

EXPLORING THE FASCINATING WORLD OF STAMPS





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INTRODUCTION

If you thought stamp collecting was a boring pastime practised by people who had nothing better to do, you’re in for a great surprise. Stamp collecting has been called the hobby of kings and has been enthusiastically pursued by kings, presidents, academics, scientists, millionaires, schoolchildren and countless other enthusiasts all over the world.

In addition to being a fascinating hobby that can be enjoyed from youth right through to old age, stamps have educational value, historical and cultural value, aesthetic value, therapeutic value and investment value, to name but a few of its benefits.

With this booklet, we hope you’ll explore with us the fascinating world of stamps.



LONG AGO...

Before embarking on our journey of exploration, let's look at how and why postage stamps came into the world.

Long ago, before there were postage stamps, postage rates for delivery of letters in many countries depended on the distance travelled and the number of sheets of paper used. Furthermore, the persons who received the letter or package - not the senders - had to pay the postage when they received mail!

Before postage stamps were used, letters were hand-stamped or postmarked with cancellers in ink. Postmarks were first called 'Bishop' marks after Henry Bishop who invented them. These postmarks, which indicated the date on which postal items were mailed, were first used in 1661 at the London General Post Office.



A BISHOP MARK FROM 1766,
DATED 20 NOVEMBER

Rowland Hill, then Secretary of the South Australian Commission, first came up with the idea of an adhesive stamp to indicate prepayment of postage. It was part of his proposal in 1837 to reform the British postal system. The postal reforms led to a uniform postal rate, the Penny Post, based on weight.

As a result, the world's first postage stamp, the Penny Black, was issued in Britain in May 1840. The stamp became known as the Penny Black because the profile of Queen Victoria's head depicted on the stamp was placed against a black background, and the stamp had a denomination of one penny.



A BRITISH STAMP DEPICTING
SIR ROWLAND HILL

Since Britain was the first country to issue adhesive stamps, the Universal Postal Union (UPU) - the international regulating body - granted it exemption from the rule that the name of the issuing country must appear on a stamp. Therefore, only the ruling monarch's head is depicted on all Britain's stamps. Today, it usually appears as a silhouette in a corner of the stamp in combination with the overall stamp design.

In South Africa, the first postage stamp, the Cape Triangular, was issued on 1 September 1853 in the Cape of Good Hope, then a British colony. The Cape Triangular was designed by Charles Davidson Bell, a surveyor by profession who was Surveyor General of the then Cape Colony. It had a peculiar shape that was unique in the stamp designs of that period. The background of the stamp featured wavy lines coupled with short thicker vertical and diagonal lines. The female figure representing Hope appears in a sitting position.



THE WORLD'S FIRST POSTAGE STAMP, BRITAIN'S PENNY BLACK



MODERN BRITISH STAMPS DEPICTING THE REIGNING MONARCH



STAMPS COMMEMORATING THE OPENING OF THE UNION PARLIAMENT IN 1910



THE WORLD FAMOUS CAPE TRIANGULAR FIRST ISSUED IN 1853

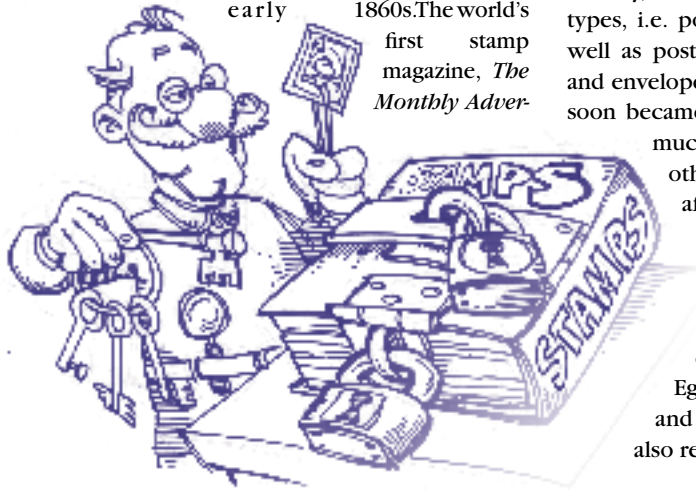
CHAPTER 1

Stamp collecting – what and why

Before exploring the wows and wonders of stamps, let's get some answers to questions that will guide us along the way.

How did it all start?

The issue of the Penny Black stamp by Great Britain in 1840, triggered the start of stamp collecting and philately. Stamp dealers started trading in stamps as early as 1850 and have since played a vital role in supplying stamps to collectors. Stamp catalogues, magazines and albums were available by the early 1860s. The world's first stamp magazine, *The Monthly Advertiser*, was published in 1862 in Liverpool.



REVENUE STAMPS FROM BRITISH COLONIES

tiser; was published in 1862 in Liverpool.

Initially, collecting pursuits covered all stamp types, i.e. postage and revenue stamps, as well as postal stationery, namely postcards and envelopes with imprinted stamps. But it soon became clear that some stamps were much more valuable or rare than others and therefore more sought after by collectors. The most extensive collection of rarities, especially of Great Britain and its colonies, belong to the British Royal Family. The collections of King Farouk of Egypt, Tsar Nicolas III of Russia and King Carol of Romania were also renowned.

What is philately?

Philately encompasses stamp collecting, but refers mainly to the study of postage or revenue stamps, postmarks, stamped envelopes and postal history. This includes aspects such as the history, design, production, errors in printing and uses of stamps.

The word 'philately' comes from the French word 'philatelie', which, in turn, is derived from the Greek words 'philos', meaning 'the love of', and 'atelia' meaning 'exemption from tax' (which can also translate to 'postage prepaid').

Why collect stamps?

People collect stamps for many different reasons. Some start at a young age and enjoy their collections so much that it becomes a life-long passion. Some are spellbound by the beauty of stamps as tiny works of art, some love the way stamps teach them about other countries of the world, some are fascinated by rare stamps and others are interested in the stories and history behind the stamps. But most of all, stamp collectors have fun with their stamps – there is always a challenge because no collection is ever really complete. New stamps are issued, old ones are discovered and research leads to new

facts about prized collections. And, of course, it's a hobby the whole family or groups of people can enjoy together. Strangers become friends when they discover that they share a passion for stamps.

What are definitive and commemorative stamps?

Definitive stamps are the day-to-day postage

stamps issued by the postal authorities to pay for a range of commonly used postal rates. Currently, definitive stamps issued by some countries are denominated in words which specify their use, e.g. 'standard mail', 'airmail postcard', etc. The stamp designs in a definitive series usually reflect a particular theme peculiar to the issuing country. Definitive stamps remain in cir-

ulation for several years.

Commemorative stamps are issued to mark a specific event, honour a prominent person or celebrate a significant event in the issuing country's history. They are printed in limited quantities and are found in Post Office branch offices for limited periods only.



STAMPS FROM THE 1ST REPUBLICAN DEFINITIVE SERIES, 1961

2ND DEFINITIVE, 1974

3RD DEFINITIVE, 1977



4TH DEFINITIVE, 1982

5TH DEFINITIVE, 1988



6TH DEFINITIVE, 1993



REDRAWN 6TH DEFINITIVE, 1998



7TH DEFINITIVE, 2000



What are mint stamps?

No, they don't taste like mint when licked! Mint stamps are stamps that are still in 'mint' condition as opposed to stamps that have been used on envelopes. This means that they remain in their original state of issue, namely unused and undamaged with its original gum still intact (if issued with gum). Used stamps are stamps that have been used for their intended purpose, namely prepayment of postage or other duties.



LEFT: A STAMP IN MINT CONDITION (UNUSED WITH GUM), AND RIGHT: A CANCELLED STAMP, RIGHT

What are first-day covers (FDCs)?

First-day covers, or FDCs as they are also called, are envelopes bearing stamps that have been cancelled on the first day on which the stamp was issued. Modern first-day covers usually bear designs that relate to the theme of the stamp issue.



A



B



C



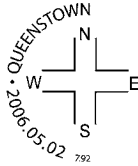
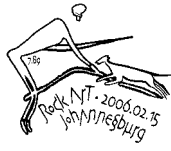
D

FIRST DAY COVERS FOR:

A. MEDICAL OUTREACH, B. WOMEN'S MARCH TO THE UNION BUILDINGS, C. ANIMAL TRACKS, STORIES IN THE SAND AND D. CLIVIA

What are cancellers?

A stamp is 'cancelled' with a post office 'canceller' or 'date stamp' to indicate that it has gone through the post. The canceller is designed to prevent a stamp's re-use. When



COMMEMORATIVE CANCELLERS FOR: WOMEN'S MARCH TO THE UNION BUILDINGS, ROCK ART, WORLD POST DAY AND MEDICAL OUTREACH

commemorative stamps are issued, a matching commemorative canceller is usually also designed. It indicates the date of the first day of issue and usually echoes the theme of the stamps.

