

Order of Presentation

2016 January	Brit themes: Music
2016 February	Brit themes: Explorers
2016 March	Brit themes: Birds
2016 April	Brit themes: Football
2016 May	Brit themes: Scientists
2016 June	Brit themes: Automobiles
2016 July	Brit themes: Becoming Europeans
2016 August	Brit themes: Bridges
2016 September	Brit themes: Social reformers
2016 October	Brit themes: Poets
2016 November	Brit themes: Prehistoric Animals
2016 December	Brit themes: Astronomy
2017 January	Brit themes: Dogs
2017 February	Brit themes: Cathedrals and Churches
2017 March	Brit themes: Cinema
2017 April	Brit themes: Landscapes
2017 May	Brit themes: Artistic portraiture
2017 June	Brit themes: Boats & Ships
2017 July	Brit themes: Folk Customs
2017 August	Brit themes: Television (A blend of two I did)
2017 September	Brit themes: Gardens
2017 October	Brit themes: Postal Sputnik 60th anniv
2017 November	Brit Themes: Beside the Seaside
2017 December	Brit Themes: Horses
2018 January	Brit Themes: Castles and Palaces
2018 February	Brit Themes: Insects
2018 March	Brit Themes: Toys and Comics
2018 April	Brit Themes: Farming (and Forestry)
2018 May	Brit Themes; UK World Heritage sites
2018 June	Brit Themes: Battles & Campaigns
2018 July	Brit Themes: Institutions, public services
2018 August	Brit Themes: Flowers & Plants
2018 September	Brit Themes: Politics

Pending at August 2018 (dates submitted)

Forever England Urban Renewal (22.6.16) Railways (16.3.17) Aircraft (29.3.17) (Architecture (5.4.17)
Novelists (22.8.18) Inventors (23.8.18) Industry (23.8.18) Dance (24.8.18) Fish (25.8.18)

Music

The important part that music plays in British life is so richly reflected in our stamps that a substantial presentation could be made of the theme.

There are many stamps, in which a musical instrument can be identified, even where the topic itself is not intended to be musical. For example a tuba and sousaphone in a 1965 Salvation Army stamp, bagpipes and harp on two of 1976 British Cultural traditions, drums in the design of two of the 1982 Youth Organisation set and a violin in a 1984 British Council issue, which will challenge the Music on Stamps expert to identify the sheet music* in the design.



Many Christmas issues have shown musical instruments somewhere in their design and on occasion the aspect of Christmas chosen has been specifically Carol Singing as in 1978 where one of the four stamps shows Eighteenth Century singers, whilst all five stamps in the 1982 Christmas set illustrate Carols. Shown is the 26p issue devoted to "We Three Kings" written in 1857 by Rev. John Henry Hopkins. One stamp in the 2010 Wallace and Gromit Christmas issue shows the characters singing and their music has also been identified by one hawk-eyed music specialist.**

A number of stamps illustrate various forms of dance which of course imply music, but that is probably a theme in itself. (1973 Court Masque and 1981 Morris dancers, for example)

*part of "The Midsummer Marriage" by Sir Michael Tippett

** "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing"

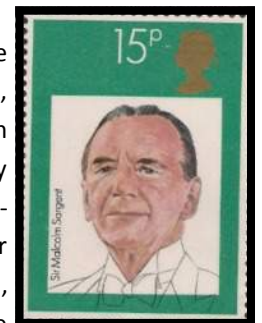


Music is also obliquely referenced in, for example, the 1980 issue for the Royal Opera House, in two stamps within the 1982 set for British theatre (ballerina and opera singer) and in 1983 set for British fairgrounds.



The Main Sets

However a small number of sets have been entirely devoted to music, beginning with the 1980 British Conductors, commemorating Sir Henry Wood (founder of The Proms) (1869-1944), Sir Thomas Beecham (conductor of the Royal Philharmonic) (1879-1961), Sir Malcolm Sargent (darling of The Proms) (1897-1967) and Sir John Barbirolli (of Hallé Orchestra fame) (1899-1970).



In 1985 the Europa theme was European Music Year which was celebrated with references to four British composers and one of their most famous works illustrated pictorially: George Frederic Handel's *Water Music*, Gustav Holst's *Planets Suite*, Frederick Delius' *The First Cuckoo* and Edward Elgar's *Sea Pictures*. Delius himself received a second stamp in the 2012 Britons of Distinction set.



Only two British composers have been given a fulsome treatment by Royal Mail and both represent British



institutions : Gilbert and Sullivan opera and The Beatles.

After much clamour by Savoyards for years G&S were finally recognised in stamps in a set of five in 1992, the 150th anniversary of birth of composer Sir Arthur Sullivan (1842-1900). The stamps each designed appropriately jauntily by Lynda Gray represented arguably the most popular of the thirteen opera in the canon few of which have ever been out of production professionally or by amateur aficionados since their first presentations in late Victorian times: *The Yeomen of the Guard*, *The Gondoliers*, *The Mikado*, *The Pirates of Penzance* and *The Yeomen of the Guard*.



As a way of encouraging young collectors at the start of a year, always a good time to begin a new hobby (!) Royal Mail began in the mid 2000's to issue strong populist topics and the ten stamps for the most popular band ever in 2007 are such an example. The prohibition regarding producing images of living people on GB stamps was respected (?) by using the theme of album covers and memorabilia for the band with the six stamps showing classic album covers: *With the Beatles*, *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, *Help!*, *Abbey Road*, *Revolver* and *Let it Be*. The miniature sheet showed a guitar, lunch box, single and badges or buttons all with images of the band. The six stamps were unusual in that their corners were irregular reflecting the illustration of a pile of lps on each stamp.



A similar treatment was given to the topic of Classic Album covers in 2010, and British Musicals a year later. The Classic Album Covers stamp were also oddly shaped as a further gimmick with the lp disc sticking out of the cover, almost inviting you to select it for your gramophone. (*London Calling* by The Clash, shown)



Somewhat oddly the ten stamps for Musicals - all using theatre posters—contained no Andrew Lloyd Webber sell

—out shows, like *Cats* possibly because of copyright reasons. (*Blood Brothers*—Willy Russell 1983 shown).



One final big music issue came in 2006 in a five stamp set called *Sounds of Great Britain* as Britain's interpretation of that year's Europa theme of Integration. So it showed musical diversity, by depicting a sitar player (shown) , a reggae Bass guitarist and African drummer, a fiddler and harpist, a sax player and Blues guitarist and a Maraca player.

Checklist of Music on GB Stamps

- 1965 Salvation Army
- 1972 Ralph Vaughan Williams
- 1976 Cultural traditions
- 1978 Christmas Carols
- 1980 Royal Opera House, in London Landmarks
- 1980 British Conductors
- 1981 Folklore
- 1982 Youth Organisations
- 1982 Theatre
- 1982 Christmas Carols
- 1983 British Fairs
- 1984 British Council
- 1985 European Music Year
- 1985 Pantomime
- 1990 Christmas Carols
- 1992 Gilbert & Sullivan
- 1999 Entertainer's Tale : Queen
- 2000 Sound & Vision
- 2000 Spirit and Faith
- 2006 Sounds of Great Britain
- 2007 The Beatles
- 2009 Henry Purcell in Eminent Britons
- 2010 Classic Album Covers
- 2011 British Musicals
- 2012 Frederick Delius
- 2013 Benjamin Britten
- Published in edited format in *STAMP* in January 2016, but since then additionally....
- 2016 Pink Floyd album covers
- 2017 David Bowie covers

Explorers & Pioneers

The British Empire which at its height was so vast that famously the sun could not set on it, began with a small number of overseas colonies and trading posts late in the Sixteenth Century. To date Royal Mail has celebrated just a handful of some of the most important pioneers who sometimes in a personal capacity only, seeking their own fortune, led teams into what was then *terra incognita* but which would eventually be colonised British territory.

