

Smilers

by Mr. John A. Cardona

It is generally known that Australia Post introduced the idea of personal photographs alongside postage stamps, offered as Personalized Stamps or P-Stamps. The product was later to be adopted and adapted by several countries, including Great Britain (Smilers), Canada (Picture Postage), Indonesia (Personalized Stamps and Prisma), New Zealand (Personalized Stamps), Singapore (My Stamp) Slovakia (Personal Stamp), and lately Malta (Personalised Stamps).

Smilers are the perfect way to personalize one's mail by having one's favourite photograph featured next to an actual stamp. It is a charming way to make one's mail that little bit more special. That is what it is reported that a good number of people are saying and if that is correct then Smilers sheets are here to stay. At least for another few years.

Most countries have a perforated tab in a portrait format to the left or the right of the stamp area, thus ensuring that there is a clear separation between the stamp which is meant for the public and the photograph which is ordered privately.

The Royal Mail had a compromising acceptable version of introducing *Generic Smilers*. Generic Smilers are sheets which contain pre-printed non-personalised imagery or text on the label area. This format enables collectors to obtain the sheets without the added cost of using the personalised method.

One can be sure that other countries will jump on the band wagon over the coming years in order to offer an element of fun for their customers and an extra source of revenue for themselves.

Following are the *Generic Smilers* sheets issued by the Royal Mail to date.

Year 2000

1. "*Smilers*" 10 x 1st Class stamps featuring different smiling faces. The stamps were issued on 22 May 2000 at Earls Court, London for the Stamp Show 2000 which was held between 22 – 28 May. The labels attached to the stamps had 'The Stamp Show 2000' printed thereon.
2. "*Christmas*" 20 x 19p stamps released on 3 October 2000. The stamps featured a robin perched in a letter box. The labels contained Seasons Greetings. Alongside the bottom right hand margin is the trade mark which reads '© The Post Office 2000'.
3. "*Christmas*" 10 x 1st Class stamps released on 3 October 2000. The stamps feature the face of Santa Claus holding a cracker in one hand. The labels contained Seasons Greetings. The trade mark is similar to item (2) above.

Year 2001

4. “*Smilers for you – Occasions*” 20 x 1st Class stamps released on 5 June 2001. The Occasion sheets contain four columns of stamps, and a half stamp size related label positioned to the left of each stamp.
5. “*Smilers*” - Smilers stamps similar to item (1) above re-issued 3 July 2001 with the labels attached to the stamps containing felicitous greetings.
6. “*Smilers for Christmas*” stamps similar to item (2) above re-issued 9 October 2001. The trade mark alongside the bottom right hand margin reads ‘Smilers is a trade mark of Consignia plc © Consignia plc 2001’.
7. “*Smilers for Christmas*” stamps similar to item (3) above re-issued 9 October 2001. Alongside the bottom right hand margin is the trade mark which is similar to (6) above.
8. “*Cartoons*” 10 x 1st Class stamps issued on 18 December 2001. The sheet is based on the humorous 1st class stamps first released in 1996, next to a label complimenting the humour of the cartoon.

Year 2002

9. “*Smilers for you – Occasions*” 20 x 1st Class cartoons stamps and labels issued on 5 March 2002. The stamps feature four of each design from the Occasions 2002 range i.e. New Baby, Moving Home, Best Wishes, Hello and Love next to a label with a suitable image. The stamps have standard (non-elliptical) perforations.
10. “*World Cup*” 20 x 1st Class stamps issued on 21 May 2002, celebrating England’s great performance in the World Cup 2002, using the bottom right hand stamp from the World Cup miniature sheet next to images of football fans and great football moments depicted on the labels.
11. “*Christmas*” 20 x 1st Class stamps issued on 1 October 2002. The sheet has a new design featuring the popular Father Christmas next to labels with the words of ‘Jingle Bells’.
12. “*Christmas*” 20 x 1st Class stamps issued on 1 October 2002. The sheet consists of ten Teddy Bear stamps and ten Dennis the Menace stamps next to labels featuring ‘knock, knock’ jokes.

Year 2003

13. “*Flowers*” 20 x 1st Class stamps issued on 21 January 2003. The sheet contains two of each of the ten colourful ‘Flowers’ greetings stamps first issued in books in January 1997. On the generic sheet the labels adjoining the stamps feature further illustrations of the flowers shown on the stamps. The stamps and labels are surrounded by a lush, verdant background design. The stamps and labels are ideal for use on Valentine’s Day and Mother’s Day cards, as well as for

birthdays and other social occasions. The 'Flower' stamps do not have elliptical perforations which makes it easier to distinguish single stamps from the original printing of 1997.

14. "*Occasions Multiple Choice*" 20 x 1st Class stamps issued 4 February 2003. Occasions 2003 is the third set of 'Occasions' stamps to be issued. This was the first time that the Royal Mail had produced a set of stamps that gave customers the chance to interact on a stamp by making their own mark, and then sending their own personalized message on an envelope. There are six 1st Class stamps in the set and each stamp has three tick boxes for the sender to choose the most appropriate message, allowing them to congratulate, commiserate, express their love or give someone the all-important thumbs up or thumbs down – all before the letter is even opened.
15. "*Cartoons*" 20 x 1st Class stamps issued on 29 July 2003. The sheets include a crossword puzzle on the bottom margin.
16. "*Winter Robins*" 20 x 1st Class stamps issued on 30 September 2003. The labels alongside the stamps depict a story of a snowman, robins and Father Christmas. This is the first of three sets of Winter Smilers stamps for Christmas 2003.
17. "*2nd Ice Sculptures*" 20 x 2nd Class stamps issued on 4 November 2003. The labels alongside the stamps feature winter animals sculptured from ice and snow (see note below). This is the second of three sets of Winter Smilers stamps for Christmas 2003.
18. "*1st Ice Sculptures*" 20 x 1st Class stamps issued on 4 November 2003. The ice and snow sculptures were created by artist Andy Goldsworthy who works in the open air using materials found in the natural landscape. This is the third and last set of three sets of Winter Smilers stamps for Christmas 2003.

