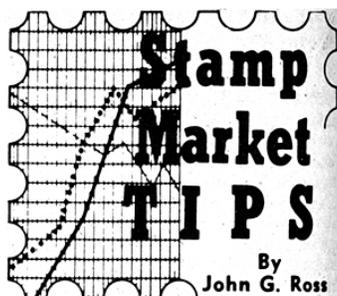


# *Stamp Market Tips:* **STAMPS Magazine, April 7, 1979**

By John G. Ross, with updates by John F. Dunn



One of the most popular features in the old *STAMPS Magazine* was the late John Ross' "Stamp Market Tips". When he discontinued the column, John was a tough act to follow, in particular because "tipsters" often times are 'talking their own book,' that is, they are touting what they

already own, rather than what actually has a positive future.

On the theory that "what has done well will continue to do well" and "what has not done well will continue to not do well", I am bringing back the old "Stamp Market Tips" features here and in our other print and website publications. We started in the September 14 edition of *Mekeel's & STAMPS*, we will run U.S. material in *U.S. Stamp News* as it is accumulated, and we will begin a summary list on our Stamp News Now website once we have enough to warrant posting there.

There are some qualifications we need to keep in mind. First, as the investment advisors always say, the past is not necessarily a predictor of the future. Also, we need to factor in inflation. For example, in comparing prices Scott or other prices quoted by Ross, the U.S. \$ inflation factor from 1979 to 2012 is 3.16, so a stamp valued at \$1 in 1979 would have to be valued at \$3.16 today in order to have just kept up with inflation.

There also is the matter of Scott's own valuation policy changes. Examples are the change from FVF to VF as a standard, the expansion of NH prices as well as separate NH prices, and the controversial reduction of almost all Scott prices in the 1980s (to bring them closer to reality). Essentially, the purpose of these "Stamp Market Tips

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Revisited” is not to come up with a precise comparison, but to suggest stamp tips you may want to revisit, so for my purposes here I am going to ignore these variables, but I point them out so that you can factor them in if you choose to do so.

And, of course, I invite your suggestions on how we can improve these value comparisons (without making it more work than the results merit, that is).

In this particular TIPS column, John Ross missed the boat on four of his five “Tips” and the only increase was a modest one. The worst performer—in retrospect—was his Vatican City “Tip”, that area having declined in popularity over the past 15 years in particular. JFD.

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**USA** — We all have witnessed the fabulous rise in prices of all high values issued by the U.S. postal administration for regular postal use. No one knows how much higher they might go, but Some of the lower values of some of these sets have just started to rise in price, and should you lack these at this time, buy them right now.



First of all get a hold of the 50¢ issue of the Presidential Issue of 1938. This stamp with the portrait of William Howard Taft, Scott number 831 used to be for sale at every Post Office in this country for many years. Thus hardly a collector bothered picking up a copy for his collection. Now this stamp is getting difficult to find as more and more people are entering the field of stamp collecting. Scott 1979 Specialized raised its price to \$8.75 from \$6 in the 1978 catalog. Retail price for that stamp has risen to almost \$10 at this time and more and more buy prices are cropping up, some dealers offering as much as \$7 for that stamp. I believe at the going price, this stamp is still a bargain, it could easily double in price in no time at all.

**U.S. Sc. 724-27: 1979 SCV \$8.75; 2012 Dollars \$27.65; 2013 SCV \$5.00; Percent Decrease: 42.9%; Per Annum Growth Rate -1.9%**



Sc. 224

**MALTA** — Stamps of the island of Malta always have been popular with the collector in Europe, especially in Italy, where demand for all issues of Malta has forced prices up quite a bit in the last few months. I suggest you try to pick up the set of two stamps that were issued in January 1949 to celebrate the Silver Wedding of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, Scott number 223-224. This set was part of the Omnibus issue which was issued for all British Colonies which at that time were still very numerous. Scott 1979 raised its catalog price slightly, it now lists for \$27.70 against \$25.20 in the 1978 edition. Retail prices in Europe are way above that Catalog price, most dealers are asking over \$50 for the pair. Buy prices in Italy are just about \$35, while English dealers are paying about \$33 at this time, which is over \$10 more than they were willing to pay less than one year ago. Make sure you get a hold of that set very soon. In my opinion it will rise in price quite a bit more in the next few months.

**Malta Sc. 223-224: 1979 SCV \$27.70; 2012 Dollars \$87.50; 2013 SCV \$40.55; Percent Decrease: 53.7%; Per Annum Growth Rate -2.3%**



Sc. 127

**ST. HELENA** — Stamps from the island of St. Helena have always been popular with the stamp collector, most likely we all remembered history lessons in our school days, when Napoleon, Emperor of France was exiled to that island after his defeat. A set of fourteen values was issued in 1938-1940 with the portrait of King George VI, Scott number 118-127, which still can be seen at your dealer's shelves over here as until recently all sets of the period of King George VI were slow sellers. Suddenly this set is in great demand in England and several buy ads have appeared for that issue. Scott 1979 lists that issue for \$38.46, up \$3 from the 1978 catalog price. Dealers in England are paying over \$30 and most of them are asking as much as \$50 at this time. I believe most issues of the George VI period are scarcer than many believe they are and suggest you start looking for these sets as quickly as possible, as fast as your checkbook allows you to pick them up.

**St. Helena Sc. 118-127: 1979 SCV \$38.46; 2012 Dollars \$121.50; 2013 SCV \$160.00; Percent Increase: 31.7%; Per Annum Growth Rate 1.4%**



Sc. 54

**TRISTAN DA CUNHA** — The British stamp market is extremely volatile these days, prices of most better issues are rising very rapidly and demand for all better issues of the British Commonwealth is rising constantly. The best proof of how the stamp business in England has grown, is that one of their popular stamp magazines which a few years ago never totalled more than 40 pages now publishes every week around 160 pages, an increase of 400%, primarily advertising. At this time, increased demand is pushing up prices for most issues of Tristan Da Cunha; especially in demand is the set of thirteen values issued in April 1961, when these islands changed their currency from pence and shillings to the decimal system, Scott number 42-54. Scott 1979 lists that set for \$58.30, up \$5.15 from the 1978 edition. Dealers in England are willing to pay you as much as \$80 for that set, recent retail prices over there are around \$125 at this time. The way prices are rising in England there is no telling how much higher that set could go.

**Tristan da Cunha Sc. 42-54: 1979 SCV \$58.30; 2012 Dollars \$184.25; 2012 SCV \$86.70; Percent Decrease: 52.9%; Per Annum Growth Rate -2.3%**



**VATICAN CITY** — The market in the stamps of the Vatican still has not recovered completely from the steep devaluation of the Italian Lire a few years back. In my opinion there are many recent issues that were not hoarded and might turn out to be small rarities in a few years time. Make certain you own the Souvenir sheet issued in June 1972 to publicize the UNESCO campaign to save Venice, Scott number 520a. Scott 1979 did not change its catalog price from the 1978 edition, it still lists for \$6, but retail is close to \$10 in this country as well as in Europe. More and more buy prices have begun to climb for that sheet and dealers are willing to pay as much as \$6 at this time. I believe this sheet is still underpriced and in my opinion is bound to rise considerably in the near future. The time to buy it is right now as long as it is easily available and comparatively reasonably priced.

**Vatican City Sc. 520a: 1979 SCV \$6.00; 2012 Dollars \$18.96; 2012 SCV \$2.50; Percent Decrease: 86.8%; Per Annum Growth Rate -3.8%**

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