

THE STAMP FORUM NEWSLETTER

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IN THIS ISSUE:



Walpurgisnacht and the Hexentanzplatz

POSTCARD NEWS FROM ZANZIBAR



Hunting British Postboxes

PLUS:

U.S. LEGENDS OF THE WEST ERROR PANE
NAVIGATING OUR FORUM
TSF'S APS ARTICLE OF DISTINCTION

THE STAMP FORUM NEWSLETTER

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Established in 2013, TSF is an online stamp club with a worldwide membership. The Forum is also Chapter 1591 of the American Philatelic Society. Membership is free and application is made online at <http://thestampforum.boards.net/>

The Stamp Forum (TSF) and this Newsletter are wholly member supported.

Write for Your Stamp Forum's Newsletter

We are always looking for articles of a philatelic nature for publication in the Newsletter. These can vary in length from 1 page to several and can cover any topic imaginable as long as there is a philatelic connection. Well-researched articles, tips for collectors, stamp collecting memories, stamp show and philatelic book reviews, etc., are all welcome topics. Just send us a text file with some supporting image files and we'll take care of the editing and layout. The Forum and its Newsletter need your support so please help us!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Forum & APS Chapter 1591 Update (Admin) [p. 2](#)

The Philately and Deltiology of Walpurgisnacht and the Hexentanzplatz (ronbreznay) [p. 3](#)

“Aboard the Warwick Castle”—Postcard News from Zanzibar (David M Frye) [p. 8](#)

Philatelic Travelogue: Hunting British Postboxes (Beryllium Guy) [p. 13](#)

U.S. Legends of the West Error Pane (tomiseksj) [p. 22](#)

Navigating Our Forum (Editorial Staff) [p. 24](#)

TSF’s APS Articles of Distinction (Editorial Staff) [p. 26](#)

In Closing... (Admin) [p. 27](#)

Forum & APS Chapter 1591 Update



I again find myself having to apologize for the late delivery of this Newsletter. It has been a very busy time of year for me and, candidly, I haven’t had the inclination to make time for stamp-related activities. Hopefully, this slump will pass quickly.

As temperatures drop for many of us, we should see more time available to spend on the Forum and with our collections. Perhaps, some of that time could be spent writing for our Newsletter.

In the five months that have passed since publication of our last Newsletter, over 75 new members have joined us. As of this writing, there are now 743 individuals on the membership roll, and 151 have signed in to their accounts since November 1st. During the same period, however, we lost one of our most prolific posters, Robert Coulson (Wert). Like those of other members who have passed, Wert’s postings on the Forum will continue to provide invaluable information well into the future. In celebration of the Holiday Season, this Newsletter contains a giveaway available to all members who have posted their introduction.

On the APS front, the American Philatelic Center has reopened and its online presence continues to expand, improving the user experience and increasing its searchability. The library is working to build the Robert A. Mason Digital Library, digitizing philatelic journals, exhibits and books. As the year comes to an end, members are reminded to submit their dues renewals, if they haven’t already done so. If you aren’t an APS member, please consider giving it a try. You can learn more about membership benefits and services by clicking [here](#).

Steve Tomisek
 Forum Admin/APS Chapter Ambassador

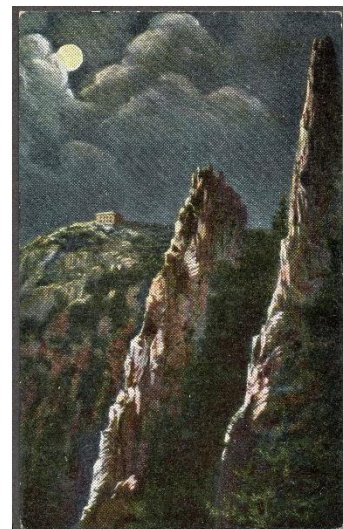
The Philately and Deltiology of Walpurgisnacht and the Hexentanzplatz

By Ron Breznay (ronbreznay)

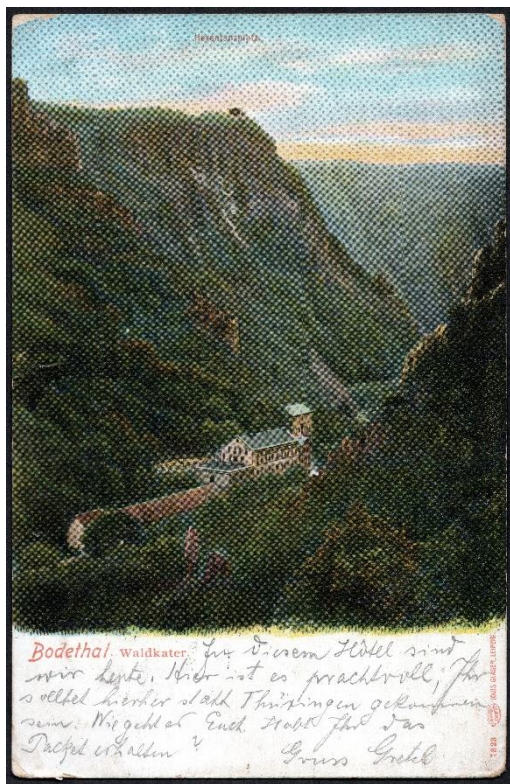
Walpurgisnacht, or Walpurgis Night, is called by some second Halloween or spring Halloween. It occurs overnight on April 30 to May 1, which is exactly midway between the Halloweens on October 31. Like Halloween, it has its origins in ancient legends and rituals. Also, like Halloween, legend has it that it's the night when the veil between this world and the next is the thinnest. It has had some of the same traditions, such as bonfires, costumes, and playing tricks.

The Hexentanzplatz (literally "Witches' Dance Place") is a plateau high above the Bode Gorge in the Harz mountains, opposite the Roßtrappe in Saxony-Anhalt, Germany. Supposedly, this is where Walpurgisnacht was observed in ancient times.

Brocken is the highest peak of the Harz mountain range and also the highest peak in northern Germany. Bodetal, or Bode Gorge, is a long ravine in the Harz mountains, formed by the River Bode, which rises in the Brocken. Hexentanzplatz overlooks Bodetal, with the Hexentanzplatz Hotel on top, as shown in this unused postcard at right.



The postcard below shows another view into the Bodetal, with the Waldkater Hotel visible at the bottom. The postmark shows it was mailed from Thale, Harz district, to England on June 23, 1904.





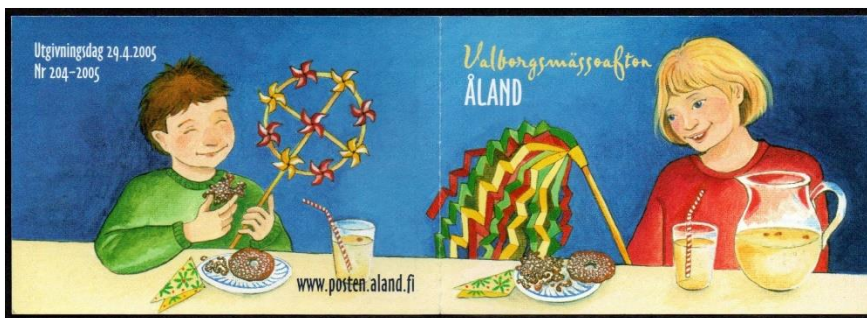
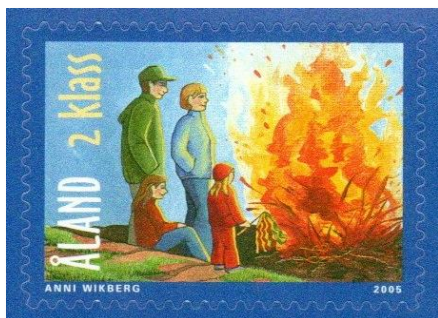
Another postcard shows the view from Hexentanzplatz into the Bode Gorge. The postmark of September 12, 1900, is from Magdeburg-Thale Bahnpost, which is a railroad post office. The card was sent to Hannover, where it was received the next day.



