

THEMATICS

Nr 184: FEBRUARY 2024

Newsletter of *Thematics Southern Africa*/ Nuusbrieff van *Tematika Suider-Afrika*

PO Box 56221, Wierda Park 0149 **Editor:** Robbie Harm robertharm9@gmail.com

ARTICLES FOR THEMNEWS

Most of the articles which appear in **Thematics** are sourced from a variety of available philatelic magazines; however, it would be wonderful to use more local articles. I have adjusted the newsletter to allow for local and longer articles. The request for articles remains as strong as ever.

FROM THE EDITOR OF THEMATICS

Dear Thematicists,

It is my prerogative to wish you all a very enjoyable and productive philatelic year, hopefully in good health. Unfortunately, this was not the case on my side, as a pinched nerve in my neck has caused my many painful days over the last two months. This made working on newsletters not something to look forward to. Compiling the newsletter on a daily basis, therefore, became a long and tedious effort. This is a long story to tell you why the newsletter is late this month. I have an appointment with the neuro surgeon in the near future and hopefully he will be able to solve the issue. It is something to look forward to. Before losing my drive, I did manage to produce a few issues of the Philatelic Terms part of the newsletter in advance. This should make several newsletters on time. In the mean time the search for philatelic articles is always on. In the mean time I received a proposed article from one of the readers, James Grinyer, which I will publish in the March edition of **Thematics**. I really hope that you enjoy the contents of this one, which may be slightly music-heavy. But I love music, and hope you do too.

Editor

THEMATIC MEETINGS / TEMATIESE BYEENKOMSTE

***First Saturday of the month** – The Pretoria Chapter meets at **10:00** in Greek Orthodox Church Hall, corner of Lynwood Road and Roper Street, (opposite UP main gate).

Contact: Helena Snyman 012-803-8922, 083-990-8953 or helena.snyman@gauteng.gov.za.

***First Saturday of the month** – The Western Cape Chapter meets at **09:30** in the Church Hall of the DR Church Bellville-Vallei, c/o Postma and St Andrews Street, Oakdale, Bellville.

Contact: Reanie de Villiers at 082-567-0353 or Reanie.devilliers@gmail.com.

STAMP FAIRS

***First Saturday of the month** – The **Cape Stamp Fair** @ DR Church Bellville-Vallei, c/o Postma and St Andrews Streets, Oakdale, Bellville, Cape Town. **Contacts:** Ken Joseph 072-597-1287 ken@philatelicfriends.co.za Robbie Harm 082 925 7103, robertharm9@gmail.com, from 08:30 until 12:30. Please confirm the date of the next Stamp Fair, although reminders are sent via SMS/E-mail.

***First Saturday of the month** – **Pretoria Stamp Fair** @ Pretoria, Greek Orthodox Church, corner Lynwood Road and Roper Street, (opposite UP main gate) **Contact:** Paul van Zeyl at 012-329-2464 or randstamps@gmail.com. From 09:00, auction at 11:00.

***Last Saturday of the month – Edenvale Stamp Fair** @ Edenvale Bowling Club, 6th Avenue, Edenvale. **Contact:** Kenny Napier Kenny.napier@mweb.co.za. From 09:00, auction at 11:00.

***Last Sunday of the month – Sunbird Stamp Auction** @ 1st Hillcrest Scout Hall, 16 Shortlands Road, Hillcrest from 09:00 until 13:00. **Contacts:** Kim Breytenbach sunbird.stampauctions@gmail.com.

THEMATICS AROUND THE COUNTRY

Pretoria Chapter – January 2024

No meeting was held.

Helena Snyman

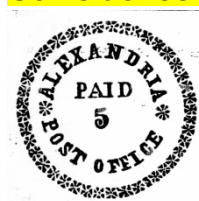
WC Chapter – January 2024

No report was received.

Reanie de Villiers

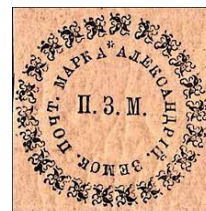
FACTS AND FEATS: THE POSTAL SERVICES

Coincidence in design has occurred on only one occasion. The city of Alexandria, Virginia



had its own 5c stamps, issued in 1846 by postmaster Daniel Bryan. The design was circular, typeset, with the inscription ALEXANDRIA POST OFFICE within a framework of 39 or 40 rosettes and with PAID 5 in the centre. Only a handful of these stamps in buff are known, and two on blue paper. The first example of these stamps was discovered in 1872. Incredibly, two years earlier, in 1870, the Russian town of Alexandria in Kherson province issued a

10 kopek stamp typeset in black on pale brown paper. The inscription in Cyrillic signified *Zemstvo Post Alexandria*, with **P.Z.M.** across the centre and a framework of rosettes. This was almost an exact copy of the American stamp of 1846, but no one knows how the postmaster of an obscure town in Russia could have seen a copy of it, especially since the existence of the American stamp was not known to philatelists at the time.



Plagiarism in design has occurred on many occasions. The British stamps of 1840-80 served as models for the first issues of Mauritius (1847-59) and the profile issues of New South Wales (1851-3), while the frames of the Penny Black were copied in the Sydney Views (1850-1)



and the early stamps of Nevis which also plagiarised the frames of the 4d, 6d and 1s British stamps for its corresponding values of 1861-78. These colonial examples may be regarded as forms of flattery, but other cases are less innocent. Some of the many examples are given. The Ceres stamps of France (1849-71) were faithfully copied by the Argentinian state of Corrientes (1876), Newfoundland's 3c Queen Victoria stamp was



blatantly copied by Uruguay for the Liberty 5 milésimas stamp of 1898. Newfoundland's 10c brigantine stamp of 1887 was faithfully reproduced by a Lübeck local post the



following year. The 1900 zemstvo stamp of Sapozhok copied Switzerland's *Seated Helvetia* design of 1862, while Norway's *Posthorn and Numeral* design was cribbed by Crete its postage due series of 1901. Probably the worst example of plagiarism, however, was the 10 centavo express delivery stamp of the Dominican Republic (1925)

which was copied from the US special delivery 10c stamp of 1922. The placing of the inscriptions was ingenuously copied, but it is in the detail of the vignette, showing a special delivery messenger, foot on doorstep, with his motor cycle at the kerb, that every detail was faithfully copied. The US postage stamps of 1879 were plagiarised by Mexico (1882), New South Wales (1891) and on three occasions between 1902 and 1909 by Australia.

