

Wintertime

14 January 1992

The 1992 special stamp programme makes its debut with the first in an annual series of "Seasons" stamps. Of the four seasons, wintertime with its winds from the east is the most forbidding. Whilst small birds migrate south for the winter months, we are compensated by the arrival of winter visitors – redwings and various waterfowl. Geese arrive from Greenland and Scandinavia. Fox, crow and magpie do the undertaker's work when birds and other beasts die in the snow. Despite its harshness, winter is regarded by many as the most beautiful time of the year.

The five stamps feature animals and birds associated with the winter season.

The Wintertime issue includes a stamp at the second class rate (18p), to increase the awareness of special stamps amongst the public and to reduce the cost of collecting.



The 18p stamp (basic inland second class rate) features the Fallow Deer. Smaller than the red, but larger than the roe deer, the fallow is mainly a woodland species. Its browsing habit makes it unpopular with the forester, inflicting damage on mature growth and in faying smooth-barked trees and saplings. In both summer and winter, fallow deer sometimes roam beyond the woodland and prove a hazard to motorists. Fallow Deer love peace and quiet; they are somewhat highly-strung creatures. The doe barks as she comes to feed her calf; when she calls the fawn to her, she bleats. Fallow Deer are unlikely to become an endangered species because of their semi-domestic existence on coun-

try estates. Great care is taken to discourage poaching for venison which always fetches a good price.

The 24p stamp (basic inland first class and EEC rate) depicts that hunted animal, the Hare. Does help protect their young from predators by dispersing them and visiting each individual member of her family to feed them. Foxes may find one or two, but are unlikely to find them all. Hunting with packs of beagles is often ineffectual. Sadly, the hare is today afflicted by some form of viral disease which may well affect its continued survival.



The Welsh mountain sheep is featured on the 28p stamp (basic rate for non-EEC countries). one of the smaller native breeds, the Welsh mountain sheep is a hardy little animal that bundles its way up rocky slopes. With the onset of winter the mountain sheep are rounded up and taken downhill to the shelter of the cwm and the stone folds. Here they face the winter weather. When the blizzards come, flocks lie along drystone walls to conserve energy and body warmth. The snow often buries them. Flockmasters and their collies often move the sheep further downhill to wind-proof walls of

straw by hay bales.

The **33p** stamp (airmail postcard rate) shows the Redwing, the smallest (about 8½ inches) and most colourful of the thrush family seen in Britain; it is similar to the Songthrush but with a deeper and richer plumage. With a red wing and a chestnut underwing, this distinctive migrant arrives in large numbers in winter. Its arrival often warns of colder weather to come. The redwing frequents open pasture and light woodland; feeding mainly on worms, grubs, insects, and snails. When the pastures are covered in snow, redwings resort to a diet of berries, holly and ivy, yew and sloes. Many die in thickets of laurel and rhododendron in which they have taken shelter. The fittest survive to return once again to Scandinavia and areas of north-eastern Europe. The redwing emits a low warbling sub-song in winter, with a fuller song in the spring months before it leaves our shores.



The **39p** value (airmail letters basic rate) depicts the fox. Red foxes are evenly spread across middle England and the southern counties. Gamekeepers have little time for the fox which finds it easier to get pheasant poults than birds from the farmer's hen-run. The fox's role is often to maintain the balance in nature; keeping rabbits in check, taking voles and mice, and as a scavenger, cleaning the bones of dead sheep and other creatures. In recent years the fox has come more and more to be found in our towns, often feeding on scraps from overturned dustbins. The wily fox - urban or rural - is one of nature's survivors.

The Designers

The stamps were designed by John Gorham with illustrations by Keith Bowen. Mr Gorham was responsible, with Andrew Davidson, for the popular 1990 Christmas stamps showing country scenes. Keith Bowen designed the 1988 Welsh Bible stamps and wrote about his work in the March 1988 issue of the *Bulletin*. His work has been exhibited at the National Museum of Wales - Museum of the North at Llanberis (May/July 1991) and published in *Snowdon Shepherd: Four Seasons on the Hill Farms of North Wales* (Pavilion Books, London 1991). Mr Bowen lives in north Wales.

