

THEMESCENE

March 2017

In this issue we:

Can't believe our eyes!

Hou Done It!

With Jeff Dugdale

Go back to childhood

Beatrix Potter

With Barry Floyd



Consider a deeper meaning

Stamps Defining Social History

With Chris Yardley

Look at some serious postal history

Cocoon of a Silkworm

With Vladimir Kachan



Investigate Postal Aspects of World War II

A Jewish Ghetto

With Rabbi Zaiden

BRITISH THEMATIC ASSOCIATION

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Hou Done it! page 4

Houdini was Harry Houdini (1874-1926), the "Escape Artist." He was the first man who released snakes and escaped all odds. His Houdini's remarkable talents, spring from his son. He was the greatest escape artist, the will beyond performer and audience and make them part of his. From through most swallowing, his escape, escapes, escapes and escaping the impossible. Houdini's conviction with death unshaken and for his only death sleeping with his hands. He kept his public, -believed it, and was

HARRY HOUDINI
 ENJOY THE MAGIC OF STAMPS

Beatrix Potter, page 8

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Beatrix Potter

Beatrix's Drawings

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EDITORIAL

Wendy Buckle


A new year (or at least it feels like it when I'm writing this in February). So thank you to all those of you who have already renewed your membership. If you have not yet paid, a reminder will be found enclosed with this edition of *Themescene*. We would really appreciate it if you could return it as soon as possible.

We are very pleased to welcome a new member to the Association: Malcolm Gascoyne. And congratulations to two of our members who have taken up new roles in the Thematic Commission Bureau of the Fédération Internationale de Philatélie: Peter Suhadolc has been elected Chairman, and Tono Putranto Secretary.

We are delighted to welcome a number of new advertisers to the magazine. If you do contact them (and it would be great if you do) please make sure you tell them you are responding to an advert in *Themescene*.

And here is my perennial request: if you, dear reader, are interested in contributing an article to *Themescene*, please let me know. I'm always grateful to my regular contributors - without them there would be no issue - but I am equally interested in involving as much of our membership as possible, covering as many topics as possible. It doesn't have to be a long piece: Grave Davies' story on page 22 makes an interesting anecdote, and I'm sure many of you could supply something similar. I would also be very happy to feature news from our Affiliated Groups, including publicity for their future events. I really don't mind when you send something in, but deadlines for specific issues in 2017 will be:

June	07 May
September	06 August
December	05 November

Finally, our programme for 2017 will be found on page 36. We would welcome as many people as possible to our first meeting of the year. Last time we held a joint meeting with Gabriel (in 2014) it was very well attended, and sixteen people put up displays. Can we increase that this time? 

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CHAIRMAN

Barry Stagg

This time of the year is a time of great conflict for me. A time of indecision and worry. Should I continue to write up my stamp collection or look after my large collection of daffodils that are already starting to flower in early February! A few years ago I thought my two passions in life, philately and gardening, matched each other well. Gardening in the summer and philately in the winter months. But that boundary has become blurred over the past few years as both interests have expanded. As I write this STAMPEX is in a few weeks' time and this will be followed by a host of shows and fairs up and down the country. Yet daffodils will need to be fed and watered, other plant and vegetable seeds need to be sown and transplanted. What should I do first!? Perhaps it is fortunate that I'm now retired and have more free time (my wife may dispute that!) or perhaps retirement IS the problem! Whatever is the answer I hope you have a good philatelic hunting season (and I hope your plants grow well!).

I often ask myself why I put myself in such a position of having too much to do, and to be honest the answer is always the same – the feeling of immense satisfaction of finding that elusive item for my collection or growing that perfect daffodil that out-shines them all. So I do like going to shows and fairs to try and find items for the collection. Often I fail to find a single item but I still had fun hunting for it. I love going to shows and gardens to see the beauty of the material that I will never own, but just like gardening I believe the passion is not about ownership it is about the hunt, the thrill of the find.

