

THEMATICS

Nr 209: SEPTEMBER 2026

Newsletter of *Thematics Southern Africa*/ Nuusbrieff van *Tematika Suider-Afrika*

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Editor: Robbie Harm robertharm9@gmail.com

ARTICLES FOR THEMNEWS

Most of the articles which appear in **Thematics** are sourced from a variety of available philatelic magazines; however, it would be wonderful to use more local articles. I have adjusted the newsletter to allow for local and longer articles. The request for articles remains as strong as ever.

FROM THE EDITOR OF THEMATICS

Dear Thematicists,

This newsletter indicates that the month of September is around the corner, also meaning that the year 2026 is rushing towards its end. That also means that we must start preparing for the year 2027. I am not always sure why it feels to me that the time is flying, although I have always maintained that I am growing older and, therefore, doing whatever I do at a slightly slower pace. Whatever the reason, It seems that I prepared the newsletter for August just the other day. The planned family visit is done and dusted, but was absolutely wonderful. Just to hold another great granddaughter was special, and emphasised once more how blessed I am. But now it is back to the *grindstone*, philately. I show the word *grindstone* in cursive, as philately to me is never a grind. The hobby of philately takes up a large part of my life, but never entices a negative feeling, as I love the hobby. Compiling yet another newsletter is just fun for me, as it means searching for articles. This also means that I will be learning something new in philately. This also is the reason why I recommend that children do philately, as they will develop a wide general knowledge. That is why philately is the hobby of kings, and the king of hobbies.

Editor

THEMATIC MEETINGS

***First Saturday of the month** – *The Pretoria Chapter* meets at **10:00** in Greek Orthodox Church Hall, corner of Lynwood Road and Roper Street, (opposite UP main gate).

Contact: Helena Snyman 012-803-8922, 083-990-8953 or helenasnyman7@gmail.com.

***First Saturday of the month** – *The Western Cape Chapter* meets at **09:30** in the Church Hall of the DR Church Bellville-Vallei, c/o Postma and St Andrews Street, Oakdale, Bellville.

Contact: Diederik Viljoen at 082-456-6653 or diederikgviljoen@gmail.com.

STAMP FAIRS

***First Saturday of the month** – *The Cape Stamp Fair* @ DR Church Bellville-Vallei, c/o Postma and Andrews Streets, Oakdale, Bellville, Cape Town. **Contacts:** Ken Joseph 072-597-1287 ken@philatelicfriends.co.za Robbie Harm 082 925 7103, robertharm9@gmail.com, from 08:30 until 12:30. Please confirm the date of the next Stamp Fair, although reminders are sent via SMS/E-mail.

***First Saturday of the month – Pretoria Stamp Fair** @ Pretoria, Greek Orthodox Church, corner Lynwood Road and Roper Street, (opposite UP main gate) **Contact:** Kenny Napier Kenny.napier@mweb.co.za and Clinton Goslin 083 272 9367, atlasauctioneers@lantic.net. Open at 08:00 with auction at 11:00.

*** Second Saturday, every month - Johannesburg Stamp Fair:** German Country Club, 131 Holkam Road, Paulshof, Sandton. Open 08:00 with an auction at 10:00. Contact: Kenny Napier, kenny.napier@mweb.co.za and Clinton Goslin 083 272 9367, atlasauctioneers@lantic.net.

***Last Saturday of the month – East Rand Stamp Fair** @ Edenvale Bowling Club, 6th Avenue, Edenvale. **Contact:** Kenny Napier Kenny.napier@mweb.co.za and Clinton Goslin 083 272 9367, atlasauctioneers@lantic.net. From 08:00, auction at 10:00.

***First Saturday of the month – Sunbird Stamp Auction** @ St Elizabeth's Anglican Church Hall, 5 Salisbury Avenue, Westville, Durban. From 09:00 until 13:00. **Contacts:** Kim Breytenbach sunbird.stampauctions@gmail.com.

***First Saturday of each month - Natal Stamp Fair:** from 09:00 to 12:30.

Even numbered months @ Hilton's Lions Hall, Azalia Drive, Hilton. Host: Maritzburg Philatelic Society. **Contact** Ken Joseph, ken@philatelicfriends.com.

Odd numbered months - at St Elizabeth's Church Main Hall, Salisbury Avenue, Westville, Durban. Host: Highway Philatelic Society. **Contact** Ken Joseph, ken@philatelicfriends.com.

***Second and last Saturday of month – Natal Fair** @ Classic Motorcycle Club, 137 Tara Road, Bluff, Durban. Open: From 09:00. Contact: Zbigniew Kawecki, z.kawecki57@gmail.com.

***George** (online philatelic auctions): Ray's Stamps, Contact: Ray Upson (044 871 2286). scpa@xsinet.co.za (Fax2email: 086 733 8444)

THEMATICS AROUND THE COUNTRY

Pretoria Chapter – 1 August 2026

The TSA Pretoria meeting was once again an interesting experience with **Hans Itman** asking difficult questions like *How do I present my themes, my collections?* We all pitched in to discuss the basics, just to realise it is not as easy as it sounds. Then we started to refer him to different sources like the websites and periodicals. **Helena** showed her found treasure - postcards of SA Railways touring buses - that will now complete her exhibition for the Regional Heritage Exhibition at the Voortrekker Monument in September. **Hans Hermanides** showed some lovely postcards and booklets of the Royal Natal National Park. He showed places where they stayed like Tendele, Broomehill, and also a scary one of the well-known chain ladder. **Petra** showed recycled Setempe booklets that are distributed to pre-primary schools. Petra also showed a postcard of Paul Kruger's funeral at Bosman Street Church and the postmark Gezina, The suburb Gezina in Pretoria was established on Kruger's wife, Gezina's, small farm. **Mias** showed us his new acquisitions which included a Russian bi-plane which was quickly identified in the meeting by using the app Lens. He also showed a few Transvaal stamps, some with overprints. **John** amazed us again with his Union Castle: Islands on the Union Castle shipping line routes to South Africa. It is mostly postcards of

Madeira, Canary Islands, Ascension, St. Helena, but also included are landing and boarding cards, as well as excursion tickets.

Helena Snyman

WC Chapter – 27 June 2026

The meeting was attended by Reanie de Villiers, Maureen & John Reeves, with apologies for Diederik Viljoen. Reanie shared some recently acquired comic stamps from Sharjah. These stamps are CTO'd and blacklisted. They are officially classified as Cinderellas and can't be used in thematic exhibitions. Next we all evaluated the SAVPEX exhibit: **A Tale of Two Islands: A Thematic Comparison of Tristan Da Cunha and Ascension (1950–1989)** which received 75 marks. We agreed that the exhibit was very neatly presented. At first glance, it wasn't very impressive and we could not understand the high allocation of marks. On closer examination, we discovered that a lot of research has been done in the comparison between the different issues. Some of the material was also deemed to be scarce.

