

# THEMESCENE

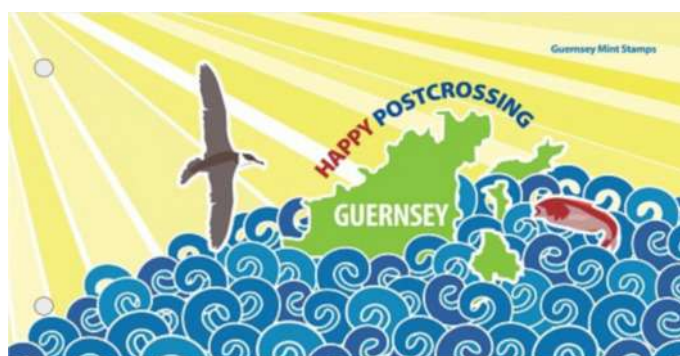
September 2023

*In this issue we:*

*Celebrate postcards*

**Evolution of the postcard**  
*With Malcolm Gascoyne*

**Postcrossing**  
*With Chris Wheeler*



*Complete our search for Tolkien characters*

**Collecting hobbits, part 2**  
*With William Silvester*

*Explore weird and wonderful stamps*

**Philatelic firsts**

*Display by Les Ashton-Smith*



**BRITISH THEMATIC ASSOCIATION**

**Volume 40, No.3. Whole Number 152**

**[www.britishthematic.org.uk](http://www.britishthematic.org.uk)**

PHILATELIC FIRSTS



*The aluminium stamp that started it all*



*Get your record deck out! Bhutan 1973*



*Beadwork from Singapore*



*Swarovski crystal*



*Facemask,  
fish and  
speaker*



# THEMESCENE

Vol. 40, No. 3 Whole Number 152

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## THEMESCENE

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# CHAIRMAN

**Barry Stagg**

I hope you all had a chance to go to the stamp fairs at either Midpex in early July or York a few weeks later. It was pleasing to see so many dealers and collectors at both events and it is perhaps proof that normality (whatever that is) has returned after Covid. Although both events had a few empty spaces (and where was the ice cream van!!) and could have benefited from a few more collectors there, I think both were a success. I hope the same will be said about Ardingly in Sussex at the end of October. Perhaps a little too far for those of you who live north of the border, it always is a pleasure to go there. I am a little biased as this is the location of the BTA annual competitions, and I do enjoy seeing pictorial collections in the frames. Always something to learn and enjoy. I am constantly surprised by some of the themes of your collections and amazed at the variety of material you collect. And Ardingly always has a good selection of dealers, many of which I rarely see as they tend not to go far from south east England.

For those of you who can get to London I'm also looking forward to the BTA event at the Royal Philatelic Society London on 21 March 2024 (see page 97). This event will show what you collect and I'm really looking forward to it. There is still time for you to register an interest in showing your collection. Just contact me for details: [chairman@britishthematic.org.uk](mailto:chairman@britishthematic.org.uk).

I have written before about looking in unlikely places for items for your collection and at York I did just that. Having an hour or two to fill I had a look through a postcard dealer's rather large box of 50p postcards, something I normally would not do. Amazingly I found a lovely early 20th century card of daffodil pickers on the Isles of Scilly. Nicely cancelled and in good condition it will be a great edition to the daffodil collection. 📖



*"From Lunnun Farm to London Town"*


# EDITORIAL

## Wendy Buckle

October 1st is World Postcard Day, so what better topic to feature in this issue than postcards: their early history (page 80) and a modern phenomenon (page 84). As ever, I am very grateful to our members for supplying me with these articles; just one of the ways in which the membership delivers the solid substance of our remit. Your support is vital - and very much appreciated - in all areas:

- Our monthly Zoom talks continue to engage and educate (page 98). Our next talk will be on Tuesday 5th September and feature short members displays. If you would like to give a presentation please contact our webmaster Jon Matthias: [website@britishthematic.org.uk](mailto:website@britishthematic.org.uk).
- Members step up to provide in-person displays (page 96). Our next meeting will be at Stampex, when George Henshilwood will travel down from Glasgow specifically to deliver *Having fun with numbers* on the Saturday of Stampex, 30th September. Do please try and come to this meeting if you can - see below.
- Previous competitions have been well supported. This year's one-frame competitions will be on 28th October, see page 103.
- The BTA supports the wider philatelic community. 2024 will be our 40th anniversary, and we have been invited to display 42 frames of pictorial material at the Royal Philatelic Society London on 21st March (page 97). If you would like to participate in this please let Barry know.
- And our hugely successful residential weekends always attract a good number of attendees, with their displays. It's now only seven months to the next one (page 107) so do think about getting your booking form sent in.

We all like to represent and advertise the BTA as widely as possible, and so wearing that hat I was flattered and delighted to be invited by the Royal Philatelic Society London to take part in its second Crawford Festival, this time on *Philatelic journals: past, present and future*. As part of a five-person 'Editors panel discussion' we each talked briefly about our own publication and then took questions from the audience, thankfully not too challenging! It was a fascinating two days and I learnt a lot from the papers delivered by the other speakers.

The BTA is still attracting new members and we extend a warm welcome to members Mike Robinson of Kent and Jajesh Pamnani of Hyderabad, India. 

**MEMBERS' MEETING AT AUTUMN STAMPEX**

**SATURDAY 30TH SEPTEMBER 12.00 - 14.00**

**SOCIETY MEETING SPACE**

**Guest speaker: George Henshilwood**

***Having fun with numbers***

# EVOLUTION OF THE POSTCARD

*Malcolm Gascoyne*

In this age of instant communication the humble postcard, whilst still remaining a familiar feature of many people's holidays, is but a shadow of its former self. And the image we have of the postcard in its heyday, as a means of mass communication, is a far cry from its inauspicious beginnings over 150 years ago.

In 1865 a Prussian postal official, Heinrich von Stephan (Fig 1), first put forward the idea of an "open post-sheet" made of stiff paper, with one side reserved for the recipient's address, and the other for a brief message. The idea was to simplify postal handling, with the cost being at the standard postal rate. This was rejected by the Prussian Post Office on grounds of being far too radical. Senior officials did not believe that anyone would willingly give up the privacy of their communications.

In January 1869 an article appeared in Austria's leading paper *Neue Freie Presse* entitled "Über eine neue Art des Korrespondenzmittels der Post" [About a novel means of postal correspondence]. In this the author, Dr Emanuel Hermann (Fig 2), proposed that all envelope-size cards, whether written, produced by copying machine or printed, ought to be admitted as mail if they contained not more than twenty words including the address and sender's signature and carried a two Kreuzer postage stamp, a reduction on the regular letter rate of 5 Kreuzers. The idea was to stimulate business.

Austria-Hungary's Postmaster General Vincenz Baron Maly von Vevanovič considered the concept valuable and in September 1869 the "Correspondence Card" was officially introduced in Austria-Hungary by ministerial order. Two forms of card, titled in Hungarian and German, were issued on 1 October 1869. They carried an imprint of a two kreuzer stamp in yellow, and were valid for delivery to any place within the dual monarchy, irrespective of the distance involved. Three million cards were mailed within the first three months (Fig 3).

The success of the card, both for businesses and for the public, raised considerable interest in a number of countries. Articles appeared in British magazines extolling the virtues of the cards: "*A halfpenny post of this kind would certainly be very convenient, especially in large towns, and a man of business carrying a few such cards in his pocket-book would find them very useful. There is an additional advantage attaching to the card, namely, that of having the address and postmark inseparably fixed to the note*" [Manufacturer and Builder vol.1, issue 12, 1869 "A New Thing in Postage"]. Indeed the business community was the main target, such that full sheets of the printed cards were issued to some companies before the official start date so that they could be pre-printed on the backs. October 1st 1870 saw the issue of two sizes of card,  $3\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{3}{4}$  and  $2\frac{7}{8} \times 4\frac{3}{4}$  inches in a similar format to the Austrian cards. These were printed by De La Rue, who, as we shall see later, fought hard to maintain their monopoly on printing cards (Fig 4).

1870 also saw cards introduced by the North German Confederation and Switzerland. In 1871 Luxemburg, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, Finland and Canada followed suit. During 1871-74 Romania, Russia, the Scandinavian countries, Spain, Japan, Italy, Chile and France followed. From these beginnings the Postal Card spread across the world.





