



INTERNET PHILATELIC DEALERS ASSOCIATION

Established 23 February 2002

Newsletter March 2021

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Hell

Lifted from "The Philatelist", February 1968, Volume 34, No 5, p.129...

***The Philatelist stood at the Golden Gates
His head was bended low
And sadly said to the man of fates
He said "Which way Have I to go?"***

***"What has thou done" St. Peter asked
"to gain admission here?"
"Why I've plated blacks and reds
for many and many a year"***

***"Come in my son" St. Peter said
And loudly rang the bell
"Come in my son and take a rest
You've had your share of hell".***

Thanks to member Alex Green for this submission.

Editorial

In these difficult and turbulent times, I would like to think that we could rely on the philatelic community to pull in the same direction.

However, I am incredibly disappointed to report that one of the major trade groups seems to consider the IPDA, the only group working to improve internet selling, as nothing more than an annoying pest.

Despite being around for almost 100 years, this organisation has not many more members than we do (including a number of deceased members still in their member list), and a hugely inflated membership cost (approximately 10 times our fee).

Rather than working together for the development, or, indeed, the very survival, of our hobby, they are taking a form of snobbish high-ground, and excluding the IPDA from their events.

I would like to name the organisation, but for the sake of propriety and professionalism, I won't.

What I can do is not join the organisation, and not encourage anyone else to, until they change their attitude towards their peers.

I strongly believe that the contribution we, the IPDA, makes to the philatelic community will, in the long term, be far more beneficial than the self-serving protectionism of the organisation in question.

(note that these are my views only and do not necessarily reflect the views of the entire Committee)



Cheers
Dave Sheridan
ipdaeditor@gmail.com



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Membership

We now have 148 members from 29 countries, a slight reduction due to non-renewals.

Algeria	1
Argentina	2
Australia	19
Belgium	1
Brazil	1
Canada	7
Croatia	2
France	3
Germany	4
Gibraltar	2
Hong Kong	1
Hungary	1
India	1
Indonesia	1
Israel	1
Italy	6
Latvia	1
Malta	2
Mexico	1
Netherlands	7
New Zealand	1
Pakistan	2
Philippines	2
Serbia	1
South Africa	4
Spain	3
Sweden	1
UK	26
USA	44
Total Paid Membership	148



New Member

Date: 2/21/2021

Name: **Grant Wagoner**

Member Number: 410

Date became a member: 2/21/2021

Business Name: SAZZIP

Business Website: <https://www.hipstamp.com/store/sazzip>

Specializes in: Stamps of every country. Not identified by Scott or any other catalog. Strictly by condition.

Email: Sazzips@gmail.com

Location: Cape Coral, Florida USA

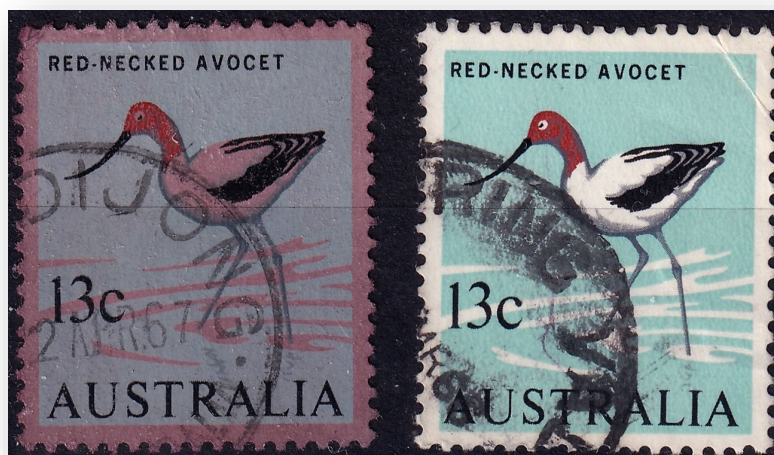
Referred By: Hipstamp member w/IPDA logo

Member Discounts: 1%

It's Never Too Late to Learn

I've been working with little pieces of paper for over 50 years now, and I admit that I occasionally enjoy a glass of red when I'm working in the evening. Recently, I managed to lose a fairly common Australian stamp with a postmark I didn't recognise.

