

Royal Mail News

the book. The cover of the book features Rupert Bear, Paddington Bear, and the Ice Dragon from Noggin the Nog.

Technical Details

Printer: Harrison and Sons Ltd

Process: Photogravure

Stamp size: 41 x 30mm, horizontal

Perforation: 15 x 14, with elliptical perforation on vertical edges of each stamp

Phosphor: 2 bands per stamp

Gum: PVA Dextrin

Presentation pack: No. G3 price £2.85

Stamp cards: Nos GS2A-J, price 25p each

Pane: The pane consists of 10 stamps in two rows of five horizontally. The labels are printed five across and four deep, separated from the stamps by a gutter margin. The overall size of the finished book is 95 x 60mm.

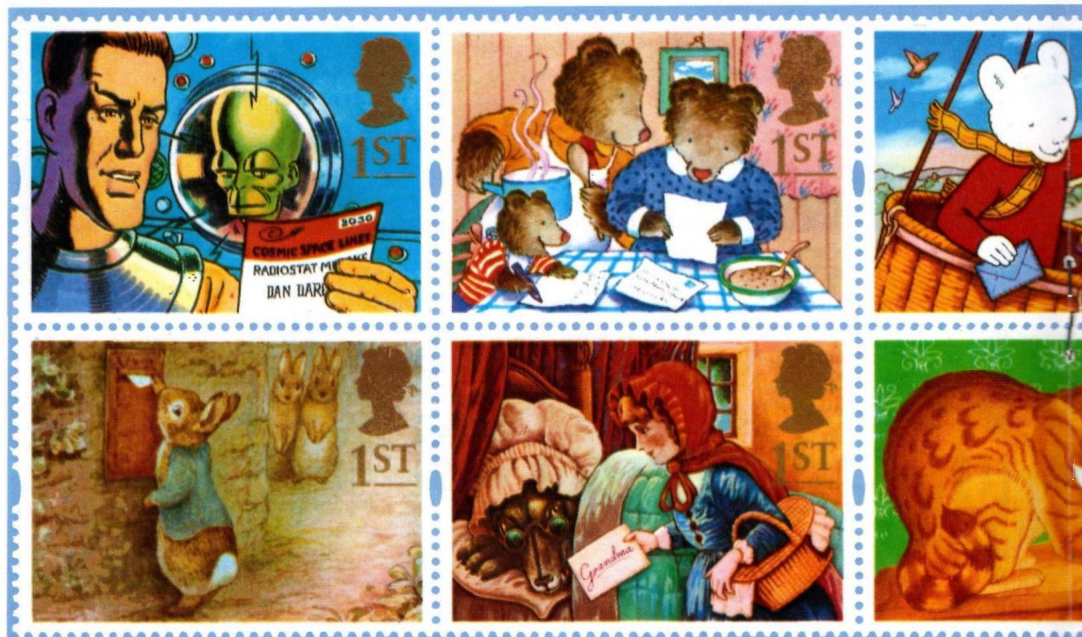
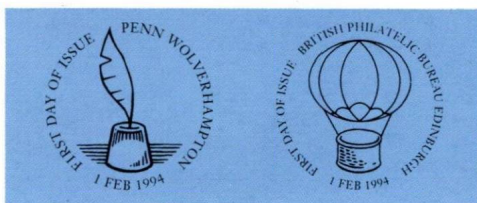
1994 Greetings Stamps

The sixth issue of colourful Royal Mail Greetings Stamps will be released on 1 February 1994 comprising 10 first class NVI stamps each with a different design. The stamps will be sold in a book, including 20 free Greetings labels, available from post offices, selected retail outlets, the British Philatelic Bureau, Collections, Post Shops Plus and philatelic counters, price £2.50.

The theme of the designs is "Messages". The stamps will feature perennial favourites from fairy stories, comics and children's literature. These characters include: Dan Dare, The Three Bears, Rupert the Bear, Alice (in Wonderland), Noggin the Nog, Peter Rabbit, Red Riding Hood, Orlando the Marmalade Cat, Biggles and Paddington Bear.

The book will also contain 20 colourful labels bearing greetings messages and illustrations.

The stamps were designed by Newell and Sorrell; details of the origination of each of the designs are printed on the inside back cover of



First Day Facilities

Unstamped Royal Mail first day cover envelopes and stamp cards will be available from main post offices, the Bureau, Collections, Post Shops Plus and Philatelic Counters approximately one week before 1 February 1994, price 25p each.

Collectors may order the Royal Mail cover bearing the 10 stamps cancelled with a pictorial "First Day of Issue" postmark of the Bureau or Penn, Wolverhampton, price £3.36 (including VAT) to UK addresses, £2.86 to overseas addresses (no VAT). Orders for first day covers must be received at the Bureau by 1 February.

Collectors may send their own stamped covers or stamp cards, on the day of issue, for the Bureau or Penn cancels, to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH, EH3 5TT or Midlands Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, BIRMINGHAM B1 1AA. The outer envelope should be endorsed "Bureau (or Penn) First Day of Issue postmark".

First Day Posting Boxes will be provided at most main post offices for collectors who wish to post covers to receive the standard, non-pictorial "First Day of Issue" handstamps.

Details of other special handstamps, sponsored by Royal Mail, stamp dealers and others, will be found in the *British Postmark Bulletin* – Royal Mail's magazine for postmark collectors. It is available on annual subscription

from the British Philatelic Bureau: £10 UK and Europe, £21.75 Rest of World (Airmail)

Earlier Greetings Book

The Gift Giving book (issued 2 February 1993) will be withdrawn from sale at post offices on 31 January 1994, being replaced the following day by the new "Messages" greetings book. "Smiles" (1991), "Memories" (1992), and "Gift Giving" (1993) books will continue to be available from the British Philatelic Bureau, Collections, Post Shops Plus and Philatelic Counters until further notice.

And a Greetings History

The Greetings stamps issues will be detailed in a special Royal Mail book to be published in September 1994. This will take a behind the scenes look at each issue from the designers perspective.

1000th Special Stamp

1994 is the 70th anniversary of the issue of Britain's first commemorative (special) stamps – the 1924 British Empire Exhibition 1d and 1½d. The 30p value in the "Age of Steam" set (18 January 1994) will be Britain's 1000th special stamp, in our 260th set. For purposes of compiling the statistics, the Greetings stamps have been included, but miniature sheets excluded. It is fitting that the 1000th special



stamp should be in an issue commemorating Railways – one of the most popular themes for special issues.

35p Age of Steam stamp

Harrisons have been working to develop a replacement adhesive for their stamp paper in order to reduce the paper curl problem. Royal Mail has agreed to a live trial of this gum on the whole print run of the 35p value Age of Steam special stamp. There should not be any variance within the run.

The gum is still referred to as PVA Dextrin, but will look marginally different in that it will be slightly lighter and slightly bluer than the usual formulation.

The gum formulation may also be harder and a consequence of this could be that some of the perforation holes may be less clean than usual. This is one of the outcomes of the trial we will be looking to assess.

New Machine Books

50p and £1 machine books with a new series of cover designs will go on sale at the Bureau, Collections, Post Shops Plus and Philatelic Counters on 25 January. The 50p book features the “Swan with Two Necks” coaching inn in London. The following details of this inn, taken from Tony Gammon’s book *Speed, Regularity and Security: The story of the Mail Coach from 1784 to its demise in the 1850s* (National Postal Museum,