Over the past years much has been said about the declining numbers of people in this country who have traditional pastimes like gardening or philately. Questions have been asked by many like 'how to get young people involved' so that philately (or gardening) does not 'die'. I believe that sowing seeds is the key. That, and an easy to find presence so that when the seedling develops it can find like-minded people easily. Let's make sure that philately keeps itself visible to the young and perhaps later in life they will find us on the Web when their interest and time allows them. This is why our web site is so important for us for the future. We hope to add to the site over the next year and, just like a tall daffodil, it will become a beacon for Thematic, Open and Postcards collectors for generations to come. 📖



HOU DONE IT!

Jeff Dugdale

“**H**arry Houdini” was the professional name taken by the Hungarian-American entertainer Erik Weisz, born in Budapest in 1874. He went on to gain a reputation as a world-class magician, illusionist, escape artist, dare-devil and film actor - in his own time as famous and astonishing as any modern entertainer in this field like Doug Hemming, David Copperfield, David Blaine or Dynamo.

Weisz was born into a Jewish family, his father Rabbi Mayer Samuel Weisz. His mother was Cecilia Steiner, who arrived in the United States with five children, including Erik, aged four. Soon - in common with many immigrant families to the New World - the family name was changed to Weiss to sound a little less Teutonic, and the boy began to be called “Ehrie” and sometimes “Harry”. When his father rejoined the family he served as rabbi to the Zion Reform Jewish Congregation of Appleton, Wisconsin.

Then the family moved to New York and the athletic young Ehrie was performing as “Prince of the Air” in a trapeze group by the age of nine. In the early days of his public career as a magician Weiss took the stage name of “Harry Houdini” in tribute to the famous French illusionist and magician Jean Eugene Robert-Houdin (1805-71). Weiss had read much about a man who was originally a hero to him, and was fascinated by his trademark illusions such as mind-reading, levitation and his *pièces de résistance* “The Marvellous Orange Tree” and “The Light and Heavy Box”. (Later Houdini would write a book explaining these illusions and debunking his former idol).

Houdini’s magic career in which he specialised in close up tricks in saloons whilst in his late teens brought him little success and he began to diversify into escape stunts in order to make him different from the scores of other card-tricksters.

Working with his brother Theodore as The Brothers Houdini, Harry met his future wife, Bess Rahner who was also a performer, and soon after marriage in 1894 the couple became The Houdinis, with his wife supporting his illusions as “my glamorous assistant”.

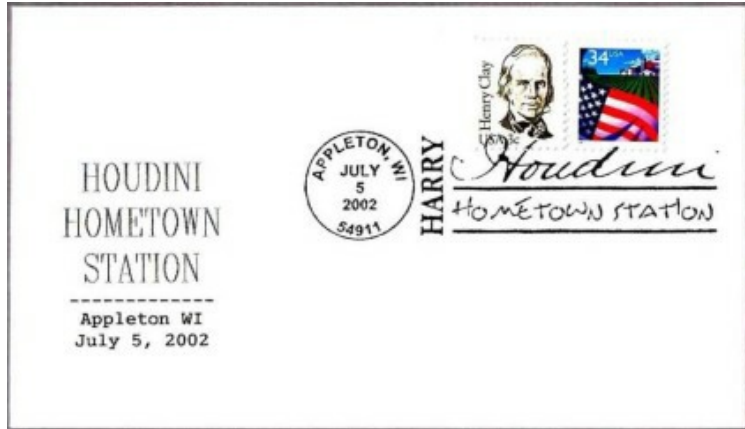
By the turn of the century, now under the guidance of manager and entrepreneur Martin Beck, the Houdinis were working on the vaudeville circuit both in America and in London’s West End where Houdini was booked for a six month stint at The Alhambra. At this time vaudeville, which later developed into “the variety show” was very big as entertainment in Europe and the US. The postcard on the next page shows the imposing vaudeville theatre in Paris, 1900.

