

Royal Mail News

Shakespeare's Globe Stamps

Five 25p stamps commemorating the opening of the replica Globe Theatre on London's South Bank go on sale at post offices, and philatelic outlets on 8 August. The stamps, printed in a horizontal se-tenant strip, cover the basic inland 1st class letter rate and the basic rate for letters to EU countries.

The designs, by C Walter Hodges, feature London theatres of the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I/VI: The Swan (1595), The Rose (1592), the original Globe (1599), The Hope (1613), and the second Globe (1614). The designs form a composite picture of the London riverside, with the theatres linked by a path. The sequence of the theatres (from left to right) is in topographical order (west to east), not date order. The serpentine path which links them represents Maid Lane (now still surviving for a short distance as Park Street).

Numerous spectators, entertainers and characters from the plays are depicted on the stamps. On the first we see the usual hucksters and hawkers and a quack doctor, here called Dr Dee (because, says the designer, "it's a short name") representing popular science. The lads looking after the customers' horses reminds us of the legend of Shakespeare beginning his theatrical career in this way. Christopher

Marlowe is depicted on the second stamp – nearly all his plays were presented at the Rose theatre.

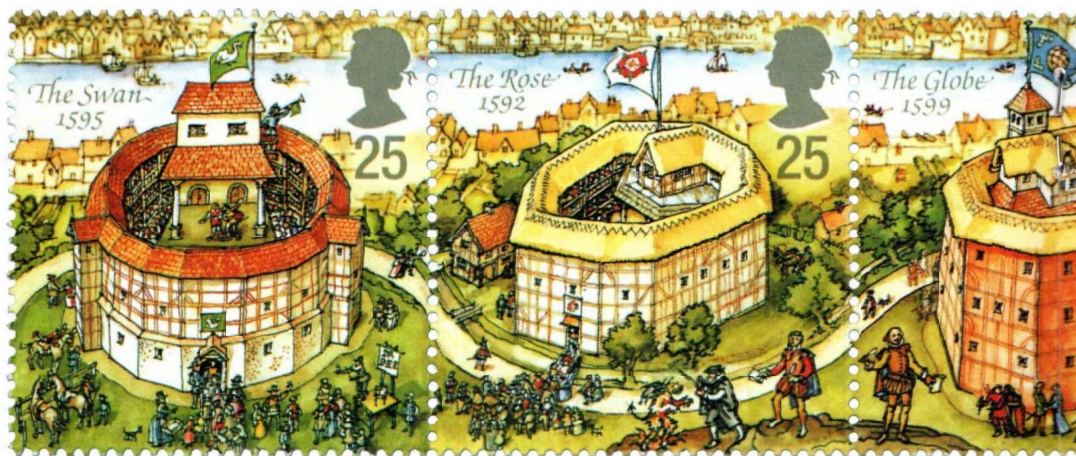
Shakespeare himself features on the centre stamp, with characters from his plays (from left to right) Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, Romeo & Juliet, Hamlet, Richard III, Falstaff, and Bottom the Weaver. The bear on the fourth stamp reminds us that the Hope was built as a convertible theatre-cum-bearbaiting ring. The flag shown on the final stamp is based on the tradition that the signboard at the Globe had a figure of Hercules supporting the Globe upon his shoulders. The designer has transferred this to the flag. These tiny representations add an element of fun to the stamps and students of the plays and Elizabethan social history will enjoy identifying characters and tradesmen.

The Theatres

The early London theatres were established in Bishopsgate and Shoreditch where the leading figure was one James Burbage. Later Philip Henslowe pioneered theatres on Bankside, south of the Thames, where the Liberty of the Clink in Southwark gave freedom from City jurisdiction.

Henslowe, originally a dyer and starchmaker, bought the Little Rose Inn on the South Bank in 1585 and there built the Rose Theatre. From 1591 until his death in 1616 he was in partnership with the prominent actor Edward "Ned" Alleyn (1566-1626), founder of Dulwich College. Shakespeare is believed to have played at the Rose.