Reanie de Villiers

18 July 2026

Attending: Reanie de Villiers, Maureen & John Reeves, Hugh Mulder, and an apology from Diederik Viljoen. Maureen and John shared a treasure trove of findings from their recent visit to the UK. Maureen acquired interesting material to enhance her Antarctic-related collection. Reanie showed how you could photograph a stamp on your mobile and then share the image to Google. It would scan the stamp and search for information on the stamp. This way we learnt that a Denmark stamp showing a thumbprint used the thumbprint of the artist, Christian Vind. Similarly, we discovered more information on Alain Lamalie, who was a French polar researcher. John bought the most beautiful picture postcards featuring lighthouses. Two stood out: The "relief" of the keepers at the Bishop Rock lighthouse in the Isles of Scilly and the old Cape Town promenade. An interesting concept was the advertisement of Stamp Fairs in the form of pamphlets and paper bags which were handed out with each purchase. Lastly, we looked at the SAVPEX exhibit: **Diving "Acrobatic Sport"** which received 86 marks. From the beginning it was clear that the exhibitor had detailed knowledge on the subject and a vast variety of philatelic items. The exhibit would have easily scored full marks on presentation. One aspect we found lacking was philatelic information.

Reanie de Villiers

1 August 2026

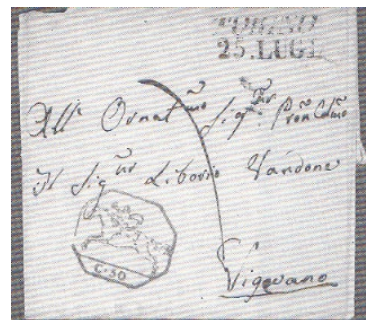
Only 6 members attended our August meeting i.e. Maureen, Rianneke, Reanie, John, Evert and Diederik, with an apology from Anton. John started by showing a number of postcards with theme, Lighthouses which he purchased in the UK on their trip there in June. Maureen also showed a range of postcards and also gave me a nice gift of Balloon stamps which will fill a few empty spots in my collection. Diederik then gifted a number of covers to those present for their respective exhibits. We then looked at a one frame collection called **"Petroleum: A Philatelist Story"**. This is an exhibit from the American Topical Association website. Well-presented and follow the theme as set out in the Plan. It was nice to see nearly on all pages 3 different philatelic item. Unfortunately, a number of FDC's and privately decorated covers distract for a very interesting presentation. Make use of a large number of meter marks which all fit in perfectly. On that note, I believe that Federation is to investigate the possibility of in future have a Topical category at our local National Exhibits. As positive that may allow more novice collectors to come forward and exhibit. We should have more information after congress in September.

Diederik Viljoen

FACTS AND FEATS: THE POSTAL SERVICES

The following Facts and Feats touch on Postal Stationary and Ancillary Labels.

The first latter sheets, pre-stamped and sold to the public for postal transmission, originated in the kingdom of Sardinia by decree of 12 August 1818. Sheets were sold at state post offices and tobacconists (a royal monopoly) from 7 November. Known as *Carta Postale Bollata* (stamped postal sheets), they were sold in three denominations with stamps of different shapes – 15c (circular), 25c (oval) and 50c (octagonal). All showed a horn-blowing putto on a galloping horse; hence the philatelists' nickname *Cavallini* (little horsemen). All letter sheets had to be stamped, whether despatched by post or not, and the *Cavallini* represented a tax. As taxed letters were transmitted by post at no further charge these stamps are regarded as postal rather than fiscal in Italy, but this definition has been challenged by postal historians in other countries.



The first pre-stamped letter sheets intended purely for prepayment of postage were issued by New South Wales in 1938. Sheets bearing the embossed seal of the colony were sold for a penny and prepaid correspondence in the Sydney area. Although unpaid letters were charged twopence, the letter sheets were not popular and are scarce in used condition, even though they remained in use until 1850 when adhesive stamps were introduced. Other countries put more faith in postal stationary than adhesive stamps. Prepaid stationary was issued by the following countries, the date of their first adhesive stamps being shown in parenthesis: Russia in 1845 (1858); Finland in 1845 (1856); Thurn and Taxis in 1846 (1852); Hanover in 1849 (1850); and Poland in 1858 (1860).



Britain's first postal stationary for public use consisted of envelopes and letter sheets printed in black (1d) and blue (2d), bearing a florid pictorial design by William Mulready, RA. The motif, showing Britannia despatching letters to the far flung outposts of the Empire, was ridiculed by the public and satirised by Thomas Hood:



*Britannia is sending her messengers forth,
To the east, to the west, to the south, to the north;
At her feet is a lion wot's taking a nap,
And a dish-over rests on her legs and her lap.*

Rowland Hill placed more faith in the Mulready stationary than in the adhesive stamps and was surprised when the latter outstripped the former in popularity. The Mulready stationary was withdrawn in 1841 and replaced by plain envelopes and letter sheets bearing embossed stamps.

Facts and feats

from Mackay, James, *The Guinness Book of Stamps*, Guinness Publishing Ltd, Enfield, 1988

Please note that the information used for this article has in many cases been overtaken by events – Ed.

TIMELINE – MICHELANGELO COMMENCES WORK ON STATUE OF DAVID



Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni, known mononymously as **Michelangelo**, was an Italian sculptor, painter, architect, and poet of the High Renaissance. On **13 September 1501** he started work on one of his best-known pieces of art, the **Statue of David**. **David** is a masterpiece of Italian Renaissance sculpture in marble created from 1501 to 1504 by Michelangelo. With a height of 5.17 metres, the **David** was not only the first colossal marble statue made in the High Renaissance, but also the first since classical antiquity, setting a precedent for the 16th century and beyond.



