



- **250th Anniversary of the Birth of Jane Austen**

Final bit of Smilers news for 2025 is the announcement from Royal Mail that they will be marking the 250th anniversary of the birth of Jane Austen, one of Britain's most beloved literary figures, with a Smilers/Collector Sheet due out on the 16th December 2025. The stamp sheet is a celebration of Jane Austen and her enduring legacy and according to Royal Mail, this is the first in what looks likely to become a regular series of Smilers/Collector Sheet Celebrating the best of Britain.



GS-182

The sheet features 10 x 1st class Union Flag stamps alongside self-adhesive labels, showing Austen's treasured Hampshire cottage, now a popular museum, and fascinating personal artefacts including letters and recipes. The stamps and labels are set against a striking graphic featuring a handwritten letter from Austen surrounded by delicate illustrations of leaf garlands, taken from the replica wallpaper in Jane Austen's House. The

sheet is available for purchase from our eBay shop, click on the image above, and will be shipped to arrive on 16th December 2025. It will be supplied, in an A4 black mount with protective cellophane wrapper and posted in board backed C4 envelope to protect sheet in transit.



No official Royal Mail First Day covers were available for this issue so we have designed our own and which are currently available through our eBay shop while stocks last. Please click on the images above to access these covers. (01/12)

- **The Stamps of Queen Victoria**

Royal Mail feature **The Stamps of Queen Victoria** in its latest stamp issue due out on 27th November 2025. Included in this issue is a Smilers / Collectors Sheet featuring all ten 1st class stamps from the issue in self-adhesive form, the sheet is enhanced with carefully selected images which help tell the story of each iconic design including first dies, trial prints, essays and diagrams.



GS-181

From the revolutionary Penny Black and Twopenny Blue to later classics such as the Penny Red, Penny Lilac and Jubilee issue, each stamp is paired with historic imagery that places it in its original context. The backdrop of a Penny Black sheet underlines Queen Victoria's enduring association with the birth of postage stamps. The Collector Sheet stamps and labels are self-adhesive and printed by lithography, this makes the stamps in the Collector Sheet different from those printed in the set.





You can purchase this new collector sheet from our eBay store, just click on the stamp sheet image above. If you would prefer to collect these stamps/labels as a First Day Cover set we have also produced a limited number of these which are also available on a first come, first served basis through our eBay store. Just click in the images above. (24/11)

- **Glorious Scotland 4 Denmark 2**

What a game! Well done to Glorious Scotland in their victory over Denmark last night and their automatic qualification as leaders of their Group to the FIFA world cup championship in 2026!

Given this achievement, I couldn't let this historic occasion go unmarked without an appropriate Smilers offering! I dug out some old Glorious Scotland blank sheets I had lying around and produced what is probably my last ever Themed Smilers sheet.



TS-627 - Scotland Qualify for FIFA World Cup 2026



The image featured on the label captures the moment following Kenny McLean's wonder goal when McTominay grabs the corner flag as his Scotland teammates mob Kenny McLean after his remarkable fourth goal sealed a World Cup spot. I guess the Scotland FA will be smiling for quite some time ....

The above sheet is available for purchase via our eBay shop - just click on either image above to secure your copy. (19/11)

- **Christmas comes but once a year ....**

... so the adage goes, and Royal Mail's Christmas stamps are no exception! Issued annually since 1966 this year's offering includes five new stamps illustrated by British artist Paula Doherty. These illustrations focus on key characters within the nativity such as Mary, Joseph, shepherds, wise men, the angel and baby Jesus. In addition to the set of self-adhesive Christmas stamps they also appear in mini sheet format, in presentation packs and on First Day Covers and of course, this year's Christmas Smiler/Collector sheet which will, no doubt, bring a cheer to the nation as we approach that special time of the year (but only if you are under 12 years of age).



GS-180

The smiler/collector sheet includes 10 stamps in the following formats: 2 x 1st class, 2 x 2nd class, 2 x 2nd Large, 2 x 1st Large and 2 x £3.40, the current overseas letter rate. The stamps are set in the backdrop of a starry evening at Christmas time. The Sheet is printed on self-adhesive paper and in Litho, which differs from the stamp set which is printed in Gravure. As with other issues we have produced a small number of First Day Covers available on first-come, first-served basis and available now on our eBay site.



