

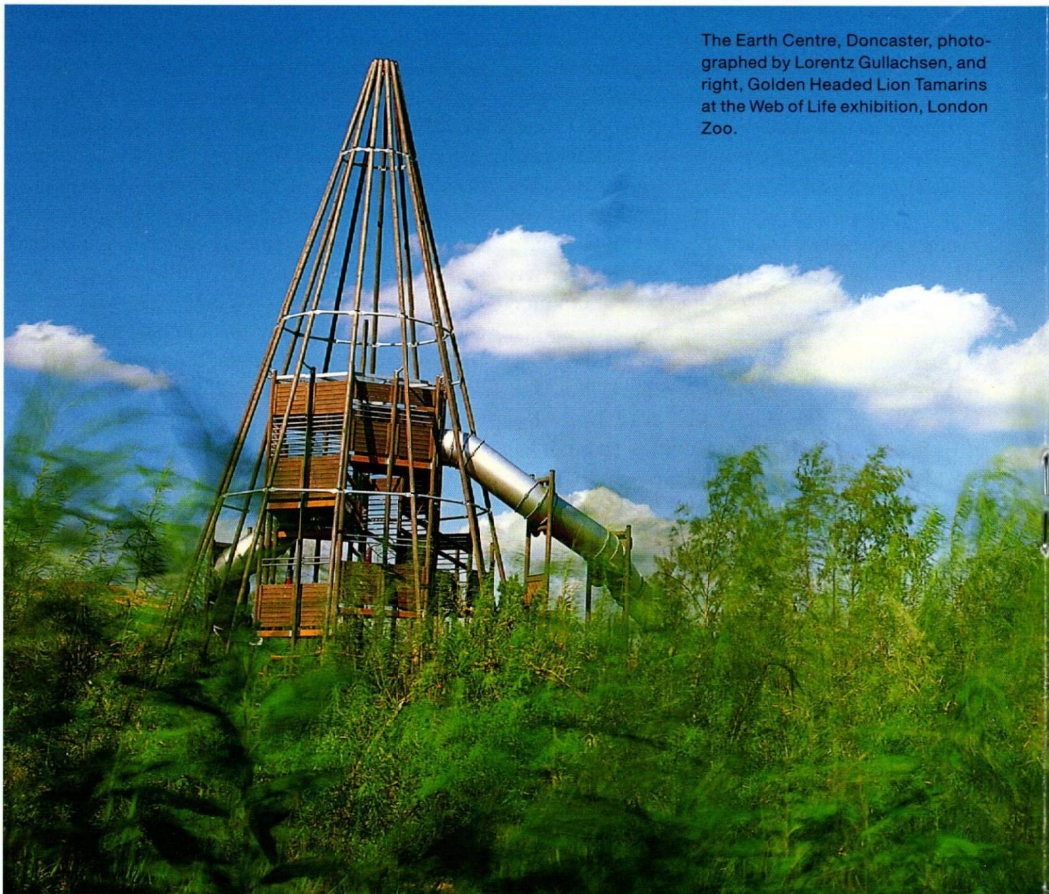
ECOS On the 61 hectare site of this project on Ballymena's River Braid, the principles of biodiversity and the development of renewable energy sources can be seen in action.

Web of Life Visitors to this exhibition at London Zoo encounter more than 100 species in their natural habitats, as well as venturing into a rain forest and exploring the ocean's depths.

Earth Centre Exploring the potential of sustainable development on a 25 acre site, the Earth Centre features a Planet Earth Show, organic gardens, and Europe's largest solar canopy.