The only stamps so far (1988) to have been designed by computer, was issued by the Netherlands on 7 April 1970 and comprised a set of five summer charity stamps with complex geometric motifs produced entirely by a computer.



Facts

and feats from Mackay, James, *The Guinness Book of Stamps*, Guinness Publishing Ltd, Enfield, 1988

Please note that the information used for this article has in many cases been overtaken by events – Ed

TIMELINE – COMPUTER CONTROLLED TRAFFIC LIGHTS IN USE IN USA



The control of traffic lights made a big turn with the rise of computers in America in the 1950s. One of the best historical examples of computerized control of lights was in Denver in **February 1952**. In 1967, the city of Toronto was the first to use more advanced computers that were better at vehicle detection. The computers maintained control over 159 signals in the cities through telephone lines. **Traffic lights, traffic signals, or stoplights** – also known as **robots** in South Africa – are signalling devices positioned at road intersections, pedestrian crossings, and other locations in order to control the flow of traffic. The first system of traffic signals was installed as a way to replace police officer control of vehicular traffic outside the Houses of Parliament in London on 9 December 1868. In 1912, the first electric traffic light was developed by Lester Wire, a policeman in Salt Lake City, Utah. It was installed by the American Traffic Signal Company on the corner of East 105th Street and Euclid Avenue in Cleveland, Ohio. The first four-way, three-colour traffic light was created by William Potts in Detroit, Michigan in 1920. Potts was Superintendent of Signals for the Police Department of Detroit. He installed automatic four-way, three-colour traffic lights in 15 towers across Detroit in 1921. By 1922 traffic towers were beginning to be controlled by automatic timers more widely. The main advantage of the use of the timer was that it saved cities money by replacing traffic officers. The 1968 Vienna Convention on Road Signs and Signals Chapter III provides international standards for the setup of traffic signal operations. Not all states have ratified the convention. A three-colour signal head should have three non-flashing lights which are red, amber, and green, either arranged horizontally (on the side opposite to the direction of traffic) or vertically (with red on top). In the Canadian province of Quebec and the Maritime provinces, lights are often arranged horizontally, but each aspect is a different shape: red is a square (larger than the normal circle) and usually in pairs at either end of the fixture, amber is a diamond, and green is a circle. In many southern and southwestern U.S. states, most traffic signals are similarly horizontal in order to ease wind resistance during storms and hurricanes. These specially shaped lights assist people with colour blindness.

International Society of World Wide Stamp Collectors and Wikipedia

SWEDISH POST OFFICE ARCHIVES OVER A CENTURY OF SANTA LETTERS - AND THEY'RE NOT ALL FROM CHILDREN

22 Dec 2023

- Sweden's postal service PostNord received around 16,000 letters intended for Father Christmas last year alone.
- The archives now hold about 10,000 letters from around the world, the oldest dating back to the 1890s.
- Not only children send letters to Santa Claus: this year's batch contained a letter from Taiwan sent by a 20-year-old.

Sweden's postal service is inundated every year with thousands of letters beginning with **'Dear Santa'**, and it not only answers them but for over a century has kept those that stand out. With addresses such as "Lapland", "Reindeer Land" or "Santa's Igloo", the postal service PostNord last year alone received around 16,000 letters intended for Father Christmas. A few letters every year are selected for the museum's archives, a collection that now holds about 10,000 letters from around the world, the oldest dating back to the 1890s. *"These are from the US, from Asia, I have some here from Taiwan,"* Kristina Olofsdotter, head of stamps at PostNord, tells AFP at the Postmuseum in Stockholm. Toys, pets and books have topped children's wish lists over the years, as they do today -- though children of yore were perhaps a little more modest in their expectations. *"You can see that in the old letters the kids asked for maybe one or two things, nowadays there are longer lists,"* Olofsdotter said. Many of the letters, written in children's handwriting, also have questions for Santa. *"What is your favourite drink so that we know what to put out for you?"* one young girl asked in the 1960s. A four-year-old wanted to let Santa know she had just learned to write her name, while adding: *"I hope your reindeer are well."* All of the letters are opened and read, and when a return address is provided, the museum sends a reply back. Olofsdotter said the reply typically *"says 'Hi from Santa', with thanks for the letter. And he says that he has got a lot of work to do up until Christmas and that he really appreciates the letter."* She says the return letter also encourages kids to brighten somebody's day by writing them a letter, and *"to not forget that all your dreams can come true if you believe in yourself"*. And it is not only children who send letters to Santa Claus: this year's batch contained a letter from Taiwan sent by a 20-year-old.

<https://www.news24.com/fin24/international/swedish-post-office-archives-over-a-century-of-santa-letters-and-theyre-not-all-from-children-20231222>

This article shows two important things, i.e. Post Nord is a functioning post office, and it is an organisation providing a service to its clients - Ed

PENNY BLACK: 'FIRST' PIECE OF MAIL SENT USING A STAMP COULD FETCH UP TO \$2.5 MILLION AT AUCTION

The first known piece of mail sent using a prepaid [stamp](#) — "one of the greatest leaps forward in human communication" — could fetch between \$1.5 million and \$2.5 million when it comes up for auction at Sotheby's in New York next month. If the piece realizes its estimate, Sotheby's said it would become one of the most valuable pieces of postal history to have ever been auctioned. Dated May 2, 1840, the letter's original recipient was

William Blenkinsop Jr., the 35-year-old manager of a Victorian iron works in Bedlington, a town in the north of England.