*First Day Cover*

Please click on the either of the above images if interested in buying this sheet/FDC from our eBay store. We are almost done for another year - with two more Smilers sheets due out later this month (Scroll down to the foot of the page for hints as to what this might be). It just remains for me to say a very Merry Christmas to all our readers and supporters - we hope you have an enjoyable festive season with your family, friends and loved ones and remember, keep smiling! (04/11)

- **Monopoly**

Royal Mail's special stamp issue for October 2025 commemorates the much-loved board game of Monopoly which turns 90 this year, and its enduring popularity shows no signs of diminishing.

The 'fast-dealing property trading game' originated in the US, but after securing the European licence in the 1930s, John Waddington Limited of Leeds created a brand new version of Monopoly. Featuring locations from around London, the game was transformed into a truly British icon, ensuring that family gatherings would never be the same again.

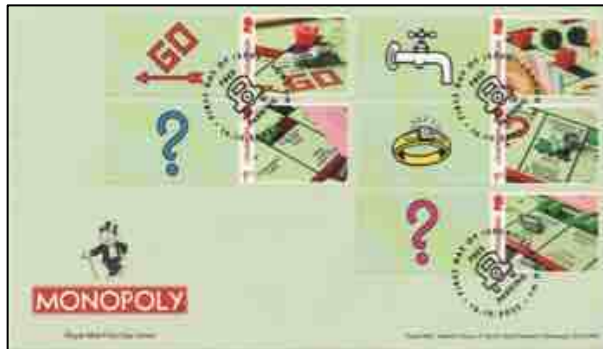
Today, the game is available in more than 100 countries worldwide and has been translated into over 40 languages. With many different themed versions to choose from, Monopoly continues to evolve and reinvent itself, as successive generations roll the dice, 'pass GO' and collect £200.

With 10 new 1st class stamps featuring in this issue, clearly Royal Mail is hoping to follow suit in the run up to Christmas. All 10 new stamps are featured in a new collector sheet issued on the 16th October 2025, along with the other goodies such as presentation packs, first day covers and other collectibles, full details of which can be found on Royal Mail's website.

Of particular interest to generic smilers sheet collectors will be the Monopoly Generic/Collector sheet featuring the iconic stamps and associated labels.



GS-179



The Collector Sheet is printed in Litho and on self-adhesive backed paper. This is different from the set of stamps, which are printed in Litho and are gummed. We are able to supply the Collector Sheet from our eBay store (click on images above). Also available are a few pairs of First Day covers featuring the stamps/labels from this sheet. (17/10)

- **Fake News - Update!**

Earlier this year I did a piece on fake Smilers sheets from China. You can find the original article at the bottom of this page...



Today I was contacted by a long-time contributor to these columns with the information that, in addition to the sheets listed in my article, my sleuth suspected there was another sheet being sold on eBay which could potentially be another fake from China. This news whilst not totally unexpected, caused me to check my stock of the 2020 Christmas Smiler sheets, yes the expensive one.



As I mentioned, I was not entirely surprised at this possibility as I had been wondering why so many examples of this sheet design were suddenly available on eBay! There was a time when you couldn't find this sheet for love nor honest money. Today there are at least ten sheets listed for sale from various sellers, some by auction for as little as £16 and others at a fixed price around £150!

I have now compared the sheets I purchased recently on eBay against those in my collection (from Tallants House) and I can see some differences perhaps worth mentioning.

- The back of the paper they are printed on seems to be as better quality than the originals and the back of the sheets is smoother and of bright, white appearance

whereas the genuine articles are less polished in appearance and less white. Check the paper quality against other sheets of the same era, if it looks different it's probably a fake!

- When held up to a light source the surface of the fake sheet is less bright than the genuine article and reflects less light - also noticeable when comparing surface finish, the genuine article looks to have a brushed finish which the fakes are quite smooth, could be a brightener coating or something similar.
- Lastly, if one compares the phosphor under UV light and you will see that the genuine sheets exhibit quite dull fluorescence whereas the fakes react well to UV light with bands clearly visible. So if you can see the bands clearly under UV light, then the sheet is likely to be a fake, in my opinion.

