

PRINTED MATTERS

THE PHILATELIC MAGAZINE



175 YEARS OF THE 'LADY MCLEOD'

EXCLUSIVE A SENSATIONAL REDISCOVERY – THE DAMGARTEN PROVISIONAL

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND A PHILATELIC ADVENTURE – TRANSATLANTIC MAIL

INTERVIEW AN ADVENTUROUS CONSIGNMENT – THE ERIK NAGEL COLLECTION



HEINRICH KÖHLER

Germany's Oldest Stamp Auction House

Dear Readers,

175 years ago, a stamp was issued that continues to fascinate philatelists to this day – the famous 'Lady McLeod'. First issued in April 1847, five months before the famous Mauritius 'Post Office' stamps, this was the first stamp used in a British crown colony. The stamp was used exclusively on board the paddle steamer 'Lady McLeod', which sailed between the Port of Spain and San Fernando on Trinidad. Read the fascinating tale of this iconic Caribbean stamp in our cover story on pages 3 to 6. Talking of sea mail, one of the most gripping chapters in the history of maritime mail transportation is the subject of transatlantic post. Until the nineteenth century, this was the only means of communication between the Old and New Worlds. The story on pages 10 to 13 outlines the historical background of the American sea mail services at a time when crossing the Atlantic was still a great adventure. I'd also like to draw your attention to our exclusive report on pages 8 and 9. The report titled 'Treasure from the Amber Town' covers the sensational rediscovery of a philatelic highlight from the early period of the German Empire. And in the 'Profile in philately' section on page 14, we meet the passionate philatelist and former minister responsible for issuing German stamps – Peer Steinbrück. Last but not least, don't miss the interview on pages 15 to 17: Dieter Michelson reports on an impressive and unprecedented consignment from South Carolina.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue of Printed Matters!



Yours sincerely,

Tobias Huylmans,
Managing Director of Heinrich Köhler

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175th anniversary of the 'Lady McLeod' of Trinidad – the world's first maritime mail stamp

A classic icon of philately

No value indication and no country name, but an impressive design nonetheless. The Lady McLeod of Trinidad is a classic icon in philately – a superlative stamp in more than one regard. Having been issued five months before the famous Mauritius 'Post Office' stamps, the Lady McLeod is the first stamp from a British crown colony. As a document of postal transportation on water, it is also the world's first ship mail stamp. Finally, it is also worth noting that the Lady McLeod stamps survived only as singles, with fewer than 100 known to exist today, be they used, unused or on cover. Not even a pair of this iconic stamp has been discovered.

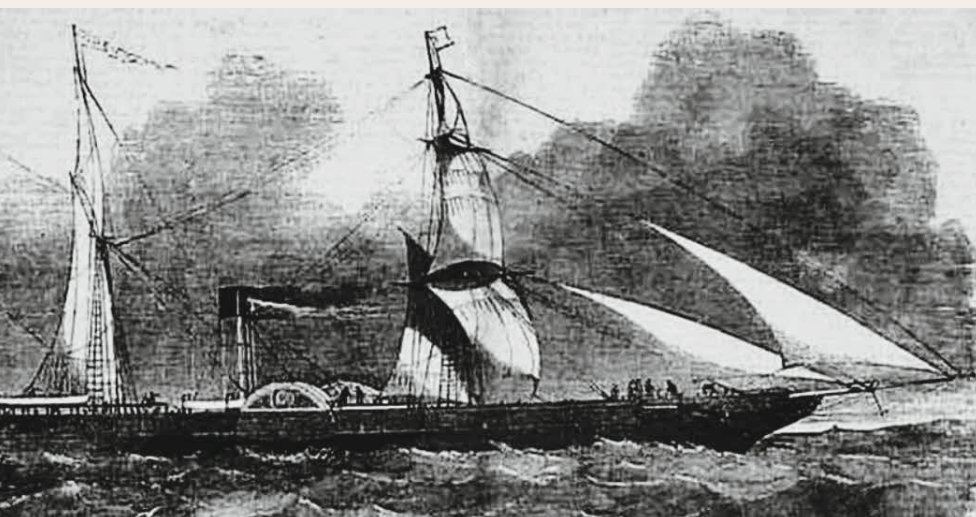
Around the end of the 1840s, a paddle steamer navigated the glorious waters of the Caribbean. This ship carried the beautiful name 'Lady McLeod'. The ship travelled between Port of Spain and San Fernando, port cities on the Caribbean island of Trinidad. Over this route, the Lady McLeod carried passengers, freight and mail. Originally named Blue Belle, the ship was designed and constructed by the famous shipbuilder Robert Napier in Govan near Glasgow in Scotland. "The paddle steamer boasted 40 horsepower, weighed 67 tonnes and was more than 33 metres long," explains Michael Hilbertz, Senior Philatelist at Heinrich

Köhler. "It was completed on 2 September 1845, and the first owner was John Lamont. The Scottish captain David Bryce took command of the steamer on her formidable maiden voyage, covering 7,000 kilometres across the North Atlantic to the coast of South America." The journey began on 5 September 1845. 48 days later, the Blue Belle arrived at Port of Spain, Trinidad. The paddle steamer began regular service between Port of Spain and San Fernando on 2 November 1845. "On 21 November 1845, a Trinidadian newspaper reported that the 'steamer Lady McLeod' was transporting letters,

money and small packages, as well as people and freight," says Hilbertz. "This service cost one dollar a month for subscribers, while non-subscribers paid ten cents a letter." On 5 December 1845, Captain David Bryce became the ship's second owner. He had previously renamed the ship 'Lady McLeod' in honour of the wife of the then Governor of Trinidad. On 15 February 1844, Sir Henry George McLeod laid the foundation stone for the new seat of government in Port of Spain and was keen to support the development of San Fernando, a settlement in the south, into the island's second-largest town. →

This painting by the Trinidadian painter Michel-Jean Cazabon (1813-1888) shows the port of San Fernando, Trinidad, in the nineteenth century.





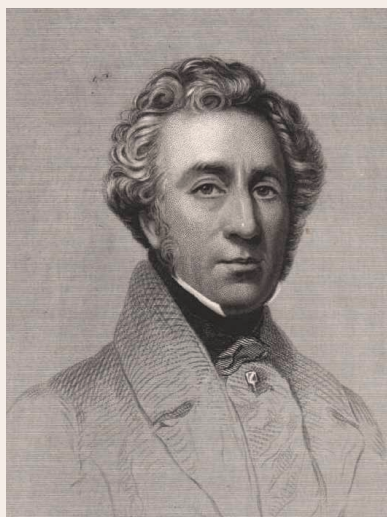
In addition to people and freight, the paddle steamer Lady McLeod also transported letters, money and small packages on the route between the Trinidadian port towns of Port of Spain and San Fernando.