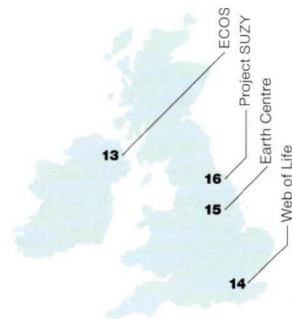
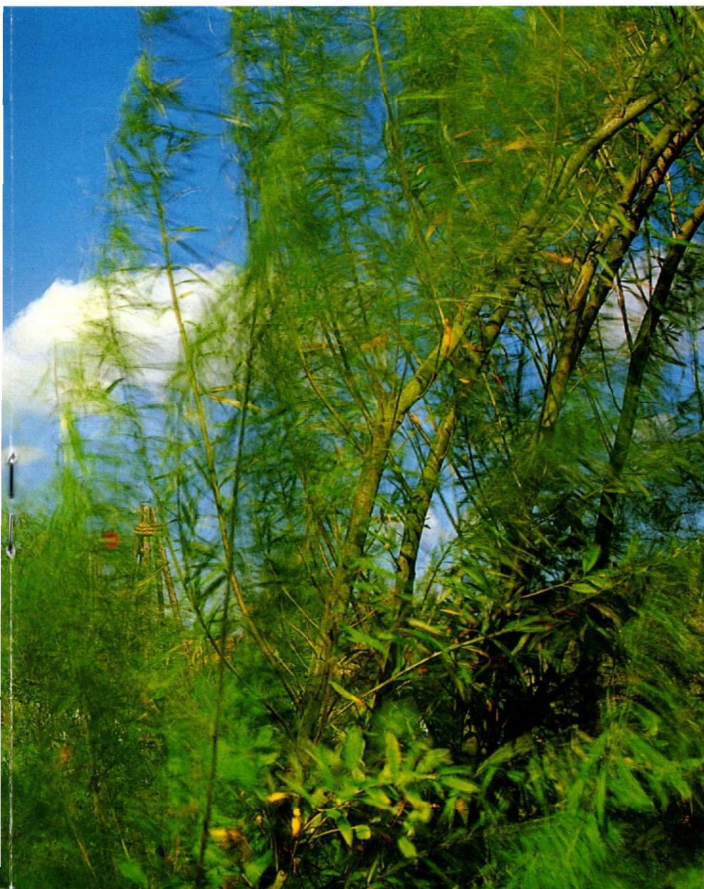
Project SUZY At the hydroponics facility of the environmental centre at Nature's World, plants grow without soil in liquid nutrients, and pests are controlled by plant-friendly insects.

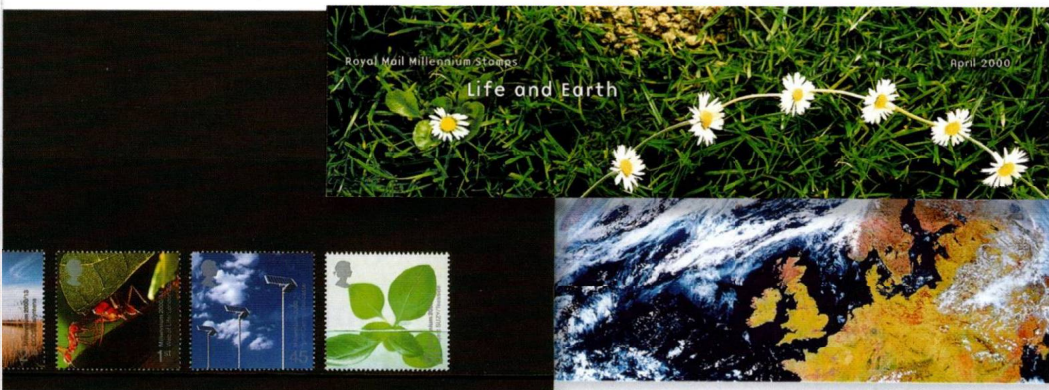
The Life and Earth issue goes on sale at post offices and philatelic outlets on 4 April.



The Earth Centre, Doncaster, photographed by Lorentz Gullachsen, and right, Golden Headed Lion Tamarins at the Web of Life exhibition, London Zoo.

Life and Earth is the fourth of 12 sets of Millennium issues for 2000, inspired by Millennium projects throughout the UK. The 2nd class stamp marks the ECOS project on the River Braid flood plain in Ballymena • The 1st class represents the Web of Life building at London Zoo, which provides a window on a unique collection of endangered species • The subject of the 45p value is Doncaster's Earth Centre, where the possibilities for a green and sustainable future are explored • The 65p stamp depicts Project SUZY (short for sustainability) at Nature's World in Middlesbrough.





A well-illustrated presentation pack (above, price £1.95) and stamp cards (price 25p each) will be available at main post offices and philatelic outlets.

