

THEMESCENE

March 2012

In this issue we:

Take a thematic look at postal history

Telling a story via postal history

With Jim Etherington

and

Thematic postal history pt.4

With John Hayward

Send a tourist postcard

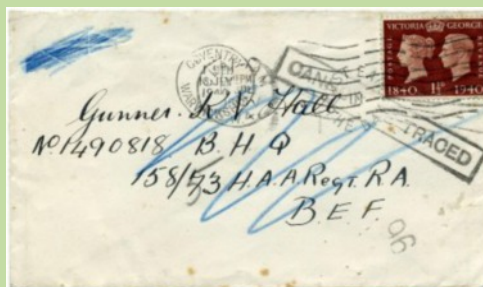
An informal postal service in the Galapagos Islands

With Barry Floyd

Enjoy a display

The Queen's Diamond Jubilee

Exhibition by John Davis



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EDITORIAL


Wendy Buckle

What is thematic collecting? The answer of course is that it is what you want it to be. You collect what you like, you arrange it the way you want to, and the whole thing is designed to give you pleasure. There is no such thing as the “right” way to build up a collection. For many people the stamp is the thing. Collections are put together largely using commemorative stamps and covers to - literally - illustrate their theme. This approach is often reflected in the articles published in *Themescene*. For others, it’s a more ‘philatelic study’ approach, using postal history; something rather less regularly represented in *Themescene* until John Hayward began his series of articles on just that. His final part is on page 20. And to illustrate further the whole idea of postal history in a thematic context I am delighted to have published the first article from Jim Etherington based on his award winning “1940: a desperate year for Britain” (page 8), an article which seamlessly brings together the story of the early part of the war and its postal history. The story of the British Expeditionary Force in France will follow in June *Themescene*.

There are many reasons for joining clubs and associations - friendship, shared interests, and pooled knowledge amongst others. This issue contains several requests for you, the reader, to respond. John Hayward (page 4) poses a question of interest to us all: how on earth do you keep track of all new issues in your own field. Ian Hobbs (Letters, page 7) asks for advice and feedback on his developing collection to be posted on his web site. And Barry Stagg, in Web Sites for Thematic Collectors (page 33) has asked for feedback on his series of articles. Please do respond, either directly or through *Themescene*.

Dialogue between members is one of the pleasures of belonging to any organisation. And not just written dialogue. This year we have a ‘first’ for the BTA: we are organising a residential weekend at Oxford (page 39). We’ve got the venue, we are finalising the programme (it will be on the BTA web site very soon), all we need is your presence. If you like chatting about thematics come and join us. It’s designed to be a fun, relaxing weekend with nothing too serious. Plus of course a prime sightseeing location for partners who for some inexplicable reason don’t share our interest.

Every year it occurs to me - too late - that I ought to be thinking about articles which acknowledge key commemorative dates at the relevant time. Well in this issue, thanks to the timing of the event, I have managed to include something on the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee (page 25). Of course you can find commemorative dates for most years if you look hard enough, but 2012 seems to have a glut of major events. So, is there anyone out there who would like to write a piece for *Themescene* on: Titanic (100 years since it’s sinking); Charles Dickens (200th anniversary of his birth); Scott and the Antarctic (100th anniversary of Scott and his companions death); or Napoleon’s invasion of Russia? It can be as long or as short as you like, with as many or as few illustrations as you like. And maybe next year I will organise myself in time to put out a request in plenty of time.

Finally many congratulations to Doonsfoot Primary School who have won the Stamp Active 2012 Trophy for the school achieving best overall results (page 15). The children put a lot of hard work into this, as does their teacher, *Themescene* contributor Lise Whittle. Well done to all the children who took part. 


PRESIDENT'S PAGE

Wendy Buckle

New year, new President, and one who is wondering how on earth she will step into the shoes of those who have gone before. Franceska Rapkin, Brian Sole, Margaret Morris and John Hayward have all served not just the BTA but the whole of the thematic world through their expertise. I cannot possibly hope to emulate their feats, but I will certainly do my best to promote thematics and the Association. I was delighted to fulfil my first official role as President by attending the official opening of an exhibition to mark the Queen's Golden Jubilee (see page 25).

It seems to me one of the best ways of promoting thematics to the wider philatelic world is to display at local societies. So please do have a look at the list of BTA speakers on page 27. And try and persuade the programme Secretary of your local society to invite one of us as a guest speaker. Do you display yourself? This list is on our web site and kept updated there, so let Programme Secretary Peter Denly know if you would like your name added.

I know many stamp collectors avidly followed the BBC programme *The People's Post*, broadcast before Christmas. The radio series was ably backed up by the British Postal Museum and Archive who have put some text and illustrations from every episode on the web site at www.postalheritage.org.uk/page/peoplespost If you haven't seen it, it is well worth exploring. I suspect I was not the only listener who thought "those were the days, posties who really cared" when they listened. Like many of us, I am not averse to the occasional Post Office bashing. Erratic delivery times, mutilated covers, I've done my share of complaining. But here's a Christmas story which shows the old days are not completely lost. My local post office is one of that increasingly rare breed who always have a supply of the complete range of new issues – stamps, miniature sheets and presentation packs. The staff are always happy to give you exactly that part of any sheet you may want – strip, corner block or whatever. They are very patient with me on my regular trips to post off Ebay items to far-flung parts of the world, sorting out the economics of the various postage rate options. In early December I had a phone call from the Postmaster, telling me "there is a Christmas card waiting for you to collect, please could you call in". It transpired that a friend from Australia had sent me a card, dutifully putting her name and address on the back flap. But in a moment's aberration she had addressed it to "18 Victoria Road" rather than 87 Victoria Road. It was duly delivered to number 18, and the kind person living there, rather than just sticking it back in the post box 'return to sender' had taken it round to the post office to ask whether they knew what the correct address should be. Thanks to my regular Ebay forays, they did indeed recognise my address details, looked my name up in the phone book, and called me. Now that is kindness and consideration well beyond the call of duty.

I am writing this two weeks before Stampex; always a good place to visit with a view to adding to one's collection, and this year with the added attraction of its exhibiting arms' focus on 'the pictorial classes' - thematics, open class and postcards. I suspect most of us thematic collectors include all sorts of ancillary material which adds to the attractiveness of our collection, and I note from the list of entrants that several well-known thematic collectors will be exhibiting in other classes. I'm looking forward to it! 

CHAIRMAN'S PAGE

John Hayward

Well I am back in the Chairman's seat after a gap of over eight years and looking forward to the various events the BTA has planned for 2012. Among them is the joint meeting with the Cinderella Stamp Club which will have taken place by the time you read this, and I do hope it turns out to be as good as the previous joint meeting of 10 years ago. Perhaps the most anticipated event is the BTA Weekend to be held in Oxford at the beginning of October (see details on page 39). The arrangements were concluded just too late to be included in the printed programme for 2012, but our Secretary, Anne Stammers, has spent a considerable amount of time pulling all the threads together to get this event off the ground (many thanks are due to her) and it thoroughly deserves members' support. I hope as many of you as possible will come along to this weekend, enjoy yourselves and make it a great success. The BTA can then make it a regular item in the programme.

One item that did get in the printed programme before it was too late to remove it was the European Championship of Thematic Philately at Essen in April 2012. This Exhibition will not now be held although the usual International Stamp Fair will go ahead. Apologies are due to all our competitive members who were interested. The next Championship will be held May 2nd - 4th 2013.

At the moment I am struggling to keep up to date with details of new stamp issues on my theme, let alone try and obtain the stamps, and I wonder how many of you have the same problems. How do you keep up to date with details of new issues? Do you rely on a new issue dealer to supply you with new issues on your theme when they come out? I know Bob Lee and Frank Spencer are pretty reliable at this and so too is Tony Bray, but they are not up to date with some countries. Or do you rely on *Stamp Magazine* and *Stanley Gibbons Monthly* with their listing of new issues to keep you up to date? Once again they are not up to date with some countries, well behind in some instances, and some countries' new issues never get a mention. If you want 100% coverage how do you go about it? You could search the websites of the philatelic bureaux, but a great number of Third World countries do not have websites and I have found some well developed countries' websites are almost impenetrable and even when they are usable they do not publicise new issues!

For my part I use a combination of the stamp magazines, SG catalogues in the local library and the Royal Philatelic Society London, Tony Bray's new issue lists and website, new issue details from my own thematic group and information from fellow thematic collectors. That gives 95% plus coverage, but there are always a few elusive stamps that slip through the net which I learn about months later. Can you fare any better by using Yvert, Scott or Michel's catalogues? Access to them and the cost are obvious drawbacks. However, Yvert does publish monthly listings in colour of all world new issues and I understand Michel has a monthly subscription service whereby you can access their website for details of all catalogued new issues. I, and of course the BTA membership at large, would be most interested to learn of how members get round all these problems, so do let me know. Getting hold of the stamps is though entirely another matter.

