

STAMPTM

MAGAZINE



The Edward VII series designed by George V



How Royal Mail's Sherlock set is far from elementary



Ocean liners

Blue Riband ships celebrated on stamps

Comprehensive guide to Virtual Stampex



Sub-post offices

Whatever happened to the class of 1997?

The humble halfpenny



Why Great Britain needed a 1½d value by 1870, and how its tiniest stamp was devised, printed and used





Ludwig van Beethoven's 250th birthday

The Faroese artist, Heiðrik á Heygum has designed the mini-sheet. He has dressed the great composer up in the Faroese national costume, placed him in quintessential Faroese surroundings – enveloped by equally iconic examples of Faroese flora and fauna.



Faroe Islands Stamps

New Stamp issues 21 September 2020

125 years of motion pictures

2020 marks the 125th anniversary of the first motion picture screening. The stamps picture two movies by Faroese film director, Katrin Ottarsdóttir: *Bye Bye Blue Bird* and *Ludo*.



Chasubles II

The second issue in the chasubles series depicts the violet chasuble of Viðareiši church and the white chasuble of Kvívik church. Violet is the colour of the Advent and fasting - and white, the colour of Christmas and Easter

Faroeese chess tradition

In the Faroe Islands, the chess tradition also gained its local characteristics and this stamp issue describes two of them: the "rook" and "four player chess". Design: Ole Wich.



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- Olympics Games and Football



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WELCOME

We've all learned a multitude of new words and phrases during 2020. It started with Covid-19, and continued with pandemic, epidemiology, lockdown, furlough, R number, social distancing, self-quarantine, personal protective equipment, elbow bump and even infodemic.



If you like, as a convenient shorthand, you can wrap these up in the all-encompassing 'new normal'. (I'll be sorely tempted to punch the first person who uses that expression in a face-to-face conversation with me, but since I'll be standing two metres away I'll probably swing and miss.)

But now here comes an extra phrase that you never thought you'd hear: Virtual Stampex.

Yes, Britain's premier stamp exhibition is migrating online this autumn, which means those who are comfortable using the internet can experiment with a whole new way of interacting with dealers, and with each other, from the comfort of their armchairs.

Let's make no bones about it; some collectors are going to love this idea (no travelling, no hotel bill, no sore feet) and others are going to loathe it (less ambience, less impulse-buying). What is undeniable, in my opinion, is that the Philatelic Traders Society should be congratulated for conceiving of it, and for throwing so much energy at it. This year, after all, it is either Virtual Stampex or no Stampex at all.

In this issue (page 14), we've attempted to give you some inkling of what to expect on October 1-3, and I urge everyone to log on and try it out. It promises to be a talking point for many years to come, so you might regret it if you weren't there. You're still fully entitled to hope that it's not the new normal.

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IN THIS ISSUE



40 The extraordinary genesis, and extraordinary usage, of Britain's 1870 halfpenny stamp

8 WORLD NEWS

Stamps painted on battlefields, photographed by drones and made from recycled plastic

10 NEW ISSUES

The Falkland Islands set produced to honour a thriving philatelic society

14 VIRTUAL STAMPX

It's Stampex, but not as we know it. Here's our guide to Britain's first interactive online show

20 AUCTION HIGHLIGHTS

Rarities from the United States, Newfoundland and Victoria, along with two Great Britain gems

26 GB NEW ISSUE

Is Royal Mail's latest blockbuster celebrating great literature or just popular television?

28 GB COLLECTOR

News of special issues, booklets, slogan postmarks, postboxes and reference books



20 A unique piece of American postal history



26 The Sherlock stamp issue unpicked



14 Stampex but not as you will recognise it



51 Canada's 1903 definitive series



54 Stamps honouring ocean liners which held the coveted Blue Riband



66 Where did all our sub-post offices go?



71 Is that smudge on this Penny Black a thumbprint?



10 An unusual honour for a philatelic society



62 Denmark's last engraver?

FEATURES

40 BRITAIN'S FIRST HALFPENNY STAMP

It is exactly 150 years since the Post Office cut its lowest postage rate from 1d to ½d, and introduced its smallest-ever stamp. We investigate the genesis and usage of the 'British bantam'

54 THEMATIC GUIDE TO BLUE RIBAND SHIPS

Many of the 35 different passenger liners which claimed the Blue Riband for the fastest Atlantic crossing have been celebrated on stamps. Here's the pick of them

66 DISAPPEARING SUB-POST OFFICES

In 1997 Royal Mail issued a set of stamps illustrating quaint rural sub-post offices, so we thought we'd investigate how they are faring today. You might want to look away now...

32 LETTERS

Practical usage of the first postal cards, the first regional definitives and modern special issues

51 COMMONWEALTH CLASSICS

How the Prince of Wales got the design credit for Canada's 1903 King Edward VII definitives

62 GREAT ENGRAVERS

Will the talented Bertil Skov Jørgensen go down in history as Denmark's last stamp engraver?

71 BLACK MAGIC

A Penny Black cancelled by a clerk's thumbprint as well as by a Maltese cross

74 WHAT'S ON

Exhibition, auction and fair dates for your diary

89 STRANGE BUT TRUE

When philately met vexillology and venality, the result was flags flying in all the wrong places

COMPETITIONS

Win a Palace of Westminster presentation pack!

Or a copy of our GB price guide!

See page 37



'Virtual Stampex is the most exciting international event on the philatelic calendar this year'

see page 14

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GREAT BRITAIN – POSTAL

The Kees van Nugteren Collection



In 1853 the British Post Office started to issue adhesive fiscal stamps. These fiscal stamps indicated that a tax, a duty or a fee has been paid or prepaid. They were not valid for prepaying postage for letters through the mail.

In 1881 it was decided that future stamp issues could be used to pay for either postage or revenue. Due to the delay in issuing new Unified stamps inscribed 'Postage and Revenue' the 'Draft and Receipt' stamps

then in use were also authorized for postal use. All Inland Revenue stamps from 1853 still in the hand of the public remained valid for the payment of postage.

This exhibit collection with Proofs, Stamps, Specimens and Covers of Kees van Nugteren concentrates on fiscal stamps showing the portrait of Queen Victoria based on the artwork of William Wyon designed for the Queen's visit to the Guildhall in 1837.

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Mayflower anniversary celebrated by the USA

The United States will issue a single stamp on September 17 to mark the 400th anniversary of the voyage of the *Mayflower*, carrying the Pilgrim Fathers from England to a new life in America.

Inscribed 'Mayflower in Plymouth Harbor', the self-adhesive non-denominated Forever stamp (sold at 55c) is based on a watercolor, gouache and acrylic painting by Greg Harlin, conveying a scene of desolate beauty at the end of the Pilgrims' harrowing transatlantic crossing to an unfamiliar world.

The design also includes a stylized hawthorn flower (sometimes called a mayflower) which is printed in intaglio.

The stamp is sold in panes of 20, while a limited-edition souvenir book, marketed at \$59.95, comes with a set of progressive proofs in cyan, magenta, yellow, black and intaglio.

The 102 migrants were Puritans seeking freedom from



persecution for their religious beliefs. They left Plymouth in Devon on September 6, 1620, and landed at Plymouth Rock in modern-day Massachusetts on December 26, establishing one of the earliest European colonies in the New World.

The pandemic through the eyes of children

Guernsey Post has issued sets of stamps for both Guernsey and Alderney which were designed by local schoolchildren in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

Chosen from more than 200 competition entries, the stamps went on sale on August 19, in aid of local charities supporting members of the community affected by the pandemic.

The Guernsey Together set of eight were created by children aged between 5 and 13, and the Alderney Spirit set of four by children aged between 7 and 9. The names and ages of the artists

are inscribed on the stamps, which are in matching styles.

The youngsters were invited to produce designs recognising positive aspects of the pandemic. Dominating their artistic vision are colourful rainbows, which have become a symbol of solidarity and support for health and care workers.

Each of the winners receives a £100 voucher as well as a complimentary pack of the stamps.

This is only the fourth time 51 years that the children of the Bailiwick have designed a stamp issue.



Stamp woven from recycled plastic bottles

Liechtenstein's new stamp issue promoting Polyethylene Recycling is made from recycled plastic bottles.



More than 3,000 bottles were processed to make flakes which were in turn used to produce polyester yarn. Stamps were then embroidered using the yarn, by a specialist company in Austria.

Some 1,860 miles of yarn were required for the limited print run of 40,000 large-format stamps, with a face value of 6.30f, which were issued on September 7.

The design, in an irregular circle shape, shows part of a globe, with western Europe and north Africa prominent.

It doesn't look like a practical way to pay for postage, but the postal administration suggests that buyers could use the stamp to decorate clothes and other accessories to show their commitment to environmental protection and sustainability.

Aerial views of southern shores

Photographs taken by battery-powered flying drones inspired a new set of six stamps from South Georgia & The South Sandwich Islands.

Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) are used to survey environments, wildlife and vegetation without disturbing them, and their striking images have been given a wider audience in the From The Air set.

Several resemble abstract art as much as natural landscapes, not least this 80p value depicting penguins and seals crowding around an icy inlet.



War artist's paintings on New Zealand set

New Zealand's set of four stamps marking the 65th anniversary of the end of World War II reproduces evocative paintings by the country's official war artist.

Appointed in 1941, Peter McIntyre shadowed New Zealand's 2nd Expeditionary Force from then until 1945, recording the everyday lives of soldiers on active service in watercolours and oils.

The \$1.40 value illustrates the German airborne invasion of Crete in 1941, while the \$2.70 shows the building of the vital supply railway to Tobruk in Libya in the same year.

A \$3.50 design features Grant tanks going into action at the Battle of El Alamein in Egypt in 1942, a turning point of the North African campaign, and the \$4.00 top value shows medical officers attending wounded German soldiers after their surrender in Tunisia in 1943.



US Postal Service in financial crisis

Americans are being encouraged buy stamps and merchandise to save the United States Postal Service, which is in financial crisis.

The organisation requested \$25bn in emergency funding from the federal government at the start of the coronavirus lockdown, but received only \$10 billion. It has since reduced the opening hours of certain post offices, removed many postboxes and taken some sorting equipment out of commission.

The USPS is a popular institution, and there has been a strong response to calls for the public to help to protect it. When its website held a 'flash sale' in August, with offers of 50% off branded T-shirts, backpacks, hoodies and other items, many lines sold out.

Critics of President Donald Trump say his administration is defunding the USPS in the hope of influencing November's Presidential Election, which is expected to see a huge increase in postal voting.



NEWS IN BRIEF

➤ This month's magazine sees the return of our What's On section, because many exhibitions have been rearranged and auctions and stamp fairs scheduled for the start of the new season, subject to coronavirus restrictions. There is no listing of society events, as few societies have published schedules.

➤ The 1f+5f stamp issued by Switzerland in April to help those affected by the pandemic raised the equivalent of £2m. The proceeds were divided equally between Swiss Solidarity and the Swiss Red Cross.

➤ All sellers' fees at David Feldman's world rarities auction in Geneva in October will be donated to Médecins Sans Frontières, to help fight the pandemic. Visit www.davidfeldman.com

➤ The Royal Philatelic Society London is planning to start a phased reopening of its premises from October 15, if permitted by government health guidance.

➤ A new website has been established for collectors of South Africa and southern Africa, with online exhibits and a forum. Visit www.southafricanphilatelyclub.com

➤ The United States issue celebrating Bugs Bunny in July was hailed as a breakthrough by LGBT campaigners, as two designs showed the cartoon rabbit in women's clothing. They claim these are the first images of drag on US stamps.

Falklands collectors honoured on stamps



The Falkland Islands has bestowed a rare honour on a society of collectors, by issuing a set of stamps marking the 50th Anniversary of the Falkland Islands Philatelic Study Group.

The FIPSG was formed as a result of a letter from, Mark Burton, a schoolboy collector, to Malcolm Barton, who was already considering starting a study circle. The first meeting of 50 enthusiasts was held on September 26, 1970, with assistance from the existing Polar Postal History Society of Great Britain.

By 1971 a rudimentary newsletter had developed into a quarterly journal, *The Upland Goose*, and by 1975 the membership had grown to more than 200. The Group now has more than 350 members worldwide, with Barton and Burton still active.

An annual weekend meeting is normally held in March. Meetings are also held regionally throughout the UK, and occasionally in other countries, such as the USA, Australia, South Africa and Sweden,

and of course in the Falklands.

Members research all aspects of the philately of the Falkland Islands, its former Dependencies, South Georgia and the British Antarctic Territory. The FIPSG was invited to give a display to the Royal Philatelic Society London on its Silver Jubilee in 1995, and has been invited to do so again for its Golden Jubilee.

The stamp designs are based on four philatelic themes: buying, research, publication and collecting.

The 32p value illustrates the Post Office and Philatelic Bureau in Stanley, where many collectors buy today's stamp issues, and the classic 1898 Queen Victoria 5s red high value.

The 78p shows the Jane Cameron National Archives, where many Study Group members have researched stamp designs, correspondence with the Crown Agents and shipping records. It also illustrates the famous 5s design from the 1933 Centenary set, showing a king penguin.

The £1.04 value shows *The Upland Goose* journal and one of the many specialist monographs published by the FIPSG over the years, along with the King George VI 1938 5s definitive, illustrating a sea lion.

The £1.26 features two Falklands rarities: a cover bearing an 1869 'black frank', one of the handstamps which were a precursor to adhesive stamps, and a celebrated 1964 error, the Battle of the Falkland Islands 6d showing HMS *Glasgow* instead of HMS *Kent*.

The first day cover illustrates the Historic Dockyard Museum in Stanley, and the National Stamp Collection, which was put together mostly by members of the Study Group and donated to the Museum in 2010.

Printed in litho by Cartor, the set was released on September 7.

'We are delighted that a superb set of stamps has been issued to celebrate our anniversary,' says FIPSG Chairman Kim Stuckey. 'This is not a common occurrence for philatelic societies.'

Selling your stamp collection?

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... and you know what – now aged 62, what's changed? As you may know I no longer collect stamps – I gave up collecting when I became a rather wet and spotty office junior, landing my 1st full-time 'stamp' job at the age of 18 with the grandiose title of Assistant Office Manager (I was the only assistant)... but, stamps still thrill me today even though I may not own them, and in all those years I've now handled stamps that have sold for £500,000 for a single item. Incredible but true...

Do you remember Victor Kiam of 'Remington' fame, "I was so impressed I bought the company", 14 years later, aged 32 I bought Omniphil, and like 'Electricity and Water Works' in Monopoly I added Avon Approvals creating synergies of scale. Both 'Stamps on Approval' businesses were established in 1958 and now 58 years later, month in, month out we're still sending unit priced stamps or individually identified and priced stamps on approval to more than 1,000 different collectors mainly in the UK but also worldwide. In the internet world we all inhabit – I find it amazing that traditional 'stamps on approval' trading continues – fortunately this is what our clients like about us. With your help long may it continue.

6 The very best of success to you.

Your service is excellent

– BJ Somerset

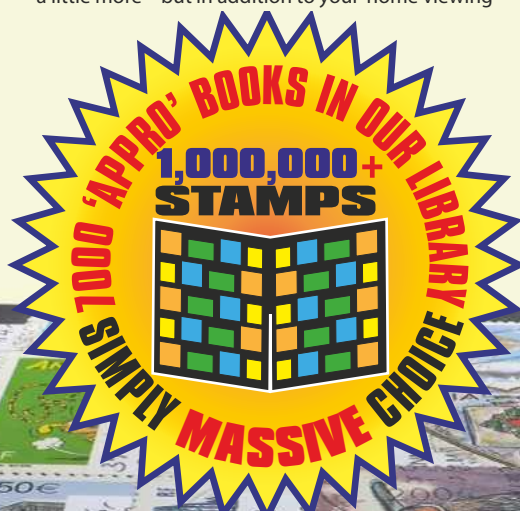
So why should you try my approvals? We're one of, if not **the** largest longest established dedicated Approvals Company in the UK with full-time staff sending focussed selections of mint and/or used stamps to collectors like you on approval. The fundamental reason to try a selection of stamps sent to you on 14 days' approval – is that you have the "pleasure of leisure" so that you see before you buy individually identified and unit priced stamps – so you have all the fun of the stamp shop you may fondly remember in your own home... Naturally stamps supplied in such a service may cost a little more – but in addition to your 'home viewing'

there's the added benefit that you simply select the best stamps you need and return the rest. The cost of return postage can be expensive – select just £9+ and deduct the cost, and in order to encourage you – spend £16+ to receive 25% discount.

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Andrew McGavin, Philatelic Expert & Author, Managing Director, U P A, Omniphil & Avon Approvals, eBay: universalphilatelic

Terms: Start/Stop service anytime. Serious UK collectors NEW to my company are pre-qualified. Overseas clients may be required to provide a deposit. A few Countries cannot be serviced, please enquire. One offer per philatelic household.



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APPROVALS ARE NOT SUITABLE FOR VERY ADVANCED COLLECTORS – TAKE MY UPA £55 AUCTION OFFER

Don't miss the first ever Virtual Stampex!

It's Stampex, but not as you know it! Open around-the-clock for three days in October, Virtual Stampex will be the world's first international interactive online stamp show.

Organised by the UK-based Philatelic Traders' Society, after its conventional Autumn Stampex event in London had to be cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic, this ground-breaking concept will enable collectors living anywhere in the world to buy, sell, explore, learn and network from the comfort of their own homes.

Although the circumstances may not be ideal, the experience promises to be extraordinary. 'Virtual Stampex will be the most exciting international event in the philatelic calendar this year,' says PTS Chairman Suzanne Rae.

How it works

After registering using your email address, you enter the event via an interactive lobby,

which has a staffed information desk.

Here you can ask questions and download the show guide, which will have full details of booths and events, as well as games to encourage you to explore the show.

Through the lobby you can search the list of trade booths and connect with up to 100 standholders around the globe. These will include auction houses, specialist dealers, accessories suppliers, postal administrations, publishers, philatelic societies and museums.

You can also access other elements of the show, such as the auditorium, where you can enjoy a range of talks and discussions, and exhibits, including the Court of Honour.

Market place

The traders' booths will look much like any stand at a major exhibition, allowing you to browse and interact as you please.

You can chat, live, with those manning the booths, via text, audio or even video (depending on the capabilities of the digital device you are using), just as if you were there in person, but without the need for a face mask!

You can search and buy material for your collection from their online shops, without having to walk up and down the aisles.

You can even collect digital catalogues, price lists, information packs, application forms and leaflets in your personalised virtual briefcase, without being restricted

'Virtual Stampex will be the most exciting international event in the philatelic calendar this year'

WHEN & WHERE

VENUE

stampex.vfairs.com
(registration is free)

ACCESSIBILITY

Access is easy via most digital devices, including Apple, Android, PC and Mac. Text, audio and video functionality is built in, so there is no need to download any software.

OPENING TIMES

October 1-3, 2020, around the clock:

- London 08:00 Thu – 07:59 Sun
- New York 04:00 Thu – 03:59 Sun
- Los Angeles 01:00 Thu – 00:59 Sun
- Hong Kong 16:00 Thu – 15:59 Sun
- Sydney 18:00 Thu – 17:59 Sun

(viewing the booths and linking to shops and documents, although not live chat, will remain possible until October 28)

INFORMATION

The digital Stampex Newsletter will be published weekly during September and daily during the event itself. You can sign up for it at www.stampexinternational.co.uk



LIVE TALKS

There will be 10 live talks arranged over the three days of the show, including one by the Royal Philatelic Society London.

The full schedule will be announced at www.stampexinternational.co.uk



by how much you can physically carry. At the end of the show, you will be e-mailed the contents of your briefcase.

If you live in a different part of the world, that's no problem, because booths can be manned round-the-clock for the duration of the event. The only things you'll miss out on are the inevitable delays at the airport.

And in case you realise there was something you missed at the time of your visit, booths can remain online for up to 30 days after the event, albeit without live chat.

Added attractions

In the virtual auditorium, you can enjoy a range of talks and live question-and-

answer sessions led by philatelic luminaries.

There will 10 live and recorded talks, including a live webinar on the subject of plating Penny Reds and a Q&A with the Royal Philatelic Society London.

Elsewhere, the Court of Honour will display some of the gems of world philately, courtesy of the prestige auctioneer David Feldman's Museum of Philately, a digital app which immortalises world-class collections.

You can examine world rarities up close, zooming in on selected items, and check out the wall of fame, with its biographies of famous collectors and records of the awards won by their exhibits.

Meanwhile, the Philatelic Traders' Society is launching a special service called Stamps In The Attic, inviting people who have inherited, rediscovered or been gifted collections to have them appraised for free by expert dealers.

When you are new to the hobby it is hard to know who to trust in order to get a collection valued, but the PTS represents only reputable philatelic businesses so this looks a good place to start. ➤

EXHIBITS

Virtual Stampex will feature two competitive exhibitions, organised by the Association of British Philatelic Societies.

But the difference, of course, is that these will be virtual exhibits, submitted in digital form as high-resolution scans of display pages, with no need for the traditional metal frames to be brought out of storage.

Entries will be displayed online for the duration of the exhibition.

INTER-FED

Philatelic federations have been invited to submit five-frame exhibits covering three different classes in the Inter-Federation Competition, to be overseen by internationally accredited judges.

ONE-FRAME

Members of ABPS-affiliated philatelic societies and clubs have also been invited to enter the One-Frame Competition. Entries will also be judged by accredited juries, but will not count towards qualification for other national or international events.



COURT OF HONOUR

The Court of Honour at Virtual Stampex is being hosted by the Museum of Philately, a digital platform created by auctioneer David Feldman, which records and presents Grand Prix and Gold Medal-winning collections and rarities, along with their provenance and historic auction realisations. This virtual exhibition is therefore guaranteed to showcase an impressive selection of world-class material, brought together exclusively for this event. Here's a small taster of what you can expect to find.

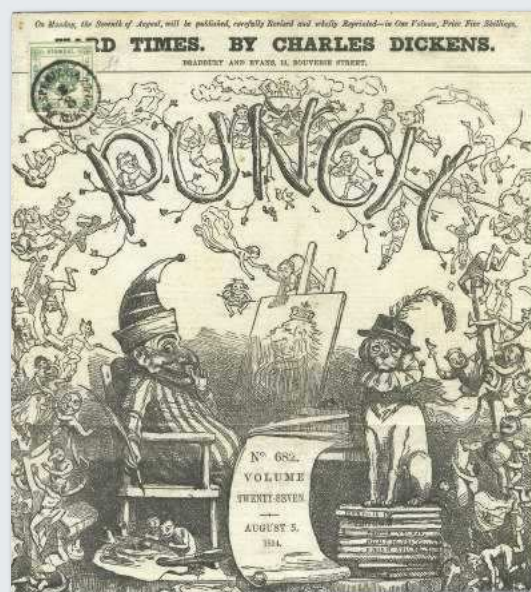


LEFT: British Guiana 1851 Cottonreel 4c pale yellow, cut with wide margins, on cover to Georgetown



BELOW LEFT: Block of four of the Canada 1857 Packet Postage 7 1/2d yellow-green, on cover from Quebec to Ireland, via Liverpool, in July 1859

BELOW: Austria 1853 2k green newspaper stamp used to mail a copy of the British magazine *Punch* in August 1854



WIDEAWAKE DEALERS

Many prominent dealers are making special efforts to attract visitors to this pioneering event, maximising their available stock and preparing to man their booths through the night.

GB specialist Bill Barrell is just one example. 'This is the first time our entire stock will be available to buy,' he says.

'Recently we had more than 21,000 individual stamps and covers on our database, but only about 14,500 listed on the website. For the three days of Virtual Stampex, the whole database will be uploaded onto our website, including some exciting new purchases and special offers only available during the show.

'Alongside this, there will be eight videos for you to watch or download, on topics such as the line-engraved printing process, plating, and what happens when you immerse a Penny Black in water.

'We will be on hand for the entire 72-hour extravaganza, to chat about the hobby and answer your questions.'



The organisers are also planning a range of further features including live chat rooms, to allow wider group conversations.

The international Postcrossing organisation is mounting an exhibition of postcards to mark World Postcard Day, and Virtual Stampex will host a large online gathering of members.

