

BRITISH PHILATELIC

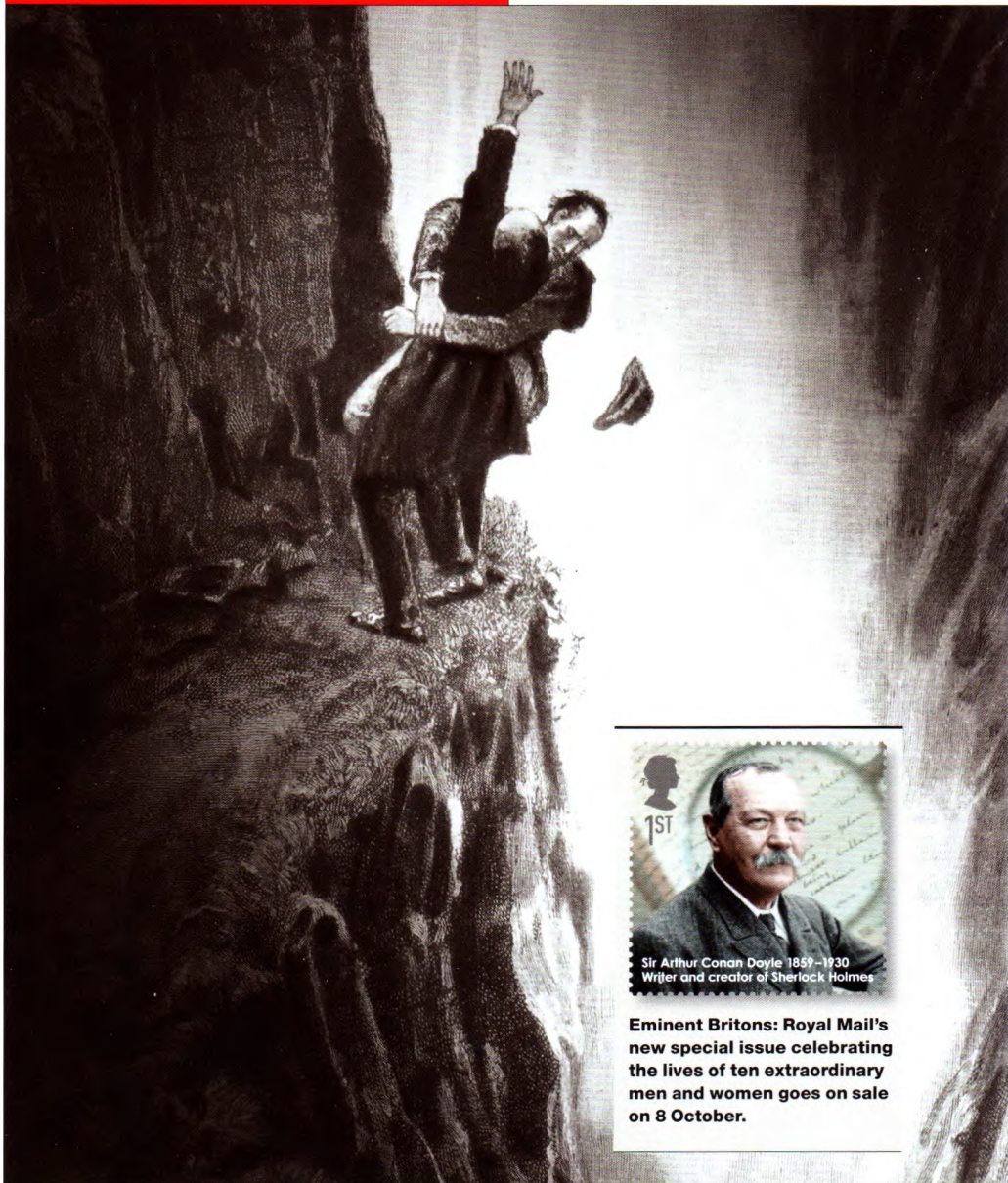
The ROYAL MAIL magazine *for stamp collectors*

Volume 47 Number 2

OCTOBER 2009 £1.20

Bulletin

50 years of postcodes • A trip to Walsall • British air letters



Eminent Britons: Royal Mail's new special issue celebrating the lives of ten extraordinary men and women goes on sale on 8 October.

Forthcoming issues and withdrawals



Cover *The Death of Sherlock Holmes* by Sidney Paget, from the December 1893 issue of *The Strand Magazine*. This issue included Arthur Conan Doyle's story *The Adventure of the Final Problem*. Royal Mail's Eminent Britons issue was previewed here in July.

Availability All items available from Royal Mail Tallents House (address below). Selected items are available at Post Office branches and Post Office philatelic outlets at the main post offices in: Bristol, Cambridge, Chester, Colchester, Coventry, Croydon, Durham, Edinburgh, Exeter, Glasgow, Grimsby, Harrogate, Lichfield, London (Eastcheap & Trafalgar Sq), Norwich, Nottingham, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Southampton (High St and Hedge End), Southend-on-Sea, Stevenage, Stroud, Trowbridge, Truro and York.

Royal Mail Tallents House 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB, UK. Telephone order line (08.30 - 17.00 Monday to Friday): 08457 641 641; from overseas +44 131 316 7483. Minimum handling charge UK £1.45, Europe £1.55, rest of world (airmail) £2.15. Some products can be ordered on Royal Mail's website: www.royalmail.com/shop

28 September	Withdrawal 50th anniversary of Country (Regional) stamps miniature sheet, presentation pack, stamp cards, prestige book and press sheet
28 September	Withdrawal Glorious UK generic sheet
7 October	Issue 800th anniversary of Cambridge University commemorative sheet
8 October	Issue Eminent Britons stamps, presentation pack and stamp cards
13 October	Withdrawal Women of Distinction stamps, presentation pack and stamp cards
20 October	Issue Silver Stamp Collection No 5: 72p Westminster Cathedral stamp
21 October	Issue Italia 2009 exhibition sheet
22 October	Issue Olympic & Paralympic Games (1) stamps, presentation pack, stamp cards, commemorative sheet and coin cover
28 October	Withdrawal UK coin cover
3 November	Issue 2009 Christmas stamps, miniature sheet, stamp cards, stamp books (12 x 1st, 12 x 2nd), generic sheet, Smilers sheets (10 x 1st, 20 x 1st, 20 x 2nd, 10 x 56p, 10 x 90p), 2006 Smilers sheets reissued
3 November	Issue 2009 Yearbook (standard & de luxe versions), Yearpack, Miniature Sheet Collection, Presentation Pack Collection
3 November	Withdrawal 2008 Christmas stamps, miniature sheet, stamp cards, stamp books and generic sheet
5 November	Withdrawal Lest We Forget miniature sheets (2006, 2007 and 2008 designs), presentation packs, stamp cards and generic sheets
30 November	Issue Scottish Castles generic sheet (20 x 1st class Flag stamp and labels)

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ROYAL NAVY UNIFORMS



ROYAL MAIL BOOK OF STAMPS

Mainly Machins In this month's report for specialist collectors, Douglas Myall looks at the Treasures of the Archive and Navy Uniforms prestige stamp books, and at recent developments in new definitive issues **178**

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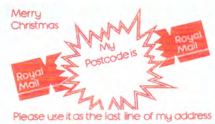


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This month The Editor previews this issue

AS ANNOUNCED in an insert to last month's *Bulletin*, Royal Mail will issue the first in a series of Olympic & Paralympic Games stamps on 22 October, depicting some of the many sports which feature in the Games. Over the next three years a total of 30 stamps will be issued in this series. Earlier issues relating to the London 2012 Games are the miniature sheet issued to mark London's success as Olympic host (August 2005) and the miniature sheet marking the Olympic Flag handover from Beijing to London (August 2008). This latter sheet was a joint issue with China Post. Previous British stamps for the Olympics were issued in 1948 (London Games), 1992 (Barcelona) and 1996 (Atlanta). The Olympic Games is a popular collecting theme, and there is an excellent Society of Olympic Collectors for those interested in the subject.

Less in the future is the London 2010 Festival of Stamps, an umbrella title for a number of events in London and throughout the country next year, with an international stamp exhibition at the Business Design Centre in London at the centrepiece (8-15 May). Details of some of the Festival events were given here in June (page 297).

More immediately there is an international exhibition to be held in Rome this month (21-25 October), and the noted Monacophil exhibition in Montecarlo on 4-6 December. *Stampa*, the well-attended Irish national philatelic exhibition, takes place in Dublin (16-18 October), and *Scotex* in Perth (16-17 October). Another popular event in the UK philatelic calendar, *Philatex*, will be at the Royal Horticultural Hall in London on 5-7 November. For details of local events see our regular Events listing.

In September I noted that 2009 was a year of numerous anniversaries, and another one falls this month – it is now half a century since postcodes were introduced in Norwich, the first place to get them. The postcoding of UK addresses was completed in the 1970s. Richard West tells the history of postcodes, an important part of everyday life. Glenn Morgan reports on a visit to Walsall printers and philatelic bureau, Colin Baker continues his series on airletters, and Douglas Myall updates us on new *Machin* issues. Something for everyone I hope... JOHN HOLMAN •

Stamp scene News and upcoming events: Glenn Morgan keeps you posted

Blists Hill enquiries For more information, visit the BPMA's website www.postalheritage.org.uk/ironbridge

For opening times and how to get there, call 01952 884391 or see www.ironbridge.org.uk

Blists Hill This month should find the new 'Post Office in the Community' exhibition open at Blists Hill Victorian town, where you will be able to see the Hen and Chicks pentacycle and many other fascinating items from the British Postal Museum & Archive (BPMA) collection on display. Moving away from the Victorian era, you will be able to explore the important role played in the community by the Post Office, and look at the services that the PO has provided throughout its history and how these have changed •

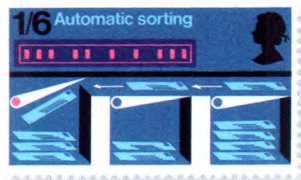
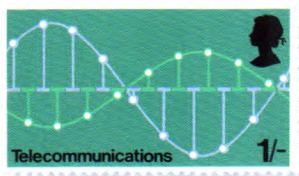
40 years on... The postal administrations of Guernsey and Jersey are this month celebrating 40 years of independently operating their own postal services. Transfer occurred on 1 October 1969 and I vividly remember the excitement surrounding this event when I attended my first-ever stamp exhibition at the Seymour Hall in London around the day of the launch of the stamps. I was just 13 and could only afford to buy the sets to 19gd, the high values of 286d to £1 being more than I was willing to pay, as the £3.75 cost for both sets equates to £87.98 today, based on average earnings.