I found it swimming in my glass of very nice Shiraz.



I chose not to be angry with the stamp for imbibing my tippie, but I was very annoyed with myself for committing this ludicrous beginners error.

Food, drink, cigarettes, dogs, and cats have NO place around stamps. The damage caused to this stamp is irreversible, although it does look quite artistic a la Andy Warhol. Luckily it was a cheapie.

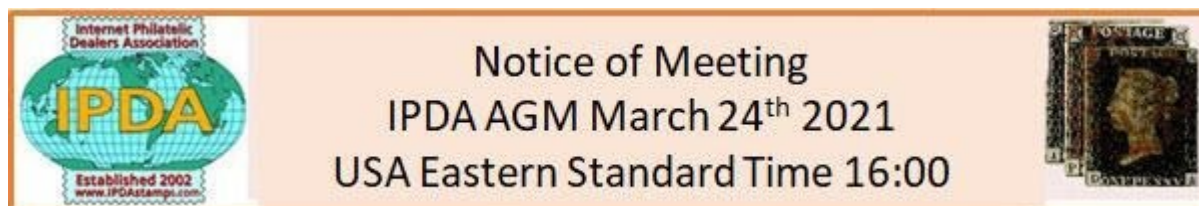
(the postmark is MUNDIJONG, Western Australia, fortunately not scarce)

You would think I would know better by now!

By Dave Sheridan



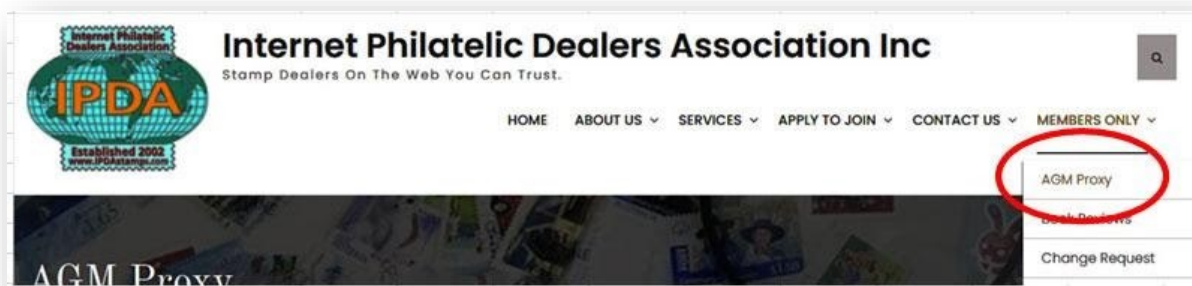
AGM Reminder



Just a short message to remind all members that the AGM will be held on March 24th in the IPDA Chatroom.

You can find the Members Chatroom from the Members Only area on the web site after you log in; third menu choice from the bottom of the drop down menu.

If you cannot attend – and with global time differences that is very understandable - you can vote by Proxy, using the online proxy voting process again found on the Members Only area.



The Committee believes your vote does count as it endorses, or otherwise, the plans for the IPDA in the coming year. Nothing too onerous this year with just 13 straightforward motions, so please take a few minutes to cast your proxy vote.

If you have not seen the AGM agenda yet, email the General Secretary at ipdasecretary1@gmail.com and he will send to full agenda and details to you.

Please remember you will only be entitled to vote if you are a current member on 23rd March.

If you have not received the Membership annual renewal notice, we know some members had the message go to and get deleted from their spam folders, contact Tony the Membership Secretary at MembershipSec@gmail.com and he will send you the relevant Paypal link for a simple payment transaction.

Thank you in advance

The IPDA Committee



We're Here to Help

The Committee received this email recently, from Member John Pearson of Pittwater Philatelic Service.

