

£10 Definitive

2 March 1993



Britain's first £10 postage stamp, depicting Britannia, goes on sale at post offices, the British Philatelic Bureau, Collections, and philatelic counters on 2 March 1993.

The stamp, for use mostly on overseas mail, features Britannia – a popular and heroic figure, representing the spirit of the British people. The image of Britannia was first used on Roman coins over 1800 years ago. The name derives from the Celtic, *brit*, which possibly meant “to paint with wood”. She is usually shown by the ocean, symbolising that Britain is an island.

After the Romans left our shores, Britannia disappeared from use until the 16th century when she is found in a book on navigation by John Dee, kneeling on shore in homage to Queen Elizabeth I. Following the union of the English and Scottish crowns, Britannia was much in vogue. Charles II chose a Court beauty Frances Stewart, Duchess of Richmond (1647-1702) to model Britannia for use on coins, this design changed little over 300 years. Britannia is still featured on the 50p coin and on banknotes.



She first appeared on a British stamp in 1913 – on the 2s.6d, 5s, 10s and £1 “Seahorse” design, by Sir Bertram MacKennal (1863-1931). The Seahorse design was reproduced on the “Stamp World 90” miniature sheet. The helmeted head of Britannia symbolised the nation on the 1951 Festival of Britain logo by Abram Games; the two stamps commemorating the Festival both featured Britannia.

Britannia featured on early colonial stamps of

Barbados, Mauritius and Trinidad, produced by Perkins, Bacon & Co, printers of the Penny Black.

This new stamp, designed by Roundel Design Group, using illustrations by Barry Craddock, continues the tradition of Britannia on stamps. Her new depiction reflects the best of contemporary Britain.

Roundel Design Group originated in the ICI in-house design department. It was part of the Edman Group from 1971 to December 1988 when Michael Denny, together with partner John Bateson, successfully concluded a management buy-out from the parent group. Roundel Design Group work for a variety of clients including British Rail, London Underground, Royal Mail National, Rover Group, ITN, Monotype, and Grand Metropolitan. The company is a founder member of the Transport design consortium, an association of graphic, interior, architectural, product and engineering designers, working in the transport industry.

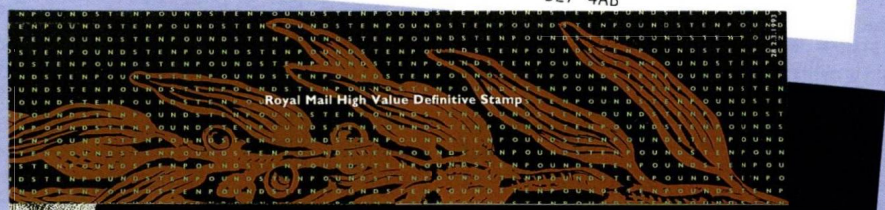
Security features

This is the first ever Braille stamp to be produced by Royal Mail. Embossed with the number 10, the stamp is an excellent example of Royal Mail combining customer and security needs.

As well as Braille embossing, other security features are incorporated in the stamp to counteract the threat of forgery. These include the use of metal inks, visible security fibres in the base paper stock, and two elliptical perforations at the top and bottom of the stamp, all of which help towards defending the stamp from replication by new high-tech photocopiers. The stamp is on OBA-free paper (OBA = Optical Brightening Agent).

The larger-size format (60 x 41mm) has meant the number of stamps per sheet being reduced to 25 (5 x 5); there are no gutters or check dots (“traffic lights”) on the sheet. The sheet is perforated through all four margins.

Plate numbers 1A (x10) appear in a single colour in the top left hand corner of the sheet, representing the colours used to print the stamp. For security reasons Royal Mail is not announcing the colours used to print this stamp.



Martyn Fry, Assistant Manager-Stamp Production, writes:

In the autumn of 1990, Royal Mail embarked on a programme to increase the security of British stamps. The result was the re-designed and technically advanced Castle stamps which put Royal Mail stamps at the forefront of security stamp design.

This new £10 Britannia stamp confirms and extends that position with the inclusion of a number of new features acting together to present a considerable deterrent to potential stamp fraud. While there is no specific evidence of a problem at present, action has been taken now to put in place measures to combat the increasing sophistication of colour copiers.

As a development of the **elliptical perforations** used on the Castle stamps, these new style ellipses, there are four in all, are proportionately larger in keeping with the dimensions of the flagship of the range.

Metallic inks (foil blocking) cannot be accurately reproduced by today's sophisticated colour copiers but technological developments could soon overcome this particular obstacle, and reinforces the need to apply several layers of security for the long term protection of the stamp.

The embossing of stamps has been used in previous designs but the adaptation into **Braille** form as a means of identifying the value is new and follows discussions with the Royal National Institute for the Blind.

The addition of visible and non-visible **fluorescent fibres** to the OBA free base paper means that checking through UV detection equipment can provide an additional security measure.

The selective use of **fluorescent ink** produces a dramatic highlighted effect when viewed under UV light conditions.

Technical Details

Printers:	The House of Questa
Process:	Offset lithography
Size:	60 x 41mm, horizontal
Sheets:	25
Perforation:	15 x 14, two elliptical perforations at top and bottom of stamp
Phosphor:	Non-phosphor
Gum:	PVA
Presentation Pack:	No. 28, price £10.30
Stamp Cards:	Nos D1-5, price 21p each (cards feature - £1, £1.50, £2, £5 and £10 stamps)

First Day Facilities

Unstamped Royal Mail first day cover envelopes will be available from main post offices, the Bureau, Collections, and philatelic counters approximately two weeks before 2 March, price 21p.

The Bureau will provide a first day cover service - collectors may order the Royal Mail cover bearing the £10 stamp cancelled with a pictorial "First Day of Issue" postmark of the Bureau or Windsor price £12.05 (including VAT) to UK addresses, £10.26 to overseas addresses (no VAT). Orders for first day covers must be received at the Bureau by 2 March. Collectors may send their own stamped covers, on the day of issue, for the Bureau or Windsor cancels, to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH EH3 5TT, or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail Windsor, Peascod Street, WINDSOR SL4 1AA. The outer envelope should be endorsed "Pictorial First Day of Issue postmark".

First Day Posting Boxes will be provided at most main post offices for collectors who wish to post covers to receive the standard, non-pictorial "First Day of Issue" handstamps.

Details of other special handstamps, sponsored by Royal Mail, stamp dealers and others, will be found in the *British Postmark Bulletin* - the Royal Mail's magazine for postmark collectors. It is available on subscription from the British Philatelic Bureau: £10 UK and Europe, £21.75 Rest of World (Airmail).

There will be no souvenir covers; these have now been discontinued.

NPM Britannia Exhibition

An exhibition on the subject of Britannia on stamps, banknotes, and coins opened at the National Postal Museum on 12 January, and will be on show until May. A special handstamp will be used at the Museum on 2 March - day of issue of the £10 Britannia definitive. Full details will be given in the *British Postmark Bulletin* - the Royal Mail magazine for postmark collectors. Covers to receive this cancel should be sent to: Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, King Edward Building, LONDON EC1A 1AA; ask for NPM Special - 2 March.

The Museum, located in London Chief Post Office, King Edward Street, LONDON EC1A 1LP, is open Monday-Friday, 9.30am to 4.30pm, admission free. It is a few minutes walk from St Paul's underground station.