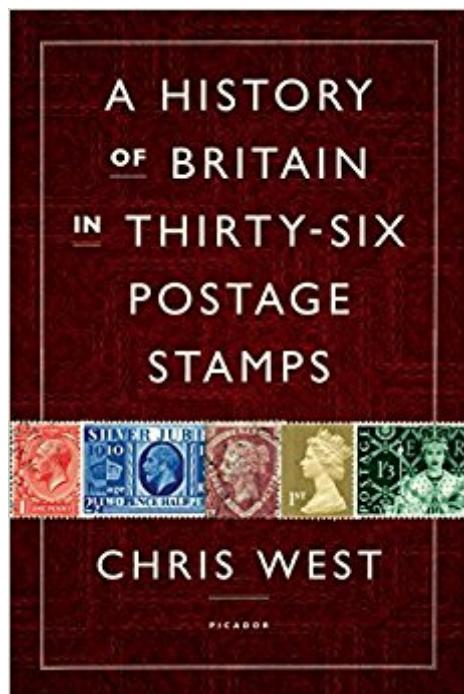


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A History Of Britain In Thirty-six Postage Stamps



Synopsis

Stamps tell a story and Chris West's book is the unique, fascinating tale of Great Britain told through its stamps. Hailed by The Times of London as "a splendid reminder of the philatelic glories of the past," A History of Britain in 36 Postage Stamps tells the rich, layered, and breathtaking history of England through thirty-six of its fascinating, often beautiful, and sometimes eccentric postage stamps. West shows that stamps have always mirrored the events, attitudes, and styles of their time. Through them, one can glimpse the whole epic tale of an empire unfolding. From the famous Penny Black, printed soon after Queen Victoria's coronation, to the Victory! stamp of 1946, anticipating the struggle of postwar reconstruction. A History of Britain in 36 Postage Stamps is a hugely entertaining and idiosyncratic romp, told in Chris West's lively prose. On their own, stamps can be curiosities, even artistic marvels; in this book, stamps become a window into the larger sweep of history.

Book Information

Hardcover: 288 pages

Publisher: Picador; Advance Reader's Copy edition (October 22, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1250035503

ISBN-13: 978-1250035509

Product Dimensions: 6.9 x 1.1 x 0.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 22 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,020,005 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #83 in Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Antiques & Collectibles > Stamps #6546 in Books > History > Europe > Great Britain #51083 in Books > History > Americas

Customer Reviews

Issued in England in 1840, the Penny Black, named for its price and background color, was the world's first postage stamp, which provides West a starting point for a concise, readable history of modern Britain. His conceit is clever: using postage stamps as a lens through which he focuses on historical events and issues from 1840 to the present: Stamps tell stories he writes. They speak to us across generations. The author, clearly a keen philatelist, offers a broad overview of Britain's historical events and issues, from the Victorian era and the Industrial Revolution to the Jubilee Olympic Britain of 2012. He is good at explicating stamp design and subject matter, and finds

connections between stamps and historical events—though sometimes he stretches this a bit too far. For example, the 1848 Penny Red stamp provides West an entrée into the devastating potato famine that impacted millions, but the only link to the stamp is its Irish postmark. Similarly, the financial crisis in 2008 is illustrated by a stamp commemorating Lloyd's of London issued in 1999. But there is cultural history to be found in these miniature art forms, and West has certainly found it, providing a quirky, and always interesting, overview of modern British history. (Nov.)

West provides a new twist on the historical chronicle by cavorting through modern British history via a series of 36 postage stamps with cultural, social, and philatelic value. “Stamps tell stories,” and the author uses them to jump-start discussions on the historical evolution of Britain from 1840 to the present. Each chapter begins with a detailed physical description of the individual stamp and progresses to an explanation of how that stamp reflected the styles, beliefs, accomplishments, and events of the era in which it was issued. Though this delightful read is deliberately designed to capture the fancy of both devoted Anglophiles and stamp enthusiasts, it will also appeal to members of the Downton Abbey set interested in background and context.

--Margaret Flanagan

I have finished two remarkable books by Chris West:[...]"A History of Britain in Thirty-Six Postage Stamps""A History of America in Thirty-Six Postage Stamps"Remarkable because they are concise, interesting and *entertaining*. I never found "history" to be entertaining in school.Although every chapter begins with (and is illustrated by) a postage stamp (Did you know 33 billion (yes, billion) copies of the Penny Lilac, 1881 were issued?), most of the chapters are dedicated to what was going on (in Britain & America & around the world) at the time of issue.

Love it! Love it! Love it! What else can I say!

A very enjoyable read for both serious students of history and the general reader. The author provides an insightful overview of modern British history plus insights into the stamps (and postal history) that provide the framework of the presentation. Each essay is lively and entertaining, providing a lot of context while not overwhelming with detail.

I enjoyed learning British history through Chris West's introduction of 36 postage stamps. It was very interesting to see how the changes in the stamps reflected what was going on in Britain during

that particular time period. An excellent read!

Bought this for my husband who loves all things British, is a big history buff and collects stamps.....a perfect match for his interests. Loved how his face lit up as he opened his gift.....he had never heard of the book - I confiscated the review so he wouldn't buy it for himself.

Absolutely delightful (I would guess even to a non-stamp-collector). Obviously it makes most sense to someone who was born in the UK, or who has studied its history. But an all-around good read.

I liked it so much I bought another to give away at Christmas; an excellent combination of facts and entertainment.

Being casually interested in British stamps, I found this a fascinating read on the subject.

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