BRITISH PHILATELIC

Bulletin

The magazine for collectors of UK stamps

VOLUME 54 NUMBER 9 | MAY 2017 | £1.95

Edmund Dulac's Coronation designs • Thomas Tapling



SONGBIRDS

At a post office branch near you

PREVIEWS
Windmills and Watermills





50 YEARS OF A DESIGN ICON

HRH PRINCESS ANNE PRINCESS ROYAL
Commemorative Sheet





WIN Royal Mail Presentation Pack



Watch the birdies...

A fine flock of illustrations of Royal Mail stamps and pictorial postmarks featuring birds appears on the latest in Adrian Bradbury's series of Commemorative Stamp Cards. One Songbird Stamp – the Wren – perches at the top of the front of the card, surrounded by a illustrated border. It is franked with a special first day of issue postmark with a line drawing of a wren and SUTTON COLDFIELD location.
(Please note: this is the only real stamp on the card, the rest are printed images.)

Richly coloured and produced on high quality card, the A4 format of British Birds on British Stamps fits nicely in the Royal Mail 'Smilers' albums.

Price: £22.50. Cheques should be made payable to BFDC Ltd. Please quote the *Bulletin* media code BPB0517.

For further details, see www.bfdc.co.uk/songbirds

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Leicester, LE2 3RA
brad@bfdc.co.uk



The birds featured in the new Songbirds issue are described on page 272 and the full philatelic Preview is featured on page 228 of the April edition of the *British Philatelic Bulletin*.

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● **Royal Mail Editor** William Doherty, Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB ● **Publishing Editor** Kate Shaw, 26 Throgmorton Street, London EC2N 2AN ● Price £1.95 from Post Office Ltd philatelic outlets or by order from Post Office branches ● **Twelve months' subscription** £18.95 UK and Europe; £24.95 rest of world. Subscribe online at www.royalmail.com/bulletin or write to Royal Mail Freepost, Royal Mail Stamps and Collectibles, PO Box 1373, Sunderland SR5 9PG, UK. Overseas subscribers will need to use a stamp, as freepost is for UK only ● **Binders** (to hold 24 issues) £8.50, and storage boxes (about 30 copies) £9.95, are also available by post or online ● Stamp images © Royal Mail. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or parts is prohibited without prior permission of the Editors. ● **Printed** in Great Britain by Zenith Print & Packaging Ltd ● **ISSN** 0953 8119 ● Royal Mail is a trading name of Royal Mail Group Ltd. Registered in England and Wales, number 4138203. Registered office: 100 Victoria Embankment, London EC4Y 0HQ.

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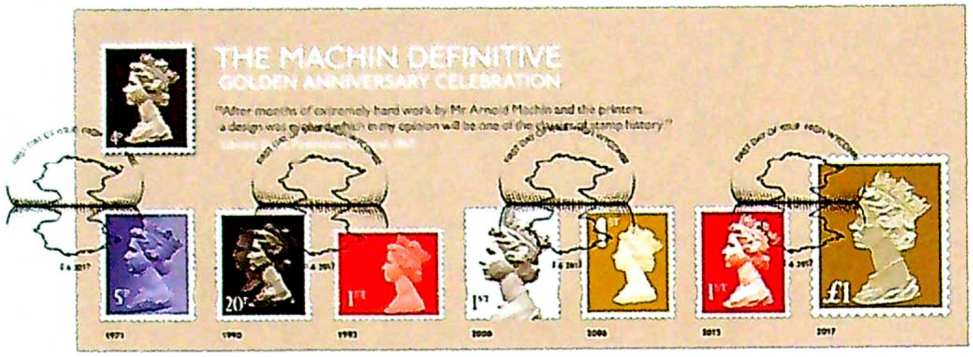


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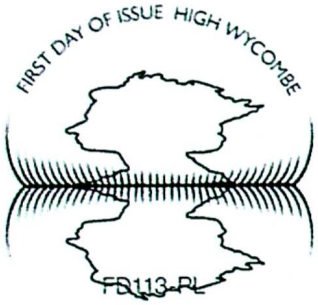
FD113-TH



THE MACHIN DEFINITIVE
50TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr K Turner
23 Arnside Terrace
Fairburn
West Yorkshire
WY10 3NU

Royal Mail First Day Cover





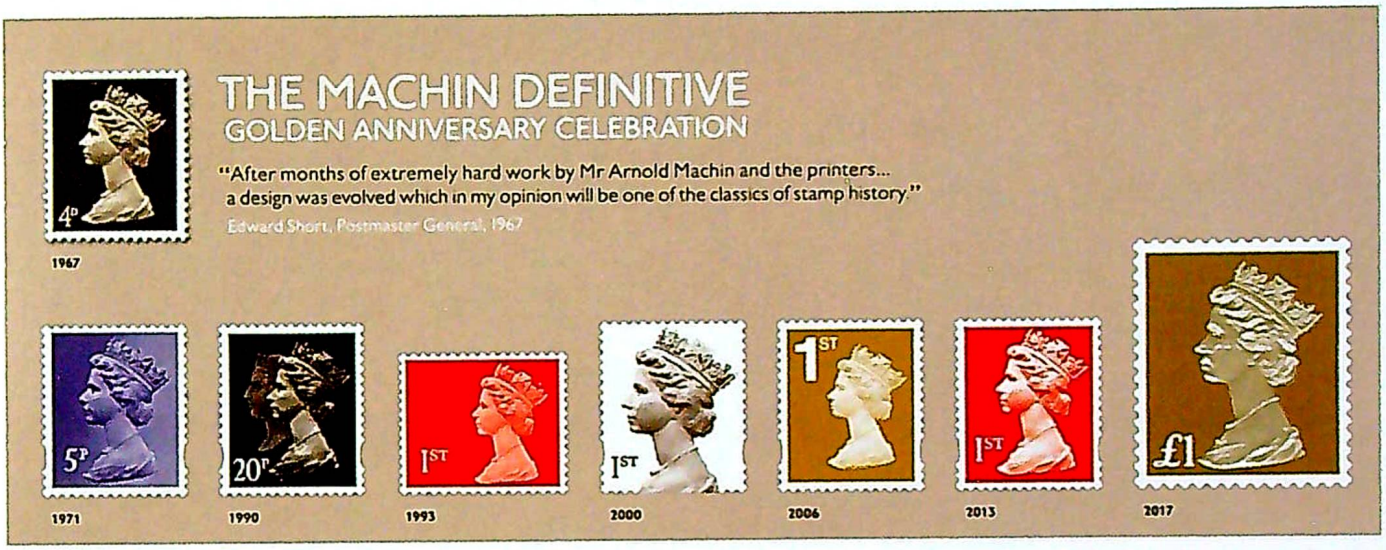
FD113-NP

Above: special handstamps have the location of HIGH WYCOMBE, chosen because this was where Harrisons & Sons, the printers who worked closely with Machin, were based for many years

Machin Anniversary 1967 - 2017 Celebrating 50 years of the iconic Machin definitive stamp design, one of the most reproduced images of all time

On Monday 5 June 1967, Royal Mail issued the first of the new definitive stamps featuring the classic portrait of The Queen designed and sculpted by Arnold Machin. Next month, fittingly on Monday 5 June (the calendars for 1967 and 2017 are the same), the 50th anniversary of this iconic stamp design is to be marked with a Special Stamp issue.

The chosen profile of The Queen wearing the diadem deliberately echoed the design of the Penny Black. The design was conceived by sculptor Arnold Machin and at first based on his bas relief sculpture for the new decimal coins. He sculpted plaster casts, looked to incorporate text and symbols and essays were produced. A number of simplifications of the head, text and framing devices were explored, and ultimately the Stamp Advisory Committee preferred the Queen to wear a diadem (the crown worn by Victoria on Penny Black). Machin used a photograph by John Hedgecoe to





Above: The Golden Anniversary Celebration Miniature Sheet. The background has an image of one of the 4d stamp which was one of the first values issued in1967.Also displayed is a quote from Edward Short, Postmaster General.
Left: First day cover for other Miniature Sheet, The Machin Definitive – 50 Years Of A Design Icon

model the diadem and then he created a further new sculpted plaster cast, later adding a corsage for the final sculpture. A cast of this was photographed and used for the artwork for the first stamp.

The Machin head image has been reproduced more times than any other image in history, having been printed on more than 200 billion stamps. 'Machins' are the subject of avid collecting and study for many philatelists.

To mark the 50th anniversay of this iconic design, Royal Mail's Special Stamp issue centres on two Miniature Sheets, as follows.

The Machin Definitive 50 Years of a Design Icon Miniature Sheet, with six First Class stamps:

January 1966 One of Arnold Machin's preliminary sketches based on the Penny Black.

February 1966 In this early preparatory work, Machin has used a photograph of his coin mould to experiment with the dimensions of the portrait. ▶

The Machin Definitive 50th Anniversary Miniature Sheets – Technical Details

	Golden Anniversary/50 Years
Date of issue	5 June 2017
Number of stamps	Seven/Six
Stamp design	Atelier Works
Stamp format	Portrait, 1993 landscape/landscape
Stamp size	Stamp size: 20 x 24mm 1993 25 x 20mm 2017 30 x 35mm/34 x 24mm
Printer	International Security Printers
Print process	Gravure with gold foil on £1 stamp/ Gravure
Perforations	15 x 14, 1993 & 2017 14 x 15/14 x 14
Phosphor	Bars as appropriate
Gum	PVA





