

PRINTED MATTERS

THE PHILATELIC MAGAZINE



165 YEARS OF MOLDAVIAN BULL'S HEADS

PROFILES IN PHILATELY BRUCE WRIGHT – “THE AMERICAN”

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND HELIGOLAND – THE MAURITIUS OF THE NORTH SEA

POSTAL HISTORY THE DREAM OF FLIGHT – THE HISTORY OF INTERNATIONAL AIR MAIL



HEINRICH KÖHLER

Germany's Oldest Stamp Auction House

Dear Readers,

It is our great pleasure to present in this issue of our customer magazine PRINTED MATTERS, another varied selection of fascinating articles. But please allow me to dedicate the editorial this time to a matter of my own concern, because it involves the future of Köhler & Corinphila Holding – also known as the Global Philatelic Network (GPN). Since 2006, the GPN has encompassed Heinrich Köhler in Wiesbaden, Corinphila Auctions in Zurich, H.R. Harmer in New York, John Bull Auctions in Hong Kong and Corinphila Veilingen in the Netherlands, which together form a strong network with outstanding international expertise. Based on the respective years when these tradition-steeped companies were founded, the network boasts 395 years of experience in the field of philately. Heinrich Köhler, Germany's oldest stamp auction house, contributes 110 years to that total. And I have to say "That makes me very proud. To ensure that you, dear customers, can continue to rely on us for a long time to come, we have recently made some changes in our management and in our company structure: with Jonas Hällström and Tobias Huylmans, we have secured the services of two dedicated and highly qualified colleagues for the management of Köhler & Corinphila Holding". You can read more about these changes in the article on pages 22–23.

But I don't wish to keep you in suspense any longer. Read on to discover remarkable people, impressive rarities, fascinating fields of collecting and interesting background information – on all aspects of philately and postal history.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue of PRINTED MATTERS!

Kind regards,




Dieter Michelson,
Managing Director of the Global Philatelic Network
and of the Heinrich Köhler Stamp Auction House

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165 years of Romanian stamps – the famous “Bull’s Heads” of the Principality of Moldavia

“They get hearts beating faster.”

The first stamps of the Principality of Moldavia are among the world’s most highly sought-after philatelic rarities. The famous Bull’s Heads were first issued in July 1858 with the values 27, 54, 81 and 108 parale. “The hand-printed aurochs from the Carpathians gets the hearts of many philatelists beating faster,” says Ion Chirescu, a successful architect and President of the Romanian Philatelic Federation. Arch. Ion Chirescu is also the organizing committee president of the EFIRO World Specialized Stamp Exhibition, which is being held in Bucharest on 17–20 April 2024. It is an event well worth attending, because Arch. Ion Chirescu will be presenting a very special exhibit there. His uncle’s collection “CARPATICA” of Bull’s Heads is the largest and most important ever to be formed in the history of international philately.

This monastery was built in Jassy (Iasi), the Moldavian capital, in the 17th century and dedicated to the Three Holy Hierarchs of Eastern Orthodoxy – Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus and John Chrysostom. The image shows the magnificent building in around 1845.



The Balkan Peninsula was fiercely fought over for centuries. Romans, Slavs, Huns and Eurasian nomads all invaded this region between the Black Sea, the Danube and the Carpathians. And the influence of the Romans can still be seen today in the name Romania. “In the 14th century, the Ottoman Empire extended all the way to south-eastern Europe,” explains Arch. Ion Chirescu. “Despite that, the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia managed to retain far-reaching internal autonomy and even a certain degree of freedom in foreign policy into the 18th century.” However, as the Sublime Porte demanded higher and higher tributes, the principalities gradually lost their independence. After the Russo-Turkish War (1828–29), the Russian occupiers enacted Moldavia’s first constitution and defeated liberal revolutionary forces in 1848–49. The Crimean War and the Treaty of Paris of 1856 resulted in a dwindling of Russian influence and a strengthening of Turkey’s position. “Soon thereafter, the Principality of Moldavia once again demonstrated its strong desire for independence,” says Chirescu. “In July 1858, the first stamps were issued there. The Moldavians were ahead of the game: it would be almost five years before the great Ottoman Empire issued its first postage stamps in January 1863.”

Small number issued – even fewer sold

The Moldavian postal system was well organised. In 1852, Prince Grigore Ghica, who ruled independently of the major powers, negotiated new terms with the private postal operators for the five existing postal routes. There were a total of 13 post offices, including the central post office in Jassy (Iași), the capital. Twice a week, the letters collected there were carried across the country by postal coaches. The postage rate was based on the number of sheet of papers sent. “Every post office used post paid FRANCO markings,” explains Chirescu. “And from the autumn of 1857, letters were given the markings ‘RECEPISSE.’” But that’s not all: postal staff wore uniforms and the post offices had set opening times. The key step towards the introduction of

postage stamps followed on 30 June 1858. Postal Director Vasile Grigoriu issued a set of general regulations governing postal services. “One of the matters covered in these regulations was the franking of letters using stamps that would soon be available to buy at post offices,” explains Chirescu. “Franked letters had to be handed in directly at a post office, where they would be checked to ensure the franking was correct. Items that were to be paid by the recipient could still be put in a post box.” By late June 1858, the Ministry of Finance had already commissioned the design and printing of the four new postage stamps. These were designed in a workshop in Jassy and handstamped one at a time. A total of around 24,000 were printed: 6,000 of the 27 parale, 10,000 of the 54 parale, 2,000 of the 81 parale, and



The legendary first Bull's Heads of the Principality of Moldavia were issued in July 1858, and they still get collectors around the world excited to this day.

6,000 of the 108 parale. They remained valid until the end of October 1858, so they were only in use for around 100 days. During that period, not even half the stamps produced were sold. “Obviously, with only 2,000 printed, the 81 parale stamp is the rarest of this issue,” says Chirescu. “But the 27 parale stamp is almost as rare, of which incidentally just one tête-bêche pair survived. Over the years, that has been part of the exceptional collections of Baron Philipp von Ferriar, Arthur Hind and King Carol II of Romania.” In 1950, the former Romanian ruler – who was by then living in exile in Portugal – exhibited the item in London.

Is this unique philatelic treasure now hiding in a well-guarded collection somewhere around the globe? Or has it – God forbid – been lost forever?

Aurochs with human features

The stamp workshop in Jassy had previously produced Princely tax on stamped paper using handprinting presses manufactured by the Georg Sigl company in Vienna in 1856. These tax stamps and old seals were then used as templates for the new postage stamps. Ion Chirescu describes the motif of the Bull's Heads: “The iron dies were engraved by hand in a circle with the head of an aurochs – Moldavia’s heraldic animal – a star, the words PORTO SCRISORI (or ‘postage for letters’) in Cyrillic lettering, and the figure of value surrounded by a post horn.” Interestingly, the head of the aurochs has human features. If you examine the four stamps more closely, it is clear that the engraver did not produce and copy an original stamp, but rather produced the four dies individually. The hand printing press was then used to print the stamp 32 times on the coloured paper provided for that purpose – the 27 parale stamp in black on rose paper, the 54 parale stamp in green on pale green, the 81 parale stamp in blue on pale blue, and the 108 parale stamp in blue on rose. “They had to take regular breaks during production to allow the ink to dry,” explains Chirescu. “And the rather thick ink was difficult to apply, so it was spread very unevenly on to the paper.” Because of this uniqueness

of the printed images, it is usually easy to trace the provenance of most of the specimens that have survived. It is thought that only around 800 of the 24,000 items originally produced are still in existence. Single frankings are rare: the renowned Romania expert Fritz Heimbüchler only recorded 88 covers.

The only completely preserved cover with an 81 parale stamp

However, according to Heimbüchler, the top item in Romanian philately is not a single franking, but a cover featuring four Bull's Heads. The item in question is a registered letter sent from Bacău on 4



The Museum Foundation of Post and Telecommunication's famous "Bacău cover" is one of the world rarities of classic Romanian philately.

