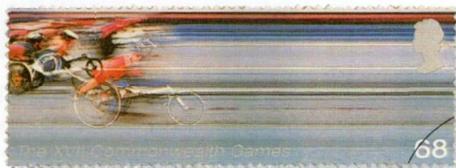


The Friendly Games Royal Mail's new issue



Technical details

Printer Joh Enschedé Stamps

Process Gravure

Stamp size 60 x 21 mm

Sheets 100

Perforation 14.5

Phosphor 2nd class one band, others two bands

Gum PVA

Gutter pairs Vertical

FIVE STAMPS featuring athletic events in the Commonwealth Games (to be held in Manchester, 25 July - 4 August) will be available from post offices, Royal Mail Tallents House Edinburgh, and Post Office philatelic outlets from 16 July. The stamps are: 2nd class (19p) swimming; 1st class (27p) running; £ (European rate, 37p) cycling; 47p long-jumping; and 68p wheelchair athletics.

FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail FDC envelopes will be available from main Post Office branches and philatelic outlets about a week before 16 July, price 25p. Orders for FDCs with the five stamps cancelled by a pictorial first day postmark of Royal Mail Tallents House Edinburgh or Manchester must reach Tallents House (address below) by the day of issue. Price £2.74 UK (including VAT) or £2.34 overseas (no VAT).

Collectors may send stamped covers on the day of issue to: Royal Mail, Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB (Tallents House postmark), or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, South Shields DO, Keppell Street, South Shields NE33 1AA (Manchester postmark), marking the outer envelope 'FDO215' (Tallents House), or 'FDO216' (Manchester). Covers can be posted or handed in at main post offices for the Manchester postmark.

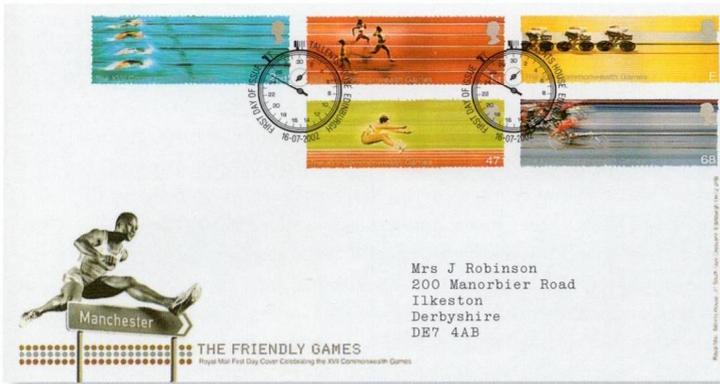
For details of other handstamps for 16 July see the *British Postmark Bulletin* - available on subscription from Tallents House (£10 UK/Europe; £21.75 elsewhere). For a sample copy write to: The Editor, British Postmark Bulletin, Royal Mail, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8HQ.

PHILATELIC PRODUCTS A well-illustrated pack containing the five stamps (price £2.35) and stamp cards (25p each) will be available from main post offices and philatelic outlets. The pack, designed by The Chase, includes an article by Alan Hubbard and photography by Martin Barraud. A coin cover, incorporating a £2 coin for each of the four home countries taking part in the Games, will be available from Royal Mail Tallents House, price £19.95.

celebrating the 17th Commonwealth Games

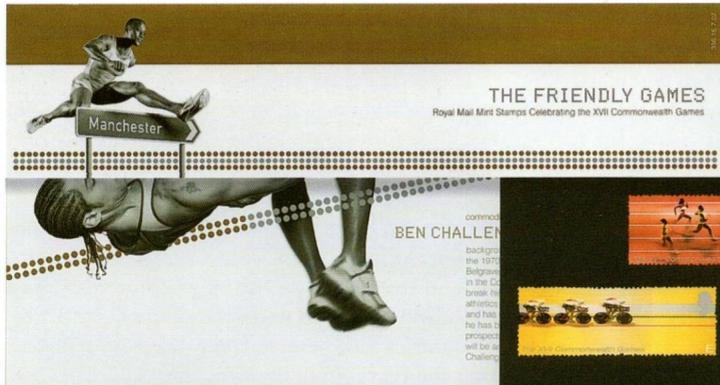


The Commonwealth Games stamps are the work of Madeleine Bennett, using photographs from Getty Images. These are her first stamp designs for Royal Mail. Madeleine established her own practice 11 years ago, and since then she has designed brand, corporate and web identities, packaging, literature and books. She recently won the London International Advertising Gold Award for packaging.



