

## The Christians' Tale

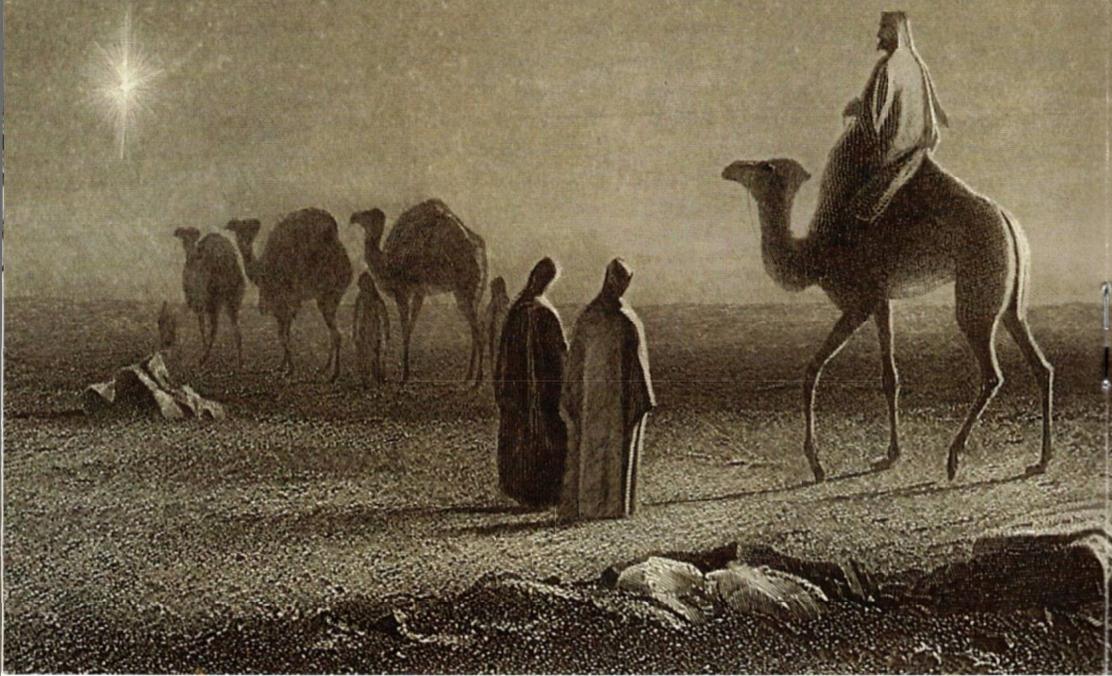
The eleventh of the 12 sets of Millennium stamps to be issued during 1999 is on the theme of Christians.

The Christians' Tale stamps will go on sale at post offices and philatelic outlets on 2 November.

ROYAL MAIL MILLENNIUM STAMPS 1999

The design of the **19p** stamp, by American calligrapher and collage artist Brody Neuschwander, features the words from Charles Wesley's famous hymn 'Hark, the Herald Angels Sing', joyously sung in many churches during the Christmas season. Written in 1739, the line 'Hark, the Herald Angels Sing' was actually coined by George Whitefield, an open-air preacher. The theme of Christmas hymns and carols also features on the Christmas aerogramme (see page 40).

The **26p** value, by Clare Melinsky, depicts King James I (VI of Scotland) with his authorised version of *The Bible* (1611). The work, commissioned in 1604, took nearly 50 scholars seven years to complete. The translation had a marked influence on English church style and literature; it was generally accepted as the standard English Bible for over three centuries. James, a noted theologian, was described as the wisest fool in Christendom.





The 19p stamp, *Wesley*, by American artist and calligrapher Brody Neuschwander, features words from the hymn 'Hark the Herald Angels Sing' by Charles Wesley. Wesley published over 4500 hymns and left some 3000 more in manuscript.

The 26p, by Clare Melinsky, shows King James I (VI of Scotland), with his authorized version of The Bible. This is Clare Melinsky's second set on a Christian theme, following the Missions of Faith stamps commemorating Saints Columba and Augustine in 1997.