August 1858. The postmaster there cut the stamps into a rounded shape. "This and the octagonal trim are actually not that popular with Moldavia collectors," says Chirescu. "To be of the best quality, the Bull's Heads need be cut square." Despite that, a Romanian collector would love to have the cover from Bacău in his collection. After all, it is probably the only completely preserved cover with a Moldavian 81 parale stamp. Unfortunately, however, the unique item is not for sale. In 1901, it came into the possession of what was then the Reichspostmuseum via the famous Berlin stamp dealer Philipp Kosack, and it is, to this day, the highlight of the Romanian collection at the Museum Foundation of Post and Telecommunication's Philatelic Archive in Bonn. The cover of this issue of PRINTED MATTERS shows the world rarity set against the background of a historic drawing of the Moldavian capital Jassy in around 1850.

Remarkable world-class rarity

Vasile Grigoriu's postal regulations involved a complicated tariff that based on distances and weight of letters. Just a few weeks after the first stamps were

introduced, preparations began for a tariff reform that came into force on 1 November 1858. The fee for each weight step was 10 parale, the registration doubled the cost of letter, a 5 parale fee for newspapers was also introduced. This, of course, meant that new postage stamps with these values were needed. These were issued in November 1858, and they show the bull's head in a square with rounded corners. The words are now in Latin lettering, rather than Cyrillic. The top rarity from this issue is the 5 parale newspapers stamp. "On a newspaper, this stamp is one of the most remarkable world-class rarities," says Chirescu. This second Moldavian stamp issue remained postally valid until May 1862. In 1859, the Principality of Moldavia united with Wallachia under the nominal sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire. That was formally confirmed in 1862, when the unified state assumed the name Romania and chose Bucharest as its capital. In April 2024, Bucharest will be hosting the EFIRO international stamp exhibition, where the "CARPATICA"-collection of Bull's Heads will be on display. Will we be seeing you there in the "Paris of the East"?



In a matter of seconds, the philatelic expertise of ProFi, the Heinrich Köhler Stamp Auction House's digital ProvenanceFinder tool, confirmed that the famous "Caspary pair" is one of only four surviving pairs of 108 parale stamps. One is owned by a private collector and another was part of King Carol II's excellent Bull's Heads collection, but is, like the vertical 27 parale tête-bêche pair, now lost. The third pair of 108 parale stamps is on display in the Museum of Communication in Berlin.



Herbert Bloch, the late stamp evaluator, once described this 81 parale as "probably the finest surviving used piece". This item with superb margins is one of two known samples that were used at the post office of Piatra. The other item is part of the Tapling Collection in the British Library. Only 27 used 81 parale stamps are known from all of Moldavia's post offices.



This 108 parale, as a single franking on a letter sent to Jassy in 1858, carries the datestamp "Bârlad/Moldova". ProFi revealed that only nine 108 parale stamps were used at Bârlad. One of these is in the British Library and one is damaged. This wonderful cover is the only known recorded letter with a 108 parale stamp from Bârlad.



Unique in a number of ways: according to current knowledge, this 27 parale is doubly unique – the only cover from the post office at Botuschan and the only recorded use of the 27 parale there.



ION CHIRESCU AND HIS PRIVATE MUSEUM OF RECORDS

In one of the narrow alleys of Bucharest's Old Town you'll find the phenomenal Museum of Romanian Records. Ion Chirescu is not only a collector of stamps, but also of many other historical items, which he exhibits there in his private, seven-storey museum. Seven of these spectacular collections have gained a place in the Guinness Book of World Records, among them the world's biggest collections of corkscrews and irons. The philatelic section is the most complete collection of Romanian philately in the world, from the first issue until today.

More at: www.museumofromanianrecords.com



Karl Louis and Dieter Michelson were thrilled to welcome Ion Chirescu to the Global Philatelic Network's booth at the International Stamp Exhibition IBRA 2023, in Essen.

From general “whole world” collector to the leading “Germany from 1849” specialist



One of the highlights of Bruce Wright's "Germany from 1849" collection is the only known still-intact cover with a pair of "Aichach Provisional" stamps. This unique item is regarded as one of the greatest rarities of German States. A short history of the provisional issue: after a reduction in postage rates in the Kingdom of Bavaria (1895), the arrival of the new 2-pfennig postage due stamps was delayed so a red "2" overprint was added to 3-pfennig postage stamps as a short-term solution. However, the new stamps soon became available and the use of the provisional stamp was no longer permitted. Despite that, it was still used.

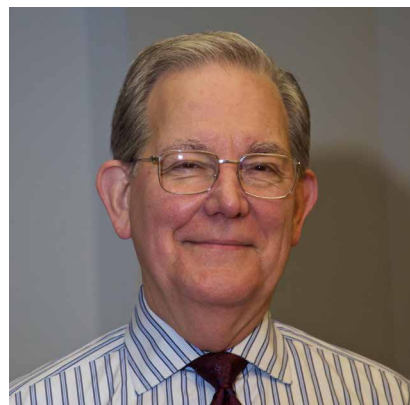
Bruce Wright – “The American”

“Through the pure joy of collecting, I have received back everything I’ve invested in my collection many times over,” says Bruce Wright. Wright is a philatelist through and through, and values the non-material benefits of collecting far higher than the pure monetary value of the collection. “I see stamps as amazing little artworks and so I prefer to collect specimens in unused condition,” says the likeable and eloquent 75 year old. “For me, a cancellation distracts from the beauty of the postage stamp. Moreover, I’ve always had very high standards when it comes to quality. Imperforate specimens had to have at least a full margin if possible, and perforated stamps had to be as perfectly centred as possible.”

Only if, despite years of searching, he couldn't find a certain stamp in unused condition, either because it was too rare or perhaps it didn't even exist, would Wright accept cancelled stamps. That is why his unique collection “Germany unused from 1849” also contains some used stamps. In his case, “used” equates to “rarity”. “And there is another reason for the cancelled postage stamps in my collection,” grins Wright. “I regard a gap in the album as nothing less than a crime against nature, because gaps are there to be filled.”

Born and raised in sunny California, Bruce Wright began collecting stamps at the age of ten. “My father inspired me to start. He was an insurance broker and would buy complete sheets of stamps at the post office because he needed so many for his business correspondence. But he didn't use them all – he'd keep a large multiple of each one. He also owned a small collection of postage stamps from all over the world. →

In German-speaking collecting circles, Bruce Wright – as a “feared” counter-bidder – is respectfully known as “The American”.



A stamp that shouldn't exist: on 11 October 2001, stamps from the semi-postal series "Für die Wohlfahrtspflege" came out in Germany. A stamp featuring the famous actress Audrey Hepburn had been planned for the series. However, this stamp was never officially issued after the Hepburn estate refused to approve the image. Despite that, some of the stamps, including this never-hinged example from Bruce Wright's collection, ended up in the hands of collectors, and these unissued "Audrey Hepburns" are among the greatest rarities of post-war German philately.



Philatelic treasure from the German Empire – the 2-mark "Germania" stamp of 1920, with the "Kreuzblüten" (quatrefoil) watermark that was originally for tax stamps. Bruce Wright was able to fill some gaps in his album with the only known unused example as well as one of only three used copies that have surfaced so far.



My passion was kindled." And young Bruce started keeping whatever stamps he could get his hands on.

Completeness was always the goal

"I was already at high school by the time I realised that, in my case, it simply didn't make sense to try collecting stamps from all over the world hoping for any degree of completeness. Because completeness was always my goal," says the former chief financial officer. "I had to restrict myself geographically. I didn't find the more modern USA stamps particularly interesting or attractive. And in the end I decided on Germany." This is how that came about: "I have always been very interested in European history, which was, as I see it, largely determined in the 19th century by the history of Germany. Besides that, the German stamps are very beautiful, especially the intaglio-printed issues. I was thereby able to kill two birds with one stone and combine my interest in European history with my passion for stamp collecting."

This passion for philately never waned. "I have collected continuously since I started. All through high school, university, the Air

Force and the early years of my career," says the highly educated American. "I gained my academic degrees in Physics, Mechanical Engineering and Management from the California Institute of Technology and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Subsequently, I went from working as a finance analyst to becoming the chief financial officer of several tech companies in Silicon Valley. As CFO, I bought and sold businesses, and floated companies on the stock market. With the particularly lucrative sale of a company in 1997, I was financially in a position to search in earnest for the genuinely rare and more expensive German postage stamps."

