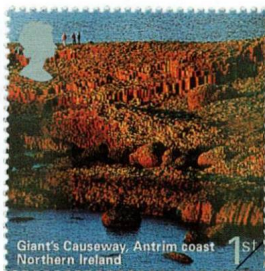


A British Journey: Northern Ireland The



Technical details

Printer Joh Enschedé
Process Gravure
Stamp size 35 x 35mm
Sheet size 25 and 50
Perforation 14.5
Phosphor One band 2nd, two bands others
Gum PVA
Gutter pairs Vertical

Cylinder numbers & colours

All values E1 silver ● E1 black
 ● E1 cyan (blue) ● E1 magenta
 ● E1 yellow ● E1 phosphor

SIX STAMPS featuring the beautiful scenery of Northern Ireland – the second in the 'A British Journey' series – will be available from Post Office branches and philatelic outlets and from Royal Mail Tallents House Edinburgh from 16 March. They feature: 2nd class Ely Island, Lower Lough Erne; 1st class Giant's Causeway, Antrim Coast; E (European rate) Slemish, Antrim Mountains; 42p Banns Road, Mourne Mountains; 47p Glenelly Valley, Sperrins; and 68p Islandmore, Strangford Lough. The location shown on the stamp appears as a caption at the foot of each design, with The Queen's head and value in silver in the top left and bottom right corners respectively. The stamps are the work of Phelan Barker Design Consultants, using photography by Geray Sweeney (2nd), Joe Cornish (1st), Michael Diggin (E and 47p), John Scovell (42p) and Chris Hill (68p).

The British Journey series started with the Scotland stamps last July and will continue with a set showing Welsh scenery on 15 June. Further sets will be issued in 2005.

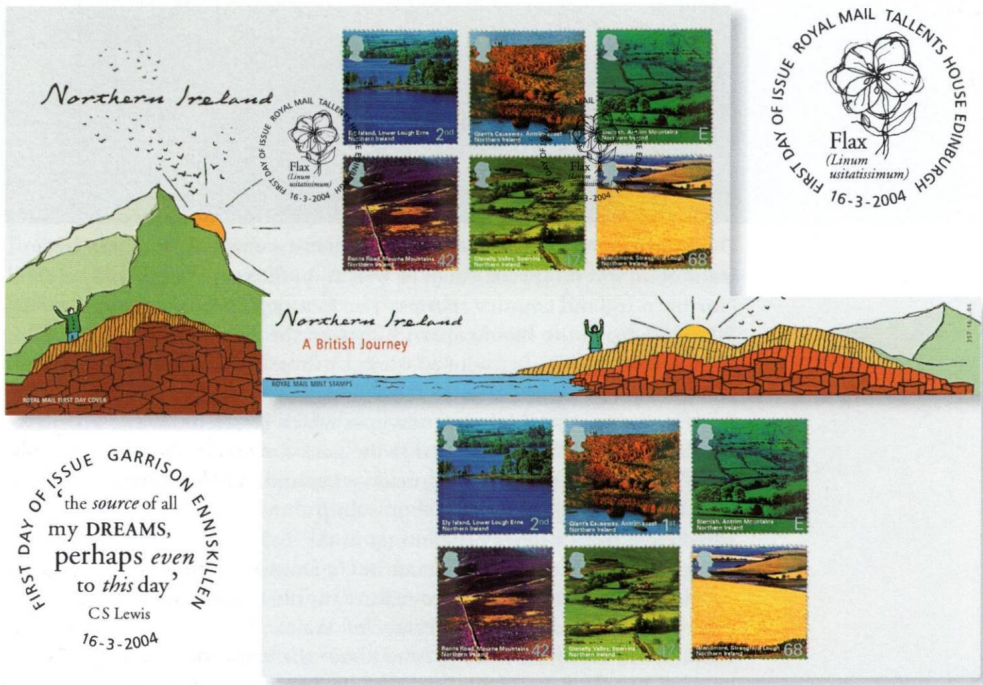
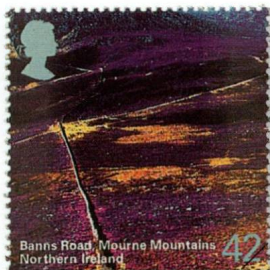
Sheets of 25 will be supplied to Post Office branches; sheets of 50 (with gutter margins) will be available from Royal Mail Tallents House and Post Office philatelic outlets.

FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail FDC envelopes will be available from main Post Offices and philatelic outlets about a week before 16 March, price 25p. Orders for serviced FDCs with the stamps cancelled by a pictorial first day postmark of Royal Mail Tallents House Edinburgh or Garrison, Enniskillen must reach Tallents House (address below) by the day of issue. Price £3.27 UK, £2.79 overseas. Garrison was chosen for the alternative postmark as it is the most westerly Post Office branch in the UK.

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, Rutherglen DO, Duchess Place, Rutherglen, Glasgow G73 1BT (Garrison postmark), marking the outer envelope 'FD0409' (Tallents House), or 'FD0410' (Garrison). Covers can be posted or handed in at main Post Office branches for the Garrison postmark. Details of other handstamps for 16 March will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin* – available on subscription from Tallents House (£12.25 UK/Europe; £24.95 elsewhere).