Sadly, I have just learned of the death of one of our former members, Steve Boorn, a previous winner of the BTA Cup. Most of you probably know that Steve had a heart transplant

Continued on next page

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S PAGE

Peter Denly

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Ordinary members | 182 |
| Family members | 17 |
| Junior members | 2 |
| Society members | 14 |
| Overseas members | 20 |
| Overseas Society members | 2 |
| Honorary members | 4 |
| Total number of members | 241 (At 6th February 2012) |

New Members joining since the December 2011 issue

Mr. L. Brown Black Notley, Essex
Mr. M. Kemp Leasgill, Cumbria

Deaths advised since the December 2011 issue

Mr. E. Day Rayleigh, Essex

The due date for subscriptions is 1st February so my thanks are due to those members who have already paid. Currently we are outstanding 51 renewals and if you haven't paid recently please respond to the reminder included with this edition of *Themescene*. There has been an encouraging response to the use of PayPal and should you be considering renewal by this means, please be sure to let the Membership Secretary know if your contact details have changed.

Our recruitment rate for the year 2011 totalled 16 new members, slightly better than the previous year but insufficient to replace those who have decided to resign due to advancing years, ill-health and changing interests. We need the help of our membership to encourage thematic collectors to join the Association where the benefits of the *Themescene* magazine, the library, access to the ATA publications and seminars can be enjoyed.

Spring Stampex is now behind us with the Seminar on Thematic Philately plus a joint meeting with the Cinderella Stamp Club at the Royal. We can now look forward to the BTA competitions in Perth in May plus the AGM in June to be held in conjunction with Swinpex, where the winner of the BTA Trophy from last year will entertain with a display. Whilst one may not always wish to compete, by studying displays and competition entries much can be learnt about suitable material for a collection with good ideas for presentation. So when all purchases have been made at the fair take some time to look at the display frames.

I take this opportunity to remind members, that when making changes to addresses whether postal or email, please be sure to inform the Membership Secretary, which will ensure your copy of *Themescene* is delivered correctly. ☐

CHAIRMAN'S PAGE

Continued from previous page

some 20 years ago and this led him to collecting and displaying his "Heart" collection. This developed into a superb thematic exhibit for which he gained the Best in Show award at the ABPS National Exhibition Torquay 2006, and then a gold medal at International level. Steve's legacy I am sure is the inspiration he will have engendered in many a thematic collector in the last 20 years. ☐

PUBLICITY OFFICER'S PAGE

Simon Moorcroft

First of all may I begin by wishing you all a very Happy New Year. This year is going to a major year for Britain as the eyes of the world will be upon us for both the Olympics and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. So we have much to look forward to nationally. Similarly, there is much to look forward to in philately.

In the December edition mention was made of the NPS initiative to attract new people into the hobby, through taking a stand at the Ideal Home Christmas Show. A full write up of the stand can be found on page [], but suffice to say it was successful in reaching a new audience although, as I point out in the article, just how many people were actually persuaded to take up collecting is questionable. The show itself though was well attended although a bit too crowded at times.



As I wrote in my last page, philately suffers from the problem of stereotyping. People outside of the hobby fail to appreciate the complexity associated with the postal system and stamp production or conceive of the depth of study one is able to pursue.

I believe thematic philately suffers from a similar problem of stereotyping from within philately itself. Because the competitive element of this discipline has become so burdened with rules, particularly around material which is and is not permitted, this in turn has led to collectors in other fields believing that the thematic discipline as a whole is governed by these rules. Of course this is not true but over the years it has become clear to me that this common misconception has manifested itself in the minds of a great many collectors, which is of course to the detriment of the BTA.

I believe that over the coming year we must try and devote more time and energy to overcoming this damaging belief and assert the fun and independence which thematic philately itself encompasses and put the competition rules in their proper place and perspective.

The BTA has an interesting programme organised for the year ahead which includes a joint meeting with the Cinderella Club in February, which should be very enjoyable - I remember the meeting in 2005 which went extremely well. The AGM will once again be held at Swinpex, at their excellent venue and a further members meeting will be held at the ABPS National Exhibition at Perth in October. Please do try to support these events as much as possible.

May 2012 bring many new and interesting acquisitions. ☰

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The views expressed in these letters may not necessarily be those of the Editorial Board.

BUILDING A COLLECTION - YOUR COMMENTS PLEASE

From: Ian Hobbs, by email

Two years ago I wrote an article for *Themescene* to introduce my theme of *Great Thinkers of the 16th Century* and to ask for help and advice. In January this year, with some nervousness, (bearing in mind my novice status), I gave a presentation to my local stamp club using a revised title of *16th Century: Revolution and Renaissance*. I was encouraged to share my display by a comment at the recent BTA event in Ashburton, when an experienced exhibitor said to me that he thought it took ten years to build a high quality display – so there is hope for me yet. As ever, Richard Wheeler has also been incredibly supportive, and has been helping me along the way.

Preparing this first display has taught me a huge amount about how to structure and display material and I am now much clearer about how it needs to change and develop. I don't know if I will get it to a standard to enter into any competitions but, more importantly to me, I am continuing to thoroughly enjoy building my collection. Aside from the delights of hunting for and finding material I am finding the experience intellectually challenging. As yet, I have not bought very expensive material – it doesn't seem sensible to do so until I know what will make the best contribution to the display – so most of my collection is fairly readily available. Having said that, local members were generous in their feedback and commented that they had enjoyed the way it was put together and that it showed that you didn't have to spend a fortune to offer something of interest.

So, I have reached the point where I know what the shape of my theme will be and I think I understand what I need to do to build it into something that takes it beyond a beginner's effort. I am really keen to get advice and feedback from BTA members and others and, with this in mind, I have built a website to share my efforts. This is also new territory for me but, in for a penny in for a pound. If any members would like to visit my site they will find it at www.stamptheme.co.uk. The site includes a Forum where people can leave comments and I would love to receive any comments.

On a different note, after my last effort for *Themescene* I had contact from members as far away as Australia, with whom I am still in touch – so BTA clearly does reach far and wide.

TELLING A STORY USING POSTAL HISTORY

Jim Etherington uses his award-winning exhibit to offer some tips

The story I tell describes events during 1940 from a British perspective. It was a year when the Battle of the Atlantic was increasing in intensity, British troops were driven out of Norway and Western Europe, Italy had entered the war challenging the Royal Navy's predominance in the Mediterranean and threatening British control in North Africa. In the Far East Britain's power was being threatened by the growth of Japanese aspiration in the region. At home stringent measures had been taken with the evacuation of children from the major cities, the imposition of censorship and the internment of aliens. The fear of imminent invasion haunted the population while the RAF fought valiantly against the might of the Luftwaffe and London and other cities experience the terror of the Blitz. It was indeed a desperate year for Britain.

A wide range of philatelic material with which to develop the story of this year can be found. Stamps depicting aircraft, ships, political leaders, farming and various other wartime themes are not difficult to find. Postal slogans promoting Government campaigns during 1940, meter marks and perfins advertising firms involved in wartime production and special commemorative hand-stamps provide additional material. Also available are stamp booklets with relevant cover illustrations or booklet panes. Stamp errors, varieties and proofs are obtainable and even the more elusive (and expensive) artists' sketches can be discovered.

However one category that provides an enormous wealth of philatelic material to support the development of my story is postal history, both military and civilian. There is a wide range to select from including military, naval and air force mail from various locations and belligerent nations, POW and internee mail, civil and military censorship, undercover addresses, Red Cross reply letter sheets, telegrams and mail affected by the Blitz. All have various postal markings that enable the elaboration of my story including censorship cachets, POW camp censors, instructional markings and date-stamps identifying units and locations.

To illustrate here how this material can be used I will take a single episode in my story, the presence of British forces in France and their ignominious withdrawal during the months of May and June 1940.

Following the declaration of war on 3 September 1939 the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) was immediately sent to France, the troops being quickly moved forward to a sector on the Belgium border between Maulde and Halluin. The presence of British forces in France is recorded postally by the use of 'Field Post Office' circular date-stamps (*Fig 1*), each military postal unit being allotted a hand-stamp with a specific number which appeared at the base of the hand-stamp. Together the number and date identifies the theatre of war where it was used (1).

Additionally a variety of military stationery was available for use by those serving in France including specially printed pictorial envelopes (*Fig 2*), Field Service post cards and the green 'Active Service' envelope frequently referred to as the 'honour' envelope (*Fig 3*). By the sender signing the declaration, 'I certify on by honour that the contents of this envelope refer to nothing but private and family matters', on the front of this envelope it was permitted to be forwarded without censorship. All other mail was censored at unit level and occasionally again at a Base Army Post Office (*Fig 4*).



Fig 1
Censored cover cancelled with a FPO 73 date-stamp which was used from 5 January to 13 May 1940 by 48th Division, 144th Infantry Brigade. It was probably taken into Belgium and used there between 13 and 24 May before being destroyed at Handschoote on 29 May (Proud 1982).



Fig 2
Pictorial envelopes identifying the theatre of war were specially printed in France for sale to British troops. The first printing bore the imprint '26147. Imp. Plouvier. Caruin.' below the word 'FORCE'. This was sometimes obliterated by the censor. Later printings bore no imprint.

