

# THE SRSC NEWSLETTER

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

*APS Chapter 1584*



Vol. 9, No. 1

May 2020

## **Editor's Note**

Dennis Buss

I suspect the stay-in-place orders are beginning to wear a bit thin for most of you. It certainly would be a welcome change to attend a club meeting and enjoy the pleasures of sharing our stamp collecting interests and maybe even picking up a few stamps at one of auctions. Unfortunately, we will have to forego this prospect at least for the near future. In the meantime, I hope you enjoy this issue of the club newsletter. I plan to increase the frequency of these newsletters as a way of sustaining our collecting interests while the confinement requirements are in place. If any of you are filling in your time with an interesting philatelic project, let me know about it and I will pass this on to the members in the next newsletter. In the meantime, I hope you are all well and that you will continue to stay so until we begin meeting again.

## **Ask Phil A. Tellick**

Paul von Gottfried

*Dear Phil:*

*Can I get the coronavirus from licking stamps? What about self-adhesive stamps? Are they safe?*

*Signed, Ima N. Skull*

Answer:

Now there's a novel question. In your case, yes. I suggest you cover your tongue or spray it with Lysol. For self-adhesive stamps, use a mask and gloves.

Phil A. Tellick.

P.S. We can still answer your questions during the coronavirus stay at home requirement folks. We do try to answer all questions remotely...



A stamp collecting neologism (a new word or expression):

*Philatelist:*

A stamp collector named Phil who uses an atlas.

## More Than Just a Cover

Doug Iams

Sometimes the content is more interesting than the cover.

Excerpt from a March 17, 1899 letter from someone in San Francisco sent to someone in Santa Rosa:

"Received your note with your offer of \$700 for my land near Bellevue, in reply I have set the price at \$900. If your party is willing to pay that much he can have it (However I will take a mortgage for half the amount if mandated at 5 percent) if you can make a sale I will allow you \$25 for your trouble."

I guess we've had a wee bit of inflation in property values since then.

## Stamps For The Wounded

Paul von Gottfried

Under the initiative of our first president, Martin Feibusch, the SRSC has supported the Stamps For The Wounded (SFTW) program shortly after the club's inception ten years ago. Martin was an internationally known philatelist and stamp exhibitor. He was respected both in the Bay Area and across the nation. Martin had award plaques on two walls of his study from around the country.

The SFTW program is located in Dunn Loring, Virginia. It serves wounded veterans. The SRSC sends three to four priority mailboxes to the SFTW every year. Members bring their duplicates to the club to be sent off. Martin ran the program the first two years. I have been privileged to run the program the last eight. I am happy to announce that Hank Kelty has agreed to take over this duty for the club. Members are asked to get in touch with Hank if they have extra stamps to donate. The SFTW program uses these stamps to support programs for wounded veterans, including purchasing equipment with proceeds from the donations.

The SRSC feels this is a very worthwhile program to support. We urge philatelists from around the country to join us in supporting the SFTW program.

## U.S. "General" First Day Covers: What Happened? "

Stephen Brett

This article addresses the general and historically popular run-of-the-mill United States First Day Covers. While I may refer from time to time to scarce or rare or foreign covers the intent is to compare but not provide detailed information as respects those categories of covers.

Why a discussion on First Day Covers? I thought it would be of general club interest to address this questions since we continuously receive gifts of this material by non-club collectors or inheritors. In addition, many of us at one time or another collected general U.S. First Day covers. In fact, some of us still do in a variety of ways. Our club has a growing hoard of these covers and has been seeking ways and means to sell (ideally) or offer them to parties who would like



to have them, perhaps for educational purposes. I hope this article also provides answers to the following additional questions:

1. Why has the "average" First Day Cover plunged in interest and value over recent years?
2. Who is collecting them today and how?
3. How may the Club sell its glut of covers or find interested parties who might value them and or even put them to meaningful use?