Caveat Emptor! Buy from a reputable dealer and if in any doubt return it for a full refund! (27/09)

## • Ducks

Royal Mail has today issued a set of 10 new stamps and associated collectibles featuring Ducks. According to a recent Royal Mail announcement .....

"Royal Mail are quacking with excitement to reveal a set of 10 stamps celebrating the UK species of ducks. Of over 120 duck species globally, 22 are found in the UK, inhabiting our rivers, wetlands, coasts, and estuaries. Ducks have become surprisingly collectible (albeit mostly the rubber variety!) and are now a full-blown TikTok sensation with adorable ducks waddling through kitchens to pet ducks splashing in bath tubs, the hashtag #ducks have racked up hundreds of thousands of posts and millions of views. With these stamps we extend our animals and nature series of issues, with a set of ten stamps featuring many of the popular breeds found in the UK both in flight and in their natural environment."

Five new 2nd class and five new 1st class stamps comprise this issue which will set you back £12.85. I can only marvel at the restraint of Royal Mail in deciding to limit this issue to "only" 10 stamps in the certain knowledge that there are another 12 native UK ducks that could have made a quacking good addition to this celebration!

It is perhaps apposite that this stamp issue has appeared in the same week as this recent article from the BBC.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cger3w129l0o>

Returning to Royal Mail's latest issue, released today, 11th September 2025 and as noted above, five second class and five first class stamps have been issued featuring native ducks.



In addition to the usual First Day Covers, Presentation packs, stamp cards, etc., there is a new Collector Sheet which will be of interest to Smilers collectors featuring the 10 stamps and 10 additional attached labels featuring further images of ducks in their natural environment. The stamps and labels are set against a backdrop of a female Goose carrying her chicks. The Collector Sheet is printed on self-adhesive paper, whilst the set of stamps are printed on PVA gummed paper, therefore these stamps differ from the counter sheet stamps.



GS-178





We are able to supply the Collector Sheet from our eBay store (click on image above). Also available are a few pairs of First Day covers featuring the stamps/labels from this sheet. We must be Quackers! (11/09).

- **And now for something completely different, it's ....**

...Royal Mail's Failing Circus!

Royal Mail's latest stamp issue due out on the 14th August 2025 celebrates Monty Python and their surreal humour, intellectual absurdity and anarchic creativity. This stamp issue marks the 50th anniversary of Monty Python and the Holy Grail – a milestone for a film that redefined spoof cinema and cemented the group's international status.



A colourful and surreal set of six 1st Class stamps celebrating the unforgettable characters and sketches from Monty Python's Flying Circus, the iconic British comedy series that redefined television humour. Each stamp features a vibrant montage of scenes and cut-out animation inspired by Terry Gilliam's distinctive visual style, perfectly capturing Monty Python's unique blend of wit, satire and absurdity. Showcases legendary moments from the show, including The Spanish Inquisition, the Ministry of Silly Walks and The Lumberjack Song. A fitting tribute to the British comedy institution that continues to influence generations of comedians and fans around the world.



A special miniature sheet celebrating Monty Python and the Holy Grail, the cult 1975 film that parodied Arthurian legend with outrageous humour and unforgettable one-liners. Contains four 1st Class stamps, each featuring a still from a classic scene in the film and set against a whimsical illustrated background with the film's logo and artwork – a milestone moment for one of the most quoted and beloved comedies of all time.



GS-177

A Collector's Sheet is amongst the other collectibles on offer from Royal Mail which showcases the outrageous humour and cultural impact of Monty Python's Flying Circus. The sheet includes all six special stamps from the main issue, each presented in a self-adhesive, horizontal-format, paired with six labels featuring stills from some of Monty Python's most famous sketches including the "Dead Parrot" confrontation, the "Upper Class Twit of the Year" race and the "Nudge Nudge" innuendo Set against a theatrical backdrop with a stage curtain design and dramatic clouds and classic Monty Python logo, paying homage to the group's original BBC opening sequences. The Collector Sheet is printed in Litho and Self-adhesive. This is different from the set of stamps, which are printed in Litho and Gummed. We are able to supply the Collector Sheet from our eBay store (click on images above). Also available are a few pairs of First Day covers featuring the stamps/labels from this sheet. (11/08)

