BRITISH PHILATELIC
Bulletin
The magazine for collectors of UK stamps
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50 years of Machins • Theatre stars on Shakespeare stamps

Catch them if you can! ANIMAIL minisheet



J HOLMAN STAMP SCENE • DEFINITIVES 50 YEARS OF MACHINS • WIN LONDON THEATRE BREAK



What are your views about the latest Royal Mail Special Stamps and covers? Let Tony know by emailing him: Tony.Devine@royalmail.com

World of wonder Stamps and Collectibles Global Programme Manager Tony Devine wants the world to see our stunning new stamps

SPRING HAS SPRUNG AT LAST and what better season is there to launch the bright, fresh and varied collection of stamp issues we have coming out in April? It is a particularly exciting time as a special set we have had to keep top secret will be revealed later this month on 21 April.

Yes, it is of course The Queen's birthday and on that day a collection of celebratory stamps is released to mark the occasion. You will have read about the HM The Queen's 90th Birthday Special Stamps in the *Bulletin* preview. So apologies to you, dear reader, that we have been unable to do the same with the Miniature Sheet and give you your usual month-in-advance preview. But it seems only fitting to keep the surprise for Her Majesty's special day – after all, who would like the whole world to see their birthday mail a month in advance! We are, however, aiming to distribute May's *Bulletin* early, so you can see the whole issue then. The Miniature Sheet is stunning – we are sure you will agree it was worth the wait.

There is much more besides. The inspiring Anzac Commemorative Sheet, the elegant Shakespeare set, the quirky and endearing Animail Miniature Sheet (see page 228), and the FIP Exhibition Sheet (page 238).

It is my privilege to be representing Royal Mail at the NY2016 World Stamp Show. Collectors who know me well, and particularly the dealers, know that I am passionate about bringing the voice of the collector into the Stamps and Collectibles team – so if you can make it to the Jacob Javitts Center between 28 May and the 2 June then please do come by our stand and say hello. I will make sure we have a special thank you for our US *Bulletin* readers. (I should add that the show does continue on until Saturday 4 June but I need to get back to sunny Scotland in time for a family event.)

If you are not travelling to the Big Apple, then please do not let that stop you expressing your views, I am always very keen to hear views from our collectors and especially those with an international dimension ●

Below: Special Stamp for The Queen's 90th Birthday; Post & Go design ready to travel to New York; a Stamp of Significance for Andrew Neish (page 252); new Shakespeare stamps (page 242)









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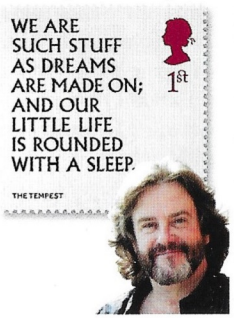
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● **Royal Mail Editor** William Doherty, Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB ● **Publishing Editor** Kate Shaw ● Price £1.95 from Post Office Ltd philatelic outlets or by order from Post Office branches ● **Annual subscription** £18.95 UK and Europe; £24.95 rest of world. Send subscriptions to Royal Mail Tallents House (address above) ● **Binders** (to hold 24 issues) £8.50, storage boxes (about 30 copies) £9.95, available by post from Royal Mail Tallents House ● Royal Mail publishes onnline the fortnightly *British Postmark Bulletin*, giving details of forthcoming special handstamps ● 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.



Up for grabs Creatures that cling to your envelope feature in this new Miniature Sheet

Above: the Animail Miniature Sheet features die-cut, animal-shaped stamps that can be 'wrapped' around envelopes and postcards

Below: the pictorial alternative postmark for the Animail set



FD1614-PL

This is a gripping issue – the Animail Miniature Sheet, issued on 17 May, comprises innovative animal stamps that entwine themselves around the edges of envelopes or postcards like creatures clutching tree trunks or grasping jungle vines. There are six endearing animal characters: a chimpanzee, an orangutan, a woodpecker, a snake squeezing a stamp like prey, a bat seemingly hanging from a cave ceiling and koala bear with its baby.

The stamps are of mixed denominations: two First Class, two £1.05 values and a pair of £1.33 stamps. Accompanying the Animail issue is a Presentation Pack, Stamp Sheet Souvenir and Stamp Cards. The First Day Cover and Souvenir Cover contains an insert card which shows the animals 'in action' against a background of jungle-style terrain, gripping the fauna around them.

Stamp designer Andrew Ross, from the design agency Osborne Ross, was challenged to devise interactive stamps that particularly appealed to children and encouraged them to brighten up their letters and cards. He wanted to 'push the envelope' design-wise while working within the constraints of the technical requirements of the die-cut printing process and the need for stamps



to be easily read by Royal Mail's sorting machines.

Inspired by one of the characters from Aardman Animations (of *Wallace & Gromit* fame), Andrew came up with the idea of engaging, friendly and fun animal characters, each having a thin white line to indicate where they might be folded to 'cling' to the tops or sides of envelopes. He wanted to create a variety of shapes and colours to generate interest, but was mindful that each character had to sit ▸

Animail Miniature Sheet – Prices	
Miniature Sheet	£6.04
Presentation Pack	£6.55
First Day Cover	£7.73
Stamp Sheet Souvenir	£7.73
Stamp Cards (set of 7)	£3.15

Animail Miniature Sheet – Specifications	
Date of issue	17 May
Number of stamps	Six
Stamp design	Magpie Studio
Stamp illustration	Osborne Ross (paper-cut scenes: Owen Gildersleeve)
Stamp format	Various
Stamp size	Various
Sheet size	192mm x 74mm
Printer	International Security Printers
Print process	Lithography
Perforations	Various
Phosphor	Bars as appropriate
Gum	Self-adhesive



FD1614-NP



FD1614-TH

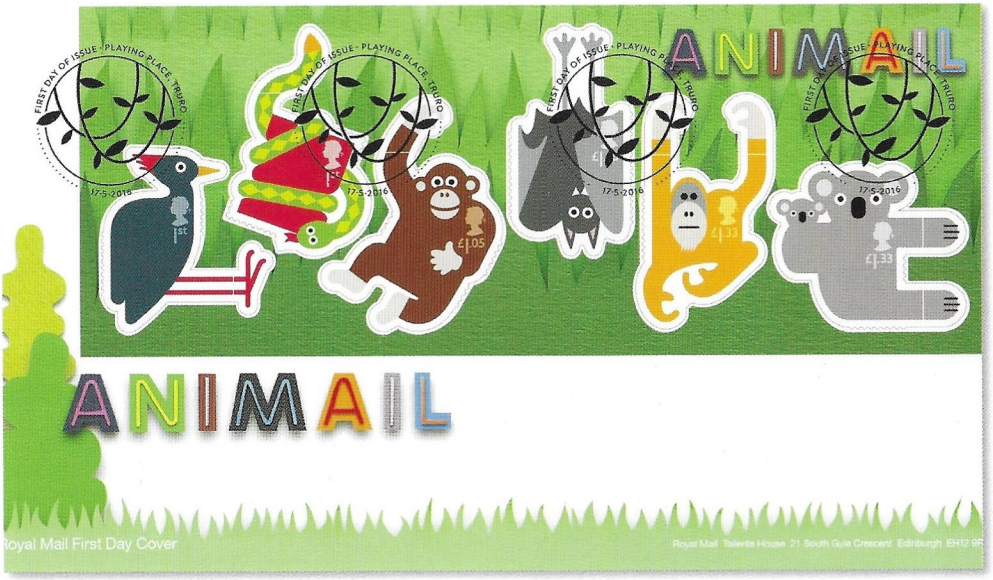
comfortably alongside the others and have a degree of consistency so that they clearly looked like part of a set.

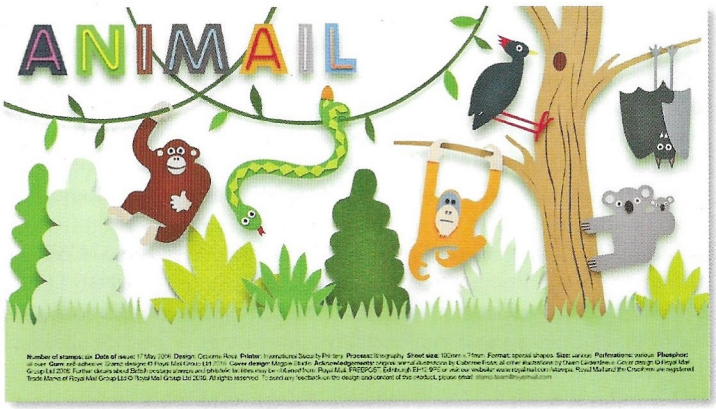
The front of the Presentation Pack features a colourful scene showing all the animals from the Miniature Sheet carrying letters, and the rear includes a game in which you make your way through the jungle, surmounting various obstacles to deliver a letter.

The Animail Sheet Stamp Souvenir is a version of the traditional First Day Cover which, unlike the FDC, will not have a customer's name and address printed on the front. It will be available for sale for three months, up to 17 August.

Orders for Serviced First Day Covers must reach Royal Mail by 17 May. Customers may send stamped envelopes on the day of issue to Royal Mail, Tallents House (address is on page 256 – please quote the *Bulletin* code CDO) for the Tallents House, Edinburgh postmark. The mark fittingly features the back of an envelope that has been 'sealed' with an animal's paw print. The alternative postmarks have the location Playing Place, Truro – a Cornish village whose name suits a stamp issue that will appeal to children. The pictorial version has an illustration of vines, the natural habitat of some of the animals hanging about on the Animail Miniature Sheet.