Four Main Groups

Six of the most important of these trail blazers are celebrated in the twin **British Explorers issues of 1972 and 1973** designed by Marjorie Saynor each showing a contemporary portrait with a map of their area of interest in the background

In the former we find these four intrepid Polar explorers



In early Summer 1831 **Sir James Clark Ross** became the first man to stand at the spot which his Vere Fox designed dip circle (compass) told him was the Earth's Magnetic North Pole and he would go on to become a famous Antarctic explorer, giving his family name to a number of geographical features there.

Sir Martin Frobisher was one of many who set out to find the fabled Northwest Passage (to "Cathay" through the Arctic wastes) leading three expeditions to North East Canada, but with limited success, thinking he had found large quantities of gold rich material which turned out on smelting to be iron pyrite, worth next to nothing.

Sir Henry Hudson also made attempts to find the way to Cathay via the icefields of Northern America, firstly on behalf of British entrepreneurs and then working for the Dutch. The nature of his death is shrouded in mystery after his crew mutinied and cast him off in a small boat with a few companions.

Captain Robert F. Scott and his team famously perished in March 1912 attempting to return from the South Pole to which they had been beaten by Roald Amundsen's Norwegian expedition. Stamps for Scott and his team also are included in the 2003 Extreme Endeavours set and in the 2012 Age of Windsors miniature sheet.

The 1973 set of five honours a further five explorers.

David Livingston and **H.M. Stanley** are appropriately honoured together in a set-tenant pair of 3d stamps

In his four expeditions, Livingstone did more than any other European for the accumulation of new knowledge about Africa, enlightening millions as to its true diversity and wonders, when many believed its unexplored centre was an unremitting barbaric hell. He was famously "found" by Stanley who had been commissioned in 1869 by an American newspaper to find the long-lost explorer of whom nothing had been heard for six years at which the often quoted and parodied words, "Dr Livingstone, I presume" were or were not spoken.

Sir Francis Drake who led only the second circumnavigation of the world—the first (the Magellan–Elcano expedition) fifty years before—between the years 1577 and 1580. News of his achievement inspired others and opened up possibilities of sponsorship for others to follow.



Sir Walter Raleigh played a major role in colonising North America, exploring Virginia in particular, trail blazing for future English immigration and later exploring in the north of South America, establishing the legend of mysterious El Dorado.

Captain **Charles Napier Sturt** who had fought with Wellington in the Peninsular Wars led several expeditions into the heart of Australia in the late 1820s searching to determine if there was as rumoured an inland sea which fed so many large rivers. Sturt's contributions paved the way for the settlement of Australia by "poms"

However far more significant for the history of colonisation were the voyages of Captain **James Cook**, FRS, RN who also began his explorations in the northern hemisphere, making charts of Newfoundland before journeying three times to the Pacific, circumnavigating New Zealand and leading the first Europeans to "discover" the Hawaiian Islands and the Eastern seaboard of Australia part of which claimed for Great Britain as "New South Wales".



The British Anniversaries issue of 1968 depicts Cook's HM Bark *Endeavour* used for his first voyage whilst a Travellers' Tale issue within the Millennium series of 1999 uses the 1775 portrait of Cook by Nathaniel Dance-Holland beside the face of a Maori warrior and Australian flora from *Florilegium* by Joseph Banks the naturalist who accompanied Cook on that voyage.

The achievements of Cook and his crews in pioneering exploration, recorded and charted meticulously were utterly astonishing and opened up the Antipodes for colonisation, which was very important to Britain following the loss of the American colonies.

Further References to Cook's explorations can also be found in the Australian Bicentennial 1988 and The Settlers' Tale 1999 issues.



The **2003 Extreme Endeavours** set of six commemorate breath taking achievement by Commonwealth citizens in a number of fields celebrating, in addition to Captain Scott,

In the 1930s Amy Johnson made a series of record-breaking international flights, some accompanied by her husband Jim Mollison, including the first solo flight by a woman from England to Australia, taking 20 days in May 1930.

On 29th May 1953 Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay became the first men to reach the summit of Mt Everest, news of which reached Britain on the day of the Coronation.

Freya Stark who lived to become a centenarian made her name as explorer of deserts in the Middle East then went on to become a famous mountaineer. She continued her adventures well into her 80's.

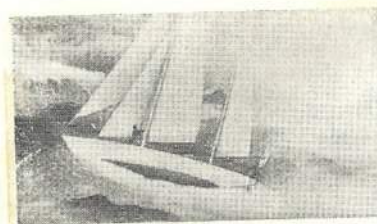
Ernest Shackleton was a Polar Explorer sledging in 1907 to within 96 miles of the South Pole. In 1914 when *Endurance*, which Shackleton was using to cross Antarctica was crushed by pack ice all of his small crew survived the passage to South Georgia, 720 nautical miles North in a 20ft long open boat.

In 1960 Francis Chichester won the first single-handed transatlantic yacht race. Later aged 65 he singled handedly sailed around the world by the clipper route taking nine months and a day.

Michael Goaman's design for an 1967 issue showing Chichester's *Gipsy Moth IV* was criticised for showing the wrong kind of sails given the prevailing sea conditions, in a



contemporary letter to the *Philatelic Bulletin* (opposite)!



Great Britain:—A special 1s. 9d. stamp, designed by Michael Goaman, to mark Sir Francis Chichester's epic voyage will be issued this month: 25 million printed. The design shows Gipsy Moth IV in rough seas and will be in the usual commemorative size, colours—blue, red, green and grey. A handstamp cancellation—"Plymouth Devon welcomes Sir Francis Chichester"—was used at Plymouth on the day that he completed his voyage.

"Dear Sir,
The illustration on page 199 of the July magazine, showing *Gipsy Moth IV*, is quite an impossible picture and the artist deserves a very big raspberry
No yacht, let alone *Cutty Sark* or any of the large sailing ships could possibly carry full sail in such a gale and sea as here depicted.
Apparently a big wave is about to break over the lee bow and swamp *Gipsy Moth IV*. Also by the set of the sails she is on the port tack, whereas the wind from the direction of the waves is on the starboard bow
Perhaps the finished stamp will show up better.
I have been three times round the Horn in sail.
Yours faithfully,
W. H. Oldham."



Other Men's Heroes ?

Possibly because in modern times political correctness requires caution about celebrating the exploitation of territory Great Britain appropriated from indigenous populations, many British personalities involved in exploration have been neglected. Whilst their images can be found on stamps from other countries there are no British stamps for Mungo Park and Cecil Rhodes (Africa), Robert Clive (India), Lachlan Macquarie, Thomas Mitchell and John Macdouall Stuart (Australia), George Vancouver, Thomas Douglas, Donald A Smith and Alexander Mackenzie (Canada), to name just a few.

Published in edited format in *STAMP* in February 2016, but since then additionally....

2016 Shackleton and the *Endurance* Expedition

2018 Captain Cook and the *Endeavour* Voyage

Birds

Birds have appeared regularly in the Royal Mail's stamp issuing programme being the topic of the very first wild life (fauna) issue, in 1966. Numerically robins, swans and barn owls have proved to be the most popular subject for designers.

Top Five Sets



British Birds was only the second non definitive issue which did not mark an event or anniversary, thus heralding a new category, then termed the "pictorial" being neither definitive nor "commemorative" in the traditional sense.

