

Royal Mail news

The Great Tudor • Asda stamp book • Christmas stamps colours & cylinders • Postmark slogan service • Stamp histories at NPM • Scottish aerogramme

A Philatelic Numismatic Cover will be issued on 28 January, the anniversary of Henry's death, price £12.95. This will be available from the Bureau – early ordering is advised as previous PNCs have sold out very quickly.

Presentation pack A presentation pack (price £2.20) and stamp cards (25p each) will be available from the Bureau, Post Office Counters philatelic outlets, and main post offices. The pack contains text by historian Dr David Starkey of London University, and numerous illustrations relating to Henry VIII's reign.

The Great Tudor Seven 26p stamps featuring King Henry VIII and his six wives go on sale at post offices, and philatelic outlets on 21 January. They commemorate the 450th anniversary of the King's death. The 26p denomination covers the basic rate for letters within the UK (1st class) and to European Union countries. The six stamps showing the wives are printed in horizontal se-tenant strips within sheets of 60. The large-size stamp showing King Henry is printed separately, also in sheets of 60. The stamps were designed by Kate Stephens.



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Postcards A postcard book will also be available, price £3.50.



HENRY VIII AND HIS SIX WIVES Henry VIII was born at the riverside Palace of Placentia, Greenwich on 28 June 1491, second son of Henry VII. His elder brother Arthur, Prince of Wales, died suddenly in 1502, shortly after his marriage to Catherine of Aragon. Henry, who became betrothed to Catherine the following year, succeeded to the throne on his father's death in April 1509. 'He was', writes historian Dr David Starkey, 'a big, bright, bonny boy, not yet 18 but determined to usher in a golden age of new Renaissance learning and old military glories'.

Henry married Catherine of Aragon (1485-1536) at Greenwich on 7 June 1509, shortly before his coronation at Westminster. He joined his father in law, Ferdinand of Spain, in a war against the French. This put Henry and England amongst the top European powers which he relished with peace treaties and conferences, most famously the Field of the Cloth of Gold, near Calais, in 1520.

But despite his success in Europe, Henry lacked what he most desired, a son and heir. Four children born between 1510 and 1514 all died in infancy. Their presumptive was his daughter, Mary, born at Greenwich in February 1516. Henry believed that the lack of a son was punishment for breaking divine law in marrying his sister-in-law. By 1527 he had fallen in love with one of the ladies of the court, Anne Boleyn, and urged his chief minister, Thomas Wolsey, to seek a dissolution of his marriage to Queen Catherine. Pope Clement VII refused and Wolsey fell from grace. His successor, Thomas Cromwell, sought Parliamentary approval of Henry, not the Pope, as head of the Church in England. In 1533 Thomas Cranmer, newly appointed Archbishop of Canterbury, proclaimed Henry's marriage to Anne Boleyn, ending that to Queen Catherine.

She refused the title Princess Dowager, retired to Bedfordshire, died at Kimbolton House, Huntingdonshire three years later and was buried at Peterborough.

Anne Boleyn (?1502-36), daughter of Sir Thomas Boleyn of Hever Castle, Kent, was a maid of honour to Queen Catherine when she began her liaison with Henry. (Her elder sister, Mary, was also a mistress of King Henry.) With flashing eyes, long black hair and a demonstrative nature, Anne captivated many men. Henry created her Marquess of Pembroke



The portrait of King Henry is attributed to the circle of Hans Holbein the Younger. Holbein (1497-1542), son of Hans Holbein the Elder (painter of religious subjects and portraits), was born at Augsburg (Germany). His aptitude for portraiture brought him to the attention of Erasmus who helped him come to England in 1526-28. He was occupied mostly with portraits of Sir Thomas More and his family. Returning in 1532, he designed a pageant arch in honour of Anne Boleyn's entry into London as queen. In 1536 he painted his best-known portrait of Henry VIII (there are numerous copies), being appointed painter to the King. He was entrusted with producing, for Whitehall Palace, a dynastic group portrait of Henry, his parents, and Jane Seymour. This was destroyed by fire in 1698, but a copy exists in the Royal Collection and the cartoon (drawing) in the National Portrait Gallery. Later Holbein developed miniature painting, or 'limning', producing such works of Catherine Howard and his own self-portrait.



Catherine of Aragon and Anne Boleyn by unknown artists. Courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, London



Jane Seymour by Holbein. By permission of Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna



Anne of Cleves by an unknown artist. By permission of Musee du Louvre, Paris



Catherine Howard Portrait formerly called Catherine Howard (identity now disputed) after Hans Holbein the Younger. Courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, London. There is no fully authenticated portrait of Queen Catherine.