What is a control block?

Control blocks, also known as cylinder blocks, are stamps in blocks of four or six taken from a corner of a sheet of stamps. The



CONTROL BLOCK FROM A SHEET OF STANDARD RATE STAMPS COMMEMORATING CHRISTMAS

What are miniature sheets?

Postal authorities sometimes issue stamps in a format that looks like a small stamp sheet containing either one stamp which forms part of a larger picture or design, or more than one stamp

that forms a picture or part of the overall design. Although the stamps contained in a miniature sheet are perforated and can be torn out to use for payment of postage, miniature sheets are primarily issued with collectors in mind.

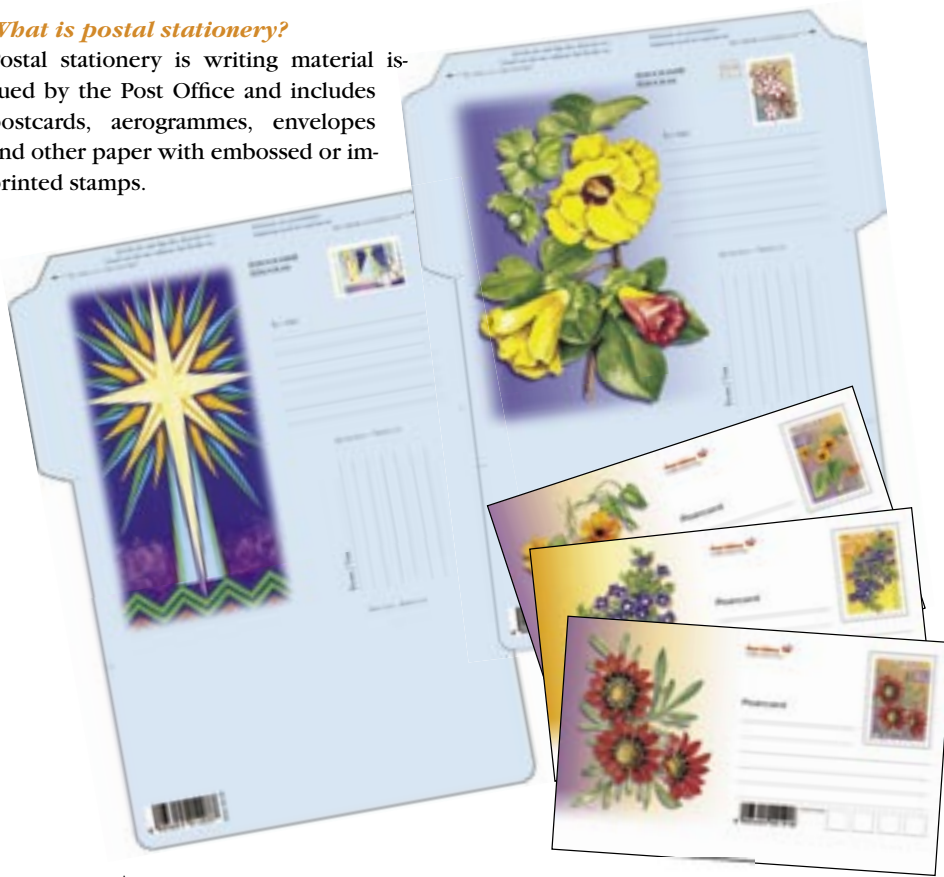
main feature of control blocks is the plate numbers of the applicable printing cylinder found in the margins.



SOME MINIATURE SHEETS ISSUED BY THE SOUTH AFRICAN POST OFFICE TO COMMEMORATE SIGNIFICANT EVENTS, FROM LEFT: THE YEAR OF THE DOG, 2010 FIFA WORLD CUP SOUTH AFRICA, WOMEN'S MARCH TO THE UNION BUILDINGS, FIFA CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY AND THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FREEDOM CHARTER

What is postal stationery?

Postal stationery is writing material issued by the Post Office and includes postcards, aerogrammes, envelopes and other paper with embossed or imprinted stamps.



AEROGRAMMES AND POSTCARDS WITH IMPRINTED STAMPS, ARE EXAMPLES OF POSTAL STATIONERY

What are 'joint issues'?

Joint stamp issues mean two or more countries have agreed to each issue a stamp on the same date to commemorate the same event. This usually takes place when the particular theme has special meaning for both countries. The stamps are often designed by the same artist and are similar in appearance. An example is South Africa's joint issue with Thailand in 2003 to commemorate 10 years of diplomatic relations.



THE JOINT ISSUE WITH THAILAND IN 2003, COMMEMORATING 10 YEARS OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

CHAPTER 2

Collecting classes for competitive collectors

While some collectors collect for their own pleasure, others want to display their collections competitively at philatelic exhibitions. For this reason, various areas of collecting interest have been designated as classes into which collections can be entered and judged at exhibitions. Most of the classes have developed from the types of products produced by postal administrations to satisfy a postal (or related) requirement.



PART OF A COLLECTION IN THE TRADITIONAL PHILATELY CLASS SHOWING PRINTING AND PERFORATING ERRORS ON BRITISH STAMPS

Traditional philately

This is the basis of all philately and concerns the nature, production, classification and use of stamps. Postage and revenue stamps are the basic components of this class. It should be noted that the collecting of revenue stamps was re-admitted to the traditional philately class recently. It is regarded as a growth area of stamp collecting. Revenue stamps were an important part of stamp collecting at the turn of the century.

Postal history

This is the study of postal rates, mail routes, and postal and other (e.g. censorship) markings. Most of this evidence is found on envelopes, postcards, parcel wrappers and postal stationery.



EXAMPLES OF POSTCARDS FROM THE ANGLO-BOER/SOUTH AFRICAN WAR, SHOWING HOW MAIL ROUTES CAN BE STUDIED THROUGH POSTAL MARKS ON LETTERS AND POSTCARDS

Postal stationery

Postal products imprinted with a stamp or information that shows that postage is prepaid, e.g. stamped postcards, envelopes, registered envelopes and aerogrammes.

Maximaphily and first-day covers

The collecting of maxi cards and first-day covers was very popular in the 1970s and 80s. Their appeal is in the integrated nature of the illustration and canceller coupled with the applicable stamps.

Aerophilately

The development of aviation has had a major impact on postal communications and postal services. In the early days, mail transport by aircraft was both exciting and expensive. Postal administrations sometimes issued special stamps to be used on mail transported by air. This has stimulated collectors to specialise in collecting postage stamps and the associated covers or special envelopes transported by air.

Astrophilately

The conquest of space has led to the development of this collecting class.

Philatelic literature

There is a large number of publications on every aspect of stamp collecting. Philatelic literature, including books, pamphlets, periodicals, magazines, journals and catalogues, is a competition class at exhibitions. Examples of philatelic publications are *Setempe* and the *SA Philatelist* (South Africa), *Gibbons Stamp Monthly* (UK) and *Linn's Stamp News* (USA).

Mophila

This is an area of stamp collecting centred on the collecting of modern postage stamps issued in the past 15 years.



A PAGE FROM A COLLECTION IN THE AEROPHILATELY CLASS

Thematic

Thematic collecting refers to the collection of any type of philatelic material, including stamps, postcards and postal slogans, featuring a specific theme. This can be anything

ranging from music, flowers, wildlife, sport, artists, science, architecture and trains, to royalty and celebrities.



TWO EXAMPLES OF PAGES FROM THEMATIC COLLECTIONS SHOWING BIRD STAMPS FROM LESOTHO, LEFT, AND STAMPS DEPICTING CHARACTERS FROM CHILDREN'S STORIES, RIGHT.

Experimental or open classes

Through these new classes, collectors are able to develop new ways of collecting. Some of the new collections can contain ranges of non-philatelic material that are related to the overall theme.

Youth philately

Youth philately is an important part of philately because children are the collectors of the future. While youth philately is not an exhibiting class as such, young collectors can exhibit their collections competitively. Youth collections are sometimes exhibited at special youth exhibitions or at adult exhibitions as a separate division. Youth philately is actively supported by most postal administrations. Some stamp designs and themes are specifically aimed at the youth market.

FIP

The "Fédération Internationale de Philatélie" (FIP) promotes philatelic exhibitions internationally by granting patronage and auspices. Visit their Internet web site at <http://www.f-i-p.ch/> for more information.

Historical, rare, unique and odd

Now that we have established where and how stamps originated, what collecting classes and what kinds of stamps are available, let's explore those that are rare or unique, or have earned a place in the history books.

Penny Black, the world's first

The Penny Black was not only the world's first official adhesive postage stamp, but has also become the world's most well-known stamp as a result. The stamp was issued in the city of Bath by Great Britain on 1 May 1840.

As many as 68 million were issued from 1840 and an estimated 1,5 million of these survive today. Despite their ready availability, they are still in great demand by collectors.