Fig 1: Heinrich Von Stephan 1947 Deutsche Post



Fig 2: Emanuel Hermann Austria 1977 Stamp Day



Fig 3: Correspondence cards



Fig 4: GB card, De La Rue 1870



Fig 5: Bavaria Nuremberg Trade Exhibition

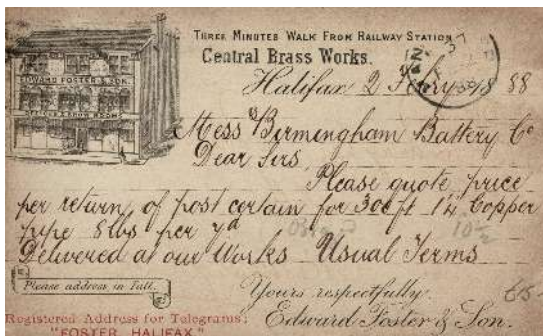


Fig 6: Illustrated trade card back 1883



Fig 7: Vitznau Rigi Bahn, Switzerland


All of these cards had plain backs, designed just for simple communication; but by the 1880's the idea of adding illustrations to the cards began to take hold. Bavaria led the way with a card to celebrate the Nuremberg Exhibition of 1882, with an engraving of the main entrance on the front (Fig 5). In Great Britain some companies began to put small engravings on the backs (Fig 6).

In the Austro-Hungarian Empire the expanding tourist industry, driven by the growth of the railways, was utilising the Correspondence Card as a means of sending messages home, but pressure was beginning to grow to allow landscape views to be put on the cards. It was also realised that congratulatory prints, patriotic sayings, poems or drawings might also have a ready market. The Austrian Post Office did not take long to respond. Under the title "Admissibility of Correspondence Cards produced by Private Industry" the Post Office allowed, from 1st January 1885, all private individuals to produce and send postcards. The only stipulations were that they had to be in the same format and paper thickness as the official cards, with the imprint "Correspondence Card" and have a two kreuzer stamp stuck to them. The Swiss were not slow to follow suit (Fig 7 shows a rare Swiss postcard of 1886 posted to England).

The Exposition Universelle of 1889 was a World's Fair held in Paris, France, from 5th May to 31st October 1889, with the Eiffel Tower having been built as its centrepiece. Demand from visitors to the Tower, wanting a souvenir to send to friends and family, pressured the Tower's administration into producing a suitable card. The Société de la Tour Eiffel commissioned the engraver Léon Charles Libonis to produce five different designs, showing the Tower. These were printed on standard Postal Cards for sale to the visitors. The first known date of usage was 21st August and it is recorded that 57,000 sold in the first 20 days. This became the first French illustrated postcard. (Fig 8).

The 1890's were to witness an explosion in both card production and illustrations on the cards. Up to this point the illustrations had typically been engravings printed in a single colour (usually black). However the development of chromo-lithography, particularly in Germany, resulted in the growing use of colour illustrations. (Fig 9).

Great Britain lagged well behind Europe when it came to illustrations on cards. This was to a large extent due to De La Rue fighting to retain its monopoly on the printing of Postal Cards. Indeed it was not until 1st September 1894 that the Post Office finally allowed privately printed postcards, with a halfpenny stamp affixed, to pass through the post. These were however still restricted to the same sizes (Court size) as the official cards at  $3\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{3}{4}$  and  $2\frac{7}{8} \times 4\frac{3}{4}$  inches, unlike the Continental cards.

The very first publisher of a picture postcard in Great Britain is thought to have been George Stewart & Co, of 92 George Street, Edinburgh, but he was quickly followed by a large number of publishers across the country. Many of the cards do not have a publisher's name, but are usually printed in Germany (Fig 10). Due to the efforts of one Adolph Tuck in negotiating with the Post Office, over a period of four years, the Postmaster General was finally persuaded to introduce a regulation UPU size ( $5\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{1}{2}$  inch) for internal postage. Hence on 1st November 1899 an Internal card was introduced, and private printed postcards of the same size were allowed to be produced. Raphael Tuck & Sons, as prime movers in this shift, were poised to take advantage of the opportunities. They already had 45 sets of cards, covering London and the Thames, printed and ready to distribute (Fig 11). 





# POSTCROSSING

*Chris Wheeler*

## **Introduction**

**P**ostcrossing was started by Paulo Magalhães when he was a student in Portugal. His concept was to connect people across the world through postcards, irrespective of their country, age, gender, race or beliefs. After playing with the idea for a while, Paulo decided to create a website for the project. Friends helped test the first version, Ana Campos designed the first logo (Fig 1), and then on 14 July 2005 the Postcrossing Project was opened to everyone.

## **What is Postcrossing?**

It is a project that allows anyone to post cards to, and receive cards from, random people from anywhere in the world. The system simply gives postcrosser members an address and postcard ID number, and they then write to that person with any informative message they choose. They also of course, choose the postcard to send that person. In due course the postcrosser will receive back a postcard from another postcrosser (one that Paulo's system has chosen) and record its receipt using the ID number on that card.

## **How does Postcrossing work?**

It's quite simple: create an account on the website ([www.postcrossing.com](http://www.postcrossing.com)) which is free: provide your details and interests so that you can receive appropriate postcards and messages back. Request to send a postcard. The Postcrossing system selects a random member to send a postcard to. Their address and interests are provided, together with a postcard ID, which is a unique code (e.g. US-12345) that identifies the postcard that you are about to send. Write a postcard to that postcrosser and make sure to also write the postcard ID on it. That's it, now all you need to do is post it just like any other postcard. The card arrives at its destination. The receiving postcrosser registers it, using the postcard ID written on the card. Once a sent postcard has been received and its ID registered, another random postcrosser will send a card to you (generated by Paulo's computer). Hopefully that postcrosser will read your interests and send you a picture and message that is relevant. Once you receive it, register it on the website, so they will be selected to receive one next. Initially each member can have up to five postcards travelling at a time. Once five cards are in transit they need to wait for a card to be registered as received before they can request another address. This limit increases as users build experience exchanging cards, up to a maximum limit of 100. A small proportion of postcards do not get registered as received because they get lost en-route, have an unreadable address or no ID (Fig 2), or are received by members who are no longer active. The computer system incorporates an algorithm which attempts to adjust for these issues to reduce the difference between the number of sent and received postcards for each member. It is of interest that some postcrossers now use envelopes/letters instead of postcards (Fig 3). Similarly, some people use Postcrossing stamps for normal postage (Fig 4).

## **Milestones**

Like any project or idea, Postcrossing has evolved over the years, continuing to grow steadily and in February 2008 the project received a big facelift which allowed the use of





Fig 1: Postcrossing logo, a registered trademark



Fig 2: no ID



Fig 3: envelope and correct ID



Fig 4: used for normal postage



Fig 6: Austria 2016



Fig 7: Romania 2017



Fig 5: First Postcrossing stamp, Netherlands 2011

Avatars; Google map integration; dormancy for periods such as when on a long holiday; the ability to check for other postcrossers nearby; and a blog to keep postcrossers posted on the latest news and events and to post their ideas.

On 11 April 2008 Postcrossing reached its first million of exchanged postcards, surpassing all imaginable expectations. Below are some of the following milestones:

- o 1 million postcards: 11 Apr, 2008
- o 5 million postcards: 24 Aug, 2010
- o 20 million postcards: 29 Oct, 2013
- o 50 million postcards: 27 Dec, 2018
- o 60 million postcards: 24 Jan, 2021

Today, the Postcrossing Project is directed by Paulo and Ana who work on it every day with the support of a small team who help run the project's website and its forum. For the future, the Postcrossing goals are simply to carry on connecting the world through postcards and to bring smiles to as many different people and countries as possible. As they say: Happy Postcrossing!

### **Postcrossing-themed Stamps**

In 2011, the Dutch Postal Services created the first Postcrossing themed stamp. It was launched at Postex 2011, where the first stamp sheetlet off the press was presented to Paulo (Fig 5).