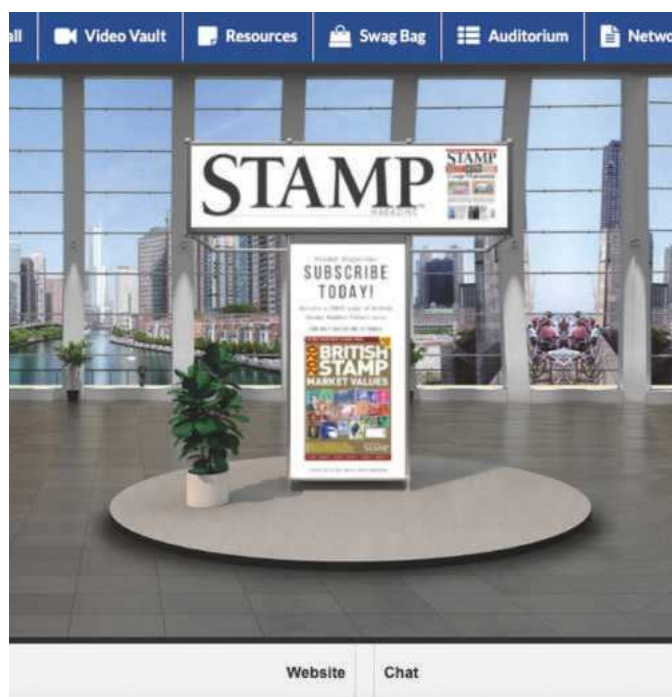
As ever, the traditional Stampex Smilers exhibition sheets can be purchased as a souvenir of a unique event.

For youth

As at any conventional Stampex there is a children's area run by Stamp Active, this time in association with StampIT, the youth programme of the Association of Scottish Philatelic Societies.

Youngsters can enjoy a different 'stampy' activity every day, investigating various themes, cultures and languages and learning how to create their own works of art.

They can also share their studies online, take on challenges, enter competitions and take advantages of free giveaways. Families, teachers and youth group leaders are encouraged to join in.



ABOVE: Stamp Magazine's booth as it may appear online, complete with an unexpectedly high-rise and futuristic Islington backdrop and a virtual pot-plant!

PROVENANCE CHECKS

Karl Louis, of Switzerland-based auctioneers Corinphila, is inviting collectors to have their prize items reviewed to establish their provenance.

Louis has been developing the Great Britain Card Index for over 35 years, building it into the world's most comprehensive census of classic British stamps, and the best tool for confirming their provenance.

'Describing rarities calls for more than just quoting catalogue numbers and values,' says Louis. 'Provenance is a philatelic item's pedigree, bestowed by previous owners who were held in the highest esteem by their contemporaries.'

Tracing an important stamp's history through the collections and exhibits it was part of, and the auctions at which it changed hands, makes it more coveted. Provenance gives it a quality seal, an indispensable attribute for a high-value item.

Consultations will be held daily during the show, between 10am and 3pm, and appointments can be made on a first-come, first-served basis.



ABOVE: Karl Louis at work with his card index of Great Britain stamps



'You can chat, live, with those manning the booths, via text, audio or even video, just as if you were there in person'

BOOTH HOLDERS

Abacus Auctions	JF Stamps
APBPS Exhibiting	John Bull
Alliance Auctions/John Auld	John Curtin
Andrew G Lajer	Malta Post
Andrew Vaughan	Mark Bloxham
APS	Mint GB Stamps
Art Stamped	Mowbray, J R
Artisio	Mulready Philatelics
BB Stamps	Museum Of Philately
Behr	Noble Spirit
Bill Barrell	North Staffs Stamps
Brixton-Chrome	Philangles
Buckingham Covers	Philatelic Traders Society
Canada Stamp Finder	Postcrossing
Candlish McCleery	Prinz Publications
Cherrystone Auctions	Punk Philatelist
Chris Green Stamps	Robert Danzig
Chris Rainey Online	Robert Siegel
Christoph Gärtner	robstineextra.com
Compustamp	Royal Philatelic Society London
Corinphila	Sandeep Jaiswal
David Feldman	Spink
David Morrison	Spring Stampex 2021
Digital Philatelist	Stamp Active
Don Tocher US Classics	Stamp Bay
Doreen Royan & Associates	Stamp Collector Magazine
eBay	Stamp Hawk
Edmonds & Turner	Stamp Magazine
Embassy Philatelists	Stampex Smilers Shop
Empire Philatelists	StampIT
Ercole Gloria	Stamps Friend
Exploring Stamps	Stamps In The Attic
Filat	stampstock.co.uk
Glasgow Stamp Shop	Stanley Gibbons
Guernsey Post	Steve Irwin Stamps
Heinrich Köhler	The Postal Museum
Heritatum	Thematix
Imperium Stamps	Volovski Rarities
Isle of Man Post	Zeboose
Jersey Post	

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AUCTION HIGHLIGHTS

USA 1846 Lockport provisional



H R Harmer's sales of the Erivan Haub collection continue to achieve high realisations across many specialities, and the latest included a unique United States postmaster's provisional stamp of 1846.

This is the only surviving complete example of the 5c red on buff issued in Lockport, in New York state, although two damaged examples have also been discovered.

Made up from an existing oval cancelling handstamp, it has a red straightline 'Paid' inscription added in the centre, along with a manuscript '5'.

Used on an entire of March 18, 1846, addressed to Geneva, also in New York state (later refolded and mailed back to the sender in Lockport), it is cancelled by a manuscript cross, the other postal markings being red 'Paid' and Lockport integral rate handstamps.

Previously owned by Philipp von Ferrary, Arthur Hind and Alfred Caspary, the cover was returning to the market for the first time in 31 years.

SOLD BY H R HARMER £76,400



NEWFOUNDLAND 1919 First transatlantic overprint

Stanley Gibbons' sale offered a mint example of the overprint commemorating the first transatlantic flight attempt departing from Newfoundland in 1919.

A single sheet of 200 of the 1919 Newfoundland Contingent 3d brown was overprinted 'First Trans-Atlantic Air Post April 1919' (and

initialled in ink on the reverse by J A Robinson, the Postmaster General). About half of the stamps franked letters which were carried on board the flight, while most of the others were sold at a premium in aid of charity.

The Australian pilot Lieutenant Harry Hawker and his Scottish navigator Lieutenant Commander Kenneth Grieve were forced to ditch their Sopwith Atlantic biplane in mid-ocean when their engine overheated, and were rescued by a Danish freighter.

The mailbag was later recovered, although many of the letters were badly damaged.

SOLD BY STANLEY GIBBONS £10,000



USA 1861 Pony Express cover to France

Another highlight of Harmer's sale was one of only six Pony Express covers sent to a destination outside of the USA, and the only one to France.

Addressed to Metz on July 27, 1861, it is a United States 3c postal stationery envelope with a black Wells Fargo frank, bearing a \$1 red Pony Express adhesive stamp tied by a blue oval San Francisco cancellation.

It passed through the eastern terminus of the Pony Express service at St Joseph, Missouri, on August 8, but was not postmarked further until it arrived in New York on August 14, leaving for Europe on the SS Africa.

On arrival in France it was treated as unpaid, and marked in black crayon for 8d postage due, while a red handstamp of August 27 notes a 3c debit to France for US inland postage.



SOLD BY H R HARMER £76,400

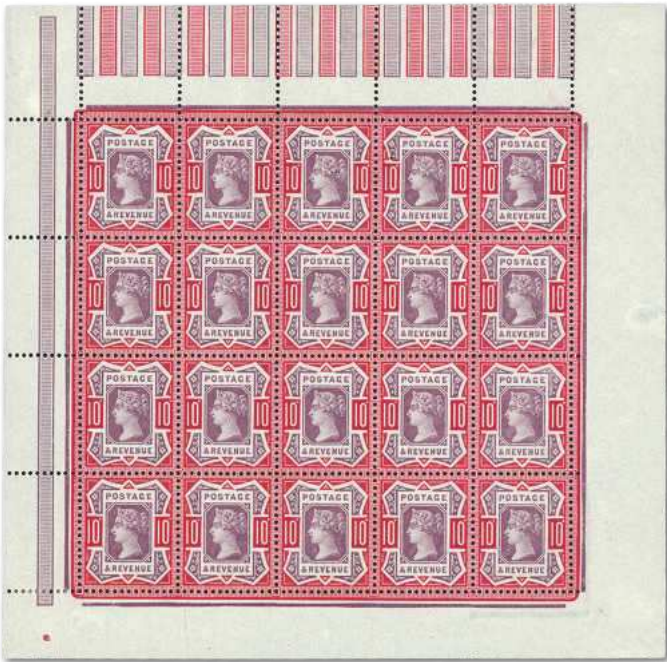
GREAT BRITAIN 1887-92 Mint pane of the 10d

The key single lot in Grosvenor's Great Britain sale in July was this unmounted mint pane of 20 of the 1887-92 'Jubilee' 10d deep purple and carmine.

It is from the lower right corner of the sheet, probably pane H, and from setting A, with short vertical pillars in the top margin and a long purple pillar at left.

Only three panes from this setting are known, one of which is in The Postal Museum.

SOLD BY GROSVENOR £9,000



GREAT BRITAIN 1935 Silver Jubilee 2½d Prussian blue

Grosvenor's sale featured a fine mint marginal example of the King George V 1935 Silver Jubilee 2½d Prussian blue.

Printed in photogravure by Harrisons, this was the top value in a set of four. Its regular colour was blue, but four sheets were printed in the wrong shade, three of them being sold over the counter by a sub-post office in Upper Edmonton, London.

With most of its original gum intact, the stamp has a British Philatelic Association certificate from 2001.

SOLD BY GROSVENOR £6,448



TRISTAN DA CUNHA 1920 Covers to Scott's widow

Argyll Etkin sold a historic pair of covers posted in 1920 from Tristan da Cunha to Northumberland, via South Georgia, and addressed to Kathleen Scott, the widow of the Antarctic explorer Robert Falcon Scott.

One bears a Tristan da Cunha type I cachet, introduced in 1908, and the other a type II cachet, introduced in 1919. Having been carried to South Georgia by the whaler *Pentam*, each has a South Georgia circular datestamp of June 4, 1920.

Although one cover has a 1½d charge mark applied by the Foreign Branch in London, both were delivered free of charge.

SOLD BY ARGYLL ETKIN £3,000



VICTORIA 1850-53 2d 'void corner' error

The Phoenix sale offered a rarity from the 1850-53 'Half-Length' series, the first stamps of the colony of Victoria.

This particular example of the 2d grey-drab was lithographed from the altered third state of the dies, from intermediate stones of 12, and shows the 'void corner' error at lower left.

There are only four examples of this error recorded in private hands, all of them postally used, this one being cancelled with a barred oval '1' obliterator.

The 'Half-Length' series comprised 1d, 2d and 3d values, illustrating Queen Victoria on her throne, printed by Thomas Ham of Melbourne.

Impressions from the early printings were clear, but their quality deteriorated as intermediate stones were used.

SOLD BY PHOENIX £2,730



‘To be really happy and really safe, one or three hobbies, and they must all be

Understanding Quality

Previously I have discussed the ‘*Importance of Condition*’ – but how do you recognise and understand quality?

Of course, the easy answer is ‘experience’, but how do you gain experience when you have not physically handled a particular type of stamp?

Obviously, there is no substitute for seeing or handling a stamp ‘in the flesh’, but stamps possess an unusual quality that makes them so suitable for sale upon the internet and for posting and trading throughout the world – **they are basically flat**. Over the past 10 years I have bumped into a reasonable number of antique dealers who blame the internet, and eBay in particular, for the demise of the ‘antique shop’...

... apparently the ‘transparency’ of information and values upon the internet has ‘finished’ off the high street ‘antique shop’ as many remember it. Certainly, I know this to be true of certain types of antiques in the U.K. – dealers could ‘hide’ in their own mystique of knowledge gained over many years of trading, visiting auctions, even museums, that many collectors were unable then to access during normal working hours. Additionally, most collectors had an unreasonable ‘fear’ of attending and purchasing at ‘public auction’ – citing all manner of ‘old-witch’ tales – where they might ‘touch their nose’ and end up winning a lot they could not afford!

Those days of the ‘old boys club’ of dealers are gone, and the transparency of the internet, apparently, is the reason. But something different happened along the way with stamps – stamp values were always that bit more transparent in the first place due to their being so well catalogued by Stanley Gibbons and other publishers. Out of interest in 1980 there were an estimated 300 stamp shops in the UK – today there may be just 30. Stamp collecting and stamp dealing went ‘underground’, long before the internet took hold. Antique dealers’ average price of an item might £100’s – whereas most stamp shops average price might be pence to pounds.

So, most stamp dealers were forced to adjust to their market conditions of selling by low-overhead methods – from home or office, by mail or at fairs/exhibitions – which is why stamps have uniquely adapted and transferred themselves so well to sale by postal auctions and upon the internet.

The internet is the key starting point to how to learn about stamps and assess quality. Catalogue publishers usually make a start at the front of their ‘physical’ catalogues by giving an illustration by appearance of good, fine, very fine, and superb quality of an imperforate stamp based upon appearance only. But it is so easy now being on-line – *to compare quality by image against description*. Put a little quality time aside and start by visiting the websites of the more ‘expensive’ dealers who retail on-line. Look for high quality and see the high prices requested ...

... **Now**, open another ‘browser window’ and go to eBay. Start searching for similar, even the same catalogue number stamps in differing conditions. Read the descriptions – compare the starting prices and put some of these items

in your ‘watch’ category. Be prepared for a shock. You are going to see the most horrendous variances between descriptions, prices and realisations.

Unless you are ‘watching’ items from the most respected ‘main-stream’ dealers on-line – pay absolutely NO attention to sellers with 100% on-line ratings. Yes, your purchases will be delivered – but on the face of it – what you see on the front of the stamp is what you get. There are thousands of on-line sellers with little or no knowledge of what they are selling and thousands with knowledge who know that what they are selling is not what it is ‘cracked-up’ to be.

I see dealers with 1,000+ feedback 100% ratings offering items described as fine used which are merely average. Be aware that the oldest ‘trick in the game’ is to describe ‘good’ as ‘fine’, ‘very fine’ as ‘superb’, and so on. Stamps easily trap the unwary in this respect.

In Part II of ‘Understanding Quality’ we will discuss what to look for, how to look for it and ‘train your philatelic eye’.

Part II:

How to Train Your Philatelic Eye

In part I of ‘*Understanding Quality*’ we discussed the benefits of stamps being ‘flat’(!) and just how helpful this is in making quality comparisons. I hope you have been making comparisons between the ‘best’ and most expensive dealers internet illustrations and those of other vendors at say, eBay.

Have you been horrified at what you have seen? Certainly we are – regularly. We don’t profess to be perfect – and with 20,000+ lot quarterly auctions we are always going to make our share of errors too – but never deliberately, and always guaranteed by prompt full refund or credit as required ...

But, over the years, one of the most important and overlooked aspects of ‘understanding quality’ that I have noticed – is amazingly, that many collectors do not carefully examine their purchases – but more than that – they don’t appear to know ‘how’ – perhaps that’s because nobody has ever explained ‘*how to train your philatelic eye*’.

How have I reached this rather fundamental conclusion? I’ve lost count of the times that I have handed over a x10 magnifying glass to collectors, inviting them to look at the stamp we are examining together. Most collectors do not realise that the focussing distance of the most practical magnifying glass is actually having their eye and the ‘glass’ approximately one to two inches from the stamp.

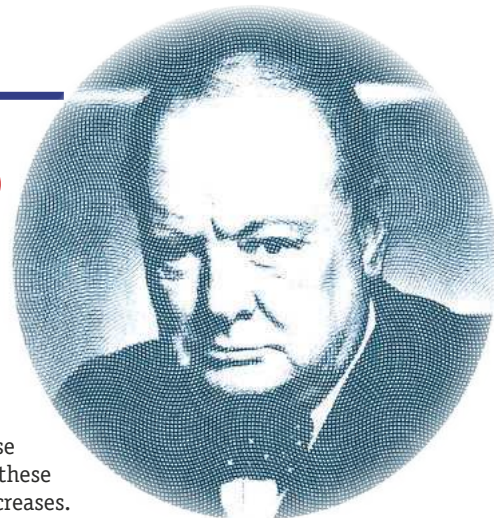
That’s how close you need to get in to examine the detail of a stamp.

Understanding this opens so many doors to what you are actually looking at and what you may start looking for.

Now that you are perhaps thinking of examining stamps ‘closer up’ than before – start by consciously selecting a point that you will consistently start from – say the top left north west (NW) corner ... then actually work your way ‘clockwise’ around the stamp. What you are now doing is ‘disciplining’ your eye to work to a pattern – you’ll be conscious of this to begin with – but soon it will become an unconsciously efficient process which will prove invaluable when looking for varieties and checking for faults.

ought to have at least two real.

Sir Winston chose Painting,
thank You for choosing Philately



1. Start by examining the perforations all of the way around the stamp, are any too short, 'pulled' or missing? Don't forget to look for 'closed tears' – or even scissor cuts. Closed tears are easily missed – but easily detected if you look for fine lines emanating from the perforations and running into the design. (Tip – flex the stamp gently, but not with your fingers! – a good time is when filing the stamp into a mount or a stock-card).

Depending upon scarcity of the stamp, one pulled out/missing perforation – upon a commonly available stamp is not acceptable when you can so easily have a perfect example. The scarcer and older a philatelic item, the more 'forgiving' you can become.

2. Now examine the margins/centring of the design to the perforations or the width of margins of an imperforate stamp. How off-centre a stamp are you prepared to have in your collection? This can have a big impact upon price in classic issues, and in modern issues – do you need it – when you may relatively easily obtain better?
3. Next, look for thins or pinholes – not just upon the reverse – but also for facial abrasions. Thinning has one of the heaviest impacts upon price. Hold the stamp against good quality background light – preferably a 'daylight' type bulb. Invest in a good quality daylight bulb/tube desk-light – seldom seen when we visit collectors to value their collections.
4. Now, check the colours of the stamp – are they 'true' – how do they compare with other stamps in your collection. Beware of faded stamps; consider the period of stamp you are working with – for example Queen Victoria GB often have crayon marks (from registered envelopes) – stamp 'improvers' often 'reduce' such marks in an attempt to reduce their overall impact upon the stamps appearance.
5. Is the stamp 'toned'? – if mint – is the gum creamier than it should be. In this area – everything is 'relative' – toning on a modern stamp within the last 50 years is pretty unacceptable as it is unnecessary to accept it. Earlier stamps – a degree of overall toning becomes more acceptable and in some cases virtually the only quality available. But, beware of tone/rust spots – these can be severe. As with everything the degree of severity affects the price. Remember that some stamps the gum was always brownish, creamy or off-white. In the British Empire KGVI 'key types' high values, for example, a brownish streaked gum often indicates an early printing which actually went to the colonies.
6. Creasing – look for creases – minor bends/ gum bends are common in classic issues and in some cases hard to purchase the stamp without such. In used stamps – particularly the 'top' end, a pressed out crease can as much as halve the value of the stamp, sometimes more. Look for a crease as you would look for a phosphor band – let the light from your desk-lamp glance across the surface of the stamp. Remember that all creases are not vertical – diagonal, even horizontal are common. Victorian/classic stamps are likely to have the highest chance of bearing a crease. A crease can convert an 'exhibition' appearance stamp to an 'also-ran' worth 50% or less. Be aware that heavy creases are often

'pressed out' – so the crease could be a 'finer' line. 'Improvers' use 'hydraulic presses' these days to eradicate creases.

7. Look at the postmark – is it a beauty? In the US they have a philatelic phrase which has 'travelled' – SON – otherwise 'socked on the nose' – probably the finest quality of a used stamp is a full crisp clear cancel beautifully positioned and with perfect balance/harmony between stamp and postmark. However there are many who term a contemporary part CDS (circular date stamp) cancel as the finest quality sought – particularly clear of profile is highly desirable in typically heavily cancelled Queen Victoria line engraved issues such as the British 2d blue. No matter how 'sound' the stamp, the heavier the cancellation – the lower the resale price.

Finally consider that a combination of defects – whilst acceptable in the unique British Guiana (a US\$10 million auction value) – are less and less acceptable in lesser high-flying stamps. When you are considering the value of a stamp – it helps not to think of 'how many £'s or \$'s to deduct for this or that' – a sure-fire way to confuse oneself – think in terms of ... is this a super-fine stamp – in which case you may think to yourself it's an X % of catalogue value example, incrementing down to it's a 'space-filler' with multiple faults worth say 5% to 10% of catalogue value to you – or no value at all to you – if it lowers the tone of your collection too much.

By adopting a systematic approach to examining stamps you will soon 'train your philatelic eye' so that all of what I have written automatically, effortlessly and enjoyably becomes second nature to you. If you start to think how faults relate to value, this will stand you in good stead when understanding quality.

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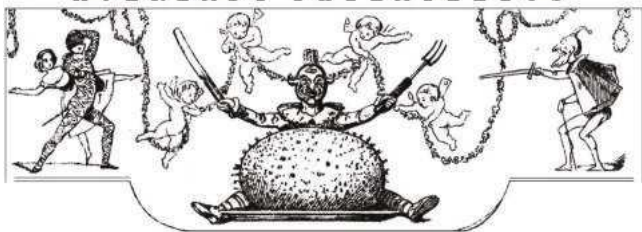


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NEW ISSUE

Elementary? Not this version of Sherlock



Royal Mail released a set of stamps and a miniature sheet on August 18 on the theme of the fictional detective Sherlock Holmes.

Although hailed as a celebration of 'Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes', the issue was entitled simply *Sherlock*, and the six counter sheet stamps depict characters and scenes from the BBC television series, *Sherlock*.

This series, aired from 2010-17, features modern interpretations of the mysteries, written by Steven Moffat and Mark Gatiss, with a more irreverent tone and the inclusion of 21st century technology.

Only the miniature sheet namechecks the original author and pays homage to his original storylines, highlighting four of his personal favourites in a more traditional illustrated style.

Conan Doyle published his first Sherlock Holmes novel, *A Study In Scarlet*, in 1887. He would go on to write 56 short stories based on the character, and four full-length novels. Holmes has become one of the best-loved fictional heroes of all time, and the stories have frequently been adapted for cinema and television.

The counter sheet stamps were designed by So, and the miniature sheet by NB Studio, from illustrations by Karolis Strautniekas.



The whole issue was printed in litho by International Security Printers, the sheet stamps being available in vertically se-tenant pairs.

1st class THE REICHENBACH FALL

The devious villain James Moriarty manipulates the public into believing that Holmes is a fraud who carries out crimes only to 'solve' them himself. A face-to-face showdown between the two on the roof of a hospital culminates in Sherlock apparently plummeting to his death. The stamp portrays Benedict Cumberbatch as Sherlock Holmes.

1st class A STUDY IN PINK

Former army medic Dr John Watson is on the hunt for a flatmate when he is introduced to Holmes, and the pair move into shared lodgings at 221B Baker Street. He soon finds himself assisting Holmes in investigating a series of bizarre 'serial suicides' that have the police baffled. The stamp portrays Martin Freeman as Dr John Watson.

£1.42 THE GREAT GAME

When a woman is taken hostage and strapped to a bomb, Holmes and Watson are drawn into a cat-and-mouse game with Moriarty, working against the clock to solve a series of crimes, each more challenging than the last, before the criminal mastermind reveals his identity. The stamp portrays Andrew Scott as James Moriarty.

£1.42 THE EMPTY HEARSE

Two years after his faked suicide, Sherlock returns to London having eliminated the last vestiges of Moriarty's criminal empire. Holmes and Watson are soon embroiled in a new case which leads to a bomb plot against the Houses of Parliament, and the revelation that there is a new master villain in town. The stamp portrays Amanda Abbington as Mary Watson.

