

TAKE A WALK THROUGH TIME

Submitted by: Stanley Gibbons Ltd

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Many of us have stamp albums at home, they may long forgotten or passed down but they are still there. Postage stamps are miniature works of art— colourful, well-designed and superbly printed. Every item, rare or common, tells a story and marks a time, place and moment in history.

The Penny Black, for example, was the world's first adhesive postage stamp and tells the story of how communication was revolutionised. Until its invention in 1837, sending a letter was an expensive and complicated task.

Rowland Hill, a schoolmaster with no experience in postal operations, was so moved by the inefficiency of the process that he took published a pamphlet, Post office reform; Its importance and practicability, that made a case for a big change. After months of lobbying, Hill's idea took shape and was so successful that the number of letters sent quadrupled to 350 million that year.

Also telling the story of a great time in our history, were the George V Seahorse stamps that epitomised the monarch's attitude in turbulent era of war and economic turmoil. The stamp is said to be a direct response to German threat posed to Britain at sea, with the Seahorses testifying to Britain's naval domination. A symbol of patriotism and camaraderie, they depicted Britain as a powerful country 'and a ruler of the seas.'

Those are just two examples of the stories these stamps have to tell. Many others come from a large group of commonwealth countries at the peak of the British Empire. Continuing a collection can be educational and provide some of the most practical ways of learning geography and history, politics and religion, and the everyday way of life in different parts of the world.

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