A BLOCK OF PENNY BLACK STAMPS FROM THE CORNER OF A SHEET SHOWING MARGINAL INSCRIPTION
 THE SANLEY GIBBONS BOOK OF STAMPS AND STAMP COLLECTING, 1990

South Africa's first and most famous

South Africa's first stamp, the Cape Triangular, was issued in 1853. It was the world's first triangular stamp and the first stamp issued by a country in Africa. Because of its exceptional design, it is still regarded as one of the world's classics. It was designed by Charles Davidson Bell, Surveyor General of the Cape Colony at the time.

In a letter to the Acting Secretary of the Government in London, Bell requested the introduction of a colonial postage stamp. He recommended a triangular shape, suggesting

that it should be so different from those of the British postage stamps as to catch the eye at a glance. The shape was unique among the stamp designs of that period.

The triangular stamp depicts the figure of the virgin Hope, one of three mythical sisters who represent the virtues of faith, hope and charity. She is shown holding an anchor, the symbol of faith. It is also an appropriate symbol for the Cape of Good Hope where many a ship has anchored to replenish supplies along the sea route around the Cape. The stamps were issued in four face values,

namely one penny, four pennies, six pennies and one shilling.

A South African stamp issued in 1926 featuring the same design, but with the inscriptions 'South Africa' instead of 'Cape of Good Hope' at the bottom, and 'Postage Stamp/Four Pennies' on the sides, should not be mistaken for the original Cape Triangular.

In 1953, the centenary of the first Cape Triangular stamps was commemorated with the issue of one-penny and four-penny stamps showing a reduced image of the original Cape Triangular. In 2003, the virgin Hope once again appeared on a South African stamp. This time, in the form of a redrawn Cape Triangular to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the original stamp. The words 'South Africa' appear at the bottom, with 'Standard/Postage' on the sides.



THE ORIGINAL CAPE TRIANGULAR WITH THE INSCRIPTION
'CAPE OF GOOD HOPE'



THE 1926 TRIANGULAR WITH THE INSCRIPTION
'SUID-AFRIKA'



1953 CENTENARY OF THE CAPE TRIANGULAR



THE 2003 REDRAWN TRIANGULAR

Treskilling Yellow - a rare and valuable find

The 1858 Swedish Treskilling yellow, or three-skilling banco error of colour, earned its way into the history books in 1996. It was sold on auction for 2,5 million Swiss francs, making it the world's most expensive stamp. The stamp was part of a set of five depicting the Swedish coat of arms and ranging in value from three to 24 skillings banco. The Treskilling was a misprint, which in its original colour was green; the eight skillings was a yellow stamp.

Only a single Treskilling yellow stamp has ever been found during the 150 years since Swedish stamps were first issued. The stamp was extracted from an envelope found by a



young collector in his grandmother's attic. This famous stamp now even has its own website, so if you want to find out more, visit www.treskillingyellow.com.

Musical stamps and other oddities

From time to time, postal authorities experiment with innovative stamp designs in different shapes, sizes, colours and surfaces to attract the public's attention. There are circular, triangular and pentagonal shapes. Tonga, a group of islands in the Pacific, has even issued

a banana-shaped stamp, as well as stamps in the shape of a crown and a set of stamps in the shape of an athlete! Postage stamps made of different materials other than paper, including embossed foil, wood, plastic and silver foil, have also been issued.



THE PACIFIC ISLAND OF TONGA ONCE ISSUED A STAMP SHAPED LIKE A BANANA

An unusual stamp issue that has certainly attracted attention is a set of seven stamps in the form of mini gramophone records. Issued by Bhutan in 1973, these stamps actually played the Bhutan national



IN 1973 BHUTAN ISSUED A STAMP THAT LOOKED LIKE A RECORD. PUT IT ON A RECORD PLAYER AND IT WOULD ACTUALLY PLAY THE BHUTANESE NATIONAL ANTHEM!

and indigenous folk songs when put on a record player.

While these musical stamps secured Bhutan a world 'first', this country in the eastern Himalayas also managed a world 'last'. It only started issuing postage stamps in 1955, making it the last country in the world to do so.

The world's first self-adhesive stamps



SIERRA LEONE ISSUED THE FIRST SELF-ADHESIVE STAMPS ON 10 FEBRUARY 1964.

Self-adhesive stamps are also known as pressure-sensitive or peel-and-stick stamps. Sierra Leone, a country in West Africa, issued the world's first self-adhesive stamps on 10 February 1964. This series of stamps, shaped like a map of the country, were issued to coincide with the New York World's Fair.

South Africa's first self-adhesive stamps were issued in 1998. This set of five, featuring South African antelopes, were issued as additions to the Sixth Definitive series.



SOUTH AFRICA'S FIRST SELF-ADHESIVE STAMPS

CHAPTER 4

What a "wow"

South Africa is well known for its unsurpassed natural beauty, its rich variety of fauna (animals) and flora (flowers), cultural and human diversity and its fascinating history. No wonder our stamps are among the most beautiful in the world and have long been rated as a thematic collector's dream. This leg of our journey allows us to explore the 'wows' of our beautiful country as reflected through our stamps.

A wealth of wildlife

Wildlife, a favourite theme among thematic collectors, has appeared on many South Afri-

can stamps. For example, the 1954 definitive issue, consisting of 14 stamps, depicted animals that are commonly found in the country's many game reserves.

Wildlife has since graced several stamp issues, both definitive and commemorative. The so-called Big Five group of animals, namely the elephant, rhino, leopard, lion and buffalo have been especially popular and have appeared on various issues and in various guises. Animal tracks and the animals that make them is the topic of a set of ten stamps issued in September 2006.



SOME SOUTH AFRICAN STAMPS DEPICTING OUR WEALTH OF WILDLIFE

Birds of a feather...

Fish, reptiles, amphibians, small mammals, butterflies, moths and insects have also found a place of pride on our stamps. However, birds have been among the most popular with collectors. It is estimated that South Africa has more than 900 bird species; and some of the most beautiful among these



SOME SOUTH AFRICAN STAMPS DEPICTING INDIGENOUS BIRDS, SPIDERS, MOTHS, FROGS AND MARINE LIFE

have appeared on our stamps. They include, among others, the 1974 Second Definitive issue, the 1990 South African Birds issue, the Sixth Definitive series, the Raptors, Migratory Species, and Water Birds issues, and the Seventh Definitive series.



SOME SOUTH AFRICAN STAMPS DEPICTING INDIGENOUS BIRDS, SPIDERS, MOTHS, FROGS AND MARINE LIFE

Fabulous flora

South Africa's rich floral diversity is legendary. More plant species, for example, occur within 22 000 hectares of the Table Mountain National Park than in the whole of the British Isles or New Zealand. Many of our fabulous flowers and plants have been depicted on stamps to the delight of collectors of flora on stamps.

Among our most famous flowers are the different protea species. These have been depicted as part of the 1961 definitives and the Third Definitive issue. Proteas also appear on a stamp in the 1998 Explore South Africa issue and the Ecology of Table Mountain issue. Other notable issues depicting flora include the Second Definitives of 1974, the 1988 Definitives featuring succulents and the Seventh Definitive series. Indigenous trees, heathers and clivias of South Africa also earned a place on our stamps.



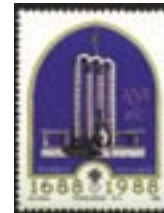
Our passionate past

South Africa's history has yielded heroes and horrors, triumphs and tragedies. Many events and people that have helped to shape our country have been commemorated or honoured on our stamps.

In 1988, the 500th anniversary of the discovery of the Cape by Bartholomew Diaz, the 300th anniversary of the arrival of the French Huguenots and the 150th anniversary of the Great Trek were commemorated. In 1994, the inauguration of President Nelson Mandela was celebrated with a set of four stamps, and in 1997



DISCOVERY OF THE CAPE BY BARTHOLOMEW DIAZ



ARRIVAL OF THE FRENCH HUGUENOTS



150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GREAT TREK

the 50th anniversary of the Congress Alliance for a Democratic South Africa was highlighted by means of a miniature sheet. In 1999, a stamp was issued to mark President Thabo Mbeki's inauguration, while in 2005, the 50th anniversary of South Africa's Freedom Charter was commemorated. A stamp marking the 50th an-

FORMER PRESIDENT
NELSON MANDELA



INAUGURATION OF SOUTH AFRICA'S
FIRST DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED
PRESIDENT, 1994



PRESIDENT
THABO MBEKI

niversary of the women's march to the Union Buildings was issued on 9 August 2006.

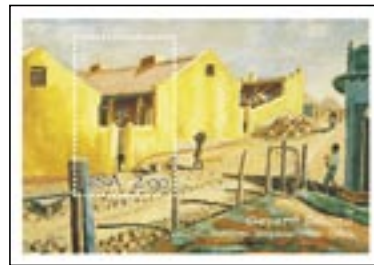
Wars and woes such as the Anglo-Boer/South African War, the Bhambatha Rebellion and the Soweto Uprising have also been observed through our stamps.