The first known piece of mail sent using a stamp is to be auctioned for up to \$2.5 million. Sotheby's CNN —

Sotheby's state that all that's known about the letter's sender is that they posted the missive in London — about 300 miles to the south — and paid for it with the Penny Black stamp. After receiving the letter, Blenkinsop Jr. turned the envelope inside out and refashioned it as a "**Mulready**" – an ornate wrapper embellished with images representing the British Empire that acted as another method of prepaid payment introduced at the same time as the Penny Black.



Sotheby's The envelope was resented as a Mulready.

That second envelope reached a Mr. Blenkinsop, most likely his father, who lived 75 miles away in Dalston, Carlisle and kept it, although the contents of both letters themselves have been lost. "Surviving over 180 years, the ornate Mulready envelope sealed with a Penny Black revolutionized the way people from all walks of life correspond, exchange ideas, share news

and express themselves," Richard Austin, Sotheby's Global Head of Books & Manuscripts, said in a statement. "At the dawn of the AI age, this remarkable object speaks to our innate human desire for connection and the ways in which it has evolved to new heights in the two centuries since."



Sotheby's The Penny Black stamp revolutionized the postal service.

Both sides of the envelope still bear the stamped dates on which they were sent, the first on May 2, 1840 and the second on May 4, two days before the official start date of the Penny Black. Teacher and social reformer Sir Rowland Hill conceived the idea for the Penny Black, the world's first adhesive stamp, to standardize the complex, expensive and unpredictable postal rates at the time, that were paid for by the recipient. The system was unwieldy for both those using it and the postal service, who could sometimes not recover the costs of delivering items if the person receiving them did not pay.

While the stamp was wildly successful and subsequently adopted worldwide, the Mulready envelope was withdrawn after it was ridiculed by the public.

The article was written by Issy Ronald, CNN and published on Thu January 11, 2024

<https://edition.cnn.com/2024/01/11/style/first-prepaid-mail-penny-black-auction/index.html>

COLLECTING ON A SHOESTRING

Although building a stamp collection is often perceived as expensive, the author explains that it doesn't necessarily have to cost a fortune. Here, he offers some excellent guidance on the many different ways you can build up a comprehensive, but inexpensive, collection.

Whenever people find out that you are a stamp collector, they generally ask one, or both, of two questions: how many stamps have you got and which is the most valuable one? Rarity has always been a key element in philately. The auction reports in our stamp magazines list the rarities which have been sold at sometimes incredibly high prices. Also, when judging at exhibitions, rarity plays an important part. However, the vast majority of collectors don't take part in auctions of very expensive stamps, nor do they build

exhibition collections. One of the main reasons is the cost involved. Many magazines feature columns discussing the value of antiques. Readers are invited to send in photographs of china, furniture and other older objects, and the magazine's experts then indicate their approximate value.

The author once read a letter published in an antiques column in which the writer had considered taking up stamp collecting and wanted to find out what the experts thought about this project. The answer was quite brief stating that stamp collecting is complicated and very expensive. Philately can certainly be quite complicated but not necessarily expensive. In fact, stamps can be collected on a shoestring, and in this article, the author will give you some ideas on how to collect with a minimal outlay of money. What gives more pleasure – a very common 10p stamp or a stamp which is valued at £100? Let's take



a look at two stamps issued by New Guinea on 2 August 1931 marking the 10th anniversary of Australian administration of the territory in order to answer the question above (**left** and **right**). The design features a splendid bird of paradise in a jungle setting in New Guinea. The 1d. value is valued at £4 in mint condition and can be obtained for much less. The top value of £1



is listed at £250 and can probably be purchased for £100. There are two obvious differences between these two stamps. The denomination and the colour. A third and very significant difference is the catalogue value. The design is the same and the stamp would fit nicely into a collection of birds on stamps. If you are a collector with a limited stamp budget, the 1d. value would do the job nicely if you need to add this particular species to your collection. If you are aspiring for a medal at a stamp exhibition, the £1 stamp would help you get more points.

Collecting used stamps

Over the years, the author has been asked to value quite a lot of collections. Many have been formed using stamps found on the collector's incoming mail. It is my guess that friends and relatives were also encouraged to save the stamps on their mail. In the past, when most people received a lot of stamped mail, this method very possibly allowed the collector to assemble an almost complete collection of used new stamp issues at almost



no cost at all. Today, of course, this really would be a challenge as there are many new issues which see limited use on commercial mail. A friend of mine has built quite an impressive GB Machin collection by spending hundreds of hours going through inexpensive mixtures of used stamps on paper. It may be supposed another benefit was the therapeutic relaxation because he has a very demanding daytime

job. The author doubts he has found any decidedly rare varieties. What with the endless additions of new Machin stamps, the author guesses he will be busy for life (**left**). Collecting modern used stamps as described above is inexpensive, but it should be remembered that the resale value is very limited. In fact, as many as 1000 different stamps from a range of countries can be purchased for as little as £10.

Collecting mint stamps

What does one get for 20p today? Not much really if we check the prices in our favourite supermarket. However, the author recently noted an advertisement in a stamp paper offering a vast range of complete GB unmounted mint commemorative stamp sets from

the early 1960s until the end of 1979, mostly listed at prices from just 10p to as much as 40p a set (**right**). A complete year set would cost you less than the price of a Sunday newspaper. You will probably spend a maximum of one hour with the paper. The stamps will provide you with many hours of pleasure provided that you research the designs carefully before adding the stamps to your album. In fact, the period from around 1950 until about 1980 provides numerous inexpensive possibilities – just check



out the stamp output from countries like Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Sweden, Australia, New Zealand and a host of others (**left**). Why not spend some time at your local library consulting the stamp catalogues listing your favourite countries. The United States introduced a three-cent rate for first-class letter mail in 1932. It was then maintained until the rate was increased to four cents in 1958. Many of these inexpensive stamps were purchased as complete sheets by people who believed

that the stamps would one day become valuable. This, of course, never happened. Years ago, The author paid US\$3 for 100 different mint USA 3c. commemorative stamps and the author have since been able to add the remaining three-centres to complete my collection (**right**). All in all, the author has spent less than £10 buying all the 3c. stamps issued during this fairly long period of time. As the author prefers engraved stamps devoted to the history and other important events of the issuing country, this 'collection' has provided me with many hours of pleasure and entertainment as the author researches the designs. They were released during an era when postal administrations generally not only celebrated the present but also remembered the past. The author's USA 3c. collection can certainly be described as a fun activity. Most collectors reach the point where it is difficult to add interesting items to their main collections. Building side-line, inexpensive and fun collections will undoubtedly provide a lot of enjoyment and satisfaction.



