

This month



THIS MONTH we commemorate various anniversaries of interest to philatelists. It is 60 years since of the Coronation of King George VI and the issue of the first stamps of his reign; no doubt some readers will recall buying the stamps at their local post office. Also in May 1937 took place an Atlantic Coronation flight to carry the first photographs and films of the Coronation to the USA. Forty years ago, in May 1957, the narrow-gauge Talylyn Railway in Wales issued railway letter stamps, reviving a service introduced in the 1890s. Today several preserved railways issue such stamps under agreement with Royal Mail. I hope you will find the articles on these subjects, by Jean Matheson, Richard Beith and Sara Eade, of interest.

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the first US postage stamps, an event commemorated by the Pacific '97 international exhibition in San Francisco this month. We wish the exhibition every success and hope all visitors will enjoy the material on display. Some of the attractions at the exhibition are previewed this month.

As I write, we in Britain are awaiting the General Election on 1 May. It is appropriate, therefore, that this *Bulletin* includes a feature on the House of Commons Post Office and the splendid work of John Arnold and his staff.

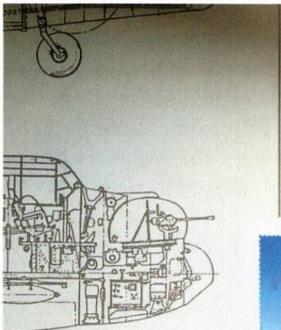
Good news from the National Postal Museum – repair work is nearing completion and it is hoped to reopen at the end of June. By way of encouraging you to visit, we include this month a booklet on Victorian stamps, illustrating a few of the many treasures in the Museum. This booklet is no 4 in Bulletin Publications series, additional copies are available from the Bureau, price £2.95. Happy reading! JOHN HOLMAN, EDITOR •

Royal Mail news Architects of the Air • Definitives change of printers • New post- marks • 1998 stamp issue dates

The designers The stamps are the work of Turner Duckworth, a graphic design group with offices in London and Los Angeles. These are their first stamps for Royal Mail.

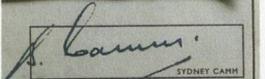
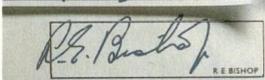
Architects of the Air stamps Five stamps honouring eminent aircraft designers go on sale at post offices, and philatelic outlets on 10 June 1997. Each stamp features a cloud-effect portrait of the designer superimposed by his famous aircraft. The Queen's head, value and caption are in silver.

The 20p stamp (inland 2nd class basic rate) features the Supermarine Spitfire mk 11A, and Reginald Joseph Mitchell (1895-1937) its chief designer. Just a year before his death he witnessed the fighter soar into the sky. The Spitfire, noted for its elliptical wings, was developed from Mitchell's pioneering sea planes. To this day Mitchell is remembered for his technical brilliance and the aesthetic appeal of his designs. In 1995, on the centenary of his birth, Royal Mail issued a commemorative label pane, and his portrait adorned the front cover of the third £1 stamp book in the Sec-



'The aeroplane is the symbol of the new age'

The architect Le Corbusier wrote these words in 1935. Up until this era the biplane reigned supreme, two wings laced together by diagonal struts, inherited from earth-bound structures such as bridges. The fuselage followed a similar pattern of triangulated members covered by canvas like the wings. But two technological trends were revolutionising the performance and appearance of aircraft. First was the realisation that the outer membrane could become a vital part of the structure: cloth gave way to planks of wood and then skins of metal. The other innovation was to replace the pair of trussed wings with one single cantilevered wing. At the same time architects and engineers were transforming the landscape with cantilevered structures to create a new concept of space; skyscrapers were gravity-defying vertical cantilevers charting new boundaries in the sky.



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Sydney Camm was the designer of the Hurricane and the Spitfire. He was driving force behind the development of the new prototype, driving force behind the development of the new prototype, driving force behind the development of the new prototype.

The most beautiful dream that has haunted the heart of man since Icarus is today reality' pronounced Bleniot early this century. If at its peak architecture and flight are about fusing the spirit with the physical practicalities to create a beautiful object, then the two are linked. Aviation began as an offspring of the engineering that makes possible a work of architecture. Today, architects study their designs in wind tunnels and computer simulations, and use new materials which would not exist without the aerospace industries. In a single lifetime the child has grown to be bigger and faster, with a wealth of knowledge to return to the parent.

SIR NORMAN FOSTER



ond World War series. The Spitfire has featured on many stamps from around the world, including four of the six 4d stamps in the 1965 Battle of Britain set.

The 26p denomination (inland 1st class and EU basic rates) depicts the Avro Lancaster mk 1, designed by Roy Chadwick (1893-1947). Chadwick experimented with all-metal planes for Avro and devised metal stressed-skin fuselages. Amongst his greatest achievements were the Anson, the first operational monoplane to enter RAF service, the Lancaster bomber and the Tudor – Britain's first pressurised production airliner. Sadly he died in a test flight of this aircraft. His design sketches foreshadowed the delta-wing design of the Vulcan bomber. He was said to be a fair artist and violinist. An Avro Type 683 Lancaster was shown, with Sir Arthur 'Bomber'

Technical details
Printers Harrison & Sons Ltd
Process Photogravure
Size 41 x 30mm
Sheets 100
Perforation 15 x 14
Phosphor One band 20p, two bands others
Paper OBA (Optical Brightening Agent) free
Gum PVA



Harris on the 31p History of the RAF stamp of 1986.