Remember the potato man? The last Royal Mail die-cut stamps, with similar child-appeal, were the Fun Fruit & Veg set of 2003. The set of ten stamps was issued in a se-tenant block with an attached sheet of 76 stickers, which could be added to the stamps to make faces •





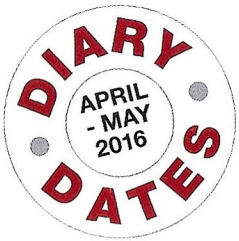
This page (from top): the Animail First Day Cover featuring the pictorial alternative postmark; the Information Card; the Animail Miniature Sheet with barcode

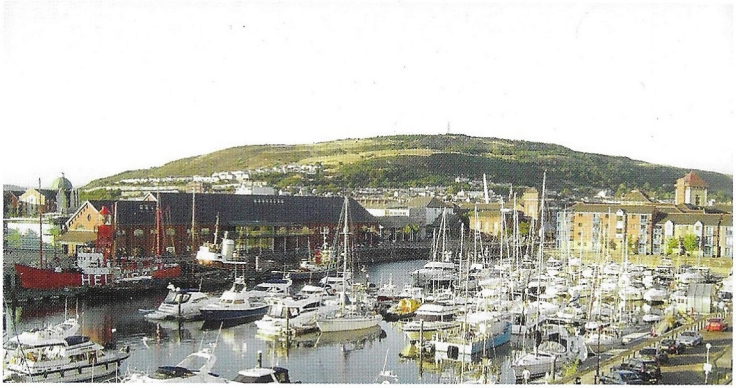
Opposite page: the Animail non-pictorial alternative postmark, Tallents House mark and the Presentation Pack



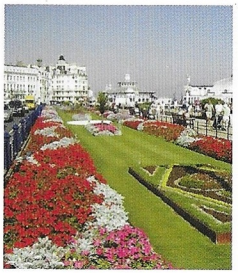


Stamp Scene John Holman keeps you posted on events and activities in the philatelic world





2 April Swansea Philatelic Society Stamp & Postcard Fair, St Illtyd Church Hall, Ystrad Road, Fforestfach, Swansea SA5 4BT, 9.30am to 3pm. Admission 50p. Enquiries: Geoff Cooper, 01792 581106.



2 April Association of Sussex Philatelic Societies Stamp & Postcard Day, Victoria Baptist Church Hall, Eldon Road, Eastbourne BN21 1UE, 10am to 4pm. Dealers, free parking, refreshments. Presentations: Ireland 1900 to 1930 by Peter Wood (11am), Go by Cycle by Brian Sole (2.15pm). Enquiries: J Wright, 01323 438964.

8 April Strand Stamp Fair, Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way, London WC1H 0DG, 9am to 4pm. Admission free. Enquires: Kate Puleston, 020 8946 4489.

9 April Telford Stamp, Card & Coin Fair, Belmont Hall, Wellington Centre, Telford TF1 1LU, 10am to 3pm. Free entry, good range of stalls. Enquiries: B Hemmings, 01694 720192.

9 April Ferndown & West Moors Philatelic & Postcard Club Fair, Ferndown Community Centre, Victoria Road, Ferndown BH22 8JP, 10am to 4pm. Enquiries: 01202 871624.

15-16 April Scottish Philatelic Congress, Dewars Centre, Perth. Friday 10am to 5pm, Saturday 10am to 4pm.

16 April Kent Federation Spring Rally, Mascalls School, Maidstone Road, Paddock Wood TN12 6LT Enquiries: M Flack, 01634 714584.

16 April GB Philatelic Society meeting. George V & VI Commemoratives by Stephen Weir (11am), First Flights by John Roe (2.15pm) at the Royal Philatelic Society London, 41 Devonshire Place, London W1. Enquiries: P Tanner, 01753 887755.

23 April Spring Stamp Essex, County Upper School, Beetons Way, Bury St Edmunds IP32 6RF.

23 April The 67th North East Philatelic Association Convention, Bowburn

On the stamp scene this season, clockwise from above: Eastbourne, Swansea, Marylebone, Perth and Cambridge

Community Centre, Durham DH6 5AT. Includes Stamp & Postcard Fair.
13 May Strand Stamp Fair, see 8 April for details.
13-14 May Salisbury Collectors Show, City Hall, Malthouse Lane, Salisbury SP2 7TU. Enquiries: S Beattie, 01722 412100.
13-14 May South of England Woking Postcard Fair, Leisure Centre, Kingsfield Road, Woking GU22 9BA. Friday 10am to 5pm, £3; Saturday 10am to 4pm, £2. Enquiries: 07583 915284, www.postcard.co.uk.
14 May WORPEX (organised by Worcester Philatelic & Postcard Society), Tudor Grange Academy, Bilford Road, Worcester WR3 8HN, 10am to 4pm. Regional meeting of British Thematic Association at 2pm. Details and park and ride directions: www.worpex.com.
14 May GB Philatelic Society meeting. Bob Galland: First Low Value Surface Printed Postage Stamps, 11am; Clive Jones: Travelling Post Offices of GB, 2.15pm. At the Royal Philatelic Society London, 41 Devonshire Place, London W1. Enquiries: Peter Tanner, 01753 887755.
21 May South Wales Philatelic Federation Annual Convention, Princess Royal Theatre, Port Talbot Civic Centre, SA13 1PJ, 10am to 4.30pm. Dealers, competition displays. Admission 50p. Enquiries: Neil Prior, 01656 740520, www.fswps.weebly.com.
28 May National Philatelic Society country meeting at Christ Church United Reformed Church, New London Road, Chelmsford CM2 0AW. From 10.30am. Further information: www.ukphilately.org.uk/nps ●



Photograph: Philafrenzy

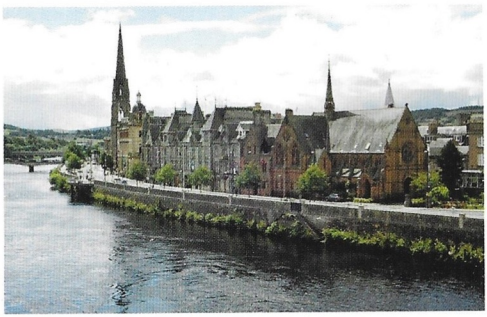
The Postal Museum

6 April and 1 June Tours of the Archive at Freeling House, Phoenix Place, London WC1X 0DL. Phone to book tours and talks: 020 7239 2570.
6 April and 1 June Tours of the Museum Store at Debden, Essex (see *Bulletin* August 2013 for feature on the Debden Store). Booking as above.
9 June Matt Tantony's talk on 'The GPO Poster Advisory Group: A Short & Colourful History', Phoenix Centre, Phoenix Place, London WC1X 0DG.

UK Congress dates

15-16 April The Scottish Philatelic Congress, organised by the Caledonian Philatelic Society to celebrate its 110th anniversary, at the Dewars Centre, Perth. Friday 10am to 5pm, Saturday 10am to 4pm. For details of the Congress timetable see www.scottishphilately.co.uk.
21-24 July The Philatelic Congress of Great Britain, the Belfry Hotel, Cambridge. Watch out for more details in the *Bulletin* and see www.abps.org uk ●





Overseas exhibitions

The World Stamp Show – New York 2016 is hosted by the American Philatelic Society (APS) at the Javits Convention Center, West 34th Street, New York NY 10001. From 10.30am to 6pm on 28 May, from 10am to 3pm on 4 June, all other days 10am to 6pm. Admission free. Further information: www.ny2016.org.

On the first day of the Show, Royal Mail issues a FIP Exhibition Sheet – see preview on page 238.

Thailand 2016, the 32nd Asian International Stamp Exhibition, takes place from 10 to 15 August at the Mall Ngamwongwan Convention Center Bangkok, Thailand.

Philatapei 2016, the World Championship Exhibition of FIP (Fédération Internationale de Philatélie) will be held at the Tapei World Trade Centre in Taiwan, from 21 to 26 October ●

Stamp-related exhibitions

Stamps marking the 400th anniversary of the death of Shakespeare go on sale in April (see page 242). The 'By me William Shakespeare: A life in writing' exhibition at the Inigo Rooms, Somerset House (East Wing), London WC2 until 29 May, includes Shakespeare's will. The British Library's 'Shakespeare in Ten Acts' exhibition (from 15 April) includes the only surviving play-script in Shakespeare's hand, two of only six authentic Shakespeare signatures, and the rare First Folio edition. Visit www.shakespeare400.org for details of anniversary exhibitions, performances, talks, etc.

The Queen's 90th birthday will be commemorated by special stamps on 21 April when the 'Fashioning a Reign: 90 years of style from The Queen's Wardrobe' exhibition opens at the Palace of Holyroodhouse in Edinburgh. Similar exhibitions will be held later at Buckingham Palace (August) and Windsor Castle (September). A 'Shakespeare and the Royal Library' display is now on show at Windsor Castle until 1 January 2017. See the Royal Collection Trust website for details ●

Blue plaque



Freddie Mercury, who featured on a Millennium stamp in 1999, is to be commemorated with a plaque at his first London home in Feltham. Mercury's schoolboy stamp collection, acquired by The Postal Museum in 1993, was the subject of a feature article in the *Bulletin* in August 2011. Over 900 blue plaques have been installed in London since 1866, the scheme first introduced by the Society of Arts ●

Publications

The January/February 2016 issue of *The GB Journal*, the magazine of the GB Philatelic Society (GBPS) includes articles on the 'colon flaw' on the 1937 Coronation stamp, die proofs of De La Rue for postal stationery and revenue issues, Oxford Union Society postal stationery, and Express mail labels and markings from 1901 to 1978.