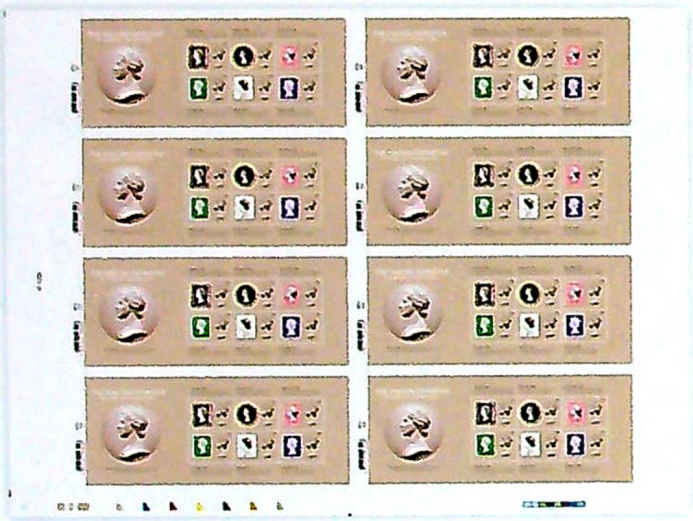
THE MACHIN DEFINITIVE
50TH ANNIVERSARY

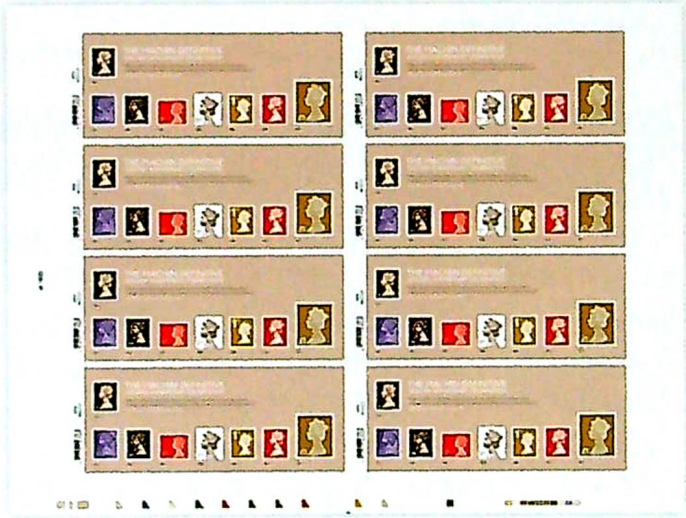
"After months of extremely hard work by Mr Arnold Machin and the printers... a design was evolved which in my opinion will be one of the classics of stamp history."
Edward Short, Postmaster General, 1967





Above: the Machin Definitive 50th Anniversary Presentation Pack for the 50 Years Of A Design Icon Miniature Sheet.
Left: the Machin Definitive 50th Anniversary Stamp Book.
Below: Press Sheets, each with eight Miniature Sheets.
Right: the Presentation Pack opens to this info card, written by Douglas Muir





April/May 1966 One of many of Arnold Machin's essays using the coinage head and four country symbols.
October 1966 The coinage head simplified and cropped, with a plain background containing only the tariff typography.
August 1966 The chosen profile photograph by John Hedgecoe.
October 1966 Arnold Machin's first plaster cast of the 'Diadem head' modelled from Hedgecoes photograph and with no corsage.



The Machin Definitive Golden Anniversary Celebration Miniature Sheet, seven mixed value stamps:

5p A range of low-value stamps, including 5p, was issued on 'Decimalisation Day', 15 February 1971.

20p The double-head 20p stamp was issued as part of a range of values on 10 January 1990 to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Penny Black.

1st Class On 19 October 1993, the first self-adhesive stamp issued by Royal Mail appeared in books of 20.

1st Class On 6 January 2000, a new setting of the Machin portrait marked the millennium.

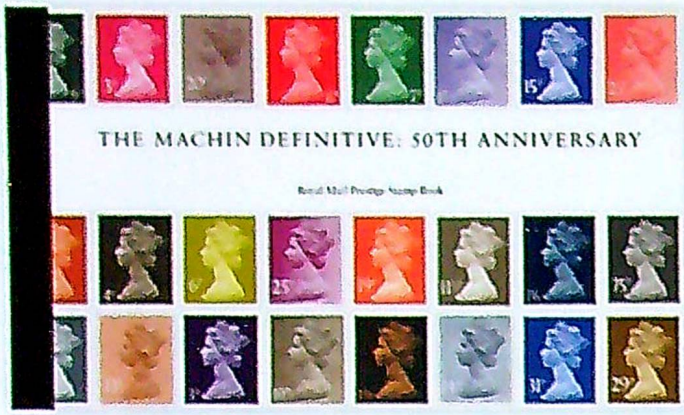
1st Class A change to the way postal charges were calculated, known as 'Pricing in Proportion', led to new 1st and 2nd class definitives on 1 August 2006.

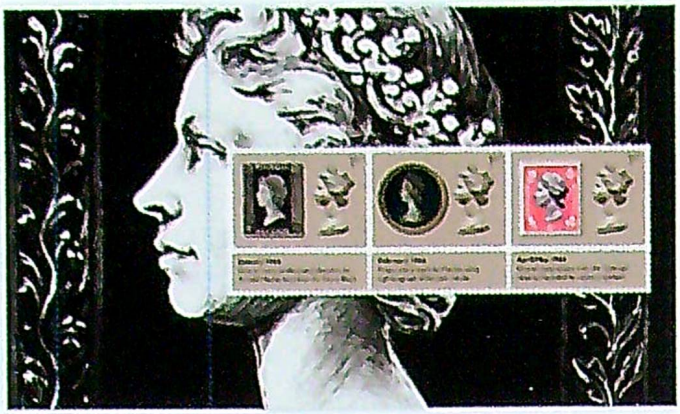
1st Class On 3 January 2013, the colour of the 1st class Machin definitive was changed from gold to red with an iridescent overprint.

£1 Issued on 5 June 2017, based on the high-value range of 1969 and printed using gold foil. ▶

The Machin Definitive 50th Anniversary – Prices

Golden Anniversary Celebration Miniature Sheet	£3.85
50 Years of a Design Icon Miniature Sheet	£3.90
First Day Cover Golden Anniverary Celebration	£5.04
First Day Cover 50 Years of a Design Icon	£5.10
Stamp Sheet Souvenir Golden Anniversary Celebration	£5.04
Stamp Sheet Souvenir 50 Years of a Design Icon	£5.10
Presentation Pack	£8.25
Postcards (6 in set)	£3.60
Prestige Stamp Book (PSB)	£15.14
Limited edition Prestige Stamp Book	£99.95
First Day Cover PSB Machin Head	£3.35
First Day Cover PSB Double Head	£5.04
First Day Envelope, 4 designs	30p each
Stamp Book 50 Years of a Design Icon	£3.90
Press Sheet Golden Anniversary Celebration (8 Miniature Sheets)	£33.88
Press Sheet 50 Years of a Design Icon (8 Miniature Sheets)	£34.32
Medal Cover with 50 Years of a Design Icon Miniature Sheet	£15.50
Limited edition Solid Sterling Silver Medallion	£89.95





Pane 1



Pane 2



Pane 3



Pane 4



Pane 5

Above: this Prestige Stamp Book is the jewel in the crown of next month's special issue

The Machin Definitive 50th Anniversary Prestige Stamp Book

The elegant Prestige Stamp Book (PSB) contains five panes, as follows.

Pane 1 and 2 each carry three of the stamps from the First Class Miniature Sheet.

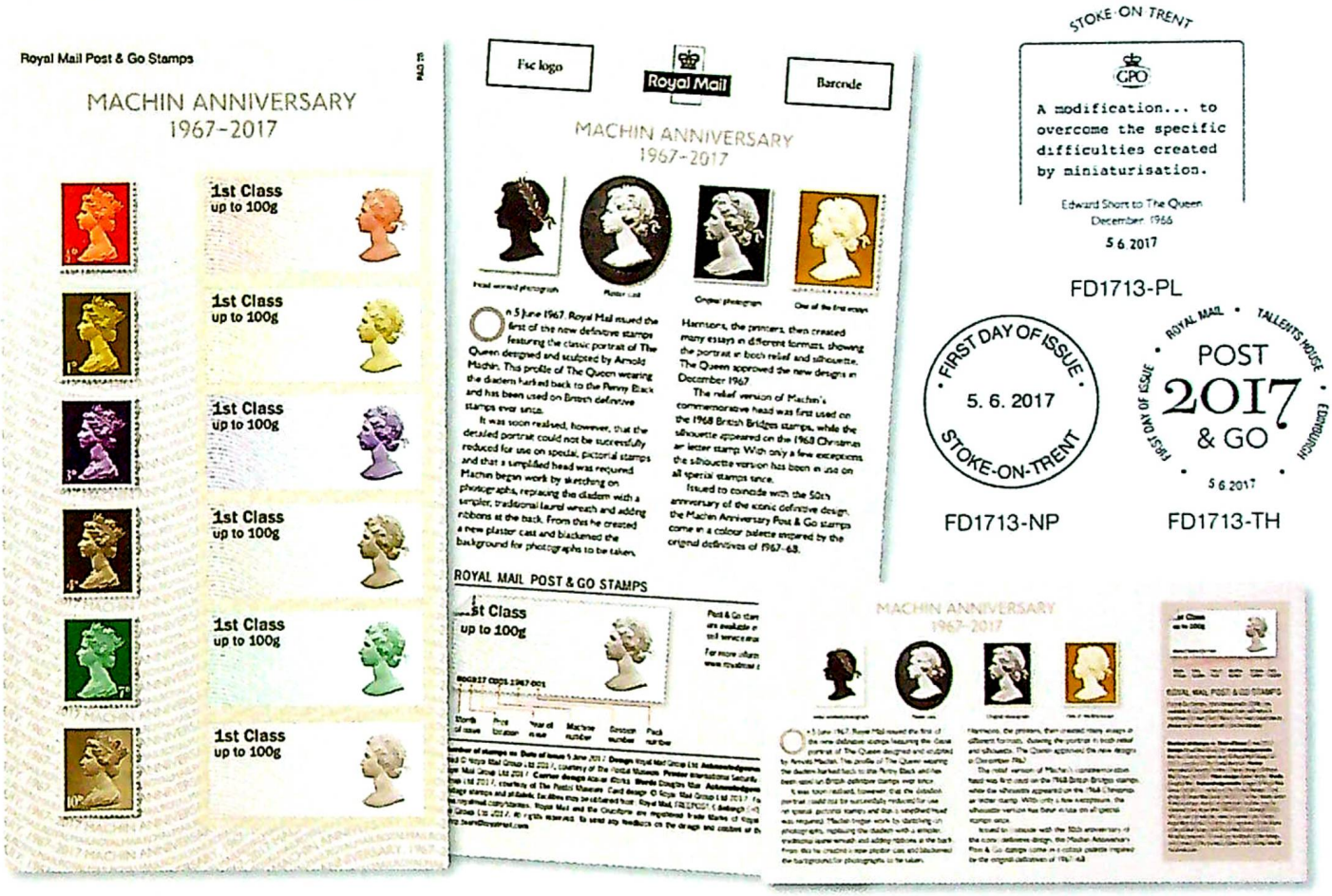
Pane 3 has a 2nd Class stamp with an iridescent overprint, as well as make-up value stamps – 1p, 2p, 5p, 10p, 20p, 50p and £1. The central label displays the number 50 reversed out of gold.

Pane 4 carries the stamps from the mixed-value Miniature Sheet in a block, with an iridescent overprint where appropriate (Gold bottom left and Royal Mail Red bottom right). The central label has the number 50 in white on grey.

