trying to reach America – but eventually they adapted their instinctive compass and changed direction. They reached Ireland in 1959 and the Faroe Islands in the early 1970s, but since then they have moved 'sideways' from the northwest spread, moving north-northeast to north of the Arctic Circle in Norway and eastward to the Ural Mountains in Russia. As soon as it arrived on our shores the Collared dove got busy creating a UK colony and by 1964, less than ten years since the first couple had been spotted, there were 19,000 of them, which works out roughly as a doubling of the population each year.

Population explosion

Farmyards full of fallen grain and plentiful animal feed were the springboard for this rapid population expansion into our gardens, mills, docks and city parks, and numbers of Collared doves in the UK continue to sky-rocket. It will be interesting to see the statistics return from this year's Big Birdwatch on 29 and 30 January this year.

The Collared dove is not migratory but vigorously dispersive; once it has settled in an area it stays there for the whole 12 months of the year, whatever the climate, and quickly becomes a familiar sight, so that many countries have chosen to celebrate 'their' Collared dove on stamps. Among my favourites is the Japanese 50 Nippon, which has the Collared dove perched on a tree overlooking the city, and the chubby bird from the 1999 Belgian Birds on Stamps series ●
Harry Wright is President of Hayling Island Philatelic Society, Vice President of Portsmouth Philatelic Society and a member of the Bird Stamp Society. He was interviewed by Richard West in Bulletin Volume 39, Number 6. Among his most recent awards is the British Philatelic Societies' Award for Youth Work.

Big Garden Birdwatch, 29-30 January

For its Post & Go Birds of Britain stamps, Royal Mail referred to the results of the RSPB's annual Big Garden Birdwatch, which takes place this month on Saturday 29 and Sunday 30 January. The Big Garden Birdwatch is your chance to do something that really counts for wildlife – with your help the RSPB can create a 'snapshot' of bird numbers in each region of the UK, spot problems and identify rapid declines in numbers.

All you need is a pen and paper and an hour to spend watching for birds on either the Saturday or the Sunday. Then simply record the highest number of each bird species seen in your garden or local park (not flying over) and submit your results at www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch, where you also find a useful recording sheet and an A-Z of birds.

The 12 birds featured on Royal Mail Post & Go illustrated stamps are frequent visitors to UK gardens. You can see the details of the Collared dove on these pages, and here's a description of the other 11:



Royal Mail Post & Go Cover

Royal Mail 'Stamps on Demand' 11 'Post & Go' Stamps (January 2011) 101

Post & Go Birds of Britain 1, issued 17 September 2010

House sparrow *Passer domesticus*. Small, noisy and gregarious, house sparrows often nest in buildings and feed on seeds and scraps. Males have a bold black bib and a distinctive grey cap, females are buff brown.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*. Colourful and sociable, goldfinches gather in areas with trees, bushes or tall seed-producing plants. Widely admired for their pretty song, they have a bright yellow wing patch, red, white and black head.

Blue tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*. Common in gardens, woodlands and along hedgerows, these colourful, agile tits have a blue cap above a black and white face and a yellow underside.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*. Black at first glance but with a purple and green sheen in summer and light spots in winter, starlings can be recognised by their waddle. Gregarious and often seen in huge flocks.

Wood pigeon *Columba palumbus*. These birds are plump and largely grey, with a white neck patch, pink breast and white bars on the wings.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*. Found in woodlands and gardens, robins are easy to spot because of their distinctive orange-red breasts and slim tails.

Post & Go Birds of Britain 2, issued 24 January 2011

Blackbird *Turdus merula*. The males are black, but females are brown, often with spots and streaks on their breasts. The bright orange-yellow beak and eye-ring make adult male blackbirds one of the most striking garden birds.

Magpie *Pica pica*. With its black-and-white plumage and long tail, there is nothing else quite like the magpie. Close-up, its black plumage takes on a colourful hue with a purplish-blue iridescent sheen to the wing feathers, and a green gloss to the tail.

Long-tailed tit *Aegithalos caudatus*. Distinctive colouring, a tail that is longer than its body, and undulating flight movement. Gregarious and noisy, often seen in small, excitable flocks of about 20 birds.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*. The UK's second commonest bird, its patterned plumage gives camouflage and ground level, but in flight it reveals a flash of white on the wings and outer tail feathers.

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*. Similar in size and shape to a House sparrow but is mainly green, with yellow in the wings and tail. The female and young birds are duller and have brown tones on the back.