I've been having a long-running problem with my PayPal account. My account has been dormant for some time because I'm a show dealer, although I still keep an office which (subject to COVID regulations) is open to the public. Due to the cancellation of all shows here in Australia, I decided to list some items on Hip-Stamp & Delcampe. Sales were pathetic – the fees exceeded the sales. Nonetheless, I sold approximately A\$300. The customers paid by PayPal.

PayPal said that I needed to re-verify my identity to access my account. I thought this was some sort of scam & initially ignored their email. Apparently, it was genuine!! My account is blocked & I can't access the funds. I followed their protocols & sent scans of my office rates & driver's licence to meet their criteria. However my account remains blocked & they're threatening to take my funds. I'm not down to my last \$300 but I resent their ability to seize my money.

Is there anything the IPDA can do to un-block my PayPal account?

Our Treasurer and Membership Secretary, Tony Tripi was on the case, and helped point John in the right direction. As we all know, contacting a human at PayPal is a difficult process.

We were, therefore, delighted to receive this email from John:

Thank you for your intervention. I was finally able to speak to someone at PayPal. Your tip about trying the Help button hidden at the bottom of the page led to a Contact Us page. This in turn led to a phone number. I then had to log in to my blocked account with a new password (about my 20th such time) to be put on hold. I persevered & eventually got a human being (probably in the Philippines). After an hour or so & some ridiculous procedures (including amongst other things insisting that I clear my browser history & cookies!), my account was unblocked. It seemed I was almost there but alas, more was required! Yet more documentation was required to prove that the linked bank account was indeed mine!

After spending almost all of the afternoon on this, I got my A\$300. Yay!!! Victory & justice prevailed.

They then cordially encouraged me to take more PayPal payments. Hmmm! No comment.

Thanks to all at the IPDA for their assistance & intervention.

That's real nuts and bolts, value-adding, assistance, that is available to ALL members.

If you have any issues that you'd like addressed, don't hesitate to contact any member of the Committee.

By Dave Sheridan



IPDA at PIPEX—May 7-9 2021



IPDA contacts at the PIPEX stamp show 2021 have seen the IPDA get an online presence at the show

PIPEX is the Portland Philatelic Exhibitions which is an American Philatelic Society Chapter. It represents *the Northwest Federation of Stamp Clubs and the Oregon Stamp Society*.

The show will be a virtual show, admission is free and is scheduled for May 7 – 9th. Details can be found at the website <http://www.pipexstampshow.org/>

The show will be the first APS National World Series of Philately Shows that has full WSP credentials using virtual exhibits. A WSP show is an APS World Series of Philately show. These are U.S. national level shows that have gone through an accreditation process and must follow standards to maintain their status. ([WSP Rules/Requirements](#))



These shows include a bourse (dealers with tables buying and selling), competitive exhibits, meetings and seminars and usually host functions of one or more philatelic societies. While these are generally the largest shows in the country, they vary significantly in size.

Adult multi-frame exhibits that receive a minimum of a vermeil medal at a WSP show may apply to be shown at international FIP shows. The multiframe grand award winning exhibit at each WSP show is invited to compete in the annual Champion of Champions competition at APS StampShow for the highest national level exhibiting honor available.



IPDA Selling Standards Guidelines—Part 2

We previously published the Internet Listing and Selling Guidelines which perhaps some members may have looked at. We have received no feedback to the idea of further promoting this so perhaps a reminder and a reason why it is needed for collectors. let alone some sellers, albeit not IPDA members!

These are a few recently observed listing descriptions / remarks.



No Faults - so what does this mean? Actually it means no faults in the eyes of the person listing. And, where the person listing does not see the detail of a mark on the surface of the stamp, or a missing perforation, or does not show the reverse of the stamp which shows wrinkled gum or very light toning..... the list could go on couldn't it? Then the term "No faults" is basically something to be taken with a grain of salt, so to speak. Personally if I see this from a seller it is a red flag – danger Will Robinson. I am not exaggerating here. I could show you by example one reasonably priced stamp, \$25 USD+, stating No Faults in the description, and the seller included an image of the reverse. Very thoughtful and professional.

