

"Timeless Treasures: A Philatelic Exhibit on the Theme of Wristwatches"

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01 Wristwatches have a long and fascinating history. The earliest known wristwatch, a "wristlet" watch, was created for Queen Elizabeth I in the late 16th century. However, wristwatches did not become popular until the late 19th century, when they were first worn by military men for convenience during combat.

This exhibit explores the history and evolution of wristwatches through a collection of postage stamps from around the world. The stamps featured in this exhibit showcase the intricate designs and precision engineering that have made wristwatches a beloved accessory for centuries.



Here an 18th century gold plated watch inlaid with precious stones made in England and kept at the Palace Museum, Forbidden City, Beijing is showcased in a numbered postcard issued in 1999 on the UNESCO Museum Day.

At first, wristwatches were considered a feminine accessory, and were often worn by women as a piece of jewelry. However, this changed during World War I, when soldiers on both sides of the conflict began wearing wristwatches as a practical way to keep track of time while on the battlefield. This sparked a trend among men, and by the end of the war, the wristwatch had become a standard accessory for men.



02 This set of six stamps issued by Isle of Man in 2020 (IM2113-8) commemorates few early horologists of 18th-19th centuries: John Harrison (1693-1776), Thomas Mudge (1715-1794), John Arnold (1736-1799), Thomas Earnshaw (1749-1829) and Dr. George Daniels (b. 1926). These and many other early inventors took the art of horology to great heights.

In the 1920s and 1930s, wristwatches began to be produced on a larger scale and became more affordable for the general public. This led to a surge in popularity, and wristwatches soon became a staple accessory for both men and women. This is often regarded as the Golden Era.

03 An East German (DDR) stamp of 1970 (DD 1229) showcases wristwatches as one of attractions of the Leipzig Trade Fair. The Tonga issue (TO CO61) of 1972 shows a beautiful intricately carved watch in the series 'Where Time Begins' to highlight the unique location of that country on the International Date Line.



During World War II, the demand for wristwatches increased as they were needed by soldiers and military personnel. After the war, the popularity of wristwatches continued to grow, and by the 1960s, they had become a status symbol and a fashion statement.

05 In the 1970s and 1980s, the quartz watch revolutionized the wristwatch industry by making watches more accurate and reliable. In the 21st century, the advent of smartwatches and wearables has further changed the industry, with wristwatches now having a range of functions and capabilities, including fitness tracking, message notifications, and even contactless payments. Here a Swiss issue of 2005 (CH 1216) showcases famous Swiss watches on a maxicard.



Swiss watches became very popular due to their precision and workmanship. Here a card from Pakistan to M/s Elag Watches in Switzerland highlights how these watches were regularly being imported in various countries. Date Line.

07 A 2020 French stamp from a booklet of 12 (FR 5909a) captioned "Combat Corona Campaign - All Engaged" shows a factory worker wearing a watch with a cellular phone in vicinity—indicating probably importance of smart watches in the modern age. Today, wristwatches continue to be a popular accessory, with a wide range of styles and designs available to suit every taste and occasion.