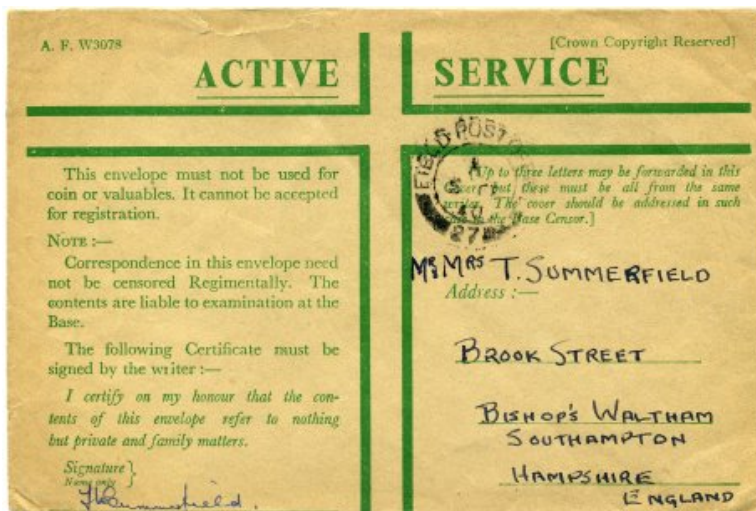


Fig 3
The 'Active Service' service envelope was used by both the military and RAF in France.

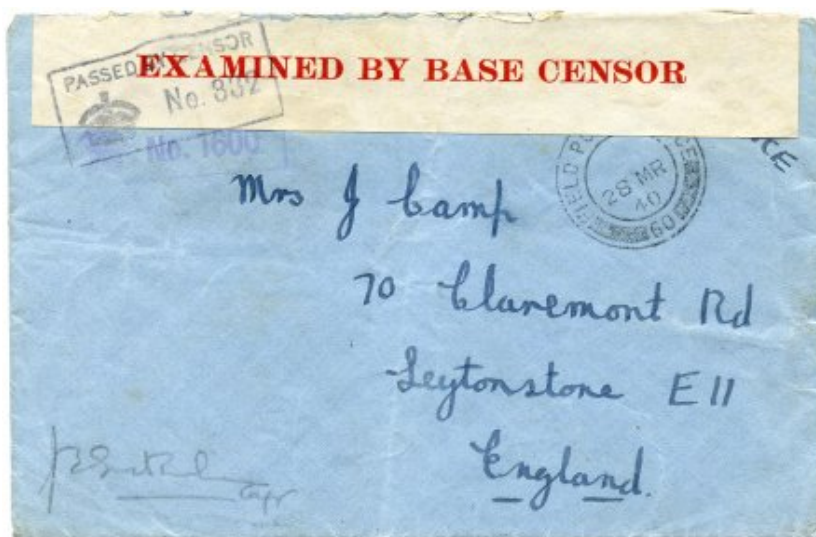


Fig 4
Cancelled with a FPO 60 date-stamp this cover has been censored at both unit and Base Army Post Office level. The date-stamp was used in France between 29 December 1939 and 20 May 1940 by an unidentified unit.

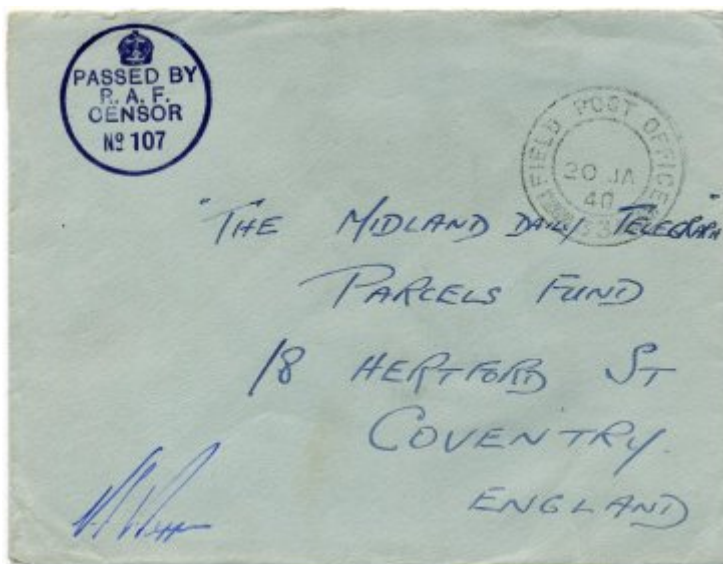


Fig 5
Cover cancelled with a FPO 33 date-stamp and endorsed by a RAF censor No 107 cachet. FPO 33 was being passed by an Air Force Postal Unit from 20 January until 8 June 1940. RAF censor No 107 was used by No 139 Squadron.



Fig 6
Censored cover with manuscript 'SERVICES DES INTERNES MILITAIRES' franked with an 'OFFICIAL PAID / LIVERPOOL' cancel. The reverse bears the sender's details, 'F/O Kempster RAF, Fort No 2, Borsbeek, Antwerp', and a purple two line 'Dépot Internement / Censure Militaire' cachet.

The RAF presence in France can be illustrated using covers bearing a RAF censor cachet. All RAF mail, except for a very brief period during September 1939, was handled by the Army Postal Service and was therefore cancelled with a FPO date-stamp. However correspondence was censored at squadron level where a circular 'PASSED BY R.A.F. CENSOR' numbered cachet was applied (*Fig 5*). Like FPO numbers these censor numbered cachets identify the cover as having come from France, but only in a few instances has the number been identified as being used by a specific squadron (2).

During the period referred to as the 'Phoney War' hostile activity on the ground was confined to scouting parties along the French German border. However it was a different story in the air where the RAF was continuously engaged in reconnaissance and bombing raids over enemy territory. Pilots and crew shot down over Germany were taken as prisoners of war, but those landing in the neutral countries of Belgium and Holland were interned, both countries adhering strictly to the terms of the Geneva Convention. Covers with the relevant cachet enable this aspect of the story to be told philatelically (*Fig 6*).

Following the outbreak of hostilities on 10 May 1940 British and French troops immediately moved into Belgium to support Belgium Forces against the invading Germans. Postal units accompanied the troops taking with them their numbered FPO date-stamps and these were in use in Belgium between 11 and 24 May. Mail cancelled with FPOs bearing specific numbers between these dates can thus be identified as having come from Belgium (*Fig 7*).

Similarly German military mail can be identified as having come from the invading troops. Each German unit was allotted a Feldpost number and all military mail was cancelled with a Feldpost date-stamp (*Fig 8*). It is possible to identify the unit and its location by using this number and the date of posting (3).

The German advance was rapid. Holland, Belgium and Luxemburg being overrun in days and British and French troops were in full retreat across northern France following the German breakthrough at Sedan. By the end of May large numbers of Allied troops were falling back towards the beaches of Dunkirk. Between 26 May and 4 June over 338,800 British, French and Belgium troops were evacuated, but many remained and headed for eastern French ports in their bid to avoid capture. FPOs dated after 4 June (*Fig 9*) provides evidence of these forces and more surprisingly the continued functioning of the Army Postal services despite their precarious position.

Much of the mail being sent from the UK at this time was being returned endorsed with a purple boxed 'UNDELIVERED FOR REASON STATED / RETURN TO SENDER' cachet. The accompanying explanatory cachet provides information that allows for the development of the story. The whereabouts of some men was known. Wounded personnel were quickly shipped back to Britain, their returned mail bearing 'NOT NOW AT ADDRESS / STATED / EVACUATED TO THE U.K.' or 'INVALIDED TO UK'. Letters to those known to have been taken prisoner bore the cachet 'Addressee Reported / Prisoner of War'. When the whereabouts of the intended recipient was not known letters would be returned endorsed with 'Addressee / Reported Missing', 'ADDRESS NOT KNOWN', or the terse 'CANNOT BE TRACED' cachets (*Fig 10*).

Members of the BEF taken prisoner were marched across northern Europe, often under brutally harsh conditions, to spend the next five years incarcerated in prisoner of war camps. From here they were able to correspond with loved ones, usually using specially provided 'Kriegsgefangenenpost' letter sheets which were endorsed with the identifying POW camp censor cachet. A few managed to escape across the border into Switzerland, but were similarly held in camps as internees until the end of the war (*Fig 11*).

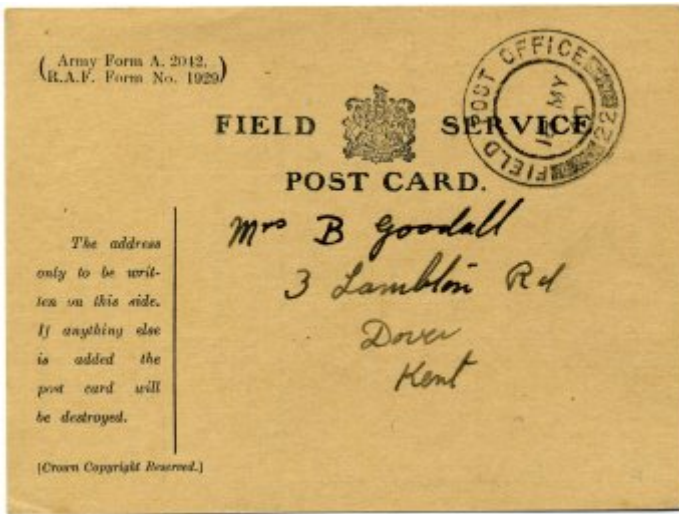


Fig 7
Field Service Post Card franked with a FPO 22 date-stamp on 18 May 40. It was used in Belgium from 11 to 24 May 1940, but was subsequently reported lost, probably during the retreat to Dunkirk.

