

THEMESCENE

December 2019

In this issue we:

Tickle the taste buds

Oranges are not the only fruit

With Neil Pearce



Enjoy literary sightseeing

Inspired by . . .

With Jeff Dugdale



Get in the Christmas spirit

Silent Night

With Wendy Buckle



And hope for peace

Philatelic Crusade for Peace

With Grace Davies

*As well as competition reports from the UK and Italy;
plus all the usual features*

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Inspired by ..., page 116



Wordsworth: Grasmere and the Staubach Falls



Conan Doyle: Sherlock Holmes and the Reichenbach Falls



Lord Byron, Lake Geneva and Château de Chillon



Mary Shelley, Frankenstein and the Mönch mountain

THEMESCENE

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EDITORIAL

Wendy Buckle

If *Themescene* arrives on your doorsteps a little later in the month than usual you can blame me. With a trip to Verona in late November for the European Championship for Thematic Philately, I wanted to get a report published in this issue rather than wait until March. See page 136 to find out how we got on.

Plans are progressing well for Autumn Stampex 2020, when the BTA will be the lead society. We are hopeful of having around 100 competitive / non-competitive frames on display, so thank you to those members who have already volunteered a contribution. It's not too late to be involved. See page 137 for details and please contact Andrew Millington if you would like to know more. Please note that the dates given for this event in September *Themescene* are incorrect; a change of dates was announced after it had gone to press. It has now been confirmed as 30 September to 03 October (later in the year than usual). Stampex is developing a programme of talks during the event, keep an eye on the website to see what may be of interest to you.

Because of this change of date the BTA Committee has decided not to hold our competitions in 2020. This year's were very successful (see page 123) but with the our venue holding its Fair and Convention just one week later it is unreasonable to ask our members to consider two lots of competition in one year. Instead we will have a table at the South of England Stamp Fair as usual, and have a few exhibits on display to show off pictorial collecting.

Finally, we are pleased to welcome a new member: Mr David Taylor of London. And its time to deal with your subscriptions. Prompt payment would really help our administration. Thank you.

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS

Unless you have prepaid for 2020 you will find a renewal slip with this issue of *Themescene*. You have the option of paying the full renewal fee, which entitles you to a print copy of *Themescene*, or paying a reduced fee of £15.00 if you wish to receive the electronic-only version of *Themescene*. The choice of course is entirely yours, but this is a cheaper option, and for overseas members a much cheaper option. Just indicate your choice on the renewal form.

Whichever option you choose, all members have access to the e-version of *Themescene* via the 'Resources' tab on the BTA website. You will need to set up a username and password. Go to the [Users](#) tab of the BTA website and click "Request a Password".

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

AUTUMN STAMPEX 30 SEPTEMBER to 03 OCTOBER

NEXT BTA WEEKEND 26 to 28 MARCH 2021
(full details in next issue)

CHAIRMAN

Barry Stagg

I always find this time of the year rather interesting. On the one hand I get a lot of satisfaction from tidying up the garden and putting it to bed for the winter. On the other hand it is time to spend those winter months adding this season's philatelic purchases to the collection. I tend to go to three or four stamp fairs a year and I tend to come away from most of them financially poorer but philatelically richer!

The recent Ardingly stamp fair was worth the journey. Not only was there a good range of dealers but twelve entries into the BTA competitions to see. And there were some super exhibits amongst them.



So thank you to those who put a frame together for the BTA competitions, thank you to Andrew for organising the BTA competition and thanks to Jim for ensuring the tables and frames were in place on the day. I did leave the Fair with a few new items, none of which made any dealer much richer! I added my latest purchases to the 'new purchases' box for sorting later on. But there is the problem. Looking through the box I came across items I bought earlier in the year, and in a few cases I have no idea why I bought them! Am I alone in having this problem? Is it a sign that my memory is going – I hope not. Is it an indication that I had an idea to expand a theme but I've forgotten what that expansion is? Or perhaps I

Barry and BTA Cup winner Mark Humfrey

was seduced by a dealer to purchase an item that I don't really want – unlikely but possible. So what is going on?

One of the joys of thematic collecting is that most collections can keep on expanding. With new issues and new sub-strands within the theme you could, theoretically, expand it for ever. Take my own theme of parachuting: yes, I have a sub-section on silk as many early parachutes were made from it. But can I delve into parachute clothing? Are military boots for instance a valid sub-strand? Perhaps not. Perhaps a step too far (pun intended!). But what is accepted? The answer is clearly whatever you want to collect. If you believe a sub-strand is valid in your thematic collection – then collect it. So, going back to my early problem, why did I buy a set of stamps showing pigs? I don't recall any pigs making parachute jumps! Dogs yes, pigs no. Then it dawned on me – these stamps were bought for another collection of mine, a collection on the life and legacy of a South Sea missionary called John Williams – and he had a gift of pigs (and goats) from a grateful Sydney Governor in the 19th Century. So I'm not going mad (others may disagree) but I have learnt a useful lesson – if you collect more than one topic then separate your new purchases into (in my case) separate shoe boxes until you can mount them. It may just save you from hours of thinking!

And may I take this opportunity to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a good New Year. 📖

ORANGES ARE NOT THE ONLY FRUIT

Neil Pearce

Fruits are the fleshy, seed-associated features of flowering plants. Many are edible in the raw state e. g. apples, bananas, grapes, oranges and raspberries. Over the years mankind has become dependent on fruits as a source of food. In fact, fruits account for a sizeable fraction of the world's agricultural output. Some - such as apples and pomegranates - have acquired cultural and symbolic meanings.

Fruits of many kinds have been featured on the stamps of most countries from around the world. A small selection has been made in support of this essay, with examples shown alphabetically, followed by brief descriptions of their special characteristics.



Thousands of different kinds of apples are grown around the world. Best noted in the U.K. are Golden Delicious, Granny Smith, Pink Lady and Royal Gala. Apples are eaten either with the skin or after peeling.



Avocados, or Avocado Pears, are often eaten as salad vegetables but, in fact, they are genuine fruits. Best eaten when ripe, and after having been cut in half with the removal of their stones, avocados offer a plentiful source of essential fats: the good ones.

Bananas are plants of the tropics and popular imported fruits for mid-latitude countries. However, production is currently threatened by a harmful virus infection. Bananas grow in hanging clusters and are shipped while green before ripening and turning yellow on arrival at European markets. The outer protective skin is peeled away to expose the softer fleshy part beneath.



Cherries are stone fruits., growing from stalks in pairs. When sweet they may be eaten raw but sour cherries are tastier when cooked.

Orange Granadillas belong to the family of passion fruits. They have sweet and sour flavours and underneath the rind is a pale pulp encasing many small black flat seeds.



Grapes grow on branches on vines. The fruit is usually sweet, juicy and jelly-like. Black grapes are dried to make raisins, green grapes are dried to become sultanas.



Lychees are small rounded fruits with sweet white scented flesh, a large central stone, and thick multi-coloured rough skins.



Mangoes come in many shapes and sizes: there are over 2,500 different varieties around the world. The flesh is soft and juicy after peeling off the skin.



There are many types of melon: cantaloupe, honeydew and galia to name a few. The cantaloupe is usually orange, being high in beta-carotene. They grow off a vine, with a strong outer skin. The inner flesh is good chopped up in a fruit salad.