Sent out with the Journal is the *GBPS Newsletter* with comprehensive, illustrated reports of recent displays, reviews of the 2016 SG 'Part 1' catalogue and of the second volume of autiobiography by former postman and government minister Alan Johnson MP. The book, entitled *Please, Mister Postman* covers his time as a junior postman until he becomes a full-time official

of the Union of Communication Workers. The reviewer, Alan Sacks, describes it as 'an enlightening insight into a bygone age – an era when postmen would feed cats while owners were away on holiday, be newspaper boys or deliver coal to elderly residents.' Bob Harding writes on 'Thoughts of a Novice Collector', and four pages of John Davies's excellent display 'A Jubilee Reminiscence' are reproduced – material from the Guildhall Exhibition of 1890.

The GBPS, founded in 1955, is the society for collectors of GB stamps from the reign of Queen Victoria to George VI. The annual UK subscription is £25, £27 for Europe and £33 rest of world airmail. For Society details contact: Peter Tanner 13 St Hubert's Close, Gerrards Cross SL9 7EN.

The January 2016 *Newsletter of the Welsh Postal History Society* includes features on the Postal Service in Gorseinon, Welsh mailvans (by Chris Hogan of the Post Office Vehicle Club), Welsh Postmarks, and Llanrhidian Post Office, as well as reports of Society meetings and displays and a listing of recent post office openings and closures. The Society's popular Annual Weekend will be held at Plas Tan y Bwlch, Maentwrog, Gwynedd, from 16 to 19 June.

The annual subscription to the *Newsletter* is £9. Membership applications and further details contact: Aled Rhys-Jones, 12 St Patrick's Court, Linnet Close, Cyncoed, Cardiff CF23 7HG or see the website www.wps.wales.org.

The 'Country Diary' section of *The Telegraph* of 6 February 2016 was devoted to the work of Robert Gillmor and mentions his many designs for Royal Mail Post & Go stamps. The writer Robin Page describes the 'Fur & Feathers' designs as 'simply stunning: beautifully crafted linocuts with bright colours against the snow', but lamented 'If only I could buy them. Most rural lovers of the countryside and its wildlife will never have seen the stamps, because they are only available from urban post offices with a "post & go" facility...' *Bulletin* readers will be familiar with Gillmor's work from an article in the June 2011 edition ●

Publications





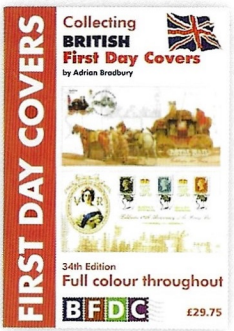


New FDC Catalogue

The 2016 (34th) edition of *Collecting British First Day Covers* is now available from Royal Mail Tallents House (price £29.75). It lists covers from the Penny Black to the Star Wars prestige book of December 2015. The 15-page General Notes section, explaining the different types of postmarks and covers in some detail, is of particular value to new collectors.

The list of commemorative stamp FDCs is arranged in four sections, covering pre-decimal issues (1924-70), decimal issues (1971-98), Millennium issues (1999-2001), and issues from 2001 to date. Definitive issues are listed under sub-sections, including stamp books, prestige books, country stamps, commemorative labels, and self-adhesives experimental issues.

Prices for special handstamps are given for ordinary or commercial covers (including Royal Mail) and official or sponsored covers. Prices are also quoted for relevant circular datestamps and slogan postmarks. Not all special handstamps are illustrated – there are simply too many (as many as 40 or 50 per issue in the 1990s); files illustrating them all can be downloaded from www.bfdc.co.uk/postmarks The four-page index of commemorative issues is a most useful feature of the catalogue. Prices reflect the scarcity of some covers, for example the 1981 National Trusts issue with Humber Bridge special handstamp is ▸



priced £25 on ordinary cover, but £325 on the official cover. A careful study of the listings will tell you what to look out for when going through boxes of first day covers at stamp fairs. The 276 page catalogue, compiled and published by Adrian Bradbury, is, for the first time, in a limited edition of 500 copies, each numbered on the title page.

Order from Royal Mail Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB, quoting *Bulletin* media code CDO ●

Postal Museum News

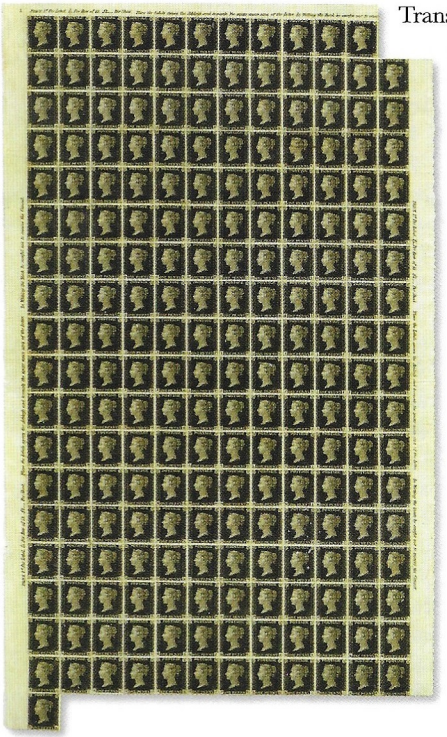
The Postal Museum

The Postal Museum (TPM, formerly British Postal Museum & Archive), located at Freeling House, Phoenix Place, London WC1, near the famous Mount Pleasant sorting office, is open Tuesday-Friday, 10am to 5pm (Thursdays until 7pm) and on the second Saturday of each month (10am to 5pm). The Postal Museum will be moving to new premises nearby in 2017.

Meanwhile a temporary exhibition 'Unstitching the Uniform' is on show at Freeling House until 30 June 2016, and the long-running 'Post Office in the Community' exhibition can be seen at the Blists Hill Victorian Town, Madeley, Telford, Shropshire (see www.blistshill.org and *Bulletin* May 2012).

For a copy of The Postal Museum's 'Events' guide or to book for tours and talks (see previous page), telephone 020 7239 2570 or e-mail info@postalheritage.org.uk.

The Friends of The Postal Museum publish *Cross Post* magazine and arrange behind the scenes visits to stamp printers and other interesting places such as the College of Arms, Apsley House, and the London Transport Museum. For details, visit www.postalheritage.org.uk/page/friends or write to: Friends of The Postal Museum, Freeling House, Phoenix Place, London WC1X 0DL.



The Postal Museum will be attending the World Stamp Show in New York next month to promote GB philately and advocate on behalf of the hobby. As well as a presentation on Postal Reform and the Penny Black, to be delivered by Senior Philatelic Curator Douglas Muir RDP, there are also ambitious plans to take an original registration sheet of Penny Blacks and Two-penny Blues to the United States for the first time in their 175 year history,. The sheets would form part of The Stamps That Changed The World display.

The Postal Museum is asking philatelists in the UK to be part of this historic event by sponsoring a stamp from the original sheets to help get them to New York. A £100 donation will secure the journey across the pond of one stamp and those who donate will receive a personalised certificate and have their names appear on The Postal Museum's stand at the World Stamp Show and on the supporters page on the campaign website.

Full details of this funding project can be found at www.thestampsthatchangedtheworld.org ●

The beautiful game

Philatelists who are also football fans are particularly looking forward to the forthcoming West Ham Commemorative Sheet from Royal Mail. The issue date is not yet fixed, but you will be able to read a Preview in the *Bulletin* as soon as details are finalised.

Royal Mail has issued three Special Stamps – in 1996, 1999 and 2013 –featuring the late Bobby Moore, captain of West Ham and the England team. This year, 50 years since he led the England team to World Cup Victory in 1966, English Heritage plans to install a blue plaque at Bobby Moore's childhood home in Barking ●



News from the Islands

Jersey Post will issue stamps marking the fifth wedding anniversary of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge on 29 April, followed by the 'Think Green' Europa issue on 3 May, and Einstein's Theory of General Relativity on 11 May. Enquiries: Jersey Philatelic Bureau, Freepost JE793, Jersey Post, Jersey JE1 1AF, website: www.jerseystamps.com, telephone 01534 516320.

Guernsey's next issues will be 'Think Green' Europa on 3 May, followed by Victor Hugo (Toilers of the Sea) and SEPAC (Seasons) both on 25 May. Also on 25 May there will be a History of the British monarchy set from Alderney. Enquiries: www.guernseystamps.com, telephone 01481 716486.

On 17 February the Isle of Man Post Office issued a miniature sheet, containing two £1.75 stamps, marking the Battle of Jutland, and six stamps commemorating the Battle of the Somme. Also on that day it issued a special cover for the 60th anniversary of Stampex, featuring Stampex postmarks of yesteryear. The cover bears one of the Isle of Man 'Long to Reign Over Us' stamps with anniversary handstamp, price £10.