David was originally commissioned as one of a series of statues of twelve prophets to be positioned along the roofline of the east end of Florence Cathedral, but was instead placed in the public square in front of the Piazza della Signoria, the seat of civic government in Florence, where it was unveiled on 8 September 1504. In 1873, the statue was moved to the Galleria dell'Accademia, installed at the original biblical figure David was Florence. Because of the represented, the statue defence of civil liberties constitution of the independent city-state powerful rival states and Medici family. statue early in the month after he was contract provided him a *Maria del Fiore* behind six *fiorini* per month, and allowed him two years to complete the sculpture. Michelangelo regarded a single block of stone as containing all the possible conceptions for a work of art, and believed that the artist's task is sculpting the marble block to reveal the ideal form within, an expression of his Neo-Platonic belief that body and mind are separate, and must work in concert and strive to attain union with one another and with the divine. In later years, speaking of his early commissions sculpting marble, he contended that he was merely liberating figures that were already existent in the stone, and that he could see them in his mind's eye



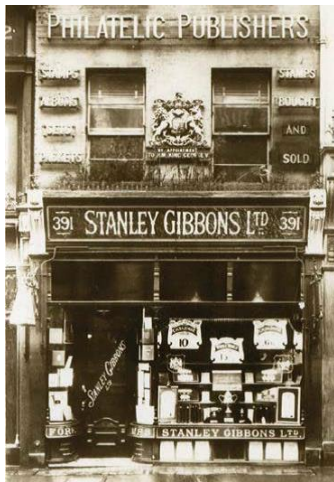
International Society of World Wide Stamp Collectors, Wikipedia, History.com

EXHIBITING: YOUR COLLECTION IS WORTH SHARING WITH OTHERS

Exhibiting is more than competition and rare material — it is the foundation of sharing, learning and growing philately. In the first of a two-part article, Neil Donen and Jan Hofmeyr argue that every collector has a role in telling their story, inspiring others and sustaining the hobby through simple, engaging show-and-tell displays at every level.

'A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.' (Lao Tzu)

One of the never-ending fascinations we have with philately is the seemingly endless areas of opportunities and variations available for collectors to both focus on and acquire more material. On the other hand, there is the regret that the rest of us never get to see these collections. The reasons behind this 'lack of exposure' are probably multifactorial.



Exhibiting first began in the 1860s when stamp dealers exhibited their wares in their shop windows or in store

It is possible that some collectors wish to save the acquisitions for their own self-enjoyment. It is equally possible they may fear that others may not respond with the same sense of joy to the acquired items as the collector. One other concern may be the philatelist's lack of self-confidence or fear they lack the knowledge to either present or share their collection with large groups. This article is about you, the reader and collector, and the need for you to share your treasures with the wider world. It is about reclaiming the original role of the 'show-and-tell' exhibit that has grown the hobby over the past 150 years. It is also about your small, but vitally significant role in sustaining philately and the stories your collections tell.

Show and tell

Exhibiting is defined as '*presenting publicly so that others may see.*' It is believed that exhibiting first began in the 1860s when stamp dealers, seeking to advertise their wares, exhibited them in their shop windows or in the store. Local stamp clubs soon embraced the concept and began sharing information about their stamps using the 'show-and-tell' process at their meetings. Over the succeeding years, as the hobby grew, these sessions evolved into regional, national and international meetings. The first so-called international exhibition took place in Vienna in 1881. The **London Philatelic Exhibition** (19-26 May 1890) is considered to be the first international stamp exhibition held in the United Kingdom. In the early 1900s, postal authorities became involved as they saw an opportunity for both promoting their respective countries and creating additional sources of revenue.

Organised philately

Most of this growth was somewhat haphazard and disorganised. In September 1926, seven European national philatelic societies formed what was to evolve into the **International Philatelic Federation (FIP)**. It is interesting to note the order and priority of their listed goals:



1. Recognition of FIP by the Universal Postal Union (UPU) officials and countries;
2. To combat production of unnecessary and harmful stamp issues;
3. To pursue effective government legislation against forgers;
4. To limit the number of international exhibits and to develop uniform regulations for exhibitions; and
5. To promote the hobby of philatelic development amongst young people.

Over time the laudable goal of uniform exhibit regulations, mimicked by many national philatelic organisations, has somehow morphed into the promotion of quality items, philatelic rarity and philatelic importance being key factors in exhibiting. This unintended focus on 'elitism' and high acquisition item costs has side-lined the vast majority of collectors and, we believe, contributed to the decline of the hobby. To some, the word 'exhibiting' carries unfortunate connotations. In this article it is taken to mean the many levels of pre-

senting one's collection through a show-and-tell process based on an organised and focused approach.

Reclaiming the show-and-tell role of exhibiting for the everyday collector



The hobby of philately embraces virtually all aspects of our life. Examples include history, design, the humanities and sciences. In short, it is about who we are and what we are about.

World-class exhibiting: The competition frames at the recent Boston 26 Stamp Expo contained some of the world's greatest material. However, every collector would have begun their exhibiting journey with small-scale displays.

Central to our particular area of interest is the need to collect and extend our knowledge so that the items

acquired are both appropriate and logical. Exhibiting ensures we focus on our collecting needs and the reasons of the 'why's and what's of what we are showing. It becomes an important medium for showcasing and preserving the richness of the different aspects of philately. It is also a means of engaging and educating people of all ages. Exhibiting also plays a role in giving back to the hobby by sharing with others and thus indirectly helping them to focus on their own collecting interests.

Philatelic exhibiting at every level is essentially a show-and-tell process. To make it instructive to the audience, the exhibitor needs to include and consider five basic elements:

1. The theme (what am I showing and why?),
2. The material (what do I have and is it enough?),
3. The supplementary material (do I need to include any supporting material?),
4. The design (what items do I include?),
5. The layout (how will the material be presented?).

Most exhibition manuals refer to these elements as story-telling. They are applicable at all levels, from the single item being shown at a local stamp club to the ten frames seen at an international exhibition. Although the ultimate goal is to change national and international philatelic exhibiting focus, rules and regulations, the first steps must begin at the local stamp club level. More importantly it must focus on the individual collector and how the concept of show and tell (exhibiting) helps grow both themselves and their collection.

Using show and tell (exhibiting) to grow

The hobby of stamp collecting is about understanding, acquisition, pleasure and personal growth. Exhibiting is, in our mind, the cornerstone to achieving these goals. It is built on three legs:

A. Focusing the collecting acquisitions: Having a particular area of collecting in mind requires one to set about acquiring items that logically fit into this area. This means carefully assessing what you need and, probably more importantly, what you don't need. Using the five elements listed above allows you to create a 'story' around your collection so that it becomes both logical and organised. This implies having a beginning (how/why did it start?), a body (the major elements of the collection) and an ending (how does it end or tied together?).

B. Knowledge and search skills: To improve any collection, knowing how and where to find the necessary collectable items requires the development of search skills. This may include internet searching, identifying a particular dealer or auction site/house. It may even just involve knowing where to look at club meetings, local bourses or stamp shows. Understanding more about the historical or technical details surrounding your collection is im-

portant in making better and more selective choices when looking to acquire or find a certain item. Some people like to use the term research for this type of skill. In our mind, knowledge and search skills are a more appropriate and descriptive term.

C. Showing/talking about (exhibiting) your collection: Showing is the third leg of collecting. It also includes the all-important word – ‘*questioning*’. This could be questions raised by you, the collector, or from others. Being confident in organising and showing your story (collection) dramatically improves one’s ability to contribute to your own personal growth and pleasure. It helps build confidence and enthusiasm and unconsciously pushes one to expand any collection in a meaningful, and ultimately, highly satisfying manner.

