

The chosen subject of the last Millennium issue is 'Hopes for the Future', embodied in the next generation – the world's children. The issue is inspired by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, with each of the images connected to a different right of children.

The Future is the last set in the series of 25 issues of Millennium stamps which started with *The Inventors' Tale*, back in January 1999. The 1999 issues concentrated on past achievements, ideas and events whereas the issues during 2000 have taken as their inspiration Millennium projects across the UK. The entire series consists of 100 stamps in all; the Royal Mail Millennium Collection was granted the status of a Millennium Product by the Design Council in December of last year.



Technical details

Printer De La Rue

Process Gravure

Size 37 × 35mm

Sheets 100

Perforation 14 × 14.5

Phosphor One band 2nd class, two bands others

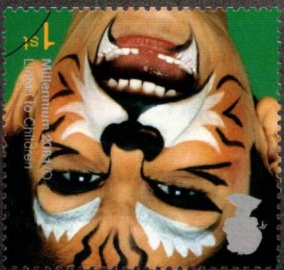
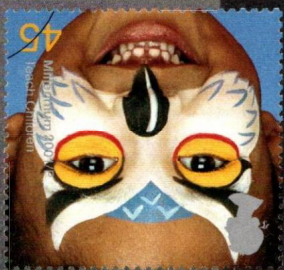
Gum PVA

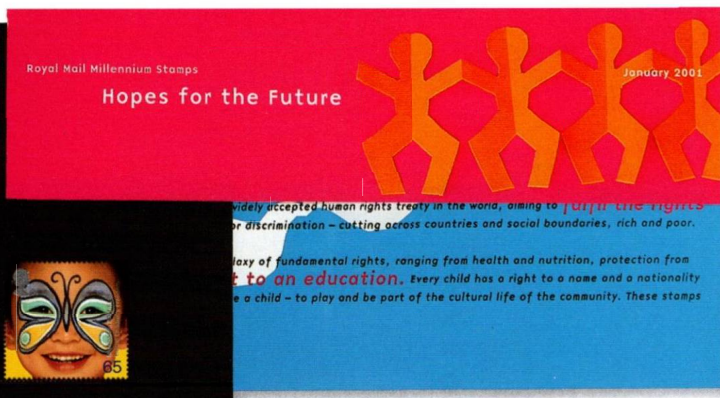
Gutter pairs Horizontal

For the design of the stamps, a broad base of creative talent was invited to submit ideas in response to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The short-list included photographers, illustrators, fashion designers, artists and graphic designers. Some 16 responded with initial visual ideas and more than 100 amazingly diverse images were presented to the Stamp Advisory Committee.

The SAC narrowed the field down to five images – all by graphic designers – which were further developed. One of the most direct solutions was by London-based design practice Why Not Associates: a close-up of a child's face with text overlaid that suggested children's rights. The simplicity of the idea swayed the Committee and Why Not Associates were asked to develop an entire set of photographic close-ups of children. Each of the faces was to be painted to render a disguise, as living people other than Royalty should not be featured on stamps, as well as to inject fun into the set. Each painted creature or object has a subliminal connection to a different right of the child.

The children's faces are painted as a flower on the 2nd class (19p), a tiger on the 1st class (27p), an owl on the 45p, and as a butterfly on the 65p. The two top rates cover the basic and 1st weight step rates for international air-mail letters. The children who feature on the stamps are four and five years old; the photographs were taken at several sessions at a London studio by Welsh photographer Sandro Sodano in August 2000. Care was taken to match the features, complexions and eye colours to the painted subject. The stamps are captioned 'Millennium/2001' followed by letters spelling HOPE (over the four values) and 'Nature children' (2nd), 'Listen to children' (1st), 'Teach children' (45p) and 'Ensure children's freedom' (65p). The captions and The Queen's silhouette are printed in silver ink.





widely accepted human rights treaty in the world, aiming to fulfil the rights of every child to an education. Every child has a right to a home and a nationality.

Every child has a right to play and be part of the cultural life of the community. These stamps



A well-illustrated presentation pack (above, price £1.95) and stamp cards (price 25p each) will be available at main post offices and philatelic outlets.



Cylinders and colours

2nd 1A bright violet ● 1B greenish yellow ● 1C cerise ● 1D new blue ● 1E rosine ● 1F grey-black ● 1G silver

1st 1A lemon ● 1B greenish yellow ● 1C cerise ● 1D new blue ● 1E emerald ● 1F grey-black ● 1G silver

45p 1A orange-yellow ● 1B greenish yellow ● 1C cerise ● 1D new blue ● 1E pale violet-blue ● 1F grey-black ● 1G silver

65p 1A bright violet ● 1B greenish yellow ● 1C cerise ● 1D new blue ● 1E lemon ● 1F grey-black ● 1G silver

Phosphor cylinder P98 2nd class, P99 others

FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail FDC envelopes will be available from main post offices and philatelic outlets about a week before 16 January, price 25p. Orders for FDCs with the stamps cancelled by a pictorial first day postmark of the Bureau or Hope, Hope Valley must reach the Bureau by the day of issue. Price £2.25 UK (including VAT) or £1.92 overseas (no VAT).

Collectors may send stamped covers on the day of issue to: British Philatelic Bureau, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB, or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Fore Street, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 1AA (Hope postmark), marking the outer envelope 'FDO101' (Bureau), or 'FDO102' (Hope). Covers can be posted or handed in at main post offices for the Hope postmark. A non-pictorial Hope postmark is also available from the Special Handstamp Centre, request 'FDO102 NP'.

Details of sponsored handstamps for 16 January will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin* – available on subscription from the Bureau (£10 UK/Europe; £21.75 elsewhere). For a free sample copy write to: The Editor, British Postmark Bulletin, Royal Mail, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8HQ ●