

Royal Mail News

Peace & Freedom Stamps

The theme of the Europa Stamps for 1995 is "Peace and Freedom" and stamps on this subject will be issued by all postal administrations in the PostEurop organisation. Royal Mail will issue five stamps on 2 May, the issue date having been brought forward by one week from that originally announced. The five stamps reflect two very different aspects of the theme of Peace and Freedom. Three of the stamps honour two organisations involved in working for peace, the British Red Cross and the United Nations which was formed in 1945. The other two



commemorate the 50th anniversary of the end of the war. The stamps will be available at post offices, the British Philatelic Bureau and Post Office Counters philatelic outlets.

Three stamps feature designs symbolising peace and the work of the British Red Cross (19p) and United Nations (25p, 30p). The 25p and 30p values include the PostEurop's EUROPA symbol. These three stamps are the work of Jean-Michel Folon with the type layout of the

stamps designed by John Gorham.

Two stamps – 19p and 25p – depict the celebration of peace and freedom and Victory night in London. These are the work of John Gorham who designed the 1990 Queen Mother, 1990 Christmas, and 1992 Wintertime sets.

The stamps cover the basic 2nd class inland rate (19p), basic 1st class inland and European Union countries rate (25p) and the basic rate for letters and postcards to European countries not in the EU (30p).

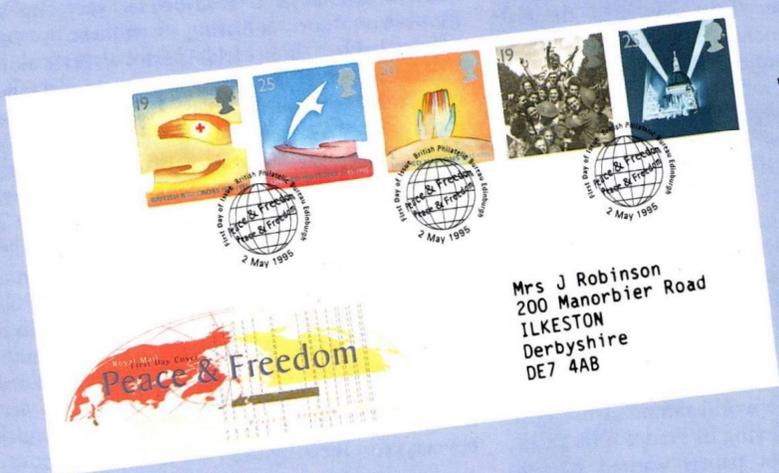
To commemorate the end of the war in Europe over 50 heads of state and government have been invited to official events in London on 6 and 7 May. The events will centre on the theme of half a century of peace and international reconciliation. VE Day itself (8 May) will be a public holiday in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Special events include a concert in Hyde Park, and entertainment in front of Buckingham Palace where crowds gathered on VE night to see George VI and Queen Elizabeth (now The Queen Mother) on the Palace balcony. The exhibition in Hyde Park will be open to the public throughout the Bank Holiday weekend.

The end of the war in the Far East will be marked by events on 19-20 August, coinciding with the 50th anniversary of VJ (Victory in Japan) Day.

In announcing the official events, the Prime Minister, Mr John Major, spoke of the advice taken from the war veterans' organisations in the planning of the commemorative events as tributes to the veterans and all who gave their lives in the defence of freedom.

The British Red Cross Society celebrates its 125th anniversary this year. It was founded in 1870 in response to the Franco-Prussian War and the original Geneva Convention which laid down rules for the treatment of those wounded in battle. In both World Wars, the Society tended the sick and wounded and prisoners of war. Today the Society supports the work of the International Committee of the Red Cross and works closely with other Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, helping in world disasters. Through its 90 UK branches the Red Cross provides valuable services such as first aid training, medical loans and transport. Red Cross Week (6-13 May), the British Red Cross's annual fundraising event, this year coincides with the 50th anniversary of VE Day.

Stamps commemorating the International Red Cross Centenary Congress were issued by the



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British Post Office in 1963 (SG 642/4).

The United Nations is a voluntary association of states that now has some 184 members – dedicated to maintain international peace and to solving problems through co-operation. In recent times the UN's work in the former Yugoslavia has been much in the news. The organisation evolved from a peace plan announced by President Roosevelt and Winston Churchill in August 1941. The UN Charter was signed in June 1945 at the end of a conference held in San Francisco. The organisation formally came into existence on 24 October 1945, annually commemorated as UN Day. The Executive Committee of the UN Preparatory Commission met at Church House, London in 1945, and in January/February 1946 the first meeting of the General Assembly was held at Central Hall, Westminster – known to older collectors as the venue for Stampex.

Stamps marking the 20th anniversary of the UN were issued by the Post Office in 1965 (SG681/2). The UN Postal Administration issues its own stamps for use on mail from its New York, Geneva and Vienna offices. Special issues this year mark the 50th anniversary. The Universal Postal Union, which co-ordinates international postal services, has been a specialised agency of the UN since 1947.

