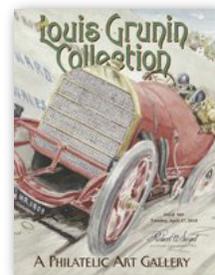
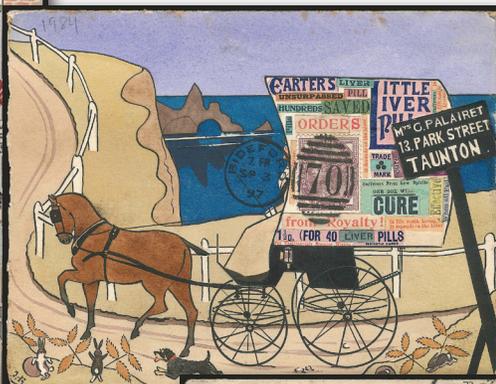
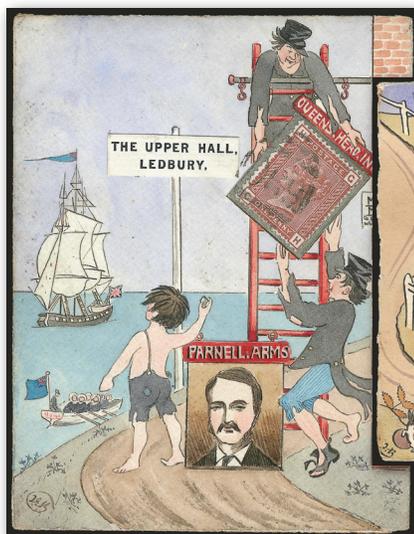


Finding Treasures

Louis Grunin's fabulous collection.

Fred Schmitt



Each of these five British illustrated covers was selected for illustration here because the postage stamp in each of them is an integral part of the depiction in the artistic drawing. We are indebted to the Robert A. Siegel firm for these fine images from their website: www.siegelauctions.com.

Louis Grunin, former president of the Collectors Club of New York and chairman of the board of trustees of the Philatelic Foundation, was very much assured of his immortality in philately in 1987-88 when his international grand prix award-winning collection of the U.S. 1851-57 Issues was sold at auction. But as many know, Mr. Grunin has never given up his love of stamps and covers—for all during his life, he has continually built world-class collections.

The Grunin collection that most interests me today is his huge holding of British Illustrated Covers that is being sold at auction by Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries at the time this issue of *ASD&C* is being put into the mails to readers. Some of the lots are shown above—examples of covers that were hand-painted by the senders back in the

latter half of the 19th century. To me, these covers are captivating for a number of reasons—not the least of which is the obvious care Mr. Grunin has taken in selecting such covers for his collection

First of all, they're quite valuable. Covers like the ones shown here will likely be sold for well over \$1,000 each—after all, they are unique. Each one is an original!

Secondly, as you can see, the artistry is the work of people who had some talents in that regard—note the meticulous nature of these tiny paintings, each one occupying no more than the space of a small envelope.

Third, the condition is supreme. This has always been a watchword for a Grunin collection. They are in pristine condition.

Fourth, one must note that the British, even before postage stamps were invented, had a penchant for creating tiny drawings on and within their mails. These illustrated covers from the second half of the 19th

century carry forward a great national tradition that, I understand, continues even today.

Fifth—and perhaps the most important aspect at least to me, and to you, our reader, is the fact that such covers from not only Great Britain, but other countries, too, are continuing to be discovered today. They turn up in family correspondences, old shoeboxes full of non-philatelic keepsakes, and tucked into the pages of an old stamp collection.

That's not to say, of course, that Mr. Grunin discovered his material in old shoeboxes, but we'd be willing to bet that some of his covers got discovered in the oddest of ways. That's the essence of philately—that great discoveries continue to be made. And what's more delightful than to find something as beautiful as these? ☒