The paddle steamer Lady McLeod provided a liner service on the sea route between Port of Spain and San Fernando to the south from 1845 until 1854.

However, the 50-kilometre overland route between the two settlements was barely traversable because of swamps and jungle. A regular ship service was therefore established that played an incredibly important part in the economic development of the port towns.

The shipbuilder Robert Napier designed and constructed the paddle steamer Lady McLeod, which was completed on 2 September 1845 and registered under the name Blue Belle.



“The signatory has procured labels.”

What led to the issuing of the world's first ship mail stamp, also known by the name ‘Lady McLeod’, which is now a highly sought-after rarity? David Bryce published the following notice in the Port of Spain Gazette on 16 April 1847: “The signatory, experiencing inconvenience in collecting the money for letters from non-subscribers, has procured labels, which may be had of him or the agents for the steamer, at five cents each, or four dollars per hundred. No other letters but those of subscribers who have paid in advance, or such as have these labels attached, will be carried, from and after the 24th instant.” The inconvenience referred to here related mainly to the change that Bryce had to have available when non-subscribers paid the fees for their letters. “So he drew on the model of prepaid postal receipts from the English motherland and had his own stamps printed, which were only valid for the route between Port of Spain and San Fernando on the Lady McLeod,” explains Michael Hilbertz. “Incidentally, the word ‘model’ can be understood literally. The Lady McLeod has the exact same dimensions as the Penny Black, the world's first stamp, which was issued in England in 1840. The discounted price

offered to those buying 100 stamps suggests that the ship mail stamps were printed in sheets of 100; however, it has not been possible to verify this, since no large multiples are known to have survived. At the same time, the introduction of the Lady McLeod stamps meant a reduction in the postage for letters from ten to five cents.” So for David Bryce, the reduced workload was, in the literal sense, worth good money.

The world's first private postage stamp

The stamp comes in a highly artistic white-and-blue design. The motif shows a ship with three masts, sails and a smoking funnel, with the entwined initials of the ship's name ‘L Mc L’ below. There is no indication of value or origin. The Lady McLeod stamp was produced in a remarkably clean lithograph with a beautiful deep-blue colour on thick, yellow paper. Incidentally, the Lady McLeod thereby claims another record as the world's first private postage stamp. Due to its importance in philately and postal history, leading stamp catalogues such as ‘Stanley Gibbons’ list it as the number-one stamp from Trinidad and Tobago. Although Bryce had thereby produced a very sophisticated postage stamp, there was no device to ‘cancel’

or obliterate the stamp on board the ship. Instead, the stamps were cancelled with an ink cross or by roughly tearing off a corner. A census of all Lady McLeod stamps, published by the British West Indies Study Circle in 2009, identifies 24 unused, 23 used and 44 on cover, making a total of 91 stamps; however, it is not possible to trace all of the known covers at present. In his 2016 publication, *New Research on the Lady McLeod of Trinidad*, Gregory Frantz lists a total of 92 stamps, so it is fairly certain that no more than 100 Lady McLeod stamps have survived to this day. "It was not uncommon for stamps on letters to avoid cancellation – for example, the Lady McLeod on a large piece in the famous Tapling Collection, which can be viewed in the British Museum in London," explains Michael Hilbertz. "It

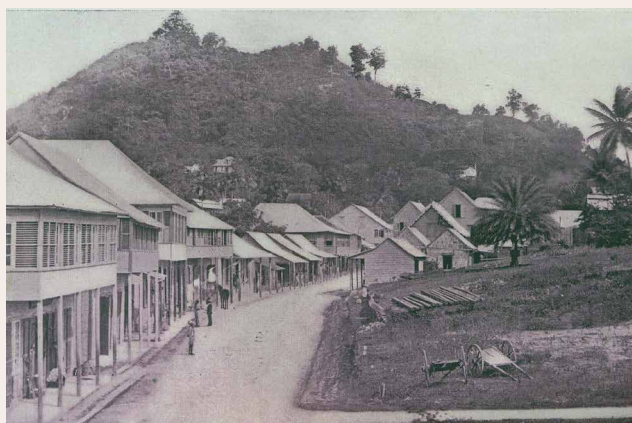
can be assumed that some of the stamps presented today as unused come from such letters where the stamp was not cancelled." Of course, some of the best Lady McLeod stamps have graced the collections of famous philatelists such as Baron Philipp von Ferrari, Alfred H. Caspary and Thomas K. Tapling. The majority of the surviving letters come from one correspondence, with Messrs. Taylor and Angus, Port of Spain, and Taylor & Co., San Fernando, as recipients.

The ultimate specimen – a cover with the top-left sheet corner

We've kept the ultimate Lady McLeod stamp until last (see also the cover of this issue): the cover in question carries the only known example of a complete top-left sheet corner – known as 'position 1' on the sheet. The item is dated



This unique example of the Lady McLeod stamp is regarded as the finest piece with the widest margins known to have survived. At one time, it was part of Alfred Caspary's famous collection. For some time now, it has had a new home in a collection in Germany.



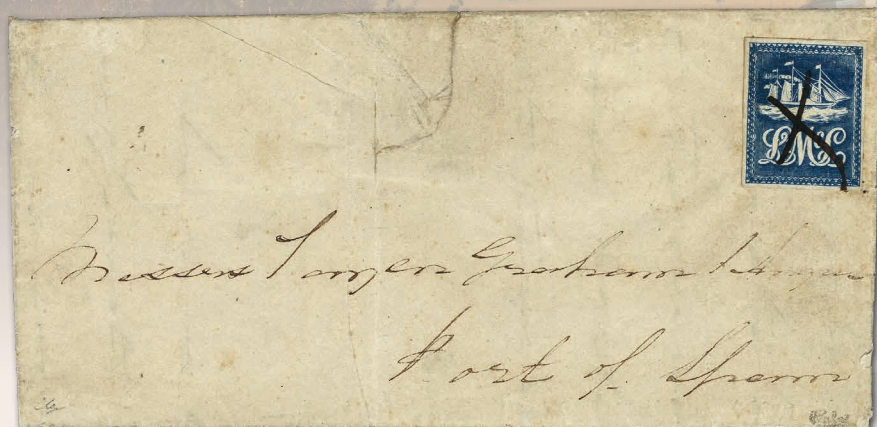
This picture of the High Street in San Fernando conveys an authentic impression of the southern port town in Trinidad in the nineteenth century.