The issue designed by the well-known wildlife artist John Norris Wood comprised four 4d stamps each of which starred a popular and familiar bird. Unusual aspects were the unique use of eight-colour printing in two runs through and the format of se-tenant blocks of four, employed for the second time only. Two birds, the blue tit (*Parus caeruleus*) and the robin (*Erithacus rubecula*) were shown on twig in engaging poses whilst the black-headed gull (*Larus ridibundus*) and the common or garden blackbird (*Turdus merula*) seemed to be more aloof.

The Centenary of the Royal Society for the Protection of



Birds issue in 1989 produced a set stylistically similar to the first British Birds issue with a well known quartet—all associated with the coastline—again featured against a stark white background, this time designed by Don Cordery. That the birds' scientific Latin names this time appearing within the design was possibly superfluous or patronising ? (Expert ornithologists would know and the man in the street would not care ?)

The selected birds included the widely beloved Atlantic Puffin on the lowest and therefore most used value, with an Avocet (once almost extinct in Britain) tending its eggs, an Oystercatcher (endangered by development on Britain estuaries) and a Northern Gannet (flourishing in vast quantities around our coastline) completing the set.

Accompanying literature boasted that the RSPB founded in 1889 by a "group of ladies" was "Europe's largest voluntary nature-conservation body".

Robins were chosen as the theme for the **1995 Christmas** issue with five issues showing a cold and puffed up robin in

different scenarios designed by Ken Lily appealing to the public—and appeal they did with the lowest value 19p design showing an all too cute robin sheltering in the mouth of a post box !



"A beacon of warmth in the winter chill" gushed the accompanying literature about "Britain's national bird" but there's little doubt that this Christmas secular issue was very well received. The four other stamps each showed the European Robin against a dominantly coloured background: sitting on a railing with Holly (green), on snow covered milk bottles (white), on a road sign (blue) and against a door with wreath (orange).

Such was its popularity that the Robin in a post box stamp became a Smiler five years later, re-issued in October 2000, and 2001 in sheets of 20 with customised label, permitting a seasonal greeting or an approved photograph. (Robins were also used as the Christmas topic for 2001 but this time using cartoons).

Within a few months a second very strong bird issue followed marking the **50th anniversary of the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust.**

Founded by Sir Peter Scott, whose "acorn has grown into a mighty oak" five decades later. The set used illustrations by internationally renowned naturalistic painter Charles Tunnicliffe printed against an ochre background and including penned notes to give the impression of an artist's sketchbook with the birds' Latin names appearing in small print.



Illustrated were The Muscovy Duck, a Lapwing, a white-fronted Goose, a Bittern and a Whooper Swan. (Swans had been given their own featured issue in the 1993 600th anniversary of Abbotsbury Swannery set) but all the other birds were debuting on our stamps.

A final remarkable issue brought together the wonders of nature and modern



technology in the **2003 Bird of Prey** issue which featured a Barn Owl (a nocturnal bird as suggested by the background) and the diurnal Kestrel in various stages of flight. The se-

tenant strip of five creates a realistic impression of each birds' technique in flight over a couple of seconds.

The design was by John Gibbs using photography by English wildlife photographer, conservationist and author Stephen Dalton.

Across the years some forty different species of bird have graced our stamps as an ever popular topic.

1966 British Birds

1980 Centenary of the Wildlife Protection Act

1986 Barn owl in Endangered Species

1988 Whistling Swan in Centenary of Linnean Society

1989 Centenary of R.S.P.B.

1990 Duckling in 150th anniv of R.S.P.C.A.

1992 Redwing in Four Seasons

1993 600th anniv of Abbotsbury Swannery

1995 Christmas Robins

1996 50th anniv of Wildlife and Wetlands Trust

1998 Song Thrush in Endangered Species

1999 Humming Bird in Settlers' Tale

1999 Galapagos Finch in Scientists' Tale

2000 Barn Owl in Above & Beyond

2001 Kingfisher in The Weather

2001 Christmas Robins

2003 Barn Owl and Kestrel in Bird of Prey photography

2003 Black Swan in Pub Signs

2007 Action for Species (ten birds featured)

2009 Finches in Darwin Birth Bicentenary issues

Published in edited format in *STAMP* in March 2016, but since then additionally....

2016 Animapil

2017 Songbirds

2018 Owls

2018 Reintroduced Species: Osprey

Football

Several references to the national game on our stamps relate to England's participation in international championships with their legendary Captain Bobby Moore featuring strongly. There are some other oddities, however, like the reference to the film about female players *Bend it Like Beckham* and most recently the item that fills the significant object slot in the formulaic Great War commemoration was the football kicked towards German lines on the first day of the Battle of Loos.

Five Main Sets

The **1966 FIFA World Cup** issue of three stamps all by different designers looks odd now with the Queen's head in two sizes, one stamp in horizontal format but two in landscape. The 4d design was lampooned at the time as it seemed to show a player about to be kicked in the face. Since the 6d and 1/3 values both showed a similar goalmouth incident, one wondered if the designers had ever been to a game and seen such things as passes, throw-ins, tackles, free kicks defended, penalties etc.



However the event spawned a unique (?? Guy) event in British philatelic history—an overprinted commemorative when in the Final on 30th July England beat West Germany 4-2. Fortunately there was white space enough in the design of the lowest value for “England Winners” which the Queen seemed to be saying (!) and the amended stamp was issued on 18th August.

Thirty years passed before the next set, for the **1996 European Football Championships** held in England from 8 to 30 June 1996. The topic chosen to celebrate this, appropriately using monochrome photographs but with the Queen's head in a different colour on each stamp was Football Legends with all but one selected being England internationalists. Scotland had qualified by mid-November 1995 but controversially no Scottish star was selected for the set issued on 14th May.

The stamps which portrayed a great variety of football



action featured Dixie Dean who scored 18 goals in 16 appearances for England in the late 1920's/early 1930s; Bobby Moore capped by England 108 times (1962-73) Duncan Edwards with 18 caps

between 1955 and 1958, then killed in the Munich air

disaster; Billy Wright, who played for England 105 times between 1946 and 1959. The highest value depicted Northern Ireland star Danny Blanchflower who gained 56 caps between 1949 and 1963. But why him and not a legendary (and deceased) Scots international like Alex James or Alan Morton ?

Ten years later the 2006 World Cup, held in Germany was celebrated with an issue which took as its theme previous World Cup winners and showed anonymous international players wearing national kit in action. The legend explained when that country had previously won the Cup: England (1966), Italy (1934, 1938 and 1982), Argentina (1978 and 1986), Germany (1954, 1974, 1990), France (1998) and Brazil (1958, 1962, 1970, 1994, 2002). Of the Home nations only England qualified and Italy defeated France in the Final to add a fourth title to their set.



A footballer who enjoyed legendary success as a manager was one of the ten **Great Britons** celebrated in 2013—**Bill Shankly**, who was capped by Scotland twelve times during the Second World War but who of course became famous as manager of Liverpool from 1959-74. In this



role he was famous for his candour, remarking for example “Some people think football is a matter of life and death. I don't like that attitude. I can assure them it is much more serious than that” and “If you are first you are first. If you are second you are nothing”.



Perhaps the best of the British football themed stamps came in the **2013 Football Heroes** set which took the concept of a Best of Britain team composed from all four home nations. England was represented by Jimmy Greaves, Gordon Banks, John Barnes, Kevin Keegan, Bobby Moore, Bryan Robson and Bobby Charlton. Scotland had two stars remembered—Dennis Law and Dave Mackay, with Wales and Northern Ireland both receiving one mention with images of John

Charles and George Best. These selections were of course controversial, not least because they featured images of several living players. However, one particular clever design aspect of the issue was that the two strips of stamps, a five and a six could be laid out in an album like a team photograph.