This month also sees the 40th anniversary of the assets of the old GPO (General Post Office) transferring from that of a government department with a Royal Charter to a Statutory Corporation. At the same time, responsibility for telecoms was given to Post Office Telecommunications, the successor to the GPO Telephones Department. More recently, on 5 April 2007, the Government published the Dissolution of the Post Office Order, 2007, whereby the old Post Office statutory corporation was formally abolished with effect from 1 May 2007.

On the day of transfer, 1 October 1969, a set of four stamps was issued on the theme of postal technology. They were, at that time, unique in the annals of British philately because they had been printed by De La Rue at its Gateshead banknote printing factory using what the company said was a revolutionary new process called 'Delacryl'. It was actually a refined version of lithography, which of late has become the process used for most special issues and some definitives rather than gravure •



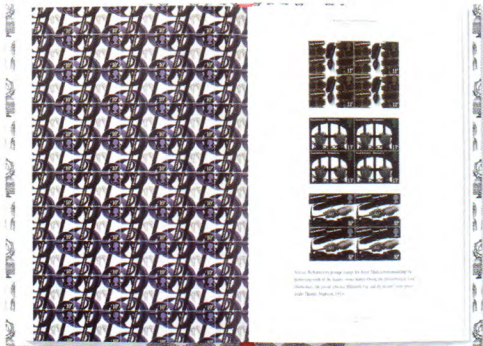
The 1969 Crown Agents leaflet announcing the new stamps from Guernsey and Jersey.



Three of the four 1969 Post Office Technology stamps – see also page 39.

Midpex This event was held at its new venue, the Xcel Leisure Centre in Canley, Coventry on 11 July. I understand that over 700 people had attended by lunchtime, so it was well patronised. Unfortunately, this brought about its own problems in that the aisles were far too narrow to cope with the numbers, especially for the several electric wheelchairs in use. Also, despite the building having opened just six months ago, there was no air conditioning and it was intolerably hot within. That said, the event certainly had a buzz about it and it was encouraging to see so many collectors enjoying a philatelic day out •

Boots labels Reader Robert Bostock has advised us of another previously unrecorded Boots label to report from our associates in Japan. It relates to Stamp Show '06 held at Asakusa in Tokyo and is on an unbranded sheet •



David Gentleman Design

Available from the BPMA at a special price of £10 (full price £12.50). Purchase online at www.postalheritage.org.uk or by phone: 020 7239 5125.

Copies of *Artwork* by David Gentleman (as author) remain available from the BPMA, as above. Price £30.

Books *David Gentleman Design*, by Brian Webb and Peyton Skipwith (and foreword by Alan Bennett), a new addition to the Antique Collectors' Club's acclaimed Design series, takes a look at the work of David Gentleman. David's early training, engraving onto small boxwood blocks, ensured that his unique style retains the characteristic intensity of the miniaturist, even when enlarged. At the Royal College of Art he was taught by some of the finest artists of the day, including John Nash and Edward Bawden, and has since worked on projects as diverse as postage stamps, wine labels and Charing Cross Station's platform panels.

The book is filled with imagery from David's long and distinguished career, covering all aspects of his work, not just postage stamps. He has never been one to shy away from assisting any cause that he believes in, including the Stop the War Coalition, where he makes a strong political statement through his powerful and bold imagery. The author, Brian Webb, is a designer, with several stamp issues to his name, and visiting Professor at the University of the Arts London. Peyton Skipwith is an independent art consultant. Hardback with dust jacket. 96 pages with many artworks reproduced in colour. ISBN 978-1-85149-595-5 •

The Antique Collectors' Club will publish *GPO: Design*, a new 96-page book in this Design series, on 1 June 2010 (ISBN 978-1851495962). It is based on the poster collection of the British Postal Museum & Archive, London, and tells the story of the Post Office and the use of design in its visual communications. The PO depends on effective communication to alert the wider population of the whole variety of services that it provides. Before the age of the internet and television, the PO pioneered the use of graphic design and cinema as tools of public relations. Accordingly, it placed itself at the heart of a global community that spanned the British Empire. The idea of community as a flow of information, and defined as communication, is at the heart of the PO and what it means to people throughout Britain and the world. This book is a celebration of communication and identity as important parts of design in Britain during the 20th century. The author, Paul Rennie, is Head of Context in the School of Graphic Design at Central St Martin's, London. He is also the author of the *Festival of Britain 1951: Design* book in this series •

Stanley Gibbons catalogues

Available from the SG Strand shop in London, or by mail order from: Stanley Gibbons Publications, 7 Parkside, Ringwood, Hants, BH24 3SH. Telephone 01425 472363.

The 2010 edition of the Stanley Gibbons *Commonwealth & British Empire Stamps 1840-1970* catalogue is now available, priced £72.50. As well as listing additional items, there are numerous price revisions. Commonwealth in Asia shows an exceptional degree of revision, with Africa, West Indies, Canada, Australian states and New Zealand all showing strong growth. A new (7th) edition of Part 19 of the standard SG Stamp Catalogue, covering the countries of the Middle East has been published, price £42.50, and a new sectional Commonwealth Stamp Catalogue listing the issues of Belize, Guyana, and Trinidad & Tobago is also available, price £19.95 •

Readers may be interested to learn that the second edition of Ridgewood Design's *Customised Stamp Sheets of Great Britain* catalogue will be published either later this year, or early next year, in time for the 2010 International Stamp exhibition. The work has been completely re-written to include all the new sheets, types and varieties, and the compilers are re-formatting, editing and extending it now. Meanwhile keep up to date with Smilers news and availability of the new catalogue by visiting www.smilers-info.com ●

A new publication by John Little, *British Empire Civil Censorship Devices World War 11: Australia, New Zealand & Pacific Islands*, has been announced. The publicity says that this is section five of a series, and 'will soon go to print'. If this interests you, contact the author at the address opposite ●

Bath Postal Museum The 26-year reign of King George V saw massive changes to the British way of life, from the effects of the First World War to improvements in transport and communications. All of this affected the postal service, and they in turn were affected by it. From Spring to Autumn 2010 the BPM will have displays of postal artefacts illustrating these changes. Some of the events covered include the British Empire Exhibition, prisoner of war mail, the effect of inflation on postal rates, advertising, transport, the Jubilee celebrations and the start of a speedy air mail service.

The nationwide Festival of Stamps is to be launched by the Bath Postal Museum. On the morning of 23 March 2010 Lord Bath will send a message by carrier pigeon to the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, with all good wishes for both the Festival of Stamps and the London 2010 Exhibition. The message will be received by the Mayor and the actor Richard Briers later that day, accompanied by Alan Huggins as Chairman of the Festival of Stamps Advisory Committee. At the same time that the pigeon-gram leaves Bath, Lord Bath will wave a flag in the centre of the city to send a cavalcade of vintage postal vehicles on their way to London ●

BPMA podcast As part of an ongoing initiative to increase their presence on the web, the British Postal Museum & Archive (BPMA) has launched its first podcast, one of the first philatelic podcasts in the UK. Where possible, they are enhanced with images.

Every year the BPMA offers a series of talks in which specialists and experts explore different aspects of the history of the British postal service. The podcasts will consist of talks from last year's programme, and more will be added on an ongoing basis.

The first BPMA podcast is a recording of the former Postmaster General Tony Benn looking back at the establishment of the Girobank. This talk was held at the BPMA on 16 October 2008. The Girobank was instigated by Tony Benn, and opened by Prime Minister Harold Wilson in 1968. This landmark initiative extended banking services to people on low incomes, and revolutionised the transfer of money in Britain. It was the first UK bank to offer free banking to personal customers and the first to develop telephone banking. Its operations are now part of the Alliance and Leicester Group ●

John Little 34 Widney Lane, Solihull B91 3LS. The price, including postage, will be £23.50 to UK, £26 to Europe and £28.60 rest of world.

Bath Postal Museum 27 Northgate Street, Bath. Open Monday to Saturday 11.00-17.00. For details see www.bathpostalmuseum.co.uk

For BPMA podcasts Go to www.postalheritage.org.uk/podcast

The BPMA also has its own blog at <http://postalheritage.wordpress.com/> and can be found on Flickr at www.flickr.com/photos/postalheritage





Commemorative & exhibition sheets A commemorative sheet marking the 150th anniversary of 'Big Ben' is now available. It bears 10 1st class Union Flag stamps (definitive size, self-adhesive) with attached labels showing the bell, clockface and clock tower, price £13.50. The sheet was shown in the July *Bulletin* (page 329) and also in August (page 361). See page 41 of this issue for details of a Big Ben medal cover.

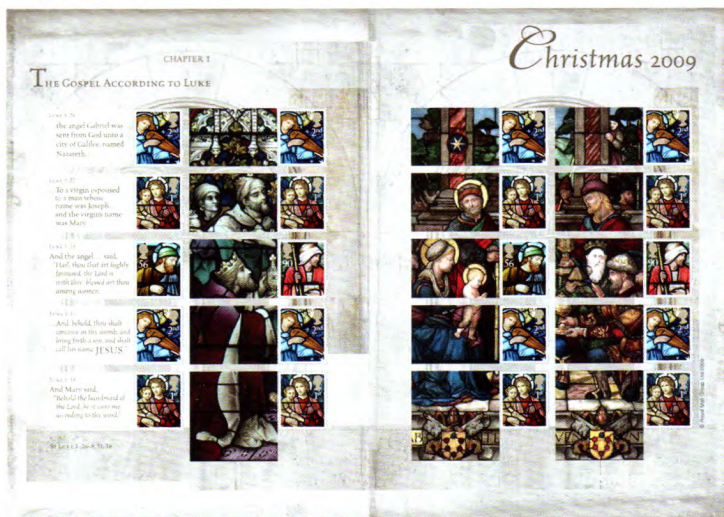
A further commemorative sheet, to be issued 7 October, marks the 800th anniversary of the University of Cambridge. This bears the 1st class Fireworks stamp with attached labels featuring achievements of eminent Cambridge graduates, and the history of the University. The sheet, supplied in a pack which includes a historical timeline of the University from 1209 to the present, costs £13.50. It was shown in the August *Bulletin* (page 361).