People power

Many of our mentors, scientists, writers and other prominent people have earned a place



STAMPS ISSUED IN HONOUR OF SOUTH AFRICA'S NOBEL LAUREATES, 1996



GERARD SEKOTO'S PAINTING OF YELLOW HOUSES



EMILY HOBHOUSE



MAHATMA GANDHI



ENOCH SONTONGA - COMPOSER
OF NKOSI SIKEL' I AFRIKA



MARK SHUTTLEWORTH - AFRICA'S FIRST MAN IN SPACE

of honour on our stamps, notably the South African Nobel Laureates issue of 1996. Others include Dr Chris Barnard who performed the world's first heart transplant; Emily Hobhouse, a British campaigner against the notorious concentration camps of the Anglo-Boer War; Enoch Sontonga, composer of our national anthem Nkosi Sikelel' i Afrika; Gerard Sekoto, renowned artist; Mahatma Gandhi and Mark Shuttleworth - Africa's first man in space.

Captivating culture

UNESCO defines heritage as “our legacy from the past, what we live with today, and what we pass on to future generations. Our cultural and natural heritage is both irreplaceable sources of life and inspiration.”



A VARIETY OF STAMPS ISSUED TO HIGHLIGHT SOUTH AFRICA'S RICH CULTURAL HERITAGE

THE LINTON STONE ON DISPLAY IN THE IZIKO SOUTH AFRICAN MUSEUM, CAPE TOWN



STAMP DESIGN SHOWING THE SECTION OF THE LINTON PANEL FROM WHICH THE IMAGE ON THE COAT OF ARMS ORIGINATED

LINTON STONE DETAIL



THE IMAGE FROM THE ROCK PAINTING AS IT WAS USED ON THE SHIELD OF THE COAT OF ARMS



THE SOUTH AFRICAN COAT OF ARMS

South Africa has a rich and diverse cultural heritage, which has been beautifully captured on various stamp issues. Examples include the 1997 Year of Cultural Experiences issue featuring a variety of cultural objects from South Africa's different ethnic groups; the 1996 Early South African History issue; the Traditional Wall Art issue of 1999 and the 2006 Rock Art issue. Historical buildings have been featured on various stamp issues, notably the 4th Definitive set. Artworks by various well-known South African artists have also graced several stamps.

A sporting chance



South Africa is a great sporting nation and sport has been an important unifying force. Not only have we produced several world-class sports men and women, but the country has also played host to some of the world's most prestigious sporting events. These include the Rugby and Cricket World Cups and the Africa Cup of Nations Soccer tournament. Soon we'll host one of the world's greatest events - the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup!

No wonder sport as a theme features prominently on numerous South African stamps. A 1964 issue commemorates the 75th anniversary of the SA Rugby Board; a 1996 issue highlighted the Olympic Games in Atlanta; our sporting heroes were honoured in 2001, and in 2004, different sports in South Africa were celebrated with a set of ten commemorative stamps, to mention but a few.

This chapter explored only some of the many popular themes reflected on South African stamps - there are many more to be explored and discovered at your own leisure.

Educational and creative value of stamps

Thanks to the great variety of images depicted on postage stamps and the wealth of information they convey, stamps are undoubtedly excellent educational tools. The image on every stamp has a story to tell, a message to convey, an emotion to evoke or a piece of information to share.

By looking at and observing stamps, both old and young will learn about history, religion, sport, culture, politics, famous personalities, social events, economy and art, to mention a few.

Teachers can use stamps creatively in the classroom and parents can keep children busy for hours during holidays. All they will need is a box of used stamps. Imagine how much fun they can have with a project like discovering South Africa through its stamps. Groups can be given different tasks like collecting stamps depicting a particular aspect of the country. Each group can then tell the class what they have learnt. Learners can also write essays or poems about the themes on stamps, especially those that relate to their curriculum such as fauna and flora, science, art and history. Younger groups can be given tasks like sorting the stamps according to themes, colours or countries.



'Sister clubs'

The educational value of stamps can be enhanced if youth stamp clubs make contact with their counterparts in other countries. This can be based on the "sister schools" concept. Through this programme, a school in one country forms a partnership with a 'sister school' elsewhere in the world. Together they tackle certain projects as a team.

Stamp clubs can team up with a 'sister club' overseas. They can use the wonderful art of letter-writing to correspond and exchange stamps. At the same time they will learn about each other's cultures and customs. Names and contact details of clubs can be found in stamp magazines and on the Internet.



Stamps can be fun

The educational, recreational and therapeutic value of stamps is not confined to using them as part of a stamp collection. Stamps can be used creatively in many different ways.

Surplus stamps that are not required for your collection, can be used in a scrap-booking

project and to decorate a variety of objects. These include ostrich eggs, gift boxes, trays, book covers and frames for mirrors, pictures and clocks. They can also be used to decorate jewellery such as bangles, necklaces and earrings. Stamps can even be used to 'paint' a work of art as illustrated in the example below.



How to start and run a stamp club for children

Many adult collectors had their first encounters with stamp collecting when they were still at school. Some were introduced to the world of stamps through a gift of stamps or an album and others joined stamp clubs or groups. This has often sparked a life-long passion for stamp collecting that opened up a whole new world. If you are passionate about stamps, why not start a club for youngsters and enrich their lives considerably.

Publicity

To announce the formation of a new stamp club for young people, a flyer can be distributed at schools libraries, the post office, hobby shops and shopping malls in your area. Announcements can also be published in community newspapers or broadcast on community radio stations that serve your area.

While clear information about where and when meetings will take place should be given in the flyer, parents should also be made aware of the educational, recreational, therapeutic and creative value of stamp collecting for their children.

Once your club starts growing, you can ask members to tell their friends. Word of mouth is still the best publicity!

A Saturday afternoon is a good time for club meetings as this is usually more convenient for the children and parents than evening meetings.

Regular communication

Children love to receive mail, especially envelopes with colourful stamps, stickers, or labels on them. A monthly flyer to remind members of meetings will serve this purpose. It also reminds them that the club is still around and tells them what to expect at the next meeting. Try to mention as many names of children in the flyer - this will give them a sense of really belonging to the group.

Advance preparation

Plan your meeting thoroughly and pack everything you will need for the meeting the night before. Study the membership list in an attempt to memorise names. Make a note of each member's preferences or needs so that these can be discussed. In putting together stamp mixtures, children are more inclined to go through several small con-

tainers of mixtures rather than one or two large boxes of stamps. This also provides opportunities to rotate material. Shoe boxes or the lids of boxes in which A4 paper is sold are ideal.

Structure and organisation

Try to set up everything for the meeting well in advance, like moving tables and chairs to their proper positions and laying out the material.

Make every attempt to stick to the pre-arranged schedule. Parents should not have to wait in the car for half an hour before their child is ready to leave the meeting. Should you run late due to unforeseen circumstances, invite parents in to observe. Assure parents that their child will be supervised by a responsible adult at all times, and follow through.

Room set-up

The meeting room should reflect the fact that this is a stamp-collecting club. Colourful posters can decorate the walls and a table can be set up with some free stamp magazines, brochures, etc. The Philatelic Services of the Post Office or stamp dealers may be able to help with posters and magazines.

(Contact them at the telephone numbers given in Chapter 13.) Club members may also want to help with decorating the venue; they may even be asked to design colourful posters.

Boxes with stamp mixtures can be placed in one corner of the room, while a buy/sell/trade area can be set up in another corner. Philatelic supplies, such as magnifying glasses, hinges, tweezers, etc. can be on display for reference purposes even if they are not used that day. Any visuals used for the program, can be posted on the wall closest to the meeting place.

