

Cinderella Time: **Ragdolls on Stamps**

By Christer Brunström, AIJP

In 1991, Sweden introduced new legislation which abolished the postal monopoly of Post Sweden. Provided that permission had been obtained from the Posts and Telecommunications Authority, anyone is allowed to operate a postal service (and issue postage stamps).



The start was rather slow but a Post Sweden rate hike in 1996 changed the situation dramatically. Numerous entrepreneurs throughout the country realized that it was now possible to deliver mail locally at rates lower than those charged by Post Sweden. One of the companies was Novydux HB in Mullsjö. The owner of this company is a man called Sven-Allan Egerbo.

Today most of the local posts that were started in 1996 or 1997 have closed. It turned out to be far more difficult than expected to make ends meet. One of the companies which is still very much in existence is Novydux in the town of Mullsjö located just west of the city of Jönköping at the southern end of Lake Vättern.

It seems that one-man enterprises have a bigger chance of being successful in the very competitive postal market. Egerbo's privately run local post serves the towns of Mullsjö and Sandhem. He has also secured the contract to deliver the internal mail of the Mullsjö local council. Additionally he rents out mail boxes. Egerbo's local post has now existed for more than 15 years and it serves its community well.

The first two stamps of 1996 only had the company name of Novydux. Later stamps are either inscribed LOKALPOST MULLSJÖ or just MULLSJÖ. The latter is true for the latest issue released on 8 December 2011. The two stamps depict Ragdoll cats.

The denominations are 3.50 and 4 kronor. The 3.50 rate is for second-class delivery of letters up to 50 grammes. Those letters will be delivered two days after they have been deposited in the letter boxes. The first-class rate is 4.00 which secures next day delivery. There are no deliveries on Saturdays or Sundays. There is a rate schedule ranging from 50 grammes to 2000 grammes.

As Post Sweden charges SEK 6.00 for first-class and 5.50 for second-class, the rates offered by the local post represent a considerable savings for local businesses.

The new stamps were produced by Z-Print in the city of Jönköping. There were 10,000 copies of each denomination. The stamps are line perforated and sold in booklets of 12 stamps. Rather interestingly the stamps are arranged in vertical tête-bêche pairs.

The stamps can be obtained from the office of the local post and from three different shops.

Six-year old Tosca is depicted on the 4-krona stamp. Tosca also appears on the 3.50 stamp along with Findus, a six-year old Ragdoll. The designs are based on photographs taken by Sven-Allan Egerbo. The actual layout of the stamps was prepared by staff members of the printing company.



The Ragdolls belong to the Egerbo household and Sven-Allan tells me that Tosca is extremely cuddly and follows him everywhere in the house.

These two new stamps will fit nicely into a collection of Cats on Stamps. *Mekeel's & STAMPS* readers can order them directly from the local post as I very much doubt they will be available from stamp dealers in North America.

[I have added U.S. prices in brackets here, based on 8.60 SEK to one dollar as of April 15, 2015, but you may need to adjust that at the time you order.] Complete booklets are SEK 42:- [\$4.90] and 48:- [\$5.60] respectively. Single stamps are of course available at face value. Postage to the USA is SEK 12:- [\$1.40] for a 20-gramme [.71

ounce] letter and 26:- [\$3] for a 100-gramme [3.53 ounce] letter. Mr Egerbo is willing to accept U.S. dollar bills as payment. Please address all correspondence to Mullsjö Lokalpost, Box 806, SE-565 18 Mullsjö, Sweden.

Sven-Allan Egerbo is not only the owner of a local post delivery service; he also is a stamp collector. I feel confident that he will attend to requests for stamps and covers in the best way possible.

In 2010, the Swedish Cinderella Society had its annual general meeting in Mullsjö with Mr Egerbo as the guest of honour. The local post even released a commemorative postage stamp marking the event.

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