Pane 5 has a block of four £1 Machins with no elliptical perforations or iridescent overprint, as they were not part of the specification for Large Definitives in 1969.

First day covers can be pre-ordered at www.royalmail/shop, with the alternative PSB handstamp, for panes 1 and 4 •

See page 261 for a full list of different items in this very special issue. Details of the Machin Definitive 50th Anniversary Medal Cover will appear in your June edition of 'Bulletin'.



Anniversary Post & Go Six self-service classics pay tribute to the Machin anniversary

Above: six First Class Post & Go Machin Anniversary stamps are available in a Collectors Pack with an informative carrier card. Top: three special handstamp options for FDC orders. See www.royalmail.com/shop

In addition to the Special Stamp Set described on the previous pages, Royal Mail will provide a variation of the current Machin Post & Go stamps as part of the philatelic celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Machin. The definitive dressed head of The Queen by Arnold Machin has been replaced by his Commemorative Head, as used on all special stamps. It shows the full relief portrait rather than the silhouette normally used.

Six pastel colour variations inspired by the December 1966 essays have been carefully selected, with the help of Douglas Muir of the Postal Museum, to reflect some of those used on the original pre-decimal Machin definitives chosen by Machin himself. The stamps also have the lettering 'Machin Anniversary 1967-2017' as background text. The carrier card information is written by Douglas Muir.

Alternative handstamps features a quote from Post Master General in a letter to the Queen and the location of Stoke-on-Trent, chosen because it is the birth place of Arnold Machin •

Machin commemorative head © Royal Mail Group Ltd 2017, courtesy of The Postal Museum.

Post & Go Machin Anniversary – Prices	
Stamp Set with Carrier Card	£3.90
First Day Cover (with choice of three handstamps)	£5.10
First Day Envelope	30p

Post & Go Machin Anniversary – Specifications	
Date of issue	5 June
Number of stamps	Six
Stamp design	Royal Mail Group Ltd
Carrier design	Atelier Works
Words	Douglas Muir
Stamp format	Landscape
Stamp size	56mm x 25mm
Printer	International Security Printers
Print process	Gravure
Perforations	Die-cut simulated
Phosphor	Bars as appropriate
Gum	Self-adhesive



Natural powerhouses Windmills and Watermills stamps breeze into view next month, in tribute to ancient systems of harnessing energy

TREASURED FEATURES OF THE UK LANDSCAPE, a number of windmills and watermills have stood for more than 400 years and many are still in working order. Photographs of six of them have been used to create a beautiful Royal Mail Special Stamp set issued next month.

Stamp by stamp The Windmills and Watermills issue portrays three windmills and three watermills from different regions of the country. The stamps are printed as three vertical se-tenant pairs in three values, as follows:

Nutley Windmill, East Sussex First Class.
New Abbey Corn Mill, Dumfries and Galloway First Class.
Ballycopeland Windmill, County Down £1.40.
Cheddleton Flint Mill, Staffordshire £1.40.
Woodchurch Windmill, Kent £1.57.
Felin Cochwillan Mill, Gwynedd £1.57.

Windmills and Watermills – Specifications	
Date of issue	20 June
Number of stamps	Six (3 vertical se-tenant pairs)
Stamp design	Atelier Works
Photography	Philip Sayer
Stamp format	Portrait
Stamp size	35mm (w) x 37mm (h)
Printer	International Security Printers
Print process	Lithography
Number per sheet	30/60
Perforations	14.5 x 14
Phosphor	Bars as appropriate
Gum	PVA

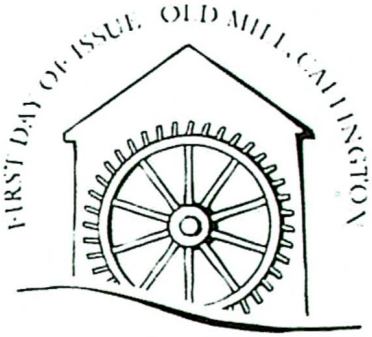
Windmills and Watermills – Prices	
Mint Special Stamps	£7.24
First Day Cover	£9.11
First Day Envelope	30p
Stamp Souvenir	£9.11
Presentation Pack	£7.75
Set of six Special Stamp Postcards	£2.70

Also in the Windmills and Watermills issue is an informative Presentation Pack written by Martin Watts, who is a freelance millwright, traditional milling specialis and author of over 50 articles and books on the subject of mills (including *The Archaeology of Mills and Milling*, 2002; *Water and Wind Power*, 2005; *Windmills*, 2011; and *Watermills*, 2011). Martin Watts also contributed the expert information carried on the insert cards of the First Day Covers and Special Stamp Souvenir Cover.

On the cover shown above, the six Special



FD1715-TH



FD1715-PL



FD1715-NP

Stamps are cancelled with a pictorial postmark featuring a representation of a watermill and there is a sepia image of a windmill on the bottom left of the envelope. The Tallents House First Day Cover bears a special postmark featuring a representation of a windmill. Both pictorial postmarks and the plain (non-pictorial) alternative postmark carry the fitting location of OLD MILL, CALLINGTON.

First day facilities Serviced (i.e. stamped and postmarked) Royal Mail First Day Covers are available by Mail Order from Royal Mail Tallents House priced £9.11. Orders for Serviced First Day Covers have to reach Royal Mail by 20 June 2017. Customers may also send stamped envelopes on the day of issue to Royal Mail, Tallents House at the address on page 259. Customers who hand in or post stamped Royal Mail First Day Cover envelopes at main Post Offices on the day of issue will receive the pictorial Old Mill, Callington First Day postmark. Alternatively, customers may send stamped envelopes to any of the Special Handstamp Centres, quoting the postmark required ●





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



4 May National Stamp Day – a new initiative from the Royal Philatelic Society London (RSPL) in association with the Philatelic Traders Society – is launched with an invitation to the public to bring their 'stamps in the attic' for assessment at 41 Devonshire Place, London W1. The celebration day has been arranged to coincide with the anniversary of the world's first postage stamp issue in May 1840. Details: www.rpsl.org.

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

13 May National Philatelic Society display at Welsh Centre, Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8UE. Display 'The Motor Car to 1970' by Anthony Miller, 2.45pm. Members' Auction from 12.50pm. Enquiries: P Mellor 01582 762284.

13 May WORPEX, Tudor Grange Academy, Bilford Road, Worcester WR3 8HN. Over 40 dealers. Organised by Worcester Philatelic & Postcard Society.

20 May GB Philatelic Society display at Royal Philatelic Society (address above), GB used in GB, Pre-1840 to 1940 from James Grimwood-Taylor at 11am; The British Post Office and the Environment from Jeremy Piercy at 2.15pm. Enquiries: www.gbps.org.uk or email membership@gbps.org.uk.

20 May Federation of South Wales Philatelic Societies Annual Convention, Princess Royal Theatre, Civic Centre, Port Talbot SA13 1PJ, 10am to 4.30pm. Dealers, competition entries. Enquiries: Neil Prior 01656 740520.

24-28 May Finlandia 2017 exhibition, Tampere, Finland. See below.

2 June Strand Stamp Fair, see 5 May for details.

10 June GB Philatelic Society display at Royal Philatelic Society (address above). Early 20th Century Postal History from Michael Lockton at 11am, AGM and Members' Displays at 2.15pm. Enquiries: www.gbps.org.uk; email membership@gbps.org.uk.

10 June SWINPEX, stamp, postcard and postal history fair, St Joseph RC College, Ocotal Way, Swindon SN3 3LR, 10am to 4pm.

15-18 June Welsh Postal History Society Weekend & AGM, Plas Tan y Bwlch, Maentwrog, Gwynedd. Membership details contact Aled Rhys-Jones – a.rhys-jones@virginmedia.com.

16-17 June Stafford Stamp Show, Staffordshire County Showground Ingestre Suite, Weston Road, Stafford ST18 0BD. Friday 10am to 5pm, Saturday 10am to 4pm. Enquiries: 01785 259350 •

2017 events



Midpex 2017 will be held at the Warwickshire Exhibition Centre, Leamington Spa, CV31 1XN on 8 July, open 10am to 5pm. Midpex is a prestigious biennial exhibition first held in 1995 and attended by stamp collectors from across the UK. It brings together specialist societies with local, national and international dealers covering all aspects of philately.

Midpex provides a shop window for specialist societies to

show off their sphere of interest to other collectors, to recruit members and identify common ground with members of other societies. It also provides an opportunity for societies to promote their publications and research projects and for members to meet informally, particularly those members who find it difficult to get to meetings in London. The event in 2017 is expected to be one of the best yet with over 50 dealers (stamps, postcards, thematics and postal history) and 40 specialist societies attending. Many will hold their regional meetings at the event including Opal, Pacific Islands, TPO, Malta, Meter Mail, Revenue and Iran Study Groups.

John Gledhill, Chairman of the Midpex Committee, said 'This is our most ambitious event to date. It is a showcase for all that is best in UK philately'. For additional details of the venue see www.warwickshireexhibitioncentre.co.uk. For more Midpex information visit www.midpex.wordpress.com.



Future events include 99th Philatelic Congress of GB in Cardiff, 27-30 July; only the third time Congress has met in Wales – previously Llandudno in 1972 and Cardiff in 1991. The event will be at Jury's Inn, Park Place, Cardiff, with the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists ceremony at Cardiff City Hall (right). Displays have a Welsh theme and there will be a lecture on the future of the Association of British Philatelic Societies. See www.abps.org.uk for further information.

Autumn Stampex will be held at the Business Design Centre, London N1 13 to 16 September, and Stampa (Irish national stamp exhibition) on 6 to 8 October in Dublin.

The Finlandia 2017 European Stamp Exhibition in Tampere, Finland (24-28 May) is billed as the largest philatelic exhibition in Europe this year. It will be staged in two venues – the Tampere Hall and the Postal Museum in the Museum Center, Vaprikki. A 'Remarkable Adventure' exhibition for children age 5-12 will show images of Finnish stamps featuring animals, vehicles, sport, etc. This exhibition will then transfer to the Postal Museum from 9 June to 29 October 2017. Admission to the exhibition at Tampere Hall will be free after the first day; an admission charge applies to the Postal Museum (free 3pm to 6pm Friday). Major exhibits include material from the Bank of Finland Museum, private collections, and the collection of HM Queen Elizabeth II. The Finnish Post Office (Posti) will issue two miniature sheets on the opening day. For more on Finlandia 2017 see last month's Stamp Scene or visit finlandia2017 •



Correction: Royal Mail Post & Go machines and an exhibition overprint will not be available at Finlandia, as was unfortunately stated in error on page 233.