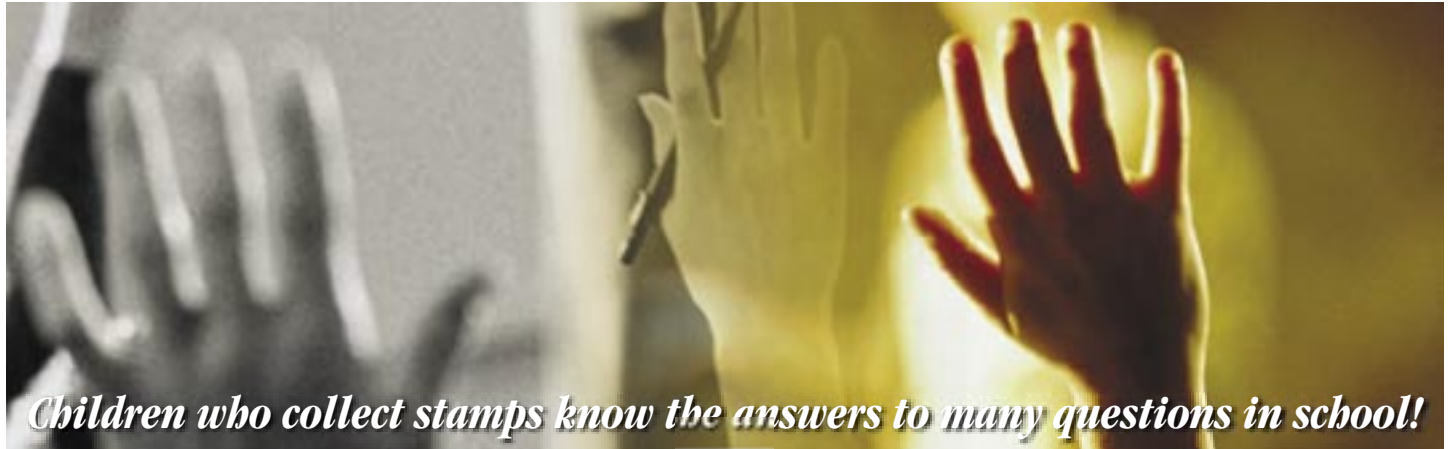
Maintaining interest

The meeting hour should be broken up into brief segments. Introducing new members can be followed by buy/sell/trade time and answering questions and queries. It is always a good idea to ask a guest collector to talk about his or her specialty collection and answer questions. Collectors are usually very enthusiastic about their hobby and more than willing to share their passion with young collectors. This can be followed by a hands-on demonstration of certain techniques such as the correct way to handle and

mount stamps, how to examine the detail on a stamp through a magnifying glass, how to identify a watermark or how to research and write up a collection. Many visuals should be available to illustrate points made.

Subscribe free of charge to the philatelic magazine *Setempe* issued by the Philatelic Services of the South African Post Office (contact details given in Chapter 13) and use it as a guide on new stamp issues and other philatelic news.

Always keep in mind that a club meeting is not a school classroom. The idea is to have fun!



Children who collect stamps know the answers to many questions in school!

Enhancing the quality of life

In addition to the educational value of stamps, stamp collecting can also enhance the quality of life.

Promoting healthy families

Healthy families form the building blocks of a healthy community as they provide the primary opportunity for the development of the individual. Shared interests and activities, such as stamp collecting, are ideal ways of improving family unity and harmony. Stamp collecting is not bound by age – the whole family, from Junior through to Grandpa, can practise it together.

A practical activity such as stamp collecting improves quality time spent together, thus improving communication between family members. As a project in which everybody's contribution is important and where teamwork is necessary to provide the end result, it will also improve respect, knowledge and understanding of each other.

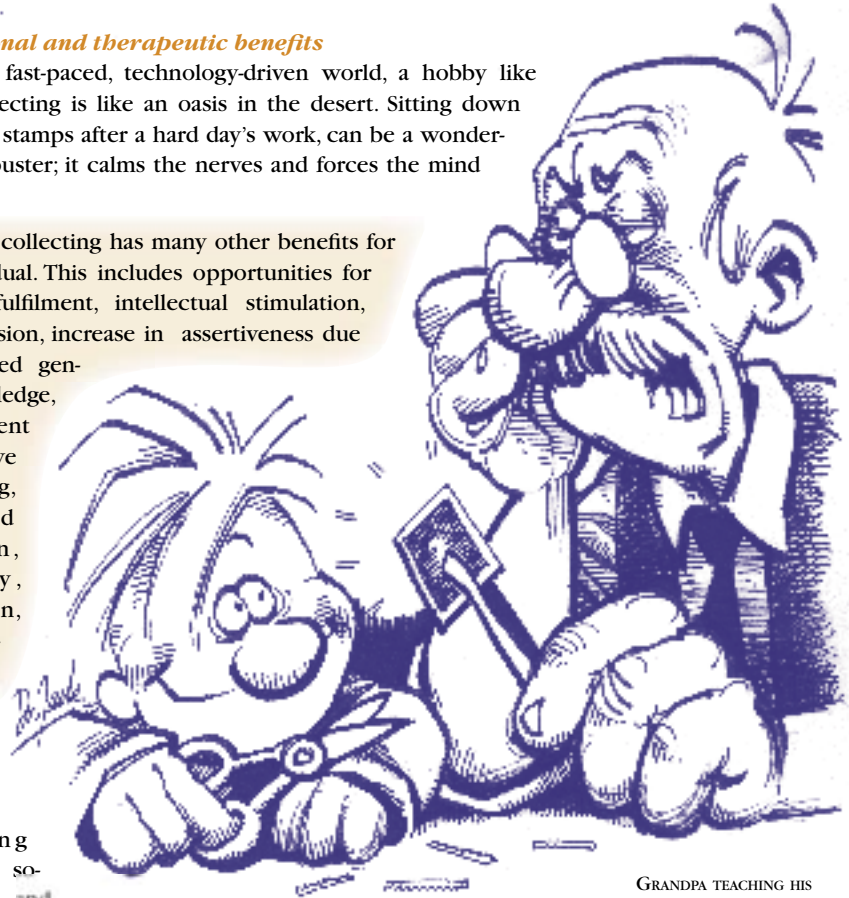
Stamp collecting furthermore helps to improve family members' general knowledge. They learn about the history, culture and people of their own country, explore foreign countries and interact with other stamp enthusiasts.

Recreational and therapeutic benefits

In today's fast-paced, technology-driven world, a hobby like stamp collecting is like an oasis in the desert. Sitting down with one's stamps after a hard day's work, can be a wonderful stress buster; it calms the nerves and forces the mind to unwind.

But stamp collecting has many other benefits for the individual. This includes opportunities for personal fulfilment, intellectual stimulation, self-expression, increase in assertiveness due to increased general knowledge, improvement in cognitive functioning, enhanced attention, memory, perception, and organisational skills.

Furthermore, stamp collecting promotes socialisation and



GRANDPA TEACHING HIS GRANDSON ABOUT STAMPS

social interaction with other enthusiasts through stamp clubs, stamp fairs, exhibitions and buying and selling.

Investment potential

Stamps are sometimes regarded as being investments, similar to “collectable” investment items such as art, antiques, Persian carpets and even stocks and shares. Segments of the stamp market do have “store of value” characteristics, but the primary value of stamps lie in collectors’ demands relating to collecting fields and interests.

Further, in those countries that show strong economic growth, the demand for and the prices of such countries’ stamps will tend to show greater price increases than in slower-growing economies. Obviously, there are exceptions to this link. For example, there are collectors of Commonwealth countries worldwide; this demand resulted from the earlier colonial associations.

Stamp collectors are not a homogeneous group. They vary from those who simply want to keep used stamps which they remove from envelopes, through to those who want to collect a copy of each in some or

other album, to those who want to research and write up a collection of select groups of stamps and related collectables for their own pleasure or for display purposes. Last-mentioned group often collect material of a thematic and historical nature. Here, the demand, and therefore price, is more a function of the current interest in the field, for example the Soccer World Cup and the Bhambatha Rebellion, than the “scarcity” of material.

Clearly, the collections of a general nature offer little chance of investment; and those of a research nature often have more value in the underlying research than the stamps. The real investment value of stamps often, therefore, lies in the emotional reward that they are capable of generating.

The ‘psychology’ of a stamp

It is interesting to note the effect a stamp has on the recipient of an envelope.

As with stamps, envelopes are available in a variety of shapes, sizes and colours and are used for various purposes. There’s the no-nonsense, down-to-business, prepaid business envelope; the potentially intimidat-

ing ‘postage paid’ official envelope and the distinctive window envelope bearing statements or reminders to pay. Then there’s the eye-catching envelope in a pleasing colour or design bearing stamps. Which of these would you rather open?

It is said that the average person takes seven seconds to decide whether to open a letter or not. Furthermore, a letter bearing a postage stamp has a 50% higher chance than a letter without a stamp to be opened first or to be opened at all. Why? Because it is perceived that a person actually took time and effort to sit down and write it.

Receiving a letter or a postcard with a stamp on from a friend or loved one is sure to make anyone feel special. Saying “I love you” or “Wish you were here” has much more impact when handwritten in a letter than through the impersonal electronic medium of e-mails.

When last did you have that warm, fuzzy feeling from receiving an e-mail or when did you replay a telephone conversation? Letters can be kept in a special place and read over and over to call up memories.