By this time Houdini’s specialism was escaping from handcuffs, which he did in almost every European major city, first challenging police officers to ensure he was properly shackled. He became one of the major showmen of the time, was beginning to build a fortune, and returned to live in an imposing house in Harlem, NY City, becoming the highest paid entertainer in the US for many years. However, because both his name and his specialities were being imitated widely he moved on, developing an escape from a locked and water filled milk can (see Chad stamp next page). To keep his act fresh Houdini began using the same secret techniques to escape from a variety of secured objects, including the belly of a beached whale.

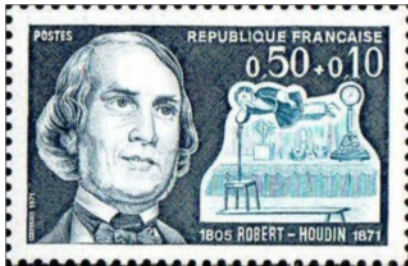
Now feeling able to emulate his one-time hero Robert-Houdin, Houdini decided to establish a signature trick which he called The Chinese Water Torture Cell, as seen in the photo on the next page. This trick, which he performed regularly until his death, required



Houdini, USA 2002



Appleton, Wisconsin, where his father served as Rabbi



Jean Eugene Robert-Houdin



Vaudeville Theatre in Paris 1900



Escaping from a locked water tank



Aviation in Australia



Chinese water torture cell

the entertainer to hold his breath for over three minutes, which as a specialist swimmer in his youth he was well capable of achieving.

By 1909 he was so successful that he was confident enough to reveal to fellow professionals in print some of his trade secrets, which involved picking locks with the brass aglets of his bootlaces, and via concealed picks and keys (sometimes regurgitated or removed from other body orifices) and escaping from a straitjacket by dislocating his shoulders at will.

Diversifying his trickery further he “dematerialised” large objects in public. For example at the Hippodrome in NY he made a full grown elephant vanish “before your very eyes!”

He established the magic company Martinka and was President of the Society of American Magicians from 1917 until he died. This role was no sinecure and wherever he went Houdini would energise local magicians to group together and build up their form of public entertainment. He was no arrogant prima donna, and addressed large groups of budding entertainers wherever he went in order to promote the fun and fascination of magic and illusion.

Towards the end of his life Houdini began to work on his famous “buried alive” stunt which endangered his life more than once. Notably in 1915 in Santa Ana, CA he had to call for help as he was exhausted trying to claw through six feet of earth - for people’s entertainment! At other times he managed to remain in an enclosed and sealed compartment with little air for over ninety minutes, all of which he claimed was achieved simply through controlling his breathing.

From 1906 until his death twenty years later, Houdini made occasional movies as director and performer, often publicising his tricks and stunts, but the movies did not provide the success or satisfaction that live entertainment gave him. Nevertheless he was so famous in himself that he gained a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Another area of fascination for Houdini, and one which because of his wealth he was able to indulge in, was aviation, much of which he did in Australia, in a French Voison biplane; though his claims to be the first person to fly in that country do not appear to be true. Nevertheless Australia issued a stamp in 2010 giving Houdini credit for an early flight without making the historical claim that he was a pioneer.


Houdini from his early days as an entertainer, somewhat ironically since he made his money as an illusionist, was keen to expose fraudsters in his profession, as with his book about his one-time hero Robert-Houdin. Late in life he turned his attentions to exposing spiritualist charlatans who were making money out of gullible newly bereaved persons by fake effects in séances. These deceptions included levitation, glowing spirit lights and hands, all of which could be simulated quite easily (with use of phosphorous) for those who wanted to believe them in the gloom of their salons. These practices led to the well known question, “Where was Moses when the light went out?” which referred to the spiritualist Stainton Moses (1839-92) one of whose tricks was to levitate and float out of one window and back via another!

One close friend of Houdini was the writer Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1859-1930) who firmly believed in spiritualism and spirit powers and therefore believed that the American entertainer had achieved so much by using powers. When Houdini set out to expose fraudulent spiritualists like Mina Crandon, Conan Doyle took exception and his friendship with the American evaporated, as it were. (Houdini promised his wife that once he had died he would try to communicate with her using a secret code phrase, and even today

magicians who have come to hold Houdini as a paragon hold séances to try to communicate with him).

