BRITISH PHILATELIC

Bulletin

The magazine for collectors of UK stamps

VOLUME 51 NUMBER 5 | JANUARY 2014 | £1.50

Previews: Working Horses • Spring Blooms • Classic Locos



Can he fix it? Yes he can! Adrian Steel on rebuilding our stamp heritage

Read all about the New Year special issue: Classic Children's TV

JOHN HOLMAN UK STAMP SCENE • DOUGLAS MYALL ON MACHINS • WIN NEW SPECIALS

Issues and withdrawals



Cover: Adrian Steel, Director of the BPMA, talks to Andrew Neish on page 144. Photograph by Conor Masterson.

Bob the Builder™ © 2014 HIT Entertainment Limited and Keith Chapman. The Classic Children's TV special stamp issue is released this month. See page 112 for philatelic preview and page 152 for the story behind the stamps.

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7 January	**Issue** Classic Children's TV: 12 x 1st Class Stamps, Presentation Pack, Stamp Cards, Medal Cover.
10 January	**Withdrawal** London Underground: 12 x 1st Class Stamps, Miniature Sheet, Stamps and Miniature Sheet Presentation Pack, Stamp Cards, Stamp Book (4 x Machins 1st Class and 2 x London Underground Stamps).
4 February	**Issue** Working Horses: 2 x 1st Class, 2 x 88p, 2 x £1.28 Stamps, Presentation Pack, Stamp Cards.
19 February	**Issue** Post & Go British Flora 1 – Spring Blooms: Stamps.
20 February	**Issue** Classic Locomotives of Wales: Miniature Sheet (1st Class, 78p, 88p and £1.28 Stamps), Stamp Book (6 x 1st Class – 2 x Locomotives and 4 x Machins), Presentation Pack, Stamp Cards.
20 February	**Issue** Classic Locomotives of the United Kingdom: Prestige Stamp Book.
21 February	**Withdrawal** The Work of Jane Austen: Stamps, Presentation Pack, Stamp Cards.
25 February	**Issue** Middlesex County Cricket Club: Commemorative Sheet (10 x 1st Class Firework Stamps).

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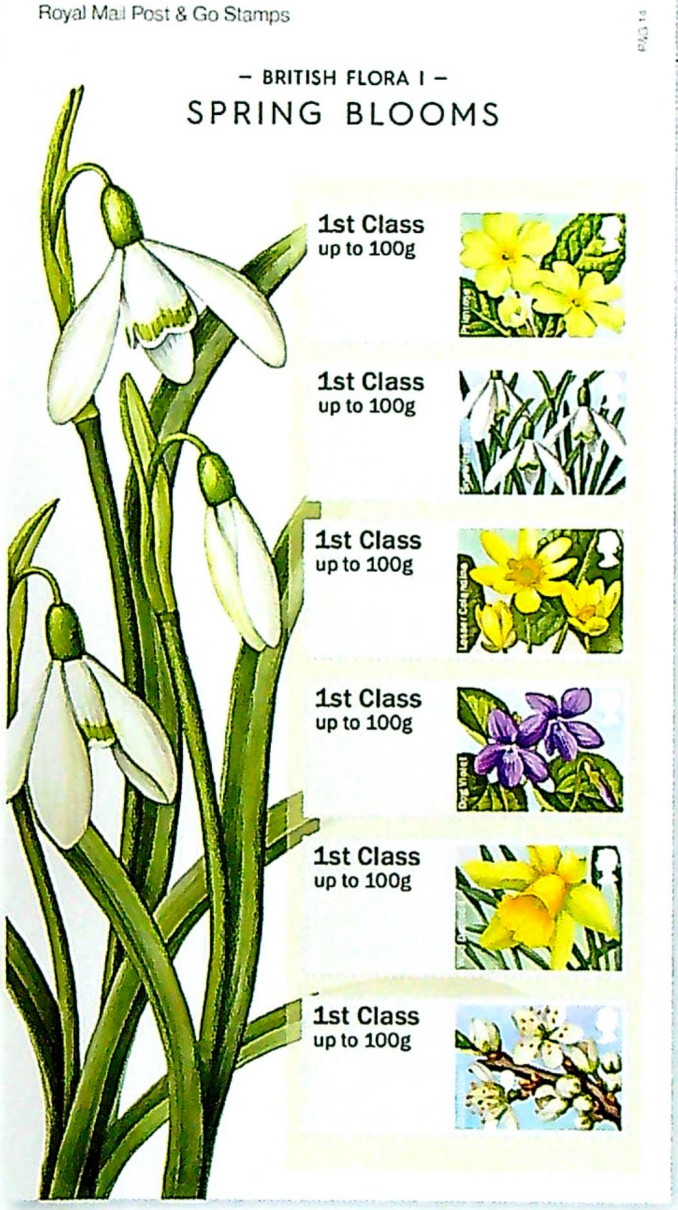
Many products can be ordered on the Royal Mail website: www.royalmail.com/stamps. Selected items are available at Post Office branches and philatelic outlets at main post offices in: Bristol, Cambridge, Chester, Colchester, Croydon, Durham, Edinburgh, Exeter, Glasgow, Grimsby, Harrogate, London (Eastcheap and Trafalgar Square), Norwich, Nottingham, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Southend on Sea, Stevenage, Stroud, Trowbridge, Truro, York and Newport, Isle of Wight.

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Post & grow Spring Blooms is the first of the very pretty Post & Go flowers series **135**

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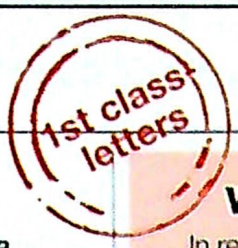
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Correspondence



Bond, stirred not shaken

I find it rather disconcerting that a person such as Ayn Rand should be celebrated as a philatelist in December *Bulletin* [page 110]. Rand's so-called philosophy was to regard selfishness as a virtue and to condemn acts of altruism towards our fellow human beings. Look after number one, without exception, was her view of life. She writes of a great sense of 'freedom and privacy', which displays her strong belief in individualism, yet then goes on to write about the 'brotherhood' among collectors, a brotherhood which elsewhere she would regard as a vice.

She also believed that governments should only involve themselves with the courts and the armed forces. Everything else should be a private matter: health, education, police, prisons, transport, social security, old age pensions etc. However, she proved herself to be a total hypocrite towards the end of her life by applying for social security and Medicare.

The irony is that this woman who thought that governments should not interfere in any way in people's lives was quite happy to collect pieces of paper issued by her own government, and perhaps governments throughout the world.

Can we next have an article about a left-wing political nutcase who collected stamps? How about Pol Pot, was he a philatelist? Rant over.
A Bond by email

A good rant, Mr Bond! Only sorry that we have had to cut out some of it to allow another letter on the page. Firstly, I must make it clear that it was not our intention to celebrate Ayn Rand's philosophy, but to inspire readers to contribute some personal reflections. We felt the irony of her eloquent expression of the pleasures derived from stamp collecting to be sufficiently astonishing to interest *Bulletin* readers.

We may discount Pol Pot as a philatelist; the Cambodian Ministry of Post ceased to exist under the Khmer Rouge and no stamps were issued from late 1975 to 1978.
Kate Shaw, Publishing Editor

Why I collect stamps

In response to your request on page 110:

When I was a boy, before computers and TV, my first reference library was a set of encyclopaedias. I pored over information on a whole raft of matters, but they were the same encyclopaedias year after year.

My elder sister collected stamps so I copied her and was rewarded by my parents with an album and an envelope of mixed stamps of the world. I was immediately absorbed into an life-long hobby. The stamps were far richer in information than any set of published encyclopedias. I looked forward to receiving more stamps at each birthday and Christmas.

Who would have believed that the Finns called their country Suomi, even though we Welsh know our country is Cymru? Who would have guessed what a bundle of rods meant to an Italian?

Unknown symbols, people, animals and flags – all inspired research. And to a small boy, questions, always questions. So I learned geography, language, history, currency, mathematics, art and politics, medicine, current affairs, astronomy and science – all from tiny colourful labels that I could mount in albums.

Today, even when I can use Google and Wikipedia, I still learn from my stamps. Stamps not only inspire questions, they tell you what questions to ask.
John Graham, Belgium

Greetings from Mithapur

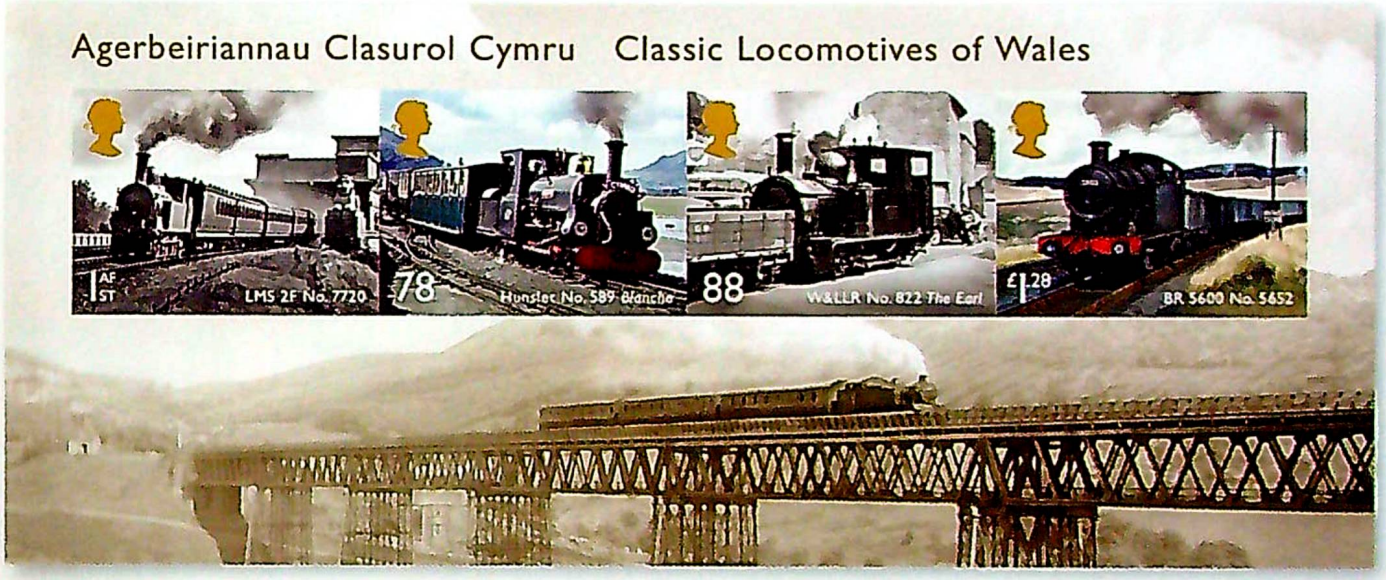
... The November edition of *Bulletin* was one of the best I have read in 20 years. Please convey my appreciation to Fadi Mikhail.
Pradip Jain, Mithapur, India

Many thanks for your letter and enclosures. Modesty prevents us from printing it in full.