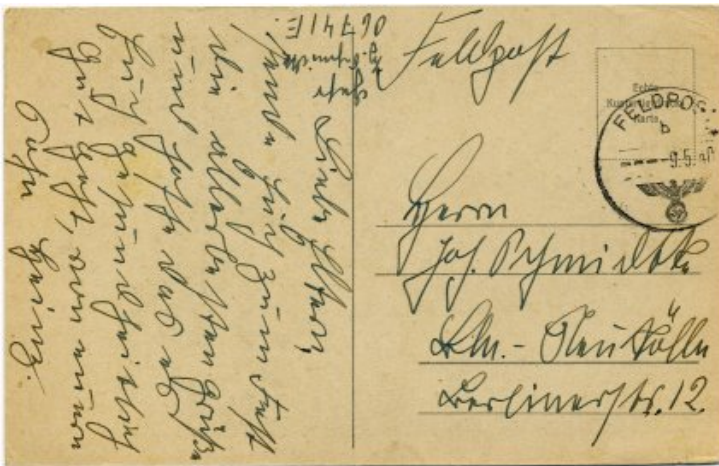


Fig 8
A post card franked with a 'FELDPOST / b' cancel dated 9 May 1940 with a manuscript Feldpost number, 06741E. At the date of posting this was allocated to 4th Company, Infantry Regiment 9, 23 Infantry Division, III Army Corps, 12th Army, Army Group 'A'. One day later the division attacked west from the Bitburg area into Luxembourg and marched towards Bastogne in Belgium.



Fig 9
Cover franked with a FPO 181 cancel dated 7 June 1940, the last recorded use of this date-stamp in France.



Fig 10
Cover with address crossed through and a 'CANNOT BE TRACED' cachet added. Gunner Kenneth Victor Hall was killed on 17 June 1940, his body being interred in Les Moutiers-en-Retz Communal Cemetery, France (4)

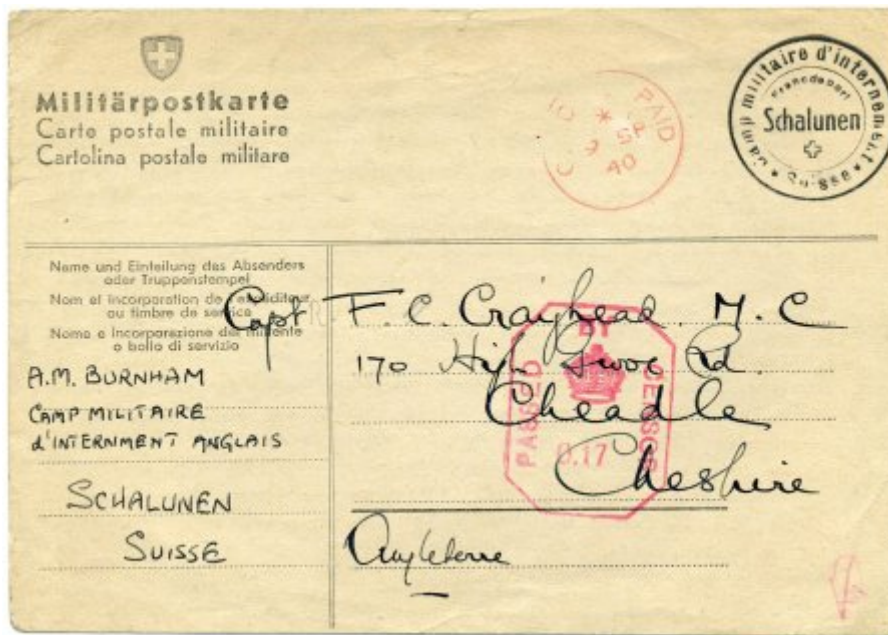


Fig 11
Swiss Militärpostkarte endorsed with a black double ring 'Schalunen / Camp Militaire d'Internement Suisse' cachet and cancelled with a single ring 'OFFICIAL PAID' die. Internees, like all military personnel, were granted free postage.



Fig 12
Two postcards, both cancelled with PAID dies, one postmarked MARGATE KENT / GT BRITAIN, the disembarkation port, and the other WREXHAM GREAT BRITAIN PAID, the final destination. The messages, despite the trauma just experienced, display a continuing sense of humour.

Those members of the BEF fortunate enough to be evacuated back to the UK were permitted one item of free post to communicate with loved ones that they were safely back in England. Once brought ashore most were quickly entrained to dispersal areas well away from the coast and while some managed to send a message immediately upon coming ashore others had to wait until they arrived at their final destinations (*Fig 12*). Frequently endorsed with a manuscript 'BEF' and cancelled with a dated red PAID cancel, mail from returning troops is usually readily identifiable. Some even had the opportunity of sending a telegram to announce their safe return (*Fig 13*). French troops landing in England were extended the same privilege (*Fig 14*).

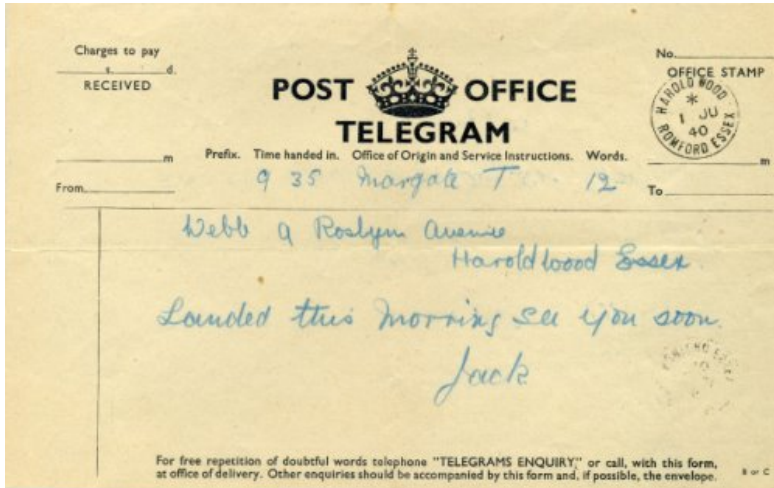


Fig 13
Post Office telegram cancelled with a HAROLD WOOD ROMFORD ESSEX date stamp handed in at Margate at 09.35 bearing the message 'Landed this morning see you soon. Jack'



Fig 14
Post card with manuscript 'FM / BEF' addressed to Paris, France dated 4 June 1940 cancelled with a Battersea B.O. S.W.11 / Great Britain / PAID date-stamp with a message sending the recipient kisses from London. The absence of any French postal markings suggests the card may not have reached its destination.

Thus, to summarize, mail to and from members of the BEF and RAF personnel who served in France provides a wealth of postal history that enables the elaboration of my story in some considerable detail. It is possible to illustrate their arrival in France, the move into Belgium, the retreat to Dunkirk, the subsequent evacuation from eastern ports and their final return to the United Kingdom. Using POW and internee mail the story can be further extended to include those unfortunate enough not to have escaped. Supported by other philatelic material the use of postal history has enhanced my collection and enable me to elaborate by story in considerable depth. ☐

Notes:

- (1) Proud, E B (Ed.), (1982), *History of the British Army Postal Service: Vol. III, 1927-1963*, Proud & Bailey Co. Ltd.
- (2) Colley, N and Garrard, W, (1993), *Censorship in the Royal Air Force 1918 to 1956*, Chavril Press.
- (3) A member of the German and Colonies Philatelic Society has the appropriate reference book and for a small fee donated to the Society will provide the required information.
- (4) Commonwealth War Graves Commission www.cwgc.org/debt_of_honour.asp

STAMP ACTIVE 2012 COMPETITION RESULTS

With nearly 50 entries, the 2012 Stamp Active competition has proved once again that there are many keen young collectors throughout the United Kingdom, and producing some extremely fine exhibits, with the judges able to present no fewer than nine gold awards.

It is clear that a great deal of thought goes into preparing the entries, with many producing highly original ideas for their chosen themes.

The Stamp Active competition is sponsored by The Great Britain Philatelic Society, and is supported by the Philatelic Traders' Society who provided the space to display the entries at Spring Stampex, and by The Royal Philatelic Society London who provided the facilities for the judging. The judges this year were Christine Earle, Dave Armitage, Brian Asquith and Richard West.

| | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Class A | 14 - 15 year olds | 1 entry |
| <i>Won by</i> | | |
| Claire Mitchell | "Let There be Light" | Gold |
| Class B | 12 and 13 year olds | 4 entries |
| <i>Won by</i> | | |
| Lynne Mitchell | "Time Flies" | Silver-Gilt |
| Class C | 10 and 11 year olds | 24 entries |
| <i>Won by</i> | | |
| Chloe Liddell | "Portraits of the Queen through the ages" | Gold |
| Class D | Under 10 years old | 13 entries |
| <i>Won by</i> | | |
| Lauren Espie | "Run, Rabbit, Run" | Silver-gilt |

Trophy for the school that achieved the best overall results: Doonfoot Primary School, Ayr.