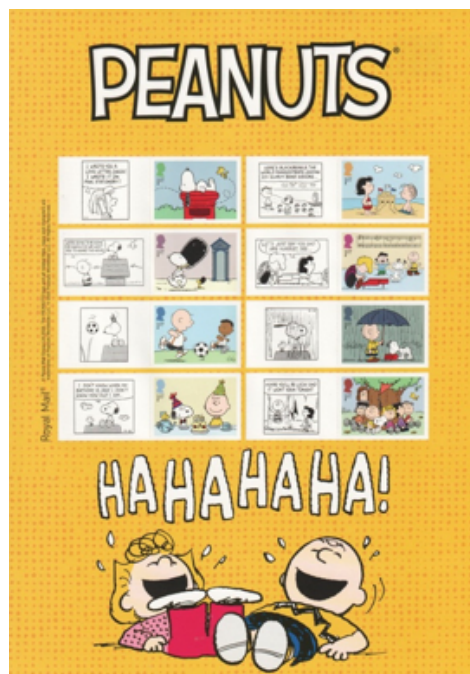
- **Peanuts**

After what seems a long two months of inactivity on the Smilers front, I am pleased to announce the arrival of a new Collector Sheet from Royal Mail, who are celebrating the internationally loved comic strip 'Peanuts' on the occasion of its 75th anniversary in 2025. The first black-and-white Peanuts daily strip launched on Monday, 2 October 1950, in a modest seven newspapers. As many more papers signed on, it led to the longer Sunday episodes in colour, from 6 January 1952. It expanded to the UK in February 1953, first featuring in the Daily Sketch, before switching to the Daily Mail in May 1971. Charles Schulz devoted himself to putting his pen to paper and turned his 'repertory company' of assorted children, a beagle and a little bird into the American comic-strip masterpiece Peanuts. Seven days a week for nearly 50 years, the comic was enjoyed in as many as 2,600 newspapers in 75 countries by an estimated 350 million readers. Reprints still run in some 2,000 papers in print and online – proof that Peanuts remains highly popular with young and old a quarter of a century after Schulz's final original strip appeared on 13 February 2000.

To mark this event, Royal Mail will issue a range of collectibles on the 24th July 2025, including a new set of eight stamps in se-tenant pairs, featuring Charlie Brown, Snoopy and friends in a British style theme of the much-loved comic strip including: the classic Snoopy pose on a Royal Mail Pillar Box, playing Football (or Soccer as Charlie Brown may have called it), Charlie Brown and Snoopy "enjoying" the British Weather and a Birthday Tea Party among others.

In addition to the set of eight gummed stamps, Royal Mail will also be issuing a new Collector Sheet featuring all eight stamps from the mint stamp set with accompanying labels featuring comic strip illustrations. As is now usual all stamps and accompanying labels are printed in Litho and Self-adhesive, making these different from the stamp set which are Litho and PVA Gum.

We are able to supply the Collector Sheet from our eBay store (click on images below). Also available are a few pairs of First Day covers featuring the stamps/labels from this sheet. Keep Smiling! (20/07).



GS-176



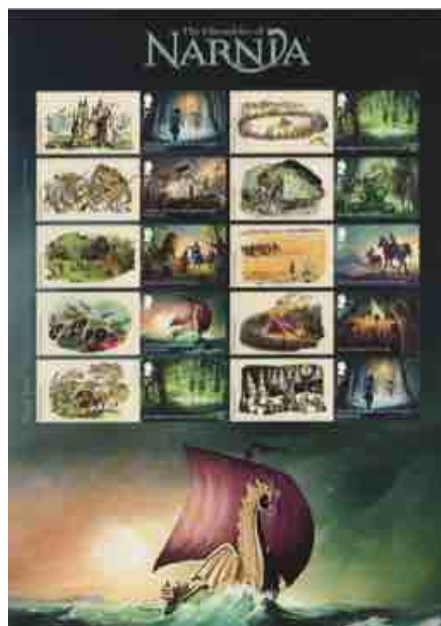


- **Chronicles of Narnia**

Apologies for this late update, just back from a few days away and have been playing catch-up ever since!