In German lore, Walpurgisnacht is the night when witches meet on the Brocken Mountain and hold revels with the devil and to plot trouble, mischief, and evil for the coming year. It is here that in pre-Christian times the locals would eat magic mushrooms, give sacrifices, and dance around bonfires on the eve of May, all for the purpose of bringing in a fertile spring.

Walpurgisnacht refers to Saint Walpurgis Night. It is the eve of the Christian feast day of Saint Walpurga, an eighth-century abbess in the Frankish Empire. The Christians of Germany hailed Saint Walpurga for battling witchcraft. In parts of Christendom, people continue to light bonfires on Saint Walpurga's Eve in order to ward off evil spirits and witches. Others have historically made Christian pilgrimages to Saint Walpurga's tomb in Eichstätt on her feast day.

Local variants of Walpurgis Night are observed throughout Northern and Central Europe. Modern-day celebrations of Walpurgisnacht in Germany include dressing up in costumes and playing pranks. This 2005 booklet stamp from Åland (Scott No. 235a) shows a bonfire, and the booklet cover depicts children having a Walpurgisnacht party (below).

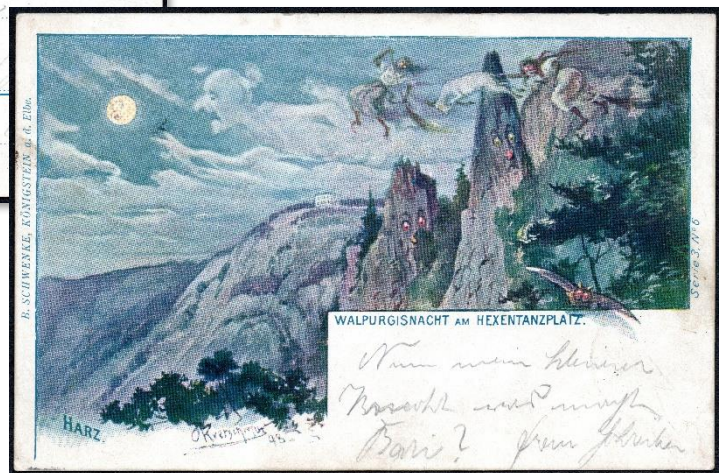




This postcard shows the witches' dance, with an inset view of the Hexentanzplatz Hotel. The tourist mailed the postcard from Leipzig on April 18, 1904, to Bradford, England, where it was received on April 20.

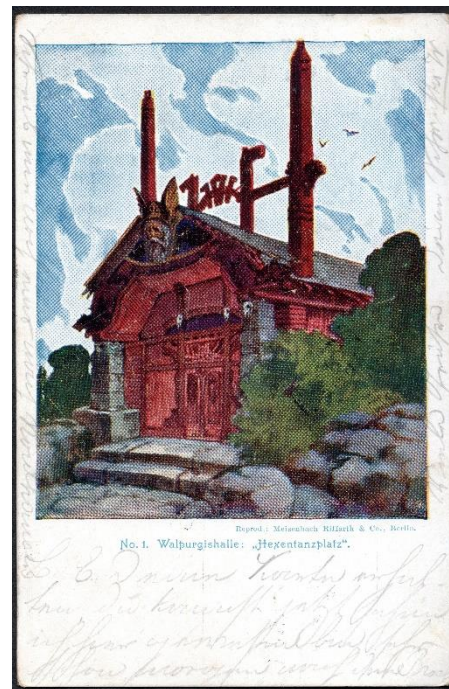


A slightly cartoonish postcard also shows the witches' dance. This time, a goat is involved. The postcard was mailed from Harzburg on July 21, 1899, to Essen, where it was received the next day (below).



Among other attractions on the Hexentanzplatz is the Walpurgishalle Museum, which was built by painter Hermann Hendrich and opened in 1901. Inside, the legends of the surrounding Harz mountains and scenes from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's play *Faust* are brought to life in five large paintings.

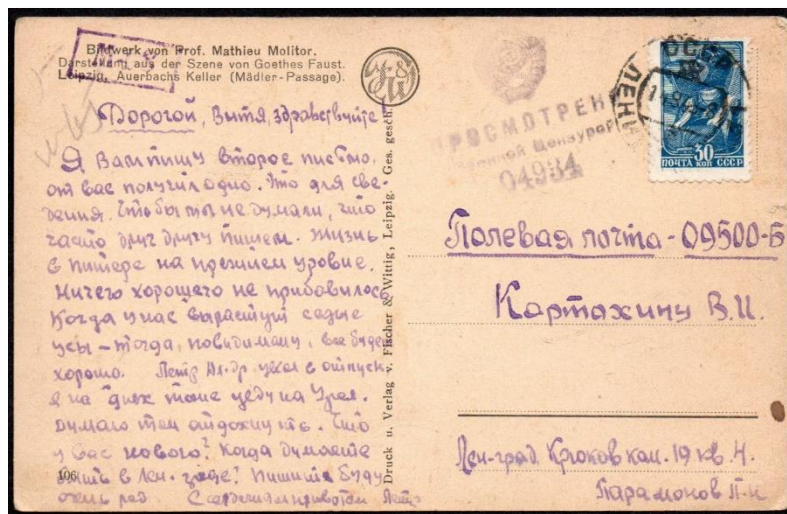
Also on exhibit is a sacrifice stone (Opferstein), which recalls ancient fertility rites. The postcard on the following page was mailed from Thale on August 17, 1901, to Vlissingen, Holland, where it was received the next day.



This postcard shows Faust and Mephistopheles (the devil) from Goethe's *Faust*. The postcard was mailed from Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) to a military post office a few months after World War II ended. The card has a military censor handstamp.



Faust und Mephistopheles



On the plateau is the Thale Mountain Theater (Bergtheater Thale), one of the oldest open-air theaters in Germany. It has 1,350 seats and was founded in 1903 by Ernst Wachler. This unused postcard appears to have been published in 1972.



As early as 1878, postal cards printed to order by the postal service were issued for Hexentanzplatz. For example, one has a 5-pfennig imprinted stamp on the back, and on the front is the “Night of the Witches at Their Meeting Place,” with bats flying around in the sky. According to *Michel Privatpostkarten-Katalog Deutschland (Ganzsachen auf Privatbestellung); Deutsches Reich 1873-1945*, there were 23 different printed-to-order postal cards for Hexentanzplatz.

Today, the Hexentanzplatz resembles a small theme park aimed at families, including a parking lot, gondola lift, mini-coaster rides, small gift and craft shops, a zoo, and an upside-down witch’s house.

I echo this final postcard by saying, “Greetings from Hexentanzplatz.” I hope you enjoyed this spooky visit.



“Aboard the Warwick Castle” — Postcard News from Zanzibar

By David M. Frye (DavidMFrye)

Introduction

In the years preceding instantaneous global digital communications and its flurry of text and email messages, tourists mailed postcards to friends and relatives to update them on their adventures. By design, postcards provided only a small canvas upon which travelers might sketch a few telling details about their journeys. The picture postcard depicted in Fig. 1, showing a monochrome image of the Union–Castle Line MV *Warwick Castle*, includes a brief message dated 21 March 1961. Despite the message’s brevity, the postcard contains enough information to sketch out the context of the postcard’s picture and note.