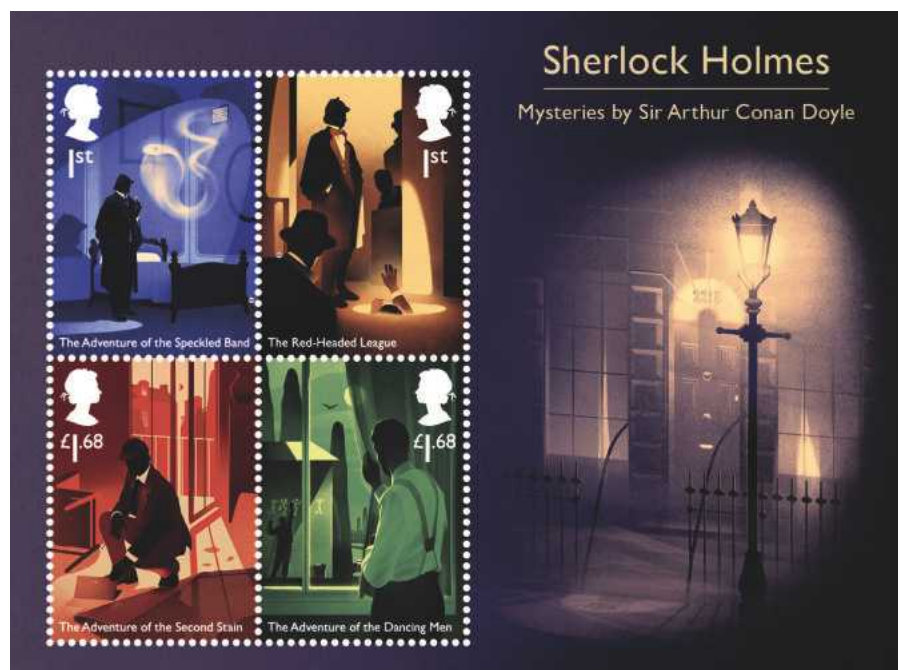


£1.68 A SCANDAL IN BELGRAVIA

The notorious but alluring Irene Adler is believed to have compromising photographs of a member of the royal family on her mobile phone, and Holmes and Watson attempt to retrieve the device. Their investigation uncovers a gang of terrorists who plan to bomb a transatlantic flight. The stamp portrays Lara Pulver as Irene Adler.

£1.68 THE FINAL PROBLEM

Holmes discovers that, in addition to his brother Mycroft, he has a sister, Eurys, who is a criminal genius being held in a secret maximum-security prison. Holmes and Watson travel to confront her, only to find that she has taken over the prison, bending the staff to her will. The stamp portrays Mark Gatiss as Mycroft Holmes.



MINIATURE SHEET

1st class THE ADVENTURE OF THE SPECKLED BAND

First published in 1892, this short story concerns a young woman who suspects that her stepfather is trying to kill her.

1st class THE RED-HEADED LEAGUE

First published in 1891, this is the case of a suspiciously pointless job offer which hides a major crime.

£1.68 THE ADVENTURE OF THE SECOND STAIN

First published in 1904, this short story sees the Prime Minister asking Holmes to investigate the disappearance of a compromising document.

£1.68 THE ADVENTURE OF THE DANCING MEN

First published in 1903, this case requires Holmes to crack a secret code in order to explain the death of his client.

OTHER PRODUCTS

The presentation pack studies the making of the television series, and has a summary of the plotline in each of the episodes featured on the stamps.

A choice of first day covers and medal covers are available, along with stamp cards and range of souvenir products.

PRICES

Set of 6 stamps	£7.72
Miniature sheet	£4.88
Presentation pack	£13.50
Stamp cards	£4.95
First day cover (stamps)	£9.90
First day cover (mini sheet)	£6.50
Medal covers	from £19.99

VERDICT

COMMEMORATIVE WORTH ★★★★★

The inspiration is a modern television series, not the classic Conan Doyle adventure stories

QUALITY OF DESIGN ★★★★★

The individual stamps are slick but lacking in drama, while the miniature sheet is classy but appears to be an afterthought

WOW FACTOR ★★★★★

You would have to be a big fan of the modern small-screen adaptations to get very excited

The mysterious case of the UV secret codes...

The six counter-sheet stamps in the Sherlock issue reveal hidden text when examined under ultra-violet light.

In each case, this is a detail from the storyline of the featured episode of the television drama series, which will be understood by

aficionados of the show but will remain mysterious to others.

This is third issue of 2020 which has featured concealed messages, after the Video Games set in January and the Q Branch miniature sheet with the James Bond set in March.



...and other Sherlock collectables

Accompanying the Sherlock stamp issue are a retail stamp book and a collector's sheet.

The booklet of six 1st class stamps includes the Red-Headed League and Adventure of The Speckled Band designs from the miniature sheet (which Sir Arthur Conan Doyle said were his two favourite stories when asked by *The Strand Magazine* in 1927), in addition to four Machin definitives.

Like the Queen retail booklet issued on July 9, and the latest printing of the 2nd class definitive booklet, the backing paper is slightly thinner and whiter than that used previously. The wavy-line security underlay text also aligns in a different way.

The collector's sheet (formerly known as a Smilers generic sheet) has 10 of the counter-sheet designs and 10 se-tenant labels featuring stills from the television series.

From both sources, the special issues are self-adhesive rather than gummed. The booklet is printed in gravure and the sheet in litho.



Joint-issue postmark honours football hero

Football legend Jack Charlton was honoured with special slogan postmark in both England and the Republic of Ireland following his death in July.

Applied to stamped mail posted in both countries from July 20 until August 9, it was the first such collaboration between Royal Mail and An Post, the Irish postal administration.

Charlton played in the winning England team in the 1966 World Cup Final, and later managed the Ireland national squad to qualification for the 1990 and 1994 tournaments.



STEVEN ARDRON

'Priority postboxes' for returning virus home tests to labs

Royal Mail has designated more than 30,000 postboxes across the UK as 'priority postboxes', for people who have completed home tests for the coronavirus to post them quickly to laboratories for analysis.

Marked with a distinctive sticker including a National Health Service logo, the boxes continue to take everyday mail as usual.

Details of where to find your nearest priority postbox are provided with the testing kit.



STEVEN ARDRON

Mail Rail tunnel tours

Although it remains closed to the general public, The Postal Museum is offering guided tunnel walks exploring parts of the Mail Rail network which are not usually accessible to visitors.

The 1hr 15min tours must be pre-booked and social distancing rules will apply. Visit www.postalmuseum.org

Illustrated guide to GB postal cards

A new illustrated guide to Great Britain's postal stationery postcards has been published to mark their 150th anniversary.

Written and published by Neil Sargent, *British Post Office Stationery Post Cards 1870-2007* covers all the issued cards, including official and field service cards and those overprinted for use abroad, showing and explaining their varieties.

It also illustrates the various wrappers used for packs of the cards, records the relevant inland and foreign postage rates, and offers a brief introduction to stamped-to-order cards.

The 134-page full-colour book is available from the author for £19 plus postage and packing. E-mail: neil.sargent@btinternet.com



Postmaster to sit on Post Office board

The Post Office is to appoint a postmaster to its board for the first time, as it tries to move on from the Horizon scandal which saw some sub-postmasters wrongly accused of fraud when software was at fault.

It has also set up a compensation scheme for subpostmasters, after identifying an unrelated historical problem in its stock control process for stamps.

NEWS IN BRIEF

➤ A special stamp issue celebrating the 100th anniversary of Rupert Bear was scheduled for September 3, but no details or images had been released as we went to press.

➤ Royal Mail increased its international postage rates on September 1, in response to the coronavirus crisis, with the basic rate rising from £1.42 to £1.45 and the £1.63 and £1.68 rates both rising to £1.70. As a result, six of the 10 stamps in the Sherlock set no longer serve their intended purpose!

➤ New printings of Machin definitives with 2020 year codes include the 1st class value on May 4, the 2nd class on May 5, the 1st Large on May 7 and the 2nd Large on May 12.

➤ The contract to manufacture Royal Mail postboxes, as well as parcel boxes, sorting stations, trolleys and other equipment, has been awarded to the WEC Group, based in Darwen, Lancashire.

➤ The Post Office has closed its online shop, which sold stamps as well as stationery, packaging and other postal supplies. This has no effect on the Royal Mail online shop, which is a completely separate entity.

➤ Musicians spotted a detail design error in the £1.68 The Final Problem stamp in the Sherlock issue. The bow of Eurys Holmes' violin has a 'frog' (the part you grip, and use to tighten the bow) at both ends. The Classic FM website described it as 'an epic blunder'.

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Letters

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The Editor reads all letters, but is unable to answer them all personally. We reserve the right to edit letters for publication.

Were the first regional stamps on sale in other parts of the country?

Your feature on milestones in British philately (July/August issue, page 38) stated that the regional stamps issued in 1958 were 'placed on general sale only in the relevant region'.

In my albums I have blocks of six from regions other than my native Scotland, and I think I remember going into the post office in Arbroath and buying issues from other parts of the UK over the counter.

Is this just a false memory?

Jeff Dugdale, Fochabers

It must be! Whilst all of the regional stamps were postally valid for use in all parts of the UK, as is still the case with today's country stamps, they were sold only in the respective regions.

As Stamp Magazine's former Editor Richard West comments: 'In 1958 there was no national philatelic bureau, nor even philatelic counters in main post offices, so most collectors will have obtained the stamps from dealers. And it will not have been easy for dealers to obtain their stocks!' -Ed

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Stamps are no longer really for postage, but simply as something for discussion

The letters from R Major, about the lack of make-up values available to cover postage rate increases, and from Paul Barton, about this year's Coronation Street stamps (July/August issue, page 30), highlighted my own thoughts about the ongoing status of stamp collecting.

I'm not surprised about the make-up values, because stamps are so rarely used these days that Royal Mail can hardly be expected to be concerned about this. It is, after all, a business aimed at delivering mail, not supplying stamp collectors.

Now that it is becoming more common to pay for postage online, few people need to keep a stock of stamps at home. If you venture into a post office, it will invariably sell you a label, rather than stamps.

As for new stamp issues, I persist with my habit of collecting them, but I have long since regarded them as little more than colourful sticky labels, because they are almost never used postally.

I still enjoy seeing most of the new issues, and even those I don't like (such as the Coronation Street stamps) still provide something for discussion. Whether or not I continue spending increasingly large amounts of money on them remains to be seen.

Jeff Newman, Higham Ferrers

The true rationale behind Switzerland's early Europa stamp designs in 1957 and 1959

Having read with interest your feature on the Europa stamps (September issue, page 58), I thought I would add one or two comments, particularly relating to Switzerland.

In 1956 Switzerland was invited to join the European Coal & Steel Community. For reasons relating to sovereignty and neutrality, it rejected full membership but became an associate member, hence the issue in 1957. The design represents co-operation between Switzerland and the ECSC countries.

You state that in 1959 Switzerland used a different design from the common circular

chain design 'presumably because it felt excluded by the standard six'. Not so. Switzerland's 1959 design specifically related to the Montreux Conference, which established the European Conference of Postal & Telecommunications Administrations (CEPT).

The two stamps released for general use and the pair which were overprinted for use at the Conference post office in Montreux both came out on the opening day of the meeting on June 22, whereas the most other Europa stamps were not issued until September.

David Hope, Stalybridge



SOAPBOX

Investigating the background story behind a single stamp can open up a world of knowledge and insight. Russ Walker offers one example

As a follow-up to Mark Hornsey's Soapbox column about how much you can learn from studying the stamps of one country (July/August issue, page 31), let's see how much we can learn from a single stamp.

On eBay recently I bought the Sierra Leone 1956-61 2s 6d black and chestnut, illustrating Orugu Bridge, and decided to see what I could find out about its subject.

DIAMONDS DIRECT

Orugu Bridge was a high railway viaduct over a forested tributary of the Sierra Leone River, a few miles south-east of the capital, Freetown.

It was built to carry the Sierra Leone Government Railway, which was an important artery of this British colony for three-quarters of a century.

Its construction started in Freetown in 1896, and the first section of railway, a seven-mile stretch to Wellington, was opened by March 1897. The building of Orugu Bridge helped it to extend further eastward, and by 1907 some 228 miles of track had been constructed.

It extended, often through difficult terrain, almost across the entire country to Pendembu, with a major branch line northward to Makeni.

The Government Railway was unusual in being a national rail system using a narrow 2ft 6in gauge, something normally used for feeder lines.

Interestingly, it had a Scottish connection, as a number of locomotives were supplied by the North British Locomotive Company of Glasgow and by Andrew Barclay & Sons of Kilmarnock.

Sierra Leone relied heavily on mining for its economic prosperity. Diamonds were its key export, and it was also among the largest producers of iron ore,

titanium and bauxite, and a major source of gold. Trains brought these lucrative minerals from the hinterland to Freetown's harbour more efficiently than ever before.

The railway assumed increased importance in World War II, playing a key part in supporting the Allied war effort in North Africa when Nazi Germany controlled much of continental Europe. Disassembled fighter aircraft were transported by sea to Freetown, and then along the railway to a reassembly factory, before being flown onward to Egypt.

END OF THE LINE

When Sierra Leone gained its independence in 1961, Britain gave the

country 45 new passenger coaches, including one specially prepared for the visit of Queen Elizabeth II that year.

Increasing road traffic and changes in government policy saw a decline in rail transport in the 1960s, however. Parts of the system gradually closed, and the railway was abandoned completely by 1974.

A collection of rolling stock was kept at the former railway workshops in the hope of establishing a museum. Several coaches were also kept, including the Governor's coach and the Queen's coach.

ROAD AND RAIL

Civil war broke out in Sierra Leone in 1991, continuing until 2002. At one point the railway workshops were being used as a shelter for displaced people, and railway enthusiasts feared the museum collection had been destroyed.

It survived, however, and restoration of the equipment commenced in 2004 on the initiative of a British army officer, Colonel Steve Davies, who would later become the Director of the National Railway Museum in York. Now there is a fully-fledged National Railway Museum in Cline Town, a suburb of Freetown.

The viaduct shown in the 1956 stamp is no more, a recent casualty of scrap-metal thieves. In January 2020, however, a new Orugu Bridge was opened, this time a 150m road bridge, part of the Wellington-Masiaka highway project which benefits from Chinese investment.

It is expected to have a similar effect on the country's infrastructure as the railway did.

Russ Walker, Caledonian Philatelic Society, Glasgow



ABOVE: Sierra Leone 1956-61 2s 6d black and chestnut, illustrating the railway bridge at Orugu

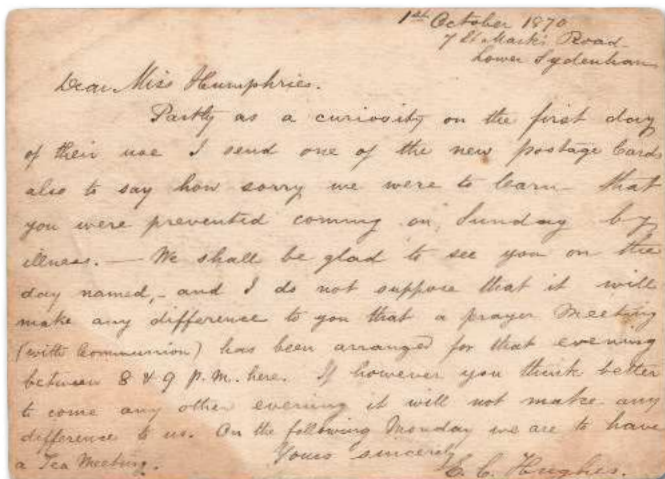
First-day-of-issue postcard which carried a personal message

Within your interesting feature on milestones in British philately (July/August issue, page 38), you illustrated a postal stationery postcard which was sent on the first day of issue in 1870.

As it happens, I own that very postcard, and I thought you might be interested to see the reverse.

Unlike most cards that were sent on that day, it is not a printed commercial advertising card, but a handwritten personal message. The opening sentence reads 'Partly as a curiosity on the first day of their use, I send one of the new postage cards'.

Barrie A Wright, Bexhill-on-Sea



Who benefits, exactly, when Royal Mail is fined for missing its delivery targets?

I was disappointed to learn that Ofcom had fined Royal Mail £1.5m for failing to hit its target of delivering 93% of mail the day after it was posted during 2019 (September issue, page 25). Who really benefits from such a fine? And to whom does the money go?

A target is an objective towards which efforts are directed. Nothing should be set in stone. For those who want a guaranteed postal date, there are Royal Mail services such as special delivery, not to mention private couriers.

I am certain posties do their absolute best to deliver 93% of their mail the day after it was posted, in the same way that bus drivers do their best to stick to a timetable. We live in the real world, though.

It doesn't seem fair that a vital but under-appreciated service such as Royal Mail is hit with a heavy fine despite its hard work.

Stephen Parry, Erdington

Randomness of whether post gets cancelled

I recently sent a bundle of Railway Philatelic Group leaflets to over 60 stamp shops in the UK, using an address list that was produced some time ago.

So far, five have been returned, 'gone away', which is not too surprising. What is inexplicable is that, of these five, two had postmarks on their stamps and the other three had biro scribbles.

Given that all this post went into one sack, I am at a loss to understand how some were properly cancelled and others weren't.

Terry Davies, Railway Philatelic Group, Caersws

Inverted postmark which looks as if it's impossible

I came across this 1978 postmark of Birkenhead, Merseyside, in a dealer's box of odds and ends.

As you can see, every element of it is fully inverted, to the extent that it looks perfect in mirror image.

We did try to see if we could replicate this at my local post office, but with no luck.

Do any of your readers have anything similar, or any explanation as to how this might have come about?

Vic Darlington, Alresford



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SG181 fine used
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Cylinder Block 1dot scarce perf£300.00</p> <p>17 QEII Wilding Edward crown set 1/2d-
1/6 SG540-556 u/m £75.00</p> <p>18 QEII Crowns set wmk inverted superb
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587-594..... £49.00</p> <p>20 QEII Crowns phosphor set inverted
SG610wi-616aWi.....£175.00</p> <p>21 QEII 1 1/2d Booklet pane SB75 Blue
Phos side left Cyl G17 u/m.....£120.00</p> <p>22 QEII 3d Booklet Pane sideways left Cyl
K19 good perfs.....£100.00</p> <p>23 QEII 4d Vermillion Booklet pane UB14b
with gum arabic scarce u/m..... £75.00</p> <p>24 QEII 6d Machin Cylinder Block Bright
Magenta Shade Cyl 3dot u/m.... £45.00</p> <p>25 QEII 3 1/2d Deep
Olive Brown
U116(2) the scarce
Faulty ink mix u/m
.....£395.00</p> <p>26 QEII 6/- Wilding Booklet
June 1965 £30.00</p> | <p>27 QEII 6/- Machin Booklet May 1968 QP37
with PVA Gum Scarce£375.00</p> <p>28 QEII Booklet HB3 4x1st "Sickle Tab" Cyl
W1W2W2..... £55.00</p> <p>29 QEII Booklet HB10a 4x1st no lines on
cover£115.00</p> <p>30 QEII 18p FCP/PVAD Imperf Marginal
Pair SG913y Cat £525£250.00</p> <p>31 QEII 9p Orange & Black SG882y missing
phosphor Cat £110 £50.00</p> <p>32 QEII 3p
Magenta
X930 Major
misperf u/m
.....£40.00</p> <p>33 QEII 4d Churchill SG661 maginal copy with
inverted watermark Cat£140 £60.00</p> <p>34 QEII 1968 Bridges 4d Printed on gum
side SG763a u/m £15.00</p> <p>35 QEII FRAMA Label unused1st
only available on cassettes for
the Blind £19.00</p> <p>36 QEII 2 1/2p Wales W13Ey Missing Phosphor
in u/m blockx4 Cat £30 £10.00</p> <p>37 QEII 12 1/2p Northern Ireland Cylinder
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COMPETITION

Spot The Stamp

WIN

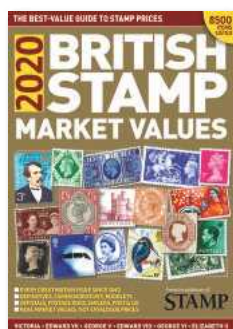
a copy of British Stamp Market Values 2020

We have a copy of *British Stamp Market Values 2020*, the authoritative annual price guide from the publishers of *Stamp Magazine*, to give away to one eagle-eyed reader.

For your chance to win, simply take a close look at the enlarged detail of a GB stamp shown below, and see whether you can identify it. All you have to do is tell us the stamp's face value, the name of the set it is from and the year of issue.

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The closing date is October 15, 2020, and the first correct answer drawn from our postbag will win the book. Good luck!



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COMPETITION

Royal Mail prizes

WIN



a Palace of Westminster presentation pack



We have a presentation pack of the Palace of Westminster stamp issue to give away to 12 lucky winners, courtesy of Royal Mail.

The set of six stamps and accompanying miniature sheet showcase the interior and exterior architecture of this magnificent building.

To enter, visit www.stampmagazine.co.uk/competitions, answer the question below and fill in your contact details. The closing date is October 15, 2020. Winners will be drawn at random after that date.

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QUESTION

What is the name of the clocktower which houses the bell known as Big Ben?

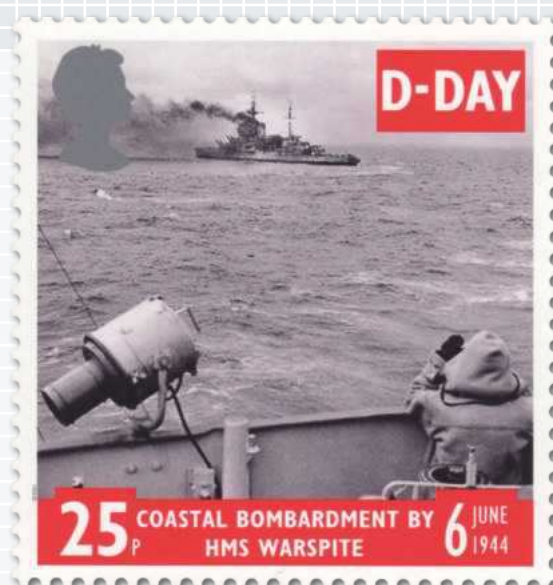
COMPETITION WINNERS

Romantic Poets presentation pack

The answer to our competition question in the June issue was 1971, and the 12 lucky winners whose correct answers were drawn at random were Kenneth McBeath from Glasgow, Jack Carlin from Doncaster, Mark Beaumont from Danbury, Harry Gay from Bristol, Linda Barber from Manchester, Gavin Counahan from Polegate, Daniel Osgood from Brighton, Terence Taylor from Carrickfergus, Laura Bradbury from Preston, David Kenny from Caversham, Deborah Munn from Sheffield, and Martin Harrison from Scunthorpe.

Spot The Stamp

The Spot The Stamp winner from the June issue is Chris Peach from Southampton, who correctly identified the mystery stamp (right) as a 25p value from the 1994 50th Anniversary of D-Day set, illustrating coastal bombardment by HMS Warspite.





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British bantam

Halfpenny postage arrived fully 30 years after penny postage, in 1870. Why was Britain's smallest-ever stamp necessary, how was it developed and what is its legacy?

■ Report by John Winchester

Uniform Penny Postage, introduced in January 1840 as part of Rowland Hill's postal reforms, reduced the basic price of sending a letter anywhere within Britain from 4d to 1d. In so doing, it committed the country to a low-cost, high-volume service suitable for a developing economy with growing levels of literacy.

The Post Office's previous price structure had been ripped up and thrown away, but would postage rates continue to fall as mail volumes increased?

Almost from the start there were demands for an even cheaper rate, for posting newspapers and books, or for short and non-confidential messages, but it would be more than 30 years before a ½d rate was introduced, in 1870.

Taxes on knowledge

One driver of the move towards even cheaper postage was the way postage rates were drawn into a wider debate about 'taxes on knowledge'.

The freedom and diversity of Britain's press was the envy of most other countries. At the start of the 19th century there were 52 different newspapers in London, and more than 100 others around the country.

However, their advertising content, the paper they were printed on and their copy sales were heavily taxed, especially when the authorities were concerned about the growth of a radical press in the years following the French Revolution.

It was the Whig government of the 1830s which began to reverse the trend. In 1834 stamp duty was abolished on pamphlets, and in 1836 it was reduced on newspapers. Advertisement duty was also cut in 1833, and paper duty in 1837.

After a further campaign led by the Association for Promoting the



ABOVE: Mint block of four of the 1870-79 ½d rose-red, Great Britain's first halfpenny value and smallest ever stamp

Repeal of Taxes on Knowledge, advertisement duty was abolished in 1853, newspaper duty (in compulsory form) in 1855 and paper duty in 1861.

These reforms helped to create a boom in publishing. By 1860 there were 177 London newspapers, with a total weekly circulation of more than two million.

Concessionary rates

Although they made fewer headlines, reduced postage charges played their part in this boom.

In the House of Commons debates on taxation in the early 1830s, many MPs, including Matthew Davenport Hill, the brother of Rowland, pushed for cheaper or free postage for newspapers and pamphlets.

Alongside the 1836 reduction in newspaper duty, a separate Post Office Act introduced free postage

for newspapers if they were not mailed locally. From 1855, newspaper publishers who paid no duty lost the right to free postage, while those who opted to pay duty retained it.

