

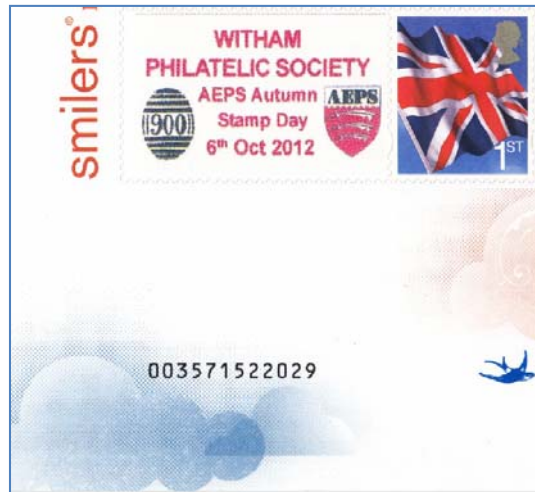
● Doctor Who Smilers via the iPhone App

Ian Billings has reminded me to mention the availability of Dr. Who Smilers stamps via the Smilers iPhone App from Snapfish. Both circular and rectangular format labels are available and for the Union Flag and new Doctor Who stamps these can additionally be combined with mock Olympic Gold Medal style and Future Dr. Who imagery and text. There are additional overlays that can be combined with your photo to spice up your label designs, for Doctor Who stamps they include scarves, bow tie and glasses.



● Altered Perforations Discovery - Up-Date

Further to the article on Altered Perforations, see below, I have checked through my collection and identified that the switch-over to square perforations on the Union Flag/Red White and Blue sheet also went unnoticed as I have an example from October 2012 showing the new square-edged perforations. The sheet in question is the Witham Philatelic Society sheet (TS-441) officially released on 6 October 2012.



All other Red, White and Blue sheets in my collection prior to this date are of the rounded perforation variety, so it seems probable that stocks of the square-edged perforations were introduced from around end of September/beginning of October. Both the Elm Park Christmas 2012 sheet (TS-443) and the Spring 2013 Stampex sheet (TS-446) show the square-edged perforations. The recently issued Spring StampEssex sheet (TS-452) also is printed on the new format sheets. I have uploaded an up-to-date listing of these themed sheets if anyone wants to keep track of these.



As a consequence, and as proposed by John Gray, we will be adding an additional collectible variety for the 2005 occasions sheets listed in our catalogue. A summary of these varieties may be seen by clicking on this link. Type 5 will be for square-edged perforations introduced from 2012.

Post-script: I have a couple of the above AEPS/Spring StampEssex sheets in stock priced £35 + pp if interested - drop me an e-mail to reserve before stocks are gone. (30/03)

• 60th Anniversary of the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II

Further to the earlier announcement covering Buckingham Covers 2013 programme for customised business sheets, see below, Buckingham have now released an image of their sheet commemorating the 60th Anniversary of the Coronation due out around the 2 June 2013. Priced at a competitive £26.95, the sheet is stated to be from a limited printing of 1953 sheets. although in reality the actual number printed may be considerably lower than this. (29/03)



• Bletchley Park make Home Front History

Home Front History and Bletchley Park Post Office have teamed up for a tribute to World War Two re-enactors. On 25 May 2013, Bletchley Park Post Office (Chapman and Mitchell) will release a special business customised stamp sheet with a Home Front theme. This coincides with Bletchley Park's Forties weekend which will be attended by many WW2 re-enactors. The sheet has a different re-enactment image alongside each of the ten stamps. They represent the diversity of roles portrayed at

events around the country. The stamps are set against a colourful image of Home Front re-enactors. The issue price is £35 and only 500 numbered sheets will be released.



Bletchley Park Post Office has provided the following additional information in support of this sheet.

