

Royal Mail news New issues and products



On sale 27 March: eight new Country stamps and five new definitives. The 46p (old gold) definitive returns to general use for overseas surface mail.



New definitives New postal rates will come into effect on 2 April. The basic 1st and 2nd class inland rates (standard size to 100g) will increase by 2p and 1p to 34p and 24p, letters to Europe and worldwide airmail, both by 4p to 48p and 54p respectively. Five new definitives will go on sale on 27 March: 16p pink, 48p rhododendron, 50p light grey, 54p rust and 78p emerald green. The 50p is in a new colour, to avoid confusion with the 1st class stamp. The names of the colours will, for the first time, be printed in the sheet margins, except 50p sheets.

The 46p stamp (old gold) will return to general use for overseas surface mail rate. New 48p and 78p country stamps for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will also be issued on 27 March; the Northern Ireland stamps, like the others, will now be printed in gravure, not litho.

Two new packs will be available, one containing the new definitives (excludes 46p), and one the eight new country stamps, price £3 and £5.55 respectively.

Serviced FDCs will cost £3.37 UK / £2.87 overseas for definitive stamps (Tallents House or Windsor postmarks) or £1.96 UK / £1.67 overseas for each of the four country issues (TH or country capital postmarks). Collectors can send stamped covers on the day of issue to Tallents House for its postmark or to any of the Special Handstamp Centres for the other postmarks. Please quote reference numbers: FD0713 Tallents House, FD0714 Windsor, FD0715 London, FD0716 Edinburgh, FD0717 Cardiff, and FD0718 Belfast. These postmarks can be applied to any of the new stamps issued on 27 March. Standard Royal Mail first day envelopes for definitives (coat of arms) and each of the country stamps (scenery) will be available at main Post Office branches in each country (and from philatelic outlets and Tallents House), price 30p each. There will be no new stamp cards.

The 9p, 12p, 42p, 44p, 50p (sand) and 72p definitives, also 44p and 72p country stamps, will be withdrawn from sale at Post Office branches on 31 March (1 April if open on Sunday). They will remain on philatelic sale until further notice.

The rate increase will result in all existing 2nd and 1st class standard stamps (definitives, country and special) being sold at 24p and 34p respectively. The 'Large' stamps – definitives and Christmas – will now sell at 48p 1st class and 40p 2nd class. The Universal overseas rate stamps (sold in books and singles from Tallents House) will now cost 54p (postcards), 69p (Europe to 40g), and £1.24 (worldwide to 40g). The increase also applies to miniature sheets containing 2nd and 1st class stamps.

Books of six standard-size 1st class stamps will cost £2.04, books of 12 2nd and 1st class £2.88 and £4.08 respectively. Books of four 'Large' 1st and 2nd class definitives will cost £1.92 and £1.60 respectively. The standard air letter (aerogramme) remains 48p ●



Wembley Stadium miniature sheet The delayed miniature sheet for the new Wembley Stadium will be issued on 17 May. It bears the crowned lion stamp of the 2002 World Cup issue (without the World Cup inscription) and two each of the 2nd class and 78p English country stamps, separated by a label showing the Wembley Stadium logo, below in a horizontal se-tenant strip. The background features the new stadium's arch. The sheet, price £2.38, measures 113 × 103mm, and was designed by Roundel of London, who designed the Steam Locomotives, Airliners, and Modern Architecture issues. The sheet was printed by De La Rue in gravure. A Royal Mail first day cover envelope will be available (30p) and serviced FDCs can be ordered from Tallents House, price £3.27 UK, £2.79 overseas. Please state if Tallents House or Wembley postmark required. Orders must be received by the day of issue. Collectors wishing to service their own covers should send them on the day of issue to Tallents House for the Tallents House postmark or to a Special Handstamp Centre for the Wembley postmark, requesting postmark NO FD0707 (TH) or FD0708 (Wembley). There will be no presentation pack or stamp cards for this Wembley Stadium issue.

The Wembley Stadium miniature sheet will be shown here next month.

A Wembley generic sheet will be available containing 20 of the 1st class Crowned Lion stamps, price £7.35. Eighteen of the 20 labels tell the story of the old Wembley Stadium, featuring some of the great events held there; the final two labels feature the new stadium ●

Dates of withdrawals Ice Age Animals stamps, pack, and stamp cards: 20 March. Brunel coin cover: 22 March. 42p and 68p country stamps (also the pack containing the four 42p country stamps): 31 March. The stamps, pack and cards for The Queen's 80th birthday: 17 April. Standard airletter (June 2004, on blue paper): 30 April. Various Generic and Smilers sheets are to be withdrawn – see page 203 ●

Scouts stamps Six stamps marking the centenary of the Scout Movement go on sale on 26 July; they feature: a camp fire (1st class), rock climbing (46p), planting trees (48p), archery (54p), gliding (69p), and a group of Scouts (78p). The 1st and 48p stamps include the EUROPA symbol. The stamps were designed by The Workroom design group, using illustrations by Gez Fry, and printed in litho by Enschedé. Further details next month ●