British Postmark Bulletin For a free sample copy, write to: The Editor, British Postmark Bulletin, Royal Mail, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8HQ.

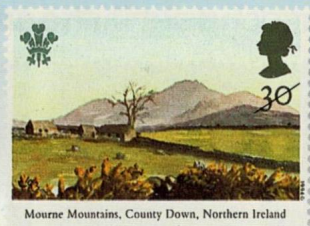
second set in the series of philatelic journeys



SELF-ADHESIVE STAMP BOOK The 1st class Northern Ireland stamp will also be issued as a self-adhesive in a retail stamp book. This will contain two of the Northern Ireland stamps plus four 1st class Machin definitives, price £1.68. The Northern Ireland stamp will be shown on the front cover.

PHILATELIC PRODUCTS A well-illustrated pack containing the six stamps (price £2.95) and stamp cards (30p each) will be available from Tallents House, main Post Office branches and philatelic outlets. The pack, designed by Rodney Miller Associates, includes text by Mike Barden. The text includes a Northern Ireland factfile (population, land mass, highest peak, etc), the recipe for Soda Farls, and Seamus Heaney's poem *Bogland*.

Among the many interesting illustrations in the presentation pack (above) are: the Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge, Antrim coast; the Wellbrook Beetling Mill, Co Tyrone; Marble Arch caves, Co Fermanagh; and an historic engraving of the Giant's Causeway.

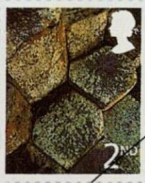


The Northern Ireland landscape The attractive scenery of Northern Ireland features on several special issues as well as on the current 2nd and 1st class Northern Ireland country stamps. The first depiction was in 1966 when the 6d stamp in the Landscapes set showed the Antrim coast. The Ulster Paintings set of 1971 reproduced works by three well-known Northern Ireland painters. The 3p featured T P Flanagan's *A Mountain Road*, one of a set of paintings of Irish bog landscapes which inspired Seamus Heaney's *Bogland* poem which is reprinted in the pack for the new stamps. Thomas Carr's *Deer's Meadow* (7½p) depicted a beautiful corner of the Mournes on a bright March day, and the 9p stamp shows *Slieve na brock* by Colin Middleton, from a series of paintings in the Tollymore Forest Park on the north slopes of Mourne Mountains in Co Down.

The Mourne Mountains also feature on the 30p stamp in the 1994 set reproducing paintings by the Prince of Wales. The Mountains lie in the south of Co Down, extending from above the town of Newcastle to Carlingford Lough. Several of the mountains are over 2000 feet, the highest, Slieve Donard, being 2796ft.

Northern Ireland was the subject of a prestige book issued in July 1994. In addition to panes of definitive and Northern Ireland country stamps it included a pane of Prince Charles's Mourne Mountains stamp and a tear-out, pre-stamped postcard bearing a reproduction of the Giant's Causeway stamp of 1981, revalued at 35p to cover the then airmail postcard rate.

Reed beds on the River Braid featured on the 2nd class stamp of the Millennium Life and Earth set of April 2000, and a view of the coast at Portrush, Co Antrim on one of the 10 stamps showing aerial photographs of the UK coastline by Richard Cooke issued in March 2002. Three other aerial views by Mr Cooke – Strangford Lough, near Benbane Head and



Northern Ireland on stamps

Ulster thatch, British Architecture 1970; Giant's Causeway, National Trust 1981; Mourne Mountains, Prince of Wales paintings 1994; Antrim coast, Landscapes 1966; the Giant's causeway and patchwork fields in the current Northern Ireland country stamps.

Ballycastle in Co Antrim – were reproduced on postcards in the Coastlines postcard book issued in October 2002. (This is still available from Tallents House, price £5.99, order code PB366.)

The Giant's Causeway, now a world heritage site, is one of the most important landforms in the world, a unique part of Northern Ireland's geological heritage. In the course of tertiary igneous activity, the lowest layer of lava cooled slowly with a uniform pattern creating thousands of hexagonal basalt columns. One of many myths about the origins of the causeway says it was built by a giant, Finn McCool, in order to confront a bad tempered Scottish giant who intimidated the locals. The Causeway features on the 1981 National Trust 22p stamp, the current Northern Ireland 2nd class country stamp, and on the 1st class in the forthcoming set.

Northern Ireland is noted for the diversity of its landscape. Its patchwork fields are a distinctive feature of the countryside. Another distinctive rural feature – the five-barred gate with circular stone pillars – was included in the design of the 13p and 16p regional stamps of 1958 and 1967.

Farm buildings in Northern Ireland feature on a 10p stamp book of May 1978. The Temple of the Winds, in the grounds of Mount Stewart, and the imposing house of Mount Stewart itself, feature on 50p stamp books of 1982 and 1987. Northern Ireland scenery featured on five of the six 1989 'Landscapes of Britain' aerogrammes: White Rocks, Co Antrim (Coastlands); Mount Stewart (Gardens); Lough Erne, Co Fermanagh (Lakes); Giant's Causeway (Landmarks); and Mountains of Mourne (Mountains). The delightful drawings on these aerogrammes were by Ronald Maddox.

Unlike Scotland, which boasts many postbus routes, Northern Ireland has just one service based on Enniskillen in Co Fermanagh. The service started in February 1993 ●