

Royal Mail News

1996 Greetings Stamps

The eighth issue of Royal Mail Greetings stamps will be released on 26 February 1996, comprising ten 1st class stamps reproducing cartoons. The stamps will be sold in a book, including 20 free Greetings labels, available from post offices, selected retail outlets, the British Philatelic Bureau, and Post Office Counters philatelic outlets, price £2.50. Some relevant dates for the use of Greetings stamps are given on the inside front cover of the book: Mother's Day (17 March), Easter (7 April), Father's Day (16 June), and Grandparent's Day (28 September).

The stamps were designed by Michael Wolff using cartoons by several well-known names. The works featured are: "More Love" (by Mel Calman); "Sincerely" (Charles Barsotti); "Do you have something for the human condition?" (Calman); "Mental Floss" (Leo Cullum); "Don't ring" (Barsotti); "Dear Lottery prize Winner" (Larry); "I'm writing to you because..." (Calman); "Fetch this, Fetch that..." (Barsotti); "My day starts before I'm ready for it" (Calman);

and "The cheque is in the post" (Jack Ziegler). Each stamp bears the silhouette head of The Queen at top right with the "1ST" (1st class) designation below.

The stamps are printed in a pane of 10 (two rows of five horizontally) with 20 accompanying labels – two each of 10 different messages: "It's only you that's incompatible...", "Best wishes", "Truth is too precious to tell every fool who asks for it...", "Congratulations", "with love", "It takes two to make a neurotic...", "happy birthday", "please write back", "Being a failure isn't as easy as it looks...", and "Whatever it is – I deny it". The lettering on the labels is by Mel Calman; they are separated from the stamps by a gutter margin.

The front cover of the book reproduces Calman's "More! Love" drawing. When closed the book measures 95 x 60mm.

The Cartoonists

The little man, by Mel Calman (1931-94) became familiar to readers of *The Times* and *Evening Standard*. "He is my alter-ego" explained Calman, "I don't know what I would do without him. I imagine that he feels the same way about me." He trained at the Borough Art School and St Martin's School of Art. Numerous books of his work have been published and in September 1995 the British Cartoonists' Association and *The Times* launched the Mel Calman Awards for





young cartoonists of the year. Winning entries from this competition will be displayed in the National Postal Museum's temporary exhibition gallery from 26 February when the Greetings stamps go on sale. Calman was influenced by James Thurber and amused by, amongst other, Woody Allen, S J Perelman, Heath Robinson, life and people.

Charles Barsotti was born in San Marcos, Texas and began "cartooning" for his college newspaper. He was the last Cartoon Editor of the great American magazine, *The Saturday Evening Post*. His work has featured in *The New Yorker* (since 1970), *Punch*, and many other publications. The work of Thurber and William Steig influenced Barsotti, who enjoys the humour of the Monty Python, *Fawlty Towers* and *Absolutely Fabulous* television programmes.

Leo Cullum, born in New Jersey in 1942, is a self-taught cartoonist whose characters make regular appearances in *The New Yorker*, *Barrons* magazine, and the *Harvard Business Review*. Cullum claims he "gives in to the compulsion to

draw" whenever there is a pencil and paper to hand. Some of his cartoons have been influenced by "having grown up with lots of cousins and uncles about, where humour was valued."

Larry (Terence Parkes) was born in Birmingham in 1927 and educated at the city's art college. He drew cartoons for the now defunct *Punch* magazine nearly every week for 30 years. He has also worked for *Private Eye* and a host of other magazines. He claims his cartoon characters are inspired by his family. He is not amused by many of today's young comedians, and tries never to miss TV appearances by Alan Bennett, John Fortune and John Bird.

Jack Ziegler, born in New York City in 1942 and educated at Fordham University, has been a freelance cartoonist since 1972. A contract cartoonist for *New Yorker* since 1974, he has had five collections of his drawings published, and has illustrated many books. The cartoon shown on the stamp is based on the drawing originally published in the *New Yorker* in 1986. His major influences have been Harvey Kurtzman, Robert Crumb, B Kliban, and George Booth.

The Designer

The 10 stamps were designed by Michael Wolff who was born in London in 1933, just a few hours after his parents arrived from St Petersburg to make a new life in England. He was educated at Greshams School and



Hammersmith School of Art before joining the Royal Army Service Corps to continue studies into "humanity in institutions". He entered the world of Design in the mid-1950s and in 1964 started Main Wolff & Partners with James Main who was replaced by Wally Olins the following year. The company became the leading European firm in "corporate identity" with clients such as Audi, Apple (the Beatles), British Airports, Renault, and Volkswagen. In 1971 Mr Wolff was elected the first President of the Designers & Art Directors Association. In 1983 he set up the Consortium consultancy company which has undertaken work for the National Health Service, British Library and W H Smith. He served on the Royal Mail Stamp Advisory Committee in the 1980s.

Cartoons

Originally the term *cartoon* (from Italian cartone – large sheet of paper) referred to a preliminary drawing for a painting or tapestry. Perhaps the best-known cartoons are those of Leonardo da Vinci and Raphael.

The term *caricature* (after drawings of Annibale Carracci, 1560-1609) was first used in English in 1748 at the time of Hogarth. Cartoons or caricatures of politicians and members of the Royal Family were popular in the 18th century – best exemplified in the work of James Gillray (1757-1815) and Thomas Rowlandson (1756-1827). In the 19th century, the magazines *Punch* and *Vanity Fair* published cartoons which are still much admired – and collected – today. Sir Max Beerbohm (1872-1956) caricatured Queen Victoria and the Prince of Wales (Edward VII) and "Spy" (Sir Leslie Ward, 1851-1922) drew, for *Vanity Fair*, many of the leading characters of the time, including the eminent philatelist, the Earl of Crawford. (A framed example is preserved at the Royal Philatelic Society, London.)

