

Punch and Judy New stamps celebrate the



Technical details

Printer and process Walsall Security Printers, gravure

Sheets 60

Stamp size 30 × 41mm

Perforation 14 × 15

Phosphor Two bands (vignetted)

Gum PVA

Gutter pairs Vertical

Cylinders and colours

W1 greenish yellow ● W1 bright magenta ● W1 new blue ● W1 grey black ● W1 violet ● W1 deep magenta ● W1 ultra-marine ● W1 silver ● W1 phosphor

SIX 1ST CLASS STAMPS featuring characters from Punch & Judy shows will be available from post offices, Royal Mail Tallents House Edinburgh, and philatelic outlets from 4 September. The stamps, printed in a horizontal set-tenant strip, feature: policeman, clown, Mr Punch, Judy, beadle, and the crocodile eating sausages. The Queen's silhouette is printed in silver at top left, with the 1st service indicator below at bottom right.

The stamps are the work of Keith Bernstein who photographed puppets made by Bryan Clarke, also known as 'Professor Jingles'. Mr Bernstein is a news & features photographer for major European and American magazines, including *The Sunday Times Magazine*, *Newsweek*, *Paris Match*, *Figaro*, and the *New York Times*. Bryan Clarke first became interested in Punch & Judy after seeing a show on Lowestoft Beach in 1945 and by age 12 he was the youngest Punch & Judy 'professor' in the world. He studied art at West Ham Polytechnic and turned his skills to puppet making and producing puppet theatres, and became a full-time professional in 1976 becoming Lowestoft beach's Punch & Judy man. During the winter months he produces hand-carved Punch & Judy puppets from blocks of beech or pine.

characters who have captivated generations



FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail FDC envelopes will be available from main post offices and philatelic outlets about a week before 4 September, price 25p. Orders for serviced FDCs with the four stamps or cancelled by a pictorial first day postmark of Royal Mail Tallents House Edinburgh or Blackpool must reach Tallents House (address below) by the day of issue. Price £2.32 UK (including VAT) or £1.98 overseas (no VAT).

Collectors may send stamped covers on the day of issue to: Royal Mail, Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB (Tallents House postmark), or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, South Shields DO, Keppell Street, South Shields NE33 1AA (Blackpool postmark), marking the outer envelope 'FD0117' (Tallents House) or 'FD0118' (Blackpool). Covers can be posted or handed in at main post offices for the Blackpool postmark.

PUNCH & JUDY STAMP BOOK A book containing the stamps showing Mr Punch and Judy stamps and four 1st class definitives will be available from Tallents House and philatelic outlets from 4 September, price £1.62. All stamps will be self-adhesive, printed by The House of Questa in gravure •

A well-illustrated presentation pack (left) containing the six stamps (price £2) and stamp cards (25p each) will be available from main post offices and philatelic outlets. The FDC envelope and pack were designed by Howard Brown.

Details of other 4 September handstamps will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin*, available on subscription from Tallents House (£10 UK and Europe; £21.75 elsewhere).

For a sample copy write to: The Editor, *British Postmark Bulletin*, Royal Mail, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8HQ.



The 35p of the 1994 Picture Postcard Centenary shows a Punch and Judy show on the beach. On the Bureau's first day postmark for this issue, the crocodile steals Punch's sausages. The 19p in this set shows Blackpool Tower.

Punch and Judy Mr Punch, the hook-nosed hunchback in a striped costume, is probably the best-known of all characters in street puppet shows. The origins go back to the European improvised drama of the 16th-18th centuries and the Italian *Commedia dell'arte*. In May 1662 Samuel Pepys wrote of witnessing a performance of Pollicinella in London's Covent Garden. This is the earliest known appearance of the character who was to become known as PUNCHINELLO and it is thought that at this time he was a marionette. *Punchinello*, published in 1832, was a forerunner of the famous *Punch* magazine which made its debut in 1841.

The Punch and Judy show story involves the dissipated, violent and cunning Punch killing his child, and attacking his wife, dog, and doctor. He is arrested and sentenced to death but beguiles the hangman into putting his own head in the noose. He is visited by the Devil who he vanquishes. Some aspects of the story may be based on vices in medieval morality drama.

Originally Punch and Judy was very much a London phenomenon where street theatre was very popular throughout Victorian times and up to the First World War. It has enjoyed a considerable revival, particularly in Covent Garden, in recent years. Yet for many people it will always be associated with the seaside – as famous as donkey rides, candyfloss and the fun fair. The stamps will bring back many happy memories of holidays long-gone ●

Punch and Judy on stamps These are the first Royal Mail stamps dedicated to Punch and Judy, although characters have featured on earlier issues ●

Punch appears on the covers of four £1 stamp books issued between September 1991 and July 1992, to mark *Punch* magazine's 150th anniversary.



Mr Punch also appears on 20p & 1st class 'Smiles' greetings stamps of 6 February 1990 & 26 March 1991, and on special handstamps for Puncheston used on these dates. (The 1st class stamps were reissued in 'Smiles' sheets with pictorial labels or personal photograph in May 2000 and June 2001.)



The only overseas Punch and Judy stamp we can trace is this West German Europa issue of 1989. We should be pleased to hear from readers who know of any others.