Since then more than a dozen countries' postal services have issued Postcrossing stamps, recognising the benefits they are receiving from the hobby. Some administrations have released more than one issue. The majority of these stamps have been launched in partnership with the Postcrossing community but some "unofficial" stamps have displayed the Postcrossing trademark without approval of the Postcrossing organization. The issues to 2022 are:

- |                                  |                                    |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| o PostNL (Netherlands), Oct 2011 | o Romfilatelia (Romania), Feb 2017 |
| o Posti (Finland), Dec 2013      | o Indonesia Post, July 2017        |
| o Belpochta (Belarus), Jan 2014  | o Swiss Post, Sept 2017            |
| o Guernsey Post, May 2014        | o An Post (Ireland), Oct 2017      |
| o Russia Post, Jan 2015          | o Magyar Posta (Hungary), Feb 2018 |
| o Slovenia Post, May 2015        | o Moldova Post, June 2018          |
| o Czech Post, Sept 2015          | o Åland Post, 7 June 2019          |
| o Ukrposhta (Ukraine), Oct 2015  | o Brazil Post, July 2020           |
| o PostNL (Netherlands), Mar 2016 | o Guernsey Post, June 2021         |
| o Austria Post, May 2016         | o Belpochta (Belarus), June 2021   |
| o Polish Post, July 2016         | o Austria Post, July 2021          |
| o Guernsey Post, July 2016       | o Post Luxembourg, Sept 2022       |
| o Belpochta (Belarus), Jan 2017  | o Deutsche Post, Oct 2022          |
|                                  | o Estonia 2022                     |

Figs 6 and 7 show examples from this list.



## World Postcard Day (1 October)

In 2019, for the 150th anniversary of the postcard, Postcrossing in conjunction with the UPU, organized a worldwide campaign to celebrate this special occasion. Eleven exhibitions were held, two at international level, one at the UPU headquarters in Berne, where a selection of some of the best postcards from over 150 years was showcased. The other was held in Vienna (Figs 8 - 9). Also, many postal authorities, museums, libraries and even schools joined the celebrations with postcard-related events and initiatives. Brazil marked the event the following year with a stamp commemorating 150 Years of the Postcard depicting a World Map with a possible Postcrossing Route (Fig 10). Åland also issued a stamp and miniature sheet in 2019.

In 2020, after a successful celebration of the 150th anniversary of the postcard, Postcrossing, with the help of Finepaper, a company based in Portugal and known to Paulo, decided to launch World Postcard Day on every 1 October, a day to celebrate the postcard and the connections they bring to the senders and recipients (Fig 11). 📖

### References:

Postcrossing. [www.postcrossing.com](http://www.postcrossing.com);  
 Wikipedia. Postcrossing. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Postcrossing>  
 World Postcard Day <https://worldpostcardday.com/>



Fig 8: 150 Years of Postcards Vienna, 5 October 2019



Fig 10: Brazil 2020



Fig 9: Austria 2019 postal stationery



Fig 11: Greece 2022, World Postcard Day

## COLLECTING HOBBITS. PART 2

*William Silvester*

The third issue from New Zealand Post commemorated the premiere of *The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies* on 17 December 2014. As before the issue consisted of six single stamps, printed in sheets of ten, six souvenir sheets, a strip of six self-adhesive stamps, a booklet of self-adhesive stamps in a pane of ten, and first day covers.

The difference with this set was the ability of stamp purchasers to have their portrait on personalized stamps. The New Zealand website included portraits of the dwarves with blank ovals for their faces. After the purchaser uploads their photograph, they align their face inside one of these ovals. In the publicity image from New Zealand Post a man has been transformed into Dori. The other dwarves who comprise the Company of Thorin Oakenshield are Balin, Bifur, Bofur, Bombur, Dwalin, Fili, Gloin, Kili, Nori, Oin, Ori and Thorin. The resulting image of a dwarf with the purchaser's face is then printed on a label attached to a stamp.

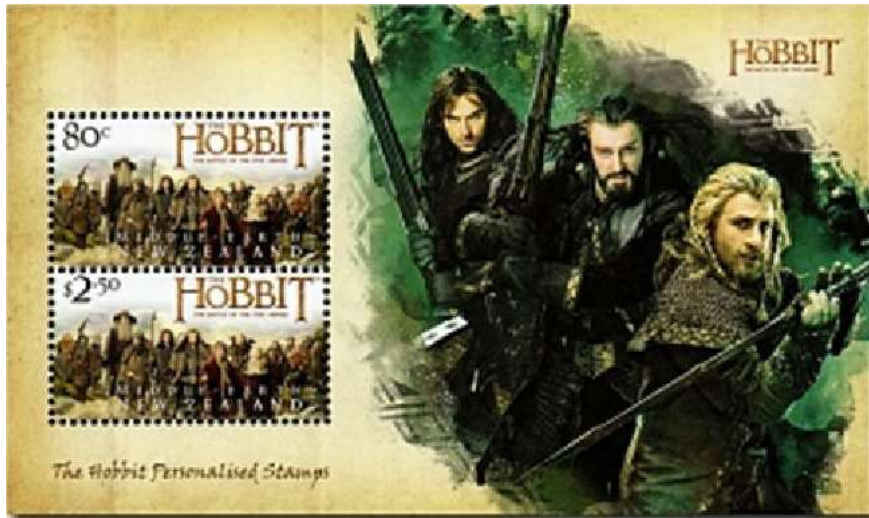
The stamps were available in two denominations, 80¢ for domestic mail and \$2.50 for international mail. Both show the same design of characters, the Company of Thorin Oakenshield, from the film, assembled together. The two stamps were also produced without labels in a small souvenir sheet (Fig. 8). The personalized stamps were issued on 15 October, printed in panes of twenty stamps and labels with a large image of the purchaser as a dwarf in the selvage area on the right side of the pane. The cost was \$25.90 (NZ) for the pane of 80¢ stamps, and \$59.90 (NZ) for the \$2.80 stamps, both \$9.90 over face value.

The set also contained two stamps featuring hobbits. The \$1.40 value shows Bilbo Baggins about to use the One Ring to warn Thorin of approaching orcs (Fig. 9) and the \$2.20 features Bag End (Fig. 10). The door on the Bag End stamp was printed using actual wood from the Hobbiton party tree, mixed into the printing ink, as seen in *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* at Bilbo Baggins' eleventy-first birthday party.

Though *The Lord of the Rings* was filmed before *The Hobbit*, the stamps New Zealand Post issued to commemorate the premiere of *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* on 3 December 2001 are listed in the order the books were published. Again, the issue consisted of six single stamps, printed in sheets of ten, six souvenir sheets, a strip of six self-adhesive stamps, a booklet of self-adhesive stamps in a pane of ten, six maximum cards and first day covers. As before the scenes on the stamps were taken from the film with the singles generally showing a single character and the souvenir sheets depicting the character with a background scene from the film.

*The Lord of the Rings* trilogy tells the story of Frodo Baggins and the Fellowship of the Ring as they set out to ultimately destroy the One Ring in the fires of Mount Doom. The Fellowship consists of the hobbits Frodo Baggins, Samwise Gamgee, Meriadoc Brandybuck, Peregrin Took, the wizard Gandalf the Grey, the men Aragorn and Boromir, the elf Legolas and the dwarf Gimli.

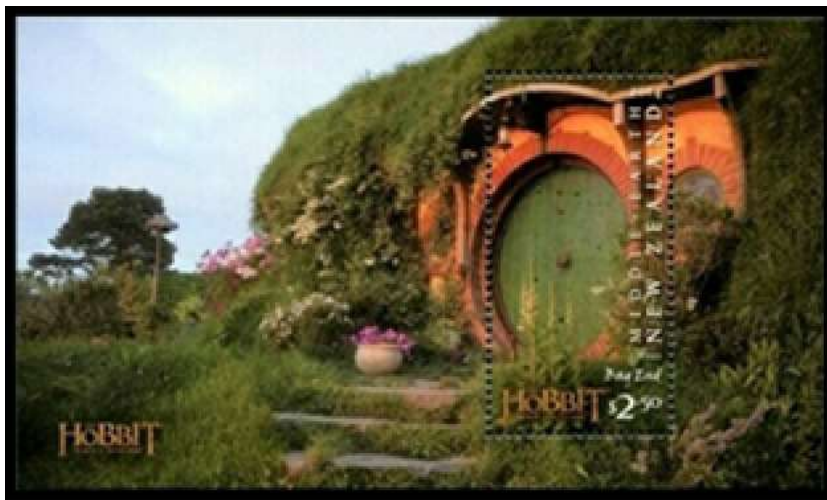
Though Frodo calls Bilbo 'uncle' they are actually cousins. Bilbo adopted Frodo as his heir some years after the deaths of his parents in a boating accident. When Bilbo left the Shire, Frodo inherited Bag End and the One Ring. When Gandalf discovered the true



*Fig 8: Personalised souvenir sheet showing the Company of Thorin Oakenshield on the stamps and Kili, Thorin and Fili on the border*



*Fig 9: Bilbo Baggins about to use the One Ring to warn Thorin*



*Fig 10: Bag End, Bilbo and Frodo Baggins' home in Hobbiton*

worth of the ring he persuaded Frodo to leave the Shire. With his three companions Frodo set off for the elven kingdom of Rivendell via Bree and its inn, The Prancing Pony, pursued by the Dark Lord Sauron's dark riders.