Starting the journey the immediate focus of both individual collectors and stamp clubs should be on improving the show-and-tell sessions. It must involve the application of the five basic elements of exhibiting listed above. It also must include the use of the three growing techniques by *all* members of the club. Thus, some of the meetings may include presentations and discussions on how to gain and apply these skills. Starting small even by showing just a single item is entirely in keeping with Lao Tzu’s *single step*.



Michael Siverns, Grace Davies and Howard Morgan displaying their material at local society meetings

We would strongly recommend that local clubs include a feedback session as part of the show-and-tell (exhibiting) presentation. We believe that all club members should participate in the feedback sessions. For the club members, it becomes their opportunity to not only assist the presenter in improving their collection, but the wide range of issues raised by other members will also benefit the group as a whole. Feedback is a key end point for the presenter. Hopefully, it should include such points as the raising of questions concerning the current collection, additional thoughts on expanding the collection or collecting area and possible techniques to enhance the collection presentation. Keeping this environment both comfortable and safe from personal criticism builds collegiality and fosters collaboration. Scoring and critiquing of the presentation, in our mind, is a later development which occurs when people become more comfortable with the new format. Although we recommend clubs develop their own show-and-tell principles (rules), we would suggest that at least it includes these three principles:

1. What is the story (exhibit) about and why?
2. Can the audience follow the story based on the material presented?
3. Are there areas for growth and improvement?

Our purpose in this article is to call on both collectors and local stamp clubs to join the movement in promoting our hobby. We have laid out some ideas and principles. These should be debated and discussed, possibly by using this article as a starting point, at a regular club meeting. It is possible that some may wish to change our proposals. We welcome that, with the caveat – keep it simple. It is equally important that you share how you have made your show-and-tell experiences and techniques a success with other clubs. This exchange should also include what did not work. We all need to learn from each other. It is your hobby and you must have some control over how it grows. Growing also means attracting new faces, particularly younger faces (FIP goal number 5). Well-told stories excite people, particularly younger people. Make show and tell (exhibiting) the key that opens these new collectors' vision to both the value and potential of collecting philatelic material. Its rewards are truly fulfilling.

About the authors

Neil Donen and Jan Hofmeyr FRPSL are both experienced exhibitors. And have won gold and large gold medals at National level and gold at International level. In 2025 Jan Hofmeyr won the Champion of Champions exhibit for the US World Series of Stamp Shows. In 2022 he was awarded the RPSL Exhibition Medal. This was only the 17th time that the Royal has awarded The Exhibition Medal.

Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge and thank Harold Kriche. His input into this article helped us greatly in focusing our message.

An article by Neil Donen and Jan Hofmeyr FRPSL in Gibbons Stamp Monthly of August 2026

THE RICHARD-WAGNER-FESTSPIELE IN BAYREUTH

The Richard Wagner Festival, also known as the *Bayreuth Festival*, is a music theatre festival which hitherto has focused exclusively on Wagner's last ten operas. The festival usually runs from 25 July to 28 August. It has been held since 1876, with a few interruptions, and since 1951 it has taken place annually in the *Festspielhaus* on the Green Hill in Bayreuth, which was built specifically for this purpose.



Richard Wagner wanted a theatre where he could realise his vision of a 'Gesamtkunstwerk' (a comprehensive work of art) as composer, librettist, dramaturg and artistic director.



Bayern, official postcard of 1897 with additional private printing: Das erste philatelistische Zeugnis der Bayreuther Festspiele (first philatelic cover of Bayreuth Festival)

The theatre was to be located away from the big cities, free from distractions and without the compromises of a repertory theatre, so that it could devote itself completely to the performance of his works. Wagner first visited Bayreuth in 1871 with his wife Cosima. He liked the town and

decided to make Bayreuth the location for his theatre. The festival theatre, built on the Green Hill in collaboration with architect Otto Brückwald, whose simple brick architecture seems rather unfestive, was initially intended as merely a temporary structure. However, the building, with its unique acoustics resulting from the concealed orchestra pit which is spanned by a sound cover open to the stage, proved to be extremely practical. The amphitheatre-like auditorium, which rises in an almost semi-circular shape and seats 1,925, is bordered at the rear by a few rows of boxes, which was also in line with Wagner's intentions.



Wagner described the fact that the first festival took place on 13 August 1876 as a miracle. It offered the first complete performance of 'Der Ring des Nibelungen' with the world premieres of 'Siegfried' and 'Götterdämmerung' over three days and one evening. It was a triumph for Wagner and Bayreuth. Guests included Franz Liszt, Anton Bruckner, Camille Saint-Saëns, Peter Tchaikovsky, Edvard Grieg, Leo Tolstoy, Friedrich Nietzsche and Gottfried Semper, as well as Emperor Wilhelm I, Emperor Pedro II of Brazil, and King Karl of Württemberg. The Bavarian King Ludwig II had attended the dress rehearsals and returned to Bayreuth for the third and final cycle of performances. Unfortunately, the first festival was a financial fiasco, and the next festival could not be held until 1882, when 'Parsifal' was premiered on 26 July.



Until shortly before his death on 13 February 1883, Wagner toyed with the idea of reworking his 'Tannhäuser' and 'The Flying Dutchman' to make them "worthy of Bayreuth". He did not forbid performances of his early works 'Das Liebesverbot', 'Die Feen' and 'Rienzi' in Bayreuth, but he did not express any interest in them either. For this reason, it has been customary in Bayreuth to perform only the ten major works from 'Der fliegende Holländer' to 'Parsifal'.



Richard Wagner himself had not appointed a successor to run the festival. After his sudden death, it was therefore continued at irregular intervals by his widow Cosima. She thus became the real founder and fanatical guardian of the festival tradition. Among the festival guests of that time were Max Reger, Theodor Fontane, George Bernard Shaw, and Mark Twain.



The festival itself experienced a cycle of artistic stagnation and innovation. Cosima Wagner, who took over as director in 1886, had a strict concept of fidelity to the original works. In 1908, on the urgent advice of her doctors, she handed over the management of the festival to her son Siegfried Wagner, who gradually modernised the performances. Among the festival guests in the years before the First World War were Albert Schweitzer, Thomas Mann, Igor Stravinsky,



and Gerhart Hauptmann. The First World War forced an interruption of the 1914 festival. The refund of tickets sold resulted in a huge deficit, so that Siegfried could only re-open the festival, after a ten-year hiatus, on 22 July 1924. In his will of 1929, he stipulated that the festival should permanently remain under the responsibility of the Wagner family.

