

## Christmas Hark the Herald Angels Sing: this



THIS YEAR there will be two issues of Christmas stamps: one set featuring Angels, and two additional stamps showing the Madonna and Child for those who wish to use a specifically religious image on their Christmas mail. All these stamps go on sale on 6 November.

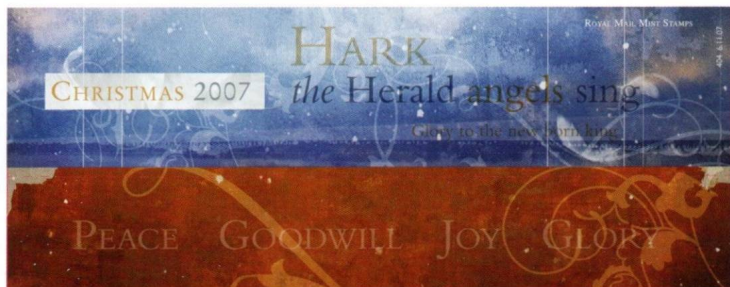
The Angels set comprises 2nd class, 2nd class Large, 1st class, 1st class Large, 78p and £1.24 values depicting angels, designed by Rose Design using illustrations by Marco Ventura. The stamps will be printed in gravure by De La Rue on self-adhesive paper in sheets of 50. They will also be available in a conventionally gummed miniature sheet.

The Madonna issue, designed by Peter Willberg, comprises 2nd and 1st class stamps reproducing religious paintings: *Madonna and Child* by William Dyce, c1827, and *The Madonna of Humility* by Lippo di Dalmasio, c1390-1400. These two paintings are held respectively by the Tate Gallery, and the National Gallery in London. These stamps will be printed in gravure by De La Rue in sheets of 50, on self-adhesive paper.

**FIRST DAY FACILITIES** 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 a Special Handstamp Centre (Bethlehem postmark), marking the outer envelope 'FDO735' (Tallents House), or 'FDO736' (Bethlehem). For details of sponsored special postmarks see the *British Postmark Bulletin*.

The presentation pack is written by Maev Kennedy, and tells us about the famous hymn *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*. Yet in Charles Wesley's original hymn there were no angels, and, although there are angels in St Luke's Gospel, which inspired it, they do not sing! Wesley's great hymn, written in 1739, opened with the archaic word for sky in 'Hark how all the Welkin Rings'. In 1855 William Cummings rewrote the words of the hymn to set Luke's angels into Wesley's sky, and made the angels sing. As Ms Kennedy notes: 'A Christmas classic was born'. The pack includes many evocative images of angels, from medieval paintings to Antony Gormley's imposing sculpture the 'Angel of the North' near Gateshead. The choice of *Hark the Herald Angels Sing* for the theme of the stamps reminds us that 2007 is the 300th anniversary of the birth of Charles Wesley. The words of this hymn were featured on the 19p stamp of the Christians' Tale set in the 1999 Millennium series. The pack has been designed by so design consultants and printed by Walsall.

## year's festive stamps honour Charles Wesley



Mrs J Robinson  
200 Manorbie Road  
Ilkeston  
Derbyshire  
DE7 4AB

Above: the presentation pack, written by Maev Kennedy.

The first day cover, right, is available with Talents House or Bethlehem pictorial postmarks (both shown top right).



**AIRLETTERS** The 2006 airletters (standard and bilingual Welsh/English versions) will be put back on sale at Post Office branches on 6 November; they have remained on sale from Talents House since November 2006. These airletters reproduce illustrations of reindeer and Father Christmas by Tatsuro Kiuchi. The front panel of the standard airletter was shown on page 74 of the November 2006 *Bulletin*.

**GENERIC AND SMILERS SHEETS** Information on this year's Christmas sheets will be published in next month's *Bulletin* ●

### Christmas prices miniature sheet is abbreviated MS

Set of stamps or MS (Angels)	£3.48
Set of stamps (Madonna)	£0.58
Presentation Pack (Angels and Madonna stamps)	£4.60
FDC envelope	£0.30
Serviced FDC: Angels stamps/MS (UK customers)	£4.46
Serviced FDC: Angels stamps/MS (overseas)	£3.80
Serviced FDC: Madonna stamps (UK)	£1.21
Serviced FDC: Madonna stamps (overseas)	£1.03
Stamp cards set (8 stamps and MS)	£2.70
12 X 1st book: Angels stamp	£4.08
12 X 2nd book: Angels stamp	£2.88
Airletter (standard or bilingual version)	£0.60