

Christmas A new stamp issue welcomes the



Technical details

Printer De La Rue

Process Gravure

Size 32 x 30mm

Sheets 50

Perforation 14.5 x 14 die-cut

Phosphor 2nd class one band, 1st class all-over, others two bands

Gum Self-adhesive

Gutter pairs Vertical

Cylinders and colours

All values D1 magenta ● D1 yellow ● D1 cyan (blue) ● D1 black ● D1 phosphor

Stamp books

2nd D1 magenta ● D1 yellow ● D1 cyan ● D1 black ● D1 blue (book panels) ● D1 phosphor

1st D1 magenta ● D1 yellow ● D1 cyan ● D1 black ● D1 gold (book panels) ● D1 phosphor

ROYAL MAIL has issued Christmas stamps annually since 1966. This year's Christmas stamps – the 38th issue – go on sale at Post Office branches, Tallents House and Post Office philatelic outlets on 4 November. As in 2001 and 2002, they are printed on self-adhesive paper, the stamps having die-cut perforations, and can be removed from sheets by rouletting which surrounds the 'perforations'. The stamps are the same size as last year's issue, but do not have matrix (paper) surrounding each stamp as in previous years. They were designed by Dick Davis using photography by Andy Goldsworthy of his own ice sculptures. The stamps are as follows.

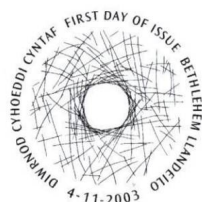
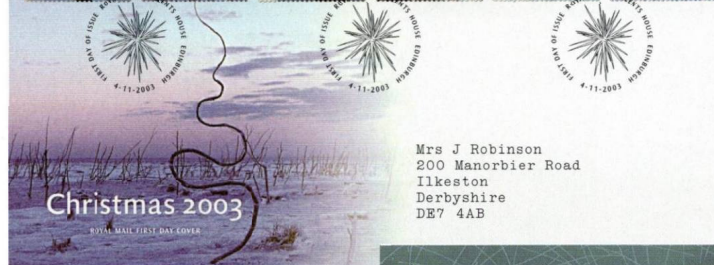
2nd class: Ice Spiral, Glen Marlin Falls, Dumfriesshire 1995. 1st class: Icicle Star, Scaur Water, Dumfriesshire 1987. E (European basic rate): Wall of Frozen Snow, Izumi-Mura, Japan 1987. 53p: Ice Ball, Scaur Water, Dumfriesshire 1987. 68p: Ice Hole, Capenoch, Dumfriesshire 1996. £1.12: Snow Pyramids, Grise Fiord, Ellesmere Island, North Pole 1989.

FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail FDC envelopes will be available from main Post Office branches and philatelic outlets about a week before 4 November, price 25p. Orders for FDCs with the stamps cancelled by a pictorial first day postmark of Tallents House Edinburgh or Bethlehem must reach Tallents House by the date of issue. Price £3.99 UK or £3.40 overseas.

Collectors may send stamped covers on the day of issue to: Royal Mail Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB, or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Penarth Road, Cardiff CF11 8TA (Bethlehem postmark), marking the outer envelope 'FD0323' or 'FD0324'. Covers can be posted or handed in at main Post Office branches for the Bethlehem postmark. Details of sponsored handstamps will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin* – available on subscription from Tallents House. For a sample copy write to: The Editor, British Postmark Bulletin, Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ.

STAMP BOOKS Two Christmas stamp books (folded sheetlets) will be available from 4 November – 12 x 1st class stamps (£3.36) and 24 x 2nd class stamps (£4.80). The books have been printed by De La Rue. There is a line of rouletting below the first and third rows of stamps on the 1st class book and below the first, third, fifth and seventh rows on the 2nd class.

season, with sculptures drawn from the land



Dumfriesshire-based Andy Goldsworthy creates nature immediately to hand and the chance conditions and worked around the world - including the

SMILERS SHEETS FOR CHRISTMAS There will be three Smilers sheets for Christmas. The first, on sale from 30 September, contains 20 × 1st class robins 2001 Christmas stamps, price £6.15. The other two sheets – 20 × 1st class 2003 Christmas stamps, and 20 × 2nd class 2003 Christmas stamps – will be available from 4 November, price £6.15 and £4.20 respectively. All three sheets will be printed in litho by De La Rue and have self-adhesive stamps. The stamps in sheets and books are printed in gravure. Smilers sheets are available from Royal Mail Tallents House and Post Office philatelic outlets. A Smilers sheets album is available from Tallents House, price £16.50 (order code PA665).