The Designers

Jean-Michel Folon is a world-famous artist, born in Belgium and now living in France. His father, a wholesale dealer in paper, wanted him to become an architect but Jean-Michel preferred to be an artist and left the Ecole Saint-Luc in Brussels and hitched to Paris with his drawing materials. In Paris he drew buildings and painted in watercolours (never oils) before working on posters for Olivetti, and front covers for *Time* and *New Yorker* magazines. His designs sometimes included a "little man" with whom, over the years, Folon has come to identify. He regards his work as very autobiographical.

Folon designed the official symbol for the bicentenary of the French Revolution, and for French television created a nightly 100-second sequence of little blue-hatted men flying through the sky, saying "Bonsoir". When it was taken off after eight years, thousands of children refused to go to bed until they had seen the blue men flying away! Folon describes himself as a "visualiser" rather than a painter, engraver or poster designer. As well as the Royal Mail 1991 Europe in Space stamps (SG 1560/3), he has also

designed issues for Belgium and France.

John Gorham was born in Uxbridge in 1937. He disliked school, apart from digging the school garden! After studies at Harrow College of Art, he worked as an apprentice in a silk-screen company, as a graphic designer for the *Daily Mirror*, and in the marketing department of *The Sunday Times*. Since 1968 he has run his own design studio and in the late 1970s and early 1980s taught at the London Royal College of Art. In 1991 he was granted the Silver award by the European Art Directors Club and in 1993 received the prestigious President's award of the Design & Art Director's Association of Great Britain.

His work has been described as "very English, humble not flashy, honest, and approachable... He wields personal craft skills, not a big team." Amongst his many acclaimed designs is the Lion chocolate bar. John Gorham is largely self-taught, his keen observation of design outweighing his lack of formal training. His output includes packaging design, posters, book design, film graphics, and direct mail as well as postage stamps. His involvement with Royal Mail began with design of the type layout for the 1987 Studio Pottery and 1990 RSPCA stamps which used photographs by the late Tony Evans. John designed the 1990 Queen Mother and Christmas issues, the latter using illustrations by Andrew Davidson. He has designed several presentation packs and first day covers, most recently the 1994 D-Day issue.

Technical Details

<i>Printers:</i> Harrison & Sons Ltd
<i>Process:</i> Photogravure
<i>Size:</i> 35 x 37mm
<i>Sheets:</i> 100
<i>Perforation:</i> 15 x 14
<i>Phosphor:</i> 19p (both) - 1 phosphor band 25p (both) & 30p - 2 phosphor bands
<i>Paper:</i> OBA free (OBA = Optical Brightening Agent)
<i>Gum:</i> PVA Dextrin

First Day Facilities

Unstamped first day cover envelopes will be available from main post offices, the British Philatelic Bureau and Post Office Counters philatelic outlets around a week before 2 May, price 25p.

The Bureau will provide a first day cover

service – collectors may order the Royal Mail cover bearing the stamps, cancelled with pictorial “First Day of Issue” postmarks of the Bureau or London SW, price £1.80 (including VAT) to UK addresses, £1.54 to overseas addresses (no VAT). Orders must be received at the Bureau by 2 May 1995.

Collectors may send their own stamped covers on 2 May for the pictorial cancels to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH EH3 5TT or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, 53 Nine Elms Lane, LONDON SW8 5BB (London SW postmark). Please endorse the outer envelope “FD9509” (Bureau), or “FD9510” (London SW).

Collectors can post cover in First Day Posting Boxes at most main post offices to receive local, non-pictorial “First Day of Issue” handstamps.

Details of sponsored special handstamps will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin* (Royal Mail’s magazine for postmark collectors), which is available on subscription to the British Philatelic Bureau: £10 UK/Europe; £21.75 Rest of World (Airmail).

Collectors may affix just the 19p Peace & Freedom stamps to covers to receive all special cancels (“First Day of Issue”, sponsored and philatelic counters), in use on 2 May. The minimum 1st class rule is suspended for the day as the set includes 2nd class rate stamps; this concession applies only to the 19p Peace & Freedom stamps; covers bearing other than Peace & Freedom stamps are subject to the 1st class rule.

Presentation Pack and Stamp Cards

The pack (price £1.53) and stamp cards (25p each) will be available from the Bureau, Post Office Counters philatelic outlets and main post offices.

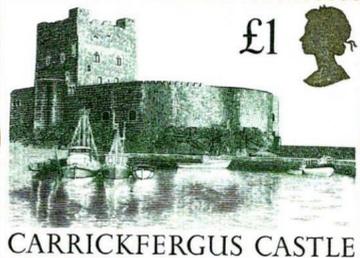
New Printings of High Value Stamps

New printings of all four Castle stamps were made last year and are now in general circulation. Although Royal Mail does not regard them as new stamps, it recognises that they are of interest to specialist collectors. The first to go into distribution was the £5 (Windsor Castle) value and enlarged illustrations of the old and new printings were published in the October 1994 *Bulletin* (page 37).

For the benefit of collectors who want to tell the different printings apart, we now publish enlarged illustrations of the remaining three values. The main difference can be seen in the



CARRICKFERGUS CASTLE



CARRICKFERGUS CASTLE

Top. 1992 printing

Below. 1994 Printing



CAERNARFON CASTLE



CAERNARFON CASTLE