The magazine for collectors of UK stamps

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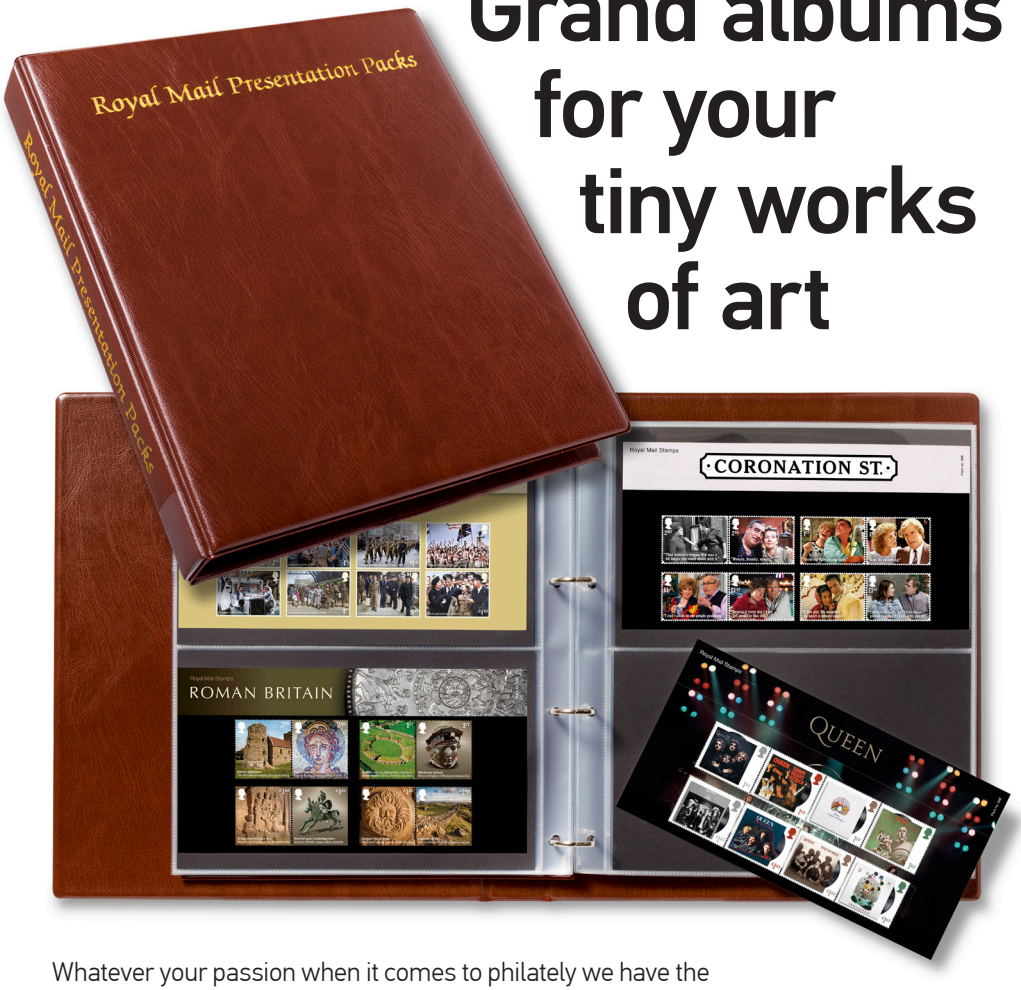


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Editor Tim Lees, Royal Mail, 185 Farringdon Road, Floor MP-03, London EC1A 1AA ● **Design and content creation** Ian Boardman, Adesso Creative Ltd ● Price £2.15 from Post Office Ltd philatelic outlets or by order from Post Office branches ● **12 months’ subscriptions** £20.95 UK and Europe; £26.95 rest of the world. Send subscriptions to Royal Mail Stamps and Collectibles, PO Box 1373, Sunderland SR5 9PG, UK or subscribe online at royalmail.com/bulletin ● **Binders** (to hold 24 issues) £8.68 and storage boxes (about 30 copies) £10.16, are also available by post or online ● Copyright and editorial rights are reserved by Royal Mail Group Ltd ● All rights reserved ● Reproduction in whole or parts is prohibited without prior permission of Royal Mail Group Ltd ● **Printed** in Great Britain by Zenith Print & Packaging Ltd ● **ISSN** 2633 2310 ● Royal Mail is a trading name and registered trade mark of Royal Mail Group Ltd. Registered in England and Wales, number 4138203. Registered office: 100 Victoria Embankment, London EC4Y 0HQ ● Stamp images © Royal Mail Group Ltd.

The show

Queen II – 1974
Building on its predecessor, *Queen II* was an assured album that upped the theatrics – and the expectations for the future.
First Class



Sheer Heart Attack – 1974 The all-important breakthrough, *Sheer Heart Attack* refined the band's earlier sound into something more directly calibrated for the charts.
First Class



A Night At The Opera – 1975 The moment where it all came together: ambition, vision and the public's desire for more.
First Class



News of the World – 1977 The punk movement may have grabbed the headlines, but *We Are the Champions* ensured Queen's place at rock's top table.
First Class



It's a kind of magic...

They sang 'We are the champions' and they were. They created the most streamed song from the 20th century. They produced the UK's number one best-selling album of all time. Frontman Freddie Mercury named himself after a Roman god and to his millions of fans he was nothing short of divine. Queen truly has ruled the world for almost half a century, since they played their first gig (with new arrival John Deacon) in 1971 at a college in Surrey.

Now a new Royal Mail Special Stamp issue bows to these kings of rock in celebration of their record-breaking, hit making career. The eight-stamp set features the covers of some of their finest albums up to 1991, when Mercury died of an AIDs-related illness. The Miniature Sheet has a definitive-sized stamp featuring a portrait of the band, plus four other stamps showing Mercury, guitarist Brian May, drummer Roger Taylor and bassist John Deacon – performing on stage. There is a choice of three First Day Covers, and other exciting products include a Presentation Pack,

Queen – Stamp Specifications

Date of issue	9 July
Number of stamps	Eight – two horizontal strips of four (4 x 1st Class, 4 x £1.63)
Design	Royal Mail Group Ltd, based on an original design by Studio Dempsey
Stamp format	Landscape
Stamp size	38mm x 31mm
Number per sheet	24/48
Printer	International Security Printers
Print process	Lithography
Perforations	14 x 14
Phosphor	Bars as appropriate
Gum	PVA

must go on

Prestige Stamp Book and three Coin Covers. The Special Stamps represent milestones in Queen's career, including: 1975's *A Night At The Opera* featuring the ground-breaking *Bohemian Rhapsody*, *News of the World* from 1977 with the anthem *We Are the Champions* and 1980's *The Game*, where Mercury's bubbly Elvis tribute, *Crazy Little Thing Called Love*, was on the tracklist. And also *Greatest Hits* from 1981 – the biggest selling album in UK rock and pop history. The stories behind the stamps and about the band members, the smash hits they penned and the concerts they performed in, are as extraordinary as the albums themselves.

Mercury, born Farrokh Bulsara in Zanzibar in 1946, was sent to school in India where teachers affectionately nicknamed him Freddie. Inspired by Little Richard and Fats Domino, even as a young boy little Freddie could listen to a song and play it immediately by ear on the piano. He returned to Zanzibar in 1963, but had to flee to the UK with his family the following year after British rule ended and revolution broke out. When a graphic art student at Ealing Art College, he met May and Taylor, who were also studying in London. Both extraordinarily bright (Taylor was learning dentistry and later gained a biology BSc; May has a doctorate in astrophysics), they were intrigued by the enigmatic Mercury, who wore black nail polish.