An incredible feeling of joy and success

By this time, Bruce Wright was already using the SAFE pre-printed albums, which were more extensive in scope than the Scott Specialty albums he'd been using before. This opened up completely "new" collecting areas for him, including military post, the colonies, Danzig, Memel, Saar and the occupations of the First and Second World Wars. "For me, the pre-prints were my collecting guide. So if there were no printed pages for an area, I simply didn't collect it – for example the Sudetenland or colonies in the First World War," explains the father of two. "But once I had finally filled all the pages, the next step was to get the exceptions to the rule. I skipped over to the empty sheets so that I could store colour nuances, types, variants, unissued items and proofs."

For a long time, Bruce Wright thought he would never be able to afford the Vineta Provisional. The stamp was produced on board the German cruiser S.M.S. Vineta in 1901 and was for franking consignments of printed matter being sent back to the homeland. To make it, the postmaster bisected 5-pfennig "Germania" stamps and added the violet handstamp overprint "3 Pf". "The American" eventually managed to reunite two values that had previously belonged together from the top left corner of the sheet.



The finest from the German colonies – this horizontal sheet of ten from the top left corner of the sheet with test overprints such as "China" and "Togo" is very rare and is one of Bruce Wright's favourite philatelic items.



When asked about any special experiences he has had through collecting "Germany from 1849", Wright says: "In the past, when I looked at the empty places on the pages of my collection, I would sometimes get slightly frustrated." He had to accept that he would never own particularly rare items. "I remember that the first specimen where I felt like that was with the Vineta Provisional. But, over the years, as I enjoyed more and more luck in my career, these sought-after rarities gradually came within reach and into my possession. Each time this happened, I felt an incredible feeling of joy and success." And that was true not only for the great rarities. "Even certain items that were too specialised for me in the beginning – such as all the colour



At the International Stamp Exhibition IBRA 2023 in Essen, "The American" was interviewed by Tobias Huylmans, Managing Director of the Heinrich Köhler Stamp Auction House, and spoke about various aspects of philately and his personal passion for collecting.



From the autumn of 2024, Bruce Wright's superb collections will be going under the hammer at the Heinrich Köhler Stamp Auction House in Wiesbaden. In addition to "Germany unused from 1849", "The American" has also formed the equally exquisite collection "Austria unused from 1850". A new volume in the EDITION SPÉCIALE series is dedicated to these two collections. The 200-page book is available as pre-subscription for the price of 69,- Euro instead of 79,- Euro (plus shipping) – while stocks last.

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varieties of the Crown & Eagle issue of the German Empire, or all the variants of the Deutsche Post's overprinted stamps in China of 1906–1919, or all the perforation varieties of the Landmarks (Bauten) issue of 1948 – brought me a lot of joy when they finally became a part of my collection." Incidentally, his desire for completeness is a deeply rooted personality trait. "When I start a book, I read it all the way through to the end, no matter how bad it is. And when I go to the cinema, I always watch to the end – even if I find it boring. When I start a project, I stick with it until it is done."

He actually wanted to stay "under the radar"

Bruce Wright has only ever exhibited one of his philatelic treasures. That was his unissued "Hepburn", which was displayed in the Court of Honor at the 2016 World Stamp Show in New York. "I'm a traditional stamp collector, but for many years now, the focus of exhibitions has been on postal history," he explains. "My wife Kathi and I were of the opinion that it would be better, for security reasons, to stay 'under the radar' and not to be in the public eye as the owners of great philatelic treasures." But things didn't quite turn out like

that. "I was told that my name is very well known in the German-speaking field of philately, and that they call me 'The American' there." No wonder: that is bound to happen when an American builds such a significant collection on the theme of "Germany Unused from 1849" with such passion and enthusiasm. One last question, Mr Wright: Which items are your personal favourites? "That's easy: my favourite stamp at any given time is the one I have just acquired and that finally fills a gap on the page of an album. But when I look back at the entire collection, my absolute favourites include the reunited pair of the Vineta Provisional, the only pair of the Bavarian Aichach Provisional on cover, the unique unused example of the 2-mark "Germania" with the 'Kreuzblüten' (quatrefoil) watermark, the Crown & Eagle overprint proof from the German Colonies in the unique block of ten, and the unissued Hepburn stamp from the Federal Republic of Germany."

The 70-kreuzer Kingdom of Württemberg stamp of 1873 is one of the most sought-after rarities from the German States. Even an unused block of four is valued at €25,000 in the specialised catalogue. This complete counter sheet from Bruce Wright's collection was once owned by the distinguished philatelists John R. Boker Jr. and Fritz Kirchner, and will be auctioned again at Heinrich Köhler next year.



The Lallier “collection book” and the “royal collection discovery” – the world’s first stamp albums

A great service to philately

As we all know, the world’s first stamp – the Penny Black – was issued on 6 May 1840 in England. The first stamp catalogues and journals followed just 20 years later. Consequently, at some point between 1840 and 1860, enthusiasts must have begun collecting these new and innovative postage stamps. From then on, philately became a global success story. However, there was still a fundamental problem facing all collectors, and it required an immediate solution: they needed to find a good way to store their collections. In this article, you will learn more about the world’s first printed stamp album and its sensational “royal” predecessor, which was crafted by hand with incredible skill.

“It was just an eccentric hobby at first.” The renowned philatelist Carlrichard Brühl wrote this sentence in the mid-1980s as a comment on the early days of stamp collecting. He dated the start of this hobby to around 1850. The postage stamp was a relatively new invention at that time. At least in the eyes of non-collectors, the systematic compiling of these new adhesive postage receipts certainly seemed like a quirky fad. “However, I am convinced that even these early stamp collectors felt differently about it”, says Karl Louis, Managing Director at Köhler & Corinphila Holding. “Because in the second half of the 19th century, most collectors focused on postage stamps from around the world. Stamps from distant, exotic lands, in particular, were highly sought-after. When they examined these stamps, collectors could imagine travelling to these countries – mounting an actual expedition would have involved a great deal of effort and expense.” The number of stamp collectors increased rapidly from the 1850s onwards. And soon, the question arose as to how to store these miniature works of art. Many collectors stored their stamps in cigar boxes, glued them on to loose sheets of paper or kept them in booklets. But let’s be honest: this wasn’t the best way to display them.

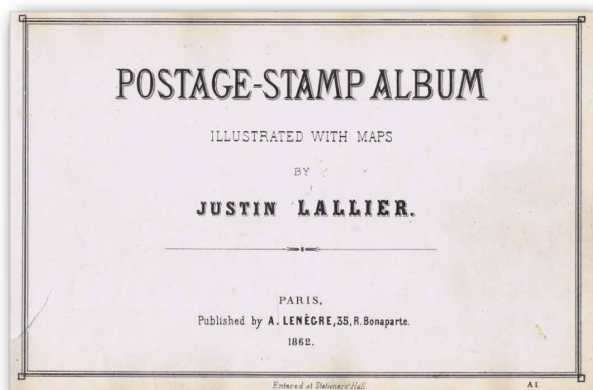
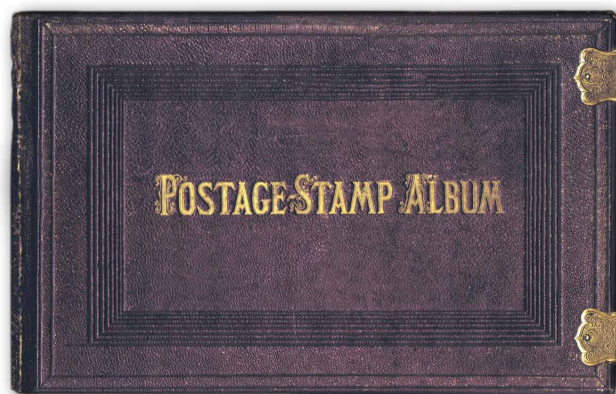
Triumph of the “collection books”

A French academic, Justin Henri Lallier (1823 to 1873), eventually came up with

the solution – and rendered a great service to philately in doing so. “His leather-bound ‘Album Timbres-Poste orné des cartes’ was published in Paris in June 1862”, Karl Louis explains. “It was a rectangular album in landscape format, and it included pre-printed spaces for stamps that even indicated the colour of the stamps to be placed there.” The album featured two geographical maps and 160 pages with pre-printed spaces for 1,100 postage stamps from around the world, arranged by continent. “There is quite a simple explanation for this very high number”, Karl Louis says. “Back then, people collected more than just loose stamps; often, they also cut out the postal stationery imprints. So the

In August 1862, just two months after the first edition came out in France, an English version of Justin Henri Lallier’s stamp album was published in London. A Spanish translation followed in 1863.

albums also included spaces in the shapes of each of these imprints.” Justin Henry Lallier created the world’s first printed stamp album – and it was a huge success. Stamp albums appeared in Germany, Belgium and the USA soon afterwards – almost simultaneously, in fact. These “collection books”, as the prominent collector



of philatelic literature Victor Suppantisch referred to them, were a triumph.