Oranges are among the most popular of fruits, belonging to the Citrus species. Associated with the Mediterranean region: hot and sunny by day, cooler at night, their juice counts as one of the recommended five-a-day intake of nutrients



Peaches are soft, juicy and fleshy stone fruits produced by peach trees. Deciduous trees native to regions in Northwest China, they have been cultivated there for over 8,000 years.

Pears always travel in groups of two. They are of the same family as apples but are softer. They are yellow, green, reddish brown on the outside but they all have white, juicy flesh inside.



Plums appear in all sorts of colours, from light red to dark purple such as the Victoria, commonly seen in the U.K. They have large stones and, when sweet, may be consumed raw or otherwise cooked into tarts or crumbles.

Pomegranates are round, tropical fruits with a tough orange skin and flesh containing numerous red seeds. which are packed with vitamins, minerals and fibre.





Quinces come from the same family as pears but are not eaten raw. When cooked they smell of perfume. Slices of quince taste nice when blended with an apple crumble.



Raspberries are edible fruits from many plant species of the rose family. They are perennials with woody stems. They are low in calories but high in fibres, minerals and anti-oxidants.



Many cultivars of Sapodilla exist. They are the fruit of long-lived trees native to Mexico and the Caribbean. Fully ripened Sapodillas are a good source of minerals and vitamins, with soft and easily-digested pulps.



Watermelons are a delicious low-calorie treat with numerous benefits. Whilst they are 92% water they do contain many nutrients - essential vitamins and minerals - with special benefits for heart health.

Thematic collectors of this popular topic may well have the fruits already featured in this essay, but there are others awaiting recognition and tasting in the flesh, providing further delights to the palate and worthy additions to a stamp collection. 📖

INSPIRED BY ...

Jeff Dugdale

As experienced collectors of literature will know, there are three default designs for stamps celebrating a writer: using a portrait, using a scene or character(s) from a well known text and a combination of the first two types. These approaches are so common they need not be exemplified here. However, sometimes a fourth approach is taken - showing a place, building or object which had a specific or generic influence upon that writer, whose portrait may accompany the image.

A classic example of this is Great Britain's 1970 celebration of the early Romantic poet William Wordsworth (see inside front cover). This stamp uses an engraving of Grasmere (which lies in the heart of the Lake District in the North West of England) by Joseph Farrington from *The Lakes of Lancashire, Westmoreland and Cumberland*, published in 1846. Wordsworth was born in Cockermouth, Cumberland and spent his early childhood exploring the woods, fields and streams of the Lake District which attracts tourists today as "Wordsworth Country".

Much of Wordsworth's finest work is permeated with a sense of man's deeply felt connection to nature, in which Wordsworth saw God everywhere. He described Grasmere in particular as "the loveliest spot that man hath ever found" and his body lies in the village churchyard. As a young man of twenty Wordsworth undertook a walking tour of France and Switzerland, continuing his accustomed practice in his homeland of looking for places of scenic beauty. In 1798 along with his sister Dorothy and fellow poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge he visited Germany, after which he began his magnum opus *The Prelude* (a poem longer than many novels) in which he describes in considerable detail his own psychological development and his relationship with God and nature. At the turn of the century Wordsworth and Dorothy set up home in Grasmere where they lived for fourteen years and, along with neighbours Coleridge and Robert Southey, became known as The Lake Poets.

However the poet continued to travel within continental Europe from time to time, and in 1822 published *Memorials of a Tour of the Continent*. His visit in the company of Robert Southey to the Staubbach Falls at Lauterbrunnen, in the Bernese Oberland of Switzerland inspired *In Approaching the Staubbach*, Canto XII of *Memorials* referenced in a 2007 set from Switzerland dedicated to "Landscapes and English Literature". The falls from which water tumbles almost a thousand feet are also celebrated in an uncaptioned Swiss stamp of 1934 within a set of landscapes. Wordsworth wrote a note explaining his reaction to the waterfall, "this wild and savage air was utterly unlike any sounds I had ever heard....they reminded me of religious services chanted to Streams and Fountains in Pagan times".

An equally dramatic and possibly more famous waterfall in Switzerland of course relates to a very famous short story by Scots writer Arthur Conan Doyle involving Sherlock Holmes. In "The Final Problem" first published in the *Strand Magazine* in December 1893 Holmes is locked in mortal combat with the wicked Professor James Moriarty and plunges with him seemingly to his death, at the Reichenbach Falls, also in the Bernese Oberland. The impression of the Falls in various stamps showing Holmes fighting with Moriarty is much more dramatic than the image given in the 2007 Swiss Landscapes stamp. However

the falls consist of a series of plummets and this stamp shows the bottom one. Whilst on a holiday in Europe Doyle had visited many striking waterfalls in the company of Sir Henry Lunn, who founded a major travel agency in the late 1890s. Doyle had been discussing how to “kill off” Holmes as he wanted to get involved in other writing projects, and the baronet suggested the Reichenbach Falls as a good site for the great detective's demise. Once Doyle was taken to the Falls he thought it the very place for a dramatic finale, but of course because the public was very unhappy indeed at the prospect of no more Sherlock Holmes stories he had to make a comeback.

The 10c stamp in the 2007 Swiss Landscapes set shows Lac Léman which features in Lord Byron's narrative poem *The Prisoner of Chillon* composed whilst Byron was staying in Geneva in 1816. (“Lac Léman” is the French name for Lake Geneva, one of the largest lakes in Europe with a surface area of over 230 square miles). Having left England under a considerable shadow on account of his outrageous behaviour, Byron settled in Villa Diodati close to Lake Geneva with a group of close friends including the poet Percy Shelley and Mary Godwin who would become Shelley's wife. The weather was so unpleasant for long periods that, unable to enjoy travelling to see various sights, the whole group began to compose fantastic stories in order to amuse the company, some of which would make it into print, notably Mary (Godwin) Shelley's *Frankenstein*.

Byron's *The Prisoner of Chillon*, a long narrative poem, gives a version of the story of the five years the monk Francois Bonivard spent cooped up in Château de Chillon, an island castle on the shore of Lake Geneva in the mid 1530's, shown on Switzerland 1934 and 2007. The narrative, which tells of the monk who watches his brothers die one by one around him but is saved from madness by the song of a bird, appears to have been inspired by an impromptu visit Byron and Shelley made to the Château and its dungeons in late June 1816. Having quickly written a fourteen-line poem in sonnet form about the incarcerated monk, Byron went on within a fortnight to write the monk's monologue in some 390 lines. A stamp from Malta in 1990 celebrates a visit Byron made to the island during an earlier European tour, in May 1811, which inspired a sprightly and rather disrespectful poem entitled *Farewell to Malta* which begins;

“Adieu, ye joys of La Valette!
 Adieu, sirocco, sun, and sweat!
 Adieu, thou palace rarely enter'd!”

and ends:

“And now, O Malta! since thou'st got us, Thou little military hothouse! I'll not offend with words uncivil, And wish thee rudely at the Devil, But only stare from out my casement, And ask, for what is such a place meant?”	Then, in my solitary nook, Return to scribbling, or a book, Or take my physic while I'm able (Two spoonfuls hourly by the label), Prefer my nightcap to my beaver, And bless the gods I've got a fever.”
--	---