The first souvenir sheet to depict three hobbits was the 90c value featuring Merry Brandybuck, Sam Gamgee and Frodo Baggins eating in the The Prancing Pony as they begin their journey from the Shire to the home of the elves (Fig. 11). The \$1.10 souvenir sheet depicts Frodo Baggins in the elven city of Rivendell recovering from wounds inflicted by the Nazgûl on Weathertop (Fig. 12).

*The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* was issued on 4 December 2002. The issue consisted of six single stamps, printed in sheets of 25, six souvenir sheets, a strip of six self-adhesive stamps, a booklet of self-adhesive stamps in a pane of ten, a pack of singles and a strip, maximum cards and first day covers. The stamps and covers were designed by Sacha Lees, Weta Workshop, Wellington. The stamps and self-adhesive booklet were printed by Southern Colour Print, Dunedin by offset lithography.

Only one stamp in the set and souvenir sheets depicts hobbits. In this case it is the \$1.50 stamp showing Frodo shortly after he and Sam were captured by Faramir's Gondor Rangers (Fig 13.) Faramir was the son of Denethor, Steward of Gondor and younger brother of Boromir. Realising the dangerous power of the One Ring he sent the hobbits on their way with the warning that their guide, Gollum was not to be trusted.

The final commemorative set was for the premiere of *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* released on 5 November 2003. The issue consisted of six single stamps, printed in sheets of twenty, six souvenir sheets, a strip of six self-adhesive stamps, a booklet of self-adhesive stamps in a pane of ten, maximum cards and first day covers.

Three stamps from this set featured Hobbits. The 80c showed Frodo Baggins in Cirith Ungol, the cave of the demon spider, Shelob, to whose lair Gollum had led him; the 90c with Merry and Pippin, swords in hand after the fall of Isengard and the \$2.00 depicting Gollum as he plots to recover the One Ring (Fig. 14).

Isle of Man Post used the excuse that a resident of their island starred in *The Lord of the Rings* films in order to make it appropriate when they issued a set of stamps paying tribute. It was not until the last film, *Return of the King*, was released that the stamps were issued in tribute to John Rhys-Davies who played the dwarf, Gimli and provided the voice for Treebeard the Ent. The stamps were issued on 17 December 2003 in eight single sheets of six, a souvenir sheet, first day covers and two souvenir packs, one with the set and the other with the souvenir sheet enclosed. The stamps feature scenes from the film embellished with elven script. They were designed by The Agency (IoM) Ltd. and printed by BDT International Security Printers of Dublin.

One of the maximum cards is imprinted with the design of the 43p stamp showing Gollum hiding in his cave in the Misty Mountains (Fig. 15). The same stamp is reproduced on the back for postage. The second card repeats the scene from the stamp on the left and shows Sam holding an exhausted Frodo on the rocks of Mount Doom in the centre. The 47p stamp is also on the back of the card for postage (Fig. 16).

*The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Rings* was further commemorated with the 20th anniversary of the filming on 1 September 2021. The set consisted of six singles in sheets of 25 and accompanying souvenir sheets, first day covers, and maximum cards. Instead of actual scenes from the film, the images are the artwork of Sacha Lees based on scenes from the films. According to her website. "Sacha began her artistic career working on *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy as an illustrator, airbrush artist, creature designer, and concept artist for Weta Workshop in Wellington."





Fig. 11: Merry, Sam and Frodo



Fig. 12: A Guardian of Rivendell watches



Fig 13: Frodo captured



Fig 14: Frodo, Merry and Pippin, Gollum



Fig. 15: Gollum in his cave



Fig 16: Sam and Frodo on Mount Doom



Fig. 17: Souvenir sheets of Bag End, hiding from a Black Rider, drinks in The Prancing Pony and Arwen's rescue of Frodo.

Most of the stamps in this set have a hobbit connection. The \$1.50 value shows Gandalf the Grey as he arrives in front of Bag End in Hobbiton. The second \$1.50 features Frodo, Sam, Merry and Pippin hiding beneath the roots of a tree from a Black Rider. The third \$1.50 denominated stamp shows the four hobbits having a drink in The Prancing Pony as they are watched by Strider and the \$2.80 depicts a wounded Frodo being carried away on horseback by Arwen in her frantic flight from the Black Riders to the Ford of Bruien (Fig. 17).

*The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* was further commemorated with the 20th anniversary of the filming on 7 September 2022, celebrating the talent of Kiwi filmmakers and the film's legacy in Aotearoa, New Zealand. The set consisted of six singles in sheets of 25 and accompanying souvenir sheets, first day covers, and maximum cards. Again, instead of actual scenes from the film, the images are the artwork of Sacha Lees based on scenes from the films. Featuring the artwork from each of the six miniature sheets, each card has a gummed stamp affixed and includes pre-paid postage (the \$3.00 The Forbidden Pool stamp) to anywhere in the world.

The \$3.00 souvenir sheet depicts Gollum being approached by Frodo as he fishes in the Forbidden Pool. The Last March of the Ents is shown on the \$4.30 souvenir sheet with Merry and Pippin trying to convince the frustratingly sedate tree-like creature, Treebeard and his fellow Ents to join the battle against Saruman. On the \$4.50 souvenir sheet Frodo confronts a Black Rider on the walls of Osgiliath. The last two stamps appear on one of the two first day covers with a scene showing Gollum leading Frodo and Sam through the Dead Marshes on their way to Mordor (Fig. 18).



*Fig. 18: Maximum cards of Gollum and Frodo at the Forbidden Pool; Merry and Pippin being carried by Treebeard and Frodo facing off with a Black Rider at Osgiliath*



Correios de Portugal in partnership with Peter Jackson's big screen adaptation of Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*, issued a set of four stamps in sheets of 50 and a souvenir sheet depicting characters and scenes from the epic trilogy. The stamps, released on 2 September 2022, feature two hobbits, Gollum on the €0.95 and Frodo Baggins on the €1.00. The One Ring connects the four stamps when placed together. A €4.00 souvenir sheet showing the One Ring and scenes from the films completes the set. Additionally, the cancel on the FDC shows a hobbit with his cloak billowing behind him as he strides along (Fig. 20).





Fig. 19: FDC cachet shows Gollum leading Frodo and Sam through the Dead Marshes



Fig 20 – two of the four stamps in the set showing Gollum and Frodo



Fig 21: Maximum card with Sam and Frodo on Emyn Muil ( Tongariro National Park)

An issue of stamps was released on 7 July 2004 saluting the imaginative conversion of New Zealand sites to cinematic scenes of the Home of Middle-earth for *The Lord of the Rings* films. The stamps were issued se-tenant with a scene from the film next to the actual New Zealand landscape as souvenir sheets, maximum cards, a booklet and first day covers. Only two of the eight stamps feature hobbits (Fig 21), with Frodo and Sam on Emyn Muil (actually Tongariro National Park) on the \$2.00 stamps and Arwen with Frodo at the Ford of Bruien (Skippers Canyon) on the 45c stamp. 📖

### TOLKIEN PHILATELIC SOCIETY

If reading this article has awakened an interest in beginning or continuing to collect J.R.R. Tolkien on stamps, you should know that several Tolkien on Stamps collectors have formed the Tolkein Philatelic Society. Membership is free. TPS is solely online with a website which anyone can access:

<https://williamsilvester.weebly.com/tolkien-philatelic-society.html>

and the journal *Middle-earth Musings* (now in its second issue) and in time, a Collector's Handbook. In addition to the stamps shown above, *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* films postage stamps issued by New Zealand Post, Isle of Man, Portugal and others will also be included. In the hope that you are interested in the joining Tolkein Philatelic Society please contact William Silvester at [wgsil60@gmail.com](mailto:wgsil60@gmail.com)

**Minutes of the 30<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2022 at Grange Leisure & Community Centre, Stratton St. Margaret, Swindon SN3 4JY, at 1 p.m.**

**Present:- 18 members**

**The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting**

1 **Apologies** were received from Mike Blackman, John Davis, Lesley Marley, Charles Oppenheim, Nick Nelson, Janet Nelson, and Andrew Millington.