Year 2004

19. "*Hong Kong Stamp Expo*" 20 x 1st Class 'Hello' stamps issued on 30 January 2004. The labels attached to the stamps bear the Hong Kong exhibition logo in the margin and an image of a monkey holding a sign which states "Year of the Monkey" in Chinese (Cantonese) characters.
20. "*Occasions*" 20 x 1st Class stamps issued on 3 February 2004. The stamps feature humorous drawings of an envelope with a postman, being kissed, as a duck, as a baby and an aeroplane.
21. "*Bicentenary of the Royal Horticultural Society*" 20 x 1st Class stamps issued on 25 May 2004. The colourful labels illustrate and give details of different groups of dahlias and guidance on successful dahlia growing. The R.H.S. logo appears in the sheet margin. For the record the R.H.S. organizes the Chelsea

Flower Show and also runs gardens at Wisley in Surrey, Rosemoor in Devon, Hyde Hall in Essex and Harlow Carr in North Yorkshire.

22. "*Rule Britannia*" (England World Rugby Champion) 20 x 1st Class stamps issued 27 July 2004. The labels attached to the stamps contain images of the nation's icons which include the postbox and the red London bus. The sheet was issued to celebrate the feast of sporting events that had taken place over the summer period such as the international cricket test, Euro 2004, Wimbledon, the British Open and the Olympic Games amongst others.
23. "*Christmas Delivery*" a composite sheet containing 10 x 1st Class and 10 x 2nd Class stamps issued on 2 November 2004. Illustrated labels alongside the stamps feature two repeated series of five images of Father Christmas getting up in the morning and preparing for bed. The background design features an image of Father Christmas flying over Buckingham Palace about to make his last delivery.

Year 2005

24. "*Farm Animals*" 20 x 1st Class stamps issued on 11 January 2005. Featured is a mixture of traditional and rare British breeds.
25. "*Magic*" 20 x 1st Class stamps issued on 15 March 2005. The labels attached to the stamps show four magic tricks namely, Coin from the air, Nothing up your sleeve, Magic handkerchief and Coin in a bread roll. The stamps were issued to celebrate the centenary when 23 magicians came together at Pinoli's Restaurant in London in 1905 to form the Magic Circle.
26. "*Hello Occasions*" 20 x 1st Class stamps issued on 21 April 2005 to coincide with the Pacific Explorer Stamp Exhibition in Sydney.
27. "*The White Ensign*" 20 x 1st Class stamps issued on 21 June 2005. The labels alongside the stamps feature signal flags and their meanings. The sheet is a reminder that the White Ensign is flown by all Her Majesty's ships in commission and furthermore that traditional ceremony is still an important part of the Royal Navy.
28. "*Classic ITV 1955 – 2005*" 20 x 1st Class stamps issued on 15 September 2005 to mark the 50th anniversary of Independent Television. Affixed to the Emmerdale (serial favourite soap drama) stamps are labels showing six front covers of TV Times plus listings of some of the programmes broadcast in 1965, 1972, 1992 and 2004 most of which may now be out of date.
29. "*Christmas*" composite sheet containing 10 x 1st Class and 10 x 2nd Class issued on 1 November 2005. The labels feature birds and a cat playing with a snowman whereas the sheet margin depicts robins and Christmas crackers.

Year 2000

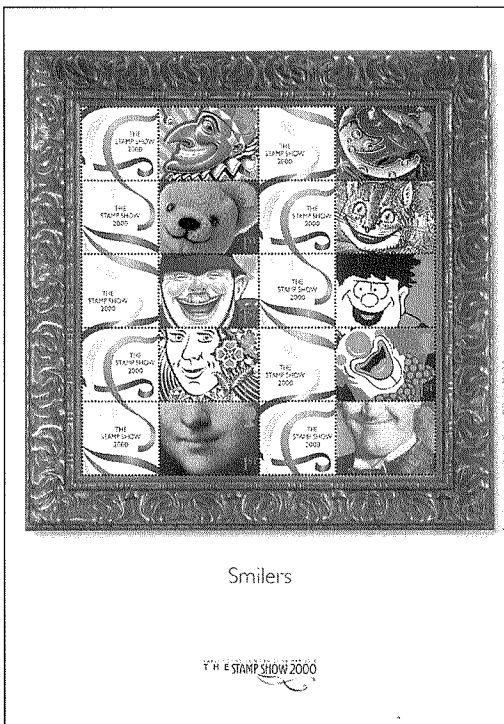
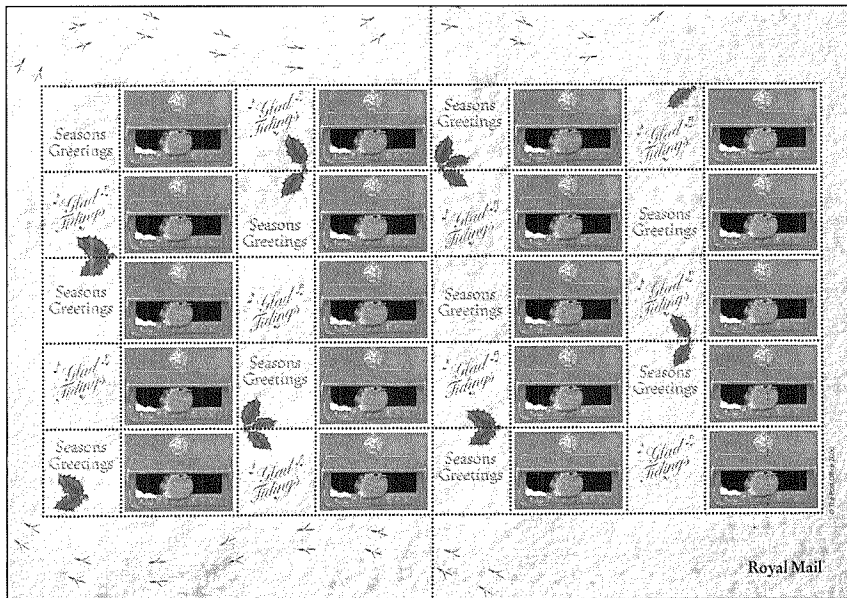