An elaborate handmade artefact

Perhaps you'd like to see some proof that people were already collecting stamps back in 1850? Then you will undoubtedly be interested in the "royal collection discovery" from Fort Belvedere. Let us take you back to the year 2008. Karl Louis was inspecting a consignment – an old, very valuable stamp album – and could not believe his eyes. The following was embossed in gold letters on the title page of the green leather-bound album: "FOREIGN & COLONIAL POSTAGE STAMPS". But before we turn to the fascinating contents of this album, you will need to know more about the provenance. This very special "collection book" came from the estate of Angela Lascelles, wife of the Honourable Gerald Lascelles, cousin of none other than her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. "Angela Lascelles had passed away in 2007", Karl Louis says. "Since the mid-1950s, she and her husband had lived at Fort Belvedere, a palace in Windsor Great Park near the village of Sunningdale in the Royal County of Berkshire. The palace had been owned by the Crown since its completion in 1755."

The little green leather-bound album only looked pre-printed at first glance. Louis's expert eye quickly spotted that this was an elaborate, handmade philatelic artefact. The spaces for the stamps had been carefully drawn by hand. "The album must have been made around 1854", Karl Louis explains. "Because the oldest stamp in it is from 1850, and the most recent one from 1854." But for whom had this elaborate, opulent album been made? It was unlikely



"Exceptionally rare item from a royal household – vertical pair of Austrian Yellow Mercury, unused with complete original gum, good as new!" This is how Karl Louis described the sensational pair of "Yellow Mercury", which found a new home with a collector in northern Germany in 2009 for the tremendous price of 220,000 Swiss francs. The "Mercuries" are Austria's most famous postage stamp issue of the classical era. They were first issued in 1851 as stamps for printed matter and were used for sending newspapers.

that Angela Lascelles herself had owned it. "I started to do some research, and I discovered that Queen Victoria had frequently visited Fort Belvedere during the 19th century", Karl Louis reports. "And in fact, I believe that either she herself, or a member of her royal family, commissioned the creation of this album."

A rather bold assumption, perhaps? Not at all: The inside of the album contained a maker's label from the company "R. Ackermann". In 1795, German-British lithographer and publisher Rudolph Ackermann opened a printing shop and school for draughtsmanship; his sons continued the enterprise after his death in 1834. By that time, Ackermann's company was already an official purveyor to the Royal Household at Buckingham Palace and was known for its exceptional artistic designs – one of which was this marvellous "Royal Album". "We know that Queen Victoria's children were among the world's first



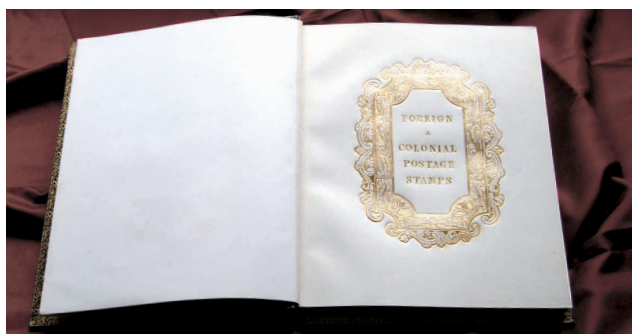
Was the "Fort Belvedere Album" made for young Prince Alfred?

stamp collectors – particularly Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh", Karl Louis explains. "He was ten years old in 1854 – the classic age to become a young fan of stamp collecting. Perhaps this leather album, with its gold-embossed

title page, ornate design and gilt edging, once belonged to the young prince?"

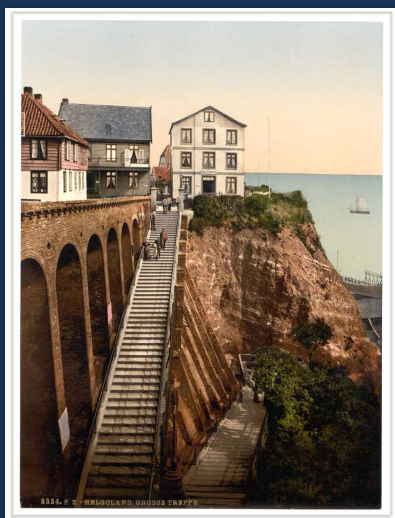
A unique, internationally renowned treasure

Now we come to the rare philatelic items contained within the "royal collection discovery". As was customary at that time, the postage stamps are imperforate, cut close and stuck directly on to the pages of the album using the original gum. The stamps had most likely not been exposed to much light since 1854 – they look as good as new, with bright colours that will dazzle any viewer. "We managed to remove some of the items from the pages without damaging the original gum", Karl Louis says. "They included an almost pristine pair of the Yellow Mercury – a unique, internationally renowned treasure of Austrian philately. Unused items were unheard of up to that point."



The spectacular "royal collection discovery", with its remarkable gold embossing, caused quite a sensation in 2008.

From a British smugglers' paradise to a German seaside resort



Heligoland – the Mauritius of the North Sea

This photochrome print from c. 1900 features the famous Grand Staircase of Heligoland. The island is divided into the lowlands, midlands and uplands.

In terms of philately, Heligoland is a unique field of collecting. Stamp catalogues have always included it under “German States”. However, the first stamps of Heligoland bore a portrait of the British Queen Victoria in profile. But that’s not the only thing that makes Heligoland unusual. Interestingly, the stamps of this North Sea island initially had a face value in “schillings”, which was the currency of a German State: the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg. From 1875 onwards, they bore a double denomination: in addition to the English shilling (= 12 pence = 48 farthings), the German imperial mark (100 pfennig = 1 mark) was listed. However, Heligoland did not become part of the German Empire until 1890. So many questions... But we have the answers!

The legendary “Humberbuden” by night, lining harbour street in Heligoland. These former fishermen’s huts and workshops are now listed buildings and are in use as pubs, souvenir shops, cafes and galleries.





This combination ten pfennig/1½ pence and five pfennig/three-farthings Heligoland postal stationery wrapper of 1878 is as curious as it is rare. Sending this item as a registered letter required additional postage of 20 pfennig (or three farthings). You would be hard-pressed to find a more attractive piece, both visually and in terms of the content.