2 **Minutes of the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting, as published in Themescene 2022** were agreed as a correct record.

3 **Matters arising**

There were no matters arising

4 **Chairman's report**

Thank you all for your continued membership of the BTA. Without you we have no BTA. I'd like to thank the committee for all their support over the year.

It has been an interesting year. With Covid behind us we continued with our Zoom meetings attracting around 30 people each time.

The BTA Weekend at Oxford went well and a good time was had by all.

Although I couldn't personally attend the BTA competition at Ardingly it went well with seven entries, particularly pleasing after a two year gap due to Covid.

The BTA 1 page competition, again, had a successful outing, thankfully with a smaller entry number.

I would like to thank those members who supported all these events.

I would also like to thank all those member who gave thematic talks to clubs and societies. It is important to keep the visibility of the BTA high.

5 **Treasurer's Report**

**RESULT FOR 2022**

a) The accounts show an operating SURPLUS of £558.

b) The Weekend deficit was funded from the Reserve from previous weekends.

**INCOME**

Subscription income, other income and advertising income remained similar to the previous year.

**EXPENDITURE**

a) *Themescene* costs were slightly higher – both printing and postage - while the regular operating costs of insurance, website and affiliations remained consistent.

b) A new cost was our ZOOM subscription which I propose to include as part of our meeting costs.

c) We had a full year effect of bank charges as every cheque is charged for. Use of bank transfer is encouraged as is 'Family and Friends' when using PayPal.

d) A prize had been purchased for the London 2022 Postcard class award. Funded by donations this had no impact on the year's results.



## 2023

I expect some inflation effect on costs and we have had several resignations advised. I anticipate a reduced surplus for 2023 but recommend no change to subscription rates.

- e) The Donations given, some time ago, for colour in Themescene have now finished but colour will continue to be used in the magazine.
- f) Peter thanked Brian Turner for his work as Examiner.  
Colin Mount proposed and Crawford Alexander seconded the Treasurer's report be accepted. The Treasurer's report was agreed unanimously.

### 6. Election of Officers

No new nominations had been received. It was proposed by Pauline Boddey and seconded by Jean Alexander that the Officers be re-elected 'en bloc' Agreed unanimously.

### 7. Election of Committee Members

It was proposed by Gerald Lovell and seconded by Malcolm Gascoyne that the committee members be re-elected 'en bloc' Agreed unanimously.  
Press / Publicity Officer – if anyone would like to do this or knows of anyone who would please let Barry Stagg know.

### 8. Ratification of the appointment of Examiner

It was proposed by Malcolm Gascoyne and seconded by Owen Green that Brian Turner be re-appointed as Examiner. Agreed unanimously.

### 9. Any Other Business

- a) Joint meeting – Derek West from the Guild of St Gabriel asked if the BTA would have another joint meeting with them. They now have a new home in City Road in October or November in the 2nd Saturday.
- b) Gerald Lovell gave a vote of thanks, and appreciation, for all the work the committee does for the BTA members.
- c) There being no other relevant business the meeting closed at 1.23 p.m.

The meeting was followed by a Display 'Philatelic Firsts' by Les Ashton-Smith (next page, with illustrations on the inside front cover).

### Member's Zoom Presentation: September 5th 2023

Would you like to show part of your collection to the BTA?

- All you need is (ideally) six to eight pages.
- No need to worry about the technology. Jon has kindly agreed to put all the pages into one presentation. This will make it simpler for the presenters.
- Interested? Please contact Jon on: [website@britishthematic.org.uk](mailto:website@britishthematic.org.uk)

# PHILATELIC FIRSTS

## *Report on a display given by Les Ashton-Smith at the BTA AGM*

This was not, as might have been expected from the title, a display of SG 1 stamps. Instead it was a display of (with a few exceptions) the first examples of stamps made of anything but paper. Some are famous in the philatelic world, others not, but all were quirky and fun.

The very first postal authority to dream up this novel approach was Hungary in 1955, with an aluminium foil stamp commemorating the country's aluminium industry. And that is the key to many of these issues: whilst aimed at collectors their materials were chosen carefully to underpin the subject of the issue.

This report cannot list every stamp shown, but materials can be grouped together. Foil has proved popular in various guises. Tonga is well-known for its self-adhesive foil stamps on gilt paper. Various countries have used gold, silver, copper, platinum or tin foil, with in one case the additional of tiny rubies.

Gold foil was also used by Bhutan in 1966, starting a tradition of non-paper stamps including laminated prismatic plastic, rose-scented, and in 1973 a record which could be played. These are now very collectable, as can be seen by the prices charged on online stores.

Other minerals include grit (from the Rock of Gibraltar); clay (from the tennis court used by the Russian Davis Cup tennis team when they won that championship); volcanic ash (Iceland, from that unpronounceable volcano Eyjafjallajökull which caused major problems to flights in 2010). Glass crystal (not a mineral) featured in an Austrian miniature sheet commemorating the Swarovski Glass Art Exhibition.

3D stamps go back to Italy 1956, the first anniversary of admission to the United Nations (special glasses were required). In 1988 Austria issued a stamp with a hologram, and GB finally got in on the act with its 'Weather' issue of 2001 using photochromatic ink. Austria again led the field when in 2008 it issued a 'moving image' stamp for that year's UEFA football championship. The stamp has 48 images which allow a three second 'movie' to be seen when viewed from certain angles.

Fabrics started in Poland in 1958 with a lovely miniature sheet on silk for 400 years of Polish Post. There are also stamps with rayon, flock (derived from silk), embroidery, lace, cotton, dirndl and cross-stitch. Singapore issued an absolutely gorgeous bead work stamp in 2008, which came in its own presentation box.

However a few materials were completely unexpected, perhaps the most unlikely being fish skin: in 2016 the Faroe Islands issued a single stamp made of the skin from cod fish which had been subjected to a special 'tanning' process to create a fish leather.

Bringing things right up to date, it is issues from Austria which again stand out. In 2019 it issued the world's first blockchain stamp, an event recorded by Estelle Shale in *Themescene* June 2021. Rereading this article does at least confirm they have been used for postage. In 2020 their first covid-themed stamp came out, printed on toilet paper (a nudge towards that weird obsession with hoarding that seemed to grip everybody); a year later came a face mask, made out the relevant material, then in 2022 a 'bandage' came out, encouraging vaccination.


This was a thoroughly entertaining display enjoyed by everyone present. 

# BRITISH THEMATIC ASSOCIATION: 40th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

*Barry Stagg*

**A**s I am sure many of you know the BTA celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2024. The committee would like to mark this occasion with a special non-competitive event where the BTA members show the rest of the philatelic community what it collects. The Royal Philatelic Society London has agreed to host a 1pm display of BTA material on 21 March 2024. We will have 42 frames to show the width and depth of BTA material, and, as space is limited, only one entry per person please. You will not be expected to talk to the audience but some words about your entry will be required beforehand for the handout accompanying the display.

I do not want to show just exhibits but collections as well. So if you have a collection or an exhibit that would fill between one to five frames (exceptionally eight frames) and you wish to show this at the Royal then please contact myself giving me the title of your collection/exhibit and the number of frames required. A closing date for entries and information to be included in the handout is provisionally set as 1 December 2023 and, as entries are likely to outstrip capacity at the Royal, a sub-committee will choose the material that will be shown.

There is no frame fee and you do not need to be a member of the Royal. Those who wish to enter and live too far away will be able to send their entry (at their cost) and details will be provided later in the year. We will need original pages, not reproductions. Any queries please contact me via email: [chairman@britishthematic.org.uk](mailto:chairman@britishthematic.org.uk). 



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# ZOOMING ALONG

**Charles Oppenheim** *Some chess pieces* 17th May

We were introduced to the subject via stamps of famous people who played chess: Turing, Napoleon, King George III, President Lincoln and Elizabeth I to name but a few. Interestingly yet surprising Einstein and Sherlock Holmes were not fans of the game!

