

A look at some of the individuals who appear, or sometimes do not appear, on the postage stamps of Trinidad and Tobago over the years.

Trinidad displayed Britannia on the island's early (1851-55) stamps and both islands had Britannia in 1913-23. Whilst not a real person, Britannia (a goddess armed with a trident and shield and wearing a Corinthian helmet) was the personification of British imperialism.



Queen Victoria (1819-1901), the British Queen and Empress of India, another strong representative of empire, appeared on stamps for both islands.



In 1898, 400 years after he discovered the island, Christopher Columbus appeared on a special edition Trinidad stamp. He is shown planting the Royal Standard of Spain.



King Edward VII was only monarch from 1901 to 1910. This period commenced shortly after the union of Trinidad and Tobago, and in fact the first joint stamps for the country only appeared in 1913, after his death...which explains why he does not appear on any stamps. He does however appear on some postal stationery - postcards, registered letter envelopes and newspaper wrappers.

King George V was the first Monarch to have visited Trinidad; as a boy he was travelling on HMS Bacchante, and planted (with his brother Albert) poui trees in the churchyard of St Stephen's Anglican church in Savanna Grande. He visited again in 1891. King George was a notable philatelist and Hon. Vice President of the Royal Philatelic Society of London. 5 sets of commemorative stamps were issued on that occasion, one set for him and the rest to raise charitable funds.



Sir Walter Raleigh discovering the Pitch Lake is illustrated on the 6c stamp of the new currency definitive series 1.2.1935.



King Edward was King for less than a year in 1936/7 before abdicating and does not appear on Trinidad and Tobago stamps or stationary. He was popular on the islands having visited Trinidad in 1920, when returning on HMS Renoun from Australia, appearing in a motorcade and at a ball. Lord Caesar, Calypso King, released a song that went "Is love, love, love alone, cause King Edward to leave de throne"



King George VI and his Queen Elizabeth appear in several stamps - the Coronation in 1937 and the Silver Wedding (1948) being of particular note.

In 1950 Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, was made First Chancellor of the University of the West Indies. A stamp featuring her was issued across all of the BWI in 1951. She remained in post until 1971, and attended all the annual graduation ceremonies during this time.



Queen Elizabeth II succeeded her father in 1952 and first appeared on stamps in 1953. During her reign Trinidad and Tobago has been a Colony, then a member of the West Indian Federation. It became independent in 1962 and subsequently a Republic on 1.8.1970. Understandably the Queen appears much less frequently on Trinidad and Tobago stamps today, but she is highly respected on the islands, in particular as the Head of the Commonwealth.



Even prior to independence Trinidad and Tobago began to feature individuals who had influenced the history of the country. Of particular note is Captain Arthur Andrew Cipriani (1875-1945)...a Trinidad and Tobago labour leader and politician described as "a pioneer of the nationalist movement" of the islands. His statue features on definitive stamps of 1960, and he is also shown on the 1969 Labour Year and 1975 Labour Day stamps.



Eleanor Roosevelt was featured in 1965, notably for her role as a United Nations Representative for Human Rights.

The islands celebrated the "First Man on the Moon" with stamps showing Neil Armstrong taking his first steps in 1969.



Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948) famous as Mahatma Gandhi for his non-violent resistance campaigning for India's independence, was featured on stamps in 1970.



Rowland Hill the Postal System Reformer who introduced the penny post and prepayment appears on stamps in 1979.



Hasley Crawford the country's first Olympic Champion, who ran 100 metres in 10.06 seconds at the Montreal Olympics, in 1976, appears on a miniature sheet in 1977.



The country has celebrated its beautiful women with its stamps:
 Janelle Commisong Miss Universe 1977...stamp 1978
 Giselle LaRonde Miss World Americas 1986, in 1986
 Wendy Fitzwilliam Miss Universe 1998, stamps in 1999

In 1980 the country marked "A decade for women" identifying the varied achievements of six women - Beryl Eugenia McBurne (dancer), Madam Justice Elizabeth Bourne (judge), Audrey Lane Jeffers (social worker and first female member of the Legislative Council), Stella Piari Abidh (Public Health Physician), Louise Home (Nutritionist and a Senator in Trinidad and Tobago's Parliament, who lived to 104), Isabella Tesbier (Government Official).



In 1985 a further series of stamps entitled "A decade for women" were issued.

Evelyn C Tracey (Social Services), May Cherie (Medical Social Work), Marjorie Padmore (Music), Sybil Atteck (Art), Jessica Smith-Phillips (Public Service), Irene Umilta McShine (Education)

In 1985, on Labour Day, 19th June the achievements of labour leaders A.Cola Rienzi, CTWE Worrell, Captain AA Cipriani, TUB Butler, CPA Alexander, and QO Connor were marked.



In 1992 three Trinidad and Tobago stamps marked "Great West Indians" - Derek Walcott the Poet, Sir Shiridath Ramphai Second Commonwealth Secretary General and William Demas First Secretary General of the Caribbean Community.

In 1994 Aldwyn Roberts "Lord Kitchener" "the Calypso King who famously penned the words "London is the place for me" (a song about the experiences of the Windrush people) is recognised with a stamp.



Cricket is at the heart of Trinidad and Tobago's culture and in more recent years many stamps have acknowledged the skills of Brian Lara, and many others.



ANR Robinson 3rd Prime Minister, appears on postage stamps with regard to his contribution to the International Criminal Court. Stamps feature him in the presence of other luminaries, including Koffi Annan - General Secretary of the United Nations.

The Hon. Dr Eric Williams (25.9.1911-29.3.1981) was the first Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago. Williams founded the People's National Movement, and as the country's first Prime Minister he oversaw the country's move into independence. A shy man, who always wore dark glasses, Williams never sought publicity, so it was only in 1985 4 years after his death that William's considerable contribution was eventually marked with stamps. Since then further stamps have marked his statesmanship, in 2001, and notably in the issue of six stamps plus a miniature sheet in 2011. This issue marks his role in bringing the country into the thinking of presidents, prime ministers, and other dignitaries across the globe... Gerald Ford and Lyndon Baines - USA Presidents Lester Pearson, David Ben Gurion, Takeo Miki, - Prime Ministers of Canada, Israel, and Japan respectively Kwame Nkrumah, and Gamal Abdel Nasser Presidents of Venezuela, Ghana, and Egypt. Sir Grantley Adams and Norman Manley of Jamaica and the West Indian Federation HIM Haile Selassie I Emperor of Ethiopia Nikolai Podgorny Chairman of the USSR Presidium Sir Winston Churchill Prime Minister of Great Britain....and....John Lennon, and Ringo Star two of the Beatles! (Perhaps he liked their music?)



Pope John Paul visited on 5.2.85. At the time a cover was issued but the stamps were floral. However, following his death in 2005, in 2006 the country produced six stamps based on photographs of the visit in 1985.