Avoid being a completist



There are some additional ways of reducing costs even more. Try to avoid completeness. If a set has multiple values with identical designs it might be a good idea to select the lowest value which will perhaps cost you just a few pence (**left**). For scarcer stamps in mint condition, it seems most collectors shun those that are mounted mint or without gum. An otherwise sound mounted mint or no-gum stamp will fit any collection nicely at a very low cost (**right**).



However, The author still feels it is important to concentrate on good quality stamps avoiding very heavy cancels, tears, missing perforations and similar imperfections. After all, even inexpensive stamps look a lot better in good condition than those that are damaged goods. Many collectors and philatelists obviously hope their stamps will increase in value and they will realise a healthy profit once they are sold (**left**).

This 1909 Chinese stamp is part of a set of three currently valued in mint condition at £35. An unmounted mint set was purchased for some 25p in the 1970s when it was still inexpensive. Some stamps do get more valuable with time but that is not the general rule



This actually does happen on occasion, but in most cases, you will only recoup part of what you once paid for your stamps. All things considered, we should collect stamps for the pleasure they provide. The kind of shoestring collections that the author has outlined in this article will never make you rich, and in some cases, you will probably have to give them away because they don't really represent any great monetary value. At my local stamp club, the author has frequently noticed that stock books in excellent condition filled with a selection of miscellaneous very common stamps tend to sell for a pittance. The same kind of empty stock book might sell for many pounds. The author has never been able to fathom the logic of this but it happens again and again. The same holds true for printed albums with only very common stamps. This is an excellent way of getting hold of an inexpensive stock book or album for your new collections.

How to find your stamps

Now to the important question of how to add stamps to your collection for next to nothing. Stamps on incoming mail are still free and one can only hope that conscientious postal employees will refrain from cancelling them using a ballpoint pen. It is still possible to ask your friends or business associates to save stamped covers for you. At stamp club meetings and smaller stamp fairs, dealers often offer stamps mounted in albums or stock books priced at just a few pence each. It takes some time to seek out the stamps that interest you, but in all probability, you will be able to return home with a whole bunch of stamps for just a few pounds. Club auctions often include small collections that lack all the rarer stamps. They usually sell for rather low prices as most collectors bid on what is scarce and highly catalogued. Internet auctions are also a source for inexpensive material. Another way of increasing the size of your collection at very little cost is by the old-fashioned way of exchanging stamps with other collectors, either by mail or at stamp club meetings. The cost of collecting should in no way prevent you from enjoying one of the world's most relaxing hobbies. In today's world, you rarely get something for free and stamp collecting is no exception, but it doesn't have to be very costly if you stick with inexpensive (but sometimes extremely interesting) material (**right**).



An article by Christer Brünstrom in Gibbons Stamp Monthly of July 2019

THE HISTORY, IMPACT AND POTENTIAL OF MUSIC ON PHILATELY

As a music journalist the author shows, the ongoing relationship between philately and contemporary music can be traced back to the late 19th century. Since then, the theme has continued to thrill (and divide) collectors. The author looks at the history of music on stamps and asks what the future may hold.

The relationship between music and philately predates the 20th century. One of the earliest examples featuring local musicians on stamps includes an 1898 picture postcard sent from Tangier to London. Rooted in classical music and musical instruments; this



relationship flourished in the early-20th century. In April 1922, the Republic of Austria released a set of stamps featuring seven of its greatest composers: Haydn, Mozart,

Beethoven, Schubert, Bruckner, J Strauss and Wolf (**above**). Austria also issued charity stamps with quite sizeable surcharges in support of artists. For example, a 1924 stamp issue bore surcharges of anything from 300 to 3000 crowns. A recent *Classic FM* article: 'The most beautiful classical music postage stamps' put the 2011 Cypriot issue of an image of Beethoven at the top of their list. This is evidence of the ongoing relationship between classical music and philately. The 2018 UN stamp issue celebrating International Music Day showcases many 'brass and woodwinds', 'strings' and 'percussions' (**one shown left**). However, the relationship with contemporary music (which has seen stamp issues in Britain for The Beatles, David Bowie and Pink Floyd) is more poignant and has the potential to fuel growing interest and interaction with philately and speak for those underrepresented in society.

GB stamps

In Britain, the cultural fusion with contemporary music and philately began 20 years ago in June 1999 when Freddie Mercury of Queen featured as a 2nd class stamp in the Entertainers Tale issue as part of the Millennium Series (**right**). This stamp caused controversy because Queen's drummer, Roger Taylor, appeared in the background. At the time, the only identifiable living people depicted on British stamps were the monarch and other members of the royal family (or people imminently marrying into it). This rule was only dispensed with in October 2005 to



commemorate England's cricket victory in the 2005 Ashes series against Australia. Fourteen months later, British philately would establish its next link with contemporary music and musicians. In January 2007, Royal Mail issued its first commemorative stamp set dedicated not just to music, but to a single musical act – The Beatles (**two shown**



left and right). Six album covers of the 'Fab Four' were featured, including *with the Beatles* and *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* as 1st class stamps. The additional miniature sheet, featuring Beatles memorabilia, included a Yellow Submarine lunchbox.



