

## Mythical Creatures Our June special issue



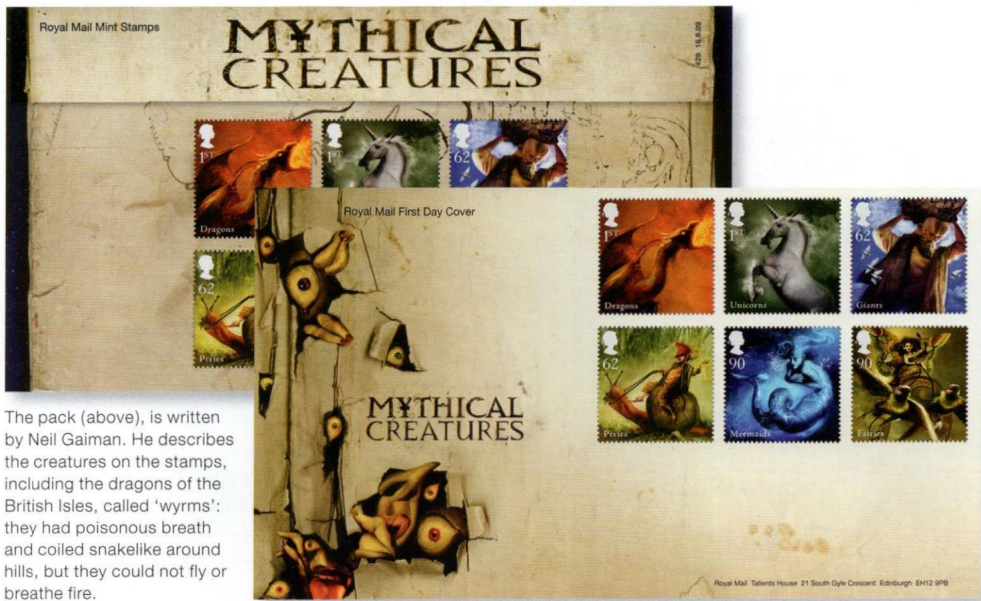
SIX STAMPS depicting Mythical Creatures go on sale at Post Office branches and philatelic outlets and from Royal Mail Tallents House from 16 June. The stamps feature: Dragons and Unicorns (two 1st class), Giants and Pixies (two 62p), and Mermaids and Fairies (two 90p). The stamps are printed in separate sheets, not as se-tenant pairs. They were designed by Morgan Radcliffe using illustrations by Dave McKean, and printed in gravure by De La Rue Security Print. The stamps measure 35mm square (perf 14.5). Sheets of 25 will be supplied to Post Office branches and sheets of 50, with gutter margins, to Tallents House and Post Office philatelic outlets.

**PHILATELIC PRODUCTS** In the presentation pack, Neil Gaiman writes amusingly about the creatures shown on the stamps, including the King of Scotland's unicorn, which was left to run, tangle-maned and alone, across the highlands. The pack is designed and illustrated by Dave McKean.

The pictorial Tallents House and Dragonby postmarks will be shown in a future *Bulletin*.

**FIRST DAY FACILITIES** Orders for serviced FDCs must reach Tallents House (address below) by the date of issue. Collectors may send stamped covers on the day of issue to: Royal Mail Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB (for Tallents House postmark), or to their nearest Royal Mail Special Handstamp Centre (Dragonby, Scunthorpe postmark) marking the outer envelope 'FD0915' or 'FD0916'. Covers can be posted or handed in at main Post Office branches for the Dragonby postmark.

Details of sponsored handstamps are 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, 35-50 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1HQ.



The pack (above), is written by Neil Gaiman. He describes the creatures on the stamps, including the dragons of the British Isles, called 'wyrms': they had poisonous breath and coiled snakelike around hills, but they could not fly or breathe fire.

**Mythical creatures** A number of earlier stamps are relevant to this theme. As far back as 1913, George V high values featured 'Sea-horses'. A Unicorn has been depicted on the George VI 2s6d and 5s high values of 1939, and on the 1951 £1 high value. During the current reign a unicorn has featured on the Scottish 1s3d regional stamp of 1958 (and the 2008 1st class version) and on the 28p and 31p Heraldry stamps of 1984 and 1987, also on one of the Queen's Beasts stamps of 1998.

St George fighting a dragon can be seen on the 1929 Postal Union Congress £1, George VI 10s high value of 1951, and the 78p stamp in the 2007 Celebrating England miniature sheet. A dragon also features on the 1998 Hobbit stamp (right), and the Welsh Dragon is depicted on 1958 and 1971 country stamps, the current 1st class country stamp, and the 1958 Empire & Commonwealth Games issue. An Ice Dragon is to be seen on the Noggin stamp in the 1994 Greetings issue. The Heraldry sets of 1984 and 1987 include mythical creatures as part of the coats of arms depicted – dragons on the City of London stamp (1984 31p), and unicorns and the winged bull (symbol of St Luke) on the Royal Scottish Academy of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture stamp (31p 1987). The 1998 Queen's Beasts se-tenant strip also features mythical creatures – the Griffin, Yale, Welsh Dragon, and Unicorn respectively on the first, third, fourth and fifth stamps. A Phoenix appears on the 37p value of the 1998 Children's Literature set. Other mythical creatures are featured on the book covers depicted on the Harry Potter stamps of 2007. Our thanks to Jeffery Matthews, MBE, designer of the Heraldry and Queen's Beasts stamps, for identifying the creatures •

#### Mythical creatures prices

Set of stamps	£3.82
Presentation pack	£4.35
FDC envelope	£0.30
Serviced FDC (UK customers)	£4.86
Serviced FDC (overseas)	£4.23
Stamp cards (set of six)	£2.34