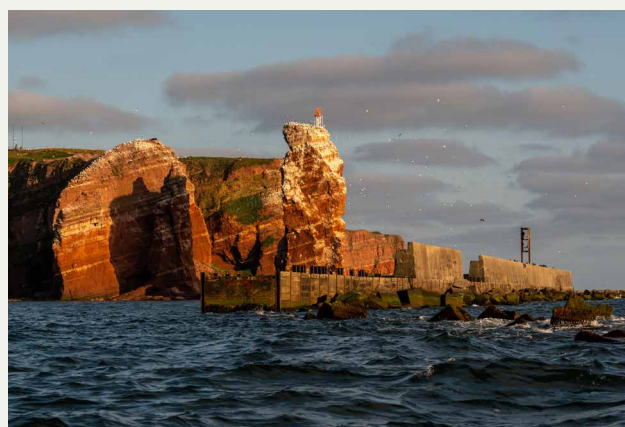
These six colour errors on a piece of 1873 are the crown jewel of the Heligoland Collection at the Museumsstiftung Post und Telekommunikation (The Museum Foundation of Post and Telecommunication) in Bonn. A complete item of mail with the error has not (yet) been found. By way of comparison, we have also included an ordinary ¼ schilling stamp here.

the island to circumvent Napoleon's ban on the import of British goods into continental Europe. Heligoland became an absolute paradise for smugglers, and trade flourished. However, this situation only lasted for a few years, ending when the ban on British imports was lifted in 1813 and the regular occupation of Heligoland by the British began in 1814. "The Hamburg postal agency also remained in place after that", Daniel Meyerhoff says. "Apparently, the British were not particularly interested in Heligoland's minimal postal traffic at the time." The island may have been administered by a British governor, but postal administration remained the responsibility of the Hamburg Post Office until 1 July 1866. Only then did the British government take over the administration of the postal service. However, Hamburg still played a major role, as the postal contract between Great Britain and Heligoland stipulated that post be carried between Heligoland and Hamburg on steamboats. The British Empire and the Hanseatic City shared the costs and the profits. "Incidentally, Hamburg postage stamps were already in use in Heligoland by 1862," Daniel Meyerhoff explains. "The undisputed crown jewel among the rare Heligoland items is a strip of four of the 1865 Hamburg 3 schilling ultramarine on cover from September 1866. It is cancelled with the semicircular British HELIGOLAND strip, and the blue HELIGOLAND mark of origin was added at the main post office in Hamburg. However, the first British Heligoland stamps had already been issued by April 1867. Fewer than ten covers with the Hamburg stamps used in Heligoland still survive today." →

"Heligoland and Mauritius have a number of things in common," says Daniel Meyerhoff, who is equally fascinated by the North Sea island and the island paradise in the Indian Ocean. "Both of them became British colonies during the Napoleonic Wars. Many Europeans lived on both islands in the 19th century. And the early stamps issued for both crown colonies are among the top rarities in philately". The 54-year-old native of Switzerland has been a passionate and accomplished philatelist for many years. His exhibited collections, "Mauritius 1847 to 1897" and "Heligoland until 1900", are award-winning.

Pirates' hideout, maritime fortress and important outpost for seafarers

Heligoland has had a stormy history, in the most literal sense. The city of Hamburg conquered the island in 1400 during the famous naval battle of Heligoland. Until that point, the island was primarily ruled by pirates, led by the legendary Klaus Störtebeker. Heligoland developed from a pirates' hideout into a maritime fortress and eventually into an important outpost for seafarers. During the Great Northern War for dominance of the Baltic Sea region (1700 to 1721), Heligoland fell under Danish control in 1714. Despite this fact, Hamburg established a postal agency on the island in 1796. "The traditionally close ties between Hamburg and Heligoland explain this decision", Daniel Meyerhoff says. "Hamburg's postal agent, Mr Volkers, was sent to Heligoland with the task of safeguarding the regular, direct maritime postal service between England and Germany (to Cuxhaven)." By 1807, Heligoland had already fallen into English hands. The English used



A view of the northern tip of Heligoland, with the Lange Anna ("Tall Anna") and northern pier. The Lange Anna is a 47-metre-high sea stack at the north-westernmost point of the island. It is also known as the Red Rock, and it is a Heligoland landmark.



Daniel Meyerhoff initially only collected Heligoland items from 1890, as they documented the island's transition into German rule. Here, he is showing one of the more unusual items in his collection. It is a large-format letter dated 8 August 1890 bearing a grand total of 67 stamps. The total postage amounts to 15 marks. The letter is a particularly impressive demonstration of the highly patriotic mood that prevailed at the time – the island of Heligoland was finally back in German hands.

Great Britain was responsible, Hamburg was in charge

To put it simply: Great Britain was now responsible for the postal service, but Hamburg was still in charge of day-to-day business. Apart from the fact that the postal workers in Heligoland who had formerly reported to Hamburg were now employees of the British postal service, not much changed. Daniel Meyerhoff offers conclusive proof of this fact: "On the recommendation of the Hamburg Post Office, all postage stamps for the British crown colony of Heligoland were printed by the Prussian state printing office in Berlin between 1867 and 1890. The fact that the British Queen Victoria, who reigned from 1837 to 1901, was a German, born into the House of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld, perhaps played a role. Heligoland was essentially given free rein. And that's something else it has in common with Mauritius, by the way." As was customary for stamps of the British crown colonies in general, these first-issue Heligoland postage stamps also feature the portrait of Queen Victoria. They were produced using an elaborate combination of letterpress and embossed printing. They were first issued in four denominations: ½, 1, 2 and 6 schillings. By 1873, five further stamps had been issued; they reflected the changing postage rates and were printed in the Heligoland colours of green, red and white. The first issue of 1867 and the stamps issued in 1873 are, on cover, among the most valuable Heligoland stamps. "Only 70 covers of the first four stamps are still in existence today, as far as we know", Daniel Meyerhoff says. "That is an extremely low number, considering the relatively large volumes that were originally issued. For instance, there are only seven covers with the 6 schilling stamp remaining today, although a whopping 100,000 stamps were delivered to Heligoland back in 1867." The year 1873 is a further milestone in Heligoland's postal history: rural

pharmacist Dr Robert Pilger became the new postmaster. And the first Heligoland postal stationery, known as "Pilger cards", was introduced. These stationery items are extremely rare today and are among the most exceptional Heligoland items.

Very rarely used for mail

An error of the 1873 issue is also particularly noteworthy. The printers at the Prussian state printing office accidentally used the colours for the 1½ schilling stamp on the ¼ schilling stamp. They printed the vignette in red rather than green, and the frame was green instead of red. "The same holds true here: a large number of stamps were issued, but they were very rarely used for mail", Daniel Meyerhoff explains. "25,000 were delivered, and 10,000 were sold. But I have never seen a complete item of mail with this error." Among the Heligoland highlights in the Philatelic Archive at the Museumsstiftung Post und Telekommunikation (The Museum Foundation of Post and Telecommunication) in Bonn is an item with six of these colour errors.

In 1875, an epochal event in postal history left its mark on the Heligoland postage stamps. When the German Empire was accepted into the Universal Postal Union – which was founded in 1874 – Heligoland also needed to convert its postage rates into the currency of the German Empire, the mark, beginning in January 1875. The island needed new stamps, which were issued in February 1875. However, the image of Queen Victoria still featured on the stamps. It wasn't until the next round of stamps was issued in June 1876 that the designers opted for a different motif – these stamps bore the Heligoland crest with a crown.

The Heligoland "farewell issue" was released in August 1879, with two supplementary stamps for insured letters and postal parcels with values of one mark (one shilling) and five marks (five shillings). Why "farewell issue"? On 1 June 1890, the British ultimately handed Heligoland over to the German Empire. In exchange, the Germans renounced their claim to territories in colonised Africa. This agreement is often referred to as the "Heligoland-Zanzibar Treaty". However, at the time, the Sultanate of Zanzibar was not a German colony; it was merely within Germany's sphere of interest, so it cannot be said that Britain and Germany traded these islands for one another. On 10 August 1890, at 12:00 pm, the era of Heligoland postage stamps came to an end – from that point on, the "Mauritius of the North Sea" began using ordinary postage stamps of the German Reichspost.

SPRING AUCTION



The 2024 Heinrich Köhler Spring Auction will be an exciting event – among other items, it will feature one of the most significant Heligoland collections of our time. Many of the rare items contained in this collection are coming back on the market again for the first time in decades.



These two imperforate "Hamburg 3 schilling" stamps from Heligoland via Hamburg to Prussia are among the most spectacular Heligoland rarities. Only a handful of letters from Heligoland with imperforate Hamburg stamps have ever been recorded.



This cover with two individual "Hamburg 3 schilling perforated" stamps from Heligoland to Berlin is also extremely rare. The fact that the stamps were cancelled with a single-line "HELIGOLAND" horizontal mark, which was normally used as a mark of origin alongside the postage stamps, makes this a first-rate rarity.