Catherine Parr by an unknown artist. Courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, London

and secretly married her in January 1533. After Archbishop Crammer declared her Henry's legal wife, she was crowned in May, and gave birth to Princess Elizabeth in September. By January 1536, when she miscarried a son, Henry was already courting her maid, Jane Seymour. Henry accused Anne of adultery, incest (with her brother George), and treason. Despite denials, she was beheaded on Tower Green in May 1536, the executioner using a sword rather than the traditional axe.

Henry became betrothed to Jane Seymour (?1509-37), the day after Anne's execution. The daughter of Sir John Seymour, she served as lady in waiting to both Queens Catherine and Anne. Described as no great beauty, she possessed a small mouth in an oval face. Nearly 20 years younger than the King, she provided him with the long-awaited son, Edward, born in October 1537, but died soon after of child bed fever. She is buried at Windsor with the King.

With a Prince of Wales safely delivered, Henry's fourth marriage was politically inspired. For two years a suitable candidate was sought. Anne of Cleves (1515-57), daughter of John, Duke of Cleves (Germany), was favoured by Cromwell as part of an anti-Catholic policy. A flattering portrait of her, by Holbein, was instrumental in Henry's drawing up a marriage treaty in 1539. Far from impressed when he met her, the marriage was speedily ended by Archbishop Crammer on the grounds of non-consummation. Anne

retired, with a good financial settlement; spending several years at a royal manor house at Dartford, Kent. (The Dartford Stamp Club met for a short period in this historic building.) She was also granted Hever Castle, which Henry took possession of following the death of Sir Thomas Boleyn in 1538. Anne of Cleves survived King Henry by a decade. The marriage and its failure brought an end to Cromwell's career; he died on the block the day the King married his next wife.

A month after he rid himself of Anne, Henry married Catherine Howard (1521-42), a cousin of Anne Boleyn's, from an impoverished branch of the Duke of Norfolk's family whose members were advanced at court. When the King was seriously ill in 1541 she became romantically involved with Thomas Culpepper. Her adultery revealed, she was arrested on grounds of treason in November 1541 and died on the block the following February. She survived 18 months as Queen – three times longer than her predecessor.



Postmark will read 'Hampton Court, East Molesey', not as shown above.

Henry's final wife, Catherine Parr (1512-48), came to his attention early in 1543. The daughter of Sir Thomas Parr of Kendal, she was noted for her learning and knowledge of religious matters. When her second husband died, Catherine was involved with Thomas Seymour, brother of Jane, but cast him aside when Henry declared his intentions. They married in July. Regent in her husband's absence, Queen Catherine served as nurse and step-mother to his children and published devotional writings. After Henry's death, she married Thomas Seymour, the new King's uncle, but died the following year after childbirth.

Henry's reign is perhaps best known for the split with the Church of Rome and the establishment of the Church of England, and for the development of an effective Royal Navy and coastal defences. From 1538 Henry set about the strengthening of coastal defences with many new castles and forts from Hull to Milford Haven, notably on the Thames, Southampton Water, Isle of Wight, and Cornwall. Three castles 'which keep the Downs' were constructed at Sandown, Deal and Walmer in Kent, under the control of the Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports.

The Royal Armouries were greatly developed at the Tower of London, Greenwich, Westminster, Hampton Court, and Windsor Castle. Many items are preserved, including a grotesque helmet presented to Henry by the Emperor Maximilian I, and armour made for him as Prince of Wales and King.

Henry is also remembered for his building work at St James's Palace and Hampton Court. This was started by his chief minister Wolsey in the 1520s, and presented to the King in a vain attempt to regain favour. Henry's coat of arms and Tudor symbols are to be found in the stonework and decoration. A gate-tower, known as Anne Boleyn's Gateway, was embellished by Henry during the short reign of his second queen. More important is the Great Hall, built by Henry to replace the more modest hall of Wolsey's house, and the Chapel Royal, built by Wolsey but enriched by Henry in 1535-36. Along the Haunted Gallery is said to run the ghost of Catherine Howard, recalling her desperate attempt to reach the chapel to plead for mercy from the King.

During the reigns of Henry VII and Henry VIII the postal service developed to carry the King's despatches. Sir Brian Tuke, a Clerk of the Signet to both monarchs, has become known as the first 'Master of the Posts', although the title was not formally granted until after his death. Tuke featured on a National Postal Museum postcard in 1989 (see *Bulletin* July 1990, p 267). Tony Gammons wrote on the Tudor posts here in January 1986.