Royal Mail Post & Go Cover

Royal Mail 'Stamps on Demand' 11 'Post & Go' Stamps (January 2011) 101



Edward Stanley Gibbons
1840-1913

In search of Stanley

Renowned collector, businessman and traveller, Stanley Gibbons also celebrated married life – many, many times. Did he have a dark secret?

IN THE HISTORY of philately, 1840 is a significant date – as the year when Rowland Hill introduced the universal penny postage and the world's first adhesive postage stamps – and the year Edward Stanley Gibbons was born.

Edward – or Stanley as the world knows him – was born in Plymouth at his father's pharmacy, which is now, fittingly, the site of the city's main post office. By the mid 1850s collecting stamps was becoming a popular pastime and, like many of his fellow pupils at London's Halloran Collegiate School, Stanley had a small collection and enjoyed exchanging stamps with his school chums. At the age of 15 he left school and worked for a short time as a junior clerk in Plymouth's Naval Bank. However, after the death of his eldest brother, he was needed in the family business and so began work with his father as an apprentice pharmacist.

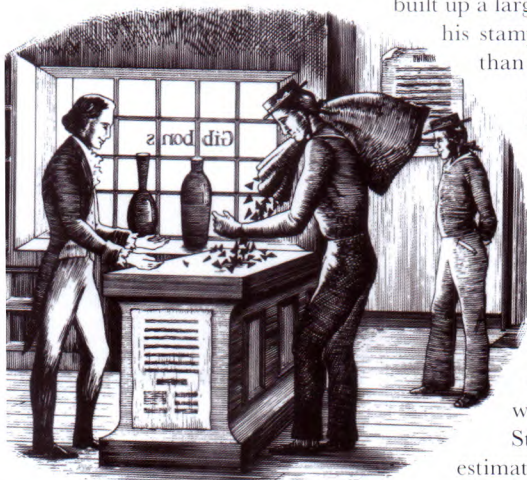
The world's first stamp shop

William encouraged his son's hobby and let him set up a stamp counter in the pharmacy – probably the first 'stamp shop'. By 1858, Stanley's stamp business had its first trading name of E S Gibbons, its first office above the shop, and its first employee – a clerk called Miss Cummings. Stanley had built up a large stock of stamps and contacts abroad and by 1862 his stamp business appears to have had a larger turnover than that of his father's more conventional shop.

As more and more countries were now producing their own stamps, an interest in foreign issues was growing. In 1863 Stanley famously bought a kitbag full of rare Cape of Good Hope triangulars from two sailors who had won them in a raffle. He sorted these and sold them in packets of 12. Entries from E S Gibbons' letter copybook confirm this: in a communication with Mr Alex Rosenberg on 16 March 1864, he wrote, 'I can supply you with Cape of Good Hope 1d, 4d and 6d in any quantity, 10d a dozen; genuine old woodblocks, 3s a dozen.'

Stanley had bought the stamps for £5 and later estimated making a princely £500 profit – that would be at

The sailors who happened upon Stanley's stamp counter in the Gibbons' pharmacy helped launch his career





Inside the Gower Street office, where most of the business was conducted by post

least £37,000 in today's terms. Other purchases at around this time included original stock of the Fiji Times Express stamps, brought home by his brother Alfred, a Royal Navy officer (Alfred's travels and purchases were a key factor in Stanley's flourishing business) and stamps from the Postmaster of Albany in Western Australia, including 120 2d Swans erroneously printed in mauve, the colour of the 6d stamps. These latter stamps now have a catalogue value of £9,000 each.

Constant expansion

With his stock expanding it made sense to advertise. Stanley's earliest known advert appeared in *The Stamp Collector's Review* in June 1865, offering 'Mixed used stamps at 1s 3d per 100 and a price list on receipt of a 1d stamp'. Stanley also started issuing his own monthly catalogue of British, colonial and foreign stamps. The first known copy of this forerunner of today's wide range of Gibbons catalogues was dated November 1864 and sold for 2d, with free postage. In it, stamps were priced unused and used, singly and by the dozen, and included Brazil 'Bull's Eyes' at 4s, 2s and 10s 6d, Swiss 'Zurich' 4 and 6 rappen cantonals at 2s 6d each, Penny Blacks at 1d each used (or 6d a dozen), and 1840 2d Blues at 2d each used.

The 1865 catalogue also included an advert for stamp albums produced in Brussels, but soon Stanley was designing and producing his own. The first, small affordable album, 'the Improved' was followed by the 'VR ►



Stanley spent his retirement years trotting the globe with various wives. He's seen here getting into the sartorial spirit of (above, left to right) Tunis, Egypt and Japan

illustrated', a more expensive book with heavy board covers and separate compartments for every stamp issued. It was the high quality of his stamps and the detail in his catalogues that ensured Stanley's success.