After so many dare-devil and death-defying events in his life Houdini died in a Detroit hospital bed from peritonitis following a ruptured appendix on the last day of October 1926. But the exact circumstances are shrouded in mystery. This injury may well have been caused when Houdini, who famously allowed all comers to punch him in the solar plexus - but only when he was ready for it - was hit by a McGill University student called Gordon Whitehead. Following the incident, in which the showman took blows whilst he was sitting down and resting an ankle broken some days before, he performed that night in great pain and was in considerable distress for a further two days, after which he consulted a doctor, presenting with a temperature of 39° suggesting widespread infection. He refused the given advice that surgery was required immediately, adopting a “show must go on” attitude and with his temperature even higher he performed at the Garrick Theater that night, though he appears to have fainted at least once during the performance. At that point he was taken to hospital, but of course with the poison coursing through his body for days it was too late and he died in agony.

He was buried in New York on November 4th and his body interred in the Machpelah Cemetery, Glendale, Queens. Though graven images are forbidden in most Jewish cemeteries a bust of his head was added to his gravestone, though it was later destroyed.

Conspiracy theories exist involving the possibility that the great showman was murdered because of his hostile attitude to spiritualism. Whatever, as for all of us there was one challenge out of which the great escapologist could not extricate himself. 

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BEATRIX POTTER

Barry Floyd

Royal Mail has featured Beatrix Potter more than once: 1979 the 9p stamp in “Year of the Child” issue; 1993 Prestige Booklet, 2006 first-class denomination in the “Animal Tales” series, and last year a set of ten stamps and a prestige booklet celebrating the 150th anniversary of the birth of Beatrix Potter (28 July 1866 - 22 December 1943); one of the world’s best-selling and best loved children’s authors. She wrote and illustrated some 28 books that have been sold throughout the world in many languages, and the stories have been retold in song, film, ballet and animation.



The best known story is that of *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* which first appeared in 1902. During her childhood in London, where she was educated at home by several governesses, Beatrix kept a variety of pets in the schoolroom, among them rabbits, newts, snails, mice, a frog and a snake. These were all carefully and accurately drawn, to the encouragement of her tutors. It was these youthful skills that would later mark Beatrix as a distinguished naturalist. Persistent observation of her pets and honing of her artistic skills meant that on reaching maturity Beatrix was able to create the delightful illustrations reproduced by Royal Mail and other stamp-issuing authorities.

With the success of the Peter Rabbit book Beatrix was encouraged to tackle other tales, drawing upon the menagerie of little creatures under the family roof or viewed in nearby gardens. In 1903 *The Tale of Squirrel Nutkin* appeared, followed closely by *The Tailor of Gloucester*. Enormously successful, twenty more little books followed over the years at a rate of two or three a year. Showing entrepreneurial initiative Beatrix Potter registered a Peter Rabbit doll in 1903, recognising that spin-off merchandise such as board games, colouring books and her animals depicted on children’s wallpapers would be marketable assets to her work.

While Beatrix had grown up in London, under privileged circumstances, her parents had regularly taken her and her younger brother Walter on lengthy summer holidays in the countryside, first in Scotland and later in the Lake District. It was on these visits away from London that Beatrix cultivated an enduring appreciation of the natural world. She delighted in exploring the environment and sketching flora and fauna. By the age of eight she was recoding the characteristics of caterpillars in a homemade notebook, and later she dissected animals and observed specimens under her brother’s microscope. Her passion for scientific investigation later culminated in a paper on the germination of fungal spores. This was read to the Linnean Society on her behalf by a mycologist from the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, since women could not attend meetings. But the study justifies including Miss Potter within the ranks of the natural scientists of her day.

Country life appealed so deeply that as soon as conditions permitted she would opt to make her future home there and to escape from “an unloved birthplace”. With royalties from *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* and subsequent books, together with a legacy from an aunt, Beatrix was able in 1905 to buy Hill Top Farm, a small working property in Near Sawtry, a village in the English Lake District.