Exactly three years later in 2010, *Classic Album Covers*, comprising ten British classic album covers, ranging from The Rolling Stones 1969 album *Let it Bleed* to the 2002 album *A Rush of Blood to the Head* from Coldplay, was released (**left**). Vinyl breakout detail was also introduced to the design of each of these stamps. Whether it was the growing impact of Record Store Day (an annual event which began in 2008 to celebrate the culture of the

independently owned record shop), but the 2010 vinyl breakout design would go on to feature in both the Pink Floyd (July 2016) (**below left**) and David Bowie (March 2017) issues (**right**). These two issues went one step further by establishing a link between listening



to purchased music (whether it is on a digital portable device, record player or CD) and seeing artists live in concert. Both of these sets feature six album LP artworks and four photos of live performances, celebrating live music venues (including the UFO Club) and



memorable tours. These curations also tell the entire story of these artists, allowing each generation to find something about the artist they can relate to. The Pink Floyd set tells the story from their 1967 debut, *The Piper at the Gates of Dawn*, to their most recent 2014 release, *The Endless River*. Likewise, the David Bowie set begins in 1971 with *Hunky Dory* and ends with his final 2016 album, *Blackstar*.

Early pioneers

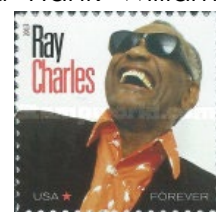
The pioneers in connecting contemporary music with philately are the Americans. Fifty years ago, in 1969, the US Postal Service first put musicians on stamps with the 'Father of the Blues' W C Handy



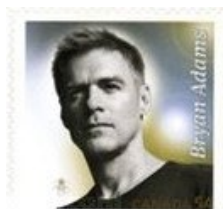
(right). From 1993 to 1999, artists were commemorated with the Legends of American Music series. Featured artists included Hank Williams, Patsy Cline (left) and the Carter Family. The US NVI Forever Stamps series has featured contemporary artists, such as Ray Charles (issued in 2013) (right) and Marvin Gaye (2019). Genres of musical



diversity in America are also celebrated. In March 2011, Latin American artists were commemorated.



Around the world



Like the UK, Canada issued their first issue of Canadian music stamps in 2007, which included globally renowned musicians like Joni Mitchell. Two years later, Bryan Adams would feature (left). Shania Twain was featured in a 2014 issue celebrating country musicians (right).



Sweden in 2015 issued a stamp set to celebrate its globally acclaimed contemporary musicians, including Avicii and First Aid Kit. Before 1997 (as with Britain), the only living persons who could appear on Australian stamps were members of the British royal family. This change has sparked innovation in Australian stamp issues by Australia Post. In



In 2013, to celebrate Australia Day, ten famous Australian bands and artists including INXS, The Seekers (left), AC/DC and Kylie Minogue (right) were commemorated on postage stamps. There were originally only going to be eight stamps. There was also a sense that one issue was never going to be enough as Michael Gudinski, who chaired the panel to select the artists said, 'Maybe, Savage Garden should have been in there [too].'



While few countries have musicians who have enjoyed international global acclaim as Britain, the USA, Canada and Australia, there is a growing global trend to recognise and celebrate home-grown musicians. Greenland did this in 2018 (left). The best-selling Greenlandic music runs into pressings of 5000 copies. For a country with 56,000 inhabitants, this indicates that around one in 11 Greenlanders annually buys physical formats of music. In September 2014, India issued stamps celebrating eight of their musicians, including



Ravi Shankar (who taught and collaborated with George Harrison of The Beatles) (*right above*). Previously, in 1998, India issued stamps celebrating the uniqueness of their musical instruments. Ireland in 2008 issued a stamp series 'celebrating the Irish music scene'.

Music-playing stamps



As well as music-related stamp issues, there are also talking and music-playing stamps. This is not science fiction but an invention by American adventurer, Burt Todd. In 1972, the Buddhist Kingdom of Bhutan issued a set of seven stamps, which were one-sided, 331/3rpm vinyl records playable on a standard turntable (*left*). You peeled off the backing paper and stuck them on an envelope or postcard. Content included Bhutanese folk songs and histories of the country in English and Dzongkha (the local language). In 1993, when they were first listed in Scott's Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue, a mint condition set was valued at around £17. Following the success of Record Store Day, these stamps are sought after and now cannot be obtained for less than £300 each.

The future

Following the release of the Pink Floyd commemorative issue, media publications, including *The Daily Telegraph*, have called for further issues to celebrate contemporary music. There is every reason to suggest that demand would be high and has the potential to encourage new entrants into the world of philately. While Royal Mail does not disclose the number of units of each stamp issue sold; many art galleries and museums do. For example, in 2013 the 'David Bowie Is' exhibition at the V&A received the most visits, with 28 per cent visiting the V&A for the first time (this exhibition went on to tour around the world attracting more than 1.5 million visitors). In 2017, the V&A 'Pink Floyd: Their Mortal Remains' exhibition received the most visits that year and 29 per cent were first-time visitors. In 2018, The National Portrait Gallery's 'Michael Jackson: On the Wall' exhibition was the most visited paid exhibition receiving more than double the number of visitors than its closest rival exhibit that year. A third had never visited the gallery before. With the number of iconic music venues (e.g. O2, Brixton Academy and the Cavern Club), festivals (e.g. Glastonbury and the Isle of Wight) and prestigious music awards (e.g. BRIT Awards and Mercury Music Prize), as well as homegrown talent amongst each generation, there is so much to commemorate on stamps. The financial case is self-evident. While it may not be practical to repeat the Bhutan example, digital download codes of music (which have vastly higher sales than vinyl) could be included within presentation packs. Britain is also home to a plethora of diverse music genres (e.g. Rap and Grime). There is an opportunity to recognise the contribution these musicians make and reduce the perception of marginalisation.