1966 England World Cup Winners

1996 European Football Championship

1999 Bobby Moore in The Entertainers' Tale holding Jules Rimet Trophy

2000 Footballers in Millennium: Body & Bone

2006 World Cup, Germany

2009 Eminent Britons—Matt Busby, Man Utd manager

2010 Olympic Games

2012 England World Cup Winners in House of Windsor

2013 Football Heroes

2013 Great Britons—Bill Shankly, Liverpool manager

2014 *Bend it Like Beckham* in British Film

2014 Remarkable Lives—Joe Mercer, Manchester City manager

2015 London Irish football from Loos (WW1)

Published in edited format in *STAMP* in April 2016, but since then additionally....

No further issues

Science & Medicine

Unlike for example The Soviet Union, the Scandinavian countries and Germany and France, Britain has been very reluctant, until fairly recently, to honour its scientists and their achievements of which there are so many, in the fields of biology, chemistry, physics and medicine. In this feature we'll look at these aspects, leaving Astronomical discovery for another time. (See also *STAMP* for March 2010 on British Scientists)

The Five Main Sets

The first dedicated Science set after a pair for antiseptic pioneer Joseph Lister in 1965 and a reference to Alexander Fleming's discovery of penicillin two years later in a general discovery and invention set in 1967, comes with the 1977 issue for the **Centenary of the Royal Institute of Chemistry**.

Each of four stamps references the achievement of a British Nobel Prize winner. The 8½p depicts the chemical structure of a steroid for which Prof Sir Derek Barton won the 1969 prize. The 10p shows synthesis of Vitamin C—hence the citrus fruit segment—which gained Sir Norman Haworth a share of the 1937 prize. The 11p references chromatography which won the prize for A.J.P. Martin and R.H.M. Synge in 1952 and the 13p shows something of the work in crystallography by father and son team W.H. and W.L. Bragg who won in 1915.



Nobel Prize winner. The 8½p depicts the chemical structure of a steroid for which Prof Sir Derek Barton won the 1969 prize. The 10p shows synthesis of Vitamin C—hence the citrus fruit segment—which gained Sir

Norman Haworth a share of the 1937 prize. The 11p references chromatography which won the prize for A.J.P. Martin and R.H.M. Synge in 1952 and the 13p shows something of the work in crystallography by father and son team W.H. and W.L. Bragg who won in 1915.

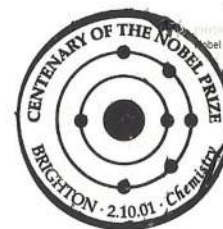
Arguably the two most important British scientists of all time, physicist and astronomer Sir Issac Newton and evolutionary theorist and naturalist Charles Darwin appear on several stamps with Darwin receiving the superior treatment numerically, firstly in 1982...

Darwin's Death centenary is marked with four stamps designed by David Gentleman each of which shows on either side of a shadowy part portrait of the scientist an aspect of evolution. For example in the 26p issue environmental changes produced in the beak structure of related species, showing the Cactus Ground Finch and the Large Ground Finch. The other stamps shows evolutionary developments in Giant tortoises, Marine iguanas and early humanoid skulls.



Darwin is also celebrated with one stamp in the 1999 The Scientists' Tale quartet and the 2006 National Portrait Gallery anniversary set. However in 2009 his Birth Bicentenary was marked with six "jigsaw" stamps and a further four within a miniature sheet.

One of the quirkiest sets came in 2001 with the **Centenary of Nobel Prizes** set with three of the six stamps referencing the science prizes. All six stamps (which also included those for Economic Science, Peace and Literature) had a peculiar and rare "appropriately geeky" (?) design element.



The Prize for Chemistry stamp included for only the second time in GB stamps thermochromic ink which meant that the application of heat to the image of the Carbon 60 molecule revealed an ion trapped within (though this effect is no longer evident 15 years on). Scratching the surface of the Physiology or Medicine stamp released a eucalyptus scent (still evident today) whilst tilting the hologram design of the Physics stamp allowed one to watch electrons orbiting within a boron molecule—arguably the most spectacular of all the effects

Two years later the **50th anniv of discovery of DNA** (also referenced in one of the 1999 Scientists' Tale quartet and in one of the eight Inventive Britain issues of 2015, both which show more conventional images of DNA) was given a surreal treatment by *Times* cartoonist Peter Brookes. Each of the stamps featured a stereotypical balding and moustachio'd research chemist (who looked like neither James Watson nor Francis Crick) dealing with a different aspect of the discovery such as Cracking the Code or pointing to future developments like Genetic Engineering. This issue was considered so important that it was accompanied by a Prestige Booklet.



The 2010 celebration of three hundred and fifty years of **The Royal Society** also saw a very imaginative treatment of the science subjects in which above a half face portrait of the ten scientists selected, all with British connections though not necessarily British there was a symbolic presentation of what they were thinking about regarding one of their most important revelations

The imagery was as follows: Robert Boyle and a vacuum chamber, Isaac Newton and optics, Benjamin Franklin and electricity, Edmund



Jenner and smallpox, Charles Babbage and computing, Alfred Russel Wallace and evolution, Joseph Lister and antiseptics, Ernest Rutherford and atomic structure, Dorothy Hodgkin and crystallography and Sir Nicholas Shackleton and earth sciences. Several of these famous scientists had already been honoured with dedicated issues: Lister in 1965, Newton in 1987, Franklin (as statesman) in 1975, Babbage in 1991, Hodgkin in 1996 and Jenner within the Patients' Tale issue in 1999. This issue also merited a prestige booklet.

1965 Lister Centenary
1967 Penicillin in British Discovery and Invention
1977 Centenary of Royal Institute of Chemistry
1982 Darwin Death Centenary
1987 Tricentenary of Newton's *Principia Mathematica*
1988 Bicentenary of Linnean Society
1989 150th anniv of Royal Microscopical Society
1991 Scientific Achievements
1991 150th anniv of Dinosaur Identification by Owen
1994 Medical Discoveries
1996 Dorothy Hodgkin in Famous Women
1999 The Scientists' Tale
2001 Centenary of Nobel Prizes
2003 50th anniv of discovery of DNA
2006 Charles Darwin in National Portrait Gallery anniv
2009 Birth Bicentenary of Charles Darwin
2010 350th anniv of the Royal Society
2013 Anthropologist Mary Leakey in Great Britons
2014 Molecular biologist Max Perutz in Remarkable Lives
2015 Inventive Britain
Published in edited format in *STAMP* in May 2016, but since then additionally....
2018 Captain Cook's *Endeavour* Voyage, referencing Joseph Banks etc

Automobiles

Man's love for fast cars is well celebrated across our stamps with the very first GB stamp to feature automobiles, in 1996 within the British Technology issue, showing silhouettes both of the then trendy Morris mini minor and the E-type Jaguar, later given full-on treatment within the 2009 Design Classics and the 2013 British Auto legends sets, respectively. A review of these stamps incidentally gives us a glimpse at what we thought was stylish several decades ago but which is now outmoded.

Five Top Sets

The **British Motor Industry** itself is celebrated in 1982 with a set stamps showing the development of four marques across the years. The issue coincided with the Motor Show at the Birmingham Exhibition Centre (as the NEC was then called).



