

PRESS RELEASE

Oxford University researchers uncover hidden secret of 40 year old stamps

Images are available on demand. Call Clare Spittle on 08452 303049 or email press@publicityheaven.com

A series of 81 brand new British stamp varieties have been “discovered” by Oxford University researchers... 40 years after they were first published.

The 1969 Post Office Technology encapsulated stamps were widely believed to be identical to the actual stamps that were issued.

But new research by Oxford University researchers – prompted by British postal auction company [Universal Philatelic Auctions](#) (UPA) – has revealed that unlike the issued stamps, they were actually printed on uncoated paper.

“That instantly makes these 40 year old stamps the rarest commemorative stamps in Great Britain,” said UPA auctioneer Andrew McGavin.

Industry standard cataloguer Stanley Gibbons has agreed with the research, and anticipates amending its listing of the stamps.

The 1969 Post Office Technology encapsulated stamps were actually pre-publicity Postal Notices – almost like press releases issued before the real stamp came out.

To prevent fraud they were encapsulated in perspex.

Andrew McGavin explained: “For 40 years no-one realised they were any different. Because they were encapsulated the paper could not be examined.

“Universal Philatelic Auctions recently purchased a collection and noticed differences between the encapsulated stamps and the issued stamps.

“The stamps appeared to be flatter, even thinner, with more ‘whiskery’ paper and ‘whiskery’ printing impressions.

“We didn’t want to damage an encapsulated Postal Notice, so sent a collection of 23 different Postal Notices to Oxford University for specialist research.”

The university’s Materials Characterisation Service concluded that the 75 different stamps it had examined had been printed on uncoated paper.

Andrew explained: “Uncoated paper varieties come from the start of the printing paper roll. Such stamps are usually discarded by the printers, making some uncoated paper stamps great rarities.

“In the case of the encapsulated Postal Notices it made commercial sense for the printers to use the first stamps off the printing roll – they were uncoated – but by encapsulating them nobody would know any different.”

He added: “It has taken 40 years for their secret to be uncovered.”

Andrew McGavin has worked in the philatelic industry since 1974 and started collecting at the age of 10.

This is the most significant stamp discovery he has ever made.

His business, Universal Philatelic Auctions cuts out stamp dealers by buying private collections and selling them in four catalogue auctions every year.

Buyers bid using a catalogue featuring more than 14,000 lots.

Universal Philatelic Auctions has an advanced business model that automatically finds the market value of every stamp. If a lot isn't sold it is automatically relisted in the next auction at a reduced price.

This continues until the correct price for the stamp is found by the market and it sells – or it finally sells for nothing. So far not a single item has ever been given away.

It also means collectors buy stamps at market value, with no buyer's premium or additional VAT and every single lot guaranteed by the company for authenticity.

Catalogues for the next auction will be available from 10th June 2010 for the next auction, which will close on Tuesday 6th July 2010.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

- For any further information, quotes or interviews, please email press@publicityheaven.com or call Clare Spittle on 08452 303049