An article by Michael Baron in Gibbons Stamp Monthly of September 2019
Music has given an impetus to our hobby and is today one of the most active themes after Birds, and in Germany, there is a thematic club just for music on stamps – see below

MARIA CALLAS, THERE CAN ONLY BE ONE

Maria Callas was born in New York on December 2, 1923, the daughter of Greek immigrants. Her birth name was Maria Anna Cecilia Sophia Kalogeropoulou. The father

changed the family name to Callas in 1929. At the age of 13 Maria Callas went to Greece, where she was first trained by the singing teacher Maria Trivella and thereafter at Athens Conservatory by the Spanish soprano Elvira de Hidalgo. While still a student, she probably made her semi-professional debut in 1938 as Santuzza in **Cavalleria rusticana** by Pietro Mascagni. Already during World War II the young soprano took on demanding roles at the Athens Opera. She caused a sensation in Athens with the title role in Puccini's **Tosca** and as Leonore in Beethoven's **Fidelio**, but an international career was not possible at the time because of the war and military occupation.



In 1945 she therefore returned to the USA, where she was to sing **Turandot** for the opening of a new opera company in Chicago. Although the company had already gone bankrupt before the premiere, Maria was lucky: she was discovered by Giovanni Zenatello, the famous Italian tenor and talent scout for the Verona Arena opera festival. There Maria Callas made her Italian debut in 1947 with the title role in Ponchielli's **La Gioconda** and met with overwhelming success. The conductor Tullio Serafin would decisively promote her further career. The great successes at the Verona Festival in 1947-1948 and 1952-1954 were followed by triumphs on the major Italian stages. At first, it seemed that Maria Callas would turn to the dramatic Wagner repertoire; in Rome, she sang Kundry in **Parsifal** in 1949 and Isolde in **Tristan und Isolde** in 1950, and in Venice and Palermo Brünnhilde in **Die Walküre** in 1949. But she surprised the experts when she sang one of the most difficult coloratura roles, that of Elvira in **I Puritani** by Bellini, at the Teatro Fenice in Venice in 1948. From then Maria Callas was considered the dramatic coloratura soprano par excellence.



In 1950 she made her Scala debut in the title role in **Aida** and soon rose to become the house's *prima donna assoluta*. Over a period of ten years she was offered the leading role in the opera six times to open the season. Particular successes were Luchino Visconti's productions, which include Bellini's **La Sonnambula**, Verdi's **La Traviata** and probably the absolute highlights Donizetti's **Anna Bolena** and Gluck's **Iphigénie en Tauride** in 1957.

Maria Callas sang at London's Covent Garden Opera (1952-53, 1957-59, 1964), the Opéra in Paris, in Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro, Chicago (1954- 56), San Francisco, Dallas (1958-59), Berlin and Vienna. In 1956 she appeared for the first time on the stage of the New York Metropolitan Opera as Norma in Bellini's opera of the same name; she remained there for three seasons (1956-1959). On January 2, 1958, she caused a major scandal at the Rome Opera when she refused to continue during a performance of **Norma** (in the presence of the Italian President) and left the house.



In 1965 she returned to the Metropolitan Opera for one season and enjoyed great success there, especially as Tosca. All in all, she performed four roles (Lucia di Lammermoor, Norma, Violetta, Tosca) in 21 performances at the Metropolitan Opera. In 1960 she thrilled the audience in the ancient theatre of Epidauros as Norma. Her last stage appearance



was on July 5, 1965, at Covent Garden in London as Tosca. After that, she retired more or less to Paris. Her last years were marked by loneliness and deteriorating health. Maria Callas, who died of a heart attack in Paris on 16 September 1977 at the age of 53, was one of the greatest personalities in the history of singing. Her voice uniquely combined the most brilliant coloratura technique, physical power and vivid presentation; moreover, she was a thrilling actress. Italian fans of Callas dubbed her *La Divina* (The Divine) and indeed she reigned like a goddess over the opera stages of

the world.

An article by Karl-Heinz Büdding in Der Musikus No 157 of December 2023

PHILA-REPTILIA: A WORLD OF REPTILES

The author sheds light on a thematic collection idea that has been 312 million years in the making. With thousands of species existing, and almost as many stamps to collect, the author explains why you should consider starting a collection of reptiles on stamps.



Reptiles are one of the most diverse groups in the animal kingdom. There are more than 8000 species on earth, to be found on all the continents except Antarctica. They include such creatures as lizards (**left**), crocodiles, snakes and tortoises. They are also among the longest-lived species on the planet. The Aldabra tortoise, for example, can live for more than 150 years; and alligators for up to 70 years. The historical study of reptiles is referred to as herpetology. The earliest-known proto-reptiles originated around 312 million years ago, during the so-called

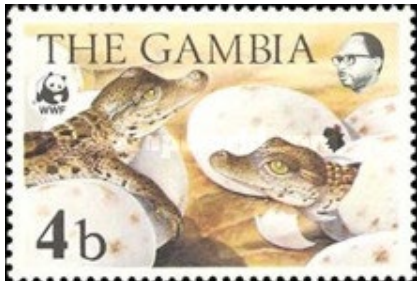
Carboniferous Period (circa 359 to 299 million years ago). It is thought they evolved from



vertebrate animals which adapted to life on dry land. Today's reptiles have either four limbs (tetrapods) or, like snakes, are descended from four-limbed ancestors. Unlike amphibians, reptiles do not have an aquatic larval phase. Most reptiles are oviparous (egg-bearing) although some species are viviparous: the fetus develops within the mother and is contained in a placenta, rather than an eggshell. Reptiles are sometimes described as cold-blooded but their blood is not necessarily cold by itself. Rather, they are ectothermic, meaning they obtain their body heat from an external source such as sunlight or a heated rock surface. While all reptiles breathe air, lizards and snakes flick their tongues in the air to capture scent particles, which when translated, allows them to hunt for food. Reptiles have been topically featured on stamp issues from many countries around the world. Selected in support of this article are stamps displaying crocodiles, lizards, snakes, and tortoises.

