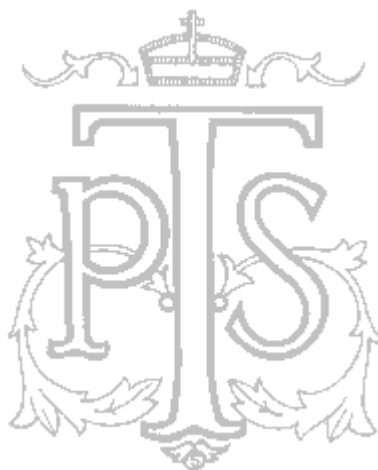


# TRAFFORD PHILATELIC SOCIETY



## NEWSLETTER

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(EDITED BY CLIVE GRIFFITHS; PRINTED BY NEIL POWER)



### CONTENTS

NEWSDESK

AN INTERNET RESOURCE FOR PHILATELISTS

POSTCODES

NEWS FROM HOME?

DATES FOR THE DIARY

## NEWSDESK

### Postal rates increase

For the fourth year running the Royal Mail announced, late in 2009, increases to its rates from April. Both first and second class letters will go up by 2p, making the first class rate 41p and the second class rate 32p. At a time of generally low inflation these increases represent rises of 9.2%, something which has outraged many consumer groups, especially those representing the elderly, who, it has been suggested, will be disproportionately affected, given that pensions are not due to rise by anything like that rate.

Luisa Fulci, Royal Mail's director of Marketing Services, said, echoing words she had used just a year earlier to justify the previous increases: "Stamped mail remains very affordable and consumers are still receiving excellent value for money – most countries in Europe charge more to deliver less.

"Our overriding priority must be to safeguard the currently loss making six-days-a-week one-price-goes-anywhere Universal Service, a task which the current market makes much harder, as big business customers choose other forms of electronic communications or competing operators instead of continuing to subsidise consumers."

The Royal Mail delivers 5 million fewer items of post a day – 79 million – compared to two years ago. It insisted this was a reason for raising the price of stamps, rather than a symptom of the previous price rises.

The company said that the average family spent just 50p a week on stamps and next year's price increases will add just 5p a week, or £2.60 a year, to their bills.

The one sure way to minimize the effect of these rises, however, and something that NewDesk has suggested previously, is to stock up on stamps **now** before the price rises take effect! It is also worth remembering that many stamp dealers are ready to sell off current GB commemoratives at a discount on face values, which often allows letter-writers to produce very colourful covers and puts into circulation stamps that are often difficult to find in anything but mint condition!

**Don't forget the Society's Auction! Come along to support us on 6 April. 'Interesting material at reasonable prices.' There is certainly something for everyone, so please come along and enjoy what usually turns out to be a fun evening.**



## An Internet Resource for Philatelists

While surfing the Internet the other day I found this amazing site, which I am sure will be of great interest to members. The address is: [www.wnsstamps.ch/en](http://www.wnsstamps.ch/en)

The **World Association for the Development of Philately** (WADP) and the **Universal Postal Union** (UPU) have jointly conceived and developed the WADP Numbering System (WNS), which was launched on 1 January 2002. It lists and pictures more than 40,000 stamps issued worldwide since 2002, which have undergone a process of registration and verification by the International Bureau of the UPU. Its aim is to act as a reference tool for philatelists and others and, going forward, as a control of stamps that have been issued illegally or of labels that are claimed to be stamps, since these will not be given WNS numbers.

A postage stamp issued by a *bona fide* postal authority is allocated a WNS number on the basis of the following four specific criteria:

- design;
- face value or indication of tariff;
- colours;
- format.

When one of the above criteria differs on another postage stamp, that stamp is given a different WNS number.

The actual day or month of issue and type of presentation (sheet, booklet, miniature sheet, etc.) are not taken into account when WNS numbers are assigned.

The WNS number comprises the ISO 3166 Alpha-2 country code (2 letters), a serial number (3 figures) and the year of issue (2 figures), i.e. a total of 8 characters including a dot.



### Example:

**DK012.08**

DK = Denmark  
012 = Serial Number  
.08 = Year

From the home page you can search for stamps by country, year issued, primary theme, subject/ key word, or any combination of these. I found 101 stamps when I searched for “cats”, but only five when I searched for “computer”. You can also search for sub-themes in many of the drop-down theme categories. I selected “science and technology”, then “information technology” and found 96 stamps in that category.

When you bring up a stamp (see example above) you can click on the “full resolution” version to see a larger image of the stamp. You can view stamps issued by each country by year, and for many countries, there is a link to that country’s philatelic web site.