Printing Details

The stamps, printed in photogravure by Harrison and Sons Limited, are of horizontal format (41 x 30mm), printed in sheets of 100 with PVA Dextrin gum. Perforation measures 15 x 14. The 18p stamp is on fluorescent coated paper with one phosphor band, the 24p, 28p, 33p and 39p values are on phosphor coated paper.

Presentation Pack

The pack (No. 224) will cost £1.75. It was designed by John Gorham with text by *Country Life* columnist Ian Niall. Printing was by Raithby, Lawrence & Company Limited of Leicester.

Royal Mail Stamp Cards

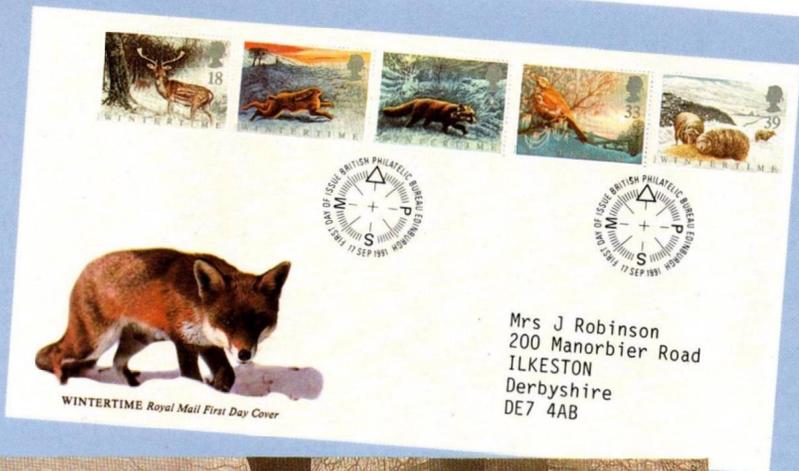
Cards, featuring enlargements of the stamp designs, will be available approximately two weeks before the stamp issue, price 21p each. They are numbered 140A-E.

First Day Cover

The Royal Mail first day cover will be available from the British Philatelic Bureau, Collections, philatelic counters and main post offices approximately two weeks before 14 January, price 21p. Two pictorial postmarks will be used for the first day cover service — one for the Bureau, the other for Brecon, Powys. The design of the sheep stamp is set in the Brecon area.

A first day cover service will be provided by the Bureau with the official Royal Mail cover addressed to the destination required with the stamps cancelled with the requested postmark. Application forms, available from the Bureau and main post offices, should be returned not later than 14 January.

Collectors may send their own cards/covers for the pictorial postmarks; these should be sent on the first day of issue in a stamped outer



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them. The fox
 The beagle p



THE FOX

Well-nourished red foxes are evenly spread across middle England and the southern counties, but it must be said that without the protection of those who hunt on horseback the fox would not be quite as plentiful as it is.

Gamekeepers have little time for Old Charley, as he is sometimes called – in Wales he is the old cadno, a leaner, but no less predatory character. From the keeper's point of view the trouble is that the fox finds it easy to catch the pheasant poults than birds from the farmer's hen-run. The fox's most important thing is to maintain the balance. He is the part of a other creatu

One of the smaller breeds native to mountain sheep is that hardy little animal that bundles his way up rocky slopes when ramblers intrude upon it above the tree line.

Everything that comes up goes down in the end, and with the onset of winter the mountain sheep are rounded up and taken downhill to the shelter of the cwm and the stone folds. Here they face the blizzard in genuine sheepskin wear that may hang with pendants of solid ice before the worst is over. The polls of the little ewes are often as frosted as the Arctic explorer's fur-lined hood.

When the blizzard comes, the flock lies along the drystone wall to and body warmth. The snow buries them and the arch of them, assisted by his sharp-nosed erring instinct for the whereabouts of a little sheep are moved further downhill of straw or hay bales. A great deal of



envelope endorsed "Pictorial First Day of Issue Postmark" to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH EH3 5TT (Bureau postmark) or Wales & The West Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail Cardiff, 220-228 Penarth Road, CARDIFF CF1 1AA (Brecon postmark). Collectors wanting their cards/covers returned under cover should enclose a suitable addressed envelope. This need not bear additional postage stamps, the postage being already paid by the stamps affixed to the covers for postmarking.