TO ALL SOUTH AFRICAN GRAPHIC DESIGNERS AND ILLUSTRATORS INTERESTED IN DESIGNING STAMPS

If you are interested to be commissioned to design stamps for the South African Post Office, please fill in this form and send it with A4 colour copies of your work to:

Philatelic Services

Attention: Thea Swanepoel - Design Artist

Private Bag X505

Pretoria, 0001

You can also e-mail this form with JPEG images of your work (100ppi images not wider than 8 cm) to: thea.swanepoel@postoffice.co.za

Stamp design - application for South African artists only

Name: _____

Surname: _____

Address: _____

_____ Postal code: _____

Telephone: _____ Mobile phone: _____

e-mail _____

Work style

Please indicate your preferred medium to work in:

- | | | |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Watercolour | <input type="checkbox"/> Oils | <input type="checkbox"/> Acrylic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coloured pencil | <input type="checkbox"/> Pastel (oil & powder) | <input type="checkbox"/> Pen and ink |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Computer | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | |

Please indicate the preferred subject matter you are best in:

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Portraits | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscapes | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildlife |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Birds / Marine life | <input type="checkbox"/> History | <input type="checkbox"/> Ships, cars, aeroplanes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Fantasy | <input type="checkbox"/> Concepts & abstract |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cartoons | <input type="checkbox"/> Plants & flowers | <input type="checkbox"/> Versatile |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | | |

If you work on computer, please indicate your preferred platform:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Apple Macintosh | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
|--|--------------------------------------|

Please indicate the application/s you prefer to work in:

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adobe Illustrator | <input type="checkbox"/> Adobe Photoshop | <input type="checkbox"/> Macromedia Freehand |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corel Draw | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | |

CHAPTER 8

Miniature works of art

Paging through a stamp album or viewing stamps at an exhibition is like viewing miniature works of art. You don't necessarily like all the designs, but you admire the artists' skill and ability to convey a particular message through composition, colour, line, texture and content.

Designing a stamp is in some ways similar to creating any other work of art; the same visual principles have to be considered. However, designing a stamp has its own challenges and constraints and the designer requires knowledge of certain principles that apply to stamp design in particular.

The main purpose of a postage stamp is to indicate the prepayment of postage. The stamp therefore has to carry a value. This is usually indicated by a number preceded by the country's currency symbol. Many early stamp issues indicated the currency value in words, for example 'One Penny'. Some recent stamps depict standardised values in words, for example, 'Standard Postage' or 'Airmail Postcard Rate'.

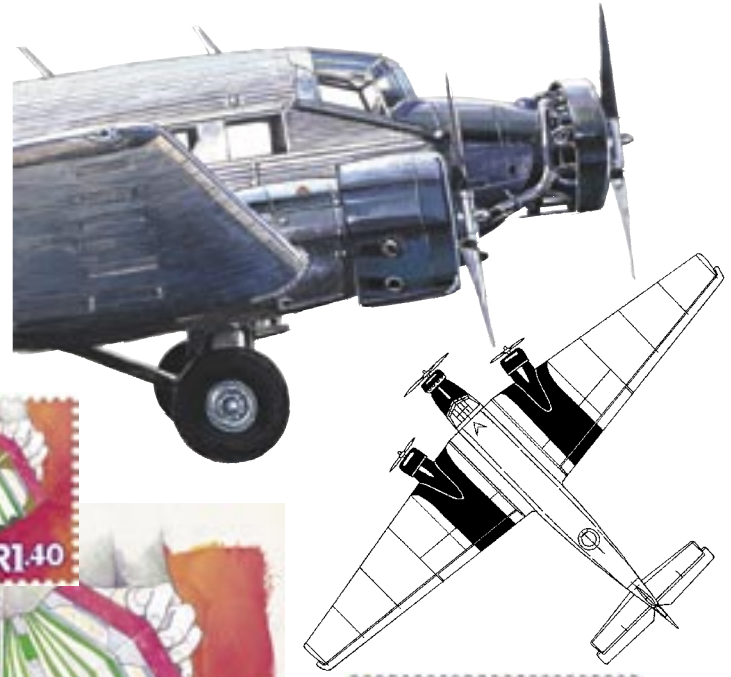
The second required element is the name of the country. (As mentioned before, this does



AN EXAMPLE OF A STAMP WITH ADDITIONAL TEXT ABOUT THE THEME OF THE STAMP



SIOBHAN CUFF'S ARTWORK FOR THE "MUSIC IN SOUTH AFRICA" STAMP ISSUE. IN THE FINAL PRODUCT, THE WORDS "SOUTH AFRICA" WERE HIGHLIGHTED IN GOLD FOILING.



HEIN BOTHA'S ARTWORK FOR THE CENTENARY OF FLIGHT, SHOWING HOW ARTWORK IN DIFFERENT STYLES ARE SOMETIMES COMBINED TO CREATE THE FINAL STAMP DESIGN

not apply to Great Britain, the only country exempted from this rule for UPU members.)

Apart from the value and the country's name, some additional text relating to the theme of the particular issue, is sometimes required. South Africa's 1998 stamp showing the words 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights' and the Millennium issue bearing the words 'Millennium 2000' are examples. Text may also relate to a statement of purpose such as "postage" or "official mail", a plate number, the name of the person portrayed, the year of issue or the artist's name.

The choice of a topic is governed by a com-

bination of the events to be commemorated (e.g. important anniversaries, etc.), additional values to the current definitive and popular demand. Artists are usually commissioned and briefed to design a stamp or set of stamps depicting a particular theme. Guidelines, such as the size and format are important elements to be considered by the artist. The usual shape of a stamp is a rectangle, either in 'landscape' or 'portrait' format.

Since stamps are 'ambassadors' for their country, the themes and imagery should ideally be chosen and depicted in such a way that they positively promote the country's image.

They should also appeal to the stamp-buying public. The choice of imagery is vast, ranging from fauna and flora, landscapes, culture and sport, to political and historical figures, technology and architecture.

To accommodate the required text, the background of a stamp design should not be too busy. Due to its small scale, detail is easily lost. The artist should aim to achieve simplicity and unity with strong and bold imagery without losing too much detail.

As is the case with any other work of art, colour plays a vital role in stamp design. Bright, vibrant colours are attractive and eye-catching, but colours, especially background colours, should not be too dark since the Post Office's date stamp may not show up against a dark background.

As stamps appear on their humble 'gallery' of an envelope or as part of a collection or exhibit, they are much more than prepayment for postage. They are miniature works of art that tell the story of mankind: they reflect our beliefs, our history, our culture, concerns, and achievements. As such they should be viewed with the same respect as any fine artwork in a gallery!



HEIN BOTHA'S ARTWORK ILLUSTRATING A TSHIVENDA FABLE OF HOW SANKHAMBI TRICKED THE MONKEYS INTO GOING WITH

HIM TO EAT HONEY IN A CAVE. WHEN THEY REACHED THE CAVE, SANKHAMBI SHOUTED THAT THE ROOF OF THE CAVE WAS FALLING IN. HE TOLD THE MONKEYS TO HOLD UP THE ROOF WHILE HE RAN TO FETCH SOME POLES. BUT HE NEVER RETURNED, LEAVING THE MONKEYS BEHIND WITH OUTSTRETCHED ARMS. AND THIS, ACCORDING TO THE FABLE, IS HOW THE MONKEYS GOT THEIR TALL AND SLENDER BODIES

South Africa's philatelic artists

South Africa has produced some outstanding philatelic artists - too many to discuss within the constraints of this booklet. However, some have made their mark on a variety of stamp issues.

AH Barritt is one of South Africa's best known stamp designers. He designed no less than 448 stamps, which also make him our most prolific artist. His stamp designs include Beadwork (Tranскеi), Woodcarving (Venda), Desert Sand Dunes (South West Africa.)

The late Dick Findlay was well known for his fine paintings of birds and plants. His versatility is reflected in the variety of artwork depicted on our stamps. These include birds of prey, water birds, medicinal plants, edible wild fruit, aloes, butterflies, indigenous trees and ferns, proteas and small mammals.

Cecil Skotnes and Ernst de Jong are two well-known South African artists who have contributed to our stamp designs. Skotnes designed the 1966 Fifth Anniversary of the Republic stamp issue and Ernst de Jong the 1974 Second Definitive issue featuring flowers, fish and birds.

Denis Murphy, a distinguished wildlife artist, designed South Africa's Sixth Definitive series featuring endangered fauna and one of South Africa's 'Big Five' issues.

Alan Ainslie, whose wildlife paintings are included in art collections worldwide, designed several Southern African stamps. Among them are South Africa's Nobel Laureates, endangered birds, a set of nine tourism stamps and a Christmas stamp and aerogramme.

Chris van Rooyen's eye-catching designs for South Africa's Seventh Definitive issue featuring South African birds, butterflies, flowers and fish, brighten up many envelopes that are seen every day. He also designed the migratory species and raptors issues.

Long before Nelson Mandela became the world's most recognised icon, he was captured on film by legendary photographer, Alf Kumalo. It is therefore fitting that some of Kumalo's photographic images were used for a set of postage stamps issued in honour of Madiba in 2001.