The festival faced problems in the early 1930s: Siegfried died in 1930 and the festival was taken over by his widow, Winifred Wagner. Also, tensions and jealousies repeatedly arose

between the newly hired conductors Arturo Toscanini and Wilhelm Furtwängler. Shortly before rehearsals for the 1933 festival were to begin, Toscanini resigned because of the hostile atmosphere towards foreigners, and especially Jews, since the National Socialists had come to power.



Express letter with correct postage from Bayreuth to Berchtesgaden, dated 20 January 1934 (letter up to 20 grams = 12 Pfennigs, surcharge for rural express delivery = 80 Pfennigs)

However, Winifred Wagner's proximity to Adolf Hitler ensured that from 1933 the festival was financed by the state and thus relieved of all financial worries. In



the years leading up to the Second World War, Hitler was a regular guest in Bayreuth during the festival season, leading Thomas Mann to describe Bayreuth as "Hitler's court theatre". During his last visit in the summer of 1940, Hitler ordered that the festival be held as a "war festival" from then on.



Eugen Jochum during an orchestra rehearsal for "Parsifal" at the Bayreuth Festival 1971

Between 1945 and 1950, no festivals took place in Bayreuth. As part of the denazification process, Winifred Wagner was classified as a 'follower' by the Allies.

After she had legally renounced the directorship of the festival in favour of her sons Wieland and Wolfgang Wagner, the way was clear for the festival to resume. Wieland and Wolfgang Wagner, the grandsons of the festival's founder, were responsible for all artistic and organisational management during this new beginning.

Postmark marking the resumption of the festival after the Second World War

They succeeded in establishing annual festivals, usually with one new production per season. The first post-war festival began on 30 July 1951 with Wieland's highly acclaimed production of 'Parsifal'. Since then, the



programme has traditionally featured an alternating selection of Richard Wagner's major works: 'The Flying Dutchman', 'Tannhäuser', 'Lohengrin', 'The Ring of the Nibelung' (with the four parts 'Das Rheingold', 'Die Walküre', 'Siegfried' and 'Götterdämmerung'), 'Tristan and Isolde', 'Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg' and 'Parsifal'.



After Wieland Wagner's death on 17 October 1966, Wolfgang Wagner assumed sole responsibility for managing the festival. Since 1 September 2015, Katharina Wagner, Richard Wagner's great-granddaughter, has been the artistic director of the Bayreuth Festival and is also the managing director of Bayreuther Festspiele GmbH.



Demeter Popovici as Alberich at the 1899 Festival

She had already held both positions since 2008 together with her half-sister Eva Wagner-Paquier. Up to 32 performances take place at the Bayreuth Festival every year. The Wagner ensemble of the 1950s, featuring singers Astrid Varnay, Martha Mödl, Birgit Nilsson, and Wolfgang Windgassen, Hans Hotter and Gustav Neidlinger was replaced in the 1970s by Hildegard Behrens, Gwyneth Jones, Jeannine Altmeyer, René Kollo, Peter Hofmann,

Anja Silja, Leonie Rysanek, Karl Ridderbusch, Siegfried Jerusalem, Donald McIntyre and Siegmund Nimsgern.

Important conductors of the festival were Hans Richter, Felix Mottl, Hermann Levi, Siegfried Wagner, Wilhelm Furtwängler, Arturo Toscanini, Richard Strauss, Hans Knappertsbusch, Clemens Krauss, Rudolf Kempe, Joseph Keilberth, Herbert von Karajan, Karl Böhm, Lorin Maazel, Pierre Boulez, Daniel Barenboim, Carlos Kleiber, Wolfgang Sawallisch, Georg Solti and Giuseppe Sinopoli.

Special commemorative stamp marking the 150th anniversary of the Bayreuth Festival, designed based on the flooring in the Royal Box of the Festspielhaus.

Since 1973, the Bayreuth Festival Theatre has been run by the Richard Wagner Foundation Bayreuth. Since 1986, Bayreuther Festspiele GmbH has been responsible for organising the festival.

In March 2020, the festival scheduled for that summer had to be cancelled due to the



COVID-19 pandemic. The 2021 Bayreuth Festival was not cancelled, but took place under strict corona restrictions and with an audience limited to 900 per performance.

Special postmarks to celebrate 150th anniversary of Bayreuther Festspiele used in Berlin and Bonn on 2 July 2026
At the premiere of 'The Flying Dutchman', Ukrainian conductor Oksana Lyniv (*1978) was the first woman to conduct at the festival. This may well herald a new era on



the Green Hill in Bayreuth: for the festival's 150th anniversary in 2026, an early work by the master, his opera 'Rienzi', was included in the program of the Richard Wagner Festival for the first time.

Reference:

Quellen: Reclams Opernlexikon;

<https://www.bayreuther-festspiele.de/historie>

An article by Karl-Heinz Büdding, translated by Peter van Dissel in Der Musikus Nr. 168 of September 2026

GAGARIN – WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN?

50 years have passed since Yuri Gagarin made his historic mission to become the first man in space, an achievement the Soviets were to follow up with several more firsts in the 'Space Race' with America. Throughout most of the sixties the Soviet space programme was to put their western competitors to shame time and time again. But did the Soviet's lust to prove itself against its Cold War counterparts push the fledgling space programme too far and ultimately cost them the coveted race to Moon? Here we chart the successes of the Soviet space programme through the stamps produced in its honour, as well as mentioning those unsuccessful – and uncommemorated – missions that blighted the Soviet's glory days, and ask what might have been if fate and the affairs of state had been just a little bit kinder?



'Good morning, this is the BBC News at 9 a.m. on Saturday 12 April 1969 read by Robert Dougall. 'The citizens of the Soviet Union are this morning celebrating their annual Cosmonauts Day with news of the latest stunning spaceflight achievement. As I speak, Colonel Yuri Gagarin and Colonel Alexei Leonov are orbiting the Moon in their Zond 6 spacecraft. Gagarin was the first man in space exactly eight years ago in Vostok 1 and Leonov, the

first man to walk in space on Voskhod 2 in March 1965. The race is now on to see who can be first to land a man on the Moon, which the Soviets will surely attempt soon, possibly before the Americans, whose plans for a manned landing were greatly compromised when two of their top astronauts, Neil Armstrong and David Scott, were killed in the Gemini 8 disaster in March 1966 ...'



Counter-factual — yes, but total fantasy — no. The American element apart, this was the scene envisaged by Sergei Korolev, the then anonymous Chief Designer of the Soviet Union's space programmes, when he masterminded a stunning series of space firsts, including the launch of Yuri Gagarin into a single orbit on 12 April 1961. Korolev's death almost five years later was probably the most important factor in the loss of the race to the Moon.



