

Greetings Stamps

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DAVID DALE

Manager Definitive Stamps, Royal Mail Stamps & Philately

On Tuesday 31 January 1989 a new stamp issue will appear which arguably fits none of the accepted categories which exist at present. The stamps are the same size as a standard special issue (41 x 30mm or "gentleman" sized) but they will appear only in books, not in sheets, and they will be on long term sale. So these stamps will not be like any other special, definitive or book issue made by The Post Office.

The description which will appear on the book cover and which will be used by The Post Office in promoting the stamps is "Royal Mail



Greetings Stamps". Collectors will have to make their own decisions about how, where and whether they fit into their GB collections.

The basic idea of Greetings stamps is that they should complement the card or letter inside the envelope. People may often put considerable effort into writing a letter or choosing the right card and by using a Greetings stamp they can make the outside of the envelope into something special.



Nowadays we send more letters under the general heading of "social mail" than our Victorian or Edwardian ancestors in spite of the development of the telephone. However the general trend has been for letter writing to decrease and the sending of postcards and greetings cards to increase.

Greetings stamps are intended to complement and promote this important sector of mail traffic. The designs have been made reasonably general so they are not tied to specific occasions but they are intended to be suitable for birthdays and messages such as "Best Wishes" and "With Love".

The five designs are repeated twice to form a book of 10 stamps to sell at £1.90 with 12 greetings labels also included. For The Post Office, the extra cost of producing the books will be recovered if customers buy 10 stamps at a time rather than one or two. The customer can of course use the stamps for any purpose.

Full details of the issue including the book cover and greetings labels will be published in the January *Bulletin*.