DENIS MURPHY,
BIG 5, 1996

ALAN AINSLIE,
BIG 5, 2001



ALAN AINSLIE, NOBEL LAUREATES, 1996



JERRY LION,
INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS
2003



PETER SIBANDA,
CHRISTMAS IN AFRICA,
2005

Folklore and story-telling are an important part of South Africa's cultural heritage. Sophia Mazi-buko designed a set of colourful stamps depicting some of our well-known myths and legends. The Soweto Uprising of 1976 marked an important turning point in our country's history. The 25th anniversary of this event was commemorated in 2001 with a stamp designed by Ntsie Lehlohonolo Moagi.

Life in South Africa's informal settlements was reflected on a set of stamps designed by Jerry Lion. He also designed a stamp commemorating the UPU Congress. The World Summit on Sustainable Development took place in Johannesburg in 2002. This event was marked with stamps designed by Peter Sibanda, who was also responsible for the design of the Ten Years of Freedom and Christmas in Africa issues.

So, you want to start collecting?

Where do I begin? you may well ask. You've already taken the first step by reading this booklet. From here the fun starts.

When asked why so many different kinds of people like stamp collecting, former American president and ardent collector, Franklin D. Roosevelt, replied; ***“One reason is that the hobby of stamp collecting suits almost anybody - it's very personal. You fit the hobby to yourself, instead of forcing yourself to fit rules, as with many hobbies.”***

This means unless you want to exhibit your collection competitively at national or international exhibitions, you don't have to abide by specific rules. However, there are some guidelines and tools that will help you to take care of your stamps and to organise them in the most practical way.

Where can I find stamps?

You can start by asking parents, uncles, aunts, grandparents and friends to give you all the stamps they have received on letters/parcels or may have saved and do not want anymore. You can also ask people who work in offices to give you envelopes with stamps

they receive at the office instead of throwing them away. Stamp collectors may also be approached since they often have surplus stamps that they will be happy to part with.

Obtaining pen pals in other countries is a good way of getting stamps from those countries. Names and addresses of pen pals who wish to exchange stamps through the mail can be found in stamp magazines.

The best way to find stamps, however, is from stamp dealers. They usually have boxes full of stamps for beginners at very reasonable prices. They may also be able to provide you with back copies of stamp magazines. You can browse through their material and ask their advice about stamp collecting. Stamp dealers can be found at individual shops and offices and stamp fairs across the country. To find out more about stamp dealers in your area, you can visit the South African Philatelic Dealers Association's web site at: www.sapda.co.za

What are the 'tools of the trade'?

It can be quite frustrating to start something and have to break it off in the middle because you don't have the correct 'tools'. The following list provides a guideline of what

you will need. You don't have to spend a lot of money - most of the items can be found around the house.

- ***Sorting boxes:*** You will need boxes or other containers for sorting your stamps. These can easily be found at home. Margarine tubs, etc will serve the purpose.

- ***Envelopes:*** You will need these to keep your stamps in separate categories while you are sorting. They don't have to be new; used envelopes will serve the purpose just as well.

- ***Tweezers:*** It is much easier to handle your stamps with a pair of smooth, blunt-nosed tweezers than with your fingers. Fingers may also leave marks on your stamps.

- ***A shallow dish:*** You can use any shallow dish, such as a pie-dish for removing your stamps from envelopes.

- ***Scissors:*** Any pair of paper-cutting scissors, preferably blunt-nosed will do.

- ***Absorbent paper:*** You need absorbent paper like a kitchen paper towel for drying stamps out after you have 'floated' them off their envelopes. It must be clean and unused - any grubbiness may discolour your stamps.

• **Albums:** You don't have to buy an expensive album to begin with. Loose-leaf albums are the best because pages can be added. An ordinary ring binder will serve the purpose. You can mount your stamps on graph paper and put it in a plastic cover that is especially made for ring binders and are available at most book stores.

• **Stamp hinges or mounts:** Never mount your stamps with adhesive tape or glue such as a glue stick as this will damage them. Rather use special mounting hinges available from stamp dealers or bookstores. They secure stamps onto an album page without damaging the original gum on the back of the stamp.

• **Magnifying glass:** This is not an essential item. However, because stamps are tiny works of art, it is fascinating to study them closely through a magnifying glass. In this way, you will learn something about the printing process and may discover flaws or errors on your stamps.

This is only a basic list and by no means exhaustive. As you go along and learn more about stamp collecting, you may find that you need additional tools such as a perforation gauge, watermark detector or stamp catalogues.

Removing a stamp from its envelope
It is recommended not to remove the stamp from the envelope at all!!

All stamps do not have to be removed from their envelopes, especially if the envelope forms part of your collection. Envelopes that are worth keeping include first-day covers or envelopes that bear special cancellers and other markings or have historical value. However, if a stamp on its own is to be included in your collection, you will need to remove it. This must be done carefully to prevent any damage to the stamp. Some stamps, especially self-adhesive stamps, are difficult to remove from envelopes and are best left on the envelope.

To 'float' stamps off paper, you will need a bowl of warm water and scissors, as well as paper towels for the drying process.

Steps

1. Cut the stamps off their envelopes by cutting around the stamps. Do not cut into a stamp.
2. Place the cut-out in a bowl of warm water (not boiling water) and wait about 10 minutes.

3. As the gum dissolves, the stamps will float off the paper. Put them on a paper towel, face down. Do this carefully so that the stamp does not tear or crease.

4. Put the sheet of stamps in a dry place overnight.

5. Once the stamps are dry, they may be a bit curled. Carefully place them flat between the pages of a large, heavy book to weigh them down.

6. Leave them for about three weeks until they are completely flat before handling and sorting them into your collection.

Tips

- Some stamps, especially from the 19th and early 20th century, may be best left on the envelope. They will be more valuable that way. You can ask your stamp dealer or experienced collectors if you are unsure.
- Be careful never to cut into the stamp itself. This damages the stamp irreparably!
- Do not leave your stamps to dry near an open window or draft; they may be blown away by gusts of wind or get wet.
- Keep food and drinks away from any stamp collection at all times.

Selling your collection

When one takes the emotional and recreational element out of stamp collecting, selling your collection is like any other business decision: consider all your options, get multiple opinions, and plan carefully. A few simple questions can assist the process.

• *Were substantial sums spent on building the collection?*

If the answer is yes, a key determinant is how much money was spent. Other important factors are the demand for the material and the condition.

• *What is the condition of the material?*

This is the quality of the more valuable stamps in a collection, its soundness in several respects. Are the stamps very fine mint or used copies? Are they affixed to an envelope and are there receiving and other postal markings.

Envelopes (or covers) can have historical value in addition to the value of the stamps attached to them. Historical value considers the writer or recipient, the place of origin or destination and the date the cover was mailed.

• *Are the stamps singles, pairs, blocks or sheets and are they complete sets as issued?*

A series starts with a low value, with each following stamp increasing in value to a final high. If they are in large multiples, do not detach or separate them, as stamps often have greater value as multiples.

The importance of condition cannot be overemphasised. The tiniest tear, the smallest spot or stain and the faintest crease can reduce a stamp to a fraction of the value it would have in perfect condition.

Calculating the value of a stamp collection

Stamps that have some investment value are characterised by features such as a high face value, immaculate condition (relating to both the stamp's face and the gummed back), an issue date before the 1930s and fairly consistent high catalogue values.

Prices listed in a stamp catalogue are revised annually and mostly do not reflect actual mar-

ket prices at a particular time. Further, any given stamp may be bought or sold above or below catalogue prices, depending upon both the ruling demand and the condition of the particular stamp. Condition refers to freshness, colour soundness, centring, gum, perforations and margins.

The sale price of a stamp also varies depending on who trades it. Is it a retail shop owner, auction or mail sale bidder, dealer at a stamp show, or another collector. ***Each segment of the market has its own mark-up and price structure.***

Getting a professional appraisal

A professional appraisal by a member of the South African Stamp Dealers Association (SAPDA) is recommended.

Members of SAPDA adhere to a code of conduct and can be relied on to place a fair value on the collection. Appraisal fees vary, depending on the appraiser and on the complexity of the collection. But it is the practice of most dealers and auctioneers to waive an appraisal fee if the collection is subsequently sold to them or consigned to their auctions.



Making your own inventory

If you have good knowledge of stamp collecting, you have an edge when selling a collection. **Start by listing your more valuable stamps and their prices.** Then determine what percentage of catalogue the market is prepared to pay at the time.

Best sale methods

There are several methods of sale that can be considered. The most appropriate method depends on factors such as the nature of the collection, its value and the personal preference of the vendor, and sometimes the geographical location of the sale.

- **Direct sale to a dealer**

Selling to a dealer has two advantages. The seller receives an agreed amount of money immediately and there is no fee.

- **Consignment to a dealer**

The seller can place the stamps with a dealer on consignment. The seller should ask for an itemised receipt, a minimum price and payout terms should be set. If possible, the vendor should have photo-

graphs of any expensive stamps in the collection, and these should be made part of the receipt. A time limit, in writing, should be placed on the sale and on the payout.