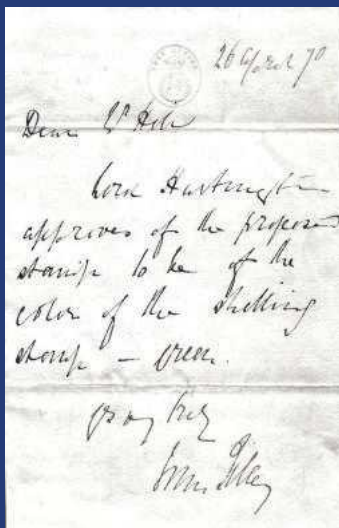
Another concession came in the form of the Book Post, Britain's first concessionary rate for printed matter, which was introduced in 1848 to encourage the growth of circulating libraries. The basic rate was 6d for a package of books up to 1lb in weight.

By 1852 almost any printed matter could be sent, providing no letter was enclosed and the package was open for inspection, and in 1855 the basic rate was lowered to just 1d for up to 4oz.

Pressure for reform

The 1855 arrangements for the free postage of newspapers were not beneficial to the Post Office,

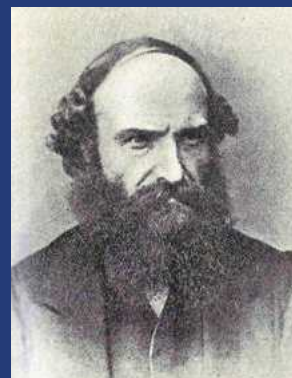




ABOVE: Marquess of Hartington, Postmaster General



ABOVE: Sir John Tilley, Secretary to the Post Office



ABOVE: Ormond Hill, Assistant Controller at the Stamp Office

LEFT: Letter of April 26, 1870, from Sir John Tilley to Ormond Hill, stating that the Postmaster General had approved the choice of green as the colour of the proposed new halfpenny stamp

because essentially it found itself providing the delivery service while the Inland Revenue pocketed the fee. Naturally, this focused minds on how to provide a cheap but paid-for service.

When the first postal cards were introduced in Austria in 1869, offering people the opportunity to send short messages at a rate

roughly equivalent to $\frac{1}{2}$ d, the urge to reduce British postage rates further gained momentum.

When the Marquess of Hartington (a future leader of the Liberal Party) was appointed Postmaster-General in William Gladstone's Liberal government in 1868, he had a reforming agenda. One result would be Britain's first

$\frac{1}{2}$ d postage rates, for postcards and printed matter, coming into force on October 1, 1870.

Out to tender

The Assistant Controller at the Stamp Office, Ormond Hill, wrote to the printer of the 1d and 2d stamps, Perkins Bacon, on April 20, 1870, with his plan for a new $\frac{1}{2}$ d stamp design. After consultation with the Secretary to the Post Office, John Tilley, it was suggested that the colour of the stamp might be green.

By April 29 the Inland Revenue was in a position to issue a formal tender to Perkins Bacon for the recess-printing of new stamps. ▷

CIRCULAR ARGUMENT

The impetus to reduce national postage rates in the late 1860s came partly from the establishment of local circular delivery companies, and in particular the private enterprise of Robert Brydone.

Brydone, a printer from Edinburgh, set up the Edinburgh & Leith Circular Delivery Company in 1865, to deliver circulars (printed matter) within the city and its environs, charging just $\frac{1}{4}$ d per item.

His organisation subsequently set up the London Circular Delivery Company (which soon merged with the Metropolitan Circular Delivery Company) and printed stamps for similar services in Aberdeen, Birmingham, Dundee, Glasgow, Liverpool and Manchester.

Not surprisingly, the Post Office brought legal action against these in August 1867, for infringing its monopoly. It won the case, ending the practice by 1869.

In truth the impact of the circular delivery companies was more gestural than financial. Reprints and forgeries of their stamps may have sold in greater numbers to collectors than the genuine ones did to customers. Still, their existence underlined the high price of posting printed matter, and piled pressure on the Post Office to offer the basic postage rate below 1d.



ABOVE: $\frac{1}{4}$ d stamp of the Liverpool Circular Delivery Company

RIGHT: Perkins Bacon composite essays No4 and No5, illustrating the difficulty of finding space for the denomination, whether expressed as 'Halfpenny' or ' $\frac{1}{2}$ d', in such a small stamp. The royal portrait used for these essays resembles that employed on the stamps of Canada





ABOVE: Some of the colour trials for the ½d were carried out using a small key plate for the New South Wales 'Diadem' issue. This example was described as dark salmon

Attached was a restrictive protocol, stating that the ½d stamp should be the same width as the 1d, yet not more than two-thirds the height. It should be green, printed in fugitive ink on thin, soft paper, in sheets of 480, arranged in 20 rows of 24.

The quantity required would be four million every week, and 100 million would need to be ready for September 24, 1870, one week before the anticipated issue date.

Design and colour

Perkins Bacon began work immediately on a series of drawings for possible designs. It would produce 19 in total, in four batches, with various heads of Queen Victoria (already in use on other stamps) set against light and dark backgrounds.

Frederick Heath, who in collaboration with his father Charles had engraved the head for the 1d and 2d stamps three decades earlier, was engaged on May 3 to engrave one for the ½d, for the sum



ABOVE: The distinctive script 'half penny' watermark, which extended horizontally across three stamps and was repeated 160 times on each sheet



ABOVE: Corner block of four from plate 5, showing the deckle edge, imperforate outer margin and plate number

of £36 15s. Once again it would be modelled on the Wyon Medal struck in the Queen's coronation year, but much reduced to fit the smaller format.

Colour trials were carried out in green, blue-green, yellow-green and various other colours, using engine-turned backgrounds as well as a small experimental plate of the 1856 'Diadem' design of New South Wales. Proofs were subsequently printed in 12 different colours.

Alas, hopes for a green fugitive ink proved fruitless, as the trial sample was only fugitive when freshly applied. The decision was made to revert to the proven rose-red ink of the 1d stamp.

The layout proved problematic, too, as the word 'halfpenny' was disproportionately long for such a small stamp. An alternative strategy was adopted, of placing a bold '½' numeral on each side of the design, with a 'd' above.

This was the first time 'd' had been used as an abbreviation for 'pence' on a British stamp, and the awkward arrangement of the inscription would not be to everyone's liking.

As on all existing stamps, check letters were required in all four

LOWER ORDER

The way the Stanley Gibbons catalogue is arranged muddies the waters in terms of the order in which British stamps were issued. The ½d and 1½d were in fact the 10th and 11th different values made available by the Post Office.

1840	1d
1840	2d
1847	1s
1848	10d
1854	6d
1855	4d
1862	3d
1862	9d
1867	2s
1870	½d
1870	1½d

corners, the top corners having the same two letters as the bottom corners but in reverse. The top row of each sheet therefore ran from A-A to A-X, and the bottom row from T-A to T-X.

The stamp design would incorporate the plate number, within the pattern on either side of the circular portrait frame.

By May 13 the design had been formalised (except for the royal portrait, which had yet to be finished), and the printing contract was confirmed on May 18.

Halfpenny Room

Perkins Bacon realised that its premises at 69 Fleet Street had insufficient capacity to print the new stamps in the quantities required, so a new wing was added to the building at a cost of £2,300. This unforeseen expenditure wasn't helped by a compensation claim from a nearby resident, who claimed that the height of the new building obstructed his light!

Installed in what was named the

'Perkins Bacon's premises at 69 Fleet Street had insufficient capacity to print the stamps in the quantities required, so a new wing was added to house seven presses'



BELOW: Die proof printed in black, showing the main elements of the issued design except the corner letters and plate numbers



ABOVE: A superb marginal block of 84 stamps, printed from plate 12

Halfpenny Room were seven newly designed printing presses, larger than existing models due to the difference in the size and orientation of the 1/2d sheets in comparison with 1d and 2d sheets.

Like the existing 1d and 2d, the stamps were to be printed on paper supplied by Wise & Co (formerly Stacey Wise) of Rush Mills in Northamptonshire. Hand-made and deckle-edged, it bore the script 'half penny' watermark, which was repeated 160 times in each sheet, each one extended horizontally across three stamps.

DID YOU KNOW?

The 1870-79 1/2d is the most difficult British stamp to illustrate in a magazine or catalogue.

Its diminutive size does not help, but an extra problem arises from a combination of its thin paper and the typical crackling of its gum. On modern colour scans, this tends to make the stamps appear creased.



First plate

Towards the end of May, the first die of the Queen's head was completed, and a proof of the unhardened die was taken on India paper. It was deepened and hardened before further proofs were taken in black and in rose.

Shortly afterwards the dies for the marginal inscriptions were completed and hardened. Identical on each side of the sheet, and arranged in three parts, these advised 'Price 1/2d per label. 1/- per row of 24. £1 per sheet', 'Place the labels above and at the right hand side of the address', and 'In wetting the back be careful not to remove the cement.'

Once the hardened die was ready, preparation of the first transfer roller began. This was hardened on June 4, and shortly afterwards plate 1 was laid down.

Unfortunately, the new hardening box required for the

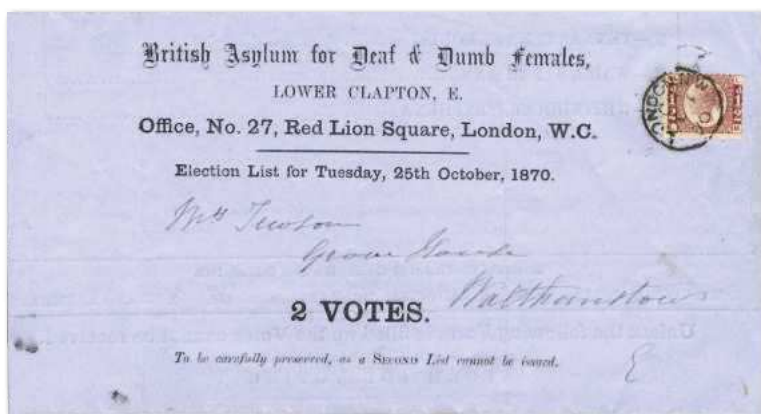


ABOVE: Stamps from plate 9 are the rarest, as this was designated as a reserve plate and printed no more than 50,000 sheets

larger plates wasn't ready in time, so plate 1 was left unhardened, which would shorten its printing life; it would last just under two years, and print 121,500 sheets.

Initial production

Plate 1 was registered on June 20 (only 96 days before 100 million stamps were due to be delivered to the Board of the Inland Revenue ▷



ABOVE: First day cover of October 1, 1870, with a single 1/2d stamp used by the British Asylum for Deaf & Dumb Females to send a printed election list within London



at Somerset House). Given a six-day working week, production would need to run at more than 1.2 million stamps per day.

The printers gave the task top priority, to the extent that they began work on plate 2 before plate 1 had been registered. Perhaps this was a step too far, for plate 2 was found to be defective and had to be abandoned.

Despite this setback, transfer roller 1 was successfully used to lay down plates 3 and 4, which went to press on June 28 and July 4 respectively. The printers then switched to transfer roller 2, which laid down plates 5 and 6, both of which were put to press before the deadline.

Unfortunately plate 7 could not be laid down, as the brittle punch broke before completion.

The printing contract had stipulated the manufacture of two reserve plates, to be stored in the safe at Somerset House, and Perkins Bacon's original plan was probably to have plates 1-6

working, with 7 and 8 in reserve. The failure of plates 2 and 7, however, meant they were down to five working plates, with 8 and 9 as the reserves.

In spite of this designation, these plates were passed between the safe and the printers on several occasions. Plate 8 produced 120,000 sheets in its lifetime, while plate 9 produced no more than 50,000 (recent estimates suggest as few as 36,000), making its stamps the most sought-after in the series.

Public debut

In the event, the printers did not manage to produce 100 million stamps by September 24. The reality was that they printed an average of only 1,440 sheets per plate per week, so they were woefully short of their target.

Nevertheless, the issue went ahead on schedule, on October 1, and the smallest stamp in Great Britain's history went into use, primarily for newspapers and printed matter but also as a

ABOVE: A copy of *The Daily Courier* newspaper sent by registered mail to Liverpool in November 1873, and then redirected to Lancaster, franked with ½d stamps from plate 4 and plate 6

RIGHT: Vertical pair from plate 5 with misaligned perforation, postally used in 1874



make-up value on other covers.

Collectors have subsequently nicknamed it the 'bantam', after small but feisty varieties of chicken and fowl.

Over the next nine years some 3,333,909 sheets of the ½d were issued, totalling 1.6 billion stamps.

Remarkably, only one complete sheet of 480 survives, from plate 12, although there are some large multiples, including a block of 72 from the rare plate 9 in the Royal Philatelic Collection. Mint stamps are much rarer than used examples.

The stamps were comb-perforated 14, but the way this was done left the first and last in each row with their outer edges imperforate. Accuracy was inconsistent, so poorly centred stamps are common and misperforations exist.



ABOVE: Two ½d stamps used to make up the 1d basic letter rate, for a hand-decorated cover sent in September 1872



'Plates 16, 17 and 18 all had to be abandoned, after cracks developed in the transfer roller'

Cracks appear

Over the course of almost a decade, a total of five transfer rollers were used to manufacture 26 plates, although only 15 of these plates produced issued stamps.

Perkins Bacon used roller 2 to lay down plate 10, which was registered in October 1872 and went to press a year later, before bringing a third roller into operation.

This successfully laid down plates 11 to 15, which were put to press between 1874 and 1878, but then came the infamous 'triple failure', in which plates 16, 17 and 18 all had to be abandoned after cracks developed in the roller. The

roller was discarded, and no stamps were printed with these plate numbers.

Perkins Bacon delivered the unhardened transfer roller 4 to the safe at Somerset House, before bringing roller 5 into use to lay down plates 19-26, the first two of which went to press in the summer of 1878.

Out of contract

By the late 1870s, cracks were appearing not only in the transfer rollers but also in the relationship between the authorities and the printer.

The Board of the Inland Revenue was all too aware that higher-value

ABOVE: A late usage of five 1/2d stamps from plate 20, affixed upside-down, to cover the 2 1/2d overseas rate from London to Paris in August 1880

stamps were being printed more economically in fugitive inks by De La Rue's letterpress process. When tests indicated that cancellations could be removed from Perkins Bacon's recess-printed lower values without damaging them, the writing was on the wall.

Two days before Christmas in 1878, the firm was given notice of the termination of its contract, and the following April the Board invited seven security printers to tender for the printing of Britain's low-denomination stamps.

It was something of a *fait accompli* that De La Rue would win the contract, and Perkins Bacon was informed that its 1/2d stamps would be required only until April 1880, a date later extended to July.

All the plates beyond 20 fell by the wayside. Proofs were taken from plates 21 and 22, but both were abandoned, left unhardened, and ultimately defaced.

Experiment over

De La Rue's 1/2d made its appearance on October 14, 1880, printed in the standard stamp format and in fugitive green, although this was changed to blue in 1884.

The beleaguered 'bantam' therefore became obsolete, an experimental format which was

POSTCARDS

The 1/2d postage rate introduced on October 1, 1870, also applied to postcards, but the adhesive stamp was not initially used for this purpose. That's because the Post Office introduced postal cards with an imprinted 1/2d stamp (with a different design) on the same day, and only this postal stationery was valid for the postcard rate.



ABOVE: 1870 1/2d postal card with imprinted stamp



ABOVE: Colour proof of the 1/2d in blue-green from plate 20 (which dates it to 1879), showing that the search for fugitive green colours continued until the end of the stamp's lifespan



ABOVE: Is this the best halfpenny-worth postage ever, in terms of miles travelled? Sent from Weymouth to a serviceman in nearby Portland in January 1875, using a single ½d stamp from plate 6, it evidently missed his sailing to the subcontinent and was subsequently forwarded to his Regiment in Jubbulpore, India. Some 24 handstamps and 13 manuscript annotations later, it ended up in the Dead Letter Office in Bombay



ABOVE: The replacement for Perkins Bacon's small-format recess-printed ½d rose-red was De La Rue's standard-format surface-printed ½d green, issued in 1880

never fully convincing, and was never repeated.

It occupies a unique position in philately as the smallest British stamp, and the first halfpenny value. But it has been lambasted by many critics, with some prominent commentators describing it as 'disfigured' or a 'freak'.

The ½d denomination endured for a full century, and was still in currency in 1970 in the final months before decimalisation. Yet its first incarnation was widely unloved.

Collectors are still drawn to its story, however, not least because of its interesting genesis, its production trials and tribulations, and the intriguing discontinuity in its plate numbers. ■

THE 1½d VALUE

The issue of the ½d stamp in 1870 was accompanied by that of a 1½d value, which had a much longer genesis.

In anticipation of downward adjustments in the basic postage rates, Ormond Hill wrote to Perkins Bacon & Co as early as 1860 requesting a design for a 1½d, stipulating that it should be same size as the existing 1d and 2d but of distinct appearance and colour.

The printer produced various essays, and approval was given to one which introduced a shield around the Queen's head. Some 10,000 sheets of 120 stamps were printed in rosy-mauve, of which 1,036 were overprinted 'Specimen'.

The stamps lingered in store for seven years, waiting for new postage rates to be introduced, but in vain. The decision was taken to destroy them in 1867, although some reached the philatelic market and a few examples are even known postally used.

The 1½d which was eventually issued in 1870 used the same design as the unissued 1860 stamp, but was printed in rose-red or lake-red. Printings exist from plate 1 (with no plate number in the design) and plate 3 (with the plate number appearing in the frame); plate 2 was not used as it was defective.



ABOVE: The unissued 1860 1½d rosy-mauve with 'Specimen' overprint



ABOVE: The issued 1870 1½d rose-red, printed from plate 3



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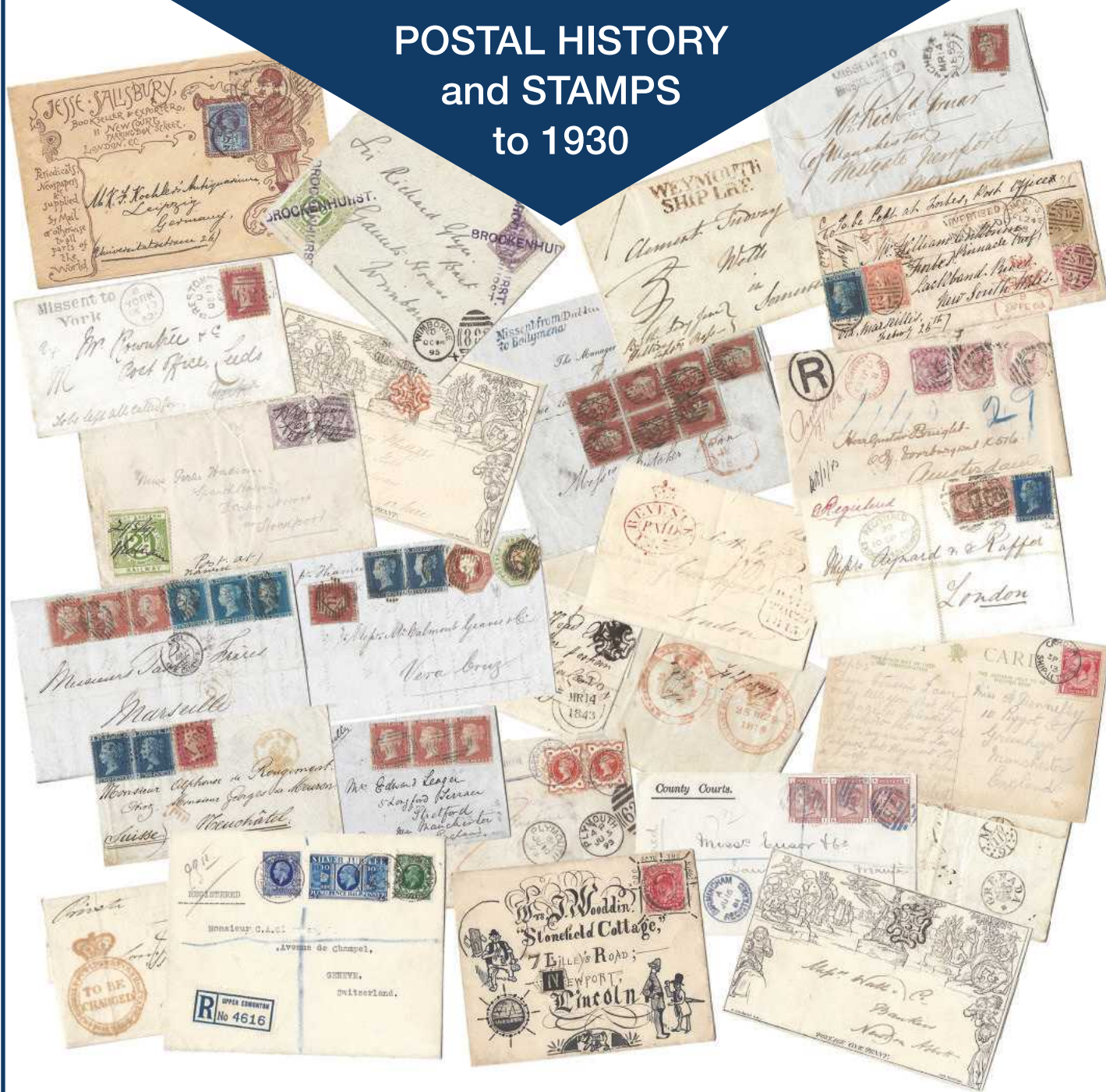
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(XP13) GERMANY ALLIED OCCUPATION 1945-49 inc. French Zone, Baden, Rheinland and Wurtemberg. A valuable collection mostly presented on 20 album pages as follows: Type A1 18 stamps M/M and F/U some better perfs (£33.60), 1946 Numeral 1pf to 1RM, 27 values a mix of Mint and Used (£20), SG 926-7, 955-56 M/M, 949-50, 951-52, 954 F/U and 953 M/M (£23), 1947 Defs. mix of M/M and F/U 20 stamps to 5 Marks (£44), 1948 Posthorn Overprints a mix of M/M and F/U inc. A88 F/U (£300) a total of 27 stamps (£436), A104-07 F/U (£24), 1948 Buildings 47 stamps to 5DM F/U with various typ3s and perfs (£394), A140-44, A138-50 F/U and A146-47 M/M (£116), French Zone F1-10 F/U, F11-13 M/M (£36), Baden FB1-12 F/U, FB13 M/M, FB14-26 F/U (£33), FB28-34, 36-37 F/U (£168), FB40 F/U (£65), Rheinland FR1-15 mix of M/M and F/U, FR16-29 set of 15 inc. FR20a F/U (£32), FR30-1 F/U (£190), FR32-41 F/U (£600), FR44 F/U (£1230), FR46-52 F/U (£204), Wurtemberg FW1-13, FW14-27 F/U (£40), FW28-37 and FW38-39 F/U (£347), FW44-52 F/U (£213). A total of 324 stamps, Cat. over £3,478**£550.00**

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XP15) ITALIAN TERRITORIES, Fiume, Trieste, AMG-FTT, AMG VG, Corona, PM Overprints, etc., about 85% Fine Used, the rest Mint as follows: Fiume (mostly Mint) 76 stamps (£570), Venezia and Corona Opts. 99% Mint, 25 stamps (£75), AMG VG Opts., 13 Mint and 10 F/U (£144), AMG-FTT SG 1-17, 18-27, 59-64, 65-76 (ex. 72), 78-79, 84-85, 87, 89, 90 x 2, 91, 93, 94-102, 114, 115-17, 135-38, 153-56, 158-62, 164, 168-72, 176, 178, 179, 180, 181, 184, 185, 189 x 2 Mint, 191 Used, 195-207 F/U, 212-14, 216, 220-21 F/U, 1951 Verdi

Country (Ref. #) Price

Mint, 222-23, 227 F/U, 228 Mint and E174 Mint, 229 F/U, 230 Mint, 234-37 Mint, 236 Used and 240 Mint, 242-47 F/U, 249 Mint, 250, 252 F/U, 264 Mint, 272-74, 276 F/U, 278, 283-89 F/U and 292 F/U plus Parcel Post Used (£1350), Various PM Opts. (£52). Total of 326 stamps, Cat. over £2000 in Simplex medium album**£395.00**

(XP27) SWEDEN - In Green Simplex Standard Album all U/M from 1939 King Gustav Definitives to 1980 Xmas. A few gaps here and there but very comprehensive inc. Booklet panes and 20 Booklets which inc. SB 341 (£55) and 2 uncut proof Booklets of UPPSALA Cathedral issued in 1974. Total number of stamps 414 and 4 M/Sheets plus 12 Booklet panes mostly in single strips of 5 Cat. £720+ only**£185.00**