The Globe was erected by Richard Burbage (c.1567-1619) and his brother Cuthbert, sons of the actor James (died 1597), who built the



Shoreditch and Blackfriars theatres. The brothers built the Globe in late 1598/early 1599 and used it for summer performances; it was intended that the Blackfriars should be used in the winter months. To raise money for the Globe, Cuthbert Burbage parted with his half-share to six actors, of whom Shakespeare was one. Shakespeare acted with the King's Company at the Globe until 1612. *Hamlet* (1602), *Othello* (1604), *Macbeth* and *King Lear* (1606), and others of his plays were all produced here. The theatre could accommodate an audience of up to 3000. The original Globe burned down in June 1613 when the thatched roof caught fire during a performance of *Henry VIII*. Fortunately there was no loss of life and the actors rescued manuscripts of Shakespeare's plays. Theatres fell foul of the Puritans and the Globe was closed in 1642 and demolished two years later.

The Swan theatre, stood on what is now Paris Garden from 1595 to 1633. The performance there in 1597 of a play reflecting on government – *The Isle of Dogs* by Thomas Nashe and Ben Jonson – provoked a Privy Council order commanding the plucking down of the theatres. Fortunately the threat was not carried out.

Near Bear Gardens (site of an Elizabethan bear pit) stood, from 1614 to 1656, the Hope Theatre. A Georgian warehouse on, or near, the site now houses a small theatre museum.

Rebuilding the Globe

One man's name will always be associated with the reconstructed Globe – film-director Sam Wanamaker (1919-73) who in 1949 found that only a plaque on a wall was all to be seen of the

Globe Theatre. It became his passion to recreate the place where so many of Shakespeare's plays were performed. In 1987 Wannamaker's Friends of the Globe acquired land 300 yards from the original site. By the time digging started, some £3 million had already been spent. The reconstruction is as close as possible to the original, mostly in oak, using wooden pegs to join the structure. The bricks are made from London clay. One change from Elizabethan times – the new theatre will include toilets! Visitors to the new Globe will be able to enjoy innovative new plays as well as the works of Shakespeare.

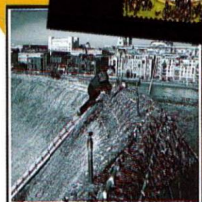
Enquiries about the theatre should be addressed to: Shakespeare's Globe, Bear Gardens, Bankside, LONDON SE1 9EB.

William Shakespeare

Shakespeare was born in Stratford upon Avon in April 1564, son of a glove maker and leather craftsman. In 1582 he married Anne Hathaway, they had one son and two daughters. By 1592 Shakespeare was working as an actor and playwright in London. Amongst the earliest plays were *The Comedy of Errors*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *All's Well that Ends Well*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and *King John*. Originally he worked with Lord Pembroke's Company, but, by 1595, was a member, with Richard Burbage, of a company called The Lord Chamberlain's Men. In 1601 the Company offended Elizabeth I by performing *Richard II* on the eve of the rebellion by the Earl of Essex. A play on the overthrow of a monarch was ill-timed.

Later James I/VI granted a royal patent to the





That year Mosking-born *Theo Crosby* was a fashionable architect rising in his profession when he invited the actor-lecturer about his plans. He offered his help.



The Womaker and Crosby partnership determined that the re-creation must be made with exactly the same materials and skills of 400 years ago - green oak framing with walls of lime, hair and plaster - researched as painstakingly as the design of the building itself. The re-created Globe is in fact the first thatched building to be erected in London since the Great Fire of 1666. Not a single nut or bolt joins any of the oak structure - all is joined together with wooden pegs and the knowledge of skilled master craftworkers. It was to be a far harder journey to

create Shakespeare's original theatre for the shy architect and the demonstrative actor than either could have feared, opposed as they were initially by politicians, archaeologists, historians and local interest groups. All were eventually won over; building work finally began in 1988. Sadly, as well as being the triumph of both men, the International Shakespeare Globe Centre is their memorial. Neither has lived to see the completion of the project which occupied them for a quarter of a century. Sam Womaker died in December 1993 and Theo Crosby in September 1994.