Each stamp showed a car in monochrome from a British manufacturer from times past alongside a colourful modern specimen. So on the same stamp we had : the Austin Seven (from 1922-39) and the modern Austin Metro; a Model T Ford (from 1908-27) and a Ford Escort; a Jaguar SS1 (from the 1930s) and an XJ6 with appropriately the top value showing a Rolls Royce Silver Ghost (from 1907 onwards) and a contemporary Silver Sprint.

The next issue featuring cars comes fourteen years later with 1996's **Classic Sports Cars** where the design concept could not be more different, as only a glimpse of a car bonnet and grill is afforded as just enough to identify... a Triumph TR3 (produced between 1955-57), an MG TD (1950-3), an Austin-Healey 100 (1953-6) a Jaguar XK120 (1949-54) and a Morgan Plus 4 (1951-69). Bought as new the price of these cars ranged from the MG at £445 to the Jaguar at just under a grand.



Two years later a different kind of car altogether gets the big treatment in the set for **British Land Speed Record Holders**, though drivers are not identifiable on the stamps themselves though their names and the speed they achieved are. From lowest face value to highest we find Sir Donald Campbell—151 mph in 1925, Sir

Henry Seagrave 152 mph in 1926, John G Parry Thomas—171 mph in 1926, John R. Cobb 394 mph in 1947 and Donald Campbell 403 mph in 1964. (Campbell, whose *Bluebird-Proteus CN7* was the first car to have wheels driven by a jet turbine is featured in one of the 2009 Eminent Britons issues with the craft he broke the *water* speed record in 1959).

The theme of cars built for speed is continued in the **2007 50th Anniversary of the British Grand Prix** issue which features six British Racing Car Champions, though from the overhead angle of the design none is identifiable.



The stars, whose cars are named in the legend are Stirling Moss (who raced in 16 F1 events), Graham Hill, (World Champion in 1962 and 1968), Jim Clark (1963 and 1965), Jackie Stewart (1969 and 1971), James Hunt (1976) and Nigel Mansell (1992).



British Auto Legends of 2013 features six fast cars in stamps of an elongated format and four "Workhorses" in stamps of a more conventional shape. Four of the six—the Jaguar E-type, The Rolls Royce Silver Shadow, the MG MGB and the Morgan Plus have either featured or been represented by precursor models in earlier stamps but the Aston Martin DB5 and the Lotus Esprit make their debuts here.

To balance these glamorous status symbols, the accompanying mini-sheet shows images of four more mundane cars the man in the street is more likely to have been in, close to or even driven: the Morris Minor van (in the livery of the Royal Mail), the Austin FX4 (London taxi), the Land Rover Defender 110 and the Ford Anglia 105E police "panda" car.



Across these five sets spanning thirty years every iconic British automobile from domestic car to fantasy vehicle has been honoured.



1966 Morris Mini and E-type Jaguar In British Technology

1982 Motor Industry

1996 Classic Sports Cars

1998 British Land Speed Record Holders

2003 Ford Zephyr Dinky Toy in Classic Transport Toys

2005 Inspector Morse's Jaguar in ITV Celebration

2007 British Grand Prix

2007 Ford Anglia on cover of book in *Harry Potter* set

2009 Morris mini in Design Classics

2009 Donald Campbell and *Bluebird* in Eminent Britons

2013 British Auto legends and Workhorses in mini-sheet

Published in edited format in *STAMP* in June 2016, but since then additionally....

No other issues

Becoming Europeans

Great Britain has been a notoriously reluctant convert to the concept of European brotherhood eschewing membership of the European Economic Community (EEC) created by The Treaty of Rome in 1957 with only eight member countries, which itself had built on partnerships of six nations in the European Coal and Steel Community formed by the Treaty of Paris six years before.

When we did become members tardily under the leadership of Conservative PM Edward Heath many continued across the years to be suspicious about Project Europe and once again the issue of membership is in the balance with a promised in/out referendum. Our stamps have marked significant milestones on an as yet unfinished journey....

Five Main Sets

Firstly, Britain joined the **European Free Trade Association**, based in Geneva, when established by the Stockholm Convention in May 1960. Seven nations, whose flags are shown in the design of the 1967 stamps, agreed to



dispense with tariffs in trade using air, sea, road and rail, two which are referenced in the design of a pair of similar stamps. This group became known as the “Outer Seven”, beyond the “Inner Six” of the EEC. In the design the acronym of the organisation appears as if heavily stencilled on export crates.

A significant step in cooperating with France, so often an historical enemy came with a supreme example of harmonious cooperation begun in 1962 to build a supersonic aircraft—**Concorde**, though there were arguments about the “e”, but because it stood for such concepts as Excellence, Energy and Europe it was reluctantly accepted on this side of the Channel.

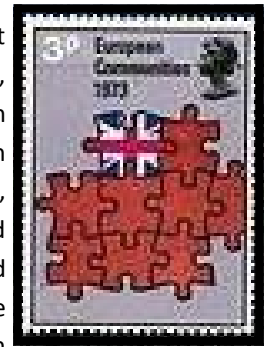


The aircraft was first flown as the “Aérospatiale-BAC Concorde” in 1969 the year in which the UK issued a set of three stamps, the highest value of which bore the

French tricolore !

The aircraft entered service in 1976 and flights continued for 27 years, between LHR or CDG and JFK in the States, but only twenty planes were made and it was not a financial success, though proudly celebrated in two later GB issues.

After obfuscation by French President Charles de Gaulle in the late 1960’s, Britain did join the **EEC in 1973** when the three original European Communities—Coal & Steel, Economic, and Atomic Energy merged and we along with Denmark and Ireland became full members of the Commission of European



Communities. This merger was reflected in the jigsaw concept for the three stamps issued on 3rd January, with the puzzle vaguely resembling the shape of the nine countries then so linked. Criticism of the stamp design at the time centred on the irony of a jigsaw “puzzle” and its connotations were mocked by those opposed to further European integration.

Following a European Council meeting in April 1978, it was agreed that **direct elections to the European Assembly**

should be held across the nine countries between 7th and 10th June 1979 and the 81 representatives from the UK were elected following our ballot. The elections were promoted in many ways



including the issue of four stamps with similar design of a flag being dropped into a ballot box across the nine states.

The Conservative Party won 60 of the 78 seats available on the British mainland, building on a decisive victory in the General Election the month before, though the turnout was the lowest in any of the nine countries voting.

Britain issued stamps for further elections to the European Parliament in 1984 and 1989 but not after that, though the creation of the Single European Market at the end of 1992 was marked with the issue of stamp with an *avant garde* design by David Hockey reimagining one of the stars on the European Union flag as a walking man of flame !!

A further event of great significance to the European Project was the agreement to build the **Channel Tunnel**, construction of which began in 1988 with full operation coming six years later. Britain issued two se-tenant pairs of very large commemoratives for the opening showing the British Lion and French Cockerel over the tunnel and symbolic hands touching



over a speeding train, with a twin issue in identical format from France.

The first breakthrough by the enormous boring machines was commemorated in the 2011 House of Windsor minisheet, whilst Margaret Thatcher who with French President François Mitterrand had signed Treaty of Canterbury in February 1986 is shown in the 2014 Prime Ministers issue.

1967 Membership of EFTA

1969 20th anniv of NATO

1970 Anglo-French cooperation: Concorde

1973 Joining the EEC

1979 First Direct Elections to European Assembly

1984 European Assembly Elections

1989 European Assembly Elections

1992 Single European Market created

1994 Anglo-French cooperation: Channel Tunnel

2002 Concorde in 50th anniv of Passenger Jet Aviation

2004 Entente Cordiale centenary

2008 Concorde in British Design Classics

2011 Channel Tunnel breakthrough in House of Windsor minisheet

2014 PM Margaret Thatcher who made the historic Channel Tunnel agreement

Published in edited format in *STAMP* in January 2016, but since then additionally....