The inspiration for the stamps came from John Leete's book A Re-enactors War that sets the standard as well celebrating the role of the re-enactor. This is becoming more important as the number of veterans diminishes and World War Two passes from living memory. Bletchley Park's code breakers were the embodiment of the vital role played by people "on the home front" in supporting those on the battlefields. John Leete recently set up the Home Front History social enterprise to promote high standards of authenticity and accuracy amongst WW2 re-enactment groups. A development much appreciated by event organisers seeking to ensure that their visitor experience is enhanced through the use of re-enactors. Bletchley Park Post Office has been supporting the development of Bletchley Park for 20 years through its stamp issues. It is now helping a new organisation on the path to success. As Terry

Mitchell said, "The number of people able to pass on their memories of wartime life in the Forties is fast diminishing. Organisations such as Home Front History are ensuring that those memories stay alive for future generations in a way that books and videos alone cannot. Therefore it is important to support them to ensure accuracy of representation". (29/03)

● **Altered Perforations Discovery - Smilers Sheets**

I recently received a communication from John Gray with reference to my piece on the Ready Teddy sheet update (see below) in which John suggests that we should also increase the varieties table for the Occasions issues from 2005 to include 5 additional and different types! John writes.

"The recent sheets with Teddy and Union Flag stamps have altered die-cut perforations. All previous sheets had stamps with round-ended die-cut perforations, but the recent reprints have square-ended perforations. The changeover from round to square started with the Royal Mail Christmas 2011 stamp sheets and appeared in Business customised sheets from April 2012. (The St James Bible business sheet has the Christmas 2011 1st class stamp with round-ended perforations, whereas all the Christmas 2011 generic and customised sheets have stamps with square-ended perforations.) It now appears that stamps with square-ended perforations are starting to appear in the reprints of the customised stamp sheets. The Smilers sheets at Spring Stampex 2013 had square-ended perforations on the Union Flag stamps, and the image of the Teddy stamps from Robert McRitchie on your website shows square-ended perforations.

I wrote to Royal Mail and to Cartor asking the reason for the change. I received no reply from Cartor, but I eventually got a reply from the British Philatelic Bulletin (copied below). They have turned my enquiry into a letter to the Editor of the British Philatelic Bulletin which will be (Ed: has been) published in the March edition. The proof of the letters page is [attached](#) below as a jpg file. I am not sure I believe in 'creep' as the explanation! Cartor have been producing Smilers sheets with round-ended perforation for 6 years or more, so Royal Mail haven't been doing much monitoring, if they have only just noticed the perforations doesn't fit their specifications!!"

A piece on the perforation shape change written by John will appear in the June Gibbons Stamp Monthly.

I have taken a look at the 2011 Christmas stamps and John is correct in noting the difference between the customised sheets and business sheets as can be seen below.



All personalised sheets of the Christmas 2011 issue are of the square-edged variety, similar to the booklet formats. The Business Smilers sheet format would appear to be the only source of the rounded perforations variety.



Square edged
ex: personalised sheet



Rounded edged
ex: business sheet

Furthermore, the transition to square edged perforations on business sheets seems to have occurred sometime around the beginning of 2012 as the first business sheet to show these perforations is the Classic Locomotives of Scotland sheet issued by Benham on 2 April 2012 (Cat ref: BC-371). All subsequent sheets with the exception of The Strike Hard Strike True (BC-372) and 175th Anniversary of P&O (BC-380) show the new square edged perforations. Looking at the stamps used with these sheets will give us a list of potential new perforation varieties. To date I have noted 10 different definitive sized self-adhesive stamps have appeared with square perforations ex business sheets:

- 1st Steam Locomotive (design first issued ex mini- sheet 26 January 2010)
- 1st Union Flag (design first issued ex Stamp Booklet 4 October 2005)
- 1st Birthday Cake (design first issued ex mini-sheet 26 January 2010)
- 1st Scotland Saltier Flag (design first issued ex mini- sheet 30 November 2006)
- 1st Crown Seal (design first issued ex mini-sheet 26 January 2010)
- 1st Champaign and Flowers (design first issued ex Stamp Booklet 17 October 2006)
- 1st England - Crowned Lion with shield of St. George (design first issued ex regional issue 23 April 2001)
- 1st Poppy/Barbed Wire (design first issued ex mini-sheet 26 January 2010)
- 1st Ocean Liner (design first issued ex mini-sheet 26 January 2010)
- 1st Big Bang (design first issued ex Stamp Booklet 17 October 2006)

I suspect the change to square perforations is, potentially, a huge area of study to fully understand and document all the different stamps. In 2010 we noted that the

Christmas stamps issued in the Wallace and Gromit Smilers sheets showed the rounded perforations whilst booklet stamps were of the square edged variety. So the transition seems to be away from the rounded- edged to the square- edged perforations and as all remaining business customised stamps could appear with square edged varieties in due course, potentially there are many more varieties possible.