A commemorative sheet with the new Olympic & Paralympic Games stamps and adjoining labels will go on sale on 22 October, price £13.50. The sheet, which is designed by True North, looks at what it takes to be an Olympic competitor, focusing on the sports shown on the stamps, and at the venues where the competitions will be held.

Exhibition sheets for the Italia and Monaco-phil exhibitions will be available from 21 October and 4 December respectively. They contain 20 of the 1st class 'Hello' stamps and labels respectively showing landmarks of Rome, and an aerial view of Monaco (as shown in last month's *Bulletin*). ●

Generic and Smilers sheets Castles of Scotland, the third of the Castles generic sheets, will go on sale on 30 November (St Andrew's Day). It will contain 20 1st class Scottish Flag stamps (as on the Celebrating Scotland miniature sheet, issued in November 2006), with 10 labels (two of each) showing Edinburgh, Culzean, Stirling, Eilean Donan, Blair, Balmoral, Castle Stalker, Caerlaverock, Kilchurn, and Cawdor castles. The Northern Ireland and England sheets are already on sale (price £8.35 each); a Welsh castles sheet will be issued on 1 March 2010 (St David's Day) ●





Christmas Generic and Smilers sheets This year's Christmas generic sheet, available from 3 November, contains eight each of the 1st and 2nd class, two 56p and two 90p Christmas stamps with adjoining labels showing Nativity figures and verses from the Gospel according to Luke. Price £9.

There will be five new Smilers sheets: 20 × 2nd class (£9.50, or £8.50 each for two or more), 10 × 1st class (£7.50), 20 × 1st class (£13.50, £12.50 each two or more), 10 × 56p (£9.50, £8.50 each two or more) and 10 × 90p (£13.50, £12.50 each two or more). Each has a different background showing scenes from the Nativity story.

For those preferring secular rather than religious stamps, reprinted 2006 generic sheets will also be available: 20 × 2nd class Snowman, 10 × 1st class Santa and 20 × 1st class Santa. Prices are as for the corresponding religious Smilers sheets. These sheets differ slightly to their 2006 counterparts, being inscribed in the bottom margin 'Christmas' instead of 'Christmas 2006' and with the copyright line amended to Royal Mail Group Ltd in place of Royal Mail Group plc. Handling charge for Smilers sheet orders is £1.41 •

Special issues This month's special issue, Eminent Britons, was featured in the July *Bulletin*. The 10 1st class stamps go on sale at Post Office branches on 8 October. The 2009 Christmas stamps will be issued on 3 November.

The issues for 2010 are listed below. Please note some changes to the list in the March *Bulletin*. Further details will follow nearer the time of issue •

07.01 British Design

02.02 Girlguiding (centenary)

25.02 The Royal Society (350th anniversary)

11.03 Battersea Dogs & Cats Home (150th anniversary)

23.03 Monarchs Part 3: House of Stewart (Scottish kings)

13.04 Action for Species Part 4: Mammals

06.05 Accession of King George V (London 2010 issue)

08.05 The King's stamps (London 2010 issue)

13.05 Britain Alone (commemoration of 1940)

15.06 Children's Books

19.08 Stage Musicals

16.09 Great British Railways

12.10 Monarchs Part 4: House of Stuart (James I-VI/Anne)

02.11 Christmas



Above: the new Fire & Rescue Services medal cover and the Navy Uniforms cachet cover. Above right: Olympic & Paralympic Games coin cover (22 October).

A medal cover, available from 18 September, marks the 150th anniversary of Big Ben. It bears a Union Flag stamp (large-size, gummed) with attached label showing the clock tower and fireworks, cancelled by a special Houses of Parliament postmark. The cover design features the Palace of Westminster and the famous bell. The filler card provides key facts about the bell and clock mechanism. Limited edition of 12,500, price £14.75.

A coin cover, available from 22 October, bears the Olympic & Paralympic Games stamps and Royal Mint uncirculated Countdown coin, price £17.50. Designed by Neon, it looks at winning the bid and the initial preparation for staging the London 2012 Olympic Games.

The cachet cover for the Navy Uniforms stamp issue bears the six stamps cancelled with the Tallents House First Day of Issue postmark, and has a cachet denoting carriage on a Royal Navy vessel. The covers were carried on a number of vessels which returned to Portsmouth during September. The filler card provides details of the British Forces Post Office service in delivering mail to Royal Navy ships. Limited edition of 5000. Price £9.99. Limited quantities of the two earlier Uniform cachet covers are still available from Tallents House – Army Uniforms (September 2007) and RAF Uniforms (September 2008), price £9.99 each •

New stamp book The fourth of the 'British Design Classics' stamp books is now available; it includes two Mary Quant miniskirt stamps as well as four definitives, price £2.34 •

Silver stamps The fifth of the silver stamp issues, featuring the 72p Westminster Cathedral stamp, will be available from 20 October, price £24.42 •



The three Miniature Medals Collections are now available, price £89.95 each, or £245 for all three.

Collections The final Miniature Medals Collection, covering Royal Navy medals, is now available. Limited edition of 1000, available from Tallents House, price £89.95. The three collections – Army, RAF and Naval Medals – are available at a discount price of £245.

A Military Uniforms Collection, available from 17 September, comprises the three Military Uniforms stamp issues (Army, RAF, Navy) in a cruciform pack similar to those for the Lest We Forget and Brilliant Britain miniature sheet collections. The pack also includes a high-quality replica Post Office Rifles cap badge, a wall chart featuring the uniforms on the stamps and specially commissioned pictures of uniforms, and the stories of VC winner Alfred Knight of the PO Rifles, and of the PO Rifles badge carved into the chalk hillside near Fovat, Wiltshire. Price £29.95 (order code PB408) ●

Year collections The 2009 Yearbook and Yearpack, containing all the year's special stamps, will go on sale on 3 November, and remain available until the end of 2011. Both contain all the special stamps of 2009. The standard version of the Yearbook costs £65, or £105 for the deluxe, leather-bound version. The Yearpack, price £60, includes concise background information on each of the special issues, with technical details of the stamps and illustrations of the alternative 'first day' postmarks for each issue. 2009 Miniature Sheet Year Pack and Presentation Pack Collections will also be available from 3 November, price £21.30 and £65 respectively ●

2009 first day postmarks The special issues and the alternative first day of issue postmarks for the rest of 2009 are: 8 October Eminent Britons, Britannia, Bacup; 22 October Olympic & Paralympic Games, Badminton; 3 November Christmas (stamps & miniature sheet), Bethlehem, Llandeilo ●

Post & Go Machines are scheduled to be installed during October at main Post Office branches in Bradford, Croydon, London (Kings Walk, sw3, Trafalgar Square, wc2), Nottingham, St Albans and Sunderland ●

Coming off sale The Women of Distinction stamps will come off sale on 13 October, and the 2008 Christmas Pantomime stamps on 3 November. The Madonna & Child Christmas stamps remain on sale. The Lest We Forget miniature sheets (2006, 2007 and 2008) will come off sale on 5 November ●

British air letters Part 2: Colin Baker looks at the history of commemorative issues

In this second of four articles on British air letters, I will look at the commemorative issues that were introduced for distribution throughout the UK. The Regional, or country air letters, will be dealt with in part three of this series.

THE British Post Office had introduced the world to the idea of the postage stamp, but even as late as the 1960s they believed that commemorative stamps should be restricted to important events.

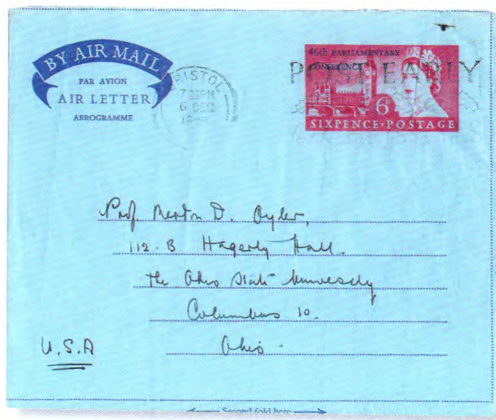
As far as postal stationery was concerned, special issues had only been created twice since the introduction of stamps in 1840. The first time was in 1890 when 1d postcards and 1d envelopes were sold celebrating the Jubilee of the Uniform Penny Post. The other occasion was in 1924/25 when postcards, lettercards and envelopes were issued for the British Empire Exhibition. One set of stationery was created with the date of 1924 incorporated into the stamp design, and a second set with the date of 1925. No other commemorative postal stationery had been issued, even for events such as Coronations or the Silver Jubilee.

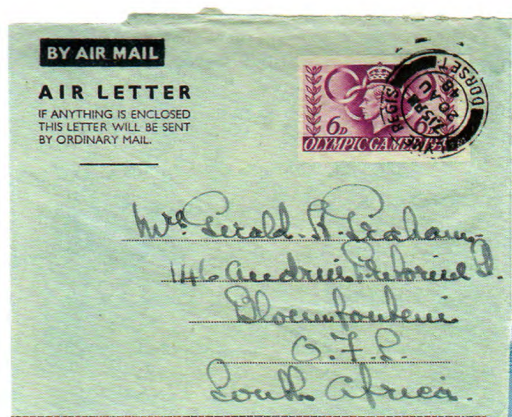
The Wembley Olympic Games It was surprising therefore that, for the 1948 Olympic Games to be held at Wembley in London, not only would a set of four commemorative stamps be issued, but a commemorative air letter would also be on sale. The air letter utilised the 6d stamp from the set of Olympic postage stamps. It was released one day earlier than the stamps, on 28 July 1948. It was a popular air letter and many were used in the summer of that year, both on a commercial and philatelic basis. This means there are plenty of these available for collectors to buy at reasonable prices.