One of Byron's house guests in Villa Diodati on Lake Geneva in 1816 was nineteen year old Mary Godwin, who later that year married Percy Shelley (who had rented a neighbouring villa), and she was also inspired by her time there to write one of the most famous of all Gothic horror novels: *Frankenstein*, celebrated by GB stamps in 1997 and 2008. The final Swiss stamp in the 2007 set shows Mönch, the German for “monk” and a mountain in the Bernese Alps, one of a group containing the more famous Eiger and Jungfrau climbing challenges. Shelley chose the lower reaches of this mountain to stage the “reconciliation” of the Monster who had escaped from Dr Victor Frankenstein's



*Thomas Hardy and
Clyffe Clump*



Joseph Conrad



James Michener



Anne Frank



O. Henry



James Baldwin



Katherine Anne Porter



Robert Burns

laboratory, lived wild and had begun to associate with a family living in a country cottage, which he had later burned down in rage when they displayed fear and disgust with him on account of his appearance. However, Shelley may also have been inspired by the mountain's dramatic ice fields to place the opening of the novel in which the dying Dr. Frankenstein and the Monster are discovered near the North Pole by Arctic explorer Captain Walton, to whom Frankenstein tells the story of the creation of his Monster, which constitutes the bulk of the story most films use.

The juxtaposition of a row of trees from Clyffe Clump, Dorset (Hardy writes of this place in his poem *Yell'Ham-Wood's Story*) beside a portrait of English novelist Thomas Hardy in the 1990 GB issue is a clear reference to his Wessex novels which include *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874), *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891), and *Jude the Obscure* (1895), in which the often sombre and dark geographical setting - the environment in all its senses - is as important as any character. The county of Wessex does not exist in reality but is understood to represent generically the rural parts of such southern English counties as Dorset, Wiltshire, Somerset, Hampshire etc. The son of a stonemason, Hardy was born in Dorset and spent his adolescence as a country lad, and of course such influences permeate his writing in prose and poetry.

If the countryside was vital to Hardy's writing, the sea played that role in novels by his contemporary Polish-British author Joseph Conrad, aka Józef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski, as recognised on stamps from the land of his birth in 1957 and 2007. The earlier stamp shows Conrad and the clipper *Torrens*, full-rigged, on which Conrad served as Chief Officer from 1891-93 as it journeyed from London to Australia, whilst the more recent stamp shows part of a Conrad manuscript and the barque *Otago* on which he served as Captain in 1888 sailing in the Far East. Aged 21 Conrad joined the British merchant marine and by 1886 had gained his Master Mariner's certificate before doing sixteen years in the marine. Thereafter he lived a life of adventure, being involved in many underhand dealings in foreign lands which he used in his novel *The Arrow of Gold* (1919). A later journey along the coast of Venezuela inspired many aspects of one of his famous novels published in 1904 *Nostramo* (Our Man), with major characters being fictionalised versions of men he sailed with. The plots of his novels *An Outcast of the Islands* (1896), *The Nigger of the Narcissus* (1897) and *Lord Jim* (1900) and *Youth* (1902 short story) all draw upon his seafaring experiences.

Another novelist whose experiences far from home inspired his writing was Pulitzer Prize winning novelist James A. Michener (1907-97). In 2007, Vanuatu (which lies over 1000 miles north east of Australia), a territory formerly known as the New Hebrides, issued four stamps marking his achievements relating to this idyllic volcanic archipelago. This all began during World War II, when as a U.S. Navy Reservist with the rank of Lieutenant Commander he was sent as a naval historian to the South Pacific. He kept personal notes and diaries of his time there which he later turned into *Tales of the South Pacific* (1947) which won him the Pulitzer for Fiction the following year. Some of the story lines within *Tales* were adapted for Rogers and Hammerstein's musical *South Pacific*. *Tales* comprises a series of short stories linked by character and theme about contemporary life on and around the island of Espiritu Santo, the largest in the group. The stories tell how the occupying American forces integrate (or not) with the local people.

Most of the writers referenced so far travelled hundreds if not thousands of miles for their inspirational experiences, but one teenager who wrote a very famous book travelled no distance at all. In this issue from Israel in 1988, Anne Frank is shown beside the Amsterdam tenement in which she and her Jewish family and friends hid from Nazi soldiers


for over two years from July 1942, before being betrayed, captured and sent to Bergen-Belsen concentration camp where Anne died of typhus in 1945. In the time Anne spent in cramped quarters, converted from space above her father Otto's office building, none of the family would have walked more than a few yards within their rooms each day and had to make minimal sound throughout the daytime, not laughing or arguing loudly, not flushing the toilet and being careful not to drop anything. All of these unique experiences Anne recorded in her diary given to her on her 13th birthday in 1942. Published posthumously this has become one of the world's most widely read books, frequently taught in schools in its original form and as a stage drama.

The approach to stamp design of using an author's portrait beside an influential place in his/her life has been an occasional one within the long running Literary Arts series from U.S. Post. For example both the 2012 Literary Arts issue for O. Henry (pseudonym of William Sydney Porter (1862-1910) and the commemorative from the Soviet Union issued in 1962 use the skyline of New York behind a portrait; apposite because though Porter was born in Greensboro, North Carolina he moved to The Big Apple after a spell in prison for embezzlement, restarted his life and wrote many stories published weekly in the *New York Sunday Magazine* about ordinary and some extraordinary New Yorkers in such anthologies as *The Four Million* (1906) and *Options* (1909). Porter typically writes a story (like the poignantly ironic "The Gift of the Magi") full of cleverly observed detail regarding human behaviour, and sardonic comment with a "twist in the tail", and his stories are still much read today.

The 2004 Literary Arts issue celebrates the black and openly gay poet James Baldwin (1924-87) with a Harlem street scene in the background, intended to evoke the atmosphere of Baldwin's first novel: the semi- autobiographical *Go Tell it on the Mountain*, published in 1953. Baldwin moved to Harlem as a child, had a harsh upbringing and suffered beatings by his stepfather and local police officers, the latter racially motivated.

Katherine Anne Porter was the 2006 Literary Arts subject and her portrait appears on the stamp with an oceangoing liner in the background, this being a direct reference to her only full-length novel *Ship of Fools* the best selling novel of all published in the USA in 1962. This novel, which gives an account of the interplay between a group of characters on board, all of whom are running away from disappointing situations and seeking brilliant new lives but all heading for new personal disasters, was developed out of a diary Porter kept on the sea journey from Veracruz in Mexico to Bremerhaven in Germany in 1931 and draws upon people she encountered on that voyage.

This article has shown a variety of stimuli and influences upon writers, ranging from geographical features like waterfalls and mountains, ships and buildings, and wide swathes of country and cityscapes, all of which have been easy to spot in stamp design and then research, but occasionally a glass is required to spot the stimulus as is the case with a stamp for our final writer, Robert Burns, Scotland's national bard.

Careful study of the higher value issue of the two GB commemoratives in 1966 shows not just a writing quill, and a rose and a thistle extreme left and right of the band behind Burns' head, but also a sheaf of corn and ploughshare (in Scots a "coulter"), the ends of which I have arrowed, which is a general reference to the poet's background as an active farmer and to his soubriquet as "The Ploughman Poet". But it is also a specific reference to one of his most famous poems stimulated by an actual event on his farm in 1785: *To a Mouse*, the full title of which continues *On Turning Up Her Nest with a Plough*, in which the plough can be seen as a metaphor for "Black Swan" events which overturn our lives despite our best plans . . . 

