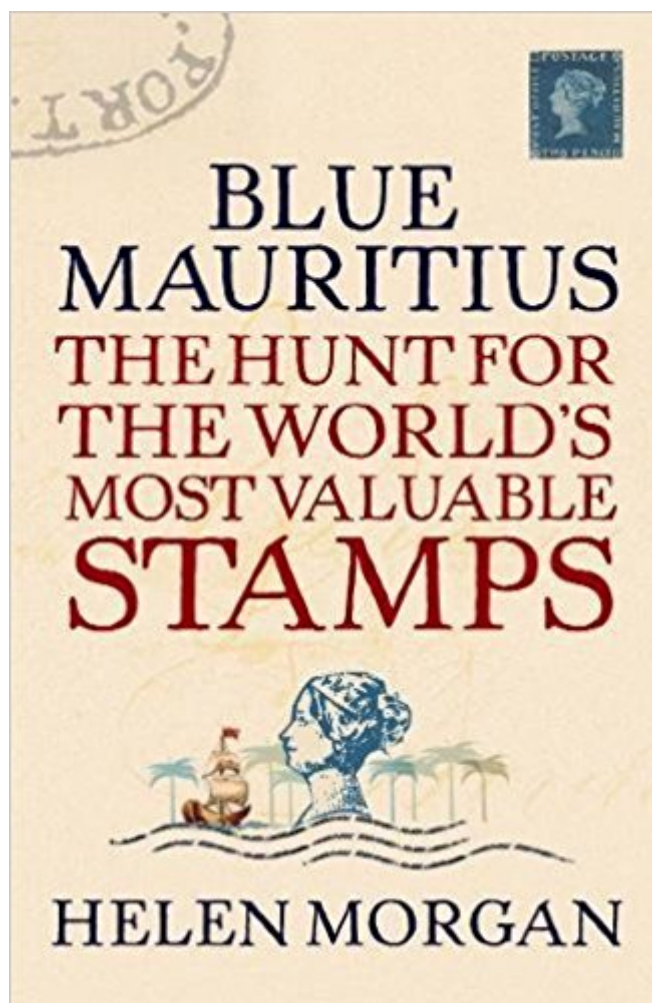


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Blue Mauritius: The Hunt For The World's Most Valuable Stamps



Synopsis

Follow the adventures of the world's most sought-after postage stamps—from a tropical Indian Ocean island to the hushed atmosphere of the modern auction room—in this dramatic and passionate tale of the first stamp hunters. In September 1847 colored squares of paper were stuck on to envelopes and used to send out admission cards to a fancy-dress ball on the tropical island of Mauritius. No one at the party would have guessed that these stamps would one day be worth more than a million dollars. When a two-pence "Blue Mauritius" surfaced on the fledgling French stamp-collecting market in 1865 it gained instant celebrity. Soldiers, schoolboys, and the entire German nation became obsessed with finding one of these extremely rare examples. When in 1903 a perfect specimen, discovered in a childhood album, was bought at auction by the Prince of Wales, the Blue Mauritius gained superstar status. Even now, "Post Office Mauritius" stamps are synonymous with fame, wealth, and mystery. The most coveted scraps of paper in existence, this is their story—from their birth during days of sail, taking them from Port Louis to Bordeaux, India and Great Britain, Switzerland and Japan, into the hearts and imagination of collectors everywhere.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Will strike a chord with anyone who has ever felt the thrill of buying a little glassine packet of stamps, tipping them out, finding the longed-for Missing One and making the proud, complete set... the stories of these stamps are often extraordinary. -- Ann Wroe * Daily Telegraph * Fascinating... not just an entertaining and meticulously researched history of Mauritius and its stamps, but also an absorbing look at the early development of one of the world's most widespread hobbies. -- Kieron

Helen Morgan trained as an art historian and archivist. This is her first book.

This book is not just about stamps. It tells a lot about the history and culture of the island of Mauritius, far far away. The book talks about the beginning French presence and then the British culture in Mauritius. It also has a lot of information about mail delivery in Mauritius and also in France and India where copies of the stamps were found after they had been used. There have been very, very few of these stamps found and the history of each known copy is given. These stamps have been owned and enjoyed by the most famous and eccentric stamp collectors in the last 150 years.

A book of deep scholarship, exactitude and completeness; wonderfully written conveying a sense of the collector's passion and the excitement of discovery. In Helen Morgan's world, the search of, and affirmation for rarity and worth is contained in the history of the first issuance of the the Blue Mauritius in September 1847 and the story of the many collectors and philatelists who have owned or now own one of the treasured stamps called Blue Mauritius. Drawing on sources worldwide in many languages, Morgan's philately is more than the love of those "dirty little pieces of paper, " but the study of countries and their histories and the beauty of the art of the commonplace. Her concluding chapter of the return of two of the prized stamps to an honored place on the small island nation of Mauritius is a fitting coda to a story well told.

If you like stamps, you'll love this. Even if you don't collect, there's much fascinating history buried in this book. Morgan writes well. Who would have thought so many details could be wrung out of the design of a couple of stamps? Bravo!

Five stars no question if you like a great historically deep & accurate stamp story. The adult book for fans of Billy Bunter and the Blue Mauritius without question will want to won this one. A book that is read more than once.

Excellent research information about a classic stamp with great value. The book has a lot of reference material and details the history of these old stamps.

Haven't read it yet. Will be interesting to read through.

All OK. Thank you

One of the world's most widespread and popular hobbies, enjoyed by children and presidents, is stamp collecting. Like every hobby, philately has its rarities, forgeries, myths and legends. One of the rarest of stamps is the subject of this excellent book by Helen Morgan. Mauritius is an island nation that lies off the coast of Africa in the southwest Indian Ocean, more than five hundred miles east of Madagascar. It is renowned for being the only known home of the dodo, a flightless bird related to pigeons and doves, extinct since the mid-to-late 17th Century. Successfully invaded by the British during the Napoleonic Wars, Mauritius was the first British colony to issue postage stamps beginning in 1847 with two stamps, a red one-penny and a blue two-penny. Perhaps only one thousand of these stamps were produced in the first printing; and only twenty-seven of these are known to survive. They carry the legend "Post Office" instead of the more common and proper "Post Paid". It is not clear why they carry the former rather than the latter. Morgan's book details the history of these small iconoclastic colored squares of old paper. But this is not just a book on stamp collecting. Reading like a detective novel, it traces the history of these stamps through various collector's hands to exclusive auction houses and postal museums. At auction in 1993, two examples on cover sold for a record four million dollars, adding validity to the statement made in 1862 that stamp enthusiasts are "hopelessly but harmlessly insane." After reading this book, one can't help but be tempted to take another look-through at the old letters stored away in the attic.

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