Royal Mail released a set of stamps on 22nd May 2025 commemorating the 75th anniversary of the publication of the "The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe", part of the classic fantasy series "**The Chronicles of Narnia**" by C.S.Lewis. The stamp set comprises 8 x 1st Class stamps illustrated by Keith Robinson, a British illustrator of children and young adult books, and commissioned especially for this stamp issue by Royal Mail. An accompanying Mini Sheet comprises 4 x 1st Class stamps with original illustrations by Pauline Baynes featuring The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe, the first and best known of seven novels in The Chronicles of Narnia.

The latest Royal Mail issue includes a Presentation Pack containing both the set of 8 x 1st class stamps and the mini sheet. Additionally other Royal Mail products are available including: First Day Covers (2) of the stamp set and mini sheet; The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe Medal Cover; Chronicles of Narnia Postcard set; a Press Sheet and (of course) a brand new **Collector Sheet** featuring 10 x 1st class stamps and labels.



GS-175

The Collector Sheet features 10 stamps from the stamp 8 x 1st class stamp set with matched labels (2 of which are duplicated) featuring original illustrations by Pauline Baynes. As is now becoming the de-facto standard for these sheets, the Collector Sheet is printed in Litho and on Self-adhesive paper. This is different from the set of stamps, which are printed in Litho and are supplied with water- activated gum.

We have again produced a limited number of **First Day Covers** featuring these stamps/labels for the keen collectors amongst us - these are not available from Royal Mail but can be purchased by clicking on the images below which will activate a link to our eBay store. You can also **purchase the collector sheet above** by clicking on its image. (27/05)



- **Europhilex 2025 Collector Sheet**

To commemorate EUROPHILEX 2025 Royal Mail will issue a limited edition collector sheet featuring 10 x 1st Class Union Flag stamps and featuring the Victory Stamps of 1946 as the images on the adjoined labels on 7th May 2025 to coincide with the opening of EuroPhilex stamp exhibition held at the NEC, Birmingham (7th-10th May 2025).



GS-174

For the first time ever the organising committee decided to move its international exhibition out of London to the NEC in Birmingham. Birmingham is the country's second city, located in the centre of England and surrounded by a massive population and several other large cities.



We will continue to supply, to our valued customers, a small number of these sheets, first day covers and private presentation packs featuring these stamps/labels which are available through our eBay store. Just click on the images above to access the relevant page. (01/05)

- **Valour and Victory Collector Sheet**

Issued to coincide with the 80th anniversary commemorations of VE Day - Victory in Europe - Royal Mail has today released a collector sheet featuring 10 x 1st class stamps paired with photographs showing the work of the ten roles carried out by those individuals featured on the stamps. The background shows the crowds at Trafalgar Square on VE Day.

The stamps featured on this collector sheet mirror the gummed set of 10 x 1st class stamps marking this event, also issued on 1st May 2025. The collector sheet is the only source of these stamps available printed in Litho on self-adhesive paper by ISP/Cartor.



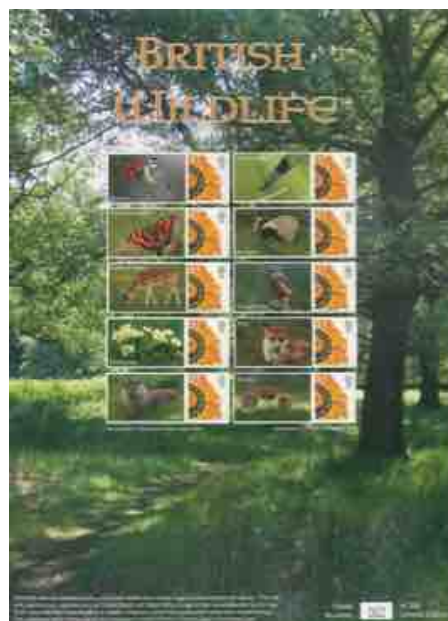
GS-173

We continue to supply, to our valued customers, a small number of these sheets and first day covers which are available through our eBay store. Just click on the images above to access the relevant page. (01/05)

- **Garden Wildlife**

Oscar Wilde once said "Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery that mediocrity can pay to greatness." In Royal Mail's latest issue due out on 11th March 2025, we at Ridgewood have taken some comfort from these words.

