

British special stamp designers by William Aubrey Witham

The top twenty Looking through my GB Elizabethan collection it struck me that a large number of stamps appeared to have been designed by relatively few artists and designers, especially in the early 1960s and 1970s. As an exercise I set about compiling a list of individual designers and the issues for which they were responsible, finishing up with a count of the total number of stamps designed by each up to the present.

Before the mid-1960s there were few special stamps issued – so that the designers of the day had relatively few designs to their credit – some indeed only one stamp!

Pre-war sets of stamps were frequently divided among several designers. For example the four stamps for the 1948 Olympic Games issue were designed by Percy Metcalf (2½d), Abram Games (3d), S D Scott (6d), and Edmund Dulac (1s). Even the great Dulac can list only seven designs between 1937 and 1953 and the majority of these were for definitive values.

As the number of issues and the number of stamps per issue increased there was an obvious need to engage the creative efforts of a wider

selection of artists, designers, graphic specialists and engravers. In recent years there has been a tendency to use design groups rather than individual artists or designers.

A list of all individuals and groups would be too lengthy for publication here so I have restricted my list to the top 20, measured arbitrarily by quantity rather than quality of output, although quantity in this case must surely imply a high standard of quality as perceived and set by Royal Mail and its Stamp Advisory Committee. Greetings stamps are included, but definitives and country stamps and To Pay labels are excluded.

The tables list the output of each of the top 20 designers. David Gentleman is clearly in the lead with 88 stamps and a further 11 in conjunction with Rosalind Dease¹.

I am obliged to Mr Barry Robinson, Design Director of Royal Mail National, for assistance in producing these listings, especially where a designer has used the specially commissioned work of an illustrator.

An asterisk (*) against number of stamps indicates others in same set by another designer.

Text © W A Witham 1997

David Gentleman¹		88	1969 Post Office Technology	4		
			1970 Rural Architecture	*2		
			1970 Philylmpia	3		
			1972 Broadcasting	4		
			1973 British Trees	1		
			1973 Christmas	6		
			1974 British Trees	1		
			1974 Fire Service	4		
			1976 Social Reformers	4		
			1977 Christmas	6		
			1980 Liverpool & Manchester Rly	5		
			1982 Charles Darwin	4		
			1989 Christmas	5		
			1993 Swans	5		
Jeffery Matthews²		38	<hr/>			
			1965 United Nations	2		
			1968 Bridges	2		
			1978 Coronation anniversary	4		
David Gentleman¹		88	1962 National Productivity Year	3	1980 London 1980	1
			1963 Lifeboat Conference	3	Design also used in min sheet	
			1964 Shakespeare Festival	*4	1980 Queen Mother's Birthday	1
			1966 World Cup	*1	1980 Christmas	5
			1966 World Cup Winners	1	1981 Royal Wedding	2
			1966 Battle of Hastings	8	1984 Heraldry	4
			1968 Anniversaries	*1	1986 Queen's 60th Birthday	4
			1969 Ships	6	1986 Royal Wedding	2
			1969 Concorde	*2	1987 Flowers	4
			1969 Prince of Wales Investiture	5	1987 Scottish Heraldry	4

Newell and Sorrell Ltd**38**

1984 British Council	4
1985 Safety at Sea	4
1993 Greetings	10
1994 Greetings	10
1995 Greetings	10

Fritz Wegner**28**

1969 Christmas	3
1970 Anniversaries	*3
1971 Anniversaries	3
1972 Anniversaries	*1
1974 Great Britons	4
1978 Cycling	4
1979 Christmas	5
1981 Folklore	4
1984 Europa	*1

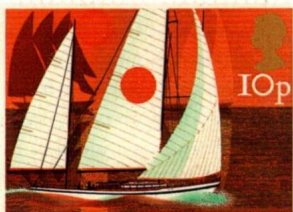
Based on common Larivere design

Keith Bassford³**26**

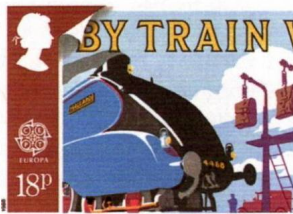
1984 Mail Coach Run	5
1985 Film Year	5



1986 Industry Year	4
1989 Microscopes	4
1992 Europa	*3
1994 D Day	5

Andrew Restall**23**

1964 Forth Road Bridge	2
1965 Battle of Britain	*1
1965 ITU Centenary	2
1966 British Technology	*2
1968 Bridges	*1
1970 Commonwealth Games	3
1975 Sailing	4
1977 Racket Sports	4
1983 British Fairs	4