2 March 1848 and was posted from Port of Spain to San Fernando, addressed to Messrs. Taylor & Co. The current owner acquired this unique item against stiff competition at an international auction in London in 1990. As a result, the item ended up in Germany and the buyer discovered a love of Lady McLeod. Today, he owns three Lady McLeod covers and the finest, most wide-margined specimen of the Lady McLeod shown on the top right of this page. He acquired this exquisite item, which was already in the famous collection of Caspary at the Corinphila auction in the spring of this year, saying at the time: "In my opinion, the Lady McLeod is one of the most exciting stamps in philately."



Baron Philipp von Ferrari (1850-1917) was one of the most famous philatelists in the world. He owned one of the largest and most valuable stamp collections ever assembled, which included this beautiful unused Lady McLeod with intensive colours.

This precious item is the ultimate example of a Lady McLeod letter, which was sent from Port of Spain to San Fernando on 2 March 1848. The unique specimen carries the only known top-left sheet corner of the first stamp from Trinidad, making it a treasured rarity in traditional philately.

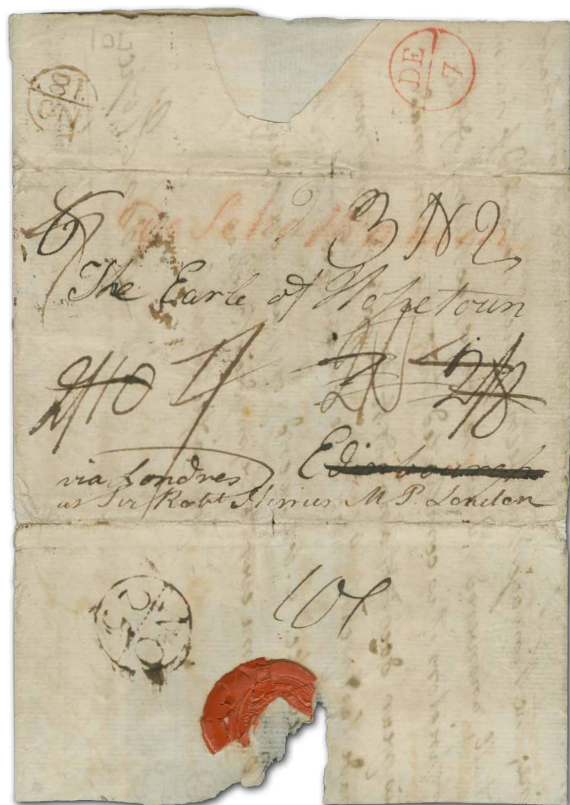


This letter from San Fernando to Port of Spain dated 19 May 1847 features a superb specimen of the Lady McLeod with full margins on all sides (above), while the cover below from the Ferrari Collection – also from San Fernando to Port of Spain – tops that with an exceptional wide-margined Lady McLeod.

The English Postmaster General introduced dated postmarks in 1661

The father of all postmarks

Did you know? In addition to the postage stamp itself, dated postmark handstamps also herald from England – and they are almost 180 years older than the adhesive stamps. The first cancellations that served as postmarks bearing the date can be traced back to May 1661. They were introduced by the English postmaster general Sir Henry Bishop.



This 1782 cover bears Bishop Marks from Scotland, Ireland and England from the three chief offices in Edinburgh (NO(VEMBER)/18), Dublin (NO/25) and London (DE(CEMBER)/7). This combination of stamps makes this item incredibly rare.

"A stamp is invented that is putt upon every letter shewing the day of the moneth that every letter comes to the office, so that no Letter Carryer may dare detain a letter from post to post; which before was usual," wrote Sir Henry Bishop on 2 August 1661 to a high-ranking member of the English parliament. By introducing the dated postmark handstamps, the postmaster general was responding to accusations from influential postal customers, particularly among the nobility and merchant classes, that mail delivery was taking too long. Known as 'Bishop Marks', these small circular stamps featured an abbreviated month with the date underneath. This was usually applied to the back of the letter, immediately upon being handed over to the post office. Dating mail using these

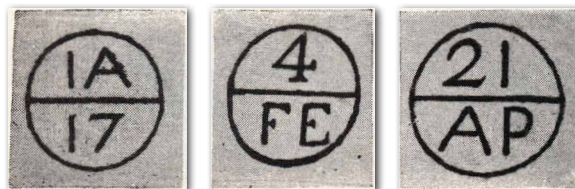
handstamps meant that customers and the post office could now clearly document the time it took to deliver letters.

In use for more than 100 years

In England, however, Bishop Marks were only used by the Chief Office in London, and only for prepaid letters. In later years, they would also be used by the chief offices in other British countries. They were ultimately used for more than a hundred years, including as arrival postmarks. Over time, the digits depicting the date were placed above the month, and the abbreviation stating the month moved down accordingly. The size of the handstamp also varied. Beginning in the 1780s, the English date stamps also included the year.



Sir Henry Bishop, the inventor of the dated postmark, served as Postmaster General between 1660 and 1663.



The first Bishop Marks list the abbreviated month on top and the date below (left). The positions of the month and date were later changed (centre), and the handstamps varied in size (right).

A Sensational Rediscovery – the Damgarten Provisional

Treasure from the Amber Town

They do still happen from time to time – remarkable finds in normal stamp collections. “When processing a philatelic delivery from abroad, I suddenly couldn’t believe what I was seeing,” says Cliff Schön, philatelist at Heinrich Köhler. “Because after examining hundreds of cards containing standard items, I was holding a card featuring an imperforate shield (Brustschilde) stamp.” It was nothing less than a Damgarten Provisional – one of the top highlights in Brustschilde philately.

“The item has not been on the market for at least 60 years and has spent decades in a collector’s duplicates inventory,” says Cliff Schön. “The owner wasn’t even aware of the treasure he possessed.” So what happened then? “We used our VSC 8000 to check the stamp thoroughly,” explains Cliff Schön. The VSC 8000 is the gold standard in authentication, with VSC standing for ‘Video Spectral Comparator’. This cutting-edge system combines intelligent digital image capture with multi-wave-length LED technology for inspecting disputed documents. The VSC 8000 is used by forensic experts, government offices and immigration authorities around the world, as well as the German State Offices of Criminal Investigation, and – of course! – by Heinrich Köhler in Wiesbaden.

