



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

**What memories are conjured up** by these iconic comics and their unforgettable characters! Celebrating the most popular and influential comics and characters of the past 75 years, next month's Comics issue is bound to raise a nostalgic smile. Combining mind-boggling tales of adventure, heroes with superpowers and the chance to revel in naughtiness – for several generations these comics are a fondly remembered part of growing up.

**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... ●

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

#### 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

Issue date	20 March
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
Perforations	14.5 x 14.5
Phosphor	All over
Gum	PVA
Sheet format	Two sheets of 25/50 with five se-tenant designs per sheet

