

By : Thurston "Bubba" Bland

oobubba@icloud.com

Today's Collector

Finding Answers

Clearing out our Stamp Mess



Some UK cash I have been holding on to since my last visit to London in 2018.

Lately I have been working on some sort of organization to my office, better known as Bubba's messy stamp dump. Well, not that bad, but I had to post some large boxes recently. Too hard to fill on the floor. It meant moving eight trays of stamps and covers, along with a little mail, to one side of my desk. Then I had room to put the large items up on the desk to bundle them in plastic bubble wrap for shipment. With that done, I started going through all those stamp trays yesterday. I worked pulling out items like a group of 102 cards, envelopes, mint stamps, and eBay lots that didn't sell or were never listed on the site. Mint late US postage stamps that had worked their way out of my folder for postage stamps for use. Then I found a clear plastic envelope filled with UK money left over from a trip I made to London years ago. Bunches of envelopes with modern stamps that I hoarded to give away to young collectors, which I have not done. Old postcards that were given to me as a child by a nice lady at my church. A 1986 souvenir with mint blocks of four from the US and France marked "Liberty 1886-1986". Gee? What the Heck am I doing?



I cut these off a package I received in the mail sometime after 2018

Well, I do have a task ahead of me: to sell off all my dealer's stamp stock minus my private collections. I know what I have to do, but I also know I really don't want to do it. We collectors love to collect, but that means becoming endeared to what we have collected. For us, parting ways is like selling off our best friends. Yes, even the stock I have accumulated over the years. Most of the old albums have been stripped of any stamps or covers worth enough to sell as a single lot on eBay. I had no problem doing this for the past twenty-five-plus years. Now I look at a nice album with beautiful pages, one after another, filled with mint, never-hinged modern stamps. I learned years ago that you can't sell a modern stamp for anything under a couple of dollars. There is not enough time or money to do this, and there is little likelihood that someone will pay four times the catalog value. So, right now I must have fifty binders and albums that are like this. Some are filled with old stamps, none worth selling as singles. What's to do? Pile them in a banker's box and hope the auction house will even accept them. Wait for someone willing to pay a couple hundred dollars for the box. Yeah, they do sell sometimes for that, but other times the binder is so messy it beckons for a final resting place in the trash bin.



Unused US postage not worth enough to mail a letter.

No, I just can't throw away an old friend's work that I bought in his collection. The hard part with owning stamps is that some are really nice and have some good value to other collectors; then there are those that are also really nice, but the collectors already have them. There is a story about a lady who wanted to paper her wall with the Penny Black issues of England shortly after their introduction in the early 1840s. There is no indication that she ever finished her project, or that someone might have just painted over them. But multiples of the same stuff are just 'more stuff'. Yes, I have heard the old saying "One man's junk is another man's treasure". So, find out who that guy is who wants my used 3 modern \$2 upside-down Flying Jenny, stuck to a piece of cardboard? I'll even throw in the modern postage I have in a holder that amounts to all of 60 cents. My goodness, I have to add in more money to send it in a first-class envelope. I hope you realize that while I have been typing most of this letter, I have figuratively been holding my tongue in check. Yes, I know as you read this message you are thinking, sounds like the things I have been holding on to. I love stamps

too much to throw them in the trash. It even pains me to drop a nasty old cover, with nothing redeeming about it, into the trash as uncollectible. Unfortunately, I can't put this stuff out at the curb in hopes someone will pick it up like an old piece of furniture. I'll just keep reminding myself that someone in the past loved this stamp or that cover. So, be a good guy, Bubba, and pass these along to someone else.

Enjoy!

Bubba Bland

oobubba@icloud.com

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