Following a successful collaboration with her publisher Beatrix became unofficially engaged to Norman Warne (of Frederick Warne & Co.), but tragically he died of leukaemia



shortly after her move to Hill Top. The farm became her sanctuary, a place where she could sketch and paint, write more animal stories for children, and begin to learn the rudiments of animal husbandry. With acquired land management skills and profits from continued publishing Beatrix was able to purchase additional farms and to help preserve the unique hill country landscapes of the Lakes. She is credited with preserving much of the land that now constitutes the Lake District National Park. Fifteen farms and over 4,000 acres were bequeathed to the National Trust.

Beatrix is particularly noted for having been a prize-winning breeder of Herdwick sheep: a distinctive feature of the vales and fells of the Lakes. In 1913, at the age of 47, she married William Heelis, a respected local solicitor from Hawkshead. They moved to Castle Farm and together became enthusiastic supporters of land conservation, serving on committees to improve rural living and acting as land agents for numerous Lake District farms.

Beatrix continued to write and illustrate, and to design merchandise based upon her children's books, but her mounting work on land management planning, together with her enthusiasm for farming, meant she had less time for painting and writing. An unfortunate deterioration in her eyesight meant that her literary endeavours had finally to draw to a close. Her last book *The Tale of Little Pig Robinson* was published in 1930.

Beatrix Potter was clearly a woman of immense talent, indefatigable spirit, and a generous heart. She died in 1943 at the age of 77 in her home in Near Sawtrey. In her will she left 4,000 acres of land, sixteen farms, cottages and herds of cattle and Herdwick sheep to the National Trust, plus nearly all the original illustrations to her books. More generally she bequeathed a superb collection of loveable children's stories to the world which continue to be enjoyed to this day. 

References

The Beatrix Potter Society. <http://beatrixpottersociety.org.uk/>

Victoria and Albert Museum www.vam.ac.uk/page/b/beatrix-potter/

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POSTAGE STAMPS DEFINING SOCIAL HISTORY: AN EXAMPLE OF COLD-WAR POLITICS

Chris Yardley

Introduction

A postage stamp is a ‘time capsule’, a representation of an ideal or a situation at a certain point in time. For approaching two centuries, the images on postage stamps have been used to convey messages from the government of the day to the general public. Science has been used to enhance those messages for the past nine decades. In this article I explore the ways in which science and scientists have been portrayed on stamps, and I look at the ideas and, in some cases the propaganda that underpins them, using the stamps of Russia and of Germany during the time Germany was politically partitioned, 1948-1990.

The stamp as a communication device

Postage stamps are issued in huge numbers. The US Postal Service, for example, prints 50 million as an initial print run for some commemoratives. Postage stamps are distributed to, and by, the general public across the country of issue and the whole world. The message contained within the stamp has a lasting life – for as long as an example of the item is contained in a collection. The life of a postage stamp is, however, prolonged with seemingly no time limit through the hobby of stamp collecting. Public and private auctions attract sellers and buyers for the very earliest stamps to the very latest.

Javier Perez de Cuellar, United Nations Secretary General, assessing the role that postage stamps play in achieving the United Nations goals has stated that “Stamps are a form of communication and culture. They carry a message of their own and lead to world understanding”. Just as newspapers and electronic media are analysed for the meaning and impact of their messages, so too stamps offer an opportunity for this kind of analysis.

Postage stamps provide a means of communication between the issuing authority and members of the general public who buy and use them. During the passage of mail, several people may be exposed to the message contained in and by the narrative of the stamp, be it visual or textual or a combination of both. For more than one hundred years the issuing authority has been an actual agency of government. Today the postal authority will be a state-owned enterprise reporting to a minister of government, and is still seen as an official medium for the dissemination of messages from government. Since there is only a short window of exposure, the message must be carefully crafted. Thus any science messages not only represent a government view but will inform the way in which science itself is viewed at that time, in that place.

