

Modern Cartoons



Above: Henry Mayo Bateman (1887-1970), *The Boy Who Breathed on Glass in the British Museum (detail)* 1916, Pen and black ink., 505 x 364 mm (full sheet) 1951-8-27-1, © H. M. Bateman Designs Ltd

The Department of Prints and Drawings has the most extensive collection of British graphic satire from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. This includes a comprehensive group of prints by William Hogarth (1697-1764); satirical prints or caricatures by James Gillray (1756-1815), Thomas Rowlandson (1756-1827) and George Cruikshank (1792-1878); drawings and lithographs by John 'HB' Doyle (1797-1868), and work by many other artists. The modern use of the word 'cartoon' as applied to humorous or satirical representations, dates from 1843 when [John Leech](#) (1817-1864) published a facetious drawing directed against the exhibition of the cartoons, i.e. full-scale preparatory designs, for the decorative scheme proposed for the new Houses of Parliament. From the mid-nineteenth century onwards there are cartoons by many of the generations of contributors to the magazine *Punch*, which was founded in 1841, including Richard Doyle (1824-1883) and Leech, and later artists such as Charles Keene (1823-1891), George Du Maurier (1834-1896), Phil May (1864-1903) and Sir John Tenniel (1820-1914). Furthermore, there are chromo-lithographs introduced by *Vanity Fair* (1869-1913) and some original drawings for the first British comic, *Ally Sloper's Half Holiday* (first published in 1884), by William Giles Baxter (1856-1888) and William Fletcher Thomas (fl. 1885-1922).

Caricatures published as single-sheet prints were largely superseded by the development of new printing technology and the advent of mass circulation newspapers and magazines in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The emphasis for the period thereafter is thus on acquiring a selection of the original drawings produced by the leading cartoonists. The Department has drawings by many of the 'classic' cartoonists, including Max Beerbohm (1872-1956), William Heath Robinson (1872-1944), Henry Mayo Bateman (1887-1970) and David Low (1891-1963). It is especially fortunate to have numerous drawings by Ronald Searle (b.1920), one of the most influential draughtsmen of the second half of the twentieth century. One group of drawings includes preparatory studies for a series of medals produced by the French Mint in 1976-1977 to celebrate *The Fathers of Caricature* (the medals belong to the Department of Coins and Medals). Another group consists of his drawings for *The Rake's Progress* published in *Punch* and as a separate book in 1954-1955. Also of note are four drawings by Ralph Steadman (b.1936) and a varied group of cartoons and strips by Wally 'Trog' Fawkes (b.1924). There are amusing pocket cartoon drawings by Hector Breeze (b.1928), David Austin (b.1935), Tony Husband (b.1950) and Matthew 'Matt' Pritchett (b.1965).

Drawings by such diverse artists as Eric Fraser (1902-1983), R.S. Sherriffs (1906-1960), Graham 'Pont' Laidler (1908-1940), 'ffolkes' (1925-1988), John Glashan (1927-1999), John Jensen (b.1930), Mark 'Marc' Boxer (1931-1988), Nicholas Garland (b.1935), Ed McLachlan (b.1940), Posy Simmonds (b.1945), and Steve Bell (b.1951) have been acquired through purchase and gift. Terence 'Larry' Parkes (b.1927) made a group of ten drawings inspired by the British Museum and generously presented them to the Department, while cartoonist, illustrator and writer Mel Calman (1931-1994), not only presented examples of his own work but also encouraged other cartoonists to do likewise.

There remains an enduring tradition of graphic satire. In this country the daily newspapers and periodical publications such as *Private Eye* and *The Spectator*, among others, continue to publish cartoons. The Department of Prints and Drawings offers an unparalleled opportunity to study the history of graphic satire within the context of its precursors including the work of foreign artists such as Goya and Daumier.

Works in Other Collections

London	British Library, Punch Archive The Cartoon Museum National Portrait Gallery Victoria and Albert Museum
UK	The Centre for Study of Cartoons and Caricatures, University of Kent, Canterbury

Further Reading

Bryant, M. and Heneage, S. *Dictionary of British Cartoonists and Caricaturists 1730-1980*. Scolar Press, 1994

Feaver, W. and Gould, A. *Masters of Caricature from Hogarth and Gillray to Scarfe and Levine*. Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1981

Godfrey, R. *English caricature: 1620 to the Present*. Victoria and Albert Museum, 1984