First Day Posting Boxes will be provided at most main post offices for those collectors who wish to post covers to receive the standard, non-pictorial "First Day of Issue" handstamps. In addition, pictorial "First Day of Issue" postmarks will be used at City of London EC (shows City coat of arms), and Durham (Cathedral). Reposting addresses: London North SHC, Royal Mail City and International, King Edward Street, LONDON EC1A 1AA (City of London handstamp); and Northern England SHC, Royal Mail Newcastle, Forth Street, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE NE1 1AA (Durham).

Souvenir Cover

A souvenir cover, of similar design to the first day cover, will be available from Collections and philatelic counters from 15 January, price 21p. This will be on sale for one year.

Snowdon Shepherd Book

Snowdon Shepherd: Four Seasons on the Hill Farms of North Wales, containing many delightful illustrations by Keith Bowen, was published earlier in the year (see April *Bulletin*, page 187). A special edition of this book will be available from 14 January 1992 from the Bureau, Collections and philatelic counters, price £15.99. Each book will be individually numbered, signed by Keith Bowen, and contain a set of the Winter-time stamps. A review will be published here next month.

Stamp Book Quantities

Given below are revised figures for stamp books issued from August to November 1989; these replace the quantities published here in May 1991. Also given are figures for the Harrison NVI books of October 1989; these include detailed postal rate information on the inside back cover. The earlier, 22 August 1989, books gave an address to which to write for postal rate information.

50p	Acoplanes 1 (2/10/89)	5,083,200
£1	Mills 1 (2/10/89)	5,523,725
56p	4 x 2nd NVI - W (22/8/89)	2,063,500
76p	4 x 1st NVI - W (22/8/89)	3,037,150
£1.40	10 x 2nd NVI (22/8/89†)	3,725,300
£1.90	10 x 1st NVI (22/8/89†)	4,214,850
£1.16	4 x 29p (2/10/89)	401,650
60p	4 x 2nd NVI - H (Nov 89)	2,184,050
80p	4 x 1st NVI - H (Nov 89)	3,005,450
£1.50	10 x 2nd NVI - H (Oct 89)	3,449,650
£2	10 x 1st NVI - H (Oct 89)	5,162,550

Notes:

W = printed by Walsall Security Printers

H = stamps printed by Harrison & Sons

† = total figure for books printed by Harrison (issued 22 August 1989) and *Questa* (19 September 1989). Separate quantities not available.

Christmas Cylinders

The cylinders, and colours, for the Christmas stamps were as follows:

18p - 1A (steel blue) 1B (greenish yellow) 1C (rose-red) 1D (orange-red) 1E (black) 1F (gold); also cylinders 1A1B1C1D1E3F and 1A1B1C1D1E4F.

18p from books - B1A B1B B1C B1D B2E B2F, colours as above.

24p - 1A (bright rose-red) 1B (greenish yellow) 1C (vermilion) 1D (slate blue) 1E (yellow-green) 1F (grey-black) 1G (gold)

28p - 1A (reddish-brown) 1B (bistre-yellow) 1C (orange vermilion) 1D (orange-red) 1E (deep dull blue) 3F (grey-black) 1G (gold)

33p - 2A (green) 1B (greenish-yellow) 1C (red) 1D (orange-red) 1E (blue) 1F (grey) 1G (gold)

39p - 1A (orange-red) 1B (greenish-yellow) 1C (orange vermilion) 1D (deep dull blue) 1E (olive-sepia) 1F (black) 1G (gold)

Stampex Awards

Our congratulations to Dr R H Champion and Nicholas de Dulin who respectively won the Post Office Trophy and National Postal Museum medal at Autumn Stampex/BPE. Dr Champion's entry was "Early Copperplate Revenue Stamps 1701-1830"; Mr de Dulin's interesting exhibit was entitled "Mail on the Move". Spring Stampex 1992 will be held at the Royal Horticultural Society Halls, Westminster from 25 February to 1 March.