AN INFORMAL POSTAL SERVICE IN THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS

Barry Floyd

Among the world's great tourist destinations are islands of the Galápagos Archipelago, some 600 miles off the coast of Ecuador in South America. The islands are a UNESCO World Heritage site. Their rich mix of exotic fauna and flora, together with dramatic volcanic landscapes, makes a planned visit truly memorable. Numerous package excursions are on offer, flying visitors from all corners of the world to Quito, the capital of Ecuador, thence by air to the Galápagos and transfer to ships for circumnavigation of the major islands in this eastern Pacific Ocean group.



The Galápagos (or Archipiélago de Colón) were first discovered by Spanish mariners in the 16th century. Remains of potshards and other artifacts indicate that the islands were visited by people from the mainland of South America before the arrival of the Spanish.

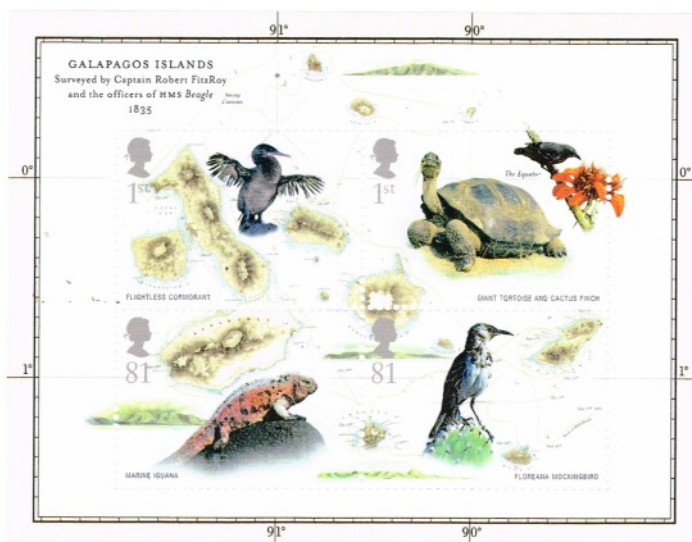
The first Englishman to visit the Galápagos (Islands of the Tortoises) was Richard Hawkins in 1593, and until as late

as the beginning of the nineteenth century the islands were often used as a hideout by English pirates, pilfering Spanish galleons carrying silver and gold from South America to Spain. The islands were given English names, often after fellow pirates or English noblemen who were supporting operations of the privateers. While renamed later by Ecuadorians, many visitors (especially ecological researchers) continue to use the older English names, such as Abingdon, Albemarle, Charles, Chatham, Culpepper, Duncan, Hood and James.

Before the days of any organized postal service, it was common practice for sailors to leave messages and letters on numerous island destinations in the Pacific, also elsewhere,

in the expectation that they would be noticed by subsequent visitors, and in the case of letters, be carried forward to their ultimate destination. It is this informal practice which, as we will note shortly, continues to the present day

The Galápagos are perhaps best known for their association with the naturalist Charles Darwin and the visit of H.M.S. *Beagle* in 1835. His observations on the different species of mockingbirds, finches and tortoises were later to help develop his theory of natural selection and publication of his



magnum opus The Origin of Species. Undoubtedly, having read some of Darwin's numerous publications, many of today's tourists and budding young scientists have been encouraged to make the lengthy journey to the archipelago from their homes in Europe, North America and beyond.

The islands were annexed by Ecuador in 1832. A group of convicts was brought over from the mainland, to be followed by small numbers of artisans and farmers. Subsequent immigrants were mainly *mestizos*, the mixed descendants of Spanish colonists and indigenous native Americans.



A set of six stamps issued by the Galápagos was issued in 1957. Two high values are shown here with a 1961 overprint: 'Estación de Biologica Maritima de Galápagos' (Ecuador, SG 1211-1212), commemorating the 15th anniversary of UNESCO and the opening of a marine biological station on the islands

The Galápagos became a full province of Ecuador in 1973. In the years to follow a number of stamp sets featuring marine life, birds, flowers, tourism, pirates and sea battles associated with the islands have been issued. There is an official airmail postal service available to tourists and many take advantage of this service to mail colourful postcards with new issue stamps to family and friends back home.

However, survival of the historic pattern of communicating with the world beyond the Galápagos Islands persists, providing a popular alternative or additional way of recording one's visit. In the appropriately named Post Office Bay on Floreana (Charles) Island is an old, white-washed barrel, surrounded by pieces of driftwood and other organic detritus.



The Informal Postbox/ Barrel for Visitors

It is within the barrel that eco-tourists cram their unstamped postcards and letters, to be scrutinized shortly by subsequent visitors. The latter will then select items for personal delivery to addressees living in or within a reasonable range of their own homes. It is as simple as that! The pleasure of making such deliveries, and the warm appreciation of those receiving the impromptu mail, is reward enough for those willing to engage in the activity.

And, surprisingly, this time-honoured personal postal service has proved on occasion to be faster than regular state-sponsored mail!

A recent American visitor to the Galápagos has described his experience with the islands' informal mail service. After plunging his hand into the white barrel he extracted cards addressed to destinations in California, Toronto, France, Germany and Romania. Repeating the process and after viewing numerous images of sea lions and blue-footed boobies, he finally found a card addressed to a more familiar location - in his own town of Washington, D.C. Excited to make the connection he then realized that he should actually try and deliver the postcard himself. Buying a U.S. stamp and mailing it that way would be considered cheating! But, he reflected, arriving at a stranger's house with a surprise communication from someone he had never met would, to say the least, be a bit daunting. However, having located the addressee's home, he left a note in Kathy's mailbox saying that he wished to deliver something from her friend Nancy and asking her to call him to arrange a time. Kathy responded favourably to his contact and the exchange of mail took place shortly, much to the satisfaction of both parties. One acknowledges that such a happy outcome might not always be achievable on a worldwide basis, but it seems as if the system - as of old - does actually still work. Long may it continue to do so. ☺

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NEW ISSUES

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P O Box 5, Poole, Dorset, BH12 9GF



THEMATIC POSTAL HISTORY

John Hayward concludes his suggestions for enhancing your collection

Before commencing this article I would like to answer the Editor's question in her December 2011 column. She wondered how on earth I found out that a Guatemala cover was carried by sidecar as she thought I must be glossing over the immense work that had gone into researching the covers I had illustrated. Well this one is easy Wendy. The information was printed in Stanley Gibbons catalogue alongside the details of the stamp from Guatemala! On now to this concluding article on thematic postal history in which I promised to illustrate some further examples of mail carried by ship and more unusual means of mail transport.

Mail carried by ship can be of interest to a thematic collector for a variety of reasons – a general collection of ships or mail transport, postal services, the shipping line or ship itself, the type of ship, whether it is merchant or military, the route involved, particularly if you collect say the Suez or Panama Canals etc. When searching for mail carried by ship, generally speaking this will have been the method of transport between Great Britain and elsewhere and between continents up until the advent of regular airmail services in the 20th century. Therefore the cover may not show a postal marking to indicate this mode of transport. In addition if you are looking for mail carried by a sailing ship, this will usually have occurred in the pre-stamp era before steam ships arrived. So, let me start with an example of ship mail from 1862 (figure 1). This is from Altona, then in Denmark, via Hamburg on 27 December 1862 with manuscript '39 schillings' paid at lower left. It travelled via London and Southampton (see transit markings) by steamer on its way to Valparaiso, Chile, via Panama. Note the arrival mark of 23 January 1863 at Panama where it would have travelled overland in the pre canal days and then on to Valparaiso by another ship.



Fig 1



Fig 2

Figure 2 illustrates a postal stationery card posted from the Danish West Indies on 9 April 1899, just before the USA acquired the islands. It was sent to Altona now in Germany. It received an arrival postmark at Hamburg and then travelled by train number 13 of the Koln/Verviers line to Altona where it arrived on 26 April 1899. So it is a nice double thematic for ship and railway collectors.

Figure 3 (next page) is another cover of interest to ship and rail thematic collectors. It was sent registered from China in 1918 to London and initially it travelled on the Trans Siberian Railway. However, Russia had lapsed into civil war at the time so the letter was

redirected east via Vancouver. So it crossed the Pacific by boat, Canada by train and the Atlantic by boat to reach London. This is a fine item for a postal services thematic collection.



Figure 3



Figure 4

Sometimes you will find the handstamp ‘Paquebot’, literally meaning ‘mailboat’, on a cover. Figure 4 is an example. This item travelled from Reunion in the Indian Ocean to South Africa by what was probably the regular mail boat to Durban to start with, where it was handstamped on receipt on 30 May 1935. The remainder of its journey to Cape Province would have been by rail.



