

Isle of Man first to issue Olympic Games stamps in 2012

By Peter Jennings FRPSL, FRGS

The Isle of Man was the first postal authority to issue a special set of London Olympic Games postage stamps in 2012. An engaging set of seven values and a cycling-themed miniature sheet went on sale just after midnight at 00.01a.m. on Sunday, 1 January 2012, at the main post office in the capital, Douglas.

The stamps - 37p, 38p, 58p, 68p, 76p, £1 and £1.15 values and a £3 miniature sheet - were designed by Sir Paul Smith, the distinguished fashion designer, at the invitation of the Isle of Man Post Office.

Sir Paul, a life-long cycling enthusiast, was inspired by his friend, Olympic cyclist and local Isle of Man hero, Mark Cavendish MBE, in his design of the 38p stamp that features a road race bike and the £3 stamp included in the miniature sheet.

Sir Paul Smith said: 'It's a real honour to be asked to design these stamps. I have tried to make them positive and colourful with a strong graphic style of design'.

The fashion world was not Paul Smith's first choice of career; he wanted to become a professional racing cyclist. Unfortunately this ambition was thwarted following a road accident at the age of 17 that necessitated three months in hospital.

The Men's Road Race (250 kilometres) starting on The Mall near Buckingham Palace, has been chosen as the opening event in the cycling programme on Saturday 28 July, the day after the opening ceremony of the London 2012 Olympic Games.

Mark Cavendish, who was recently voted the BBC Sports Personality of 2011, is quoted in the special presentation pack: 'I have already inspected the route and I am confident it provides me and my GB team mates with the best possible opportunity of a victory. I am certainly motivated to win in front of my home crowd and become Olympic champion.'



Tommy Godwin, Great Britain double Olympic bronze cycling medallist at the 1948 London Olympic Games pictured holding the Isle of Man London 2012 Olympic Games first day cover with the special set of seven values. Picture by Peter Jennings FRPSL, FRGS



The Isle of Man, London 2012 Olympic Games stamps, designed by Sir Paul Smith, issued just after midnight on Sunday, January 1 2012 (Stamps shown here at 75% normal size)

The Manx cyclist added: 'My great friend and cycling enthusiast, Sir Paul Smith, has designed the Olympic stamps for the Isle of Man Post Office which includes two cycling stamps and I see this as a good omen for the GB Team - we will be ready to take up the challenge!'

Tommy Godwin, now aged 91, Great Britain double Olympic bronze cycling medallist at the 1948 London Olympic Games was enthusiastic about the stamps. He told *GSM*: 'I like this Isle of Man London 2012 Olympic Games set of stamps. I am delighted that Sir Paul Smith has included cycling on two stamps.'

Mr Godwin, who won bronze for the 1000 metres Time Trial, and the 4000 metres Team Pursuit, added: 'I hope that these particular stamps will encourage many young people to take up cycling at this exciting and successful time for the sport.'

The Isle of Man stamps and miniature sheet include the official London 2012 Olympic Games logo and were printed by the Lowe-Martin Group in Canada, using offset lithography. The stamps were printed in sheets of five.



Tommy Godwin, pictured holding the original Olympic torch that lit the flame at the Opening Ceremony - together with Peter Jennings FRPSL, FRGS, and the Isle of Man London 2012 Olympic Games miniature sheet on special first day cover. Picture by Mrs Kay Jones, Tommy Godwin's daughter.

Sadly, the five Olympic Rings are missing from the stamp designs owing to the difficulties which all postal authorities have experienced in securing permission to include them on their London 2012 stamps.

This famous Olympic symbol was depicted prominently on the four postage stamps - 2½d., 3d., 6d., and 1s. values - issued on 29 July 1948 to commemorate the 1948 London Olympic Games.

Other related London 2012 Olympic Games products available from Isle of Man Stamps & Coins include: a first day cover, presentation pack, souvenir sheet incorporating two full sets of stamps - ideal for framing, stamp cards and a collector's book.

**A special monthly column, 'The London 2012 Olympic Games And Its Stamps', by Peter Jennings FRPSL, FRGS, with comments by Tommy Godwin, will appear exclusively in GSM each month during Olympic Year.*



The Isle of Man, London 2012 Olympic Games, £3 miniature sheet, designed by Sir Paul Smith, autographed by Tommy Godwin, pictured holding it.