



# 103 NOT OUT

DAVID GENTLEMAN'S STAMPS

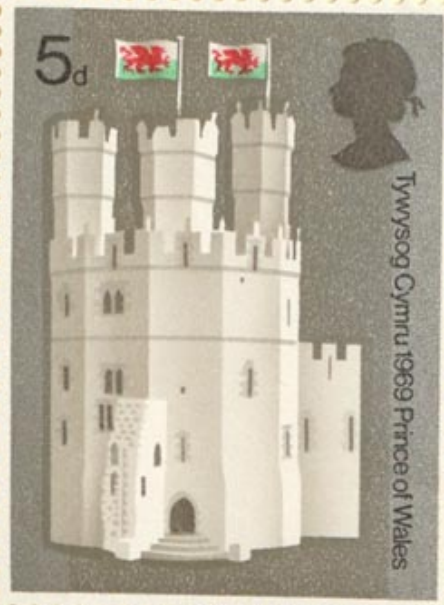
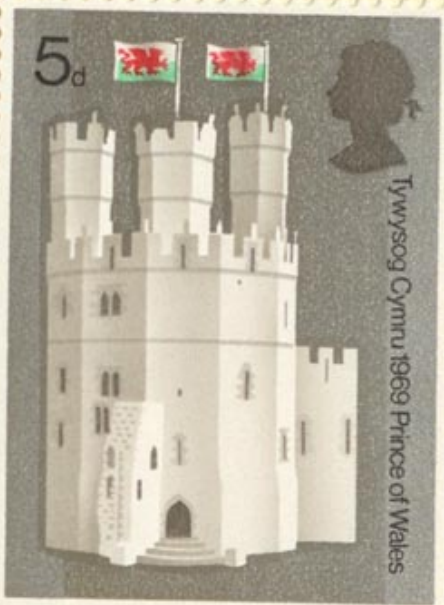
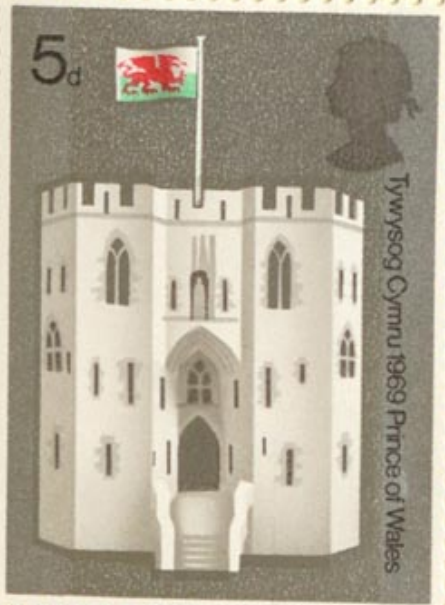
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BRIAN WEBB

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THE FLEECE PRESS, UPPER DENBY







Following the appearance of the first commoner on a postage stamp it was to happen a second time in 1965 with the commemoration of the death of Winston Churchill.



The well-known photograph by Karsh of Ottawa of Churchill at his most bulldoggish had been selected by the Royal Mail. Gentleman reduced the tightly-cropped image to line, all tone removed, and specified their printing in black and brown (4d) and black and grey (1s 3d).

To avoid the Queen seeming to be looking over Churchill's shoulder, on the instruction of the Stamp Advisory Committee, a white vertical line was added to avoid adverse comment.



1965 was a record year. Nine sets of stamps were issued by the Post Office with subjects that included the centenary of the Salvation Army, the 700th Anniversary of Parliament and the opening of the Post Office Tower. Of the remaining six, three





issues were designed by Gentleman. As well as the Churchill and Battle of Britain sets, in collaboration with his then wife Rosalind Dease, he designed two stamps for the Commonwealth Arts Festival for which he engraved Trinidadian and Canadian folk dancers.

Looking like an action comic, the set marking the 25th anniversary of the Battle of Britain revolutionised the look of British postage stamp design. Gentleman had initially tried to put just one Queen's head on

the se-tenant block of six stamps. The idea was defended by the new Postmaster General Tony Benn but Sir Kenneth Clark, chairman of the Stamp Advisory Committee, considered postage stamps to be heraldic devices. The Queen had to remain on each 4d stamp, and of course swastikas on tailplanes created a storm of press publicity.

From Shakespeare's Bottom to dogfights landing on the doormat, Gentleman's new stamps were getting talked about.



In the late 1960s the Post Office was still responsible for telecommunications and the National Giro Bank. For his Post Office Technology set, repeating images of sound waves and automatic sorting machines proved to be the link in creating images for an impenetrable subject. The National Giro's circular symbol and earth's globe encircled by telephone dials, too, made use of the idea of a single unit repeating to make a sheet of stamps into a big picture.

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*David Gentleman (left), the designer of a set of five commemorative stamps marking the investiture of Charles, Prince of Wales, shows the new stamps to politician John Stonehouse, the Postmaster General, 13th May 1969. (Photo by Bob Aylott | Keystone | Hulton Archive | Getty Images).*



In 1969 the GPO became the Post Office. Gentleman illustrated only two of the four 1970 Rural Architecture stamps: the 5d Fife Harling, a stepped gabled cottage and the 9d Cotswold cottages. Both stamps,