Keep the mail coming...

The Editor welcomes your letters and the senders of those published will receive philatelic delights as a thank-you. Send your letters to: The Editor, *British Philatelic Bulletin*, Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB. You can also send e-mails to bulletin.enquiries@royalmail.com

Miniature railways The last in the Royal Mail series of Classic Locomotives Miniature Sheets tells the story of steam trains in Wales



The Classic Locomotives of Wales Miniature Sheet steams majestically into service on 20 February to complete Royal Mail's celebration of a golden age of railways. This final fascinating issue in the Classic Locomotives series follows sheets on steam engines of England, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and features a First Day Cover with Filler Card (£4.72), Presentation Pack (£4.05) and Stamp Cards (£2.25).

A beautiful Prestige Stamp Book (£13.97) brings together locos of all four countries of the UK, along with a special definitives pane (see overleaf). Also available from 20 February is the George V Name Plate Cover (£14.95), the fifth in a series of five.

Classic Locomotives of Wales Miniature Sheet – Specifications

Date of issue	20 February
Number of stamps	4
Sheet design	Delaney Design Consultants
Sheet price	£3.54
Sheet size	179mm x 74mm
Stamp format	Landscape
Stamp size	41mm x 30mm
Printer	International Security Printers
Print process	Lithography
Perforations	14.5 x 14
Phosphor	All over
Gum	PVA

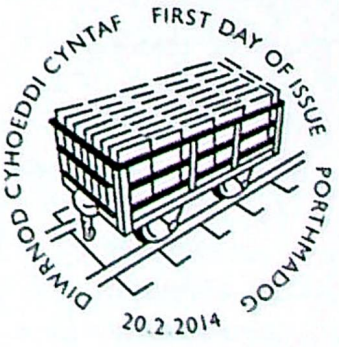
Stamp by stamp The four-stamp Miniature Sheet comprises the following:

LMS No. 7720 Built in 1895 at the Crewe Works for the London and North Western Railway, the LMS 'coal tank' is pictured leaving Britannia Bridge, pulling a Bangor-to-Holyhead local train in around 1930. *First Class*

Hunslet No. 589 Blanche This stamp shows *Blanche* at the Pen Cob Halt on the Ffestiniog Railway in 1964. The locomotive was originally made for the Penrhyn Slate Quarry by the Leeds-based Hunslet Engine Company. The narrow gauge Ffestiniog railway took slate to the harbour at Porthmadog. *78p*

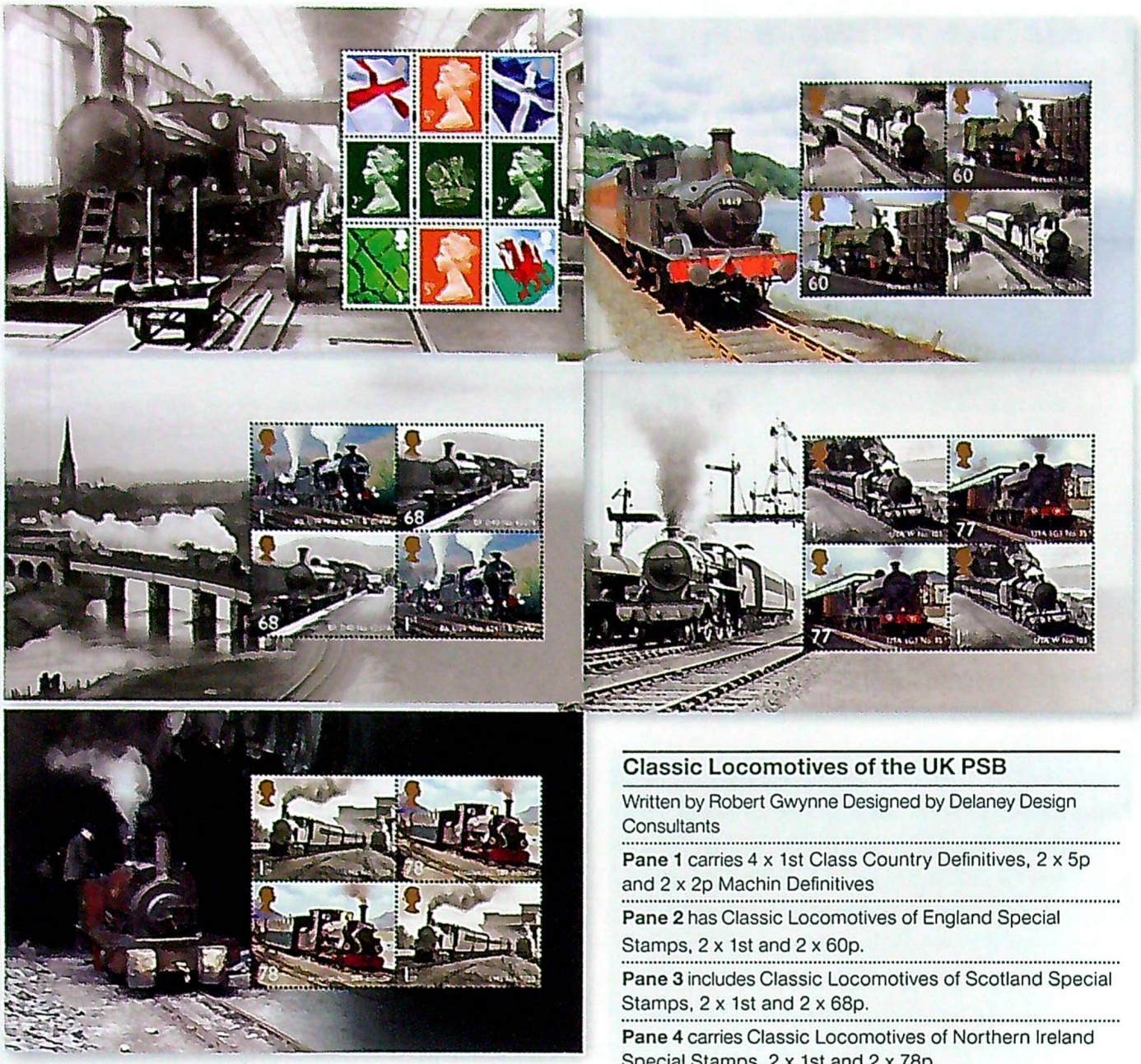
W&LLR No. 822 The Earl Photographed waiting for a car to be moved from the line on Welshpool's Union Street in 1953, *The Earl* was constructed for the Welshpool and Llanfair Light Railway in 1902. *88p*

BR 5600 No. 5652 The BR 5600 freight engine was designed by the Great Western Railway company to transport goods across its massive rail network. The stamp shows the loco pulling coal at Cwmbargoed in 1959. *£1.28* ▶



FD140220PL

Above: alternative pictorial postmark – Porthmadog is the lower terminus of the famous Ffestiniog railway



Above: Prestige Stamp Book with stamps from the whole series of Classic Locomotives

Classic Locomotives of the UK PSB

Written by Robert Gwynne Designed by Delaney Design Consultants

Pane 1 carries 4 x 1st Class Country Definitives, 2 x 5p and 2 x 2p Machin Definitives

Pane 2 has Classic Locomotives of England Special Stamps, 2 x 1st and 2 x 60p.

Pane 3 includes Classic Locomotives of Scotland Special Stamps, 2 x 1st and 2 x 68p.

Pane 4 carries Classic Locomotives of Northern Ireland Special Stamps, 2 x 1st and 2 x 78p.

Pane 5 features Classic Locomotives of Wales Special Stamps, 2 x 1st and 2 x 78p, (2 x 1st and 2 x 78p)



FD140220TH

Above: Tallents House special handstamp showing a double Fairlie locomotive

The Presentation Pack tells the story of the great locomotives of Wales, in both Welsh and English. It reveals how railways transformed the country into an industrial society in the 19th century. The Tallents House pictorial postmark shows a double Fairlie locomotive, while an alternative pictorial handstamp, featuring a slate quarry wagon, has a Porthmadog postmark. Orders for Serviced First Day Covers must reach Royal Mail by 20 February.

The Classic Locomotives of the United Kingdom Prestige Stamp Book dedicates one pane to each of the four Miniature Sheets, with the addition of a definitive pane (see above) and costs £13.97 •

Acknowledgements: LMS No. 7720 – FR Hebron © Rail Archive Stephenson; Hunslet No. 589 Blanche © Geoff Plumb; W&LLR No. 822 The Earl – PM Alexander © Michael Whitehouse; BR 5600 No. 5652 – TB Owen © Colour-Rail; (background image) BR Class 5101 2-6-2T No. 4126 – AED Collection © Prorail UK.