(XP16) ITALY 1863-1978 - A superb collection nearly all Fine Used and a few Mint with many scarce sets and singles as follows: SG 16 F/U (£150), 1878 Surcharges Fine Used (7 stamps) (£155), 1890 Surcharges Used (£130), SG 61 F/U (£250) with Perf. Fault, 1890 Parcel Post F/U (£218), 1910 SG 82-85 F/U (£569), 1911 Jubilee F/U (£170), SG 91-92 FR/U (£86), 103 Mint (£22), E118 and 697 F/U (£48), 1921 Dante Mint and Victory Set F/U plus E122 /U (£75), 126-27 F/U (£77), 134 F/U (£55), 127 Mint and 1923 Congress F/U (£427), SG PE98 F/U (£130), 1923 Manzoni F/U to 1 Lire (£670), 161 F/U and 164 Mint (£302), 1925 Holy Year F/U (£190), SG E180 and 145 F/U (£102), 1926 Airs (4 values) F/U (£177), 1926 St. Francis (7 stamps) inc. 196A F/U (£176), 1926 National Defense F/U (£200), 1927 Airs SG 217-18 F/U (£260), 212-15 F/U (£75), 1928 Filiberto (9 stamp,ps) various Perfs. F/U (£341), SG 235 plus 1929 Def. Set F/U (£136), 219 Mint and 220 F/U and 223 F/U (£55), 1929 Monte-Casino Abbey Set F/U (£350), 1930 Ferrucci Set F/U (£325), SG 298 F/U (£325), 299-302 F/U (£725), 1931 St. Anthony Set F/U (£200), 1932 Geribaldi Set F/U (ex. 341) (£295), E348-49 Airs F/U (£130), 1932 Fascist March F/U (£600), 1933 Zeppelins Mint (£120), SG 380-89 F/U (£262), 1934 Airs Mint (£31), 1932 Anne4xation SG 395-EE410 (ex. 403-07) F/U (£279), 1934 Football SG 413-16 and 418-19 F/U (£90), 1934 Military Centenary (13 values) F/U and 2 Mint (£274), SG 457 F/U (£40), 458-72 F/U (£718), 477/89 (ex. 483) F/U (£7825), 1937 Child Welfare SG 490-96, 501, 504-05 F/U (£411), 506-14 and 516-20 F/U (£464), 529 F/U (£130), 534-41 and 544 F/U

Country (Ref. #) Price

and 542-43 Mint (£89), 702-03 F/U (£93), 706/17 (ex. 4L and 6L) and E718 F/U (£94), 718-26, 730-32, 734-35 F/U (£260), 737-8 and 748 F/U (£111), 727-29, 749-80 F/U (£196), 782-86, 790-94 F/U (£265), 795-98, 800-07 and E684 (ex. 804) F/U (£82), 809-11 F/U (£25), 813 Mint, 814-23 F/U (£92). A total of 1472 stamps, Cat. over £14,200 in Simplex standard album**£2,250.00**

(XP24) SWEDEN 1872-1982 99% Fine Used Collection in Simplex Standard Album. Including Many better items: 1874 Officials, 20 stamps (£482), 1903 5Kr Post Office (£42), 1917-18 Surcharges, 31 stamps and 1920 Surcharges 3 stamps (£230), 1921 War of Independence set (£40), 1924 Congress to 1Kr (£425), 1924 U.P.U. 14 values (ex. 2Kr) (£823), 1935 King Gustav (£20), SG 176 x 2 (£25). A total of 1613 stamps including various perf changes, 11 Booklet Panes (inc. 621a), 1 FDC and 3 Miniature Sheets, Cat. over £3460.00**£450.00**

(TR10) SWITZERLAND 1948-93 in 21 albums with slipcases including Pro-Patria, Pro-Juvene, Publicity Sets and Definitives U/M and FDC in Swiss PTT folders as issued by the Post Office. Also including some Maximum Cards and Stationery (UK Postpaid)**£500.00 £350.00**

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Royal treatment

The heir to the throne is jointly credited with the design for Canada's 1903-12 King Edward VII definitive series. In reality, though, the stamp almost designed itself

■ Report by John Winchester

In 1902 Canada's Postmaster General, William Muloch, was knighted by King Edward VII for his services to the Imperial Penny Post. During the ceremony the conversation turned to stamps.

Canada would require a new definitive series for the new reign, and George, Prince of Wales (the future King George V) offered his services as its designer. Placed on the spot, Muloch agreed.

The Prince, who was President of the (soon to be Royal) Philatelic Society London at the time, rushed to consult his mentor, the Society's Honorary Secretary, John Tilleard. They would design the issue together, although in many ways it seemed to design itself!

Their starting point was the existing definitive design. The 1897 'Maple Leaves' series, based on a photograph of Queen Victoria by W & D Downey, had a maple leaf motif in each corner and the denomination in words only; the 1898 'Numerals' series tweaked this by replacing the two lower leaves with numerals.

George and Tilleard's plan was to keep the same essential design and replace the portrait with another Downey image, of the new King in the ermine robes of state. Unlike Victoria's discrete veil crown, however, his Imperial State Crown wouldn't fit in the oval frame.

A crown needed to appear somewhere in the design, so the solution was to remove the maple leaves from the top corners and insert Tudor crowns in their place.

RIGHT: Canada 1903-12 King Edward VII 5c blue, designed by the Prince of Wales and John Tilleard, and recess-printed by the American Bank Note Company



With all four leaves having now been sacrificed, something had to be done restore this patriotic symbol, so they were squeezed back in around the value tablets in the bottom corners.

Perkins Bacon's J A C Harrison engraved the portrait, while the American Bank Note Company's Charles Skinner engraved the layout. On the 1898 issue the shading behind the portrait had been considered too dark, so here he used diagonal lines to throw it into greater relief.

The ABNC then recess-printed the issue on its high-speed rotary presses in Ottawa.

There was no longer considered to be any need for ½c, 3c, 6c and 8c denominations, and stocks of the existing 20c and 50c remained

high. So, in contrast to the 11 values of the previous series, only five of the new series were initially required: a 1c green, a 2c red, a 5c blue, a 7c olive and a 10c purple.

They were printed on white wove paper (except for the 5c which had a bluish tinge), perforated 12.

The stamps were put on sale on July 1, 1903, and would remain in use for the entire reign.

Values of 20c and 50c were added in 1904 and 1908, respectively, when stocks of the Queen Victoria stamps finally ran out.

Large quantities were printed, with the 2c alone (also issued in booklets, and experimentally on 'dry' paper) notching more than two billion, from 86 plates. Numerous shade varieties add to the popularity of the series. ■

MARKET VALUES

The basic set of seven is catalogued at £1,100 mint and £180 fine used, although used low values are very cheap. Collectors should be wary of imperforate stamps which were distributed by favour and are not catalogued.

COLLECTIONS !

Every month, hundreds of collections in the price range £20 to £500+, strong in European countries plus some Colonies and Foreign. (No GB.) Estate clearances, collections in printed albums, stock card lots with better items, and a few better stamps individually. Why gamble in auction and pay commission plus postage, when you can quickly buy direct, the price asked is the price you pay, no buyer's commission and post free in UK (even for large boxed lots) - plus fuller describing! Enjoy this period of isolation with a new collection?

Here are a just few of the lots available to buy at the time of going to press :



FIUME - ARBE

7256 : 1920 set of four mint (hinged) with ARBE in large letters (SG 1A/4A cat £2025), each with signatures, rare (illus) (4 stamps) ... £650

FIUME - ARBE & VEGLIA

7257 : 1920 postage sets used, small letters, complete for Arbe (SG 1B/6) and for Veglia (SG 1B/6), total cat £452, some on piece (12 stamps) ...£150



FRANCE

7163 : 1936 Air set (SG 534/40 cat £750), all fresh colours, well centred, light hinge (illus) (7 stamps) ... £295

FRANCE

6776 : 1929 Pont du Gard perf 13½ unmounted mint (SG 475) (1 stamp) ... £135

FRANCE

6774 : 1922 2nd War Orphans set mint (SG 388/95 cat £170) (8 stamps) ... £60

FRANCE - ALGERIA

6585 : 1962 1F+9F Liberation Fighters surcharge unmounted mint (1 stamp) ... £100

FRENCH COLONIES - ALGERIA

7066 : 1924-c1950 mint hinged collection nearly complete (couple used), with 1924 surcharges to 5F, later Views, surcharges, 1930 Centenary set, most later 1930s and wartime issues, and immediate postwar to c1950 (300 stamps) ... £175

FRENCH COLONIES - FR. GUIANA

6986 : 1892-1940 mint (and couple used) collection on old-style Schaubek pages, with 1892 GUYANE overprints, 1900 new colours incl 2F mint (SG 57 cat £140), 1904 pictorials set mint or used, 1920s new values and surcharges, 1929-40 most pictorials, dues, airs, also Inini some 1932 pictorials, 1932 Dues set incl the 3F red ovpt variety, all very fresh. Cat £750+ (165 stamps) ... £200

FRENCH COLONIES - INDOCHINA

7126 : 1917 Red Cross 15c+5c, variety triple overprint (SG 78b, cat £180) mint (1 stamp) ... £65

FRENCH COLONIES - LEBANON

7197 : 1924-1930 mint (hinged) range with 1924 ovpts on Sower/Merson to 25P on 5F, 1925 pictorials, 1930 pictorials to 100P, also some Cilicia (68 stamps) ... £100

FRENCH COLONIES - LEVANT

7069 : Issues for Dedeagh, Port Lagos, Vathy, with Dedeagh 1893 to 8Pi on 2F m or u (4Pi is mint, 8Pi used), Port Lagos 1893 to 4Pi on 1F mint, and a few Vathy to 1Pi on 25c. Cat £800+ (40 stamps) ... £150

FRENCH COLS - SOMALI COAST

7104 : 1902 Camels 25c blue & grey (unissued colour, as SFG 129) mint block of four (two u/m) all with inverted centres (4 stamps) ... £50

FRENCH COLS - SOMALI COAST

7093 : 1903 Views, selection of ten imperfs (all four good margins) with values to 40c and three of them with inverted centres (10 stamps) ... £45

FRENCH COLONIES - VIETNAM

7133 : 1954 Prince Bao Long, the set (SG 91/97) each in matching corner blocks of ten showing sheet numbers (u/m but some gum toning). Cat £290 (70 stamps) ... £70

GERMAN STATES - BAVARIA

7229 : 1949-1919 mainly used collection on older Exeter plain leaves, emphasis on 19th century material, with 1850 1k (2), to 9k (4) (plus 12k and 18k cut into and therefore not counted), 1862 new colours 1k (2) to 9k, 18k 9SG 33 cat £250) (N.B. some shades noted for these Quadrats and owner has suggested SG numbers), then 1867 etc Arms with some imperfs, higher values, various watermarks and some unused, 1911 Luitpold to 2M, 1912 Ludwig plus ovpts, high values, also Officials. Generally better than average condition though inevitably a few faults or tone marks here and there, more developed by shade than most collections with SG numbers indicated by owner, plus a few covers (200 stamps) ... £200

GERMAN STATES - BAVARIA

7221 : 1849-1920 mint and used (often both for 20th century issues) in Exeter album (blue peg binder, plain leaves), with 1850 set mixed condition (1k cut close, 6k (2) and 9k four margins, 12k poor, 18k cut close), 1862 1k (2 shades), 9k (3), 12k (neat but four very small margins, 18k with fault), 1867 etc Arms from imperf both 6k four margins, later 19th century Arms, some Luitpold, Ludwig most incl ovpts and high values, through to 1920, incl Officials etc. (weight 1 kilo) ... £150

GERMAN STATES - BAVARIA

7223 : 1850-1920 mainly used collection on Scott printed leaves, with 1850 Quadrats 1k (SG 8 cat £300), 6k (SG 11 cat £80), 9k (SG 17 cat £120) all with four margins albeit close, 1862 1k to 12k (SG 20/30 cat c£225 three or four margin), 1867 Arms imperf 1k to 6k blue, 7k, 9k (mostly four margins), later 19th century Arms, Luitpold, Ludwig to higher values and overprints and through to 1920 plus Officials. (200+ stamps) ... £150

GERMAN STATES - THURN & TAXIS

7232 : 1852-1866 mainly used collection on plain Exeter leaves, with Northern 1852 first set plus shades, 1859 set incl 5sgr used, 1862 set plus shades, 1865 some rouletted; Southern 1852 first set plus shades, 1859 (9k is pen cancelled but 15k is used), 1862 set plus shades, 1865 some rouletted. Imperfs are generally 3-margin or less as is usual for this country but still above average condition, shades sorted by SG. Very high cat value. (70 + 5 covers) ... £275

GERMANY

7215 : 1872-1945 mint and used (sometimes both) collection in older blue Exeter peg album (plain pages, written up in English), from 1872 small shield Eagles 1/4g to 2g used and 2k mint, large Eagles 1/4g to 2½g and 1k to 9k, 1874 both surcharges used (these Eagles cat about £2500, average condition), later 19th century, Germanias to 5M, Inflation, range of 1920s, III Reich with 1934 Airs & Count Zeppelin used (SG 551/59 cat £110), charity (trades) set used (SG 551/59 cat £180), and further III Reich nearly complete (except the min sheets) mint or used, often both, through to 1945 SA/SS, also Officials (weight 1½ kilos) ... £500

GERMANY

7220 : 1875-1932 mint and used (often both) collection in SG Devon album (black peg binder, plain leaves) from later 19th century, Germanias, Inflation with some better, 1920s commems and charities incl 1924 Elizabeth mint, 1927 I.A.A. (Labour Office) mint, 1925 charity (Arms) mint, 1928 2M Reichsmark mint. (weight 2 kilos) ... £250

GERMANY

7219 : 1982-1974 Eagles, nearly complete used run with Small Shield groschen set (both ½g), 1k to 7k, Large Shield groschen set, 1k, 3k to 9k, 1874 2½g, mostly good condition. Total cat £2417 (plus couple not counted) (23 stamps) ... £175

GERMANY - DDR

7242 : 1949-1975 mint (mainly hinged) and used (often both) collection in four albums (British style springbacks, plain leaves, mostly written up), slight duplication e.g. where couple of years overlap between albums, some better stamps of the earlier years with 1949 Postal Workers mint, 1951 Polish Friendship, Mao 12pf and 50pf mint, through to 1975, estimate 50% complete, often both mint and used, modestly priced. (weight 7 kilos) ... £150

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		British Solomon Islands	British Leeward Islands	Isle of Man	Papua + New Guinea	Turks + Caicos	
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Power and glory

Some 35 different passenger liners claimed the Blue Riband for the fastest crossing of the Atlantic. Many of them are immortalised on stamps, making for an evocative thematic collection. We present 15 gems to get you started

■ Report by Linus Teeming



For decades it was the most prestigious prize in the world of transport. Ships which held the Blue Riband, for the fastest crossing of the north Atlantic Ocean, could expect to be the first choice for wealthy travellers and for lucrative mail contracts.

The nations of North America and western Europe vied for supremacy in a technical and commercial battle which enthralled the public, invoked national pride and pushed nautical engineering to new limits.

Neither the term 'blue riband' nor the habit of flying an honorary blue pennant from a mast-top came into regular use until the later 19th century. The intense competition between shipping lines, however, is generally regarded to have started in earnest as far back as the 1830s,

ABOVE: Cover celebrating the departure of the RMS Queen Mary on her maiden transatlantic voyage, from Southampton to New York, on May 27, 1936

'Of the 35 different holders of the Blue Riband, 25 were British-built, five German, three American, one Italian and one French'

when sail began to give way to steam, and ended in the 1950s, when air travel made the outright pace of any steamship irrelevant.

Claimants of the honour had to be passenger liners in regular service, so vessels built for speed without practicality were excluded. The holders were initially paddlesteamers, and later single- or double-screw steamships, culminating in huge and luxurious liners built with the aid of government subsidies.

Westbound and eastbound crossings were recognised, although the latter were typically

faster due to more favourable prevailing winds and currents. Since the distances between the ports of departure and arrival varied, the riband went to the ship which completed its journey at the highest average speed.

Of the 35 different holders, 25 were British-built, five German, three American, one Italian and one French. Many of these magnificent ships have been celebrated on attractive stamps, which suggest a wonderful thematic collection.

Here's our pick of the essential 15, and the stories of the vessels they depict.

SS Sirius

Blue Riband westbound: 1938.

Blue Riband eastbound: 1938.

Fastest crossing: 8.03 knots.

Stamp issue: Ireland 1988.

Built in Leith and chartered by the British & American Steam Navigation Company for two return passages from Cork to New York, this diminutive 54m paddlesteamer is regarded in retrospect as the first holder of the Blue Riband, having been engaged in the first serious competition for the fastest crossing.

Carrying 45 passengers, she took 18 days for her westbound crossing and 15 days eastbound, significantly quicker than the mail packets of the time. Her records lasted a matter of days, however, before being eclipsed by the larger SS *Great Western*.



SS Great Western

Blue Riband westbound: 1938-41, 1843-45.

Blue Riband eastbound: 1838-41, 1842-43.

Fastest crossing: 10.99 knots.

Stamp issue: Great Britain 2004.

Designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel and built in Bristol, this 71m paddlesteamer was not only the first steamship purpose-built for crossing the Atlantic but also the largest passenger ship in the world when she was launched.

Operated by the Great Western Steamship Company, an offshoot of the Great Western Railway, she plied the route from Bristol to New York for eight years, until 1946, before being diverted to new destinations in the West Indies and South America.

Setting a precedent which would be followed by many of her successors, her last role was as a troopship, during the Crimean War.

RMS Britannia

Blue Riband eastbound: 1841-42.

Fastest crossing: 10.98 knots.

Stamp issue: Great Britain 2013.

Designed by Robert Napier and built in Glasgow, this 63m paddlesteamer was the original Royal Mail Ship.

Operated by the British & North American Royal Mail Steam Packet Company, which had won the first contract to carry transatlantic mail and would later become the Cunard Line, she was one of four ships plying a regular route from Liverpool to Halifax, Nova Scotia, with an extension to Boston, USA.

She could carry 115 passengers. One was the novelist Charles Dickens, who got very seasick.

After being taken out of service, she was used by the Prussian Navy as a barracks ship, and was sunk after being redesignated as a target ship.



SS Adriatic

Blue Riband westbound: 1872-75.

Fastest crossing: 14.53 knots.

Stamp issue: USA 1869.

Built in Belfast and operated by the White Star Line, this 138m vessel was one of the new breed of propeller-driven ocean liners, with compound expansion engines driving a single screw.

The largest in a fleet of six, aiming to provide more comfort for both 'saloon class' and steerage passengers on the Liverpool to New York route, she became the first of six White Star ships to claim a Blue Riband.

Intriguingly, she was originally intended to be the first ship with cabins lit by gas lamps rather than oil lamps, but the plan had to be abandoned before she went into service due to gas leaks in the system.

Eventually she became more famous for a series of collisions, with a Cunard liner in 1874, with an American ship and a packet ship in 1875, and with a brig in 1878. Three of these resulted in loss of life.



SS City of Berlin

Blue Riband westbound: 1875-76.

Blue Riband eastbound: 1875-76.

Fastest crossing: 15.37 knots.

Stamp issue: Jamaica 1960.

Built on Clydeside and operated by the Inman Line, a British shipping firm which had the habit of naming its vessels after world cities, this 149m single-screw steamship was one of a new breed of express liners commissioned to compete with the White Star Line. She duly deprived the rival company of both Blue Riband honours while plying the Queenstown (Cobh) to New York route.

She could carry 202 first-class and 1,500 steerage passengers, and for six years she was the world's largest active passenger ship.

In 1879 she became the first North Atlantic liner to be fitted with electric lighting, which comprised a grand total of six incandescent lamps, shared between the dining saloon and the boiler room.

After Inman was taken over by the American Line she was sold to the US Government, and served as a troopship during the Spanish-American War and World War I.

RMS Umbria

Blue Riband westbound: 1887-88.

Fastest crossing: 19.22 knots.

Stamp issue: Cuba 1899.

Built in Glasgow, and operated by Cunard on the Liverpool to New York mail route, this 158m vessel became the largest ship afloat when she was launched in 1884. Powered by six compound engines supplied by nine boilers, she was among the last of the Cunard steamers to be fitted with auxiliary sails, and vied for the Blue Riband with her sister ship RMS *Etruria*.

In 1900 she was chartered by the British government as a Boer War troopship, before returning to civilian service to complete 145 round trips to New York.



SS City of New York

Blue Riband eastbound: 1892-93.
Fastest crossing: 20.11 knots.
Stamp issue: Great Britain 2004.

Built on the Clyde for the Inman Line, this 170m vessel was the world's first twin-screw express liner, with two triple-expansion steam engines driving separate propellers.

Originally she plied the Liverpool to New York route. After the Inman Line was taken over by the American Line, however, she was renamed *New York* and crossed to and from Southampton.

She was chartered to serve as a US scout and troopship during the Spanish-American War and World War I. In between, in 1912, she famously almost collided with RMS *Titanic* as the latter set off for her ill-fated maiden voyage.



'Lusitania completed 201 Atlantic crossings, but became most famous for being sunk by a German U-boat in 1915'

SS Kronprinz Wilhelm

Blue Riband westbound: 1902-03.
Fastest crossing: 23.09 knots.
Stamp issue: USA 1912.

Built in Stettin (now Szczecin) and named after the heir to the imperial throne, this 202m ship was operated by Norddeutscher Lloyd on the Bremerhaven to New York line. She was one of a trio of vessels which dominated the Blue Riband for Germany in the 1897-1904 period.

In World War I, she served as an auxiliary warship for the German Navy, capturing or sinking many Allied ships off the east coast of South America, before being interned in the USA. After America entered the war, she was renamed USS *Van Steuben* and served as a troopship with the US Navy.



RMS Lusitania

Blue Riband westbound: 1907-09.
Blue Riband eastbound: 1907.
Fastest crossing: 25.65 knots.
Stamp issue: Ireland 2015.

Built on Clydeside and operated by the Cunard Line on the Liverpool to New York route, this 240m vessel (like her sister, RMS *Mauretania*) introduced a revolutionary new propulsion system in the shape of four steam turbines driving four propellers.

In an illustrious career, she completed 201 transatlantic crossings, but ultimately became most famous for being sunk by a German U-boat off the coast of Ireland in 1915, an event which escalated World War I and helped to draw the USA into the war.

The ship had been unarmed, and the death toll of 1,198 was dominated by civilian passengers, 128 of them American. In its defence, Germany claimed she was sailing in a declared war zone and was also transporting munitions, an assertion which was officially denied at the time but is now thought to have been true.

RMS Mauretania

Blue Riband westbound: 1909-29.
Blue Riband eastbound: 1907-24.
Fastest crossing: 26.25 knots.
Stamp issue: Great Britain 1969.

RMS *Lusitania*'s sister ship, built on Tyneside and operated by Cunard on the Southampton to New York route, was the largest ship in the world when she was launched, at 241m. She later held the Blue Riband in both directions for longer than any other ship up to that time.

She was also the epitome of Edwardian style and elegance, with luxurious and spacious interiors (at least for first-class passengers) crafted from marble and 28 different types of wood, and decorated with tapestries, Corinthian columns and

stained-glass windows. The centrepiece was an elaborately domed dining room seating 470 people.

In wartime she was used as a troopship and hospital ship, starting with the Gallipoli campaign in 1915.



SS Bremen

Blue Riband westbound: 1929-30, 1933.
Blue Riband eastbound: 1929-35.
Fastest crossing: 28.51 knots.
Stamp issue: West Germany 1977.

Built in Bremen and operated by Norddeutscher Lloyd on the Bremerhaven to New York route, this 286m vessel was one of a new breed of liners which reignited competition for the Blue Riband in the inter-war years.

Driven by reduction-gear rather than direct-drive turbines, she was noted for her streamlined profile but also for her bulbous bow below the waterline, increasing buoyancy while reducing drag.

She also featured a compressed-air catapult system on her deck, installed between the two funnels, for launching a Heinkel seaplane which could deliver the mail some hours in advance of her docking at her destination. First used in July 1929, on the crossing which claimed the westbound Blue Riband, this novelty helped to launch a whole new branch of aerophilately.

Converted into a troopship and then a barracks in World War II, *Bremen* was destroyed by fire in her home port in 1941.



'Bremen's catapult launched a new branch of aerophilately'



SS Europa

Blue Riband westbound: 1930-33.
Fastest crossing: 27.91 knots.
Stamp issue: Germany 1937.

Built in Hamburg for Norddeutscher Lloyd, the 284m sister ship of *SS Bremen* endured a chequered life.

