

The weather Stamps and a miniature sheet



FOUR NEW STAMPS feature aspects of the British weather. The colourful designs, placed together, form a barometer showing scenes of rain (19p), sunshine (27p), storms (45p), and very dry weather (65p). Users of the stamps will be intrigued by the creatures shown on three of the four stamps – cats and dogs on the 19p, a black-headed gull on the 45p and goldfinch and butterflies on the 65p. A tiny black Scottie dog also appears in the upper right sheet margin of the miniature sheet. The Queen's silhouette, printed in gold, is positioned top left on the 19p and 45p values and top right on the 27p and 65p. The four values cover the basic inland 2nd and 1st class rates and the two basic rates for overseas airmail letters.



The stamps will also be available in a miniature sheet (see following pages) price £1.56, with illustrations running into the sheet margins. There is an interesting technical development on the 27p stamp in both sheets of 100 and miniature sheet: thermochromic ink has been applied to the cloud – touch or rub the lower cloud for a few seconds and the heat of your finger will change the colour from reddish violet to light blue. On the examples examined by the Editor the phosphor band on the 19p sheet stamp falls short of the right-hand edge of the stamp whereas it runs into the left-hand band on the adjoining 27p stamp in the miniature sheet.



The stamps were designed by Howard Brown, designer of the 1991 Maps, 1993 Maritime Timekeepers (with David Penny), and 1996 Football Legends stamps. He was awarded the R M Phillips medal for stamp design in 1995. For the weather stamps Mr Brown used illustrations by Tony Meeuwissen who has designed covers for the *Radio Times* and illustrated articles for the *Sunday Times* magazine. His awards include the Italian Francobollo d'Oro for the world's best stamps for the Lucky Charms greetings stamps of 1991. His first book – *The Witch's Hat* (1975) – was nominated the most beautifully illustrated book of the year by *The Listener*. His work has been collected by the V&A Museum, London.



FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail FDC envelopes will be available from main post offices and philatelic outlets about a week before 13 March, price 25p. Orders for FDCs with the four stamps or miniature sheet cancelled by a pictorial first day postmark of the Bureau or Fraserburgh must reach Royal Mail (address below) by the day of issue. Price £2.25 UK (including VAT) or £1.92 overseas (no VAT). Please state clearly whether stamps and/or miniature sheet FDC required when ordering.

Collectors may send stamped covers on the day of issue to: Royal Mail, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB (Bureau postmark), or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Queen Street, Glasgow G1 3AZ (Fraserburgh postmark), marking the outer envelope 'FD0107' (Bureau), or 'FD0108' (Fraserburgh). Covers can be posted or handed in at main post offices for the Fraserburgh postmark. A non-pictorial Fraserburgh postmark is also available from the Special Handstamp Centre, request 'FD0108 NP'. Fraserburgh is the windiest (low-lying) place in the UK.

The stamps and the miniature sheet will go on sale at post offices, the British Philatelic Bureau and philatelic outlets on 13 March.

celebrate the ever-changing British weather



Mrs J Robinson
200 Manorbie Road
Ilkeston
Derbyshire
DE7 4AB

Royal Mail © 2001 Royal Mail Corporation Edinburgh, UK 1998



A well-illustrated presentation pack containing the individual stamps (below, price £1.95), and stamp cards (25p each) will be available at main post

offices and philatelic outlets. The pack has been written by the internationally recognised science writers John and Mary Gribbon. John trained as an

astronomer and is a member of the Royal Meteorological Society; Mary studied psychology and is a member of the Royal Geographical Society.

Sponsored handstamps for 13 March 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.

The winds of history

Britain largely owes its political existence to the weather. The process that made us British began in 1066, with the invasion by William the Conqueror. In England, King Harold assembled an army powerful enough to easily defeat the Normans, but throughout the month of September William's ships were bottled up in Normandy by a northerly wind. The same wind brought another invasion from Scandinavia to northern England, and Harold had to rush to defeat this invasion. The wind changed. William slipped across the Channel while the English were otherwise occupied, and the rest is history.

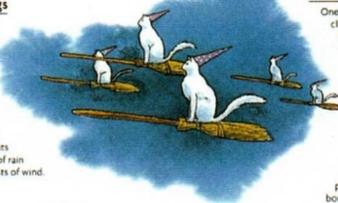


"I feel it in my bones"

One of the most dubious sounding claims of weather prediction is also one of the best-founded. Many people who suffer from arthritis will tell you that they feel a twinge in their bones several hours before rain starts to fall. These claims have been tested, and found to be true. It seems that a fall in atmospheric pressure ahead of the change in the weather causes the twinge, so that some people really can feel it in their bones when rain is approaching.

Raining cats and dogs

Our favourite expression for really heavy rain owes nothing to our four-footed friends, and everything to our Viking forebears. In Norse mythology, witches riding on storm clouds were thought to assume the form of cats, while both the dog and the wolf were the attendants of Odin, the god of storms. Strong winds in Viking sagas were described as blowing from the mouth of a wolf. So the combination 'cats and dogs' came to mean downpourings of rain associated with blasting gusts of wind.