May was a gifted guitarist, and his guitar was as special as his musical talents. He hand-built it with his father in the garage using parts from a 100-year-old fire mantelpiece. Called the Red Special, it took father and son two years to complete. May played it on every Queen album and it even had its own bodyguard when Queen toured.

Norfolk-born and Cornwall-raised, Taylor was Queen's master drummer, yet his early musical 'career' wasn't quite as rock 'n' roll as he'd have ▶



The Game – 1980
Using synths for the very first time, *The Game* kept up with the changing trends of a new decade.
£1.63



Greatest Hits – 1981
Featuring the band's biggest hits since its first chart appearance in 1974 including *Seven Seas of Rhye*, *Another One Bites the Dust*, *Killer Queen* and *We Will Rock You*.
£1.63



The Works – 1984
As its title suggests, *The Works* had it all: modern rock with a pop sensibility, as exemplified in *Radio Ga Ga*.
£1.63



Innuendo – 1991
The final Queen album released during Freddie Mercury's lifetime, *Innuendo* closed with the poignant ballad, *The Show Must Go On*.
£1.63

Queen The band shot at Johnny Dewe Mathews' studio, Primrose Hill, London, on 4 September 1974, featuring: Roger Taylor (drummer), Freddie Mercury (lead vocalist), John Deacon (bassist) and Brian May (guitarist).
First Class



Magic Tour – 1986 Freddie performing at Wembley in the summer of '86. The tour's final show at Knebworth the following month on 9 August was the last time that Queen's four original members performed publicly.
First Class



Hyde Park Concert – 1976 In the wake of the success of the A Night At The Opera Tour, on 18 September Queen thrilled over 150,000 fans with a free concert at London's Hyde Park.
First Class



A Night At The Opera Tour – 1975 The shows that announced the arrival of Queen as the biggest group on the planet – and no wonder, *Bohemian Rhapsody* was dominating the singles charts.
£1.63



Magic Tour – 1986 The tour of 1986 coincided with the release of the album *A Kind of Magic* – fans were enthralled by some of the band's most outstanding concerts in their career.
£1.63



liked. The first instrument young Roger learned to play was a ukulele, and he was – reluctantly – a choirboy at Truro Cathedral. Like Mercury, Taylor got into rock at a tender age: as a pre-teen, he created his first drum kit – a set of his mother's saucepans and her knitting needles for drumsticks.

John Deacon, who joined the band in 1971, was an electronics whizz who impressed the three original Queen members when he showed them his home-made amp, dubbed the 'Deacy Amp'. They did, of course, like his playing style too, but also the fact that he was rather quiet, and so wouldn't upstage the rest of the band, especially extrovert performer Mercury. They even changed his name to Deacon John on the credits of their first album *Queen*, as a joke to make him sound more interesting. In reality, Deacon was simply quietly brilliant, penning some of the band's greatest hits: *You're My Best Friend*, *I Want to Break Free* and *Another One Bites the Dust*.

Queen released dozens of singles, had six number ones and 26 top 10s, but *Bohemian Rhapsody* is surely their classic. With at least 1.6 billion streams, it is the most streamed song from the last century. It took the boys three weeks to record, and featured no less than 180 overdubbed vocal parts from them. Amazingly, it almost didn't get released. The rock-opera fusion was enormously long for its time, a whisper under six minutes, and Queen's management doubted it would work. Yet Freddie persisted, persuading his friend BBC DJ Kenny Everett to play it on his hit radio show, and the track took off. *Rhapsody* features famously enigmatic lyrics that no one has ever deciphered and Mercury refused to explain, but its power

Queen – Miniature Sheet Specifications

Date of issue	9 July
Number of stamps	Five (3 x 1st Class, 2 x £1.63)
Design	Royal Mail Group Ltd and Baxter and Bailey
Miniature Sheet size	192mm x 74mm
Stamp format, size, perforations	Band Member Stamps (square 35mm x 35mm – 14.5 x 14.5) Band Portrait Stamp (portrait 20mm x 24mm – 15 x 14)
Printer	International Security Printers
Print process	Lithography
Phosphor	Bars as appropriate
Gum	PVA



The Miniature Sheet featuring five stamps, four of which show each individual band member while the fifth comprises a group photo

was no mystery to listeners: the song became Queen's first UK number one. The recording of *Bohemian Rhapsody* may have been grinding, but Mercury's songwriting expertise was effortless. *Crazy Little Thing Called Love*, for example, was written by the singer in ten minutes as he relaxed in the bath in his suite at the Bayerischer Hof Hotel in Munich, when the band were recording.

But the band didn't always have total confidence in their talents. They hesitated to release Deacon's *Another One Bites the Dust* – from *The Game*, on one of the £1.63 values – as a single. They only did so when Michael Jackson came backstage during their 1980 The Game Tour and persuaded them, saying they'd be mad not to release it. Their 15 studio albums are triumphs, yet Queen's success reaches far beyond recorded classics. The band's theatrical, cinematic gigs were also legendary, with soaring light shows and blazingly dramatic pyrotechnics. And, of course, there was Mercury's sartorial stage style – from the fur coat he wore in their ground-breaking 1974 *Top of the Pops* performance of *Killer Queen* to the biker boy leathers, sequined jumpsuits, crown and royal robe (see it on the Miniature Sheet) and the famous white pleated 'cape top' designed by Zandra Rhodes. The designer had intended it as the top part of a wedding dress; yet it was typical of Mercury's natural sense of style that he tried it on in a private viewing at Rhodes' Bayswater studio and made the garment his own. Interestingly, Mercury's stage costume for Queen's most lauded live performance was uncharacteristically pared-back. For their classic 1985 Live Aid set, he wore just white jeans, vest and trainers. Yet this simple look merely exposed ►

Below: the Presentation Pack contains the full set of eight Special Stamps as well as the Miniature Sheet. Written by journalist Jason Draper it highlights Queen's meteoric album and more generally music success from 1970 to the untimely death of Freddie Mercury in 1991. Packed with imagery and quotes







his talents, and those of the band, still further. It was the music and performance which counted, and in just 21 minutes on that stage at Wembley Stadium, Queen created a legend. The crowd was 72,000 but the band played, by satellite, to a global audience of 1.9 billion. Mercury began with a short take of *Rhapsody* on the piano. The band moved on to *Radio Ga Ga* and, with his *Ay-Oh* improvisation, Mercury famously invited the crowd to join



First Day Cover with stamps cancelled with a postmark using gold ink. The Tallents House version contains the line 'Is this the real life? Is this just fantasy?' a line from the legendary mini rock opera *Bohemian Rhapsody*



First Day Cover with the alternative postmark which has the Knebworth location which is where the four band members last performed in public. 'Any way the wind blows' are also lyrics from *Bohemian Rhapsody*

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Prestige Stamp Book pane one: (4 x 1st Class)



Pane two: (4 x £1.63)

in. *Crazy Little Thing Called Love* and *We Will Rock You* followed, and Queen finished with *We Are the Champions* which, given the whole purpose of Live Aid, sounded like an anthem of hope. 'It was the greatest day of our lives,' said May later. Elton John, who dashed into Queen's trailer afterwards to congratulate them, put it rather more richly: 'You b**tards, you stole the show.' He was right – and it was exactly what Queen did their entire career ●

Article by Andrew Neish



Miniature Sheet First Day Cover
Below: Prestige Stamp Book Pane First Day Cover





FD2014-TH



FD2014-PL



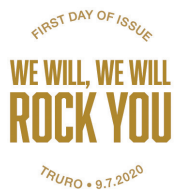
FD2014-NP



Pane three: (2 x 1st Class, 2 x £1.63)



Pane four: (4 x 1p, 4 x 1st Class)



The Coin Cover handstamp has lyrics from Queen's 1977 hit *We Will Rock You* – written by Brian May