Issued last month, another new stamp set from the Isle of Man Post Office features the illustrations of artist and ornithologist Matt Sewell. The stamps depict a selection of 'birds spotted and jotted in the Isle of Man' with an exclusive illustration of the Manx Shearwater. The 'Matt Sewell's Birds' stamps were issued on 24 March, the same day as the publication of his latest book, *Penguins and Other Sea Birds*,

See www.iomstamps.com or telephone 01624 698430 to order ●

New York pretty The stunning cityscape of the Big Apple is the star of this Royal Mail Exhibition Sheet for next month's World Stamp Show in NYC

The world's most filmed city's famous skyline is captured on camera for this Exhibition Sheet celebrating the NY 2016 World Stamp Show in New York next month. All the Big Apple classics – including many movie landmarks – take a starring role on the 20 labels. Central Park, Little Italy, the Brooklyn Bridge and more are accompanied by a First Class Hello Stamp on the Sheet, which premieres at the NY 2016 on 28 May.

But the leading lady must be the Statue of Liberty, soaring majestically over five labels. In this jigsaw-style design each label on the first strip of stamps features a fragment of this historic 305ft-high monument: her torch, head, body, feet and pedestal. Also starring on the Federation of International Philatelists/ Royal Mail New York World Stamp Show 2016 Exhibition Sheet are:

Manhattan Island This 13 mile-long island makes up most of Manhattan, one of the five boroughs of New York City, and is the heart of the Big Apple, featuring Times Square, Greenwich Village, Broadway and Central Park.

New York City Subway The 24-hour subway system's 24 lines take around five million New Yorkers every day, making it the busiest public transport system in the Western world.

The High Line A rotting elevated railway track abandoned for 30 years was transformed into what is now a glorious garden park beautifying the concrete and brick blocks of Manhattan's west side.

Wall Street Follow the gold-plated footsteps of Gordon Gekko in New York's financial district. The New York Stock Exchange is at No.11 Wall Street and at No.48 is the Museum of American Finance. Only in America...

Ellis Island Ellis Island was the famous first port of call for immigrants to the USA. It is estimated that half of the country's population today can trace their ancestry back to an immigrant who arrived via Ellis Island.

Central Park A true NYC icon for locals who stroll and socialise in its 843 acres. Top spots include the Strawberry Fields meditation garden in memory of John Lennon, assassinated nearby in 1980, and the Literary Walk, boasting statues of Robert Burns and Sir Walter Scott.

Central Park Zoo More than 130 species call the zoo their home, from grizzly bears and snow leopards to red pandas and poison dart frogs.

Little Italy is a byword for colourful Italian culture, food and the mob. In *Godfather Part II* the local Feast of San Gennaro festival is the backdrop when Vito Corleone, on his way to a hit, creeps over the rooftops of this Manhattan quarter. Gentrification has led to a flurry of coffee shops and cool boutiques.



Above: the background picture on the Exhibition Sheet features the emerging new World Trade Center

Chinatown Real Chinatown is Columbus Park where the Chinese community practise kung fu, watch Chinese opera troupes and play mah-jongg.

Staten Island Ferry The 25-minute trip to the island from Lower Manhattan offers one of the best views of the Statue of Liberty and New York Harbor.

Brooklyn Botanic Garden 10,000 plants flourish in themed gardens – cacti from Namibia to Bolivia grow in the Desert Pavilion and there are 350 small but perfectly formed trees in the Bonsai Museum.

Metropolitan Museum of Art The 'Met' holds two million art works spanning more than 5,000 years.

Grand Central Terminal With its soaring arches, marble floors and zodiac-themed ceiling featuring 2,500 stars, this station is grand indeed. It has 44 platforms, 67 tracks – and its own tennis club.

Brooklyn Bridge Stretching 6,000ft across the East River, the bridge connecting Brooklyn Heights with Manhattan has starred in dozens of movies, including *Annie Hall* and *The French Connection*.

Coney Island The seaside playground is famous for its Luna Park amusements, Cyclone rollercoaster and cold beer beach picnics in the salty Atlantic air.

Order the Sheet from Tallents House (address on page 256) or visit www.royalmail.com/specialsheets, quoting the *Bulletin* code CDO •

Royal Mail/FIP (International Philatelic Federation) New York World Stamp Show 2016 Exhibition Sheet – Specifications

Date of issue	28 May
Number of stamps	Twenty
Sheet design	Studio Up
Sheet format	Landscape
Stamp format	Portrait
Stamp size	20mm x 24mm
Printer	International Security Printers
Print process	Lithography
Perforations	15 x 14
Phosphor	Bars as appropriate
Gum	Self-adhesive

The 50th glorious year of Royal

We celebrate this special anniversary milestone with a look at the launch of the iconic Machin

It is the ultimate icon of Britain and British Royalty: the Machin portrait of The Queen's head now celebrates its 50th year of adorning our definitive stamps, a symbol of stability and continuity. But the story behind this design, the famous 'Machin head', is in fact one of progress and change. Indeed the Machin story began in 1965 when The Queen agreed to a profile portrait photograph being taken for a fresh stamp design. Postmaster-General Tony Benn announced that a new series of definitives would replace the existing design based on a picture by society photographer Dorothy Wilding. The Wilding portrait may have a nostalgic elegance to our 21st century eye, but in the mid-Sixties it was seen by many as twee, evoking a perfumed world of debutantes who were rapidly becoming a thing of the past; the Queen's portrait on stamps should reflect the changing times by portraying a more modern image of our monarchy.

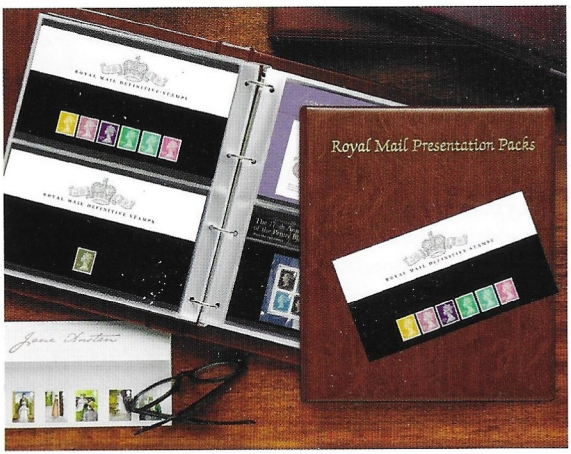
By the end of 1965 the commission for the new portrait had been given to gifted sculptor and painter Arnold Machin. It was agreed he would produce a bas-relief sculpture which, when photographed, would lend a three-dimensional quality to the portrait, even on the small surface area of a stamp. In June 1966 the Stamp Advisory Committee asked Machin to revise his first sculpture by replacing the tiara with the diadem featured in photographs of The Queen taken by John Hedgecoe. As well as adding height and gravitas to the portrait, this gave a fitting sense of continuity, as the same diadem was worn by Queen Victoria on the Penny Black portrait and was used on all the Wilding definitives.

The first Machin design definitive stamp was issued in June 1967 and since then has become one of the most iconic portraits in the world, appearing on more than 20 billion stamps, to the continued delight of dedicated Machin collectors across the globe ●





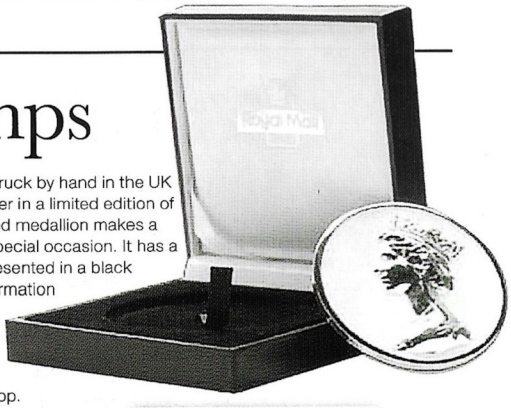
Badges of honour
Above: enamelled pin badges in the Machin design make eye-catching tie pins and brooches. They are available in a variety of colours at £8.95 each, and in a solid sterling silver version for £26.95. On the reverse of each pin is the original issue date, so if you know your Machins you can choose a personalised birthday gift. See the range at www.royalmail.com/shop.



Number one album Right: need a safe haven for your treasured collection? Never fear, you can keep your Machin Presentation Packs in pristine condition with Royal Mail's smart Presentation Pack Album. Price: £19.50 and available from www.royalmail.com/shop.

Mail Machin stamps





Elegant silver keepsake Struck by hand in the UK from 97g of solid sterling silver in a limited edition of 2007, this elegant, hallmarked medallion makes a memorable way to mark a special occasion. It has a diameter of 60mm and is presented in a black leatherette case with an information booklet – ideal for a very traditional silver christening gift that is likely to be kept for a lifetime. Price: £89.95 from www.royalmail.com/shop.



Presentation is everything Above right: every year that new definitive stamps are issued to accord with tariff changes, a new Presentation Pack is made available. This year's Pack contains one Machin only – the Gooseberry Green – and last year's, with six values, is still available. The Packs contain an informative illustrated insert card which explains the history of the Machin head, written by Douglas Muir.



Machin memories Right: with characteristic dedication, Adrian Bradbury has created this Commemorative Stamp Card in celebration of 50 years of Machin definitives.

In pride of place at the top of the front of the Stamp Card is the latest Gooseberry Green definitive. It is cancelled with a special gold first day of issue postmark, which heads a display of Machins taking us back through five decades.

Adrian explains: 'The criterion for deciding which Machin stamps to show on the Card was to include only those for which Royal Mail has provided a first day of issue cover.'