Crocodiles

Crocodiles are familiarly regarded as wetland predators par excellence, with long powerful jaws and rows of piercing teeth. Its long armoured and streamlined body makes it an efficient carnivore (**right**). After many early crocodilians and the dinosaurs died out at the close of the Cretaceous Period (circa 145.5 to 65.5 million years ago) there were no higher predators in their water-edge habitats than the surviving crocodilians themselves. They remained dominant until a 20th-century

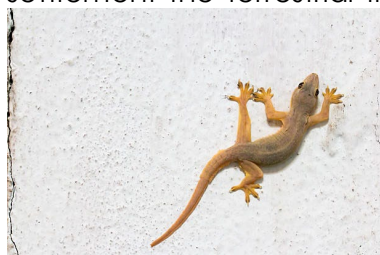


man appeared with weapons of increasing sophistication – and a taste for crocodile leather. Crocodiles are egg-layers. Some females deposit their eggs in a mound of vegetation or leaf layer; others leave them in holes in a sandy river bank. Clutches range in size from fewer than 20 eggs to almost 100 (**left**). A crocodile, floating just below the surface, with only eyes and nostrils protruding above the water, can monitor animal activity along a river bank. Using sideways bodysweeping grabs with its long snout, it can knock creatures as large as buffalo, waterbuck or even domestic animals, such as goats or cattle, into the water where they drown. The prey is then torn into manageable pieces through rapid twisting of the crocodile's body.



Lizards

Tuatara lizards are largely nocturnal. Foraging activity is confined to the night hours with a diet of beetles and other small invertebrates. They are well-equipped for processing their prey; the anterior wedge-shaped teeth are efficient biting tools, offering a sawing action with the teeth of their lower jaws. A low metabolic rate means that their growth rate is similarly slow, and hence their dietary requirements are modest (**right**). As distinct from their night-time activities, most of the lizards' days are spent basking at the entrance to their burrows rather than hiding inside. Long periods of time are spent in rock-like immobility, probably as an ambient temperature response to their cool and wet habitat. Variations of the tuatara lizard appeared on Norfolk Island, lying some 1600km east of the continent of Australia in the western Pacific. Due to historic human settlement the terrestrial flora and fauna have been much impoverished, two species of



lizards persisted, geckos and skinks, until wiped out by rats: introduced as a source of food by early settlers. To be found now on Phillip Island within the Norfolk group, geckos, while generally small, have a large head with a snout, and prominent eyes (**left**). The feet have long slender toes which open out to form distinct pads at their tips. The undersides of the pads allow them to cling onto vertical surfaces with ease.

They do not appear to be very fussy in their habitat requirements and may be both terrestrial and arboreal. Food consists of insects and other small invertebrates, but unusually they show a strong preference for the sweet nectar of flowers. Another curious phenomenon, especially among the males, is the loss of original tails which are replaced by new versions. While predators such as land crabs or large centipedes may be responsible for the tail shedding, it is thought to be due more likely to fight with rival geckos. Skinks are by far the largest of all lizard families, with



over 1300 species worldwide. They have a smooth streamlined appearance with a relatively narrow head and cylindrical body (**above right**). They spend most of their time sheltering under rocks, boulders or fallen timber. Breeding seems to appear in the summer months, with an incubation period of around 70 days. Unlike Norfolk Island, Phillip Island is free of a rat menace; the survival of skinks and geckos thus evidently depends on keeping their present habitat free of rodents.

Snakes

Snakes are elongated, limbless, flexible reptiles. There are some 2900 species of snakes, 375 of them are venomous. They consume a wide range of items, including termites, rodents, birds, frogs, and other reptiles. They eat their prey whole, being able to consume creatures three times the size of their heads due to separating jaws. Venomous snakes inject their prey with venom, while constrictors squeeze their unfortunate victims. Hunting mostly by night, Pythons and Anacondas can survive for up to a year without food. The Jamaican Boa, known locally as the Yellow Snake of the West Indies, is a large attractive animal, commonly reaching a length of two to three metres. It is



patterned for concealment with a variety of colours on both the upper and lower parts of its body. The success of its camouflage, together with largely nocturnal habits, make it a widespread and secretive animal. Boas are rarely encountered by humans but, when brought face to face, they are invariably killed in the mistaken belief that they are venomous (**left**). As a group, boas are almost exclusively viviparous, giving birth to live young, unlike

pythons who lay eggs. Quite large litters are produced: as many as 24 or more. They slough their skins a few hours after birth and grow fast, despite not feeding for three or more weeks, surviving on the yoke retained in their intestines from birth. They are at risk from several predators, particularly rats, mongooses and dogs. Due to the destruction of their woody habitat (forest cover in Jamaica is today about 7 per cent from a former 90 per cent of the land) severe limits are now being placed on the boas' domain which is leading to an overall decline in numbers.

Tortoises

Tortoises are one of the oldest groups of animals on earth, in a form very much the same now as at the time when dinosaurs became extinct. They arose sometime before the Jurassic period, 150 million years ago. Tortoises are also probably the longest-living and largest reptiles on earth today, dwelling over 100 years or more (**right**). Tortoises, including the Aldabra Giant



Tortoises (**left**), are not fussy feeders. Eating



almost anything: plants, other animals (e.g, beached porpoises, fish) and even their dead counterparts. They tend to seek shade – otherwise, they may overheat and die. The Aldabra Giant Tortoises sleep with their necks outstretched, unlike most other tortoises, which makes them vulnerable to predators; they have difficulty keeping their heads inside

their protective shells and breathing at the same time! Mating occurs in the later part of

the rainy season (November onwards). The Giant Tortoise is noted for its mating calls, which may be heard over 1km away on a still day. A nest hole is dug and five to 20 eggs are laid. While digging, the female urinates into the hole to stabilize the earth and, when dry, it hardens like concrete. This deters a Coconut Crab from entering the nest and destroying the eggs.