Except you can see the light toning in the gum, oh yes, and what clearly looks like a few thins. No faults? Sure!!!

Mint Fine H cr - yes that is a description found on one well known philatelic portal. Talk about a red flag.

Is this seller trying to hide something? I think so. What does it mean? Well we could all guess and probably come up with a few ideas. H perhaps means hinged, or hole, or hairline; cr.... maybe crease or corner or centering? With only one image to view, we may never know.

mint hinged e191.3160 - ok I know it is someone's own stock reference – well we assume it is don't we. But this in the description. Not much help to a buyer in my book. I should add in the additional remarks column the seller writes and I quote "Please contact the seller if you need additional information" Given the image of the stamp was a pretty poor picture taken with a phone camera I suspect, certainly not a scanned image I decided not to waste my time as a buyer pursuing this stamp any further. The seller is clearly showing no interest in providing me with a professional selling experience, are they?

Unused F-VFHPG - cpl sp's at top and LR This one is for the anagram lover, surely? With some thinking through it is clear what is says, or is it? What exactly are sp's at the top, short perfs one might suspect, and LR? At first I thought a subtle reference to the obvious rusting that was coming through the stamp, but now I am not so sure. As a customer I want to read a meaningful and unambiguous description. I do not want to have to try to work out what the seller is trying to tell me. Of course when practically every stamp listed by this seller has these acronyms crowding the listing description one wonders if they are just there for effect or if they really do mean something. I suspect after a while they mean very little except in the mind of the seller.



IPDA Selling Standards Guidelines—Part 2



Unused VFVVLHOG when it comes to Mint stamps can someone tell me the dividing line between very very light hinged, and very light hinged, or light hinged, or very very very light hinged? I must write to this seller for details so I can improve my listing descriptions.

An image of the reverse might have helped. Just a crazy idea! And is a stamp "Very Fine" when somewhat off center? Maybe it is?

MHR+Mng I suppose this means something to many collectors. The question is do we as collectors want to spend our time writing to sellers asking them what they are talking about? Answer: No.

USED - TINY THIN - VERY FINE! or MINT NO GUM - MINT HINGED CREASE - VERY FINE and the Capitals are not mine. Surely you know someone is leading you on when....

All this for some fun as well. We cannot take life too seriously at times although I do worry about collectors finding out in some years to come that what they bought really wasn't what it was made out to be.

And let's not forget, in both Stanley Gibbons and Scott catalogues and I suspect others from Europe and Asia there are very well presented and very clear statements of stamp condition and grading.

In one of my Scott catalogues pages 10A through 13A very concisely lists grades and grade definitions with very clear images of mint stamps showing both the front and the reverse. Why do sellers make up definitions of their own? I won't answer that - it was a rhetorical question.



As I am sure most if not all readers know SG presents a very useful Condition Guide, and with images of used stamps graded for margins on imperforate stamps, to centering and cancellations. After reading this again I realized I now know 100s of sellers who have never read it.

If you want some lighthearted entertainment look through a few listings on any philatelic portal. One seller only lists very fine and extra fine. They have no such thing as just Used! even if there is a chipped corner perf! There you go, ccp a new acronym, chipped corner perf!

Tell your buyers you are an IPDA member and that you abide by our Code of Ethics and our Internet Listing and Selling Guidelines.

A Chinese New Year resolution perhaps?

By Michael Dodd



Customer “Service” Part 2—Ebay

I stopped selling on Ebay, after 22 years, due to the “Managed Payments” system they introduced, which is obligatory. Since I moved my listings elsewhere, I’ve been bombarded with emails demanding that I must register for Managed Payments. There is no option on the email to unsubscribe, so I opened a chat. I hope I don’t bore you with the full chat.

09:01:34 UTC David

Hello, thank you for contacting eBay Managed Payments my name is David, and I am happy to help you today. For the safety and security of your account please do not provide any personal/sensitive information.

