

Pub Signs Five new stamps from Royal Mail



Technical details

Printer De La Rue

Process Gravure

Stamp size 30 × 41mm

Sheet size 50

Perforation 14 × 14.5

Phosphor Two bands

Gum PVA

Gutter pairs Vertical

Cylinder numbers & colours

All values D1 black ● D1 magenta ● D1 yellow ● D1 cyan (blue) ● D1 phosphor ● The 1st and E also have D1 silver (used for the Europa symbol).

FIVE STAMPS featuring pub signs will be available from Post Office branches and philatelic outlets and from Royal Mail Tallents House Edinburgh from 12 August. They feature: 1st class The Station; E (European) rate Black Swan; 42p The Cross Keys; 47p The Mayflower; and 68p The Barley Sheaf. The Queen's silhouette and value/service indicator are positioned at top left and top right respectively. The pub names appear as captions at the foot of each stamp. The 1st and E (European rate) stamps include the EUROPA symbol in the lower right part of the design – Royal Mail's contribution to the Europa series, the theme of which this year is Poster Art. Royal Mail has issued Europa stamps annually since 1980 (except 2000). The stamps were designed by Elmwood using signs illustrated by Andrew Davidson (1st class), Stanley Chew (E), George Mackenney (42p), Ralph Ellis (47p), and Joy Cooper (68p).

Andrew Davidson studied graphic art and design at Norwich and the Royal College of Art. He is a well-known commercial artist and book illustrator. As one of the illustrators behind a ground-breaking project for John Smith's Yorkshire Brewery, Davidson used vitreous enamel in pub sign art for the first time.

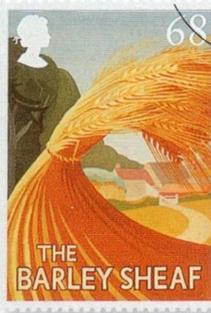
Stanley Chew studied at the Royal College of Art. After war service, he moved to Devon where he spent the rest of his life. Starting in 1960, he painted more than 600 signs, mostly in the West Country and mostly for Bass. He is especially noted for his use of colour.

George Mackenney, one of the most prolific signpainters of the post-war period, studied at art school in the 1930s. He painted more than 6000 signs, many of them for Bedford brewer Charles Wells, in a career that lasted over 30 years.

Ralph Gordon Ellis became an artist after service in World War I and was a noted painter of portraits and landscapes as well as inn signs. In a 30-year career, he painted over 250 signs for long-gone breweries such as Atkinson's, Brickwood's, Fremlin's, Watney and Whitbread.

Joy Cooper worked under her maiden name, Linton, and painted many signs in a bold contemporary style for the St Austell Brewery in Cornwall in the 1940s. The brewer's chairman, Egbert Barnes, was a noted connoisseur of modern art and architecture.

celebrate a most traditional British landmark



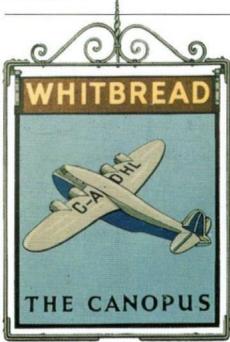
An illustrated pack containing the five stamps (below, price £2.60) and stamp cards (25p each) will be available from Tallents House, main Post Office branches and philatelic outlets. The pack is designed by Morgan Radcliffe with text by Ted Bruning.



FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail FDC envelopes will be available from main Post Office branches and philatelic outlets about a week before 12 August, price 25p. Orders for serviced FDCs with the five stamps cancelled by a pictorial first day postmark of Royal Mail Tallents House Edinburgh or Cross Keys, Hereford must reach Tallents House (address below) by the day of issue. Price £3.04 UK or £2.59 overseas.

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, St Stephens Street, Birmingham B6 4AA (Cross Keys postmark), marking the outer envelope 'F0317' (Tallents House), or 'F0318' (Cross Keys). Covers can be posted or handed in at main Post Offices for the Cross Keys postmark.

Other handstamps for 12 August will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin* – available on subscription from Tallents House (£12.25 UK / Europe; £24.95 elsewhere). For a sample copy write to: The Editor, *British Postmark Bulletin*, Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ.



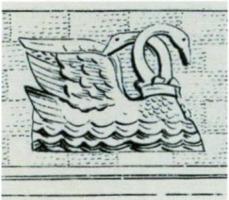
Sign at The Canopus pub in Cookham Hill, Kent. *Canopus* was one of the flying boats which carried mail throughout the British Empire in the 1930s.

Pub signs What could be more British than the traditional public house? Like red pillar boxes and double-decker buses, we often take the pub for granted. But there is a thousand years of history behind your local, and a fine way to investigate its past is to take a look at the sign hanging outside.

In medieval times, many brewed ale for their own use; if they had a surplus to sell they would display an alestake (a sprig of greenery attached to a pole) outside their home. This primitive sign survives today in pub names such as The Bush. In towns, inn signs had more elaborate designs to distinguish one inn from another, and in 1393 Richard II made it compulsory for alehouses to exhibit a sign.

The Red Lion became the most popular pub name because lions were the most common heraldic beasts. Such signs multiplied after 1603 when James I, in whose arms a lion gules appears, succeeded Elizabeth I. During the Reformation hundreds of Pope's Heads were hurriedly replaced by the King's Head. Queen Victoria banned the use of portraits of living members of the royal family in advertising, including inn signs.

Religion inspired many names, such as the Angel, Anchor, Salutation, Lamb, Mitre, and Cross Keys. In Victorian times pub names become more commercial, with names drawn from trades being common: Gardener's Arms, Cooper's Arms, Plumber's Arms, etc. Publicans hoped that both employers and workers would be drawn to aptly-titled pubs. Farming is recalled in names such as the Barley Mow, Barley Sheaf and Plough.



The Swan with Two Necks, London (detail from the 1984 Mail Coaches issue).

Pub signs on stamps The forthcoming set is the first devoted to the subject but the sign of the Swan with Two Necks can be seen on the first of the five Mail Coaches issued in 1984 (left). The signs of the Bull and Mouth and Swan were depicted on the first day of issue postmarks for the Philatelic Bureau and Bristol. A number of coaching inns featured on Post Office Regional postcards issued at the time. Inn signs also appeared on the covers of four 50p stamp books issued in 1994 (shown above) – the Swan with Two Necks, Bull and Mouth, and Golden Cross (all in London), and the Pheasant Inn (Wiltshire). In recent years a number of special handstamps, sponsored by M Brazier, have featured pub signs ●