- **Consignment to an auction house**

Auction offers the greatest potential for the highest sale price. The customary fee to the auction house is between 15% and 20% of the sale price. However, there may be a wait of a few months between the time of submission and the date of the auction sale. Some auction houses will give a cash advance against the estimated sale price.

- **Private treaty**

Retail dealers and auction houses often act as agents offering collections in their entirety for sale privately. Commission fees vary in line with sale complexity and price considerations.

- **Selling at a stamp show**

The collection can be offered to dealers at a local or regional stamp show. It can be sold to the person offering the highest price.

How to store your stamps...

...until you decide to dispose of them

The condition of your stamp collection affects the final sale price because buyers all seek stamps in sound condition. Postage stamps do not bring top prices if they are torn, creased, "rusted" (toned, oxidised), stuck together or pasted down. Therefore, you should take the following storage precautions:

- Keep your stamp collection in a dry place at moderate room temperature.
- Avoid attics or basements, since temperature, both hot and cold, or dampness damages stamps.
- Avoid bright light. Light contains ultra violet that can damage your stamps
- When storing stamp albums, place them in an upright position. Do not stack them one on top of another, since the weight of other books will tend to make the stamps stick.



Submit your proposal for a stamp issue

The South African Post Office prints more than 380 million postage stamps a year. These stamps reach all corners of the world. Stamps are tiny ambassadors of our country as they reflect the beauty of our flora and fauna, the vibrancy of our culture, the triumphs of our people, the riches of our land and significant national and international events.

Members of the public are requested to submit proposals to the South African Post Office on topics they believe should be covered in the stamp calendar. Topics that have been covered in the past include South African marine life, Chinese astrology, migratory species, South Africa's World Heritage sites and music in South Africa. The Post Office commissions the design of these topics to local artists. Each artist interprets and illustrates a topic in his or her unique way with the end product being miniature works of art.

Proposals should be brief, include a short motivation and adhere to the following criteria:

- Topics must relate directly to South Africa.
- Themes must be of significant national and international interest such as:

culture and achievements of the South African people;

South Africa's contribution to international affairs;

contributions of South Africans to the scientific, cultural and economic development of a broader world society;

different aspects of local life and values;

indigenous flora and fauna;

economic activities of our people; and

any other topic that reflects positively upon

our values, culture, aspirations and achievements.

All proposals will be evaluated by an independent committee. Successful proposals will be submitted to the Minister of Communications for approval.

Members of the public should send their proposals and a detailed motivation with pictures or photographs to: The Product Manager, Stamp Programme, Philatelic Services, Private Bag X505, Pretoria, 0001. Full contact details must accompany all proposals.



*Put your
thoughts on paper...*

*write a proposal
for a stamp. Your
idea could become one
of the smallest
ambassadors of South Africa!*

CHAPTER 12

A personal encounter with postage stamps

(excerpts from 'Philosophy of the Postage Stamp' by Professor Alex Antonites, Department of Philosophy, University of Pretoria)

Postage stamps played an enormous and meaningful role in my life. I started collecting stamps in 1952 when I was in Grade III. My father gave me a stamp album as a birthday (or was it Christmas?) gift and I still have and use it. Little did he realise what great gift with such long-term good effects it would be.

Stamps are relatively small, but the worlds they tell us about, are huge.

By experiencing the worlds of the stamp, the collector is delineating him- or herself or herself. The stamp never becomes a fixed, passive possession. It is evermore being repossessed, re-constituted and a new relationship constituted between the collector and the stamp.

Stamps tell us a lot about the past; about the good and the bad things; the evil that happened in history.

An impersonal thing cannot make an ap-

pealing claim upon anyone. It is not alive. But this is not the case with stamps. Even though on paper, stamps encounter you, there is reciprocity in the encounter. It lays claim upon you in more than one way. The collector builds up relationships with many areas of his or her collection.

Through so many enriching experiences, the collector seems to get lost in the world of the stamp, but never so that he or she completely disappears or dissolves into the world. The collector meaningfully structures space and time, because he or she wishes to understand fellow humans, in their world, their context and situation.

When the collector returns to the same page in an album, it is never the same as previous visits. An example of this are some stamps of France with Victor Hugo, Jean d' Arc and others. Sometimes a strange or intriguing stamp, can fire curiosity. It can be an unknown figure. The stamps of Czechoslovakia (now the Czech Republic and Slovakia) for example, had an historical figure with the

name of Prokop Divis. This name sounded so strange that I said it repeatedly! Eventually it spurred me on to find out more about what and who Prokop Divis was.

The beauty of the stamps of many countries deserves to be mentioned. I will never forget the large triangle and square stamps of Tannou Touva. It was a semi-independent republic in the north of China, but is now part of Russia. The same applies to the fish stamps of Mozambique when it was under Portuguese rule and the stamps of Hungary with their well-known phrase 'Magyar Posta.'

What has also intrigued me over time was the fact that some countries have printed exactly the same stamps commemorating the same historical event, but with different currencies and names. For example, Britain's Queen Elizabeth was honoured in June 1953. Nyassaland (now Malawi), Bechuanaland (now Botswana), Malaya-Singapore, Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika (now Tanzania), Malta, British Guiana, Jamaica and others issued stamps with the same design depicting a young Queen Elizabeth.



I also found it fascinating when one state occupied another. The stamps used by the occupied state before the occupation would still be used, but the name of the occupying power would be overprinted in dark, bold lettering. Sometimes stamps of the occupying country would be used, but with a similar overprint showing the occupied country's name. An example is when Britain occupied former Italian colonies, e.g. Tripolitania (Libya), Eritrea and Italian Somaliland. History was also reflected by changes in the names of a country. German stamps in pre-World War II, were mostly Deutsches Reich. During World War II it was changed to Gross Deutsches Reich, meaning Great German Empire. This is comparable to Britain and Great Britain.

A past that became present and is still present to me, is language. Since school days, the stamp world helped me to connect to different languages. Many languages spoke to me, including Finnish, Turkish, Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, Swedish, Hungarian - all of which I cannot speak or understand - except for a few words. It is still an inexplicable phenomenon: stamps had the effect that I could identify these languages on any script. Stamp collecting in this way not only enriched my world, but opened doors to other worlds. Can I be more grateful to postage stamps?

To say that stamps are very interesting is an understatement!



Stamping's structures

We conclude our journey by introducing the structures behind stamps and stamp collecting in South Africa.

Philatelic Services of the South African Post Office

By the early 1950s it had become clear to the South African Post Office that a specialist branch was necessary to cater for stamp collector needs. This led to the establishment of its Philatelic Services branch in the early 1970s.

Philatelic Services is responsible for issuing South Africa's official postage stamps in line with an annual Stamp Issuing Programme. This includes definitive and commemorative issues. It also includes related items such as commemorative envelopes, special temporary date stamps, special permanent date stamps and commemorative postcards.

Philatelic Services liaises closely with organised philately, including the Philatelic Federation of South Africa and SAPDA to promote philately on all levels.

Contact details:

Tel: (012) 845-2814/5; Fax: (012) 804-6745;
E-mail: sa.stamps@postoffice.co.za
Web site: www.sapo.co.za

The Philatelic Federation of South Africa (PFSA)

The Philatelic Federation of South Africa is the umbrella body for organised philately in South Africa. It was founded in 1928 as a body to promote stamp collecting, to standardise exhibiting and judging practice within the country and to be a unified voice on all matters philatelic.

Federation also has a youth section that is dedicated to promoting stamp collecting among our youth. It can be contacted at the addresses given at the end of this section.

Federation is affiliated to the Federation Internationale de Philatélie (FIP), and is an Associate Member of the Federation of Inter-Asian Philately (FIAP).

Federation liaises closely with the South African Post Office and the stamp dealers body, SAPDA, on the promotion of stamp collecting at all levels.

Contact details:

The Philatelic Federation of South Africa, PO Box 9248, Cinda Park 1463, South Africa. E-mail: pfsasec@mweb.co.za
Web site: philatelysa.co.za

South African Stamp Dealers Association (SAPDA)

In the late 1960s, a number of philatelic dealers with common goals drew up a constitution and code of conduct of what was to become the South African Philatelic Dealers Association (SAPDA).

SAPDA's constitution makes it clear that while the promotion of members' interests is a basic aim, co-operation with philately's "various forces" are equally important. Specific support activities such as arbitration, dealing benefits and valuation support are also specified. The importance of ethical behaviour is a cornerstone of this organisation.

Dealer details can be obtained on SAPDA's web site: www.sapda.co.za

Philatelic or stamp clubs

There are several philatelic or stamp clubs and associations throughout South Africa. For details on these, contact the Philatelic Federation of South Africa at the address given above.

Interesting Internet web sites about stamps

- Start by doing a search using the key words “philately”, “postage stamps” or “stamp collecting” on your favourite Internet search engine
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philately>

- <http://www.askphil.org/>

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Post Office

We deliver, whatever it takes.

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