She was severely damaged by fire even before her maiden voyage in 1930, was briefly used as a troopship after being seized by the Americans at the end of World War II, and was then handed over to the French line CGT as war reparations, being renamed *SS Liberté*.

She sank after colliding with another ship in 1946, but was refloated and repaired, serving as France's premier ocean liner until as late as 1961.

SS Normandie

Blue Riband westbound: 1935-36, 1937-38.

Blue Riband eastbound: 1935-36, 1937-38.

Fastest crossing: 31.20 knots.

Stamp issue: France 1935.

Built in St Nazaire, and operated by the Compagnie Générale Transatlantique (CGT), this 313m liner was the largest vessel afloat when she was launched, and remains the most powerful steam turbo-electric passenger ship ever.

Known for her luxurious interior, with Art Deco styling, she was the pride of France and became the liner of choice for the rich and famous, making 277 crossings between Le Havre and New York during the 1935-39 period.

Finding herself in New York at the outbreak of World War II, she was first interned by the American authorities and later seized for conversion to a troopship. During the refit she caught fire and capsized in 1942.



RMS Queen Mary

Blue Riband westbound: 1936-37, 1938-52.

Blue Riband eastbound: 1936-37, 1938-52.

Fastest crossing: 31.69 knots.

Stamp issue: Great Britain 2004.

Built on Clydeside and operated by the newly merged Cunard-White Star line, on the weekly service from Southampton (via Cherbourg) to New York, SS *Normandie*'s great rival was a little shorter at 310m, but her more traditional interior decor was more appealing to many.

Named after the consort of King George V, she could carry 2,139 passengers: 776 in first class, 784 in cabin class and 579 in tourist class. Her attractions included a three-storey first-class dining room, two indoor swimming pools, a music studio, children's nurseries, worldwide telephone connectivity and air-conditioning.

She served as a troopship during World War II but was refitted for passenger service afterwards. After being retired in 1967, she was permanently moored as a tourist attraction in Long Beach, California, housing restaurants, museums and a hotel.

SS United States

Blue Riband westbound: 1952 to date.

Blue Riband eastbound: 1952 to date.

Fastest crossing: 35.59 knots.

Stamp issue: Monaco 1953.

Built in Newport News, Virginia, and operated by the United States Lines, this 302m vessel was the ultimate transatlantic speed merchant, and has now held the Blue Riband for almost 70 years, and counting.

Powered by four double-reduction-gear steam turbines fed by eight boilers, she broke the eastbound record by more than 10 hours on her maiden voyage from New York to Southampton, and the westbound record by almost 10 hours on her return passage.

These marks remained unchallenged as the golden age of the ocean liner was ended by air travel, and she was taken out of service in 1969.

Sadly her retirement has been ignominious, and she lies rusting in a berth in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, awaiting possible restoration as a tourist attraction.

The US government sponsored her construction with the proviso that she had to be easily convertible into a troopship in time of war, but this never proved necessary.



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Last man standing

Bertil Skov Jørgensen has seen his career as a full-time stamp engraver for Denmark curtailed by circumstances, and the evidence suggests that's a waste

■ Report by Adrian Keppel

When Bertil Skov Jørgensen began engraving stamps for Denmark, a country with a proud tradition of high-class philatelic design, little could he have imagined that he would become the last man standing.

His career as a full-time stamp engraver spanned a relatively short period, from 2008 until his country decided to stop producing hand-engraved stamps in 2016.

Even so, there are plenty of gems to be found among his work.

Born in Kolding in central Denmark in 1968, young Bertil had two divergent influences in his early life. His father, was a press photographer who loved art and typography, and had a complete sheet of the 10ø wavy-line definitive hanging on the wall. On the other hand his maternal grandfather, a priest who became the Bishop of Ribe, sparked his interest in theology.

Art eventually won out, when he



ABOVE: Denmark's 2008 Breast Cancer Awareness Campaign charity issue was Bertil Skov Jørgensen's first stamp engraving



ABOVE: This 2010 stamp illustrates the Cathedral at Ribe, where the engraver's grandfather had been the incumbent Bishop

applied for a place at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen, and to his amazement was one of only 16 of 800 applicants to be admitted.

He had been studying at the academy for seven years when one of his professors put Skov Jørgensen's name forward for designing a stamp marking the 50th anniversary of the Royal Danish Air Force, to be issued in 2000.

He had always wanted to design a stamp, so having his design accepted and engraved by Martin Mörck was a dream come true.

Some years later, the administration's master engraver Arne Kühlmann retired, and Skov Jørgensen was offered an apprenticeship under Mörck.

Initially, he would work mainly as a designer, drawing the keyline artwork on which an engraving would be based, and later he

would progress to engraving designs himself.

His first issued engraving, in 2008, was a single stamp promoting the breast cancer awareness campaign, using an eye-catching abstract image of a woman.

In fact this would be one of the very few stamps he would produce that was recess-printed only. Most would employ a combination of recess and litho, with the engraved part usually playing only a supporting role.

Two years later, Skov Jørgensen got the opportunity to immortalise one of his childhood memories, when he engraved both designs for the 2010 set marking the 1300th anniversary of the historic town of Ribe. One of these depicted Ribe Cathedral, where his grandfather had been Bishop!

Besides this, Skov Jørgensen counts among his favourites two miniature sheets: the 2011 issue



LEFT: Skov Jørgensen's only portrait stamp, of the philosopher Søren Kierkegaard, was for a 2013 joint issue by Denmark and the Farøe Islands

larger and more heavily outlined figures in the foreground, with the background bleeding into neighbouring stamps to create an effect of being blinded by the brightness of the snow.

A change in the remit meant more text had to be added, necessitating smaller illustrations, but the impression of being blinded by snow is still present.

Skov Jørgensen's only true portrait stamp came in 2013, when a joint issue by Denmark and the Farøes marked the 200th anniversary of the birth of the philosopher Søren Kierkegaard.

The engraving was quite a challenge, because it was based on a portrait very softly drawn in pencil and charcoal, so he used a combination of techniques.

The delicate tonal contrasts of the face were effected using a traditional crosshatching-and-dots technique (also known as American Bank Note style), while other elements are done in free style (or European style).

Skov Jørgensen's final traditional engravings for Denmark, before hand-engraved stamps were discontinued, were for a set illustrating popular children's songs in 2016.

He still works intermittently for the postal administration, designing the odd stamp issue for computer-engraving, but what he calls 'the most refined and delicate artistic technique' is now confined to his private commissions. ■

BELOW: 18k stamp from the 2014 miniature sheet marking the 150th anniversary of the Second Schleswig War, illustrating Prussian soldiers dragging cannon into position during the Siege of Dybbøl

'Very few of the stamps being produced were recess-printed only. Most employed a combination of recess and litho'

commemorating the 250th anniversary of the Danish scientific expedition to Arabia, led by the German cartographer Carsten Niebuhr, and the 2014 sheet marking the 150th anniversary of the Second Schleswig War, in which Danish forces were defeated by those of Prussia.

Both sheets also exist as officially produced black prints, showing only the engraved parts, and the latter in particular exhibits

the engraver's ability to incorporate a huge amount of detail into a small space.

Skov Jørgensen has also created some stamps for Greenland and the Farøe Islands.

Among his most intriguing work are Greenland's 2009 and 2010 stamps marking the centenaries of Danish mission and trade stations in Thule.

Originally, the concept was for





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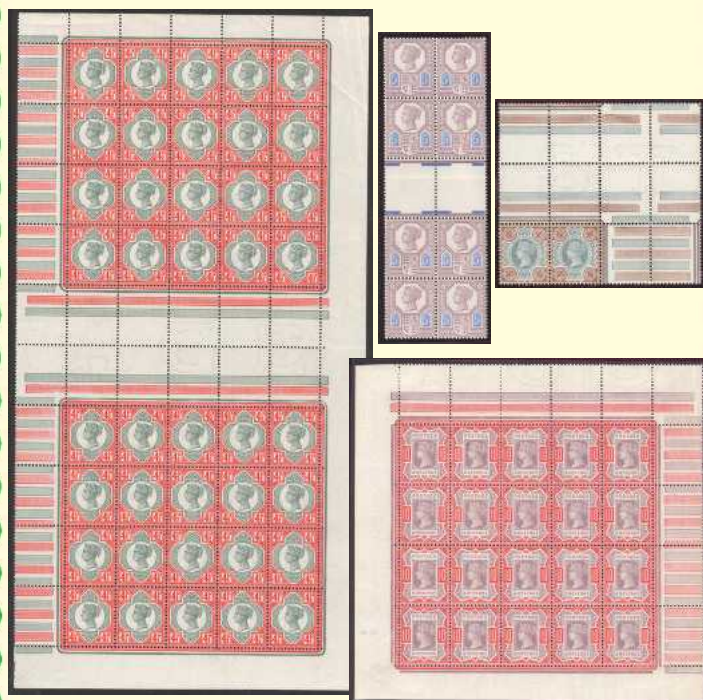
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Disappearing act

How have the four British sub-post offices featured in a 1997 stamp issue fared in the interim? Theirs is a sorry tale reflecting continuing upheavals in postal services

■ Report by Jeff Dugdale

In 1997, when Royal Mail marked the Centenary of the National Federation of Sub-Postmasters by issuing a set of four stamps celebrating Sub-Post Offices, there were more than 20,000 of them in Britain.

Today there are around 11,500 post offices in all, and their decline is continuing. Despite the range of services they offer, which are financial as well as postal, and despite their importance to village communities, they are looking like an endangered species.

So we thought we would check on the four quaint rural offices illustrated by Terrence Millington for that 1997 set, and see how they were faring.

You will probably not be surprised to hear that not all of them are still operational. But you might be shocked to learn that not one of them is!

Haroldswick

The first of the four properties in the 1997 set to cease to be a post office was the one shown on the 20p value, which closed in November 1999.

The timber building at



ABOVE: Benham first day cover for the 1997 Sub-Post Offices issue, marking the centenary of the National Federation of Sub-Postmasters, with a cachet and handstamp illustrating the Old Post Office at Castle Combe in Wiltshire

Haroldswick on Unst, the northernmost of the Shetland Islands, is just about as far north as you can go in the British Isles. The office used to have a permanent handstamp boasting that it was the most northerly post office in the UK.

It was in operation for more than 50 years, until the last sub-postmistress, Doris Gray, retired after three decades and no-one could be found to keep it going.

The closing of the Haroldswick office left the Baltasound office, five miles to the south, as Britain's most northerly.

Beddgelert

There is a flourishing post office in Beddgelert, between Porthmadog and Caernarfon in Gwynedd, open seven days a week and offering a full range of services within the village shop.

This, however, is not the substantial building which was illustrated on the 1997 43p stamp, which had been awarded the title of Best Post Office in the UK in 1995.

That edifice, constructed in different shades of beautiful Snowdonia stone, lies across the other side of the river and is now a private dwelling, after the provision of postal services was relocated within the village in 2013.

Now owned by the Community Council and named Llys Bulkeley, the former post office has been modernised throughout, offering three double bedrooms, a modern fitted kitchen and bathroom, and a spacious dining area and lounge. It



ABOVE: 1997 Sub-Post Offices 20p, illustrating the office at Haroldswick in the Shetland Islands, now closed



ABOVE: Haroldswick used to have a permanent handstamp proclaiming that it was Britain's northernmost post office



ABOVE: 1997 Sub-Post Offices 43p, illustrating the office at Beddgelert in Snowdonia, now closed



ABOVE: The Snowdonia stone building is now a private dwelling, refitted and available for rent

ANNE TILL, BEDDGELERT COMMUNITY COUNCIL



ABOVE: 1997 Sub-Post Offices 26p, illustrating the office at Painswick in Gloucestershire, now closed



ABOVE: The Cotswold stone-and-timber building, once Britain's oldest sub-post office, is now out of use

shop on the ground floor of the town hall in Victoria Square, a short walk away.

The reinstatement was made possible only when Shreyas Patel, the postmaster in nearby Upton St Leonards, agreed to provide a limited service in Painswick too. The office is open for only two days a week, and then only for two hours in the morning.

Ballyroney

The most recent of these buildings to change its function is the one which was featured on the 63p top value in the 1997 set. This was the sub-post office in Ballyroney, Co Down, between Lisburn and Newry in the south-eastern corner of Northern Ireland.

The owners who had been running the post office sold the property in January 2017. A firm of estate agents in Banbridge put it on the market at around £155,000, although the sale price has not been disclosed.

After the closure of the business, the large (8.5m x 5.5m) front room was first used as a games room, and later converted into a living room.

Besides the 1997 stamp, the sub-post office was also illustrated on a limited-edition cover, with a £5 stamp tied by a specially commissioned handstamp, which was given by Royal Mail to customers who took part in a consumer survey in 2002. ■

can be rented for £600 per month from an estate agent in Caernarfon.

Painswick

The sub-post office featured on the 26p value, on the main road through Painswick in Gloucestershire, five miles north of Stroud, was widely claimed to be the oldest in Britain.

In truth it is not known when it first opened its counter, but the listed Cotswold stone-and-timber edifice in which it was housed dates from 1428, and until quite recently was probably the oldest building in the country which contained a post office.

The sad news is that it is no longer operational. It closed in April 2013, and the wallbox outside was removed in November of the same year. When a post office was restored in 2015, it was within a

'In 1997 there were more than 20,000 sub-post offices in Britain. Today there are around 11,500'



ABOVE: 1997 Sub-Post Offices 63p, illustrating the office at Ballyroney in Northern Ireland, now closed



ABOVE: The building's former shopfront is now someone's spacious private living room

from / respond to: **Andrew McGavin**

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(naïve seller) ✓ = **me but I was only 15 at the time!**



ANDREW PROMOTING PHILATELY ON THE ALAN TITCHMARSH SHOW ITV

About The Author ▶ Andrew found his Father's stamps at the age of 10. A year later at Senior School he immediately joined the School Stamp Club. He 'specialised' (!) in British, but soon was interested in Queen Victoria which he could not afford. The 2nd to last boy wearing short trousers in his school year, he religiously bought Post Office New Issues on Tuesdays with his pocket money. He soon found that he enjoyed swapping / trading stamps as much as collecting them. Aged 19, eschewing University he quickly found a philatelic career in London, leading to creating his own companies in stamps. Andrew has authored many internationally published Stamp 'Tips' articles, appearing on Local Radio and National TV promoting Philately with Alan Titchmarsh. Andrew's area of expertise is unusual – in so far as his grounding in collecting and wide philatelic knowledge has given him a deep understanding of Philately. He has studied Philately for the past 51 years, in combination with Commerce and Marketing Expertise, enabling him to create synergies in 'lifetime' interlinked Stamp Selling Systems, selling unit-priced stamps through to handling collections & Rarities up to £700,000 each. Today Andrew is fortunate to be co-owner with his Wife, of Universal Philatelic Auctions (aka UPA) – the Largest No Buyer's Premium Reducing-Estimate System Stamp Auction in the World, creating records selling stamps to 2,261 different bidders from 54 different countries 'in his international auctions. Andrew stopped collecting stamps aged 18 reasoning that his enjoyment of stamps would be in handling them and selling them... He loves working in stamps and looks forward to each philatelic day



2 ▶ Three years later, attending my first public stamp auctions I wondered how some bidders seemed to buy everything, paying the highest price? It didn't occur to me that they were probably Auction Bidding Agents, paid by absent (dealer) bidders to represent them. I wondered why two collectors sitting side by side muttered to each other "he's a dealer" as if that justified him paying the highest price...

...but did it really? What was the real reason? How could a Dealer pay a higher price than a Collector? It doesn't make sense, does it? Collectors are customers. Customers usually pay the highest price, unless... for a Collector, this was...

Wrong Presentation ✗ **Wrong Place** ✗
therefore **Wrong Price** ✗

3 ▶ Fast-forward 48 years later to a British Empire collection, lot #1 in an International Stamp Auction – Estimated at £3,000, but we were the highest bidder at £21,000 – **YES** – some 7x higher. Including Buyer's Premium in the extraordinary sum of £4,788 we actually paid GBP£25,788= upon a £3,000 estimate... **however**, we broke it down into sets, singles, mini-collections etc. We made a profit. Some might say it found its price. Others may say:

Wrong Estimate ✗ **Wrong Presentation** ✗
Wrong Structure ✗ **Wrong Protection of Price** ✗

– **Lucky for the seller that 2 well-heeled bidders saw the potential value that day** or it could have been given away... the seller could easily have lost out couldn't he? or she?

So, by un-peeling the layers of obfuscation, hopefully we can all agree:

The Secret is Simple – it's ALL ABOUT : TIMING

Plus the 3 Philatelic 'P's –
Presentation ✓ **Place** ✓ **and Price** ✓

4 ▶ Understanding the problem... I always remember the car trade had their own little 'bible' – Glass's Guide. I've no idea, I've not even looked – in this internet-dominated world, it may even have disappeared. Well, there's an insider Stamp Trade publication for Stamp Dealers called "The Philatelic Exporter". There's nothing that special about it – and you won't learn much or find massively reduced prices by subscribing **BUT** – it is a forum, a paper focal point, a last 'bastion' in this on-line transparent world that we inhabit... whereby dealers (and auctioneers) can try and communicate with each other. I publish my own articles there...

Recently I discussed the outcome of my 10 years' simple research, asking dealers and auctioneers 'what is your biggest problem?'

To a man, (why are we almost all men), they replied – "my biggest problem is stock, if I can get more of the right stock I can sell it easily"

Strange that, nobody ever asked me the same question back – because my answer would have been

entirely different (and I don't treat it as a problem) – I seek to satisfy more collector clients than any other stamp auction

This is the reason why my company has such massive advertising. This is the reason why we spend up to 8% of turnover – up to £200,000 per annum in marketing costs. (Most dealers don't even sell £200K per annum).

5 ▶ Why is that? Because, as the world revolved the **Stamp Market, imperceptibly Changed, and incrementally – Massively**

So, although few will tell you this, it's clearly evident that the problem for most Sellers of Stamps today is no longer absent stock – but **absent collectors in the place they choose to sell their stamps in**. Simply put, other Dealers, Auctions, Stamp Fairs have not invested in marketing to have a strong Customer-core. To be fair, this is not true of all – but it is true of most – so that our former competitor 'Apex' had 800 bidders in a recent auction. In my most recent 20,000+ lot UPA 77th Auction we had 1,793 different bidders from 49 different countries, 95% of whom were Collectors. Some other well-advertised auctions only have 200 bidders (a high percentage of whom are dealers – so that, essentially they are Dealer-dominated auctions) – so that when you sell through them – you're paying up to 18% (including VAT) seller's commission and the buyer is paying up to 25% and more in Buyer's Premium, credit card fees, on-line bidding fee, delivery and insurance etc... **AND all of that so that your stamps may be sold, wait for it – TO DEALERS (and some collectors)**, but Dealers, that naturally must make a profit to survive...

6 ▶ Now, let's examine the cost implications – **Example:** Your stamp collection sells in public auction for £800. Upon a 25% buyer's premium, the dealer pays £1,000 and it could be more. He breaks it into £2,000+ selling price (much lower and he'll go out of business). The auction charges you a seller's commission of up to 18% (VAT included) upon the £800 sale price. This is GBP£144. Therefore you receive approaching £656 – which is approximately 33% of the dealer's £2,000+/- retail selling price – **BUT... now that we have identified the problem...**

Isn't the Solution Staring us Right in The Face ?

7 ▶ Why Pay an Auction to Sell to Dealers: Sell to Collectors instead? In our example with buyer's premium, sellers commission, lotting fees, extra credit card charges, VAT and even insurance – you're already being charged in different ways up to 40% of the selling price to sell, possibly or probably, **to the wrong person**.

Why not direct that 40% cost you're paying to sell to Collectors instead? Sounds good, so why hasn't this been done before ?

8▶ Truth is, it Has been done before... Sometimes the 'old' ways are the best ways aren't they? But in today's enthusiasm to obscure the obvious so that money may be taken, almost surreptitiously, in numerous different ways, (without us apparently noticing until we see the cheque in our pocket) – the transparent 'seller pays' has been deliberately 'obscured' – so much so that, **amazingly**, the latest 2017 European Auction Selling Legislation just introduced – now requires auctions that charge 'buyer's premiums' **to warn the buyer in advance**. Just imagine going into the petrol station, and being warned that the price you're paying to put fuel in your tank is not the real price, you have to pay a premium! Obviously, there would be an uproar...

9▶ How can you cut out the middleman and sell to Collectors instead? Well, I can think of two ways. 1). **DIY** - Do It Yourself selling on eBay. That may be fine for lower grade material – but, would you risk auctioning relatively unprotected rare material on eBay? We don't and we're professionals, so we should know what we're doing. Or 2). Cut out the extra middle-man. **Use my company UPA, which reaches collectors instead.** Here's how it works: Continuing from our previous **Example**:

The auction sold your stamps to a dealer for £1,000 – but You received circa £656

UPA sells them to collectors for you for up to £2,000 – even after 40% commission you receive up to £1,200. Up to £544 more. Now that's amazing, isn't it?

10▶ Sounds Good Andrew, but Can You 'Deliver'? Obviously, nothing is as simple as that, and as we auction stamps to collectors some collections may 'break' to the example £2,000+/- but the stamps may be sold for more or less – especially as we reserve all lots at 20% below, (Estimate £2,000 = £1,600 reserve) and not everything sells first or even 2nd time so prices may come down... Naturally, it's not that straightforward for a dealer either – he may sell at a discount to 'move' stock **OR**, like many dealers he may be sitting on the same unsold stamps, that you see time and time again, in dealer's stocks years later and still at the same unattractive prices... So, I think it is more reasonable for you to expect up to 36% to 50% more, indirectly or directly via my **Collector's Secret Weapon**: Universal Philatelic Auctions, which moves material more quickly, by incrementally reducing estimate (and reserve) price in a structured selling system...

11▶ Q.) What is the Collector's 'Secret Weapon'?

A.) It's called the Unique UPA Reducing Estimate System...

This is a rather long explanation, I don't want to bore you, but 20 years ago, when my wife and I set up Universal Philatelic Auctions I detected that the stamp trade's biggest problem then was not what sold – **but what didn't sell...** So, because I didn't want to try to keep on offering the same either unsaleable or overpriced stock I created the unique UPA Reducing Estimate (and reserve) Selling System. Simply put, if a lot doesn't sell in the 1st auction we reduce the estimate (and reserve) by 11% and unlike other dealers and auctions **WE TELL YOU – 'US'** = once unsold. If unsold after the following auction we **reduce by a further 12%** and **WE TELL YOU 'US2'**, if unsold after a 3rd UPA auction we reduce by a further 13% and **WE TELL YOU 'US3'** and so on till the lot finds its price, is sold or virtually given away...

12▶ Any Scientist will tell you that combinations of ingredients can produce powerful results. So we created the unique combination of my UPA Reducing Estimate System, married (in stone), with UPA's fair 'NO BUYER'S Premium' policy, PLUS each lot carries my total 'no quibble' guarantee – this formula is the reason why within the span of 4 auctions (one year)... 90%-95% of lots broken from a collection have sold.



Contact UPA: 01451 861 111

UNSOLICITED TESTIMONIAL:

Dear Folk at UPA,

I've dealt with the public for 37 + years, and as both a consumer, and a businessman, I have created huge numbers of orders from all over the world from a complete range of suppliers from all aspects of our daily lives.

But I don't believe I have ever encountered such sensitivity, such kind thought, such understanding as I have with you in our initial meeting, our subsequent successful transaction, and now this.

I recall well the item you highlight, and realise that this one item has such colossal personal value, I could never part with it.

It has been an absolute pleasure dealing with yourself, and I am more than willing for you to use this e-mail as commendation to others who may be thinking of disposing of their collection.

Many, many thanks for a memorable experience, and I will try to emulate your thought and care in my own business sphere.

Yours sincerely

D. E. B. Bath, UK

This Unique Philatelic Selling System **Formula** is the reason why we are the largest stamp auction in the UK today with more than 2,250 different regular bidders.

In Hindsight Dealers warned me 20 years ago that my idea wouldn't work. 20 years later I think I've proven that it does. (Reader: Please Request a complimentary UPA catalogue – using the contact details further below)

13▶ OK, Cut to the Chase Andrew, what's the offer? All of my Selling Systems are based upon **selling to Collectors Globally**, so that 95% of stamps sold by UPA are sold directly to Collectors. If you wish to benefit by up to 50% or more, depending upon your circumstance and type of material, by cutting out the middleman – then this offer may be for you. Generally 'time' is the enemy in our lives, and for most dealers not being able to sell stock. Now is the time to let 'time' do the 'heavy-lifting' and consider making 'time' work for you, so that at UPA you can make time your friend.