Figure 5

The postcard illustrated front and back in figure 5 is an example of highly desirable wreck mail, but would easily fit into a collection of ships or postal services. It was posted in New Zealand on 6 August 1930 to New York, and travelled aboard the *S. S. Tahiti*. Unfortunately, the *Tahiti* sank on 18 August 1930, but the letter was recovered, hence the violet handstamp ‘Salvaged from S.S. Tahiti Lost at sea’. The letter arrived in San Francisco on 1 September, but the New Zealand stamp had been washed away. Nonetheless this is a good item of mail transported by ship.

One very unusual form of water borne mail is by canoe. I came across an example of this when I read an article by Edith Thorp in *Stamp Magazine* (February 2012, page 64). Two very nice covers are illustrated in the article that travelled by canoe in Africa for part of their journey. If you collect canoes or hand propelled boats this is the type of material to look out for.

And now for something completely different with which to end this series – mail carried by an unusual means. Several animals have been used to transport mail apart from the horse – camels, mules, elephants and dogs are some examples. Figure 6 (next page) illustrates mail

carried by the last of these – the Alaska Dog Team Post. It is very philatelic of course, but dogs were used to haul sledges carrying mail in the frozen wastes of Canada and Alaska. If you collect dogs, this is the cover for you. It was posted on 22 December 1945 in Diamond (there's a name for a precious stone collection), Alaska, to Nenana by dog sledge and then by more normal means to Oregon, USA. Mail carried by other animals is hard to find, but extremely rewarding and enhancing for a thematic collection on that animal.

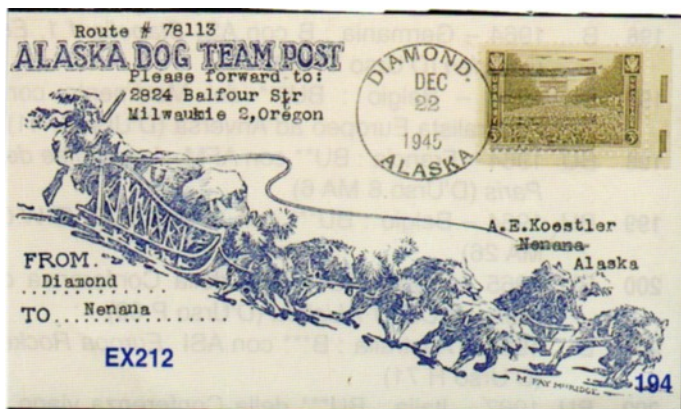


Fig 6



Fig 7

Another means of unusual mail transport is pneumatic post used for urgent deliveries. Several large cities operated such a service – Paris, Berlin and Vienna for example – although they have all closed down in recent times. Figure 6 is an example of pneumatic post from Vienna. Very often special stationery was used for the service as is the case here paid for by the 20 kreuzer stamp. It was sent from the Vienna post office in district 21 sometime towards the end of the 19th century (it carries no date unfortunately) and handstamped by the number V postal clerk. Again it is a nice item for a thematic collector of postal services or means of communication.

I do hope this series of articles has whetted your thematic appetite to look at postal history in a different light and create greater interest in your collection. After all thematic collecting is not just about stamps. ☐

IDEAL HOME CHRISTMAS EXHIBITION

Simon Moorcroft reviews an enterprising initiative

The BTA was very pleased to be able to sponsor this venture conceived and organised by the NPS. The theme of the project and of the stand was to reach out to a wholly new audience and bring the story and fun of stamps and philately to them. The NPS decided that the Ideal Home Christmas Exhibition would provide an excellent showcase for this as it had no connection to philately and would therefore attract a totally different audience to that of a stamp show.

To help meet some of the very high costs associated with the stand, societies were invited to provide sponsorship in the form of selecting stamps pertinent to their area of specialism which would be printed onto postcards. These cards would explain the background to the stamp and the society and would be given out to visitors. The BTA sponsored one card with three other cards being provided by way of donations received from individuals.

I attended the exhibition on the second day briefly and again two days later for a longer period. John Hayward also visited on the first day and assisted on the stand. My impression was that it was successful in that it did publicise the hobby to a wholly different audience. Many of the various postcards were taken away so we can only hope that interest in the BTA and other societies is stimulated.

One problem was the location of the stand. It was not in the most central location and its small size meant only three or four people could get to it at any one point. However, this could not be helped given the very costs of even a small stand. Further, a large number of people inquiring at the stand were only asking for advice on valuations and disposals of collections, perhaps inevitable, but maybe not enough was done by those on the stand to encourage them to take up collecting themselves.

For my part I believe what the NPS did was not just worthwhile in itself for the reasons I mention above, but also because I believe the taking of this very proactive step to promote the hobby throws down the challenge to other bodies, such as the Trust, Royal and ABPS to do something similar as a means of outreach.

In my view the best approach going forward is to do something like this again but involve other bodies to enable a pooling of resources. This would have the advantage of increasing financial resources enabling larger spaces to be hired and a larger complimentary publicity campaign. London 2010 Festival of Stamps showed that collaborative and inclusive events can attract new people to the hobby. Doing this outside of the normal philatelic circles could be extremely beneficial to societies and the hobby at large. ☺





ThematiX '12

Britain's National Thematic Stamp Show

Will be held on

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Friday 10.30 to 17.00, Saturday 10.00 to 17.00

at

King George Field Indoor Bowls Club

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John Perriman, Frank Spencer, Thames Themes

Paula Cant Stamps, Bob Lee

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Organisers

Paula & Philip Cant

01256 415699

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Bob Lee

020 8397 2332

boblee@ThematiX.co.uk

For the latest updates see www.thematiX.co.uk/thematiX12.htm

PHILATELIC EXHIBITION: THE QUEEN'S GOLDEN JUBILEE

Wendy Buckle gets in the mood for Jubilee year

Highcliffe Castle in Dorset hosted one of the first events to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, and the event was a philatelic one. From 1st to 10th February there was an exhibition of stamps and related philatelic material telling the story of the modern monarchy. This had been put together by BTA member John Davis FRPSL, being inspired, he said, by his triple interest in philately, the monarchy and genealogy. Of course the exhibit attracted the interest of local collectors, but it was put together primarily for the general public, with the avowed aim of attracting new members to the local societies.

The 384 sheets covered:

- ❖ Frame 1: Introduction.
- ❖ Frame 2: The Hobby of Kings, the foundation and development of the Royal Collection.
- ❖ Frame 3: Some background on George VI and Queen Elizabeth before her coronation.
- ❖ Frames 4 - 9: The public life of the Queen since 1953. This included royal visits, birthdays and anniversaries, and her children's weddings.
- ❖ Frame 10: The Crown Jewels and the House of Hanover
- ❖ Frame 11: London 2010 Festival of Stamps
- ❖ Frame 12: Royal visitors to Highcliffe Castle. Starting with a 1689 letter from Lord Weymouth to the Earl of Abingdon it illustrated both British visitors including King Edward VII as Prince of Wales, and Queen Mary, wife of George V; and foreign royalty including Kaiser Wilhelm II (Kaiser Bill) and members of the Swedish royal family.
- ❖ Frames 13 - 24: The whole of the second half of the display was devoted to the royal families of Europe who are descended from Queen Victoria "the Grandmother of Europe". This covered Belgium and colonies, Denmark and Colonies, Germany and States, Greece and Crete, Norway, Romania, Russia, Spain and Colonies, Sweden, and Yugoslavia including Serbia and Slovenia.

The Exhibition was officially opened by the Lord-Lieutenant of Dorset, Mrs. Anthony Pitt-Rivers, and attended by the Mayor of Christchurch and around 40 guests. Many local philatelic societies were represented, as were ABPS, NPS and Hampshire Philatelic Federation, plus of course the BTA. Non-philatelists included Rotary, Probus, and the local Church.



The exhibition was well attended during its 10 days of opening, and non-collectors were quite taken aback at the array of material on show. Several asked whether the exhibition would be going on tour after Highcliffe - quite a compliment. ABPS, local philatelic federations and local societies provided sponsorship for costs of the whole project, and members of local societies volunteered themselves for stewarding duties.

Highcliffe Castle provided a spectacular setting for the display, and John is to be congratulated for his drive and initiative in conceiving and creating such a splendid memorial of the Queen and advertisement for our hobby.

PICTURES FROM A PHILATELIC EXHIBITION



Highcliffe Castle, built in the 1830s in Gothic Revival style



BTA SPEAKERS' LIST

If your local society would like a thematic speaker why not have a look at the BTA list:

| | |
|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Dr. J. Alexander | Waterfalls of the World |
| Mrs. W. Buckle | The Write Stuff |
| Mrs. G. Davies | Peace - All aspects Nobel, The Peace Prize and Laureates |
| Capt. P. Denly | Man's Marine Adventure |
| Dr. J. Etherington | 1940: A Desperate Year for Britain |
| Mr. T. J. Fray | Masonic Philately |
| Mr. I. J. Gray | Golfilately |
| Mr. J. C. Hayward | The Iron Steed |
| Mr. S. Moorcroft | Winston Churchill Thematic Collecting |
| Mrs. M.I. Morris FRPSL | Aspects of Astronomy Time |
| Mr. C. Mount | Pig in the Post |
| Prof. C. Oppenheim | It's Patently Obvious Chess |
| Mr. I. A. Peel | Capt. James Cook – his Early Life and 1st Voyage Capt. James Cook – 2nd and 3rd Voyages Capt. William Bligh – The Man and his Mutinies |
| Mr. B. J. Sole FRPSL | Go by Cycle British Cycling Telegrams Thematics – How to Display |
| Mr. B. Stagg | Parachuting |
| Mr. R. Wheeler | The Evolution of Puppets |
| Mr. L. Yandell | Church Architecture |

To contact one of these speakers, or to add your own name to the list, please contact Membership Secretary Peter Denly (contact details on inside front page).