The Postal Museum

The Postal Museum (formerly British Postal Museum & Archive) is to open in its new home near the Mount Pleasant Mail Centre in London in July.

The Postal Museum website – www.postalmuseum.org – will show details of the new museum and the Mail Rail experience. Visitors will be able to take a 15-minute journey in specially constructed trains on part of the former Post Office Underground Railway which carried mail beneath the streets of London from 1927 until 2003.



To enquire about the The Postal Museum, phone 020 7239 2570, email info@postalheritage.org.uk or write to: The Postal Museum, Freeling House, Phoenix Place, London WC1X 0DL. The online shop offers a wide range of cards, DVDs, CDs, and gifts •

Stamp-related exhibitions



Stamps honouring Jane Austen were issued in 1975 (bicentenary of birth) and 2013 (bicentenary of *Pride and Prejudice*). To mark the bicentenary of her death on 18 July 1817 an exhibition 'The Mysterious Miss Austen' is on show at Winchester Discovery Centre from 13 May to 24 July. Details: www.janeausten200.co.uk.

Red Rum is one of the Racehorse Legends stamps issued on 6 April and featured on *Bulletin*'s front page last month. A wire sculpture of Red Rum was recently unveiled at Aintree for the Grand National, marking 40 years since his third win in the iconic race.It is to be installed close to 'Rummy's' final resting place, located near the finishing post at Aintree. Artist Paul Tavernor spent three months creating the piece of art out of steel wire and mesh.

'Howard Hodgkin, Absent Friends' is at the National Portrait Gallery until 18 June 2017. It explores the renowned artist's 'development of a personal visual language of portraiture, which challenges traditional forms of represent-ation'. See Hodgkin stamps and obituary on facing page. Details: www.npg.org.uk •

Photograph courtesy Manchester Evening News

New railway letter stamps





The first heritage railway to issue railway letter stamps was the Talyllyn Railway in mid-Wales in 1957 and the 60th anniversary will be commemorated in May 2017 with two new stamps, one inscribed in English, the other in Welsh, printed in sheets of 10 – five of each type. Enquiries: Postmaster, Talyllyn Railway, Wharf Station, Tywyn, Gwynedd, LL36 9EY.

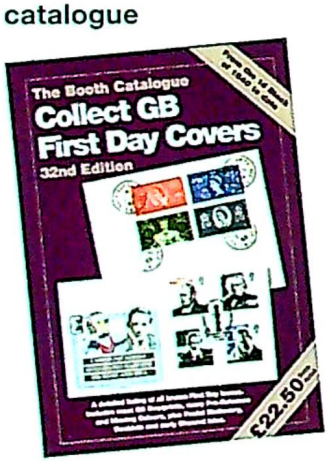
The narrow-gauge Festiniog Railway in north Wales has issued railway letter stamps since 1969. Stamps are being issued to mark the 60th anniversaries of the staged reopening of the Festiniog Railway in the 1950s.

A new stamp, issued on 20 April 2017, commemorates the reopening of Penrhyn station and features a painting of a train at the station in the 1930s. It is available in sheets of nine for £2.50 plus postage.

The 60th anniversary of the reopening of Tan-y-Bwlch station is to be marked with a commemorative stamp due in 2018. Orders/enquiries: Festiniog Railway Letter Service, Harbour Station, Porthmadog, LL49 9NF.

The Nene Valley Railway, which runs from Peterborough to Yarwell, has issued railway letter stamps since 1986. A new stamp showing locomotive 34081 '92 Squadron' was issued on 25 February 2017, available in sheet of nine at £2.25 or at £5 on first day cover for the 'Bulleid 50 Weekend' event. Orders/enquiries: Nene Valley Railway (Stamps), Wansford Station, Stibbington, Peterborough PE8 6LR. The minimum order should be £5, plus £1 post and packing •

New first day cover catalogue



A new 32nd edition of the popular *Collect GB First Day Covers* catalogue (usually referred to as 'The Booth Catalogue') has recently been published. It covers all FDCs of stamp issues, plus 1839 and 1840 Uniform 4d and 1d posts and Mulready envelopes or wrappers. Elizabeth II issues are divided between Commemoratives and Definitives, Regionals, Dues, Coils, etc. The QEII commemoratives section, not surprisingly, takes over some 356 of the catalogues's 526 pages! Until 1989 covers are listed with each special handstamp, but growing numbers of these led to a summarised listing from 1990 onwards. Now the publisher notes that 'the ever increasing number of additional supplementary products being put out by Royal Mail for each of

the new stamp issues, i.e. commemorative stamp books, miniature sheets, prestige stamp books, generic sheets' requires cataloguing them in a different way. 'Up until now these "add-on" products have been catalogued in detail', but in future 'they will be given just one value on fdc, irrespective of postmark type. However where the only new issue product is, for instance, a miniature sheet it will continue to be catalogued in full detail as a first day cover. The change will keep the emphasis on the set of stamps that is being issued – the First Day Cover – rather than spreading it across one or more "add-on" products.'

A selection of postmarks – specials and operational – is shown for each listing and throughout the catalogue are pages with good colour illustrations of selected covers. A number of 'Gems' pages show some particularly desirable items, such as the 1925 British Empire Exhibition stamps in blocks of 18 on document with 9 May 1925 postmark and signed by the Wembley Postmaster, and also choice items of the 1951 Festival of Britain issue and 1952 to 1954 Wilding definitives.

The catalogue also lists FDCs for GB stamps overprinted for use overseas; pre-release covers, listing with known dates; FDCs bearing stamps with missing colours (1961-2003); and postal stationery (1972-82).

As always, this is a useful and well-presented reference work. Price £22.50, UK postage £3.50. Order from First Day Publishing Company, PO Box 11, Arundel BN18 9SS or www.collectgbfirstdaycovers.com •

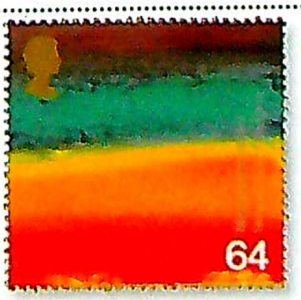
Society news

The articles in the January/February 2017 issue of *The GB Journal* (from the GB Philatelic Society) are all on Victorian subjects: Selwyn College Messenger Stamps; Queen Victoria 2d blue, 10d embossed and 4d Jubilee; and the first type of Post Office Express labels. All are good, meaty articles for the cognoscenti.



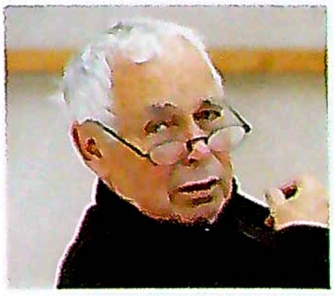
The GBPS Newsletter, sent out with the *The GB Journal*, includes well-written, illustrated record of society displays and short notes and updates sent in my members. Four pages are devoted to showing pages from the 'An Olympic Effort' display by Glenn Morgan (Royal Mail 2012 Olympic medal winners stamps) which won the Theo Jones Salver in the GBPS competitions in January. The GBPS will hold its Regional Meeting/Weekend in York on 21-23 July. For GBPS details see www.gbps.org.uk or email membership@gbps.org.uk •

Obituary





Sir Howard Hodgkin, a Turner Prize winner and British artist of international renown, died on 9 March, age 84. *The Telegraph* described his work as 'both visually arresting and intellectually challenging'. Although admired in the art world, his first British stamp was less well received in the philatelic community. The 64p stamp in The Artists Tale set of the 1999 Millennium series reproduced Hodgkin's work 'New Worlds' and received just seven votes in the *Bulletin* readers' poll for favourite stamp of the year. His second stamp depicted the remembrance poppy in the 2015 First World War Commemorative series (see *Bulletin* Vol 53, page 277). Hodgkin was knighted in 1992 and in 2003 made a Companion of Honour •



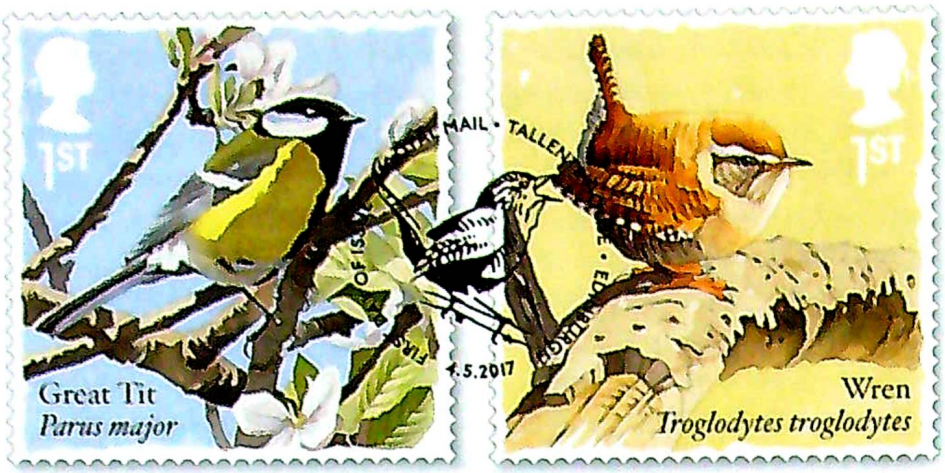
Sten-M. Rosenlund/Tate Gallery

A Songbird in the hand

Who could resist feathering their philatelic nest with these charming new stamps, illustrated wildlife artist Frederico Gemma?

The dawn chorus often opens with the liquid warble of the skylark. Then builds with song thrushes, cuckoos, wrens, blackcaps, great tits, yellowhammers, willow warblers and goldcrests. Later that eve, the nightingale starts his sublime solo…

This month we celebrate a symphony of Songbirds with Royal Mail Special Stamps issued on 4 May.



Great Tit

You know spring has sprung when you hear the distinctive double-note song of the male great tit. But he has a much more extensive repertoire than this; it is crucial to his success with the opposite sex.

Wren

The tiny wren is one of Britain's most abundant birds. And while he may be small, his voice packs a mighty punch. That's because, in proportion to his size, the wren sings the loudest of any British birds.



Blackcap

The blackcap is known as the 'northern nightingale' because of his rich, varied song. It is frequently celebrated in the arts and represents St Francis of Assisi n Messiaen's opera.