In 2009 Ridgewood Stamp Sheets released a Business Customised Stamp Sheet themed around British Wildlife. It showed a mix of well known animals, flora, insects and birds in a celebration of British Wildlife.



On the 11th March 2025, Royal Mail will be releasing a Collector Stamp Sheet themed around Garden Wildlife. It shows a mix of well known animals, flora, insects and birds in a celebration of Garden Wildlife. Garden Wildlife? Really? How many Badgers have you got in your garden. I guess they couldn't bring themselves to use the name "British Wildlife" for fear of being accused of complete plagiarism!!



LS-172

This copycat collector sheet comes after Royal Mail have ....

- a) cancelled the personalised Smilers service,
  - b) cancelled business customised Smilers service,
  - c) abandoned the brand "Smilers" in favour of the "Collector Sheet" branding,
- and in so doing effectively eliminated all third-party competition and creativeness.

Royal Mail are selling these Collector Sheets at less than the trade can buy/sell them for on the likes of eBay presumably in a cynical attempt to further eliminate third party competition in the form of the philatelic trade who created much of the market for these products!

Royal Mail's next stamp issue (5 x 2nd and 5 x 1st) is a celebration of the plethora of amazing collector sheets, sorry, species that inhabit the UK's gardens, from frogs to foxes, bees to badgers. Shame they didn't include the odd toad or weasel Oh! hang on they were responsible for plagiarizing the idea in the first place! Enough!

A set of 10 x Garden Wildlife mint stamps featuring a range of wildlife found in UK gardens also feature on the latest collector sheet from Royal Mail. The Collector Sheet is printed in Litho and Self-adhesive. This is different from the set of stamps, which are printed in Litho and Gummed.



We continue to supply, to our valued customers, a small number of these sheets and first day covers which are available through our eBay store. Just click on the images above to access the relevant page. (07/03)

- **Music Giants XI - AC/DC**

Royal Mail's latest stamp issue, due out on 18th February, features the Australian rock band AC/DC. I had thought that the Music Giants stamp issues series were a celebration of all things British but apparently this now includes our overseas colonies!

In Royal Mail's own words ....

*"Royal Mail is celebrating the legendary rock band AC/DC with a set of special stamps and collectibles marking the 50th anniversary of their groundbreaking debut album High Voltage. Formed in Australia by Scottish brothers Angus and Malcolm Young, their music has forged an enduring connection with British fans. From their iconic performances to the critical acclaim of albums like Highway to Hell and Back in Black, AC/DC's electrifying sound has become part of the fabric of British rock history."*

Now I don't claim to be a fan of AC/DC but with a little internet fact checking I discovered that their debut album, *High Voltage*, was not released until 1975 and then only in Australia! One would have to wait until 1976 for the international version to be released so Royal Mail are well ahead of the game with this release - the 48th Anniversary of the release of *High Voltage* in the UK! How bizarre, how bizarre!

"Eight new stamps capture the band in full force, with dynamic images of AC/DC performing live, while an additional miniature sheet of four stamps features the record covers from some of their most successful and influential albums. Alongside the stamps are a number of officially licensed and limited-edition souvenirs to appeal to music fans and collectors alike."



The number of *officially licensed and limited-edition souvenirs* is truly electrifying!!

- Minisheet
- FDC (4)
- Presentation Pack
- Stamp Booklet (4 x 1st)
- Maxicards
- Framed stamp products (3)
- Collector Sheet
- Fan Sheets (2)
- Prestige Stamp Booklet
- Limited Edition Prestige Stamp Booklet
- Medal Covers (2)
- Platinum Stamp set

The Smiler/Collector Sheet is full of energy (excuse the pun) and very colourful! We have listed a few on ebay so just click on the following image to purchase from our eBay shop.



GS-171

The two Fan sheets follow the now well established formats for these products.