On the move

When his father died in 1867 Stanley took over the pharmacy business, but a few years later he decided to sell it and focus on stamps. After moving to nearby Lockyer Street in 1872, he soon realised that London was the place to be if he wanted his business to grow and moved to Clapham two years later. His business flourished and he was able to take on women workers to tear up stamp sheets. The evening comings and goings of these ladies caused some consternation among the locals and this, plus a need for bigger premises, meant a move to Gower Street.

At that time most of Stanley's business was conducted by post. He continued to produce his albums and annual catalogue, by then comprising 100 pages, with stamp illustrations in a separate appendix. Later, catalogue numbers were introduced and linked to the spaces in his albums.

In 1890 after 34 years in business, Stanley retired to fulfil his ambition of travelling and visiting some of those countries whose stamps he had been dealing in. He sold his business to Charles Phillips, a part-time dealer in Birmingham, for £25,000. The firm retained its well-known name and became a private company, with Phillips as managing director and Stanley as chairman. In 1891 Phillips opened a shop at 435 the Strand and in 1893 the shop and offices were amalgamated at 391 the Strand, where the company's retail premises remained for many years until it was moved to number 399. By the time the new century arrived, Gibbons had become the leading company catering for a well-established hobby. Many famous collections were purchased, rare stamps became known and identified and the Gibbons catalogue had become the collector's main source of reference. In 1914 the company received a Royal Warrant from George V.



Exchanging wives

Stanley Gibbons' personal life was also very interesting. In 1872 he married clergyman's daughter, Matilda Woon. She died just five years later and the cause of the death was officially given as 'marasmus', a wasting disease similar to anorexia. Eight years later Stanley married his assistant and housemaid Maggie Casey. In 1899 after 12 years of marriage, Maggie died of cirrhosis. A few years after her death, Stanley welcomed Georgina as his third wife, but she only lasted until 1905, when she died overseas. He remarried in October of the same year, at 65, to 27-year-old Bertha Barth, believed to have died from cancer of the liver in a hospital in Ceylon just eight years later. Stanley returned home shortly after her death and remarried again to Sophia Crofts, the only wife to outlive him.

Stanley died on 17 February 1913, allegedly at his nephew's flat in Portman Mansions, just off Baker Street. It was also rumoured that he had died in the arms of a lover at the Savoy Hotel and his body moved to cover up the scandal. The death certificate, issued three days after his passing, gives his occupation as 'retired stamp collector' and the cause as brain haemorrhage. Stanley was buried in Twickenham cemetery. His estate was left to 'a dear friend' Mabel Hedgecoe.

An intriguing story indeed, for Stanley's rapid remarriages and background in pharmacy have given rise to various rumours. What remains beyond dispute is Stanley's business acumen and his pivotal role in developing the business of stamp collecting worldwide •

Above left: the substantial Twickenham villa Stanley bought in 1892

Above right: Stanley with third wife, Georgina

Below: a rather homely photographic portrait, commissioned later in life



Philately on the net

In the spirit of the New Year, we're getting back to basics for those less familiar with the wonders of the web

IF YOU HAVE SIDESTEPED the online revolution – through choice or just by being left behind – never fear. Age and lack of experience do not necessarily mean it's too late but you may have to put aside suspicion of this most marvellous of mediums. Scare stories about privacy issues and financial security are just that – millions of Britons happily bank, shop and communicate online without any problems. And once you experience the ease with which you can research even the most niche of subjects, you may rue your days in the web wilderness.

But what to do if you don't know your cookies from your cache, your blog from your forum? *Bulletin's* step-by-step guide to getting the most from the web aims to demystify the whole subject.

Step 1 – ISPs and search engines Firstly, we are assuming that you have a computer of your own or access to one (if the latter, lucky you because you don't have to worry about setting anything up except an email account). In short, to connect your computer to the internet you need an ISP. Your mobile phone company, home phone, cable television provider, or even your local supermarket chain can offer you an internet connection. A broadband connection is the one to aim for if you have it in your area – it allows you to search more quickly, download large files and zip about at the speed of light.

Your next job is to choose a browser – this is the program that will search the world wide web for you. Internet Explorer, Firefox and Google Chrome are a few of the options and everyone has their preferred browser, so try them out to see which you find most useful. There's one more important choice to make: which search engine you want to use? Google, Yahoo, Ask Jeeves and Bing all have very different ways of searching and interfaces (appearances). It's all down to personal preference.