14▶ AND the SMALL PRINT? Some lots are too small in value for us to offer this system. Other lots may not be suited to selling in this manner (e.g. surplus mint British decimal stamps best used for postage) – especially if the market is heavily compromised by stock overhang

in specific areas. Some Collectors will not wish to use time and systems to leverage price, others will want to agree a specific price and know that they are paid precisely this amount. No client is treated like a number and no client is forced like a square peg into a round hole.

15▶ OK, What Do I Do Next?

- You contact UPA to discuss with Andrew or a highly-qualified Auction Valuer/Describer what you have to dispose of and your options bearing in mind your specific interests / requirements
- If you wish, get a 2nd opinion, but investigate what type of auction / dealer you are dealing with. Is it a Dealer's auction with relatively few collectors? Can you see where / how the Dealer sells? If you can't easily see any pricelists or high quality selling catalogues – that Dealer may sell your stamps to other dealers...
- Finally you ask U P A to collect your stamps, insure in transit for an estimated replacement retail value...

16▶ What Happens then? A member of my Team telephones/e-mails you to confirm safe receipt. 'Overnight' valuations, unless simple, are rare. Valuing stamp collections that have taken tens of years to create takes time. Depending upon your priorities / timescale I, or an experienced member of my Team will contact you to discuss your requirements and the options available to you for the sale of your collection. Provided only that you feel well-informed and comfortable do we agree strategy

17▶ How Strong is the Stamp and Cover Market? Everybody knows that the strongest areas are GB and British Empire. Post-Independence / QEII material sells but if hinged at considerable discount. Mint hinged material pre 1952 is regarded as the industry 'norm' and therefore desirable – but **genuine** never-hinged commands a premium. Europe sells but at reduced levels, Americas is good, as generally is Asia but the 'heat' has come off China which is still good – and Russia which can still be good. East Europe is weaker. Overall, Rarities throughout can command their own price levels and real Postal History has good demand.

18▶ What Should I Do Next?

Discuss your collection with U P A. Contact Andrew or an experienced member of his Team now...

19▶ Guarantee: I want You to be absolutely Sure So If You're not sure we'll transport and return your stamps for FREE up to £200 in actual shipping cost at our expense. It sounds generous (and it is), but it's far less than the cost of driving 100+ miles each way and 3 to 6 hours in your home valuing your stamps

20▶ My Double Cast Iron Guarantee: We can do a better job valuing your stamps in our office than in your home. If you don't agree I'll pay you an extra £50 for you to pay somebody trusted to open the boxes and put your albums back, in the same place, on the shelf they came from.

21▶ Act NOW: Contact Andrew or an experienced member of his Team using the on-line selling form at our website, by fax, telephone or by mail. We'll work harder for you not to regret the decision to sell all or part of your collection...

Andrew
Andrew McGavin, Philatelic Expert,
Author, Managing Director
Universal Philatelic Auctions UPA

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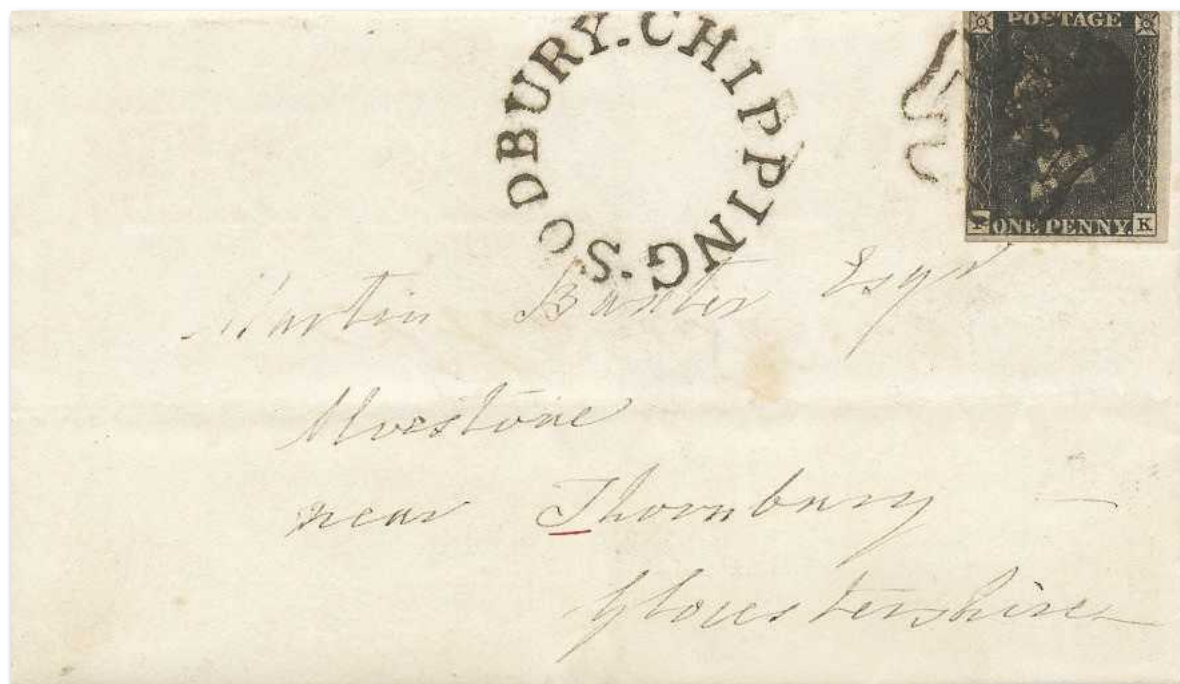


Under the thumb

Most Penny Black covers have the familiar Maltese cross cancellation, but occasionally a postmaster would have to improvise to guard against the possibility of fraud

■ Report by Norman Watson

RIGHT: Penny Black entire posted from Chipping Sodbury to Thornbury in Gloucestershire, cancelled not only by a Maltese cross handstamp but also by an inky thumbprint



There is rightly much fury today at the number of stamps being 'vandalised' by biro or marker pen instead of properly cancelled. But irregular obliterations are by no means an exclusively modern phenomenon.

Victorian posties couldn't very well take a quill and inkpot with them, so occasionally a sorter's inky thumb was used to cancel an adhesive which had escaped the familiar Maltese cross handstamp.

Post Office paranoia over the possibility of fraud ensured that clerks were under firm instructions that the adhesive stamps introduced in May 1840 must be obliterated prior to delivery.

A circular sent by GPO Secretary

William Maberley to all postmasters on April 25, 1840, made the situation crystal clear: 'As it will be necessary that every such stamp should be cancelled at the post office or sub-post office where the letter bearing the same may be posted, I hereby forward, for your use, an obliterating stamp, with which you will efface the postage stamp on every letter despatched from your office.'

Incidentally, this memo explodes the myth that the new adhesives were universally described as 'labels', and that the word 'stamp' was adopted later.

The obliterator that most postmasters received was a standard design with the pattern of a Maltese Cross, and an example struck in black can be seen on this Penny Black entire posted from Chipping Sodbury to Thornbury in Gloucestershire, with a fine strike of a despatch handstamp alongside.

For reasons that are unclear, however, the conventional cancellation is backed up by an

inky thumbprint or fingerprint over the stamp itself.

There is no evidence of inky smears elsewhere on the cover, so this does appear to be a deliberate improvised obliteration.

Thumb cancellations are quite rare, but there are some well documented examples. In December 1840, for example, the Maltese cross canceller of Ardrossan was lost or damaged, and the postmaster improvised by using a thumb print or blunt object as a stop-gap measure.

The Penny Black used here is from plate 8, from which almost 30,000 sheets were printed. It has the corner letters F-K, and shows the 'O' flaw in the word 'One'.

Registered on July 31, 1840, plate 8 continued in use for subsequent printings of the stamp in red, after the Penny Black was retired early in 1841.

The black theme is continued inside, as the entire unfolds to reveal mourning paper conveying the sombre news of a death. ■

'The conventional cancellation is backed up by an inky fingerprint over the stamp, which appears to be a deliberately improvised obliteration'

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OCTOBER 1-3 UK

Virtual Stampex

Venue: online only, at stampex.vfairs.com

Contact: Philatelic Traders Society, PO Box 290, Lingfield, Surrey RH7 9AX
Tel: 01342 830225
Fax: 01342 837888
info@thepts.net

www.thephilatelictaderssociety.co.uk
www.stampexinternational.co.uk

OCTOBER 21-27 TAIWAN

Taipei 2020 International Stamp Exhibition

Venue: Hall 1, Taipei World Trade Center, Hsin-Yi Road, Xinyi, Taipei City, Taiwan.

Contact: Federation of Inter-Asian

Philately
www.asiaphilately.com

NOVEMBER 5-8 GERMANY

Ostropa 2020 Eastern European Stamp Exhibition

Venue: Russisches Haus, Friedrichstrasse 176-179, 10117 Berlin, Germany.

Contact: Frank Blechschmidt,

Commissioner, Dorfstrasse 68a, Bernsgrün, D-08340 Schwarzenberg, Germany
blechschmidt@ostropa2020.de
www.ostropa2020.de

NOVEMBER 5-10 INDONESIA

Indonesia 2020 World Stamp Championship

Venue: Indonesian Parliament Complex, Jalan Jenderal Gatot Subroto No1, Jakarta 10270, Indonesia.

Contact: John Jackson, UK Commissioner
john.w.jackson@care4free.net
www.indonesia2020.com

DECEMBER 4-6 SWEDEN

Nordia 2020

Venue: Malmömassan Convention Center, Mässgatan 6, Hyllie, Malmö, Sweden.

Contact: Lars Nordberg, Maskinmästaregatan 2, SE-233 43 Svedala, Sweden
Tel: +46 725 446 598
info@nordia2020.se
www.nordia2020.se

FEBRUARY 11-14 AUSTRALIA

Melbourne 2021

Venue: Caulfield Racecourse, Station Street, Caulfield East, Melbourne, Victoria 3145, Australia.

Contact: John Moore, President
moore.john@optusnet.com.au
www.melbourne2021.com.au

MARCH 17-20 SOUTH AFRICA

Ipex 2021 International Exhibition

Venue: International Convention Centre, Convention Square, 1 Lower Long Street, Cape Town 8001.

Contact: Jon Aitchison, UK Commissioner
Tel: 01279 870488
britishlocals@aol.com
www.capetown2021.org

MARCH 18-20 NETHERLANDS

Hertogpost 2021

Venue: Brabanthallen, Diezekade 2, 's-Hertogenbosch 5222, Netherlands.

Contact: Hertogpost 2021
Tel: +31 73 629 3911
www.hertogpost-event.nl

APRIL 23-25 USA

Westpex 2021

Venue: San Francisco Airport Marriott Waterfront Hotel, 1800 Old Bayshore Highway, Burlingame, California 94010, USA.

Contact: Edward Jarvis
Tel: +1 415 387 1016
Fax: +1 415 668 4222
www.westpex.com

MAY 6-9 GERMANY

IBRA 2021 World Stamp Exhibition

Venue: Messe Essen, Norbertstrasse, 45131 Essen, Germany.

Contact: Frank Walton, UK Commissioner
frank@frankwalton.com
www.ibra2021.de

JUNE 4-8 TAIWAN

Taipei 2020 International Stamp Exhibition

Venue: Hall 1, Taipei World Trade Center, Hsin-Yi Road, Xinyi, Taipei City, Taiwan.

Contact: Federation of Inter-Asian Philately
www.asiaphilately.com

JUNE 11-13 BELGIUM

Antverpiade 1920-2021

Venue: Hall 1, Antwerp Expo, Jan Van Rijswijcklaan 191, 2020 Antwerpen, Belgium.

Contact: Antverpiade 1920-2021
exhibition@antverpiade2020.be
www.antverpiade2020.be

AUGUST 25-30 JAPAN

Philanippou 2021

Venue: Hall B/C, Pacifico Yokohama National Convention Hall, 1-1-1 Minato Mirai, Yokohama, Nishi-ku 220-0012, Japan.

Contact: www.japan2021.jp/en



ABOVE: The Taipei World Trade Center hopes to host the rearranged Taipei 2020 International Exhibition

ON OR OFF?

The events listed here were scheduled as *Stamp Magazine* went to press, but must be considered provisional due to possible restrictions imposed as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. Many of them have been rearranged following postponement in the early months of 2020.

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WHAT'S ON: AUCTIONS

UK & WORLDWIDE AUCTION DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

SEPTEMBER 7-12

CORINPHILA

Erivan Collection of Switzerland,

Austria and Lombardy-Venetia

Venue: 4th Floor, Wiesenstrasse 8,
8032 Zurich, Switzerland
(advance booking required).

Contact: Corinphila Auctions

Tel: +41 44 3899191

info@corinphila.ch

www.corinphila.ch

SEPTEMBER 9

AJH STAMPS

Venue: The Dunkenhall Hotel &
Spa, Clayton-le-Moors, Lancashire
BB5 5JP.

Contact: The Laurels, Manchester
Road, Accrington, Lancashire BB5 2PF

Tel: 01254 393740

Fax: 01254 382274

sales@ajhstamps.co.uk

www.ajhstamps.co.uk

SEPTEMBER 9

PROVINCIAL PHILATELICS

Venue: Benson Parish Hall,
Sunnyside, Benson, Wallingford,
Oxfordshire OX10 6LZ.

Contact: Provincial Philatelics,
90 Park Road, Didcot,
Oxfordshire OX11 8QR.

Tel/Fax: 01235 511083

www.provincialphilatelics.co.uk

SEPTEMBER 9-10

CAVENDISH

Robert Johnson collection of

Cape of Good Hope

Venue: Cavendish House,

153-157 London Road,

Derby DE1 2SY

(advance booking required).

Contact: Cavendish Philatelic

Auctions

Tel: 01332 250970

stamps@cavendish-auctions.com

www.cavendish-auctions.com

SEPTEMBER 11-12

AUCTION GALLERIES HAMBURG

Venue: Kleine Reichenstrasse 1,
20457 Hamburg, Germany
(advance booking required).

Tel: +49 40 33 71 57

Fax: +41 40 33 13 30

info@auction-galleries.de

www.auction-galleries.de

SEPTEMBER 17-18

RÖLLI

Venue: Buzibachring 4a,
CH 6023 Rothenburg, Switzerland
(advance booking required).

Contact: Rölli Auktionen

Tel: +41 41 226 0202

Fax: +41 41 226 0201

info@roelli-auktionen.ch

www.roelli-auktionen.ch

SEPTEMBER 18-19

DUTCH COUNTRY AUCTIONS

Venue: Auction Gallery,
4115 Concord Pike, Wilmington,
Delaware 19803, USA.

Contact: Russell Eggert,

Stamp Center Inc

Tel: +1 302 478 8740

Fax: +1 302 478 8779

auctions@dutchcountryauctions.com

www.dutchcountryauctions.com

SEPTEMBER 22

GROSVENOR

British Empire & Foreign Countries
featuring the Falkland Islands,
South Atlantic and Antarctica

Venue: 399-401 Strand,

London WC2R 0LT.

Contact: Grosvenor Philatelic
Auctions

Tel: 020 7379 8789

Fax: 020 7379 9737

info@grosvenor-auctions.co.uk

www.grosvenorauctions.com

SEPTEMBER 22

PROVINCIAL PHILATELICS

Venue: Benson Parish Hall,
Sunnyside, Benson, Wallingford,
Oxfordshire OX10 6LZ.

Contact: Provincial Philatelics,
90 Park Road, Didcot,
Oxfordshire OX11 8QR.

Tel/Fax: 01235 511083

www.provincialphilatelics.co.uk

SEPTEMBER 22-23

SPARKS

Venue: 1770 Woodward Drive,

Suite 101, Ottawa, Ontario

K2C 0P8, Canada.

Contact: Sparks Auctions

Tel: +1 844 252 2032

www.sparks-auctions.com

SEPTEMBER 24-26

CORINPHILA-VEILINGEN

Dick van der Wateren collection

of Nepal

Kees van Nugteren collection of

GB Postal Fiscals

Gerrit Matthijssen collection

Bosnia & Herzegovina

Venue: Mortelmolen 3,

1185 XV Amstelveen, Netherlands.

Contact: Corinphila Veilingen

Tel: +31 20 6249740

Fax: +31 20 6249749

info@corinphila.nl

www.corinphila.nl

SEPTEMBER 25-26

POSTILJONEN

Gummission collection of Finland

Venue: Hotel Savoy, Norra Vallgatan

62, SE-211 22 Malmö, Sweden.

Contact: Postiljonen AB, Box 537,

S-201 25 Malmö, Sweden

Tel: +46 40 25 88 52

stampauctions@postiljonen.se

www.postiljonen.se

OCTOBER 1-3

SPINK

Gary Diffen collection of

Australian Colonies errors (part 2)

Lionheart collection of Great
Britain & British Empire (part 3)

Dubois collection of Jamaica

Venue: Royal Philatelic Society

London, 15 Abchurch Lane,

London EC4N 7BW.

Contact: Spink UK

Tel: 020 7563 4000

Fax: 020 7563 4066

info@spink.com

www.spink.com

OCTOBER 7

WARWICK & WARWICK

Venue: The Court House,

Jury Street, Warwick CV34 4EW.

Contact: Chalon House, Scar Bank,

Millers Road, Warwick CV34 5DB

Tel: 01926 499031

info@warwickandwarwick.com

www.warwickandwarwick.com

OCTOBER 8

PROVINCIAL PHILATELICS

Venue: Benson Parish Hall,
Sunnyside, Benson, Wallingford,
Oxfordshire OX10 6LZ.

Contact: Provincial Philatelics,
90 Park Road, Didcot,
Oxfordshire OX11 8QR.

Tel/Fax: 01235 511083

www.provincialphilatelics.co.uk

OCTOBER 10

BIL & CO

Venue: check with auctioneer.

Contact: Bil Tilbury

Tel: 01400 230769

billtilbury@btinternet.com

www.bilandco.co.uk



ON OR OFF?

The events listed here were scheduled as *Stamp Magazine* went to press, but must be considered provisional due to possible restrictions imposed as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. There may be no public admittance, or admittance by prior arrangement only, with social-distancing and hygiene measures in place.

To include an event in this listing, we need at least two months' notice.

Send details to What's On, *Stamp Magazine*, MyTimeMedia Ltd,

Suite 25, Eden House, Enterprise Way, Edenbridge, Kent TN8 6HF.

E-mail: guy.thomas@mytimemedia.com

ENGLISH-LANGUAGE POSTAL SALES

COUNTY

county@stampauctions.co.uk

www.stampauctions.co.uk

MAYFAIR

info@mpastamps.com

www.mpastamps.com

MOWBRAY

mowbray.stamps@xtra.co.nz

www.mowbrays.co.nz

SAJAL PHILATELICS

brian@brian-reeve.com

www.brian-reeve.com

SANDAFAYRE

stamp@sandafayre.com

www.sandafayre.com

UNIVERSAL

info@upastampauctions.co.uk

www.upastampauctions.co.uk

VANCE

mail@vanceauctions.com

www.vanceauctions.com

ENGLISH-LANGUAGE ONLINE SALES

DALKEITH

www.dalkeith-auctions.co.uk

DEL CAMPE

www.delcampe.net

MCCUSKER

www.jamesmccusker.com

MOWBRAY

www.mowbrays.co.nz

PHILATINO

www.philatino.com

RASMUSSEN

www.brune-rasmussen.dk

REGENCY

www.regencystamps.com

ROGERS

www.michaelrogersinc.com

SAMMARINISE

www.filsam.com

SANDAFAYRE

www.sandafayre.com

SKANFIL

www.skanfil.no

STAMP CENTER

www.thestampcenter.com

STAMPFAIR

www.stampfair.com

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www.stanleygibbons.com

TORRES

www.antoniotorres.com

TRAFFORD BOOKS

www.traffordbooks.co.uk

SD.54 GREAT BRITAIN & BRITISH COMMONWEALTH PROOFS Valuable specialised collection of G.B. and Brit. Commonwealth proofs & progressive proofs includes imperforate stamps and specimens all unmounted mint.Price £18

CM134 BRITISH COMMONWEALTH A superb collection of British colonial and commonwealth stamps, includes mint & used definitives & commems. Containing over 500 different stamps plus miniature sheets and first day covers. The entire collection.Price £19.80

SD.69 GIBRALTAR Investors lot of mint sheets, blocks, as purchased from the Gibraltar Post Office. Hundreds of stamps in mint sheets plus various mint & used mostly Q.E.II but includes earlier, with a catalogue value of over £600-00. The whole lot guaranteed genuine.Price £39

HK97 HONG KONG A scarce combination cover for the Hong Kong handover from UK to China. The cover depicts Chris Patton (last Governor of Hong Kong), and Prince Charles. Bearing a British Machin issue with scarce British Forces Postal Service transfer of sovereignty of Hong Kong, Royal Mail Crown postmark inscribed in dual language, English & Chinese, dated 30th June 1997. Also bears PRC China stamps, tied to the cover with a red squared cachet in English and Chinese for the Hong Kong handover also dated 30th June 1997. Possibly, one of the scarcest Chinese related Hong Kong covers.Price £35.00

LOT K3 GREAT BRITAIN, COMMEMS & DEFINES. UN-SORTED ACCUMULATION
With stamps in blocks, multiples and singles. Items noted include Traffic Light Gutter Pairs and miniature sheets. Well over 500 stamps, only unmounted mint.Price £18

CYL29 CYLINDER NUMBER BLOCKS A specialised collection of Great Britain & British Commonwealth cylinder number blocks. It is unusual to see such a large lot of different cylinder number blocks. 120 stamps in all unmounted mint cylinder number blocks.Price £21

EI.342 IRELAND A superior collection of only unmounted mint Irish stamps; includes older stamps with definitive commemoratives and postage dues. Also includes unusual stamps for the Fenian movement, these are imperforate and unmounted mint depicting an Irish harp and priced in "cents" understood to have been issued circa 1860s. The Fenian stamps are offered "as is" and without guarantee, but these form only a small part of the larger collection of 100 plus stamps, which are all guaranteed genuine. Entire collection. Price.....£18.50

RW986 RAILWAYS & LOCOMOTIVES A fantastic thematic collection of locomotive and railway stamps. The specialised collection contains several hundred train stamps with many scarcer unmounted mint blocks included, plus F.D.Cs, also several scarcer local issues, specimen stamps, proofs and progressive proofs, lots of higher \$ stamps and £1 values; also many Railway and locomotive miniature sheets. A glorious collection for any philatelic railway enthusiast.Price £28

CAIRN21 SUMMER ISLANDS A scarce item of Scottish postal history. The official Royal Mail PHQ card for the 400th Anniversary of the Landing of Saint Columba bears Summer Isles map stamp postmarked "Summer Isles", 9/6/1997, on reverse. Front bears a Cairn IAR Island St. Columba stamp tied with an official green St. Columba PMK. Possibly the scarcest Royal Mail PHQ.Price £15

SA37 PANAMA CANAL Impressive cover commemorating the centenary of the opening of the Panama Canal. Superbly illustrated with Panama Canal Map and quote by W.H. Taft. Taft served as Secretary of War under Theodore Roosevelt and supervised the building of the Canal; he later became 27th President of the USA. The cover was a restricted issue of only 100. It bears a USA ship stamp tied to the cover with small purple cachet inscribed "Zona del Canal de Panama" also British stamp used in combination with Royal Mail ship and bi-plane Southampton postmark 15/8/14.Price £14

SD.48 LATIN AMERICA Group of Latin American countries date back to Puerto Rico 1890 to more recent. 100+ stamps mint & used.....Price £7.50

IOM8 ISLE OF MAN Queen Victoria illustrated commemorative cover for the 175th Anniv. of the world's first stamp. The impressive cover bears a block of six penny black stamps and one two penny blue stamp tied to the cover with 6th May IOM Anniv. postmarks. Only 100 of this cover were postmarked by the IOM Post Office.Price £9.25

SD.82 MIDDLE EAST Mainly the Trucial States in the Persian Gulf. Other countries noted include Bahrain, Kuwait, Egypt, Jordan, Yemen, British Post Offices in Eastern Arabia (Muscat), Dubai and Saudi Arabia. Hundreds of stamps, mint & used with scarcer uncatalogued and miniature sheets.Price £32

SA414 SAAR A specialised collection of Saar stamps includes used, but mostly unmounted mint in blocks and singles including some complete sets. Over seventy stamps from the German Saarland.Price £11

