

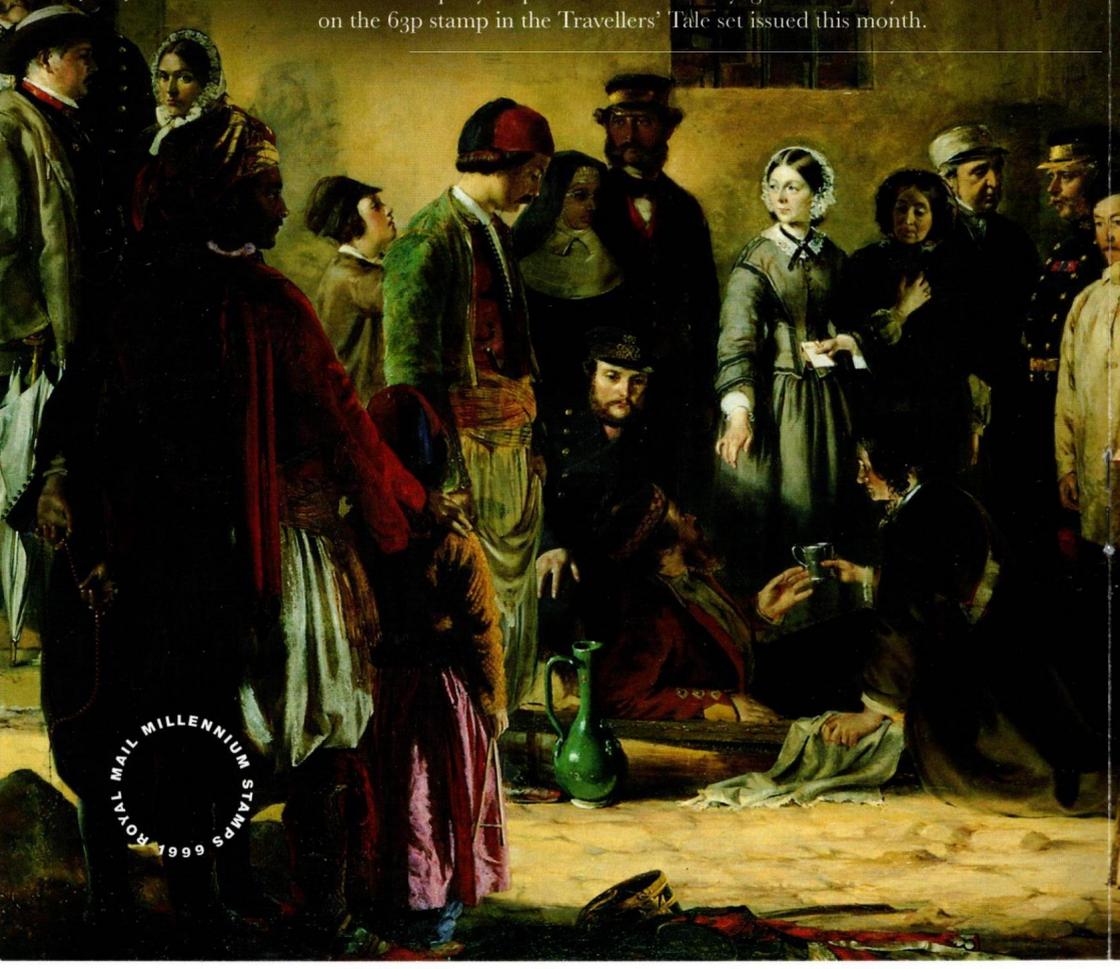
The Patients' Tale

The third of 12 sets of Millennium stamps to be issued this year is on the theme of patients and health.

Florence Nightingale put her ideas into practice during the Crimean War when she took a team of nurses to a hospital at Scutari, on the Black Sea. Her work reduced the death rate, and when she returned to Britain the first Nightingale School of Nursing was set up at St Thomas's Hospital in London.

Below, *The Mission of Mercy: Florence Nightingale receiving the wounded at Scutari*, by Jerry Barrett, c1856-58.

