



Sept. 16, 2005

## **“John Lennon: The Lost Album” Opens Oct. 6 at National Postal Museum**

John Lennon’s childhood stamp album will be on display in “John Lennon: The Lost Album,” an exhibit opening Oct. 6 at the Smithsonian’s National Postal Museum. October is National Stamp Collecting Month and Oct. 9 marks the 65th anniversary of the late Beatle’s birth.

To commemorate the anniversary, the National Postal Museum will hold an open house from 1 – 3 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 9 in the museum’s atrium. Beatlemania Now, a Beatles tribute band, will perform throughout the event. In addition, the museum will give away stamp collecting starter kits containing a paperback stamp album for beginners, stamps from around the world and an informational booklet about stamps. The event is free and open to the public.

Years before his rise to fame as a musician and member of the Beatles, Lennon was a schoolboy in Liverpool, England, when his older cousin Stanley Parkes gave him a hardcover Mercury stamp album. The album originally belonged to Parkes, who encouraged Lennon’s interest in stamp collecting.

Lennon rubbed out Parkes’s name and address on the album’s flyleaf, replacing it with his own signature and the address at Mendips, the home he shared with his aunt Mary (“Mimi”) Smith and her husband George. On the album’s title page, Lennon drew beards and mustaches in blue ink on the likenesses of British monarchs, including Queen Victoria and King George VI.

According to Parkes, Lennon began collecting at about age 9 and actively collected stamps for several years. There is evidence throughout the album that Lennon added and removed stamps. Lennon’s handwritten notes on the flyleaf indicate the album may have contained as many as 800 stamps at some point. Currently, the album contains 565 stamps.

“I see exhibiting John Lennon’s stamp album as a fun, novel way to introduce stamp collecting to a whole new audience,” curator of philately Wilson Hulme said. “Stamp collecting is a fantastic way to discover the history, geography and cultures of the world around us. It can take you anywhere you want to go—the possibilities are limitless.”

Hulme acknowledged that there are stereotypes around stamp collecting and said the museum's acquisition of the Lennon album is part of a broader strategy to enhance the appeal of stamp collecting.

"Somewhere along the line, people started thinking of stamp collecting as somewhat stodgy. That's what has made John Lennon's stamp album so much fun," Hulme said. "John Lennon could never be described as stodgy."

Materials included in the stamp collecting starter kits to be handed out at the Postal Museum's open house on Oct. 9 were donated by the American Stamp Dealers Association, Mystic Stamp Company and Inter-Governmental Philatelic Corporation.

Philately is the collection and study of postage stamps, postmarks and stamped envelopes and the study of postal history.

The National Postal Museum is devoted to presenting the colorful and engaging history of the nation's mail service and showcasing the largest and most comprehensive collection of stamps and philatelic material in the world. It is located at 2 Massachusetts Ave. N.E., in the Old City Post Office Building across from Union Station. The museum is open daily, except Dec. 25, from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. For more information, visit the museum's Website at [www.postalmuseum.si.edu](http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu)

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