Charles went on to show Mulready envelopes that carried advertising for chess sets (costing from 8s 6d!) and postmarks on a German envelope from the 1922-29 period that included the earliest postmark showing chess. He then showed items from chess clubs that produced their own postal stationery, including clubs from Hawaii, New Orleans, and Buenos Aires. Reply paid cards were also on show from the London Metropolitan Chess Club and the Edinburgh Chess Club.

Arguably the most interesting envelope depicted an imaginary game of chess between a confident Commander-in-Chief of the union forces and a very unhappy Jefferson Davies, the Confederate leader at the start of the 1861 Civil War. You could imagine such a composition today with a large variety of warring pairs of politicians!

I thought the postcards used for 'correspondence chess' were fascinating. Games between a Russian and a Dutchman featured as did a Russian versus an Englishman plus many more. For me this was an early and significant use of postcards that I had not heard of before.

Charles finished his lovely talk with some postal items from World War II that had a chess theme: a 1939 Feldpost packet containing chess games and a German censor who took exception to chess moves/games as they were banned during war time. And finishing on a high Charles showed us a cover with a special chess postmark from 1959 that had the signature of Bobby Fisher, arguably the greatest chess player ever.

**Michele Bresso** *The history of St. Bernards as rescue dogs* 17th June

Our good friend Michele Bresso from the USA talked about St Bernard rescue dogs, their history and their myths. The first stamp Michele showed was a 1964 Bulgarian issue showing a variety of dogs including a St Bernard. This was followed by stamps from Romania (1981), Germany (1996) and Nicaragua (1987) all showing a St Bernard, with an Albanian stamp showing the rescue of a person, followed by a Mongolian stamp overprinted 'Specimen' from 1978 showing a St Bernard in action.

Michele surprised many of us by telling us that St Bernard (strictly speaking St Bernard of Menthon) was a man who lived in the 1050s. He dedicated his life to helping wayward travellers in the Alps and Michele showed us a postcard depicting his statue. It is said St Bernard visited every mountainside village and talked to many travellers and heard many stories of death and injury whilst they crossed the mountains. Consequently, he founded a sanctuary for travellers at the top of a pass that we now know as St Bernard's pass as shown on a postcard, together with another postcard showing Napoleon in 1800 leading his men over the pass into Italy.

The St Bernard dog, thought to have its origins in an English Mastiff, was shown on a postcard finding a victim of an avalanche. Although there are many depictions of a St Bernard dog with a small barrel of brandy around its neck Michele told us that this never happened. This myth appears to have been started by the painter Landseer who, in 1820, painted a picture of a St Bernard, complete with barrel, finding an injured man! Michele's story ended with a 1964 Swiss stamp showing the opening of a tunnel that runs under the



Alps, negating the need for travellers to journey over the St Bernard pass. And Michele had a lovely footnote: a St Bernard itself being rescued in Northeast England after becoming exhausted on a walk, shown in a photograph being carried down on a stretcher by a mountain rescue team. Thanks, Michele, for a fun and informative talk.

**Peter Wood *The Irish in America* 8th July**

Members and friends of the BTA enjoyed a crackingly good presentation delivered by Peter Wood at a fast pace with an eclectic mix of philatelic material showing 'The Irish in America'. Peter's enthusiasm and knowledge of all things philatelically Irish shone out of the screen.

He started by showing a pair of letters from 1873 and 1889 from the USA with the understated British post office cancel of 'Gone to America'! At the time it was estimated that 40% (3 million) of people of Irish descent were living abroad. This was followed by stamps from a variety of countries depicting the New York St Patrick's day parade (the first parade was in 1766). Shamrock cancels and trademarks featured next on a variety of covers, quickly followed by stamps depicting Leprechauns.

We then saw stamps showing a variety of celebrities with links to Ireland including Walt Disney (Irish links from the 17th century), Eddie Murphy the actor (in the 19th century African slaves often took their slave masters' surname [or was that given to them?]), Duke Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald; and lastly Paul Morphy the World Chess Champion: Peter explained he initially thought Morphy was a corruption of Murphy but he found out that Morphy is itself an Irish surname!

Peter quickly moved on to showing handstamps of Dublin and Belfast. Many Irish left Europe because of religious persecution. Lord Baltimore, a Catholic, left Cork for the USA and Peter showed a nice receiving house handstamp on an envelope addressed to Lord Baltimore. This tsunami of Irish facts and philatelic items continued with a nice trial colour proof and stamp on cover from 1866 showing President Andrew Jackson whose parents came from Co. Antrim in 1765. As an ex-navy radio operator, I was intrigued to see two stamp depictions of Samuel Morse, the inventor of Morse code. This was quickly followed by various stamps showing generals and heroes of the American Civil War (most Irish fought on the Union side) plus an Irish stamp of John Barry, the father of the US Navy, who had Irish ancestors.

Peter then went into top gear and told us that three signatories of the US Declaration of Independence were Irish and five more were of Irish descent. This was depicted on an US stamp. An Irish stamp showing the Irishman James Hoban, the designer of the White House, came next, with Peter explaining that there are two values of the stamp to collect as the post office put the prices up just before the stamp was released! Now in the final straight, stamps were shown of Grace Kelly (of Irish descent) and President Kennedy (both his grandfathers were of Irish descent) on a US and Liberian stamp plus an Irish stamp showing President Kennedy's visit to Ireland in June 1963. Peter finished on a high with a cover that had been addressed to President Kennedy's sister (and signed by her on the front) who was at the time the US Ambassador to the Republic of Ireland. Finally, Peter showed a few covers that had Ireland as the town of origin in the USA.

Thank you, Peter, for a tremendous presentation delivered with great professionalism, enthusiasm, and knowledge (and my apologies if I got something wrong in this report as you showed such a lot of wonderful material I could not write quickly enough!). A treat for us all and I strongly recommend that those of you who did not see it watch it online at [www.britishthematic.org.uk/bta-zoom-2023.htm](http://www.britishthematic.org.uk/bta-zoom-2023.htm)

# EXHIBITING PAGE

## UK NATIONAL EXHIBITIONS

Stampex will no longer be hosting UK exhibitions. Instead, the Royal Philatelic Society London will become the new home of UK qualifying exhibitions in London, while the York Fair will host the North of England exhibiting event.

The first exhibition at the RPSL will be from Thursday 28 March to Saturday 30 March 2024. Providing it is successful, the intention is to have two exhibitions a year at the RPSL from then on. These events are open to anyone, not just RPSL members, whether as an exhibitor or visitor. There is no admission charge to attend and the standard UK frame fees of £25 per frame will apply. All FIP classes are welcome, including Literature, plus the UK classes of Ephemera and Cinderellas. Judged exhibits will receive certificates and medals, and those receiving 75 marks or above will be qualified for international exhibitions.

150 exhibition frames are available, there will be some dealers' stands, and the members' lounge will be open. Exhibits can be entered through the ABPS website at: [www.abps.org.uk/forthcoming-exhibitions](http://www.abps.org.uk/forthcoming-exhibitions) from 1 June 2023.

## EUROPHILEX 7 - 11 MAY 2025. National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham

This will be the next UK international exhibition, featuring all FIP classes except Youth. Entry forms are on the website and applications are now open. There will be over 2,000 frames of exhibits and a wide range of dealers, plus a full programme of lectures and entertainment. Full details are on the website at <https://europhilex2025.co.uk/>

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# BTA NEWS

## STAMPEX 2023

Now down to one event a year, and without the competitions, this year's Stampex will be held on Wednesday 27th to Saturday 30th September. There will be a £10 admission charge on the first day. Other days are free, but you need to register at the Welcome Desk. To avoid queuing you can register in advance at [www.stampexinternational.com/tickets](http://www.stampexinternational.com/tickets), but please note there is a £2.99 administration charge for this. At the time of writing seven specialist societies have arranged meetings during the event, including the BTA:

### MEMBERS' MEETING AT STAMPEX

Saturday 30th September

Location: Society Meeting Space

12.00 to 14.00

George Henshilwood will entertain us with *Having fun with numbers*

## PHILATELIC CONGRESS OF GREAT BRITAIN 2023

Day one of the event featured presentations on all the different class of collecting from Astrophilately to Youth. BTA Chairman Barry Stagg was invited to talk about thematics, and his presentation *The attraction of thematic philately* can now be found on our website under '[Thematic Collecting](#)'.