Carroll, Dempsey Thirkell Ltd**23**

1987 Victorian Britain	4
1988 Transport and Communications	4
1991 Dogs	5
1992 Christmas	5

Trickett & Webb Ltd**23**

1984 Urban Renewal	4
1988 Christmas	5
1992 Greetings (Memories)	10
1992 Green Issue	4

Rosalind Dease⁴**20**

1968 Christmas	3
1970 Literary Anniversaries	5
1971 Literary anniversaries	3
1972 Anniversaries	*1
1973 Inigo Jones	4
1974 UPU Centenary	4

Marjorie Saynor**20**

1970 Anniversaries	*2
1972 Polar Explorers	4
1973 British Explorers	5
1976 British Cultural Tradition	4
1982 Maritime Heritage	5

Peter Gauld**18**

1961 Post Office Savings Bank	*1
1963 Compac	1
1965 Lister Centenary	*1
1969 Cathedrals	6
1975 European Architecture	5
1980 British Conductors	4

Ronald Maddox⁵**17**

1972 Village Churches	5
1978 British Architecture	4
1984 Urban Renewal	4
1989 Industrial Archaeology	4



Brian Sanders 17



- 1979 Metropolitan Police 4
- 1981 Fishing Industry 4
- 1982 Youth Organisations 4
- 1986 History of RAF 5

John Gorham 16



- 1990 Queen Mother 4
- 1990 Christmas 5
- Illustrations by J Davidson
- 1992 Wintertime 5
- Illustrations by K Bowen
- 1995 Peace and Freedom *2

John Gibbs 15

- 1981 Year of the Disabled 4
- 1986 Commonwealth 1
- Parliamentary Association
- 1990 Thomas Hardy 1
- 1990 Gallantry 5
- 1993 Roman Britain 4



Tony Meeuwissen 15

- 1983 Christmas 5
- 1991 Greetings (Good Luck) 10

Paul Hogarth 14

- 1984 Economic Summit 1
- 1985 Royal Mail 4
- 1990 Europa (Buildings) 4
- 1994 Golf 5

Yvonne Gilbert 14



- 1984 Christmas 5
- 1985 Arthurian Legend 4
- 1994 Christmas 5

Howard Brown 13



- 1991 Maps 4
- 1993 Maritime Timepieces 4
- 1994 Prince of Wales Anniv 5

Stuart Rose 12

- 1973 British Painters 4
- 1975 Turner 4
- 1979 Horse Racing 4

Clive Abbott⁶ 10



- 1965 PO Tower 2
- 1967 EFTA 2
- 1967 Discovery 2
- 1968 Anniversaries 3
- 1972 Anniversaries 1

Linda Gray⁶ 10

- 1986 Christmas 5
- Same design for 12p and 13p
- 1992 Gilbert and Sullivan 5

Michael Peters & Partners⁶ 10

- 1990 Greetings (Smiles) 10
- Designs later issued with 1st NVI

1 Gentleman also designed a further 11 stamps with Rosalind Dease: 1965 Churchill (2); 1965 Commonwealth Arts Festival (2); 1965 Battle of Britain (*7).

2 Matthews's total of 38 rather belies his important contribution to stamp design. He also designed the 1970-74 To Pay labels, Country stamps for N Ireland, Scotland, and Wales (issued since 1971) and Isle of Man (1971-73), 1977-87 High Value Machins, 1990 150th Anniversary of the Penny Black definitives, 1993 self-adhesive definitive, and has been influential in the colour scheme for the Machin low values.

3 Bassford also designed two further 1992 Europa stamps with S Paine.

4 Dease also designed 11 stamps in 1965 in conjunction with Gentleman (see note 1 above).

5 Maddox's total could be increased to 21 if one includes the horizontal as well as vertical versions of his Industrial Archaeology stamps, issued in miniature sheet format.

6 These designers share 20th place