When contacting a prospective speaker please ensure you state which display you are interested in and offer a range of dates and times available.

HERE AND THERE

LONDON 2015 EUROPHILEX

13 to 16 May 2015, Business Design Centre, London



London is to host a European stamp exhibition in 2015. The venue will be the Business Design Centre in Islington, which proved so ideal for the highly successful London 2010 international stamp exhibition.

The exhibition will be open to all philatelic associations that are members of FEPA, the Federation of European Philatelic Associations. There will be a wide range of stand-holders, plus about 1,200 frames of competitive exhibits.

A Steering Committee has been established, chaired by Bill Hedley, with Frank Walton as Vice-Chairman. The Committee also includes Brian Trotter, who was Chairman of the London 2010 international stamp exhibition. The event has the support of the British Philatelic Trust.

For up to date information see <http://london2015.net>

STAMP ACTIVE NETWORK

Great news for Young Collectors

In association with The British Philatelic Trust, Stamp Active Network have produced a new Stamp Fun work book with the theme of Sport on Stamps. This coincides with the year of the London Olympics and will be launched at the Stamp Active stand at Spring Stampex, at the Business Design Centre at the end of February.

It is available at no charge to any young collector, but adults will be expected to make a contribution to Stamp Active Network funds. The booklet will also be available at all Stamp Active events, through Kidstamps and the Stamps in Schools project, and at ABPS and Federation events.



LICHTENSTEIN MEDAL



Congratulations to BTA member Francis Kiddle FRPSL who has been awarded the 2012 Lichtenstein Medal by the Collectors Club of New York for outstanding services to philately. Among his many attributes Francis is a thematic judge and a world authority on cinderellas. The Lichtenstein Memorial Award is named after the American collector and exhibitor Alfred F. Lichtenstein. Full details can be found at www.collectorsclub.org/Awards.shtml

AUTUMN STAMPEX 2012

This will be a full national multiframe exhibition with all classes participating, in addition to invited displays from Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands. On Wednesday 26th September at 14:00 there will be the launch of *Gems of Australasia* a 100 page colour book which will be sold at £5 per copy during the Exhibition only. The normal price is £10.00. On Friday 28th September at 14:00 there will be a lecture and display entitled 'Captain Cook'.



COMMEMORATIVE COVER TO HONOUR SCOTT AND HIS COMPANIONS

Dundee & District Philatelic Society are producing a limited number of commemorative covers in memory of Robert Falcon Scott and his companions who died on the return journey from the South Pole in 1912.

The cover will have a special handstamp and a Scottish definitive. A limited number will have a commemorative stamp featuring Scott. These will be the 9p (1972), the 68p (2003) or the 1st class from a miniature sheet (2012).

Each cover will have a descriptive insert.

The costs including postage & packing will be:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| 1st class Scottish definitive | £3 |
| 1972 9p plus 2nd class stamp | £4 |
| 2003 68p | £5 |
| 2012 1st class ex miniature sheet | £5 |

A few unserviced covers may be available at a cost of £2 inclusive of postage.

Queries about the cover should be e-mailed to dundeephilatelic@btinternet.com

Orders, with payment, be sent to Colin Campbell, 11 Denoon Terrace, Dundee DD2 2EL

Cheques (drawn on a UK Bank) should be made payable to *Dundee & District Philatelic Society*

Further information will appear in the society's web-site at www.dundeephilatelic.org

Please note that this web-site is being revised.

GROUP MEMBERS

ABPS NATIONAL PHILATELIC EXHIBITION PERTH 2012

19 Oct 2012 - 20 Oct 2012 | Perth, Scotland

The Association of Scottish Philatelic Societies will be hosting an Association of British Philatelic Societies (ABPS) national exhibition in 2012 in Perth. The exhibition is being held in October, replacing the Scottish Philatelic Trade Association's Scotex fair that year. The Dewars Centre will be used with additional dealers likely to be present compared with the Association's Congress and Scotex.

The Philatelic Congress of Great Britain will also be hosted by the Association. It will open as the exhibition closes at the Queen's Hotel, Perth.

The ABPS Inter-Federation trophy will also be competed for.

See: <http://perth2012.homestead.com>

DATE FOR YOUR DIARIES: A BTA MEETING WILL BE HELD AT THIS EVENT,
OPEN TO MEMBERS AND NON-MEMBERS

We offer a warm welcome to all. If London and the South is not convenient for you
then please consider making our Scotland meeting.

Full details will be on the web site and in June *Themescene*

GROUP NEWS

MASONIC PHILATELIC CLUB

Please note that the club has a new Secretary. Maurice Beesley has stepped down after many years of service. From now on please contact:

Mr Peter Nason

3 Van Dyck Road

Colchester

Essex

CO3 4QD



Telephone 01206 570544

Email pnason@aol.com

Themescene is always pleased to publish news from
Group members. Just email a few lines to the Editor

GROUP MEMBERS

Alba Stamp Group

Mr. S. Brown, 14 Buchan Drive, Perth, PH1 1NQ.

Astro Space Stamp Society

Mr. H. Duncan, 16 Begg Avenue, Falkirk, FK1 5DL

Web: <http://astropacestampssociety.com/>

Bicycle Stamps Club

Mr. B. J. Sole, 3 Stockfield Road, Claygate, Esher, Surrey KT10 0QJ.

Web: <http://www.members.tripod.com/~bicyclestamps/>

Bird Stamp Society

Mr G. Horsman, 23a East Main Street, Blackburn, West Lothian, EH47 7QR.

Web: <http://www.birdstampssociety.org>

Captain Cook Society

Mr I. A. Peel, 13 Caudry Close, Thornhill, Dewsbury, West Yorkshire, WF12 0LW.

Web: <http://www.captaincooksociety.com/ccsu1.htm>

Concorde Study Circle

Mr B. L. Asquith, Alandale, Radcliffe Gardens, Carshalton Beeches, Surrey,

SM5 4PQ. Web: http://www.concorde-jet.com/e_concorde_study_circle.htm

Glasgow Thematic Society

Mrs M. Mathieson, 17 Hairmyers Park, East Kilbride, Glasgow, G75 8SS.

Guild of St. Gabriel

Rev. D. C. Hague, 16 Filder Close, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN22 8SY.

Masonic Philatelic Club

Mr. M. Beazley, 216 West Dyke Road, Redcar, N. Yorks, TS10 4JS

Web: <http://www.masonicphilatelicclub.org.uk/>

Scout and Guide Stamp Club

Mr. T. Simister, 1 Falcon Way, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 8AY

Web: <http://www.sgsc.org.uk/index.shtml>

Ship Stamp Society

Mr. T. Broadley, 10 Heyes Drive, Lymm, Cheshire, WA13 0PB.

Web: http://www.chez.com/philateliemarine/phil_mar_e/SSS.htm

West of England Thematic Society

Mrs. G. Gray, 6 Compton Avenue, Mannamead, Plymouth, Devon, PL3 5BZ

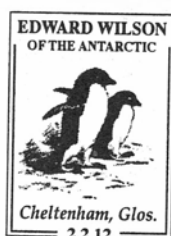
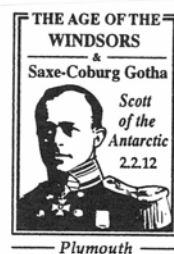
Web: <http://www.wessexpf.org.uk/WETS/>

HANDSTAMP SPECIAL

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WEB SITES FOR THEMATIC COLLECTORS

Barry Stagg trawls the Web

Now that I have my PC back – my son has been doing exams recently and using the PC all hours of the day and night – I have been able to collate some of my favourite philatelic sites. I hope you find something interesting in this second article on web sites – let me know if you do.

I like collecting postcards on a thematic theme. If you are new to this aspect of the hobby then try www.michael-eastick.com. or www.postcard.co.uk. The latter contains details of dealers, fairs in the UK, and a host of useful information for experienced and novice collectors alike.



I love Maximum cards. The variety, the colours, the topics they cover makes them an interesting and rewarding part of any thematic collection. There are so many web sites covering Maximum cards (249 million according to Google!!) it is difficult to pick one. But I have. Try 'The Wonderful World of Maximum Cards' at www.virginstamps.com/world_maximum_cards_maximaphily_cartoline_maximum.html. It has a bit of history on Maximum cards and an easy to use search engine.

Any article on web sites of interest to thematic collectors must mention the American Topical Association. It can be found at <http://americantopicalassn.org/home.shtml>. I can't do this web site justice in just a short paragraph but I do urge you to look at it as it contains so much interesting material. It is particularly interesting if you are trying to encourage young people into thematic collecting as it has a section just for the young collector.