Would any one like to volunteer to complete a more in-depth study of this change in perforations for these self-adhesive issues? If so please contact me and we will be glad to assist with scans from our stock and/or publish the findings. (21/03)

● Universal Mail Strips - Update

Last December, I issued an updated collectors guide for the Universal Mail customised tourist stamps, and as luck would have it Universal Mail issued three new strips that month that went unrecorded. I have now had a chance to update the guide and you can now download an Adobe Acrobat file that contains all current known variations of these issues. The three new issues are:

- St. Michael's At the North Gate : UK0069 12/12
- The Roman Baths : UK0070 11/12
- The London Dungeon : UK0071 1/13



UM-070 (UK0069 12/12) UM-071 (UK0070 11/12) UM-072 (UK0071 1/13)

I have 5 sets of the above strips available for collectors and these are available for purchase at £20 incl. p+p as above to the first 5 e-mails received. Send me an e-mail and I'll forward payment details by return.

In addition, David Pearson wrote to me in February and provided me with scans of three (hitherto) unknown issues which somehow had slipped through the net.

I have included these in the updated collectors guide and these are as follows:

South East England - Cat Ref: UM13a - UK012 05/10 ...

... and as a result of this new find, South East England - Cat Ref: UM13a - UK0012 07/11 is now renumbered UM13b

Edinburgh - Cat Ref UM-020a - UK0019 05/10 ...

... and as a result of this new find, Edinburgh- Cat Ref: UM20a - UK0019 07/11 is now renumbered UM20b

Scotland - Cat Ref UM-021a - UK0020 05/10 ...

... and as a result of this new find, Scotland- Cat Ref: UM21a - UK0020 07/11 is now renumbered UM21b

Sadly, I have no stocks of these issues so if anyone has a spare set I would appreciate an opportunity to buy them. (19/03)

Post Script: David Pearson has pointed out corrected dates for the three new strips which have been updated here and in the download guide. Note to self: Check, check and check again, dooh! (02/04)

• **Salisbury Stamp Fair Smilers**

Royal Mail were represented at the recent Salisbury Stamp Fair held March 15th-16th at the Five Rivers Leisure Centre, Salisbury. In addition to the Post and Go offerings there was an instant Smilers facility available similar to that seen at the recent STAMPEX event.



As with the recent STAMPEX event, the sheets were only available in the Union Flag/Red White and Blue format and again only in half sheets of 10 stamps/labels. I have 5 pairs (left/right panels) available for collectors and these are available for purchase at £35 incl. p+p as above to the first 5 e-mails received. Send me an [e-mail](#) and I'll forward payment details by return. (19/03)

● David Livingston Bi-centenary

Royal Mail have announced that will be issuing a Commemorative Sheet on 1 May 2013 to commemorate the 200th Anniversary of the Birth of British Explorer, David Livingston, priced £14.95.



Advance Orders for this sheet (and First Day Covers) are now being taken - the sheet is priced £20.00 and C4 size full sheet First Day Covers are also available priced £27.50. Just e-mail your requirements to graham@smilers-info.com (19/03)

● **Australia 2013 World Stamp Exhibition Smiler Sheet**

Royal Mail will be issuing a Generic Smilers sheet on 10th May to coincide with their participation at the Australia 2013 World Stamp Expo to be held in Melbourne, between 10-15 May 2013.



The images contained on the labels are:

- The Royal exhibition building where the 'Centenary of Kangaroo Stamps' show is being held
- Brighton Beach (Hut) Boxes
- Degraves Street
- A scene from the Melbourne Cup
- Parliament House
- Melbourne Cricket Ground
- W-Class Tram
- The Yarra River
- Flinders Street Station
- National Gallery of Victoria
- Luna Park
- Hosier Lane
- Royal Botanic Gardens
- A scene from the Australia Open
- The Shrine of Remembrance
- Queen Victoria Market
- Webb Bridge
- Federation Square

- Royal Arcade
- The Twelve Apostles stacks

Advance Orders for this sheet (and First Day Covers) are now being taken - the sheet is priced £20.00 and C4 size full sheet First Day Covers are also available priced £27.50. Just e-mail your requirements to graham@smilers-info.com. (12/03)

● **All aboard for the HMY Britannia Commemorative Sheet!**

Royal Mail have today released an image of a new Commemorative Sheet to be issued on 16th April 2013 to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the launch of this world famous ship and to

".... complement the stamps being issued by Royal Mail on 30 May to commemorate the anniversary of her Majesty the Queen's Coronation in 1953.