Dog days of summer

Legend has it that late summer is hot because of the influence of Sirius, the Dog Star, which rises high in the sky in July and August. But this time, the legend is wrong. Late summer is hot, even though the nights start drawing in, because the ground has gained heat during the long sunny days of June, and in July and August it gives back some of this heat to the air, making for sticky, sleepless nights even though those nights are getting longer.



Clever cows?

When cows lie down it is said that rain must be on the way. Apparently cows - like many animals - can sense dampness in the air, and are making sure they have somewhere dry to rest themselves. This particular prediction proves as often wrong as right.



This old rhyme advises that if you are out in a storm, never shelter under a tall tree.

Lightning seeks the easiest path to ground, and you would be far better off sheltering under a hedge or bush.

Beware the oak, the low pine, the birch, the ash, it draws the flash. But under the thorn, you'll come to no harm.

Technical details

Printer De La Rue

Process Gravure (Jumelle press)

Stamp size 35mm square

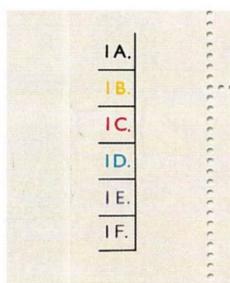
Miniature sheet size 105mm square

Perforation 14.5

Phosphor 19p one band right, two bands others

Gum PVA

MINIATURE SHEET The sheet (opposite, at actual size) was printed in large sheets of 8 (2 × 4) guillotined into single sheets for sale. Printing, on De La Rue's Jumelle press, was from cylinders 1A black 1B greenish yellow 1C bright magenta 1D new blue 1E reddish violet 1F gold P1 phosphor. The numbers appeared in the left sheet margin (shown at actual size below left) and were trimmed off when the sheets were guillotined. They are recorded here for record purposes only ●

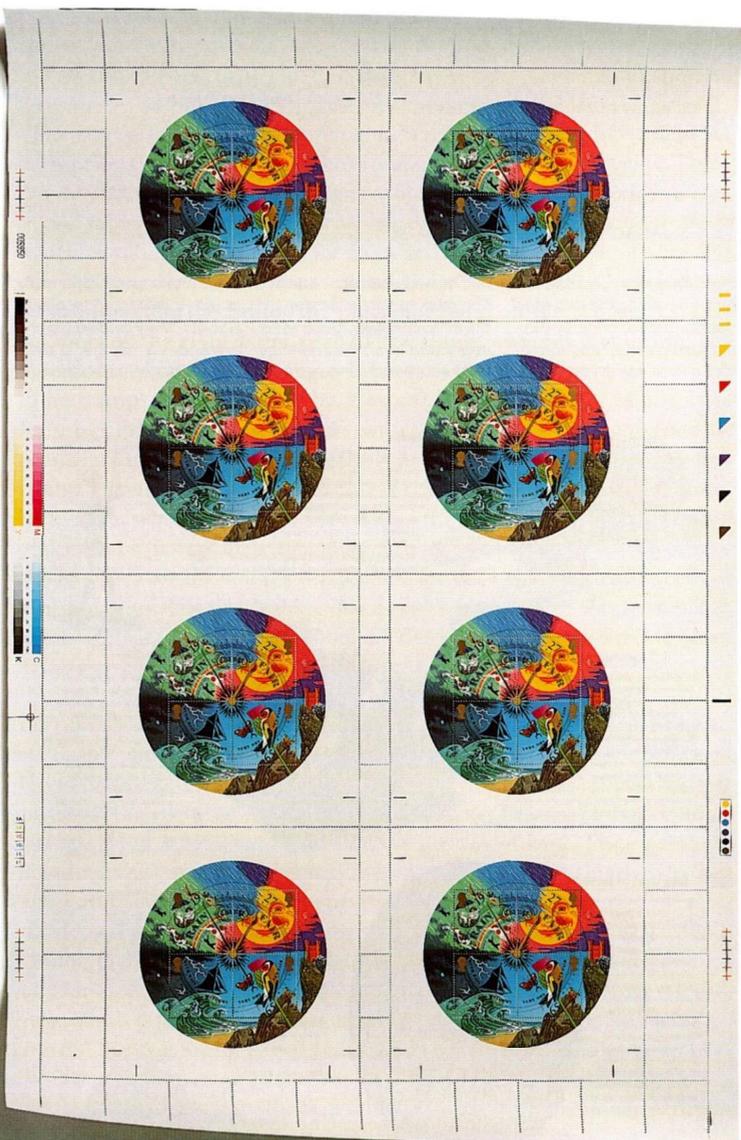


Cylinders and colours

19p 45p & 65p 1A black ● 1B greenish yellow ● 1C bright magenta ● 1D new blue ● 1E gold

27p 1A black ● 1B greenish yellow ● 1C bright magenta ● 1D new blue ● 1E reddish violet ● 1F gold

Phosphor cylinder P2 19p, P3 others





Special draw Machin high values to be won

WE HAVE 10 packs of the Machin high values to give away to the senders of the first 10 cards drawn on 2 March. Simply write your name and address on the back of a postcard and send it to: High Values Draw, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8HQ •



The Machin high values
£1.50, £2, £3 and £5