09:02:25 UTC David

Hi David, I hope you are well today. I am so sorry to see that you keep getting emails from eBay in relation to this.

09:03:02 UTC global_philately

I'm sorry that I found it necessary to close my store after so long!

09:04:34 UTC David

As your account is still showing as an active account and we are looking to get all our members on to Managed Payments by the end of 2021, we are asking our members to register and come on board. That is the only reason you keep getting the emails.

09:05:07 UTC David

I am so sorry to see that you had to close your store, I am sure that was a hard decision to make

09:05:58 UTC global_philately

It was, but thinking that controlling your seller's funds was a good idea was a horrendous business decision.

09:06:22 UTC global_philately

I no longer sell on Ebay and won't return. How do I stop the emails?

09:07:39 UTC David

I am sorry to see that you feel that way but appreciate the feed back. To stop the emails David you will need to close the selling account.

09:08:22 UTC global_philately

I would have thought that not having a store might be a bit of a giveaway that I'm not a seller?!

09:09:30 UTC David

As you can still sell as an individual on the site David, you are still showing as a seller

09:11:04 UTC global_philately

Do I need to beg you for info on how to do that??



Customer "Service" Part 2—Ebay.....cont'd

09:12:33 UTC David

Sorry no you dont', if you go to your account on the on the right in the account preference side, there is a link to the close account section and this will bring you through the steps to do this.

09:15:07 UTC global_philately

So, there's no option but to delete ALL the account data, including my feedback as a buyer? Seriously?

09:15:57 UTC David

I was sure that that information remained, let me check

09:19:22 UTC David

Sorry for the delay David, I will have to get someone in the sales team to speak to you in relation to close the selling account only, two moments.

09:22:19 UTC David

David, sorry for the delay once more, there is a long queue for the account closure team, can I get the, to coall you back to get this done for you?

09:23:35 UTC global_philately

No, I'll accept an email or I can hold the chat

09:24:16 UTC David

OK, thanks for that, I can ask them to email you as well if that suits you better.

09:24:47 UTC global_philately

Yes, that will be fine

09:25:25 UTC David

Thanks David, I will do that now and have someone email in relation to this.

09:28:11 UTC David

David, am I ok to no wend this chat and have someone from that team contact you by email.

09:28:53 UTC global_philately

Yes thank you

09:29:31 UTC David

Thanks you David. I will have someone contact you. I hope you have a good day. Take care

09:34:22 UTC

Chat ended by David

Thirty minutes of chat, and "David" had no answer to a basic query. I received the promised email at 3.51am (almost 6½ hours later), confirming that there is no option to stop the emails harassment unless I close my account and lose my feedback. The last line of the email stated "Thank you for choosing Ebay". Poor training, poor knowledge and a lack of care. I guess that's Ebay for you!

By Dave Sheridan

But It's a Misperf!

The other night I was searching Hipstamp. I always check for new listings. I might just run into a great deal I can't pass up. Searching the Persian listings, I stumbled across this listing:



Persia, Scott# 80, 1889 cv US\$6.00

Most stamp collectors/sellers would think, as I would, error, mis-perf and of course resale value. After many, many years selling Persian stamps, I have learned that-buyer beware. A quick check of the Scott catalogue we find a small notation on page 439 of the Scott 2020 catalogue:

76	A14	7c	brown	7.50	1.50
77	A15	10c	black	2.50	.75
78	A15	1k	red orange	4.50	.75
79	A15	2k	rose	40.00	6.00
80	A15	5k	green	25.00	6.00
Nos. 73-80 (8)				86.00	17.00

All values exist imperforate.
 Canceled to order stamps of No. 76 abound.
 For surcharges see Nos. 622-625.
 ➡ Nos. 73-80 with average centering, faded colors and/or toned paper sell for much less. ⚡

Using deductive reasoning, this tells me that I, as a reseller of stamps, want to steer clear of this massively offered and frequently seen 'mis perfed' example offered on all selling platforms on the web. Noticing the used value of \$6.00usd and selling at 40% of that suggested number-this is still a one-dollar stamp if I were to buy one. (trust me, I won't). So, is it worth your time and money to purchase this stamp?