A Top Rarity in Brustschilde Philately

The multispectral light sources of the VSC 8000, which range from UV to the visible spectrum to infrared, make details visible that would otherwise be imperceptible to the naked eye. 3D analysis is another useful option offered by the VSC 8000. The VSC 8000 analysis revealed no issues with the imperforated Brustschilde stamp, and in fact confirmed the initial impression that this really was the famous rarity. This was further confirmed by the philatelic expert consulted in the next step, Hansmichael Krug, who has been examining Brustschilde stamps for almost 30 years and is a leading expert in the field. With numerous award-winning exhibits, he is one of the outstanding philatelists of our time. “I was gobsmacked





Cliff Schön discovered the Brustschilde rarity postmarked in Damgarten amongst a huge accumulation of standard postage stamps.



Brustschilde stamp specialist Hansmichael Krug and Cliff Schön, philatelist at Heinrich Köhler and an expert on German areas since the Brustschilde stamps, examine the find from the amber town of Ribnitz-Damgarten.

when I was given the stamp to examine,” says the 74-year-old Frankfurt-based specialist. “The item is listed in my index, but only as a photocopy from old documents belonging to the former expert Josef Hennies. That means it’s been slumbering in a collection for a long, long time, and is now coming back into the public eye for the first time in decades. I’m delighted to say that the item is genuine and in impeccable condition.”

Philatelic Highlights from the Early Period of the German Empire

He does, however, express one ‘reservation’ when it comes to the name of the item. “Although the term ‘provisional stamp’ has become established for these imperforate Brustschilde stamps, that’s not technically correct,” says Hansmichael Krug. “A provisional stamp is an issue produced specifically for provisional use, for example with an overprint of a new value indication on stamps used temporarily before regular issues in the corresponding value were available again. But the imperforate Brustschilde stamps were not intentionally left imperforate, they simply reached the postal system like that by mistake. Nevertheless, there’s no denying that imperforate Brustschilde are, along with the Syke Provisorium, among the philatelic highlights from the early period of the German Empire.” Incidentally, the Syke Provisorium, also known as the Syke Bisect, really is a provisional issue. For a time, the one-groschen small shield stamp was vertically bisected and used as half-groschen franking by the post office authorities in Syke in Hanover. And the same procedure was later followed there with the one-groschen large shield stamps. These were also vertically bisected and used as half-groschen franking. The Syke Provisorium is bisected, but perforated in a comb perforation 13¾: 14¼ like the regular Brustschilde stamps that were issued in January 1872 as the German Empire’s first stamps. But let’s return now to the imperforate Brustschilde rarities.

Largest known multiple is a strip of three

“A total of 57 imperforate Brustschilde stamps have been registered to date,” explains Hansmichael Krug. “It’s striking that none of the specimens are from the gulden/kreuzer currency area – all the items are from the taler/groschen area. It’s also interesting that stamps featuring a discernible year in the cancellation were all imperforate stamps with a small shield used in the first nine months of 1872, while all the imperforate stamps with a large shield are from 1875 and were used as pfennig franking at that time.” On top of that, you have the fact that many imperforate Brustschilde stamps were used in the same places in a relatively short period of time. That suggests that full sheets of imperforate Brustschilde stamps could have existed.


The rediscovered treasure, the imperforate Brustschilde stamp cancelled in Damgarten – one of only two known loose items, making it a philatelic rarity of the first order – was sold at auction at Heinrich Köhler in September for 7,000 euros, and has now been added to one of the best Brustschilde collections of our time!



This gem of Brustschilde philately – one of only two known imperforate 5-groschen, ochre large shield stamps cancelled in Damgarten – has been rediscovered after 60 years.

Transatlantic Mail – Communication between the Old and New Worlds

An Amazing Philatelic Adventure



This painting by John Hughes (1806-1880) is a portrait of one of the ships of the Black Ball Line.

In the nineteenth century, hundreds of thousands of European emigrants headed for America to seek their fortunes; however, many of those were keen to maintain a connection with their homeland. Merchants on both sides of the Atlantic also had an interest in establishing a regular exchange of information and goods. This was the beginning of the American shipping lines' great story of success, as they transported mail, people and freight. And that at a time when crossing the Atlantic was still a great adventure.

Let us take you back to the year 1818. On 5 January, a cold wind is blowing through the port of New York. Captain James Watkinson is pacing the deck of the James Monroe impatiently as he waits for the clock of St Paul's Chapel in Manhattan to finally strike ten. That was the time his sailing vessel, which was loaded with a cargo of apples, was scheduled to depart. The James Monroe was also transporting seven passengers and a mailbag that was also on its way to Liverpool. All told, this was a very light load. But the focus in this case wasn't on the freight itself, but on a punctual departure. The emphasis was on the schedule. This was

because three months earlier, various advertisements in New York newspapers had announced that, from January 1818, four ships would sail from New York to Liverpool and back on a regular timetable on certain days of the month over the entire year. The headsails of these four ships – the Amity, the Courier, the Pacific and the James Monroe – were painted with a large black circle, the logo of the American shipping company Black Ball Line. "This timetable was a huge innovation for the shipping industry," says Tobias Huylmans, Managing Director of Heinrich Köhler. "Having ships set sail at times you could rely on gave merchants a certain planning

security, and the ships of the Black Ball Line soon achieved a high capacity utilisation rate." The model caught on. From the mid-1830s onwards, other 'packet lines' competed successfully on the New York-Liverpool route. And other lines from Boston, Baltimore and Philadelphia sailed to and from major British and continental ports such as London, Le Havre and Bremen. These services facilitated the swift development of transatlantic trade and communication between the Old and New Worlds. Surviving from these journeys are pieces of mail, each telling their own story of their arduous journey through storms and rough seas.

Postal organisations sign contracts with 'packets' for ship mail transportation

But before we dive deeper into this fascinating story of transatlantic mail, it is important to understand exactly what the term 'packet' means. "Packet ships were contracted by postal organisations and governments to transport mail," explains Tobias Huylmans. "The respective postal administration charged a fixed packet postage fee for mail transported by sea. Postal historians make a distinction between these ships and private cargo ships that transported mail across the Atlantic alongside their normal freight. In this case, when the ship docked, a 'ship fee' became due, and this usually also included a small contribution for the ship owner or captain."

