

## Beside the Seaside A holiday in six stamps



The stamps were designed by Phelan Barker of London with photography by Martin Parr (1st), Rolph Gobits (46p), Ian Britton (48p), Vivien Borrie (54p), Pete Williams (69p) and Steve Benbow (78p).

**Please note** Stamp values and prices quoted here are subject to confirmation.

SIX STAMPS featuring scenes from traditional British seaside holidays go on sale at Post Office branches and philatelic outlets and Royal Mail Tallents House on 15 May. The stamps feature: a '99' ice-cream cone (1st class), sand castle (46p), fairground merry-go-round ride (48p), beach huts (54p), deckchairs (69p) and donkey rides (78p). The stamps will be issued to Post Office branches in sheets of 25. However sheets of 50 with gutter margins will be available from Post Office philatelic outlets and from Royal Mail Tallents House.

### Technical details

**Printer** De La Rue Security Print

**Process** Gravure

**Stamp size** 35mm square

**Sheets** 25 and 50

**Perforation** 14.5

**Phosphor** Two bands

**Gum** PVA

**Gutter pairs** Vertical

**FIRST DAY FACILITIES** Unstamped Royal Mail FDC envelopes will be available from main Post Office branches and philatelic outlets about a week before 15 May, price 30p. The cover features, on both front and back, seaside scenes – a sandcastle, donkey rides and sitting in deckchairs and playing on the beach; it was designed by Iris Associates of Sheffield. Orders for serviced FDCs must reach Tallents House 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 their nearest Royal Mail Special Handstamp Centre (Blackpool postmark) marking the outer envelope 'FD0723' or 'FD0724'. Covers can be posted or handed in at main Post Office branches for the Blackpool postmark. The postmarks feature a Ferris wheel and Blackpool Tower.

For details of sponsored handstamps and addresses of the Handstamp Centres see the *British Postmark Bulletin* – available on subscription from Tallents House (£12.25 UK/Europe; £24.95 elsewhere). For a free sample copy write to: The Editor, British Postmark Bulletin, Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ.

**Philatelic products** A well-illustrated pack has been written by Simon Calder, the Travel Editor of *The Independent*. He reminds us that despite the current penchant for overseas travel, our memories of a traditional seaside holiday recall some of the most powerful, formative days of our lives. The pack is enlivened with family holiday photos from 1916 (Blackpool) to Cleethorpes (2006). The pack was designed by Iris Associates and printed by Walsall Security Printers •

**Beside the Seaside prices**

Set of stamps	£3.04
Presentation pack	£3.80
FDC envelope	£0.30
Serviced FDC (UK customers)	£4.34
Serviced FDC (overseas customers)	£3.70
Stamp cards set	£1.80

**Beside the Seaside**  
Royal Mail First Day Cover

Mrs J Robinson  
200 Manorbie Road  
Ilkeston  
Derbyshire  
DE7 4AB

Royal Mail Talley's House 21 South Gyle Crescent Edinburgh EH12 5PB



Celebrating the original family holiday



As a 21st-century nation, we take for granted travel to distant horizons. Pay a return visit to your former British seaside haunts, though, and you will make a great escape – back to some of the most powerful, formative days of your life.

Decades on, the images remain as sharp as ever, etched with clarity in the cerebral scrapbook of childhood. The first beach holiday of my tiny life, at Bembridge on the Isle of Wight; the indulgence of the Grand Hotel in Swanage in Dorset, watching Punch and Judy on the sand, then taking High Tea in a high-chair; and the cheap and, er, cheerful cosiness of six of us sharing a caravan-for-four at Robin Hood's Bay in North Yorkshire. From tot to teenager, my sole experience of travel was the Great British Seaside. How I cherished it, and the instant friendships made while crowding around a rockpool or jolting around the dodgems. Even inclement weather could be a boon, permitting expeditions to the souvenir shops. These emporia infiltrated every lane of the jolly fishing villages that lie at the heart of many of Britain's resorts, amplified and elaborated in the 19th century.

What did the Victorians ever do for us holidaymakers? Provide an elegant infrastructure of promenades, punctuated by the regulation wrought-iron bandstand. Every resort surely has a local by-law that brass or silver bands must end their sets

Do we still like to stroll along the prom? The cheap and easy availability of flights abroad led to the decline of the family fortnight at Blackpool or Bridlington. But the increasing hassle of foreign travel, coupled with the renaissance of coastal resorts from Bognor Regis to North Berwick, is rekindling our low affair with the Great British Seaside. Why seek tropical when Tenby is so tempting, or look for the exotic when Exmouth is so enticing?

Little in life can beat a suppy summer's afternoon on a British beach, enriched with colour that defies any ordinary spectrum. In my younger days, it seemed absurd to contemplate leaving the sand for any reason short of a torrential downpour. Now, though, I can see why our parents wanted to drag us off on long, invigorating walks beyond the bay. Much of Britain's coast is simply lovely, with cliff paths tracing a dramatic course between land and sea and the horizon decorated by islands or sailing boats.

With a family of one's own, the seaside gets even better. I share