The Queen Live Brilliant Uncirculated Coin Cover – celebrates Queen's legendary live performances and contains the Miniature Sheet



The Retail Stamp Book includes one *A Night At The Opera* First Class Special Stamp and one *Queen II* First Class Special Stamp and four First Class Machin Definitives. The book is printed in gravure and the stamps are self-adhesive (unlike the individual stamps from the set which are litho and gummed). The printer is International Security Printers

Queen quiz

1 In what year did John Deacon join the group?
a) 1970
b) 1971
c) 1973

2 On what tour did they first perform *Bohemian Rhapsody*?
a) A Night At The Opera
b) News of the World
c) Crazy

3 Which band member wrote *Radio Ga Ga*?
a) Freddie Mercury
b) Roger Taylor
c) Brian May

4 In which song is the line 'guaranteed to blow your mind'?
a) *A Kind Of Magic*
b) *Under Pressure*
c) *Killer Queen*

5 What is known as 'The Red Special'?
a) Freddie's piano
b) Brian May's guitar
c) Roger Taylor's drum set

How to enter Please send your answers, with your contact address or phone number, marked 'Queen quiz', to: Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB. Or by email to tim.lees2@royalmail.com

Prizes The first five correct entries drawn after the closing date win the Queen Presentation Pack.

Closing Date 15 August '20.



Bohemian Rhapsody Souvenir Pack



Queen Greatest Hits Souvenir Pack



Queen Album Cover Collection Fan Sheet

Queen – Prices

Set of 8 Special Stamps	£9.56
Miniature Sheet	£5.54
Presentation Pack	£16.00
First Day Cover Stamps	£12.15
First Day Cover Miniature Sheet	£7.30
Stamp Souvenir	£12.15
Stamp Sheet Souvenir	£7.30
First Day Envelope	£0.30
Postcards (14 in set)	£6.30
First Day Cover – Prestige Stamp Book Pane	£4.35
Prestige Stamp Book	£19.10
Retail Stamp Book	£4.56
Press Sheet (Limited edition of 500)	£91.40
Queen Album Cover Collector's Sheet	£13.15
Queen Live Collector's Sheet	£8.80
Full Stamp Sheet (1st Class)	£36.48
Full Stamp Sheet (£1.63)	£78.24
Half Stamp Sheet (1st Class)	£18.24
Half Stamp Sheet (£1.63)	£39.12
Stamp Mount	£21.99
Framed Stamps	£29.99
Framed Stamps and Miniature Sheet	£39.99
Framed Album Cover Collector's Sheet	£39.99
Framed Bohemian Rhapsody Print Enlargement and Stamp	£79.99
Bohemian Rhapsody Souvenir Pack	£8.50
Greatest Hits Souvenir Pack	£10.60
A Night At The Opera Fan Sheet	£7.50
Album Collection Fan Sheet	£10.20
The Bohemian Rhapsody Bundle	£49.99
Queen Legends Bundle	£55.49
Queen Live BU Coin Cover	£19.95
Queen Live Silver Coin Cover	£64.99
Queen Live Gold Proof Coin Cover	£699

April solutions – Poets quiz 1)b 2)b 3)a 4)c 5)c

Winners M P McCartan, Bangor; Derrick Codling, Warwick; Anthony Everall, Burntwood; Mr T J Bowater, Yarhampton; Mr P Moulton, Eastbourne.

Terms and conditions Promotions are open to any reader aged 18 or over, except employees of Royal Mail Group Ltd, their business associates and immediate families. Responsibility cannot be accepted for entries which are incomplete, damaged or not received. Proof of posting is not proof of receipt. Prizes must be accepted as offered; they are not transferable and there are no cash alternatives. Winners are notified within 28 days of the closing date stated. 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. Royal Mail's decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into. Entry implies acceptance of these rules. Prizes are subject to 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. The winners' names are available 28 days after the closing date. To receive this please send an SAE to The Editor.



Freddie Mercury
the earliest album

Queen's *Greatest Hits* collection of 1981 is the UK's best selling album of all time, and one of the longest charting in the US, but the frontman behind the success has left us an even more enduring album



From Freddie's page of Australian stamps, laid out in symmetry, which has more importance than issue date, is this used example of the 3½d scarlet stamp issued with two others to commemorate the Royal Visit of The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh in the summer of 1954. An important occasion, and stamp, for this Commonwealth country



Placed by Freddie as a top centrepiece on his page, the superbly designed first stamp of the Australian Antarctic Territory - issued in March 1957. The Australian page is complete with red and blue stamps on opposite sides, and brown stamps close together. However, this stamp is where the eye falls first, as his artistic flair no doubt intended



The completed page of Australian stamps with total symmetry of shapes and positioning

The young philatelist Farrokh Bulsara was born in Zanzibar on 5 September 1946. Aged eight he went to a boarding school in Panchgani, India, and it was in these environs that a penchant for stamp-collecting manifested itself. He was, no doubt, inspired by his father Bomi, who was a British Colonial Officer and a collector of British Commonwealth stamps – he encouraged Farrokh to use his initiative and form his own personal collection. Whilst in India, Farrokh's creativity ►



With the first sheet complete on these untraditional black pages, we move to the second sheet of Australia which is laid out even more artistically, and has room for further additions. The three orange stamps are situated around the page, the ½d orange stamp with the wallaroo being a long term issue, with variations of perforation, since 1938 - this stamp being from the issue from 1949 onwards



The second page of Australian stamps - a work in progress, but again with much thought and care



Freddie positioned the four Queen Elizabeth portrait stamps on either side at the top of the page, with two from the Queen's father, King George VI, neatly placed inwards from these. The 2½d blue stamp was issued from June 1954, and with the three others shown from the issue, would have regularly been seen on letters and parcels



The Food Production issue of February 1953 in two denominations and colours, but three designs of each, enabled this young collector to put all six as the top two rows of his new page. The 3d emerald showing 'wheat' was placed as the first of the six that constitute a visual block of red and green



The 1s (one shilling) bistre-brown King George V stamp was the highest value of the 1934-36 set of 11 stamps in daily use, as distinct from commemoratives, which feature as some of his Australian stamps. The page is composed of stamps only from the reign of the Queen's grandfather, which ended some 20 years before the young Farrokh started collecting at age nine years. All neatly placed, the emphasis being on positioning, not incremental face values





The King George V high values from 1934 would have been purchased in later years for, or by, Freddie, as were all these issues from this period and reign that were assembled as a distinctive 'F'. This stamp from the short set of three is the 2s 6d (half-crown) chocolate-brown, matched by the next value, the bright rose-red 5s (five shillings), on the opposite bottom corner, both away from the 'F' shape. With further stamps, the design to the right would have progressed, but we cannot know how



The 6d (sixpenny) purple issue, which features here towards the middle of the 'F' and in the centre of the page, was carried over from the earlier issued sets, this value not being issued anew from 1934. The postmark is clearly 'London' with the year date '1922', so it was probably purchased within a packet of stamps



Progression on this page to show the letter 'F' for his name - Farrokh

flourished, he loved art and impressed family and friends with sketches. In 1962 at the age of 16, he returned to Zanzibar where he completed the last two years of his schooling at St Joseph's Convent School. The days of his childhood education were at times sadly marred by bullying and ridicule due to his buck teeth. He endured taunts of 'Bucky!' but 'Freddie' was his youthful nickname that stuck – as did his teeth – rising to stardom he was scared that fixing them might compromise his incredible vocal range. Besides, he knew the distinctive fault gave his face character – after all, hadn't an acquaintance – a certain Mr Bowie, with a mesmeric image, benefited from a quirky, defective eye? And that, courtesy of a fist as a youth!