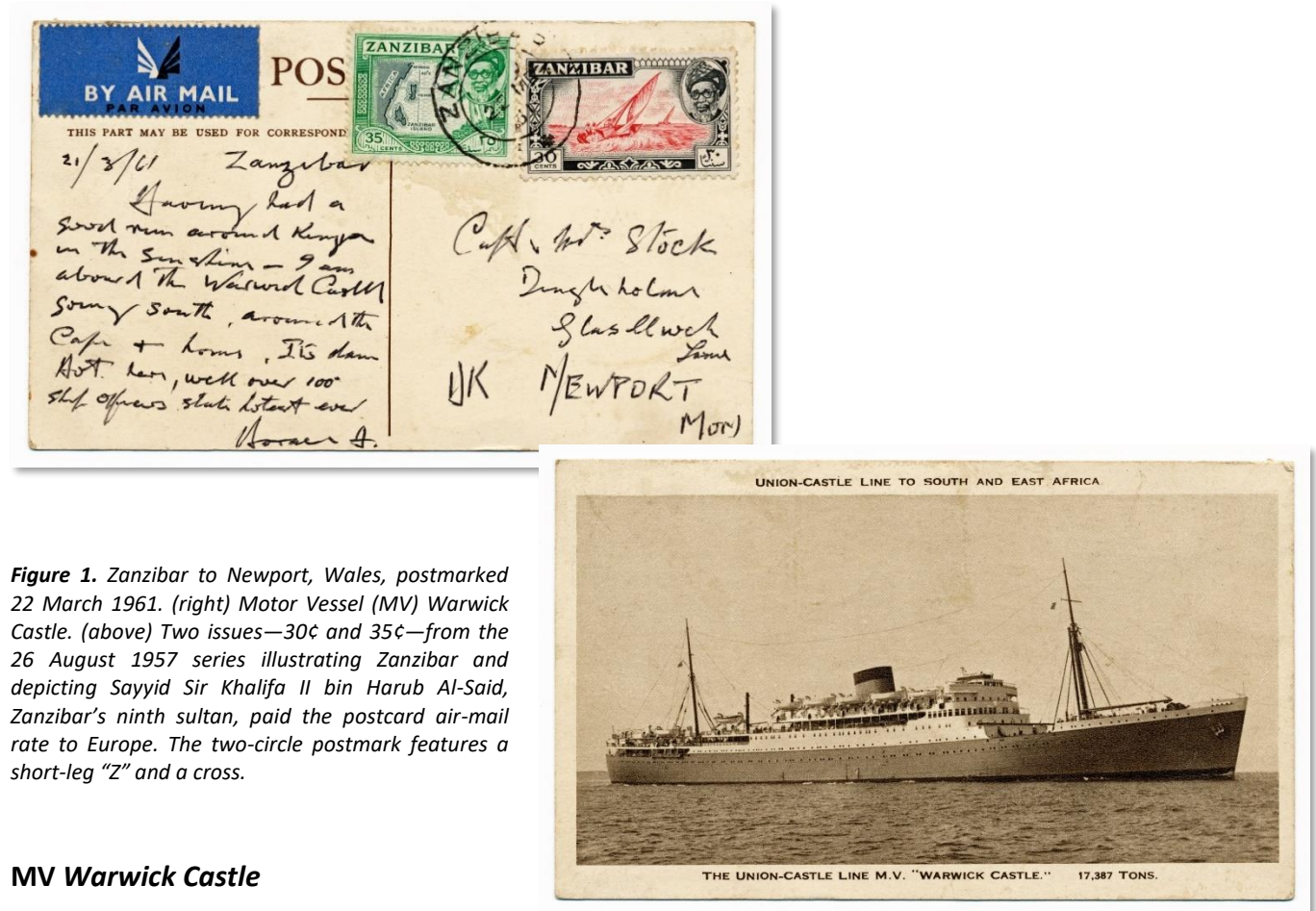


Figure 1. Zanzibar to Newport, Wales, postmarked 22 March 1961. (right) Motor Vessel (MV) *Warwick Castle*. (above) Two issues—30¢ and 35¢—from the 26 August 1957 series illustrating Zanzibar and depicting Sayyid Sir Khalifa II bin Harub Al-Said, Zanzibar’s ninth sultan, paid the postcard air-mail rate to Europe. The two-circle postmark features a short-leg “Z” and a cross.

MV *Warwick Castle*

Listed on the front of the postcard as having a displacement of 17,387 tons, *Warwick Castle*, constructed by Harland & Wolff Ltd. of Belfast, Northern Ireland, had an initial launch date of 12 October 1938 (uboat.net, 2020). Initially named *Pretoria Castle*, the vessel served as a passenger and mail-service ship (Cox, 2010). After World War II began on 1 September 1939, the British Royal Navy requisitioned *Pretoria Castle* a month later, on 2 October 1939, to serve as an armed merchant cruiser (Geoffrey B. Mason, 2005). In addition, the ship later underwent modifications to serve as an aircraft carrier, as shown in Fig. 2, below (Drury, 2020).

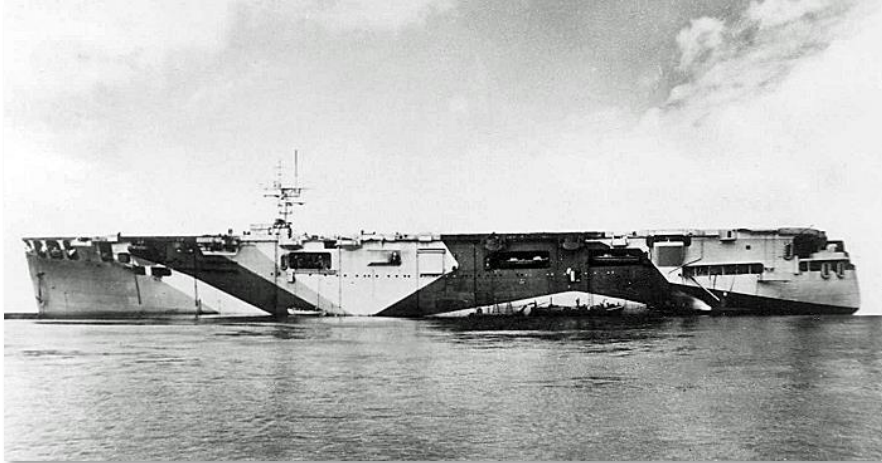


Figure 2. HMS Pretoria Castle repurposed as an aircraft carrier.

One naval history notes,

With fifteen aircraft and equipped with one catapult, she was commissioned on 18th March 1943 but was used purely for training purposes. She was re-purchased by Union-Castle in January 1946 and rebuilt to her original specification, but because a new mail ship was under construction, with *Pretoria Castle* as her designated name, she was renamed *Warwick Castle*. Resuming commercial activities on 13th March 1947, she initially served on the mail run until the new mail ships joined the fleet and then reverted to the Round Africa service in 1950. On 26th July 1962, she arrived at Barcelona, where she was scrapped (The British & Commonwealth Register, 2020).

After being restored to its pre-war configuration, *Warwick Castle* appeared as shown below in Fig. 3 (The British & Commonwealth Register, 2020).

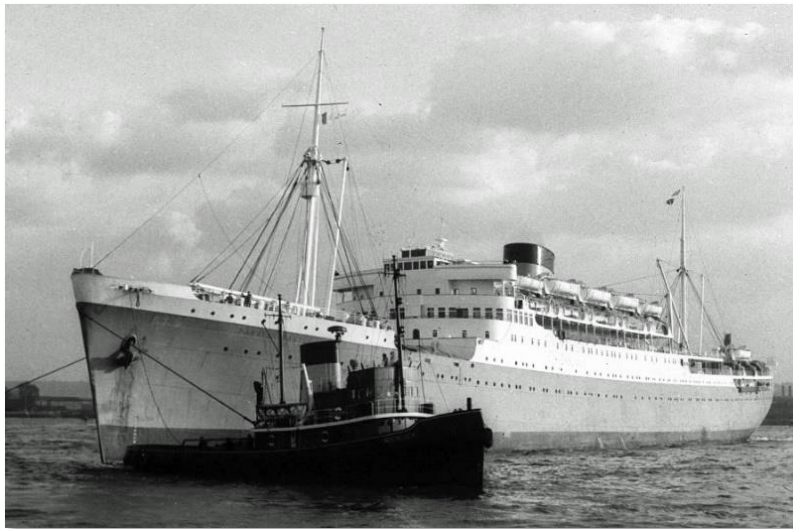


Figure 3. Warwick Castle in its post-war configuration as a mail-service and passenger vessel.

In its post-war role, *Warwick Castle* sailed roundtrips between London and Africa, stopping, during the year between March 1960 and March 1961, at numerous ports: “London, Gibraltar, Genoa, Port Said, Suez, Aden, Mombasa, Tanga, Zanzibar, Dar es Salaam, Beira, Lourenço Marques, Durban, East London, Port Elizabeth, Cape Town, St. Helena, Ascension, Las Palmas, and London” (Björn Larsson, 2020). This list includes both the postcard’s mailing location—Zanzibar—and ports of call mentioned in the sender’s message.

