

Collectors may send their own stamped covers on the day of issue, for these cancels, to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT, or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Mount Pleasant, London EC1A 1BB (for Wembley postmark). The outer envelope should be endorsed "FD9609" (Bureau), or "FD9610" (Wembley).

First Day Posting Boxes will be provided at most main post offices for collectors who wish to post covers to receive local (mostly 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).

Collectors are reminded that it will be in order to affix just the 19p Football Legends stamp

to covers to receive all special cancels ("First Day of Issue", sponsored and philatelic counters), in use on 14 May. The minimum 1st class rule is suspended on this day as the set includes a 2nd class rate stamp. It should be noted that this concession applies only to the Football Legends stamps; otherwise covers must bear at least 1st class postage.

Presentation Pack and Stamp Cards

A presentation pack (price £2.15) and stamp cards (25p each) will be available from the Bureau, Post Office Counters philatelic outlets, and main post offices.

The pack has been written by Jimmy Greaves, one of the greatest goalscorers ever to play for England with some 357 First division goals to his credit. He was a member of England's 1966 World Cup Squad and played with or against all the players shown on the stamps, except Dixie Dean. He is now a well-known football commentator on television.

Postcard Book & Maxi-cards

The fourth in Royal Mail's series of Postcard Books will be issued on 14 May, containing 10 cards reproducing the designs of the stamps. This will be available from the Bureau and Post Office Counters philatelic outlets, price £2.95. Earlier books were produced for the Cats, Rugby League, and Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust issues.

Royal Mail/Evening Standard First Day Cover

A joint Royal Mail-London *Evening Standard* first day cover is being produced which will be offered to *Standard* readers in the *ES Magazine* on 10 May. The cover can be obtained free by saving the Eros logo from the newspaper's heading. The cover will bear the five Football Legends stamps with special Eros postmark.

Readers outside the London area will be able to purchase the cover later in the year – details will be announced here in due course.

Other Products

Royal Mail will produce coffee mugs, pin badges and t-shirts reproducing the Football Legends stamps, also a softback football stamp album containing the Royal Mail stamps and the football issues of Gibraltar, Guernsey, and Jersey. Details next month.

European Football Prestige Stamp Book

The 1996 prestige stamp book, to be issued on 14 May, commemorates the European Football





Championships in England, 8-30 June. This new book costs £6.48 and contains stamps of that amount – detailed below. The front cover shows an action shot of David Platt (Arsenal and England player).

European Football Championships

The Championships were first suggested by Henri Delaunay in 1927 although it was not until the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) was founded in the 1950s that the forerunner of the modern championships were arranged. The title “The European Football Championships – Henri Delaunay Cup” was adopted by UEFA in 1966. Delaunay, Secretary of the French Football Federation, died in 1955.

European Football Championships, First Day Cover and Handstamps

Only 17 countries took part in that first European Nations Cup; the UK was not represented. Subsequent finals have been staged in 1960 (final played in Paris), 1964 (Madrid), 1968 (Rome), 1972 (Brussels), 1976 (Belgrade), 1980 (Rome), 1984 (Paris), 1988 (Munich), and 1992 (Gothenburg), with the respective winners USSR, Spain, Italy, West Germany, Czechoslovakia, West Germany, France, Holland, and Denmark.

England entered for the first time in 1964, going out in the first round to France in (Sir) Alf Ramsey’s first match as manager. They did better in 1968, knocking out the holders Spain and winning the third-place final with goals from (Sir) Bobby Charlton and Geoff Hurst. In



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1972 they reached the quarter-finals before being outclassed by West Germany at Wembley. Wales reached the quarter-finals in 1976 and in 1984 Northern Ireland failed to qualify for the finals only on goal difference after beating West Germany home and away. In 1992 Scotland reached the finals for the first time and beat the Commonwealth of Independent States (ex USSR) 3-0.

Stamps for the Championships have been issued by Italy in 1980 (SG 1641), West Germany, 1988 (2232), and Sweden, 1992 (1623/4). One of the Swedish stamps shows Tomas Brodin who now plays for Leeds United.

1996 Championships

England will host the Championships for the first time. Some 16 countries, of the 48 who entered, will contest the finals – Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Scotland, Spain, Switzerland, and Turkey. It will be the biggest football event staged in England since the World Cup in 1966. Matches will be played as follows:

8 June

England v Switzerland (Wembley, London)

9 June

Germany v Czech Republic (Old Trafford Manchester)

Spain v Bulgaria (Elland Road, Leeds)

Denmark v Portugal (Hillsborough, Sheffield)

10 June

Holland v Scotland (Villa Park, Birmingham)

Romania v France (St James' Park, Newcastle)

11 June

Italy v Russia (Anfield, Liverpool)

Turkey v Croatia (City Ground, Nottingham)

13 June

Switzerland v Holland (Villa Park)

Bulgaria v Romania (St James' Park)

14 June

Czech Republic v Italy (Anfield)

Portugal v Turkey (City Ground)

15 June

France v Spain (Elland Road)

Scotland v England (Wembley)

16 June

Russia v Germany (Old Trafford)

Croatia v Denmark (Hillsborough)

18 June

Scotland v Switzerland (Villa Park)

France v Bulgaria (St James' Park)

Romania v Spain (Elland Road)

Holland v England (Wembley)

19 June

Italy v Germany (Old Trafford)

Russia v Czech Republic (Anfield)

Turkey v Denmark (Hillsborough)