Bloom time for Britain Start 2014 with a fine crop of Post & Go stamps featuring British flowers

British Flora is the subject for the Post & Go stamps of 2014 and the series begins on 19 February with the release of the Spring Blooms issue. The six-stamp First Class set features the classic flowers we love to see blossoming in the British countryside after the dull, flat grey of winter: the snowdrop, daffodil and primrose all feature, as well as the dog-violet, lesser celandine and blackthorn. The stamps have been created by leading stamp designer Kate Stephens and are illustrated by Julia Trickey.

Stamp by stamp The six Spring Blooms Post & Go stamps will be available from Post & Go machines and also as a six-stamp sheet overprinted with First Class values and a philatelic Post & Go code – from Post & Go terminals in 146 branches of the Post Office.

SNOWDROP: haunting woods, meadows, parks and churchyards, these delicate lantern-shaped blooms encapsulate, for many, the beginning of spring. From the *Amaryllidaceae* family, they are in flower in February and March. A symbol of hope and purity, the snowdrop is traditionally dedicated to the Virgin Mary.

WILD DAFFODIL: the iconic bright yellow flower that famously inspired William Wordsworth blooms from February to April, and is seen in coppice and open woodland. Its Latin name, *Narcissus pseudonarcissus*, is said to have come from the Greek mythological figure Narcissus, who fell ▸

Below: the snowdrop, the first flower of the year, graces the Carrier Card



Post & Go British Flora 1: Spring Blooms – Prices	
Stamp Set	£3.60
First Day Cover UK	£4.80
First Day Cover overseas	£4
First Day Envelope	30p

Post & Go British Flora 1: Spring Blooms – Specifications	
Date of issue	19 February 2014
Number of stamps	Six
Stamp design	Kate Stephens
Stamp illustration	Julia Trickey
Stamp format	Landscape
Stamp size	56mm x 25mm
Printer	International Security Printers
Print process	Gravure
Perforations	Kiss die-cut simulated
Phosphor	Bars

Right: the six First Class Post & Go stamps are a stunning welcome to the new year



Below: the Tallents House, Edinburgh postmark and the alternative postmark show flowers and the location Primrose Hill, Huddersfield





in love with his own reflection in a pool of water. The daffodil's trumpet-shaped centre is seen as the head of Narcissus bending down while he admires his face in the water. Daffodils are traditionally meant to first flower on St David's Day – 1 March.

PRIMROSE: walk into a clearing in the woods and you could well be pleasantly surprised by a colony of primroses, for a sheltered spot between the trees is one of their favoured habitats, as well as parks and churchyards. According to folklore, these lemon-yellow flowers with their heart-shaped petals – which flower from February to May – will grow red if watered with bullock's blood or planted upside down on Good Friday.

COMMON DOG VIOLET: from April to June, these rich purple flowers bloom across Britain's woods, downlands and grass heaths. From the *Violaceae* family, dog violets are widespread throughout the British Isles.

LESSER CELANDINE: catch these bright yellow star-like flowers on a sunny spring day and you will be in for a treat, for they open wide in the sunshine. Spot them in woods and hedgerows and on road verges and the banks of streams from March to May. 'Local' names for the celandine include 'goldy knob', 'filding cup' and 'golden guinea'.

BLACKTHORN: forming hedgerows and scrub, the white flowers of this very spiny shrub are in bloom from March to May. Come the autumn, the blackthorn produces sloes – those plump, purple berries that are used, of course, to make sloe gin.

Orders for Serviced First Day Covers must reach Royal Mail by 19 February. Customers may send stamped envelopes on the day of issue to Royal Mail, Tallents House (address on page xxx). A special pictorial postmark shows the British Isles with a perforated coastline. As an alternative to the Tallents House, Edinburgh postmark, a pictorial postmark is also available showing primroses and the location Primrose Hill, Huddersfield •

Details of the 2014 Post & Go stamp programme are on the opposite page

Post and Go Exhibition Programme 2014

2014 is set to be a great year for Post & Go collectors with an exciting programme of stamp releases available at all the major exhibitions.

York Stamp Show 17-18 January 2014

Machine	Day 1		Day 2	
	Reel A	Reel B	Reel A	Reel B
A3	Union Flag	Machin	Union Flag	Machin
A4	Union Flag	Machin	Union Flag	Machin

No overprint

Spring Stampex 19-22 February 2014

Machine	Wednesday-Saturday	
	Reel A	Reel B
A2	Spring Blooms	Machin*
A3	Spring Blooms	Machin*
A3	Union Flag	Machin*
B1	Spring Blooms	Spring Blooms
B2	Machin*	Machin*

*With overprint

Salisbury Stamp Show 14-15 March 2014

Machine	Day 1	Day 2
	Reel A	Reel B
A2	Spring Blooms	Machin
A3	Spring Blooms	Machin

No overprint

85th Scottish Congress 11-12 April 2014

Machine	Day 1		Day 2	
	Reel A	Reel B	Reel A	Reel B
A2	Union Flag*	Machin*	Union Flag*	Machin*
A3	Union Flag*	Machin*	Union Flag*	Machin*

*85th Scottish Congress overprint

York Stamp Show 18-19 April 2014

Machine	Day 1		Day 2	
	Reel A	Reel B	Reel A	Reel B
A2	Union Flag	Machin	Union Flag	Machin
A3	Union Flag	Machin	Union Flag	Machin

No overprint

Philakorea Seoul Korea 7-12 August 2014

Machine	Day 1		Day 2	
	Reel A	Reel B	Reel A	Reel B
A2	Union Flag*	Machin*	Union Flag*	Machin*
A3	Union Flag*	Machin*	Union Flag*	Machin*

*Philakorea 2014 World Stamp Exhibition overprint - GB version also available

Autumn Stampex 17-20 September 2014

Machine	Wednesday	
	Reel A	Reel B
A2	Symbolic Flowers	Union Flag
A3	Symbolic Flowers	Union Flag*
A4	Union Flag	Machin
B1	Symbolic Flowers	Symbolic Flowers
B2	Union Flag	Machin*

Machine	Thursday	
	Reel A	Reel B
A2	Symbolic Flowers	Union Flag*
A3	Symbolic Flowers	Union Flag*
A4	Union Flag*	Machin
B1	Symbolic Flowers	Symbolic Flowers
B2	Union Flag*	Union Flag*

Machine	Friday	
	Reel A	Reel B
A2	Symbolic Flowers	Union Flag*
A3	Symbolic Flowers	Union Flag*
A4	Union Flag*	Machin
B1	Symbolic Flowers	Symbolic Flowers
B2	Union Flag*	Union Flag*

Machine	Saturday	
	Reel A	Reel B
A2	Symbolic Flowers	Union Flag*
A3	Symbolic Flowers	Union Flag*
A4	Union Flag*	Machin
B1	Symbolic Flowers	Symbolic Flowers
B2	Union Flag*	Union Flag*

*With overprint

Stafford Stamp Show November 2014

Machine	Day 1		Day 2	
	Reel A	Reel B	Reel A	Reel B
A2	Winter Greenery	Machin	Winter Greenery	Machin
A3	Symbolic Flowers	Winter Greenery	Symbolic Flowers	Winter Greenery

No overprint



Stamp of hooves Saddle up for a new issue that celebrates Britain's hard-working horses

Long may they rein... in today's high-tech transport world full of trucks, vans, trains, planes and ships, good old-fashioned horses still play an important role in modern British working life – and their contribution is celebrated in a new issue out on 4 February.

Working Horses reveals their importance in commerce, country life, the military, law enforcement, state occasions and therapy for the disabled. As well as the six-stamp set, a First Day Cover, Presentation Pack, Stamp Cards and special postmarks are available. Toiling in the mines, pulling ploughs, people and parcels – horses once did it all. Indeed, in the 19th century Royal Mail had a 'fleet' of 150,000. Inevitably progress has all but replaced hooves with wheels but Britain still recognises that the physical strength and intelligence of its equine workforce are invaluable in so many ways: across the country almost 90,000 horses work in a professional capacity...

Stamp by stamp The Working Horses set, designed by Michael Denny and Harold Batten, features a mix of values – First Class, 88p and £1.28.

Riding for the Disabled Association Every year more than 500 volunteer groups of the Riding for the Disabled Association enable some 30,000 people

Working Horses Stamps – Specifications

Date of issue	4 February
Number of stamps	Six
Stamp design	Michael Denny and Harold Batten
Stamp format	Landscape
Stamp size	41mm x 30mm
Printer	International Security Printers
Print process	Lithography
Number per sheet	25/50
Perforations	14.5 x 14
Phosphor	All over
Gum	PVA

Working Horses Stamps – Prices

Stamps	£5.52
Presentation Pack	£6.05
First Day Cover Stamps/overseas	£7.10/£5.92
Stamp Cards, set of 6	£2.70

with disabilities to enjoy riding, carriage-driving, vaulting and showjumping at its centres. Horses' natural gentleness, combined with their strength and power, means that disabled children and adults can safely ride them, building up their skills and confidence, and improving their physical stability. *First Class*

The King's Troop Ceremonial Horses Firing Royal salutes on state occasions, providing a gun carriage and a team of black horses for state and military funerals, and performing the duties of The Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards Parade for one month every summer – The King's Troop Royal Horse Artillery is a very busy mounted British Army unit. The 111 horses of The King's Troop are based at Woolwich Garrison in London. *First Class*

Dray Horses Modern transport may have meant the decline of the once-familiar brewery dray horses, but their ability to negotiate busy city streets, avoiding jams, or to handle the rounds for smaller country breweries means they still have a useful delivery role to play. For their size and beauty, Shire horses have always been a popular choice and some breweries keep promotional show teams to appear in summer fairs around the country. *88p*

Royal Mews Carriage Horses Supporting the Royal Household, these horses are an essential part of grand ceremonial events such as Trooping the Colour. One of their regular tasks is to take newly appointed high commissioners or foreign ambassadors to an audience with The Queen. Thirty horses are stationed at the Royal Mews – 20 Bays as well as ten Windsor Greys, which have drawn carriages for the Royal Family since Queen Victoria's reign. *88p*

