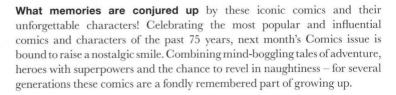


Biff! As *The Dandy* turns 75 this year, we celebrate the British institution of the top-class comic



Stamp by stamp *The Dandy* and Desperate Dan kick off this smile-inducing set. *The Dandy* was launched by DC Thomson & Co Ltd in 1937 and is the world's third-longest-running comic. Desperate Dan made his debut in the same year, delighting children with his tough-guy antics such as shaving with a blow torch and eating cow pies (complete with horns).

The Beano was first published in the following year and its great star, Dennis the Menace, began getting into scrapes in 1951. Other iconic strips include the Bash Street Kids, Roger the Dodger and Minnie the Minx.

Eagle hit the shelves in 1950 and the first issue, showing Dan Dare on the cover, sold 900,000 copies. Other popular stories included Riders of the Range and PC 49. *Eagle* had educational elements, too, containing news and sport sections and cross-section diagrams of machinery.

The Topper was published from 1953 to 1990, when it merged with *The Beezer*. Mickey the Monkey was the original cover star and Beryl the Peril a big favourite.

Tiger was published from 1954 to 1985 and concentrated on sports. Its most popular strip was Roy of the Rovers. This strip was so successful it eventually became a comic in its own right.

Bunty was another DC Thomson & Co publication. Launched in 1958, it ran until 2001. The Four Marys – four teens who lived in a girls-only boarding school – was the comic's longest-running story.

Buster was published from 1960 to 2000 and carried a mixture of humour





Above: in true comic style, the two pictorial postmarks pack a punch

and adventure strips. The title character was originally billed as 'Son of Andy Capp', the hero of the *Daily Mirror's* strip, and sported a similar flat cap.

Valiant was a British boys' adventure comic, running from 1962 to 1976. It was published by IPC and was one of their major titles throughout the 1960s and early 1970s. As well as war hero characters like Captain Hurricane, *Valiant* ran science fiction strips, such as the Steel Claw.

Yet another DC Thomson & Co Ltd title was the weekly comic *Twinkle*, 'the picture paper especially for little girls', which was published from 1968 to 1999. Nurse Nancy, who ran a toy hospital with her grandfather, was one of the most popular characters, along with Goody Gumdrops and Jenny Wren.

2000 AD is a weekly British science fiction-oriented comic, first published in 1977 and still going strong. It is most noted for its Judge Dredd stories and a number of artists and writers who became renowned in the field, including

Alan Moore, Neil Gaiman and Grant Morrison. Judge Dredd is a law enforcement officer in a futuristic city where uniformed Judges combine the powers of police, judge, jury and executioner.

All in all, there was a comic character for everyone to associate with, plus adventures to fuel the imagination. Those were the days... \bullet

Comics Prices	
Stamp Set	£4.60
Presentation Pack	£5.10
First Day Cover UK	£6.00
First Day Cover non-UK	£5.00
First Day Envelope	30p
Stamp Cards (10 in set)	£4.50

Comics Stamps Specifications 20 March Issue date Number of stamps Ten Design The Chase Stamp Format Square Stamp Size 35mm x 35mm Printer Cartor Security Printing Print Process Lithography Number per Sheet 25/50 14.5 x 14.5 Perforations Phosphor All over Gum **PVA** Sheet format Two sheets of 25/50 with five

se-tenant designs per sheet



Facing page: released on 8 March, the Comics special issue recalls the glory days of children's weeklies. Below: Comics stamps in the Presentation Pack