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A. Z. Marana/Image Bank



**Beacons across the land** For many centuries, beacons have been used to communicate urgent news and to herald momentous events, as they were again on new year's eve 1999.

**Dynamic Earth** Salisbury Crags form a backdrop to this Edinburgh centre, where visitors journey through time to experience the forces that shaped the earth, beginning billions of years ago with the Big Bang.

The Fire and Light issue will go on sale at post offices and philatelic outlets on 1 February.

George Kavanagh



David Montgomery



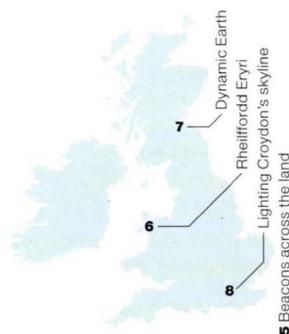
**Rheilffordd Eryri** Fueled by red-hot coals and burning oil, locomotives of the Welsh Highland Railway will link Caernarfon with Porthmadog along its rebuilt route through Snowdonia.

**Lighting Croydon's skyline** By the end of 2000 Croydon will be home to the single largest lighting installation in the world, designed for maximum impact with the minimum of light-spill pollution and energy consumption.

**Fire and Light** is the second set of 12 Millennium issues for 2000, inspired by Millennium projects throughout the UK. The 19p stamp, *Beacons across the land*, celebrates the many bonfires, braziers and torches lit by Beacon Millennium Ltd on hill tops, church towers and in village greens throughout the country on New Year's Eve, 1999 • The Welsh Highland Railway, Rheilffordd Eryri, is the subject of the 26p stamp. Now, after years of neglect, a section of the railway is being reconstructed. When complete in 2005, it will be a valuable local amenity and a tourist attraction

• Visitors to Dynamic Earth in Edinburgh, the subject of the 44p, are taken on a journey through time, graphically experiencing the forces which shaped the natural world •

The 64p stamp, *Lighting Croydon's skyline*, illustrates the innovative lighting scheme which is already revitalising a 20th-century urban centre, creating a colourful night-time environment for the new Millennium •



5 Beacons across the land



A well-illustrated presentation pack (above, price £1.90) and stamp cards (price 25p each) will be available at main post offices and philatelic outlets.



#### Technical details

**Printer** De La Rue

**Process** Gravure

**Size** 37 x 35mm

**Sheets** 100

**Perforation** 14 x 14.5

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

**Gum** PVA

**Gutter pairs** Horizontal

#### Cylinders and colours

Fire and Light

**19p, 26p and 44p** 1A silver ● 1B greenish yellow ● 1C bright magenta ● 1D new blue ● 1E black

**64p** 1A silver ● 1B greenish yellow ● 1C bright magenta ● 1D pale greenish blue ● 1E black

The phosphor cylinder is P92 19p, P93 others

#### Cylinders and colours

Christians' Tale

Further to the cylinders and colours listed here in October (page 50), the 19p was also printed with 2E cylinder for the deep dull blue colour.

On new year's eve 1999, thousands watched the Beacon Millennium flames illuminate the night sky, raising money for charity. The Beacon Millennium International Trust was formed in 1995 to distribute funds raised. Previous events commemorated by the lighting of beacons include the jubilees of George III and Queen Victoria, and the VE Day celebrations in 1995.

The Welsh Highland Railway, Rheilffordd Eryri, is one of a number of narrow-gauge railways in north Wales, opened in the 1870s to exploit the region's rich mineral resources. When it closed in 1937, most of the track was later dismantled for scrap. The reconstruction now under way involves rebuilding dozens of bridges and erecting fences, as well as track laying.

At Dynamic Earth, lights, wrap-around video screens and dramatic sound effects recreate the meteor storms, clouds of exploding gases, volcanoes, earthquakes and other phenomena that help give our planet its distinctive beauty. Dynamic Earth is open November to March 10.00-17.00 Wednesday-Sunday; April-October 10.00-18.00 daily. A visit lasts about 1½ hours.

By the end of 2000, Croydon will boast the world's largest single lighting installation. Croydon Skyline's images – both public information and artwork by local students, up to 20m (65ft) high – can be projected onto buildings, while multicoloured light shows accompany concerts and other events.

**FIRST DAY FACILITIES** Unstamped Royal Mail FDC envelopes will be available from main post offices and philatelic outlets about a week before 1 February, price 25p. Orders for FDCs with the stamps cancelled by a pictorial first day postmark of the Bureau or Edinburgh must reach the Bureau by 1 February. 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 (Edinburgh postmark), marking the outer envelope 'FD0003' (Bureau), or 'FD0004' (Edinburgh). Covers can be posted or handed in at main post offices for the Edinburgh postmark. A non-pictorial Edinburgh postmark is also available from the Special Handstamp Centre, request 'FD0004 NP'.

Details of sponsored handstamps for 1 February 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 Fire and Light stamp for any philatelic postmark in use on 1 February.

**MILLENNIUM PHILATELIC PRODUCTS** A Fire and Light pack and stamp cards will be available. Each of the Millennium packs this year includes a specially commissioned poem. The Fire and Light poem is by John Agard, poet, playwright, performer and anthologist. Born in Guyana, he came to Britain in 1977 and soon established a reputation as a performer and writer of often piercingly satirical poems. From 1978 to 1985 he worked as a touring reader for the Commonwealth Institute, visiting some 2000 schools to talk about his Caribbean experiences and organise workshops. His books include *Man to Pan*, *Mangoes and Bullets*, *We Animals Would Like a Word With You*, and *From the Devil's Pulpit*. His poem in the pack, entitled *The Gift of Flame*, comprises six stanzas based on the Fire and Light theme and informed by the four projects on the stamps.

The poem in the Above and Beyond pack is by Jo Shapcott, one of the most respected poets of her generation. Her books include *Electroplating the Baby* and *My Life Asleep*. Her poem, *Night Flight from Muncaster*, was inspired by the stamps and explores the Above and Beyond theme by means of a metaphorical journey of an owl ●

**Millennium reminders** A Millennium definitive stamp will be issued on 6 January – details were published here last month. The sheet stamp, by De La Rue, is from cylinder 1, phosphor 47. Booklet stamps by Questa and Walsall are from cylinders Q1 and W1 respectively. The De La Rue and Walsall stamps are perf 15 × 14, the Questa stamp is perf 14.

The special arrangements for the dual-postmarking of philatelic mail with 31 December 1999 and 1 January 2000 cancellations were published as a supplement to last month's *Bulletin*. Covers cancelled with 31 December postmarks should be submitted for the 1 January cancels not later than 29 January 2000 ●



#### Future Millennium issues

Water and Coast	07.03.00
Life and Earth	04.04.00
Art and Craft	02.05.00
People and Place	06.06.00
Stone and Soil	04.07.00
Tree and Leaf	01.08.00
Mind and Matter	05.09.00
Body and Bone	03.10.00
Spirit and Faith	07.11.00
Sound and Vision	05.12.00