Postcard Message

Beneath the postcard’s instruction noting that “THIS PART MAY BE USED FOR CORRESPONDENCE,” the writer penned the following message:

21/3/61 Zanzibar

Having had a good run around Kenya in the sunshine—I am aboard the Warwick Castle going south, around the Cape & home. It’s damn hot here, well over 100° Ship officers state hottest [sic] ever.

Horace G.

Penmanship creates challenges for transcribing handwritten messages. The general context of the message makes most of the transcription fairly straightforward to determine; the sender’s name remains a conjecture, however. Likewise, parts of the recipient’s name and address are easier than others to determine.

C[?] [?] Stock
Dingh holme
Glasllwch Lane
UK Newport Mon[mouthshire]

Enough of the sender’s handwriting is sufficiently decipherable to establish that the postcard, written on 21 March 1961, traveled from Zanzibar to Newport, Monmouthshire, Wales. The message provides several ports of call and their sequence on the voyage: Kenya, Zanzibar, the Cape, and home. When these places are compared with the March 1960 to March 1961 sailings, one finds a match with London ... Mombasa ... Zanzibar ... Cape Town ... London. Thus, the writer penned the note after the stop in Mombasa and before the departure from Zanzibar.

The message mentions “damn hot” weather with temperatures over 100° F. One recent study that examines changes in rainfall and temperature in Tanzania includes 1961’s weather in its dataset. The depiction of the “mean percentage of warm days in Tanzania” in Fig. 4, below, shows that 1961 produced significantly more than the mean number of warm days.

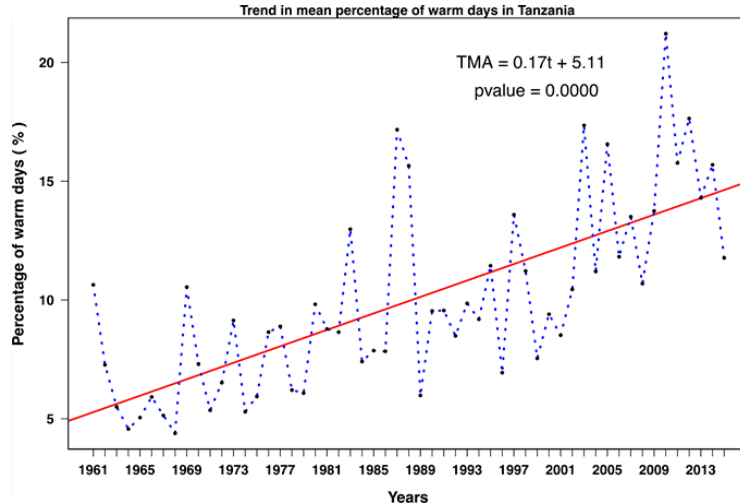


Figure 4. "Trend in mean percentage of warm days in Tanzania" (Landislaus B. Chang'a, 2017).

U-C INTERMEDIATE SERVICE	Warwick Castle Left London 30th March for East Africa
Master	F. J. Pye
Chief Officer .. .	B. M. O'Connor
Second Officer ..	K. R. Bennett
Jnr. Second Officer ..	G. H. Ryan
Third Officer .. .	K. Parker
Fourth Officer .. .	R. D. Brown
Surgeon	W. G. S. Russell
Purser	O. H. Parry-Williams
Assistant Purser ..	M. G. Peploe
Assistant Purser ..	A. T. Gwynn
Purser's Clerk .. .	T. J. Cobbett
	Miss P. Smith
First Radio Officer ..	D. G. Bristow
Second Radio Officer	G. Walker
Third Radio Officer ..	R. M. R. Page
Nursing Sister .. .	Miss C. Richards
Children's Hostess ..	Miss M. C. De Vries
Carpenter	S. P. Gray
Boatswain	E. J. Guest
Masters-at-Arms .. .	G. W. Lees
	J. C. Anderson
Chief Engineer .. .	W. O. Stephen
Snr. Second Engineer	D. P. Nolan
Int. Second Engineer	V. Boyle
Jnr. Second Engineers	J. F. Black
	R. G. Whyte
Snr. Third Engineer	D. Jamieson
Int. Third Engineer ..	G. M. Ballantyne
Jnr. Third Engineer ..	D. A. Cadenhead
Snr. Fourth Engineer	P. J. Kirby
Jnr. Fourth Engineer	I. R. Rawson
Jnr. Engineers .. .	A. J. Roberts
	J. N. Koflinas
	T. E. Williams
	P. J. Stals
First Electrician .. .	A. Q. Green
Second Electrician ..	A. B. Shirmer
E.R. Storekeeper .. .	W. Winniczuk
Chief Catering Officer	G. S. Wigg
Second Catering Officer	T. Conway
Chief Barman .. .	E. Brooke
Storekeeper	P. C. Leal
Linen Steward .. .	H. V. Thompsett
First Class Head Waiter	S. Wheeler
First Passenger Steward	—
First Tourist Steward	A. G. Pritchard
Tourist Class Head Waiter	T. C. Pearson
Laundryman	R. Binding
Chef	D. V. Daysh
Baker & Confectioner	A. E. Perkins
Butcher	T. E. Mongan

The postcard message also comments, "Ship officers state hottest [sic] ever." Given the schedule of regular sailings conducted by *Warwick Castle*, the regular crew would have first-hand knowledge of the changes in weather. The ship's crew on this trip would have included many of the individuals who made the final voyage of *Warwick Castle* a year later in 1962. This crew appears in the list shown in Fig. 5 below (The British & Commonwealth Register, 2020).

Figure 5. *Warwick Castle* crew on the ship's final voyage, 30 March 1962.

Surely some of these crewmembers were the ones to which the postcard sender referred when writing, "Ship officers state hottest [sic] ever." An online search revealed that one of these officers listed above, D[enis] P. Nolan, *Warwick Castle's* senior second engineer, took photographs to record memories of his service. Figure 6 shows him in the center of a group of five members of the ship's crew.



Figure 6. Members of the crew of *Warwick Castle*, early 1960s (Anthony John Nolan, 2020).

This collection of photographs by Denis Nolan also includes images, such as the one in Fig. 7, below, that show the accommodations offered to passengers, such as the writer of the 21 March 1961 postcard.



Figure 7. Passenger deck on Warwick Castle, early 1960s (Anthony John Nolan, 2020).

Conclusion

While the postcard's brief text and the sender's handwriting do not support identifying either the sender or the recipient, the postcard's design and message contain enough information about the routine topics of travelers' messages—routes and weather—to

open up a window to a period in the history of ocean-going travel as it touched ports of call in British East Africa: Mombasa, Tanga, Zanzibar, and Dar es Salaam. The account that emerged from online searches for background tied to the clues contained in this postcard shows the capacity of the world's online digital repository to support postal history storytelling arising from the most ordinary and affordable (£1.50/\$2.00) of acquisitions.

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About the Author

David M. Frye collects items to inform his study of modern United States postal history and southern and eastern Africa's post-colonial postal history. His writings have appeared in *The Airpost Journal*, *Auxiliary Markings*, *B.E.A.—The Bulletin of the East Africa Study Circle*, *Forerunners*, *The Journal of the Rhodesian Study Circle*, *The Miasma Philatelist*, *Postage Due Mail Study Group Journal*, *Postal History Journal*, *The Postal Label Bulletin*, *The Stamp Forum Newsletter*, *The United States Specialist*, *Vatican Notes*, and *The Vermont Philatelist*. A past member of the Board of Directors of the Postal History Society, he lives in Franklin, Massachusetts, and works in nearby Framingham as a lead clerk for the U.S. Postal Service.

Philatelic Travelogue: Hunting British Postboxes

By Chris Dorn (*Beryllium Guy*)

It is perhaps time that I explained that I not only love stamps, but I also love to travel, so these articles I write under the banner of “Philatelic Travelogue” combine two of my passions into one experience. Along the way, I have learned that even when we, as collectors, are away from our stamps, we are never actually that far away from philately in some form. When I travel, I enjoy looking for examples of philately wherever I can find them.