It was in 1964, at the age of 18 that Freddie, his father Bomi, mother Jer, and younger sister Kashmira, fled political turmoil in Zanzibar and arrived in Britain. With scant personal belongings in one suitcase and the family's ►



The page for Zanzibar, again laid out with precision and care, symmetry and colour balance



Close to his heart would have been his homeland - Zanzibar, so naturally these stamps would have more meaning to young Freddie than some from other countries. This mint commemorative stamp features with two used examples in the centre of the page, and shows the ruler of the time, Sultan Khalifa bin Harub, at the time of his 75th birthday



The definitive issue of August 1957 is shown in the bottom half of the Zanzibar page, and the orange and deep green 2sh. (two shilling) stamp, one of the highest values, features the Dimbani Mosque, originally opened in the year 1107 and one of the oldest Islamic buildings on the East African coast



At the top of the page is the previous definitive set, issued from 1952, which features the Sultan, and other places in Zanzibar. The 2sh. stamp from this set, bright blue and deep purple, illustrates the Seyyid Khalifa Schools in Beit-el-Ras, which means 'the palace on the headland', and describes place and building exactly



Farrokh Bulsara (Freddie Mercury) aged eight in 1953

stamp collections in another, they set up home in a terraced house in Feltham, Middlesex. Two years later in 1966 Freddie enrolled at the Ealing College of Art, and it was there as a student that he cultivated his love of music and desire for fame. Whilst his peers thought he suffered with delusions of grandeur, Freddie started plotting his rise to stardom. His artistic skills were honed studying graphic illustration, and were later demonstrated when he designed the Queen crest featuring the zodiac signs of the four band members which appeared on the sleeve reverse of their first album.

Thereafter, in a musical era when glam rock was the order of the day, Freddie – now Mercury, and Queen rose to fame. A natural baritone, the inimitable frontman regularly sang as a tenor, and could effortlessly move through the gears to tackle soprano parts – his range could accommodate delicate tones, but when the vibe and lyrics dictated it he was equally adept at delivering



A splendid page that would grace any collection of Zanzibar shows 14 fiscal stamps laid out in numerical order, rather than value, as shown by the '8A' values situated between the '5R' and '10R' stamps. It would be interesting to know where the young boy, or probably his father, obtained these stamps, but possibly towards the end of his collecting period when Farrokh (Freddie) returned back to Zanzibar in 1962 at age 16, two years before he moved to Britain, and future unparalleled musical and performance stardom



The large format revenue stamps are from India, overprinted 'ZANZIBAR', and are handstamped with a Zanzibar Government Registration Office oval handstamp. This one rupee stamp is dated in 1902, which is outside the 1875 to 1895 period that Indian stamps were used in Zanzibar. However, revenue stamps would have had little usage compared with postage stamps, which would account for different dates of the postmarks that can be seen on some of the 14 stamps on the page

barnstorming vocals. With that remarkable voice, the spectacular costumes, his captivating stage presence and legendary audience rapport – Freddie Mercury is indelibly etched in rock history.

The Album We are very fortunate to still have the stamp collection – given that the Bulsaras as a Parsi family are followers of the Persian prophet Zoroaster. Adherents to the faith customarily burn the possessions of the deceased, and consequently Freddie's stamp album is one of the few personal belongings that still exist following his untimely death in 1991. The collection comprises 54 pages with material from more than 35 countries, including many stamps from the British Commonwealth countries, as well as from Poland and Russia. The actual stamps with the exception of the Zanzibar fiscals are of little monetary value. Perhaps the most striking thing about the album, is the presentation of the stamps. The choice of black background, the symmetrical patterns, and the balance of colour demonstrated a precocious talent and offered a glimpse into the creative showman to come. The page of British stamps forming the letter 'F' poses the question: is that 'F' for Farrokh or 'F' for Freddie? – views differ as to the timing of the transition.

The album purchased by the National Postal Museum (now The Postal Museum) on 17 December 1993 helped to raise funds for the Mercury Phoenix Trust that was set up by friends of Freddie. It has been displayed around the globe and remains a source of fascination for Freddie Mercury fans and philatelists alike ●



The New Zealand page was carefully laid out with the usual symmetry, and has shapes, colour, and related pairs of stamps at opposite sides of the page. With pictures of the Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret at the top corners, and again below, all these top 16 stamps are health stamps from eight different years. Further down are five definitives of King George VI, and six of the present Queen, in between those of her father

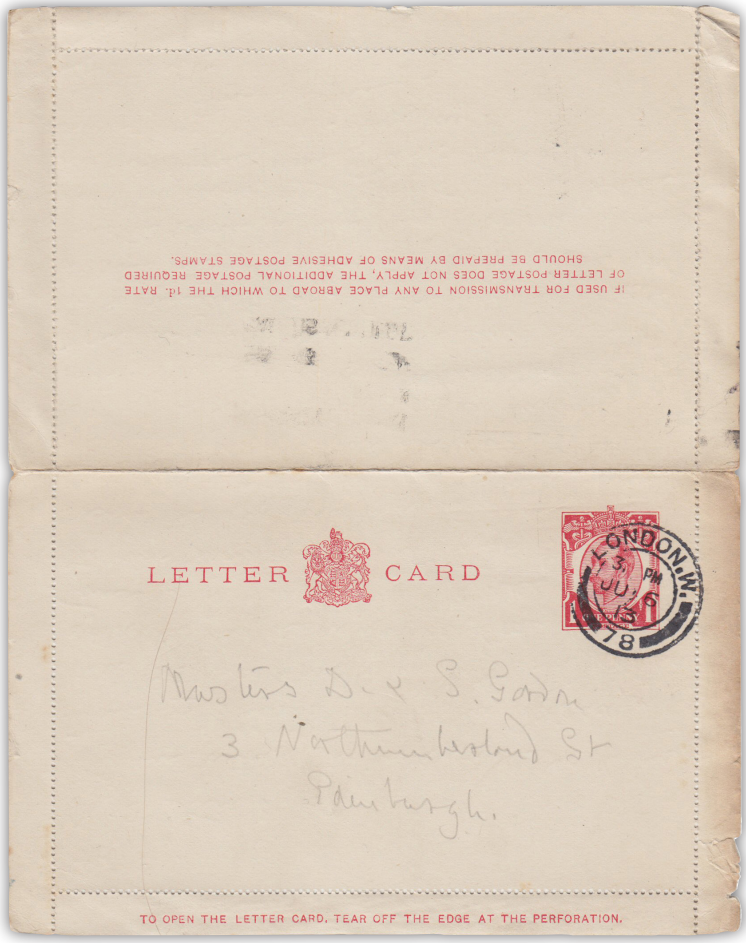


Health stamps were issued annually in New Zealand from 1929 to 2016, where a small premium went to charitable causes. This 1½d plus ½d scarlet and yellow stamp is from 1951 and shows Takapuna class yachts. The halfpenny premium is shown top-right, separate from the postage amount

Article by Ian Boardman with thanks to Dane Garrod for the analysis of album pages and stamps

On the hop – on the buses

In the April edition of the *Bulletin*, there was a short piece by me concerning a letter that was written on a train. If you thought 'hmm, that sounds like a tricky thing to do' – well, how about one that was written on a bus? The letter in question dates from 1913, and was written in pencil on a George V postal stationery letter card – an item that was effectively writing paper, envelope and stamp all in one, and just the sort of thing that would come in handy if you were trying to conduct your correspondence in a moving vehicle. (For postal stationery fans, this is Huggins & Baker LCP6, issued that year with a revised three-line inscription on the back.) It's from a mother visiting London to her sons in Edinburgh ('Masters D. & S. Gordon'), and surprisingly neatly written under the circumstances. She was apparently having a busy time of it:



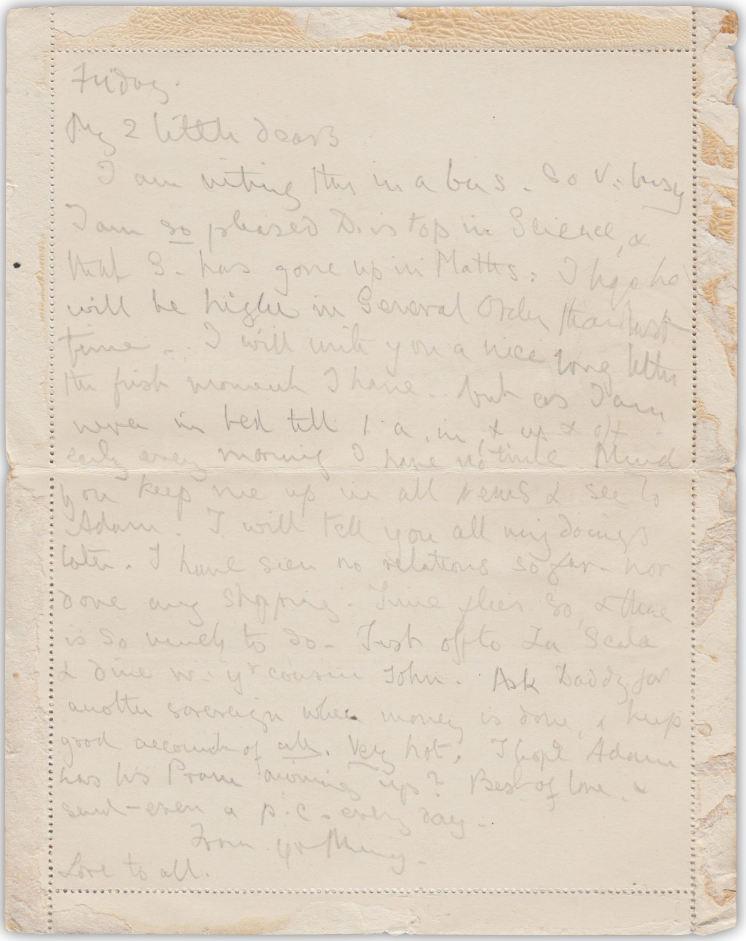
George V postal stationery letter card of June 1913 – likely the 16th (Monday) as it seems the writer may have been too busy to catch the post having written the letter – probably on Friday 13th

'Friday. / My 2 little dears

I am writing this in a bus. So v. busy. I am so pleased D. is top in Science, & that S. has gone up in Maths. I hope he will be higher in General Order than last time. I will write you a nice long letter the first moment I have, but as I am never in bed till 1 a.m. & up & off early every morning I have no time. Mind you keep me up in all news & see to Adam. I will tell you all my doings later. I have seen no relations so far nor done any shopping. Time flies so, & there is so much to do. Just off to La Scala & dine w. yr cousin John. Ask Daddy for another sovereign when money is done, & keep good account of all. Very hot, I hope Adam has his Pram awning up? Best of love, & send – even a p.c. – every day.

From yr Mumy / Love to all.'

The references to a sovereign as pocket money and dining at La Scala indicate that we're in the upper echelons of society here, and to my pleasant surprise the surname and address were sufficient to identify the writer and her family via that traditional research method known as 'Googling'. 3 Northumberland Street ►

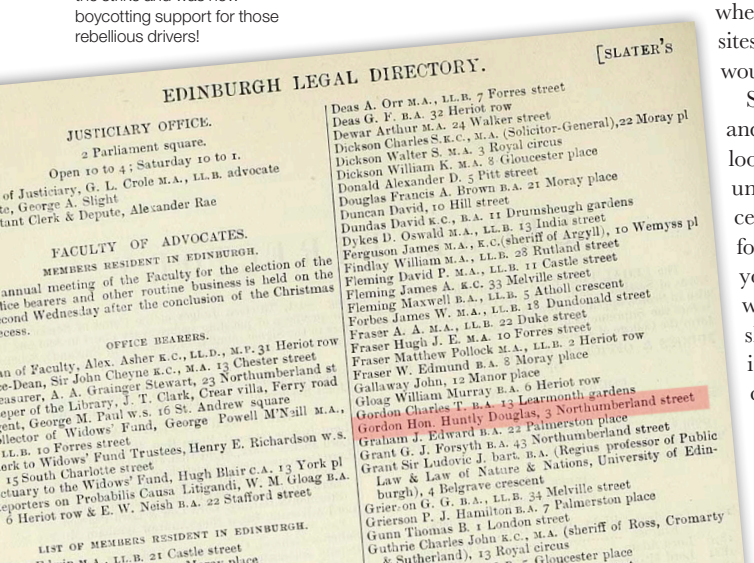




The writer probably wrote the letter aboard the London General Omnibus Company's B-type bus. However it begs the question – why would a lady of her status choose this mode of transport? The answer may be related to the Great Taxi Strike Of 1913. After a hike in petrol prices, 11,000 London cab drivers went on strike between 1 January and 21 March. Although the letter was written three months later, Miss Violet Fanshawe may have been inconvenienced by the strike and was now boycotting support for those rebellious drivers!

proved to be the residence of the Honourable Huntley Douglas Gordon, born 1860, son of Lord Gordon of Drumearn (a law lord), and listed as a member of the Scottish bar in Slater's Royal National Directory of Scotland. He in turn makes an appearance towards the end of a 1927 book entitled *The History of the Fanshawe Family*, which reports that that he got married in 1899 at St. Michael's Church, Chester Square, London to a Miss Violet Fanshawe (born 1863 in London). This, then, is our writer. The volume, 'printed privately as a family memoir' (you probably guessed that) also provided the names of the children and some notes on what the family had done up to the date of publication: '…the Hon. Huntly Douglas Gordon… was educated at Wellington College, became a member of the Faculty of Advocates and was for some years a prominent member of the Primrose League; his wife being Dame President of the Scotts' Habitation. Six months after the outbreak of War Huntly Gordon joined the 9th Royal Scots (Lothian Regt.), passing into the reserve in August, 1917. He is now Sheriff Substitute [a judge] of Ross and Cromarty. They have a family of three sons: Douglas-John, born on 14 September, 1900, a scholar of Balliol College, Oxford, Clerk to the House of Commons; Strathearn, born on 3 September, 1902, a prize Cadet at the R.M. College, Sandhurst, now Lieut. Highland Light Infantry; and Adam, born on 19 March, 1911.' The last-named would have been two years old when this letter was written, hence the reference to the pram!

I must admit to being curious as to what the 'doings' were that were making the writer late to bed and early to rise, but there's no clue to that. Perhaps it was related to 'the Scotts' Habitation' – does anyone know what that was? (Note: you should probably not Google this phrase in any situation where results that are largely niche sites with XXX in the domain name would be embarrassing.)


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fice bearers and other routine business is held on the
cond Wednesday after the conclusion of the Christmas
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Grier on G. G. B.A., LL.B. 34 Melville street
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Gunn Thomas B. 1 London street
Guthrie Charles John K.C., M.A. (sheriff of Ross, Cromarty & Sutherland), 13 Royal circus
Gloucester place

Still, it's an interesting message, and shows that even a very ordinary looking item can have something unusual about it. Apparently, a century or so ago, specifying the form of public transport on which you were writing your letter was the epistolary equivalent of shouting 'I'M ON THE TRAIN' into your mobile phone. Albeit considerably less annoying…

Article by Maurice Buxton

Classic British double-deckers

On 15 May 2001 Royal Mail issued five first class stamps commemorating the 150th anniversary of the first double-decker bus. A total of 16 buses graced the stamp set, including the most iconic of all – the AEC Routemaster – more commonly referred to as the red London bus, although it was also used by other operators around the UK. This front-engined double-decker model was designed by London Transport (to replace trolley buses) and made by the Associated Equipment Company (AEC) – production was between 1954 and 1968. However, the first bus that features on the stamps (bisected by perforation but printed in full on the Miniature Sheet) is the Leyland X-Type, which was typical of many buses in the early years of the century – basic and high-built on solid tyres. As manufacturers and operators refined the early vehicles the motorbus became an increasingly viable alternative to trains and trams.