Cylinders and colours

- 2nd 1A greenish yellow ● 1B magenta ● 1C turquoise ● 1D black ● 1E silver ● 1F blue
- Others 1A greenish yellow ● 1B magenta ● 1C blue ● 1D black ● 1E silver
- Phosphor 1G 2nd, 1F others



These are exciting times for sport's disabled competitors – for the first time, the Commonwealth Games will integrate their events with the able-bodied programme. James Crisp, a 19-year-old swimmer from Nottingham, will be competing in the 100 metres freestyle. Vaccine damaged with polio as a three-year-old, he has restricted mobility in one leg.

JAMES CRISP

"It is a wonderful opportunity for the rest of the world to know how far disabled sport has progressed. I don't know what I would be doing with my life if it wasn't for swimming. It has enabled me to travel the world." In the 2000 Paralympics he won three gold, two silver and two bronze medals and broke two world records. Yet he knows he will have to be in top form to come away with gold against the Australians, who are as dominant in disabled swimming as they are in able-bodied events.

The presentation pack (left) includes an article by Alan Hubbard and photography by Martin Barraud.



The Commonwealth Games The 17th Games – the fourth held in the UK – will be opened in Manchester by HM The Queen on 25 July. Some 5250 competitors and officials from 72 nations will take part in 17 sports over a 10 day period. For the first time able-bodied and disabled athletes will take part. Manchester is a city steeped in sport, world renowned for football, but also possessing probably the best all-round sports facilities in the UK.

The first British Empire Games were held in Hamilton, Canada in August 1930 when 450 competitors and team officials from just 11 countries took part. Subsequent Games have been staged in London (1934), Sydney, Australia (1938), Auckland, New Zealand (1950), Vancouver, Canada (1954), Cardiff (1958), Perth, Australia (1962), Kingston, Jamaica (1966), Edinburgh (1970), Christchurch, New Zealand (1974), Edmonton, Canada (1978), Brisbane, Australia (1982), Edinburgh (1986), Auckland, New Zealand (1990), Victoria, Canada (1994), and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (1998). The fifth, sixth and seventh Games (1954, 1958 and 1960) were titled British Empire & Commonwealth Games, then British Commonwealth Games in 1966, and 1970, and 1974, and since 1978 simply as Commonwealth Games.

The British PO issued three stamps, featuring the Welsh dragon, for the 6th Games held in Cardiff in 1958. A range of slogan postmarks and special handstamps were used, including some at the Games village in Barry and for the water activities at Llanberis in north Wales. Amongst the competitors was a postal worker, Stuart Slack, who went on to head the Isle of Man Post Office. The Queen handed over a silver baton containing a message to be carried by runners to Cardiff to be read at the opening ceremony. The Queen's Message is now an integral part of the ceremonial part of the Games. At the end of the Cardiff Games The Queen announced that she was creating Prince Charles as Prince of Wales although it was not until 1969 that he was invested as such at Caernarfon Castle.

Runners, swimmers and cyclists featured on the three stamps, designed by Andrew Restall, for the 1970 Games in Edinburgh. Again there was a special Games postmark. Sixteen years later the Games were back in Edinburgh and marked by four stamps featuring athletics, rowing, weightlifting, and rifle shooting. A nice touch was the inclusion of the Scottish Saltire in the cap of the rifle shooter. (The fifth stamp in the set marked the World Hockey Cup for Men in London.) Again there were special postmarks and a Post Office commemorative cover as well as the usual first day cover.

The inspiration for the Games is thought to be the Rev Astley Cooper who suggested in *Greater Britain* magazine and *The Times* a 'Pan-Britannic-Pan-Anglican Contest and Festival' to be held every four years 'as a means of increasing the goodwill and good understanding of the British Empire.' The number of countries represented, competitors and officials has grown substantially over the years. From the 11 countries and 450 participants in 1930 the numbers had increased to 67 and 3471 in 1994. Australia heads the table of medals having 1474 (564 gold, 460 silver and 472 bronze) to its credit. England is second (1419), Canada third (1115) and New Zealand fourth (452). We await with interest the medal tally for the Manchester Games •