Can this cockpit hold the vasty fields of France? Or may we cram within this wooden O the very coxwain that did affront the air at Agincourt? *Henry V*

Company which was then renamed The King's Men. When plague closed the theatres, the Company played at Wilton House, Somerset House, and in the Banqueting House at Whitehall Palace. After the original Globe was burned down in 1613, Shakespeare took no further part in the Company or in the rebuilding of the playhouse. He retired to Stratford, where he died in 1616, aged just 52.

Some of his plays were published during his lifetime, although he made no efforts to see his plays in print. In 1623 the famous *First Folio* edition, prepared by John Hemmings and Henry Condell, appeared. This included the well-known portrait of Shakespeare by Martin Droeshout which was reproduced on four of the 1964 Shakespeare Festival stamps (see below).

Earlier Shakespeare Stamps

Stamps featuring Shakespeare and characters from his plays were issued in 1964 to mark the Shakespeare Festival which commemorated the 400th anniversary of the Bard's birth (SG 646/50). The 3d, 6d, 1s3d and 1s6d stamps were the work of David Gentleman, the recess-printed 2s6d value was designed by Robin & Christopher Ironside. The 26p stamp in the 1982 British Theatre set featured Hamlet (1185) and Shakespeare was portrayed, with John Lennon and the Sydney Opera House and Bridge, on a 34p stamp in the Australian Bicentennial issue of 1988 (1399).

Shakespeare, characters from his plays and the Royal Shakespeare Theatre featured on two aerogrammes issued in 1964, and Stratford scenes are depicted on four of five international air cards (pre-stamped postcards) issued in August 1993. These are still available from the Bureau - £2.50 per set. (The fifth card in the set features Warwick Castle.)

The forthcoming Shakespeare's Globe stamps are a first in two senses - the first stamps designed by C Walter Hodges, and the first British special stamps produced by Walsall Security Printers.

The Designer

C(yril) Walter Hodges, born in 1909, is a noted historical illustrator and advocate of "educated folklore". He was educated at Dulwich College where he says he was "no use at anything" other than drawing. Fired with the idea of the "romance of artistic life" by reading du Marier's *Tribly*, he went on to study at Goldsmiths College School of Art where he was taught by

Harold Speed and Clive Gardiner, and where he became great friends with Norman Hepple and Rowland Hilder. Graham Sutherland had just left but Mr Hodges recalls him returning to use the etching presses. His father, an advertising manager with Lever Brothers, introduced him to artists and was instrumental in getting him his first job, with R P Gossop. He went on to become an illustrator in advertising and for magazines, especially *Radio Times* with which he is proud to have been associated, describing it as "a great influence... it took over what *Punch* had done, and represented the best of British illustrators." His first work in book illustration was in 1933 and his writing career began four years later. He served in the Army during the Second World War.

His many commissions have included designing stage productions for the Mermaid Theatre. His special studies of Elizabethan theatre have been recognised by the academic world; Mr Hodges has lectured at many universities and holds an Hon DLitt degree of the University of Sussex. His numerous publications include *Shakespeare and the Players* (1948), *The Globe restored* (1953), *Shakespeare's Theatre* (1964), *Shakespeare's Second Globe* (1973), *Playhouse Tales* (1974), and *The Third Globe* (editor, 1981). He has contributed to *Shakespeare Survey* and *The New Cambridge Shakespeare*. In 1979 he acted as Co-ordinator of the Symposium for the Reconstruction of the Globe Playhouse. He lists his recreations as: "music (listening), letters (writing), museums (visiting)".