But let's return now to the success story of the American packet lines. The first shipping company to copy the Black Ball Line's concept was the Red Star Line in 1822. The company was founded in New York in early 1818 and, from 1822 under the name 'New Line', also operated a scheduled service between New York and Liverpool, initially with four ships. Other competitors soon followed with their own shipping services, taking mail, people and goods on board. At this point, the Red Star Line stopped calling itself the 'New Line' and instead began operating under the name 'Second Line'. On 11 September 1835, the shipowner and shipping agent Robert Kermit acquired the Red Star Line and renamed it the Kermit Line. The company was liquidated in 1867 because of the economic crisis that followed the American Civil War. "The so-called 'Havre Packets' – vessels under the American flag that sailed scheduled routes between New York and Le Havre in France – were also successful in the 1820s," says Tobias Huylmans. "However, these ships did not have government contracts for postal transportation, so they were not actually packet ships in the strictest sense, even if they were called that at the time." →



This letter was transported from Liverpool to Montreal in 1818 on the maiden return voyage of the Black Ball Line's ship, the *James Monroe*.



On its maiden return voyage on 1 May 1838, the *Sirius* – the first steamer to cross the Atlantic – transported this letter from New York to Falmouth in Cornwall, England (arriving on 18 May 1838). From there, the letter was carried over land to London, where it arrived on 21 May 1838 (see the arrival postmark on the back of the cover shown below).



The Cunard Line's ship *Britannia* brought this letter from Edinburgh to Boston. The journey went from 2 to 19 September 1847. From there, the mail was carried to New York in sealed mail bags. The letter was franked in Scotland with a strip of six of the blue 'Two Pence' stamps, amounting to a total of 12 pence (one shilling). The red 7 on the cover indicates the amount of postage that was due in the USA: five cents for domestic transport and a two-cent 'ship fee'.



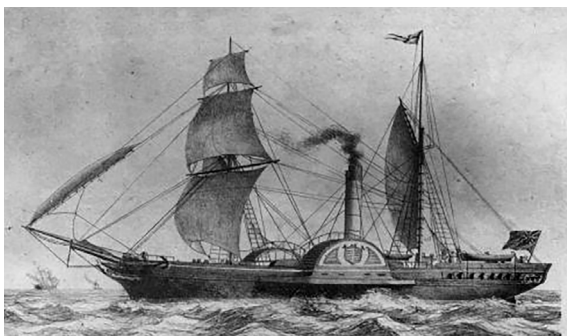
This letter was posted in Paris on 8 November 1852 and travelled via Le Havre and Solent to Bremen. From there, the *Hermann* – a ship owned by the Ocean Steam Navigation Company – carried it to New York in 13 days.



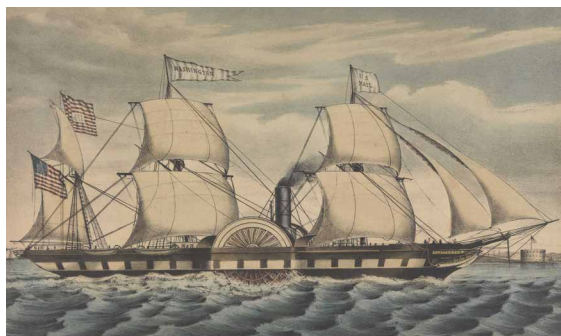
From 25 August to 4 September 1858, this letter was transported from Boston to Liverpool on the *Niagara*, a ship belonging to the Cunard Line. The letter was franked with a whopping 96 cents – the postage for a letter weighing two ounces. This priceless item is franked with eight grey-black '12 Cents George Washington' stamps, which were issued on 30 January 1857.

April 1838: the age of transatlantic steam shipping begins

Another key factor in the success of the American packet lines was the network of coasters that sailed between the ports on the north-eastern coast, predominantly New York, and the major ports of the south in Savannah, Mobile, Charleston and New Orleans. In the decades before the civil war, large square riggers transported not only mail and passengers from southern ports, but also cotton bales for American and European textile factories. The return loads would then include North American and European products as well as agricultural produce. In the mid-nineteenth century, the continuing rapid growth of the cotton trade boosted the American economy, and that industry, alongside the transportation of immigrants, became the main source of income for the sailboat shipping lines. This was because these sailboat lines had lost the majority of their mail business to the nineteenth century's big invention – the steam engine. The late 1830s marked the beginning of the era of the ocean steamers – the age of the great liners that, with their speed in matters of transatlantic communication, stole a march on the sailing ships that had come before. Steamers were already used to transport letters on rivers and in close proximity to the coast at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The first attempt to cross the Atlantic using steam was undertaken in 1819 by the American three-masted sailing ship the *Savannah*, which was also fitted with steam-driven paddlewheels. "However, the sailors retained the upper hand, and almost 20 years would pass before the Saint George Steam Packet Company's steamship *Sirius* finally rang in the age of the steamer with its voyage from Cork, Ireland, to New York on 4 April 1838," explains Tobias Huylmans. "Just four days later, on 8 April 1838, the Great Western Steamship Company's steamship *Great Western* set off from Bristol towards New York. Both ships reached the port of New York on the same day, 23 April 1838, with the *Sirius* beating the *Great Western* by just a few hours."



The *Sirius*, which was operated by the Saint George Steam Packet Company, weighed 700 tonnes and travelled at 320 horsepower. In April 1838, it became the first steamer to cross the Atlantic from Cork, Ireland to New York.



The paddle steamer *Washington* and its sister ship the *Hermann* were the first ships belonging to the Ocean Steam Navigation Company to launch operations.

Speed and reliability were key

Nobody could deny it – the new steamships were much faster and more reliable than the sailing ships. Travelling westwards, sailing boats took around 30 days on average, while steamers made the voyage in only 17 days. Travelling eastwards, sailing ships could cross the Atlantic in just 20 days because of the more favourable winds, while steamers took 15 days. Yet even in those days, time was money, and the majority of merchants chose steamers when it came to their correspondence. One man in particular played a leading role at the beginning of this era. The Canadian shipowner Samuel Cunard presented the British government with a convincing concept for establishing a transatlantic postal service using steamships. And he quickly put the competition – and the Great Western Steamship Company in particular – out of the race. The British and North-American Royal Mail Steam Packet Company, or the Cunard Line for short, was awarded a contract for transatlantic mail transport by the British admiralty. And on 4 July 1840, the steamer *Britannia* carried mail and freight from Liverpool to Boston. The Cunard Line would later alternately call at Boston and New York. The company was so successful that British steam shipping totally dominated transatlantic transportation. The shorter transport times for mail and goods gave British companies a dominant position in the American market. And thanks to the fast and reliable voyages of its Cunard

Line, the British Royal Mail achieved a near monopoly in transatlantic postal transport, allowing it to charge high sea post fees. The American Revolutionary War between the 13 colonies and the British colonial power had led to America gaining independence in 1783. Now, just 60 years later, the United States found itself once again in a position of economic dependency on Great Britain. This was a situation American Congress was determined to change as soon as possible.