SILENT NIGHT

Wendy Buckle

S*ilent Night*, with its gentle haunting tune, must be one of our favourite Christmas carols. But the story of its composition has a very modern resonance: flooding. Maybe not due to climate change at the time, but of course still with major consequences.

The lyrics were written by a young priest, Father Joseph Mohr, in 1816 while living in Mariapfarr near Salzburg. He moved to the village of Oberndorf, situated on the Salzach river, the following year. In 1818 the organ of the village church of St. Nicholas was damaged by floodwater and Mohr took his composition to Franz Xaver Gruber, schoolmaster and organist in the nearby village of Arnsdorf, requesting him to compose a melody and guitar accompaniment for the Christmas Eve mass. The resulting song was first performed on Christmas Eve 1818 at St Nicholas parish church.

According to Gruber, Karl Mauracher, an organ builder who serviced the instrument at the Obendorf church, was enamoured with the song, and took the composition home with him to the Zillertal. From there, two travelling families of folk singers, the Strassers and the Rainers, included the tune in their shows. The Rainers performed to European royalty including Franz I of Austria and Alexander I of Russia, and took it to New York in 1839. John Freeman Young, who later became Bishop of Florida, translated it and published it in his *Carols for Christmastide* in 1859.

Over the years, because the original manuscript had been lost, Mohr's name was forgotten, and although Gruber was known to be the composer many people assumed he wrote the words, and that the melody was composed by a famous composer, variously attributed to Haydn, Mozart, or Beethoven. However, a manuscript was discovered in 1995 in Mohr's handwriting and dated by researchers as c. 1820. It states that Mohr wrote the words in 1816 when he was assigned to a pilgrim church in Mariapfarr, Austria, and shows that the music was composed by Gruber in 1818. This is the earliest manuscript that exists and the only one in Mohr's handwriting.

The carol became famous and today has been translated into more than 200 languages. The church of St. Nicholas where the hymn was originally sung was badly damaged by repeated flooding and eventually demolished. In its place stands the Stille Nacht Kapelle or Silent Night Chapel, built between 1924 and 1936.

Many countries have commemorated this famous carol and its chapel philatelically, primarily - of course - Austria. 📖





Gruber and Mohr



Franz Gruber's tomb

BTA ANNUAL COMPETITIONS

Our competitions were again held as part of the South of England Stamp Fair and Convention, hosted by the Association of Sussex Philatelic Societies and held at the Ardingly Showground. As always we were made most welcome by the friendly and efficient organisers. It was pleasing to see a doubling in the number of competition entries over last year. They were all attractive to look at and interesting to read, and attracted many viewers during the day, providing the chance to promote the BTA and pictorial collecting in particular. The competition was judged by Barry Stagg.

CHAMPIONSHIP CLASS: PREVIOUS WINNERS OF BTA COMPETITIONS

Malcolm Gascoyne Lin Poh Chiang and Longhouse Photo Supply, Sibü 82 points

Lin Poh Chiang was born in 1924 in Lembangan, Sibü, Sarawak. He was educated in Singapore and began a career in banking but left this to set up the company Longhouse Arts and Crafts, trading in antiques and handicrafts at 19 High Street, Sibü. He had a deep interest in photography and spent much time exploring the Rejang River looking for photographic inspiration. Some rare early post-war black and white photos exist. The Longhouse Photo Supply company of Sarawak later produced proper postcards with a divided back. Colour photos were produced in the USA from the early 1960's using four-tone half-colour printing.

Grace Davies Towards United Nations 75 points

That history repeats itself is illustrated by three attempts to prevent war by international collaboration. The display covers the creation of the International Peace Bureau, the League of Nations and the United Nations. This is a story of optimism - but of course ultimately of failure.

Mark Humfrey Globalisation of vanilla 72 points

Vanilla is a member of the orchid family and its cultivation dates back as far as the Totonac people of Mexico. Later on it was grown by the Aztecs and used to flavour the drink we now call chocolate. The Conquistadors introduced chocolate - and vanilla - to Europe and we can them for the chocolate food and drink we enjoy today.

BTA CUP: THEMATIC PHILATELY

Mark Humfrey Orchidelerium 74 points

Orchidelerium is the name given to the obsession with all aspects of orchids. The concept was coined in Victorian times but this obsession seems to date back as far as the Romans. There is so much to study and admire: the varied and intricate shapes, the intense colours, and the mystery of pollination and flower production. Orchids even have a sexual connotation with 'orchis' derived from the Latin word for testicle (use your imagination). The mania for this plant has led to many species being threatened with extinction.

Heather Lawn The origins and evolution of parrots 70 points

A scientific study of the evolution of parrots, from superfamilies, families and subfamilies, to tribes and finally an overview of other genera and species.



Vanda Miss Joaquim orchid



The first people to cultivate vanilla were the Totonac people of what is now Mexico



Glaucus and Lear's Macaws



Church of San Pablo, Valladolid, Columbus' original burial place



The Golden Hind, a successor voyage following Columbus

David Wiskin Christopher Columbus: the end of a journey 69 points

A different look at Columbus, starting the story after the return from his fourth voyage to the Americas in 1504. Compared with his treatment after his first voyage when he was lauded and feted by royalty, his final return went almost unnoticed. Queen Isabella died two months later and King Ferdinand made him wait a year before summoning him to court. Columbus continued to follow the court but his health was failing and he died in May 1506. But of course the legacy he left was enormous, and has ensured his enduring fame.

JOHN FOSBERY TROPHY: OPEN PHILATELY

Wayne Cox Pillars to post 87 points

When pillar boxes were first introduced to the British mainland in 1853 Post Office District Surveyors were given considerable freedom when choosing designs for their particular areas. All manner of shapes and sizes appeared, made by different iron foundries. Designs began to be standardised from 1857 and the first pillar boxes of uniform design were introduced nationally in 1859.

Andrew Millington *Falu Gruva*: the mine that changed a country 83 points

Operating for over a millennia the Swedish Falun Mine was for centuries Europe's largest copper mine. But it was more than a mine: it bankrolled the Kingdom of Sweden from its 16th century war of independence, through its period as a Baltic superpower in the 17th century, right up to the 20th century. The exhibit brought together key aspects of the geology, mining and metallurgy with the important political, economic and social developments.

Anne Stammers Copper: the first metal 73 points

The metal copper is a native element, which is to say it can occur on its own and not combined with another. It was the first metal used by man, being used by Neolithic people around 8000 BC. Four thousand years later the Egyptians were casting it in moulds and 500 years after that it was being mixed with tin to form bronze. It is mined throughout the world and today is used extensively in the space industry, electrical engineering, electronic goods and medicine.

Mark Humfrey Vanillin: the perfect substitute 70 points

Vanillin is a synthetic vanilla. Rising prices and the insecurity of supply of the natural product since the early 1800's made the synthesis of vanilla a priority in Europe and the USA. The chemistry, structure and production of Vanillin were shown, plus examples of food products.



Copper pyrites mine



Vanillin

BRIAN SOLE TROPHY: POSTCARD CLASS

Malcolm Gascoyne K. F. Wong and The Anna Photo Supply 79 points

Ken Foo Wong was born in Sarawak in 1916. He developed a passion for photography as a youth, focused on genre work. He established the Anna Photo Studios in Kuching in 1937, but as an ethnic Chinese his work was curtailed during the Japanese occupation of Singapore in World War II. After the war he returned to photography, producing postcards, photo-card sets and portraits covering a wide range of subjects. He has left a wonderful record of Borneo and Singapore during the colonial and early independence period.

