

# Stampex and its Customised Stamps

John A. Cardona

The Business Design Centre in London, the venue where Stampex is held twice yearly in Spring and Autumn, must have been the last place to be visited by our erstwhile Vice President, the late Anthony (Tony) Fenech prior to his demise on 23<sup>rd</sup> September.

What is Stampex? The first British National Stamp Exhibition was held at the Central Hall, Westminster in January 1953. In 1956 the name was changed to Stampex which has been retained to the present day.

Stampex is organized by the Philatelic Traders' Society. It provides a variety of stands for stamp dealers, specially prepared halls for exhibitions and specifically designed rooms for meetings. In addition to the foregoing preparations, the U.K. Annual National Stamp Competitions are held normally during the Autumn session. The competitions cover a number of philatelic items such as Aerophilately, Postal History, Postal Stationery, Revenue, Special Studies, Social Philately, Thematics, Traditional and Literature. A number of trophies and special awards are awarded including the famous Silver Mailcoach for the best exhibit.

The organizers introduced the issue of a Customised Sheetlet of 10 x 1<sup>st</sup> Class stamps in the Stampex of Spring 2003 and have continued to do so to date. This short write up covers the eight sheetlets issued since then.

**Figure 1 – Spring Stampex 2003 (26 February – 2 March).** The organizers printed the first Customised Sheetlet of 10 x 1<sup>st</sup> Class stamps to celebrate and complement the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the first National Stamp Exhibition. The stamp chosen was the 1<sup>st</sup> Class “Hello” depicting the word as an aeroplane contrail with the Stampex logo printed on the tab.

The main attractions in the exhibition section were displays by the British Aerophilatelic Federation and the Czechoslovak Philatelic Society of Great Britain.

**Figure 2 – Autumn Stampex 2003 (17 – 21 September).** It being the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year of Stampex, and following the interest generated at the Spring show, a second Customised Sheetlet of 10 x 1<sup>st</sup> Class stamps was produced in limited numbers. The stamp chosen was the “Teddy Bear” from the “Smilers” set of 10 x 1<sup>st</sup> Class stamps featuring smiling faces which was issued in 1991. The Stampex logo was printed on the tab.

The exhibition section included, as the main attractions, displays by the British Society of Russian Philately and the National Youth Stamp Committee.

**Figure 3 – Spring Stampex 2004 (25 – 29 February).** The third Customised Sheetlet of 10 x 1<sup>st</sup> Class stamps celebrated mainly a very special event the 300<sup>th</sup>

Anniversary of British Gibraltar. That was shown prominently in the vignette and at the bottom of the sheetlet. The stamp chosen was the 1<sup>st</sup> Class “*Love*” stamp from the set featuring “*Occasions*” issued in 2002.

The main displays in the exhibition section were mounted by the German & Colonies Philatelic Society, The American Stamp Club of Great Britain and the Guild of St. Gabriel.

**Figure 4 – Autumn Stampex 2004 (15 – 19 September).** The fourth Customised Sheetlet of 10 x 1<sup>st</sup> Class stamps featured the “*Rule Britannia*” stamp from the miniature sheet issued in 2001. The details of the different trophies awarded in the U.K. Annual National Competition are shown on the labels affixed to the stamps. The trophies are also shown at the bottom of the sheet.

The main displays in the exhibition section were those exhibited by the China Philatelic Society and the National Youth Stamp Committee.

**Figure 5 – Spring Stampex 2005 ( 23 – 27 February).** The fifth Customised Sheetlet of 10 x 1<sup>st</sup> Class stamps celebrated the Rotary International centenary. The chosen stamp was the “*Hello*” 1<sup>st</sup> Class stamp issued in 2002. At the bottom of the sheet are shown a number of social services which are sponsored by Rotary International. The tabs attached to the stamps show the Rotary International logo and, vertically on each side, are the inscriptions “*A Centenary of service*” and “*A new Century of Services*”.