Finally, to add to your collecting delight (but primarily intended for fellow Smilers sheet collectors) I have produced a few pairs of first day covers of the Smiler sheet. If this is your thing man then you can add these to your weekly shop by clicking on the images below. (13/02)



- **Smiler Unmasked!**

Despite the demise of the personalised Smiler sheets, occasionally we learn of one that slipped through the net! Recently an e-mail from long time contributor RL added additional information to the sparse knowledge we had on a Smilers sheet produced in by Alfreton Philatelic Society, but never seen.

In June 2007 Alfreton Philatelic Society issued a limited-edition Smilers sheet to coincide with their AGM and on the occasion of the 21st Anniversary of Mr. R F Stammers as President (TSL-004). At the time we were told that an alternative label design had been produced featuring both Mr. and Mrs. Stammer but we had never seen the sheet. Our eagle eyed contributor spotted this sheet recently on eBay and has provided a scan of the sheet - we understood c. 5 sheets were produced.

Whilst a different design from TSL-004, we have included in our listing as TSL-004a and wish to thank RL for sharing this image. Our contributor also noted that the RM order number printed in the bottom left of the sheet was identical to that shown on TSL-004, thus squaring the information circle - the label is an image of Mrs. Stammers but we have been left wondering what happened to Mr. Stammers, who is clearly absent from the image used for this sheet! (05/02)



- **Fake News!**

Some of us may have read in the news about the fake stamps coming out of China but did you know that China have also been printing fake Smilers / Collector sheets for some years now? No? Read on...



There was an excellent article in the Telegraph last April in which the Daily Telegraph exposed the great Chinese Fake Stamp Scandal which continues to blight our shores and those of other countries.

It seems that despite the introduction of so-called bar-coded stamps and associated revenue protection methods by Royal Mail, these fake stamps continue to be produced in their masses and are probably available in every town in the UK.

According to the Daily Telegraph.

*A Telegraph investigation identified four major Chinese suppliers offering to print up to one million counterfeit Royal Mail stamps a week for as little as 4p each – and deliver them to Britain within days.*

*The stamps are also being sold through online retail giants such as Amazon and eBay – and on websites that mimic the official Royal Mail store.*

*A senior figure at Royal Mail admitted to BBC One's Watchdog that he could not spot the difference between a counterfeit and a genuine stamp.*

*David Gold, director of external affairs and policy, said: "The reality is counterfeiters are now so good at what they do that even I, and I work for Royal Mail, I can't tell the difference just by looking at them."*

So with this information in mind it was with interest that I spotted apparently genuine Smilers Sheets on sale on eBay for £7.65 each shortly after the Daily Telegraph article had appeared from an eBay seller in China. I had previously heard rumours and whispers of these fake Smilers Sheets from the trade but had never seen any so I duly ordered one of each from an eBay seller called **jd\_cattleya**.

The three sheets I purchased were:

- 2017 Christmas Smilers sheet
- 2018 Game of Thrones
- 2020 Sherlock Homes

They eventually arrived in a crumbled jiffy bag, posted in China, and containing equally crumbled Smilers sheets! I complained about the damaged quality of the received sheets and was duly promised replacements which also turned up weeks later in a crumbled condition as the first batch. I complained again and was refunded the purchase price without quibble.

Recently I was contacted by a fellow collector who told me that he could get some of these fake Smilers so I duly ordered four different sheets, the above three plus the **Lunar Year of the Pig** sheet from 2018. The fake sheets have now been received and I thought I would share my thoughts on these and a few images so that you can see how good they are.

On first inspection they look identical to the real thing, indeed to the trained eye it is hard to spot any differences. The one thing I would say is the adhesive paper they are printed on seems to be a better quality than the originals and the back of the sheets are smoother and of bright, white appearance whereas the genuine articles are less polished in appearance and less white.

They appear to include the phosphor detailing/bands that react to UV light. Even the Sherlock sheet includes the detailed UV coded printing on the stamps, see images below.