Another exceptionally unique item from Heligoland comes from the renowned "Consul Weinberger Collection". Neither the specialised German stamp catalogue nor the famous Grobe German States Handbook contains a record of a strip of four of the 2 farthings/2 pfennig stamp of February 1875 like this one. It is most likely the largest postal denomination used.

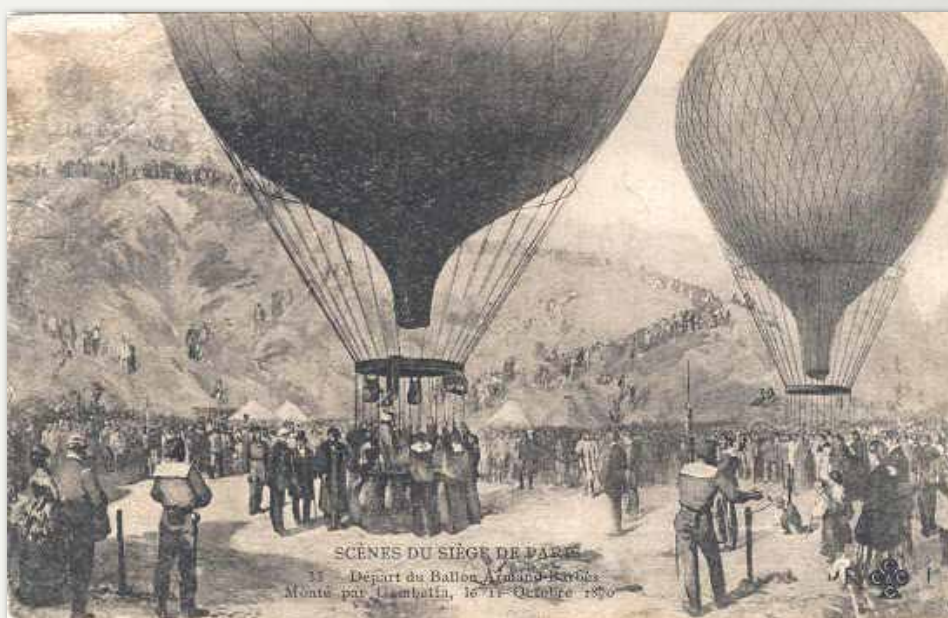
“Flying free like a bird on the wing” – the history of international airmail

The dream of flight



Noblesse oblige – German aviation pioneer August Euler trained many pilots, including Prince Henry of Prussia (shown here on the left).

Ever since the days of the ancient world, people have dreamed of soaring through the air like birds. But it wasn't until the 19th century that science and technology made these dreams a reality. The history of airmail, also known as aerophilately, is closely tied to the development of aviation. Airmail remains one of the most popular subjects for collectors, even today. Join us on a thrilling journey through the early days of international airmail.



This old postcard features a scene from the Siege of Paris – people bidding farewell to Armand Barbès' hot air balloon on 7 October 1870.

"Humanity must be granted the ability to fly free like a bird on the wing." In his highly regarded lecture "Weltpost und Luftschiff-fahrt" ("Universal Post and Aviation") back in 1874, German Postmaster General Heinrich von Stephan already alluded to the future importance of aircraft for mail delivery – "The great ocean of the sky is perfectly suited to this purpose". He was inspired by the Paris balloon mail deliveries of 1870/71. It is a famous tale, and one of the most exciting chapters in airmail history: two million people in Paris were cut off from all contact with the outside world when the city was besieged by the Germans in 1870, and brave aeronauts carried their mail into the unoccupied territories of France via hot air balloon. But we are getting ahead of ourselves. In fact, airmail is millennia older than aviation.

From carrier pigeons to balloon mail

"Even in the days of ancient Egypt, mail was delivered by carrier pigeons", explains Cliff Schön, a philatelist at the Heinrich Köhler Stamp Auction House. "Roman General Julius Caesar also used them to communicate with his legions in Gaul." In the 12th century, the Arabs used carrier pigeons to deliver government mail, as did Nur ad-Din, who later became caliph of Baghdad. His carrier pigeons continued to fly until the Abbasid Caliphate was destroyed by the Mongols in 1258. "The first designs for flying machines appeared in Europe around the time of the Renaissance", Cliff Schön explains. "The most

famous of these designs were drawn up by Leonardo da Vinci." However, it still took another 250 years before the Montgolfier brothers developed the first hot air balloons, and the first manned hot air balloon flight in one of these "Montgolfière" models didn't take place until November 1783. Ten years later came another debut: hot air balloons carried letters from a besieged fortress in France – marking the true beginning of balloon mail. "The first official airmail delivery via hot air balloon took place on 17 July 1859 in the USA. The pilot, John Wise, carried 123 letters on his 1,290-kilometre trip from St. Louis

to Henderson, New York", Cliff Schön says. And the French used both carrier pigeons and balloon mail during the aforementioned Siege of Paris by the Germans during the Franco-Prussian war in 1870/71. The hot air balloons also brought carrier pigeons along to transport the replies to the letters back to Paris.

First official airmail flight in India

The invention of the aeroplane was naturally a groundbreaking event in the history of airmail. Otto Lilienthal attempted his first flights with his Derwitzer Glider in the spring of 1891. Five years later, during →

The great pioneer of German aviation, Hans Grade, flew his old monoplane in Bork for the first time in 1909.



a test flight with one of his gliders, he had an accident and fell from the sky – the flight cost him his life. On 17 December 1903, the Wright brothers, Orville and Wilbur, managed to fly 53 metres before they had to land their flying machine, which was powered by an engine for the first time. They finally made a breakthrough in 1908: Wilbur Wright managed a long-distance flight of 99 kilometres. Two years later, Henri Farman, a British-French aviator and aircraft designer, set

a world record with an 8-hour, 600-kilometre flight. The curse was broken. “The first official postal transport via aeroplane took place on 18 February 1911, during an art and trade exhibition in India”, says Cliff Schön. “French pilot Henri Pequet carried approximately 6,500 letters from Allahabad to Naini, about eight kilometres away.” Postal flights also took off from France and England during that same year. For example, on 12 December 1911, King George was crowned Emperor of India,

and the British insisted on sending proper congratulations from London to Windsor by aeroplane.

Popular destinations overseas

Airmail quickly picked up steam in the years that followed. “In February 1912, aviation pioneer, mechanical engineer and entrepreneur Hans Grade partnered with dentist and Chairman of the Borkheide Transport Association Kurt Schäfer to establish an airmail route between the town of Bork in Brandenburg and the town of Brück, which was eight kilometres away”, Cliff Schön explains. “They had flight stamps printed to finance their plan. The German Reichspost actually legitimised this airmail service after the fact, so these stamps are considered semi-official.” Post was delivered by airmail on a larger scale and with the approval of the German Reichspost as part of a charity event in June 1912. The event, titled “Flugpost am Rhein und Main” (Airmail on the Rhine and Main), featured both the “Schwabens” Zeppelin and the “Gelber Hund” biplane (Yellow Dog – named for its paint scheme) built by Frankfurt-based industrialist and aviator August Euler. Between 10 and 23 June, the service carried many letters and postcards between Darmstadt, Frankfurt am Main, Mainz, Offenbach and Worms, many of which travelled on board the airship. The German Reichspost then forwarded the items to the recipients, some of whom lived in overseas destinations that remain popular today.



A jewel of the “Ballon Monté” field of collecting – this letter dated 27 January 1871 left Paris, which was besieged by the Germans at the time, in the final airmail balloon of the siege: ‘General Cambronne’.



An exceptionally rare item from the early days of German airmail – the special catalogue values this 1912 black imperforate test print on cover at 12,000 euros. A few of these stamps were used on mail sent on the legendary postal flights from Bork to Brück.

