

A proper presentation

Richard West relates the history of

Two forerunners of today's presentation packs, those containing Regional stamps and the Castle high values, showing the price in either sterling or US currency.



IT IS WIDELY recognised that it was during the 1960s that the Post Office discovered philately. A philosophy that scarcely saw a need for special stamps, and would announce designs at midnight on the day of issue, was turned around almost overnight. More issues, more pictorial designs and the use of more colour was matched by a proper acceptance of first day covers, even providing 'first day of issue' cancellations.

The most remarkable change came in 1964: it was still not possible blatantly to commemorate the 400th anniversary of William Shakespeare's birth, but the accompanying Festival was celebrated – and with five stamps. Most significantly, the Post Office introduced a product that would soon accompany every British stamp issue, and indeed would be widely embraced by many other postal administrations – the presentation pack. The Shakespeare Festival pack adopted a style that would be used hereafter: the stamps within clear strips on a black card contained within an informative folder, the whole slipped into a cellophane protector.

A problem noted with many early presentation packs is that the cellophane shrinks, causing the pack to curl: the material used for the protector was later changed. The format of the pack was also to change – but more on that later.

The Shakespeare packs can be found with all five stamps overprinted 'CANCELLED' in black (the same overprint used on samples of the 1963 COMPAC stamp presented with this *Bulletin* at the

time the stamp was issued). These packs were mainly used to promote both the issue and the product among dealers in the United States.

Forerunners While the Shakespeare issue was the first for which the term 'presentation pack' was adopted, most collectors recognise a group of four forerunners produced in 1960. These were the idea of Frank Langfield, who at the time was spearheading the development of philatelic sales for the PO. They were prepared to ease the sale of sets of current definitives at both the international stamp exhibition at the Royal Festival Hall in London in 1960, and during a sales tour in the United States. As a result, all four packs can be found priced either in sterling or US dollars.

The stamps are placed in strips on dark grey card, which is encased in a 'window' envelope, allowing the contents to be seen. Details of the stamps enclosed (designs, designers, technical details) are printed on the back of each envelope. On the face of each appears the 'GPO' cypher with the inscription 'British Postage Stamps'. The four packs produced were as follows.

One contained one of each of the Wilding definitives from 1/2d to 1s6d. All the stamps have

the British presentation pack, in the first part of a new series

the Multiple Crowns watermark, except the 1½d and the 11d which have the St Edward's Crown watermark. The pale blue envelope is inscribed 'Eighteen Low Value Stamps' with a price of either 10s6d or \$1.80.

The second pack is inscribed 'Sixteen Experimental Stamps', and contained two sets of the phosphor-graphite definitives from ½d to 4½d, one set being shown face upwards, the second set showing the reverse with the graphite lines. The technical details printed on the reverse of the envelope state that all the stamps have the Multiple Crowns watermark: a sticker was affixed, giving the corrected information that the ½d, 1d and 1½d stamps in fact have the St Edward's Crown watermark. The pack, in a pink envelope, is priced at either 3s8d or 50¢.

The four 'Castle' high values were in the third pack, enclosed in a grey envelope inscribed 'Four High Value Stamps' and priced at £1 18s, \$6.50, or unpriced (the unpriced version was also for sale in the UK). The stamps were from the De La Rue printing with Multiple Crowns watermark.

The final pack, in a cream envelope inscribed 'Twelve Regional Stamps', contained the 3d values for Guernsey, Isle of Man and Jersey, and the 3d, 6d and 1s3d for Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. The pack was priced at 7s 3d or \$1.20.

After Shakespeare Following the Shakespeare Festival pack, the remaining three special issues of 1964 were also available in packs. Almost without exception packs contained the non-phosphor versions (where both phosphor and non-phosphor was issued). However, clearly at the time it had not been decided to provide a pack for every issue. Thus, when it came to 1965, several of the issues did not have a pack, namely Salvation Army, Joseph Lister, Commonwealth Arts Festival, United Nations and ITU Centenary.

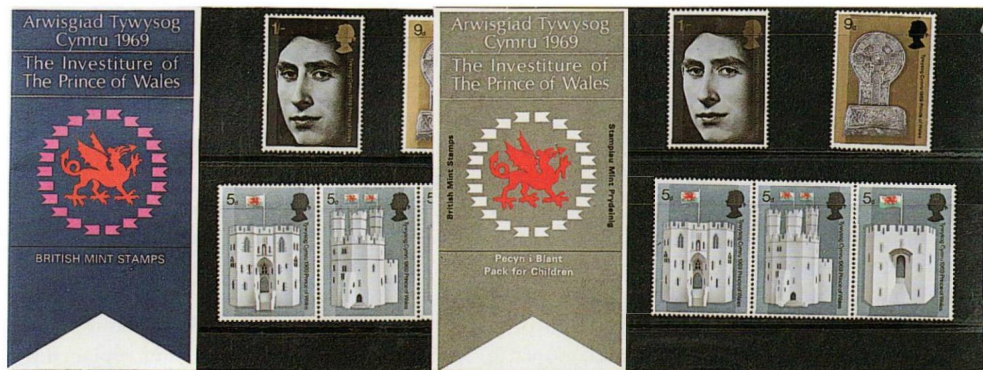
In the following years, a few other issues did not have packs provided: Landscapes and England Winners in 1966; Sir Francis Chichester and Christmas in 1967; Gandhi in 1969. However, a few years later, privately-produced presentation

packs were made available for the various 'missing' issues. Such 'private packs' will be dealt with in a subsequent article.