It would be another five years before the second commemorative air letter appeared. This was issued to celebrate the Coronation of our present Queen on 2 June 1953. It was released the next day, 3 June, and remained as the definitive issue for the remainder of that year. Once again the design of one of the four adhesive stamps, also issued for this event, was used for the air letter. The 1s 6d stamp from the set was chosen, with its value being changed to 6d. The day of the Coronation was declared a public holiday, and nearly all post offices were closed. For this reason both the stamps and the air letter were not released until the next day.

The next commemorative air letter to be released by the Post Office was a very low key affair. It appeared in 1957, when the 46th Inter-Parliamentary Union Conference was held in London. To honour this event the stamp on the standard air letter showing Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament was overprinted '46th Parliamentary Conference' in blue. The lettering was very small and it can be obscured when used air letters are cancelled by heavy lines or a slogan postmark. Like so many other ideas tried out by the Post Office, this was one that was never repeated.

The only overprinted air letter for sale in Britain, issued for the 46th Inter-Parliamentary Union Conference in London in 1957. The overprint is very small and is easily obscured.



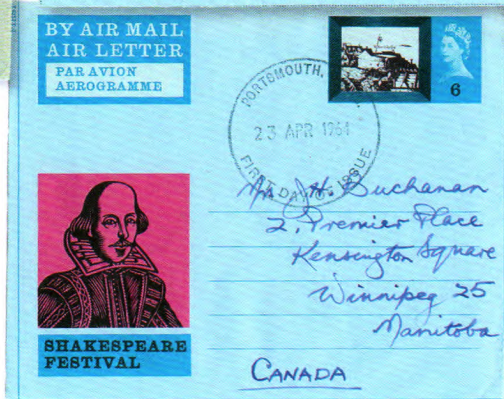


Tourist issues In 1963 two further commemorative air letters were released, based on the definitive stamps of the time. These were printed with two London scenes on a part of the air letter normally reserved for the correspondence. One view showed Tower Bridge, and the other the Houses of Parliament. They were intended mainly to be used by visiting tourists, but nearly all of the examples I have seen have been used philatelically. Once again this was an idea that the Post Office never repeated.

None of the air letters that had been released since the Olympic Games issue can be said to be truly commemorative. The Coronation issue was the only air letter on sale for seven months, and the other three were the standard issues with additional printing. The first true commemorative air letter to be released in the reign of Queen Elizabeth II was in 1964 when two air letters were created for the Shakespeare Festival and quatercentenary of his birth. One of these showed scenes from the Bard's plays, and the other the theatre in Stratford on Avon, with differently coloured vignettes of Shakespeare, set next to the address panel. Unfortunately in the second of these air letters, the theatre was incorrectly labelled as the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, instead of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre. This error was not noticed in time and a new printing had to be made with the title corrected, giving philatelists three Shakespeare air letters to collect.

Five years later, in 1969, collectors were treated to another Royal subject, this time the investiture of the Prince of Wales at Caernarfon Castle. Although a set of three special stamps was issued for the investiture, the air letter carried the standard 9d violet stamp, which was also used for all the definitive issues.

No further commemorative air letters were to be issued for the next eight years, until 1977, the year of the Queen's Silver Jubilee. However, collectors had not been left in a vacuum. ►



From top left: the first special air letter to be issued by Great Britain, for the 1948 Olympic Games; the special air letter for the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, which remained on sale for the second half of 1953; and one of a pair of air letters for the tercentenary of Shakespeare's birth.

From 1965 Christmas air letters had been issued annually, each with their own individually designed stamps and colourful decorations on the left side of the address panel. Further decorations were sometimes printed on the back panel and on part of the area normally reserved for the message. For 1965, 1967 and 1968 two Christmas air letters were issued, with alternative decorations. In 1965 and 1968 the two air letters even carried different stamp designs. Christmas air letters were so popular that new designs were created every year up to 2004, although from 1990 no special Christmas stamps were prepared and the standard NV1 air letter stamp was used.

The end of commemorative air letters With the increasing popularity of the internet and the falling cost of international phone calls, the use of air letters gradually declined. In 2005 the Christmas air letter issued in 2004 was put back on sale. This does not appear to have been a reprint, but the reissue of existing stocks. Although a new design of Christmas air letter was released in 2006, no new air letters have been issued since then. Just as before, the 2006 air letter was re-released in 2007, 2008 and 2009. We shall have to wait and see what happens for Christmas 2010 and beyond.

Apart from the annual Christmas issues, few other commemorative air letters have gone on sale across the UK. I have mentioned the one issued for the Queen's Silver Jubilee; two years later, 1979 saw the centenary of the death of the 'father of the postage stamp', Rowland Hill. Quite rightly the Post Office marked this with a special air letter, as well as a set of four stamps and a miniature sheet. The air letter had images on all three panels of one side illustrating the stamps and postal stationery that Rowland Hill fought so hard to introduce. Two years later, the wedding of the Prince of Wales and Lady Diana Spencer also gave rise to another special air letter. Other commemorative air letters followed at irregular intervals, with issues for the Pen Pal Club, garden birds, the Youth Olympics, and the journey of a replica of Captain Cook's ship the *Endeavour* in 1997.

In 1989 the Post Office released a set of six air letters showing views of the landscape of Britain. These were sold in discounted packs of six, in a similar way to the packs of the standard issue of air letters released the year before. Five years later in 1994 the same idea was tried again, with British Birds being the subject this time. Railway locomotives were also used to create a third set of air letters. This is always a popular subject, and one that the Post Office had not used on an air letter previously.

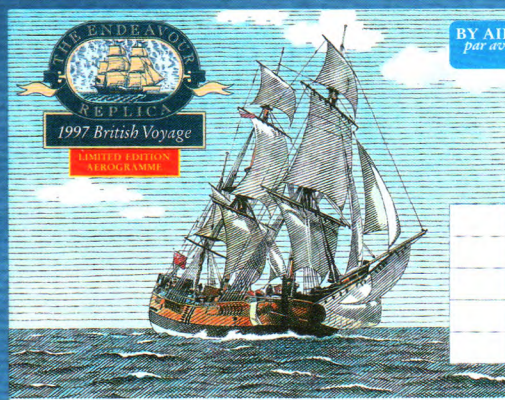
Finally, in looking at commemorative air letters available throughout the country, we should not forget the special issue of 1992. This celebrated 50 years of British air letters. It was a significant anniversary, for the air letter had given the average family the chance to correspond with dear ones far away, in war time or in peace. It is a shame that the subject was treated so poorly, with a rather simple overprint on the standard issue of the time. So many special air letters had already been produced by the Post Office that many philatelists felt cheated at this low key item. The air letter may not be around when the centenary arrives in 2042, but perhaps the 75th anniversary in 2017 can be treated with a more appropriate design ●

BY AIRMAIL
AIR LETTER
PAR AVION
AÉROGRAMME



BY AIR MAIL
AIR LETTER

PAR AVION AÉROGRAMME



BY AIR MAIL
par avion
Royal Mail



Great
Britain
Postage
Paid

BY AIR MAIL AIR LETTER
PAR AVION AÉROGRAMME

SIR ROWLAND HILL
CENTENARY 1979



G. Barlow,
24, Rensley Ave.,
SALE, Cheshire,
England, SK23 3JW

From top: the two 1965 Christmas air letters, each with its own stamp and images; the 1998 Christmas issue featuring angels; a colourful air letter issued in 1997, when a replica of Captain Cook's ship the *Endeavour* followed his original route around the world; and the special issue of 1979 marking the centenary of the death of Rowland Hill.

Creator of the Uniform Penny Post

* First Day of Issue *

TO OPEN SLIT HERE

Olympic and Paralympic Games The first



THE FIRST SET of Royal Mail special stamps for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games will go on sale at Post Office branches, Tallents House, and Post Office philatelic outlets on 22 October. In total, 30 stamps will be issued over the next two years to mark the 30th Olympiad; each featuring an Olympic or Paralympic sport. The first set of 10 1st class stamps features: weightlifting, badminton, track (athletics), dressage, canoe slalom, diving, boccia, basketball, archery and judo, printed in two sheets, each in strips of five. The stamps were designed by Studio David Hillman, using images by John Royle, George Hardie, Nathalie Guinamard, Julian Opie, David Doyle, Paul Slater, Andrew Davidson, David Holmes, Guy Billout, and Huntley Muir. Each stamp includes either the London 2012 Olympic or Paralympic Games logo. They are litho-printed by Cartor, 35mm square in sheets of 25, with all-over phosphor, and perforation gauge 14.5.

The Olympic Games will be held 27 July to 12 August 2012, followed by the Paralympic Games, 29 August to 9 September 2012.

FIRST DAY FACILITIES Orders for serviced FDCs should be sent to Tallents House (address below). Collectors may send stamped covers to: Royal Mail, Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB (Tallents House postmark), or a Special Handstamp Centre (Badminton postmark), marking the outer envelope 'FD0917' (Tallents House), or 'FD0918' (Badminton). Covers must be received by 18 November. For details of sponsored special postmarks see the *British Postmark Bulletin*.

PRESENTATION PACK The pack, written by Ian Cole, provides an interesting account of the sports featured on the stamps •

set in Royal Mail's new series leading to 2012



Olympic and Paralympic Games prices

Set of stamps	£ 3.90
Presentation pack	£ 4.40
First day cover envelope	£ 0.30
Serviced FDC (UK customers)	£ 4.95
Serviced FDC (overseas customers)	£ 4.31
Stamp cards set	£ 3.90
Commemorative sheet	£13.50
Coin cover	£17.50



First day cover Orders for serviced FDCs (right) must be received by 18 November.

Presentation pack The pack (shown left), written by Ian Cole, provides an interesting account of each of the sports featured on the stamps.

Please note the coin cover will cost £17.50, not £16.50 as stated in the September *Bulletin* insert.

Mrs J Robinson
200 Manorbie Road
Ilkeston
Derbyshire
DE7 4AB

Royal Mail, Talents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH4 3JL

Walsall and its innovative bureau Glenn



The first British stamps printed by Walsall:
14p and 19p definitives in £1 stamp books.