#### First Day Covers: A Little Background & History

Until the early twentieth century, the postal service placed most new issues on sale as needed, where needed, without prior announcement. And, until that time, collectors paid no attention to having new stamps postmarked on their first day of issue. Even after the postal service began announcing dates of issue, most collectors remained uninterested in obtaining First Day Covers (FDC's). Consequently, few FDC's made prior to 1920 exist. Those that do are generally worth hundreds or even thousands of dollars. Early FDC's do not bear the slogan cancel "First Day of Issue," and they lack pictorial cachets. The date on the postmark is the only clue. More than one lucky collector has discovered a valuable early FDC disguised as an ordinary cover by taking the time to check the postmark against the first day of issue as recorded in a stamp catalogue.



Today almost all new stamps are announced well in advance. In most cases on its first day, a new stamp is placed on sale in only a single city, known as the official city. Release nationwide occurs the following day. In almost all cases, FDC's are serviced (cancelled) with a postmark containing the phrase "First Day Of Issue" and the name of the official city. All that is actually required of an FDC is that it

shows a stamp postmarked on the first day it became available for public sale. Most modern FDC's depict a cachet. A cachet consists of text or an illustration usually situated on the left side of the cover, but in some cases occupying the entire front of the cover.

Collectors can send covers to the Postal Service for the first day of cancellation; however, most prefer to subscribe to a new issue service. Serious FDC collectors tend to specialize. Some attempt to obtain early, rare FDC's, the rarest of which are worth many thousands of dollars. Others build a collection devoted to a particular cachet maker. Still others focus on a favorite stamp and try to obtain as many different cachets produced for it as possible. In some cases, that means more than 100, some of which are invariably obscure, although not necessarily expensive.

In the next installment, I will touch on the several ways that covers are created and collected.

## **The Popularity of George VI Philately, Or Why I Collect the Stamps of George VI 1937-1952**

Paul von Gottfried

The stamps of Great Britain and Colonies remain one of the most popular stamp collecting venues in the world. The stamps of Great Britain and Colonies during the reign of George VI, 1937-1952, are arguably one of the most viable. Some of this is due to the time period, which encompassed WWII. Great Britain had not divested itself of most of its colonies, this happened after WWII. The losses of Canada and India contributed



dramatically to the financial health of Great Britain and the collecting of British Colonies. It may have helped add to the intrigue of collecting the stamps of Great Britain and its colonies, both present and former.

British Colonies are renowned for their varieties, including overprints, perforations, paper, watermark and color variants. There are two main types of perforation, line and comb. The perforations of the individual stamps can vary tremendously, from perf 9 to perf 18. The paper variants can be most challenging. One can generally use the 'Silver Test' wherein rubbing silver, usually a coin, on chalky paper stamps, to produce a gray mark (it's not permanent) on the gum side. However, this is not absolute. I've spent considerable time trying to distinguish between chalky and ordinary papers. Even experts can find it challenging. Many of the stamps can be found overprinted or more commonly perforated 'Specimen' that are challenging and expensive to acquire. Most stamps of this era have at least one perforation variety. One can argue that the George VI era encompasses more of these varieties than any other era of British Colonies or for that matter of any other group in the world.

Much of this is due to WWII. Wartime printings of many issues were not uniform. Almost all of the stamps were printed in Great Britain and shipped to the various colonies. Because of various shortages during the war years, different papers, perforations and inks were utilized. Many shipments simply did not arrive at their destinations. The quantities of some of these issues were very small. For example, the Gandhi set issued by India in 1948 has an Official Usage set with the top value having less than 35 issued. It currently has a catalogue value of \$225,000.

I'm sure much of this would be embarrassing for George VI. A shy, decent, retiring man, I'm sure he would be quite humbled by all the attention showed his stamps and to himself. He quietly and discreetly led his country during this dangerous era. His style was in variance of Winston Churchill's. I am not criticizing Churchill. But I have great respect for George VI who stepped unwanted into crucial leadership when his brother abdicated the throne for love.

There are special catalogues devoted strictly to the George VI era. The most popular, considered the "Bible" of George VI collecting, is the Murray Payne catalogue. The Murray Payne (MP) firm is now owned by Stanley Gibbons.

