



The British Machins, with David Alderfer

Course Description:

The current definitives of Great Britain are known to collectors as Machins. Sculptor Arnold Machin molded the bas relief profile of Queen Elizabeth that is the central element of the stamp's design.

The Machin series has now been in existence for 44 years producing for collectors anywhere from 400 to 6,000 distinct varieties, depending on the criteria one used to count. Many collectors feel overwhelmed by the sheer magnitude of possibilities. This course will give collectors the knowledge they need to understand major differences and identify stamps they want to include in their collections.

Key characteristics of the Machin series including color, design, style of numerals, perforation differences, types of printing, luminescence (phosphor varieties), and paper variations will be lavishly illustrated with PowerPoint presentations.

Interesting ways to collect Machins will be explored and illustrated. Areas of specialization include closed groups, postal history, errors, overprints, administrative usages, and oddities. Once collectors know characteristics to look for when viewing a Machin stamp, collecting them can become an obsessive fascination.

Instructor Biography:

David Alderfer

Alderfer began collecting Machins in 1983, initially attracted to the bright colors of individual stamps in the series. For the past 28 years, he has kept up with the many technological changes that have affected the issuance and production of the current definitive series of Great Britain.

Alderfer believes that what make Machin stamps fascinating are the many subtle differences that make every issue unique. "Once you know all the differences to look for in the Machins, you can have a lot of fun with these inexpensive and readily available stamps." says Alderfer.

In 1992, he and fellow Machin aficionado, Larry Rosenblum of Sunnyvale, California, began writing a monthly column for Linn's Stamp News about the stamps of Great Britain. The column continues to appear in the second issue of every month.

In 2004, Linn's Stamp News published a book in its Handbook Series entitled, Introduction to the Stamps of Great Britain, which was a compilation of 12 years of columns from the weekly periodical by the two authors.

No other country's stamps have ever won Alderfer's passion as much as those of Great Britain. His favorite eras, besides the Machin definitives, are the Penny Blacks, the surface-printed stamps of the Victorian era, and the Wilding definitives of the Queen Elizabeth II era.

Alderfer currently lives in the Chicagoland area with his wife, Kay, and is retired from active ministry as a pastor of the Lutheran church.