Fig. 1
Smilers



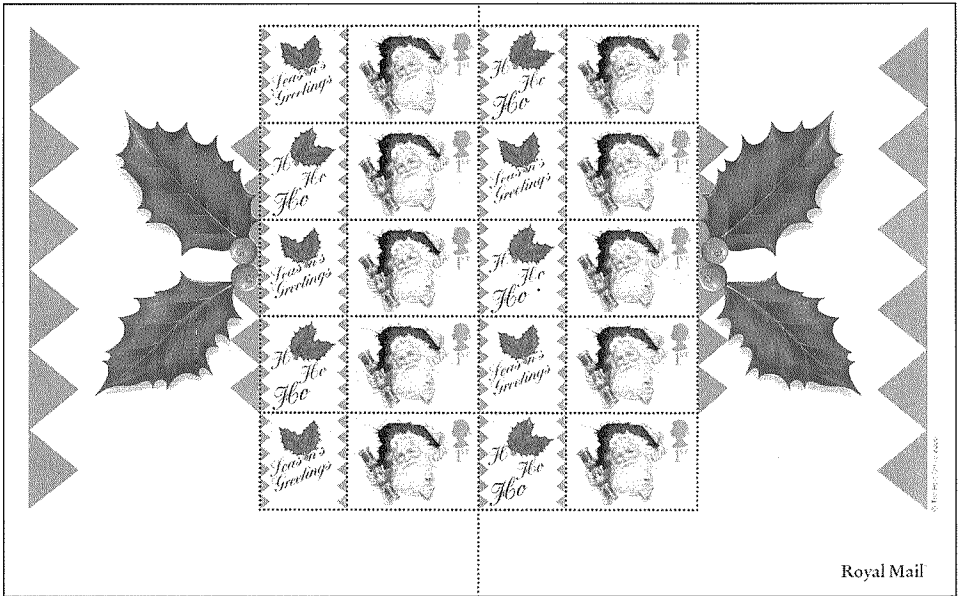


Fig. 3
Christmas

Year 2001

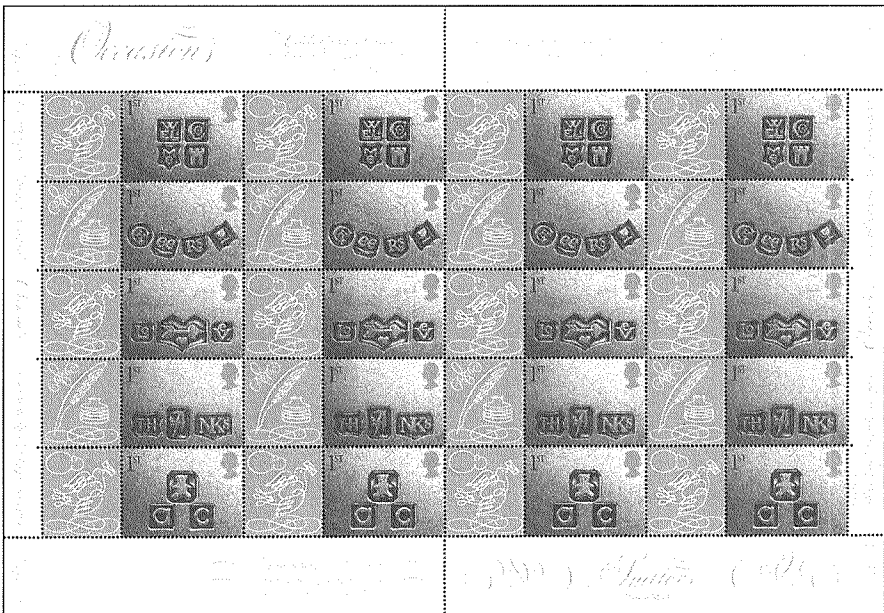


Fig. 4
Smilers for you - Occasions

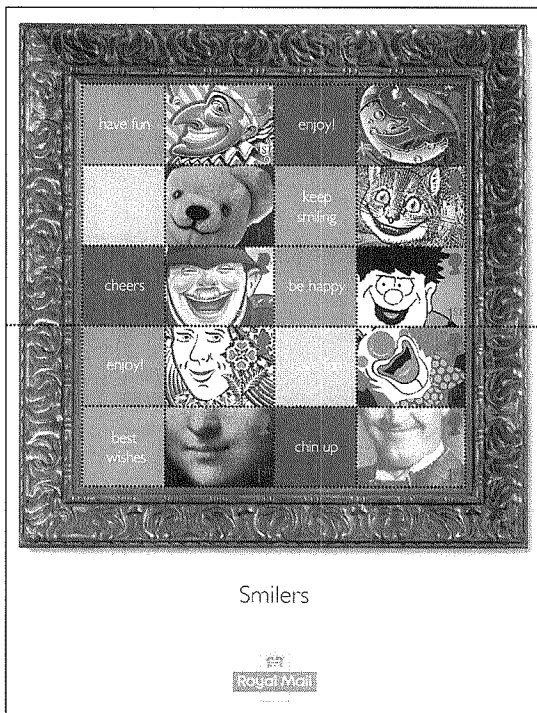


Fig. 5
Smilers

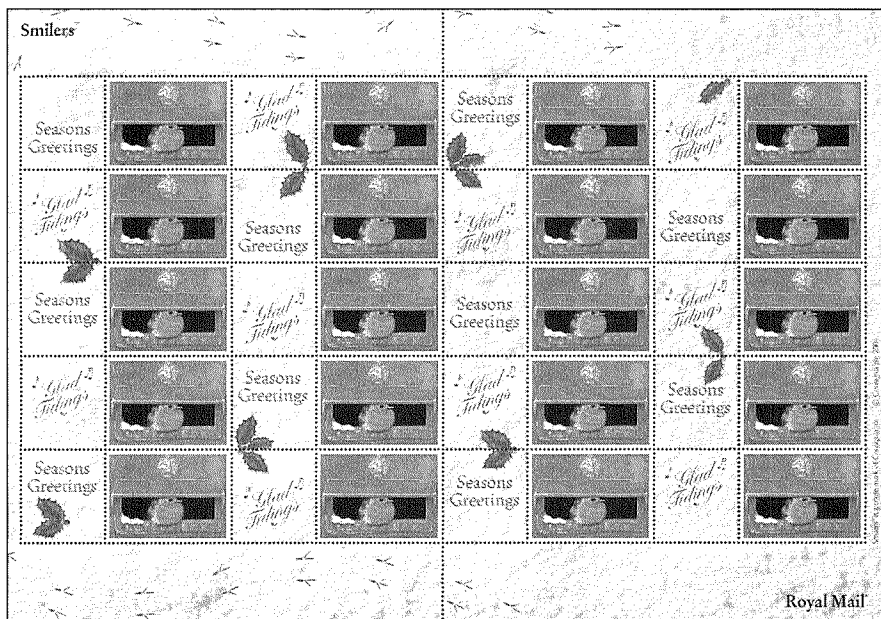


Fig. 6
Smilers for Christmas

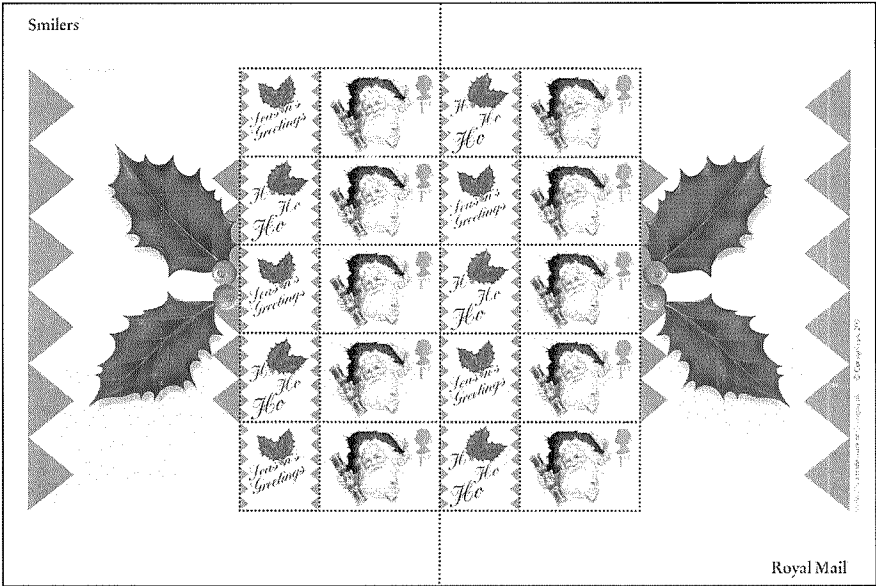


