

Tolkien – The Anniversary

£6 Prestige Stamp Book

27 OCTOBER 1992



Steve Griffiths, Royal Mail's Product Manager – Definitive Stamps, writes:

A second prestige stamp book will be issued on 27 October to commemorate the centenary of the birth of J R R Tolkien. This date is bringing forward the traditional February launch in order to reposition the prestige stamp book range as a Christmas gift item.

Tolkien has undoubtedly been one of the most influential fantasy writers in the whole of literary history. His interest in Anglo-Saxon England combined with his love of Norse mythology led him to create a comparable mythology for England. This, in turn, inspired a huge range of domestic and overseas writers to develop this style of modern literature. Interest in 'Middle Earth' led to Tolkien becoming a cult figure in the 1960s. He initiated his mythical world in *The Hobbit*, then further refined and expanded his ideas in the world renown *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. The first part of the latter was made into

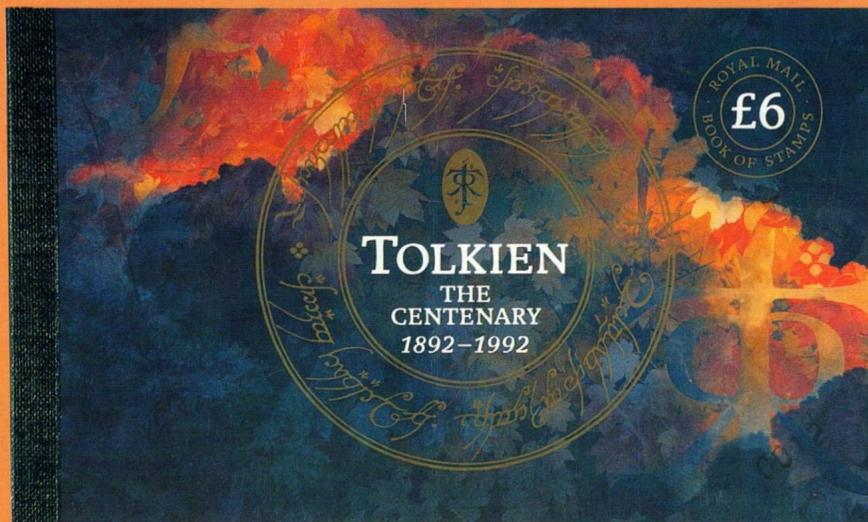
a full length animated film, but due to copyright problems the sequel has still to be made.

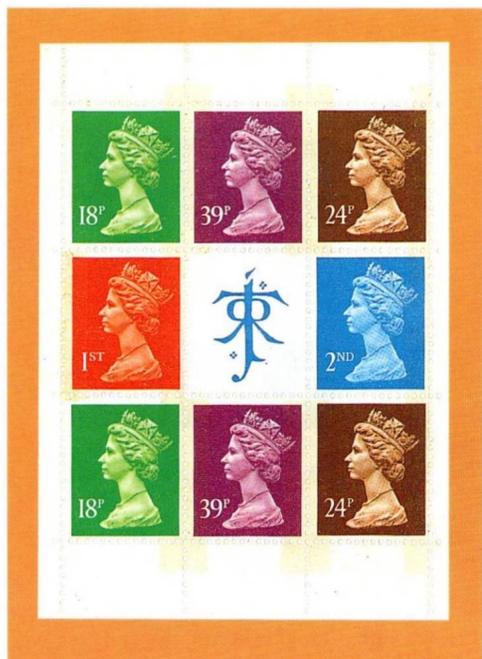
Tolkien wrote: *The Hobbit* (1937); *Farmer Giles of Ham* (1949); *The Fellowship of the Ring** (1954); *The Two Towers** (1954); *The Return of the King** (1955); *The adventures of Tom Bombadil* (1962); *Tree and Leaf* (1964); *Smith of Wootton Major* (1967); the record, 'Poems and Songs from Middle Earth' (1968); and *The Silmarillion* (published posthumously, 1978).

**Lord of the Rings* trilogy.

There are Tolkien appreciation societies throughout the Anglo Saxon world and much of Europe, including Poland.

Tolkien – The Anniversary has been written for Royal Mail by Neil Mattingley, with text sourced from the works of Tolkien. The book has been designed by The Partners who designed the Edward Lear stamps, first day cover and presentation pack; the Australian Bicentenary first day cover and pack; and the 1988 Collectors' Pack.





Stamp Panes

The four panes contain definitive stamps as follows:

1. 6 x 24p on Phosphor Coated Paper (PCP).
2. 6 x 18p with centre phosphor band.
3. Mixed pane containing 2 x 18p with phosphor band right, 2 x 24p with 2 phosphor bands, 2 x 39p with 2 phosphor bands, 1 x 1st class NVI with 2 phosphor bands, and 1 x 2nd class NVI with phosphor band right. The pane is completed with a central label showing Tolkien's initials J R R (John Ronald Reuel).
4. 6 x 24p on Phosphor Coated Paper.

The panes have all been printed in offset-litho by The House of Questa Ltd.

All stamps cover basic postal rates – 18p basic inland second class rate; 24p basic inland first class and EEC rate; and 39p basic airmail letter rate.