Police Horses Working police horses were first used in the campaign against highwaymen in the late 18th century. Nowadays they are more likely to deal with crowd control at large public events. Horses are also effective in the community policing role, thanks to their formidable but approachable presence on the streets. Impressively large, police horses receive rigorous training to ensure they respond calmly when under pressure in tense or sometimes violent public order situations. *£1.28*

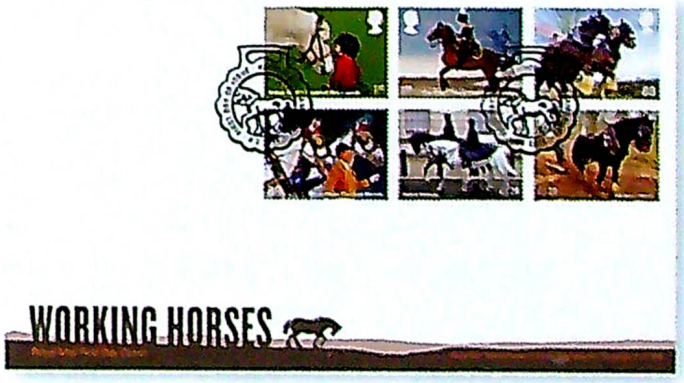
Forestry Horses They can travel through vulnerable woodland environments with minimal ecological impact. Stocky breeds, such as the Dales and Fell Pony, as well as bigger draught horses, are excellent in this type of operation. The work also employs breeds at risk, such as the Clydesdale and the Suffolk Punch, as a way of helping to ensure the breeds' future. *£1.28*



FD140204-PL



FD140204-TH



Top: the alternative Horseheath, Cambridge postmark and the Tallents House mark
Above: the Working Horses First Day Cover

Also in the Working Horses issue Illustrated by Robert M. Ball, designed by the Jack Renwick Studio and written by equine expert Dr Elaine Walker, the Presentation Pack contains a fascinating overview of the relationship between horses and humans. The First Day Cover also offers a concise pen portrait of the different types of horse on the stamps. Six Stamp Cards complete the line-up.

Orders for serviced First Day Covers must reach Royal Mail by 4 February. As an alternative to the Tallents House postmark, special pictorial and non-pictorial HORSEHEATH, CAMBRIDGE postmarks are available •





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

UK diary dates

9 January Inverness Philatelic Society – Letter C – Members' Displays, Haugh Community Centre, 7pm.

10 January Strand Stamp Fair, Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way, London WC1, 9am to 4pm. 20 to 30 dealers. Information: 020 8946 4480, www.stampshows.net.

11 January Telford Stamp Card & Coin Fair, Belmont Hall, Wellington Centre, Telford TF1 1LU, 10am to 3pm. Free admission and valuations. Information: B Hemmings, 01694 771880.

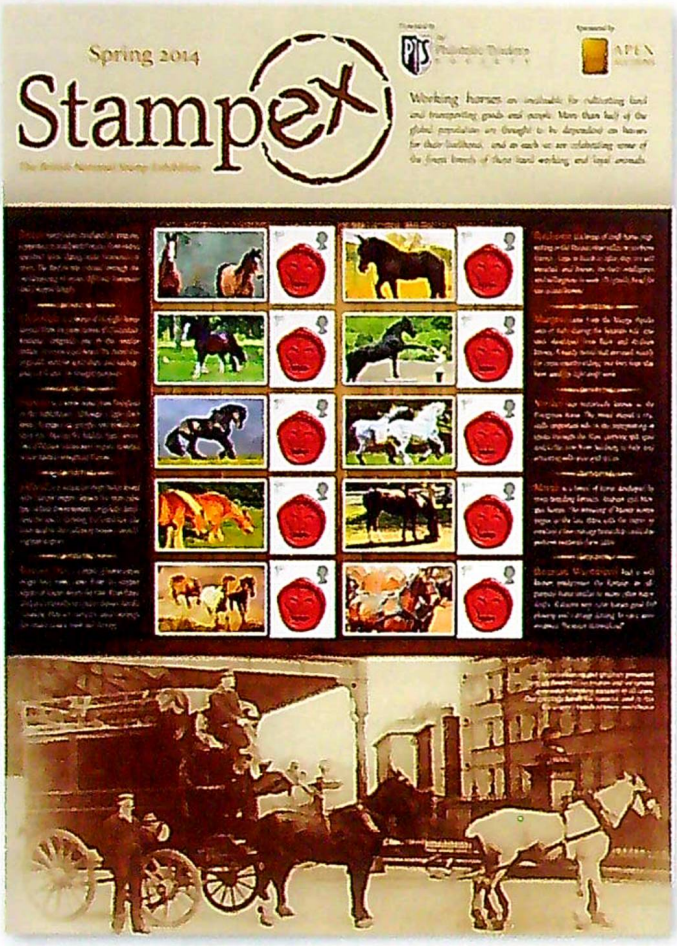
17-18 January York Stamp & Coin Fair, Grandstand, York Racecourse YO23 1EX, Friday 11am to 6pm, Saturday 10am to 4pm. Information: www.stampshows.net.

14 February Strand Stamp Fair.

19-22 February Spring Stampex, Business Design Centre, Upper Street, London N1.

1 March Streetly Philatelic Society Annual Stamp Fair, Collingwood Centre, Pheasey, Birmingham B43 7NF, 10am to 4.30pm. 16 dealers. Admission 20p. Information: B Hyner, 0121 357 5340.

Stamp exhibitions



Spring Stampex at London's Business Design Centre (see UK Diary Dates for details) includes displays of 'pictorial' material – thematics, 'open' and postcards. As usual, Royal Mail will have a stand offering the full range of stamps and philatelic products. The Classic Locomotives of Wales and Post & Go Spring Blooms stamps are issued on the second and third days of the show. The popular Stampex customised sheet (sometimes called the Smilers® sheet) will feature Working Horses – including Clydesdale, Friesian, Jutland and Russian Don – on the labels adjoining ten first-class crown seal stamps. The sheet will be on sale at the Stampex information stand. Exhibition visitors will receive a free catalogue and souvenir postcard. Information: office.pts@btinternet.com.

Other major UK events include the Scottish Philatelic Congress in Perth (11 to 12 April) and the Philatelic Congress of GB, held this year in the historic Belgian city of Ypres, from 11 to 14 July.

Philakorea, the only international stamp exhibition to be held in 2014, will take place in Seoul from 7 to 12 August.

Stamp-related exhibitions

The main anniversary of 2014 will, of course, be the centenary of the start of the First World War, with Royal Mail issuing stamps on 28 July. The Imperial War Museum is leading over 1,600 local, regional, national and international organisations in presenting an impressive series of exhibitions, talks and events – details of which can be found on the Museum's website, www.iwm.org.uk. Other exhibitions include 'Trent to Trenches' about the nurses of the First World War at Nottingham's Mansfield Museum from 8 February to 29 March, and 'Stanley Spencer: Heaven in a Hell of War' at Pallant House, Chichester, from 15 February to 1 June. The 'Great War in Portraits' is on at the National Portrait Gallery in London from 27 February to 15 June. A talk entitled 'The Arrival of the Postman – Hope Mingled with Fear 1914-18' will be given by Derek Beattie at the Much Wenlock Museum, Shropshire, on 17 March.

Royal Mail issued a stamp featuring Benjamin Britten in the Great Britons set last April, and a coin cover marked the centenary of his birth on 22 November. A small display, 'Benjamin Britten: A Life in Pictures' can be seen in Room 31 at the National Portrait Gallery until 30 June.



A suit designed by Sir Paul Smith was shown on one of ten Great British Fashion stamps issued in May 2012. An exhibition, 'Hello My Name is Paul Smith', is on at the Design Museum, London SE1, until 9 March (call 020 7940 8783 for tickets). The exhibition celebrates his career to date and explores future developments. An article about Sir Paul and three other designers who featured in the issue appeared in the May 2012 issue of the *Bulletin*.

In the news

This month Royal Mail issues the Classic Children's TV issue (see page 152). A set in September 1996 also showed favourite children's shows, including Seventies hit *The Clangers*. The BBC has recently announced a new series featuring the space creatures, due to be aired in 2015. Peter Firmin, who created the original programme with the late Oliver Postgate, will be executive producer with Postgate's son.



One of the £1.28 stamps in the London Underground set of January 2013 features the Jubilee Line station at Canary Wharf. The impressive stations on the Jubilee Line Extension were masterminded by Anglo-Italian Roland Paoletti, the lead commissioning architect on the project, who died in November aged 82. Described as 'the Medici of London Transport', Paoletti said of Sir Norman Foster's Canary Wharf design: 'Everyone keeps saying it's like a cathedral. They're wrong – it actually is a cathedral.'

One of the Britons of Distinction stamps of February 2012 paid tribute to Alan Turing, mathematician and legendary Second World War code-breaker. A film about Turing, *The Imitation Game*, is set to be released this year, the 60th anniversary of his death. Actor Benedict Cumberbatch plays Turing.

BPMA

The British Postal Museum & Archive (BPMA), located at Freeling House, Phoenix Place, London WC1, near the famous Mount Pleasant sorting office, is open Monday to Friday 10am to 5pm (Thursdays until 7pm) and on certain Saturdays. On show at Freeling House is a display of photographs of Mail Rail, the famous Post Office Underground Railway built to carry mail ▸



Above: Mail Rail, which operated from 3 December 1927 until 31 May 2003, is the subject of an exhibtion of photographs at Freeling House. Turn to page 144 to read about the BPMA's plans to reopen it

between sorting offices beneath the London streets in the Twenties. The 'Post Office in the Community' display can be seen at Blists Hill Victorian Town, Ironbridge, Shropshire, and 25 online exhibitions on the BPMA website (www.postalheritage.org.uk) include: Aerial Post, regional stamps, Machins, David Gentleman, postal vehicles and letter boxes.

