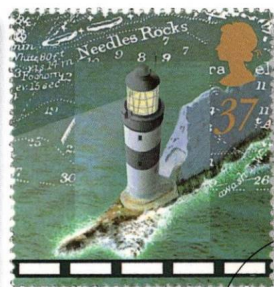


Royal Mail news Lighthouses stamps • Current exhibitions at the National Postal Museum • Disney stamp book



The designer The stamps were designed by Dick Davis using illustrations by John Boon. Mr Davis (born 1945) designed the 1986 Medieval Life stamps, first day cover and pack, 1993 Swans FDC and first day handstamps, 1994 Golf FDC and pack, and the covers for the 50p stamp books showing sea charts, issued in 1995. Trained at the Chelsea School of Art and the Royal College of Art, he now works from home on the Isle of Wight.

Lighthouses Five stamps featuring important British lighthouses go on sale at post offices and philatelic outlets on 24 March. The stamps commemorate the 300th anniversary of the lighting of the first Eddystone lighthouse and the final year of manned lighthouses in the UK. All will be automatic by the end of 1998.

The **20p** stamp (basic inland 2nd class letter rate) features the lighthouse at St John's Point, Co Down, Northern Ireland which was established in 1844. The colours of the lighthouse were changed to black and yellow in 1954. The stamp displays a contemporary chart in the background, and a band that shows the 'character' of the light – 'group quick flashing $\times 2$ '.

The Smalls lighthouse in Pembrokeshire, Wales features on the **26p** denomination (inland 1st class and EU basic weight letters). The current tower was built in 1859 by James Douglass and like most lighthouses was automated in the 1980s. The chart is dated 1988. The light's 'character' is 'group flashing $\times 3$ '.

The famous Needles Rocks lighthouse on the Isle of Wight, England, is shown on the **37p** value (airmail postcard rate). This was also built in 1859, by James Walker and the stamp shows it as it was at the turn of the century when it was black and white. The chart dates from 1908; the light's character is 'single occulting'.

Shown on the **43p** stamp (airmail letters basic rate) is the lighthouse on Bell Rock (or Inchcape Rock), 11 miles south east of Arbroath, Scotland. It was built in 1811 by Robert Stevenson (ancestor of Robert Louis Stevenson), and marks a dangerous reef. This tower is the oldest rock lighthouse extant in Britain and is shown as it appeared in the mid-19th century. The chart is dated 1842; the light's character is 'alternating white and red'.

The final stamp, **63p** (airmail letters, second weight step) features Henry Winstanley's original Eddystone lighthouse, off Plymouth, Devon, as it looked when first lit in 1698. The chart dates from the mid-18th century; the light's character is 'fixed steady light'. The 300th anniversary of the

Technical details

Printers The House of Questa

Process Offset lithography

Size 35 \times 37mm

Sheets 100

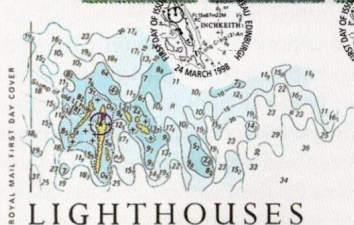
Perforation 14.5 \times 14

Phosphor One band 20p •
two bands others

Gum PVA



Presentation pack and stamp cards A well-illustrated pack (price £2.25) and stamp cards (25p each) will be available from main post offices and philatelic outlets. The pack has been written by Alexandra Henderson, former Editor of *Scotland on Sunday*. She gives impressions of life on Fair Isle South lighthouse – the last remaining manned lighthouse in Scotland, soon to become fully automatic.