“The fastest horses, the prettiest women, the best shooting guns and the fastest ships.”

With its resolution of 15 June 1844 and the associated law passed on 3 March 1845, the United States Congress commissioned the Postmaster General with the task of establishing a postal steamer service between the US and Europe. Once Bremen had been selected as the port of call in Europe, the American postal service began the search for a suitable shipping company. In February 1846, the New York-based Ocean Steam Navigation Company was awarded the contract for establishing a shipping service from New York to Bremerhaven. But the new company nearly went under before it even began – it proved extremely difficult to find investors for a newly founded shipping company. With financial support from Prussia and other German states, the Free and Hanseatic City of Bremen ultimately raised the necessary funds, and the Ocean Steam

Navigation Company was able to construct the required ships and launch its liner service. However, the actual competition to the Cunard Line was the Collins Line, which was founded by American businessman Edward Knight Collins in 1847 and subsidised by the US Congress. Edson Olds, a congressman at the time, is quoted as saying: “We have the fastest horses, the prettiest women and the best shooting guns in the world, and we must also have the fastest steamers.” Perhaps it was due to these high technological standards that the Collins Line was already forced to declare bankruptcy by 1858. “They may have had faster and more elegant steamers, but the Collins Line never managed to operate at a profit, despite the subsidies they were receiving,” explains Tobias Huylmans. “Maybe their investments were just too high. On top of that, they lost a number of their ships in accidents.” Nevertheless, the Collins Line still played an important role in the history of transatlantic shipping thanks to the innovative developments it made to the technology and comfort of its vessels.

SPRING AUCTION

The 2023 spring auction at Heinrich Köhler will be an exciting event – among other items, it will feature one of the most significant collections on the rise and fall of the American packet lines: the Graham Booth Collection.

Peer Steinbrück has been collecting stamps since childhood



“Philately Expands Our Horizons.”

“I really should have paid entertainment tax on those events,” says Peer Steinbrück with a smile. He is referring to the official presentations of new German stamp issues, which was one of his favourite duties during his tenure as German Finance Minister from 2005 to 2009. In Germany, the Finance Minister is the official issuer of stamps and coins. For Peer Steinbrück, who has been collecting stamps since he was six years old, this was a thrilling opportunity – and a chance to gain exciting new knowledge.

“Stamps document history and trends,” says the Hamburg native. “And they are beautiful, aesthetically pleasing little works of art at the same time. In that sense, philately expands our horizons in many ways.” Born on 10 January 1947, Peer Steinbrück aspired to a career in politics from an early age. After holding a number of different political roles, he was appointed chief clerk to the Premier of North Rhine-Westphalia, Johannes Rau, in 1986. In 1990, Peer Steinbrück transferred to the state government of Schleswig-Holstein, where he served as state secretary. He returned to North Rhine-Westphalia in 1998 to run the Ministry of Economics and, ultimately, the Ministry of Finance beginning in February 2000. On 6 November 2002, Steinbrück became Premier of North Rhine-Westphalia, and Angela Merkel appointed him German Finance Minister on 22 November 2005. From 2009 to 2016, Peer Steinbrück was a member of the German parliament. He lost his bid for the chancellorship as the SPD candidate in the 2013 German elections to the incumbent Angela Merkel.

“When you don’t have anyone to pass your treasures on to, you have to recognise when it’s time to let go of them.”

“When I was six, I started removing the stamps from the

letters we received at home, the same way many early collectors do,” Peer Steinbrück recounts. He also inherited a collection of 19th- and 20th-century Japanese stamps from a relative a few years later. “That was what sparked my serious interest in philately.” In the years that followed, he focused on collecting from German regions, including the Kingdom of Bavaria, the German colonies until the Treaty of Versailles, and the Free City of Danzig, as his father had been born there. The Memel Territory, with its thrilling history, also appealed to the regular soldier and candidate for reserve officer. “That’s what got me started in the late 1960s. It was around the same time I joined the SPD, in 1969.” Peer Steinbrück’s Danish grandmother also frequently gave him stamps as gifts, including many from the various English colonies. “Philately is almost like time travel. I learned so much about our history and the history of our European neighbours. Sadly, I never managed to get my children or grandchildren interested in philately,” says the 75-year-old. “When you don’t have anyone to pass your treasures on to, you have to recognise when it’s time to let go of them.” Peer Steinbrück chose Heinrich Köhler auction house to return his collections to the world of philately. We would like to thank him for placing his trust in us!

Two suitcases and four pallets weighing more than two tonnes

“Wonderful Collections – Flawlessly Presented.”

The 2023 spring auction at Heinrich Köhler will feature a truly impressive series of sales. Going under the hammer is a general collection of German stamps from 1849 to the modern era, which also includes several outstanding special collections and a large number of rarities. Read more about this exceptional consignment in our interview with Dieter Michelson, Managing Director at Heinrich Köhler.



‘5 Shillings on 5 Marks’ – this G.R.I. stamp of German New Guinea in overprint type II is an exceptional rarity that the special catalogue values at 15,000 euros (unused). It is one of the G.R.I. highlights in Erik Nagel's collection.

Mr Michelson, Heinrich Köhler auction house receives numerous consignments from all over the world for every auction. Recently, however, a very large collection made for an extremely interesting consignment story. Can you tell us more?

The consignment you're referring to is just incredible. It's a great collection from South Carolina. And it's great in more ways than one: the level of the philately, the volume, the weight and even the value.

How did this consignment come to pass?

It started with a phone call on 27 April of this year, late afternoon. The caller was the wife of Erik Nagel, a major collector. Mrs Nagel told me that it had been her husband's heartfelt wish to have his collections sold by Heinrich Köhler. I realised immediately that we were talking about important material, since Erik was passionate about a wide range of philatelic fields, and he invested a great deal of time and money into his collections. His wife and I agreed to meet in South Carolina as soon as possible, planning to be there from 2 to 5 May. Tobias

Huylmans and I were very much looking forward to our trip to the USA.

As a collector, Erik Nagel was undoubtedly a philatelist par excellence. Please tell us a bit more about him and his unique way of documenting philately and postal history.