Mark Humfrey Say it with an orchid 66 points

A selection of orchids shown on pre-paid postcards. The images were backed up with a slogan, the body of the text or an icon. The exhibit was arranged by the subject of the message, including Easter, Mother's Day, propaganda and advertising.



K F Wong postcard



*Wayne and Barry
with Fosbery trophy*



Andrew



Heather

DO YOU (STILL) LIKE KIPLING?

Brian Asquith

Following the article on Donald McGill and his postcards in June *Themescene* the Editor received this email from Brian Asquith:

“Attached are scans of postcards, two by McGill, which were looked at by the Blackpool Post Card Censorship Board and their verdicts are also shown.

I ran the Postcard and Cigarette Card Department of Phillips for many years but saw very few cards with evidence of censorship. If you look at the Internet there is quite a lot about it, indeed the Manx National Heritage Library & Archives apparently has 76 boxes of material”.



PHILATELIC CRUSADE FOR PEACE

Grace Davies

Some years ago, I arrived at a stamp fair to be greeted and called over by a dealer whom I knew well. “I am glad you are here” he said “I have something that might interest you and if you don’t want it, no-one else will!” So I made us both happy by paying 50 pence each for five items, a grand total of £2.50. They were strange, these cards, liberally covered with stamps and labels, with various slogans to do with peace and religion. The one thing that was clear was that these cards were produced and posted by the Philatelic Crusade for Peace.

Well, who knows what that is? I didn’t, and was not the only one according to one of the cards showing a printed message from the New York Times Information Service on 27 July 1956 which referred the enquirer to the American Philatelic Society – without result. I thought I’d try my own research and wrote to the Crusade’s address in Alexandria (no reply) and to the Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt which regretfully had no information and suggested I write to a stamp dealer in Cairo – F. Cifariello & Co (no reply). I see that an enquiry was made to the Egyptian Study Circle by a non-member in 2008 but no indication of a response. I decided just collecting might be more fruitful. Thanks to eBay it was and I now have a selection of letters and covers which are informative in themselves and are rather fun to display.

According to a column ‘Philatelic News’ by Gustav Detjen Jr in the Harlem Valley Times in February 1965 it seems that the Philatelic Crusade for Peace was the brainchild of Mt. Constantin St. Tsirimonis of the Bank of Arts in Alexandria. His vision was not explicit but his interest in promoting international peace was clear from the nature of the stamps, labels and phrases literally covering the many envelopes – Rainbow Covers for Peace - and on the PAX cards which were sent all over the world.


Who did they go to and what if anything was inside? Suddenly ebay had the answer for me, letters from the Crusade to what I can only call ‘The Great and the Good’ and everybody else! Some of the pages are trying to sell a stamp collection to raise funds, one half for UNESCO to save the Nubian monuments under threat of flooding during the construction of a dam and in memory of Dag Hammarskjöld; the other half to USO (United Service Organizations) ‘for keeping the Peace around ONE world and on behalf of the Crusaders for Peace’. Other items have just the main aim of publicity for the cause. All the letters are full of quotations from recipients who write appreciatively but without commitment as far as I can see.

I was pleased that one of the envelopes I acquired still had its own contents, addressed to Mr S. Adkins in Palmers Green, London. I don’t know who he was (a brief Google search revealed nothing) but that doesn’t matter. I have enough material to show the essence of the Crusade and what a curious – and yet strangely inspiring – project it was.

At this point of writing I have to make a decision: do I stop or do I go into much more detail? I think the former is best; whatever I say will not give you the reader a true picture unless you have seen these items. There is usually something on ebay to look at. Some of you will have seen my small collection at the BTA weekend in Oxford last year and I am happy to add them to any display on request.

A few quotes to finish:

- “For Better Understanding, Goodwill and Friendship leading to Peace and Prosperity of the Entire World”.
- “1963 - Test Ban Treaty – Abu Simbel Pax Deal, Immortality of J*F*K The PAX Leader”.
- “Mankind is between God + this Picture. Help to Preserve + Promote World Peace.”
- “Archeology (sic), Art, Philately for Peace.” “Preserve St Peter in Nubia.”

Make of it what you will! 



Appeal to save the Nubian monuments



Cover to Harold Wilson, front and back



EXHIBITING PAGE: TIPS FOR FIRST-TIME EXHIBITORS


Wendy Buckle

Autumn Stampex this year introduced a new feature: daily talks on a variety of subjects, and a tour of the exhibits on the Thursday and Friday. The Friday tour was conducted by Graham Winters, who could not have been more helpful. After introducing himself he went round the group of attendees and asked each of us what we wanted to get out of the tour, and if there were specific exhibits we wanted to look at. It turned out everyone wanted tips and ideas on how to improve competitive exhibiting, so what follows will, I hope, give those who plan to enter competition at Autumn Stampex 2020, particularly new entrants, some helpful pointers when preparing their exhibit. The points he made are relevant to all classes, and will certainly be helpful to Thematic, Open and Postcard exhibitors.

- Title page. This is always submitted with the application. It is the only page of your entry which judges guarantee to read in full; time constraints make it impossible to read every line of every sheet of the full entry. So it is vital you get this right. A title page should contain:
 - Title, which must reflect the content accurately.
 - Introduction.
 - Plan. This has to be accurate; judges will look at the plan and follow it up by looking at specific pages as indicated.
 - Main references. Your primary sources of information. If you have written anything yourself make sure you include it, even if it only an article for your local club.
 - One nice philatelic item if possible (very difficult to find space on A4 or album page).
- Given that you have to send your application in well before the exhibition it may well change before the entry is mounted. The judges expect this, it's not a problem, and they will look at it again when the exhibit is in the frame. Graham always marks his title page entry "Draft" with a note that a few things may be changed on the actual exhibit page.
- The title page will be mostly, if not entirely, made up of text. It's the only page where you can do this. As a rule of thumb there should be no more than four lines of text on any other page except the first page of a section. (This also depends a bit on your page size - four lines across A3 is a lot more text than four lines across A4; but the message is: let the material tell the story).
- You have plenty of flexibility over the size of pages. The rules state maximum height 30cm, but gives no maximum individual width. So the choice is yours: you can use album pages, A4, A3 or something in between that totals four pages of A4 widthways, e.g. three pages of one and a third width. What's more, these can vary frame by frame, so for instance if you want to use A4 but have the occasional large size piece, then use a larger sheet just for that. Make use of this flexibility to mount your material the correct way up, do not point covers etc sideways or at a slant.

- Paper colour. There are no hard and fast rules, but avoid bright colours which will lose you marks for presentation. Dark cream and pale green/grey are not well-liked. The ideal is off-white.
- Number of frames. Stampex will accept anything between one and five frames from all competitors (and eight frames if you have qualified for this). Choose your number of frames carefully. Judges assessing a one-frame entry will expect to see a subject that fits comfortably in one frame, not a cut-down version of a larger subject. The same goes for two frames. Getting this wrong is a quick, and common, way to lose marks.