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 **Ian Lasok-Smith (Philatelist)**  
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# HERE AND THERE

## FIP AWARD

During the Palmares of IBRA 2023, the FIP Board awarded a medal of appreciation to FEPA Vice President Giancarlo Morolli. Dr Morolli RDP was a delegate of the FIP Thematic Commission from 1968, Vice-President from 1975 and President from 1977 to 2004. He provided leadership in developing the FIP Regulations of Thematic Philately and as an FIP juror, he served in over 50 FIP exhibitions from Belgica 72 to Ibra 2023, often as team leader and twice as the jury president.

## SMITHSONIAN NATIONAL POSTAL MUSEUM

The Museum regularly mounts virtual exhibitions. Naturally they favour American interests, but are well worth looking at for other subjects, as well as seeking American perspectives on global subjects. The most recent is “Stamps across the Pacific: A Visual History of Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Migrations”. It features every U.S. postage stamp issued to 2023 honouring Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Americans or their history and culture, plus some fascinating postal history. Go to: <https://postalmuseum.si.edu/stamps-across-the-pacific>.



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# BRITISH THEMATIC ASSOCIATION 2023 ONE-FRAME COMPETITIONS

The South of England Stamp Fair & Sussex Convention, Norfolk Pavilion, South of England Centre, Ardingly Showground, Ardingly, RH17 6TL

**SATURDAY 28 OCTOBER 2023 10.00am – 4.00pm**

*Competition categories are:*

## **BTA CUP**

16-sheet One Frame competition subject to the Rules and Regulations for National **Thematic** Philately competitions

## **JOHN FOSBERY TROPHY**

16-sheet One Frame competition subject to the Rules and Regulations for National **Open** Philately competitions

## **BRIAN SOLE TROPHY**

16-sheet One Frame competition for **Picture Postcards** subject to the Rules and Regulations for National Picture Postcard competitions

## **BTA CHAMPIONSHIP CLASS**

16-sheet One Frame competition for **Pictorial Classes**; open to previous winners of the BTA's annual competitions. Subject to the Rules and Regulations for National Pictorial Class competitions.

*See next page for Rules*

**Please complete the Entry Form and send it to –**  
Andrew Millington, Flat 4, 87 Shurdington Road, Cheltenham, GL53 0JQ. Tel: 0770 8356757.

Email: [competitions@britishthematic.org.uk](mailto:competitions@britishthematic.org.uk)

## **Closing date for receipt of entry forms: Monday 23rd October**

Please send sheets to: Andrew Millington from Saturday 14th October (or earlier if you notify him) but **no later than Tuesday 24th October or deliver them to the Fair** (first floor) by 10.00 on 28th October. Scanned entries from overseas members (see Rule 3) to be sent by **Tuesday 24th October**.

## **RULES**

### **All classes**

1. Every exhibit must have an Introductory Page as the first sheet. All sheets must be enclosed in protectors and the pages numbered at the foot of the page.
2. There will be an entry fee of £10 for each competition. A receipt will be issued and must be produced if collecting the entry after the Exhibition has closed.
3. We accept entries from overseas members. These should be sent as scans (300 - 400 dpi, pdf format) to:  
competitions@britishthematic.org.uk (deadline as per instructions for this year's competition).
4. Judges will be appointed who are qualified in judging Thematic Philately and/or Open Philately and/or Picture Postcard exhibits at Federation or National level.

### **Thematic, Open and Postcard Class**

The winner of any of these competitions will not be allowed to enter the same exhibit in the same competition at any time in the future.

### **Championship Class**

1. The Championship Class will cover all aspects of theme-based philately: i.e., Thematic Philately, Open Philately, and Picture Postcards.
2. The Championship Class is open to past winning exhibits of any of the BTA's competitions: The BTA Cup, The John Fosbery Trophy and The Brian Sole Trophy. Exhibits will be based on previous winning exhibits but can of course be modified. Past winners who are exhibiting new subjects should enter the other classes in the BTA's Annual Competitions.
3. Entries will be one frame (16 sheets), regardless of whether the qualifying winning exhibit was one or two frames.
4. A person may only enter one exhibit in The Championship Class.
5. All entries will be judged to national standards using the appropriate marking schedule (Thematic, Open, Picture Postcard) on the next page. There will be one winner and that will be the entry with the most points.

*All previous winners of all competitions can be found listed on the BTA website at*

[www.britishthematic.org.uk/kcfinder/upload/files/Composite%20winners.pdf](http://www.britishthematic.org.uk/kcfinder/upload/files/Composite%20winners.pdf)

**AWARDS.** The Minimum points required to achieve LARGE GOLD level is 90.

For Gold level is	85	For Silver level is	65
For Large Vermeil level is	80	For Silver Bronze level is	60
For Vermeil level is	75	For Bronze level is	55
For Large Silver level is	70	For Certificate of Participation below	55

**MARKING Thematic Philately – BTA Cup**

Treatment	Title and Plan	15	
	Development	15	
	Innovation	<u>5</u>	35
Knowledge, Study & Research	Thematic	15	
	Philatelic	<u>15</u>	30
Condition and Rarity	Condition	10	
	Rarity	<u>20</u>	30
Presentation		<u>5</u>	
TOTAL		<u>100</u>	

**MARKING Open Philately – John Fosbery Trophy**

Treatment	Title & Plan	10	
	Treatment	<u>20</u>	30
Knowledge and Research	Philatelic	20	
	Non-philatelic	<u>15</u>	35
Material	Condition	10	
	Rarity	<u>20</u>	30
Presentation		<u>5</u>	
TOTAL		<u>100</u>	

**MARKING Picture Postcard Class - Brian Sole Trophy**

Idea, Plan and Treatment of the Topic	Idea and Plan	10	
	Treatment	<u>20</u>	30
Knowledge and Research			35
Condition and Rarity	Condition	10	
	Rarity	<u>20</u>	30
Presentation		<u>5</u>	
TOTAL		<u>100</u>	

# British Thematic Association Competitions 2023 Entry Form

*I wish to enter*

- A. 16-sheet BTA CUP  
Thematic Philately Competition (please tick)

AND/OR

- B. 16-sheet JOHN FOSBERY TROPHY  
Open Philately Competition (please tick)

AND/OR

- C. 16-sheet BRIAN SOLE TROPHY  
Picture Postcard competition (please tick)

AND/OR

- D. 16-sheet CHAMPIONSHIP CLASS  
Thematic, Open or Picture Postcard (please tick)

Name .....

Tel No.....

Address.....

.....

.....

Postcode.....E-mail.....

Title of Entry (A).....

Title of Entry (B).....

Title of Entry (C) .....

Title of Entry (D) .....

*Please indicate*  Thematic  Open  Picture Postcards

The material is submitted entirely at my own risk and I undertake to make my own arrangements with regard to the insurance of the entry whilst it is out of my possession; this includes all transit risks, temporary housing of the entry and its display at Ardingly Showground. I confirm that all information on this form is correct.

I am transferring £10 per entry to British Thematic Association, Sort code 40-03-29, Account 71157701 by BACS. Overseas competitors to pay by PayPal: peter.wood95@btinternet.com

*Please tick to indicate how your entry will be delivered:*

- By post beforehand*  *Hand in on the day*

Signed.....

Date.....





# **BTA FUN WITH PHILATELY WEEKEND**

**Friday 12th to Sunday 14th April 2024**

**voco Oxford Spires Hotel**

**Abingdon Road, Oxford, OX1 4PS**

<https://oxfordspires.vocohotels.com>



## **COST**

### **Full Delegate**

*Will include:*

2 nights dinner, bed and breakfast; pre-dinner drink both evenings; some wine with dinner; teas, coffees and biscuits or pastries between the sessions.

Two people sharing: £282 per person

With single room supplement £327 per person

There are also a number of other options, including an extra night on the Thursday or Sunday, a day (or half day) delegate rate, and options for meals for those not booking the full package. Please see the booking page for full choices.

## **TRAVEL**

By car: the hotel is easily reached from the A40/A34 to the north, or the M4/A34 to the south. There will be free parking for hotel users.

By train: only a short taxi ride from Oxford Station.

## **LOCAL ATTRACTIONS**

The City of Oxford is easily reached either by bus from the end of the hotel drive, or in good weather only a short stroll along the Thames tow-path.