Step 2 – searching effectively So now you have access to the most marvellous library you could imagine. But the sheer wealth of information can be daunting, so how do you find the good stuff rather than go round and round in circles? If you type in 'GB stamps' into your search engine's search box, you'll get approximately 5,760,000 results. More than even the most dedicated philatelists can handle. So being specific in your search terms is crucial. The more words you use, the more targetted your search will be (but do just use key words rather than full sentences). To search for a specific phrase put it in quotation marks, such as 'Penny Black'. Or search for one word but not include another by using a minus sign. For example, to search for Victorian stamps, but not Penny Blacks you would type: 'Victorian stamp - Penny Black'. If you want to seek out seahorse stamps but don't wish to buy on an online auction, you'd use 'seahorse stamp -eBay'. Think around

Web glossary

Bandwidth: determines the speed with which you can access the internet

Blog: an online diary

Cache: a component that transparently stores data so that future requests for that data can be served faster

Cookie: information that a site puts on your hard disk so it can remember something about you at a later time

Forum: a place to exchange views with others

ISP: internet service provider

URL: the website's address

Twitter: a speedier place to exchange views, using fewer than 140 characters

the subject to ensure you're finding every hidden gem out there (for instance the words 'postage' and 'postal' bring very different results when combined with other stamp terms).

Step 3 – blogs, forums and Twitter Surely words to strike fear into the heart of anyone with a web phobia. But they're really very harmless terms. A blog is simply an individual's online 'diary'. More often than not, these personal ramblings are about a particular passion – such as philately – and offer an interesting insight into others' perspectives (have a look at www.pennystars.com or www.stampcollectingblog.com for examples).

Forums and message boards are group affairs – you can comment on other users' opinions, research and thoughts and they (and everyone else in the forum) can share their thoughts. Sometimes the conversations can become a little heated, as you can imagine! The musings on www.stampboards.com are often very interesting. Philatelists are usually very helpful to anyone seeking information and are happy to share their findings online.

Twitter is a different beast. It seems to be more popular than Facebook for philatelists, probably because it's so fast-moving. Once you've set up your own account (at www.twitter.com) you can search for people with similar interests to your own and then 'follow' them, meaning you'll see all their updates whenever you log in. The BPMA's posts are particularly good (<http://twitter.com/postalheritage>) and can lead you to all kinds of resources.

Step 4 – eBay and buying online safely Online safety is, of course, crucial. To protect your PC from viruses you can get virus protection software (Apple Macs are less susceptible to invasion). Your ISP may supply you with some, or you can download it for free from the internet, or buy software.

To prevent someone accessing your computer when you are connected to the web you should have a firewall – a piece of software that makes sure no programs on your computer try to connect to the internet without your consent.

The online auction site, eBay, has a wealth of products for philatelists. But how do you know they're genuine? Firstly, check each seller's reputation (every time you buy from eBay you will be asked to rate the purchase, so anyone not being entirely honest should theoretically be found out). It's also safer to pay through the PayPal service. Do read the advice on pages.ebay.co.uk/safetycentre/buyingwithconfidence.html. The collecting community is usually on top of any scams too – see www.glenstephens.com, for example. When in doubt, ask a philatelist! ●

We're now tweeting! Look out for *Bulletin* on Twitter at www.twitter.com/philbulletin



Commemorative covers

Orders and enquiries

Cotswold Covers

PO Box 100, York YO26 9SS
Phone 0844 980 8772

Nene Valley Railway (Stamps)

Wansford Station, Stibbington,
Peterborough PE8 6LR
Phone 01780 784444

The Royal Naval Philatelic Society

19 College Road, Portsmouth,
PO1 3LJ
enquiries@rmphilatelic.org

The Stamp Centre

79 Strand, London WC2R 0DE
Phone 0207 8362341
www.stamp-centre.co.uk

Methodist Philatelic Society Cover Secretary

R J MacMillan, 11 Cullalade
Road, Dalgeys Bay, Fife,
Scotland KY11 9HW
Please send A4 sae

Farrukh Jamil

PO Box 31261, London
NW2 6GA
farrukh.jamil@virgin.net

Please note: The Battle of Britain Smiler Generic sheet FDC, described on page 124, costs £29.50 (inc p&p). The price was not printed in *December Bulletin*.