As Rotary International was celebrating its centenary, an exhibit from the official Rotary collection was mounted very prominently in the exhibition section. Displays by the G.B. Philatelic Society and the Postal Stationery Society were also exhibited. In a separate part of the building the Middlesex Philatelic Federation put up its own displays on the Dawes Cup Competition.

**Figure 6 – Autumn Stampex 2005 (14 – 18 September).** The sixth Customised Sheetlet of 10 x 1<sup>st</sup> Class stamps featured the “*White Ensign*” from the miniature sheet issued in 2001. The tabs depicted Lord Nelson. The foregoing was to celebrate the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar and in remembrance of Nelson’s death on 21<sup>st</sup> October 1805.

Besides the variety of stands provided for stamp dealers, taking part were the Royal Mail, the National Philatelic Society and the Friends of the British Postal Museum and Archives. In addition the U.K. National Stamp Competitions were held for both the Senior and Junior entries.

**Figure 7 – Spring Stampex 2006 (22 – 26 February).** The seventh Customised Sheetlet contained 10 x 1<sup>st</sup> Class “*Cheers*” stamps from the 2001 “*Occasions*” issue. The labels featured different themes of thematic collecting. The background to the sheetlet featured Brunel the famous British civil engineer whose great legacy encompasses railways, bridges, stations and steamships. Without doubt Brunel’s pioneering engineering achievements influenced the shaping of the modern world.

In the exhibition section the main feature was a display organized by the British Thematic Association with participation of various thematic societies namely Alba Stamp Group, Bicycle Stamps Club, Bird Stamp Society, Concorde Study Circle, Glasgow Thematic Society, Guild of St. Gabriel, Philatelic Music Circle, Scout & Guide Stamp Club, Ship Stamp Society and West of England Thematic Society plus displays by individual members of the British Thematic Association.

**Figure 8 – Autumn Stampex 2006 (20 – 24 September).** The eighth Customised Sheetlet of 10 x 1st Class stamps featured the “Union Jack” from the miniature sheet issued in 2001. The adjoining tabs depicted a Victoria Cross medal which is a unique award for feats of heroism and consequently there is so much to write about. Since 1856 the Victoria Cross has been awarded 1,355 times for acts of valour. Each medal is cast from the bronze taken from Russian cannons captured at Sevastopol in 1856. The current year marks the 150th anniversary of the award being instituted.

The Crimean War (1854 – 1856) was the first conflict that was extensively reported on, and as a result public awareness of extreme bravery and heroism was very high. Queen Victoria endeavoured to recognize these valorous achievements and the Victoria Cross was the result – a medal open to all regardless of rank, awarded ‘For Valour’ as is inscribed on the medal itself. (British Philatelic Preview No. 153.)

According to the British Philatelic Bulletin this was the first exhibition without the competitive displays. However the British Postal Museum & Archives display included the VC medal won by Sergeant A. J. Knight the only Post Office Rifle to be awarded the VC for “most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty” on 20th September 1917 at the battle for Wurst Farm Ridge, Ypres. Another VC medal, won by Private William Mariner, killed in action, was also on display on another stand. This medal was to be auctioned estimated £70,000 – 80,000. William Mariner citation states that “with remarkable valour and during a thunderstorm crept from his trench at Cambrin (22/5/15) and through entanglements to a German machine gun which he bombed scaring the enemy off. This brave deed occupied one and a half hours”. (Cohen, Weenen & Co’s Cigarette Trade Card No. 89 refers).

The British Forces Post Office and Bletchley Park Post Office had stands offering for sale their colourful covers. Additionally there were many well known dealers, both British and foreign, offering the best of everything by way of classic stamps, new issues, postal history and philatelic accessories. Amongst the numerous dealers there was Sliema Stamp Shop manned by our colleagues Joe Buttigieg and the late Anthony Fenech.

Stampex adjourned to Spring 2007 and probably most of this year’s participants and visitors will be there again next year. But surely one gentleman will not be there because he has been recalled by his Creator.