Oxford - 'City of Dreaming Spires' - needs no introduction. But if you want some ideas see the web site <https://www.experienceoxfordshire.org/>

If you are coming by car there are many places which are a short drive away.

# BTA FUN WITH PHILATELY WEEKEND

Friday 12th to Sunday 14th April 2024

voco Oxford Spires Hotel

## PROGRAMME

### Friday

p.m.

18.00

Arrival.

Welcome, with Pimms and soft drinks.

Members' displays (6 sheets, one minute).

19.30

Dinner; followed by invited display by James Podger:  
*Africa and Islands.*

### Saturday

09.00

Invited display by Wayne Cox: *Small but perfectly formed: the British lamp letter box.*

Coffee.

11.00

Members' displays: 'One-page story' or 'The most difficult item I ever found'.

12.30

Invited short display by Philip Cant on *Thematic ripples.*

Lunch not provided. Hotel has lounge and bar, or spend some time in Oxford.

Saturday afternoon

Paula Cant Stamps will be present with a selection of stock.

*Plus:*

Owen Green and Chris Kennedy will demonstrate one or more stereo-zoom microscopes and re-create a version of the *Watson Philatelic Microscope* described by Harold Cheavin in 1913.

*Or:*

Free time for sightseeing.

16.00

Members displays: 'Latest Acquisitions' or 'The colour blue' (12 sheets).

19.00

Pre-dinner drink. Plus raffle.

19.30

Dinner, followed by optional social gathering at the bar.

### Sunday

09.00

Invited display by Paul Leonard: *Exploring forgeries in your collection.*

Coffee.

11.00

Members displays: 'Non-philatelic items which enhance your collection' (12 sheets).

# BTA WEEKEND BOOKING FORM

I wish to book:

- Rooms based on two people sharing £282 per head
- With single room supplement £327 per head
- Extra dinner/bed/breakfast Thursday £105 per head;  
[plus single room supplement £20]
- Extra dinner/bed/breakfast Sunday £105 per head;  
[plus single room supplement £20]

Or:

- Evening meal Friday £48.00 per head (inc. drinks)
- Day delegate Saturday £20.00 per head
- Evening meal Saturday £48.00 per head (inc. drinks)
- Day delegate Sunday £10.00 per head

## Deposit

£25.00 per person (non-refundable). Or: Day delegate rate per person

*Please tick as appropriate (BACS preferred):*

I have paid £..... by BACS. Sort code 40-03-29; account number 71157701. Please add your name and '2024 Weekend' in the 'Reference' box.

I enclose a cheque for £..... made out to BRITISH THEMATIC ASSOCIATION  
Please email Peter Wood and inform him when you have paid.

## Your details

Name.....

Name of partner .....

Address.....

..... Post code .....

Telephone number (home) ..... Mobile.....

Email.....

*Acknowledgement of booking will be sent by email where possible.*

*Rooms are limited so please send this form (or a photocopy) plus deposit, as soon as possible, to:*

Mrs. A. Stammers, 40 St. Helen's Way, Benson, Wallingford, Oxon, OX10 6SW

*Please do NOT book directly with the hotel. [You will be asked when you book out to pay the hotel direct for any extra rooms booked on top of the full Weekend package, but the BTA will make the booking on your behalf].*



# BTA PROGRAMME 2023

- 05 September      **Zoom meeting**  
19.00 for 19.30    *Members' displays*
- 30 September      **Members' meeting at Stampex**  
Guest speaker: George Henshilwood  
*Having fun with numbers*  
Business Design Centre, Islington
- 28 October        **BTA One-Frame Competitions**  
*At South of England Stamp Fair & Sussex Convention*  
Ardingly Showground, RH17 6TL.  
BTA Table
- 16 November      **Zoom meeting**  
19.00 for 19.30    **Mark Humfrey**  
*Polar orchids*  
Orchids are found growing in the northern polar regions and the display looks at orchid stamps and postmarks occurring in both polar regions.
- 12 December      **Julian Bagshaw**  
19.00 for 19.30    *Christmas*  
A three-part presentation:
  - Early Christmas postal items
  - Early postal items carrying a 25 Dec postmark
  - What was the first Christmas Commemorative stamp?

*Please note:*

The 2024 programme of Zoom talks will be on the website in due course. Please check our website under Events - BTA Zoom Presentations - Upcoming Programme for the latest updates and descriptions of the talks.



Just4Kids by Lise Whittle

## WHAT'S THE BUZZ? All About Bees!

*Did you know....* that there are over 20,000 different types of bees in the World?! Start a collection of as many stamps showing bees that you can find, (or any other of your favourite insects). Find out lots of fabulous facts about the insects and your stamps.

Here are a few interesting things about bees . . .



Bees are great little creatures. Yes, they can sting you if you bother or frighten them, and it hurts, but they don't mean to! They really just want to get on with their job of making honey. In fact, bees help us!



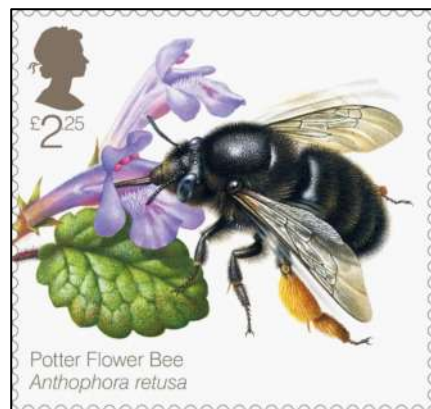
Bees make honey which is delicious and can be good for our health. They also make beeswax which can be used to make candles, furniture polish and in skincare lotions. Honeybees are the only insects that overwinter (stay awake huddled together in their hives) so they need to make sure they have enough to eat for themselves during the cold months. Beekeepers can take some of their honey, but they make sure they give the bees a

sugary solution during the winter so the bees don't go hungry or thirsty.

Bees do something really important to help nature! Bees are known as 'pollinators' meaning they help plants, trees, flowers and crops to live by transferring a powdery substance called pollen between different plants and flowers. Without this help, the plants would not be able to reproduce and make more plants and flowers. When a bee lands on a flower, it sucks up a sweet nectar which is a kind of sugary juice that the plant specially makes to attract the bees. While the bees are sucking up the nectar from the plants to make into honey, they also brush against the



powdery pollen on the plant which the bees collect on little tiny hairs on their back legs known as 'pollen baskets' - look closely at these GB stamps. If you see a bee and sit quietly, you can sometimes see the pollen on their back legs. When the bee has gathered nectar and pollen from one plant, they move on to the next plant, where the pollen will get rubbed off onto the



So it's a bit like the plant produces nectar to attract the bees only because the plant really wants the bees to carry the pollen to another plant! It's a good system for the plants and the bees!

Bees are strong! A bee can carry and fly with almost its own body weight in pollen and nectar. That's like you carrying someone the same weight as you on your back, and running home!



If bees didn't pollinate plants, there would be far less plants the next year, so it's really important they do this. They help us too because the bees don't just pollinate flowers, but also food plants such as apples, pears, strawberries, onions, cucumbers, pumpkins, and cereal crops.

Bees are under threat from pollution, pesticides, and other bugs and mites which carry diseases.



You can help by planting flowers and plants and looking after the plants by watering them, so there will be plenty of nectar and pollen for the bees. Or you could provide a 'bee hotel' for the bees, which you can either make or buy, and put it in a safe place.

If you see a bee that is walking very slowly on the ground it may be dehydrated and needing a drink. Ask an adult to help you mix a sugar and water solution and leave it in a teaspoon near the bee, but don't touch the bee.



*If you would like to win a set of bee stamps (children only), answer this question –*

**How many legs do bees have, and which legs collect pollen?  
Write to us and tell us about your stamps and receive some free stamps (children only) to: Just4Kids, c/o The Editor, Themescene, 87 Victoria Road, Bournemouth BH1 4RS.**

**Find out more about stamp collecting on the Stamp Active website [www.stampactive.co.uk](http://www.stampactive.co.uk)**



## ANNIVERSARIES IN SEPTEMBER



### 25 years

On 04 September 1998 Google, the Internet search company, was founded by Larry Page and Sergey Brin, both students at Stanford University, California, USA.



### 75 years

The Honda Motor Company was founded on 24 September 1948 by Soichiro Honda and Takeo Fujisawa.



### 100 years

Interpol, the International Criminal Police Organisation, was set up in 1923 with twenty founder member countries.