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The Space Race

Following the end of the World War II, both superpowers began their own space projects. Reaching the Moon was the first major milestone on the road to Mars, which some thought could be achieved in the 1970s. Whilst the Americans were largely open about their space programme, saying in advance what they were about to do and allowing



public access to manned space launches, the Soviets kept their cards very close to their chests, with news of successes reported only once their cosmonauts were safely back on the ground and with failures left for the historians to unearth. Both national space agencies were under tremendous political pressure to succeed, the Soviets more so than the Americans. This sometimes led to the rash over-ruling of experts and demands for corners to be cut by the politicians. Soviet Premier, Nikita Krushchev (**left**), insisted on

regular propaganda coups from his space scientists. On occasions these were even tailored to fall upon famous anniversaries in Soviet history or up-coming major political events. Moreover, the whole programme was shrouded with secrecy and misinformation, as was the Soviet culture of the time during the Cold War. The term 'Sputnik' covered satellites the size of a basketball to one as large as a small family car; the 'Voskhod' spacecraft were much the same as the 'Vostok' craft but called something else to impress the West; the 'Cosmos' programme was a blanket term for scores of different satellites and probes and the 'Zond' Moon craft were simply 'Soyuz' capsules with elements left off.



Nevertheless, the Soviets pulled off a series of stunning space firsts, which alarmed and energised the Americans, who, with some dilettantism and extravagance, were running three rival space programmes themselves, until they realised they had to coordinate their resources if they were to beat the Soviets to the Moon. The first shock to the



West came on 4 October 1957 with the launch of Sputnik, the world's first artificial satellite (**right**). Within a month they had launched a dog (called various names, but usually Laika) into orbit. Evidence of the Soviet's determination to succeed whatever the cost was that this dog was never intended to return to Earth. Its fate



was to perish from overheating whilst in orbit (**above left**). Sputnik 3, launched in late April 1958, carried a series of scientific experiments (**below right**) but Sputnik 4 (Koraby-Sputnik 1) was the name given to the first unmanned test of the Vostok (East) craft that would carry Gagarin. Sputnik 7 and Sputnik 8 were directed at Venus, but Sputniks



5, 6, 9 and 10 all carried the weight of a small cosmonaut, three of them orbiting human dummies (complete with voice recordings to give the impression to snoopers that they were actually living cosmonauts) and dogs, some of which survived their trips. As history shows, less than three weeks before the launch of Gagarin, the final manned flight rehearsal of Sputnik 10, carrying cosmonaut Ivan Ivanovich (a dummy) and his faithful canine companion, Zvezdochka, was a complete success and preparations could be made for the big day.



The first man in space

Major Yuri Gagarin was picked from a cosmonaut cadre of over a dozen candidates who had been in training for many months for a chance to be the first man in space. Propaganda played an important role in his selection. Although Gagarin was an extremely competent pilot he was not their top man. However, being a young, handsome, clean-cut and charismatic family man, meant he was perfect to become a media darling — should he survive. Learning of his selection only a handful of days before launch, Gagarin



hardly had time to worry about the mission ahead, but his whole demeanour during launch, flight and landing (which involved parachuting to earth after a planned ejection seat exit from the descending Vostok craft (**left**), spoke of calmness, courage

and competence; although, as the Vostok crafts were fully controlled from the ground, he did not have to do very much once in orbit — just survive, observe and report. He was as much in charge of his flight as Laika and Zvezdochka had been of theirs.

More 'firsts'

Gagarin was up and down well within two hours. On his return the news blackout was lifted and he became a classic, overnight sensation. The Americans, despite their espionage and suspicions, were still a little shocked and dismayed as they were still planning downrange manned ballistic flights and would not put a man into orbit for months to come, by which time the Soviets had achieved further stunning suc-



cesses. In August 1961, Vostok 2 carried Gagarin's back up cosmonaut, Gherman Titov, into space for a full day (**above right**). A year later, Vostok 3 and Vostok 4 were launched within a day of each other, (**left**), trumping the Americans' success of John Glenn's

three orbits in February of that year. In June 1963, Vostok 5 and Vostok 6 were also launched within days of each other, one of them carrying the first woman in space, Valentina Tereschkova. (**right**).



The Americans literally did not know what was coming next. In October 1964 there was another propaganda coup for the Russian programme when three cosmonauts in a Vostok craft, now called 'Voshkod' orbited the Earth months before the two-man Gemini programme could get underway in the States



(left). This launch was a ruthless

gamble by the Soviets, who took out the ejection seat of Vostok and dispensed with the cosmonauts' bulky space suits so they could all be crammed into something the size of a small family car. Thankfully, mission commander Vladimir Komarov, scientist Konstantin Feokstifov and doctor Boris Yegorov survived the mission.

The Soviet's next coup was to take a man out of an orbiting capsule to make the world's first space-walk. In March 1965, Alexei Leonov left the safety of his Voskhod 2 craft to make his historic 'walk in space'; something the Americans would not effect, with Ed White in Gemini 4, until June of that year



(right). Whilst other cosmonauts gained flight experience, the 'Hero of the Soviet Union', Yuri Gagarin, was being feted internationally. His every appearance in world capitals emphasised the apparent superiority of the Soviet space programme, which trumped the American efforts time and time again. At the same time Gagarin was being groomed for a role at the cosmonaut training school, later to be named in his honour (left).

Too many Chiefs...

The Soviet space programme seemed to be unbeatable and a coveted Moon mission seemed to be in their reach. Then, in January 1966, the programme's Chief Designer, Sergei Pavlovich Korolev, died following major surgery. This single event was arguably the most important reason the Soviet Union failed to beat the Americans to a manned Moon landing. To the cosmonauts, Korolev, (who they simply called 'S P') was a greatly respected father figure, however, until after his death, no one outside the secretive Soviet power base knew his identity or his incredible contribution to the Russian space programme. It later became known that there was a small group of 'Chief Designers' all with their own specialist bureaux: Valentin Glushko (right), Vladimir Chelomei, Mikhail Yangel and Vasily Mishin, most of whom were Ukrainians. However, to say that Korolev was *primus inter pares* is to give quite the wrong idea because the atmosphere amongst the men was poisonous and highly competitive, each having the ear and favour of particular influential Politburo members.



However, it was Korolev who had the political upper hand and a clear set of goals for the Space programme. Following his death the direction and decisiveness of the programme

was lost as rival Chief Designers jostled for control. The situation was compounded with technical problems—particularly with the enormous N-1 booster rockets, which were designed to carry large payloads into orbit to make the Moon landing possible, and with the new Soyuz craft. However, the Politburo executives did not want to know about such issues: they just wanted more successes. Over two years passed between the flight of Voskhod 2 and the first manned test of the new generation Soyuz craft. This was to be flown by the first cosmonaut to make a second flight, Vladimir Komarov, with Gagarin as his back up. Soyuz 1 was to rendezvous with Soyuz 2, piloted by Valery Bykovsky (who had also flown Vostok 5). Once the two crafts were in position it was planned that two cosmonauts would make a space-walk between the two modules.

