



News Release
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ROYAL MAIL PAYS 'FAB' TRIBUTE TO PUPPET GENIUS GERRY ANDERSON

AND THUNDERBIRDS ARE GO, ON 'MOVING' MINI SHEET

The puppet characters in *Stingray*, *Joe 90*, *Captain Scarlett* and *Thunderbirds* have enthralled millions since they first arrived on our TV screens in the 1960s, and they are now set to visit our homes again as Royal Mail pays tribute to their creator in a new set of special stamps.

Issued on 11 January, *FAB: The Genius of Gerry Anderson* marks the 50th anniversary of these ground-breaking programmes, which began with *Supercar* in 1961. The set of stamps also includes Royal Mail's first 'motion stamps' on a miniature sheet which using microlenticular printing reveals the *Thunderbirds* take off when tilted back and forth.

Gerry Anderson said: "I feel incredibly proud that my work has been chosen to appear on a set of commemorative stamps and to see actual animation of the opening scenes of *Thunderbirds* on motion stamps, for me, is wonderful."

The stamps, split between 1st Class and 97p values, feature six of his most popular shows: *Supercar*, *Fireball XL5*, *Stingray*, *Thunderbirds*, *Captain Scarlet* and *Joe 90*, highlighting the ingenious characters and incredible vehicles created by Anderson.

For many of course, it's his most celebrated creation, *Thunderbirds*, that we remember, especially its dramatic 5! 4! 3! 2! 1! opening sequence. Now people can relive that moment through a four-stamp miniature sheet. The countdown begins with *Thunderbird 5* - the Earth-orbiting space station keeping a watchful eye from within the miniature sheet's border, whilst a moving image of lift off is revealed for *Thunderbirds 1, 2, 3 and 4*.

Philip Parker, Royal Mail Stamps spokesperson, said: "Gerry Anderson's sophisticated puppetry, combined with his taste for state-of-the-art special effects and futuristic super-vehicles, caused a sensation in the 1960s and his legacy lives on today.

"I'm delighted that Royal Mail is celebrating his ingenuity and inventiveness with our first stamp issue of 2011, and our first motion stamps. I'm sure that collectors and TV fans alike will enjoy the chance to see the opening credits of *Thunderbirds* again - but this time through the technology of stamps!"

Royal Mail is also producing a Retail Stamp Book and Medal Cover to accompany the issue (for more details see Notes to Editors).

The Gerry Anderson archive is represented by ITV Studios Global Entertainment who worked with Royal Mail to produce **FAB: The Genius of Gerry Anderson**.

NOTES TO EDITORS

Stamps and stamp products are available at all Post Office branches, online at www.royalmail.com/stamps the Royal Mail eBay shop: <http://stores.ebay.co.uk/Royal-Mail-Stamp-Collections> and mail order from Royal Mail Tallents House (tel. 08457 641 641), 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh, EH12 9PB

Motion stamps and microlenticular printing

In film, moving images are created by a series of frames each showing an image 1/24th of a second later than the previous frame.

Several seconds of the original Thunderbirds footage, which plays at 30 frames per second, were re-edited to 36 key frames for the project.

Each frame was divided into 36 microthin slices and then placed side by side and micro-printed onto the rear of a special clear magnifying lens in reverse so they read correctly through the lens from the front.

The slices are made to match exactly to fit under one optical lens, of which there are 29 per centimetre.

The unique lens is ridged along its width with tiny curved LENTICULES. When the sliced images are viewed through this lens at an angle of $\pm 47^\circ$, the light is refracted in such a way that all of the slices from one particular frame re-form to show you the whole of the original image before it was sliced.

Thus, as you move the miniature sheet and the light refraction changes, you get the entire sequence, with all 36 images replayed, just like on TV and THUNDERBIRDS ARE GO!

FAB: The Genius of Gerry Anderson - Stamp by Stamp

1st Class - Joe 90

Each week nine year old Joe would download special skills from the Big Rat computer to carry out secret missions. Broadcast 1968 to 1969

1st Class - Captain Scarlet

Rendered indestructible by the alien Mysterons, Spectrum agent Captain Scarlet and his colour co-ordinated colleagues save the world in 32 episodes broadcast from 1967 to 1968.

1st Class - Thunderbirds

From their island hideaway International Rescue coordinate amazing rescue missions with their fantastic machines - like transporter Thunderbird 2 seen about to blast off. Broadcast from 1965 to 1966.

