

Great British Fashion Stylish new stamps pay tribute to ten iconic UK designers

In the second half of the 20th century, fashion became a major national industry. Today it employs around a million people and contributes some £21 billion to the UK economy. The international renown of British fashion designers has been built on our centuries-old heritage of bespoke tailoring, shoemaking and millinery crafts, and indigenous fine wool fabrics. However, on their journey to the top, most eminent designers have given tradition a fresh and irreverent kick up the bustle with the kind of distinctive eccentricity and flair that put Britain at the cutting edge of fashion.

A new stamp issue, released next month, celebrates ten innovative fashion houses that have stood as beacons of creativity across the years since World War Two. One key garment has been chosen to represent each designer. Like Mary Quant's daring mini-skirt, which proved to be one of the most popular of the stamps featured in the British Design Classic stamps of 2009, the clothes showcase a key look and line that recalls a certain fashion era but has stood the test of time.

Claire Wilcox, Senior Curator of Fashion at London's Victoria and Albert Museum, helped Royal Mail compile a list of the UK's most influential post-war fashion design houses. The chosen ten names were supplied to designers Johnson Banks, who commissioned photographer Solve Sundsbø to photograph models wearing the vintage designer-label garments, sourced from fashion houses and vintage clothes stores..

Stamp by stamp Because the stamps are printed across two sheets of five se-tenant designs, vertical strips of five stamps of each design are also available.

Hardy Amies was the first major European fashion designer to venture into



Above: Talents House and alternative pictorial First Day Cover postmarks.

Below: the Presentation Pack, in which Amy de la Haye looks at 70 years of British fashion



Great British Fashion Stamps – Specifications

Issue date	15 May
Number of stamps	Ten x 1st
Design	Johnson Banks
Stamp format	Portrait
Stamp size	35mm x 37mm
Printer	Cartor Security Printing
Print process	Lithography
Number per sheet	25/50
Perforations	14.5 x 14
Phosphor	Background screen
Gum	PVA
Sheet format	Two x 25.50, each of five se-tenant designs; vertical strips of five of each design

ready-to-wear. In 1955 he received a Royal Warrant as Dressmaker to The Queen.

Norman Hartnell began at 10 Bruton Street, Mayfair, in 1923. He became Dressmaker to HM Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother and Queen Elizabeth II.

Granny Takes a Trip was an idiosyncratic Kings Road boutique, opened in 1965 and has been dubbed London's 'first psychedelic boutique'.

Ossie Clark was a major figure in the Swinging Sixties and he has influenced many other designers. His dress on the stamp is made from fabric designed by Celia Birtwhistle.

Tommy Nutter recreated the Savile Row suit for pop stars of the 1960s. The suit featured on the stamp was originally designed for Ringo Starr.

Jean Muir set up her own label after designing for Jaeger. Her clients include Joanna Lumley, Charlotte Rampling and Maggie Smith.

Zandra Rhodes was one of the 1970s new wave of British designers. Her designs are dramatic yet graceful. She designed for Diana, Princess of Wales, and continues to design for royalty and celebrities.

Vivienne Westwood is largely responsible for bringing punk fashion into the mainstream – starting in the mid-1970s with Malcolm McLaren.

Paul Smith took evening classes in tailoring and worked in Savile Row before setting up his own label, now established worldwide.

Please note: we are unable to list prices of stamps, First Day Cover and Presentation Pack, because the date of the introduction of new tariffs had not been confirmed at the time of April *Bulletin* going to press. We apologise for any inconvenience caused and suggest that readers wishing to know the prices contact Tallents House, Edinburgh nearer to the date of issue ●



Above: which one is your favourite 'look'? Next month's new issue comprises key pieces from ten top British fashion designers