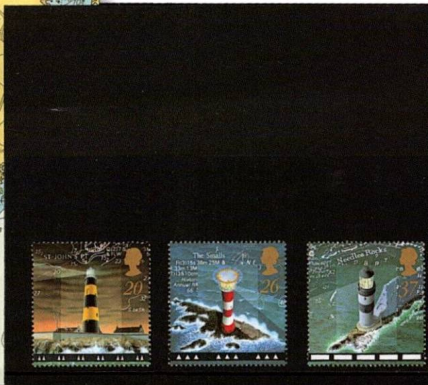
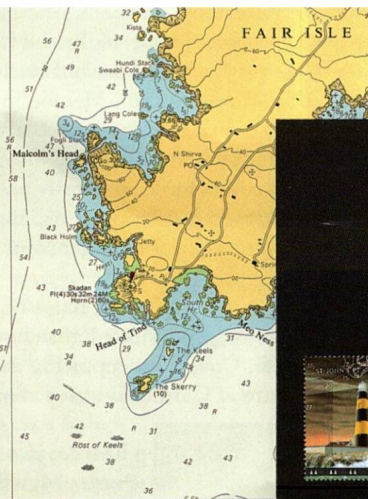
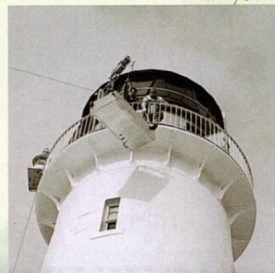


Mrs J Robinson
200 Manorbird Road
Ilkeston
Derbyshire
DE7 4AB

LIGHTHOUSES

WHEN THE WIND WHIPS UP AND THE SWELL TURNS A STEELY GRAY, Fair Isle is transformed from a haven of soft green fields to an inhospitable place of cliffs and rocks that beckon menacingly to passing vessels. In the days before lighthouses, countless seafarers – including sailors from the Spanish Armada – perished off these shores. For 106 years, as darkness has fallen over this tiny island halfway between Orkney and Shetland, the stalwarts of the Northern Lighthouse Board have watched over the light that shines from its southern tip and operated the horn that wails through the impenetrable fogs that descend so rapidly here.

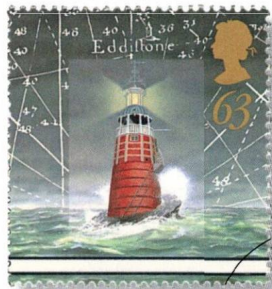
But the days of the lighthousekeepers' solitary vigil are almost over. The men of Fair Isle South are the last in Scotland – all remaining staffed UK lighthouses will be automated in 1998. Poignantly, the keepers will go ashore for the final time 300 years after the world-famous Eddystone first cast its protective glow along England's south coast.





Eddystone lighthouse will be featured in the March issue of *Leading Lights* – a unique international journal aimed at all people interested in the many facets of lighthouses. For information contact the Editor and Publisher: Peter Williams, The Haven Lightship, Milford Marina, Milford Haven SA73 3AF. Telephone 01646 698055.

Questa will be using a fine screen - 850 dots per inch, as opposed to the more usual 300; this will greatly improve the image on the stamps.



FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail first day cover envelopes will be available from main post offices and philatelic outlets around a week before 24 March, price 25p. Orders for the cover bearing the stamps, cancelled with a pictorial 'first day of issue' postmark of the Bureau or Plymouth, price £2.64 UK (including VAT) or £2.25 overseas (no VAT), must reach the Bureau by 24 March. Alternatively, collectors may send stamped covers on the day of issue, to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT, or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Penarth Road, Cardiff CF1 1AA (for Plymouth postmark), marking the outer envelope 'FD9805' (Bureau), or 'FD9806' (Plymouth).

First day posting boxes will be provided at main post offices for collectors to post covers for local (mostly non-pictorial) 'first day of issue' handstamps. Sponsored special handstamps will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin* – available on subscription from the Bureau (£10 UK/Europe; £21.75 elsewhere).

The permanent philatelic handstamp for Plymouth shows Smeaton's Tower – the old Eddystone lighthouse of 1756, re-erected on Plymouth Hoe in 1882. Covers for reposting should be sent to the Special Handstamp Centre at Cardiff (address above), requesting handstamp number 4673.

Covers may be posted bearing just the 20p Lighthouses stamp for any philatelic postmark in use on 24 March; the normal 1st class rule is waived for the day.