Fig. 7
Smilers for Christmas

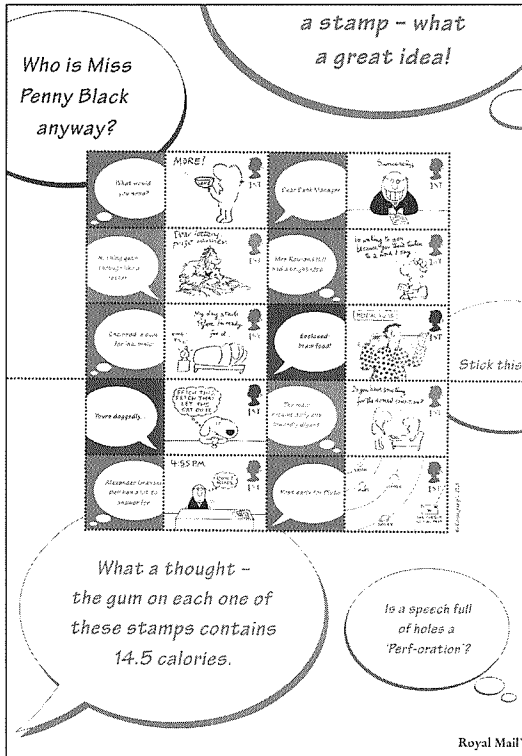


Fig. 8
Cartoons

Year 2002

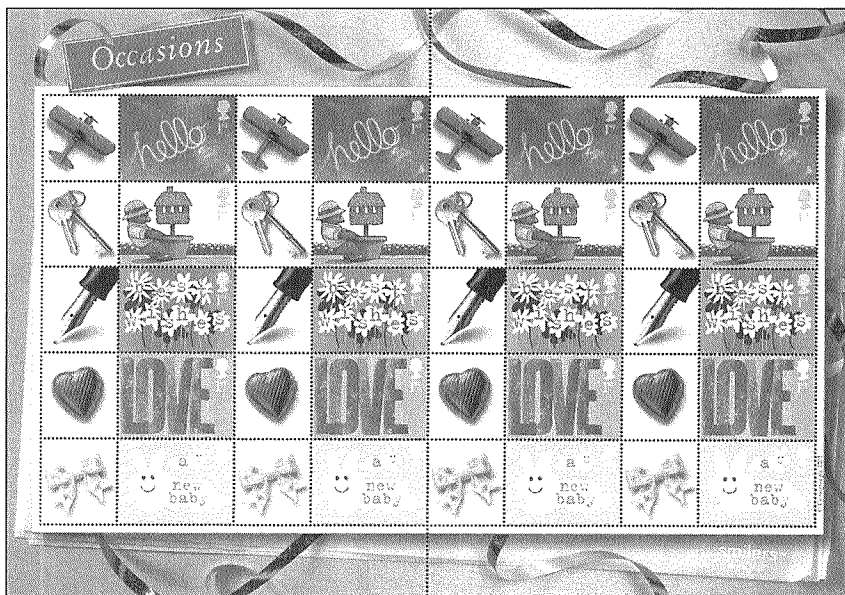


Fig. 9
Smilers for You – Occasions



Fig. 10
World Cup

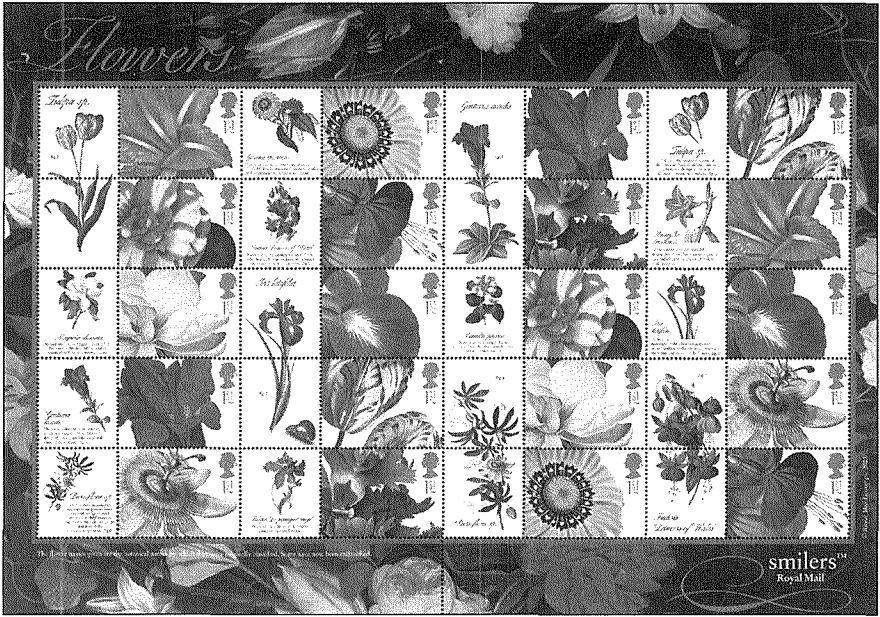


Fig. 13
Flowers

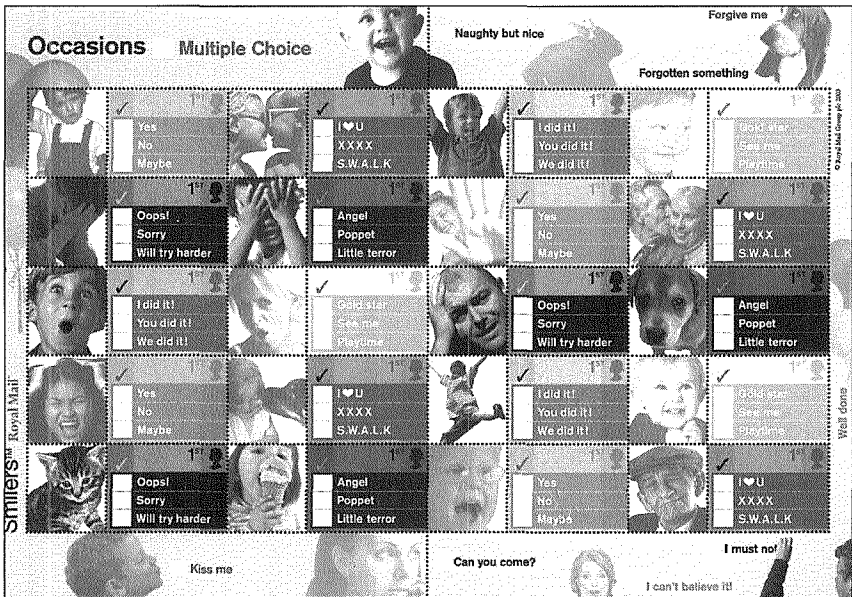


