

# THE SRSC NEWSLETTER

*The Santa Rosa Stamp Club: Promoting the study,  
knowledge, and enjoyment of stamp collecting.  
APS Chapter 1584*



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## **Editor's Note**

Dennis Buss

This issue of the Newsletter marks the beginning of the fourth month of social distancing as a response to the COVID-19 virus. Whether or not we have a club meeting in the near future remains uncertain. The reason why we have a stamp club is that it provides an opportunity to share our common interest in a social manner. We enjoy each other's company, we enjoy learning about philately, and we enjoy the opportunity to buy and sell stamps through our club auctions. Because most of us are in an age group that makes us particularly vulnerable to the virus, the risks entailed in resuming our meetings without proper precautions are considerable. The club board members are looking for ways to overcome these risks. We will be in touch with you soon about options we can consider. If you have any suggestions about how we might resume our gatherings whether virtually through the Zoom application, another venue or some kind of outdoor meeting, call or send an email to any of the club board members. In the meantime, I hope you enjoy this edition of the newsletter. I am particularly grateful for the article contributions made by Stephen Brett and Paul von Gottfried that have enabled me to publish the newsletter on a more frequent basis.

## **Collecting King George VI: Trends in Stamp Values**

Paul von Gottfried

George VI stamp collecting remains one of the vital areas of collecting around the world. This article will look at recent value changes of George VI stamps. I have focused on value changes of the last two years. I will then make an educated guess as to possible future value changes. Classic stamps of Britain and Colonies, the period of Queen Victoria and George V, remain desirable and collectible.

Generally, George VI stamps of Africa, Middle East and Asia have continued to be variable, recording both increases and declines. The stamps of Malaysia (Malaya) continue to increase overall. Stamps of Great Britain George VI period have remained stable. George VI stamps of the Western Hemisphere have remained stable or have declined slightly. I will list specific sets and value changes. I will be comparing the catalog years 2018 and 2020. One factor that has affected the values is the decline in the value of the British Pound compared to other currencies. If and when the pound stabilizes, the value of Britain and colonies stamps may increase again. I will preface this by saying that stamps of George VI, especially MNH, increased dramatically between 2005 and 2015. For example, Aden 16- 27A increased from \$43.10 to over \$100. Bahrain 20-37 increased from \$700 to almost \$1,000. Australia 170 from \$12 to



over \$35. India 203-206 from \$62.50 to \$407.50. India O112D from \$12,000 to \$225,000. It is doubtful we will ever see price increases like this again. I am mildly surprised that some stamps and sets have increased at all, considering the dramatic decline in the value of the pound. All values considered are for MNH.

| <u>2018</u>                       | <u>2020</u> |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| ADEN, 20-27, \$115.70             | \$115.70    |
| BAHAMAS, 115-129 \$95.            | \$84.95     |
| BURMA, O15-27, \$420.             | \$375.00    |
| BURMA, O43-55, \$177.             | \$200.00    |
| FALKLANDS, 84-95, \$550.          | \$550.00    |
| KUWAIT, 72-81A, \$92.50           | \$185.25    |
| MALAYA, JOHORE, 130-150, \$109.20 | \$180.65    |
| MALAYA, KEDAH, 61-81, \$119.      | \$181.00    |
| MALAYA, PERLIS, \$125.75          | \$119.40    |
| MALAYA, SELANGOR, 80-100, \$113   | \$190.50    |
| NIGERIA, 53-68, \$80.40           | \$75.00     |
| NORTH BORNEO, 193-207, \$1000     | \$1,200.00  |
| SWAZILAND, 27-37, \$70            | \$85.00     |

This is just a sample of the hundreds of individual stamps and sets of the George VI colonies throughout the world. Part of their popularity is because of the history of the time and the beautiful pictorial definitive sets that were issued during this era. In the May issue of the Newsletter I explained the reasons why I believe that stamps of the George VI era will be popular for many years to come.