Price: £19.75, including postage and packing to anywhere in the world. You can send a cheque to BFDC Ltd, 3 Link Road, Leicester LE2 3RA or order online at www.bfdc.co.uk/cards.



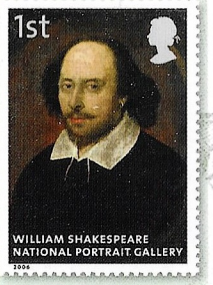
Lines of vision

As Royal Mail raises the curtain on the dramatic Shakespeare issue featuring some of his finest lines, we ask leading actors and directors how The Bard's powerful words of wisdom inspire their work and life

All the world's a stage this year, as the planet commemorates the 400th anniversary of William Shakespeare's death – and Royal Mail joins the drama with a show-stopping stamp issue. The ten-stamp set, out on 5 April, features inspiring speeches and verses from some of his finest plays and poems, including *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Venus and Adonis*. Accompanied by a Presentation Pack written by Britain's leading Shakespeare scholar Sir Jonathan Bate, the issue also includes Stamp Cards, a Stamp Souvenir and limited-edition Coin Cover.

Taking part in the celebrations are some of the country's finest cultural and creative institutions with a spectacular repertoire of productions, performances and major public events. See *Hamlet* at the RSC in Stratford-upon-Avon, *The Merchant of Venice* at The Globe in London, *Much Ado About Nothing* next door at The Rose Playhouse, Verdi's *Macbeth* by the Welsh National Opera in Cardiff, the Shakespeare programme at the Edinburgh International Festival. The BBC is hosting a massive Shakespeare season for armchair aficionados of The Bard.

The *Bulletin* joins in the celebrations overleaf by waxing lyrical with some of Britain's best Shakespeare actors and directors. The stars admire the new stamps and reveal why they are inspired by the wise words on them – lines that still resonate 400 years after their visionary author left the stage for the last time.



Above: this 2006 stamp has a portrait of Shakespeare, attributed to the artist John Taylor. Top: First Day Cover with Tallents House postmark. See page 208 for your philatelic preview of the new Shakespeare issue

Hamlet

Actor Cyril Nri



In Act 1 Scene 3 of *Hamlet* this line concludes a lot of fatherly advice from Polonius to Laertes, who is in a rush to leave for Paris. Polonius's position as chief advisor to Hamlet's murdered father lends weight to his words



What is so significant about the quotation on this stamp? To me, 'To thine own self be true' means not living life as a rehearsal and realising that one's life is a one-off performance with no retakes. It means there's no point in trying to live my life in such a way that I'm tempering my thoughts and actions in pursuit of the Pope's, the government's, my Mum's, my friends' or even my children's approval – as long as I try to be the best person I can be and cause no harm. It's my life, and I can only truly enjoy it whilst being me, not you.

What does Hamlet tell us about the human condition? *Hamlet* is probably the greatest exploration of the human condition that has ever been or ever will be written. If it is done well, this play is not only an exploration of grief, procrastination, love and madness, but it is also an investigative thriller.

What is the pleasure of acting in *Hamlet*? The more selfish pleasure for me is that after 32 years of acting I finally get to tackle Shakespeare's greatest play. I remember, as a young actor, hearing that Daniel Day Lewis was going to drop out of the National Theatre's *Hamlet* as he was ill. When I asked the casting director whether I could be considered to take over, she just smiled and said 'be serious'. It was a different time back then and it was many years before a black face would play the role of the Dane. Paapa Essiedu is a brilliant actor and it is a pleasure to work beside him and watch him triumph in the role.

What has been your greatest Shakespeare moment?-Playing Cassius to Patterson Joseph's Brutus at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, The Brooklyn Academy of Music in New York and the Moscow Arts Theatre – in Gregory Doran's 2012-13 RSC production of *Julius Caesar*. Closely followed by playing Ariel to Max Von Sydow's Prospero in Jonathan Miller's 1988 Old Vic production of *The Tempest*.

Sum up Shakespeare in five words. Every answer to life's questions.

What do you think of the stamps? I'm old school so still write letters and always have stamps in my wallet, but I may just buy an extra set of these particular stamps to keep for all time ●

Cyril Nri plays Polonius in 'Hamlet' at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, from 12 March to 13 August. For details visit www.rsc.org.uk.

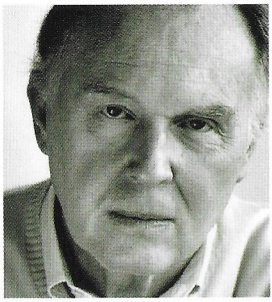
Below: two stamps portray Hamlet contemplating the skull of Yorick, a court jester. The 2s 6d stamp was designed by C&R Ironside, one of the Shakespeare Festival set of 1964. It was the first British stamp to be printed intaglio since 1955. The Europa stamp is from the 1982 British Theatre issue



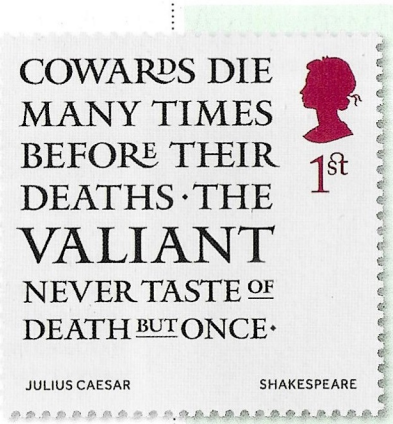


Julius Caesar

Actor Tim Pigott-Smith



In *Julius Caesar* Act 2 Scene 2 Caesar's wife Calpurnia, tormented by ill omens, begs the great general and senator not to visit the Capitol where the assassins await. But Caesar is determined to go, revealing his courage on the path to death.



Below: this *King Lear* stamp – representing a great Shakespeare moment for Tim Pigott-Smith – is one of a set issued in April 2011 to mark the 50th birthday season of the RSC. *Julius Caesar* was one of the first ever plays to be performed at The Globe theatre, which is depicted in a 1995 stamp set





What is so significant about the quotation on this stamp?
The essence of stoicism – so much expressed in so few words.

What does *Julius Caesar* tell us about the human condition?
That the idealist and the politician are not natural bedfellows, and that the world will always be an imperfect place.

What is the pleasure of acting in *Julius Caesar*?
Its lucid language taps into a well of profound emotion.

What has been your greatest Shakespeare moment?
It's really hard to choose between playing Leontes, Prospero and Lear but, in the end, it must be Lear – playing the last act of *King Lear* at the West Yorkshire Playhouse in Leeds in 2011, with a very old friend, Bernard Lloyd, as Gloucester.

I cannot think of a greater passage in dramatic literature than the last two acts of that astounding play. It deals with some fundamentals of the human condition at its most raw and vulnerable: the power of the mind, the power of the imagination, the kindness of strangers, the depiction of a mind going or gone in and out of lucidity, the pain of madness to both the sufferer and the observer, the joy of reconciliation and the pain of loss, the incomprehensibility of human evil, the brief glimpse of our need to rebuild shattered worlds.

Sum up Shakespeare in five words. Compassion, poetry, words, drama, compassion.

What do you think of the stamps?
It's a beautiful collection.

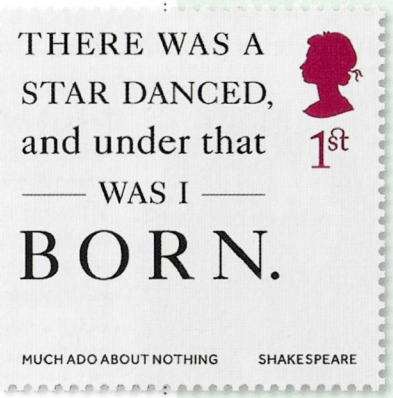
Tim Pigott-Smith stars as Caesar in a new three-part production of William Shakespeare's 'Julius Caesar' broadcast on Radio 4 this spring as part of the BBC's far-reaching celebration of Shakespeare's work. BBC Director General Tony Hall says that the aim of the BBC Shakespeare Festival is 'to make Shakespeare irresistible to everybody'. For more details, search at www.bbc.co.uk.

Much Ado About Nothing

Director Alex Pearson



In Act 2 Scene 1 of battle-of-the-sexes rom-com *Much Ado About Nothing*, feisty, funny feminist Beatrice reveals her cheerful world view in the face of adversity, including being orphaned at a young age.



What is so significant about the quotation on this stamp?
What I really like about Beatrice's words is that they express the joy of the creation of life, and a desire to see life positively. Yes, life throws obstacles at you and for Beatrice this has happened very early on, but here she's saying yes, I've had my troubles, but I've come out of them. I'm taking the happiness that life also brings and I'm making it mine.

What does *Much Ado About Nothing* tell us about the human condition?
That love is the answer. And if you have love and intelligence like Beatrice, you are always going to come out on top. *Much Ado About Nothing* also shows us that Shakespeare was an early feminist because in it there are such strong female roles, women are shown to be more loyal than men think they are, and that it's men not women who are actually more fickle.

What is the pleasure of directing *Much Ado About Nothing*?
It's a pleasure to be working on a play with such powerful female characters and strong emotions. Shakespeare is exploring the battle of the sexes, which still very much exists today, and I enjoy working to portray that to a modern audience.