All panes have selvage, giving a miniature sheet effect, and also have a vertical column of rouletting near the binding margin for ease of removing the complete stamp pages from the book if desired.

Stamp Variations

The book will yield five new stamps:

18p Litho centre band

18p Litho right band

24p Litho PCP

24p Litho 2 bands

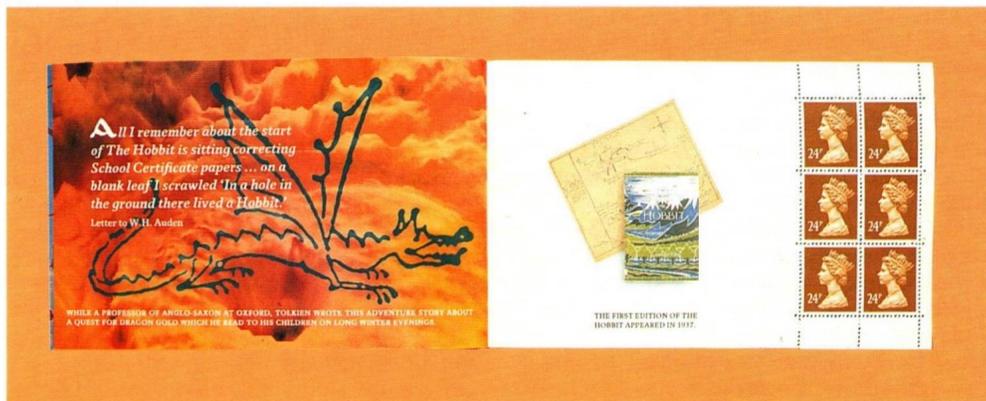
39p Litho 2 bands

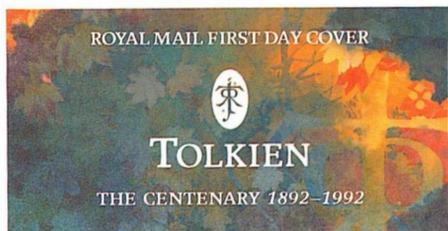
Illustrations

The Tolkien book is profusely illustrated with scenes from Tolkien's "Middle Earth". A portrait of Professor Tolkien appears on the inside front cover. There are numerous quotes from Tolkien's published works and from his letters to Milton Waldman (publisher), W H Arden, and Father Christmas letters to children.

The illustration in the margin of pane 1 shows the cover of the first edition of *The Hobbit*; pane 2 features the manuscript and front cover of *The Two Towers* (first volume of *The Lord of the Rings*), pane 3 shows heraldic emblems relating to the Silmarrillion, designed by Tolkien, and pane 4 reproduces examples of one of the Runic alphabets invented by Tolkien.

On the back cover of the prestige book are details of a "Riddle of the Runes" competition. First prize will be a trip for two people on a Norwegian fiord-country cruise. Runner up prizes of centenary editions of *The Lord of the Rings* will be awarded.





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First Day Cover

The Royal Mail first day cover will be available from the British Philatelic Bureau, Collections, philatelic counters and main post offices approximately two weeks before 27 October, price 21p.

J R R Tolkien obtained his degree at Oxford, and returned in 1924 as first, Professor of Anglo Saxon, then, in 1945, Merton Professor of English. In 1918-1920 he worked on the editorial staff of the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Tolkien wrote most of his works while living in Oxford. It is not surprising to see Oxford selected as the one of the two pictorial "First Day of Issue" postmarks, the other being the British Philatelic Bureau.

A first day cover service will be provided by the Bureau with the official Royal Mail cover addressed to the destination specified on the application form, and stamps cancelled with either of the requested postmarks. Application forms, available from the Bureau and main post offices, should be returned no later than 26 October. The first day cover features the mixed pane, number 3 above.

Collectors may send their own cards/covers for these pictorial postmarks, they should be sent on the first day of issue in a stamped outer envelope clearly marked "Pictorial First Day of Issue Postmark" to the Bureau or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail Windsor, Peascod Street, WINDSOR SL4 1AA (Oxford

handstamp). Should collectors want their covers returned under cover, a suitably addressed envelope must also be enclosed (no stamp required on this envelope). First Day Posting Boxes will be provided at most main post offices for those collectors wanting standard, non pictorial, "First Day Of Issue" handstamps. Other special handstamps sponsored by commercial organisations and stamp dealers, are detailed in the *British Postmark Bulletin*, the Royal Mail's magazine for postmark collectors. It is available on subscription from the British Philatelic Bureau: £10 UK and Europe; £21.75 Rest of the World.

National Postal Museum Postcards

The Museum will issue four new postcards on 15 September, day of issue of the Green Issue stamps; three cards will feature postal artefacts: "Hen and Chickens" parcel cycle; Slogan postmarks dies; and Pearson Hill Stamp cancelling machine. The fourth card will reproduce the Machin head. The cards will cost 25p each and can be ordered, nearer the time, from: National Postal Museum (Mail Order), KEB, LONDON EC1A 1LP. Minimum order £1; handling charge of 24p on orders up to £24, £2.14 over £24 (sent by registered post).

* Please note that there will now be four cards on 15 September, *not* five as originally announced.