What are some possible future trends? Most stamps of the George VI period have remained stable the last two years. This is a good sign considering the instability of Great Britain and the pound. It's been chaotic to say the least. It's possible we haven't seen the full effect of BREXIT on Great Britain and its economy yet. The stamp market in Great Britain remains vital. The George VI era of Great Britain and Colonies, from 1937-1952, remains one of the most popular in Britain and around the world.

The COVID-19 catastrophe will dramatically and negatively affect worldwide economies for many years to come. How this impacts the stamp market remains to be seen. Another important factor is the stabilization of the British Pound and economy, especially as it relates to Great Britain's interactions with the European Union, as well as the rest of the world. I am surprised that the stamp market in Great Britain has not been more adversely affected the last couple of years.

I expect the values of stamps of Asia will continue to increase, with the possible exception of Hong Kong. That bubble is over. I believe the stamps of the Middle East and Africa will continue to post increases. Again, the influence of the coronavirus may have a dramatic on the stamp markets in Britain and around the world. I encourage people to support your stamp dealers and auction houses here and abroad. So be patient if you can, and wait and see what happens, both in the near future and long term.

## Ask Phil A. Tellick

*Dear Phil,*

*Outside of the obvious complete gum on the back, how can you tell if a stamp is a CTO?*

*Signed,*

*Lover of Iron Curtain stamps*

Dear Iron Curtain,

I referred this question to Steve Brett, who may have the largest collection of CTO's this side of Yemen. I also referred this to Paul who has an abhorrence of CTO stamps. And they're great friends. Go figure.

Most stamps that have less than a ¼ circular cancel in a corner are suspect, partly because there is usually not enough information, such as date and location to verify. Most stamps from countries that usually issue CTO's are almost always CTO. In other words, it's very difficult to find postally used examples of these stamps that actually went through the mail. Besides the obvious Soviet block nations, Trucial States, and a few South American countries there are a few others. Most Labuan with smudged cancels without identifying information and Switzerland are considered to be CTO's.



Another factor are overly clean cancels without any small smudges or lines.

Hope this helps.

Phil (AKA Paul von Gottfried)

## The Evolution of First Day Covers

Stephen Brett

The origins of First Day Cover collecting are obscure. As I mentioned in the previous installment, it goes back the late 19th century. First, there are the "Accidentals" - people who bought a stamp on its first day of issue and then used it in the mail on the same day. One anecdote of prime significance regards the Gimbel's Philadelphia department store. The store mailed all their monthly statements on May 1, 1901 with the new 2 Cent Pan American stamp (Scott 294). Almost no one collected First Day Covers in 1901 and many of the envelopes after the bill was paid were put aside in filing drawers. Stamped and dated these envelopes are now worth \$2,000.

By 1910, the hobby of FDC collecting was set to begin. Collectors began to find and esteem older envelopes that were cancelled on the first day that the stamp had been issued. Articles appeared in the contemporary press alerting collectors to finds of older FDC's and soon collectors were hunting for discoveries of their own. In a decision that greatly advanced FDC collecting, the US Post office began to announce, often months in advance, the dates when new issues were going to be released. This gave budding FDC collectors time to prepare to buy the new stamps and have them used on the first day of issue.



One of the forefathers of FDC collecting was the great Philadelphia philatelist Phillip Ward. Ward began making his FDC's when still a schoolboy in 1912. His first effort was the 2-cent Lincoln issue of 1912 (Scott 367). By 1920, led by collectors like Edward Worden, FDC collecting had a devoted following. FDC's could

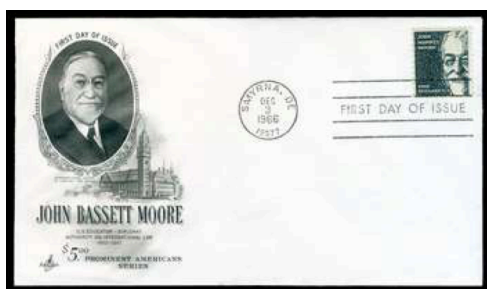
still only be told by the date of the cancellation on the envelope. It wasn't until 1923 that the first envelope cachet, indicating that the cover is a FDC and what the purpose of the stamp was, that FDC collecting entered its modern phase. This first cachet was on the 1923 Harding memorial issue that was released for the recently deceased President Warren Harding. The famous Harding cachet was designed and issued by George Linn, who was publisher of the famous magazine.