Britain can be proud of many great cartoonists, including Sir David Low (1891-1963), Sir Osbert Lancaster (1908-86), Wally Fawkes ("Trog"), Gerald Scarfe (born 1936), and Carl Giles (1916-95), famous for grandmother in his "Giles Family". Cartoons are an essential part of our newspapers and magazines – including this *Bulletin*.

Many famous people collect cartoons, such as Kenneth Baker, the former Home Secretary, who presented a TV series on the history of cartoons. In a foreword to the book "*We are amused*": *The Cartoonists' View of Royalty* (Bodley Head, 1978), HRH The Prince of Wales wrote of the

importance of being able to laugh at oneself, and reflected that the present Royal Family had been more politely treated by the cartoonists than had George III and his family. The book, resulting from an exhibition of Royal Cartoons at the London Press Club in 1977, features one by Trog based on the 9d Concorde stamp of 1969. Various cartoons using stamp design have appeared in the newspapers in recent years.

Cartoons on stamps

Cartoon-style illustrations, including one of Astronomer-Royal Edmond Halley, by Ralph Steadman, featured on the 1986 Halley's Comet stamps. (A Steadman self-portrait cartoon appeared in the February 1986 *Bulletin*). Other cartoon characters were shown on the 27p and 32p stamps of the 1988 Edward Lear set, and on Quentin Blake's 1993 Christmas stamps. A number of comic strip and animated cartoon characters have been used on earlier greetings stamps – Dennis the Menace, The Bash Street Kids, Dan Dare, Noggin the Nog, and Paddington Bear. The cartoon-style, humorous seaside postcards, made famous by Donald McGill, featured on the 1994 Pictorial Postcards stamps. Amongst recent issues featuring cartoons and comic strips from other countries is a pane of 20 "Comic Strip Classics" stamps issued by the US Post Office on 1 October 1995.

Technical Details

| |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Printer:</i> Walsall Security Printers Ltd |
| <i>Process:</i> Offset lithography |
| <i>Stamp size:</i> 41 x 30mm |
| <i>Perforation:</i> 15 x 14 with elliptical perforation on vertical sides |
| <i>Phosphor:</i> Phosphor screen |
| <i>Paper:</i> OBA free (OBA = Optical Brightening Agent) |
| <i>Gum:</i> PVA |

First Day Facilities

Unstamped Royal Mail first day cover envelopes will be available from the Bureau, PO Counters philatelic outlets and main post offices about a week before 26 February, price 25p.

The Bureau will provide a first day cover service – collectors may order the Royal Mail cover bearing the stamps cancelled by a Bureau or Titterhill "First Day of Issue" pictorial postmark, price £3.36 (inc VAT) to UK addresses, £2.86 (no VAT) overseas. Orders for serviced covers must reach the Bureau by 26 February. Titterhill is situated near Haydons Bent, Ludlow, Shropshire.



Collectors may send their own stamped covers, on the day of issue, for the pictorial postmarks to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH EH3 5TT or Wales & West Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Penarth Road, CARDIFF CF1 1AA (Titterhill cancel). The outer envelope should be marked "FD9603" (Bureau or "FD9604" (Titterhill).

First Day Posting boxes will be provided at most main post offices for collectors who wish to post covers to receive local (mostly non-pictorial) "First Day of Issue" handstamps. Details of other special handstamps, sponsored by Royal Mail, stamp dealers and others will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin* – Royal Mail's magazine for postmark collectors. This is available on subscription from the Bureau: £10 UK/Europe, £21.50 Rest of World (Airmail).

Presentation Pack & Stamp Cards

A Greetings Pack (No. G5) containing the pane of stamps and labels will be available from 26 February, price £2.85. Stamp cards, reproducing each of the 10 designs will go on sale about one week before the stamps, price 25p each.

Earlier Greetings Stamps

Several earlier Greetings stamp books are still available from the British Philatelic Bureau, also the 1995 Greetings pack and stamp cards. Details can be found on the Bureau's current stock list.

Railway Aerogrammes

Royal Mail International will issue a set of aerogrammes featuring railway locomotives and trains on 30 January 1996. These will be available from the British Philatelic Bureau as well as post offices.

Stamp Books Update

Shown here are the front covers of the new £1 and £2 machine books which go on sale at the Bureau and Post Office Counters philatelic outlets on 16 January. They will replace existing books in machines at post offices and other outlets as stocks of earlier books are used up. Details of the new books were published here last month.

Please note that the books with the Olympic logos have been delayed – they are now expected to be available from 6 February 1996, not January as announced earlier.

A new promotional book will be available from 19 February. This will include a Disney promotion, following on from earlier W H Smith and Sainsbury's campaigns. The book will contain ten 1st class NV1 stamps. Details next month.

National Postal Museum News

The Museum will issue four "Valentines" postcards on 14 February:

96/1 Handcoloured Valentine card, made about 1860.

96/2 Handcoloured Valentine card, made about 1830.

96/3 "Loves Telegraph" handcoloured Valentine card, made in the workshop of Dobbs Kidd & Co in the 1870s.

96/4 Handcoloured Valentine card, made about 1822.

All four cards are from the NPM collection. Valentines have featured on earlier NPM cards and a fine exhibition of them was mounted at the Museum two years ago (see *Bulletin* March 1994).

The four postcards will be available at the