This whole talk was illustrated by looking at examples of most of the classes on show. Graham remarked that Revenues are an area of growing interest, and he recommended Postcards as a fascinating class to collect without a huge financial outlay. His final piece of advice was “Read the rules”. I have heard this stressed by many speakers. Look at the breakdown of the marking schedule and see where you can pick up marks. You can’t do much about Rarity, but it is in your hands to earn marks under Knowledge, Study and Research.

The delivery throughout was friendly, helpful and supportive and I would like to think it will encourage entries for the next Stampex - where we will be the lead society! 

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HERE AND THERE



OFFICIAL HISTORY OF THE 'ROYAL'

BTA Membership Secretary Charles Oppenheim is the Editor of a new publication *A History of the Royal Philatelic Society London 1869-2019*. It was launched at Autumn Stampex and at the first meeting of the RPSL in its new premises.

Charles with President Richard Stock

CRIME AND THE POST

The current exhibition at the Postal Museum is *The Great Train Robbery: Crime & The Post* unearthing the role of the Post Office's own investigation department in piecing together this and other crimes, and shedding light on the human stories of the victims through never before seen artefacts, objects and personal accounts. It is on until April 2020.

STEPHANIE CONNELL BECOMES A PATRON FOR STAMP ACTIVE

Stephanie Connell, one of the UK's leading consultants in Art and Antiques, has become a Patron for Stamp Active.

She is well known as one of the antique and collectables specialists on the popular BBC series, *The Antiques Roadshow*, *Bargain Hunt* and in Series 18 and 19 of the *Antiques Road Trip*. Stephanie has over twelve years' experience within the fine art industry and now has her own retail business. She has a Masters Degree in Fine Art Valuation and a Bachelors Degree in the History of Art and Design (including Film History) and a Postgraduate Diploma in Interior Design.

She has explained that her interest in collectables began with stamps:

"Antiques and history have been a passion of mine since childhood. I started collecting stamps aged 9 or 10 and dragged my parents to antique shops to help me find more. Once I saw all the other things you could buy that were interesting, that was it!"

Stephanie added "Stamps create a window into the world of people, places and history and much more. They have inspired me to look at lots of different things and led me into a career that has brought nothing but pleasure into my life and lots of fun."

NEW AUCTION MANAGER FOR STAMP ACTIVE

The Stamp Active Committee are pleased to advise that Peter Barham has accepted the position of Donations and Auction Manager, taking over the role previously handled by John Davies, of accepting donations of philatelic material, stamps, covers, etc on behalf of the Stamp Active Network. Please note therefore that all such donations should now be directed to him at 2E Broomwood Road, Orpington, Kent, BR5 2JH.

Peter has also taken on the organisation of the children's auctions at Stampex which prove very popular with our young attendees.

HOW I STARTED

Estelle Shale

The title of this piece should really be ‘How and why I am starting to build a thematic collection’ to properly reflect my status as a beginner. I have never, until very recently, been in any sense of the word a philatelist. As a child I had a stamp album.



I recall it was whole world, hardbound in royal blue cloth, and I have a clear memory of its creamy quadrille pages with sample illustrations of (two?) stamps in black and white for each country. I do not remember its arrival, I presume it was a Christmas gift when I was around seven or eight years old. I am equally in the dark about the source of the stamp hinges and Victorian stamps that I received to put in the album but I can now identify my favourites as coming from the 1887 Jubilee issue.

I had limited pocket money as a child but did ask to buy some packets of stamps from a small stand on the corner of the central service desk in Midland Educational Supplies (the Coventry branch), favourite haunt of my mother and myself in the 1960s. I dutifully placed these in the album but found them less interesting than the stamps I already had. I was aware that the quality of these purchased stamps was inferior to those I had been given previously and after a couple of packets I stopped asking to have any more. Hindsight tells me these were cancelled to order from countries using them as a revenue source as opposed to issuing for postal need. I am intrigued that my younger self preferred the Victorian material to the ‘pretty pictures’ with neat cancellations.

It may have been this interest that resulted in my father occasionally bringing home stamps from the correspondence from his work as a sales



engineer in a large telecommunications firm’s export department. I suspect there were some stamp collectors among the staff so I got the remainders, so to speak. Nonetheless these were more interesting than the little glassine packets of CTO labels from the shop. I remember being grieved over the damage done in the post to a 5/- Kenyan 1966 Vervet Monkey, this being the only individual

stamp my father supplied that sticks in my mind.

And that was that for a long time!

Sometime in my late 20s/early 30s, for no particular reason I can remember I bought some philatelic magazines, then a small stockbook from W. H. Smith and subscribed to some circulating packets as I was at home with small children and no car. I had no interest in collecting geographically and in my mind, I believe, was to collect stamps of a religious nature. I had just read the autobiography of Therese of Lisieux and eagerly snapped up issues from the 1973 centenary of her birth. Unaware of thematic collecting as a field, I eventually cancelled the packets as there was little material that fitted my nascent interest, and the whole thing died a death again.



A couple of years ago, with the advent of the Internet, professionally honed research skills and a little more leisure I embarked once again on collecting. It did not take me too long to find the ATA and books by van den Bold and Vegter. The wonderful world of thematic collecting, exhibiting and FIP regulations burst

into my personal space and ‘scratched the itch’ of my then under-used research skills. I decided to collect on a biblical theme (with absolutely no intention of exhibiting but intrigued by how collectors defined quality) and thought Genesis as good a place to start as any! I found some material on Ebay and then bethought me to go to Stampex in the Spring of 2018. I gave myself a budget of £250 for a little spree and had a truly great day. I met with so much friendliness (being rebuffed by only one dealer despite my newbie ignorance) and it was that above everything else that cemented my engagement with philately. At the end of the day, in a thoroughly ebullient, indeed somewhat puckish, mood I approached the RPSL stand with the question ‘Is there any place for beginners in your society?’ I fully expected the answer to be ‘No’ but I was interested to hear what the qualifying status for the society was, again the idea being to understand the notion of ‘quality’. To my surprise, after a lively and interesting conversation, I duly completed an application form and was subsequently accepted for membership. At my first meeting in London I was made so welcome it was a little overwhelming. Indeed I now realise that collectors with outstanding international reputations had spent time gently and enthusiastically pushing back the boundaries of my ignorance. It was at that first meeting I met Lesley Marley and thus became aware of the BTA and again met with much assistance; indeed I now have a valued and incredibly patient mentor amongst the BTA membership (not named to spare her blushes). A subsequent, slightly cynical, suggestion that the RPSL just wanted my money cannot erase the memory of the generosity of the membership!