With the decline of brick-and-mortar stamp stores, one now looks to post offices and postboxes to provide those philatelic reminders. Growing up in the U.S., I admit that I never really considered what we called mailboxes to be anything all that special. In my early memories, they were red over blue and inscribed “U.S. Mail”, but after a while, they were all blue and bore the emblem of the U.S. Postal Service, which they still do today. In my teens, I can remember seeing ornate brass mailboxes in the lobbies of some of the office buildings in downtown Cleveland, Ohio.

It wasn't until I started to travel to Great Britain, that I realized that mailboxes, generally referred to as postboxes around here, really have a history all their own. Since the time that I have been living here, nearly 2 years at this writing, it has become a fascination for me now not only to find, but actually to seek out unusual postboxes, and to better understand their story. As a stamp collector for more than 50 years, I admit that I have until recently, taken the venerable postbox for granted—no longer.

A Very Brief History of Postboxes in Great Britain

There have been entire books written about the history of postboxes, and I will not attempt to rival those here. My goal is just to give a bit of context to the subject for stamp collectors, who are always acquainted with postboxes, thanks to their interest in stamps, but may never have looked upon them as the markers of history that they truly can be.

As stamp collectors, we all know the year 1840 as the introduction of the Penny Black, the world's first adhesive postage stamp. Based on that knowledge, I always assumed that the need for postboxes must have come after that time, imagining that it would have been the change to pre-paid postage that would have justified their use, but it is not so. While the origin of the very first postbox remains a mystery, it is known that boxes for public use were introduced in the environs of Paris as early as 1653, and that post offices in Great Britain were required to have them starting in 1819, and some already did before that time [1].



Figure 1. Oldest known British postbox, the 1809 example from Wakefield, England, remained in service well into the 20th Century but is now a museum piece. It was originally mounted in the wall of the post office.

Just a slight digression to include a point of interest from my recent trip to Scotland. The term “mercant cross” is the Scots name for a market cross, often found in historic Scottish towns. We saw several of these during our travels, and generally, they took the form of a column or obelisk topped with a statue of a unicorn, the national animal of Scotland.

Mercat crosses were originally erected to show that the local town had permission from its ruling authority to hold a market in that place, and it also served as a location where important public announcements were made, such as proclamations from a monarch. The mercat cross in Aberdeen, shown to us by Alex (*vikingeck*) during our visit, has the distinction of being perhaps the finest 17th Century such cross in all of Scotland, and its image has also been used as the logo for the Aberdeen Philatelic Society since the 1960s.

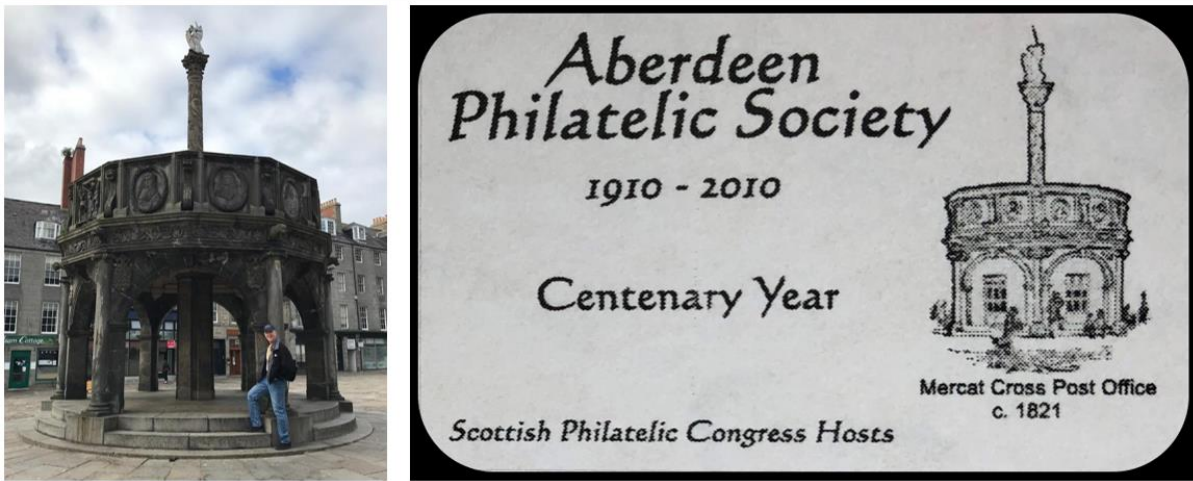


Figure 2. Left: The Aberdeen Mercat Cross was built in 1686, and unlike the other crosses we saw, included a large stone structure at its base, which interestingly served as a post office from 1821-1824. Right: Cinderella label produced by Alex in 2010 for the Aberdeen Philatelic Society, which uses an image of the local cross.

So, the original postboxes were mainly installed at post offices as places where people could deposit outgoing mail, which in those days could be done for free by the sender, as it was the recipient who paid the postage. These would have been the days of the original stampless covers, as collectors refer to them today.

All of that said, it was indeed the introduction of pre-paid postage and adhesive stamps in 1840 that really spurred the need to enable people to put a letter into the post without having to go to a post office to do it. Interestingly, despite the fact that Great Britain was the first country to issue postage stamps, they were not the first to use free-standing postboxes. The most common type of free-standing receptacle is called a “pillar box” and was already in use in France, Belgium, and Germany by the time the first pillar box was installed in the British Isles in 1852 in Jersey [2].

The first British pillar boxes were bronze in color, followed by green, which later gave way to the well-known red color, which became the standard in 1874. It took another 10 years before all boxes were painted red. Designs varied from ornate to simple, with very early examples of rectangular boxes, followed by hexagonal, octagonal, and fluted types, before circular and oval designs became predominant, as they still are today.



Figure 3. Examples of early British pillar boxes. Left: A so-called Suttie Box from Greenock, Scotland in 1856, named for its maker, blacksmith Thomas Suttie. Note the vertical mail slot, also referred to as the aperture. Middle left: An original Liverpool "Special" Pillar Box made in 1863 for use exclusively in that city. Middle right: A replica Queen Victoria cipher Penfold Pillar Box painted in the original green color located in London, photo credit [3]. Right: Original QV cipher Penfold Box located on the Royal Mile in Edinburgh, Scotland. Note the use of the Scottish crown just below the mail slot compared to the coat of arms on the green replica.

Different Types of British Postboxes

There are three basic types of postboxes in service today in Great Britain: the pillar box, wall box, and lamp box. These are listed here in generally decreasing order by size and the number found in service, meaning that the pillar boxes are the largest in size of the three and are most commonly encountered, whilst the lamp box is the smallest and least commonly found.



Figure 4. Examples of current British wall and lamp boxes. Left: An earlier style wall box, with the cipher at the top above the mail slot. Middle left: Later style wall box, featuring a much larger door with the cipher in a lower position on the door. Middle right: A lamp box, so called as they were originally intended to be hung on lamp posts. They are more commonly supported by a single post of their own nowadays. Right: A very new design lamp box in Scotland, which appears to use a laser-cut aluminum plate to display the crown.

Following on with changes in pillar box design over the years, it should be mentioned that the British Post Office first tried to standardize the design in 1859. Even the standard designs continued to change for the next 20 years, finally settling into the familiar cylindrical and oval styles that we see today. Pillar boxes come in both large and small cylindrical sizes, as well as the double-wide versions with two slots on them.



Figure 5. Examples of current British pillar boxes. Left: A small-sized cylindrical box, which is the most commonly found of this type. Middle left: A modern oval-shaped box, located inside a building. Note the use of decals for the cypher and the inscription “Royal Mail,” which has replaced the former legend “Post Office.” Middle right: A double-aperture oval box with two ciphers, one on each side. Right: A double-aperture oval box with a single cypher in the center and doors on opposite ends.

Use of Royal Ciphers on British Postboxes

Simply put, a royal cypher is a monogram of a country’s reigning monarch, and it generally consists of the monarch’s initials and numeral (as appropriate) as well as a crown. As an example, the cypher for Queen Elizabeth II looks like EII R. In her case, the E stands for Elizabeth, her chosen regnal name, followed by the Roman numeral for 2, as she is the second queen called Elizabeth in the history of the British monarchy. The final letter R stands for “regina”, which means queen in Latin. Similarly, the final letter R for a king would stand for “rex” [4].