Queen's Beasts plates

The five 26p stamps were printed by plates 1A (silver) 1B (green) 1C (bright blue) 1D (carmine-red) 1E (vermillion) 1F (lemon) 1G (grey) 1H (grey-black) 4J (black, recess printing) P66 (phosphor).

There are, including the phosphor, 10 passes of which stamps 2, 3 and 4 have all, and stamps 1 and 5 in the strip are missing one colour – grey (stamp 1) and carmine-red (5).

AEROGRAMMES Three aerogrammes featuring lighthouses in England, Scotland and Wales will go on sale at post offices in the respective countries, and at the Bureau and philatelic outlets on 24 March, price 45p each. The Scottish aerogramme featuring Science and Technology, announced here in October has now been cancelled; we regret any disappointment caused.

LIGHTHOUSES ON STAMPS These are not the first British stamps to feature lighthouses although the first set devoted to the subject. Under magnification you can just make out the Roman lighthouse (Pharos) near Dover Castle on the 1951 5s White Cliffs of Dover high value definitive (SG 510). An unidentified lighthouse can be seen on the 1972 Coastguard sesquicentenary stamp (902), and the Beachey Head lighthouse on the 22p value in the 1985 Safety at Sea set (1287). Turnberry lighthouse featured on the 1994 41p Golf stamp (1833) and on the alternative first day postmark for

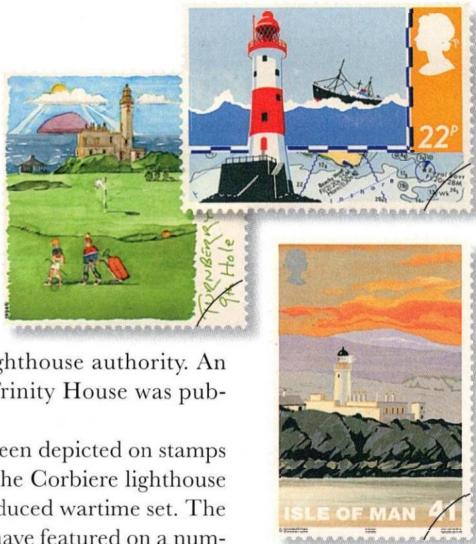
the Golf set. The Needles lighthouse can be identified on the Isle of Wight first day postmark for the 1992 Tennyson issue.

Nor should postal stationery be overlooked. The Eddystone lighthouse featured on a pre-stamped postcard issued for the Royal Naval Exhibition in May 1891 and the 23rd Scottish aerogramme (April 1986) featured various lighthouses run by the Commissioners of Northern Lights – the lighthouse authority for Scotland. In England and Wales, the Channel Islands and a few overseas territories, Trinity House is the lighthouse authority. An interesting article, by the late Barbara Last, on Trinity House was published in the September 1986 *Bulletin*.

Other lighthouses around the British Isles have been depicted on stamps from Guernsey, Jersey, Isle of Man, and Ireland. The Corbiere lighthouse was shown on the 1½d value in Jersey's locally-produced wartime set. The three lighthouses on Lundy in the Bristol Channel have featured on a number of local stamps (local carriage labels) from this island in the Bristol Channel ●

Free Lighthouse mounts for your Lighthouses

stamps To coincide with the new issue of five stamps depicting lighthouses, Lighthouse (the world renowned philatelic album and accessory manufacturer) is offering a free pack of protective mounts for you to house this new issue. To receive your free mounts send a 2nd class stamp (or international reply coupon from overseas) to cover cost of return postage to: Free Mounts Offer, The Duncannon Partnership, 4 Beaufort Road, Reigate RH2 9DJ ●



Queen's flowers To mark the golden wedding of The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh, Royal Mail's Stamp Advisory Committee arranged for a replica of the 1947 wedding bouquet to be sent to Her Majesty at Buckingham Palace.

The photograph shows, with the bouquet, Margaret David, Head Florist of Longmans Florists of Holborn; Fiona Merrikin, SAC Secretary; and Mrs Janet Owen, Managing Director of Longmans. Mrs Owen's father made the original wedding bouquet.