A milestone in airmail history – the first Atlantic crossing

Crossing the Atlantic by air was a particular challenge in the beginning of the 20th century. As early as 1913, English newspaper magnate Alfred Charles William Harmsworth offered 10,000 pounds sterling as a reward to anyone who could fly the route non-stop. However, the First World War put a stop to that sensational contest. “It wasn’t until June 1919 that pilots John Alcock and Arthur Whitten Brown managed to achieve this milestone of aviation and airmail history with a 16-hour flight”, Cliff Schön says. The pilots carried 196 letters and a parcel onboard their flight. However, the time was not yet ripe for regular transatlantic postal flights.

That all changed with the legendary Atlantic crossings by the giants of the skies – the Zeppelins

The first of these enormous cigar-shaped aircraft was launched 123 years ago, on 2 July 1900. The launch pad was located at Manzell, near Friedrichshafen in Germany. Count Ferdinand von Zeppelin (1838-1917) had finally realised his dream of building an airship: the LZ 1 was 128 metres long. The flight lasted just 17 minutes, but it marked the beginning of a new era in aviation. From 1909 to 1914, the Zeppelins were primarily civilian aircraft, but they were increasingly used for military purposes during the First World War. Later on, it became standard practice to carry mail via rigid airship. "For example, the Zeppelins LZ 127 Graf Zeppelin and LZ 129 Hindenburg carried nearly 50 metric tonnes of mail during their more than 650 flights between 1928 and 1937", Cliff Schön says. Many fascinating chapters of aviation and airmail history have been written in the intervening years between then and now, including thrilling postal deliveries to space. These deliveries began back in 1969, when the Soviet Soyuz spacecraft carried letters around our blue planet for the first time – and once again, the dream of flying (and of airmail) was elevated to new spheres.



PREVIEW

AUCTION HIGHLIGHTS

The 2024 Heinrich Köhler Spring Auction will offer a wide range of philatelic highlights from the field of international airmail. You will not want to miss this unique opportunity.



Airmail on the Rhine and Main was subject to additional fees in the form of special stamps on items of mail. These stamps included a 10 pfennig stamp with the overprint "1 M – Gelber Hund" that was used on mail carried in Euler's yellow biplane. The inverted overprint makes this item a first-rate philatelic rarity.



This rare postcard was on board the LZ 120 "Bodensee" on 2 November 1919 when, due to inclement weather conditions, the airship had to make a spectacular emergency landing near Magdeburg, without the assistance of ground crew.



In 1937, the LZ 129 "Hindenburg" crashed in the American borough of Lakehurst. Items of mail that were on board the airship and "survived" the disaster are philatelic relics that document one of the worst catastrophes in airship aviation history – and they are among the most sought-after rarities of Zeppelin mail.

The tenth and final ERIVAN auction in Wiesbaden – our report on the worthy conclusion to this exceptional auction series

Breathtaking bidding wars and thrilling top bids



The "Rondel cover" from Mecklenburg-Strelitz is one of the most important philatelic treasures from the German States. It is the only known cover with Mecklenburg-Strelitz stamps in three different colours and values. As was typical for this type of correspondence, the additional postage was attached using the sheet margins of stamps from other regions of German States. Research by the experts at Heinrich Köhler determined that the recipient, Theodore Rondel, had postal stationery sent to him in this way so that he could then remove the additional postage along with the sheet margins, leaving him with an item that had been spared the "indignity" of further postmarks. Thank goodness he decided not to do so with this cover!

"We've saved the best for last" is a very common expression. But it only partly applies to the phenomenal ERIVAN auction series. Without exception, all ten auction lots from the unique collections that belonged to successful entrepreneur and passionate philatelist Erivan Haub were unforgettable pieces of auction and philatelic history. The first ERIVAN auction was held at Heinrich Köhler Stamp Auction House on 8 June 2019. Five years later, on 23 September of this year, the ERIVAN collection auction series finally reached its thrilling conclusion, with the tenth and final auction being held in Wiesbaden. This report details the breathtaking bidding wars, thrilling top bids – and auctions that reflected philately at its finest.

Time and place of the event: Saturday, 23 September 2023, shortly before 9:30 in the morning: A hush falls over the packed auction room at Heinrich Köhler in Wiesbaden as auctioneer Tobias Huylmans, managing director at Heinrich Köhler, steps up to the podium. The ERIVAN collection is back on the auction block today. Just like the great collector and former Tengelmann boss himself, the ERIVAN collection set benchmarks in many respects, and it gifted the philatelic world a huge number of exceptional historic pieces. His philatelic life's work will live on in many different collections, and the provenance "ex-ERIVAN" will be a seal of quality and a mark of great distinction. You could cut the tension in the auction room with a

knife. "Welcome, ladies and gentlemen, to the tenth and final ERIVAN auction at Heinrich Köhler", says Tobias Huylmans, who is visibly relaxed and in a cheerful mood. "Incidentally, I spoke to a collector last evening who told me that he was so impressed by the exceptional pieces on offer in this week's auction that he somewhat exceeded the budget he had originally set for himself. And now he doesn't know how to explain that to his wife". There are smiles in the crowd, and a few people nod knowingly – probably from first-hand experience. "I told him – and the same applies to all of you, gentlemen – that we reserve an extra block of hotel rooms here in Wiesbaden for just these sorts of cases", Tobias Huylmans jokes. "So

no need to hold back!" And the smiles in the room blossom into belly laughs.

Spectacular, beautiful and fascinating

"And so we come to the first lot – the counterpart to the famous Baden error", Tobias Huylmans continues. He is referring to a cover from the Grand Duchy of Baden, franked with a black on blue-green 6-kreutzer stamp from 1851, addressed to Baron von Türkheim. This noble addressee also received the aforementioned blue-green 9-kreutzer Baden error on cover, which sold during the first ERIVAN auction at Heinrich Köhler for 1.26 million euros. So it's no wonder that its counterpart, going under the hammer today as auction lot number 1, quickly rises from

its starting bid of 200 euros to the range of thousands. The hammer finally falls at 7,500 euros – 37.5 times its starting price. The auction couldn't have gotten off to a better start. Naturally, there are numerous other philatelic highlights from the Baden region of German States – one of the most spectacular blocks from the old states of Germany, for instance. It's a vertical block of eight of the black on lilac-pink 9-kreutzer stamp – by far the largest block of this stamp in existence. One particularly unusual aspect of this piece is the additional franked 6-kreutzer stamp glued right in the middle of the block. "In this combination, it is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful and fascinating pieces in the world of Baden philately", Tobias Huylmans says. And the bidding gets heated once again. Potential buyers in the room, on the telephone and online refuse to relinquish the upper hand. The block ultimately sells for 105,000 euros, and the guests in the auction room honour the winning bid with a long round of applause. The bidders have already cracked the 100,000-euro-mark with auction lot number 6. Overall, seven items in the auction achieve six-figure purchase prices.

Impressive provenances

A cover from Lübeck and a cover from Mecklenburg-Strelitz fetch the highest prices of the day. In the meantime, another managing director from the Heinrich Köhler Stamp Auction House has taken over the role of auctioneer at the podium: "The next lot is the unique tricolour franking of the first issue from Lübeck. Without question, it is one of the most sublime covers from the Free and Hanseatic City", says Dieter Michelson, announcing the opening of bids for this highlight from Lübeck. Like a great many of the covers and stamps from the ERIVAN collection, this item boasts impressive provenances. Yet another reason why this highly decorative cover addressed to Estonia ultimately finds a new home for a whopping bid of 230,000 euros.

The same holds true for the "Rondel cover" from Mecklenburg-Strelitz dated 1864. It is named for its recipient, Frenchman Theodore Rondel, who was a very early collector of stamps and postal stationery, and whose correspondence also provides a

wide variety of incredible rarities from other areas. At a starting bid of 100,000 euros, the cover is the most exciting lot of the tenth ERIVAN auction. In the end, two bidders in the auction room are in heated competition for the piece. Dieter Michelson points to the left of the room: "220,000 euros from the bidder at the window". He then looks to the other bidder. "Do I hear 230,000 euros? We need 230,000 now. Come on, you can do it!" After a brief pause, the bidder says: "Alright, then". And Dieter Michelson quips: "From now on, 'alright, then' is a new synonym for 230,000 euros!" The auctioneer later summarises the experience: "Since the auctions of the ERIVAN Collection began in 2019, they have been enormously thrilling for dealers and collectors alike – and



Auctioneer Dieter Michelson just before the hammer fell for the impressive winning bid on the fabulous "Rondel cover" – 230,000 euros going once, going twice...!

for others, as well. Increasingly frequently, we receive visits from people who have no previous philately experience". And Karl Louis, managing director at Heinrich Köhler, adds: "Over the last five years, we have noticed a connection between the auction results and the insecurity of traditional financial investments. People are looking for new ways to invest their money in tangible assets, and the ERIVAN auctions led them to discover that stamps could serve that purpose".