Given my love of history, one of the most interesting aspects in the design of postboxes in Britain for me is the use of the royal cypher, but this feature also has developed and changed over time. The use of the royal ciphers on British postboxes began in the early days from 1852-1879, and then apparently stopped for several years until the practice was reprised in 1887 and continues to the present day. A table which summarizes the use of royal ciphers on British postboxes is presented below.







Monarch	Period of Reign	Royal Cipher	Proportion of Current Postboxes
Queen Victoria	1837-1901		~8%
King Edward VII	1901-1910		~7%
King George V	1910-1936		15%
King Edward VIII	1936		<<1%
King George VI	1936-1952		~10%
Queen Elizabeth II	1952-present		60%

Table Notes [5]:

- EII R proportion includes Scottish crown boxes
- VR, EVIIR, and GVIR % are estimated, but in correct order of proportion

Based on figures from Royal Mail, it is estimated that there are currently about 115,500 postboxes in service throughout Great Britain, and as can be seen from the table, more than half of those are attributed to the reign of Queen Elizabeth II. It should be noted, in Scotland the EIIIR cipher is normally replaced by a Scottish crown. This is due to the fact that Queen Elizabeth I was never queen of Scotland, so the current queen would not be considered as “the second” in Scotland. There were protests in Scotland, in 1952, when EIIIR postboxes were first installed, so those were quickly replaced with the Scottish crown, examples of which can be seen in Figures 4 and 5.

Unusual British Postboxes

As might be expected, the least commonly found royal cipher is that of King Edward VIII, who held the throne for 10-11 months in 1936, but was never officially crowned. There were only 171 postboxes created during his short reign, and some of those are no longer in service. I could not determine a definitive figure of the surviving number of such boxes, but I estimate it to be between 100-150. From the big picture perspective, that means that Edward VIII postboxes comprise about one box in every thousand or roughly 0.1%, one-tenth of one percent.

There are, of course, other out-of-the-ordinary postboxes to be found in Great Britain. From 1930-1938, postboxes painted blue signified that they were designated for air mail service. Based on my research, it seems that there is only one surviving air mail postbox, and it has been maintained to commemorate its former purpose.



Figure 6. Examples of some unusual classic British pillar boxes. Left: The last remaining blue air mail pillar box, located just outside of Windsor Castle. Middle left: The next-to-last blue air mail box, which served Manchester until 2019. Middle right: Edward VIII pillar box in Aberdeen, Scotland. Right: A very uncommon Edward VII rectangular pillar box found in London that seems to have been created out of a re-purposed wall box.

In more recent years, Royal Mail has started to paint postboxes in different colors for other reasons. In 2012, they decided to celebrate the winners of Olympic and Paralympic gold medals by temporarily painting a postbox gold in the hometown of the victorious athlete. This program was so popular that the selected postboxes have remained gold, and Royal Mail has continued to honor the Olympic and Paralympic champions at subsequent events.



Figure 7. Examples of unusual recent British pillar boxes. Left: Some pillar boxes have been painted blue to honor the dedication of NHS (National Health Service) employees during the pandemic in 2020. Middle left: George VI pillar box in Aberdeen, Scotland painted gold to honor hometown 2012 Olympic champion Katherine Grainger (Inset to the right: plaque with inscription). Right: George VI pillar box painted black with gold trim in honor of Black History Month in the UK in 2020 (Inset to the left: partial view of the inscription of a particular honoree).

Postboxes as Iconic Symbols of Great Britain

Considering that this article is being published in The Stamp Forum Newsletter, it would seem to be a great oversight not to include any images of stamps, so here goes. Postboxes have been featured on stamps of Great Britain on multiple occasions [6], but here are some of my favorite examples.



Figure 8. Pillar boxes depicted on British stamps. This set was issued in Oct-2002 to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the British mainland letter box in 2003; Great Britain, Sc2076-2080. From left to right: 1857 green/bronze, hexagonal Victoria ciphers pillar box; 1874 red, fluted pillar box; 1934 blue, cylindrical air mail pillar box with signage on top; 1939 George VI red, double-aperture, oval-shaped pillar box with wartime features; and 1980 Elizabeth II modern design red pillar box.



Figure 9. Wall and lamp boxes depicted on British stamps. This set was issued in Aug-2009; Great Britain, Sc2679e booklet pane of 4. Top margin: small image of the 1809 Wakefield Post Office slot. Self-adhesive stamps from left to right: George V wall box; Edward VII “Ludlow” wall box; Victoria lamp box; Elizabeth II wall box.

There have also been numerous depictions of postboxes on Christmas stamps issued by Great Britain, as well as by many other countries. Especially when it comes to the wall boxes, I find so many here to be beautifully, almost artistically situated, to a much greater extent than I have found anywhere else in my travels around the world. Here are a couple of local examples.



Figure 10. George V wall box mounted into the side of a stone building in Oxford, England near where I currently live. When I see settings like this, it makes me wonder if the building, which is now a pub/ restaurant, was in former times a British Post Office.



Figure 11. Edward VII wall box mounted into a brick pillar in a wall in front of what is now a private residence on Abingdon Road in Oxford. In this case, there is a stone emblem of Queen Victoria on the side of the building and a sign on the door indicating that the building was indeed a British Post Office in former times.

Concluding Thoughts

One of the things that I really value about TSF is how much I have learned while I have been a member. My philatelic horizons have been broadened immeasurably, which is actually both a blessing and a curse. It is a blessing because I am always grateful to be able to learn from others, but also a curse, as it makes it all that much harder to figure out on which areas of philately I most want to concentrate!

Acknowledgements

I would like to gratefully acknowledge the contribution of my lovely wife Amy, who took some of the photos and helped with proofreading the draft article. I would also like to thank Emily, the author of *Memoirs of a Metro Girl*, for graciously granting me permission to use one of her photos in the article.

Furthermore, I would like to express special thanks to Alex Walker, my fellow TSF member who, in addition to volunteering to be our host during our visit to Aberdeen, also patiently acted as our tour guide around the town, taking me to see Edward VIII postboxes and explaining some of the history about the famous Mercat Cross Post Office. On top of that, Alex has also kindly reviewed the draft manuscript of this article for accuracy of the content, especially points about Aberdeen and Scotland, which were very important for me to get right. Thank you, Alex, for all your help, without which, this article would not have been possible.

References & Credits

- [1] Farrugia, Jean Young. *The Letter Box: A History of Post Office Pillar and Wall Boxes*. Centaur Press Ltd., Fontwell, Sussex, England, 1969.
- [2] *History of British Letter Boxes*. Paul's Unofficial Letterbox Pages: <http://www.wicks.org/pulp/part1.html>
- [3] Photo credit: *The history of the Royal Mail's post boxes and how you can tell each one's age (roughly!)*. *Memoirs of a Metro Girl*: <https://memoirsofаметrogirl.com/2019/07/21/london-post-boxes-royal-mail-history-queen-victoria-queen-elizabeth-ii/>
- [4] *Spotting a Royal Cypher*. *The Postal Museum*: <https://www.postalmuseum.org/blog/royal-cypher-appearances/#>
- [5] *Use of the Royal Cypher on Post Boxes*. *The Royal Mail Group*: <http://500years.royalmailgroup.com/gallery/use-of-the-royal-cypher-on-post-boxes/>
- [6] *Postboxes Featured on Stamps*. *Colne Valley Postal History Museum*: <http://www.cvphm.org.uk/Stamps.html>