In 1965 the opening of the Post Office Tower was marked by two stamps, 3d and 1s3d. The presentation pack of this issue remained on sale at the Tower until decimalisation. As a consequence, while at first the packs on sale contained non-phosphor stamps, these were later replaced by the phosphor version. (Post Office Tower stamps were also sold from machines at the Tower in small white envelopes bearing a silhouette of the Tower in blue: these contained a block of four of the 3d value, and a pair of the 1s3d value.)

Overseas versions One of the most interesting developments in presentation packs came about in 1968: the pack for the Paintings series that year was available not only with the text printed in English, but a separate version was also produced with all the text in German. At the time the Post Office had a growing network of overseas sales agencies promoting the sales of British stamps. Similar German language packs were produced for several subsequent special issues: Christmas 1968; Ships, Concorde, Anniversaries, British Cathedrals and the Investiture of The Prince of Wales in 1969. Apart from packs containing definitives (referred to in a subsequent article), these were all the German packs that were produced. As an alternative, for a time, insert cards were inserted into English language packs which provided a translation of the text. Such insert cards in German started with the Post Office Technology set in 1969, and continued through to the Christmas issue of 1974.

Similar insert cards were also produced in Dutch and Japanese, and were first included with packs in 1969, starting with the British Ships series. However, not all issues had such insert cards provided, particularly of the Dutch versions, which were produced finally in 1970 for the Commonwealth Games set. The Japanese cards continued a little longer, finally appearing with the Christmas issue of 1972.



Above: The Investiture of the Prince of Wales – the standard pack (left) and the version for distribution to schoolchildren in Wales.

Right: the standard BBC and Broadcasting History pack, and that containing just the three values dedicated to the BBC prepared for distribution to BBC staff.



However, this was not the end of the Japanese pack. The final special issue for 1972 appeared after the Christmas stamps: it was the two stamps issued on 20 November for the Royal Silver Wedding. Packs were produced with all the text translated and printed in Japanese, rather than by the use of an insert card.

Welsh packs The Welsh language has appeared on a number of packs. A notable example is that for the British Cultural Traditions series of 1974 of which two values were devoted to the Royal National Eisteddfod of Wales. The pack had its body text printed in both English and Welsh. (The stamps also featured the Highland Games, and so key information also appeared in Gaelic.)

However, packs have been prepared primarily for distribution in Wales. For the Investiture of The Prince of Wales in 1969, the standard pack understandably included text in both English and Welsh (plus the German text pack already mentioned). However, special packs were also

produced for schoolchildren in Wales, with most of their text in Welsh. In addition, while the standard and German packs have a blue front panel, the 'schoolchildren' version has a grey panel.

More recently, the Diana Princess of Wales Memorial issue was produced in both English and Welsh. Within the Welsh pack was inserted a card written by 5 year old David Morris: 'Dear God, Thank you for all the love and cuddles Princess Diana gave children everywhere. Amen.'

Special versions In 1969 the British Ships issue was planned to coincide with the maiden voyage of the Cunard liner *Queen Elizabeth II*. The stamps were issued on 15 January, two days prior to the intended date of her maiden voyage. The presentation packs on general sale made reference to 17 January, but the maiden voyage was postponed. Packs were to be on sale on board ship when she did eventually sail; as a consequence the text in such packs was amended to refer to the maiden voyage as taking place 'early in 1969'.

Pack number 50
This pack and the stamps were issued on 14 November 1973, by the British Post Office.

Designed by Clarke/Clements/Hughes.

The stamps were designed by Colles/Clements/MSA and Edward Hughes/MSA.

The photograph was specially taken by Lord Lichfield.

Printed in photogravure by Harrison & Sons (High Wycombe) Ltd.

Acknowledgements for the photographs used in this pack are given to Camera Press Limited.

Central Office of Information Lord Lichfield.

Syndication International Limited. The Press Association Limited.

Made and printed in Great Britain by Moore and Matthews (Printers) Limited.

Further details about British postage stamps and philately facilities can be obtained from the British Post Office Philatelic Bureau, 2-4 Waterloo Place, Edinburgh EH1 1AB.



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**50TH
ANNIVERSARY
OF THE BBC**

BRITISH POST OFFICE MINT STAMPS



Majorie Saynor
The 1s and 1s 9d stamps were designed by Marjorie Saynor. She



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Curiously two printings were made of the Royal Wedding pack of 1973, one having the photograph on the rear of the pack trimmed (above).