A well-illustrated Christmas pack (above, price £3.55) and stamp cards (30p each) will be available from main Post Office branches and philatelic outlets. The pack was designed by Typearea Ltd, with text by Andy Goldsworthy.

12 × 1st class (above left) and 24 × 2nd class stamp books will be available.

'When I work with winter, I work with the north. For me, north is an integral part of the land. I can touch it in the cold shadow of a mountain, the green side of a tree, the mossy face of a rock. Its energy is made visible in snow and ice.'



The Christmas stamps are:

Ice spiral 2nd class
Reconstructed icicles
around a tree
catching the sunlight

50

Icicle star 1st class
Icicles
thick ends dipped in snow
then water
held until frozen together

Wall of frozen snow E rate
Carved with a stick
almost through
to the other side

Dumfriesshire-based Andy Goldsworthy (born 1956) creates sculpture in the landscape using the materials of nature immediately to hand and the chance conditions of place, time, weather and season. He has exhibited and worked around the world, including the Northern Territories of Canada and the North Pole. Goldsworthy's plant sculptures were shown on the Springtime stamps of March 1995. Dick Davis (born 1945), designer of these stamps, has designed a number of Royal Mail issues – 1986 Medieval Life, 1997 Lighthouses and 2001 Submarines and Flags & Ensigns.

**Ice ball** 53p

Thin ice
welded with water from
dripping ice
hollow inside

Ice hole 68p

Filled in under the branch arch
with snow
made a hole
that changed with the light

Snow pyramids £1.12

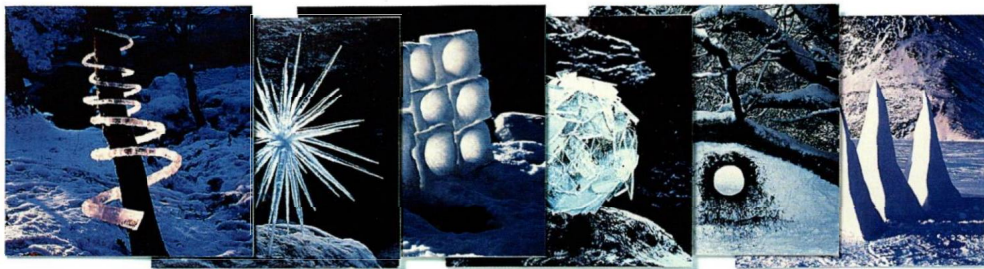
Spires
moulded from snow

The airletter was designed by Dick Davis and printed by Mail Solutions Ltd. The design is continuous over one complete side of the sheet, featuring ice sculptures made and photographed by Andy Goldsworthy. The front and back panels are shown below, as folded.



CHRISTMAS AIRLETTERS Two airletters (aerogrammes) will be available from 4 November. As last year there will be national and bilingual (Welsh/English) versions. The bilingual version will be available only from Post Office branches in Wales, Tallents House and Post Office philatelic outlets. Price 52p each. The airletter does not qualify for 'First Day of Issue' postmarking. Christmas airletters were first issued in 1965, one year before the first Christmas stamps appeared.

CHRISTMAS CARDS Boxes containing the Christmas stamp images (without Queen's head and value) reproduced as Christmas cards will be available from Tallents House from 4 November. Price £5.95 per box of 18 cards (three of each design), order code PY827. Also available will be cards in a traditional style depicting pillar boxes – nine each of two designs for £5.95 (order code PY828). These colourful cards are ideal to send to stamp collector friends and relatives at home and abroad •



Royal Mail Christmas cards

£5.95 per box of 18 (three of each design), above.

£5.95 per box of 18 (nine each of two designs), right.