You can download and save the stamp images to your computer. Remember, though, that most of those recent stamps are copyrighted material. You cannot use the images for commercial usage without the permission of the copyright holder!

The main page also provides links to a number of associated authorities (e.g. The International Stamp Dealers Association) and the UPU itself.

I spent many enjoyable hours browsing through this site and I think it will be an easy and invaluable way of keeping up to date with new issues. Happy stamp delving.

Ted Jackson

## Postcodes



Coming across this machine cancel gave me some pause for thought. Was it really fifty years since Postcodes were introduced? A bit of research showed that actually it wasn't that long ago, in the sense that they only became universal in the mid-1970s, although they had first been introduced, as a trial, in Norwich in 1959 at the behest of the then Postmaster General, Ernest Marples (didn't he introduce motorways too?). Indeed, like motorways perhaps, it is difficult to think what we would do without the good old postcode. Years ago, a letter from Italy on which practically everything was wrong, apart from the postcode, still managed to find me. Something that I didn't realise is that some postcodes are a bit special, such as SW1W 0DT (*The Daily Telegraph*) and W1D 4FA (*The Football Association*).

And as a starter for next year's Xmas quiz - any ideas who lives at SW1A 1AA?

Clive Griffiths

## News from Home?

This cover (Fig. 1 below) was sent express from Littoria Scalo to Heerte über Wolfenbüttel (Lower Saxony), now part of the City of Salzgitter, situated some 40 miles from Hannover, on 4 September 1941. It is franked 1.25 lire (1x25c; 2x50c) + 2.50 lire express fee. And the first thing to note with respect to a cover that tells an interesting tale is that this appears to have been an over-franking, since, with effect from July 1941, a new, preferential rate of 1 lira had been introduced for mail directed to Germany.



(Fig. 1)

It appears, from details of the address (*Lager* = camp; *Stube* = block), to be a letter addressed to a work camp, temporary home to one of the almost 500,000 Italian workers who voluntarily went to Germany in the period 1938-43, lured by the prospects of the significantly higher wages on offer (up to five times those available in Italy). This trade in workers began in the late 1930s with modest German requests for agricultural workers. By the beginning of the 1940s some 50,000 workers were leaving for Germany each year, and as it became clear that the Italians were unlikely to be able to make a significant contribution to the Axis war effort, German demands became more exacting and quite specific in terms of the skills required. The experiences of the workers were mixed: they were valued by many employers, but many of the Italians were recruited from the ranks of the unemployed and needed time both to readjust to the discipline of work and also to get used to life (and work) in a foreign country.

News from home must have been welcome, both in terms of counteracting 'home-sickness' and in reassuring the workers that their remittances were reaching home and being appreciated.

Indeed it seems from this envelope, with its pre-printed address, and from the fact that, as can be seen from the reverse, the cover passed through both the Italian censorship in Bologna (*Ufficio Censura Posta Estera II*) and the German military censorship in Munich (identified by the letter 'd' in the printed cancel on the censor strip), apparently without being opened, that the authorities were anxious at least not to impede such communication



(Fig. 2)

Littoria Scalo, the cover's place of origin, was a district (*frazione*) of Littoria,<sup>1</sup> a fascist 'new town', one of several built on the Pontine Marshes, a few miles outside Rome. It was, in fact, the site of the railway station on the main Rome-Naples line and had been planned from about 1929 to provide a rail connection for the new town. Littoria itself, taking its name from the fascist symbol, the *littorio* or fasces (a bundle of rods bound together as a metaphor for strength through unity), was built during the early 1930s. It was officially inaugurated by Mussolini himself in a ceremony on 18 December 1932, as part of the celebrations marking ten years of fascist rule. Littoria, and the tower in its central square also featured on the series of official postcards '*Opere del Regime*' (Public Works undertaken by the Regime) issued in 1934. The draining of the Pontine Marshes, part of a countrywide initiative begun in 1928, was one of the big public works projects undertaken during the fascist period, and while it undoubtedly served propagandistic purposes as far as the regime was concerned, attracting much international interest, it also represented a genuine civil engineering achievement through which large areas of previously unproductive land were brought into cultivation.