Left: two dies were used to emboss the coat of arms for the General Anniversaries pack: note the chains around the hind legs of the unicorn (on one version partly filled in) and the area above 'DROIT'. On the same pack, note the incorrect spelling of Majorie, later corrected to Marjorie.

Four stamps were issued in 1972 to mark both the 50th anniversary of the BBC and the experiments conducted by Marconi and Kemp. The BBC wanted to present its staff with a pack containing just the three stamps appertaining to the organisation: special packs, in a completely different design and with minimal text, were produced for this purpose. Interestingly these packs adopted a different format, in that the information folder, when opened, was of a portrait format. Folders in normal packs were at that time landscape format when opened: only later did the style change to portrait.

Differences Many early packs included an embossed Royal coat of arms. Michael Morse, writing in *Stamp Magazine*, September 1996, noticed two types of embossing. The differences are best seen at the base of the tail of the lion, and the chains around the hind legs of the unicorn. As embossing is a slower process than printing, it is likely that two dies were often needed to speed the task of producing the packs.

The pack for the Royal Wedding of Princess Anne to Captain Mark Phillips in 1973 was clearly reprinted. Apart from the blue on the reprinted version being paler, a photograph of the couple on the back of the pack was amended: on the reprint, the dog's hindquarters have been trimmed at lower right (see above).

The 1974 Famous Britons presentation pack was also reprinted. The initial printing was on cream card; the reprint is on white card, which affects the appearance of other colours used in the printing of the pack.

Errors The pack for the five General Anniversaries in 1970 contained two spelling errors: one of the two designers was credited as Majorie, rather than Marjorie, Saynor, while the text referred to the *Mayflower* Descendants rather than Descendants. Interestingly, packs exist in four forms: with both spelling mistakes; with Majorie and Descendants; with Marjorie and Decendants; and with both mistakes corrected.

A change of style For many years the majority of packs adopted a standard format with the information folder having a landscape format when opened out. However, the Post Office received complaints that this meant that opened packs were difficult to mount on standard-sized stamp album leaves. Likewise, comments were received that first day envelopes, which were the same size as a 'closed' presentation pack', were not ideal for sets of four or five values, particularly when se-tenant strips were involved. It was therefore

decided to change the size of both the first day envelopes and closed packs, while the information folders in the packs were to become portrait format when opened. The first pack in the new style was for the Charles Darwin set in 1982.

Now each special issue has its presentation pack. However, the story certainly does not end here: there is much of interest surrounding the definitives, plus Special Packs, the annual packs, promotional and private packs – more of these in subsequent articles •

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Larger than life Richard West talks with David Springbett

REINSURANCE – it's hardly a scintillating subject for a conversation at any time, let alone with a lady! David Springbett admits he left school as a 'dunce', but has never been afraid of hard work, or lacking initiative. So he set himself up in reinsurance, a career that meant frequent flying: in fact, he has now flown well over 5 million miles. His preference was for the less popular airlines, in the hope he would find himself with no fellow passenger in the next seat – he is averse to sleeping next to men.



His plan did not always work. A flight from London to Caracas found David seated next to a very attractive lady. Being a gentleman, David was not the first to speak. The eventual conversation revealed that his travelling companion was a Miss World 'look-alike', who had nearly married Arnold Schwarzenegger. They agreed to meet again, on which occasion more was revealed: Arnold had appeared in the *Guinness Book of Records* as having the most beautiful body ever. David rose to the challenge: he would earn a place, together with his photograph, as a 'record breaker'. He would attempt to fly around the world on scheduled flights in the fastest time. He managed a double achievement: he broke the record, and the lady became his wife.

David is certainly larger than life. He has not been content with just one record: he now has six records acknowledged by Guinness. He broke

the world record for a journey from St Paul's in London to Wall Street, using helicopters and Concorde, in a time of 3 hours 59 minutes 44 seconds. He is the fastest around the world, starting and finishing at the same airport, and setting foot on all six continents en route. And he holds the record for the fastest around the world setting foot on 'anti-podal'

points on both hemispheres, that is points linked by a line passing through the centre of the earth: he chose Terminal 2 at Madrid Airport in Spain and a remote road junction near the south eastern tip of the North Island of New Zealand.

David derives much from his love of life: he has a large garden and a farm to keep him busy. He has brought up seven children, and now there are four grandchildren, although none have been captivated by stamp collecting. His own collections include airline and hotel ephemera: of his countless flights over the years, there is just one for which he no longer has the ticket. Plus, of course, there are his stamps.

Collecting started around the age of 5, and as a schoolboy much of his pocket money passed over the counter at Stanley Gibbons' shop in the Strand. Later, when travelling the world, one of his first tasks on reaching his destination was to locate the nearby stamp shops – the owners were usually delighted to offer material that their regular customers did not request.