

9 November 1993



This year's Christmas stamps mark the 150th anniversary of the publication of *A Christmas Carol*, written by Charles Dickens (1812-70). Within the book children mingle as equals with adults, and adults rediscover the simple pleasures of childhood. But its main concern was the deprivation, ignorance and iniquities of 19th century society. Dickens proclaimed ignorance "the most prolific parent of misery and crime."

Within a week of its publication some 6000 copies of *A Christmas Carol* had been sold at five shillings each; a reprint was put in hand. Dickens declared the book "a most prodigious success - the greatest, I think."



The Christmas Carol characters featured on the stamps are: 19p - Bob Cratchit and Tiny Tim, 25p - Mr & Mrs Fezziwig; 30p - Scrooge; 35p - The Prize Turkey; 41p - Mr Scrooge's nephew.

The stamps cover the basic inland 1st and 2nd class rates and the rates for letters to European countries, and basic airmail postcards and letters.

The five stamps were designed by Quentin Blake, OBE, RDI, FCSI. Mr Blake, born 1932, was educated at Downing College, Cambridge and was appointed a Senior Fellow at the Royal College of Art in 1988. He has been a freelance artist and illustrator since 1957. His work has been exhibited on numerous occasions, with a retrospective exhibition at the National Theatre in 1984. His publications, as author and



illustrator, are voluminous, including books for children. He has provided illustrations for works by Ogden Nash, Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice, Roald Dahl, Sir Clement Freud, Lewis Carroll, Evelyn Waugh, and George Orwell.

Technical Details

Printers:	Harrison & Sons Ltd
Process:	Photogravure
Size:	41 x 30mm
Sheets:	100
Perforation:	15 x 14
Phosphor:	19p - one phosphor band, others phosphor coated paper
Gum:	PVA Dextrin
Presentation Pack:	No. 242, price £1.85
Stamp Cards:	Nos. 157a-e, price 25p each

First Day Facilities

Unstamped Royal Mail first day cover envelopes will be available from main post offices, the Bureau, Collections, Post Shops Plus, and Philatelic Counters around a week before 9 November, price 25p.

The Bureau will provide a first day cover service - collectors may order the Royal Mail cover bearing the stamps cancelled with a pictorial "First Day of Issue" postmark of the Philatelic Bureau, or Bethlehem, price £2.18 (including VAT) to UK addresses, £1.86 to

ROYAL MAIL MINT STAMPS

Christmas 1993: A Christmas Carol

Before the arriv
better-off home
as the main de
joined to make
greenery, oran
with mistletoe
contained a c
candlelight. T
fancy magazin
neath the bou
you are rather
moul... mo
advice which
romantic am



Us

The walls and ceiling were to hung about with living green, that it looked a perfect grove.

A Christmas Carol was also put on as a play

But they didn't discover the whole evening to music. After a while they played at forfeits; for it is good to be children sometimes, and never better than at Christmas, when its mighty Founder was a child himself. Stop! There was first a game at blind-man's buff. Of course there was.

Every one playing forfeits gives something personal to the 'judge'. These belongings are returned when a forfeit is performed to the judge's satisfaction. Here are some suggested Dickensian forfeits: name five characters in A Christmas Carol; sing a carol; guess how many ornaments are on your Christmas tree; or name was a

energy of action, that the singer fled in terror.

Just occasionally, the unreformed Scrooge strikes a sympathetic note. We end as we began with Tiny Tim's message for the festive season: God Bless



ROYAL MAIL
FIRST DAY COVER

Christmas 1993

A Christmas Carol

Mrs J Robinson
200 Manorbier Road
ILKESTON
Derbyshire
DE7 4AB

overseas addresses (no VAT). Orders for first day covers must be received at the British Philatelic Bureau by 9 November.

Collectors may send their own stamped covers, on the day of issue, for the Philatelic Bureau, or Bethlehem cancels, to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH EH3 5TT or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Penarth Road, CARDIFF CF1 1AA (Bethlehem postmark). The outer envelope should be endorsed "Pictorial First Day of Issue postmark".



First Day Posting Boxes will be provided at most main post offices for collectors who wish to post covers to receive the standard, non-pictorial "First Day of Issue" handstamps.

Details of other special handstamps, sponsored by Royal Mail, stamp dealers and others, will be found in the *British Postmark Bulletin* – the Royal Mail's magazine for postmark collectors. It is available on subscription from the British Philatelic Bureau: £10 UK and Europe; £21.75 Rest of World (Airmail).



Christmas 19p stamp

Collectors are advised that it will be in order to affix just the 19p Christmas stamp to covers to receive all special cancels ("First Day of Issue", sponsored and philatelic counter) in use on 9 November. The minimum 1st class rule is suspended on this day as the Christmas set includes a 2nd class rate stamp. It should be noted that this concession applies only to the 19p Christmas stamp; covers bearing other than Christmas stamps must bear at least 1st class postage.

Christmas Stamp Books

A book containing twenty 19p Christmas stamps will be available from post offices, the Bureau, Collections, Post Shops Plus and Philatelic Counters. Price £3.80, the book will be on sale at post offices until Christmas Eve unless previously sold out. It will remain on philatelic sale for one year.

Also going on sale on 9 November will be a book containing ten 25p stamps, price £2.50. This will be on trial sale at post offices in the Central TV area, and, for the benefit of collectors, from the usual philatelic outlets. Both books have a festive cover design.



Christmas Aerogramme

This year's Christmas aerogramme will be available at post offices and philatelic outlets from 5 October, price 44p (including 34p aerogramme postage). The price will remain 44p after the new postal tariffs come into force on 1 November. The aerogramme was illustrated in last month's *Bulletin*.

Royal Mail Yearbook

Volume 10 of the Royal Mail *Special Stamps Yearbook* will go on sale on 9 November. The handsomely produced book contains