

1st Class
up to 100g



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The animals come in six by six This month sees the launch of a new Royal Mail series of British Farm Animals Post & Go stamps, which will feature traditional UK breeds of sheep, cattle and pigs. The first issue, released on 24 February (during Stampex), features six traditional sheep breeds in their typical habitat, illustrated by Robert Gillmor.

The *Welsh Mountain Badger Face* is an ancient breed and the Domesday Book mentions sheep of a similar description. Today there are two varieties, both with the 'badger-style' stripe above the eyes: Torddu (Welsh for black belly, as shown top left) and the lighter Torwen (white belly).

Standing in front of a dry-stone wall, we see a fine pair of *Dalesbred* sheep, with a distinctive black face and a white spot on each side of the nose. This hardy breed has been reared in northern areas of England for generations and its resilient, hard-wearing wool used in the making of tweeds and carpets.

The origins of the *Jacob* sheep can be traced back over 3,000 years to Syria. With its distinctive spotted fleece and upright horns, it was introduced to the UK as an ornamental breed. Its wool is strong and long (up to 10cm) and therefore is ideal for hand-spinning.

A handsome all-black head, black legs and almost horizontal ears distinguish the *Suffolk* breed, which was created from crossing the Southdown and the Norfolk Horn. Its fleece produces fine knitting wools and tweed.

The sheep breed believed to be the UK's most primitive is the *Soay*, originating from the first

Post & Go British Farm Animals I, Sheep – Prices

Stamp Set	£2.76
First Day Cover UK	£3.79
First Day Cover non-UK	£3.16
First Day Envelope	30p

Post & Go British Farm Animals I, Sheep – Specifications

Date of issue	24 February
Number of stamps	Six
Stamp design	Kate Stephens
Stamp illustration	Robert Gillmor
Stamp format	Landscape
Stamp size	56mm x 25mm
Printer	Walsall Security Printers
Print process	Gravure
Perforations	Kiss die-cut simulated
Phosphor	Bars
Gum	Self-adhesive

domesticated sheep that populated northern Europe. Small and robust with curved, ridged horns, it has a fleece usually chocolate or tan in colour.

Last comes the lovely *Leicester Longwool*, a large breed of sheep with a lustrous curly fleece, first developed by Robert Bakewell over 200 years ago. Bakewell was a pioneer in the field of animal breeding techniques in the selection of livestock (his work is said to have influenced that of Charles Darwin). The high-quality wool of the *Leicester Longwool* is always in demand by hand-weavers and is mainly used to create fine cloth, material for suits and knitting wool.

The six Post & Go Sheep stamps are available as a Stamp Set, printed in a sheetlet form and inserted in a card carrier designed by The Chase (as shown on page 135 of January *Bulletin*). It has information about each breed, written by Jack Byard, and a profile of the artist Robert Gillmor. The Stamp Set is available from Tallents House and will be overprinted with First Class values and a philatelic code in gravure.

Orders for serviced First Day Covers have to reach the Royal Mail by 24 February 2012. Customers may also send stamped envelopes on the day of issue to Royal Mail, Tallents House for the Tallents House, Edinburgh postmark. Customers who hand in or post stamped Royal Mail First Day Cover envelopes at main Post Offices® on the day of issue will receive the pictorial SHEEPDROVE, LAMBOURN, HUNGERFORD first day postmark (as shown above right). Alternatively, customers may send stamped envelopes to any of the Special Handstamp Centres for the pictorial or plain SHEEPDROVE, LAMBOURN, HUNGERFORD postmark, quoting the reference number of the postmark required.

Special posting facilities are available for first day covers and for the special exhibition overprint at this month's Stampex (see page 192).

Thematic collectors may be interested to know that other Royal Mail stamps to feature Sheep are the 1992 Wintertime (30p Welsh Mountain Sheep), 2004 Farm Animals and 2009 Christmas (£1.35 Shepherd with Lamb) ●

Small but perfectly formed The GVR Type E Small Combination Pillar Box, dating from 1932 is released on 7 February, the latest addition to The Royal Mail Pillar Box Collection. This is a delightful series of models for the serious collector – all the models are accurately detailed at a scale of 1:19 and are handmade and painted, with a pewter touch mark applied to the inside. The packaging carries an accurate illustration and includes historical information about the pillar box.

The consultant for this series is Martin Robinson of the Letterbox Study Group (who writes for *Bulletin* this month on page 186). The models are produced by DJH Engineering Ltd and the packaging designed by The Chase ●

February farewells Audiences currently enjoying record-breaking runs of the musicals *Billy Elliot*, *We Will Rock You* and *Oliver!* will sadly be unable to buy stamps that celebrate their experience after 23 February, when the Musical special issue – featuring these and four other internationally acclaimed British musicals – is withdrawn. The *Oliver!* stamp is shown right ●



Above, alternative pictorial postmark with an illustration of a Soay sheep, the UK's oldest known breed, and with the postmark of Sheepdrove, chosen as the suitably sheep-themed place name. The Tallents House Post & Go postmark shows a map of the British Isles

