

Interview with Maxine Cannon, General Manager Isle of Man Stamps & Coins

**Can you talk us through why you have chosen the stamps featuring on these stamp on stamp 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary stamps?**

Where better to start than with the 15p 'Inauguration' stamp of 1973? The striking design showing a Viking landing on Mann, epitomising the strength and determination of our Island nation and regularly by my colleagues across all areas of our business as they deliver for our community.

Many of us will remember the Millennium of Tynwald in 1979, Odin's Raven, a two-thirds scale replica of a 9th century Viking ship, sailed from Trondheim in Norway, arriving at Peel, Isle of Man, on 5th July, Tynwald Day. Covers were carried on board but quickly sold out, I think that's how I got my : During my job interview Norman Bason, Controller of Posts and Stuart Slack, Philatelic Bureau Manager, I was asked what I knew of the Post Office. I mentioned I was devastated to have missed out on these special covers.

**What is your most memorable moment out of all the featured stamps?**

A special moment, which coincided with the visit of the Royal Yacht Britannia to Douglas (HRH Prince Charles was on board), was when, along with my colleague Janet we presented the Britannia stamp from the 1993 definitive set to the ship's company.

Another unforgettable moment was 1999: The new millennium provided the opportunity for something different: a miniature sheet issued on 31st December 1999, and cancelled 23.59, 00.00 and 00.01. A party that night at the Regent Street Post Office in Douglas included a buffet, Bee Gees music, and Andy Sykes gold postmarking our covers. Dot Tilbury hosted the best of all Millennium parties, and we made it to national TV when a film crew from News at Ten did "and finally".

There is so many more to add... As far as I know we are the only country to have artwork produced exclusively for us by Sir Paul McCartney. I think the curly whirly chocolate bar got that one over the line.

**What makes Isle of Man stamps so important in your opinion?**

Through the postage stamp and this common design in our 50th anniversary year, our hopes are for a world where through the written word people of all nations, creeds and colours can come together and support one another in harmony and in peace.

This message resonates with a set issued at the time of the Covid pandemic in April 2020 Carry Us Through, it carries the most powerful message: 'Words will carry us through'. For me writing is still key, giving great pleasure to both sender and receiver. In my career stamps and postal items have brought me into the company of so many fantastic businesses and people from all walks of life and in so many countries worldwide, I have the very best career and never ever imagined when Norman said "we would like to offer you a post", that so much would come my way. I would encourage everyone to press the pinball of life and open up a conversation by letter with a stamp on it and be different!

## **With this passion in mind - how would you describe what stamps can achieve?**

Across many issues we have paid tribute to Manx men and woman who have defended our freedoms and values One of those who fought in the First World War George Kneale featured on a set in 2000 titled Mann at War. It is through such stamps that future generations can learn of their bravery. More poignant than an email or text will ever be. Another issue Letters Home included a letter written by Thomas Quilliam, grandfather of my colleague Paul Ford. Being part of the Post Office family since 1996, he has made a big contribution to more recent issue designs.

Michael Noakes, artist and portrait painter, spent much of 1999 with HM Queen Elizabeth II, making sketches, paintings and drawings of her daily life his stories were fascinating and beautifully reflected in stamps based on his work.

The Manx Radio programme hosted by the late David Callister 'Time to Remember' inspired the set issued in 2005 for which Islanders were invited to a tea party, bringing memorabilia and sharing memories. However, one Islander with a wealth of memories, Hilary Guard, preferred not to come along. Then, to everyone's surprise, attended the launch of the stamps at the Royal Show, the first time he had taken part in anything for years. That was a real tearful moment, not least because we also invited a donkey to reminisce about the rides all of those present enjoyed as kids on Douglas foreshore.

The 40<sup>TH</sup> Anniversary of the first manned Moon landing in 1969 resulted in corresponding with astronaut and artist Alan Bean, the fourth man to walk on the Moon, one of the nicest people you could meet. Particularly exciting was to be able to launch the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary set at the Space Centre Houston and seeing our stamps on the huge monitors.

## **Looking back - what was a typical day in the life of Maxine Cannon?**

Well, one day, as I explained to Braddan Church Mother's Union during a talk on my working day, looked like this: It started off with Tim Peake and our stamps going to the space station, then Kate Philp Manx associations with the Royal Artillery, followed by arrangements for well-known character Morph to visit Laxey Railway station. And when finally at home a phone call from Christopher Biggins, who was hosting our Post Office Xmas party as it tied in with our Xmas theme of Pantomimes. He wanted to know which Dames outfit he should bring with him!

## **What does the future hold?**

This bring us right up to date the first stamp to be issued as we look to the future is 'Peace - The Highest Value of Humanity' which we have issued in parity with a large number of postal administrations around Europe who are fellow members of PostEurop , one of which is the Ukrainian post office who suggested the design

On behalf of Isle of Man Post Office, I would like to say thank you all those who have contributed past and present, and to our collectors and enthusiasts worldwide. We are looking forward to the joy future postage stamp issues will bring us all.