Fig. 1

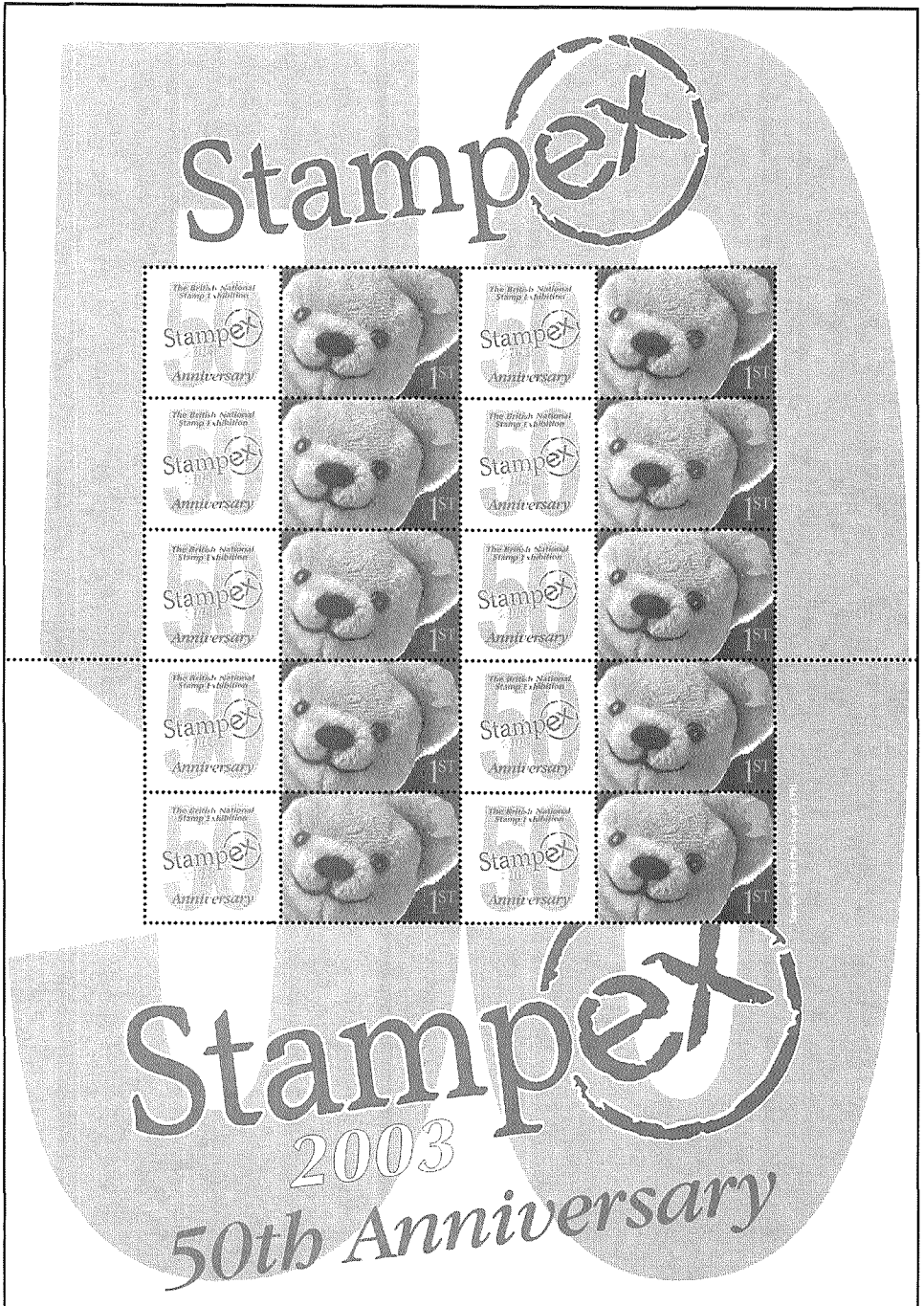
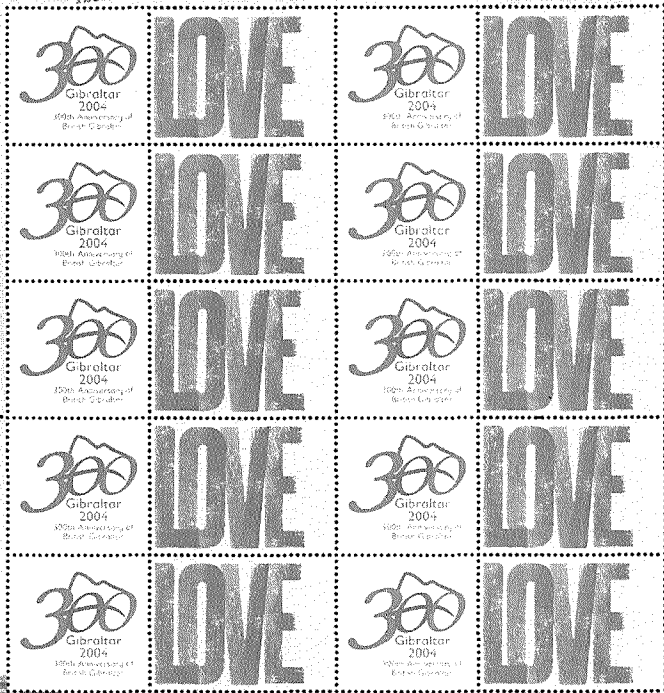