The reason for posting this now is having now seen them I would have been fooled if I hadn't known better! Going forward, if you find Smilers/Collector sheets on sale at significant discounts to normal pricing then they may not be what they seem! Also, I would give **jd\_cattleya** a wide berth! (16/01)



GS-109 (Counterfeit)



GS-112 (Counterfeit)



GS-116 (Counterfeit)



GS-128 (Counterfeit and detail)



- **No, No, No, Yes! It's the Vicar of Dibley**

Royal Mail kick off their 2025 stamp issue programme with a celebration of one of the UK's most successful and award-winning comedy series 'The Vicar of Dibley'. The Vicar of Dibley is a British sitcom which originally ran on BBC from November 1994 to January 2007 and was set in the fictional Oxfordshire village of Dibley. Following the 1993 changes in the Church of England to permit the ordination of women, the series portrayed a female vicar who had been assigned to the church in the village. It is among the most successful British programmes, receiving multiple British Comedy Awards, two International Emmys and was a multiple British Academy Television Awards nominee. In 2004, it placed third in a BBC poll of Britain's Best Sitcoms. There is no notable anniversary in 2025 so one assumes this is a purely commercial decision by Royal Mail to honour this much-loved TV sitcom.

Alice. "So Royal Mail are putting my face on the 2nd class stamp?"

Geraldine: "Yes Alice."

Alice. "Why?"

Geraldine: "Good question Alice"





Eight new stamps and a mini sheet containing four more new stamps will be issued on 14th January 2025 along with Presentation Pack, First Day Covers, Mini Sheet Press Sheet, Maxicards, framed collectibles and of course the all important Smilers/Collector Sheet.



GS-170

The Collector Sheet is printed in Litho on self-adhesive and thus **the only source of the self-adhesive format stamps**. The counter sheet stamps are issued in se-tenant pairs throughout the sheet on gummed paper. We have also produced a very limited number of First Day Covers featuring the stamps/labels from this sheet.





- **Royal Mail Stamp Programme 2025**

In October 2024 Royal Mail announced to the philatelic Trade the proposed 2025 stamp issue programme and in early December advised this would be made public on the 2nd of January 2025, in line with previous practice. Then on 30th December the trade was told that plans to make public the Stamp Programme for 2025 on 2nd January had been delayed and that only the first three issues of the year were confirmed.

- The Vicar of Dibley
- The Royal Armouries
- Music Giants: AC/DC

Then by some miracle, the following day the following hit our inboxes courtesy of Royal Mail.

Month	Date	Topic
Jan	14	The Vicar of Dibley
Jan	30	Royal Armouries
Feb	18	AC/DC
Mar	11	Garden Wildlife
Apr	15	Myths and Legends
May	1	Valour and Victory: Stories of the Second World War
May	22	The Chronicles of Narnia
Jun	12	Royal Observatory Greenwich

**Full calendar coming soon**

Also, on that day we were told:

Some changes have been made to 2025 Stamp Programme shared in Key News last year. At this time we are currently unable to confirm the issue dates for the second half of the year. We can, however, confirm the Programme for the first half of the year as shown below. This list is now free from Embargo and can be shared with your customers.

**Update:** Royal Mail have now published details of the 2025 planned issues, although one final issue due out in November remains under wraps. We can see at least nine issues in 2025 that may have interest for Smilers/Collector Sheet Collectors....

Stamp Issue	Date of Issue
The Vicar of Dibley	14-Jan-25
The Royal Armouries	30-Jan-25
Music Giants: AC/DC	18-Feb-25
Garden Wildlife	11-Mar-25
British Myths Legends	15-Apr-25
Valour & Victory Stories of the Second World War	01-May-25
Europhilex	07-May-25
The Chronicles of Narnia	22-May-25
Royal Observatory Greenwich	12-Jun-25
Mushrooms	19-Jun-25
Peanuts	24-Jul-2025
Monty Python	14-Aug-25
Ducks	11-Sep-25
Steam Locomotives	25-Sep-25
Monopoly	14-Oct-25
Christmas 2025	04-Nov-25
The Stamps of Queen Victoria	20-Nov-25
Jane Austin	16-Dec-25

The issues highlighted in red are those with potential interest for Smilers / Collector Sheet Collectors. No further details can be made public at this time so we shall all have to wait and see what 2025 brings! (15/01)

## • 2025 News Archive

I have now archived the **2025 Smilers News** and you may now download this in Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) format by clicking on the above link. Keep Smiling in 2026!

I have also updated details of all generic, collector, themed and business customised stamp sheets issued during 2023 and hopefully have not made too many mistakes! You can find these updated listed under the New Issues menu item at top left. (04/01)