So am I still working my way through the Bible? No, because I found this:



Not the sort of thing the FIP regulations encourage at all but I was intrigued by its combining references to the beginnings of Genesis and the Gospel of John. The significance and beauty of these texts have attracted the attention of many post offices and philatelic designers, and subsequent research showed there was a rich seam of theological reflection on the links between the first creation account and the Johannine prologue to plunder. Lo my theme was begun! I am still grappling with finding material to represent abstract theological constructs and trying to build my philatelic knowledge, as many of you know who have received questions from me. The mysterious alchemy involved in producing attractive pages for display still eludes me but I am delighted to be able to study the exhibits shared on the BTA website and so learn from them. So thank you all for your generosity to a new member of the community! 📖

AUTUMN STAMPEX

The Court of Honour featured *Faster Than a Bullet: the Concorde Story* by BTA member Brian Asquith, marking the fiftieth anniversary of the maiden flight of Concorde. The collection featured much rare philatelic material, augmented by memorabilia including flight certificates, menus and postcards. Highlights of the display included a letter from Prince Philip to Sir Harold Hartley in which the Prince talks about his first flight on Concorde, a card signed by Tony Benn then Minister of Technology, and many signed covers including some by the Concorde test pilot Brian Trubshaw. Our affiliated society the Concorde Study Circle held a meeting during Stampex, who were pleased to welcome twelve members, including one from the Netherlands and one from the USA. 📖



Advertising poster for the GB Concorde stamps of 1969

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EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP FOR THEMATIC PHILATELY, VERONA; OR, TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA (PLUS THE REST OF US)


Wendy Buckle

Normally held at Essen in Germany, in 2019 the ECTP was held in Verona to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of the Federation of Italian Philatelic Societies, with the involvement of the Italian Center for Thematic Philately and the Italian Olympic and Sports Collectors Union. Clearly a chance to visit one of Italy's great historic cities was too good an opportunity to miss, and eight BTA members attended, giving us the chance to sightsee the medieval city before attending the event hosted by the collectors' fair "Veronafil". The Fair was very big, offering postcard, coin and ephemera dealers as well as stamp dealers (ideal for the Open collector). And it was popular, with hundreds queuing to get in by the time it opened.

ECTP itself was also a great success. There were 54 entries from fifteen countries, ten of which were awarded Gold and two Large Gold. I am delighted to report that two of the gold medals were awarded to BTA members: Lawrence Fisher won the Championship Class with *The Jewish Homeland: our struggle for survival*, and Peter Weir won the Medicine and Science category with *Liquid of Life: blood from an ancient myth to a modern medicine*. The organisers are to be congratulated on the way they managed the whole event, with several innovations:

- All registration, acceptance and pre-evaluation of the entries was done online.
- Full scans of each entry had to be submitted six weeks before the event. With this, the judges had the chance to examine entries in great detail before seeing the real thing. And within hours of the palmarès the full results plus every scan was on the ECTP website - click on the 'Exhibits' tab of the [ECTP website](#). And as a nice touch, all competitors were given a USB stick with all the scans.
- For the first time at ECTP a philatelic expert worked alongside the jury to assess any doubtful and counterfeit pieces.

The competitors were well looked after, being given much help and support mounting and dismounting their entries, being invited guests at the palmarès, and having the opportunity to attend a very useful seminar held during the event on the new Guidelines for Judging Thematic Exhibits. There will be a full report on this in the next issue. 80% of the exhibitors were present in person to receive juror feedback, which I found to be helpful and encouraging.

So what next? The ECTP is normally held every two years, so expect the event in 2021. If you want to learn about thematic exhibiting (and I accept that most don't, you do what you enjoy), this is the place to go. But whatever your approach to collecting do have a look at the website, there are some absolutely fascinating displays there, from rugby football to wine making, from Christopher Columbus to the Internet, and all manner of unexpected topics in between. 

Some photographs will be found on the inside back page.

BTA AT AUTUMN STAMPEX 2020

As previously announced, the BTA will be the lead organisation for displays at Autumn Stampex 2020. This will be a rare chance for visitors to see a very wide range of pictorial displays, so please save 30 September - 03 October 2020 in your diaries!

But to make this a resounding success we need the help of members. The Association would like to encourage as many of you as possible to exhibit at Autumn Stampex 2020. Exhibits can be either competitive or for display (the latter will not be judged): both are equally welcome. Exhibits can be anything between one and five frames (sixteen sheets per frame), or eight frames for those who have qualified for this.

If you would like to compete:


- There are no qualification requirements.
- If you are new to competitions (at least at this level) you may find it helpful to read the guidance and tips on exhibiting the [BTA's website](#).
- Unlike international competitions it does not have to be five frames: you choose how many frames you want to submit.

If you would like to display only (non-competitive):

- Don't feel obliged to rewrite your pages.
- You will not be required to submit original material unless you want to. Good quality scans are perfectly acceptable. Send them to BTA Chairman [Barry Stagg](#) either as printed pages (1 Naunton Way, Cheltenham, Glos., GL53 7BQ) or email him the file and he will print the pages out, mount them at the exhibition and take them down afterwards. Please email him if you have any queries about this.

Competitive or non-competitive:

- If you plan to exhibit, or are thinking about it as a possibility, please email the BTA Competitions Organiser, [Andrew Millington](#), and let him know how many frames you plan to exhibit.
- Let Andrew know if you will be a first time exhibitor at Stampex, as this will help BTA's planning.
- You can produce more than one exhibit.
- Applications will have to be submitted through the normal process for Stampex, i.e. through the [ABPS portal](#) which involves an on-line registration and entry process. You will need to create an online account with the ABPS and then register your entry.
- The title and a brief description of each exhibit will be published in the Stampex programme. This will be taken from your entry form.
- The normal arrangements for Stampex are that you need to mount and dismount your own exhibit(s), so you will either need to be in London on 29th September, and 4th October OR pass your entry to a nominated member of the BTA Committee who will be happy to manage this for you.
- Fees are £25 per frame. The BTA is committed to producing a very wide range of material that will showcase pictorial collecting, not to mention advertise the Association, and **to encourage those new to exhibiting (whether to compete or to display only) the BTA will contribute £10 towards the fee of the first (or only) frame of your exhibit.**

The event is a year away, but it's never too soon to start planning. If you have any questions at all please contact Andrew Millington. 

BOOK AND YOUTUBE REVIEWS

FOUNDATIONS OF THEMATIC PHILATELY

Lucinio Pérez Heres

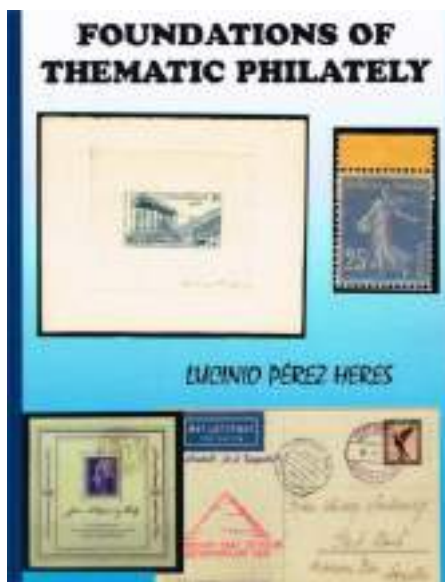
isbn 9781074096212. 198 pages. col, b&w illus throughout.

Originally published in Spanish 2003; author's translation into English 2019.

Available from Amazon, print version £22.95; Kindle or Kindle app £2.37

Reviewed by Wendy Buckle

The author's credentials are laid out in this book. He has wide philatelic interests including traditional and postal stationery, and has been collecting thematically since 1991 with collections *The World of Mining*, *The Odyssey of the Minerals* and *Gods, Kings and Tombs*. His knowledge is validated in the Preface by José Ramón Moreno, President of FEPA, the Federation of European Philatelic Associations, describing him as one of Spain's leading thematic experts, and this knowledge is shared in detail in this book.