Parked next to the X-Type is its successor London General Omnibus Company's B-Type bus – built between 1910 and 1921 and considered to be an upgrade. Up to 900 of these vehicles were used to move troops behind the lines during the First World War – the B-Type could carry 24 fully equipped infantrymen and their kit. When first utilised by the military the buses retained their red and white livery but were later painted khaki. The windows on the lower decks had to be replaced with planks nailed to the sides of the vehicle due to windows being prone to breakage – mostly from rifles and packs. Some B-Types were even converted into mobile pigeon lofts to house the pigeons used for communication along the front.

The other 14 buses that feature on the stamps show the evolution of designs up until the Dennis Trident model – operative when the stamps were issued. In 2008 a design competition was spearheaded by the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson to produce a new version of the classical AEC Routemaster, subsequently Wrightbus was awarded the contract to build 1000 New Routemaster buses upholding a very British tradition on the roads today ●



Leyland X2 Open-top, London General B Type, Leyland Titan TD1 and AEC Regent 1



AEC Regent 1, Daimler COG5, Utility Guy Arab Mk II and AEC Regent III RT Type



AEC Regent III RT Type, Bristol KSW5G Open-top, AEC Routemaster and Bristol Lodekka FSF6G



Bristol Lodekka FSF6G, Leyland Titan PD3/4, Leyland Atlantean PDR1/1 and Daimler Fleetline CRG6LX-33



Daimler Fleetline CRG6LX-33, MCW Metrobus DR102/43, Leyland Olympian ONLXB/1R and Dennis Trident



Buses: Classic British Double-Deckers Miniature Sheet

To Paris and from New York – the Earls of Lucan

Although probably little of our own family history correspondence from past decades and centuries has survived, that from the country's aristocracy and landed gentry has often been retained in their country houses, which also have the space and facilities for storage. The Earls of Lucan have featured in the public domain in at least two particular scenarios of history, one for a tragic event in London in the 1970s, the other for involvement, together with his father, in a battle charge in the 1860s. Both these two Earls of Lucan are represented here in these postal items.

The first is from 1892, and is an uprated postal stationery envelope. By this date, the issue of pre-paid postal stationery was no longer a novelty, having been in existence in varied forms since the advent of the ill-fated Mulready stationery from May 1840, which the public disliked, preferring to use the postage stamp - the now celebrated Penny Black. The envelopes with the penny pink embossed stamps were issued in various sizes and cameos of the Sovereign, undated and dated within the design, and The Queen with differing pendant curls to her hair. This example is undated, with the pendant curl in a bunch and issued in this sized envelope – 93mm x 120mm – from 1881. To deal with the postage amount first, two further stamps have been added to cover the 2½d (twopence-halfpenny) rate to Europe. One being the so-called 16 dot variety of the Penny Lilac, and the other the vermilion halfpenny stamp of the Jubilee issue.



Front of postal stationery envelope written by the 4th Earl of Lucan from Fochabers to Paris

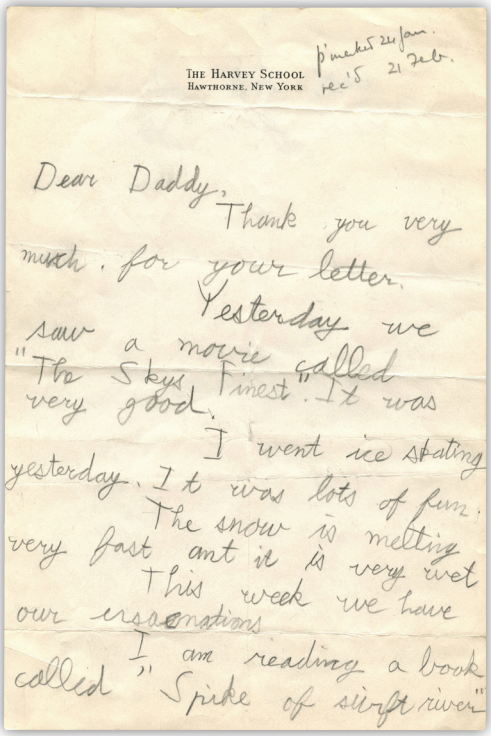
The writer was Charles George Bingham, 4th Earl of Lucan (1830-1914), writing from Gordon Castle near Fochabers, the home of his father-in-law, Charles Gordon-Lennox, 5th Duke of Richmond. Sadly, the letter has left the envelope long ago, but the wax seal still remains, showing the family crest of the Earldom of Lucan, and we are fortunate that the receiver opened the envelope with some care. The double-strike postmark is a duplex with the number '143' for Fochabers, a village in Morayshire, Scotland. Although there is an indistinct double-circle transit mark on the reverse that is dated 'OCT 92' and the word 'DISTRIBUTION' at the bottom, the date in the month and the place cannot be seen. Additionally, an unreadable and faint arrival mark is on the left, over which the receiver, Mr Reginald Gosling, has written the name of the sender - Earl of Lucan. He also at some time drew in pencil what appears to be the centre part of the family crest - the knight with vizor and headdress - that does not appear on the wax seal. This 4th Earl, as Lord Bingham and a Lieutenant-Colonel in the Coldstream Guards, served as aide-de-camp to his father who commanded the cavalry division during the Crimean War that included the infamous Charge of the Light Brigade. ►



Charles George Bingham, 4th Earl of Lucan



Back of postal stationery envelope written by the 4th Earl of Lucan from Fochabers to Paris



THE HARVEY SCHOOL
HAWTHORNE, NEW YORK

p'marked 24 Jan.
rec'd 21 Feb.

Dear Daddy,

Thank you very much for your letter.

Yesterday we saw a movie called "The Skys Finest". It was very good.

I went ice skating yesterday. It was lots of fun.

The snow is melting very fast and it is very wet

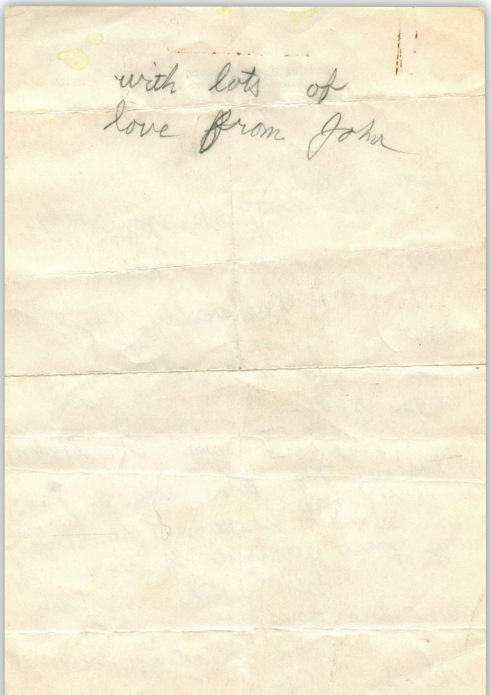
This week we have our examinations

I am reading a book called "Spike of Swift river"

Front of letter from the future 7th Earl in New York to his father – reverse of letter below



John Bingham (later 7th Earl) in April 1948



with lots of
love from John

Two generations later, during the turmoil of the Second World War, the 4th Earl's grandson, another George and the 6th Earl, decided that it would be safer for his eldest son and heir to travel to New York. After the fall of France, there was great fear that an invasion of Britain was imminent, and accordingly, many families in the aristocracy arranged for their children to be evacuated for safety. Reginald John Bingham – he used his second name John - was one of the fortunate ones. Born in December 1934, he would have been aged just 5½ years when sent to America. His letter from late January, probably 1941, has survived, and the headed notepaper is from The Harvey School, Hawthorne, New York. It begins 'Dear Daddy' and ends with 'lots of love from John'. His father, 6th Earl of Lucan, has written in pencil at the top 'p'marked 24 Jan.' and 'rec'd 21 Feb.'