WALSALL Security Printers (WSP) has printed postage stamps since 1963, when the Kingdom of Tonga required circular examples embossed on gold foil, a world first. The Government of Sierra Leone ordered the world's first self-adhesive free-form stamps from the company the following year, and Walsall still specialises in self-adhesive products, having become a major player in this particular field of stamp printing.

I was recently afforded the opportunity of seeing an element of WSP's production less well known to collectors, namely the Philatelic Bureau. It is from here that FDCs, packs, yearbooks and stamp carriers are created or assembled for an increasing number of postal administrations, including Royal Mail. My hosts were Heather Simmons, Sales/PR Manager, and John Lavender, Sales and Marketing Manager, both of whom have long-term careers in the stamp production industry.

To get to the Bureau it was necessary for us to walk through the print facility, where self-adhesive stamp booklets were on press for two major customers. It still amazes me the speed

with which these two-sided items are produced and the thousands of booklets that can be printed in minutes. The British product continues to get more technically complicated, but the recent addition of u-shaped cuts into the design and the application of the transparent text overprint have both been quickly assimilated into the process.

On reaching the Bureau, I was introduced to Phil Egginton, Bureau Commercial Manager, who has headed-up operations since its formation as a partnership with the Dutch Postal Service, TNT. It was purchased outright by Walsall in 2000, going from strength to strength.

Phil told me that the ultimate situation is when they can act as a one-stop shop for the postal administration, and he said that he can see the day fast approaching when the Bureau mails directly to the philatelic customer, even when they have not printed the stamps. It is obvious that they have the capability and the will to make this happen, for they have a loyal staff who are clearly proud of what they do, resulting in a world-class reputation in both the postal and philatelic industries. I was taken around each of the Bureau functions, as described below.

FDCs Stamps with water-activated gum are applied by affixing machines that hold stocks in cassettes, one per value to be applied. Vacuum cups pick up each stamp, which are then advanced and have moisture applied before being positioned and affixed to the envelope. Once dry, they are cancelled, either by a self-inking datestamp, or by an adapted Heidelberg platen press using flexography. Self-adhesive stamps are ideally supplied in vertical rolls and affixed to the envelope by machine, but with stamps being shipped to the Bureau from other printers this is not always the case. Application by hand becomes necessary in these instances.

Morgan witnesses the current state of the art

Bursting of stamps The Bureau does not use bursting equipment to separate its water-activated stamps into singles, but does this by hand. This is achieved either by lining up one row of perforations of a few uncut sheets along the edge of a metal block and then applying downward pressure to the stamps to enable them to be separated, or by simply rocking each row back and forth in order to weaken the perforation ties (the pieces of paper between each hole) and tearing them apart. This is a skilled operation and the staff are free to choose either of these two methods which suits them best, and, perhaps surprisingly, few stamps ever become damaged during this process.

Packs Gone is the time when 'packs' would have comprised only the familiar presentation pack, the likes of which Royal Mail has produced since the 1960s. Nowadays year books, year packs, half-year packs, FDC packs, collector packs, Commemorative Sheet packs (such as the recent Royal Mail 'Big Ben' issue) and Kids Smilers packs are all created by the Bureau staff.

Assembly equipment lifts the carrier strip and each stamp is inserted from hoppers one by one automatically, until the card is filled as required. These are collated with other cards and any promotional or information sheets, and most will then be inserted into a sealed film sleeve produced in-line. FDC year and half-year packs can similarly be assembled, from hoppers that drop each cover onto a conveyor and collate as they move forward.

Stamp carriers The latest operation at the Bureau is the creation of stamp carriers, as reported in the June *Bulletin* (page 296). It was interesting to see these being produced and, put simply, black card on a reel is advanced, glue lines are applied and clear film is then placed on top, marrying the two substrates. Knives then slit through the film below each glue line and they are cut into single carriers. The requirement for these items is growing year-on-year, as virtually any format can be created in-house in any quantity, whether sold to post offices or to private collectors. Visit www.stampstore.uk.com for more information and to order supplies of these useful carriers.

The range of sample material produced by the Bureau reveals just how creative and innovative the team are, and I left with a far greater understanding of the processes. I was surprised at how much is automated, for I had previously assumed that most material was created by hand. ►



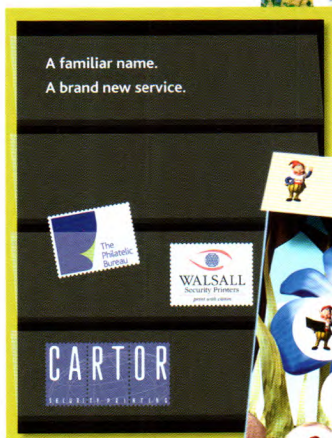
No. 0000 of an edition of 5,000



THE 100th ANNIVERSARY OF THE END OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR IS COMMEMORATED BY THIS SPECIAL ISSUE OF 100 PENS. THE DESIGN OF THE STAMPS IS BY THE ARTIST AND DESIGNER, JAMES BROWN. THE STAMPS ARE AVAILABLE IN A RANGE OF DENOMINATIONS AND ARE AVAILABLE TO ORDER FROM THE BUREAU OF STAMPS AND POSTAGE, WALSALL, CHESHIRE, WV1 1JH. THE STAMPS ARE AVAILABLE TO ORDER FROM THE BUREAU OF STAMPS AND POSTAGE, WALSALL, CHESHIRE, WV1 1JH. THE STAMPS ARE AVAILABLE TO ORDER FROM THE BUREAU OF STAMPS AND POSTAGE, WALSALL, CHESHIRE, WV1 1JH.

EMBROIDERED Postcards

EMBROIDERED POSTCARDS ARE AVAILABLE TO ORDER FROM THE BUREAU OF STAMPS AND POSTAGE, WALSALL, CHESHIRE, WV1 1JH. THE POSTCARDS ARE AVAILABLE TO ORDER FROM THE BUREAU OF STAMPS AND POSTAGE, WALSALL, CHESHIRE, WV1 1JH. THE POSTCARDS ARE AVAILABLE TO ORDER FROM THE BUREAU OF STAMPS AND POSTAGE, WALSALL, CHESHIRE, WV1 1JH.



Above: pack for Royal Mail's Lest We Forget issues, WSP brochure about their stamp carrier services, and one of their Smilers for Kids packs.





The Post and Go stamps and pack, printed by Walsall.

Walsall Security Printers The final part of my visit was a bonus, as I met Paul White, the Managing Director of wsp, who gave me an in-depth understanding of the company's current position and future plans. Paul has worked in security printing all his working life and so was the ideal person to buy out the company last year with Ian Brigham, who has a similar background and reputation. The Aspinall family, which owned both Cartor and wsp, sought to sell the companies through a

management buyout and Paul and Ian thought it too good an opportunity to pass by. So, with the co-operation of the banks, they acquired the Group businesses in December 2008. Perhaps the timing could have been better, with the world in financial melt-down, but it all finally came together.

Paul sees new markets forming – the Post and Go type labels are a case in point (wsp prints the base stock used in the machinery), as it seems that where Royal Mail takes the lead, other postal administrations respond. In fact, they are working with other administrations to create designs for this type of product, and see machine stamps as a new business opportunity.

Full order books The umbrella organisation International Security Printers (ISP) continues to exist, and it is hoped they may expand partnership agreements with state printers, some of whom are struggling to keep their order books going and costs under control. wsp considers itself very fortunate in keeping order books full three or four months ahead and, despite smaller print runs, an increasing number of issues helps to balance things out.

Paul has noticed a shift in thinking by its customers, who now put cost at the top of their priorities and invariably want a premium product without paying premium prices, which is where investment in equipment can help with competitiveness. Since the buyout, there have been signs of major investment. New printing machinery has gone into Cartor (wsp's French operation), and Walsall is having sophisticated new camera verification equipment installed to ensure more efficient manufacturing.

Until recently, work was allocated between plants on the basis of capacity, whereas now Cartor will undertake sheet-fed litho work (the smaller print runs), and wsp the web-fed gravure and web litho orders. A reallocation of presses reflects this strategic change within the Group.

Paul concluded: 'We are extremely pleased to have completed our buyout of International Security Printers Ltd. Despite the economic climate we have consistently been developing new business opportunities especially abroad. Innovation and consistently high levels of service offered to our clients along with a robust strategy for cost management has been the key to our success. We believe that both Walsall and Cartor already have an enviable reputation in the worldwide market and we are very excited at the prospect of expanding our services and products even further. We forecast a bright future for the Group with sustained growth and profitable performance.' •



Paul White, WSP's Managing Director.

50 years of the postcode by Richard West

WHILE the postcode, as we now recognise it, was introduced to Norwich 50 years ago, the idea of dividing a city or similar large area for ease of delivering the mail is much older. The reforms of the postal system in 1839 and 1840 resulted in a great increase in letter writing. However, in an area like London, the same street name could be found in different places. It was Sir Rowland Hill who devised the idea of dividing London into ten postal districts, with East Central (EC) and West Central (WC) surrounded by the eight principal compass points, N, NE, E, SE etc. Hill's plan was implemented in 1857 and 1858, with the public being asked to add their district to the end of their address. About ten years later, both the E and S districts were dropped as unnecessary. During the First World War, in 1917, the idea was extended, mainly to help the women who had been recruited as postal sorters and who understandably had not built up the knowledge of London's geography. Outside EC and WC, for each district the area nearest the centre of London was designated '1', all others being numbered in alphabetical order.

The idea of dividing large areas into regions soon spread – to Liverpool and Manchester initially, and then also to Birmingham, Brighton, Bristol, Dublin, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leeds, Newcastle and Sheffield.

Postcode publicity labels.

The introduction of postal codes In time the need changed – from helping manual sorters, to undertaking the tasks automatically. Eight new sorting machines were installed in Norwich in 1959, which it was thought could sort the incoming mail into the individual postman's rounds. To put this plan into effect, postcodes were introduced, all starting with NOR for Norwich, with three additional characters that identified a particular street (large businesses each had their own identifying code).

