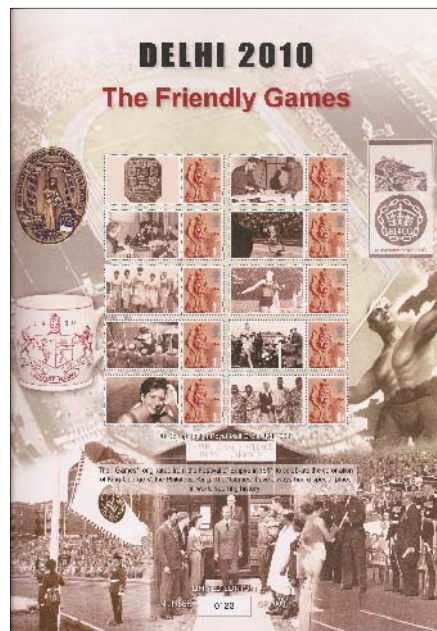


• The Friendly Games

Bletchley Park Post Office (Terry Mitchell) has advised us of a second Indian Smilers Sheet which is being released at the Commonwealth Games conference in Delhi on 28th March. The sheet was commissioned by the conference organisers as part of the delegate pack. It is not a CMC/BPPO issue but they have managed to acquire a small stock and these are available from BPPO. The delegates represent the elite of world sport and security is such that the stamps had to be checked by the Delhi Police before they could be added to the packs. A few will go on sale at the venue but otherwise will be very hard to come by.



Terry writes "The images used on the sheet are also pretty exclusive. They come from the personal collection of Randhir Singh the vice chair of the Delhi games and an Olympian. He is also India's IOC member and descended from the Royal Family of Patalia. Should make this a very collectable sheet, especially when the games take place in October as it is the first time India has hosted them". (28/03)

• The End of the War - 65th Anniversary of VE Day

Celebrating the 65th Anniversary of the end of World War II, Buckingham Covers have just released their latest Business Customised Stamp Sheet featuring an emotive painting by famed artist, Terence Cuneo. The sheet labels feature photographic images from the period. The stamp featured in the sheet is the new DS sized Remembrance Day Poppy stamp. (27/03)



Halley's Comet due May!

Royal Mail have released first glimpse of a new Commemorative Stamp Sheet (?) featuring Halley's Comet. Whilst the cost of Business Sheets is due to rise in April, Royal Mail seem to be holding the price of Commemorative Sheets to £13.50. Further details under [Commemorative Sheets](#). (19/03)



Bletchley Park covered with Smilers.

This just in from BPPO:

"For the London 2010 Festival of Stamps Bletchley Park will host a themed event aimed at collectors of first day covers and customised stamp sheets. The event takes place over the August Bank Holiday weekend. Displays and trade stalls will be in the mansion and marquee with a host of other activities taking place in the Park's 28 acres. Floor plans and space details are available.

As part of the 2010 Festival it is the first show dedicated to this rapidly developing hobby. The aim is to also encourage new collectors by inviting them to one of Britain's best known venues. The subject of many films, books and documentaries, the Park is famous as the home of the Enigma code breakers. The BBC's "Antiques

Roadshow” was recently held there and its post office is known to cover collectors around the world.

To bring in the visitors Bletchley Park will have a 1940's “Post Office at War” theme for the weekend. Vehicle displays, flypasts, dance demonstrations and fashion shows will be just a few of the extra attractions. For keen collectors it means the family will have plenty to do whilst leaving them free to indulge their hobby.

For more information about space in the trade area contact; Smiler and Cover Fair, Bletchley Park, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, MK3 6EB or visit the website at bletchleypark.org.uk." (10/03)

• New Sheets from Adrian Bradbury

Two new sheets spotted this week from Adrian Bradbury. Adrian continues his Kings and Queens of Britain series, this time featuring King James I and King Charles I, both due to appear in April and both priced at £35 each. Further details in our New Issue section. (09/03)



• London 2010 - New Sheets Previewed

Royal Mail has issued pre-release images of two new Customised Stamp sheets due on the 8th May 2010 to coincide with the start of the London 2010 Festival of Stamps Exhibition.



The first is an Exhibition "souvenir" sheet in self-adhesive format (a first for Royal Mail) the second a collection of existing Smilers stamps (new and old) set against a background of greeting-type messages. The later sheet we understand will be

available in personalised format, from one of four booths planned for the show. (06/03)

● Bletchley Park Post Office - First Indian Smiler!

Bletchley Park - famous for the Enigma Machine has lived up to its name and announced something of an enigma for British Smilers collectors. A Business customised stamp sheet designed exclusively for the Indian market!

Tagore at 150 celebrates the 150th anniversary of the birth of Rabindranath Tagore, “.. a National hero, known to the West as the voice of India's spiritual heritage”. In 1913 he was the first non-European to be awarded the Nobel Prize for literature. Knighted in 1915 he later rejected this in protest against the Raj. A great friend of Gandhi, he gave him the name "Mahatma" from the Sanskrit word for 'Saint'."



With 1000 sheets printed and a retail price of £50 for this somewhat unusual sheet it will be interesting to see the uptake of this sheet by India-based collectors. The choice of the British Union Flag is an interesting one given the anti-Raj position of its subject and it remains to be seen whether such a choice will impact sales of this sheet in the Indian sub-continent. (06/03)

● Centenary of Florence Nightingale death marked by AG Bradbury

This year is the centenary of Florence Nightingale's death and this anniversary is the subject of Adrian Bradbury's latest Business Customised Stamp Sheet (a limited edition of just 275) which is due out in March. It is available from www.smilers.co.uk priced £50. Our advice would be to order yours now as Adrian's previous low number limited editions have all been a sell-out before the sheets were issued. (28/2)



2010 Programme outlined by Royal Mail

At the Royal Mail Key Accounts briefing on Thursday afternoon Royal Mail announced some of their plans for 2010 including new Generic, Commemorative and something called a Souvenir Sheet in connection with the 2010 Stamp Expo. The Castles of Wales sheet already announced and due on the 1st March completes the "Castles" series of generic sheets.

This will be followed on the 8th May by a new generic sheet entitled Keep Smiling - sounds familiar - featuring all the recently issued 10 definitive sized Smilers stamps in a colourful background. A personalised version of that sheet will be available during the stamp show and we understand a dated overprint will also be added to the sheet indicating on which day the personalised sheet was printed. There will be four instant smilers stamp booths at the show, reminiscent of the first Smilers sheets which appeared 10 years ago. To celebrate this event Royal Mail have announced an additional souvenir sheet but no further details were made available so this looks like work in progress.

On the 18th May there will be a new Commemorative Stamp Sheet featuring Halley's Comet although what anniversary this is supposed to commemorate is beyond me since it last made an appearance in 1986 and is not due again until 2061. It will feature 10 Union Flag stamps and labels set against a rather garish background design (in my opinion). This will be followed on 8th July 2010 with a second Commemorative Sheet this year issued to coincide with the British Grand Prix.

A Battle of Britain generic stamp sheet featuring 20 x 1st class Spitfire stamps from the British Design Classics issue of last year is due to appear over the south downs (and elsewhere in the British Isles) on 15th September 2010 and celebrates the 70th Anniversary of this historic event.

Finally, in time for Christmas is the Generic Christmas sheet due on 2nd November 2010, presumably also available in personalised variants. No mention of Smilers for Kids but I would look out for at least four different packs/sheets from Royal Mail

this year. Also the possibility of a Winni the Poo sheet around September perhaps - perhaps that's just wishful thinking on my part - more later when I have more to share. (26/02)

• **Six STAMPEX personalised sheets available at Spring STAMPEX**

It has always been a mystery to me why Royal Mail has never thought to ring the changes of the sheets available from the Instant Smilers booths at the twice-a-year STAMPEX event. The Flying High and Red, White and Blue sheets have been available for the past 4 or 5 events and the frankly have lost their appeal. This year Royal Mail surprised us all by adding to these two best seller's no less than four additional sheets making a choice of 6 sheets all featuring the STAMPEX logo printed on the first label and in the margin.

- Red, White and Blue (Union Flag)
- Flying High (Hello)
- Ready Teddy (Teddy Bear)
- Best Wishes (Best Wishes)
- Far and Away (Europe 20g)
- Up, Up and Away (Worldwide 20g)

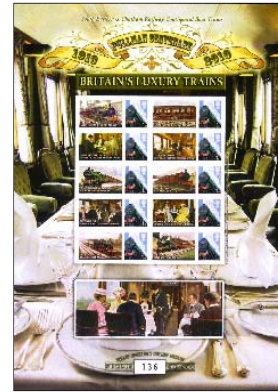
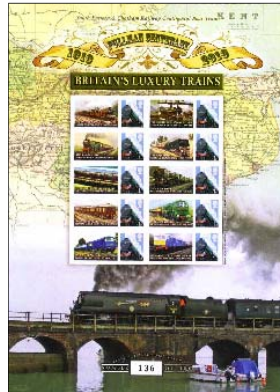
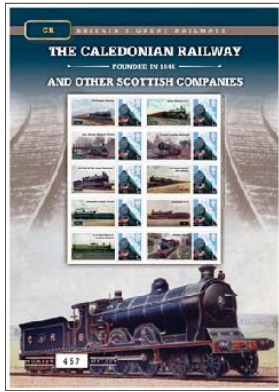
Talking to the Booth operator at the end of the second day, the new Europe and Worldwide sheets had proved popular with overseas visitors so well done to Royal Mail for increasing the choice at last!! See Listing of Themed Sheets for full details. (26/02)



• **Another batch of Business Sheets announced**

Writing the update to the Smilers Catalogue used to be a leisurely affair, once a week would be sufficient to sum up the comings and goings in the Smilers World. The second Edition of the Smilers Catalogue is barely 3 days old and already there are a raft of updates and new sheets announced.

The Caledonian Railway Sheet made a somewhat unannounced appearance on 22 Feb just ahead of the Spring STAMPEX sheet. Also announced by Benham during that week was a pair of railway-themed business sheets from Benham commemorating the Centenary of Pullman Coaches used on the Boat Train. That makes a total of seven sheets either issued or planned in the next month or so. (26/02)

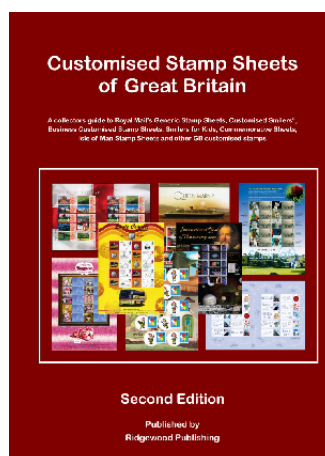


- Updated Range of BCS Smilers Stamps - Update

Further to the News item posted 31st January 2010 it seems Royal Mail have bowed to public pressure and will be retaining (at least) the Smiles *Moon* stamp and the *Union Flag* stamp in the larger gummed format for their Business Customised range of stamp sheets. We are reliably advised that these stamps will not appear in official information on this service but can be ordered from Royal Mail upon request - so, lots more Dr. Who sci-fi sheets to look forward to then! (12/02)

- Customised Stamp Sheets of Great Britain - 2nd edition

The long awaited 2nd Edition of the Smilers Catalogue - *Customised Stamp Sheets of Great Britain* - will be on sale at Stampex on 24th February 2010. The 2nd Edition has been completely revised and updated to end January 2010 and provides a handy A5 size reference guide to all customised stamp sheets since they first appeared in 2000. The scope of this work has been expanded to include all the new formats including Smilers for Kids packs, Commemorative Stamp Sheets, Isle of Man sheets, Universal Mail customised stamps and now includes over 500 full colour illustrations.



The 300 + pp fully illustrated 2nd edition is now set out in a dual-column format to ensure that all new generic, customised and business sheets that have appeared over the past three years are all numbered, referenced and illustrated in full colour. Issue dates, printer details, sheet producer details are all provided along with a price guide based on current retail pricing. You can buy your copy today from [The Stamp Centre](http://www.thestampcentre.co.uk) at the Strand, London. As a result of this updated publication all website updates to the first edition of the Smilers Catalogue have been removed from this website and future updates will cover the period from 1st January 2010. (06/02)

● Spring Stampex Sheet Announced

The PTS will again be releasing a customised stamp sheet at Spring Stampex on 24th February.

Buckingham Covers have also released information about their 2010 programme - see table below. (06/02)

Month	Working Title
Feb	Funeral of King Edward VII
Mar	Accession of King George V
Apr	VE VJ day
Apr	HMS Warrior
May	Love Never Dies
May	Dunkirk
Jun	Rolls Royce/Aviators
Jul	GWR 175
Aug	Cunard Elizabeth
Aug	Florence Nightingale
Sep	Battle of Britain
Oct	Concorde M2

● Updated Range of BCS Smilers Stamps confirmed

Royal Mail have updated their list of Smilers stamps available for the Business Customised range of Stamp sheets (effective 6th April 2010). Gone are all the Commemorative size smilers stamps (Smiles, Cartoons, Hallmarks, Flowers, Flags, Poppies etc.) and also all the water activated gummed sheet formats. The following list has been issued to the trade and represents the current list of stamps for use with the BCS sheets. Some notable omissions are the White Ensign and Union Flag stamps and the Man in the Moon stamp (does this mean no more Dr. Who sci-fi sheets from the Stamp Centre?). (31/01)

Issue	Design	Size	Paper	Perfs
Country definitive's	England	20.3 x 24.1	SA	Elliptical
Country definitive's	Wales	20.3 x 24.1	SA	Elliptical
Country definitive's	Scotland	20.3 x 24.1	SA	Elliptical
Country definitive's	Northern Ireland	20.3 x 24.1	SA	Elliptical
Country definitive's	St George	20.3 x 24.1	SA	Elliptical
Country definitive's	Saltier	20.3 x 24.1	SA	Elliptical
Country definitive's	Dragon	20.3 x 24.1	SA	Elliptical
Definitive size Smilers®	Love	20.3 x 24.1	SA	Elliptical
Definitive size Smilers®	Union Jack	20.3 x 24.1	SA	Elliptical
Definitive size Smilers®	Hello	20.3 x 24.1	SA	Elliptical
Definitive size Smilers®	Flower	20.3 x 24.1	SA	Elliptical
Definitive size Smilers®	Robin in a box	20.3 x 24.1	SA	Elliptical
Definitive size Smilers®	Teddy Bear	20.3 x 24.1	SA	Elliptical



● Castles of Wales

Royal Mail will issue the last sheet in their "Castles" generic stamp sheet series which is due to be issued on 1st March. The sheet features 20 x 1st class definitive sized (DS) Welsh flag stamps which first appeared in the celebrating Wales mini-sheet. The label images depict well-known Welsh Castles and the sheet is the fourth and final sheet in the series of Smilers sheets featuring castles of the United Kingdom. The Castles featured are: Caernavfon, Carreg Cennen, Biwmares (Beaumaris), Cricieth, Harlech, Cas-Gwent (Chepstow), Dinefwr, Dolbadarn, Dolwyddelan and Conway. (31/01)



● New Sheets from Benham and Planet Prints

It's been a bit quiet of late with very little news to pass on. Benham have issued a flyer advising of two new sheets in the pipeline in their RAF series - that's four designs announced and awaited. Planet Prints have also released a new sheet today - a striking sheet featuring British Birds. (31/01)



● New Year Update

A Happy New Year to all readers, contributors and collectors alike with an apology for the apparent silence over the past month or so. Seasonal and other commitments have kept me away from the computer but to be honest there has not been much going on in the Smilers world. That said, it is probably worth a quick re-cap of comings and goings by way of a New Year update

Since our last report at the beginning of December there have been only two new Business Customised Stamp sheets announced that we are aware of. Sir Isaac Newton is the subject of a new sheet from Adrian Bradbury due in January, whilst The Accession of King George V is featured on a new sheet from Buckingham Covers, due out in May.



You may have noticed a slight lull in the issue of new self-adhesive Business sheets since last November. This is because Cartor have had production problems which have delayed many planned releases including our History of British Air Services. Thankfully this seems to have been resolved as our supply of sheets arrived from the printers yesterday so watch out for other sheet arrivals in the next few weeks or so as sheet producers catch up on mailing out orders.

Other recent developments are a *torrent* of new themed sheets from the George Kreisler stable. Marketed jointly by Rushstamps (only those with print runs greater than 25) and the GB Stamp Centre. You will find details of the limited availability Smilers at Gary Harrop's new website www.smilers-sheets.co.uk. First class sheets

but in my opinion too many expensive sheets released too close together to make collecting these interesting or enjoyable.



Talking about websites, Adrian Bradbury has managed to bag the domain name www.smilers.co.uk from the Co-Op bank so in future you will be able to find all your new Bradbury Smilers at this easy to remember website.

Also in December, we saw a new Themed sheet from a limited printing of 14 sheets from the folks behind the Isle of Pabay carriage labels/customised stamp sheets which have made regular appearances for a number of years. This year the label features the South Skye Lighthouse.



Finally, no takers for our Christmas Quiz so no prizes awarded on this occasion. I can't decide whether it was the turkey, the TV or just lack of cerebral activity over the festive season. (17/01)