

# 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 is an all-Stephen Brett contribution to the newsletter and a timely one at that. However, you too can contribute to future editions with a short piece on your favorite stamp or stamp set or a set of philatelic quiz questions. I hope to hear from you. In the meantime, enjoy!

## Queen Elizabeth II, Avid Stamp Collector and Her Collection

Stephen Brett

First, relax! The Santa Rosa Stamp Club has not been approached by any Royal functionary to assess and help dispose of the Royal Stamp Collection.

The Royal Stamp Collection is the world's finest and most comprehensive collection of British Commonwealth stamps. It is also one of the most remarkable stamp collections in the world. Queen Elizabeth II was the proud owner of it. It is internationally renowned. Of major items included in this fabulous collection, only the British Guiana one cent magenta is missing.

The collection was originally started by Queen Victoria's second son Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh in 1864. He sold his collection to his older brother [Edward VII](#), who in turn gave it to his son, George V who became one of the notable philatelists of his day. In 1893, as the Duke of York, he was elected honorary vice-president of what became the Royal Philatelic Society of London. On his marriage that year, fellow members of the society gave him an album of nearly 1,500 postage stamps as a wedding present. Over the years, he expanded the collection with a number of high-priced purchases. The Queen's father, King George VI, also took an interest in stamp collecting and added to the collection. Queen Elizabeth took it upon herself to further developed the royal collection. She was the 5th Monarch to inherit the vast Royal Philatelic Collection. The working collection resides



in the State Apartments at Buckingham Palace. It is reported that, aside from the bound volumes in the apartment, there are boxes and boxes of materials in the apartment storage floors. Something you and I may have in common with the Royals. Aside from the Buckingham Royal Apartments, the collection is kept in vaults at St. James Palace. She liked to also show off the stored items from time to time.

As an aside, I asked myself: "How many stamps actually existed when the collection originally started?" I investigated Scott's and found that by 1860 Great Britain had issued about 35 stamps including the several printing varieties of these stamps. So, let's say, liberally there were 100 stamps to collect in Great Britain and throwing in the Empire, perhaps 300 to 400 hundred total stamps. This should hint at Prince Alfred's great love and imagination let alone foresight in beginning a collection.



There is a consensus of opinion that at the time of Queen Elizabeth II 's death the Royal Collection had a value of 100 million pounds (\$124 million U.S.). One of the stamps, the 2d Post Office Mauritius of 1847 is said to be worth 2 million pounds alone. It was shown in a travelling exhibit during her Golden Jubilee year. It was the first stamp to be issued by a colonial post office. The Queen's entire net worth was placed at 470 million pounds making her collection a good portion of her entire wealth.

Royal Expert Phil Dampier says, "The Queen loved showing her stamp collection to visitors and this was echoed by many heads of state who visited and or stayed at Buckingham Palace. "It was

one of her pride and joys, not only because she owned some of the world's most valuable stamps, but also because she had built on a family treasure and felt she had done her father and previous monarchs who owned it proud." Just as an aside, her current profile, known as the Machin series, is one of the most produced images on stamps so far and one of the most reproduced artworks in the world. It is estimated that her profile appears on 220 billion stamps.

At age 93 the Queen has also left her mark on the collection by selling some of her "duplicates." As she described them, "surplus to demand." She used the sales money in



buying new additions. These included spending 250,000 pounds on a unique set of 10 Penny Blacks, dated May 6, 1840, which are considered very rare.

Like her royal predecessors, The Queen had been patron of the Royal Philatelic Society of London. It is the world's oldest surviving organization for the study and collection of stamps and postal history.

There also exists the Philatelic Collection at the British Library in London. We may as well mention this here as another trove of great philatelic materials in Great Britain. It was founded in 1891 by a bequest of 8 million items from the Tapling collection. It includes 50 other important collections or archives. The Tapling collection is amongst the few in the world to be 100% intact. This collection includes millions of various philatelic items from every country and period. Perhaps a SRSC member can tell us whether these materials can be accessed and viewed when one visits England. I was an Underwriter at Lloyd's and was unaware of these collections and never thought to look into them. I may have been right on top of these treasures. Too bad.

Why is the Royal collection worth so much? The answer is simple; it is filled with the rarest, most valuable and historic stamps relating to the British commonwealth and United Kingdom.

Earlier, this article mentioned one stamp in the collection stamp valued at 2 million pounds but it is NOT the most valuable. The most valuable stamp is the error 1963 Red Cross stamp missing the red cross as it is the most valuable and difficult to find.