The Commemorative Sheet is packed full of fascinating facts, figures, stories and photos relating to her Majesty's Yacht Britannia including its launch, historic ports of call and ultimate decommissioning on 11 December 1997. It also contains details of the design and specifications of the vessel that played a central role in the reign of Queen Elizabeth II as she travelled across the world and welcomed monarchs, presidents, prime Ministers and diplomats on board. Since 1998 the yacht has been permanently moored in the port of Leith in Scotland and has become an award winning tourist attraction (for further information visit www.royalyachtbritannia.co.uk)." (12/03)



This sheet is now in stock and available to order at £20 + pp. E-mail me (or contact me by phone or letter) and I will forward a PayPal invoice. (12/03)

● **A limited Edition Teddy!**

Robert McRitchie has written in and advised of a new variety he has identified on the 2005 Occasions personalised stamp sheets, this time the Ready Teddy sheet which has turned up with the Royal Mail branding changed from plc to Ltd, following similar re-prints of sheets in the series. I will be stocking this new sheet in due course to add to the many others available, see Occasions 2005 Customised Sheets for further information (08/03)



● **New Business Sheet from Bradbury - George IV**

Adrian Bradbury has brought out another sheet in his History of Britain Stamp Sheet series (No. 91), this one featuring the reign of King George IV (...there can't be many more monarchs left, can there?). As usual, crammed full of interesting information and imagery that help define his reign. From a limited edition of 500 sheets they are available from www.bfdc.co.uk priced £50 each. (08/03)



● **Odd Olympic Smilers**

Robert McRitchie has sent me in a scan of a personalised 1st Class Olympic sheet that he obtained from SnapFish before Christmas which was returned to him with only

half the sheet printed. Whilst perhaps a disappointment to most consumers expecting the whole sheet printed for the McRitchie household, Christmas came early!



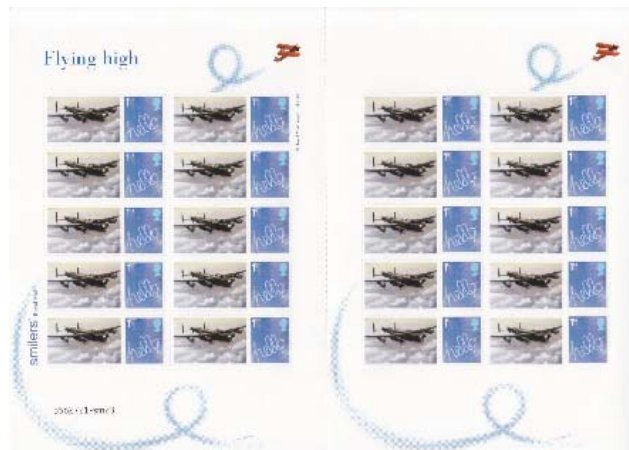
This is not the first instance of this production error that I have heard of and I wondered whether other collectors had encountered similar "problems". If so I would be happy to share your experiences here. (28/02)

● Bletchley Park Smilers

Bletchley Park Post Office are planning four new Themed Smilers sheets, representing various aspects of life at Bletchley Park. Two sheets are currently available for purchase on-line and two further sheets are due out on 16th March. Terry Mitchell, from BPPO, has kindly provided the following news update.



TS-447 (CMCSM079) White Cliffs Spitfire by Steve Williams



TS-448 (CMCSM080) Evening Mission by Steve Williams

TS-450 (CMCSM081) Battle of the Atlantic by Steve Williams commemorates the 70th anniversary of the role Bletchley Park played in winning the Battle of the Atlantic in 1943. The image depicts the capture of a U Boat and its code books. This enabled the Bletchley Park code breakers to provide the Royal Navy with U Boat positions. This was a turning point of WW2 enabling convoys to get through and make the 1944 D-Day landings possible. The issue coincides with a day of talks at Bletchley Park on the Battle of the Atlantic.



