

The Nobel Prize A display of stamp printing



Silk-screening Thermo-chromic ink was first used on a British stamp on the 1st class value in the Weather set earlier this year. The silk-screen process was used to apply the ink.



Engraving The recess part of the 1st class was engraved by Mrs Inge Madlé of Enschedé, who engraved the Castle High Values printed by that firm in 1997.



Embossing Embossing is now a rare technique on British stamps; it was last used for the large-size 1st class Machin in the 1999 'Profile on Print' prestige book.

Technical details

Printer Joh Enschedé Stamps

Processes Lithography plus: 2nd, silk-screen process using thermo-chromic ink ● 1st, recess (intaglio) for the magenta printing on the globe ● E, embossed ● 40p, screen-printed 'scratch and sniff' ● 45p, microprinting in lithography ● 65p, hologram

Sheets 50

Stamp size 35 x 37mm

Perforation 14.5

Phosphor One band 2nd class, all-over others

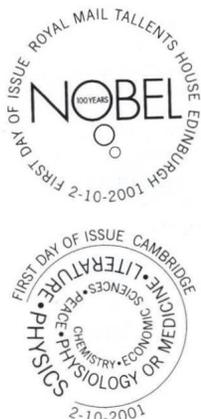
Gum PVA

Gutter pairs Horizontal

To mark the centenary of the awarding of the first Nobel Prizes, six innovative and unusual stamps go on sale at post offices, Tallents House and philatelic outlets on 2 October. The stamps, printed by a variety of processes, represent the prizes for Chemistry (2nd class), Economic Sciences (1st class), Peace (E, European rate), Physiology or Medicine (40p), Literature (45p) and Physics (65p). The 40p, 45p and 65p stamps cover basic airmail postcard and letter rates. The stamps were designed by Pierre Vermeir of HGV, a London-based design group. With J-P Tibbles, he designed the 1994 Medical Discoveries stamps. The representations on the 2nd class and 65p stamps are of a Carbon 60 and boron molecules.

PRINTING TECHNIQUES Standard litho printing is used for the Queen's head (in silver), value or service indicator and captions. The sheet size (50 stamps) was required to ensure better register of the printing. Embossing and hologram application offered a challenge to the printer given the distortion to the paper caused by these printing techniques. The results will be of considerable interest to collectors specialising in stamp printing.

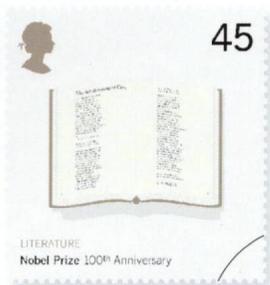
FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail FDC envelopes will be available from main post offices about a week before 2 October, price 25p. Orders for FDCs with stamps cancelled by a pictorial first day postmark of Tallents House or Cambridge must reach Tallents House by 2 October. Price £3.16 UK (inc VAT) or £2.69 overseas (no VAT). Stamped covers can be sent on the day of issue to: Royal Mail, Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB, or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Wexham Road, Slough SL1 1AA (Cambridge postmark), marking the outer envelope 'FD0119' or 'FD0120' respectively. Covers can be posted or handed in at main post offices for the Cambridge postmark. A non-pictorial Cambridge postmark is also available from the Special Handstamp Centre, request 'FD0120 NP'. For details of sponsored handstamps see the *British Postmark Bulletin*.



techniques to celebrate 100 years of Awards



Scenting The scented area (green cross) on the 40p emits a medicinal smell (reminiscent of eucalyptus) if scratched. Please note that such scratching will damage the printing.



Micro printing The microtext on the 45p stamp is litho-printed. Under magnification, the text of T S Eliot's poem *The Ad-dressing of Cats* can be discerned.



Holography The hologram on the 65p changes when tilted, rotating in orbits. It was produced by OVD Kinegram of Switzerland and added to the stamp by Enschedé.

PHILATELIC PRODUCTS A well-illustrated presentation pack (price £2.70) and stamp cards (25p each) will be available from Tallents House, philatelic outlets and main post offices. The pack includes text by six Nobel laureates: Sir Harold Kroto (Chemistry 1996), Prof James Mirrless (Economic Sciences 1996), Sir Joseph Rotblat (Peace 1995), Sir James Black (Medicine 1988), Seamus Heaney (Literature 1995), and Prof Brian Josephson (Physics 1973). A Postbag – a pack for young collectors – will be available, price £5.99.

A commemorative document, price £5.95, contains an outer cover, a card bearing the six stamps with a special Oxford postmark, and a certificate of authenticity signed by Mark Thomson, Managing Director of Royal Mail Stamps & Collectibles. The certificate bears technical information about the stamps – designer, sheet and stamp size, perforation, etc. The past century of the prizes is depicted by the use of six colour-coded timelines, one for each of the prize categories, spanning from 1901 to the present. Along each line, British winners are indicated at appropriate points. A section of Nobel's will is reproduced on one of the inner flaps and Nobel's signature is reproduced as a decorative motif on the reverse of the pack. A rich metallic gold has been used throughout which, in combination with embossing, conveys the premium nature of the product •

ALFRED NOBEL Alfred Bernhard Nobel (1833-96), the Swedish scientist noted for the invention of dynamite, features on Swedish stamps marking the 50th anniversary of his death in 1946 and on joint Swedish/German and Swedish/Swiss issues of 1995 and 1997. Further joint Swedish/us stamps, issued on 22 March 2001 for the centenary of the Nobel Prizes, were engraved by Czeslaw Slania. The us stamp and one of the Swedish stamps features Nobel and both sides of the Peace medal; three other Swedish stamps show the reverse of the Medicine, Chemistry, and Literature medals.

Plate numbers and colours

2nd 2A black • 2B silver • 1C phosphor • 1D grey

1st 1A black • 1B silver • 1C dull mauve • 1D blue • 1E rosine • 1F phosphor

E 1A black • 1B silver • 1C bright green • 1D phosphor

40p 2A black • 1B silver • 1C new blue • 1D greenish yellow • 1E phosphor • 1F scent coating

45p 1A black • 1B silver • 1C yellow-ochre • 1D pale grey • 1E phosphor

65p 1A black • 1B silver • 1C phosphor

On the 2nd class, the second black colour (1D plate number) was applied in thermochromic ink by silk-screen process. A special coating (UV absorber) was applied to absorb natural ultra-violet light in sunlight and lengthen the life of the thermo-chromic ink. When warmed, by holding the stamp between finger and thumb, the black pentagon (except the centre) changes to a pale grey.