

Royal Horticultural Society stamp issue



Technical details

Printer Joh Enschedé
Security Printers

Process Gravure

Stamp size 35mm square

Sheets 25 and 50

Miniature sheet 115 x 105mm

Perforation 14.5

Phosphor One band 2nd
class, all-over others

Gum PVA

Gutter pairs Horizontal

Cylinders and colours

All values E1 sage-green ●
E1 black ● E1 cyan (blue) ●
E1 magenta ● E1 yellow ● E1
phosphor

SIX STAMPS, a miniature sheet and a prestige book marking the 200th anniversary of the Royal Horticultural Society will be issued on 25 May. The six stamps depict flowers popular with British gardeners – all examples of six of the nine types of plant for which the RHS is the official international registrar of cultivar names (a voluntary international system ensuring that different plants do not share the same name.) British gardeners have grown cultivated clematis and pinks successfully for generations. The flowers are: 2nd class *Dianthus* Allwoodii Group; 1st class *Dahlia* 'Garden Princess'; E rate *Clematis* 'Arabella'; 42p *Miltonia* 'French Lake'; 47p *Lilium* 'Leon Pixie'; and 68p *Delphinium* 'Clifford Sky'. The Queen's silhouette and price or service indicator appears at top right with the caption 'Royal Horticultural Society 1804-2004' and the plant name on the left side of the stamp. The stamps are by Rose Design, with photography by Barbara and Zafer Baran.

The stamps will be issued to Post Office branches in sheets of 25; sheets of 50, with gutter margins, will be supplied to Royal Mail Tallents House and Post Office philatelic outlets.

FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail FDC envelopes will be available from main Post Office branches and philatelic outlets about a week before 25 May, price 25p. Orders for serviced FDCs with stamps/miniature sheet cancelled by a pictorial first day postmark of Royal Mail Tallents House Edinburgh or Wisley must reach Tallents House (address below) by the day of issue. Price £3.31 UK or £2.82 overseas. Please state if stamps/miniature sheet required. Covers can also be ordered with the label pane from the prestige book, price £3.83 to UK customers, £3.26 overseas.



Collectors may send stamped covers on the day of issue to: Royal Mail, Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB (Tallents House postmark), or any of Royal Mail's six Special Handstamp Centres, (Wisley postmark), marking the outer envelope 'FD0417' (Tallents House), or 'FD0418' (Wisley). Covers can be posted or handed in at main Post Office branches for the Wisley postmark. The Tallents House and Wisley postmarks will be applied in silver ink.

Details of other handstamps for 25 May will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin* – available on subscription from Tallents House (£12.25 UK/Europe; £24.95 elsewhere). For a sample copy write to: The Editor, British Postmark Bulletin, Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ.

PHILATELIC PRODUCTS A well-illustrated pack containing the six stamps (price £3) and seven stamp cards (30p each) will be available from Tallents House, main Post Office branches and philatelic outlets. The cards feature one of each stamp and the miniature sheet. A Philatelic Medallion Cover will be available, price £13.95.

SMILERS SHEET A 'generic' sheet of 20 of the 1st class (Dahlia) stamp will be available, price £6.15. The colourful labels illustrate and give details of different groups of dahlias and guidance on successful dahlia growing. The RHS logo appears in the sheet margin. The sheet is being printed in litho by Walsall, yielding a litho variety of the 1st class stamp. These sheets cost £14.95 for one sheet of 20 stamps, £13.95 each for 2-4 sheets, and £11.95 each for 5-9 sheets; enquire for prices for larger quantities.

The miniature sheet (top, on a first day cover) contains one of each stamp. Price £2.46. A presentation pack, shown above, has been designed by The English Group, with text by botanist Francesca Green-oak. The illustrations include some delightful drawings of pinks and clematis.