Erik was a decent man, very soft-spoken. He usually placed his bids in writing, and he never held back; he was always on the lookout for better material. It had to be rare, special and of the highest quality. And he got many of the exceptional items he wanted, too. He collected German stamps from 1849 into the 2000s, with his areas of specialisation spanning Bavaria, Württemberg, the German Empire, the German colonies and Danzig. But he also had many high-quality items from other regions. His greatest passion was the British occupation of the German colonies, known as the G.R.I. issues. Erik Nagel's expertise really was one of a kind! He cultivated his collections by the book with the utmost care. Erik loved to collect unused stamps. For some territories, such as German States, he also focused on collecting the cancellations, particularly →



Birgit Michelson guards the precious stamps: Birgit and Dieter Michelson packed the most valuable pieces from Erik Nagel's phenomenal collection into two large suitcases, checked them in with the airline as 'passengers' and personally transported them back to Germany on the aeroplane.



Dieter Michelson and Tobias Huylmans, Managing Directors at Heinrich Köhler, inspected Erik Nagel's collection in South Carolina and were absolutely thrilled with it.

the numbered cancellations of Saxony, Braunschweig or Bavaria. The quality and condition were very important to him, and he always wanted stamps that were as centred as possible – not unusual among American collectors. He was a specialised collector of his favourite area – G.R.I. stamps – and he wanted to include as many varieties of overprints in his collection as possible. And like all the other areas he collected, his G.R.I stamps are flawlessly presented.

At the beginning of our discussion, you said that the collection isn't just valuable; it's also enormous. But you can't simply tuck a stamp collection of that size under your arm and carry it back to Germany. How did you transport these treasures across the pond?

It was a real adventure from start to finish. At first, Tobias Huylmans and I were absolutely astonished by the sheer volume of the collection when we saw it with our own eyes. Erik had an enormous room in his house just for stamps, and most of the basement was also full of albums, boxes and still-packaged auction shipments. We immediately realised that transporting this collection to Germany was going to be a herculean task. But for special cases like these, we have a resident expert in the USA: Thomas Rhein. I went and met with Thomas in Greenville, South Carolina to arrange the logistics of packaging and shipping the collection. It was clear that I would need to take many of the more valuable items back with me on the aeroplane. But the value of those items exceeded the amount that I could insure as an individual – never mind the fact that I simply couldn't have carried such a huge amount of valuable stamps on my own. So I asked my wife Birgit if she fancied spending a weekend in South Carolina. As luck would have it, she did! And that's how we managed the insurance issue, too. We carefully packed the most valuable material into two suitcases and checked them in as passengers with the airline, so the suitcases had their own seats on the flight and were also properly insured. However, all this was easier said than done. We had numerous conversations with Lufthansa employees and had to go through quite a few checks before we were finally sitting on the plane with



A curiosity of postal history: this piece of mail was franked with Germania overprints and sent by the German postal service in Turkey. It's what was known as a 'raisin lid' – the lid of a round tin containing raisins sent to potential buyers to give them the opportunity to sample the product.

the suitcases. Incidentally, Thomas Rhein and his team needed two full days to pack up the rest of the collection that was still at the house. In the end, there were 84 large cardboard boxes on four pallets, weighing a total of more than two tonnes; luckily, all of them have since arrived in Wiesbaden safe and sound.

A general collection of German stamps with a wide range of high-quality special collections – and bidding for them will start at next year's spring auction. What are your plans? How many auctions will feature stamps from these collections?

We will feature Erik Nagel's incredible collections over the course of three or four auctions. There will be a selection of first-rate items from every area in each auction, sensibly distributed, just as we've done for over a hundred years. I'm already looking forward to these auctions with great anticipation. They are sure to be wonderful, and our customers will be thrilled. I'm very certain of that.

Many thanks for talking to us, Mr Michelson.

G.R.I. and G.R. MAFIA

In 1914, during the First World War, British troops occupied the German colonies of German New Guinea, Samoa and the island of Nauru, which was part of the German colony of the Marshall Islands. Soon afterward, the occupying forces added an overprint featuring the letters **G.R.I.** and an additional surcharge in British currency to the ship-type colonial stamps previously valid in these colonies. Incidentally, **G.R.I.** stands for Georgius Rex Imperator. For German New Guinea and the Marshall Islands, a distinction is drawn between the two different overprint types for the small-format pfennig values and the large, horizontal-format mark values. For Samoa, there is generally only one overprint type each for the small- and large-value stamps; however, the '1 Shilling on 1 Mark' stamp has both a 'shillings' and a 'shilling' overprint. The occupying forces did not find many German colonial stamps, relatively speaking – they only ever encountered 72 of the Marshall Islands '5 Shillings on 5 Marks' stamp, for instance. That is why these items are so rare and so highly valued. The stamp catalogue values an unused Marshall Islands '5 Shillings on 5 Marks' stamp at 9,000 euros, and a never-hinged issue would fetch 17,000 euros.

Furthermore, the island of Mafia – which belonged to the colony of German East Africa at the time – was occupied by British-Indian troops in January 1915. There, too, the occupying forces overprinted surcharges on the ship-type stamps. They display the letters **G.R.** and the name of the island, **MAFIA**. Whilst the G.R.I. overprints are always black, there are black, blackish-purple, purple, green and blue-green versions of the G.R. MAFIA overprints.

Last but not least, there are rare and highly valuable errors and varieties of the various overprint types from the British occupation of the German colonies that make this attractive field of collecting even more exciting.

Recommended reading: The book "G.R.I." by Robert M. Gibbs is a detailed and highly knowledgeable source on the fascinating subject of German colonial stamps with British overprints during the First World War. The book can occasionally be found as a second-hand copy and is highly recommended.



Just one example of the numerous rare pieces of classic German philately that Erik Nagel's collection has to offer: this unused strip of three of the 3-Kreuzer stamp from the first stamp issue of the Kingdom of Württemberg in 1851 is an extremely rare find in such crisp and beautiful condition.

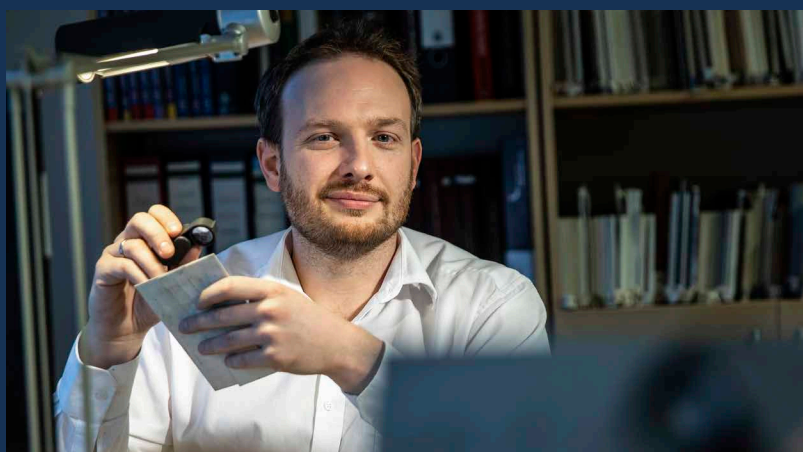


The stamp booklets from the Free City of Danzig are so rare and sought-after that the special stamp catalogue generally does not appraise them. Stamp booklet No. 7 is an exception, however; if it is in never-hinged condition, like this one from Erik Nagel's collection, the catalogue values it at 14,000 euros.