Ronald Eric Bishop (1903-89) and the de Havilland Mosquito B, mk XVI feature on the **37p** value (airmail postcard rate). As head of design for de Havilland, Bishop devised the all-wooden Mosquito. In the early 1940s its Rolls Royce Merlin engines powered the fastest aircraft in the RAF, giving it the lowest loss rate of any aircraft with Bomber Command. The home-based fighter version was responsible for shooting down 600 enemy raiders and 600 flying bombs in just 60 nights. Bishop is also remembered as the designer of the Comet, the first jet airliner, which featured on a 50p stamp book cover in 1990. A DH98 Mosquito was featured, with Lord Portal, on the 1986 34p RAF stamp.

The **43p** stamp (basic airmail letter rate) depicts George Carter (1889-1969) and the Gloster Meteor F mk 8. Carter, of the Gloster Aircraft Company, worked with Frank Whittle, pioneer of the jet engine, on the Meteor – the first operational jet aircraft which entered service in 1944 and soon set world speed records. The 37p stamp in the 1991 Scientific Achievements set featured a Gloster Whittle E28/39 airplane, marking the 50th anniversary of Whittle's jet engine.

The **63p** value (airmail letters, second weight step) features Sir Sydney Camm (1893-1966), a contemporary of Mitchell, and creator of the Hawker Hunter FGA mk 9. He is best-known perhaps for the classic fighter, the Hurricane which was shown on two 1965 Battle of Britain stamps, the 17p 1986 RAF stamp, and on a £1 book cover in 1980. Camm, described by Sir Henry Royce, as 'slow to decide and quick to act' was the driving force behind the vertical take-off Harrier.

'1947', writes Sir Norman Foster in the presentation pack, 'was a pivotal point in the history of world aviation which is inseparable from the lives of the five great British aircraft designers celebrated. In that year it was possible to take stock of the past and to glimpse the future: when Roy Chadwick tragically died in one of his own creations, when speed records were smashed by the pioneering jets.'

An article, by G E Drabble, on British stamps featuring aircraft was published here in September 1990.

FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail 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 10 June, price 25p.

The Bureau will provide a first day cover service – collectors may order the Royal Mail cover bearing the stamps, cancelled with a pictorial 'first day of issue' postmark of the Bureau or Duxford, price £2.64 (including VAT) to UK addresses, £2.25 overseas (no VAT). Orders for covers must be received at the Bureau by 10 June. Collectors may send their

own stamped covers on the day of issue, for these cancels, to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT, or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Wexham Road, Slough SL1 1AA (for Duxford postmark). The outer envelope should be marked 'FD9709' (Bureau), or 'FD9710' (Duxford).

First Day Posting Boxes will be provided at most main post offices for collectors who wish to post covers to receive local (mostly non-pictorial) 'first day of issue' handstamps. For details of special handstamps, sponsored by Royal Mail, stamp dealers and others, see the *British Postmark Bulletin* – available on subscription from the British Philatelic Bureau: £10 UK and Europe; £21.75 rest of world (airmail).

PRESENTATION PACK AND STAMP CARDS A presentation pack (price £2.25) and stamp cards (25p each) will be available from the Bureau, Post Office Counters philatelic outlets, and main post offices. The pack has been written by Sir Norman Foster, architect, aircraft enthusiast and designer of the new American Air Museum in Britain, to be opened by HM The Queen at the Imperial War Museum, Duxford near Cambridge on 1 August 1997. The 70,000 sq ft exhibition area will house Europe's finest collection of historic American combat aircraft from a First World War biplane to the giant B-52 jet bomber. A Philatelic Numismatic Cover (PNC) is to be issued in August on the anniversary of Chadwick's death.

NEW MARGINAL MARKINGS The no dot sheets of these stamps have colour shade boxes for each basic colour – cyan (blue), magenta, black, and yellow – in the top left sheet margin. The dot sheets of the aircraft stamps have the traditional colour registration marks in this position ●

NPM Aircraft Postcards On 10 June the National Postal Museum will issue a set of four postcards to commemorate Aircraft (Aviators), coinciding with the Architects of the Air stamps. A special handstamp will be available on 10 June, cards and covers should be sent to: Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Mount Pleasant, London EC1A 1BB. As readers are aware the Museum is temporarily closed for repair and not expected to reopen before late June. However customers who usually purchase postcards at the Museum can make an appointment (Monday-Friday) with the Shop Manager, Barry Tennant on 0171 600 8938, who will be happy to provide this issue for sale ●

1998 stamp issues Provisional dates of issue for next year's stamps are:

27 January Endangered Species

3 March The Queen's Beasts

1 April Comedians

2 June Lighthouses

30 June Health

11 August Carnival

8 September C S Lewis

6 October Speed

2 November Christmas

A set recalling major events and personalities of 1997 will be issued in January, and the 1998 prestige stamp book in September ●

American Air Museum enquiries Imperial War Museum, Duxford Airfield, Cambridge CB2 4QR. Telephone 01223 835000.

Aircraft postcards price £1 the set, can, as usual, be obtained on mail order (post free) from: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT, quoting reference NPM 97/9-12.

NPM enquiries including latest on reopening date, should be made on 0171 600 8914.

All dates given here are subject to change – any alteration will be published in the *Bulletin*.