For the public at large, nothing further concerning the Earls of Lucan would have been in their knowledge and interest, but for a sad occurrence in early November 1974 when a crime in London caused John Bingham, now 7th Earl of Lucan following the death of his father in 1964, to suddenly disappear. Much police activity across the world over many decades failed to locate the missing earl, and in time his wife, the Countess of Lucan, disposed of his belongings including his coronation robes and his correspondence. This brings us now to the original *Star Wars* film, which has also been commemorated by an excellent Royal Mail issue in October 2015, one 1st class stamp specifically illustrating Darth Vader. During the time that British television showed the first *Star Wars* film, large billboard advertising seen in Old Oak Lane, London, featured a picture of the missing Earl holding the Darth Vader helmet, and the words 'So that's why he keeps his helmet on' ●

Article by Dane Garrod



The 7th Earl of Lucan in his Coronation robes - January 1973



Star Wars advertising - 'So that's why he keeps his helmet on'

Roman Britain

Four centuries under the jurisdiction of Rome shaped our nation and left its mark on almost every facet of living in modern day Britain



Dover Lighthouse – The UK's tallest standing Roman building *2nd Class*



Bignor mosaic – Depicts Venus, Roman goddess of love *2nd Class*



Bridgeness distance slab – Records the building of the Antonine Wall *£1.63*

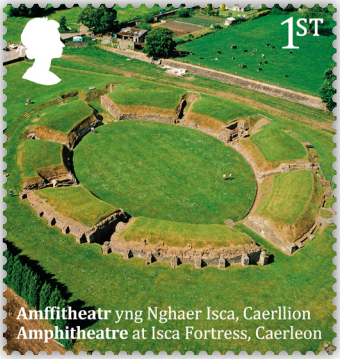


Warrior god, Cambridgeshire – Romano-British copper-alloy statuette *£1.63*

The enduring legacy



Roman Britain – Stamp Specifications	
Date of issue	18 June
Number of stamps	Eight – four horizontal se-tenant pairs (2 x 2nd Class, 2 x 1st Class, 2 x £1.63, 2 x £1.68)
Design	Up
Stamp format	Over-square portrait
Stamp size	35mm x 37mm
Printer	International Security Printers
Print process	Lithography
Perforations	14.5 x 14
Phosphor	Bars as appropriate
Gum	PVA



Amffitheatr yng Nghaer Isca, Caerllion
Amphitheatre at Isca Fortress, Caerleon
1st Class



Ribchester helmet – Worn at displays of Roman horsemanship *1st Class*



Gorgon's head, Bath – Sited at the spring sacred to Sulis Minerva *£1.68*



Hadrian's Wall – The northwest frontier of Rome's empire *£1.68*

It was the summer of AD 43, apprehension and fear almost overpowered Roman troops as they gathered at Boulogne and contemplated crossing the Channel and the invasion of an unknown land. It took the sarcastic jibes of a former slave to cajole the troops to set sail under Aulus Plautius – Emperor Claudius' commander-in-chief. Their arrival on British soil, probably at Kent, was uncontested but conflict was soon to follow, notably at two river crossings – believed to be the Medway and afterwards at the Thames. The Romans emerged as victors in those conflicts but the conquest of Britain proved to be a long process. However, Romano-British culture was eventually established and new trades, crafts and customs were assimilated into the lives of the indigenous population. The country was also enriched with a network of roads linking newly established Roman towns such as Londinium (London), Mamucium (Manchester) and ►

'So it was that Plautius undertook the expedition, though he had difficulty in getting his army to leave Gaul, since the troops were indignant at the prospect of campaigning outside the known world...'

Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, LX, 19, circa AD 220



First Day Cover with stamps cancelled with the Tallents House handstamp. The illustration is a section of the mosaic floor in the Bignor Roman Villa, West Sussex. Opposite: First Day Cover with the alternative postmark. The location is Colchester (Camulodunum) – the first legionary fortress was established there after the conquest – as was the first colonia in AD 49; in this regard, Colchester can be considered to be the first town in (Roman) Britain. The illustration of a Roman Imperial coin depicts the head of Claudius

Dover Lighthouse © Chris Howes/ Wild Places Photography/Alamy Stock Photo; Bignor mosaic © RGB Ventures/ SuperStock/Alamy Stock Photo; Caerleon Amphitheatre © Skyscan Photolibrary/Alamy Stock Photo; Ribchester helmet © The Trustees of the British Museum; Bridgeness distance slab © National Museums Scotland; Warrior god, Cambridgeshire © The Trustees of the British Museum; Gorgon's head, Bath © Prisma by Dukas Presseagentur GmbH/Alamy Stock Photo; Hadrian's Wall © Roy James Shakespeare/Getty Images

Eboracum (York). Archaeologists have gained extensive insight into the impact of Roman occupation through the analysis of a wealth of remnants – from the large, such as Hadrian's Wall, amphitheatres and villas, to the smaller including mosaics, and intricate metalwork and statues. Royal Mail has worked in conjunction with the British Museum in the development of an eight-stamp issue which demonstrates the sophistication, technical brilliance and artistry of Roman Britain, as demonstrated through some of these important sites and artefacts. The First Day Cover is a unique time-limited and personalised collectible which includes all eight stamps postmarked (with a choice of two special edition handstamps) on their first day of issue – 18 June 2020. The Presentation Pack that houses the complete stamp set takes the reader back in time – highlighting different areas of life and the effect the Romans had during the 400 years that mainland Britain was a province of the grand Roman empire. Here we take a closer look at each of the captivating stamps:

Dover Lighthouse *The UK's tallest standing Roman building – 2nd Class*

The Roman lighthouse – pharos – that adjoins the church of St Mary in the grounds of Dover Castle is the tallest surviving Roman building in Britain. Possibly modelled on the Pharos at Alexandria in Egypt, it probably stood to a height of around 24m (80ft). When it was in use, a beacon of fire would have been lit at night to guide ships using the Channel.

Bignor mosaic *Depicts Venus, Roman goddess of love – 2nd Class*

The Roman villa at Bignor, Sussex, discovered in 1811 during ploughing, has some of the finest preserved mosaics from Roman Britain. The mosaic featured on the stamp, laid in an apsed room on the villa's north side, probably dates to the early 4th century AD. It depicts a female head usually identified as the Roman goddess Venus, although the attribution is uncertain.



Amffitheatr/ Amphitheatre *yng Nghaer Isca, Caerllion / at Isca Fortress, Caerleon – 1st Class.* The amphitheatre in southeast Wales is the most complete to survive in Britain. It was built around AD 80, some years after the establishment of the nearby legionary fortress occupied by the Second Legion Augusta. The amphitheatre has a probable beast pen (carcer), in which animals and possibly humans were kept before their turn in the arena.

Ribchester helmet *Worn at displays of Roman horsemanship – 1st Class*

Discovered by a clogmaker's son in 1796 at Ribchester, Lancashire, this helmet is one of the finest surviving examples of its type from anywhere in the Empire. It was worn by an expert cavalryman during cavalry sports events (hippika gymnasia) – flamboyant displays of military horsemanship and mounted weapons drill of great skill and timing.