Fig. 2

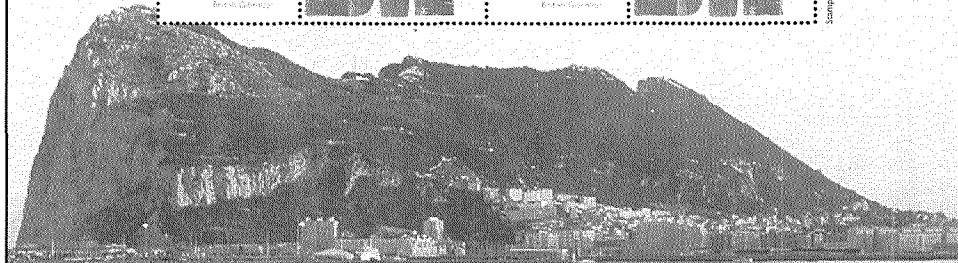
SPRING 2004

# Stampet

The British National Stamp Exhibition



Stamps © Royal Mail Group plc, 2002.



Celebrating the 300th Anniversary of British Gibraltar



Fig. 3

# AUTUMN 2004 Stampex

The British National Stamp Exhibition



THE SILVER MAILCOACH NATIONAL (Prix d'Inauguration)		HARMERS DIAMOND JUBILEE TROPHY INTERNATIONAL (Prix d'Honneur)	
N.P.S. TROPHY NATIONAL (First Time Fair)		R.A.G. LEE TROPHY INTERNATIONAL (Outstanding Exhibit)	
ARGVILL SILVER NATIONAL (Postal History)		GRAEME K. HARRISON AWARD INTERNATIONAL (Thematic)	
ROYAL MAIL TROPHY NATIONAL (Great Britain)		P.T.S. TROPHY NATIONAL (Commonwealth)	
H.L. KATCHER HELVETIA AWARD ALL CLASSES (Switzerland)		LINK HOUSE TROPHY NATIONAL (Thematic)	