You know what they say, 'Knowledge is power'.

Good luck!

Lee Coen

Chairman elect,

IPDA



Pleasure From Philately

It is not just that collecting stamps is interesting because, for whatever reason, we enjoy collecting stamps, it is that collecting stamps brings us pleasure. Pleasure is a feeling of happy satisfaction and enjoyment. How much more rewarding could anything be than for some "thing", yes like stamp collecting, to bring us pleasure.

For me, I enjoy my aviation collection. Not the best example of a collection I must admit. The material is rather scattered all over the place, in a few albums. First flight covers in various boxes, and miniature sheets in various folders.

But I basically know what things are where, well sometimes I do, and I enjoy adding to them occasionally. And, when that happens, I get to open the albums and fill the gaps or just add the new stamps.



Mostly my collection is focused on two themes – the first is collecting at least one aviation related issue from every country around the world, and second, collecting first flight covers mainly related to the early years of aviation in the USA – Asia Pacific region. Plenty of scope for finding new and interesting material.

Of course any stamp with an aircraft on it will interest me, particularly because I enjoy reading the history behind why that particular plane was used in the stamp design.

Sometimes the research can consume create hours of reading. What a pleasure is that?

But one thing I always get extra pleasure from is when I find stamps my children have bought me, because on their travels they often have come across stalls or bazaars or flea markets and frequently there are packets of old stamps being sold by topic. Airplanes on stamps is quite a common topic.

These, nothing special of course but the gift is greater than any monetary value, from some my daughter found in a bazaar in Beirut some years ago. I just happened across them again today while sorting some stamps and the idea for this piece came to me. I hope you have the same memories.

By Michael Dodd

Michael owns cddstamps.com and writes on the topic of Aircraft and Aerophilately at cddstamps.wordpress.com
He can be reached at cddstamps@gmail.com

Unlocking History

Three hundred years ago, before envelopes, passwords and security codes, writers often struggled to keep thoughts, cares and dreams expressed in their letters private.

Letter locking was one innovative way to keep things private. The letter sheet is intricately folded and interlocked, without the use of adhesive or wax.

In 1926, this chest was donated to the Museum voor Communicatie in The Hague. It contained over 3,000 undelivered letters to The Hague from the 17th century, including 577 unopened locked letters.

Named the Brienne Collection, after the postmaster who kept the mail, the contents of the chest would mainly consist of left-address and receiver-pays (and rejected) mail.

Conservators didn't want to open the locked letters, for fear of damaging them.

Then, in steps the 21st Century!

Using a CT scanner and computer algorithms, researchers have been able to "virtually" unfold letters.

The technique revealed the contents of a letter dated July 31, 1697. It contains a request from Jacques Sennacques to his cousin Pierre Le Pers, a French merchant in The Hague, for a certified copy of a death notice of Daniel Le Pers. Written in French, the letter was translated into English as part of the study. There is some missing text that the researchers said was likely due to wormholes in the paper.



Dear sir & cousin,

It has been a few weeks since I wrote to you in order to ask you to have drawn up for me a legalized excerpt of the death of sieur Daniel Le Pers, which took place in The Hague in the month of December 1695, without hearing from you. This is f...g I am writing to you a second time in order to remind you of the pains that I took on your behalf. It is important to me to have this extract you will do me a great pleasure to procure it for me to send me at the same time news of your health of all the family.

I also pray that God maintains you in His Sainted graces & covers you with the blessings necessary to your salvation. Nothing more for the time being, except that I pray you to believe that I am completely, sir and cousin, your most humble & very obedient servant,

Jacques Sennacques

The letter contains nothing incredible, just the world going about it's business. Sennacques, a legal professional in Lille, needed an official death certificate for his relation Daniel Le Pers, perhaps due to a question of inheritance. Le Pers did not receive Sennacques' letter, but given the itinerancy of merchants, the study said it was probable that LePers had simply moved on.