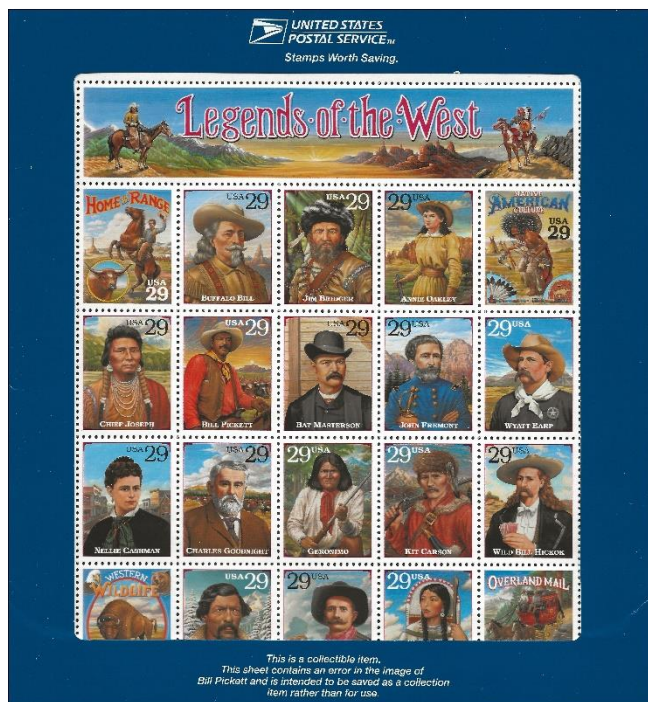
U.S. Legends of the West Error Pane

By Steve Tomisek (tomiseksj)

According to information posted on the [Oklahoma Historical Society's website](#), William "Bill" Pickett, an African American cowboy, was believed to have been born December 5, 1870, in Travis County, Texas. After completing 5th grade, Pickett worked on a ranch. He subsequently established a horse breaking business with his four brothers; the business also advertised catching and taming wild cattle as a specialty. Pickett entered his first rodeo in 1888, becoming a popular rodeo performer by the early 1900s. Pickett is credited with developing the technique of felling a steer which evolved into the popular rodeo event of steer wrestling. He also performed in a number of motion pictures and is credited with being the first black cowboy star. In 1932, Pickett died of head injuries inflicted by a horse.

In January 1984, the USPS announced it was going to issue a set of 20 stamps, titled "Legends of the West," that would feature stamps honoring people associated with exploration, settlement and development of the American West. Shortly after the sheet's issuance, it was learned that the Pickett image was that of Bill's brother Ben. Then Postmaster General Runyon ordered both the recall and destruction of the error sheets and the creation of the corrected Legends of the West stamps. Before the recall, and prior to the official first day of issue, 186 of the error sheets had been sold by postal workers and were being resold for sums ranging up to \$15,000.

Several weeks later, the USPS announced that 150,000 of the error sheets would be sold at face value by means of a mail order lottery. The remaining sheets were destroyed. The corrected sheet was issued on October 18, 1994 and is cataloged as Scott 2869. The error sheets were distributed to lottery winners in a blue framed envelope; it is cataloged as Scott 2870 and is valued much greater than the revised sheet. The 2021 CV for an unused pane of Scott 2869 is \$15. The CV of an unused pane of Scott 2870 without the envelope is \$125; panes with the envelope sell for more.



At left is the error pane with envelope (Scott 2870). Above left is Ben Pickett as depicted on the error pane. Above right is Bill Pickett as he appears on the corrected pane (Scott 2869).

If you'd like a chance to own this error pane, send a forum personal message (PM) to me with "Legends of the West" as the subject. The recipient of this Forum holiday giveaway will be selected by random drawing during January 2022.

Support Your Forum by Writing for Its Newsletter

The simple truth is: since all of the Newsletter material is written by members, the survival of this Newsletter is entirely dependent upon member contributions.

We welcome articles written on any area of philately, as long as they are original works.

For instance:

- How did you come to be a stamp collector? Tell us about it...
- Did you attend an interesting philatelic exhibition or stamp venue? Tell us about it...
- Do you have expertise in a particular area? Tell us about it...
- Have you had a positive or negative online buying or selling experience? Tell us about it...
- Do you belong to an interesting stamp club? Tell us about it...
- Do you have a favorite stamp? Tell us about it...

If you are able to make posts on the Forum, you have the ability to prepare articles for this publication.

In addition to supporting the Forum, submitting material provides the opportunity for recognition by the American Philatelic Society through its Articles of Distinction program.

Submitting an article is easy—all we need is the file containing the article's text, annotated with suggested image locations, and the images sent as separate files.

If you'd like to have an article published in the next issue of the Newsletter (V6.2), please attach the files to an email and send it to stampforum.net@gmail.com by not later than January 30, 2022.



Navigating Our Forum

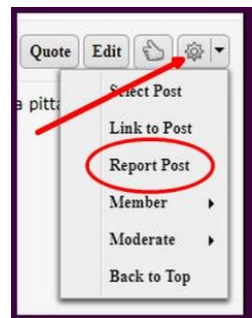
Techniques, Tips and Reminders

- Remember – civility is a required virtue on The Stamp Forum; ***treat all members with courtesy and respect.***
- The [Frequently Asked Questions about Using the Forum](#) board in the General Information category contains a wealth of information that should prove useful to members – consider checking it out.
- To use the Forum’s image host plug-in (the **Upload images** button), ***you must have an account.*** To get an account, send a request to stampforum.net@gmail.com that includes your Forum user ID and full name. This is the Forum’s preferred image host.



- The **Add image to post** button is a plug-in that uses imgbb.com as the host. An ImgBB account is not needed to use this method but one can be requested through that host. Unlike the TSF Image Host, imgbb.com is not associated with the Forum and the Moderator team will likely be unable to assist you with any problems.
- Conduct one-on-one conversations using **Forum Personal Messages (PM)**. One-on-one conversations via posts in threads can be disruptive and detract from the intended subject matter.

- The most expeditious way to gain the attention of Admin, or a Forum Moderator, is to use the **Report Post** function. Select this function from the pull-down menu found at the cog-wheel to the upper right of the post being reported.
- If your thread(s) in the Buy, Sell, Trade category have ended, please notify the Forum Staff using the “report post” function (see above) so that it may be moved to an “Ended” board. As an alternative, edit the subject to include the word “ENDED.”

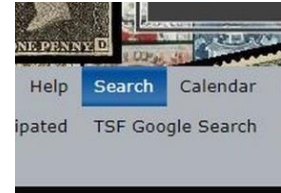


- Do not use the **Quote** function if you are reading the Forum using the [Recent Posts](#) function. Rather, navigate to the thread in which the post resides to see if your reply can be posted without having to use a quote. The [Vol. 3, Issue 3 Newsletter](#) has an article on quoting posts.
- If a quote is needed for understanding, edit out any unnecessary text and/or images from the quote and take the time to ensure that your response is outside of the quote box.
- The Forum’s **Google Language plug-in** helps members, who’s primary or second language is not English, to understand posts and take part in discussions. To use this tool, select the desired

language from the pull down menu to the left of the screen below the Navigation bar. Once a language has been selected, all posts will appear to the viewer in that language.

- When creating a thread, please clearly describe the thread’s subject matter so members don’t have to open the thread to determine what it is about.

- Before creating a new thread, use one of the two search options from the Navigation bar to see if a similar thread already exists; if one does, add to it rather than creating a new one.



- A listing of countries that don’t yet have boards on the Forum can be viewed [here](#). If you want to start a thread on a country not yet listed, either send a request via PM to @Admin or create the thread in that geographic regions “Other” sub-board. Making the request in a post risks it not being noticed and acted upon.

- If you are willing to share your mailing address with other like-minded members, request being added to the **Mailing Address** group; include your full name, user ID and complete mailing address.

- You can either add your own avatar by editing your profile or use the Forum’s default, which has been changed from the previous default (the Proboards’ alien).



- If you have a question or encounter a problem, reach out to Admin or a Moderator via PM.

- Right-click **Help** in the navigation menu and select an open option from the displayed menu. The ProBoards’ [help guide](#) provides a wealth of “how to” information.



Membership is free; apply online.

Use our image host or one of your own choosing.

Once you have made your introduction, staff will add you to the ****Members**** group. You will then be able to post in all of the boards except the Buy Sell and Trade (for this you will need 50 quality posts and membership for at least two weeks).

We are a Chapter of the American Philatelic Society.

Send information requests to stampforum.net@gmail.com

Forum Help Guide

Please click any of the listed topics below for a detailed explanation of that topic. If you still have unanswered questions or need additional assistance, please visit the ProBoards Support Board.