We trust this short selection of reptiles on stamps will encourage collectors to pursue the topic. There are many other examples of reptilian creatures featured philatelically, and easily acquired without straining the pocket (Fig 10). They offer an attractive club or competition display.

An article by Barry N. Floyd in Gibbons Stamp Monthly of October 2019

PHILATELIC TERMS: P-10

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P



The overprint **P** on an air mail stamp of Colombia indicates that the stamp was sold in Panama to frank mail from that country to an interior point in Colombia and carried by SCADTA during the early 1920s. It was necessary that such mail be franked with the appropriate Panamanian stamps. The mail



would be handed to either a Colombian consulate or to an agent of the airline. Another use of the letter **P** in a circle with a star and a crescent handstamped on stamps of the Straits Settlement indicates their use in the state of Perak. A third use of the letter **P** occurred prior to the introduction of stamps overprinted **O.S.** in 1874 for general Office use, the British colony of South Australia used several different overprints to indicate their use by specific government departments. The letter **P** indicated Police.



PA

Prior to the introduction of stamps overprinted **O.S.** in 1874 for general Office use, the British colony of South Australia used several different overprints to indicate their use by specific government departments. The letter **P.A.** indicated Protector of Aborigines.



PACCHI POSTALI



The inscription **PACCHI POSTALE** is found on the parcel post stamps of Italy and San Marino. The stamps are divided into two portions by perforations, with the first word on one part and the second part on the other half.

Pacific Steam Navigation Company

This British shipping line, with services to the west coast of South America, prepared its own stamps in 1847 to frank mail carried on



its vessels, but they were never placed in use, reportedly because of objections by the Peruvian government. When Peru was considering the introduction of adhesive stamps, the shipping line gave the government a supply of the stamps in two denominations, so that the government officials could experiment with them. They were first placed on sale on 1 December 1857, and three months later regular Peruvian stamps were released. Thus, what was intended originally as local stamps became the first issue of Peru. They are now considered a rarity.

PACKHOI

The overprint **PACKHOI** can be found on the stamps of Indo-China for use at the French post office at Packhoi, Indo-China. There are similar overprints.



PADROES DE GRAND GUERRA



The overprint **PADROES DE GRAND GUERRA**, standing for *Comrades of the Great War*, can be found on the first Postal Tax stamp of Portugal.

Pahang

Pahang is the largest of the four states that made up the Federated Malay States. It is now a state of Malaysia and is located on the east side of the Malay Peninsula. Pahang first issued stamps in 1889 and consisted of stamps of the Straits Settlement overprinted **PAHANG**. In 1892 stamps of the first Malay Tiger key type were issued. These stamps were used until the formation of the Federated Malay States and the introduction of the famous *Leaping Tiger* stamp, which was issued until the state resumed its own stamp issues in 1955. The stamps of 1935 feature the portrait of the ruling sultan, Abu Bakar, and were later overprinted for use when the area was occupied by the Japanese in World War II. Beginning in 1950, the stamps of Pahang bear the word **MALAYA** as the only English-language inscription. They picture a new portrait of the sultan, Abu Bakar. The stamps of Malaysia are now used, although several of the Malaysian omnibus issues were released bearing Pahang's name, and such a set was issued in 1975 honouring the installation of a new sultan, Haji Ahmad Shah.



Paita

Paita is a town on the northern coast of Peru. The town issued its own provisional stamps during the 1879-1884 war with Chile. They were regular stamps of Peru overprinted with **PAITA** in an oval, in versions with and without ornaments.



Palatinate



The **Palatinate** is a region of Germany located west of the River Rhine. It is now part of the Federal Republic of Germany and is included in the state of Rhineland-Palatinate. It was the Palatinate that formed part of the French Zone of Occupation following World War II, and stamps of 1947-49 inscribed Rhineland-Pfalz are listed in stamp catalogues under Rhine Platinat.

Palestine

Until 15 May 1948, when most of its area went to form the new nation of Israel,



Palestine had been under mandate to Great Britain following its World War I liberation from Turkish rule. On 22 July 1922, when Great Britain assumed the mandate responsibility, the area of Palestine had been reduced by the establishment of Trans-Jordan, now the Kingdom of Jordan, and the Dead Sea and the Jordan River formed the eastern boundary. After World War I, tension grew between the Arabs and the Jews. Though the Arabs claimed that the British has made territorial promises to them in exchange for their assistance in expelling the Turks, Britain had, by the Balfour Declaration, pledged the *establishment of Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people*. Stamps of Palestine were first issued on 10 February 1918, and were inscribed **E.E.F.** (Egyptian Expeditionary Force) for the British force that, under General Allenby, had pushed into northern Syria in pursuit of retreating Turks. In 1920 a civil administration took over from the British Army, and the stamps were locally overprinted **PALESTINE** in Hebrew, Arabic and English. A third administration took over when the mandate became effective. This led to an attractive pictorial issue of 1927.



Palestine, Egyptian Occupation of

In May 1948, Egyptian forces occupied a portion of Palestine and issued stamps consisting of Egyptian stamps overprinted **PALESTINE** in English and Arabic. These stamps continued in use until 6 Jun 1967, when the area was occupied by Israel. Israeli stamps are now used.



Palestine, Jordanian Occupation of



In 1948 Jordan issued several stamps **PALESTINE** in English and Arabic. These were for use in a portion of occupied Palestine and included definitive stamps, one issue of commemorative stamps, postage due labels and An obligatory tax issue. The stamps of Jordan went into use shortly after the stamps were issued.

Paper, Basted Mills

Basted Mills paper was produced by the Basted Paper Company and used for some stamps of New Zealand. It is a thin, hard, wove paper and incorporates a double-line NZ and star watermark.

Compiled by Robert Harm on 16 December 2023