Unlocking History.....cont'd



The gif of the virtual unfolding is mesmerising. You can see it [here](#).

The X-ray scanners were originally designed to map the mineral content of teeth and until now have been used in dental research.

"We've been able to use our scanners to X-ray history," said study author David Mills, a researcher at Queen Mary University of London, in a statement.

"The scanning technology is similar to medical CT scanners, but using much more intense X-rays which allow us to see the minute traces of metal in the ink used to write these letters. The rest of the team were then able to take our scan images and turn them into letters they could open virtually and read for the first time in over 300 years."

The new technique has the potential to unlock new historical evidence from the Brienne trunk and other collections of unopened letters and documents, the study said.

One tantalising application could be to virtually unfold sealed items and letters in the Prize Papers, an archive of documents confiscated by the British from enemy ships between the 17th and 19th centuries.

"Using virtual unfolding to read an intimate story that has never seen the light of day, and never even reached its recipient, is truly extraordinary," the researchers said in the statement.

As a fan of lateral thinking, this news made my day. It's amazing what amazing minds can do.

By Dave Sheridan

Devoted To Your Service

Celebrating a Lifetime of Service by HM Queen Elizabeth II

Isle of Man Post Office is pleased to present six stamps in celebration of HM The Queen's 95th birthday.

To commemorate this milestone we showcase key aspects of Her Majesty's long reign since her accession in 1952 and pay tribute to HRH Prince Philip in this landmark issue, produced in collaboration with ten other postal administrations.

Lady Colin Campbell writes...

The Lord of Mann is the most revered head of state in the world. Born on the 21st April 1926 to the Duke and Duchess of York, Queen Elizabeth II's 95th birthday is celebrated by the Isle of Man Post Office with the issuance of a series of six stamps marking a few of the many highpoints of her life.

The cover of this collection aptly features a dual image, a contemporary picture of the older woman who is fondly known all over the world as The Queen (as if there were no other), and a smaller image from nine decades ago of the young Princess Elizabeth when she had little prospect of acceding to the throne.



Known for her sense of humour and beaming smile as much as for her devotion to duty, the stamp marked Princess is reminiscent of the famous broadcast Princess Elizabeth made to the Empire from South Africa to mark her 21st birthday. In that speech, she articulated her intention to devote her life to the service of all the peoples of the Realm, a promise she has kept throughout her long reign and even longer life.

Devoted To Your Service.....cont'd

Celebrating a Lifetime of Service by HM Queen Elizabeth II



The stamp entitled Coronation reminds us just how beautiful and glamorous a couple The Queen and her consort, The Duke of Edinburgh, were in their youth. Acceding to the throne in 1952 at the age of 25, and crowned in Westminster Abbey at 26, Queen Elizabeth II's reign started with high hopes of a second and equally glorious Elizabethan Age as the first, and while her reign has seen the dismantling of the Empire and the development of the Commonwealth, it has also witnessed the creation of one of the world's most vibrant and progressive multi-cultural societies. By her own admission, her goal of service to the people of her Realms and of the Commonwealth has been much enhanced by the innovativeness, imagination, and support of The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, so it is fitting that one of the stamps is entitled Marriage.

