

## Royal Mail news Greetings stamps • 1997 Definitives and Stamp Books • Greetings Book reprint • Award for Christmas stamp • NPM news • Angela Reeves heads west

**1997 Greetings Stamps** The ninth issue of Royal Mail greetings stamps will go on sale at post offices, retail and philatelic outlets on 6 January 1997. Ten stamps featuring flowers will be sold in a book, including 20 free Greetings labels, price £2.60.

*Gentiana acaulis* by Georg Dionysius Ehret (1708-70)

*Magnolia altissima* (modern name *Magnolia grandiflora*) by Ehret

*Camellia japonica variegata* by Alfred Chandler (1804-96) a nurseryman from Vauxhall, London

*Tulipa* by Ehret



*Le Perroquet rouge – Tulipia gesneriana* by Ehret

*Gazania splendens* (modern name *Guzmania splendens* x) by Charlotte Caroline Sowerby (1820-65)

*Iris latifolia* by Ehret

*Amaryllis bresiliensis* (modern name *Hippeastrum rutilum*) by Pierre-Joseph Redoute (1759-1840)



The stamps, designed by Tuttsels design group, show details of flower drawings by five eminent botanical illustrators.

Six of the illustrations are by Georg Dionysius Ehret (1708-70), one of the most talented of all botanical illustrators. Born in Heidelberg, he began his working life as a gardener, but decided to study the science of plants and came to England in 1735. He contributed to many botanical books including his own *Plantae et Papiliones Rariores* (1748-62) and was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1757. His work was prodigious, amounting to over 3000 illustrations.

**FIRST DAY FACILITIES** Unstamped Royal Mail first day cover envelopes will be available from main post offices, the British Philatelic Bureau and Post Office Counters philatelic outlets around a week before 6 January, price 25p.

The Bureau will provide a first day cover service – collectors may order the Royal Mail cover bearing the stamps, cancelled with a pictorial 'first day of issue' postmark of the Bureau or Kew, Richmond, Surrey, price £3.47 (including VAT) to UK addresses, £2.96 to overseas addresses (no VAT). Orders for first day covers must be received at the Bureau by 6 January 1997.

Collectors may send their own stamped covers on the day of issue, for these cancels, to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh

#### **Fuchsia 'Princess of Wales'**

by Augusta Innes Withers (1792-1869) botanical artist to Queen Adelaide, wife of William IV

**The greetings labels** also include flower illustrations with messages such as Best Wishes, Thank You, Happy Birthday, With Love, Congratulations.

#### **Technical details**

**Printers** Walsall Security Printers Ltd

**Process** Offset lithography

**Size** 41 × 30mm

**Perforation** 15 × 14

**Phosphor** Two phosphor bands, blue fluor in phosphor

**Paper** OBA (Optical Brightening Agent) free

**Gum** PVA



**Granadilla** (modern name *Passiflora coerulea*) by Ehret

EH3 5TT, or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Mount Pleasant, London EC1A 1BB (for Kew postmark). The outer envelope should be endorsed 'FD9701' (Bureau), or 'FD9702' (Kew). 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 found in the *British Postmark Bulletin* – the Royal Mail's magazine for postmark collectors. It is available on subscription from the British Philatelic Bureau: £10 UK and Europe; £21.75 rest of world (airmail).

**The front cover of the book** features Ehret's illustration of *Gentiana acaulis*. The names of the flowers, with acknowledgements to the source of the illustrations is given on the inside back cover. Information about greetings stamps and their use appears on the inside front cover. The back cover is given over to the barcode.



**Presentation pack and stamp cards** A presentation pack (reference G6, price £2.95) and stamp cards (25p each) will be available from the Bureau, Post Office Counters philatelic outlets, and main post offices. The pack reproduces the flower illustrations with a brief description of each subject, and biographical details of the botanical illustrators. A portrait of Ehret is reproduced. The text was written by Fay Sweet.

**EARLIER FLOWER AND GREETINGS STAMPS** Flowers have been depicted on many Royal Mail stamps, both definitives and special issues. Amongst the main flower stamps are: 1963 National Nature Week 3d, 1964 Botanical Congress, 1967 Wild Flowers, 1976 Roses, 1979 Spring Flowers, 1987 Flower Photographs, 1991 Roses, and 1993 Orchids.

Greetings stamps were introduced in 1989 with a set of five designs, one of which featured a rose. Flowers were shown on two of the 1992 Memorics issue.

Several earlier books of greetings stamps books are still available from the British Philatelic Bureau, also the 1995 and 1996 greetings packs and stamp cards. Details can be found in the Bureau's current stock list.

The 1990 greetings stamps won first prize in the Graphics section of the prestigious BBC Design Competition that year ●

**1996 Greetings Book reprint** Readers are reminded that a reprint of the 1996 Cartoons book will be available from the Bureau and Post Office Counters philatelic outlets from 11 November. This will contain stamps with phosphor bands instead of a phosphor screen as in the original printing. The cover text has also been amended ●

**Definitive variation** The 2nd class NV1 stamp in sheets will in future have extended phosphor bands. This printing will be available from the Bureau from 3 December ●