Catherine Yass's 44p stamp recalls medieval pilgrimages, in this case to the cathedral at St Andrews in Fife, Scotland. The cathedral, which developed from a shrine for the saint's bones, was in disrepair by the mid-17th century. It was featured on the 1993 Scottish aerogramme honouring St Margaret.

The 64p stamp, titled *First Christmas*, is by one of Scotland's most celebrated artists, Craigie Aitchison RA, awarded the CBE in The Queen's Birthday Honours this year. His paintings were used on five aircards in September 1997.



Major Evans Picture Library

## Cylinders and colours

**19p** 1A gold ● 1B stone ● 1C greenish yellow ● 1D bright crimson ● 1E deep dull blue ● 1F black ● 1G yellow-ochre ● P87 phosphor

**26p** 1A gold ● 1B greenish yellow ● 1C bright scarlet ● 1D emerald ● 1E dull violet ● 1F black ● P88 phosphor

**44p** 1A gold ● 1B greenish yellow ● 1C bright magenta ● 1D new blue ● 1E black ● 1F ultramarine ● P88 phosphor

**64p** 1A gold ● 1B bistre-yellow ● 1C cerise ● 1D bright emerald ● 1E bistre ● 1F slate blue ● 1G pale new blue ● 1H black ● P88 phosphor

Catherine Yass's design for the **44p** stamp reminds us of medieval pilgrimages, in this case to the cathedral at St Andrews in Fife, Scotland. Tradition has it that St Rule (Regulus) of Patrae was told in a vision to take some bones of St Andrew (died AD60) and travel to the most westerly part of the known world. He is said to have landed at Kilrymont near the present town of St Andrews. The cathedral, which developed from the shrine of the saint's bones, was in disrepair by the mid-17th century. The ruins, as shown on the stamp, are now in the care of Historic Scotland. The Cathedral featured on the 1993 Scottish aerogramme honouring St Margaret.

The Scottish link is maintained by the **64p** stamp, designed by one of Scotland's most celebrated artists, Craigie Aitchison RA, who was awarded the CBE in The Queen's Birthday Honours this year. The stamp is entitled 'First Christmas'. His paintings were used on five aircards issued in September 1997.



religion was in a state of change

the reformation in the mid-

16th century. The liturgy of the faith was

in people's lives, but some held

fasts; while the corporate nature

of the mass, remained

largely unchanged. Liturgical

practices were developing

independently in the north and

south of Rome in Britain. One

factor which was to have far-reaching

consequences was the

replacement of Latin by English.

William Tyndale began the first-ever English

translation of the

New Testament directly from

the Greek. The first complete English

translation, by Miles Coverdale – was printed in

1534 and ordered every parish church

to purchase one. Later, in the reign of

Edward VI, the existing translations were

deemed to be 'unreliable' and

unavailable to the truth of the

King to support a revision of the

translation, published in 1539, is

the King James, or Authorized Version.

The design was to be both popular and

tolerated Wesley and Methodism.

Over the millennium the Church has played a

significant role in another area of our lives –

as a patron of the arts. This patronage has

resulted in the great medieval cathedrals of

Europe and a cultural wealth of paintings,

sculptures, frescoes, gold- and silver-ware, wood

and stone carving beyond measure. One of the

great inspirations for such work is the story of

the birth of Christ. The millenio-old theme of

the nativity and the story of the first Christmas

continues to inspire modern artists, including

one of Britain's greatest living painters,

Craigie Aitchison.

