

Letters by Night New prestige stamp book

Letters by Night PSB panes

Pane 1 Top and bottom rows: 68p English country stamp and 2nd class Scottish country stamp; middle row: 2nd class Scottish and 68p English.

Pane 2 Classic Locomotives stamps (vertically arranged) 28p, E rate, 42p.

Pane 3 Four 1st class Pub Signs (The Station) stamps.

Pane 4 Top and bottom rows: Two 37p definitives separated by a 1st class definitive. Middle row: Two 1st class definitives separated by a label showing 1936 Night Mail poster.

A NEW PRESTIGE BOOK, produced as a tribute to the Travelling Post Office service, will be available from 16 March, priced at £7.44. This will contain four panes, all with illustrations in the margins from the *Night Mail* film.

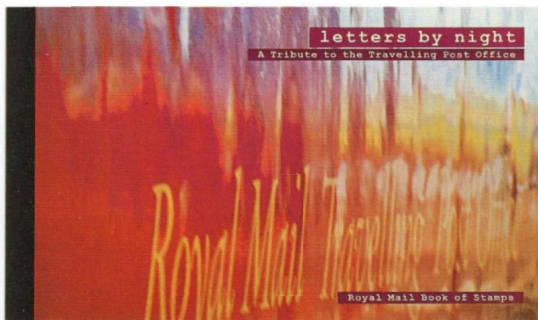
The book has been printed by De La Rue with panes 1, 3 and 4 printed in gravure, pane 2 in lithography. The book includes an introduction by Peter Johnson, the author of *Mail by Rail: The History of the TPO & Post Office Railway* (1995), and a specially written poem by Simon Armitage.

Royal Mail wanted to commission a leading British poet to compose a poem based around the TPO experience and be respectful of the famous W H Auden poem for the *Night Mail* film of 1936, but not to compose a complete update. Simon Armitage is one of the leading poets of his generation and was recently awarded both a BAFTA and an Ivor Novello award. Shortly before Easter 2003 we arranged for him to travel on the overnight TPO from Willesden to Newcastle. He took the train to York (near where he lives) and spent time talking to the sorters and staff and absorbing the atmosphere. His resulting poem is actually a love poem, interweaving ideas about letters, communication and the immediacy of the written word and making references to the night time journey of the mail in the TPOs.

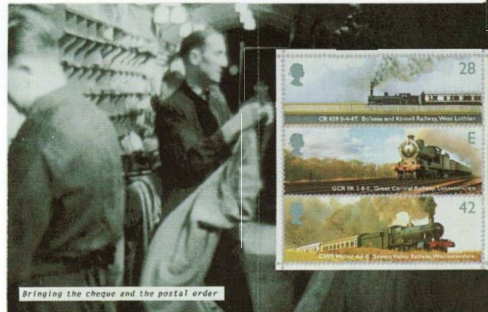
A cover carried on the Liverpool-London TPO in 1887 is reproduced on the inside back cover of the book. Other images are by Royal Academician Brendan Neiland (his painting of the Lloyd's Building was used on a Millennium stamp in 1999). Neiland worked on the TPOs as a young man before becoming a full-time artist.

FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail FDC envelopes will be available from main Post Office branches and philatelic outlets about a week before 16 March, price 25p. Orders for serviced FDCs with the label pane cancelled by a pictorial first day postmark of Royal Mail Tallents House Edinburgh or London NW10 must reach Tallents House (address below) by the day of issue. Price £3.47 UK or £2.96 overseas.

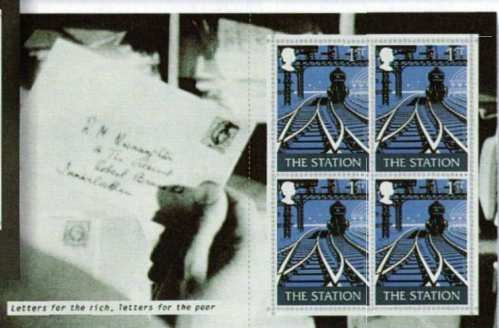
Collectors may send stamped covers on the day of issue to: Royal Mail, Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB (Tallents House postmark), or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Mount Pleasant, London EC1A 1BB (London NW10 postmark), marking the outer envelope 'FDO411' (Tallents House), or 'FDO412' (London). Covers can be posted or handed in at main Post Office branches for the London postmark. Details of other handstamps for 16 March will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin*. Any stamps from the prestige book can be used, singly or in combination, for all first day, philatelic and sponsored handstamps in use on 16 March ●



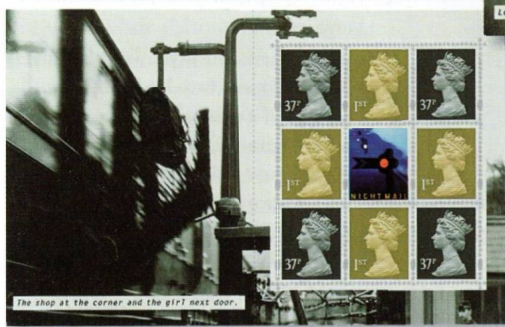
This is the Right Mail crossing the border



Bringing the cheque and the postal order



Letters for the rich, letters for the poor



The shop at the corner and the girl next door



Letters by Night PSB Above: front cover, four stamp panes and postmarks. Left: the first day cover envelope.