However, the Politburo's demands for quick results were to take its first casualty. As Vladimir Komarov waited for Soyuz 1 to lift off in April 1967, he knew there were so many problems with his craft that his survival was most unlikely. He had already been asked to risk his life once by flying in Voskhod 1 without a space suit and now the Politburo wanted another sacrifice of him. Soon after take-off it was obvious that all sorts of things were wrong with his flight and he was ordered to start his descent on the 18th orbit. However, four miles up the parachute harness on Soyuz 1 became twisted and he died in the uncontrolled



plunge to the ground. To its eternal shame the USSR/Russia has never commemorated Komarov or marked the flight of Soyuz 1 with a postage stamp. Apparently only successes are worthy (*left*). In charge of this disaster was Korolev's deputy, Vasily Mishin. Had he still been alive, Korolev would surely not have allowed the flight to continue, knowing that there was a high chance of 'one of his boys' being killed. Komarov died on 23 April 1967, along with any lingering hope that the Soviets could beat the Americans to the Moon.

It wasn't until January 1969, a year and a half after Korolev's post-mortem, that Soyuz 3 (*right*) launched and the cosmonaut transfers in earth orbit, planned



between Soyuz 1 and Soyuz 2, were effected between Soyuz 4 and 5 (*left*). It was now too late to set their targets on the Moon. The Americans had already orbited it with Apollo 8 a month before (*right*). The Soviets responded by insisting that they never had a Moon programme at all. Had Komarov not died, maybe the maiden flight of Soyuz 1 would have gone well, albeit delayed, and Gagarin may have made his planned Soyuz mission—instead of being killed in a crash when his jet trainer went into a fatal spin near Moscow on 27 March 1968.



Of course, the Americans also had their setbacks. A fire during a launchpad practice for the Apollo 1 mission on 27 January 1967 killed three astronauts, some of whom would certainly have gone to the Moon (*left*). There was also very nearly a fatal accident in space on 16 March 1966 when Neil Armstrong, the commander of Gemini 8, saved the life of pilot,



David Scott and his own with an astonishing display of calmness and skill as his craft spun wildly out of control in an attempt to dock with an Agena rocket (*right*). It was Armstrong's courage and expertise in this near fatal episode that supported the decision that he should be the first



man on the Moon some three years later (**above left**). Fate had determined that astronauts not cosmonauts—one of whom might well have been Yuri Gagarin—should be the first to fly around the Moon. However, 50 years on from that milestone mission, Gagarin's place as one of the greatest pioneers in space travel is still secure.

An article by Jeff Dugdale in Gibbons Stamp Monthly of April 2011

MOST POPULAR MUSIC STAMP 2025

Stamp issues marking significant anniversaries of famous figures from the worlds of culture, science, and politics have long been highly popular among postal authorities and collectors alike. Against this backdrop, it comes as no surprise that the stamp commemorating the 200th anniversary of the "Waltz King," Johann Strauss, was voted the most popular music-themed stamp of 2025 by collectors worldwide, garnering 6.07% of the vote. Issued by Austrian Post on 18 January 2025, the stamp combines the figure from the Johann Strauss monument in Vienna's Stadtpark with a detail from the title page of the first edition of the piano score for the waltz "The Blue Danube" (*An der schönen blauen Donau*), published by C.A. Spina in Vienna in 1867.



The stamp was designed by Viennese artist Kirsten Lubach, who is being honoured with the 2026 Yehudi Menuhin Trophy for her work. Kirsten Lubach (*1973), a self-employed master engraver from Vienna, engraved her first stamp in 2006. Since then, she has designed numerous stamps for various postal authorities. She already received the Yehudi Menuhin Trophy in 2023 for the "Trombone" stamp, part of the "Musical Austria" series.

With 4.59% of the vote, the "The Pixies' Christmas" stamp from the Faroe Islands, issued on 20 October 2025, took second place. The stamp was designed by Janus á Húsagarði, a Faroese photographer and visual artist based in Hafnarfjörður, Iceland. Taking third place with 4.43% of the vote was the German stamp "Semper Opera House". For the design, graphic artist Jan-Niklas Kröger utilized the AI image generator DALL·E. It is fascinating to observe the diverse graphic approaches taken with these three stamps:



ranging from collage and poetic, fairy-tale-style illustration to the use of artificial intelligence — though one hopes that postal authorities will not succumb to the temptation of replacing the craftsmanship of graphic artists with AI.

Reported in Der Musikus Nr 168 of September 2026

ERRORS ON STAMPS

Errors of stamp designers worldwide cause stamps that make you smile.

"Unavoidable stumbling"



This 1989 Europa stamp of Iceland is showing a boy with a hobbyhorse and a girl running in front with a stick and hoop. The

problem and error of the artist was that the girl got the stick in the wrong left hand while the hoop is running to her right and it will be almost impossible for the girl not to stumble and fall when she is hitting the hoop ...

This article is taken from Volker Janssen's book Errors on Stamps.

Compiled by Robert Harm 31 August 2026

PHILATELIC TERMS: T-7

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Thaler

The term thaler is a currency used widely in Europe, and from which the word the **dollar** is derived. It was thaler in German and daler in low German. The word thaler is an abbreviation of *Joachimsthaler*, a large silver coin picturing St. Joachim, first minted in about 1518, from silver mines at Joachimsthal, Bohemia. One famous thaler is the Maria Theresa thaler (dollar) used in international trade and still circulating in Middle East areas. The thaler was unit of currency in several German areas, including Mecklenburgh-Strelitz, Oldenburg, and Saxony, Olus the northern of the Thurn and Taxis postal service. It was also used in the North German Federation and the northern district of the German Empire. The African country of Ethiopia used a currency unit known as the thaler from 1936.

The various names of currency used, have generally not be included as one of the terms. This exception is included as it is the basis of a widely used unit of currency in the world. – Ed.