The popular 'From Pillar to Post: GPO London' walking tour will be held on 25 January, starting at Farringdon station at 11am and finishing at Bank station at 1pm. No need to book, just pay the guide: £7, or £6 for concessions. Two BPMA touring exhibitions, 'The Post Office in Pictures' and 'Designs on Delivery: GPO Posters 1930-1960', can be seen at the Aberystwyth Arts Centre, Aberystwyth University, from 18 January to 8 March.

For more on BPMA displays and events, contact the BPMA for a copy of its comprehensive Events Guide: call 020 7239 2570, email info@postalheritage.org.uk, or visit www.postalheritage.org.uk.

The BPMA's Autumn 2013 *Newsletter* contains useful features on Calthorpe House, home of the new museum that is expected to open in 2016, Parcel Post, Mail Rail, the 'Pillar to Post' walking tour of London, and much else. The *Newsletter* reports that the BPMA's online catalogue has undergone a substantial update: some 2,450 Elizabeth II pre-decimal stamp artwork items complete with images were added to the database, as well as 248 pre-decimal GB commemorative stamp registration sheets. The BPMA now provides full online catalogue descriptions and digitised images for all registration sheets, from the Penny Black to these most recent additions.

The *Newsletter* included a photograph of its Curator Philately, Douglas Muir, signing the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists at the Philatelic Congress in Gloucester in June (see also *Bulletin* Vol 50, p378). Douglas was Editor of the *Bulletin* from 1986 to 1988 and previously a philatelic journalist on *Stamp Collecting*. He was also the founder of the Postal Mechanisation Study Circle.

Visit the BPMA website for more information about the Friends or email friends@postalheritage.org.uk. Membership costs £21 a year, with a reduced rate for the over-65s.

Society news



The November/December issue of the Great Britain Philatelic Society's *GB Journal* included a number of learned articles on Queen Victoria and George V stamps, and postal history. There are reviews of two new books – one about the Queen Victoria £5 orange and another on King George V as a stamp collector (the latter produced as a Kindle edition rather than in traditional format).

Sent out with the *Journal* is the *Newsletter* with reports of society events plus a feature on the Castle high values of 1988 to 1999, as well as earlier stamps. There is also a checklist of GB new issues, January-June 2013.

The GBPS's first meetings in 2014 will be on 1 February, with stamps from the Royal Collection (open to members only), and at Stampex on 22 February when Julian Tweed will display Late Fees material. The Society celebrates its 60th anniversary with a series of meetings, competitions and social events to coincide with Spring Stampex in February 2015. For more

© Bradley Photography

about the GBPS, call Peter Tanner on 01753 887755 or email petertannerHS13@talktalk.net. Membership costs £25 UK, £27 Europe, £35 Rest of World airmail (or £27 by seamail).

New Stanley Gibbons catalogues

Now available from Stanley Gibbons is the 2014 edition of *Stamps of the World*, in six volumes listing stamps from all countries. Over 2,200 new stamps have been listed since the last edition. It is the only world catalogue where all volumes are published simultaneously. *Stamps of the World* was first published as a single-volume 'simplified' catalogue in March 1934, and cost five shillings. The new six-volume set costs £249.95.

The 2014 edition of *Collect British Stamps* covers all stamp issues from the Penny Black to the 2013 Christmas set. There has been a complete renumbering of Machin definitives with elliptical perfs (the 'Y' series) and the 'emblem' regionals (country stamps). The reason for this is explained by Hugh Jefferies in his Catalogue Column feature in the December issue of *Gibbons Stamp Monthly*.

Collect British Stamps costs £13.95. Also new from Stanley Gibbons are the fourth edition of its Brunei, Malaysia & Singapore catalogue (£25.95) and eighth edition of the Italy & Switzerland catalogue (£45.95). All are available from the Stanley Gibbons London shop or by mail order from Stanley Gibbons Ltd, 7 Parkside, Ringwood, Hants BH24 3SH. Collect British Stamps is also available from Royal Mail Tallents House.

New from the islands

Guernsey's first issues for 2014 will be Chinese New Year (six stamps and souvenir sheet), out on 8 January, and Endangered Species – Orangutan (miniature sheet) released on 12 February. Also coming out on 12 February is Alderney's Ladybirds (six stamps and souvenir sheet). Enquiries: Guernsey Philatelic Bureau, Freepost GU267, Envoy House, La Vrangue, Guernsey GY1 5SS, or email philatelic@guernseypost.com.

Jersey's 2014 programme starts with six stamps featuring Manor Houses, designed by Nick Shewing, on 7 January, followed by four Europa stamps depicting musical instruments, designed by Mark Wilkinson and released on 25 March. The 450th anniversary of Shakespeare's birth will be commemorated by six stamps and a miniature sheet on 23 April. Information: Jersey Philatelic Bureau, Freepost JE793, Jersey Post, Jersey JE1 1AF or www.jerseystamps.com.

The Isle of Man's 2014 issues start with Island of Culture (which includes the Europa Musical Instrument stamp), Winter Flora and World War 1 issues in January, followed by a RAF Red Arrows 50th Anniversary set on 19 February. Information: Isle of Man Stamps & Coins, PO Box 10M, Douglas, Isle of Man IM99 1PB or www.iomstamps.com •





Nerves of Steel

He is under intense pressure to raise millions in just three months to fund Britain's new postal museum and archive – but BPMA Director Adrian Steel is calmly determined to hit his target

INTERVIEW BY ANDREW NEISH
PHOTOGRAPHY BY CONOR MASTERSON

British Postal Museum & Archive Director Adrian Steel has a battle on his hands to raise millions to build Britain's flagship philatelic centre – and it helps that he is living up to his name. It is a race against time to secure the final funding of over £3 million, to meet a Heritage Lottery Fund grant deadline in March. If the BPMA cannot raise most of this by the deadline, it risks losing the grant for the time being.

Adrian's hopes remain high, however. Indeed, this dapper former archivist is calm when the *Bulletin* quizzes him on his fundraising campaign. Calm, but also determined. Which is reassuring, for never have nerves of steel been more useful.

He is now networking furiously to win corporate sponsorship and donations from charitable foundations. Individual donations are also very much welcome.

'We need the money quite quickly, it is a real challenge,' Adrian admits,



but adds: 'I'm confident we're in a good place to achieve it.' His confidence will be welcome to philatelists across the country because stakes are high and the prizes glittering. BPMA insiders see the new museum and archive at Calthorpe House in London as pivotal in preserving its unique collection of several million stamps and postal artefacts. They also believe the museum will help safeguard the future of philately by attracting a far wider range of visitors.

The numbers speak for themselves: today only 3,000 a year visit the BPMA. The new museum, along with its planned Mail Rail ride that resurrects London's underground postal train network, is expected to attract 180,000 visitors annually. But the cost is a challenge. Just over £11 million has been raised so far and the BPMA needs £22 million in all. Hitting that fundraising target would bring enormous rewards: those already passionate about stamps will be ▸



The BPMA's 17th-century Post Office ledgers clearly record boom periods for the postal services

Adrian Steel's fundraising campaign is entering a critical stage in the next few months, as the BPMA strives to bankroll the museum and Mail Rail project.

- The BPMA must find £22 million in total but just £18.9 million in this first phase of the scheme. The remainder will be raised by 2019.
- It already has £11.2 million in the bank. It has been offered a grant of up to £4.5 million by the Heritage Lottery Fund if it can find £2 million of the £3.2 million balance by March 2014.
- This deadline is also critical because keeping the land pledged by Royal Mail for the Mail Rail Ride also depends on hitting the fundraising target in March.
- Among other strategies, the BPMA is aiming to secure a number of sponsorship deals ranging from £25,000 to £100,000.

THE BRITISH POSTAL MUSEUM & ARCHIVE

Our history through the post

walking into Aladdin's cave when the museum opens in 2016, just across the road from the BPMA's current HQ at Phoenix Place by the legendary Mount Pleasant sorting office. There are 500 square metres of exhibition space telling the story of the postal service, a conservation facility, collections repository and, in a hugely exciting development for collectors, a £250,000 digitisation studio that will put the entire collection online.

'There's something like 10,000 pages of stamp artwork from the BPMA collections online already, but it's still a fraction of what we've got, so our aim is to get every stamp onto the BPMA website with the new digitisation studio,' Adrian explains. 'A lot of collectors ask us to put things online, it's the most common request we get from the philatelic community, so we've really gone to town to get a proper digital facility.'

Exhibits newly confirmed to the *Bulletin* include that great world exclusive, the Penny Black. The BPMA is the only organisation on the planet to have sheets of them, all of which will be on display on a rotational basis.

'People rightly expect to see examples of the Penny Black when they come to a postal museum in Britain, the cradle of the postal service,' says Adrian. 'And I'm delighted to say that there will always be a chance to see the 'Holy Grail' of philately. We believe we have enough sheets to rotate through them and prevent any one sheet from being damaged by heat or light.'

Adrian also reveals to the *Bulletin* that rare unpublished stamps will be emerging from the BPMA vaults and put on public display for the first time when the museum opens. 'Quite well-known is the story of the artwork produced for the 1978 issue if Scotland had won the World Cup. I'm sure that artwork will make an appearance,' he says. 'There are other stamp sets that were worked up and never made it to the final issue: the Edward VIII Coronation, for example, and those that would have been released had there been Scottish and Welsh devolution in 1979. They'll also make an

appearance to show how stamps try and capture, in the moment, chapters of history as they happen, even if they then don't ever see the light of day.'

Collectors will be pleased to know that the museum's purpose-built conservation studio and modern collection vaults will play a leading role in preserving the BPMA's treasures. Research facilities will also be vastly improved. Another welcome facility will be a meeting room area, designed for philatelic societies and individual collectors to get together and discuss their latest finds. In addition, a temporary display area in the exhibition space will allow stamp societies to come in and curate shows.