Stampex 2004 © Royal Mail Group plc 2004

Celebrating the British Philatelic Competitions



Fig. 4

SPRING 2005  
**Stampet**  
The British National Stamp Exhibition

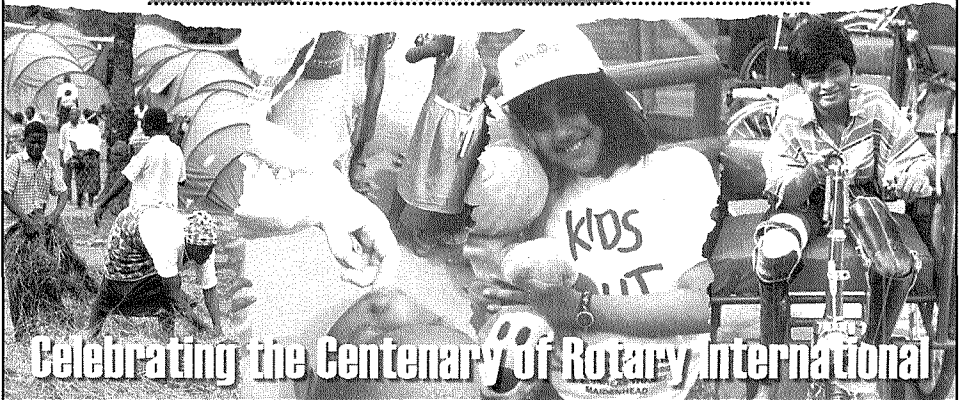


Fig. 5



# Vice Admiral Horatio Nelson 1758 - 1805

Celebrating the 200th Anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar and in remembrance of Nelson's death - 21st October 1805. Nelson defeated the combined French and Spanish fleets and gave his life for his country.



National Museums Liverpool (the Walker)

## Nelson's Prayer on the eve of the Trafalgar Battle

† May the great God whom I worship grant to my country and to the benefit of Europe in general, a great and glorious victory, and may we unconquered in any one, cherish it, and may humanity offer victory to the predominant virtues of the British fleet. For myself, indeed, I cannot say to God, who made me and man. His blessing light upon my endeavours for serving my country faithfully. To Him I resign myself, and the most cause which is entrusted to me to defend. Amen. Amen. Amen.



Image © Royal Mail (Stamp) 2001

AUTUMN 2005  
**Stampex**  
The British National Stamp Exhibition

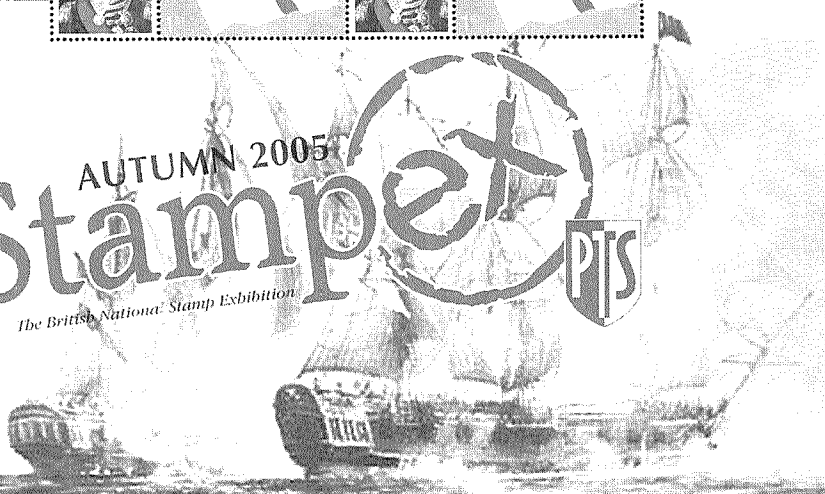


Fig. 6

Collecting by theme

SPRING 2006

# Stampot

*The Great British Stamp Collection*

PTIS

*Isambard Kingdom Brunel  
1806 - 1859*

The list of Brunel's achievements - from the SS Great Britain, through the Clifton Suspension Bridge and the Rotherhithe Tunnel, to great steam trains and railway advances - is legendary. Brunel is a truly great British engineering hero.

Fig. 7

# AUTUMN 2006

# Stampex

*The British National Stamp Exhibition*



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## "FOR VALOUR"

2006 is the 150th anniversary of the Victoria Cross, which is the highest recognition for valour in the British Honours system.

Initiated by Queen Victoria, it was first issued on 29 January 1856, recognising acts of conspicuous valour during the Crimean War of 1854-1855.

A total of 1,355 awards of the Victoria Cross have been bestowed, the last in 2005 during the Iraq conflict.



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Fig. 8