Norwich residents were introduced to the plan in a letter received from the Postmaster General, Ernest Marples, dated 28 July 1959. On 1 September 1959 a press conference announced the scheme, with postcodes, or postal codes as they were then known, to be introduced for Norwich on 8 October 1959. During November the people of Norwich received green cards to send to their correspondents, requesting that the postal code be added to the address when replying. Labels, with red lettering on white or white lettering on red, urging 'Please include the POSTAL CODE in my address when replying' were also supplied. ►

The UK postcode identifies a group of homes, with the final sorting for delivery being left to the postman on his rounds. First introduced in Norwich 50 years ago this month, it has become a familiar and useful tool, used not only to sort letters but also to quickly identify an address or determine the status of any area in the country.



The eight automated machines already mentioned were commissioned in December 1958, and came into use during the following January. Initially the postmen keying in the information relied upon memory codes when coding letters; letters that passed through the system during the Spring and Autumn of 1959 received an identification mark, or ident, in violet, which can be seen on the front of the envelope adjacent to the address. In the early part of 1960 two of these eight machines were converted to interpret the postcodes, still keyed-in by hand. Envelopes can again be identified by the ident applied during the Spring and Autumn of 1960, now in black. For a time during 1963 the ident was applied in red.

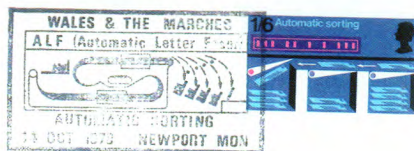
Phosphor dots However, the Norwich experiment did not prove a great success, mainly because many did not include the postcode in the address. That was despite postmark slogan campaigns, 'Norwich Addresses Need Postal Codes', introduced on 5 September 1960, and in use for various periods up to 31 March 1967. Nevertheless development of automated sorting continued, still using a postcode, but now it would be translated into phosphor dots that could be sensed by the equipment. The use of phosphor dots was introduced in 1966, with Croydon being the second place to be allocated postcodes. Croydon established the pattern for future postcodes in the UK, with an outward and an inward section, the outward part identifying a place, the inward section homing in on just a few addresses. Croydon remains unusual, in that some of its outward codes start with CRO, albeit this caused immediate confusion as many mistook the final zero for the letter 'o': the use of zero was not repeated in other areas. Also in Croydon, all large businesses were given the code of CR9, a practice that was again not repeated, as it had to be used for too much mail. After Croydon, every UK address was given a postcode, the task being completed in 1974, at which point Norwich was allocated new codes. The style adopted was a letter and numeral combination, followed by a numeral and letter combination. However, not all letters have been used: letters are not used if they might be confused with numerals in a hand-written address. A slogan postmark campaign, 'Remember to use the POSTAL CODE', supported the introduction of codes, starting with Croydon on 21 November 1966.

It was not until the early 1990s that Guernsey, Isle of Man and Jersey, postally independent since 1 October 1969, introduced their own postcodes. The system has also been extended to certain of the British dependencies overseas, such as Ascension Island, the Falkland Islands, St Helena and Tristan da Cunha. This is to prevent confusion with place names that can look similar when hand written, resulting in mail being mis-sorted.

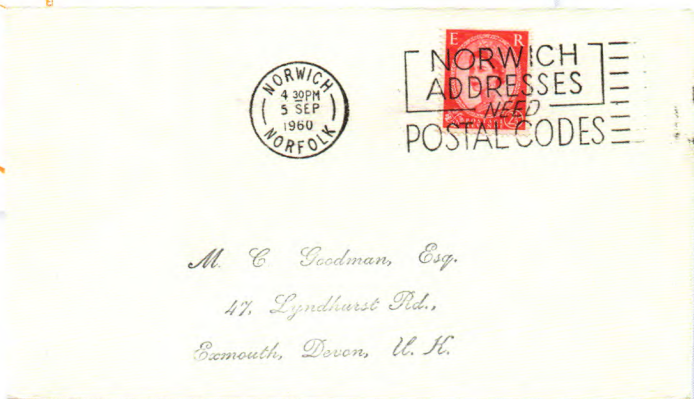
Gradually even keying in the postcode manually was overtaken by automation, with Optical Character Recognition (OCR) capable of reading most of the postcodes. At one time, those that were indecipherable were captured on camera, and an operator within the sorting office would determine what was intended. Now even that process has progressed, and with the latest Address Interpretation (A1) system, if an address is not automatically read, an image of the item is transmitted to one of three Manual

PHOSPHORESCENT CODED
FIRST DAY COVER
WALES AND THE MARCHES

Official Opening
New Automatic
Sorting Office
Newport, Mon.
14th October
1970



Above: cover for the opening of the new automated sorting office in Newport, showing a postman postcoding the mail. Right: a 1960 cover posted in Norwich, with publicity slogan (courtesy Tom Norgate).



Data Entry Centres, at Plymouth, Stockport or Stoke, where the necessary information will be keyed in to enable the item to be handled automatically thereafter.

The idea of postcodes has spread to many countries, with Germany introducing a two-digit code in 1942, changing to a four-digit code on 3 November 1964. Other countries to introduce their own codes in the 1960s were Austria, Australia, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Italy, Japan, Norway, Philippines, Sweden, Switzerland and USA, the first of these being the United States on 1 July 1963.

Automatically sorting the mail ready for delivery was first developed by The Netherlands, its Transorma machine being brought into use in 1930: two of these machines were introduced at Brighton and Hove in September 1935, where they remained in use until July 1968.

The postcode used in the UK identifies a group of homes, the final sorting for delivery being left to the postman. Gradually being introduced is equipment that sorts the mail ready for the postman's walk. I will leave you to contemplate what will be the next stage •

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of postcodes on 8 October 2009, the Norfolk and Norwich Philatelic Society has invited the Postal Mechanisation Study Circle (PMSC) to give a display to the Society on 10 November. Jeremy Meal and Bob de Vekey will give a display entitled '50 Years of Postcodes in Norwich'. Both PMSC members are experienced collectors of the inauguration and development of postcodes both in Norwich and nationally. The meeting will be held at the United Reformed Church Rooms, Princes Street, Norwich NR3 1AZ. Doors open 19.00, and the display commences at 19.30 ●

The world of online philately by Glenn H Morgan FRPSL

PHILATELIC BUREAU

GUERNSEY
POST

ABOUT US EXPRESS ORDERING HOW TO USE THIS SITE GLOSSARY STAMP ARCHIVE LINKS CONTACT US

Guernsey

Guernsey new issues
Alderney new issues
Guernsey current issues
Alderney current issues
Issues to be withdrawn
Guernsey definitives
Alderney definitives
Yearbooks
Albums & binders
Self stick stamps
Other products
2009 Stamp Programme

SEARCH



EUROPA
"ASTRONOMY"
A set of six stamps
commemorating the 400th
anniversary of the telescope
READ MORE >



NAVAL AVIATION

Celebrate the Centenary of
Naval Aviation with our brand
new Con Cover and Souvenir
Album
READ MORE >



50TH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE CORONATION OF
HENRY VII
These unique stamps feature
hand made paper sculptures of
Henry's reign
READ MORE >



GUERNSEY 40TH
ANNIVERSARY OF POSTAL
REFORMATION
This is a first class set of various
popular designs from the 60's to
present
READ MORE >

Jersey Post website screenshot showing the 'Stamps' section. The header includes 'we're delivering for you' and navigation links like 'Home', 'Send & Receive Post', 'Customer Services', 'Business Services', 'Stamps', 'About Jersey Post', 'Privacy', 'Contact', and 'Site'. The 'Stamps' section features a large image of a stamp sheet and text: 'Welcome to the Stamps section of the Jersey Post website. Jersey Post design and market stamps which are collected throughout the world. Stamps are windows of the world, allowing a glimpse of another country's history, its geography and economy, its achievements and values, fashion and culture and even flora and fauna. There are many sets of Jersey stamps to collect and many ways in which to collect them. In the Catalogue and Buy area of the site you may see the current range of stamp products available.' Below the text is a 'Buy Stamps Online' button with the subtext 'Buy your stamps online'.



The Guernsey Post website, www.guernseypost.com (top) has a link to their philatelic bureau, or you can go directly to www.guernseystamps.com

Jersey Post's website (above) is at www.jerseypost.com

THIS MONTH celebrates 40 years of independent postal services in the Channel Islands. Both post offices operate successful websites that promote and sell their attractive stamps.

At the Guernsey Post website, horizontal toolbar options provide a history of the Bailiwick and its postal service, Frequently Asked Questions on how to use the site, a philatelic glossary of terms, links to other websites, full contact details and a stamp archive with images and extensive background details of around 60 past issues which are no longer on sale. An 'Express Ordering' button leads to a straightforward listing of every product on offer making it a quick process for anyone knowing in advance what they wish to purchase.

Vertical menu options provide a search facility, Guernsey and Alderney new and current issue information, details of products due to be withdrawn, and the 2009 stamp programme. Definitives, yearbooks, albums and binders, self-stick stamps and other products are also detailed. It is from these options that orders can be placed via the Online Shop by customers preferring to study details of each available product first.

Terms and conditions, a privacy policy and a link to the main Guernsey Post website are also provided.

The Jersey bureau is accessed from Jersey Post's home page. A vertical menu provides the links needed to get the most from this site, such as details of the latest set, forthcoming issues and the 2009 stamp programme. A useful service to collectors includes an archive of each issue of the Jersey Stamp Bulletin published since 2000. Available as downloadable PDF files, these are essential for general and thematic background information. More back numbers are promised. An article about the history of Jersey and its stamps will be especially helpful to those unfamiliar with the island and its posts.

An 'Online Shop' shows products for sale; clicking any set will take you to thumbnail images, a brief description and prices. Clicking the 'More info/Buy' button takes you to a larger image and the chance to place the product in a shopping basket and to record quantities required. Normal checkout facilities apply when shopping has been completed.

Full contact information, links to other websites, a search facility and terms and conditions complete the available options.