Patients' Tale stamps go on sale at post offices and philatelic outlets on 2 March. The **20p** stamp (basic inland 2nd class letter rate) shows Dr Jenner vaccinating a child. Edward Jenner (1749-1823) was born in Gloucestershire and studied medicine at St George's Hospital, London where he saw at first-hand victims of smallpox. One of the most virulent killer diseases of the time, it affected rich and poor alike and caused the death of Queen Mary II in 1694. Jenner knew from folklore and his own observations that milkmaids who had been infected with cowpox never caught smallpox. After investigation he developed a vaccination containing cowpox and inoculated an eight-year old boy in 1796. In the presentation pack, historian Jeremy Black tells us that Jenner, being a brilliant naturalist, was invited to accompany Captain Cook on his voyage of discovery. Cook features on the 63p stamp in the Travellers' Tale set issued this month.



ROYAL MAIL MILLENNIUM STAMPS 6666



The 20p stamp shows Edward Jenner vaccinating a child in the pattering of a black and white cow. With the success of his smallpox vaccine, vaccination became one of the first modern methods of preventive medicine.

The 26p value features nursing care. Florence Nightingale (1820-1910) sought to make nursing an acceptable profession for women, and held strong convictions in terms of hygiene, ventilation and nutrition.



The important work of Sir Alexander Fleming (1881-1955) is recalled by the 43p value, which shows penicillin mould. In 1928 Fleming made a discovery which led to one of the main medical advances this century. By the 1940s penicillin was being produced in large quantities.

The 63p stamp features a sculpture of a test-tube baby by Antony Gormley. History was made at Oldham District Hospital in 1978 with the birth of Louise Brown – the world's first 'test-tube baby'.

Below, (and p163) courtesy National Portrait Gallery, London



Peter Brookes, designer of the 20p stamp, was born in Liverpool in 1943 and studied at art colleges in Manchester and London. He has been political cartoonist for *The Times* since 1993, and has worked for *Radio Times*, *New Statesman*, *The Listener* and *Spectator*.

Susan Macfarlane, designer of the 26p stamp, was born in Brighton in 1938 and trained at the Winchester School of Art. In recent years she has concentrated on painting and drawing connected with health matters. Her work has been displayed in many 'one man' shows.

Mike Dempsey (born 1944), designer of the 43p value, is known to philatelists for the 1987 Victorian Britain, 1988 Transport & Communications, and 1994 Pictorial Postcards stamps. He wrote about his work on the first two of these sets in the *Bulletin*, September 1987 and May 1988.

Antony Gormley, designer of the 63p, is best-known for the massive and controversial 'Angel of the North' sculpture near Gateshead.

The **26p** value (basic 1st class inland letter rate) features nursing care. Before the days of Florence Nightingale the British nurse had a poor reputation, but she sought to make nursing an acceptable profession for women, and is regarded as the founder of the modern profession. Florence Nightingale featured on the 9d stamp in the 1970 Anniversaries set.

The important work of Sir Alexander Fleming (1881-1955) is recalled by the **43p** value (basic airmail letter rate). Fleming went on holiday from St Mary's Hospital, Paddington leaving a Petri dish containing staphylococcus open to the air. The dish became contaminated with the fungus *Penicillium notatum* and part of the bacterial colony had been destroyed by it. Fleming had, by accident, stumbled on to one of the main medical advances this century. His work was taken up by pathologist Howard Florey and biochemist Ernst Chain, and penicillin became generally available in 1946. The three pioneers shared the Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine in 1945. Penicillin featured on the 1s stamp in the 1967 Discoveries set. Fleming was shown on the first day cover and a special handstamp was used at St Mary's Hospital, where Fleming made his discovery, on the day of issue.

The **63p** stamp (second step airmail letter rate) recalls techniques developed by British gynaecologist/obstetrician Patrick Steptoe (1913-88) and physiologist Robert Edwards. The popular term 'test tube' is inaccurate, the treatment – in vitro fertilization (IVF) involves combining egg and sperm in a glass dish with the resulting embryo being replaced in the womb. Initially developed to treat infertile women, it is now used to help men who produce few or defective sperm. It is estimated that about 7000 IVF babies have been born in Britain over the past five years.

Royal Mail Millennium Stamps

Patients' Tale

March 1999

proof: the concept of vaccination – the use of one disease as a preventative measure to confer immunity to another – had come into being.

Jenner's book on the subject caused controversy, but eventually vaccination became accepted. By 1812 more than one million people had been vaccinated. Yet nineteenth-century urbanization and population growth had created major problems. Most people lived in squalid conditions; in cities only half of all children lived beyond the age of five. Nevertheless, there were major improvements in medical knowledge and public health, especially in the provision of clean water. Improved nursing also helped, not least by altering the image of care. The founding of the patient-centred nursing

conditions and poor food.