If you want to have a look at a general thematic site then have a look at www.thematics4u.com. It claims to be the largest thematic stamp dealer in Europe. I can't verify that statement but it does have a large stock.



ATM stamps are now available from over 60 countries and are a rich source for thematic collectors. May I suggest you investigate www.ateeme.net/angles/welcome_a.html if you want to get an idea of what philatelic information is available. The site contains a lot of good history about ATMs and a good search engine to help you find thematic ATMs. And if you can read German then have a look at www.atms.ch. It contains a lot of current information on ATM stamps.



Knowing that a philatelic item exists is perhaps the greatest challenge for a thematic collector. I do spend a lot of time looking through illustrated lists of stamp issues. For instance I use www.stamprussia.com/stamp.htm which lists all the Russian stamps from 1918 to 1981 or www.allworldstamps.com that lists the stamps from over 20 countries of the world over hundreds of pages. The basic lists are available free of charge but if you want to see the images and much of the details of the stamps then there is a subscription charge. Good hunting!

I must admit I'm a bit of a Luddite as far as social networking is concerned! I have what my daughter calls a presence on Facebook but why I would want to be 'friends' with people I've never heard of I don't know! As for Twitter and Blogs: I just don't get the point. If I want to keep a diary then pen and paper sounds good to me. But putting aside my Luddite tendencies I did spend some time looking at philatelic Facebook and Twitter sites and found them wanting. Many dealers and stamp authorities use them for advertising with little if any unique information. And to be honest I've better things to do than monitor my phone for the latest tweet! I shall stick to web sites for the time being. But Blogs are a little more interesting. May I suggest three to have a look at:

www.stampcollectingblog.com.

www.blogs.com/topten/the-philatelic-databases-top-10-stamp-blogs

<http://www.collectiblestamp.org/10-great-stamp-blogs/>.

The first one is a Blog from 'an ordinary collector'. It has some interesting philatelic information, whereas the second one is a Blog listing the top ten philatelic sites. It claims to 'be a veritable cornucopia of philatelic knowledge'. The last Blog is a little more modest and contains another top ten list of stamp Blogs. These Blogs are not specifically thematic but more for the generalist; however, they do contain useful material if you have a spare hour or two.

Thank you for reading this far! I hope you have found this article useful and have managed to find some new items or new information to make your thematic collection even more interesting. My son now wants the PC back – some homework involving YouTube! Or so he says. ☹

JUST4KIDS

By Lise Whittle

(Adult members - please photocopy these pages and pass them on to a youngster you know, and perhaps include some stamps to help them.

When you photocopy this, please enlarge each page to A4 size (enlarge to 141%).

Thank you

What is Planet Stamp? Is it to do with space stamps? Or little green aliens sending letters to each other? Or a post office on a space ship?

No! **Planet Stamp** is a website for Kids who collect stamps. Type www.planetstamp.co.uk in your computer search engine, or google 'planetstamp' and it will lead you to the website. This is what you will find:



HOME PAGE:



When you arrive at the website, you will find yourself on the 'HOME' page. A friendly little green alien called Perfy greets you and tells you about everything on the site and where to find it. Underneath the strip of pictures you will see 'WHERE DO I FIND?' – click on it and you will see an index to the whole site. Then click your computer's back arrow (usually at the top left of your screen) to go back to the 'HOME' page

ROCKET NEWS:

Perfy says: "If you want to know about any competitions or displays then Rocket News is for you."

So click on the 'Rocket News' picture in the strip at the top. (see arrow below).

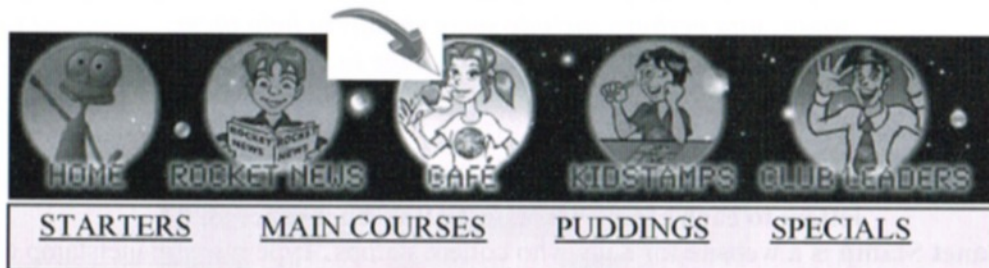


You'll find two sections under the strip called 'NEWS' and 'COMPETITIONS' and you can click on them to give you lots of information about stamp competitions you can enter, and the names of winners.

When you have finished in this area, click on the 'HOME' picture again.

CAFE: Perfy says: “If you are new to stamps then get right over to the café where you will find lots and loads of information about stamps, what they are and how to look after them and collect them.”

So click on the ‘Cafe’ picture in the strip at the top (see arrow below).



This is a very useful part of the website, and there are lots of stamps to look at too. Under the strip you will find the four headings – STARTERS, MAIN COURSES, PUDDINGS and SPECIALS. When you click on them you find even more sub-headings to click on to help you find out all about how to collect stamps, how to use an album, what a catalogue is, mounting your stamps, arranging your stamps on a page, using tweezers, perforations, famous stamp collectors – there is a lot to read about, and there are lots of colourful stamps to look at – even a Shrek stamp!

When you have finished in this area, click on the ‘HOME’ symbol again.

KIDSTAMPS: Perfy says; “If you want some fun and games and some less serious activity then Kidstamps has a range of things you will enjoy.”

So click on the ‘Kidstamps’ picture in the strip at the top (see arrow below).



Under the strip you will find lots more headings and sub-headings which you can click on for even more info, some good games, and some animals sticking their tongues out at you under ‘Do You Know’! Try ‘Wierd But True’ and click on the sub-heading ‘101 Facts About Stamps’ – there aren’t many pictures, but you’ll find some pretty amazing facts about stamps, such as the world’s rarest stamp which is a Swedish stamp called a ‘Treskilling Yellow’ and sold for \$2.5 million in 1996!!!! Under the sub-heading ‘WELCOME’ you can join the Kidstamps Club and get some free stamps.

The final section on the website is called ‘CLUB LEADERS’ and guess what? It’s intended for Club Leaders (but you could tell your Class Teacher about it).

When you have had a look at all the different sections, why not go back and have another look at your favourite bits?

www.planetstamp.co.uk

LIBRARY LISTING

If you would like to receive a list of articles on your topic(s), send a stamped sae to the Librarian (contact details inside front page). To assist, he will quote the current postal rates when he sends the list.

If you are interested in borrowing any articles then give him a ring and he will advise how to proceed.

Members asking to borrow books and catalogues are not required to pay the cost of outward posting, only the return cost.

BOOKS

Floyd, Barry *Charles Darwin: his life through commemorative stamps* 2011
D. S. Media Resources, Malaysia
407 grams

JOURNAL ARTICLES

Art

- | | | | |
|---|-----------|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 6 | Floyd, B. | Miniature works of art | Gibbons Stamp Monthly 6/2011 |
|---|-----------|------------------------|---------------------------------|

Astronomy

- | | | | |
|---|------------|----------------------------------------|---------------|
| 6 | Beenen, J. | Galileo Galilei | Orbit 10/2009 |
| 3 | Morris, M. | Christopher Wren: astronomer | Orbit 3/2009 |
| 2 | Wekka, S. | Our astonishing Nicholas Copernicus | Orbit 10/200 |

Cinema

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|---|------------|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 2 | Baker, J. | La Baker | Topical Time 10/2010 |
| 3 | Dodson, L. | Jules Verne's Journey to the Centre of the Earth | Topical Time 10/2010 |

Geysers

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|---|-----------|-------------------------|------------------|
| 2 | Bantz, H. | About geysers on stamps | ThemNews 11/2010 |
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History

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| 4 | Keppel A. | Escape from the Cape | Stamp Magazine 10/2011 |
| 3 | Scannell, C. | Alexander the Great | Topical Times 12/2010 |

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| 3 | Van Greunen, E. | Other decorations of the British and Commonwealth | ThemNews 5/2010 |
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- 5 Stagg, B. Defying gravity Stamp Magazine 9/2010

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- 4 Cranford, B. Collecting U.S. space covers Orbit 6/2009
8 History of the International Space Station Orbit 6/2010

Surveying

- 8 Kessler, F. Measuring and surveying on stamps Orbit 6 and 10/2009

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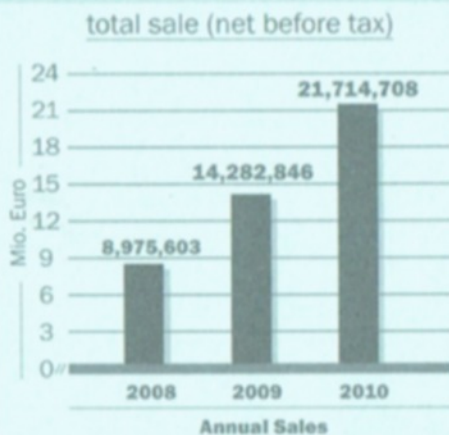
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