Smilers For details of how to order personalised sheets, phone 0845 074 2000 or see website: www.royalmail.com/smilers



Royal Horticultural Society PSB panes

1 Machin definitives: top and bottom rows 1st class, 42p, 1st class; middle row 47p, label with RHS logo, 47p.

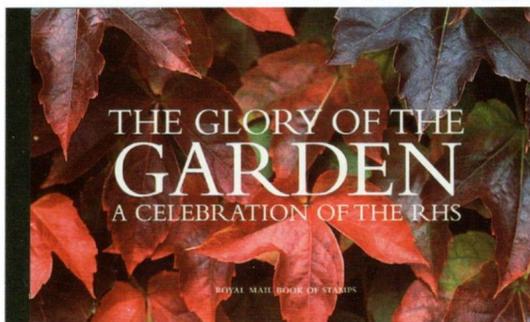
2 RHS stamps: top row 2nd and E; bottom row 68p and 42p.

3 1997 Flowers greetings stamps: top row *Iris latifolia* and *Tulipa*; bottom row *Tulipa* and *Gentiana acaulis*.

4 RHS stamps: top row 1st and 47p; bottom row 47p and 1st.

PRESTIGE STAMP BOOK The second of this year's prestige stamp books, entitled *The Glory of the Garden*, will be available from 25 May, price £7.23. This contains four stamp panes as shown, and detailed below.

The book, printed by Enschedé, contains numerous photographs of plants and gardens, and interesting text by Geoff Hodge of the RHS. The Flowers greetings stamps were originally printed by Walsall. This will also be the first printing of the 42p definitive by Enschedé.



'Gardening is the art that uses flowers and plants as paint, and the soil and sky as canvas'

ELIZABETH MURRAY

The Royal Horticultural Society Britain's leading gardening charity, known worldwide for its magnificent Chelsea show and Hampton Court Palace garden, is highly respected for its scientific work in horticulture. Its science department, with library and herbarium, is situated at its garden at Wisley in Surrey – chosen as the location for the alternative first day postmark. It has other gardens at Rosemoor, Devon; Hyde Hall, Essex; and Harlow Carr, North Yorkshire.

The RHS began with a meeting, arranged by John Wedgwood (son of Josiah, the potter) of four amateur and three professional gardeners at Hatchard's bookshop in London in 1804. The Society's aim was to 'collect every information respecting the culture and treatment of all plants and trees'. Its early meetings were held at the Linnean Society in Parton Square and later in Gerrard Street. (The bicentenary of the Linnean Society was marked by stamps in 1988.) Experimental gardens were set up in Edwardes Square, a nursery garden at Kensington in 1818, and another garden was added in 1821 at Chiswick where fetes and floral exhibitions were held. Joseph Paxton, who worked at Chiswick, went on to be Head Gardener to the Duke of Devonshire at Chatsworth. Prince Albert became the Society's President in 1858 and gardens were opened in South Kensington in 1861 when the Society was granted its Royal title. The Kensington gardens and conservatory were run in association with the Commissioners of the Great Exhibition, and in 1871-74 international exhibitions organized by Henry Cole (who worked with Rowland Hill on postal reform) were held in the gardens. Expensive to maintain, the gardens closed in 1882. The RHS gardens at Wisley were presented to the Society by Sir Thomas Hanbury in 1903 and the Chiswick gardens were closed. The Royal Horticultural Hall in Vincent Square, designed by E.J. Stebbins, was opened in 1904, and a new hall, by Murray Easton, was built in nearby Greycourt Street in 1927-28. The Lindley Library at Vincent Square has over 36,000 books, making it one of the leading horticultural libraries in the world. Apart from wartime, the Society's Chelsea Flower Show has been held in the grounds of the Royal Hospital Chelsea each May since 1913. Today the Society answers over 65,000 gardening queries each year, and several thousand amateur and professional gardeners sit RHS examinations to gain nationally recognized qualifications.

Stamp collectors will be aware of the RHS halls in Westminster – the home of Stampex, 1969-95 and now of Philatex. Numerous other exhibitions have been staged there over the years – such as the Schoolboys and Schoolgirls Exhibitions, Applied Arts and Handicraft Shows and the Model Engineer Exhibition – see the letter from Rene Dee published in the June 2003 *Bulletin* (page 317). An exhibition is planned, as part of the Society's Great Autumn Show, to depict the Royal Horticultural Halls and their extraordinary history of events.

The Royal Horticultural Hall featured in a number of Stampex postmarks, and the RHS was mentioned on four postmarks used on 20 January 1987, the day of issue of Flowers stamps. The Society's name also appears in the postmarks used for the Chelsea Flower show in recent years •