Technical details

Printers: Walsall Security Printers Ltd

Process: Offset-lithography

Size: 35 x 37mm

Sheets: 100

Perforation: 14½ x 14

Phosphor: Two phosphor bands

Paper: OBA free (OBA = Optical Brightening Agent)

Gum: PVA

Plate Numbers & Colours

W1 (brownish-grey) W1 (black) W1 (magenta),
W1 (new blue) W1 (greenish-yellow)

First Day Facilities

Unstamped Royal Mail first day cover envelopes will be available from main post offices, the British Philatelic Bureau and Post Office

Counters philatelic outlets around a week before 8 August, price 25p.

The Bureau will provide a first day cover service – collectors may order the Royal Mail cover bearing the stamps, cancelled with a pictorial “First Day of Issue” postmark of the Bureau or Stratford upon Avon. Order forms for first day covers are available from the Bureau, and should be returned to the Bureau by 8 August 1995.

Collectors may send their own stamped covers on the day of issue, for the pictorial cancels, to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH EH3 5TT or Midland Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, BIRMINGHAM B1 1AA (for Stratford postmark). The outer envelope should be endorsed “FD9515” (Bureau), or “FD9516” (Stratford).

First Day Posting Boxes will be provided at most main post offices for collectors who wish



to post covers to receive local (usually non-pictorial) “First Day of Issue” handstamps.

A permanent pictorial handstamp, featuring Shakespeare, is applied to mail handed in at the Postshop at Stratford Post Office, or sent to the Midland Special Handstamp Centre. Covers to receive this handstamp should be sent to: Midland SHC, Royal Mail, BIRMINGHAM B1 1AA, requesting handstamp No. 2714.

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).

Presentation Pack and Stamp Cards

A presentation pack will be available from the Bureau, Post Office Counters philatelic outlets, main post offices and most W H Smith shops. Stamp cards (25p each) will be available from the Bureau, POC philatelic outlets, and main post offices.

Serviced First Day Covers

Fully serviced first day covers, bearing the Stratford upon Avon pictorial first day postmark will be available from most W H Smith shops, offered subject unsold.

Stamp Advisory Committee

A number of readers have asked for a current list of members of Royal Mail’s Stamp Advisory Committee. We are happy to oblige:

John Tew (Chairman), Director/General Manager, Royal Mail National

Barry Robinson, Design Director, RMN

Alistair Sharp, Head of Philatelic Marketing and Production, RMN

Jane Ryan, Design Manager, RMN

Alan Williams, Director Public Relations, The Post Office

Lauretta Morris (Secretary), Design Division, RMN

Dr Jean Alexander, Food Scientist & Philatelist

Floella Benjamin, Television Presenter

Simon Heffer, Deputy Editor, *The Daily Telegraph*

Mary Lewis, Director of Design Consultancy

Professor Alan Livingston, Principal of Falmouth School of Art & Design

John McConnell, Design Consultant

Richard Negus, Design Consultant

Elisabeth Santry, Dept of Trade & Industry Representative

Jean Varga, European Stamp Dealer & Catalogue Publisher

The Hon Gwyneth Dunwoody, MP

Extended Sale of Golf Stamps

Royal Mail Scotland and Northern Ireland will have its exhibition unit at the British Open Golf Championship, St Andrews, 20-23 July 1995.

The unit will be staffed by a team from the British Philatelic Bureau in Edinburgh. The 1994 Golf stamps will remain on sale until 31 July 1995, allowing visitors to the event to purchase the stamps. The 19p value shows the Old Course at St Andrews.

The set of five stamps costs £1.50, the presentation pack £1.85, and a set of postcards £1.25. Orders should be sent to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH EH3 5TT.

Royal Mail in Switzerland and Singapore

Royal Mail will be officially represented by Philart SA at the Swiss national stamp exhibition – “Basler Taube” – in Basel, 17-25 June. Philart SA will be promoting and selling British stamps