

News Release

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August 8, 1994

ROYAL MAIL PAYS TRIBUTE TO BRITAIN'S MEDICAL PIONEERS

Pioneering British medical achievements are honoured on a new set of stamps, unveiled by Royal Mail today.

The subject of the designs is Royal Mail's interpretation of "Discoveries", which is this year's PostEurop theme for stamps issued by postal authorities throughout Europe.

The four-stamp "Medical Discoveries" set illustrates techniques which have been adopted world-wide for the treatment and detection of a variety of medical conditions. The stamps go on sale at post offices on September 27.

Rosena Robson, Royal Mail's Special Stamps Manager, said: "Britain has long been a key player in the world of medical science and these stamps pay tribute to four of our major contributions.

"Choosing to interpret 'Discoveries' in this way has allowed us to look in detail at a fascinating subject which would not otherwise be easy to incorporate in the annual stamp programme.

"We feel that the design team has done a great job in conveying what is a very technical subject in the limited space available on a stamp. The designs combine the technical side of modern medicine with a glimpse of the people who benefit."

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The Letters Business of The Post Office
Official Sponsor to the British Olympic Team

The four stamps were designed by Pierre Vermeir, of the design group Halphin Grey Vermeir. They are his first set of stamps for Royal Mail and combine illustrations by Jean-Paul Tibbles with images generated by the four medical processes courtesy of : the Acuson Corporation (25p), the Science Photo Library (30p and 35p) and the Royal Victoria Infirmary, Radiology Department (41p).

The 25p stamp features Ultrasonic Imaging. An ultrasound scan for pregnant women is now a standard part of ante natal care in Britain, producing an image of an unborn baby. It was scientists at Glasgow University 40 years ago who first saw the wider possibilities for sonar technology, initially developed to detect submarines.

The 30p stamp depicts Scanning Electron Microscopy which allows imaging of objects less than a few thousandth of a millimetre across. Ordinary microscopes use light and optical lenses to create their magnified images. Electron microscopes, using electrons and electromagnets, can form images magnified up to 100,000 times.

This makes scanning electron microscopes particularly useful when dealing with diseases relating to the structure of blood cells, bacteria and viruses. The first of these machines was manufactured by the Cambridge Instrument Company in 1965.

Magnetic Resonance Imaging is featured on the 35p stamp. This image-creating process allows doctors to examine the atoms which make up the human body using precisely tuned radio waves and to look for differences between normal and diseased tissue. The technique exploits the fact that much of the human body is made up of water. The nuclei of hydrogen atoms in water give off detectable signals in the strong magnetic field of the MRI machine which act as vital clues in determining the state of a patient's health. This is commonly used to examine the brain, heart and kidneys.

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The 41p stamp features Computed Tomography which uses beams of X-rays to take pictures of a slice through the human body. This technique, now commonly referred to as a CT scan and used to diagnose diseases such as cancer, was developed by Godfrey Hounsfield, who worked for Electric and Musical Industries Ltd. (EMI).

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TECHNICAL DETAILS

The four stamps are printed in photogravure by Jon Enschede Security Printing, of The Netherlands, the first special stamps the company has printed. They are horizontal in format and measure 41mm x 30mm, with a perforation of 15 x 14. The paper is phosphor-coated and the gum is PVA.

CYLINDER NUMBERS AND COLOURS

25p: 1A,1B,1C,1D,1E	Greenish-yellow, bright magenta, new blue, black, silver
30p: 1A,1B,1C,1D,1E	Greenish-yellow, bright magenta, new blue, black, silver
35p: 1A,1B,1C,1D,1E	Greenish-yellow, bright magenta, new blue, black, silver
41p: 1A,1B,1C,1D,1E	Greenish-yellow, bright magenta, new blue, black, silver

FIRST DAY COVERS

Special First Day Envelopes, designed by Halphin Grey Vermeir will be available from the British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH, EH3 5TT and at most main and many sub-Post Offices, priced 25p each.

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The usual first day of issue facilities will be available at Post Offices with philatelic post boxes. Two first day of issue postmarks will also be available, one from the British Philatelic Bureau and one from Cambridge. These are illustrated below:



The Bureau will provide its usual First Day Cover service. Covers addressed to the correct postal address of the destination required and bearing all four stamps will be cancelled "British Philatelic Bureau" or "Cambridge" and despatched for £1.95 [inland] and £1.66 [overseas].

Application forms for these services are available from the British Philatelic Bureau and at main Post Offices and should be returned no later than September 27, 1994. For customers who wish to pay through Girobank, the Bureau's Girobank account number is 11000099. Customers requiring only the special handstamps may obtain them under the reposting facility by sending, on the first day of issue, a stamped addressed envelope under an outer cover endorsed "Special First Day of Issue Handstamp" to the British Philatelic Bureau or the Royal Mail South East Special Handstamps Centre, Royal Mail, 15 Wrexham Road, SLOUGH, Berkshire, SL1 1AA.

PRESENTATION PACK

The Presentation Pack [number 251] was designed by Halphin Grey Vermeir with illustrations by Jean-Paul Tibbles. Text was written by Susan Watts. The packs will be available from the British Philatelic Bureau and at most main Post Offices and many sub-Post Offices from September 27, 1994, price £1.65.

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News Release



STAMP CARDS

Four new stamp cards [numbers 165a, b, c, and d] each featuring one of the stamps, will also be on sale, price 25p each, from the British Philatelic Bureau and most main Post Offices and many sub-Post Offices.

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