Throughout the 1920's and for most of the rest of the last century, FDC collecting continued to gain in popularity and the older FDC's shot up in price. The emphasis in FDC collecting was increasingly on the cachets - the printed portion of the envelope design that complimented the stamp issue that was commemorating some aspect of American history. By 1940 most US collectors included FDC's as part of their US collections.

### First Day Cover Collecting After WW II

Beginning in the 1950's and 1960's First Day Cover collecting became more cachet oriented than anything else. Many collectors went back and tried to obtain the "classic cachets" of the 1920's and 1930's and by 1970, there were scores of cachet makers who created envelopes for every new stamp that came out. Because no cachet had official US Post Office authorization, collectors were often puzzled as to which cachet to collect. But certainly, by 1980, a collector would have needed fifty or more of most US new issue FDC's to claim a complete collection according to known cachet makers.

Most stamp collectors who collected in the 1950's and 1960's maintained a collection



of plate blocks and FDC's along with their regular collection of US mint singles. There were two reasons for this. First, nearly all plate blocks consisted of just four stamps. Thus the face value of putting away a plate block was 16 or 20 cents, a modest amount. The same could be said for the FDC, the stamp was inexpensive and a nice Artcraft cacheted cover to make the First Day could be had for a dime. Both the FDC's and plate

block collecting were an inexpensive adjunct to US stamps.

FDC collecting has changed considerably over the past fifty years, and the trend has accelerated in the last twenty years. FDC and plate block collecting have waned, and the reason is more than the fact that postage rates have driven up the cost of plate blocks and FDC's. In the 1950's and 1960's, the US Post Office issued ten to fifteen stamps a year with a total postage value of under a dollar. Now, in most years there are over 100 stamps. For most stamp collectors, philately is a casual hobby, one on which they happily spend a few hours a month. Then they put their albums back on the shelves. Obviously, in the 1960's the average 5-cent stamp a month that was being issued didn't fill the collecting needs of the casual philatelist. She could put that stamp away in her album in a few minutes. Plate block and first day cover collecting was born and thrived when the number of newer US postal issues was relatively low. Collectors appreciated acquiring the allied items to sustain their collecting interests and did not mind spending the extra time and money to do so.

The slow end to United States FDC collecting began about 1975 with the entry of both the Franklin Mint and Reader's Digest into the FDC market. Both companies operated a monthly service that sent the latest FDC's to their subscribers. The prices were high, usually close to \$10.00 for each cover that had a 13 or 15-cent stamp (the postage rate in the 1970's) affixed to the cacheted envelope. The covers were marketed as exclusive



souvenirs mounted on elaborately designed pages and binders. Millions of dollars were spent on these products, often to casual collectors who thought that they were buying limited edition items that would appreciate in value.

By 2000, the philatelic FDC marketers were largely gone, leaving millions of collectors with material that was very overpriced, undesirable, and avoided by most serious philatelists. This occurred at the same time that the US Postal Service began to juice up their own stamp production machinery, issuing up to a hundred more stamps per year, at postage cost of hundreds of dollars. The average US collector didn't need FDC collecting anymore to keep busy with his hobby. He had plenty of stamps to collect. Add to that, FDC cover collecting takes up a lot of room. A very comprehensive US stamp collection can be housed in just a few albums. Not so for FDC's. There have been nearly 3000 US postal issues that have had cacheted FDC's issued for them. First Day Cover albums usually house a hundred covers making comprehensive collection not only expensive in terms of albums but invasive (30 -50 albums) in terms of space.

#### The Present Situation

The First Day Cover market has all but collapsed. Some of the classic (pre 1930) FDC's are still sought by serious collectors and a few hardy old timers still attempt to put together collections not by stamp but by cachet maker. But, for the most part, few newer collectors entering the hobby have the time, money or inclination to assemble a First Day Cover collection. There are just too many stamps to collect and not enough time or money.