It once belonged to renowned philatelist John R. Boker, Jr. – this unique tricolour franking of the first stamp issue from Lübeck also found a new home with a dedicated philatelist for 230,000 euros.



A cover from Oldenburg also thrilled auction visitors. It is one of the earliest known examples of a fully franked overseas cover from the former Grand Duchy. And it's not just any overseas letter; it's addressed to the other side of the world – to Australia. This beautiful cover is franked with a horizontal black on yellow strip of four of the first-issue 1/10 Thaler stamps from Oldenburg from 1852. It is the largest known unit of this stamp, and this cover is unique. Its enthusiastic new owner paid the handsome sum of 150,000 euros to acquire it.

**Jonas Hällström and Tobias Huylmans – an interview
with the new managing directors and shareholders of Köhler & Corinphila Holding**

“A sign of respect and recognition.”

The Global Philatelic Network is prepared for the future. Since 1 July this year, there have been two new managing directors and shareholders at Köhler & Corinphila Holding GmbH: Jonas Hällström and Tobias Huylmans. Erivan Haub's heirs will remain the principal shareholders. Karl Louis and Dieter Michelson will also retain their positions as managing directors. Tobias Huylmans is already a managing director at the Heinrich Köhler Stamp Auction House, and this move will expand his involvement within the group. Jonas Hällström also took on the position of managing director at Corinphila Auctions in Switzerland. In this interview, the two internationally renowned philatelists discuss their first few months in their new roles and the direction the GPN will take in future.

Jonas Hällström, one of Sweden's best-known philatelists, has been a new managing director and shareholder at Köhler & Corinphila Holding GmbH since 1 July 2023. Since that date, he has also been managing Corinphila Auctions in Switzerland alongside Karl Louis and Antoine Clavel.



Tobias Huylmans, who has also been a new managing director and shareholder at Köhler & Corinphila Holding GmbH since 1 July 2023, has worked at Heinrich Köhler Stamp Auction House since 2007. He has been a managing director at the company since 2019, and he is also a highly respected expert in the German Federation of Philatelic Expertisers. He will continue to share the managing director role at Heinrich Köhler with Dieter Michelson.

Hello, Tobias. How have things changed for you at work since 1 July this year?

Tobias Huylmans: “I'm now confronted with questions that affect more than just the Heinrich Köhler Stamp Auction House. I'm also dealing with issues that involve all the companies in Köhler & Corinphila Holding GmbH – so Corinphila Auctions in Zurich, H.R. Harmer in New York, John Bull Auctions in Hong Kong and Corinphila Veilingen in the Netherlands. We regularly discuss strategies, investments, prospects for the future and the allocation of responsibilities within our group. Luckily, this new perspective isn't actually entirely new to me, because I've also taken on responsibility in many different areas throughout the group over the years, in regard to both philately and IT.”

Hello, Jonas. Once again, we'd like to welcome you to the management of the Global Philatelic Network. Until 2011, you served in the Swedish army, and after that, you held a number of managerial roles at Saab in Sweden until this year. So our first question to you, as a Lieutenant Colonel (ret.), is: How were your (literal) first 100 days on your new mission?

Jonas Hällström: “First of all, I am very proud that Karl Louis and Dieter Michelson selected me for this new mission. And I'm very grateful to Erivan Haub's heirs for offering me a partnership as a new group shareholder in the Global Philatelic Network. My first few months were extremely exciting, and I'm sure that the future will be just as fascinating. At the beginning,

one of my main jobs was getting to know the team at Köhler & Corinphila Holding better. Naturally, I've known many of my colleagues there for years, thanks to my extensive experience as a collector and exhibitor. Now that I'm working here, we have been able to have a lot of in-depth personal discussions about our professional collaboration. I have also familiarised myself with the detailed processes and requirements at Corinphila Auctions and the auction houses that are part of the group. And last but not least, I've also already had some very interesting conversations with a number of our long-standing customers.”

You are just 51 years old, but you have already made outstanding contributions to philately, including holding a

wide range of symposia and seminars and writing more than 50 philatelic publications – several books among them. For many years, you have been a valued juror and sought-after speaker at international exhibitions. Your own stamp collection exhibits of postal history and thematic philately have won the highest awards. In 2016, you were accorded the oldest and most illustrious honour in philately when you were invited to sign the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists. You are known for your excellent organisational skills and your ability to develop strong concepts, which you once again proved beyond a doubt with the perfectly executed STOCKHOLMIA International Stamp Exhibition in 2019. What does a passionate philatelist such as you see when you look behind the scenes at Köhler & Corinphila Holding?

Jonas Hällström: “I see a corporate group that is innovative and well positioned in terms of both its staff and its business, with a strong, sustainable position in the market. The exceptional strategic and operational leadership of Dieter Michelson and Karl Louis and our extremely dedicated expert employees have seen to that. All of our colleagues truly enjoy philately. We aren't just trading in any old product; these are exciting, educational documents that trace the history of communications. I have long been interested in supporting other collectors in maximising our enjoyment of our shared hobby. Now, I can also do that professionally as part of the management team of the Global Philatelic Network, and I'm thrilled about that. Turning my hobby into a career – it is a dream come true for me. Tobias and I are determined to continue in the same direction in which Dieter and Karl have been guiding the organisation since the acquisition of the group in 2012.”

Tobias, could you tell us a bit more?

Tobias Huylmans: “In the last ten years, we have worked intently on the broad-scale promotion of stamp collecting, whilst always bolstering the aspects of sophisticated philately that make it what it is: an important, unique source of history



The managers at Köhler & Corinphila Holding all agree: printed catalogues with exceptional images and descriptions of the philatelic and historical lots are the key to any successful auction.

and stories. That is the foundation we're building on, and we will continue pursuing these goals. To that end, we're using all available channels and continuously investing in new media and systems. Examples include the cutting-edge VSC 8000 for complex multi-spectral document analysis, and most recently, ProFi, our digital ProvenanceFinder: the database was compiled with academic rigour and contains globally available information about individual items in digital form. It is a matter of course for us to create professional digital presentations of the items entrusted to us; we also offer live online bidding via our proprietary platform as standard. This opens up our auction rooms to the strong international buyers in the Global Philatelic Network. However, printed formats are also very important to us – including our auction catalogues and EDITIONS. The catalogues, in particular, will always be at the heart of our services for our customers.”

Jonas Hällström: “It is becoming increasingly common in professional philately to do away with printed catalogues in order to cut costs. However, from the customer's point of view, these catalogues are extremely important reference materials, especially because customers can reach for them at any time. During the auctions, the catalogue is an excellent handbook,

providing information and guidance on an ongoing basis. The combination of expert lot descriptions, editorial added value, historical illustrations and especially the brilliant, true-to-life colour reproductions of the philatelic items form a perfect physical manifestation of our passion for philately. A high-quality catalogue is a collector's item in and of itself. The printed catalogues are the GPN auction houses' calling cards, and they make good on our promise of quality. But most importantly: To us, it is a sign of respect and recognition to appropriately and beautifully present the items and collections that our customers have invested a great deal of time, effort and passion in forming.”

Tobias Huylmans: “Absolutely. That's why we will spare no expense or effort to continue printing high-quality, visually appealing auction catalogues with exceptional content, and we will keep shipping them around the world. And naturally, these catalogues are complemented by our digital formats that include helpful search functions and often provide more images of the lots than we can fit into the printed catalogue.”

Many thanks for talking to us, and we wish you all the best!



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