Fig. 14
Occasions Multiple Choice

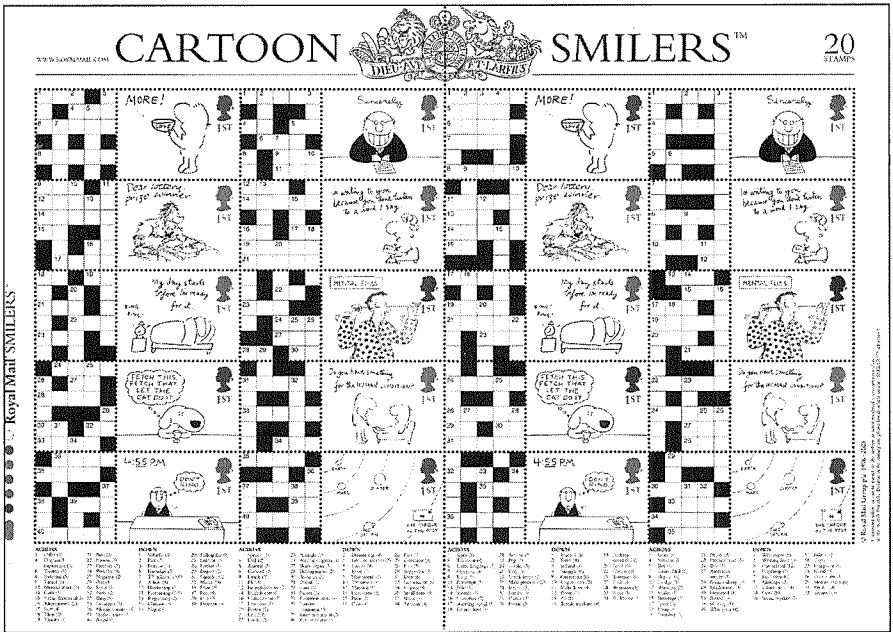


Fig. 15
Cartoons

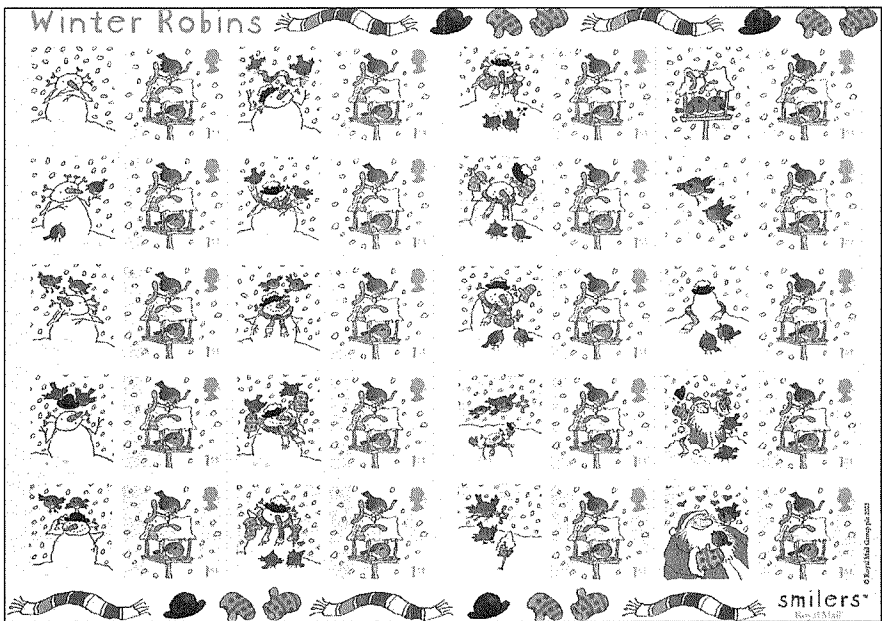


Fig. 16
Winter Robins

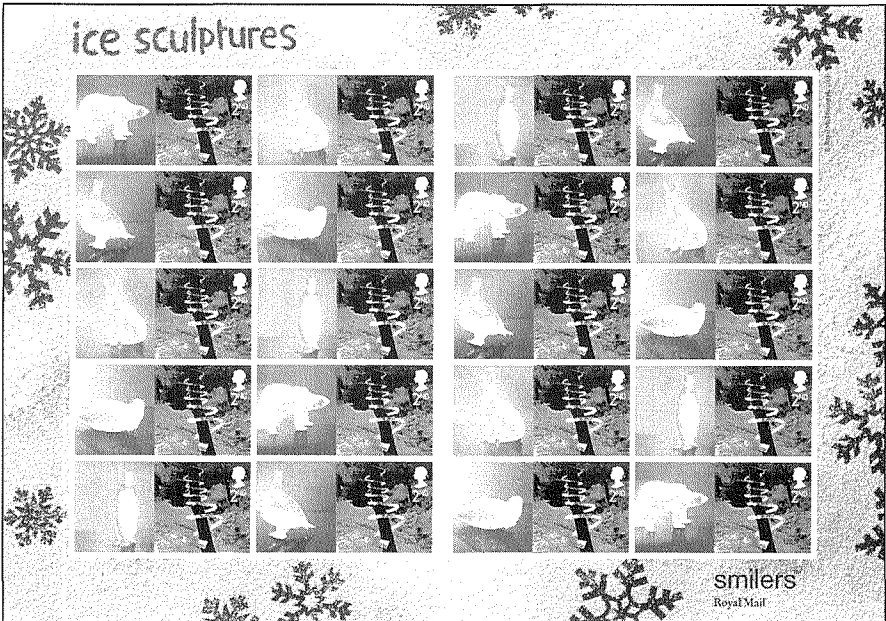


Fig. 17
2nd Ice Sculptures

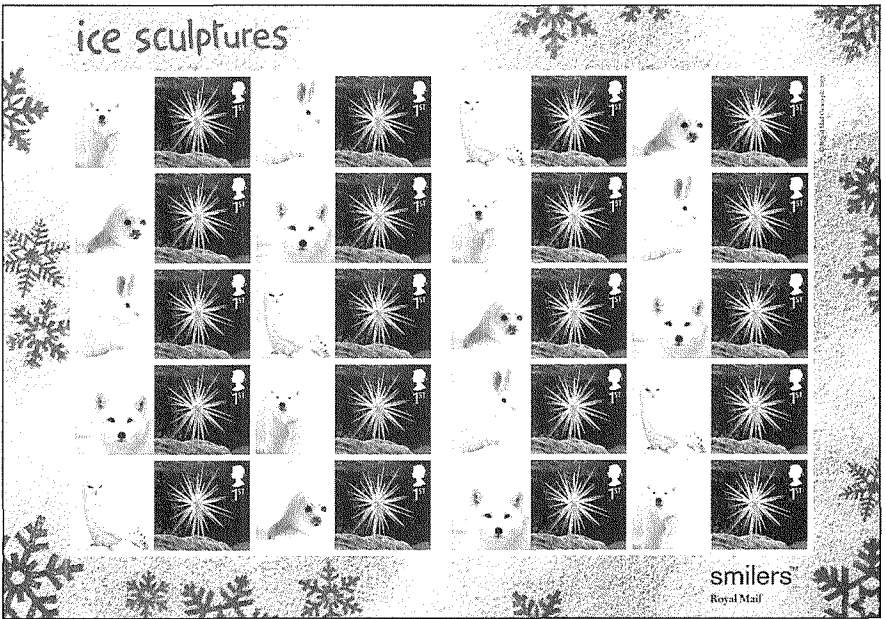


Fig. 18
1st Ice Sculptures



Fig. 19