TS-451 (CMCSM082) Bletchley railway station 1943 by Natalie Orchard. Issued in association with Home Front History to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the most significant year in Bletchley Park history. 1943 was a special year for Bletchley Park on several fronts making nearby Bletchley railway station even busier. From January to December 1943 the Foreign and Commonwealth office reported receiving 14,050 decrypted messages from Bletchley Park. Of particular importance were those for the Admiralty that enabled the Royal Navy to defeat the U Boats and win the Battle of the Atlantic. Gaining control of these waters changed the course of World War 2 and made the 1944 D-Day landings a possibility. In May 1943 the UK and USA also began to exchange intelligence and start the so-called Special Relationship. American personnel were stationed at Bletchley Park as part of this. In December 1943 the first

Colossus computer was installed at Bletchley Park so the pioneers of modern computing would most likely have travelled there by train. (28/02)



● Personalised Smilers at Spring STAMPEX

Last week I rang my contact at Royal Mail and asked a very straight question. "Will there be a Smilers Booth at this year's Spring Stampex event." "No". was the very straight response I received. Imagine my surprise then, when today the first thing I stumbled upon at Stampex was a Smilers booth! Not only had the booth re-materialised (No! It wasn't blue and shaped like a police call-box in time for the Dr. Who issue!) but it had got a whole new makeover!



Located alongside the Post and Go Machines the Smilers were now processed using an App similar to the one launched last year and available for hand-held tablets and iPhones. The Smilers team at the show were using an App that took the photo but instead of forwarding the application to the SnapFish team the Smilers were produced using a local network and an adjacent HP Laser printer.



But perhaps the most interesting aspect of the re-launch was the use of the Post and Go Machines to pay for the Smilers sheets. For the first team at Stampex the terminals had an added menu function - the purchase of an A5 sheet of 10 smilers stamps/labels. Here is Dave pointing this out to me at the show.



The Smilers sheets were only available in the Union Flag/Red White and Blue format and again only in half sheets of 10 stamps/labels. I had a word with the organisers and they have promised to look into the possibility of adding full sheets for the next Stampex in the Autumn.



They followed a similar format to previous show Smilers in that one label on each sheet sported the STAMPEX logo but interestingly this now includes the strap-line **Spring 2013** and the annoying customers number in the lower left hand corner of the sheet has disappeared making for an altogether more attractive product.

I have 5 pairs (left/right panels) available for collectors and these are available for purchase at £35 incl. p+p as above to the first 5 e-mails received. Send me an [e-mail](#) and I'll forward payment details by return. (21/02)

● New Business Sheets

Tomorrow sees the start of another Spring PTS sponsored STAMPEX exhibition to be held at the Business Design Centre, Islington and with it the release of the latest in a long line of Stampex Business sheets, this year featuring British Inventors. Also recently announced is a brand new sheet from Benham celebrating the 60th Anniversary of the launch of the Royal Yacht Britannia (19/02)



● **Isle of Pabay Customised Sheet**

I have just received details of the latest Isle of Pabay customised sheet which was released on 26th November 2012. Apparently 11 sheets were produced (markedly down from the usual printing of c. 25 - sign of the times?) with a cover planned in the next few weeks or so, so look out for that. The sheet features the image of a newly

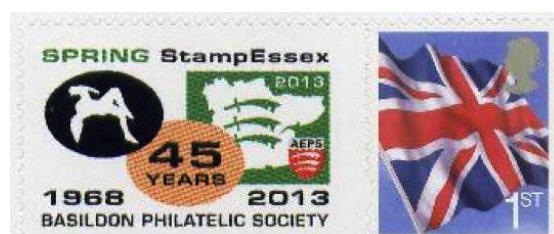
constructed house on the island. A few sheets are still available from Jeff Harris contactable through www.pabay.org (13/02)



● Association of Essex Philatelic Societies

Len Stanway, press officer of the Association of Essex Philatelic Societies (AEPS), has sent in news of a new Themed Smilers sheet to mark the 45th Anniversary of the AEPS and the Spring StampEssex event to be held in April. Len writes:

"Basildon Philatelic Society is forty-five years old this year and is celebrating its success as holders of the President's Trophy for the best overall society in the AEPS county philatelic competitions for 2012. The society's challenge to retain the trophy begins in the extensive display of stamps and postal history at the Essex Stamp Day exhibition and fair. "Spring StampEssex 2013" will be hosted by the society and will take place on 27 April 2013 at James Hornsby School, Laindon from 10am to 4pm. As well as the displays, there will be dealers to fill gaps in collectors' collection's, refreshments and extensive free parking. The occasion will be marked by an issue of special Smilers stamps showing the event emblem, designed by Charlie Mead, the society Chairman."



