

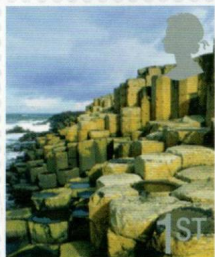


National treasures

Julia Lee discovers places and spaces owned by the National Trust on a variety of GB stamps

Stamps from the 1995 Centenary of the National Trust issue, left to right: details of a fireplace and table leg at Attingham Park, Shrewsbury, and a window at Little Moreton Hall, Cheshire

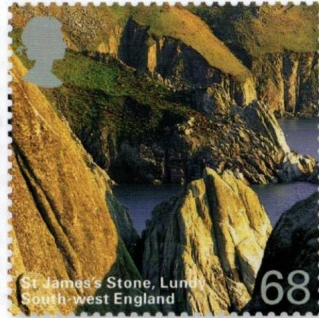
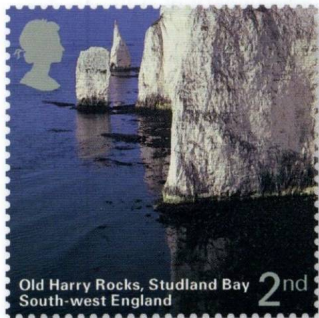
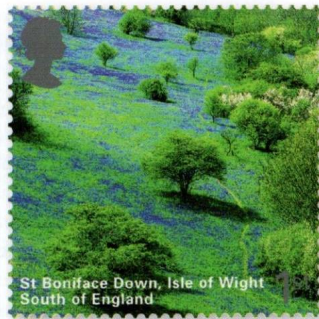
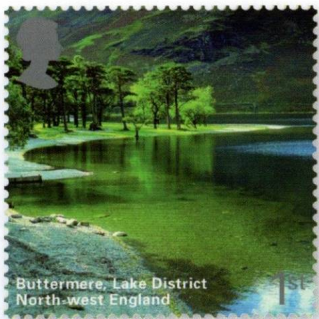
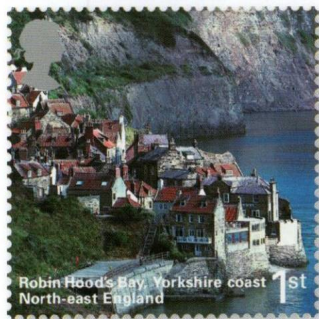
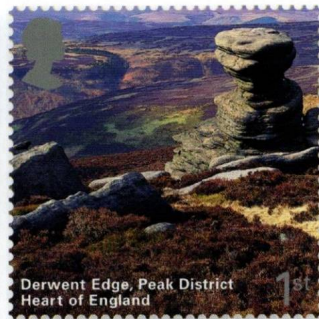
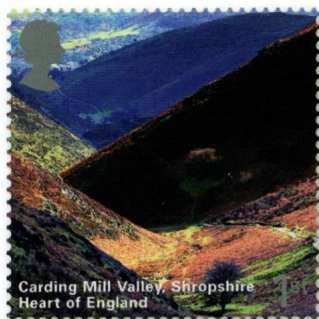
2008 Celebrating Northern Ireland, this stamp features the Giant's Causeway



THE NATIONAL TRUST was founded in 1895 to protect open spaces and a variety of threatened buildings in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Its three main founders were Victorian philanthropists who were concerned about the effects of industrialisation on the nation's natural landscape and architectural heritage: Octavia Hill, Canon Hardwicke Rawnsley and Sir Robert Hunter, who worked as legal adviser to the Post Office from 1882-1913. They were encouraged by the earlier success of Charles Eliot and the Kyrle Society and received considerable support from the 1st Duke of Westminster (1825-1899).

The charity's centenary was celebrated in 1995 with a five-stamp issue portraying different aspects of its work. Two of the stamps feature details from Attingham Park, an 18th-century mansion in Shrewsbury, donated to the Trust in 1947. The 19p value, titled 'Celebrating 100 Years' shows part of a fireplace decoration, while 30p is 'Conserving Art' and features a carved table leg. The rest of the stamps carry images of exterior architecture: a section of the Elizabethan window at Little Moreton Hall in Cheshire, a classic Tudor half-timbered building ('Repairing Buildings'); a view of St David's Head in Wales to denote 'Saving Coast', and a reference to the Trust's logo of an oak leaf with an oak seedling for 'Protecting Land'.

Land rovers It is the Trust's *land*, rather than its buildings, that features on the most stamps, with the British Journey series deserving special mention for the sheer number of striking English and Welsh landscapes it shows. The



2008 Northern Ireland series featured several sites and established a pattern for further sets in the series. Most impressive is the Giant's Causeway, a stunning series of basalt columns around 60 million years old and a World Heritage Site. The Causeway also features on Northern Ireland's country definitives and in the 2008 Celebrating Northern Ireland miniature sheet.