<p>User Guide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Account Creation and Logging In • Threads, Posts, Polls, and Attachments • Bookmarks • Post Options • Search • Calendar • The Members List • Avatars • Viewing Profiles • Your Profile Information • Social Websites • Profile Preferences • Profile Privacy • Notification Options • Keyboard Shortcuts • Glossary 	<p>Admins and Moderators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Forum Settings • Boards and Threads • Moderation Options • Login and Registration Settings • Themes and Styles • Custom Pages • Plugins • Headers and Footers • Member Groups and Rankings • Managing Members • Security • Upgrading Your Forum • Theme and Plugin Libraries
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TSF's APS Articles of Distinction

By Editorial Staff

To date, our Forum, APS Chapter 1591, has submitted four articles for publication on the American Philatelic Society's [website](#). All have been posted and each of those has a link that will bring readers to our Forum. Our most recent submission is currently featured on the website's [Collecting Interests](#) page

In addition to the recognition afforded The Stamp Forum, the articles' authors receive a certificate of achievement from APS.

The articles chosen to represent our Forum in each of the annual competitions conducted thus far are shown below, and each may be viewed by clicking on their respective link.

- 2017 [The 1926 Madrid-Manila Flight – A Pioneering Journey](#)
- 2018 [Visiting Stamp Shops Around the World](#)
- 2019 [USS Constitution – America's Ship of State](#)
- 2020 [Philatelic Travelogue: Paris and Its Stamp Market](#)
- 2021 [SAMOA, 1840-2000: Transition from Chiefly Fiefdoms to Nationhood](#)

The 2022 selection will be made during September and your participation is essential in helping to identify the best of the best. Four articles will compete for the distinction of being selected as The Stamp Forum's 2022 APS Article of Distinction – one from each issue published that year.

Please make your selection from this Volume 6 issue before life gets in the way. The individual issue selection polls will close on August 31, 2022 at Midnight, New York time. You may make your selection(s) by clicking [here](#).

If you enjoy reading the Newsletter, please show its contributors your appreciation by making your selections known.



In Closing...

Three members contributed material for this issue of the Forum's Newsletter; however, we had room for many more. My thanks go to those who have contributed content for this issue and I hope that all will find something of interest within these pages.

Member support is essential if we are to continue publishing a Newsletter. Any contributions of a philatelic nature will be considered for inclusion in a forthcoming issue (e.g., a catalog or book review, what I collect and why, a stamp show or bourse review, an intro to my local club, etc.).

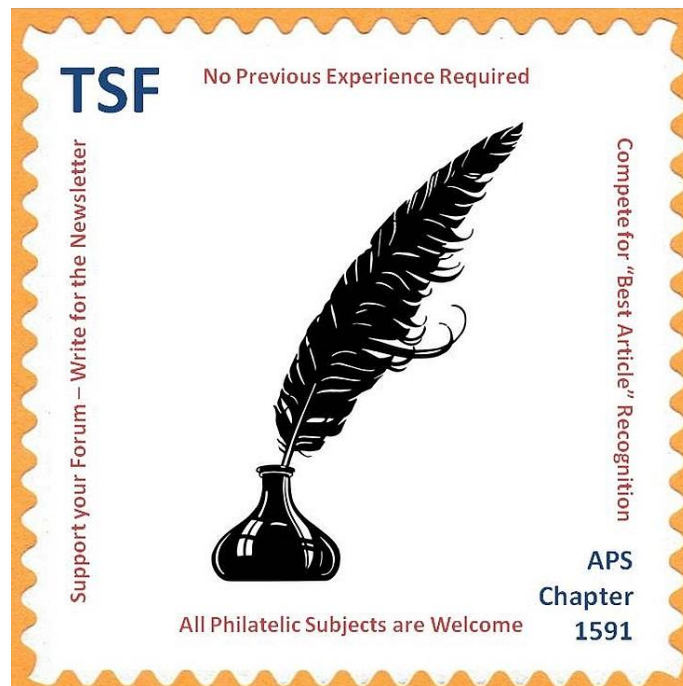
Please consider trying your hand at writing something for publication. If you aren't sure how to go about it, contact one of the editorial staff and we'll be happy to assist.

Although our submitters had their material in on time, I am at fault for this issue being well behind schedule. I hope to have the next issue, covering the period January - March 2022, completed by the middle of February. In order to meet that target, we'd like to receive your submissions by the end of January at the very latest.

When contributing material, Microsoft Word files are preferred, with images submitted as separate files. Although we can work with PDF files with embedded images, it makes for a more tedious process.

Thanks for your continued support! Please remain vigilant. Get vaccinated, keep washing your hands, maintaining social distance, wearing a mask when you can't maintain social distance, and staying at home with your loved ones and stamps, whenever possible!

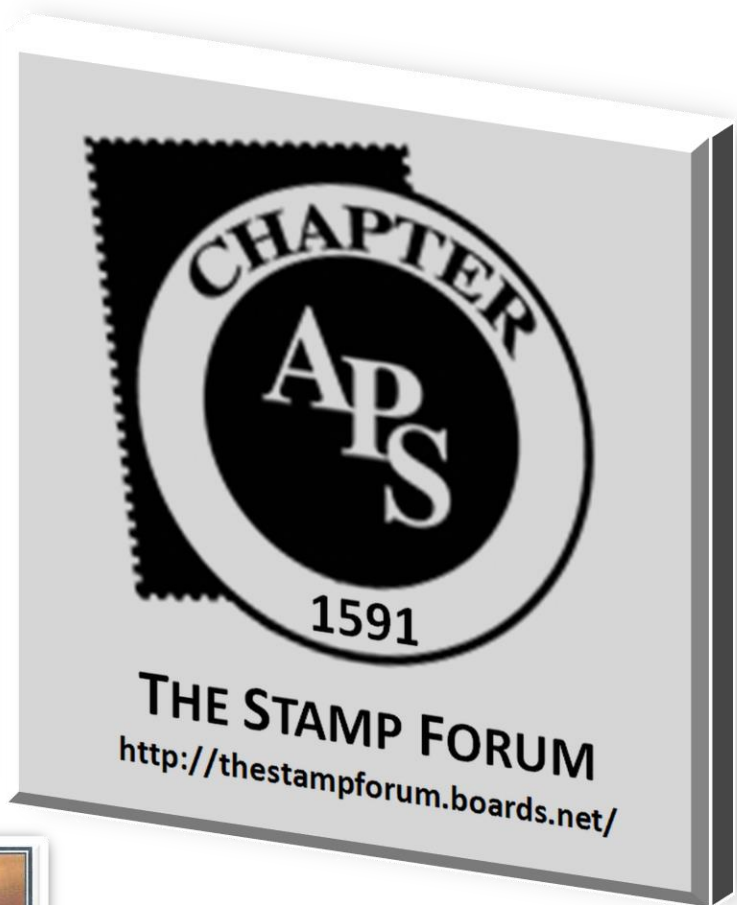
Have you submitted your entry in the Holiday Giveaway?



The Stamp Forum became a Chapter of the American Philatelic Society on February 28, 2014. A requirement of that membership was our obligation to abide by APS' [Philatelic Code of Ethics](#).

While most of the benefits of Chapter membership are best-suited for physical stamp clubs, there are several that are applicable to us. For example, we are listed in the APS club directory, are able to participate in the [Articles of Distinction](#) program, and receive a copy of [The American Philatelist](#), the monthly journal of the Society.

If you are not an individual APS member, please consider joining the organization. If you are going to apply for membership, indicate Chapter 1591 as your sponsor.



It's Time for a Stamp Club Meeting

Join us!

- Would you like to join a stamp club but you either can't find one or its meeting time doesn't fit your schedule?
- Would you like to discuss stamps with other collectors at any time you choose, day or night?
- Do you have questions about your stamp collection that you'd like to have help in answering?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, we can help! The Stamp Forum, Chapter 1591 of the American Philatelic Society, meets online, 24/7 at thestampforum.boards.net. Feel free to check us out. If you have questions, please send them to us at stampforum.net@gmail.com.