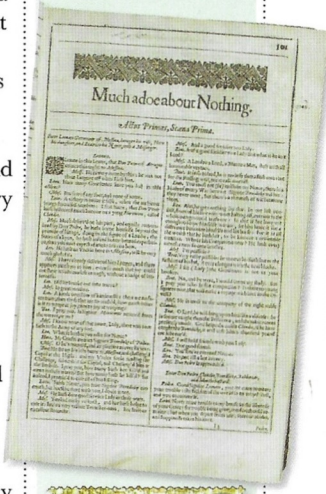
What has been your greatest Shakespeare moment?
At the age of six I saw a production of *Much Ado About Nothing* with my family when it was performed by the RSC at the Barbican. This was the first Shakespeare play I saw and I just fell in love with it. It was a moment when I knew I had to work in theatre, it led to the shaping of the rest of my life. I loved the richness of the language and also the passion that the actors had for performing it. And I also remember the pace of the play – it just flew.

Sum up Shakespeare in five words. It's forever relevant for humanity.

What do you think of the stamps? For Shakespeare's 400th death anniversary it's a brilliant concept. It's a really fabulous collection of quotes that inspire daily life. Especially the Beatrice quote and the *Hamlet* one, 'To thine own self be true'. And *The Tempest* too: 'We are such stuff as dreams are made on'. Who wouldn't want to receive a quote like that on a letter? They are great words in a simple and effective design ●

Alex Pearson directs 'Much Ado About Nothing' at The Rose Playhouse, London. Performances run from 5 to 29 April. For details visit www.rosetheatre.org.uk.

Below: the first page of *Much Ado About Nothing*, printed in the Second Folio of 1632, and The Rose theatre stamp of 1995. The Rose Theatre was built in 1587 and was rediscovered beneath a building site in 1989





The Tempest

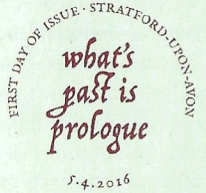
RSC Artistic Director Greg Doran



Photograph by Ellie Kurttz

All-powerful Prospero, the island magus, explains to young Ferdinand, lover of his teenage daughter Miranda, the fragility of humanity and the inevitability of final oblivion in Act 4 Scene 1 of *The Tempest*.





What is so significant about the quotation on this stamp? Prospero's line is deceptive in its simplicity. It aches with both acceptance of the fleeting nature of our lives, and a yielding resignation to the inevitability of its conclusion. For Shakespeare's characters, life can be 'a walking shadow', or a 'great stage of fools', but here, more gently, it is a dream, and its ending is merely sleep.

What does *The Tempest* tell us about the human condition? That we all have both base and higher instincts: the capacity for cruelty, and desire for revenge, alongside the ability to forgive and to love.

What is the pleasure of directing *The Tempest*?

The challenge of matching the imaginative worlds that Shakespeare evokes is exciting. This autumn, I have invited both Intel and The Imaginarium Studios to join us at the RSC in deploying the very latest cutting edge digital technology to create Prospero's island, to make Ariel fly, and the ship sink – a 'brave new-world' for actors and audiences alike.

What has been your greatest Shakespeare moment?

In *King Lear*, the scene where Edgar tells his despairing blind father, Gloucester, that he is on the edge of a high cliff, and watches him as he throws himself off. It is one of the most profoundly moving scenes in the entire canon.

Sum up Shakespeare in five words. He was for all time.

What do you think about the stamps?

Dr Johnson once said that trying to persuade someone of the greatness of Shakespeare's genius by merely quoting him would be like trying to persuade someone to buy your house by showing them a brick.

Nevertheless these beautifully drafted quotations are a vivid reminder of Shakespeare's ability to articulate 360 degrees of the human condition.

Greg Doran directs The Tempest at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, showing from 8 November 2016 to 21 January 2017. For details of the RSC's 2016 programme visit www.rsc.org.uk.

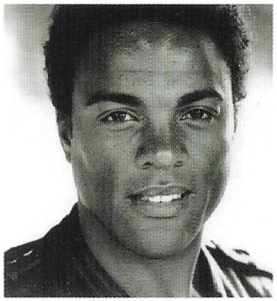
Below: a 2011 stamp celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Royal Shakespeare Company also has a quotation from *The Tempest*; the dramatic theatre poster advertising the current RSC production



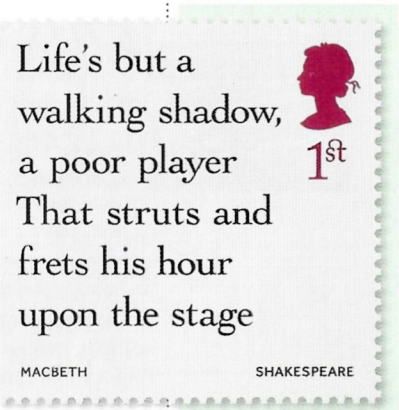


Macbeth

Actor Ray Fearon



With a fistful of murders to his credit, including the King of Scotland's, and hearing news of Lady Macbeth's death, a haunted, world-weary Macbeth reflects upon the transient nature of existence in Act 5, Scene 5.





What is so significant about the quotation on this stamp? It is a great metaphor for life, particularly for me being an actor. You are on stage, you act the play and then the play is over. We live and we die, we are here and then we are not.

I felt exactly like that when my father passed away. I remember thinking, oh my God, that's it, finished. That's his life, something that went in a flash and then it was gone. This is the greatness of Shakespeare, he is talking a book's worth of ideas in just a few lines.

What does *Macbeth* tell us about the human condition? That ambition is a dangerous thing. The Macbeths take a huge risk in killing the king and if you do something extreme in life you have to accept the consequences. In this case the fear about what they've done grips them and haunts them. They can't face the consequences, and in the end fear turns them inside out and kills them.

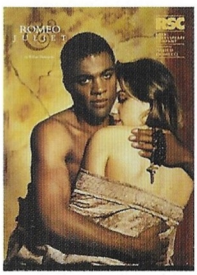
What is the pleasure of acting in *Macbeth*? It's a short play and a fast play which makes it exciting. *Macbeth* goes at extreme speed, it's a hurtling of events. It also has the best poetic verse. The poetry is just extraordinary.

What has been your greatest Shakespeare moment? Playing Romeo in the Roman amphitheatre in Verona on the final leg of a one-year RSC world tour of *Romeo and Juliet* in 1998. It was summer and there I was on stage talking about the moon and the stars, and I looked up at the real moon and the stars in the night sky above me.

Sum up Shakespeare in five words. He is a complete genius.

What do you think of the stamps? We use these ideas and views in everyday language to philosophise about ourselves, so I think the stamps are terrific.

Ray Fearon plays Macbeth at the Globe Theatre, London, from 18 June to 1 October. Details: www.shakespearesglobe.com ●



Below: two UK stamps pay tribute to *Romeo and Juliet* – a David Gentleman design issued in 1964, and one of the 2011 RSC 50th Anniversary set. Below left: RSC poster with Fearon in the role of Romeo





This month in History

John Holman revisits a striking stamp set of 40 years ago, whose subjects remain inspiring and relevant

On 28 April 1976, the Post Office issued four stamps honouring social reformers. At first glance they appeared rather drab and unappealing, but the stark design has stood the test of time and the issue is worth a second look as the stories behind the stamps and the genesis of the issue itself are of considerable interest.

The background to this issue is told in the book *Royal Mail Stamps* (published in 1980), written by Stuart Rose who was the Post Office Design Director from 1968 to 1976. In April 1974 the Post Office received a request from the newly appointed Secretary of State for Industry, Tony Benn, for a set of stamps devoted to trade unionism to be issued on 1 May 1975. Benn had previously been Postmaster General (1964 to 1966) and in his new role was the government minister ultimately in charge of the Post Office, by then a public corporation rather than a government department. Benn could not insist on the issue, his only power being to veto any stamps deemed likely to embarrass the government. The Stamp Advisory Committee was not in favour of a trade union set per se and asked for research into an issue devoted to pioneering, reform and social development. The aim was to issue a series of stamps on British Pioneering, beginning with social reform in which trade unionism would be a component.

Designs were commissioned from David Gentleman, quoted by Rose as saying: 'I believe trade unionism is a very important historic force.'

One set of designs used figures of working men based on engravings and prints in union archives and from beautifully designed membership certificates and sheets. Another set used the more abstract concept of shapes, the simple basic unit on the first stamp becoming more complex on subsequent values. A third set of designs featured hands – the basic tools involved in all work, both manual and creative. (Four of Gentleman's early 'Hands' designs, captioned 'British Trade Unions', are reproduced in Rose's book.)

Stamps repeated on the printed sheet gave Gentleman the basis of his idea of conveying the contrast between the human scale of the people involved and the monumental, all-embracing nature of the evils that the social reformers sought to put right. The pulleys of factory machinery and the chains and bars of prisons, spread over the whole sheet, could make an all-enveloping pattern.

In his book *Artwork* (2002), Gentleman notes that he 'drew the colours as separations, so that the textures – of coal, brick, stone, and cast-iron – would be very clear. The coal seams' layered texture came by drawing one separation with a soft black crayon over our endlessly scrubbed kitchen table ... The children's hands (10p stamp) belonged to our younger daughters; I began by drawing them and, when they eventually got fed up with that, I photographed them'.