Also included in the British Journey series are Trust-owned Banns Road in the Mourne Mountains and Islandmore in Strangford Lough. The Welsh set in the same year showed a variety of land types under the care of the Trust – from the mountains of the Brecon Beacons to the ancient Silurian cliffs at Marloes Sands. A third of the subjects of the 2005 six-stamp issue, which covered the South West, is owned by the National Trust. Old Harry Rocks, at Studland Bay, is a pair of chalk stacks which originally stretched ▶

From top, left to right: A British Journey – England issue of 2006 – Carding, Brancaster, Derwent, Robin Hood's Bay, Buttermere and St Boniface Down; from 2005's A British Journey – South-West England, Old Harry Rocks and Lundy Island; and from 2004's A British Journey – Wales, Brecon Beacons

towards the Isle of Wight. 'Old Harry' refers to the devil, who is supposed to have lain down by the cliff. Studland Bay, much of which is owned by the National Trust, also featured in the 2002 issue on British Coastlines. Lundy, in the Bristol Channel, is also owned by the National Trust, though it is leased by the Landmark Trust. It has the distinction of issuing its own local stamps. The stamp image on the GB stamp shows St James' Stone, a huge granite slab that is very popular with climbers.

Journey's end In 2006, the British Journey series, which was supposed to have several sets taking in different parts of the country, came to a rather sudden halt with a set on 'England' rather than one of its regions. Again, it provides rich pickings for fans of the National Trust, because six of the ten stamps depict the organisation's land.

One of the values shows Buttermere in the Lake District, which has been entirely owned by the Trust since 1935. In fact, it was a campaign to save the valleys above Buttermere from railways carrying quarried stone that brought together the three founders of the Trust. Two other areas close to the hearts of walkers are also in the set. Carding Mill Valley is the name the National Trust gives to 2,000 hectares of the Shropshire Hills. The valley leads from the major town of Church Stretton up towards the Long Mynd and has Iron Age settlements. Derwent Edge in the Peak District is prime walking country, too, and the stamp carries a view of the Salt Cellar, a gritstone tor (which actually lies outside the boundary of National Trust land by just 30 yards).

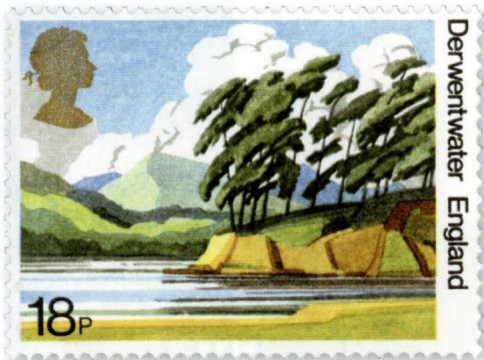
The National Trust owns 709 miles of coastal land, so it's appropriate that we include two stamps featuring coastlines. The organisation owns the whole harbour area of Brancaster Staithe, a fishing village since Roman times, which is depicted on the 'Brancaster' stamp. On the Robin Hood's Bay stamp, the National Trust uses the Old Coastguard Station as both a visitors' centre and a holiday cottage, and just the back of the building can be seen on the stamp. What a find if, perhaps, you wanted to actually say somewhere that had featured on a stamp.

St Boniface Down is the last National Trust landmark on the set, a chalk down which rises to the Isle of Wight's highest point.

Gardens of England More cultivated aspects of the British countryside have also featured on stamps, as the National Trust's gardens were honoured on the British Gardens set of 1983. Issued to mark the 200th anniversary of Capability Brown, the stamps imagery showed 'gardens through the ages'. Sissinghurst in Kent, once home of the writer and gardener Vita Sackville-West, was selected for the 20th-century garden. The 19th-century garden is also a National Trust one but, as it was acquired in 1988, it didn't actually belong to the Trust at the time of the stamp's issue. The fascinating Biddulph Grange was owned by horticulturalist James Baldwin between around 1840 and 1861. Baldwin was a member of the Royal Horticultural Society's Plant Exploration Committee and used the gardens to represent different parts of the world, hence the topiary Egyptian pyramid, temple gateway and sphinxes that feature on the stamp.

The 1983 British Gardens issue featuring Sissinghurst and Biddulph





The 1981 National Trust for Scotland issue shows Stackpole Head in Wales, Derwentwater in England and the Giant's Causeway of Northern Ireland – but no view of Scotland

Special issues Perhaps the oddest stamp issue with National Trust associations is that of 1981, designed to mark the 50th anniversary of the National Trust for Scotland (NTS) in the same year. Instead of concentrating on NTS properties, it tours the UK with Derwentwater, England, Stackpole Head, Wales, and the Giant's Causeway of Northern Ireland, all featured in paintings by Michael Fairclough (who was born in Blackburn).

The Prince of Wales' art gained a significant honour when his own paintings were used on stamps to mark the 25th anniversary of his Investiture in 1994. One shows Castell Y Waun (Chirk Castle) in the distance. National Trust land even appeared on the stamps of the Prince's grandfather, King George VI, as the White Cliffs of Dover are depicted on the 1951 high values. They were also used in the 2002 British Coastlines set.

It's clear from these stamps, that you cannot feature British landscapes without including some of the National Trust's many properties. The sheer variety and amount of land own by the Trust – more than 630,000 acres – means the institution is bound to crop up again and again. From the angular columns of the Giant's Causeway to the smooth, flat sands of Brancaster, from Buttermere to the Isle of Wight, Cornwall to Kent, the National Trust has taken an inspiring British journey on GB stamps and provides another way for us to enjoy our wonderful heritage ●

A view of Chirk Castle, painted by the Prince of Wales and chosen for the 1994 stamp marking the 25th anniversary of his Investiture