The early chapters give general advice on collecting: a brief history of thematic philately, choosing a theme, how to arrange a collection and searching for material. However, from there on, while the book claims to be aimed at both collectors and exhibitors, the nature of the topics covered suggest that it is more likely to be consulted by those who compete. People collect what they choose to, in whatever way they choose, there is no right or wrong way of doing things, and telling people how they "should" do things gives thematics a bad name. But if you are an exhibitor read on! For you this book is a goldmine of information. A detailed section looks in depth at stamps - personalised, charity, proofs, essays, specimens and much more, including a very helpful list of prohibited and dubious countries. Then follows descriptions of various types of stationery from Mulreadies to aerogrammes. This is followed by a very

detailed look at all types of postal markings, particularly useful for those less common areas of philately. It then moves on to good practice in writing up your pages, and finally an in-depth look at exhibiting - rules, referees and juries. The approach of the whole book is to guide the reader towards compiling a collection that will meet the requirements of a national or international competition.

One shortcoming of this work, particularly the print version, is that it has no contents page or index. This is less important with an e-version, where you can use the search facility, but is frustrating when trying to check something in the print version. This is the first English translation of the work first published in Spanish; the English does not flow comfortably but the meaning is easily understood.

However these are small points, and if you are just starting out on exhibiting at national or international level this book will be enormously helpful in guiding you through the minefield of what is expected when competing, while widening your knowledge of the enormous range of material encompassed by philately. 📖

STAMP COLLECTOR DOCUMENTARY

produced by Mikael Seidler, 2015

Reviewed by Estelle Shale

Ordinary stamp collectors (of any ilk, thematic or otherwise) are not particularly visible in the conventional mainstream media. However, the proliferation of Internet-enabled channels of communication has redefined the idea of what constitutes 'media' and 'social network'. Those who claim philately is dying must surely engage with the Internet very little; the marketplace Delcampe and the Colnect catalogue/wiki being just two examples of international and lively areas where many thousands of ordinary collectors enjoy their hobby (there are almost 42,000 stamp collectors registered on Colnect for example). Put 'philately' into the Google search bar and you get more than 12 million pages, one of which is this [Stamp Collector Documentary](#), a short (~20 mins) documentary from Seidler Design available via YouTube. The subject is an elderly Finn who now makes up packets of used stamps to sell to raise money for mission work. It is not profound but it is gentle and thoughtful and shows an ordinary collector who loves Thai stamps because they are 'beautiful'. As it is a short meditative piece I shall say no more about it so that you can enjoy its modest but cinematic qualities for yourself. You will need to switch on the subtitles unless your Finnish is fluent!

Note for those unfamiliar with the YouTube interface the subtitles can be obtained by clicking the CC button shown on the snip below.




YOUTUBE SUGGESTIONS

Reviewed by Wendy Buckle

Just searching YouTube for 'thematic stamps' brings up some interesting results, including [All About Stamps](#) from BTA member Paula Cant offering sound advice to anyone just starting a thematic collection.



If you want some background to your subject try [Exploring Stamps](#), a series of short films focusing on one aspect of collecting, or one subject. This is a particularly professional and informative series which has been going for just over a year.

One example is *Iceland Volcano Stamps* which will tell you about the stamps and the volcanology, plus some stunning film of Iceland and the northern lights. My personal favourite is *The Simpsons Television Series Stamps*. Stamp collectors do not get well treated in the television series, but who can't love Homer, Marge and the rest? The video also makes a serious point about USPS stamp issuing policy. 

Just4Kids by Lise Whittle

(Adult readers, please photocopy these pages and pass them on to a youngster you know, and perhaps include a few nice stamps to encourage them. When you photocopy, please enlarge each page to A4 size - enlarge to 141% - Thank you.)

IT'S COMPETITION TIME AGAIN!

'MY FAVOURITE THINGS' COMPETITION

There weren't as many competition entries as usual in the 2019 Stamp Active one-page stamp competition about your **Favourite Things**. Perhaps you didn't get around to finishing your entry, but with the dark Winter nights approaching, there will be plenty of time to think about entering a stamp competition. Although the deadline isn't until next September, why not begin preparing your entry now? Here's a reminder of what to do:



You can choose anything you like as your one-page theme, so you can start thinking about something now. Perhaps you could choose your favourite hobby or sport, your favourite famous person, or your favourite holiday

place or building, or your favourite Royal Wedding. Or maybe you could choose stamps to illustrate your favourite author, story, poem or song; or maybe your favourite wild animal or pets, flowers, trees, sports or transport; your favourite season of the year, Disney characters, a musical or film, or even your favourite colour in fact it could be *anything* that you like to do or see or places you like to go to. The possibilities are endless! You could choose to focus on one area - like tennis or trains or Beatrix Potter - or you may wish to cover a range such as Sports or Transport or Children's Books!





What you need to do is choose your 'Favourite Things' theme, and collect about 6 - 12 stamps or other philatelic items that go together or that tell the story.

Then arrange your stamps on a page, and mount them neatly, writing something beneath the stamp to tell the story or give more information.



Ask your parent/carer's permission to enter. Anyone up to the age of 13 (on 1st September 2020) can enter. Entries should be on good quality paper (A4) or a similar size album page, and placed in a clear protector. The entries can be either hand-written or prepared using a computer.

The page must have a title, and either captions or a short write up that tells the story or gives information. Your full name and address (home or school) should be on the back of the page, also your age on 1st September 2020. *Entries will only be returned if a stamped-addressed envelope is enclosed with the entry.*

There will be three age groups - Up to 7; 8-9; 10-12 - with stamp prizes being awarded for *First, Second, and Third* in each age group, sponsored by Isle of Man Stamps & Coins to the value of £25 (1st), £20 (2nd) and £15 (3rd). **The best overall entry will receive a prize valued at £40.**

THE DEADLINE FOR RECEIVING ENTRIES IS 1st SEPTEMBER 2020. Only one entry per person is allowed. UK entrants only. Winners will be announced in the philatelic press and on the Stamp Active Website. The best entries will be on display at Stampex at the Business and Design Centre in London. Send entries to: Stamp Active Network, 3 Longfellow Road, Banbury, OX16 9LB.

Full details of this competition and other stamp competitions are on the Stamp Active website at www.stampactive.co.uk/competitions



BTA PROGRAMME 2020

- May 2nd - 9th **London 2020 International Stamp Exhibition**
At Business Design Centre, Islington.
Open and Postcard classes on show Saturday to Tuesday, 2nd to 5th
Thematic class on show Wednesday to Saturday 6th - 9th.
One-frame exhibits will be shown alongside their parent class.
No BTA meeting at this event but various talks are planned by the organisers, check the London 2020 website
- June 13th **Annual General Meeting and guest speaker 14.30**
Guest speaker: Malcolm Gascoyne
Life in Borneo in postcards
At [Swinpex](#), St. Joseph's Roman Catholic College
Ocotal Way, Swindon, SN3 3LR
- Sept 30th - Oct 3rd **Autumn Stampex 2020**
At Business Design Centre, Islington
Lead society BTA
- October 3rd *As part of Autumn Stampex. Talk arranged by Stampex, not a BTA event*
José Ramón Moreno
“How could I improve the evaluation of my thematic exhibit?”
- October 10th **BTA table and display [no competitions this year]**
At [South of England Stamp Fair](#)
Ardingly Showground, RH17 6TL

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Peter receiving his award from Damian Läge



Lawrence and Peter



BTA members discovering that Verona is full of good restaurants



WE WISH ALL OUR READERS A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS

