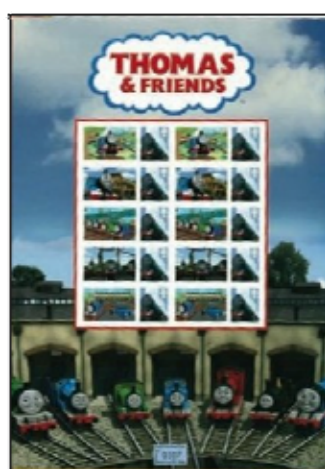


• New Business Sheets

There was a time, not so long ago, when we looked forward to receiving the next 10-15 business sheets that had already been announced. Not so now! As the deficit bites so our disposable spending reduces and I think this may in part be impacting the choices that collectors are making. Not only are there fewer sheets these days (not a bad thing) but they are announced days, not weeks, before their appearance. I think all sheet producers, including us, are taking a more cautious approach with future issues, Ridgewood for one has decided that fewer more significant sheets are the future - we will leave the trains, boats and planes to the other producers. Your response to our blog re: Gulliver's Travel sheet from Bradbury surprised us in that you seemed to reject this design/sheet theme. I know Adrian has noted of your comments, both positive and negative, and it will be his decision whether to proceed, or not, with this theme.



Four new sheets have emerged over the past few weeks, these are described in more detail in our New Issues section. Adrian Bradbury's latest is the 60th Anniversary of the Festival of Britain, available from 2nd April 2011. Benham will issue a Royal Wedding Sheet in May and Buckingham promise us new sheets in May - The Launch of the Titanic, and in June - Thomas and Friends. (03/04)

● Gulliver's Travels

Last month I mentioned that Adrian Bradbury was considering a new direction for his Business Customised Stamp Sheets and at the time he very kindly provided me with a sneak preview of the future. At STAMPEX Adrian gave me his permission to share this image with readers of this web site and we are delighted to be able to share this potential new sheet with you. We think its great but it would be great if you would take a minute and let us and Adrian know what you think. To this end I have set up a blog entry over at the Keep Smiling Blog to enable you to have your say.



Please let Adrian know what you think and help shape the future of our hobby. (09/03)

● Spring STAMPEX shocker

Surprisingly Royal Mail decided to withdraw their Smilers booth at last month's STAMPEX show and as a consequence STAMPEX for me felt a bit dull this time around. I have always enjoyed the opportunity of acquiring a show special at STAMPEX even if the product was somewhat dull. Perhaps the lack of imagination from Royal Mail has caused the public to loose interest. By contrast, other Postal Agencies power on as this India My Stamp example from the recent Indipex Exhibition held in New Deli wonderfully illustrates. Come on Royal Mail, wake up and smell the coffee!!



I asked around as to the reason why the change and I was told by a reliable Royal Mail representative that the decision had been due to the abuse of the Smilers Booth by some private companies who sought to make excessive profits by using non-personal photos on the sheet. I didn't buy their excuse and believe that the reason had more to do with costs and profit than any other reason. Clearly, the public are not inclined to buy the same product show after show and the costs of operating the booth may have exceeded their revenue due to falling public interest. In my opinion Royal Mail's lack of creativity and marketing skills have combined to kill off the instant Smiler for the immediate future, at least. (09/03)

◆ Buckingham's latest Railway sheet

Buckingham have announced the availability of a new Train themed Business Customised Stamp Sheet entitled Preserved Locomotives. Whilst Buckingham probably lead the market in the production and presentation of Business Customised Sheets this one disappoints! There cannot be a steam train in UK that has not featured in one or other Smilers sheet from Buckingham or Benham. Come on guys - lets innovate and be more adventurous with future designs. The choice of "Big Bang" stamp design is an interesting choice for a sheet featuring old steam engines. Is there a subliminal message here?



I can tell you that Adrian Bradbury has listened to feedback from this website and is planning an exciting new series of Business Customised Stamp Sheets - I have seen his first design and it is refreshingly different to say the least. Look out for more news in the next few weeks. (23/02)

- **All smiles as William and Kate tie the knot!**

Royalty is again the theme of the next Business Sheet from AG Bradbury in his series History of Britain Sheets (interestingly No. 69!) featuring the wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton. We are not sure exactly when the sheet will appear, (ED: Adrian tells us to look out for it mid-April) it has an official issue date of 11th April 2011 but we expect to see it being shipped within the next few weeks or so.