2018 Dad's Army stamps "Don't Panic" etc !

Bridges

Since Britain has so many rivers and estuaries it's no surprise our stamps show bridges so frequently. Over the years bridges referenced more than once are The Tarr Steps, the Menai Suspension, the Humber, the Forth, Ironbridge (Shropshire), and Tower Bridge, London and the architects whose work is featured most often are Thomas Telford, Robert Stephenson, Isambard Kingdom Brunel, Sir William Arrol & Co, Mott, Hay & Anderson. and Freeman Fox.

Five Top Sets

The first ever and the most recent set in 1968 and 2015 both attempted to reflect bridge development over the years and across the nations and regions.



The former called **British Bridges** shows four : The Tarr Steps, which cross the River Barle in Exmoor National Park (possibly 500 or possibly 3,000 years old, depending on your expert!); the bridge at Aberfeldy in Perthshire built in 1733 by William Adam of the famous family of architects; Telford's Menai Suspension Bridge, completed in 1826 to link Anglesey to the Welsh mainland and the M4 viaduct, south of London celebrated at the time as (at 9680ft) the then longest elevated road in Europe.

Tarr Steps and the Menai also feature in the latter (simply **Bridges**) and eight others : the 18th century narrow packhorse Row Bridge over Mosedale Beck in Cumbria, Robert Adam's Pulteney Bridge in Bath; Telford's bridge over the Spey at Craigellachie in Moray; the High Level Bridge over the Tyne and the Royal Border Bridge which crosses the Tweed, both designed by Robert Stephenson; the Tees Transporter bridge by Sir William Arrol & Co.; the Humber by Freeman Fox and the Peace Bridge over the Foyle and Derry/Londonderry designed by Wilkinson Eyre.



A similar chronological approach to bridges across the Thames can be seen in the **2002 Bridges of London** set which shows : the mid-17th century London Bridge. effectively a suburb with houses and shops, the subject of the nursery rhyme "London Bridge is Falling down"; Blackfriars Bridge in a painting

around 1800; Westminster bridge in Victorian times; Sir William Arrol & Co's iconic Tower Bridge completed in 1894 (which had also featured in the large London 1980 stamp) and Millennium Bridge 2001.

Arrol & Co were also responsible for two other iconic British bridges, the second Tay Rail Bridge (not yet featured on a stamp) and the Forth Bridge, opened in 1890 and featured in the **2011 Britain A-Z (part one)** set This famous structure had appeared in the background of one of the first of our stamps showing bridges, marking the opening in 1964 of the Forth Road Bridge connecting Fife to Lothian and Scotland's capital city.



The **2006** set devoted to the architectural achievements of **I.K.Brunel** featured three stamps showing bridges: the Royal Albert, a railway bridge 100 feet above the Tamar between Plymouth and Saltash, the Clifton Suspension bridge spanning the Avon Gorge (a Grade 1 listed structure) and the Maidenhead Railway bridge carrying the line over the Thames in Buckinghamshire.



The elongated format of these stamps shows the glories of these constructions particularly well as is the case with all four of the minisheets issued for the **Classic Locomotives** series (2011-14) where beneath the se-tenant strip (shown below) there is plenty of scope to show such magnificent structures as the Glenfinnan railway viaduct (Scotland 2012) in the West Highlands of Scotland, which opened in three months after the death of Queen Victoria in 1901. This bridge is also featured in the British Journey: Scotland set of 2003



1964 Forth Road Bridge opening

1968 British Bridges

1980 Tower Bridge on London 1980 minisheet

1983 Humber Bridge in Engineering Achievements

1984 Bridge within Europa logo

1989 Pontcysyllite Aqueduct and Ironbridge in Industrial Archaeology

1994 Bridge over Worcester and Birmingham canal in Age of Steam

1994 Bridge over Swilcan burn, St Andrews Golf Course

2000 Millennium Bridge, Gateshead in People and Places

2002 Bridges of London

2003 Glenfinnan Viaduct in British Journey: Scotland

2006 Brunel: Royal Albert, Clifton Suspension and Maidenhead

2007 Ironbridge (re Telford) in World Of Invention

2009 Bridge across water in Kew Gardens minisheet

2010 Locomotive on Bridge in Great British Railways

2011 Bridge in selvage of Classic Locomotives minisheet

2011 Bridge in Thomas the Tank Engine minisheet

2011 Carrick-a-Rede, Forth Rail Bridge, Ironbridge in A-Z Britain (1)

2012 Bridge in selvage of Classic Locomotives minisheet (2)

2012 Tyne Bridge in A-Z Britain (2)

2013 Bridge in selvage of Classic Locomotives minisheet (3)

2014 Bridge in selvage of Classic Locomotives minisheet (4)

2014 Various in British piers

2015 Bridges

Published in edited format in *STAMP* in August 2016, but since then additionally....

2016 Landscape Gardens: Compton Verney

Social Reformers

One of the first major social reforms in British history was the **abolition of the Slave Trade**, made illegal by an act of Parliament in March 1807. The Act's intention was to entirely outlaw the slave trade within the British Empire, but although this action gave Britain the moral high ground the trade was not abolished and despite high penalties slave ships were still being seized by the Royal Navy well into the second half of the century.

Six prominent figures in the anti-slavery movement were commemorated with an issue in 2007, the politicians William Wilberforce, Granville Sharp, and Thomas Clarkson, the writer and philanthropist Hannah More and two prominent abolitionists who had once been slaves themselves Olaudah Equiano and Ignatius Sancho. (For a full account see *STAMP* for February 2013).



Britain's Industrial Revolution produced enormous wealth for a small number of people and great squalor and hardship for millions, some of which was redressed by more principled figures of power and influence, four of whom are honoured in the **1976 issue entitled Social Reformers** which references the context of their reforms and not their person.



Anthony Cooper, the 7th Earl of Shaftesbury was an important mover in factory reform, promoting two Factory Acts and the Mines & Collieries Act of 1842. One of his main concerns was the welfare of children and as the stamp suggests he abolished the sweeping of chimneys by climbing boys.

Also referenced in the set are prison and social reformer the Quaker Elizabeth Fry, dubbed "The Angel of Prisons", Thomas Hepburn a coal miner and trade union leader who promoted the use of industrial action to improve conditions and Welshman Robert Owen, one of the founders of utopian socialism and the cooperative movement.



Setting up home in Scotland with a new wife Owen persuaded his business partners to purchase the mill at New Lanark (shown within the Industrial Archaeology mini-sheet of 1989) which in 1800 he hoped to run on higher principles than other commercially focussed mills.

A major social movement as the Twentieth Century turned was **female suffrage** referenced on four stamps. "Suffragette" was a pejorative term coined by *The Daily Mail* in order to belittle members of the Women's Social and Political Union. However rather like the history of the "N" word in America last century once active members of the movement began to reclaim the word rather than use the more politically correct term "suffragist" it began to lose its negative connotations.

The WSPU's figure was of course Emmeline Pankhurst (1858-1928) who was honoured by stamps in 1968 and 2006.



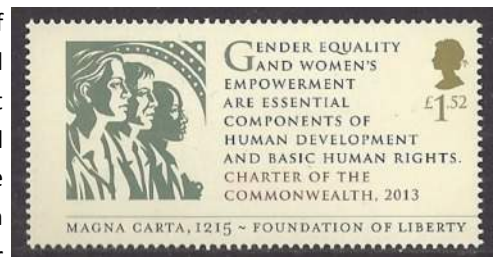
Because of acts of civil disobedience many suffragettes were imprisoned, as shown in one 1999 stamp in The Millennium: Citizens' Tale set and the suffragist campaigner Millicent Garrett Fawcett and co-founder of women-only Newnham College, Cambridge was one of the six women honoured in the **Women of Distinction set of 2008**.