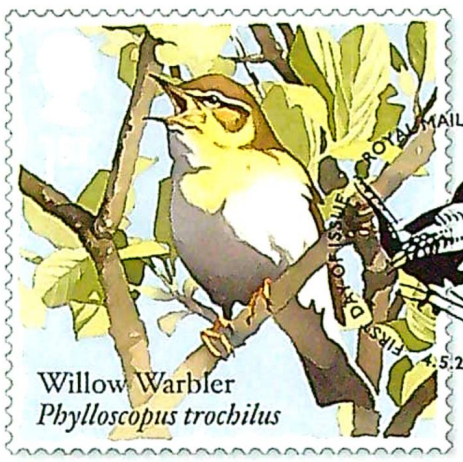
Song Thrush

As in Browning's 'Home-Thoughts, From Abroad': the thrush 'sings each song twice over,/Lest you should think he never could recapture/The first fine careless rapture!'

Win Songbirds stamps

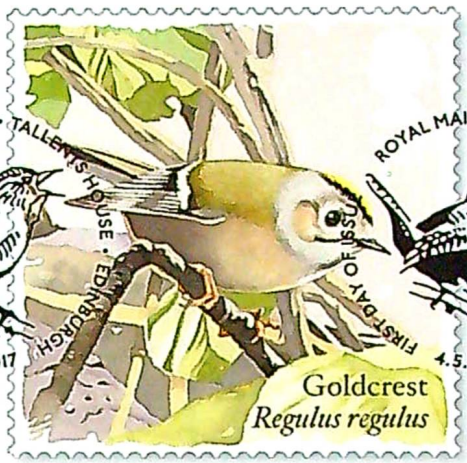
NAME THAT STAMP From the details of the two stamps shown in the binoculars, on the right, name birds shown, the issues they belong to and the year they were issued.

HOW TO ENTER Send your answers, along with your contact address or number, to 'May Songbirds' or 'May Name That Stamp', Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12



Willow Warbler

How do you tell a willow warbler and a chiffchaff apart? By their song. The chiffchaff repeats his name 'chiff-chaff, chiff-chaff, chiff-chaff', whereas the willow warbler has a melodic descending whistle.



Goldcrest

Despite being Britain's smallest bird, the goldcrest has a surprisingly loud song. It is also very high pitched – so much so that, sadly, some people of advanced years can no longer appreciate its beauty.



Skylark

Which is the finest songster in the British bird world? Most say either the skylark or the nightingale, but the fast and complex skylark song bests his rival based on the sheer volume of poetry written about him.



Nightingale

In 'Ode to a Nightingale', John Keats calls the nightingale female: a 'light-winged Dryad of the trees'. But it is the male that woos with song – and has a repertoire of some 200 phrases.



Cuckoo

Ever written to *The Times* when you've heard the first 'cuckoo-cuckoo' of spring? Later in spring, the cuckoo changes notes, as in the old rhyme 'in June, I change my tune.'



Yellowhammer

The yellowhammer's song is a series of short notes that increase in volume, with longer notes at the end. Enid Blyton's 'Famous Five' popularised the rhythm as 'a little bit of bread and no cheese'.

9PB or rmbulletin@rocketmail.com.

Closing date: 19 June 2017.

PRIZES The senders of the first five correct entries drawn in each section after the closing date win the Songbirds Presentation Pack. Normal rules and regulations apply •





1



2



3

The collection of... Thomas Keay Tapling

Dane Garrod explores the life and legacy of Tapling, a famous founding father of philately

Above: **1** Mauritius 1847: 'Post Office' 2d blue, unused. British Library (BL) ref 2009-19.
2 Transvaal 1870: imperforate 1/- deep green, tête-beche pair, unused. BL ref 2009-12.
3 Western Australia 1854-55: 4d blue error, frame inverted, used. BL ref 2009-13.
4 Cape of Good Hope 1861: 4d vermillion, error of colour, in pair with 1d vermillion, used. BL ref 2009-17.
5 Uruguay 1858: 120 centavos blue, tête-beche pair, unused. BL ref 2009-15.
6 USA 1893: 15 cents, error inverted centre, used. BL ref 2009-18.
Page 276: **7** India 1854, 4 annas inversion error, two used on cover.

ONE OF THE FIRST IMPORTANT PHILATELISTS, Thomas Keay Tapling began the hobby as many of us have, in his school days. Born on 30 October 1855 in Dulwich, his birth was apparently not registered until the second quarter of 1856, way beyond the legally required period of 90 days – which might suggest that the quoted date of birth is incorrect, or that his father, also Thomas Tapling, was too busy making his fortune from his carpet and furniture business to make time to register the birth. When aged ten years old in 1865, young Thomas started collecting stamps, and by the age of 16 he had joined the fledgling Philatelic Society in London (now the RPSL – Royal Philatelic Society London).

Career and pastimes A busy man with drive and boundless enthusiasm, Thomas decided on a career in the legal profession and was called to the Bar at Middle Temple, following education at Harrow School and Trinity College, Cambridge. He continued his philatelic pursuits with vigour, as well as his many other interests – playing first-class cricket for Cambridge University and for the MCC in 1886; working as the Member of Parliament for the Harborough Division of Leicestershire from 1886 to 1891; and taking over the family business of Thomas



4



5



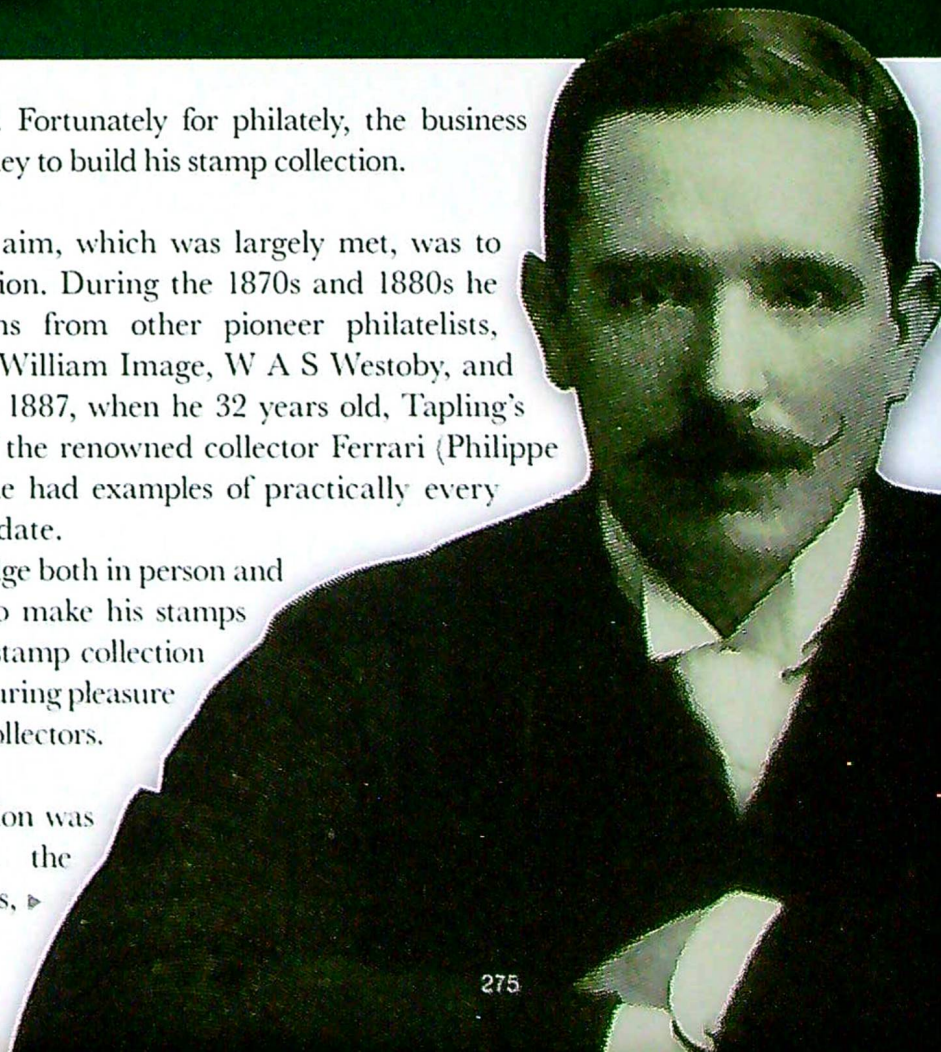
6

Tapling & Son when his father died. Fortunately for philately, the business prospered, providing him with the money to build his stamp collection.

Collecting style Tapling's ambitious aim, which was largely met, was to complete an all-world general collection. During the 1870s and 1880s he purchased existing major collections from other pioneer philatelists, including those of Edward B Evans, William Image, W A S Westoby, and Gustave and Martial Caillebotte. By 1887, when he 32 years old, Tapling's collection was second only to that of the renowned collector Ferrari (Philippe Ferrari de La Renotière). By 1889 he had examples of practically every stamp issued in the world up to that date.

Generous with his philatelic knowledge both in person and in print, Tapling was always happy to make his stamps available for study. Working with his stamp collection was true recreation and a source of enduring pleasure for him, as was socialising with other collectors.

Tapling's legacy To ensure his collection was all-embracing, Tapling negotiated the purchase of many major rarities, ▸

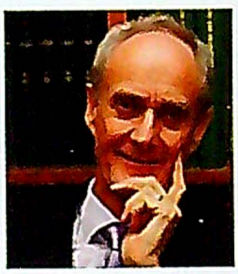




including the key items listed on the left. Always wishing to share his knowledge, he had the foresight to bequeath his vast and unique collection to the British Museum. However, he could not have foreseen that his life would be quite so short; his achievements are all the more remarkable for the fact that he died young – at the age of 35, following an attack of pleurisy, at Gumley Hall near Market Harborough in Leicestershire.

7

His collection today Thomas Tapling deserves to be honoured and remembered as an eminent philatelist for his expertise, his willingness to share his knowledge during his lifetime, and for gifting his collection to be shared by future generations of collectors. The Tapling Collection is now held in the British Library, with half on display at any one time (currently countries A-M) and selected items on permanent public exhibition. Paul Skinner, Lead Curator of the British Library's Philatelic Collection says, 'The Tapling collection is probably the only major collection formed during the 19th century which is still intact. Its coverage is worldwide for the period 1840 to 1890, and is virtually complete in all basic issues. It also has a large section of postal stationery. Apart from the rarities, the collection is strong in unused examples, with excellent ranges of shades, and includes important covers, blocks, essays and proofs.'