Despite the Royalty theme, we like it. Fresh, clean, balanced and an interesting use of the Royal Coat of Arms and what look to be official (licensed) engagement photos for the labels. With a print run of 1000 sheets clearly Adrian is expecting the issue to receive broader interest than from just Smilers collectors. A great new Smiler for 2011 (17/02)

- **...and now for something completely different!**

I note, with some disappointment, that Benham have continued to pursue the thematic Royalty and Railway subjects represented by their latest two sheets. Given the vast possibilities available to sheet designers it never ceases to amaze at the sheer lack of imagination and originality that goes into the production of some sheets on the market.

There can be no doubt that popular thematic themes help broaden the appeal of these customised sheets so the subjects may, in part, be selected with one eye on profit. Nothing wrong with this. However, once in a while someone produces something fresh and imaginative and it stands out from the crowd. Planet Prints are distinctive in this area and are to be commended for their diverse range of sports and pastimes represented in their sheets.

Given this background I thought it was time to engage the Smilers collecting community in a debate on the direction of the hobby - content, frequency of issues, print runs, etc., etc., by way of feedback for to sheet producers such as ourselves.

Here's some statistics to think about. In 2008 64 new sheets were produced, this increased to 76 sheets in 2009 and dropped back to 61 sheets in 2010. At around 60 sheets a year this represents five new sheets a month - more than one a week at a minimum cost of around c. £150 per month. Is this sustainable?

To get you going here's just a few prompts...

- What are your ideas for new sheets for 2011/12?
- What do you want more of?
- What do you want less of?
- What is a sustainable annual production of of new sheets - 50, 60, 70 or something much smaller?

It's time to have your say! Take a look at our Keep Smiling Blog and leave your comments. (13/02)

● **Update on the BPPO Dual Image Churchill sheet**

Terry Mitchell contacted me recently from BPPO suggesting that my article on their forthcoming Churchill sheets had caused a slight confusion since it suggested that a dual image sheet was to be released in addition to the old and young Churchill sheets. Terry pointed out that they had planned to issue two sheets and split them for "Churchillians rather than serious collectors". Terry went on to say that he would have liked to have done a dual sheet "if only Royal Mail had accommodated us".

I respectfully pointed out that the confusion may have arisen because that's how it had been perceived from their website (i.e. a third dual image sheet) and unbeknown to Terry such a sheet is possible to order from Royal Mail. Given the interest and the additional information surrounding dual image Smilers, Terry is looking into the possibility of producing the third sheet as illustrated. Watch this space! (13/02)

● **Two New Business Customised Sheets from Benham**

The latest offerings from the Benham stable have appeared on the web. The first is a George V King and Emperor sheet features The Philatelic Heritage of India issued to coincide with Indipex. The sheet is a numbered limited edition of 1936. (Benham Stock Ref: GBS0149).

- What are your ideas for new sheets for 2011/12?
- What do you want more of?
- What do you want less of?
- What is a sustainable?



The next sheet is Benham's eighth in the series of Customised Sheets celebrating Britain's unique railway heritage and features the London & South Western Railway and the South Eastern & Chatham Railway - companies which served the south of Britain from Padstow and Exeter in the west to the Channel ports and resorts of Kent and Sussex in the east. The sheet is a numbered limited edition of 500. (Benham Stock Ref: GBS0155). (13/02)

● New Bletchley Park Post Office Customised Sheets

Having had a relatively quiet 2010 Chapman and Mitchell Covers are back in the guise of Bletchley Park Post Office with no less than 10 new Customised Stamp Sheets to look out for over the next month or two. Firstly, three Green and Pleasant Land customised sheets have been issued featuring the young and not-so-young **Winston Churchill**.