SU.70 SUPERMAN A specialised collection Superman stamps from various countries noted Jersey "Man of Steel" of several complete sets and miniature sheets. Also includes scarcer unlisted stamps, depicting iconic Superman comic and film stamp designs. The ultimate superhero stamp collection.....Price £24

SD.89 SPANISH COLONIES A fantastic lot of only unmounted mint Spanish colonies in blocks, multiples and singles. Includes Spanish Guinea, Spanish Sahara, Ifni, Rio-Muni, Philippines. Does date back to pre-1900 but mostly 1950's and 1960's period. Includes many complete sets. Hundreds of mint stamps catalogued well over £100.Price £19

AUS 49c AUSTRALIA A large specialised collection of Australian stamps with strength in modern used commemoratives, estimated several hundred different stamps. A superb collection to build on, totally unchecked for catalogue value. Several hundred stamps.Price £13

SD.84 FRENCH COLONIES AND EX COLONIES French investors' lot of only unmounted mint includes complete sheet blocks. Multiples with Ivory Coast, Central African Rep, Senegal, Niger, Upper Volta, Somali Coast. Other colonies too many to list. Includes duplication with a Stanley Gibbons value of well over £600.Price £68

UK84 GREAT BRITAIN Royal Mail Elusive Mount Pleasant Sorting Office Cover. Issued to commemorate the 125th Anniversary of the GPO Mount Pleasant Office, officially opened on 30/8/1889, on the site of Coldbath Prison. Once acknowledged as the largest post sorting office in the world, it continues to handle millions of postal items daily. Only 100 of this important cover were ever produced. Bearing the iconic Machin stamp postmark. Dated 30/8/14. Offered in superb condition.Price £7.50

SD.76 GREAT BRITAIN UNADOPTED ESSAY Dorothy Wilding Queen's Head design inscribed postage "One Pound" depicting Windsor Castle £1 Grey, imperforate unmounted mint. Ex-exhibition sheet.Price £9.80

IND 449 INDIA A specialist reference collection of Queen Victoria forgeries, spectacular lot includes singles and blocks of issues of 1854 various ½ Anna and 1 Anna stamps. A range of 4 Anna blue and red stamps. 1852 Scinde Dawk. Includes unused and used stamps. If genuine the catalogue value would be excess of £38,000. The reference collection of fake stamps and forgeries is being sold "as is" although some genuine Victorian stamps have been noted.....Price £24

SC17 SCOTLAND Important and historic cover for the 700th anniversary of the Battle of Bannockburn. The cover bears the Royal Mail Robert The Bruce commemorative stamp issue tied with official Royal Mail Edinburgh illustrated postmark dated 24/6/2014 - exactly 700 years to the day of the historic event. Only 100 of this important Scottish cover exist.Price £9.50

GBW12 950TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF HASTINGS COVER Wonderfully illustrated cover featuring an image of the Bayeux tapestry scene, alongside the quote from William the Conqueror "Life yields only to be conqueror." Cover bears Royal Mail 1st class stamp tied to the cover with official King Harold Battle of Hastings, Battle PMK from October 2016. Less than 100 covers are understood to exist.Price £7

K.747 KENYA Scarce Kenya revenue stamps in superb unmounted mint blocks of four with high value 20/- and 30/- stamps (engraved) also includes other Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika stamps dating back to King George VI with used, and unmounted mint.Price £8

M27A CORONATION STREET A specialised and most unusual thematic collection of Coronation Street stamps with complete unmounted mint sets. From various British Local Islands, including scarcer High Values and several £1.00 values. Personalities depicted on stamps include: Jack & Annie Walker, Stan & Hilda Ogden, Ken & Irma Barlow, Jack & Vera Duckworth, Martha Longhurst, Ena Sharples, Mike & Alma Baldwin, Kevin Webster, Raquel Wolstenholme, Ray Langton, Liz McDonald, Alf Roberts, Bet Gilroy, Curly Watts, Emily Bishop, Martin Platt, Leonard Swindly, Elsie Tanner, Reg Holdsworth + others.Price £12

STR58a GREAT BRITAIN SPECIALISED 1971 POSTAL STRIKE COLLECTION Dating back to the short period in British Postal History when the Post Office granted licenses to private delivery companies to deliver mail in the U.K. This important GB postal history collection comprising of postal strike stamps in singles & blocks also has scarcer multiples and "Tete-beche" stamps. Used and unused with many unmounted mintPrice £11

P8823 PAINTINGS The rarities of the world's most famous art galleries at your fingertips. A superb collection of famous paintings on stamps, hundreds of different stamps plus miniature sheets.Price £13.75

SD.53 CUBA A fine collection of Cuba mostly used modern issues, but does include mint dating back to 1898 with blocks and singles, hundreds of stamps.Price £13

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UK STAMP FAIR DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

SEPTEMBER 12 COLWYN BAY (stamps, postal history, postcards)

Venue: Ysgol Eirias, Eirias Road, LL29 7SP.
Time: 9.30am-3pm
Contact: Steve Chapman
Tel: 01745 826434

DERBY (stamps, postal history)

Venue: Nunsfield House Community Hall, 33 Boulton Road, Alvaston, DE24 0FD.
Time: 9.30am-3.30pm
Contact: H V Johnson & Co
Tel: 01909 563394

HASTINGS (stamps, postal history, postcards)

Venue: Christ Church, London Road, St Leonard's on Sea, TN37 6GL.
Time: 9.30am-3pm
Contact: Chris Rapley
Tel: 07711 677760

LIVERPOOL (stamps, postal history)

Venue: St Columba Church Hall, Hillfoot Road, Hunts Cross, L25 0NR.
Time: 10am-3.30pm

Contact: Terry Barnett
Tel: 0151 486 2610

NORTON (stamps, postal history, postcards)

Venue: Norton Methodist Church Hall, High Street, TS20 2QO.
Time: 9.30am-1.30pm
Contact: Graham Whitewick
Tel: 07849 904353

SEPTEMBER 13 CHESTERFIELD (stamps, postal history, postcards)

Venue: Chester Street Club, Chester Street, S40 1DL.
Time: 10am-4pm
Contact: Howard Hatton
Tel: 0161 766 9031

WOKINGHAM (stamps, postal history)

Venue: St Crispin's Centre, London Road, RG40 1SR.
Time: 10am-3pm
Contact: T Brittain
Tel: 07957 158299

SEPTEMBER 16 EAST GRINSTEAD (stamps, postal history, postcards)

Venue: Chequer Mead Arts Centre, De La Warr Road, RH19 3BS.
Time: 10am-3pm
Contact: Malcolm Green
Tel: 01342 327554

SEPTEMBER 19 EALING (stamps, postal history)

Venue: Kingsdown Baptist Church Hall, Northfield Avenue, W13 9PR.
Time: 9am-1pm
Contact: T Brittain
Tel: 07957 158299

EASTBOURNE (stamps, postal history)

Venue: St Mary's Church Hall, Decoy Drive, Hampden Park, BN22 9PP.
Time: 9.30am-3pm
Contact: Chris Rapley
Tel: 07711 677760

EXETER (stamps, postal history, postcards)

Venue: America Hall, De La Rue Way, Pinhoe, EX4 8PX.
Time: 10am-4pm
Contact: Michael Hale
Tel: 01749 677669

HULL (stamps, postal history)

Venue: St James Centre, 169 First Lane, Hessle, HU13 9EY.
Time: 9.30am-3.30pm
Contact: H V Johnson & Co
Tel: 01909 563394

PLYMOUTH (stamps, postal history, postcards)

Venue: Plymstock Community Centre, The Broadway, PL9 9GH.
Time: 9.30am-3.30pm
Contact: Peter Eagles
Tel: 01395 516060

SEPTEMBER 20 BOWDON (stamps, postal history, postcards)

Venue: Mercure Hotel, Langham Road, WA14 2HT.
Time: 10am-4pm
Contact: Howard Hatton
Tel: 0161 766 9031

DRONFIELD (stamps, postal history)

Venue: Coal Aston Village Hall, Eckington Road, Coal Aston, S18 3AY.
Time: 9.30am-3.30pm



Contact: H V Johnson & Co
Tel: 01909 563394

SEPTEMBER 26 ABERDEEN (stamps, postal history, postcards)

Venue: Queen's Cross Parish Church Halls, Albyn Place, AB10 1YN.
Time: 10.30am-3.30pm
Contact: Chad Neighbor,
North East Fairs
Tel: 01674 832823

MAIDSTONE (stamps, postal history)

Venue: East Malling Village Hall, New Road, East Malling, ME19 6DD.
Time: 9.30am-3.30pm
Contact: Michael R Thompson
Tel: 01474 325507

MORLEY (stamps, postal history)

Venue: St Mary's Church Hall, Commercial Street, LS27 8HZ.
Time: 9.30am-3.30pm
Contact: H V Johnson & Co
Tel: 01909 563394

NORTHAMPTON (stamps, postal history)

Venue: The Abbey Centre, 10 Overslade Close, East Hunsbury, NN4 0RZ.
Time: 10am-3pm
Contact: T Brittain
Tel: 07957 158299

SUTTON BRIDGE (stamps, postal history, postcards)

Venue: Curlew Centre, Bridge Street, PE12 9SA.

Time: 10am-3.30pm
Contact: Machin Collectors Club
Tel: 01406 350896

SEPTEMBER 27 DONCASTER (stamps, postal history)

Venue: Park Social Club, Eden Grove Road, Edenthorpe, DN3 2LS.
Time: 9.30am-3.30pm
Contact: H V Johnson & Co
Tel: 01909 563394

SOUTHPORT (stamps, postal history, postcards)

Venue: Royal Clifton Hotel, Promenade, PR8 1RB.
Time: 10am-4pm
Contact: Howard Hatton
Tel: 0161 766 9031

SEPTEMBER 30 EDGBASTON (stamps, postal history)

Venue: The Walker Memorial Hall, Ampton Road, B15 2UJ.
Time: 9.30am-3.30pm
Contact: Simon Collyer
Tel: 07966 565151

OCTOBER 3 BECKENHAM (stamps, postal history, postcards)

Venue: Azelia Halls, Croydon Road, BR3 4DA.
Time: 9am-3pm
Contact: Ray McQuade
Tel: 020 8395 9285

CHICHESTER (stamps, postal history, postcards)





Venue: Donnington Parish Hall, Stockbridge Road, Donnington, PO19 8QR.
Time: 9.30am-3pm
Contact: Chris Rapley
Tel: 07711 677760

LEICESTER
(stamps, postal history)
Venue: Derby Room, The Holiday Inn, St Nicholas Circle, LE1 5LX.
Time: 9.30am-3.30pm
Contact: John Suschitzky
Tel: 0116 235 0441

LICHFIELD
(stamps, postal history)
Venue: Boley Park Community Hall, Ryknild Street, WS14 9XU.
Time: 9.30am-3.30pm
Contact: JRS Fairs
Tel: 01785 259350

OCTOBER 4
BOWDON
(stamps, postal history, postcards)
Venue: Mercure Hotel, Langham Road, WA14 2HT.
Time: 10am-4pm
Contact: Howard Hatton
Tel: 0161 766 9031

OXFORD
(stamps, postal history)
Venue: Women's Institute, North Hinksey Lane, OX2 0LT.
Time: 9am-1.30pm
Contact: T Brittain
Tel: 07957 158299

WOLVERHAMPTON
(stamps, postal history, postcards)

Venue: Bradmore Social Club, 60 Church Road, WV3 7ER.
Time: 9.30am-2.30pm
Contact: John Coaten
Tel: 07808 864297

OCTOBER 9
LONDON
(stamps, postal history, postcards)
Venue: Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way, Russell Square, WC1H 0DG.
Time: Friday 9am-4pm
Contact: Kate Puleston
Tel: 020 8946 4489

OCTOBER 10
ARDINGLY
(stamps, postal history, postcards)
Venue: Norfolk Pavilion, Ardingly Showground, South of England Event Centre, RH17 6TL.
Time: 10am-4pm
Contact: Dr Jim Etherington
Tel: 01273 471897

DERBY
(stamps, postal history, postcards)
Venue: Nunsfield House Community Hall, 33 Boulton Road, Alvaston, DE24 0FD.
Time: 9.30am-3.30pm
Contact: H V Johnson & Co
Tel: 01909 563394

KENILWORTH
(stamps, postal history)
Venue: Kenilworth School, Leyes Lane, CV8 2DA.
Time: 9.30am-3.30pm
Contact: JRS Fairs
Tel: 01785 259350

MANCHESTER
(stamps, postal history)
Venue: Sale Grammar School, Marsland Road, Sale, M33 3NH.
Time: 10am-4pm
Contact: George Wewiora
Tel: 0161 427 2101

NORTON
(stamps, postal history)
Venue: Norton Methodist Church Hall, High Street, TS20 2QQ.
Time: 9.30am-1.30pm
Contact: Graham Whitewick
Tel: 07849 904353

TELFORD
(stamps, postal history, postcards, coins)
Venue: Belmont Community Hall, off Tan Bank car park, Wellington, TF1 1HJ.
Time: 9.30am-2pm
Contact: Richard Camp
Tel: 01952 405458

OCTOBER 11
CHESTERFIELD
(stamps, postal history)
Venue: Chester Street Club, Chester Street, S40 1DL.
Time: 10am-4pm
Contact: Howard Hatton
Tel: 0161 766 9031

WOKINGHAM
(stamps, postal history)

Venue: St Crispin's Centre, London Road, RG40 1SR.
Time: 10am-3pm
Contact: T Brittain
Tel: 07957 158299

OCTOBER 16-17
PERTH
(stamps, postal history, postcards)
Venue: Dewars Centre, Glover Street, PH2 0TH.
Time: 11am-5.30pm (Friday); 10am-3pm (Saturday)
Contact: Richard Stenlake, Scotex 2020
Tel: 01674 832823

OCTOBER 17
HULL
(stamps, postal history)
Venue: St James Centre, 169 First Lane, Hessle, HU13 9EY.
Time: 9.30am-3.30pm
Contact: H V Johnson & Co
Tel: 01909 563394

LAVENHAM
(stamps, postal history, postcards)
Venue: Lavenham Village Hall, Church Street, CO10 9QT.
Time: 9am-3pm
Contact: Sue Pope
Tel: 01787 249860

PRESTON
(stamps, postal history)

Venue: Barton Village Hall, Garstang Road, PR3 3HE.
Time: 9.30am-4.30pm
Contact: Martin Crowson
Tel: 07521 282383

RUISLIP
(stamps, postal history, postcards)
Venue: Methodist Church Hall, Ickenham Road, HA4 7BZ.
Time: 10am-4.30pm
Contact: David Milton
Tel: 01895 637283

SITTINGBOURNE
(stamps, postal history, postcards)
Venue: Carmel Hall, Ufton Lane, off West Street, ME10 1JB.

Time: 9.30am-3pm
Contact: Chris Rapley
Tel: 07711 677760

OCTOBER 18
BOWDON
(stamps, postal history)
Venue: Mercure Hotel, Langham Road, WA14 2HT.
Time: 10am-4pm
Contact: Howard Hatton
Tel: 0161 766 9031

DRONFIELD
(stamps, postal history)
Venue: Coal Aston Village Hall, Eckington Road, Coal Aston, S18 3AY.
Time: 9.30am-3.30pm
Contact: H V Johnson & Co
Tel: 01909 563394

ON OR OFF?

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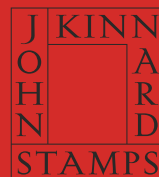
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Flying the flag

Liberia's commemoration of its President's prestigious tour of Europe involved some hazy wishful thinking, even before the cynical money-grabbing kicked in

■ Report by John Winchester

When the President of Liberia, William Tubman, embarked on a European tour in 1956, he was enthusiastically received. His stabilising pro-western policies were appreciated, and Liberia was enjoying the second highest growth rate in the world at the time.

After arriving by ship in Marseille, France, the visiting dignitary was whisked off to Rome to meet President Gronchi of Italy, and then continued to the Vatican City for an audience with Pope Pius XII. Later he would travel to Germany and the Netherlands, before ending his tour in Switzerland to tick off a total of six countries.

In 1958, Liberia planned a belated philatelic commemoration of the expedition, in the form of a substantial set printed by Harry L Peckmore & Son of New Jersey, USA. There would be a stamp for each of the countries visited, comprising a recess-printed view of a national landmark with a full-colour national flag added by lithography.

To those with firm memories of the tour, it must have seemed a little strange that the set numbered seven stamps. It included Sweden, a country which played a major role in the Liberian mining industry but which President Tubman hadn't visited.

But that was the least of the machinations. For each country, Peckmore's output included stamps showing the wrong flag, a



ABOVE: Liberia 1958 5c, recalling a presidential visit to Sweden (which never happened), with a flag of France (the wrong country), showing an upward shift of litho colours

partial flag, an upside-down flag, a missing flag and even a flag printed on the gummed side!

Vexillologically speaking, it was madness. Philatelically, it was a nice little earner. ■

NEXT MONTH

A life in pictures



Collecting the 10 definitive series of King Bhumibol of Thailand, the world's longest-reigning monarch in the postage stamp era

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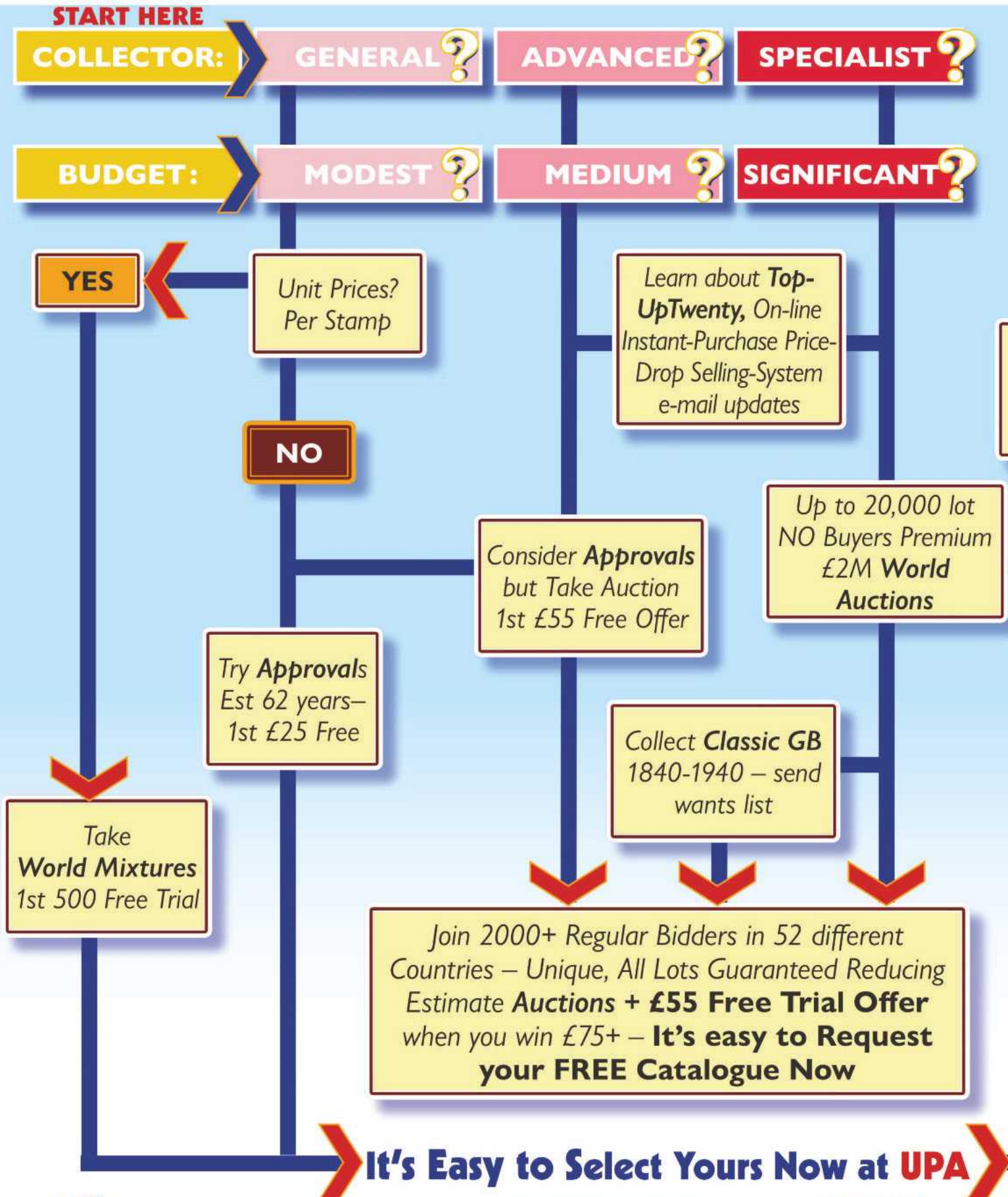
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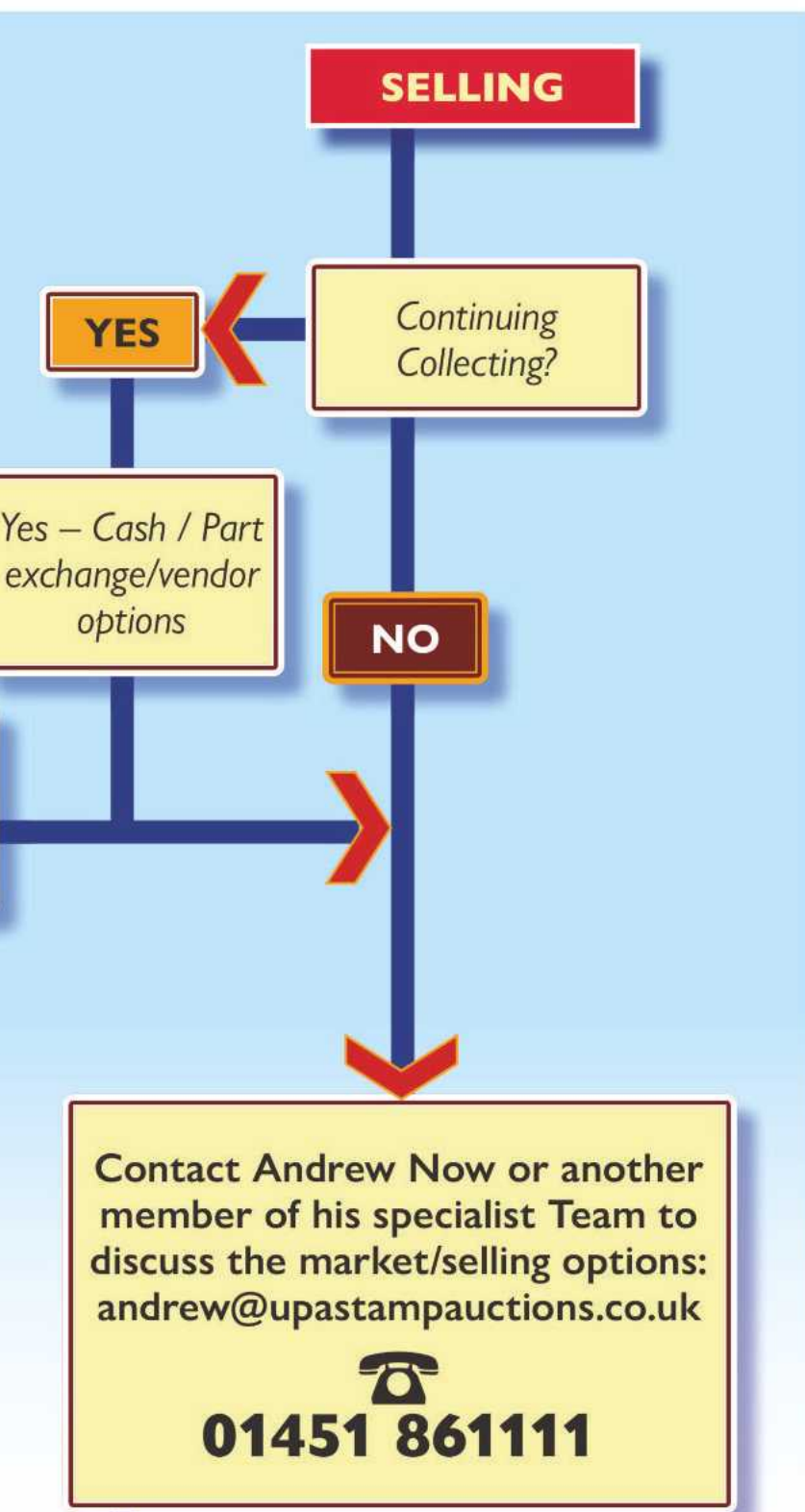
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