Researchers who wish to see items that are not on display should enquire by email to philatelic@bl.uk or phone +44 (0)207 412 7635. A Readers Pass is required – see www.bl.uk for details. We urge you to go and see the Tapling Collection; you will not be disappointed ●

Dane Garrod FRPSL thanks the British Library for assistance in writing this article.

A selection of key items of the Tapling Collection

• Gold Coast 1883 (May) 1d on 4d magenta, unique. • Great Britain 1858-79 1d red, plate 77, one of a few known. • Hawaii 1851-52 2 cents to 13 cents, the 'Missionaries'. • India 1854, 4 annas blue and pale red, error head inverted, two used on cover, unique. • Mauritius 1847 1d red used on cover and 2d blue – 'Post Office' issue. • Spain 1851 2 reales, error of colour, one of three known. • Switzerland-Zurich 1843 4 rappen, the unique unsevered horizontal strip of five. • Uruguay 1858, 120 centavos blue and 180 centavos green, in tête bêche pairs, two of five known. • Western Australia 1854-5 4d blue, error frame inverted.

Recommended reading on Tapling:

A Astling, *A. Tapestry, The story of a Victorian Business-man*, Tucann Books 2010, ISBN 978-1-907516-09-2.

F J Melville, *The Tapling Collection of Stamps and Postal Stationery at the British Museum*, Lawn & Barlow, London, circa 1910. (The collection was transferred from the British Museum to the British Library in 1998).

The Royal Philatelic Society London 1869-1969.

Philatelic collections at the British Library



There is a permanent public exhibition area for the Philatelic Collections on the upper ground floor of the British Library, where you can see some of the world's rarest and most significant stamps. Approximately 80,000 items may be seen, contained in 1,000 display frames, considered the best permanent display of diverse classic stamps and philatelic material in the world.

The British Library is at 96 Euston Rd, Kings Cross, London NW1 2DB. For opening times and further details see www.bl.uk or phone 0330 333 1144.

This month in History

John Holman revisits the Coronation commemorative stamp issue of 1937

Below: Coronation stamp in strip of three from cylinder 23 (control A/37)



EIGHTY YEARS AGO, ON 12 MAY 1937, KING GEORGE VI WAS CROWNED at Westminster Abbey. That date had already been fixed for the Coronation of Edward VIII who abdication in December 1936, after just 11 months as king, resulting in his brother the Duke of York taking the throne. The Coronation of the new King and Queen was broadcast on BBC radio without commentary. Some 28 microphones were positioned around the Abbey. The embryonic BBC television service broadcast the procession but not the service, although newsreel companies were permitted to film it. (Camera crews were required to wear evening dress). The Coronation procession drew huge crowds with some 32,500 troops marching or lining the route. The King and Queen left Buckingham Palace in the gold coach at 10.43am, arriving at the Abbey at precisely 11am.

The Post Office had in preparation stamps for Edward VIII's coronation which were abandoned on his abdication. At first it seemed doubtful that new Coronation stamps could be produced in time for May, but this did not stop leading designer Edmund Dulac submitting a design in early January, even before the PO had decided to go ahead with a Coronation issue. One newspaper reported that it was unlikely sufficient quantities of a basic UK letter rate stamp (1½d) could be produced in time and that 6d, 9d and 1s stamps would be issued instead. In the event a 1½d stamp proved possible.



Above: Dorothy Wilding photograph, from which Dulac's accepted design derived.
Below: designs submitted by Edmund Dulac and Eric Gill





By March designs were being considered from Eric Gill and the printers Harrisons, as well as the submissions from Dulac. His designs included one featuring profile heads of the Queen facing left and King facing right, in hexagonal frames separated by crown and floral emblems and cyphers ER and GR. Gill's designs showed full-face photographs of the King and Queen and another with the heads facing inwards using photographs of the King and Queen taken by Landucci and Hugh Cecil. The heads were in individual frames separated by crown. Other designs considered were based on group photographs of the King, Queen and Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret by Marcus Adams.

Eventually a design by Dulac was accepted. This features full-face portraits the King, in full-dress naval uniform, and Queen, in diamond-fringe tiara and evening gown. The portraits were derived from photographs taken by Dorothy Wilding and juxtaposed with the Queen on her husband's left, as required by court protocol. They were subsequently used by Canada and Newfoundland on their Royal Visit commemoratives of 1939. The Wilding photograph was reproduced by the National Postal Museum on a postcard issued in 1988. ▸

Between the portraits appeared the initials of the King and Queen above an entwined R and surmounted by a Tudor crown. The top of the crown was flanked by the words POSTAGE and REVENUE. Maltese crosses occupied the upper corners above curved trelliswork reminiscent of the Penny Black. The trellis was interrupted by the Orb of State (left) and the Ampulla (right), a gold vessel shaped like an eagle which contained the holy oil used in the coronation ceremony. The value in numerals occupied the lower corners and flanked the Coronation date.

The stamp was printed in an attractive deep maroon colour – a much richer shade than the red-brown used for the subsequent 1½d definitive. Writing in the *Bulletin* in November 1974 James Watson described the colour as 'suggesting an over-ripe Victoria plum or a bar of Bournville plain chocolate'.

The issued stamp

Coronation day was a public holiday so the stamp was issued the following day. It was not well received by *The Times* newspaper, which commented: 'The stamp designed to mark an occasion so august as well as joyful, the first stamp in Great Britain to include the head of a Queen Consort should have made better use both of its opportunity and of its unusually attractive material. But with the best will in the world it is not possible to see in it any singleness of design. The crown and the monogram divide, not join, the two heads. The patterns in the margins are meagre, and the whole too closely suggests the sort of thing a hospital issues for the charitable to stick on the backs of their letters'. The stamp was, however, received more enthusiastically by the philatelic community.

Although officially issued on 13 May, some examples are recorded postmarked 10 and 11 May from pre-release, possibly caused by confusion, as the first George VI definitives were issued on 10 May. Examples are also known with Coronation Day, 12 May, postmarks, probably applied by favour as that day was a public holiday and post offices closed The Coronation stamp remained on sale until the 1½d definitive was issued in July. By then some 389 million of the 500 million Coronation stamps printed had been sold, making it one of the top-selling commemorative stamps. It is still readily available, catalogued at just 30p mint or used. Harrisons used no fewer than 17 cylinders to produce the stamp, numbered between 2 and 30.

Below: Coronation stamps overprinted for use in Morocco Agencies and Tangier





A number of interesting constant varieties can be found on this stamp, the most prominent comprising a 'colon' between 12 and MAY of the date – this is listed and illustrated in the *GB Concise Catalogue*. Others are recorded in the GB *Specialised Catalogue* (vol. 2).

The Coronation stamp was issued overprinted and surcharged in Spanish/French currency for use in the Morocco Agencies and Tangier.

In article in *Bulletin* in May 1997, Jean Matheson noted that Dulac sent autographed specimens of his Coronation stamp to two friends, joking that in time they might fetch as much as 6d each. One wonders where they are now!

First day covers were serviced by collectors and dealers in large quantities, but the especially sought-after covers are examples with London SW1 and Windsor postmarks and the cancellations of the post offices at the camps were troops were stationed – Hampton Court, Kensington Gardens, Pirbright Regents Park, and

Bullswater. The *Collect GB First Day Covers* catalogue states that well over 200 different display/commemorative covers were produced for this issue. There was no Post Office presentation pack, but a privately produced 'Post Office Missed' pack was produced in an edition of 2,000 many years later – this is listed in *British Presentation Packs* (1st edn 2014)



Commemorative labels

As well as the Coronation stamp, there were a number of private labels produced – some very attractive and popular with collectors of cinderella material. Twelve labels produced by the publishers of *Philatelic Magazine* were designed by T A Chaplin and printed by Harrisons in six colours: black, blue, brown, green, red, and violet. Although Stanley Gibbons Ltd normally frowned on commemorative labels, they offered these for sale to their customers, urging that they should be affixed to the top of all letters written during May and June 1937 and should not be affixed to covers sent through the post. The 12 labels feature Royal regalia: St Edward's Crown, The Bible and the Ring, The Orb; the Ampulla, St George's spurs, Imperial State Crown, Sword of State, St Edward's Staff, Sword of Mercy, Royal Sceptre with the Cross, Anointing Spoon and Sceptre with the Dove.

Some 60 different 'Coronation Souvenir Stamps' were produced by Parkshaw Publishing Co, 10 Station Road, Finsbury Park, London N4 and sold at a shilling a set in a buff coloured packet on which was printed 'Add a set to your collection. Send a set to a friend', but warned 'Do not affix on the front of envelopes'. The stamps were printed in a mix of brown, light blue, pale magenta, and yellow. Amongst the designs were members of the Royal family and royal residences. Perhaps a little surprisingly, one of the labels featured the former Edward VIII, now styled Duke of Windsor. Another interesting set was produced by Posterstamp Publicity Ltd of London, their designs including ones showing Princess Margaret Rose and the Houses of Parliament. These delightful labels are still to be found in cinderella dealers' stocks and are worth looking out for.

Another interesting cinderella item is the Nazi black propaganda imitation of the issued Coronation stamp, with image of Stalin in place of Queen Elizabeth, hammer and sickle device incorporated into the crown, and the 12 MAY 1937 date replaced by TEHERAN 28.11.1943. This was illustrated in an article by Norman Williams on the Black Propaganda issues in the *Bulletin* of May 1988.