97p - Stingray

From 1964 to 1965 Troy Tempest and Phones of the World Aquanaut Security Patrol, kept humanity safe from various undersea threats, in their submarine, Stingray. This was the first of Anderson's shows in colour.

97p - Fireball XL5

Together with his robot sidekick Robert (who was voiced by Anderson) Colonel Steve Zodiac of the World Space Patrol kept the Earth safe from any interplanetary threat with his rocket ship Fireball XL5.

97p - Supercar

Featuring the adventures of inventor Mike Mercury and his amazing vehicle, that was equally at home on land, under water and in the air. First broadcast between 1961 and 1962.

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FAB: The Genius of Gerry Anderson Miniature Sheet Stamp by Stamp

1st Class - Thunderbird 4

Often transported in one of Thunderbird 2's pods, Thunderbird 4 is a submarine piloted by Gordon Tracy.

60p - Thunderbird 3

Piloted by Alan Tracy, Thunderbird 3 carries out deep space rescues.

88p - Thunderbird 2

Piloted by Virgil Tracy, Thunderbird 2 transports International Rescue's equipment wherever it's needed.

97p - Thunderbird 1

Piloted by elder brother Scott Tracy, Thunderbird 1 is always first on the scene of a rescue.

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Product Portfolio:

Miniature Sheet

Price £2.86

The Miniature Sheet is made up of four new stamps (1st, 60p, 88p and 97p) featuring Thunderbirds 1 to 4. The sheet is printed using microlenticular technology so that when tilted the stamps show each vehicle's launch sequence. The outer space monitoring station Thunderbird 5 is shown in the border.



Presentation Pack No 450 - FAB: The Genius of Gerry Anderson

Price: £7.50

The fully illustrated presentation pack contains the six Gerry Anderson stamps and the Miniature Sheet. Inside Anderson expert Chris Bentley talks to Gerry Anderson about how the shows were devised. The Sheet's Carrier Card explains how the microlenticular technology works in the words of Thunderbird's boffin Brains.

The Pack also contains a four-page folded 'comic' in the style of the 60s comic, *TV Century 21* which goes between the pack and carrier card. The insert was illustrated by Gerry Embleton, one of the original *TV Century 21* illustrators, and written by Stephen La Riviere, and tells the story of how Thunderbirds came about.

First Day Envelope

Price: 30p

First Day Cover

Mail Order Price: Cancelled and stamped only from Tallents House: £5.45 UK for the stamps and £3.92 for the Miniature Sheet

The First Day Cover Envelope was designed by GBH and features the badges of the organisations featured in Gerry Anderson's shows like Spectrum and International Rescue. The filler card designed by GBH and features potted biographies of each of the shows by Chris Bentley.

Retail Stamp Book

Price £2.46

The retail stamp book features two 1st Class Thunderbirds stamps together with four gold Machins.

Thunderbirds Medal Cover

Price £14.95

Edition Limit: 9000

This striking Medal Cover, produced in conjunction with the Royal Mint, concentrates on Gerry Anderson's best known work - Thunderbirds.

Featuring the microlenticular Thunderbirds Miniature Sheet complete with a unique cancellation mark, the Cover features a dramatic and colourful design, in keeping with the design of the Miniature Sheet itself.

The pack insert has been put together in the style of a newspaper 'special' featuring a wealth of imagery and info relating to the International Rescue organisation, Tracy family and their stunning vehicles.

The reverse of the medal shows a dramatic depiction of Thunderbird 1 blasting off from Tracy Island, the obverse showing the international Rescue logo alongside Jeff Tracy and his five famous sons.

Stamp Cards

Price £4.95 the set

Eleven postcards bearing enlarged images of each of the six 'FAB The Genius of Gerry Anderson' stamps, the four Miniature sheet stamps and the Miniature Sheet go on sale about a week before the stamp issue date.

Postmarks

Two different pictorial 'first day of issue postmarks' are available for every new stamp issue:



Unstamped Royal Mail First Day Cover envelopes (price 30p) will be available from Post Office® branches and philatelic outlets approximately one week before issue. Collectors who hand in or post covers at main Post Office® branches will receive the pictorial SLOUGH first day postmark.

Alternatively, collectors may send stamped covers for the first day of issue to Royal Mail, Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB, quoting reference FD11 01 (Tallents House) or to any Special Handstamp Centre quoting reference FD11 02 (SLOUGH pictorial postmark) FD11 02NP (non-pictorial).