"Two new portraits of Winston Churchill by Buckinghamshire artist Daniel Rogers feature on a postage stamp issue from Bletchley Park's secret post office. The portraits that portray Churchill as a young man and a wartime leader recently featured on the cover of the Churchill Centre's magazine "Finest Hour". The stamps are being issued as two limited edition sheets each of 20 1st class stamps (Ed: or you can have a combined image sheet as illustrated) and can be viewed at www.bletchleycovers.com.



Issue price is £40 per sheet plus post and packing. They will be released at "Stampex" the London Stamp Fair, 23-26th February where Rogers will be in attendance to sign them...."

Next, four customised Big Bang sheets featuring more images from the same artist are being sold at £40 each. They feature images by Daniel Rogers with the theme Aliens. A new area this for Bletchley Park Post Office and it will be interesting to see whether the take -up for so many (similar) sheets justifies the print run of 50 sheets. (05/02)



● Spring STAMPEX 2011

We can reveal an early image of PTS spring STAMPEX Smilers sheet which will go on sale from 24th February 2011. The sheet features Space Exploration and will be on sale from the PTS counter at STAMPEX, priced £12.00 per sheet. PTS will also be selling individual stamps/labels priced £1.50 ea. (05/02)



◆ Battersea Dogs Home Charity Smiler

Did anyone spot the charity Smilers sheet on sale for one day via e-bay over Christmas? Judging by the price achieved many of us were otherwise distracted! In December 2010, Shine Communications (in the guise of eBay name RoyalMailSmilers) offered for auction on eBay under item ref: 180602066839, an autographed customized Smilers sheets featuring a donated image by Craig Revel-Horwood, with the the intent of raising money for the Battersea Dogs Home.



To quote the listing: "Dog-loving, TV dancing judge Craig Revel-Horwood has teamed up with Battersea Dogs & Cats Home to create his very own set of one off Christmas charity stamps. The exclusive sheet of Smilers® stamps, which will be personally signed by Craig Revel-Horwood. All funds generated by the auction will be donated to the charity, which has cared for 3.1 million unwanted and abandoned pets for the past 150 years. The limited edition set of First Class Smilers® stamps from Royal Mail feature an exclusive image of Craig with Wilma, one of Battersea's beloved Jack Russell Terriers. Craig has donated this image, as he hopes it will raise money to help the 500 dogs and 250 cats who are expected to spend Christmas at Battersea."

Regrettably, the sheet only sold for £105, the proceeds of which will be donated to the Battersea Dogs Home. The above picture is illustrated courtesy of the winning bidder. (05/02).

◆ 75th Anniversary of Death of King George V

A new Business Customised sheet from Benham has been issued this week. Priced at a competitive £24.95 it commemorates the 75th Anniversary of the Death of King George V. (03/02).



◆ 50th Anniversary of the Iconic Jaguar E-Type

Royal Mail will be issuing a new Commemorative Stamp Sheet on 30th March 2010 as a celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the iconic E-Type - a British design classic to compliment the 2009 stamp set of the same name.



In 2009 Ridgewood Stamp Sheets produced two designs for Car Anniversaries which we felt would be well received by the British public. Unfortunately we could not interest the brand owners sufficiently to enable them to grant us permission to proceed with the production of the proposed stamp sheets. Given the subject of the latest Royal Mail commemorative sheet, you may interested to see what we were working on which, sadly, never saw the light of day. (15/01)



◆ Two New Business Sheets from Adrian Bradbury

Adrian Bradbury has announced two new Business Customised stamps sheets earlier this month which are due to be issued on 1st February 2011. Stylistically they closely follow Adrian's Kings and Queens series format but the Souvenir of 1936 sheet in particular is packed with interesting information in the year of the Three Kings and must represent many hours of research and design to achieve such a well balanced and stylish sheet. (15/01)

- o Souvenir of 1936 - The Three Kings
- o Centenary of Coronation of King George V



◆ Three Customised Stamp Sheets from Bletchley Park

Having had a relatively quiet 2010, Chapman and Mitchell Covers (aka Bletchley Park) go back to their roots and have produced three customised stamp sheets themed around Bletchley Park. The three sheets appeared on their web site

during December and whilst we have not received any official information on sheet availability (unusual for Bletchley) we understand that all three are now available and being issued effective beginning of January. (15/01)



