REMBRANDT – WAS HE JEWISH?

Rembrandt is being commemorated on many countries stamps at present, as it is his 400th. Birth Anniversary.
I have often wondered if he is, or is not Jewish. I have no confirmed information, to say that he was, - but he did live in the Jewish quarter in Amsterdam.
One of his paintings was titled “The Jewish Bride”.
Infact, Netherlands Antilles on the 28th. September 2006 issued a set of stamps commemorating his 400th. Birth Anniversary, and one of the stamps depicts detail of “The Jewish Bride”.
I will leave the decision up to yourselves, as to whether you include him in your Judaica collection!…………………..This issue will be in mine though!.

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA – JUDAICA AGAIN!

Last month saw the release by the U.S.A. of its Hanukah stamp. – which I thought was their only Judaica related stamp in October.
But I have just found out that the attractive Southern Florida Wetland sheetlet depicting animals and plants, can justify a place in a Judaica collection.
The reason being, that the art director of the stamps is Ethel Kessler.
Incidentally, she has designed a couple of U.S.A stamps in the last few years. – also including the recent Hanukah stamp too.

By the way, the design of the Hanukah stamp turned out to be the same desin as the 2004 issue. – The only difference being that the value on the stamp was now 39 cents. I have been told that they will be issuing the same designed Hanukah stamp next year, but the value will be 42 cents. This is the new postage rate to be introduced in the U.S.A. next May. This will result in the recently issued 39 cents Hanukah stamp only having an 8 month life span. Quite short lived, and it may be worth tucking a sheet or two away.
40 Million Hanukah stamps have been printed for this issue – but if any are unsold, when the postal rates increase next year, then they will be returned to the Postal Service for destruction. – With this in mind, that is why they have reduced their printing run on this issue. Usually they print higher quantities – as can be seen by some of the figures of previous U.S. Hanukah issues:-
In 1996 – 103.5 Million 32c Hanukah stamps were printed.
In 1999 – 65 Million 33 c Hanukah stamps were printed.
In 2001 – 40 Million 34 c Hanukah stamps were printed.
In 2002 – 35 Million 37 c Hanukah stamps were printed.
In 2004 – 60 Million of the newly re-designed 37 c Hanukah stamp were printed.

This means that the U.S.A. have issued over 300 Million Hanukah stamps in total.

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CRAZY PRICES!

Sometimes I find, that if a stamp dealer comes across something a little bit different, that he has not come across before, he simply inflates the price of that particular item.

This is what seems to have happened to an item that I came across in a dealers British First Day Covers price list.
There was nothing Judaica in this list, until I came across a listing for:-
A Churchill First Day Cover (9/10/74), that was on a Wanstead and Woodford Synagogue official. – with a printed address label.

The price list states that this is a scarce cover, and priced it at £50.00. Obviously, this dealer has not been in contact with the synagogue, or its members, or the local community. – If he did, he would find that it is not quite that scarce, to make it justify its £50.00 price tag!!

If stamp dealers in this country (U.K.), saw our Judaica collections, I wonder what figure they would place on them – as I am sure our collections would be very unique to them.
That is, after you have explained what a Judaica collection is all about!
NEW MEMBERS AND ARTICLES!

My usual request, firstly, for new members – If you know of anyone that collects Judaica themed stamps, then please mention the Society to them. You can always pass my details onto them, for them to contact me for further details.

My second request is for articles for the Newsletters. – No matter how small the article or information is, - it is always greatly appreciated, and will be of interest to someone.

Thirdly, members can enter as many free adverts as they wish, and as often as they wish – so send your adverts in now.

The more members that we have, then hopefully the more contributions there will be to the Newsletter, and then the more interesting the newsletter and the Society will become. The more articles for the Newsletters, the more debate, it will hopefully create.

In the coming months I am hoping to contact, similar societies, and see if we can have a “two-way” advert, where we will advertise their society, in return for them advertising our society. It must be remembered that we are not in any competition, with any similar society – and any society is a good thing if it creates more interest into the world of Stamp Collecting, or Judaica, or whatever.

If more collectors knew of our society, I am sure they would be interested. Don’t you?

NEW JUDAICA ISSUES

CROATIA have recently issued a stamp depicting a synagogue and a “Menorah” (a seven-branch candelabra), to commemorate 200 years of the Jewish Community in Croatia. (Personally speaking, I think it is a very nice stamp).

An issue that I completely missed, and was unaware about, was issued by Mexico last year in December 2005. It commemorates the Centenary of the Jewish Community in
Mexico, and depicts a Cactus plant as a “Menorah”. The stamp also carries an additional image visible only under a UV lamp. (so I have been told!!) – but as I do not have a UV lamp, I am unable to decipher the hidden image!

**CANADA** issued in May a set of stamps titled Canadians In Hollywood. The judaica relevant stamp is the one depicting Lorne Greene (1915-1987).- Actor, Narrator and Broadcaster in World War 2. He is depicted on the stamp as Ben Cartwright in “Bonanza”. The stamps come in the form of a Miniature Sheet. – And also in the form of a self-adhesive stamp booklet, which has a large full illustration of Lorne Greene on the cover. (Another set that I can recommend.)