Certainly anyone finding or inheriting a collection should seek a professional opinion. But, as a rule of thumb, dealers sell FDC's from 1950 to 2000, if cacheted and unaddressed, at 10 cents or less each. Collecting fashions change over the years and what was once popular often is not anymore. And, while there is still an active market for US and foreign stamps, the market for FDC's continues to fade away.

So, today collecting has largely changed, since collectors have hundreds of newer issues to choose from, certainly enough to satisfy the casual collector. Accordingly, only the most avid US collectors seek plate blocks and FDC's along with their regular US singles. There never were an enormous number of the most avid FDC collectors in our hobby anyway and when casual collectors no longer pursue these adjuncts to mainstream US collecting, popularity and prices have dropped.

[To be continued]



#### ***Soliloquy of a Postage Stamp***

I am the world's greatest traveler. I've journeyed from pole to pole and all the climes between . . . by dogsled, camel and horseback, by every land, sea and air conveyance, even by submarine, dirigible and rocket.

I am the world's greatest art and portrait gallery. The heroes and heroines of mythology pose within my borders. I portray the greats and the near-greats of all time, kings and queens, pharaohs and presidents, princes and princesses, poets and patriots, emperors and explorers, athletes, architects, aviators, artists and adventurers, tribal chieftains, inventors, moguls, musicians and martyrs, dramatists and novelists, shahs, sultans, saints and sinners. Even the vanished forms of the phoenix, dragon, centaur and unicorn appear upon my face.



I am the world's greatest picture chronicle and miniature encyclopedia. I map communities, countries and continents, and reveal views from every strange remote corner of the earth. I depict mountains and valleys, oceans, rivers, lakes, waterfalls, geysers, harbors, bridges and dams, native canoes, sailing ships and modern ocean liners, monuments and statues, castles, cathedrals, churches, missions, temples and ruins of temples, and every type of locomotion, from automobiles to zeppelins and steamboats to space ships. I delineate all manner of sports, handicrafts, customs, sacred rites and ceremonies; and nearly every variety of bird, animal, fish, vegetable, fruit and flower.

I frame the horrors of war, the blessings of peace, the hardships of emigration, the plight of indigence and the blight of famine. I illustrate the adventures of Don Quixote, the fairy tales of childhood and the legends of all civilizations. I reflect the symbols of art and culture, of natural resources and industry, of trade and commerce, of agriculture and architecture, and of all human endeavor. I commemorate the expeditions and voyages, and the inventions, discoveries and creations that make life worth living.

Millions of men, women, and children are fascinated by me. Through my infinite variety they find boundless pleasure, relaxation and enchantment.

*Yet . . . I am only a postage stamp!*

© H. E. Harris & Co., 18 Dec. 1963



## SRSC

**The Santa Rosa Stamp Club meets on the first Tuesday of the month from 6:45 pm to 9:00 pm at the Finley Community Center, 2060 W. College Road, in Santa Rosa. Membership dues are \$20 per year. Following a discussion of club business matters, the meetings feature a philatelic presentation and a member auction. For further information about the club visit our website at <http://www.santarosastampclub.org/home.html>**

### ***Special Announcement:***

***Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, meetings have been canceled until further notice.***

### **SRSC OFFICERS FOR 2020**

#### **President**

Bill Anklam

#### **Vice President**

Stephen Brett

#### **Secretary**

Dennis Buss

#### **Treasurer**

Susan Dixon

#### **Advertising & Public Relations**

Steven Brett

#### **Newsletter Editor**

Dennis Buss

#### **Webmaster**

Bill Anklam

#### **Auctioneer**

Jim Scholz

### **Executive Committee Members**

Bill Anklam, Stephen Brett, Dennis Buss, Susan Dixon.

Members At-Large: Paul von Gottfried, Barry Sovel, Plus One Other To Be Appointed.