Rather less philatelic but no less fascinating are the displays in the five-room exhibition space, planned to show quirky or unusual snapshots of postal history. They will include weapons used to hold up mail coaches, an exhibition about the Suffragettes who posted themselves in protest to the Prime Minister, and telegrams related to the doomed *RMS Titanic*. And when they first walk through the doors, visitors will see the gleaming red 18th century mail coach that appeared in the Golden Jubilee celebrations of 2002.

For Adrian Steel, the new museum and archive presents a win-win situation for the BPMA, collectors, 'non-expert' visitors wanting a fun family day out, and of course the health of British philately: 'The museum will conclusively prove that London is the world centre for philately. It secures, physically, the future of our collections. It provides for long-term financial support for cataloguing and digitisation of these important collections, and for access for researchers,' he says. 'It widens the base of interest in stamps and postal history. As well as collectors, we will have thousands of families coming whose perception of stamps will change for the better after seeing the museum and riding on Mail Rail. That can only help broaden the popularity of philately' •

Find out more at www.postalheritage.co.uk

Roll up for the Mail Rail experience

The BPMA Mail Rail attraction will reveal to visitors the secret, subterranean history of the underground trains that delivered post across London for almost a century.

- Riding in a newly built train, visitors will complete a 1km-long looped circuit on the double 2ft gauge track while a guide and audio-visual shows tell the story of the world's first driverless electric railway.
- To sidestep congested streets and pea-soupers, the Post Office Underground Railway opened in 1927 to take mail to post offices around the capital.
- The trains travelled the 23-mile track from Whitechapel to Paddington and delivered to eight stations, including Mount Pleasant and the Western Parcels Office at Baker Street.
- The system transported six million bags of mail a year 70ft below the streets before closing in 2003.
- In the 15-minute ride, visitors will first descend at a gentle 6mph into the network's tunnel entrance as the train passes below Mount Pleasant.



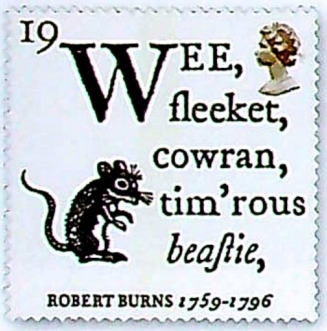
This month in history John Holman looks back at some stamp battles fought on behalf of Robert Burns





Above left: a cover sent by registered post to mark the bicentenary of Burns' birth on 25 January, which fell on a Sunday in 1959. Since then a number of Royal Mail special stamps have been issued in commemoration of the Scottish bard





In the Fifties the Post Office came under pressure to issue stamps to mark the bicentenary of the birth of Robert Burns on 25 January 1959. Stamp policy at that time did not permit such issues and the PO refused to budge. Two MPs raised the matter in Parliament. Aberdeen North MP Hector Hughes suggested a guinea stamp (£1 1s), showing Burns's birthplace in Alloway in a similar design to the Castles high values. Just days before the anniversary, South Ayrshire MP Emrys Hughes asked what steps the PO was taking to mark the anniversary. On behalf of the government, Assistant Postmaster General Kenneth Thompson MP stated that arrangements were in hand for mail sent by 24 January to the Head Post Office at Ayr to receive the Alloway datestamp of 25 January, a Sunday. Hughes told the minister this response was 'inadequate' and said the Russian stamp showing Burns, issued in 1956, should be used on such mail in the absence of a British Burns stamp. Thompson described this suggestion as provocative.

The post office at Alloway was opened on Sunday 25 January for collectors to post covers, and mail posted in boxes in Alloway were also handstamped with the village datestamp. Shown above is a cover sent by registered post with the Alloway registration label and datestamp. It is believed that several thousand covers were posted in Alloway or sent to the Head Post Office in Ayr for datestamping on the bicentenary day.

After the outcry by supporters of a Burns stamp when Shakespeare stamps were released in 1964, the new Postmaster General Tony Benn announced that Burns stamps would be issued on 25 January 1966, the 207th anniversary of his birth. Special postmarks were used on first day covers, including one for Alloway, though I have not seen the normal Alloway datestamp used that day. Further Burns stamps were issued for the bicentenary of his death in 1996 and 250th anniversary of his birth in 2009.

A number of Burns-related special one-day Alloway postmarks have been used over the years and one inscribed 'O My Luve's Like a Red Red Rose' was in use for one year from 25 January 1996 with similar handstamps for Ayr, Dumfries and Kilmarnock •



1



2

Another view Douglas Myall explores stamps used in training counter staff

POTS is an acronym of Post Office Training Stamps and it also stands for Post Office Training Schools. Although the first schools were formed in 1920, schools for training staff in counter work did not come into being until 1931. Different schools covered the work of different branches but here I will be talking about the ones where counter staff have been trained in office procedures and the 'products' used there. Today they are run by Post Office Ltd and are called Counter Training Schools or CTOs. They are spread across the country to train new entrants on all aspects of Post Office work.

The training has always had a very practical approach: to make things as realistic as possible, several types of paper money, cheques, postal orders and credit cards are used as well as actual forms and even real stamps. It also involves role-playing where students act as members of the public as well as counter clerks. The school stamps are normally overprinted with either one or two black bars. This is done to ensure they cannot be used on normal mail and has the benefit of not having to be accounted for (though training in balancing the till, latterly the Horizon computer system, is given). At one time the stamps were invalidated by having holes of various shapes punched in them but this method has not been used on stamps of The Queen's reign.

Initially, training stamps existed on almost all special issues as well as on definitives. Now only a limited number of values are required to be used, stamps generally having being replaced by Horizon labels for use on items other than letters. The stamps come from sheets, coils and booklets. They are not intended to reach the general public but most are available, with gum, and probably came from waste material after sheets were torn up as part of the training. Most stamp dealers sell them and they can often be seen in stamp auctions. A very interesting sideline collection can be made from them.

It seems that different methods have been used to apply the bars. They vary in thickness and, where there are two of them on a stamp, in their spacing. Even two stamps se-tenant can show these variations and two examples are shown here (1, 2). Not all bars are vertical; many are horizontal. In fact, I cannot ▸



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10

perceive any pattern in the allocation of the number of bars or their orientation. For example, the 1p stamp exists in three variations (3, 4, 5). Even high values exist in more than one version – just look at the two £10 Britannia stamps (6, 7).

It has been suggested that the bars were applied by rollers with spacers between the bars, but that would not account for the spacing on the 20p illustrated (1). An alternative theory is that these variations were caused by slippage, and one of the bars on that pair does seem to be a bit wobbly. Whatever the reason, the variations are very collectable.

Some bars appear to have been added by a felt-tip pen. I am none too sure of these. It may be that the market for POTS is large enough to tempt some entrepreneur to create these from mint stamps that were never in a school. A dubious 41p Machin is shown here (8). In the days when fees for underpaid mail were collected by the postman, he had to collect and pay for the To Pay (postage due) stamps at the post office before starting his walk and reimburse himself on delivery. Staff training also covered these procedures and To Pay stamps exist overprinted with two bars; vertical and horizontal pairs exist, but I know of them only on labels of the first series, which was in use from 1970 to 1982 (9, 10).

Not all cancellations consist of black bars Shown here (11) is a pane affixed to a 10p machine-vended book of 1977. The overprint, a bit smudged, reads 'TRAINING CENTRE FOR TESTING PURPOSES ONLY'. Such books are no longer produced, but in the Seventies post office staff would have to learn to load and maintain the machines.

Another kind of text overprint on stamps consisted of the words 'SCHOOL



11



12



13



14



15



17



16

SPECIMEN' in two lines. This was applied by a rubber stamp, and it must have been a somewhat tedious job to stamp full sheets instead of running a roller over them. Two sizes of this overprint are known with the text either thick or thin (12, 13). A similar overprint exists on postal stationery and shows that this branch of service was included in the training. This, too, exists in two versions, varying in the spacing between the lines, which is either 18mm or 22m (14, 15).