Many of the questions that have confronted

the different Christian Churches in the past are

just as relevant today: how best to meet the

needs of their flocks; how to reach out to others;

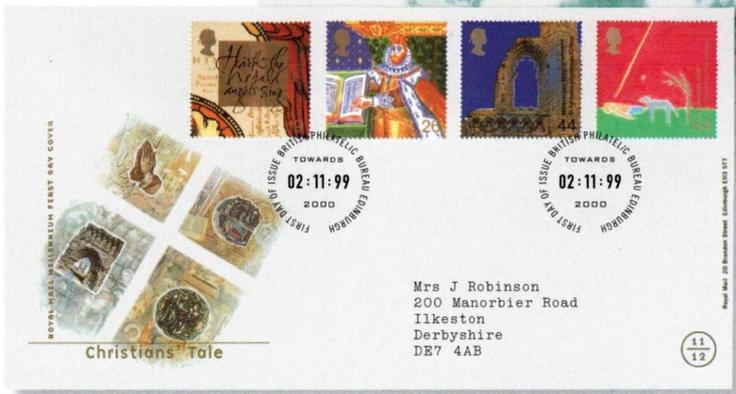
whether to be inclusive or exclusive? At the

close of the millennium it is important to appreciate

the central role that Christianity has played in our

past, and to reflect on a new beginning in

human history.



**Presentation pack** The well-illustrated pack above (price £1.90) will be available from philatelic outlets and main post offices.

**FIRST DAY FACILITIES** Unstamped Royal Mail FDC envelopes will be available from main post offices and philatelic outlets about a week before 2 November, price 25p. Orders for FDCs with the stamps cancelled by a pictorial first day postmark of the Bureau or St Andrews must reach the Bureau by 2 November. Price £2.22 UK (including VAT) or £1.89 overseas (no VAT).

Collectors may send stamped covers on the day of issue to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT, or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, 57 Queen Street, Glasgow G1 3AZ (St Andrews postmark), marking the outer envelope 'FD9925' (Bureau), or 'FD9926' (St Andrews). Covers can be posted or handed in at main post offices for the St Andrews postmark. A non-pictorial St Andrews postmark is also available from the Special Handstamp Centre: request 'FD9926 NP'.

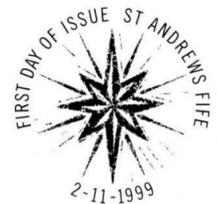
Bilingual Welsh/English versions of the St Andrews handstamps can be obtained by sending covers to the Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Penarth Road, Cardiff CF11AA, quoting reference 'FD9926 Bil' (pictorial) and 'FD9926 NP Bil' (non-pictorial).

Please note that there will be no Royal Mail first day handstamp for Bethlehem this year; any sponsored handstamps for this small Welsh village will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin* – available on subscription from the Bureau (£10 UK/Europe; £21.75 elsewhere). For a sample copy write to: The Editor, *British Postmark Bulletin*, Royal Mail, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8HQ. Covers may bear just the 19p Christians' Tale stamp for any philatelic postmark in use on 2 November.

**MILLENNIUM PHILATELIC PRODUCTS** A well-illustrated Christians' Tale pack (price £1.90) and stamp cards (25p each) will be available from main post offices and philatelic outlets. A Millennium Stamps Album, with pages for the 1999 issues, is available from the Bureau. Price: album and slipcase £19.99; sets of pages only £9.99. A presentation case has been produced to display the Millennium packs and covers. Enquiries: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT.

**Future Millennium issues** The last 1999 set – Artists' Tale – will be issued on 7 December, featuring specially commissioned paintings by Allen Jones, Bridget Riley, Lisa Milroy, and Sir Howard Hodgkin. In addition a Millennium miniature sheet containing four new 64p stamps, designed by David Gentleman, will be issued on 14 December 1999, and a Millennium definitive for use during 2000 will follow on 6 January. Further information will be published shortly.

The 2000 series begins on 18 January with a set entitled 'Above & Beyond', followed by Fire & Light (1 February), Water & Coast (7 March), Life & Earth (4 April), Art & Craft (2 May), People & Place (6 June), Stone & Soil (4 July), Tree & Leaf (1 August), Mind & Matter (5 September), Body & Bone (3 October), Spirit & Faith (7 November), and Sound & Vision (5 December). The titles of issues are subject to change; further details are to be announced ●



#### Technical details

**Printer** De La Rue Security Printers

**Process** Gravure

**Size** 37 × 35mm

**Sheets** 100

**Perforation** 14.5

**Phosphor** One band 19p ●  
two bands others

**Gum** PVA

**Central gutter** Vertical

