

Famous Great Britain 'Buckleuch Block' to be Sold at Auction May 28

The greatest stamp discovery in modern history is expected to bring \$5m to \$7.5m

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, January 20, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On May 28 at [Boston 2026 World Expo](#), Siegel International will offer the largest known intact block of the Great Britain Two-Pence Blue, one of the world's first two postage stamps, issued for use 186 years ago on May 6, 1840.



The block of 48 "Tuppence Blue" stamps, known as the "Buckleuch Block" offered for sale at Siegel Auction Galleries May 28

The mint block of 48 blue stamps depicting Queen Victoria is known to collectors as the "Buckleuch Block" (pronounced buck-loo). It is named for the Scottish noble family who owned the stamps from their original purchase around 1840 until their discovery and sale soon after World War II.

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We all dream of opening an old book or desk drawer and finding a hidden stamp treasure. The Buckleuch Block was found just this way. In May, it will be offered at auction for the first time ever”

Scott Trepel, President Siegel Auctions

The Siegel firm estimates the block will bring \$5,000,000 to \$7,500,000. The block cost the 5th Duke of Buckleuch about \$1.92 when it was purchased from the post office.

The Buckleuch Block is considered by many philatelic experts to be the world's most important philatelic item, because it is the largest known multiple of the 1840 Two-Pence Blue. The next largest block contains 38 stamps and is part of the Royal Family's stamp collection. A large block of the One-Penny Black is part of the British Postal Museum and Archive.

FOUND INSIDE A TRAVELING DESK SET

The Buckleuch Block measures about 10.5 in. wide by 4.25 in. tall (approximately 27 by 10.5 cm). It was discovered in 1945 inside a compartment of the Duke's leather traveling writing desk set.

The Two-Pence block was found with a companion block of a much more common stamp.

The discovery was made in 1945 by a recently released member of the RAF named Alexander Martin, who served as personal secretary to the 8th Duke of Buccleuch. Martin was tasked with inventorying the contents of Dalkeith Palace, where the Buccleuch family resided until 1914. The desk set containing the block was situated on a table in the Palace Library.

THE BUCCLEUCH BLOCK HAS NEVER BEEN OFFERED AT AUCTION

The two blocks found inside the desk set were sold for £6,500 in 1946 in a private transaction through the London firm of H. R. Harmer Ltd. (approximately \$26,000 at the then-current exchange rate). The buyer was a British collector named Gordon P. Bailey.

Sometime later the block was acquired in a private transaction by Renato Mondolfo, an Italian collector who owned many important world rarities. In 1985, the block was sold by Mondolfo, once again in a private transaction. The London dealers William and Michael Lea negotiated the sale to Hassan Shaida, an Iranian collector. Shaida exhibited the block as part of his exhibit of "Queen Victoria: The Birth of the World's First Postage Stamps," which won the Grand Prix National at Stamp World London in 1990.

After Shaida won the Grand Prix in 1990, his collection, including the Buccleuch Block, was sold privately to Guido Craveri, a European dealer. The block was one of twenty items displayed in the "Aristocrats of Philately" exhibit at ANPHILEX 1996 in New York City, the Collectors Club centenary event. It was listed in the 1996 exhibition catalog as "on loan" from Tito Giamporcaro, a European collector. It was subsequently acquired by the current owner, a private collector.

The Buccleuch Block will be offered with a few other major philatelic rarities in an auction on Thursday, May 28, held in conjunction with Boston 2026 World Expo (May 23-30). This is the first time the block has ever been offered at auction.

Details and updates regarding the sale will be made available on the Siegel firm's website: www.siegelauctions.com



The 5th Duke of Buccleuch, at his writing desk

Scott Trepel, president of the Siegel firm, describes the block and predicts its potential value:

"The stories of fantastic discoveries of rare collectibles are what fascinate and inspire collectors. We all dream of opening an old book or desk drawer and finding a hidden stamp treasure. The Buccleuch Block was found just this way. As the world was still celebrating the defeat of tyranny in Europe in 1945, this incredible part sheet of the 'Tuppence Blue' was found inside a desk set in a Scottish nobleman's palace, lying there since the Duke of Buccleuch purchased it for use in 1840. In May, the block will be offered at auction for the first time ever. I agree with those who describe it as the world's most important philatelic item, and I think it is worth at least \$10 million. I'm excited to see just how far the bidders take it."

ABOUT SIEGEL AUCTION GALLERIES

Since its founding in 1930, Siegel Auction Galleries has become one of the highest-grossing stamp auction companies in the world and is the leading auctioneer in the U.S.. Under Scott Trepel's leadership as president, Siegel has generated nearly \$900 million in sales. Siegel has broken multiple auction records with sales including the 1c Z Grill at \$4.366 million, the Inverted Jenny plate block at \$2.97 million, the Hawaiian 2c Missionary cover at \$2.090 million, and the Inverted Jenny single at \$2.006 million. Siegel is committed to ensuring the future of stamp collecting by providing free educational resources, developing innovative technology, and sharing the stories of collections with the public. Trepel is an authority in philately, producing thoroughly researched catalogues for auctions of some of the most prestigious stamp collections in the world. The firm's website is also a valuable research platform for experienced and novice collectors alike, offering census data for rarities, scholarly research articles, pricing data, and additional information. For more information on the firm and upcoming sales, please visit www.siegelauctions.com.

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