Cover producers wishing to announce a recent or forthcoming cover should submit copy of up to 75 words and an image of the cover. Announcements are published on a first-come-first-served basis or around a theme, at the discretion of the editor. Please send submission for *March Bulletin* to the address on page 133 to arrive by 20 January 2011.



Cotswold Covers This Classic Locomotives cover is designed for the special stamp issue on 1 February. It carries Cotswold's sponsored handstamp showing the portico of York Station. **Price:** £7.95 + £1.20 p&p ●



Nene Valley Railway FDC of Wallace & Gromit Christmas stamps, cancelled with a pudding postmark and with three railway stamps with NVR Santa handstamps. **Price:** £7.20 including p&p ●



Royal Naval Philatelic Society On 29 December, 500 commemorative covers were issued to mark the 150th Anniversary of the Launch of HMS Warrior. **Price:** from £10.90 including p&p. Signed covers available ●



Farrukh Jamil Two covers, the first bearing full set of Medical Breakthroughs stamps, cancelled with 'Autumn Stampex Medical Breakthroughs, First Day of Issue, 16 September 2010, London N1'. Limited Edition of 10. The second is a 2009

The Stamp Centre Two limited edition Wallace & Gromit Christmas FDCs, one featuring the full set of stamps, the other showing the minisheet. There are only 500 of each and both are cancelled by a 'Wallace & Gromit' handstamp designed and sponsored on the date of issue, incorporating a sketch by Nick Park.

Price £14.99 + £1.25 p&p ●



Methodist Philatelic Society A recent cover commemorates 175 years of Methodist worship at the Oxford Place Methodist Chapel in Leeds, and the particular occasion of the 2010 thanksgiving service led by Revd David Gamble, the president of the Methodist Conference of Great Britain. **Price:** £2 + sae ●



Plants UK Species in Recovery First Day Cover bearing NAFAS (National Association of Flower Arrangement Societies) 50th Anniversary stamp booklet. Limited Edition of 10. **Prices:** £10 each including p&p ●

Competitions More puzzles to tax you and winners' names too

IDENTIFY To win a prize selection First Day Covers and the Royal Mail 2010 Yearbook, identify the stamp from this detail below. Please give the name of the stamp and its year of issue.



KNOWLEDGE Test your philatelic knowledge by answering the following questions:

- Which was the first country in the world to honour Robbie Burns with a commemorative stamp?
- In what year did Burns first appear on a British stamp?
- Which famous poet featured on a special issue stamp set in 1992?

HOW TO ENTER Please send your answers on separate postcards, marked *Identify* or *Knowledge to The Philatelic Bulletin*, 1st Floor, 35-50 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1HQ by

10 February 2011. The senders of the first correct answers drawn will receive a selection of First Day Covers and the Royal Mail 2010 Yearbook •



November results



IDENTIFY The stamp detail was taken from the Greater Horseshoe Bat (*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*) 1st Class stamp (shown left), taken from the Mammals series,

which was issued in April 2010.

Winner Jordan Wykes, Yarhampton

KNOWLEDGE

- There were 14 special stamp issues in 2010.
- Asbestos, which can be carried only when fixed in a resin, plastic or glass matrix. Royal Mail will carry batteries if mailed in their original packaging, except for batteries which are classed as dangerous goods by the ICAO.

Winner A H Lewis, Ilford, Essex

CROSSWORD Answer: watermark

Winner M Dungate, Broadstone, Dorset

Rules and regulations

1 The closing date is 10 February 2011. **2** Promotions are open to all readers aged 18 and over, except employees of Royal Mail Group Ltd, their business associates and immediate families. **3** Responsibility cannot be accepted for entries which are incomplete, damaged or not received for any reason. Proof of posting is not proof of receipt. Prizes must be accepted as offered; they are not transferable and there are no cash alternatives. **4** Winners are notified within 28 days of closing date. **5** For prize draws where readers must answer a question or solve a crossword, winners will be the senders of the first correct entries drawn at random by an independent service after the closing date. **6** Promoter's decision on any aspect of the promotions is final. No correspondence will be entered into. **7** Entry implies acceptance of these rules. **8** Prizes are subject to suitability and availability. The promoter reserves the right to a) substitute a prize of equal or greater value if circumstances so demand and b) to suspend or cancel or hold void any of the competitions or prize draws at any time without notice. **9** Winners' names are available 28 days after closing date; send an SAE to Karin Ward, the *British Philatelic Bulletin*, Royal Mail 1st Floor, 35-50 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1HQ. The promoter is Royal Mail Group Ltd, 100 Victoria Embankment, London EC4Y 0HQ.