These sites are broadly similar in what they offer collectors. I especially liked Guernsey's express ordering, and the invaluable archive of Jersey Stamp Bulletins. Both sites are attractive and simple to use, as one would expect from two successful bureaux with such a loyal collector base ●

Mainly Machins



Prestige stamp books The third of this year's four prestige books was issued on 18 August. Called *Treasures of the Archive*, it features documents from the archive held by the British Postal Museum and Archive (BPMA) as well as artefacts from its collection. This book does not celebrate any particular anniversary; there have been so many during the history of Royal Mail and its predecessors. The General Letter Office was established in 1660 (its tercentenary was commemorated by two stamps on 7 July 1960), but the archive dates back more than 400 years when the post was a royal monopoly. With such a rich heritage to choose from, it must have been a difficult task to decide which items and documents were to feature in the book. The task fell to Douglas Muir, Curator Philately at the BPMA. His account naturally concentrates on the mail but telegraph and the GPO film unit get a deserved mention.

The stamp content comprises four panes, two in the now usual arrangement of eight se-tenant definitives around a centre label, and two featuring special issues. One of the latter is a block of four of the very colourful 20p mail coach stamps from the 1989 Lord Mayor of London issue. The other special issue pane has the four values from the 2009 post boxes issue, printed se-tenant. The first of the definitive panes has four 20p and four 1st class 'double head' design by Jeffery Matthews around a label showing an essay from the 1839 Treasury competition. The other is a bit of a puzzle as except for the GPO and crown logo on the label, it has nothing obvious to do with the BPMA archive and cannot be said to be one of its treasures. The stamps are current values, consisting of $4 \times 17p$, $2 \times 22p$ and $2 \times 62p$.

All of the stamps were printed by Cartor of France in lithography. All are new for one reason or another. The special issues and Machin definitives were printed in lithography for the first time. The original 20p 1840 anniversary issue was printed in lithography by both Questa and Walsall but now has phosphor bars and elliptical perforations for the first time. The 1st class NV1 in the same design was first issued in the *Special by Design* prestige book of February 2000. Although it had phosphor bars and elliptical perforations, it was printed in gravure, and so this is the first lithographic version. ►

The first two stamp panes in the *Treasures of the Archive* prestige book. The other two panes are shown overleaf.



Above: panes three and four (in their order of appearance) from *Treasures of the Archive*, and the *Navy Uniforms* panes (in order of appearance).

Each of the two definitive panes yields eight se-tenant pairs: four horizontal and four vertical, and you will need four books to get all of them. This is on the basis that you count the labels as units in a pair. If you prefer to ignore these stamp/label and label/stamp combinations, you can obtain all the other pairs from just one book.

The last of the series of prestige books on military uniforms was issued on 17 September. This one deals with the uniforms of the Navy, and for once the senior service has let others lead, perhaps because it was the last to have uniforms. Did you know, for example, that until the 18th century, officers and men on HM ships of war wore civilian clothing? Or that ordinary seamen did not get a uniform until 1857 but it included a silk tie? Officers' uniforms were in fact very far from being uniform, as everyone could design his own. They were very colourful, some even gaudy, and there could be no doubt who were in charge on any vessel. Unfortunately, this was also obvious to the Crown's enemies, something which did for Nelson.

So, although the Navy has the longest history of the military services, the six stamps depicting its uniforms cover a relatively short period. These are printed se-tenant in two panes of three, one as 90p values and one as 1st class NVIS. They are the same arrangement as the sheets and, like them were printed in lithography by Cartor, as, indeed, were all four panes. A third pane has two White Ensign and two Jolly Roger stamps yielding four se-tenant pairs. The White Ensign stamp has also appeared in two previous prestige books; it was paired with the Union Flag stamp in the *RAF Uniforms* book issued in January last year and in the *Battle of Trafalgar* book of October 2005. Both were printed in lithography; by De La Rue in 2005 and by Cartor in 2008.

The fourth pane, the third in sequence in the book, has the usual eight Machin definitives se-tenant around a label; this one depicting an imperial crown in embroidery. The values are $2 \times 1p$, $4 \times 17p$ and $2 \times 90p$. The 1p was first printed in lithography by Questa for the £1 machine book of 1996 but this is the first by Cartor. The 17p appeared in the *Treasures of the Archive* book in August. The 90p is new, being the first to be printed in lithography. An official first day cover service was available for this pane. It yields eight se-tenant pairs from four books if you include the label, or four pairs from one book if you don't.

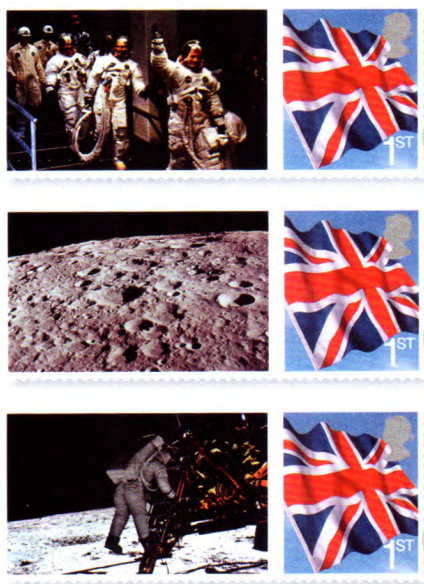


Royal Mail publications The *Preview* brochure, giving advance information about new issues, has been discontinued. In its place is a folder called *first* (without a capital letter) giving much the same information. My copy included my name, address and Tallents House account number, backing its claim that it was prepared especially with me in mind. I expect your copy said the same about you! Also promised is a quarterly catalogue, which I expect will replace the former Stock List. The Autumn issue should have been available from mid-August so you will know by now if I am right.

The first issue of *first* featured the Post Boxes stamps and the Treasures prestige stamp book. Like *Preview*, it included an order form for the products mentioned in it. Among these was a specially designed first day cover for the Machin pane in the prestige book.

Journey to the Moon There are events in life that are so seismic that one can recall exactly where one was at the time. Among these, for those over 40, was the news that a man had set foot on the Moon. It is difficult to believe that it happened 40 years ago or, indeed, that it happened at all. Last July, Royal Mail celebrated this event with a commemorative sheet. This includes ten of the Union flag 1st class NV1 stamps, each attached to one of ten different labels showing colour photographs of this historic occasion and how the news reached Earth. The accompanying backing sheet is full of interesting information. I was particularly taken by two items: space suit design was influenced by the articulation of Henry VIII's body armour, and Apollo's onboard computer was no more powerful than today's pocket calculator.

The self-adhesive stamps and labels were printed by Cartor in lithography. The die cut simulated perforations were interrupted at three points, resulting in stamps and labels being joined, so if your idea of a se-tenant pair includes a label... ►



Some stamps and labels from the Journey to the Moon sheet



An enlargement from one of the 1st class Machins in the Design Classics Concorde book, showing the 'C' code hidden in 'ROYAL MCIL'.



Concorde book Continuing the welcome return of books of six 1st class stamps with a block of four Machins flanked by two contemporary special stamps, one with two Concorde stamps from the British (pace the French) Design Classics issue went on sale on 18 August. The Machins are the same as those in earlier books in this series, and have the hidden code c (for custom) to indicate their origin. The cylinder numbers are all w1 and occupy their new position under the invitation to visit Royal Mail's website.

Another hidden code Rolls of 10,000 self-adhesive 1st and 2nd class NV1 stamps were issued in July 2009. These are produced for large companies for their mail shots. The stamps have all the security features introduced last February, including the oval security slits. It had been thought that these meant that rolls could not be produced as the extra operations of slitting and reeling might cause the stamps, or the die-cut ovals, to lift from the substrate. Evidently, any such problems have been overcome. The shape of the slits indicates that the rolls were printed by De La Rue. What is of particular philatelic interest is that every stamp on the rolls has the letter R replacing the A of MAIL above the diadem. In addition, every tenth stamp has a number on the back, counting down from 10,000 ●

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Commemorative covers New this month



Cotswold & Stuart Covers A Navy Uniforms cover featuring the Royal Navy Crest, with a 200th anniversary of the Admiralty Library logo postmark, making this a very special issue.

Price £7.95 plus postage. A Stuart cover for this issue is also available, at the same price. All covers come with illustrated colourful card insert giving details of the stamp issue ●



M Tanner 15 numbered Mythical Creatures covers, bearing all six stamps postmarked by 16 June pictorial Unicorn postmark. Cover art features a dragon, unicorn and fairy. Free filler postcard included. **Price** £17.99 plus £1.50 worldwide postage. Postcards are 60p each and a handmade maximumcard with 1st class Unicorn stamp £9 plus postage ●



Bletchley Park PO A Mythical Creatures cover bearing the stamps and special Bletchley Park PO cancel featuring a dragon. Limited edition of 250. Price £15.00 plus £1.50 postage ●

Place' handstamp. Each cover is signed and numbered. **Price** £16.50 plus £1.50 postage. Also small miniature sheet and PSB issues. Remittances payable to GB Covers ●



Buckingham Covers A Navy Uniforms FDC, featuring a painting of HMS *Warrior*, the first iron-hulled warship, by John Wigston. The six stamps are cancelled by Buckingham's Ports-mouth postmark. Price £10.95, or £24.95 signed by Commander in Chief of the Fleet, Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope (limited number) ●



Cambridge Stamp Centre Cover marking the 70th anniversary of the sinking of HMS *Royal Oak* on 14 October 1939, featuring archive photos of the ship. Signed by survivors Lt Col Norman Thackeray or Petty Officer Arthur Smith. Price £24.95 each plus postage ●



GB Covers This official FDC (an edition of 40) features the famous portrait of Lord Nelson by Lemuel Francis Abbott, with a special 'Nelson

NIDY AT WAR - 1940.
3 - 4 MAY 2009



Mid-Suffolk Light Railway FDC (edition of 40) featuring 1940s vehicles and a loco, bearing two MSLR labels tied by a cachet and a Royal Mail stamp cancelled with a WWII Operations special handstamp. **Prices** FDC £3.25; block of six labels £1.50, A5 sheet £3, A4 sheet £6, perf/imperf. Postage 60p UK, £1.10 Europe, £1.50 abroad. Remittances to B R Reynolds ●

Orders and enquiries

Bletchley Park Post Office

The Mansion, Bletchley Park,
Milton Keynes MK3 6EB.
Telephone/fax 01908 631797.
www.bletchleycovers.com