Theresienstadt



The horror of the German concentration camps during the 1930s and 1940s lives on in a seemingly innocent non-denominated postal label issued by the Germans on 10 July 1943. The purpose of this item was to frank parcels sent to victims in the camp at Theresienstadt. Its use was obligatory. The design features a peaceful rural landscape, which lends even greater horror to the name it bears – THERESIENSTADT. It is assumed that the motif was chosen deliberately to lull families into thinking that their loved ones were being well-treated. The stamp was intaglio printed in dark green in sheets of 25 stamps and perforated 10. It cost 1000 crowns (about \$20.00 or R320.00) and was affixed to the parcel, which was then delivered to the camp. The use of the label required that the sender make application to the Gestapo to send a parcel and to receive a certificate of permission, which then had to be presented to buy the postal label. Upon arrival, the wrappings were removed by the guards, who censored the contents, accounting for the label's scarcity in used condition. The use of the label thus in no way guaranteed that the prisoner would receive all or any of the parcel's contents. The source for this information is *Bohemia. Moravia and Slovakia*, edited by Ray Van Handel Jr. and published by the Czechoslovak Philatelic Society in 1958.

Thessaly

Thessaly is a district in northern Greece on the Aegean Sea and south of Macedonia. Thessaly was ceded to Greece by Turkey in 1881. The area was the scene of fighting during the war between Greece and Turkey in 1897. In 1898 the Turkish postal authorities issued a set of stamps for by its occupying forces in Thessaly. The stamps were issued on 21 April and are hexagonal in shape. Their designs feature a tughra and the bridge at Larissa. Forgeries exist, which are perforation 11.5 instead of perforation 13.



Thies, James H.



James H. Thies was the brother of Thomas Thies, postmaster of St. Georges, Bermuda. He was filling in for his sick brother when he created the Thies type of postmaster provisional stamp, similar to the famous Perot stamps of Bermuda.

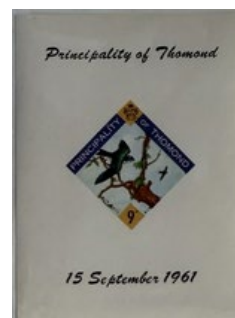
*The Perot stamps are described under the heading of **Perot Stamps** – Ed.*

Thin

The term **thin** is used to describe a condition upon which a stamp is printed. It consists of an area where a portion of the stamp's paper has become removed, usually from the back. It can result from the careless removal of a hinge, poor quality hinges that do not peel properly, a stamp becoming partially stuck to an album page by careless hinging, or exposure to humidity. A thin can usually be detected by holding a stamp up to the light. It should be remembered that a watermark will often give the appearance of a thin, for indeed it is one. But an awareness of the stamp's watermark will enable you to discount its presence. Sometimes a stamp with a portion of its gum removed may look like a thinned stamp, but the paper would not be damaged, and thus it will be a gum defect rather than damaged paper. As an example, collectors should always be wary of the French 5fr stamp of 1869. It was particularly susceptible to thinning and has undoubtedly attracted the attention of *restorers*. Thins can be filled and thus not be detected by visual examination. Watermarking will often show up whether or not it has been filled. The use of an ultraviolet lamp will also be of use. Since an unused stamp (i.e. a mint stamp from which the gum has been removed) will often be regummed after the repair of a thin, you should not make an assumption on the basis of gum condition.

Thormond

This is another known version of bogus stamps, stamps bearing names of imaginary, or existing, countries or postal services and intended to fool collectors into believing them to be genuine postage or revenue stamps. The term, **Thormond** is typical. It is a 1962 sticker from the non-existing Principality of Thormond, supposedly located somewhere in Ireland. This country was the imaginary creation of an individual who produced the stickers as a means of raising money from their sales to collectors. Irish postal authorities successfully prosecuted the man responsible, although his diamond-shaped stickers continue to confuse newcomers to philately.



Thrace



The name of Thrace lives on as the name of the easternmost province of Greece. However, once it applied to an area encompassing most of what is now Bulgaria, north-eastern Greece, and the area of Turkey in Europe. Turkey dominated the Balkans for 400 years but began to disintegrate in the late 1800s. The area of Thrace was a battleground for several years, with Turkey fighting Bulgaria, and Greece and Serbia also becoming involved. The first result was the creation of an autonomous area under the title of Eastern Rumelia. The second Balkan War resulted in the Treaty of Bucharest in 1913. This restored Eastern Thrace to Turkey and gave Bulgaria Western Thrace with a stretch of coast on the Aegean Sea and the port of Dedeagach. The settlement following World War I, in which Turkey and Bulgaria had sided with the Central Powers of Germany and Austria-Hungary, resulted in just about today's boundaries in 1982.

THRACE INTERALLIEE

During 1919-20, there was a period of Allied occupation north of the Aegean Sea, and stamps were issued. These were Bulgarian stamps overprinted **THRACE INTERALLIEE**. Greek stamps were also overprinted with the inscription



ADMINISTRATION OF WESTERN THRACE in Greek. These stamps were issued for use in the area while national boundaries were being determined in the area of what are now Bulgaria, Turkey and the eastern Greek province of Thrace. Shortly thereafter, Greece occupied a portion of Eastern Thrace, and Greek and Turkish stamps were overprinted **ADMINISTRATION OF THRACE** on Greek stamps and **HIGH COMMISSION OF THRACE** on the Turkish stamps. Both overprints are in Greek. Previously, in 1913, Turkish stamps had been issued overprinted in Greek for use in the Giumulzina district.



Three-skilling Banco Error



The three-skilling banco error of 1855 is a Swedish error of colour that occurred on the first stamp of that country. The one known copy is believed to be unique and is thus a fitting rival to the British Guiana 1c of 1856. It is thought that the error occurred when a cliché of the three-skilling banco was accidentally inserted in a plate of the eight-skilling banco stamp. It thus came to be printed in the orange colour of the eight-skilling banco denomination instead of the green of the normal three-skilling banco. The one known example is reported to have been

found in 1885 by Georg Wilhelm Backman, a Stockholm schoolboy visiting his grandmother in the country (source: *Stamps of fame*, Blandford, London, 1949). Backman sold it to a Stockholm dealer named Lichtenstein, who bought it at a price he had offered to pay for normal specimens of the three-skilling banco. He, in turn, sold it some years later, and the stamp found its way into the Ferrary collection. It subsequently passed through the collections of several persons. Though it is understandable that a cliché of the three-skilling banco denomination could easily have been inserted into a plate of eight-skilling banco stamps, it has been claimed that the colour does not match that of the eight-skilling banco stamps and that is, in fact, a fake. This was claimed by Gilbert Svensen in 1975 when directed of the Swedish Postal Museum, who also claimed that the paper of the



upper portion of the stamp did not match that of the rest. Other experts have contradicted this claim, which was not supported by any facts. In October 1978 the stamp was reported to have been sold by a Hamburg, Germany, auction firm for \$550 000 (about R8, 891 520 000), making it the most costly single stamp at the time. The British Guiana 1c of 1853 and the 1919 US 2c inverted Jenny have since been traded at higher amounts.

Compiled by Robert Harm 15 August 2026