Henry, it should be remembered, was King of England, Wales and Ireland, but not of Scotland. He was linked to the Stewart kingdom through his sister Margaret who married King James IV. In the 1540s Henry tried, unsuccessfully, to arrange marriage of his son Edward to Mary, Queen of Scots. The Tudor dynasty ended, after 118 years, when Elizabeth I died childless in 1603. She was succeeded by James VI of Scotland, great-great-grandson of Henry VII, who then ruled both kingdoms. Another century passed before the two countries were united under a single Parliament.

Technical details

Printers Harrison & Sons Ltd

Process Photogravure

Size 41mm square (Henry),
30 x 41mm (wives)

Sheets 60 (separate sheets
of King Henry and wives)

Perforation 15 (King Henry),
15 x 14 (wives)

Phosphor Two bands, incor-
porating blue fluor

Paper OBA (Optical Brighten-
ing Agent) free

Gum PVA



Henry established great naval dockyards at Deptford and Woolwich and built many fine warships, including the *Mary Rose*, and the *Henri Grace a Dieu*, the greatest of her day. The *Mary Rose*, which featured on a British stamp in 1982 (above), was built at Portsmouth 1509-11, and refitted in 1536. In 1545 she sailed to meet French invasion and sank off Portsmouth with the loss of over 600 men.



Asda Stamp Book The book containing 10 × 1st class NVI stamps and Asda store coupon will be available from the British Philatelic Bureau and Post Office Counters philatelic outlets from 13 January. It went on sale at Asda stores in October.

FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail first day cover envelopes will be available from main post offices, the British Philatelic Bureau and Post Office Counters philatelic outlets about a week before 21 January, price 25p. Collectors may order serviced covers bearing the stamps, cancelled by pictorial 'first day of issue' postmarks of the Bureau or Hampton Court, price £2.56 UK (including VAT), £2.18 overseas (no VAT). Orders must reach the Bureau by 21 January.

Collectors may submit stamped covers on the day of issue, for these cancels, to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT, or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Mount Pleasant, London EC1A 1BB (Hampton Court postmark). Please mark outer envelope 'FD9703' (Bureau), or 'FD9704' (Hampton Court). Boxes will be provided at most main post offices for posting covers to receive local (mostly non-pictorial) 'first day of issue' handstamps.

Other special handstamps will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin* – Royal Mail's magazine for postmark collectors. It is available on subscription from the British Philatelic Bureau: £10 UK/Europe; £21.75 rest of world (airmail) ●

Postmark slogan reposting service Since the introduction of the Culler Facer Cancellor (CFC) machines in Royal Mail sorting offices it has become increasingly more difficult to provide a service to customers who request specific postmark slogans to be added to individual items of mail. This is because our machines are designed to process, segregate and postmark large volumes of mail in one single operation. The interruption of this process in order to add a specific postmark to a handful of mail items for collectors can cause delay to the rest of the mail. Under these circumstances we regret we are unable to continue to provide a reposting facility for postmark slogan collectors. The service was withdrawn from 4 November 1996. Postmark slogans will continue to be illustrated in the *British Postmark Bulletin* on an information only basis. JAMES ELDRIDGE Postmarks Manager, Royal Mail ●

Definitive update

The National Postal Museum report the following cylinder/plate numbers

20p definitive 14

2nd class NVI in sheets

Q5Q5 and Q6Q6

Wales 20p Q3Q3

£10 high value 4A × 10 and 5A × 10

Stamp rolls (margins and numbers trimmed off before issue) 1st class NVI R4 ●

37p R2 ● 43p R2 ● 25p 'Readers Digest' horizontal roll (non-elliptical perfs) B4

Stamp histories at NPM Staff from the National Postal Museum have been researching the background to British commemorative stamps in Post Office Archives files. Detailed histories of commemorative issues to Christmas 1974 can be seen, by prior arrangement, at the National Postal Museum or Post Office Archives. Histories of the 1964 Shakespeare Festival and 1974 UPU Centenary sets were published in the Museum's Review (annual report) of 1994 and 1995 respectively. Both are still available from the British Philatelic Bureau, price £5 each ●

Presentation packs to remain unchanged In April 1995 I asked for *Bulletin* readers' views on re-designing presentation packs along the lines of those issued by Australia Post. Of the 300 letters received, nearly 60% came out against any changes. The reasons given were (a) the AP design doesn't allow access to the stamps themselves, (b) many collectors were worried that a