The Central Square in modern Latina

The cover is franked with three stamps from the Italo-German Friendship (*Fratellanza d'armi*) issue of 1941. These stamps were intended to celebrate, perhaps a little belatedly, Italy's military intervention alongside Germany in the Second World War.<sup>2</sup> The first three stamps from the issue, designed by Amedeo Pesci and comprising 50c, 75c and 1.25 lire values, appeared on 30 January 1941. Curiously, although Pesci had also designed three lower values (10c, 20c and 25c), these were not issued and another designer, Corrado Mezzana, was asked to produce a design. These latter stamps were eventually issued some three months later on 2 April. Just why it was decided not to release the entire Pesci series, is not clear.<sup>3</sup> It has been suggested that the appearance of the value boxes, similar to price tags, close to the heads of the two dictators, was considered inappropriate, especially in the case of the lower values. However, as has often been pointed out, the same could be said of those values that were issued, and a simpler explanation might be that the design as a whole was considered too bland and without the visual impact that such an important issue demanded. In the event, Mezzana's design was a triumph by an artist who already enjoyed a considerable reputation as a stamp designer, bringing together in a visually succinct manner striking representations of the dictators and icons associated with each of the regimes (the swastika and the fasces), as well as clarifying the principal idea of behind the issue with the centrally placed slogan: '*Due popoli, una Guerra*' (Two peoples, one war), something only hinted at in the Pesci design.<sup>4</sup>

A final, curious feature of the franking of this cover is the use of the Leoni design 2.50 lire Express stamp. This stamp had originally been issued in July 1926 and had been superseded in 1933 by a new design, being formally invalidated from 31 December 1935. Its use here, therefore, was totally irregular, but surprisingly it does not seem to have been picked up, or, if the anomaly was spotted, it was nonetheless allowed, perhaps another indication of the favour with which this morale-boosting type of communication was looked on by the authorities!

*Clive Griffiths*

1. After the fall of Fascism, Littoria was renamed Latina.
2. Ironically, by the time the first stamps of the issue appeared, Italy had already suffered humiliating military defeats in Greece and North Africa, although the Axis alliance remained generally in the ascendant until defeats in North Africa late in 1942.
3. The three values were put on sale by the Italian Philatelic Bureau in 1946.
4. Both designs were subject to Allied propaganda forgery, although it is not clear whether they were ever circulated in Italy. The slogan on the Mezzana design was changed to read, in Italian, 'Two peoples, one Führer', with a fearful Mussolini being confronted by a fierce-looking Hitler.

PS This cover bears a number of interesting marks, one of which remains a puzzle: the large red 'K', which was possibly applied by the German authorities since there is no letter 'K' in the Italian alphabet.

My thanks to Mr G. du Boulay, Chairman of the Germany and Colonies PS, for providing information regarding the German Military censor mark.

## Dates for the diary

### 2010

<b>2 March</b>	<b>President's Request Evening</b>
7 March	Stamp Fair (Cresta Hotel, Altrincham)
14 March	Stamp Fair (Quality Hotel, Bowden)
<b>16 March</b>	<b>Members' Evening – 'Letter O'</b>
21 March	Stamp Fair (Cresta Hotel, Altrincham)
30 March	Stockport Card and Stamp Fair (Masonic Hall, Wellington Road, Stockport)
4 April	Stamp Fair (Cresta Hotel, Altrincham)
<b>6 April</b>	<b>Society Auction</b>
10 April	Sale Stamp Fair (Sale GS, Marsland Road, Sale)
11 April	Stamp Fair (Quality Hotel, Bowden)
18 April	Stamp Fair (Cresta Hotel, Altrincham)
<b>20 April</b>	<b>Visit from Bolton PS</b>
27 April	Stockport Card and Stamp Fair (Masonic Hall, Wellington Road, Stockport)
2 May	Stamp Fair (Cresta Hotel, Altrincham)
<b>4 May</b>	<b>AGM and Competition Evening</b>
5-6 May	Philatex Extra (Royal Horticultural Halls, London)
8-15 May	LONDON 2010 International Stamp Exhibition (Business Design Centre, Islington, London)*
9 May	Stamp Fair (Quality Hotel, Bowden)
16 May	Stamp Fair (Cresta Hotel, Altrincham)
<b>18 May</b>	<b>End of Year Quiz by Maureen Pedley</b>
<b>25 May</b>	<b>Annual Dinner (venue to be confirmed)</b>
16-17 July	York Summer Stamp Fair (Racecourse, York)

*Please note that some of these dates differ from the previously circulated syllabus: those shown above are the correct ones.*

\* Further details about the year-long Festival of Stamps of which the Exhibition is only a part can be had from the official website: [www.london2010.org.uk](http://www.london2010.org.uk)

- TPS website: [www. communicate.co.uk/traffordphilatelic](http://www.communicate.co.uk/traffordphilatelic)

Answer to the Postcode question from p.4:



It is the postcode for Buckingham Palace!