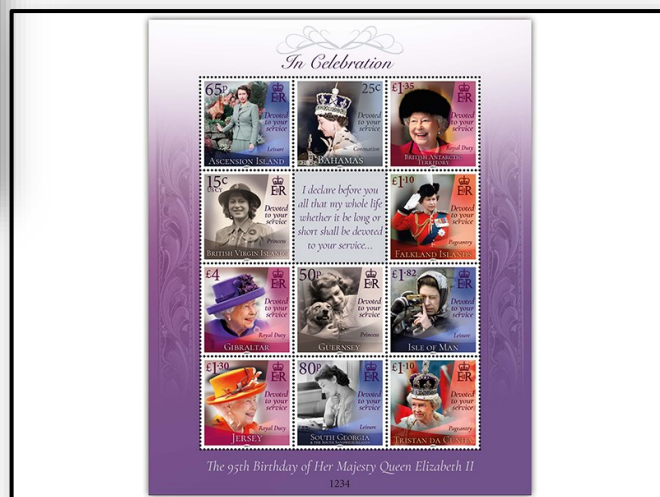
Well known to be a great mimic and of sociable bent, The Queen has never had the time for many hobbies. Two of her main ones have been bloodstock and photography, and it is fitting that she is commemorated under the caption of Leisure as a young woman wielding a camera, her hair encased in the inevitable scarf she has always worn when out of doors. By her own account, she does not have the time to have her hair done more than once a day, and she is one of the few women whose hairstyle has never varied throughout her adult life. Partly this has been a matter of practicality but it has also been because The Queen is aware that she must be easily identifiable, and her hair has been but one of the elements of her image that has remained unchanged throughout the decades.



Devoted To Your Service.....cont'd

Celebrating a Lifetime of Service by HM Queen Elizabeth II

Pageantry is another essential element of the monarchy, so the stamp celebrating this aspect of The Queen's reign and life is wisely chosen: the mature monarch, wearing a crown and the smile which lights up her face and provides a glimpse of the warm, kind, and dutiful woman who has devoted her whole life to her People. Another is the royal uniform of a hat, gloves, and brightly coloured outfits that she customarily wears during the day whenever she is out and about on her royal engagements, and the stamp entitled Royal Duty is representative of this.



Technical Specifications

- Text: Lady Colin Campbell
- Design: Andrew Robinson
- Printer: Cartor
- Process: Offset Lithography
- Colours: 4
- Paper: 110gm PVA gummed
- Perforations: 13 per 2cm
- Stamp Size: 36 x 36mm
- No. of Stamps: 6
- Sheet Format: 10
- Date of Issue: 26th February 2021

Latvia Map Stamps

In Riga on November 18, 1918, in the aftermath of World War I, Latvia declared independence. The German army still occupied Latvia, which had been part of Russia. As the Germans gradually withdrew from Latvia, the Soviet Latvian troops followed them and were immediately reoccupying the territory.

With the war-induced shortage of paper in Latvia, the new Latvian postal administration chose surplus German military maps for printing their first stamps. The maps were from the series *Karte des westlichen Rußlands*. The paper quality was excellent. Latvians also used these maps to wrap fish in the Riga market, as Janis Ronis [†2000] of Brampton, Ontario, recalled from his boyhood.



Q17 Ponedele, block of 4, map is upside-down with respect to stamps

The maps were unfinished; that is, their backs were unprinted and they were not trimmed to a smaller size for folding. On finished maps the backs were printed with the map grid position and main town name, such as S18. Illukšt, and often included the map scale in the text RUSSLAND, 1:100 000.

When folded into sixths, this information appeared on the top of the back of the map.

The unfinished maps were in storage in Riga, the German military headquarters for the region. Although the map series contained maps of a large area east of Germany, these maps showed southern and eastern Latvia and most of Lithuania. Some of the maps had become obsolete when new editions replaced them; others were obsolete as WWI was over. The map paper is a dark cream colour.

The stamp design by Ansis Cirulis [in 1918 Zihrulīšs] shows 3 ears of grain with a ring around the grain stalks, and a rising sun with 3 stars in the rays around the sun. Each stamp sheet has 228 stamps in 12 rows of 19. This unusual arrangement allowed for a maximum number of stamps per printing sheet. The stamp is red.

Most of the maps are black with thin brown lines to show altitude. Some maps are entirely in black, and some of these were replaced by newer versions in black with thin brown lines.

The Schnakenburg Printing Works in Riga printed the stamps which became the Latvian Government Printing Office in late 1919

By Jon Griffiths