Pioneering trade unions The 8½p stamp, showing a miner's hands clutching a pickaxe hewing coal, is dedicated to Thomas Hepburn (c.1795-1864), leader of the first trade union of Northumberland and Durham Coal Miners at Hetton in



1831. He was probably the first trade unionist to call a strike – in protest about men being sacked and evicted from their homes for trifling offences. After a lifelong struggle, during which he won shorter working hours for the miners in the north-east, Hepburn lost his own job when the strike failed and was only reinstated when he ceased union activities.



Improving factory conditions The 10p stamp, showing hands amid mill-wheels, honours Robert Owen (1771-1858), who by the age of 19 was manager of a large cotton mill in Manchester. As manager and part-owner of the New Lanark Mill near Glasgow (shown on the 32p Industrial Archaeology stamp in 1989), he greatly improved conditions for the operatives with better housing and sanitation, reduced hours of work, sickness and old age insurance, and educational and recreational facilities. Later he founded several communal villages, including New Harmony in Indiana. Owen did not achieve all his objectives, but his ideas inspired the modern cooperative movement.



Eradicating exploitation A hand with brush sweeping a chimney on the 11p stamp reminds us of the work of the 7th Earl of Shaftesbury (1801-1885) in reforming 'slave labour' by women and children.

A philanthropist and evangelical Tory MP, he entered Parliament in 1826 and promoted numerous acts of Parliament concerning social reform, including the Mines and Colleries Act of 1842 which excluded women and boys under 13 from working in the mines, and the Better Treatment of Lunatics Act 1845 which called for greater tolerance towards the mentally sick. He was instrumental in the ending of young boys sweeping chimneys and assisted Florence Nightingale in army welfare. ▸



Reforming prisons Finally the 13p stamp, showing chained hands clutching the bars of a prison window, is a tribute to Elizabeth Fry (1780-1845), the Quaker philanthropist who devoted her life to prison reform and the rehabilitation of criminals. In 1813 she visited the notorious Newgate Prison in London and found 300 women living in squalor. She introduced women supervisors, and provided prison education and employment. Her reforms were eventually adopted in many countries, not just in Britain. Elizabeth Fry has featured on the Bank of England £5 note since 2002.

Stuart Rose described the set as 'perhaps the most imaginative pictorial issue the Post Office has ever published', although he noted 'they were, I suppose, the most unpopular stamps ever issued, at least with some people'. He devoted some four pages of his book to this issue whereas some sets barely receive a mention. Two letters from readers about the designs were published in the *Bulletin* in July 1976. One described them as 'outstanding designs', another as 'plain miserable.'

In a reply to *Bulletin* readers Rose noted that the designs echoed the miserable state of affairs the social reformers were concerned to change. He asked should we 'gloss over the situation pretending it never existed by producing "pretty"' stamps? Blame the Post Office, by all means, for choosing a miserable subject, but not David Gentleman for finding such a brilliant answer.'

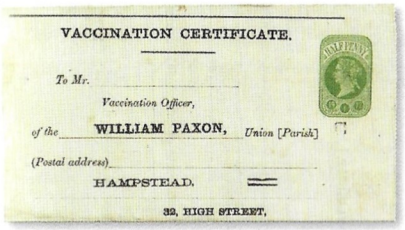
In *Artwork*, David Gentleman acknowledged the stamps 'were attacked for being dark and gloomy... the right-wing journalist Auberon Waugh had a lengthy go at them in *The Spectator*, which cheered me up'.

The stamps were printed by Harrisons, the 8½p and 10p in four colours, the others in three. In fact two cylinders (1B and 2E) were used for the black colour on the 8½p value. On all values the design extended about 2mm into all four sheet margins, as with the Polar Explorer stamps of 1972 and 1973. The 8½p is recorded in the *Gibbons Specialised* and *Stoneham* catalogues with horizontal perforations displaced by about 6mm upwards, resulting in stamps with no face value, value at top of the design or bisected. The 10p exists with horizontal perforation displaced upwards so that the value appears near the top.

The SG catalogue notes 'major colour shifts are frequently seen in this issue', and the *Pierron Errors Catalogue* lists the 8½p with a 2mm shift of black (cylinder 2E) creating the impression of two sets of hands; about 100 mint examples are known. Just one constant variety is listed in the SG *Specialised Catalogue* – two small white patches on the piece of coal above the pick on the 8½p stamp.

The Post Office provided a first day cover cancelled with a Philatelic Bureau handstamp depicting interlocked chains. No special handstamps were sponsored for this issue, but collectors favour those with 'First Day of Issue' postmarks of Durham (mining connection), Folkestone (where Lord Shaftesbury died), Norwich (the birthplace of Elizabeth Fry), and Rochdale (homeland of the cooperative movement). Also sought-after are covers with operational handstamps of New Lanark, Newtown (Owen's birthplace) and Shaftesbury. A presentation pack was produced, and a stamp card of the 8½p value, sold at 7p.

The Social Reformers stamp set was withdrawn one year after issue, with sales ranging from just over seven million of the 13p stamp to 41.25 million of the 8½p, then the first-class UK letter rate. Some 117,880 packs were sold ●


VACCINATION CERTIFICATE.

To Mr.

Vaccination Officer,

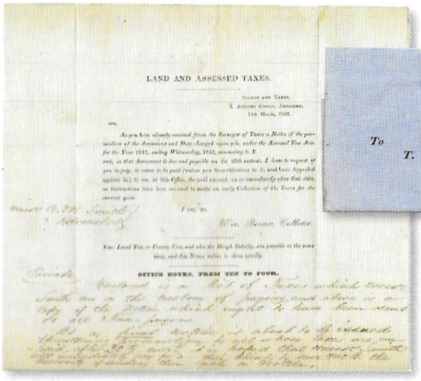
of the WILLIAM PAXON, Union [Parish]

(Postal address)

HAMPSTEAD.

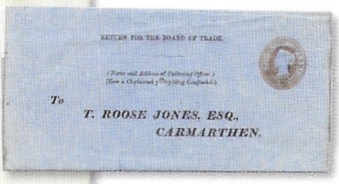
32, HIGH STREET,

Fig 1


LAND AND ASSESSED TAXES.

OFFICE HOURS, FROM TEN TO FOUR.

Fig 2


To

T. ROOSE JONES, ESQ.,

CARMARTHEN.

Fig 3

O is for... official stationery

Colin Baker exposes a rich collecting seam in the history of official government letters and forms

We have all received letters from government departments on tax or health matters. Official correspondence is now sent with a PPI 'stamp', by private contractors under the 'Condition 9 Access' scheme, and delivered by Royal Mail. Previously official mail used the Crown Circle to show that postage had been paid. This was brought into use at the beginning of the 20th century and these are collectable, even though they do not indicate the value of postage paid.

Official prepaid envelopes first appeared in 1840 following the introduction of the Penny Post and the withdrawal of free postage for Members of Parliament. Rather than giving money to their clerks to pay the postage, MPs could buy prepaid envelopes which had to be posted at the Houses of Parliament.

In the next few years, some Mulready letter sheets were used by tax offices and other government departments, but it was not until 1860 that embossed stamps began to be used on official correspondence. These paid the postage both to and from the addressees on government questionnaires and other official documents.

In 1871 the recently introduced ½d newspaper wrapper stamp was used on smallpox vaccination forms. A large number of forms were needed and it was much quicker to print this ½d stamp rather than individually emboss a stamp on each form. Many government forms used the same ½d stamp, including agricultural returns and Admiralty recruitment forms.

By the turn of the century the number of official items being sent through the post had risen sharply and a new system was devised to show postage had been met: the Crown Circle. That should have been the end of official postal stationery. But it continued over the years where letters and postcards were to be posted back to a department and the Crown Circle would not have been appropriate. Even today, official envelopes are still found paid with a postal stationery stamp ●

Colin Baker welcomes your enquiries by email at pss.secretary@gmail.com

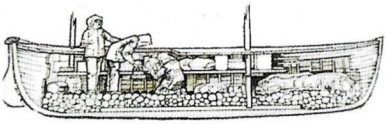
Fig 1: vaccination certificate complete with ½d newspaper wrapper stamp
Fig 2: 1842 1d Mulready letter sheet sent from Aberdeen tax office
Fig 3: an agricultural return in Welsh prepaid by penny pink stamp

Symbol of valour Andrew Neish was inspired by a stamp capturing Shackleton's courage when he wrote a *Bulletin* article on the *Endurance* Expedition issue

THE BITTER ICEBOUND HELL OF THE ANTARCTIC – and the pluck of the men preparing to defy it – is frozen forever in this tiny monochrome tableau about courage. The dogged bravery of Ernest Shackleton and his men is tellingly framed by the snow-white borders of the £1.52 value from the *Endurance* Expedition set. His bid to make the world's first coast-to-coast crossing of Antarctica has ended in disaster. His expedition ship *Endurance* has been crushed and sunk by millions of tons of ice. The 28 crew are marooned on a remote, uninhabited island off the unforgiving Antarctic coast, languishing at the bottom of the world doomed to die.

Shackleton, affectionately known as The Boss by his men, will not allow this to happen. The stamp shows the *Endurance* lifeboat *James Caird*, a mere 22ft long and open to the elements, being launched in April 1916. In it Shackleton and five of his men will sail 800 miles in the world's stormiest ocean to South Georgia, where they intend to borrow a ship, then return with it to rescue the rest of the crew. Shackleton ultimately saves them all.

