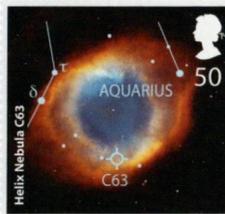
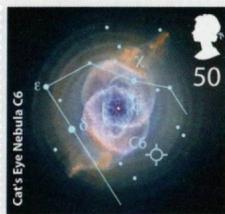
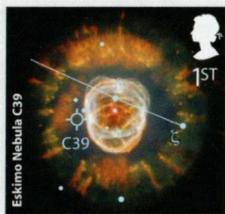
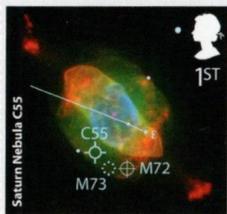


The Sky at Night Celebrating half a century



Technical details

Designer Dick Davies

Printer Walsall Security Printers

Process Gravure

Stamp size 32 × 30mm

Sheets PO branches will hold sheets of 30. Sheets of 60, with gutter margin, available from Tallents House and from selected PO philatelic outlets

Perforation 14 × 14.5 die-cut

Phosphor Two bands

Gum Self-adhesive

Gutter pairs Vertical

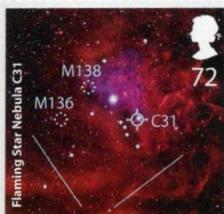
THE SECOND SPECIAL ISSUE in February comprises six stamps featuring nebulae, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Sir Patrick Moore's TV programme *The Sky at Night*. They go on sale at Post Office branches and philatelic outlets and from Royal Mail Tallents House Edinburgh on 13 February. The stamps feature nebulae, defined in the dictionary as clouds of gas and dust, sometimes glowing and sometimes appearing as a dark silhouette against other glowing matters. Those depicted are: Saturn Nebula c55 and Eskimo Nebula c39 (1st class); Cat's Eye Nebula c6 and Helix Nebula c63 (50p); and Flaming Star Nebula c31 and the Spindle c53 (72p). (The names are from a classification system devised by Sir Patrick Moore.) The stamps will be printed in se-tenant pairs on self-adhesive paper and will have a brief description of each subject printed on the reverse. The year of issue '2007' is reversed out of the phosphor bands at bottom right.

FIRST DAY FACILITIES The FDC envelope, designed by Dick Davies, is shown opposite. Orders for serviced FDCs must reach Tallents House (address below) by the day of issue. 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 to the nearest Special Handstamp Centre (Star, Glenrothes, Fife postmark), marking the outer envelope 'FD0705' (Tallents House) or 'FD0706' (Star). These postmarks will be applied in silver ink owing to the dark background colour of the stamps. For details of other special postmarks see the *British Postmark Bulletin*.

PHILATELIC PRODUCTS A presentation pack will be available, as described opposite. Details of a medal cover will be published later.

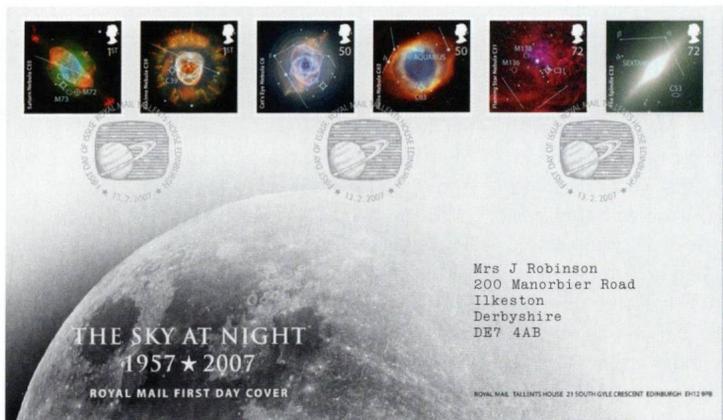
SKY ON STAMPS These stamps will add to a fairly substantial astronomy collection, beginning with the Jodrell Bank Telescope (1966, 4d), and followed by: the 150th anniversary of the Royal Astronomical Society (1970); Greenwich Meridian (1984, featuring Earth as seen from Apollo 11, Greenwich Observatory and Sir George Airy's Transit Telescope); Halley's comet (1986, four stamps); centenary of the British Astronomical Association and bicentenary of the Armagh Observatory (1990); Millennium Scientists' Tale (1999, Saturn); Solar Eclipse miniature sheet (1999, Saturn); Millennium National Space Science Centre, Leicester (2000); and the Astronomy miniature sheet (2002, galaxies and nebulae) ●

of Sir Patrick Moore's popular TV programme



The Sky at Night prices

Set of stamps	£3.08
Presentation pack	£3.60
FDC envelope	£0.30
Serviced first day cover (UK customers)	£4.10
Serviced first day cover (overseas customers)	£3.49
Stamp cards set (set)	£1.80



Mrs J Robinson
200 Manorbie Road
Ilkeston
Derbyshire
DE7 4AB

I sometimes find it hard to believe that *The Sky at Night* is half a century old!

The first programme went out on the air in April 1957. We were ushered in by a comet – Arend-Roland, the brightest comet for many years and we have not missed a month since.

In fact the idea of the programme came not from me, but from Paul Johnstone, a senior BBC producer. He was not an astronomer – he was an archaeologist – but he wanted a programme of the kind not actually tried before. He had read a book of mine and asked me to come and see him. I went down to Lime Grove and we worked out a plan. *The Sky at Night* would be shown every four weeks for three months, just to see how it was received. Of course all television was 'live' in those days, and I will remember that first programme!

Well – we have been lucky enough to live through probably the most exciting period in the history of astronomy. We have seen the beginning of the space age, probes to the planets, and the first men on the Moon. We have been to the great observatories in places such as Hawaii and the Atacama Desert in Chile. We have shown total eclipses of the Sun and we have visited Russia's Star City where the cosmonauts are trained. We have been joined by several of the leading astronomers from all around the world, as well as by many of the American and Russian space men, most notably the first men on the Moon, Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin.

What we have tried to do is to bring astronomy to everyone, and I hope we have succeeded; others must be the judge of that. But it has been immensely enjoyable, and I hope that *The Sky at Night* will still be a favourite pastime 50 years on.

First day postmarks: Talents House and Star, Glenrothes, Fife. These will be applied in silver ink.

The presentation pack (left), written by Sir Patrick Moore, explains his classification of nebulae and recalls the early days of his TV programme *The Sky at Night*, which was first broadcast in April 1957. The 1966 Jodrell Bank stamp is shown, along with pictures of Sir Patrick, Charles Messier, John Flamsteed, and Sir John Herschel. Pack design is by Dick Davies, and printing by Walsall Security Printers.