The other women in that set all of whom pushed for social reformers were: Elizabeth Garret Anderson (the first female doctor and surgeon, and first female mayor and magistrate in Britain); Marie Stopes (campaigner for women's rights, and pioneer in the field of birth control); Eleanor Rathbone and Barbara Castle (politicians and campaigners for women's rights) and Claudia Jones (political activist and black nationalist and founder of Britain's first black newspaper, *The West Indian Gazette*).



The Magna Carta commemoration of 2015 celebrating 700 years of its signing, looks at a series of social reforms across history. (The Magna Carta was also referenced in a 1999 Millennium: Citizens' Tale stamp)

A number of once aspirational reforms still not fully fulfilled universally are treated within the set, for



example the 1689 Bill of Rights, the 1791 American Bill of Rights, the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the currently very topical 2013 Charter of the Commonwealth with particular reference to gender equality.

1968 Votes for Women

1976 Social Reformers

1989 New Lanark, part of Robert Owen's utopian socialism project

1999 Imprisoned Suffragette in Citizens' Tale

2004 Chimney Sweep reforms

2006 Emmeline Pankhurst, suffragist in National Portrait Gallery set

2007 Abolition of Slave Trade

2008 Women of Distinction

2009 2009 Mary Wollstonecraft (advocate of women's rights) and Judy Fryd (campaigner for mentally handicapped children) in Eminent Britons

2012 Joan Fry (campaigner for peace and social reform) in Britons of Distinction

2013 John Archer (civil rights campaigner) in Great Britons

2015 Magna Carta issue.

Published in edited format in *STAMP* in September 2016, but since then additionally....

2016 British Humanitarians

2018 Votes for Women: various name checks

Poetry

Given the richness of English literature it's surprising so little of it is referenced on our stamps and the work of some of its giants is hardly touched on. There are stamps referencing via portraiture or painting of such greats as Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Scott, Keats, Gray, Dylan Thomas and W.H.Auden but nothing of their verses. Then again some great men have been honoured with a fulsome treatment, as below but are Burns, Lear and Tennyson truly representative of the glories of our language? The closest we are going to get to any serious treatment of modern poetry, it seems, are to be five stamps between 2014 and 2018 for The War Poets.

Five Top Sets

The first two poets to be given a full treatment with a dedicated set were the Victorians—Edward Lear and Alfred Tennyson, who could hardly have been more different.

The work of Edward Lear (1812-88) was honoured in 1988



with four comically illustrated stamps using his words and drawings, and included one of his best known—*The Owl and the Pussycat* and another for the limericks with which he was so taken. In addition to

eventually gaining fame as a minor poet, Lear was a painter, illustrator and travel writer, but today he is remembered as a children's writer as his *A Book of Nonsense* (1846) and *Laughable Lyrics* (1877) suggest. Without him we might not have the limerick, though today his work even here seems a little stilted....

There was an Old Man with a beard,
Who said, 'It is just as I feared!
Two Owls and a Hen,
Four Larks and a Wren,
Have all built their nests in my beard!'

Almost an exact contemporary of Lear, **Alfred Tennyson**



(1809-92) was marked with an issue in 1992 which combines photographs of him at various stages in his life with paintings of heroines from his poems. He is probably best remembered today for his *The Lady of Shalott*, (referenced in the 33p value), a doleful narrative poem set in

Arthurian times which relates the tale of a cursed maiden who is marooned in a high tower and forced to observe the world passing by only through a mirror, on pain of death.

She knows not what the curse may be

And so she weaveth steadily

And little other care hath she,

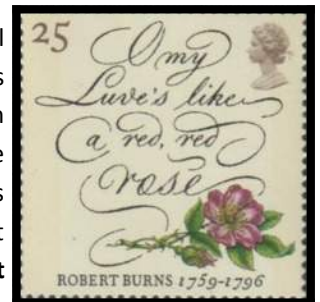
The Lady of Shalott

Tennyson was made Poet Laureate in 1850 and in this role ("spinning" on behalf of the establishment) he created the other poem most people remember him for today.

The Charge of Light Brigade relates to a very major British military "cock-up" or blunder during the Crimean War (1853-6) against Russia in which the commanders observing the Battle of Balaclava (October 1854) from a distant promontory gave ambiguous directions via a messenger for a section of cavalry, armed only with lances and swords, to charge at a bank of Russian cannon and naturally were slaughtered.

'Forward, the Light Brigade!
Was there a man dismay'd?
Not tho' the soldier knew
Some one had blunder'd:
Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do & die,

After the Shakespeare Festival issue (which concentrated on his plays) in 1963 there was much clamour for Scotland's Bard to be honoured in stamps and this finally happened with two portrait stamps in 1966. (Since **Robert Burns'** dates are 1759—1796 this



was a curious year in which to do it). The background illustration of the higher value of these two stamps made allusion (under close scrutiny) to *To a Mouse* but fans had to wait until 1996 for a proper treatment of their idol with four stamps which quoted from some of Burns' greatest works—*To a Mouse*, *A Red, Red Rose*, *Scots Wha Hae* and *Auld Lang Syne* beside related imagery.

Poetry by Anglo-American **T.S.Eliot** is quoted in one of the 2001 Nobel Prize issue stamps which uses as a gimmick micro-

printing. The poem, given in full, is "The ad-dressing of Cats" from *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* (1939). "Old Possum" was the nickname given to Eliot by his friend and fellow poet Ezra Pound.





Part of the well known **Laurence Binyon** poem spoken at Armistice Day ceremonies is quoted in the 2014 Great War commemoration set. The poem by Charles Sorley selected for the 2015 Great War set is also anodyne but more acerbic war

poetry from the likes of Sassoon and Owen who wrote memorably about the horror and stupidity of war is to come in future years !

Will we ever see stamps commemorating the work of Chaucer, Milton, Shelley or Byron and any of the great poets of the last century ?

- 1966 Robert Burns
- 1970 William Wordsworth
- 1971 Keats, Gray and Scott in Literary Anniversaries
- 1976 The Knight from Chaucer's *Prologue* in 500th anniv of Printing
- 1988 Poems of Edward Lear
- 1990 Thomas Hardy, 19th century novelist, 20th century poet
- 1992 Alfred, Lord Tennyson
- 1995 Shakespeare's love poetry in Greetings in Art
- 1996 Robert Burns
- 1999 John Wesley's hymn *Hark the Herald Angels Sing* in The Christians' Tale
- 2000 Latin Gradual in Spirit and Faith
- 2001 T.S.Eliot Poem in Nobel Prize issue
- 2006 Eliot, Scott and Shakespeare portraits in National Gallery Issue
- 2010 John Milton portrait in House of Stuart minisheet
- 2014 Dylan Thomas portrait in Remarkable Lives
- 2014 *Night Mail* by W.H.Auden in GPO Film Unit minisheet
- 2014 Laurence Binyon quote in Great War commemoration
- 2015 Charles Sorley quote in Great War commemoration

Published in edited format in *STAMP* in October 2016, but since then additionally...

- 2016 Vera Brittain quote in Great War set
- 2017 Isaac Rosenberg quote in Great War set

Prehistoric Animals

Before the startling and controversial revelations of Victorian palaeontologist Sir Richard Owen (1804-92) and anthropologist Alfred Russel Wallace (1823-1913) whose



work prompted Charles Darwin to publish his own ideas, it was thought by many that dragons such as the wyvern, associated with Wales and shown on this 1958 issue, did in fact exist in the far distant past.

