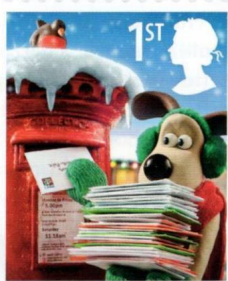


## A cracking Christmas! Britain's favourite



A robin watches as Gromit posts the duo's many cards



The Large format reveals the wicked penguin Feathers McGraw about to launch a snowball

'We've created a monster!' That's definitely something that the inventor Wallace *wouldn't* say about the sparkling 2010 Christmas issue. The cheese-loving, tank-top wearing Wallace and his long-suffering dog Gromit will appear on seven Christmas stamps, to be issued on 2 November.

To create these stamps, Royal Mail has been working for many months with Aardman Animations and Nick Park, the award-winning creator of Wallace and Gromit, tasked to devise brand new scenes that could be used to feature the pair in stamp-sized images. All the photography for the stamps took place at the Aardman's film studio in Bristol.

Millions of fans around the world are familiar with the extraordinary inventions that come out of Wallace and Gromit's modest terraced house Up North. And the festive stamp set seemed a perfect opportunity to give the public a peek through their keyhole, to see how the pair celebrate the festive period in their cosy home, away from the flashing cameras of their hectic studio schedule.

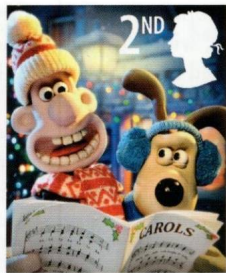
**'Cracking idea Gromit!'** In order to explore how best the world of Wallace and Gromit would work in stamp-size miniature format, Nick Park and the team at Aardman Animations created a series of models, props and background sets to capture the characters involved in a variety of seasonal activities, including carol singing and posting Christmas cards. (A large pile – it would seem they have a lot of friends and family.) The models were photographed and then Royal Mail formatted the images into stamp designs.

Each image features a close-up shot of the characters, in front of a background that has a

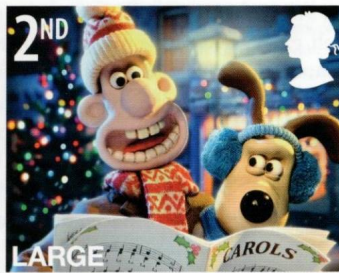
### Wallace and Gromit Christmas issue details

Number of stamps	Seven
Design	Aardman Animations Ltd
Acknowledgements	© and TM Aardman/Wallace & Gromit Limited (2010). All rights reserved. Wallace and Gromit (word mark) and the characters 'Wallace' and 'Gromit' © and TM Aardman/Wallace & Gromit Limited
Stamp Format	Standard: portrait. Large option, 1st and 2nd Class: landscape
Stamp Size	Standard: 20mm x 24mm Large: 30mm x 24mm
Printer	De la Rue Security Print
Print Process	Gravure
Number of stamps	50
Perforations	Kiss die-cut simulated perforations
Phosphor	Bars
Gum	Self-adhesive

## inventor and his dog bring lashings of festive fun



Gromit endures Wallace's dubious attempt at carol singing



The wider format of the Large stamp shows more of the carefully designed festive background

suggestion of depth, which, together with the lighting, achieves a sense of perspective that brings the stories to life. To achieve this life-like quality, keeping the focus on the two main characters was vital and so a very shallow depth-of-field was employed. Multiple shots were taken of each scene, with the focus point changing each time. This allowed the team to select the exact part of the scenes to keep in sharp focus when the final images were developed for the stamps. The lighting for all of the photography was done by Dave-Alex Riddett, who has been responsible for the lighting on each one of the Wallace and Gromit films.

**'All hands on deck!'** A huge team at Aardman was involved in the production of these stamps, including model makers, animators, continuity checkers, photographers and lighting specialists. The photography alone took over two weeks, then the post-production phase another three weeks or so, experimenting with pulling together different shots and making them work as a powerful composite image. And yet the result looks like charming snapshots of an effortlessly relaxed day at home!

As with the films, attention to detail is crucially important in conveying the mad-cap life of our two Lancastrian heroes. Eagle-eyed philatelists will no doubt notice that on the first-class stamp the envelope Gromit is posting features the same Wallace and Gromit first-class stamp. Champion!

**Christmastime alternatives** While hoping that adults and children will enjoy these jolly Christmas stamps, Royal Mail is aware that at Christmas many people prefer stamps with a more obviously Christian theme. So Royal Mail policy is to alternate year to year between non-secular and secular themes. Last year the 2009 Christmas stamps showed the nativity depicted in stained glass windows and so this year we have the secular series, but there is also an alternative choice – Christmas stamps showing the Madonna and Child are also available. More details can be found on page 40 •

From top: Wallace gives a thumbs up as Gromit tries on his seasonal gift of a bone-themed pullover; Gromit arrives with a magnificently rotund Christmas pudding; and Wallace decorates the tree with a Christmas fairy that looks suspiciously like Feathers McGraw