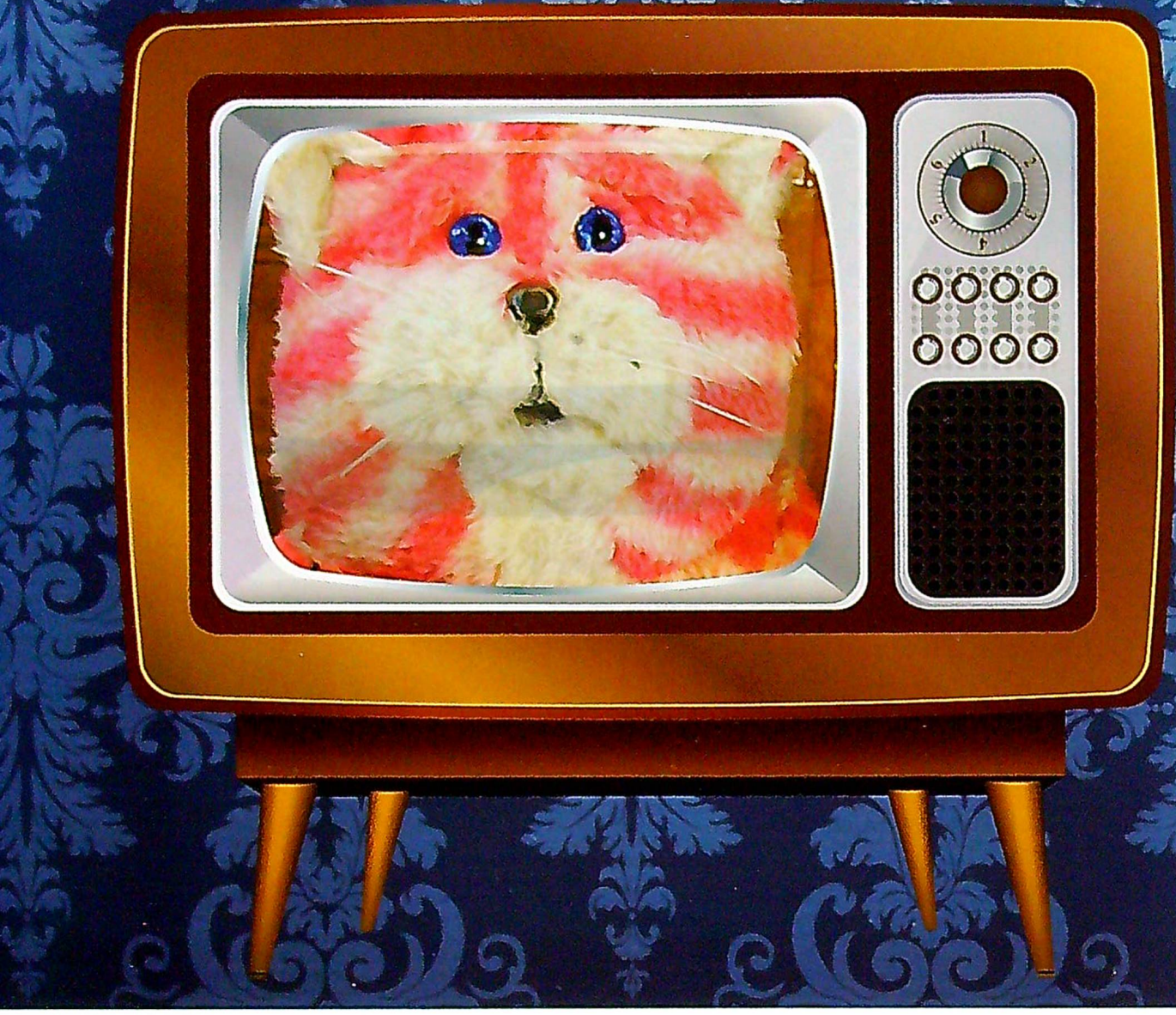
The handling of registered mail, or latterly priority items, also features in the training and special labels were used with overprinted stamps. Part of one is shown here (16), taken from an entire which has a typewritten address. The three stamps would have paid the registration fee of 60p and the first-class letter rate of 9p effective from 13 June 1977 to 18 August 1979.

Familiarisation has always been a strong theme of postal training, and just before Decimal Day on 15 February 1971, sheets of 200 labels were distributed to all post offices so staff could see the colours that would be used for stamps with the new currency. These were printed in lithography, with the five 'values' in white, reversed out of the coloured backgrounds – 2p greenish grey, 2½p pale magenta, 3p ultramarine, 3½p grey green and 4p rust brown. The 3p is shown here (17). I have seen these offered on eBay wrongly described as colour trials.

It seems that almost every stamp, definitives and special issues, has been overprinted for training purposes, some of them in more than one version. Today's counter training uses self-adhesive sheet stamps, 'voided' Horizon labels and various other items relevant to the modern Post Office – specially produced for training purposes •

Watched with Mother

The first special stamps of 2014 celebrate a dozen unforgettable characters from the world of children's television. Simon Ball explores their cultural pedigrees



CLASSIC CHILDREN'S TV TIMELINE

1946 Muffin the Mule Questions were asked in the House of Lords about Muffin the Mule taking preference over subjects such as William Morris for a 1996 stamp.



1950 Andy Pandy A series of 13 programmes, originally filmed live, was repeated until 1970. Now Andy Pandy has made a no-strings comeback in CGI and has a stamp in the *Children's Classic Television* set.



The Flower Pot Men and **The Wooden Tops** Both joined Andy Pandy in 1952, extending the *Watch with Mother* viewing slot.

Since its birth in the Fifties British children's TV has run the gamut of the country's mood and emotions and the attitudes of the times. From dinky to dark, safe to surreal, cute to downright crazy, almost every classic programme resonates with the spirit of the age. We had the utterly reassuring *Andy Pandy* in the Fifties, then *The Magic Roundabout* with its faint whiff of Sixties drug culture, the softly textured *Bagpuss* of the Seventies, through to *Shaun the Sheep,* an example of sharp modern humour and knowing irony of the 21st century audience. These great shows have tapped into the hearts of diverse audiences of children and parents, and broadcast their way permanently into the consciousness of the nation.

Given that children's TV programmes are such a part of our cultural heritage, it is no surprise that they now have their own stamp issue, Classic Children's TV, out on 7 January. The stamps (previewed on page 112 of last month's edition of *Bulletin*) feature 12 characters – including the likes of *Ivor the Engine*, *Mr Benn* and *Bob the Builder* – that trigger childhood memories from five decades of British animation. Their cross-generational appeal comes partly from the rich vein of uniquely British humour, eccentric and sometimes even subversive, that runs through them.

Post-war beginnings

In today's fast developing multi-media world it may seem surprising that it took four years from the resumption of television broadcasting after the Second World War for children to get their very own TV shows. And even then, children's broadcasting could have had an uncertain start: in the black-and-white world of late-Forties television broadcasting, there were some very real concerns about these new-fangled boxes contributing to the decline of the nation's standards and becoming the nursemaid in the living room.

Andy Pandy was first broadcast in the summer of 1950. As with most television programmes transmitted during the BBC's early days, Andy Pandy's adventures went out live because of the prohibitive cost of film stock. Only in 1952 was it realised that recording the shows would allow mistakes to be edited out, and would slash the cost of producing programmes by repeating them time after time. Which, of course, the BBC did with the 26 increasingly grainy filmed episodes of *Andy Pandy* right up until the introduction of colour in 1970. Today, the puppets' adventures might seem rather tame, with only naughty Teddy ever introducing any kind of anarchy into Andy Pandy and Looby Loo's world.

The show's 3.45pm slot was designed to fill the niche between the early ▸

1955



Sooty A typical act of puppet violence on this 1996 stamp from *50 Years of Children's Television*

1958 **Alexander the Mouse** and **The Journey of Master Ho** Created by Postage and Firmin, these make 1958 a milestone year in animation.

Blue Peter The children's magazine programme was created by John Hunter Blair – and is still going strong.

1959 **Ivor the Engine** and **Noggin the Nog** – also from Postgate and Firmin, became long-term favourites. Ivor the Engine works in the 'top left-hand corner of Wales' and features in the latest special issue.





Oliver Postgate (1925-2008), whose first television series became a landmark in the history of animation

afternoon nap and older siblings arriving home from school. Much of each episode revolved around familiar songs, part of the show's philosophy of engaging with its audience of stay-at-home mums and pre-school children. The slot was christened *Watch With Mother* in 1953 and Andy's gang were joined by other regular puppet shows including *The Flowerpot Men* and *The Woodentops*. These programmes were fairly formulaic and the ordinary deeds of the puppet folk were overlaid with crystal-clear BBC enunciation, as if the cast were being overseen by an invisible parent. Although the cosy storylines, familiar sets and characters were perfect for their age group, older children – and grown-ups – soon needed something a bit more imaginative to hold their attention. It was up to a select few British eccentrics and one lone Frenchman to provide just that...

The recently launched ITV channel wanted to inject a dose of British eccentricity into children's programming and the men who pulled it off were Oliver Postgate and Peter Firmin. A former TV stage manager, Postgate hit upon the idea of using magnets to animate cut-out figures from behind an artworked background. Firmin, a tutor at the London Central School of Art and Design, provided the illustrations. Their first television project was *Alexander the Mouse*, which saw the formation of their Smallfilms collaborative venture, set up in a disused cowshed near Canterbury. Alexander's mousey escapades took place beneath different parts of London, with each episode performed live in the summer of 1958. This led to problems when magnets failed to work. So Postgate agreed, for the princely sum of £175 per episode, to shoot a stop-frame animation on film for their next project – *The Journey of Master Ho* starred a feisty Chinese boy and specially designed for hearing-impaired children.

To create the oriental-style backgrounds and characters for *Master Ho*, Firmin engaged a classically trained Chinese painter who drew characters in traditional Chinese three-quarter view rather than the full view that was the convention for flat animation. This approach was to influence the distinctive style of Postgate and Firmin's later programmes, including *Ivor the Engine*, (featured in this month's Classic Children's TV issue) and *Noggin the Nog* (which joined the cast of the 1995 Messages stamp set).

Photograph: BBC Archive

CLASSIC CHILDREN'S TV TIMELINE

1964 **Stingray** The first British programme to be filmed entirely in colour – and in the first 'motion stamp' set for Royal Mail in 2011.



1964 **Thunderbirds** An all-time favourite, which appeared to take off on this 2011 stamp.

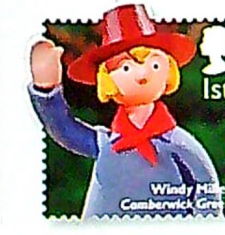


1965 

The Magic Roundabout Don't miss the Dougal stamp!

The Pogles Postgate's first 3D show.

1966 **Camberwick Green** More 60s nostalgia in the new set.



Ivor the Engine debuted on BBC television in 1959 and *Noggin the Nog* followed in the same year. Postgate wrote the scripts and narrated as well as animating the characters, which gave him the opportunity to introduce jokes that would engage a more adult audience. This two-tier appeal has generated for Postgate's films a cult following that is probably stronger today than it was at the time, as *Guardian* heritage and culture correspondent Maev Kennedy explains: 'Postgate had a genius for taking things that appeared childishly simple and injecting a layer of anarchic wit which hooked adults in as well. Often this was entirely non-verbal, which has had the unintended side-effect that they don't date.



Eric Thompson (1929-1982), whose dry wit and whimsy gave *The Magic Roundabout* its unique voice

'I once watched a group of adults come upon some of the original knitted Clangers in a toy museum and immediately begin to talk to one another in Clanger language, to the acute embarrassment of their children. I find people either miss Postgate completely, or he marks them for life.'