Take the stamps of Seychelles. There are paper varieties; both normal and chalky, as well as color varieties. Scott has three different listings of stamps. The MP catalogue is even more detailed. Then there are the listings of the 'Key Plate' varieties of Bermuda. The MP listings for Bermuda are over 15 pages. The pages are small but yeah, 15 pages! There

are books published that detail the specific Key Plate issues of Bermuda, Leeward Islands and Nyasaland. I have a signed copy of one of these. I guess that makes me an OCD nerd. Then there is Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika (KUT). Stanley Gibbons lists six different



headings for perforation varieties, with color and 'fly spec' varieties listed additionally. It's a dream (or nightmare) for those with OCD.

I prefer to have the basic set for each issues with some accommodation for individual countries, like Bermuda. The Key Plate varieties are some of the most beautiful in the world. I have over 20 of the Key Plates of Bermuda.

I will comment on the listings of George VI in Scott. Most countries have minimal listings. In a perfect world, I expect stamp catalogues to provide, consistent, pertinent information. Scott listings are inconsistent. Some countries, like Seychelles, separates issues by paper, color changes and value changes. Other countries list some perforation varieties separately or are jumbled together. Scott lists the Ascension set as one, with perforation and color variants listed as minor varieties. Stanley Gibbons list three different perforation sets, with color variants listed with the perforation set accordingly for Ascension. It is the inconsistency of the listings that is slightly maddening. Stanley Gibbons is very good about sticking to the criteria of its listings consistently. I hope that Scott makes an effort to list the stamps of George VI more consistently and accurately in the future.

I try to collect most stamps and sets as MNH. This can be a challenge, especially for areas like Malaya. I collect very few of the Japanese occupation issues. Many are counterfeit and/or quite rare. I don't even attempt to collect the India Convention States issues MNH. I don't have the money. They are challenging to find in this condition. The catalogue value for most GVI sets MNH sets is usually twice as much as hinged sets.

Another aspect of George VI that I like, are the pictorial definitive sets. This is true for almost all countries. These pictorial issues feature, buildings, natural locations, commerce and often contain maps. It is these pictorial definitive sets that intrigued me from the time I started collecting at age 11. My knowledge of geography and industry of each country furthered my esoteric knowledge of the world.



I recently discovered a possible variety of a Great Britain set overprinted for use in Kuwait. Since I have ample time on my hands, I'm taking a closer look at the sets that I have. I'm pretty sure one stamp has a double overprint. It's valued at \$800 instead of \$80.

My collection of basic sets of the George VI era is basically complete, with the exception of the India States and Japanese occupation of Malaya. I do have a specialized collection of the Falkland Island Dependency Map issue. It is inexpensive and I occasionally add varieties to this collection. I still purchase this set when available. My George VI stamps are on stock cards. I moved them to a safety deposit box after the fires of 2017. They will be there after the coronavirus crisis is resolved and are safe from fire and hopefully theft.



# 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>

## 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.



## STAMPS TO SELL, BUY OR TRADE?

If you miss the opportunity to sell or buy stamps at our regular monthly meeting auctions, here is your chance to offer items that might be of interest to other club members. Send me a description of what you have to offer and I will forward your listing to all club members via email. To start, please limit your lots to three, we can expand the limit later if this project proves popular. If you are selling singles or sets, it would be ideal but not absolutely necessary to attach a scan or a jpg file photo of the stamps you have for sale. If you do not have a scan or photo, provide as thorough a description (condition of perforations, centering, cancels, gum, hinging, faults, etc.) as possible of the item(s) you are offering along with your asking price. I will then forward your "for sale" item(s) description to the membership. If any member is interested in making a purchase, that member will contact you directly either by phone or email as listed in the club directory. Once the transaction is completed, the seller holds the usual 10% commission that goes to the club. **I will not be responsible for collecting payments or for mailing items sold or traded. In other words, this is a direct member-to-member arrangement.** If you have a want list of items you are looking to buy, I will also distribute your list to the members. Again, anyone who might have what you are looking for, he or she will contact you directly to complete the sale (the 10% commission applies). You can also list trading interests. For example, "will trade 100 modern used Sweden from 1980s & 90s for same number of used Canada from '80s & '90s)." Send your lists to [srsc2012@yahoo.com](mailto:srsc2012@yahoo.com) by Monday, May 11. I will then forward your listings to the members via email a day later, on May 12. If you have any further questions, let me know.

Dennis Buss, Secretary