Technical details

Printer De La Rue

Process Gravure

Size 37 × 35mm

Sheets 100

Perforation 14 × 14.5

Phosphor One band 19p; two bands others

Gum PVA

Gutter pairs Horizontal

Cylinders and colours

2nd 1A silver ● 1B greenish yellow ● 1C magenta ● 1D new blue ● 1E black ● 1F grey

1st 1A silver ● 1B greenish yellow ● 1C magenta ● 1D new blue ● 1E black

45p 1A silver ● 1B greenish yellow ● 1C magenta ● 1D blue ● 1E black

65p 1A silver ● 1B greenish yellow ● 1C magenta ● 1D new blue ● 1E grey-black

Phosphor numbers P92 2nd class, P93 others.

At the ECOS Millennium Environmental Centre, visitors can interact with exhibits which explain alternative technologies, and enjoy the newly-developed habitats which increase the number and diversity of plants and animal species. The main building is being designed to provide two-thirds of its own energy requirements – using solar panels, a wind turbine and the burning of wood chips from a willow coppice – and reed beds will act as a natural filtration system to purify waste water.

Britain's most sophisticated barn is how the Zoo describes the building housing this exhibition, a glass pavilion with environmentally-friendly heating and cooling systems. Magnified screens give a close-up on the Micrarium, which offers a glimpse into the tiny and normally hidden worlds of some of the Earth's smallest insects, such as leaf cutter ants.

Opened in 1999, the Earth Centre's mission is 'to inspire understanding of sustainable development and to help people become involved in the process of achieving it in their own lives and for the world'. Sustainable development is defined as 'a process which enables all people, particularly those disadvantaged, to realise their potential and improve the quality of their lives in ways that protect and enhance the resources and life support systems of the planet for the benefit of current and future generations.' Visitors can stand by a Kaki tree grown from one that survived the Nagasaki atomic bomb – an evocative symbol for the future of our planet. The ecology park demonstrates the benefits of water conservation for wildlife and habitat management, and shows how the landscape can be an integrated place of education, enjoyment and food production.

Visitors to Project suzy at Nature's World in Middlesbrough can learn about food production. The environmental centre includes a hydroponics facility where plants will grow without soil – in liquid nutrients – and where plant-friendly insects will be used to control pests. A two-storey Earth House – part glass bubble and partly built underground – demonstrates that wind, solar and geothermal power are viable and sustainable energy sources for the next century. Virtual-reality tours will show a world in which fossil fuels have finally run out, as well as a home for the future where all waste and water is re-used.



Future Millennium issues

Art and Craft	02.05.00
People and Place	06.06.00
Stone and Soil	04.07.00
Tree and Leaf	01.08.00
Mind and Matter	05.09.00
Body and Bone	03.10.00
Spirit and Faith	07.11.00
Sound and Vision	05.12.00

FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail FDC envelopes will be available from main post offices and philatelic outlets about a week before 4 April, price 25p. Orders for FDCs with the stamps cancelled by a pictorial first day postmark of the Bureau or Doncaster must reach the Bureau by 4 April. Price £2.25 UK (including VAT) or £1.92 overseas (no VAT).

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 (Doncaster postmark), marking the outer envelope 'FD0007' (Bureau), or 'FD0008' (Doncaster). Covers can be posted or handed in at main post offices for the Doncaster postmark. A non-pictorial Doncaster postmark is also available from the Special Handstamp Centre, request 'FD0008 NP'.

Details of sponsored handstamps for 4 April will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin* – available on subscription from the Bureau (£10 UK/Europe; £21.75 elsewhere). For a sample copy write to: The Editor, British Postmark Bulletin, Royal Mail, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8HQ. Covers may bear just the 2nd class Life and Earth stamp for any philatelic postmark in use on 4 April.

MILLENNIUM PHILATELIC PRODUCTS A Life and Earth pack and stamp cards will be available from main post offices and philatelic outlets. Each of the Millennium packs this year includes a specially commissioned poem. The Life and Earth poem is by Tobias Hill who was born in 1970 and lives in London. He has received numerous literary awards; his collections are *Midnight in the City of Clocks* (1996) and *Zoo* (1998). In 1998 he was London Zoo's poet in residence. While on vacation in Brazil he developed the idea for his poem, *The Lighthouse Keeper's Cat* – a warning about extinction and the finely-balanced ecological web of life.

Next month The fifth set in the Millennium 2000 series will be issued on 2 May. Entitled Art and Craft, this features Ceramica, Stoke-on-Trent; the Tate Gallery, London; Cycle Network Artworks; and the Lowry Centre, Salford. Details next month ●



Earth Centre p195 & p208. Loventz Gullischsen