In 1965 Postgate produced his first three-dimensional stop-motion show *The Pogles* for *Watch With Mother*. This dark tale of forest folk with their changeling son and clearly alcoholic storytelling plant was later recommissioned by the BBC on the condition that Postgate lightened the show's content. Renamed *Pogle's Wood*, it ran for another two series. Postgate and Firmin went on to create such classic shows as *The Clangers*, celebrated in the Children's Television stamp issue of 1996, and *Bagpuss*, who appears in the present issue.

From France with a twist

By the time the Pogles had joined the *Watch With Mother* pantheon, another small revolution in children's TV had taken place across the Channel. In 1963 French advertising executive Serge Danot got together with expat English animator Ivor Wood to create *Le Manège Enchanté*. In the UK, transferred to the BBC, this of course became *The Magic Roundabout*, and its heady mixture of bright graphics and whimsical eccentricity was to be the template for many subsequent children's animated programmes.

In France the show was an immediate hit. Filmmaker Nemo Sandman remains an ardent fan: '*Le Manège Enchanté* was one of my very first television shows. I loved it. Pollux [addicted to sugar lumps and with an outrageously English accent, set to become Dougal in the UK version] was my dream dog and Zebulon [Zebedee in the UK], the magician with the Salvador Dalí moustache, was my favourite of all the characters. No, wait... I ▸

Photographer: Robin Jones/Getty Images



50 years on...

Author and film critic Kim Newman remembers growing up in the Sixties with The Magic Roundabout:

'Even as a child, I recognised that it was weirder than the other kids' shows. It seemed far less babyish than other programmes in the *Watch With Mother* slot, but it was squeezed in just before the news, to catch a grown-up crowd who responded to its surrealism.

'Somehow, I knew it was a 'foreign' show: there were things like the often terrifying East German or Czech fairy tale films, *Tales From Europe*, around – so the format was familiar, but I had a sense of the way Eric Thompson added a great deal with his wry, deadpan ironies.

'Now it strikes me that the French show was for kids but the English adaptation was aimed wider. It had all the comforting ritual elements that were part of the *Watch With Mother* format, such as the repeated catchphrases and that oddly melancholy theme tune, but really vivid characters and a sense of its own enclosed, weird world.

'The fact that Dougal, the supposed hero, was a selfish, fed-up egotist somehow made him great – he's almost a Hancock creation or a Mr Toad. Like *Alice in Wonderland* and Tolkien it was too easily co-opted by druggie hippie types (who are lampooned a bit in Thompson's Dylan the Rabbit) but it expressed an older literary heritage, a very English whimsy and absurdism. And all this nostalgia is evoked by the new Dougal stamp!'

thought Azalée the cow and Margot [Azalea and Florence] were great too.'

Much of *The Magic Roundabout*'s lasting appeal in the UK was to do with the happy accident that had excluded the original French scripts from the BBC's contract with Danot. When they realised they would have to spend more to buy the scripts and then translate and overdub them, BBC executives decided to commission former *Play School* presenter Eric Thompson (father of actress Emma) to write and voice his own scripts over Danot's and Wood's animation.

The resulting shows were peppered with popular cultural references and jokes that soared way above children's heads, but then they were already happy with brightly coloured anarchy of the Magic Garden. Even the *enfant terrible* of the British film industry, Ken Russell, got a name check in one episode.

From small screen to high street to cinema

Leading stamp designer Brian Webb was a young adult when *The Magic Roundabout* was first broadcast. 'It worked for children with its simple, pretty sets, and it worked for grown-ups because it used very grown-up language and was very witty,' he says. 'With all those poppies and mushrooms, the stories hint of drugs sub-plots which probably increased the student viewing figures no end. Dougal was cool, Florence was pretty – it was all very relaxed in comparison with other stiff children's programmes.'

In fact, the popularity of the show with adults meant the BBC switchboard was flooded with protests when it was moved to an earlier slot from its original time just before the early evening news.

In 1970 Dougal and his friends made the transition from the small screen to the cinema in the full-length feature *Dougal and the Blue Cat*. Thompson again wrote the script for the English language version and narrated, but in a departure from tradition, the Blue Cat was voiced by Fenella Fielding (who appeared, by the way, on the *Carry on Screaming* stamp in the Classic Carry On and Hammer Films special issue of 2008).

Magic Roundabout animator Ivor Wood returned to the UK where he joined the FilmFair production company and made a number of stop-motion shows for both ITV and BBC. These included *The Herbs* (scripted by *Paddington* author Michael Bond) *The Wombles* and *Paddington*. Both of the latter are in this month's Classic Children's Television issue, along with *Postman Pat*, which Wood's own company Woodland Animation first produced in 1981.

By the Eighties, animated children's shows were big business, not solely because of the burgeoning new video trade – if a show hit the right groove with

CLASSIC CHILDREN'S TV TIMELINE

1974 **Bagpuss**
Just 13 episodes, yet in a 1999 poll, Bagpuss was voted the most popular children's TV programme of all time. Catch the quiz on page 158.



1975 **Paddington Bear**
From book to screen and now his third stamp.





1981 **Postman Pat**
A special favourite of stamp collectors!



Royal Mail First Day Cover for the Classic Children's TV issue, released on 7 January. For more details and to purchase philatelic items, visit www.royalmail.com/stamps Below: Professor Yaffle on Anniversary of Bagpuss postmark of the Medal Cover. For details of all special postmarks for this issue, see p112 of December *Bulletin*



its target audience, an array of themed merchandise followed. *Bob the Builder* and *Peppa Pig* are recent examples of this phenomenon, but the real high roller must be *Thomas the Tank Engine and Friends* (they had their very own stamp issue in 2011, marking the centenary of the birth of their creator, the Rev W Awdry). Still deep in the tradition of British eccentricity, the TV tales of Thomas have spun off into a commercial empire selling everything from pyjamas to lunch boxes.

Global movie stars

Aside from an ever-increasing commercialism, the other major development in children's animated shows has been technology. Computer graphics now facilitate far more graceful animation than was ever possible in the past. Gone are the days of slightly shaky stop-frame animation or string puppetry. While the end result is very clean, life-like movement, I cannot help but think that something of the original charm of puppets and stop-frame animation has been lost. A joyous exception is the most contemporary star of the stamp issue, *Shaun the Sheep* – he is one hundred per cent modelling clay with a bendy wire skeleton.

Shaun is a spin off from Nick Park's third Wallace and Gromit film, the Oscar-winning *A Close Shave* from 1995. In 2010 he made a guest appearance in the Royal Mail stamps programme, playing the violin on the Wallace and Gromit Christmas Miniature Sheet. Now he has his very own stamp. Shaun's adventures are a delightful mixture of sit-com and anarchic slapstick humour as the super-bright sheep creates mayhem on the farm. Long may they continue! ●

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1984 Thomas the Tank Engine Although a whole set issue was dedicated to the author in 2011, Thomas just had to have his own stamp in the Classic Children's TV issue.

1998 Bob the Builder Who hasn't borrowed a hammer from his kit in the toy box? Bob the Builder is a timeless hero and represents the 1990s in the new stamp set.



2004 Peppa Pig A 21st-century heroine of post-modern simplicity.





2007 Shaun the Sheep A thumbs-up from the coolest dude in the new stamp set.

Feline lucky? Then this quiz will make you purr with pleasure. Answer a few questions about Bagpuss – one of the host of celebrities in the Classic Children's TV issue – for your chance to win every single item in the new set



Correctly answer the following teasers about everyone's favourite televsion moggy and you could soon be the proud owner of the new Classic Children's TV stamps, presentation pack, stamp cards, medal cover and framed stamps.

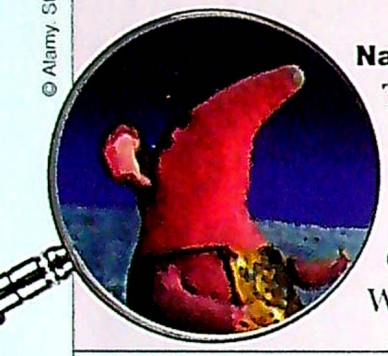
1. In the introduction of every episode of the show, how does the narrator describe Bagpuss? **a)** Baggy **b)** Saggy **c)** Maggie

2. What instrument did the frog character Gabriel play in the series? **a)** Banjo **b)** Electric bagpipes **c)** The spoons

3. What kind of animal is Professor Yaffle? (Yes, we know the Prof also doubles a bookend…) **a)** Python **b)** Owl **c)** Woodpecker



4. *Bagpuss* creator Oliver Postgate also masterminded Seventies kids' classic *The Clangers*, which appeared in the Children's TV issue of 1996. What was the value of the *Clangers* stamp? **a)** 31p **b)** 37p **c)** 39 kosmics



Name That Stamp
The stamp under the magnifying glass left shows another Oliver Postgate hit, also featuring in the Classic Children's TV set. What was the show called?

Stampstumper
Hurrah! You find a little tin of stamps in the attic. They are 20p and 50p stamps with a total tariff value of £28. The value of all 50p stamps together is three times more than the value of all 20p stamps. **a)** How many 20p stamps are there? **b)** How many 50p stamps are there?
Try not to peek now, but the solution is printed upside down at the foot of the page.

How to enter Send your answers, marked 'January Feline Lucky' and/or 'January Name That Stamp' to: *Bulletin* Prize Draws, Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB.

Closing date 20 February 2014. Senders of the first two correct entries drawn in each section after the closing date win the Classic Children's TV issue. Six runners-up also receive prizes.

October winners *Dinosaur Quiz* Mr R L Clarke, Essex. *Name That Stamp* Mr R Sayers, Essex. *Crossword winner* Mrs M Dungate, Dorset.
The solutions to the October puzzles were published on page 126 in the December *Bulletin* •

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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.

Stampstumper answers: a) 35, b) 42.

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PTS Stamp & Coin Exhibitions Ltd
PO Box 981
Southsea
Hampshire PO1 9PG
Tel: +44 (0) 2392 832289
Email: office.pts@btinternet.com

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