Understated heroism The stamp image of Shackleton and his companions struggling in icy surf to launch the *Caird* says it all. You can see determination against all the odds in every limb. The desperation of their struggle strikes a very emotional chord with me. I also love the tone of understated heroism conveyed by the caption on this beautifully executed stamp. 'Setting out for South Georgia' is so modest, almost everyday. As though a few chaps were setting out for a summer afternoon jaunt down the Thames to Pangbourne. It somehow encapsulates the unassuming courage we British are rightly famous for.



Below: preparations to strengthen and stabilise the *James Caird* with higher sides and extra ballast

Researching the story behind this stamp for my article in January's issue of the *Bulletin* revealed to me the enormity of the *Caird* crew's achievement. During the 17-day voyage





You can visit the James Caird, now on display at Dulwich College's new science block. Visits must be booked in advance. Contact: reception@dulwich.org.uk.

through the raging Southern Ocean they survived 40ft, 50mph waves, eating mainly rations intended for their pack dogs, baling out seawater all night to prevent them sinking. Ice lay 15in thick on the deck. They hacked it off three times a day.

Personal connections The *James Caird* is close to my heart for two rather more personal reasons. First, Shackleton is an alumnus of my son Alex's school, Dulwich College in south-east London. On my first visit there I was delighted to discover this, and the *James Caird* on display in the North Cloister. What could be more inspiring for Alex and his friends than Shackleton and the *Caird*, these twin symbols of pure British pluck?



Picture by Daniel Shearing

Second, I was also intrigued to discover that a Scot, one Harry McNeish, was the carpenter on the *Endurance* and one of the heroes accompanying Shackleton on the voyage of the *James Caird*. He cleverly customised the *Caird* to give it more chance of surviving the journey, reinforcing the keel, building up the hull sides, and extending the deck with broken-up sledges.



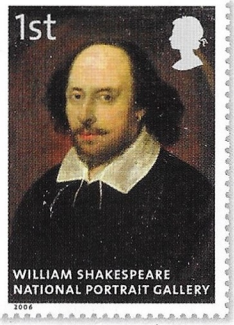
Above: the 2016 *James Caird* stamp, the boat on show at Dulwich College, and a 1972 stamp from South Georgia

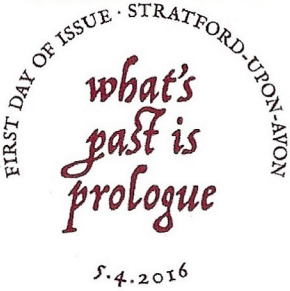
I do not know for certain if Harry McNeish was definitely related to my branch of the McNeish clan from Perthshire. But I hope so. Previous research into my ancestors exposed them as 17th century bandits who were almost entirely massacred in revenge by their arch-enemies the McNabs after we stole their chieftain's Christmas vittles in an ambush.

I would very much like to think that my son will take after Harry and The Boss, not those Perthshire bad boys ●













SHAKESPEARE STAMP QUIZ

Quills at the ready?



Step back in stamp time to answer our Bard-themed questions on the Royal Mail issues above. We have ten lovely Shakespeare Presentation Packs – as shown on page 243 – for the winners

1 What method of printing was used in the 1964 Shakespeare Festival stamp above?
a) Taglioni
b) Linogait
c) Intaglio

2 The first of three UK stamps celebrating *Romeo and Juliet* shows the famous balcony in...
a) Venice
b) Vauxhall
c) Verona

3 The quotation from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* on the 2011 stamp here reads: 'My heart is as true as...'
a) stew
b) steel
c) stars

4 The quotation on the first day postmark is taken from which play?
a) *The Tempest*
b) *Titus and Andronicus*
c) *Taming of the Shrew*

5 The actor playing Polonius in the 2016 RSC production of *Hamlet* speaks the words on the new stamp above. What is his name?
a) Cyril Fletcher
b) Breakfast Cyril
c) Cyril Nri

6 The Chandos portrait of William Shakespeare appeared in the 2006 stamp set celebrating the 150th anniversary of the National Portrait Gallery. To which artist is the picture attributed?
a) John Taylor
b) Tinker Tailor
c) Taylor Swift

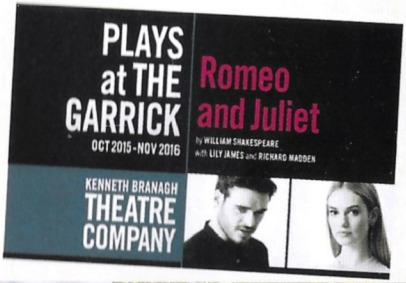
7 Five Elizabethan theatres were in the 1995 stamp set marking the reconstruction of Shakespeare's Globe. Which theatre is shown here?
a) The Rose
b) The Swan
c) The Hope

HOW TO ENTER Send your answers, with your contact details, marked 'Bulletin April Shakespeare Quiz', to Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB or email rmbulletin@rocketmail.com. **CLOSING DATE** 3 May 2016. ●

ROMEO AND JULIET COMPETITION

WIN a spectacular London theatre break

- Top-price seats at the historic Garrick Theatre for Kenneth Branagh's enchanting production of *Romeo and Juliet* featuring Richard Madden, Lily James, Meera Syal and Sir Derek Jacobi
- Two nights of luxury at the five-star Royal Horseguards Hotel in the heart of the capital







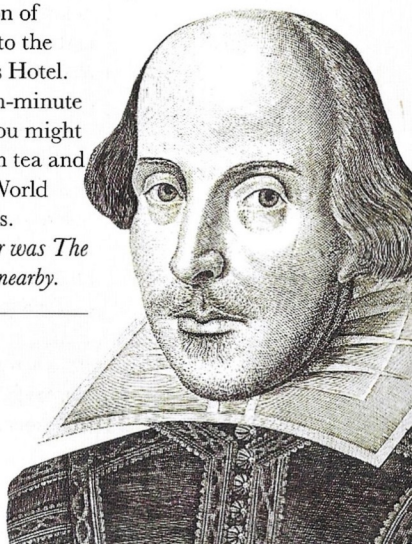


To mark the Shakespeare anniversary celebrations of 2016 we have joined forces with the Kenneth Branagh Theatre Company and Guoman Hotels to bring you the chance to win an exciting two-night theatre break in London. Win our competition and you and a companion will enjoy top-flight seats for Kenneth Branagh's much-anticipated production of *Romeo and Juliet* at the Garrick. Afterwards you can treat yourself to the comfort of your luxurious room at the five-star Royal Horseguards Hotel.

In a splendid location facing the River Thames, the hotel is a ten-minute stroll from the Garrick and ideal for exploring London – though you might want to linger at the Horseguards for the award-winning afternoon tea and discover its fascinating history: it was the HQ of MI6 in the First World War and guests have included Gladstone, Churchill and H G Wells.

For your chance to win, simply answer this question: *In what year was The Rose theatre first built in London? Clue: seek at a highly sinister elevation nearby.*

Above: the *Bulletin* theatre break includes a visit to the Garrick for Branagh's *Romeo and Juliet* and a stay at the Royal Horseguards Hotel



HOW TO ENTER Send your answer, with your contact details, marked 'Bulletin/Romeo and Juliet', to Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB or by email to rmbulletin@rocketmail.com

CLOSING DATE 1 June 2016. Terms and conditions apply; see overleaf ●

Royal Mail stamp issues and withdrawals

5 April



Issue Shakespeare Stamps (10 x 1st Class, 2 x se-tenant strips of five stamps), Presentation Pack, Stamp Cards (6 in set), Stamp Souvenir, Coin Covers (3 x £2 coins, 10 x 1st Class stamps). Preview: page 208. Feature: page 242.

7 April — **Withdrawal** Stamp Souvenir Shackleton and the *Endurance* Expedition. Details: page 102.

21 April



Issue HM The Queen's 90th Birthday: Stamps (3 x 1st Class, 3 x £1.52, 2 x se-tenant strips of three), Miniature Sheet (4 x 1st Class), Presentation Pack, Press Sheet, Prestige Stamp Book, Limited Edition Prestige Stamp Book, Stamp Souvenir, Stamp Sheet Souvenir, Stamp Cards (11 in set), 3 x Coin Covers all with Miniature Sheet, Commemorative Document. Details: pages 196 and 259.

25 April — **Issue** Anzac Commemorative Sheet (10 x 1st Class with information backing card). Preview: page 218.

6 May — **Withdrawal** 175th Anniversary of the Penny Black Miniature Sheet (2 x Penny Black and 2 x Two Penny Blue), Press Sheet (15 x Miniature Sheet).

13 May — **Withdrawal** FIP Exhibition Sheet – London Europhilex.

17 May



Issue Animail Miniature Sheet: 6 die-cut Special Stamps (2 x 1st Class, 2 x £1, 2 x £1.33), Presentation Pack, Stamp Cards (7 in set), Stamp Sheet Souvenir. Preview: page 228.

28 May — **Issue** 2016 FIP Exhibition Sheet – New York (20 x 1st Class). Preview: page 238.

28 May — **Issue** Post & Go New York design (from Sea Travel) and Post & Go Union Flag, both in Collectors Strips of six with overprint 'World Stamp Show NY2016'.



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

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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Royal Mail

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WIN a spectacular London theatre break + TEN Shakespeare Presentation Packs

SEE PAGES 254 & 255

Rules and regulations 1 Promotions are open to all readers aged 18 and over, 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. The cost of transport to and from a prize venue, where applicable, is not included. 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) 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.