The unused 1-, 2- and 3-rupee stamps from the British occupation of the island of Mafia are among the rarest items in the entire field of German East Africa collecting. The special stamp catalogue values these items at 10,000, 11,000 and 9,000 euros respectively.



Tobias Huylmans – philatelist, stamp expert and IT expert



Tobias Huylmans, Managing Director at Heinrich Köhler and respected philatelic expert, is married with three sons.

“I learn something new every day.”

He discovered his passion for philately over 25 years ago. “When I was 12, my grandma gave me my great-grandfather’s collection as a gift,” Tobias Huylmans explains. “I’ve been intensely interested in philately ever since. Even now, I still learn something new every day.” By the tender age of 15, Tobias was already sure of one thing: “I’m going to become a professional philatelist.” Tobias Huylmans has been a philatelic expert at Heinrich Köhler in Wiesbaden since 2007. Owing to his exceptional performance and particular aptitude, he was appointed as a Managing Director at Heinrich Köhler on 6 February 2019.

Since his appointment, he has also been responsible for managing Heinrich Köhler Auktionen GmbH & Co. KG and Heinrich Köhler Briefmarkenhandel GmbH & Co. KG. “Appointing Tobias to this role was the logical consequence of his stellar work, as well as the years of steady growth of both Köhler businesses in the German and international philately market,” explains Dieter Michelson. “Tobias had been working for Heinrich Köhler very successfully for over ten years at that point. Beyond the realm of philately, he also served as a head project manager for the development of our in-house IT auction programmes and successfully advanced our online live bidding programmes.” Tobias additionally provides significant support – in terms of both IT and philatelic expertise – to the international Köhler & Corinphila Group auction companies in Switzerland, the Netherlands, the USA and Hong Kong.

Broad knowledge of philately and highly specialised expertise

Customers and colleagues truly value Tobias Huylmans’ philatelic expertise – and his friendly nature. In recent years, he acquired a number of major consignments and made a significant contribution to strengthening Heinrich Köhler’s market

position. His broad knowledge of philately and his highly specialised expertise in a number of fields of collecting led to his appointment as an official expertiser in the German Federation of Philatelic Experts (BPP) a few years ago. His hard work and dedication to the BPP in his roles as the organisation’s internet officer and as a consulting partner for new BPP expertisers have earned him a great deal of respect throughout the industry. Tobias Huylmans’ specialised fields of collecting and expertising within the BPP are Hamburg, the Memel Territory, Lithuania 1918-1940, the occupation of Lithuania during the Second World War, Western Ukraine, Liepāja and the state postal courier service of the 10th army. “His extraordinary expertise is documented in numerous articles in magazines and committee newsletters, as well as in the outstanding publication ‘Memelgebiet – Handbuch der Stempel 1920-1925’ (‘The Memel Territory – A guide to the cancellations of 1920-1925’). That publication sparked a new wave of interest in that field among numerous collectors,” Karl Louis adds. Tobias Huylmans is also a member of the Association Internationale des Experts en Philatelie (A.I.E.P.), the Royal Philatelic Society London and numerous other committees and research groups.

The highlights of IBRA 2023 in Essen

The world championship of philately



The countdown is on, with just a few months remaining before the IBRA International Stamp Fair in Essen, Germany opens its doors to philatelists from around the world from 25 to 28 May 2023. IBRA 2023 is the world championship of philately, where numerous exhibitors from all over the globe come to present their outstanding collections.

The crown jewel of philately – the original world-famous Bordeaux Cover – will be on display in the treasury at IBRA 2023. This legendary letter was sent exactly 175 years ago.



Preparations for IBRA have been in full swing for some time now, with the goal being to offer something for everyone. The stamp exhibits alone will be an impressive sight. Several hundred of the best collections from Germany and abroad are expected to be presented in approximately 3,500 frames, with exhibitors including representatives from every corner of the world.

Exceptional Philatelists

There will also be a number of exciting and educational special exhibitions on topics such as 'Jewels of German philately' and 'The 100th anniversary of German hyperinflation in 1923'. And last but not least, the centrepiece of the IBRA hall will be a treasury containing some of the world's rarest philatelic gems on display for attendees to admire. Another major highlight is that visitors will have the chance to view the crown jewel of global philately – the legendary 'Bordeaux Cover' that bears the two spectacular Mauritius POST OFFICE stamps, the red one penny and the blue two pence. The organisers of IBRA are offering a philately forum presented by Heinrich

Köhler on all four days of the event, which will feature full-day lectures on a broad range of philatelic subjects. The speakers are all outstanding philatelists and are among the most renowned experts in their respective fields. The numerous philatelic committees and research groups are also a true fount of knowledge, and these will all have their own booths at IBRA. There will even be an IBRA stage in the foyer that will host a fascinating and varied programme of events throughout the duration of the fair. IBRA 2023 is the third FIP World Exhibition in Germany, after IBRA 1973 in Munich and IBRA 1999 in Nuremberg. It is being held in conjunction with the International Stamp Fair 2023 in Essen. First held in 1976, it has since become an annual event. The focal point of the event is the large number of professional philatelists who attend: stamp dealers, leading publishers and popular trade journals, and renowned German and international stamp auctioneers – including Germany's oldest stamp auction house and one of the sponsors of the fair, Heinrich Köhler. If you would also like to become a sponsor of IBRA 2023 and enjoy the associated benefits, you can find more information at www.ibra2023.de.



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- AIJP-Patronat
- Center of Philately
- Youth Programme
- Study Group Booths
- 33rd International Stamp Fair

- Global Philatelic Network stand (Corinphila, Heinrich Köhler, H.R. Harmer and John Bull)
 - Viewing upcoming auctions
 - Presentation of the VSC8000
 - Meet and Greet
 - Free appraisal
- Rarities Auction, 27th May 2023
The ERIVAN Collection
- Book presentations
- IBRA-READING ROOM –
Presented by Heinrich Köhler
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