Hong Kong Stamp Expo

Year 2004

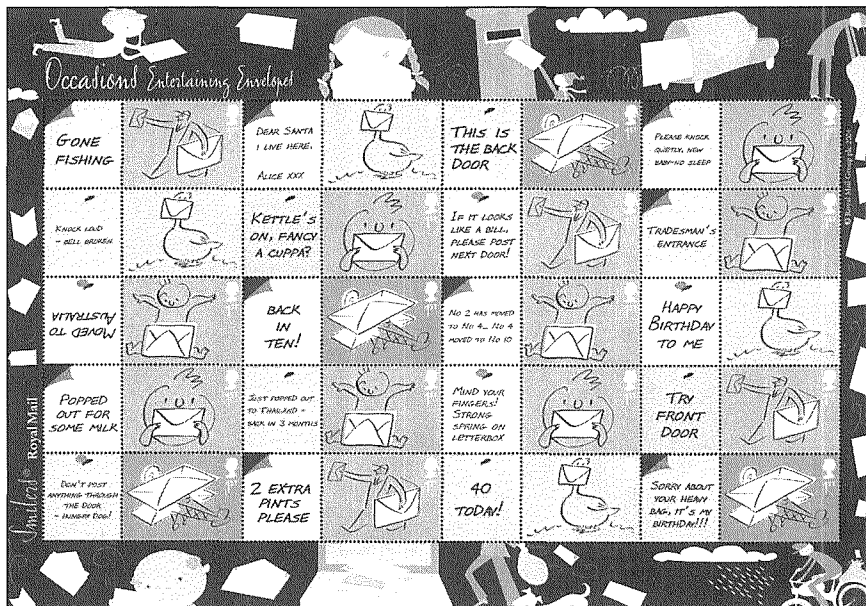


Fig. 20
Occasions

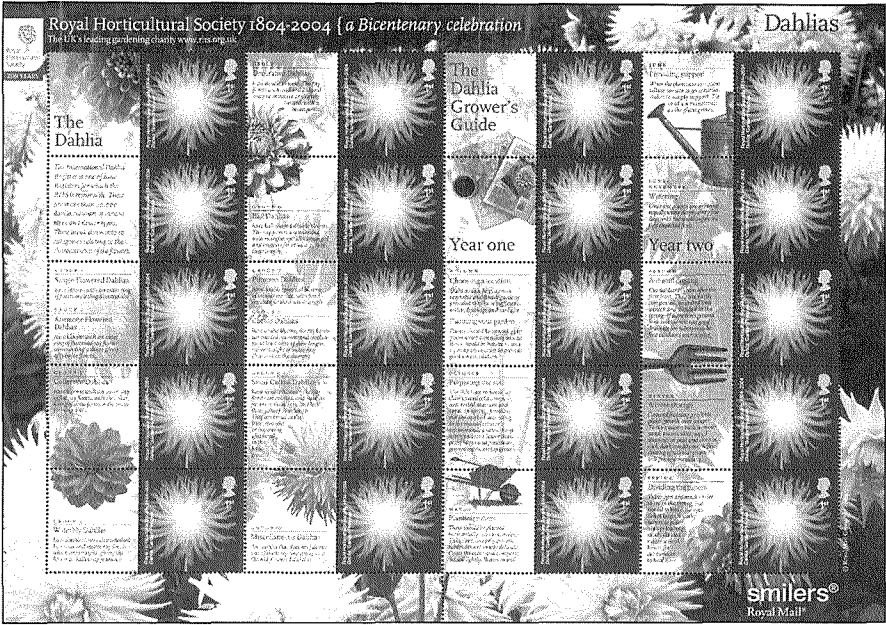


Fig. 21
Bicentenary of the Royal Horticultural Society

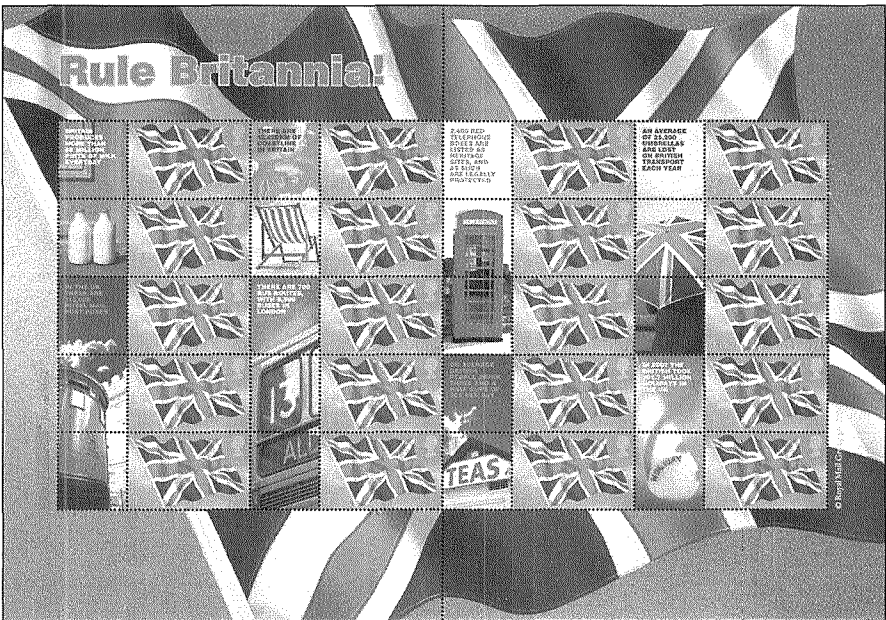


Fig. 22
Rule Britannia



Fig. 23
Christmas Delivery

Year 2005

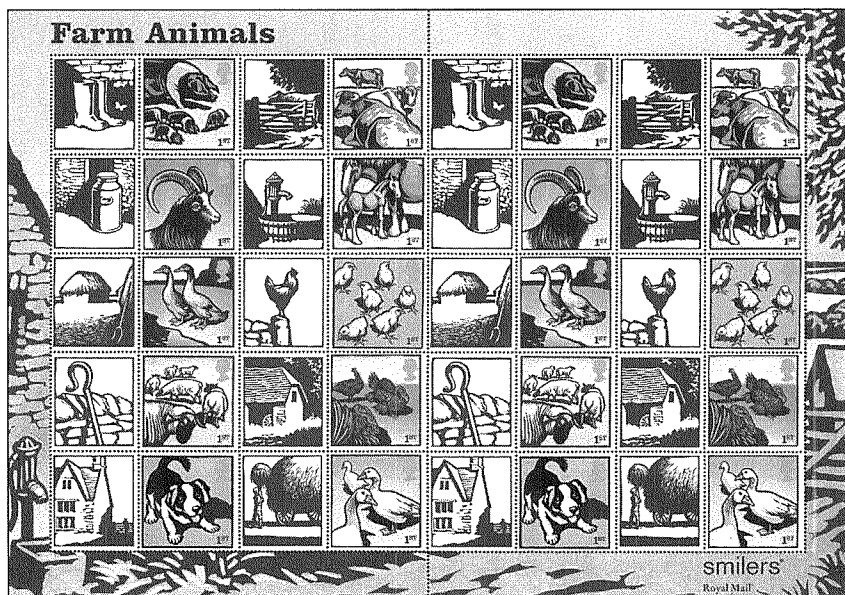