Buckingham Covers Warren

House, Shearway Road,
Folkestone, Kent CT19 4BF
Telephone 01303 278137.
www.buckinghamcovers.com

Cambridge Stamp Centre

9 Sussex Street, Cambridge
CB1 1PA. Telephone 01223
363980. www.cambridge-covers.co.uk

Cotswold and Stuart Covers

PO Box 100, Great Ouseburn,
York YO26 9SS. Telephone
08707 423962. e-mail em@postmark.co.uk

GB Covers

102 Regal Way,
Kenton, Harrow HA3 0RY. e-mail
derek@gbcovers.co.uk

Mid Suffolk Light Railway

B R Reynolds, 74 Edgecomb
Road, Stowmarket IP14 2DW.
e-mail barry.reynolds@tiscali.co.uk to order by credit card,
via PayPal

M Tanner

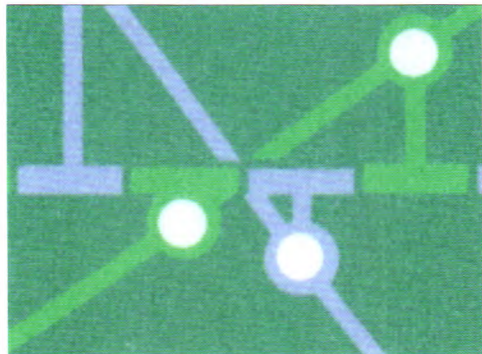
180 Whitehorse
Road, West Croydon CR0
2LA. Fax/Answerphone 020
8684 9757 (for credit card
orders only)

Cover producers wishing to announce a recent or forthcoming cover should submit copy of up to 75 words in the style above. The text should briefly describe the cover, state the stamps and postmarks it will bear, and give retail prices and an address for orders and enquiries. Announcements are published on a first-come-first-served basis and may be modified or shortened. Copy for consideration for the December *Bulletin* should be sent to The Editor (address on p35) by 7 October. Copy for January should arrive by 7 November. Royal Mail cannot enter into correspondence or telephone conversations concerning announcements in this Covers section.

Prize draw Cambridge Anniversary sheets

Two University of Cambridge 800th anniversary sheets will be given away this month. To enter, write your name and address on the back of a postcard and send it to: Cambridge Draw, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 35-50 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1HQ, to arrive by 30 October ●

Competitions Enter for a chance to win the 2009 Yearbook



July identify The detail was from the Investiture stamp of 1969 (Queen Eleanor's Gate). The winner was R C Lear of Staffordshire.

July knowledge The answers: 1) David Gentleman; 2) 1s 11½d; 3) 62. The winner was H J Nissen of Denmark.

Runner-up prizes were also sent for each competition. Our thanks to all who entered.

FIRSTLY, identify the stamp from the detail above. Send your answer to October *Identify* Competition. Secondly, test your philatelic knowledge by answering the questions below. Send your answer to October *Knowledge* Competition. The competitions are not open to Royal Mail employees

- 1 Who designed the 1995 Science Fiction stamps?
- 2 What was the total face value of the 1999 Millennium Soldiers' Tale issue?
- 3 Which philatelic society is celebrating its 125th anniversary with an exhibition in a museum?

Send your answer (addressed to either October *Identify* competition or October *Knowledge* competition), name and address on a postcard or back of a sealed envelope to: British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 35-50 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1HQ. The senders of the first cards drawn in each competition on 13 November will each receive a 2009 Yearbook. Runner-up prizes of presentation packs, FDCs or stamp cards will also be awarded in each competition. These competitions are not open to Royal Mail employees •

Events

Until Spring 2010 David Gentleman exhibition at British Postal Museum & Archive, Freeling House, Phoenix Place, London WC1. **Enquiries** 020 7239 2570, e-mail info@postalheritage.org.uk

Until 9 January 2010 Exhibition at Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery to mark 125th anniversary of Birmingham PS. Includes material from the Society and from the Thomas Evans collection. Admission free. **Enquiries** A Spencer, 0121 459 7650.

10 October Thatcham & District PS Annual Stamp Fair, Memorial Hall, Thatcham, 10.00-16.00. 11 dealers, free entry and parking. **Enquiries** 01635 866942.

17-18 October Exhibition Study Group Annual Convention, Crystal Palace, London. AGM Saturday at 10.00 followed by displays Saturday and Sunday.

Enquiries Don Knight, 020 8440 3574, or e-mail donaldrk@btinternet.com

16-17 October Scotex 2009 (annual Scottish Stamp and Postcard Fair), Dewar's Centre, Perth. **Enquiries** A Wishart, 01698 356337 or visit www.spta.biz

16-18 October Stampa (Irish National Stamp Exhibition) at RDS, Ballsbridge, Dublin. In conjunction with the Over 50s Show and National Coin Fair.

21-25 October Italia 2009 international festival of philately, Rome. See www.italia2009.it

24 October North West Federation Annual Convention, Stamp Fair and Exhibition at Thornleigh College, Sharples Park, Bolton. **Enquiries** B Fielding 01204 307252 •

Late news

Royal Mail update The cylinders and colours of the Eminent Britons stamps (8 October) are: C1 silver C1 yellow C1 magenta C1 cyan (blue) C1 black C1 phosphor. They were printed 'six up' so there will be six cylinder number position guide boxes for specialists to collect. Cylinders and colours for this year's Christmas stamps are: D1 gold D1 magenta D1 yellow D1 cyan (blue) D1 black D1 phosphor. The definitive-size stamps were printed six-up; the Large 2nd and the 1st class four-up. Cylinders in the Christmas stamp books read: D1 magenta D1 yellow D1 cyan (blue) D1 black D1 gold D1 phosphor. The year '2009' has been reversed out of the phosphor bands. The Madonna and Child 2nd and 1st class stamps, issued in 2007 and 2008, have been reprinted and will be reissued on 3 November. The same cylinder numbers have been used. Specialist collectors will identify the new printings from the printing dates in the right sheet margins. Some offices may still have stocks left from 2008, and will use these before the new 2009 stock is used.

Christmas cards reproducing the stained glass windows shown on the 1st and 2nd class stamps will be available from main Post Office branches. Packs of 10 cards (five of each design) are £3 (£5 for two packs). For every sale a donation is made to Royal Mail's charity partner, Barnardo's.

The Lest We Forget sheet stamps are being re-issued and will be available from about 1000 Post Office branches from 28 October.

Issue of the new international reply coupon (see July *Bulletin*, page 332) was delayed from 3 August. At time of going to press it was expected to go on sale on 28 September •

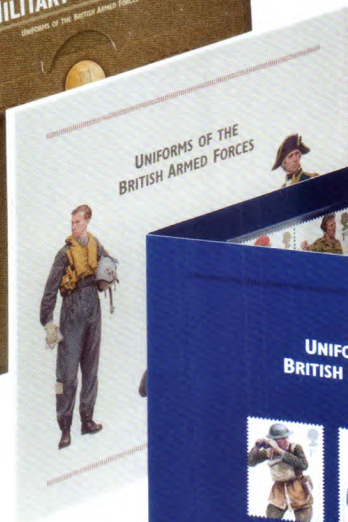
Postal history lecture Tom Slemons will give the Stuart Rossiter Lecture for 2009 – British County Postal History, Research and Discovery – at 17.00 on 6 November at the Royal Philatelic Society in London. For a free ticket contact: Stuart Rossiter Trust, c/o David Beech, British Library, Philatelic Collections, 96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB or drbeech@btinternet.com. Early application is advised •

Posters exhibition The British Postal Museum & Archive (BPMA) is arranging an exhibition of GPO poster designs, 1930-60. The GPO became a leader and trend setter in the field of poster design, commissioning some of Britain's leading artists and designers. Designs on Delivery, on show at London College of Communication, Elephant & Castle, London SE1, 7 October to 4 November, focuses on six themes: Education, Air Mail, Post Early, Wartime, Postage & Packaging, and Products & Services. It features posters by innovative and celebrated designers: Tom Eckersley, Edward McKnight Kauffer, Leonard Beaumont and F H K Henrion. Credit for much of their success is also due to Stephen Tallents (after whom Tallents House is named), the GPO's first public relations officer, who successfully combined commercial advertising techniques and government service •

Philatelists on TV In May (page 263), we featured a team of philatelists who took part in the BBC TV programme *Eggheads*. This programme was to have been broadcast in May or June, but is now expected to be shown on 21 October; it is usually broadcast at 6pm on Mondays to Fridays. Mike Brindle, John Baron, Colin Searle, Dane Garrod and Barry Feltham played the regular 'Eggheads' team which includes champions of *Mastermind*, *Brain of Britain*, and *Millionaire* •

UK's fastest growing stamp club Membership of KIDSTAMPS, the postal club for children run by the Stamp Active Network, has rocketed as more children find pleasure in collecting. Membership in January 2008 was 300, by November 500, and in June 2009 was over 700! Kidstamps needs support to keep this interest going. Each Christmas it sends its members packs of Christmas stamps, FDCs, PHQ cards, or anything similar – and it needs to replenish its stocks within the next few months. *Bulletin* readers are urged to send any spare material to KIDSTAMPS, 46 Moorfield Road, Rothwell, Northants, NN14 6AT. Please help keep the hobby alive and kicking for the future •

Military Uniforms collectors pack



This replica of a Post Office Rifles cap badge is included in the pack (shown smaller than actual size).



Price £29.95

Order code PB408

Handling charge UK £1.45,
Europe £1.55, rest of world
£2.15

This limited edition product uniquely features all three sets of the Military Uniforms stamps (Army, RAF and Navy Uniforms) within a beautifully designed pack. In addition to the three sets of mint stamps, the pack includes • A high-quality replica of a Post Office Rifles regimental cap badge – this army regiment's rich history is inextricably linked with the Post Office from whose workers it was formed • A stunning wall chart featuring the uniforms depicted on the stamps, alongside three new specially commissioned pictures of uniforms exclusive to this pack. These images form a timeline charting the development of military uniform throughout the ages • A wealth of intriguing information about the Post Office Rifles, who fought in three major wars. Alongside this is the story of the Fovant regimental cap badges, which have been carved into the Wiltshire hillside by proud servicemen.



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