Stamps from the Empire

An omnibus Coronation design was used for stamps from no fewer than 45 Empire countries. The King was depicted in the uniform of Admiral of the Fleet and shown on the right side with Queen Elizabeth at left – the opposite arrangement to the British stamp. Australia and India did not issue Coronation stamps, but there were non-omnibus designs from Canada, Nauru, Newfoundland (also in omnibus series), New Guinea, New Zealand, Papua, South Africa, South West Africa, and Southern Rhodesia. Canada's stamp went on sale on 10 May two days before the coronation ●











Top: 1937 Coronation stamp on one of over 200 cover designs.
Above: commemorative label with Anointing Spoon image. Below Coronation Omnibus issues from British Solomon Islands and Nyasaland, and bespoke issues from Southern Rhodesia and New Zealand

X is for... postman's crosses

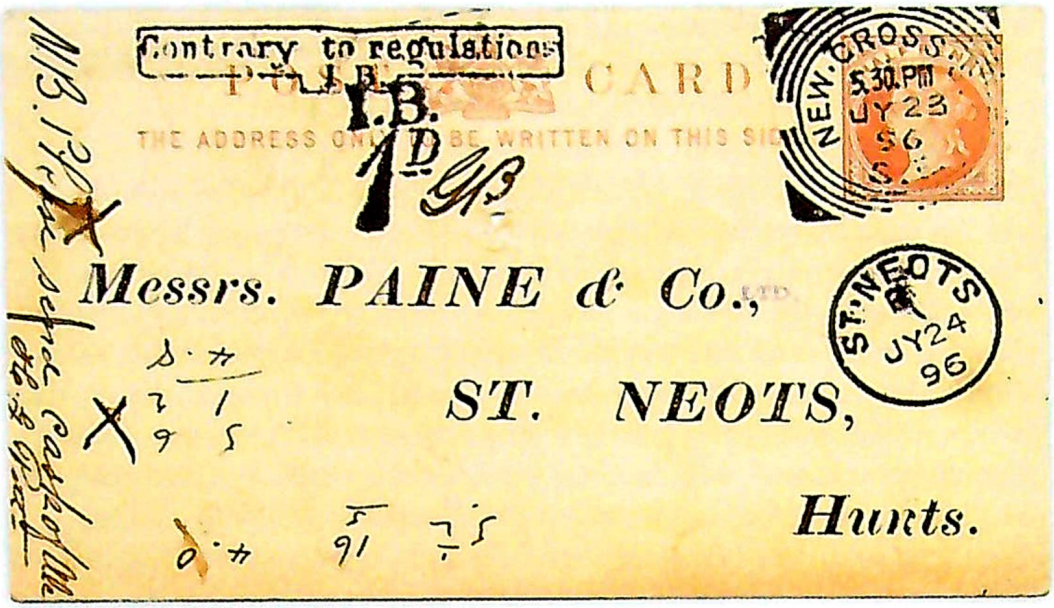


Fig 1

Collecting marks indicating naughty contraventions of Post Office regulations

Fig 1 The postman's crosses indicate that the writer has incurred a surcharge by completing his message on the front of this postcard

IT SHOULD BE EASY FOR PEOPLE TO POST A LETTER to get to its destination quickly. But human error once again provides a niche for collectors of postal stationery. Every so often, an item is posted, perhaps when the person writing and stamping the envelope was in a hurry or distracted, and it contravenes the Post Office's regulations. This means that the letter is delayed and surcharged and often a mark from the postman or a small handstamp will show us why.

The printed paper rate was introduced in 1848 to give cheap postage for printed matter (with the aim of encouraging circulating libraries of the day) but it did not include handwritten or typewritten letters, even if part of the correspondence was pre-printed. However, you were allowed a few words in manuscript, and to include your address. Envelopes had to be unsealed to facilitate inspection by the postman and wrappers had to show part of their contents so that postmen could check that the contents were wholly pre-printed. Some people forgot, others hoped the postmen would miss their letter. When an error was spotted, a special handstamp would be applied stating "Contains a communication in nature of a letter" and a surcharge made on the item.

The postcard regulations were particularly tough. Anything other than the address on the front meant it was treated as a letter and surcharged accordingly. The 1896 card shown above (Fig 1) has the postman's crosses around the offending sentence. But the Post Office did have a heart! Postal stationery used

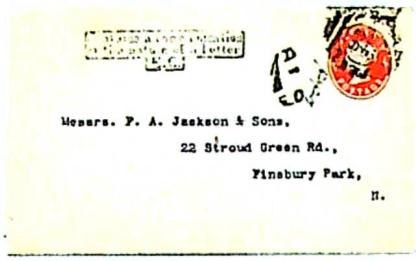


Fig 2

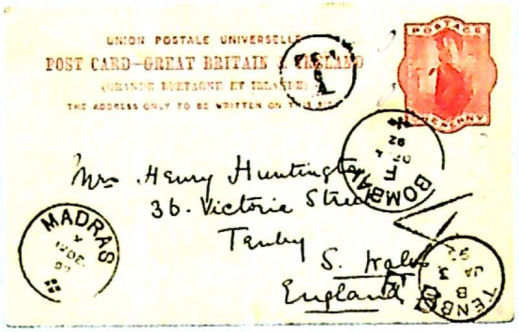


Fig 3



Fig 4



Fig 5

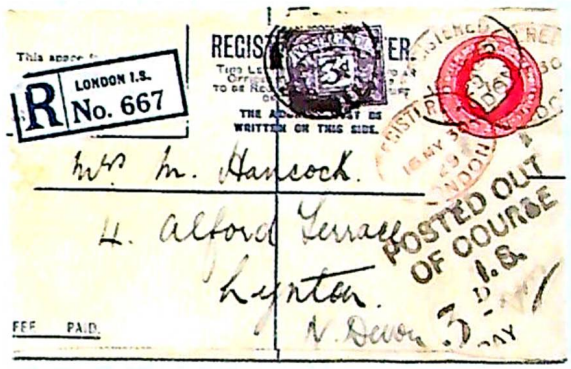


Fig 6

from abroad that was surcharged in the country where it was posted, had the surcharge reduced in the UK by the value of the stamps used, as shown by the 1d postcard used from India (Fig 4). Rather than crosses, the Indian post office has marked the offending stamp with circles.

Postage rates today increase almost every year, but in the early years of the last century increases were rare. When they happened, not everyone was ready, so more mail than usual had to be surcharged when letters and cards were posted at the old rates.

Registered mail (special delivery today) was always treated with special care. Such mail was likely to contain money, valuables or gifts and so it had to be handed into a post office. But people in a hurry sometimes dropped their registered envelope into the nearest post box. The Post Office did not want registered mail mixed up with the general post and so imposed a surcharge to discourage people from doing so. Sometimes people sent valuables through the post without using the registration service. If the Post Office discovered this then the item was compulsorily surcharged, for example the QEII envelope shown here (Fig 5) that contained an uncrossed postal order. It was only picked up because the writer forgot to address the envelope – a careless and expensive mistake! •

Next in Baker's A to Z of Postal Stationery: V is for Young Queen Victoria.

Fig 2 A ½d envelope for printed papers that included a letter

Fig 3 1d has been allowed against a 5d surcharge on this postcard used from India

Fig 4 A postcard sent a few days after a rate increase and treated as underpaid

Fig 5 A letter that should have been registered, as it contained an uncrossed postal order

Fig 6 "Posted Out of Course" an envelope marked as registered has been put in an ordinary post box rather than properly registered at a post office

For more inspiration about collecting postal stationery www.postalstationery.org.uk

In tribute to our Princess Royal

This charming Commemorative Sheet marks the 30th anniversary of HRH Princess Anne becoming Princess Royal

On 13 June 1987, Queen Elizabeth II bestowed the title 'Princess Royal' on HRH Princess Anne. This royal style for the eldest daughter is a noble tradition that dates back to 1642. Next month Royal Mail celebrates the 30th anniversary of this important royal tradition with a Princess Royal Commemorative Sheet. Ten Union flags are flanked by labels which recall different aspects of Her Royal Highness's life. The labels are captioned as follows.

Childhood Anne Elizabeth Alice Louise, Princess Elizabeth's second child and only daughter, is born on 15 August 1950 at Clarence House in London.
Early life Her Royal Highness The Princess Anne is pictured with her parents and elder brother on Windsor Castle's East Terrace in May 1959.
UK ambassador During her first tour of New Zealand and Australia in March and April 1970, Her Royal Highness attends a fashion show in Brisbane, Australia.
Sporting career A passionate horse rider since childhood, Her Royal Highness won individual and team silver medals in the 1975 European Eventing Championships.
Family life Her Royal Highness with her son Peter (born in November 1977) and daughter Zara (born in May 1981) at the Royal Windsor Horse Show in 1984.
Charitable work Her Royal Highness has been President of Save the Children UK since 1970. She is pictured visiting a Save the Children project in Bangladesh in 1984.
Public life The Princess Royal was made a Lady of the Most Noble Order of the Garter in 1994. Here she attends the 1998 Garter Day procession.
Sporting passion The Princess Royal presents the Calcutta Cup to England rugby union captain – and her future son-in-law – Mike Tindall in March 2011.
Ceremonial duties A member of the International Olympic Committee since 1988, The Princess Royal presents Team Eventing medals at the London 2012 Olympic Games.
Military support Her Royal Highness pays tribute

Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Sheet – Specifications

Issue date	13 June
Number of stamps	Ten First Class
Sheet and Pack design	CDT Design Ltd and Up.
Sheet format	A4
Stamp format	Portrait
Stamp size	20mm x 24mm
Printer	International Security Printers
Print process	Lithography
Perforations	Die-cut simulate
Phosphor	Bars as appropriate
Gum	Self-adhesive
Price	£15.95

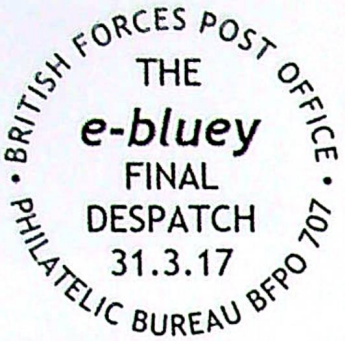


to the British military involved in the 1941-45 Arctic Convoys at a memorial in a cemetery in Arkhangelsk, Russia, in 2016.

This Commemorative Sheet is a worthy tribute to the Princess Royal and will be treasured by both philatelists and collectors of royal memorabilia. The pack and Commemorative Sheet design was created by Up – Scott Keightley and Christopher Challinor – the team behind this year's majestic Windsor Castle Special Stamps. (See 'Onward and Upward', p176) ●

Pre-order from 2 June at www.royalmail.com/theroyalcollection

Above: he Princess Royal Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Sheet issued next month. The illustrated information card is written by Jacqueline Wines





A fond farewell to the e-bluey As the British Forces Philatelic Service marks the withdrawal of the e-bluey mail system, Major (Retd) Roy Walker MBE explains its development and demise

In October 1998 I was tasked by Brigadier Barry Cash, Chief Executive of the British Forces Post Office, to explore options for making use of the internet for the delivery of letters to troops deployed on operations. At this time Royal Mail software engineers were developing a hybrid mail system called Relay One, which was a 'one to many' hybrid mail solution. Working with Royal Mail in Swindon, I helped to design and implement the e-bluey system by adapting the 'One to One' hybrid mail platform utilising Royal Mail Relay One servers; this was a one-way system only. The e-bluey was launched by Doug Henderson, the Armed Forces Minister, on 28 June 1999.