Croatia v Portugal (City Ground)

22 June

Quarter-finals (Wembley and Anfield)

23 June

Quarter-finals (Old Trafford and Villa Park)

26 June

Semi-finals (Old Trafford and Wembley)

30 June

Final (Wembley, kick-off 19.00)

Stamps

The book contains four panes as follows:

Pane 1 – 4 x 19p Football Legends stamps (Dean)

Pane 2 – 4 x 25p Football Legends stamps

(Moore)

Pane 3 – Mixed pane of 2 x 35p, 41p, and 60p

Football Legends stamps (Edwards, Wright, and Blanchflower)

Pane 4 – Mixed pane of 2 x 25p definitive, 2 x

25p Northern Ireland, 2 x 25p Scotland, and 2 x

25p Wales Country stamps and one label showing George Best.

The book will be printed by the House of Questa – the Football stamps will be the same as those printed by Questa in sheets. The 25p definitive and Country stamps will be as those currently printed by Questa, with elliptical perfs and blue fluor in the phosphor bands. Specialist collectors may detect minor variations between these and stamps from sheets and other books. Douglas Myall will report on this in his "Decimal Stamp Books" feature in this magazine.

The book, designed by Why Not Associates design group, gives a history of the Championships with some splendid photographs of players in action.

First Day Facilities

Unstamped Royal Mail first day cover envelopes will be available from the Bureau, PO Counters philatelic outlets and main post offices about a

week before 14 May, price 25p. The Bureau will provide a first day cover service – collectors may order the Royal Mail cover bearing the mixed pane with pictorial label cancelled by a Bureau or Manchester “First Day of Issue” pictorial postmark, price £2.77 (inc VAT) to UK addresses, £2.36 (no VAT) overseas. Orders for serviced covers must reach the Bureau by 14 May.

Collectors may send their own stamped covers, on the day of issue, for the Bureau or Manchester postmarks to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT, or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Forth Street, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 1AA. The outer envelope should be marked “FD9611” (Bureau), or “FD9612” (Manchester).

First Day Posting boxes will be provided at most main post offices for collectors who wish to post covers to receive local (mostly non-pictorial) “First Day of Issue” handstamps. Details of other special handstamps, sponsored by Royal Mail, stamp dealers and others will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin*.

Any of the stamps in the prestige book can be used, singly or in combination (subject to minimum 19p postage) on first day covers to qualify for “First Day of Issue”, sponsored or philatelic counter/tourist handstamps in use on 14 May. The minimum 1st class rule will be waived for this day, i.e. 19p stamps from the book can be used on their own.

Philatelic Numismatic Cover

Royal Mail and Royal Mint are producing a joint cover, to be issued on 8 June. This will bear the set of the Football Legends stamp and the £2 Football coin designed by John Mills. The cover will cost £12.95 and can be ordered from the British Philatelic Bureau. Further details next month.

New Stamp Books

Three new books of 10 x 1st class stamps will be available from the British Philatelic Bureau and Post Office Counters philatelic outlets from 13 May. These will bear an Olympic Triathlon promotion on the covers. Details next month. The books, printed by Harrison, will contain the usual 1st class NVI stamp with elliptical perforations and blue fluor in the phosphor.

Burns Exhibition

Royal Mail is sponsoring an touring exhibition on the life and work of Robert Burns, arranged

by the National Library of Scotland. During April the exhibition can be seen at: Bridge of Allan Library (1-29 April), Eastwood District Libraries (until 12 April), and Stranraer Museum (12 April-13 May). Further venues to be announced.

NPM News

The National Postal Museum will issue four new postcards (reference 96/5-8) on 16 April – these will pertain to the Post Haste! exhibition of postal vehicles and artefacts on show in the former London Chief Post Office area of King Edward Building:

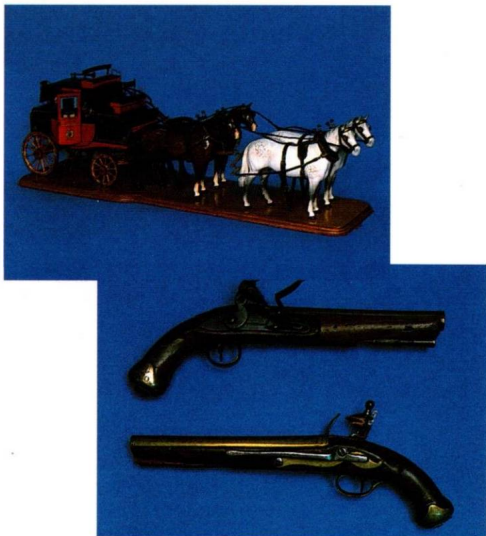
96/5 Flintlock “Maritime” pistols carried aboard packet boats. Those shown were made by Henry Nock of London, pre 1804, and J Wilkinson, c. 1810.

96/6 Model of the Devonport-London mailcoach, made by J R Snell.

96/7 Mailcoach guard’s timepiece.

96/8 Helmet and goggles worn by messenger boys who rode motorcycles to deliver telegrams and express items.

The cards will be available to callers at the NPM Shop, price 25p each, or by post in sets of four (£1) from: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT.



A special handstamp will be used on 16 April, collectors may submit cards/covers for this postmark to: Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Mount Pleasant, London EC1A 1BB, requesting “Museum Special 16 April”. The regular Maltese Cross postmark will also be available – request handstamp No. 1985.