

Christmas 2012 Children's book illustrator Alex Scheffler has created the distinctive images that feature on this year's festive stamp issue



Christmas Smilers® Personalised Sheets

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| 2nd Class Personalised Sheet – 20 x 2nd, Set within a frame featuring reindeer | £13.99 |
| 1st Class Personalised Sheets – 10 x 1st | £9.99 |
| 1st Class Personalised Sheets – 20 x 1st Set within a frame featuring robins | £18.25 |
| 87p Personalised Sheet – 10 x 87p, Set within a frame featuring snowman with a snowcat and a snowmouse | £13.55 |
| £1.28 Personalised Sheet – 10 x £1.28, Set within a frame showing penguin on ice skates | £18.50 |

Christmas Stamps – Specifications

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| Date of issue | 6 November |
| Number of stamps | Seven |
| Illustration | Alex Scheffler |
| Stamp design | Webb & Webb Design Ltd |
| Stamp format | Standard: portrait Large: landscape |
| Stamp size | Standard: 20mm x 24mm Large: 30mm x 24mm |
| Printer | De la Rue Security Print |
| Print process | Gravure |
| Number per sheet | 50 |
| Perforations | Kiss die-cut simulated |
| Phosphor | Bars as appropriate |
| Gum | Self adhesive |

Here comes Santa Claus – along with a friendly reindeer, a snowman with his penguin chum, a robin perched on a holly branch and a tree with all the trimmings. These traditional Christmas favourites all get their very own stamp for Christmas 2012, released on 6 November. The special issue comprises a Miniature Sheet, seven stamps (including Large First Class and Large Second Class versions), Presentation Pack, Stamp Cards, First Class and Second Class Stamp Books, a generic sheet, a Smilers® Sheet and First Day Covers for both stamps and Miniature Sheet.

The distinctive images were created by German-born illustrator Axel Scheffler, who now lives in Blackheath, southeast London. His best-known illustrations are probably those in Julia Donaldson's *The Gruffalo*. Scheffler has drawn for many other authors of books in Britain, Germany and the Netherlands, including Jon Blake, Paul Shipton, David Henry Wilson, Uwe Timm, Paul van Loon and Toon Tellegen.

Designer Brian Webb of Webb & Webb translated Scheffler's work into the stamp format. By the way, there is a little intrigue too: in one of the stamps, a curious cat and mouse are decorating a Christmas tree. To explain how they fit into a storyline that links the stamps, children's author and poet Tony Mitton has written a poem for the First Day Cover insert.

As an alternative to the Tallents House, Edinburgh postmark, pictorial and non-pictorial (plain design) BETHLEHEM, LLANDEILO postmarks will be available for this issue. All first-day-of-issue postmarking offices will be supplied with the alternative pictorial first-day-of-issue postmark. This means that all First Day Covers posted at a post office counter will be cancelled with the same pictorial postmark, regardless of where they are posted. Unstamped Royal Mail First Day Cover envelopes are available from main post offices and philatelic outlets about a week before the stamps go on sale. Serviced Royal Mail First Day Covers are available by mail order from Tallents House (address on page 35). Orders for Serviced First Day Covers must reach Royal Mail by 6 November 2012. Customers may also send stamped envelopes on the day of issue to Royal Mail, Tallents House for the Tallents House, Edinburgh postmark •



Christmas Stamps – Prices

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| Stamps | £6.74 |
| Presentation Pack | £7.25 |
| First Day Cover UK | £8.56 |
| First Day Cover overseas | £7.86 |
| Miniature Sheet | £6.74 |
| First Day Cover Miniature Sheet UK | £8.56 |
| First Day Cover Miniature Sheet overseas | £7.86 |
| Stamp Cards, set of eight | £3.60 |
| Stamp Book, 12 x 1st Class | £7.20 |
| Stamp Book, 12 x 2nd Class | £6 |
| Christmas Generic Sheet | |
| 8 x 2nd Class, 8 x 1st Class, 2 x 87p and 2 x £1.28 stamps with labels illustrated with presents and set within a decorative frame featuring Santa on his sleigh | £13.10 |



Left: Large First Class and Second Class stamps.

Above: five more stamps in the set.

Facing page: the Christmas 2012 Miniature Sheet is gummed and contains all seven stamps within a border designed by Alex Scheffler