I'd be remiss in not explaining the breadth of the Queen's collection. There are 15 Commonwealth Realms and this includes 56 countries, an association of mostly former British colonies. The British colonies were in Africa, Asia, the Americas, Europe and the Pacific including Australia and New Zealand. Five of the 42 "small" States of the world are Commonwealth states.

I looked back to 1950 when the Queen was likely to engage in the hobby in earnest. There were 15 member states known as Commonwealth Realms and 36 other members which were republics. There were 5 others with their own monarchs. To us collectors, this explains the changes in identifications of these countries amongst the stamps we own.

Let's hope that King Charles and the Royal family continue to collect stamps, and, if perchance they don't, our phones don't ring with a U.K. country code.



*Dear Uncle Phil:*

*With the Queens passing what can we expect about new British issues which have included her profile on each stamp?*

*Prudence K.*

Dear Prudence: The British postal service will continue to accept British postage with the Queen's classic profile until supplies run out. However, their inner committee is concerned about shocking the public with the immediate insertion of King Charles' profile in the Queen's place on postage. An idea that is gaining wide support and is in tandem with popular social trends is to morph the Queen gradually into a likeness of King Charles. This will include both hair style and accoutrement.

*Dear Uncle Phil:*

*A local stamp dealer identified a stamp for me. He said it was an Omnibus issue. Before I had a chance to ask him to explain the term a street sweeper came through his front door with a notice that he had to maintain at least 4 square feet of usable floor space for customers. So, I departed with the intent to ask you the same question. What is an Omnibus issue?*

*Sincerely, Reggie.*

Dear Reggie: I think I know the Dealer... and the sweeper. This is the term given to an issue of stamps from a number of countries, all devoted to a common subject or commemorating the same event and generally of similar design. The first of the major modern omnibus issues was the 1935 issue of the British Commonwealth area commemorating the Silver Jubilee of King George V and Queen Mary. Similar precursor issues include the 1898 Vasco da Gama issue and the 1925 Pombal issue from Portugal and its colonies, plus the 1931 Colonial Exposition issue from the French Community as examples. I would be remiss not to mention Alistair Cooke (1908 - 2004) when one utters the word "Omnibus." He was the author and voice of *Letters from America*, 1946 - 2004, a 15 minute radio program and one of the longest running at that. It was a running battle in our home whether my mother got to the radio before my Dad. She wanted to hear the next episode of "Young Doctor Malone." He wanted to hear Alistair Cooke.

*Dear Uncle Phil: I found a stamp in a mixture with NOREG featured as the country. I asked a Norwegian friend and fellow collector, if it could be a stamp issued by Norway? He said it was an appliance seal and laughed. I still think it was a Norwegian stamp. Was Olaf joking?*

*Yours, Vidkun Q.*

Dear Vidkun: Name me one Norwegian comedian! For your information, country designations used by Norway on its stamps include both "NORGE" and "NOREG." They are used interchangeably. Did you know that Norway's Post Horn Stamps date from 1871, when architect Wilhelm von Hanno was commissioned to create a new stamp design? It is claimed to be the world's oldest stamp design in continuous use. With minor changes over the years, it is still issued. The wheels in the stamp's corners symbolize railroads as mail carriers, and the wings imply speed. U.S. Stamps have FOREVER. I wonder why?



*Dear Uncle Phil: I find it confusing and contradictory that stamp errors are so highly prized by some collectors. After all, huge premiums are paid for stamps that grade Superb or Gem quality. One would think that stamps that are imperfect would sell at a discount. What's the story? I'm puzzled by this grading inconsistency.*

*Yours, Ms. R. Nadir.*

Dear Ms. Nadir, There are many inconsistencies amongst collectors. The same collector that will store his stamps in leather bound albums will also use a shoe box when it suits him. Stamp errors are often highly prized by collectors and investors. The error stamp is often so desirable because their defect unintentionally has created the rarest and most visually striking stamps in the world. Some are valued thousands of times higher than their normal price. The philatelic value of an error stamp is defined by its visual appeal and relative scarcity. The more visible the printing mistake the more the chances are for the stamp to sell big.

### **Attend the WINEPEX stamp show October 7-9, 2022**

**Novato Oaks-Best Western Inn at 215 Alameda Del Prado Rd., in Novato. Hours: Friday and Saturday 10:00 am to 5:00 pm; Sunday 10:00 am to 3:00 pm.**

**Free Admission.**

**The show features a 9-dealer stamp bourse with video access to virtual stamp exhibits. For more information about the show including how to submit an exhibit, visit the [redwoodempirecollectorsclub.org](http://redwoodempirecollectorsclub.org) website.**



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, Room #1, 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 information about the club visit our website at <http://www.santarosastampclub.org/home.html>

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