Following the introduction of Nightingale's reforming ideas, in a five-month period in 1855 the mortality rate of soldiers entering her hospital plummeted from 50 to 8 per cent. She returned to Britain to spread her reformation.

As Jenner and Nightingale were to preventative medicine, so Alexander Fleming (1881-1955) was to curative medicine, with his laboratory discovery of the antibiotic properties of the penicillin mould. First used during the Second World War, penicillin proved to be a powerful weapon in the doctor's armoury, and death rates from post-operative infections fell dramatically, as they did from other infections such as pneumonia and meningitis. However, our continuing health depends on constant effort and vigilance. Some bacteria rapidly developed resistance to penicillin, necessitating the development of new drugs.

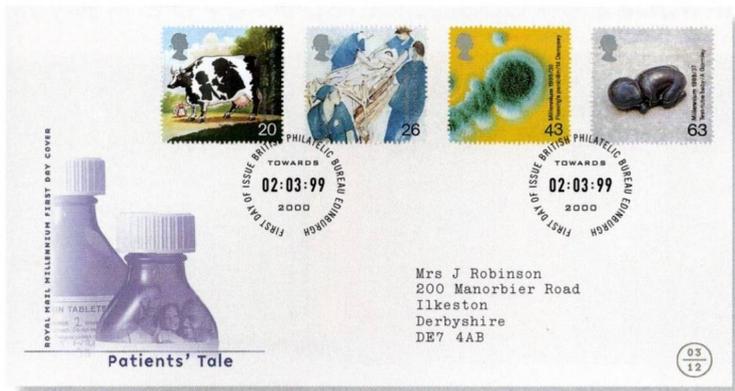
Antibiotics have become commonplace, a reminder of the dramatic, accelerating pace of change in our lifetime. More recent medical developments have also become common – many people now regard hip replacements as quite ordinary, for example. Other

our families, our futures. The dramatic nature of laboratory medicine and surgery has tended to overshadow the crucial developments in fields such as pharmacy, understanding disease and mental health, which contribute to the high state of medicine today. Perhaps in reaction to the 'high-tech', complementary and alternative treatments have gained in popularity in recent decades.

Improvements have touched the lives of countless millions. But not all illnesses and disabilities are in retreat. The work continues; we live in still momentous times for medicine.

As well as being a doctor, Edward Jenner (1749-1823) was a brilliant naturalist who was invited to accompany Captain Cook on his voyage of discovery.

Robert Edwards (1927) and Patrick Steptoe – the pioneers of in vitro fertilization techniques.



FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail FDC envelopes will be available from main post offices and philatelic outlets about a week before 2 March, price 25p. Orders for FDCs with the stamps cancelled by a pictorial first day postmark of the Bureau or Oldham must reach the Bureau by 2 February. Price £2.20 UK (including VAT) or £1.88 overseas (no VAT).

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, Forth Street, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 1AA (Oldham postmark), marking the outer envelope 'FD9905' (Bureau), or 'FD9906' (Oldham). Collectors can post or hand in covers at main post offices – all covers will be given the Oldham postmark. A non-pictorial Oldham postmark will also be available, by sending covers to the Newcastle Handstamp Centre, requesting 'FD9906 NP'.

In accordance with Royal Mail's policy on the 'Welsh Language Scheme', bilingual versions of the Oldham pictorial and non-pictorial handstamps can be obtained by sending covers to the Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Penarth Road, Cardiff CF1 1AA quoting reference FD9906 Bil (pictorial) and FD9906 NP Bil (non-pictorial).

Sponsored handstamps will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin* – available on subscription from the Bureau (£10 UK/Europe; £21.75 elsewhere). Covers may be posted bearing just the 20p Patients' Tale stamp for any philatelic postmark in use on 2 March.

MILLENNIUM PHILATELIC PRODUCTS A well-illustrated pack (price £1.85) and stamp cards (25p each) will be available from main post offices and philatelic outlets. The pack, written by Prof Jeremy Black of Exeter University, was designed by Silk Pearce.

A Royal Mail Millennium Stamps Album, now available, contains an introductory page, 12 double page spreads with subject information facing a page on which to mount each set of stamps, and three FDC and three presentation pack pages. The album, with slipcase, costs £19.99; sets of pages only £9.99 ●



Technical details

Printer and process The House of Questa, gravure

Size 37 × 35mm

Sheets 100

Perforation 13.5 × 14

Phosphor One band 20p ●
two bands others

Gum PVA