Fig. 24
Farm Animals

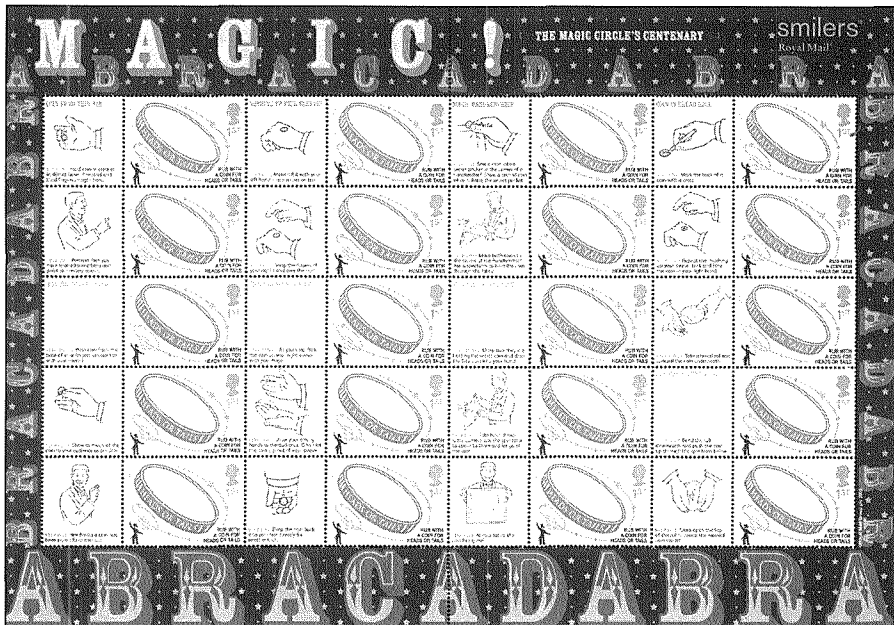


Fig. 25
Magic

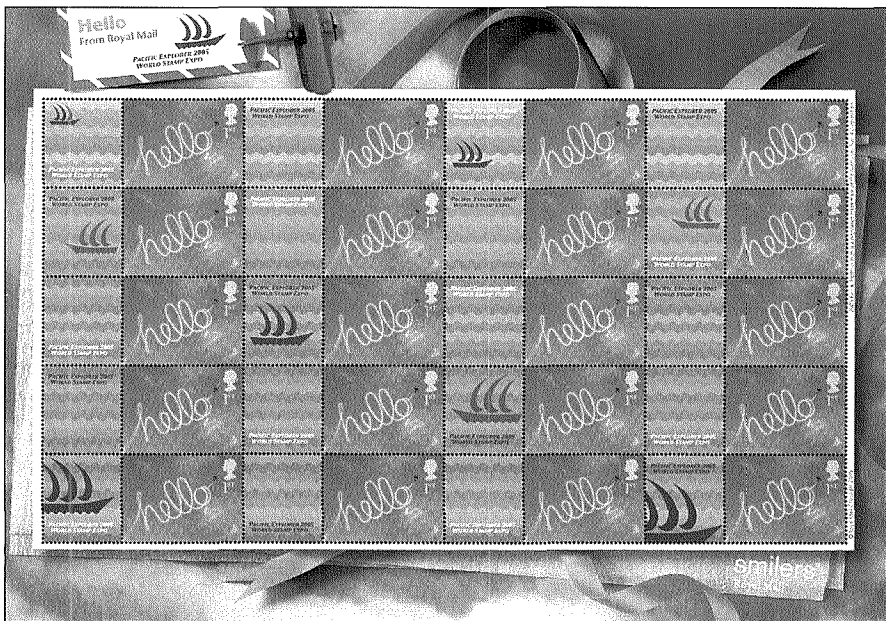


Fig. 26
Hello Occasions

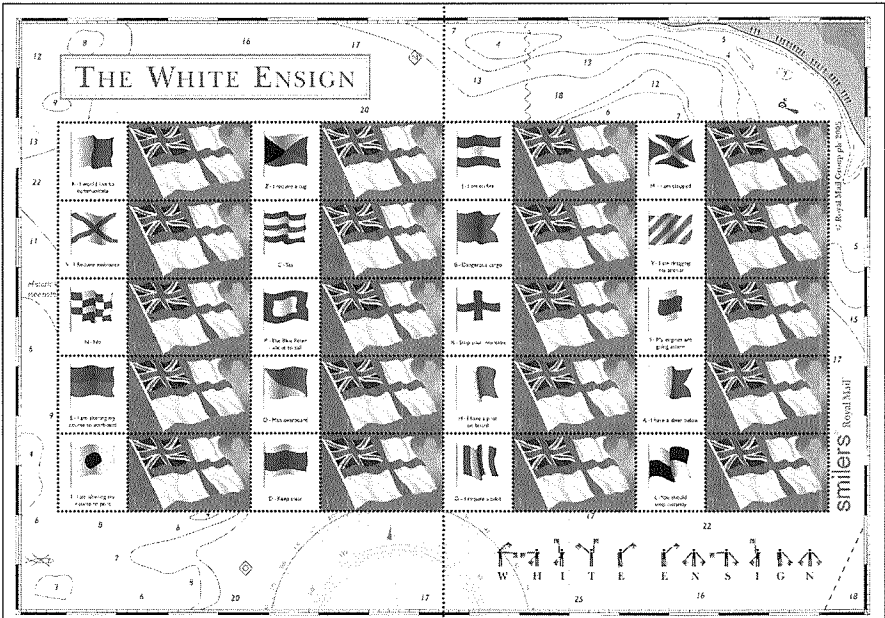


Fig. 27
The White Ensign



Fig. 28
Classic ITV 1955-2005

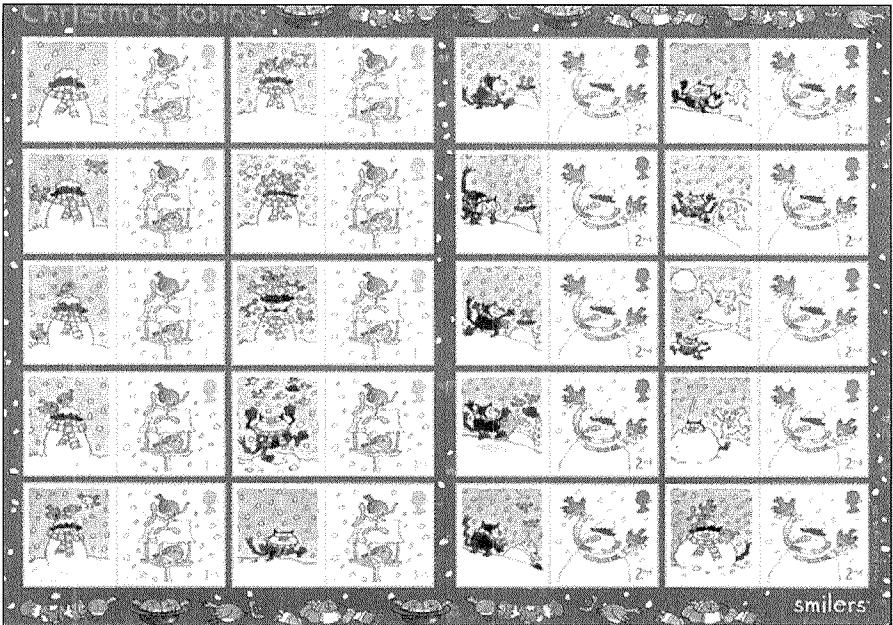


Fig. 29
Christmas

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for Research Purposes

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Dr. A. Bonnici

**'Casa Bonnici', Sir Augustus Bartolo Street,
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Tel: (00356) 2133 8437

Fax: (00356) 2133 9338

E-mail: abonnici@maltanet.net