Enigma Operators Guernsey: This is one of two "Smilers" issued to commemorate the affiliation between Bletchley Park and The Channel Islands. Images are from the display at St Peter Port, Guernsey showing German Naval Enigma machine operators. Presumably more information on the second sheet later in 2011! (BPPO Ref. CMCSM044/ SC ref: TS-400)



Silverstone Stamp-It Challenge: The inaugural winning entry from Cawthorne Primary School for the "Stamp It" challenge organised by Silverstone Innovation Centre. The design is by Joseph Brownlow and Harry Chinnock. It depicts the development of different forms of transport in the past 200 years. The Design Challenge is a national competition for school teams covering a range of design and technology disciplines. For 2010 a new category called "Stamp It" was introduced for a younger age group. The winning design was chosen from over 400 entries. (BPPO Re. CMCSM046/SC ref: TS-401)



Alan Turing Statue: This sheet features the Alan Turing statue at Bletchley Park. It was reproduced with the kind permission of sculptor Stephen Kettle. The life size statue is formed from millions of pieces of slate and shows Turing contemplating an Enigma machine. (BPPO Re. CMCSM047/SC ref: TS-402)

• **Wallace and Gromit Smilers at Selfridges**

On the 26th December 2010 I learned from my daughter that Royal Mail were running a Wallace and Gromit Smilers Booth located in the basement of Selfridges. Fired up by this news I stupidly agreed to accompany my wife and daughter on an expedition to Oxford Street on the 27th December. Sadly the Royal Mail stand which had been apparently been present at Selfridges since the beginning of November had packed up on Christmas Eve and all traces of Wallace and Gromit Smilers had been expunged. Not so the number of people in Oxford Street! I have never seen so many people in all my life and I declare I have no desire to set foot in Oxford Street ever again, ever!



A short note to let you know that I now have received stocks of the personalised/ customised Xmas Wallace and Gromit Stamp sheets with the above label design (four different sheets) and these will be available shortly through the Smilers Store. (10/01)

• **Themed Smilers Roundup**

Again, somewhat belatedly, I have updated the Themed Smilers Listings for October, November and December. And again, not a huge quantity of these Themed Smilers this quarter with none appearing in August. You can view these updates under Themed Smilers listing. (05/01)

• **Earl Shilton Scout Group**

Ridgewood Stamp Sheets are pleased to announce the release of its Earl Shilton Scout Group customised stamp sheet. For full details of this sheet and a very special New Year offer for all new members of our Smilers Club please see visit our Earl Shilton Scouts page. (15/12)



Lord Robert Baden-Powell, at 14 years old in 1871, was a successful soldier, but not a good one. He had been chosen for his physical prowess of the small South African territory of Mafeking during the Boer War, because of his exceptional performance as an extraordinary leader as the founder of Scouting.

He had been imprisoned during the Boer War, but he had been released, and he had been chosen to lead the Scouts in the Boer War, because of his exceptional performance as an extraordinary leader as the founder of Scouting.

In 1907 he had an exceptional unit on Brownsea Island, Poole, Dorset, in the south of England. He had chosen the Scouts because of his exceptional performance as an extraordinary leader as the founder of Scouting.

























Scout Number
002
London/Priming
at 100 Years

Earl Shilton Scouts



Cub Camp Cadelus

The first Earl Shilton Scout group was formed around 1908. The original Scoutmaster was Mr. W. J. Cotton, and the first Scoutmaster was Mr. W. J. Cotton, and the first Scoutmaster was Mr. W. J. Cotton.

Mr. Perkins recalls: "Much of the Scouts equipment was handmade. In the early days, we wore green heavy bed sheets and would sew them into trousers (John, I remember). The Scout group took part in the World Scout Jamboree in 1920. During the jamboree, they camped in the town of Boreham.

Mr. Perkins was a Scoutmaster and the first Scoutmaster in the village to provide a Scoutmaster. But, and why? Regulations were not in evidence, in the early days, ordinary chairs, set in rows and lined around the sides. Children were given five minutes round the village in the morning.