Some sources argue that the concept of dragons emerged from the responses of our ancestors to the finding of dinosaur bones first discovered in China in the Sixteenth Century. Since before the development of modern archaeological techniques people had a very vague sense of history so a popular the assumption was that such creatures existed whilst their human ancestors walked the Earth.

Owen who is commemorated with a set of five stamps in 1991 for the **150th anniversary of Dinosaur identification**, was a pioneer in the study of fossilized remains as published



in his *History of British Fossil Reptiles* (1849-1884) and he coined the word Dinosauria ("Terrible Reptile") in 1841. Although he agreed with Darwin that evolution had occurred he thought it more complex than outlined in *On the Origin of Species*. Owen displayed

some of his speculative life size reconstructions in concrete at the Great Exhibition in 1851 and then more permanently at the Crystal Palace. He became the driving force behind the establishment in 1881 of the Natural History Museum in London. Owen's displays educated people about the truth behind dinosaurs and in particular that there was a distance of many million years between when such creatures and humans existed.

Each of the five stamps show one of the Owen's recreated skeletons and in silhouette the relative proportions of those beasts to a man.

A second issue of ten self-adhesive stamps showing a



considerable variety of **Dinosaurs in 2013** was unrelated to any event and was perhaps intended to capture the imagination of young potential stamp collectors fascinated by everything to do with these

beasts. Of the types included in this set the only one reprised from the 1991 set is the Iguanodon and there are examples of flying dinosaurs (*Ornithocheirus*) and of the amphibious type like *Plesiosaurus*, much beloved of Loch Ness Monster theorists. Evidence of all of the dinosaurs featured were found in Britain, several on the Jurassic Coast, mainly early in Victorian times.

Other specimens from pre-history appear on two stamps related to Charles Darwin (1809-82) himself with one of the four for the 1982 commemoration of his death showing early humanoid skulls such as the *Homo habilis* (which lived between 2.8 and 1.5 million years ago) on the right of the design.



The study of such skulls is closely associated with the British paleoanthropologist Mary Leakey (1913-96) honoured with a stamp in **Great Britons 2013** who discovered the first fossilised *Proconsul* skull whilst excavating the Olduvai Gorge in Tanzania.



A fossil directly related to Darwin appears on a **1999 Millennium** stamp which shows a fossilised and a contemporary Galapagos finch, found by Darwin during his five year voyage on *HMS Beagle* in the 1830s study of which helped him to formulate his theories of evolution.



Animals from the less distant past were featured in the **2006 Ice Age Animals** set which depicts five dramatically drawn creatures : the sabre tooth cat (which became extinct about 40,000 years ago), cave bear (c.24,000 years) and giant deer woolly rhino, woolly mammoth (all three dying out about 10,000 years ago) .



1982 Humanoid skulls in Darwin death centenary

1991 150th anniv of Dinosaur identification by Owen

1999 Fossilized skeleton of Galapos finch in Scientists' Tale

2006 Ice Age Animals

2010 Alfred Russel Wallace in 350th anniv of Royal Society

2013 Mary Leakey, archaeologist in Great Britons

2013 Dinosaurs

Published in edited format in *STAMP* in November 2016, but since then additionally....

No further issues

Astronomy

British stamps relating to this topic appear regularly and in addition to doing the obvious by including images of stellar objects designers on occasion have taken very left field approaches.

Top Sets

The best example of such an approach comes in Royal Mail's celebration of the arrival of Halley's Comet in 1986, marked by a very large number of countries, most of whom showed probes to the comet or historical images of its passing, every 75 years or so.



Britain's approach was to accept four designs from the very distinctive imagination of well known artist Ralph Steadman (b.1936) which indeed showed Dr Edmond Halley, the Giotto probe, the comet's path and the famous quote "Maybe Twice in a Lifetime" - but all in caricature style with the image of Dr Halley's wig becoming the nucleus and tail of the comet particularly quirky.

Other esoteric designs within this theme can be found in the



1991 set for Europe in Space which used paintings by Belgian artist Jean-Michel Folon and one of the 1996 Greetings stamps.



Britain's most famous astronomer, Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727) was honoured with a set of his own in 1987 though not all of the four stamps relate directly to astronomy. The 22p value refers to Newton's study of the motion of planetary bodies.



Newton was also referenced in the 1990 Astronomy, 1999 Scientists' Tale set and in the 2010 Royal Society set. The 1999 stamp showing a false colour image of Saturn, is arguably one of most stunning GB stamps ever.

The 2002, 2007 and 2012 sets showing astronomical objects do take the conventional approach using photographs of



beautiful distant objects like galaxies and nebula and solar system phenomena. Shown above left is one of four stamps from the 2002 minisheet showing a planetary nebula in Norma and clouds on Venus from one of six stamps issued in the 2012 Space Science set.

However the Astronomy set which repays most study is undoubtedly the 1990 quartet designed by Australian artist Jeff Fisher. Here each stamp is chock full of astronomical reference. The highest value (37p) with the title "Early Appreciation" for example



includes Stonehenge, thought to have been used for astronomical alignments in the centre segment: this ancient site is also commemorated with a stamp in the 2005 World Heritage issue. On the left we see an armillary sphere and on the right a reference to using the stars for navigation. Over arching these segments we see the phases of the Moon.

The 22p value references the Armagh Observatory, the mark 1A Jodrell Bank radio telescope (also shown on stamps in 1966 and 2011) and the Wm Herschel telescope on La Palma. On the 26p Newton's study of gravity is represented by two diagrams referencing orbital motion and the movement of the tides, two references to comets, a diagram of our galaxy and the 40ft reflector telescope at Slough. In the 31p value the old Royal Observatory is shown centre along with the Greenwich Meridian, which itself had a set devoted to it in 1984. Overarching these is part of an old star map and a diagram of the planets as far out as Uranus, the furthest planet known until the mid-18th Century. The design is completed with references to a mural quadrant and on the right the famous Harrison Chronometer which revolutionised navigation (and which is celebrated in a 1994 set).

Stamps can also be found referencing famous astronomers like the Herschels, Francis Baily, Sir George Airy and Sir Martin Ryle.

In addition to the above, purist collectors might also want to consider any Christmas issue showing The Star of Bethlehem, which might have been a supernova or the spectacular conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in 6AD.

This is a fascinating topic which has produced many stamps of great beauty as well as exercising the imagination of designers.

1966 British Technology: Jodrell Bank

1970 Anniversaries: 150th of Royal Astronomical Society

1984 Greenwich Meridian: Sir George Airey

1986 Halley's Comet

1987 Isaac Newton

1988 Australian Settlement Bicentenary: Southern Cross

1990 Astronomy

1991 Europe in Space

1993 John Harrison's H4 Chronometer

1996 Cheque is in the Post

1999 Scientists' Tale/ Solar Eclipse

2000 Above and Beyond: Night Sky

2002 Astronomy

2007 50th Anniversary of *The Sky at Night*

2007 World of Invention

2009 Eminent Britons: Sir Martin Ryle

2010 350th Anniv of The Royal Society: Isaac Newton

2011 UK A-Z Jodrell Bank

2012 Space Science

- Any Christmas issue showing the Star of Bethlehem e.g. 1969, 1979, 1981, 1988 etc etc

Published in edited format in *STAMP* in December 2016, but since then additionally....

2018 Captain Cooks *Endeavour* voyage: observing the Transit of Venus at Tahiti