Thanks to Ralph Lanesman for the following very interesting article:- (Part 2 will follow next month)

A MATTER OF RELEVANCE – PART 1
BY
RALPH LANESMAN

About a year ago an exchange partner to whom I had sent a list of “swaps” that I had available, questioned the relevance of many of the stamps on my list to Judaica. I could only lamely respond that I had based my description on Dr. Benjamin Reuter’s “Encyclopedia Of Philatelic Judaica” (B.J.R.) where he stated that he strived to be as accurate as possible in compiling the biographies.

I don’t think that my reply was at all satisfactory to my correspondent, and I still have my own reservations of how certain particular stamps were relevant to philatelic Judaica.

In citing some of these hereunder, I would really be grateful if a reader would be able to fill me in on the subject. A large proportion of the stamps in this category are those issued by the USSR and I will leave those to a later survey.

In 1951, Australia issued a stamp (SG243), commemorating the Golden Jubilee of the Commonwealth of Australia, and featuring the opening of the first Federal Parliament by the Duke of York. B.J.R. lists the stamp as the work of Sir Isaac Isaacs. In 1973, Australia did issue a stamp (SG538) which featured the first Australian-born Governor-General Sir Isaac Isaacs. That stamp was relevant. What about the first-mentioned?
Canada issued a stamp on the occasion of the Expo ’67 Exhibition which was held in Montreal and which depicted the emblem and the Canadian Pavilion (SG611). B.J.R. lists this as the work of Edward Churchill, an architect. How relevant is this stamp to Judaica?

Both John Henry Richter in his cumulative list in the Judaica Philatelic Journal and B.J.R. in his publication, reflect Robert Debre, the French author and physician as the Judaica connection in the French stamps (SG1941) issued in 1971 in commemoration of the 150th Anniversary of the National Academy of Medicine. There is no problem regarding the Judaica relevance of Robert Debre (See SG2517) who has his portrait appearing on that stamp commemorating the 100th Anniversary of his birth which occurred in 1882. This is 61 years after the inauguration of the Academy. There is a portrait appearing on the Academy stamp – that of Baron Portal the first President of the Academy. I concede that Debre could have been a member of the Academy in his time as he became a Professor of Medicine, but what does that have to do with the sesquicentennial of its foundation? Am I missing something here?

A number of stamps issued by the United States Postal Services have also had a Judaica content tagged on to them that seems to be some-what far-fetched. 1976 saw the Commercial Aviation Issue to mark the 50th anniversary of the first contract airmail flights during 1926 (SG1664). B.J.R. lists the issue under the name Benjamin Berel Lipsner, undoubtedly a very honourable member of the tribe, whose occupation is listed as Aerial Mail Superintendent. But, did he have any connection to the flights contracts commemorated? A similar connection is raised in the case of Myer Myers who is described as a silversmith and the series celebrating the American Bicentennial (SG1461) pays honour to the Silversmiths. Without any biographical information of Myers, it is impossible to make any considered judgement of this issue. B.J.R. may have had the answer in Volume III of his Encyclopedia but of course that volume thus far has not seen the light of day. A quick round-up of a number of names where much doubt exists as to their Jewishness:-

Yves Montand, born Ivo Livi. – This may be a close hit to the world-wide Levy family.

Henri Moissan, Nobel Prize in Chemistry.

Clara Zetkin, German Revolutionary. In the March/April 1990 issue of the Israeli Philatelist an article appears on Judaica on Soviet Envelopes wherein it claims Zetkin as Jewish but no corroboration.

Freda Kahlo, The painter had a number of stamps issued in 2001 and 2002 in her honour by USA and other entities. A recent article in the Jerusalem Post demolishes the Judaica connection.

Max Euwe, Dutch Grand Chess-master. In 2001 the Netherlands issued a lovely
miniature sheet. Any information on his lineage?
Rudolph Hauser – painter of “Adam” which is of course Biblical Judaica but is Hauser himself of Jewish descent (SG1826 – Austria)?
One last poser – Cecil Roth in his “The Jewish Contribution to Civilization” suggests that Claude Bizet, composer of the opera Carmen was said to have been of Jewish descent. Is there any corroborating proof?

Ralph Lanesman can be contacted by email:- lanesman@013.net

(A copy of the findings to the Newsletter too, would be appreciated – so that we can all share the developments of the above article)

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Dr. Benjamin Reuter author of “Encyclopedia Of Philatelic Judaica” sadly passed away before completion of Volumes 2 and 3.
There were plans that the Reuter family, would continue to publish his works – but as far as I am aware, nothing has so far materialised.
I have tried to contact the family to enquire about the publication, but unfortunately, I have an old email address, and no proper address to contact them.
Does anyone have an address that I could contact them on.
(Thanks, Gary.)

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FEEDBACK

Following Harriet Epstein’s enquiry last month regarding Bela Lugosi – Michael Green – (Liverpool) has kindly replied by saying, that “He was East-European, and played the part of Dracula in the film. He liked the part so much, playing Dracula, that when he died he was buried in his cape”.
Unfortunately that is all the information that Michael knows on him – so the mystery of his religion still continues!!!!!!