Bridgeness distance slab *Records the building of the Antonine Wall – £1.63*

The Bridgeness distance slab at the eastern end of the Antonine Wall records its building by the Second Legion Augusta and documents the distance erected. The construction of the wall, primarily in turf, was ordered by Antoninus Pius in AD 138, and the wall ran from the Firth of Forth to the Firth of Clyde. It was occupied for only about 20 years.

Warrior god, Cambridgeshire *Romano-British copper-alloy statuette – £1.63*

This attractive copper-alloy figurine was discovered at Stow-cum-Quy in Cambridgeshire. Dating from the 3rd or 4th centuries AD, it depicts a helmeted rider on horseback who originally would have held a spear in his raised hand. The figure is probably that of a local rider-god associated with Roman Mars and may have belonged to a shrine dedicated to the god.

Gorgon's head, Bath *Sited at the spring sacred to Sulis Minerva – £1.68*

One of the most striking pieces of stone sculpture to survive from Roman Britain, this head occupied the pediment of the temple to Sulis Minerva ►



FD2013-TH



FD2013-PL

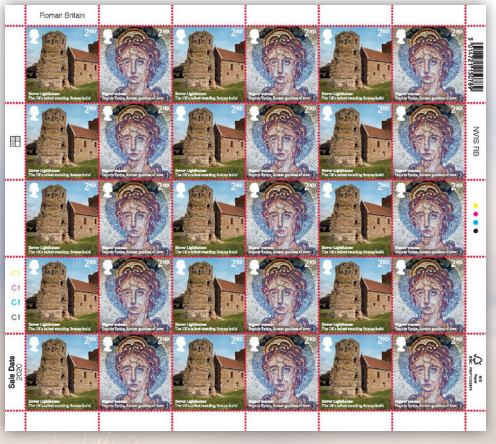


FD2013-NP





The Presentation Pack is beautifully illustrated and focuses on various spheres of the Roman occupation – conquest and rule; army and communications; town and country; commerce; entertainment and leisure; language and literacy; culture and belief



Half Stamp Sheet – Second Class

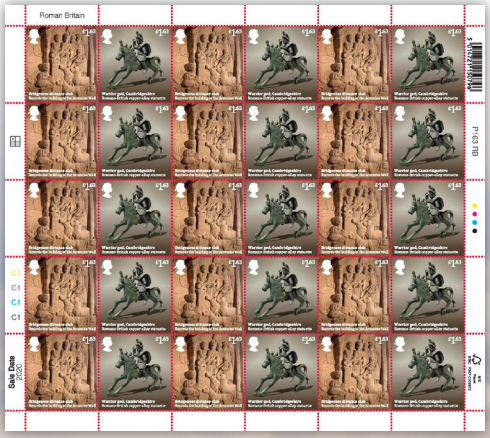


Half Stamp Sheet – First Class

at Bath, where it was set on a shield held aloft by Victories. An unusual portrayal of a male Gorgon, it also has echoes of Oceanus, the god of the oceans, an appropriate image for the sacred spring at the Roman Baths.

Hadrian's Wall *The northwest frontier of Rome's empire – £1.68.* Hadrian's Wall is the largest surviving Roman-era monument in Britain. Its construction followed Emperor Hadrian's visit to the province in AD 122. A stone wall with milecastles, forts and a ditch, it formed a continuous barrier running from the River Tyne at Newcastle to Bowness on the Solway. Its likely purpose was to control tribal activity on both sides of the frontier ●

Roman Britain – Prices	
Set of 8 Special Stamps	£9.44
Presentation Pack	£10.35
First Day Cover Stamps	£12.00
Stamp Souvenir	£12.00
First Day Envelope	£0.30
Postcards (8 in set)	£3.60
Full Stamp Sheet – 60 x 1st Class	£45.60
Full Stamp Sheet – 60 x 2nd Class	£39.00
Full Stamp Sheet – 60 x £1.63	£97.80
Full Stamp Sheet – 60 x £1.68	£100.80
Half Stamp Sheet – 30 x 1st Class	£22.80
Half Stamp Sheet – 30 x 2nd Class	£19.50
Half Stamp Sheet – 30 x £1.63	£48.90
Half Stamp Sheet – 30 x £1.68	£50.40



Half Stamp Sheet – £1.63



Half Stamp Sheet – £1.68

Hadrian's Wall in beautiful early morning light – photographed near the Housesteads Fort

New Issues and Withdrawals

6 July	**Withdrawal** The Declaration of Arbroath: Commemorative Cover.
7 July	**Withdrawal** The Romantic Poets: Stamp Souvenir.
9 July	**Issue** Queen: Stamps (4 x 1st Class, 4 x £1.63 – 2 x horizontal strips). Miniature Sheet (3 x 1st Class, 2 x £1.63). Presentation Pack. Stamp Souvenir. Stamp Sheet Souvenir. First Day Envelope. First Day Cover Stamps. First Day Cover Miniature Sheet. First Day Cover Prestige Stamp Book pane. Prestige Stamp Book (pane one: 4 x 1st Class, pane two: 4 x £1.63, pane three: 2 x 1st Class, 2 x £1.63, pane four: 4 x 1p, 4 x 1st Class). Press Sheet. Stamp Book. Queen Album Cover Collector's Sheet. Queen Live Collector's Sheet. Postcards (14 in set). Full Stamp Sheet (1st Class). Half Stamp Sheet (1st Class). Full Stamp Sheet (£1.63). Half Stamp Sheet (£1.63). Framed Stamps. Framed Stamps and Miniature Sheet. Framed Album Cover Collector's Sheet. Framed Bohemian Rhapsody Print Enlargement and Stamp. Bohemian Rhapsody Souvenir Pack. Greatest Hits Souvenir Pack. A Night At The Opera Fan Sheet. Album Collection Fan Sheet. Stamp Mount. The Bohemian Rhapsody Bundle. Queen Legends Bundle. Queen Live Coin Cover (BU/ Silver/Gold).
30 July	**Issue** Palace of Westminster: Stamps (3 x 1st Class, 3 x £1.68 – 2 x horizontal se-tenant strips of three). Miniature Sheet (2 x 1st Class, 2 x £1.63). Presentation Pack. First Day Cover Stamps. First Day Cover Miniature Sheet. Stamp Souvenir. Stamp Sheet Souvenir. First Day Envelope. Postcards (11 in set). Press Sheet. Framed Stamps and Miniature Sheet.
8 August	**Withdrawal** End of the Second World War: Stamp Souvenir. Stamp Sheet Souvenir.
18 August	**Issue** Sherlock: Stamps (2 x 1st Class, 2 x £1.42, 2 x £1.68 – 3 x vertical se-tenant pairs). Miniature Sheet (2 x 1st Class, 2 x £1.68). Presentation Pack. First Day Cover Stamps. First Day Cover Miniature Sheet. Stamp Souvenir. Stamp Sheet Souvenir. First Day Envelope. Postcards (11 in set). Stamp Book. Collector's Sheet. Sherlock: The Reichenbach Fall Stamp Set. Sherlock: The Great Game Stamp Set. Sherlock Character Stamp Set. Framed Stamps. Stamp Mount. Framed Miniature Sheet. Framed Collector's Sheet. Collector's Sheet Mount. Sherlock: The Reichenbach Fall Framed Gallery Print. Sherlock: The Great Game Framed Gallery Print. Sherlock: A Study in Pink Framed Gallery Print. Sherlock & Moriarty Limited Edition Brilliant Uncirculated Medal Cover. Sherlock & Moriarty Limited Edition Silver Medal Cover. The Genius of Sherlock Holmes Limited Edition Brilliant Uncirculated Medal Cover. The Genius of Sherlock Holmes Limited Edition Silver Medal Cover. Sherlock Ultimate Bundle.

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