International Post Corporation

Royal Mail reveals image of the new King Charles III definitive stamp

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Royal Mail today revealed the image of new definitive stamp featuring the image of King Charles III. A definitive stamp is a stamp that consists solely of the monarch's head and value of the stamp on a plain coloured background.

The image of HM The King is an adapted version of the portrait created by Martin Jennings for The Royal Mint for the obverse of the new UK coinage and shows the new monarch facing to the left.

The new coin effigy was carefully adjusted and digitally re-lit to make it suitable for use on definitive stamps, with the aim of creating a worthy successor to Arnold Machin's classic image of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth.

The King's effigy appears alongside a barcode printed in matching colour alongside the main body of the stamp, separated by a simulated perforation line. The colours for all four values are retained from the Machin stamps:

- 1st Class – Plum Purple

- 2nd Class – Holly Green

- 1st Class Large – Marine Turquoise

- 2nd Class Large – Dark Pine Green

To minimise the environmental and financial impact of the change of monarch, existing stocks of definitive stamps that feature Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth will be distributed and issued as planned and will remain valid for use in line with our recent transition to barcodes on definitive stamps.

Retailers will continue to sell their existing stocks of definitive stamps featuring Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth and be supplied with the new stamps when existing stocks at Royal Mail have been exhausted.

The use of the coin image is continuation of a long tradition stretching back to the creation of the Penny Black in 1840.

Since the release of the world's first adhesive postage stamp, the Penny Black, in 1840, there has been a close association between British coins and Definitive stamps. The portrait of Queen Victoria on the Penny Black was based on that designed by William Wyon,

chief engraver at The Royal Mint, for the 'City' medal of 1838, which commemorated Queen Victoria's first visit to the City of London the year before.

During successive reigns, many artists worked on both coins and stamps or had their designs for the former adapted for use on the latter. In the 1960s, Arnold Machin created an effigy of The Queen for decimal coinage and then designed new definitive stamps, which became an iconic symbol of the United Kingdom around the world, reproduced billions of times.

King Charles III becomes the seventh monarch to appear on a Definitive stamp. The first was Queen Victoria who appeared on the Penny Black in 1840, followed by Edward VII, George V, Edward VIII, George VI, Queen Elizabeth II and now King Charles III.

Simon Thompson, CEO, Royal Mail said: "Ever since the Penny Black was issued in the reign of Queen Victoria, British stamps have carried the image of the reigning monarch. The Definitive stamp has become a recognisable symbol of each reign. Uniquely, British stamps do not have the country of origin printed on them as the image of the monarch is sufficient. So today is a hugely important milestone for Royal Mail and the country as we reveal the image of the new King Charles Definitive."

Customers can register their interest from today (8 February) at www.royalmail.com/hmkingcharlesregister

The stamps will go on general sale from 4 April 2023.

The Postal Museum Exhibition:
The new 1st Class stamp will form part of an exhibition of Great Britain's definitive stamps at the Postal Museum, London. Called 'The King's Stamp', the exhibition coincides with the release of the new King Charles III 1st Class definitive stamp and opens today (8 February) and runs until 3 September 2023.

The display will celebrate the newest stamp design with a unique chance to see a sheet of King Charles III 1st Class definitive before they are in public circulation.

The exhibition tells the story of definitive stamps from the very first design, the famous Penny Black featuring Queen Victoria, to today. Visitors will see rare stamps from the reigns of seven monarchs, including King Edward VII's Tyrian Plum, which was never released, and Queen Victoria's Two Penny Blue. It will culminate in the newest design for the reign of King Charles III.

Visitors can explore how stamps have been designed and produced with works from Edmund Dulac, Bertram Park and Dorothy Wilding. They can also discover how past monarchs have influenced the design process, shaping their royal identity through these

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ubiquitous objects.

The exhibition is included with entry to The Postal Museum and is perfect for all ages. For tickets, visit postalmuseum.org

Source: Royal Mail

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