Collectors wishing to purchase sheets of 20 stamps (£22) or specially-designed presentation packs containing two stamps (£3) should contact the society. Postage and packing will be £2 per order. Cheques should be made payable to Basildon Philatelic Society and sent to: Basildon Philatelic Society, 25 Clay Hill Road, Basildon, Essex SS16 5DD." (07/02)

● Universal Mail Update

Since publishing details of the latest Universal Mail stamp strips last October, I have had another look at these issues and with the help of a number of contributors updated the listing and corrected a few errors that had crept into the update. To assist collectors in understanding these issues I have produced a guide which you can download here. Just click on this [link](#) to download the 32 page illustrated guide to Universal Mail personalised tourist stamps. (06/02)

● Buckingham's 2013 Programme

Tony Buckingham has released details of Buckingham's 2013 programme which is already underway with the issue of their London Underground sheet on 10th January. The following sheets are planned for 2013.

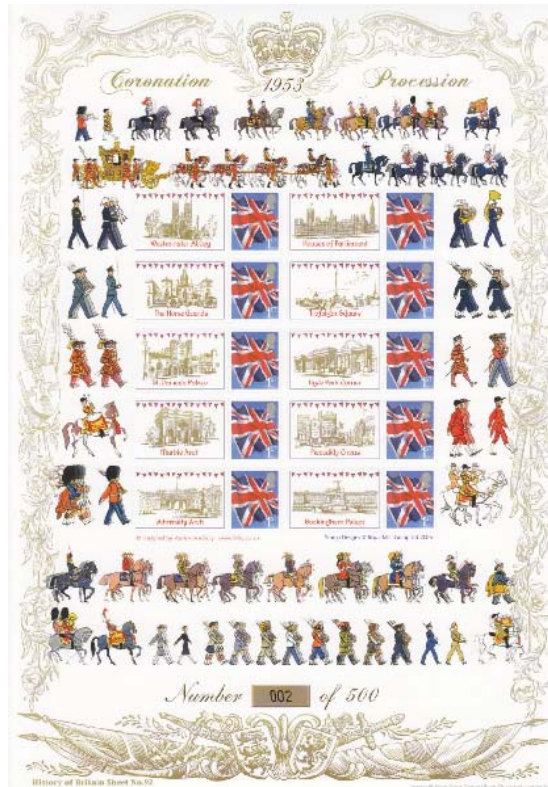
- Chelsea Flower Show - 100th Anniversary (in conjunction with RHS) (22 May)
- 60th Anniversary of the Coronation (2 Jun)
- Mauritania Maiden Voyage White Star (Cunard) (17 Jun)
- Mallard Speed Record Anniversary/A4 Pacific's Reunited at York (3 Jul)
- 75th Anniversary of launching White Star (Cunard) featuring QE2 (27 Sep)

Here's an initial view of the Chelsea Flower Show sheet, apologies for quality but we hope to be able to improve on this in the weeks ahead. (06/02)



● Coronation Celebration

Adrian Bradbury kicks off another year of Smilers sheets with the announcement of a new sheet in his History of Britain series (incredibly Number 92!) commemorating 60 years since the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953. Due out on the 14th February 2013 and priced £50, the sheet is available to order on-line or by post from Adrian Bradbury's web site. www.bfdc.co.uk (03/02)



● A Belated Happy New Year!

A Happy New Year to all our readers and Smilers Collectors out there. Also an apology to our regulars, eager for news on the Smilers scene for effectively taking a two month break from updating this column. As some of you may know, since 2008 I have been based in Moscow, Russia where my employer sent me for two years! Two years turned into five and keeping up with what was going on in the Smilers world has proved something of a challenge to say the least.

However, I am pleased to be able to report that I have been repatriated on good behavior and December saw us making our final departure from Russia and all that entails. Moving home from one house to another is daunting enough at the best of times, moving from one country to another, two weeks before Christmas and in -10 Degrees Centigrade was a whole new experience for me!

Shortly after a family Christmas in UK, we set off on a month long vacation during which my computer developed a fault which effectively meant I went silent for another month until it was fixed two days ago! I am now back on line and can now start to play catch up as we look forward to another bumper year of Smilers sheets and surprises from Royal Mail and others. (03/02)