It was understandable that Royal Mail gave notice that the service would cease at the end of July 2000, because Relay One was not a success in commerical terms. However, by that time over 35,000 e-blueys had been sent to operational theatres during the Bosnian War since it started in June 1999. Realising the importance of the e-bluey service to the Armed Forces, Royal Mail granted a stay of execution for six months. So our challenge was then to find, within six months, a commercial partner that shared our commitment to the improved delivery of mail using hybrid mail technology in order to maintain morale of Service personnel.

The solution was to enter into a partnership arrangement with Superletter.com, who had been encountered during benchmarking activity during the summer of 2000. Superletter was asked to provide a managed solution. Time was short, as they needed to adapt their standard program to meet the special requirements of British Forces Mail. Working with Bill Ramsay and Marc Hale from Superletter, it took us just four weeks to get a system installed and working in readiness for the Christmas season. The

For more information about INtouch, Enduring Families Free Mail Service (EFFMS) and other Forces Mail services please see the BFPO service guide at www.gov.uk/guidance/british-forces-post-office-services

Superletter e-bluey system allowed letters to be sent to and from BFPO locations, which was a marked improvement on the original e-bluey system.

To ensure personnel on operational tours and their family and friends continued to receive the best possible service, further improvements and enhancements were introduced to the family of e-bluey products. In 2004 the fax-bluey was introduced. This allowed senders who were unable to access the internet to scan their handwritten letters and send them electronically. The fax-bluey was installed in many Forces Post Offices, Hives* information centres and unit family centres

In 2006 photo-bluey was introduced. This allowed family and friends to attach a digital photograph to their e-bluey letters, echoing developments in the use of camera phones in the UK. In the following year fax2email was launched – a service that allowed personnel on operation tours to send a scanned letter directly to an email address anywhere in the world.

January 2012 saw the introduction of ebluey2 with the launch of Ebluey2Email. This service allowed soldiers' families and friends to send letters directly from their e-bluey accounts to an email address. Fax-bluey and Ebluey2Email provided a much quicker delivery service, negating the need for the conventional 'last mile' mail delivery system, thus reducing delivery costs.

Through 2007 the RBGan communication system deployed in Afghanistan and Iraq was replaced with the Bgan communication system. The new system provided much improved high-speed internet access, which was necessary for the new photo-bluey and fax2email service. A sophisticated and robust communication service, Bgan gave the e-bluey system the ability to stand alone and operate anywhere in the world.

The e-bluey system continued to provide an essential personal communications service for the British Armed Forces, their families and friends up until its withdrawal on 31 March 2017. At its operational peak the e-bluey secure website dealt with over 100,000 items of mail per month and the e-bluey service accounted for over 80 per cent of the letters sent between British Service personnel and their family and friends while on operations.

The e-bluey was an award-winning system – in 2000 it won the IM2000 Award, followed by the Government Computing for Innovation in 2001, e-Messaging 2001, World Mail Award 2002 and the UK Mail Award 2005. It was a finalist in the category for Uniformed Services of the Public Servants of the Year Awards in 2006, and in 2007 won the UK Mail Award for technology.

Prior to withdrawal of the e-bluey, Defence Minister Mark Lancaster announced a new mailing system for friends and family to send letters to personnel around the world – the imail *I*Mtouch system will allow personnel to stay in touch with friends and family as they work to protect the UK across the world. A new contract with Neopost means that, since 1 April 2017, Britain's Armed Forces have continued to receive hard copy, secure mail of up to eight pages and with the possibility of including high-definition photos from their loved ones – for free and with no break in the mail service ●

**The HIVE is an information network available to all members of the Service community. It serves both married and single personnel, together with their families, dependants and civilians employed by the Services, throughout UK and overseas.*







Limited edition Last E-blueys

A numbered, limited edition batch of 100 e-blueys sent on the last day of operation are available from the British Forces Philatelic Society (BFPS). Each bears a special BFPO 707 handstamp, as shown on facing page, and includes an information sheet

Price £12.50 with free UK/BFPO p&p. All net profits will be donated to Service charities

How to buy Orders are limited to two per customer. You can purchase the souvenir e-bluey online from www.bfps.org.uk.shop. Or by post, send a cheque payable to 'BFPS CIC' to:
The Old Post Office, Links Place, Elie, Fife KY9 1AR.

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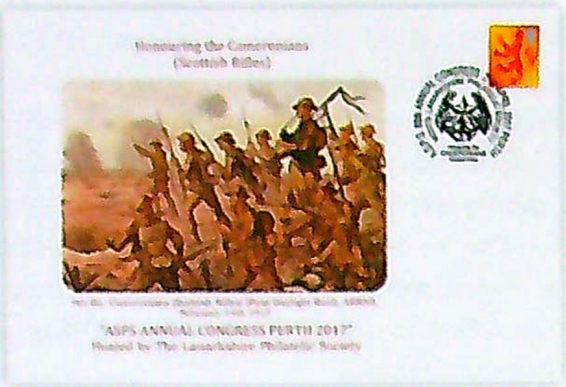


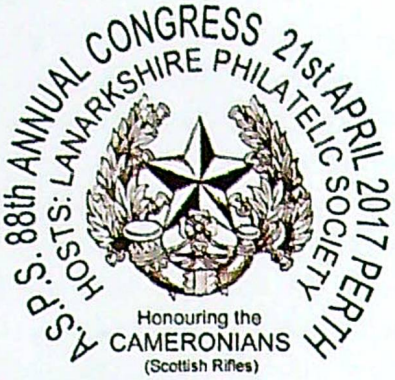






From top: the city of Perth, the Thistle design from Post & Go Symbolic Flowers set, specially produced for Congress, Sandie Robb, doing much to promote the hobby among the young of Scotland





Annual philatelic focus at Perth

Richard West reports on the Scottish Philatelic Congress held last month

THE 88TH ANNUAL CONGRESS of the Association of Scottish Philatelic Societies took place at the Dewar Centre in Perth on 21 and 22 April, hosted by the Lanarkshire Philatelic Society. The annual Scottish Congress is always a thoroughly enjoyable event. Everyone is so friendly and the atmosphere relaxed – and this year was no exception.

In recent years particular attention has been focused on the fact that Royal Mail Post & Go machines have been present, with a special 'Scottish Congress' overprint on the stamps. This year there were three designs available: the Thistle design from the Symbolic Flowers series was produced specially for the event, in a digitally printed form whose shiny appearance instantly distinguishes it from the previous version. Also available was the Lion design (from Royal Mail's Heraldic Beasts) and the standard Machin (with versions dated either 13 or 15 available).

Congress combines a mixture of trade stands and displays, including the entries in the National competitions. The Tom Rielly display was presented by Dr Brian Dow on the topic of Scottish Viking Miscellany. Sadly this year there was only one entrant in the Junior Competition, for the Alba Salver, from Lachlan Philbey. Previously this competition has been well supported. However, it was good to see Sandie Robb there, who is doing incredible work in helping to promote collecting among the young.

Sandie has recently organised 20 outreach sessions that have involved nearly 500 children, and 40 teachers and group leaders. These have been held at the Central Library in Edinburgh, at Brownies and Guides groups and in schools. She has also developed two board games to link in with language learning: games are available in Japanese and Spanish – one in French will come soon (stampit,asps@hotmail.co.uk).

Another highlight of Scottish Congress is the Dinner. The guest speaker was Major Farquharson of the Cameronians Regiment. Organiser Alan Watson likes to give each course a philatelic touch, such as 'chicken breast surcharged with honey'. Sadly his 'Salted Caramel Tart cancelled' was interpreted by the caterers as no longer required, so was not available.

The Scottish Congress for 2018 will be held at the Dewar Centre on 20 and 21 April, hosted by the Scottish Philatelic Society •

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The Glasgow Stamp Shop has been in business since 1908 in various guises but it has always offered collectors a huge stock of GB stamps, philatelic expertise and experience – and a very warm welcome.

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Royal Mail stamp issues and withdrawals

4 May — **Issue** Songbirds: Stamps (10 x 1st Class in 2 x se-tenant strips of 5), Presentation Pack, Stamp Souvenir, Postcards (10 in set). Details: page 272, Preview on page 228.



17 May — **Withdrawal** Animail Miniature Sheet: 6 x die-cut Special Stamps (2 x 1st Class, 2 x £1, 2 x £1.33), Presentation Pack, Postcards (7 in set). Details: Vol 53, page 228.



24 May — **Issue** 2017 FIP Exhibition Sheet – Finland (20 x 1st Class Smilers® Hello Stamps). Preview: page 232, April *Bulletin*..

25 May — **Issue** Lisbon Lions Sheet. Details: June *Bulletin*.

28 May — **Withdrawal** 2016 FIP Exhibition Sheet – New York (20 x 1st Class).

5 June — **Issue** Machin Anniversary, 1967-2017: Post & Go Stamps (6 x designs), Miniature Sheet – 50 Years of A Design Icon (6 x 1st Class), Miniature Sheet – Golden Anniversary Celebration (1 x 5p, 1 x 20p, 4 x 1st Class, 1 x £1), 2 x Miniature Sheet Souvenir Covers, Presentation Pack, Prestige Stamp Book, Limited edition Prestige Stamp Book, Retail Stamp Book (6 x 1st Class), 2 x Bespoke Press Sheets (8 x Miniature Sheet), Postcards (8 in set), Medal Cover with 50 Years of a Design Icon Miniature Sheet, 6 x 1st Class). Preview: page 260.



9 June — **Withdrawal** HM The Queen's 90th Birthday Stamp Book (6 x 1st Class).

13 June — **Issue** Her Royal Highness Princess Anne, Princess Royal: Commemorative Sheet (10 x 1st Class Union Flag stamps). Preview: page 282.

20 June — **Issue** Windmills and Watermills: stamps (2 x 1st Class, 2 x £1.40, 2 x £1.57 in 3 se-tenant pairs), Presentation Pack, Stamp Souvenir, Postcards (6 in set). Preview: page 266.

30 June — **Issue** Celebrating Canada Commemorative Sheet (10 x 1st Class Firework stamps). Preview: June *Bulletin*.

Order all philatelic items, including the stamp products listed above, at **www.royalmail.com/stamps** or from **Royal Mail Stamps and Collectibles** PO Box 1373, Sunderland SR5 9PG, UK. (Overseas subscribers will need to use a stamp.) Telephone order line (08.30 to 17.00 Monday to Friday): 03457 641 641. From overseas: +44 131 316 7483. Minimum handling charge UK £1.45, Europe £1.55, rest of world (airmail) £2.15. Please quote **17BUL05**, the *Bulletin* media code. Selected items are available at Post Office branches and philatelic outlets at main post offices.

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