Soviet Russia and East Germany

Introduction

Two countries provide significant examples of the use of science messages to promote national plans or projects. These are Soviet Russia (USSR) 1923-1991 which contracted to the Russian Federation in 1992, East Germany that existed as a constitutional entity within the ‘Eastern Bloc’ in Europe from 1949-1990 and West Germany. The Russian postal images

are of a larger format than ‘normal’ and somewhat ‘monumental’ in the use of the images drawn for the issue. Photographs are rarely used.

Russia

The stamps of the two earliest stamp issuing Russian constitutions, the Empire of all the Russias, 1855-1917, and the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic, (RSFSR), 1917-1923, featured a mixture of patriotic images with generic representations of agriculture and industry, most usually featuring a hammer and sickle. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) was formed in 1923. The first stamp issued by the USSR celebrated the 1923 Agricultural Exhibition in Moscow and showed images of generic reapers and sowers, using hand tools. The first science and technology image was also included. It shows a tractor. (left). Russia purchased 25,000 Fordson tractors from the Ford Company in the US between 1921-1927. In 1924, the Leningrad plant “Red Putilovet” started production of Fordson-Putilovets tractors for home consumption. The stamp is a lens bringing into focus the introduction of science and technology to Russia.

In the post-Stalin years, which are after 1953, Communist Party platforms continued to occupy a prominent place on Soviet stamps but were presented in a different manner. Gone were the brief heroic slogans of the Stalin era that urged economic mobilization, and in their place were rather lengthy excerpts from Party Congresses.

The science stamps of the USSR until 1959 had established a trend for the country to celebrate an individual scientist’s achievements mainly on birth or death anniversaries. Lomonosov and the Leningrad Academy of Sciences and Popov, as the ‘inventor of radio’ are the predominant individuals honoured. Exploration and the developing aviation industry feature in later sets. An *Aviation Day* is celebrated with long sets of 9 stamps of various designs.

I regard a 1951 set of 16 stamps with the title of *Russian Scientists* as significant, almost as if the issuing authority decided it was time to celebrate individual scientists. Within the set is the first female scientist to be honoured, Sofia Vasilyevna Kovalevskaya (1850-1891), recognized as the first major (Russian) female mathematician. The other five images shown below include a contextual indication of the scientists’ profession and are among the earliest stamps to do this. The remaining stamps are typical of the ‘poster’ style of Russian stamps



feature an individual, and minimum text without context, a style still used today.

Although these stamps feature contextual indications, as an aid to understanding the importance of the scientists, these icons are greatly overshadowed by the faces. The person is the focus here, not the work, and it is clear that the stamps are intended to emphasise Russia’s scientists as individuals achieving greatness on an international stage.

In 1959 the USSR issued its first overtly political message with a set of twelve stamps with a large figure ‘7’ representing the Communist Party Seven Year Plan. The images are

of a variety of manual workers and infrastructure but one stamp shows a generic, female chemist. The chemist is working under a forceful figure “7” which contains an upward arrow proclaiming a 300% target rise in chemicals production between 1958 and 1965.

In 1957 Russia announced to the world that it had launched the first artificial satellite, celebrated with a stamp issue. A second artificial satellite launch was commemorated the same year with a set of four stamps (“to the stars”) (Illustrations on next page). A symbolic female figure is shown standing upon a ‘globe’, the earth, gesturing towards the vapour trail of the rocket making its way to the stars. A building topped by a star-shape denotes the State’s endorsement of the venture. In this case, the news of Russian scientific achievement is given to the public through a (presumably) somewhat familiar iconic and romantic figure, which is exploited in a scientific context to convey a strong political message. The stamp mirrors Russian public pride in the event, while at the same time seeking to raise nationalistic feelings. With a range of service values it will be expected that the message will travel outside of Russia.

In 1958 the third artificial satellite was successfully launched. This stamp represents a marked change from the previous more subtle styles. The public is “being educated” here in an uncompromising manner. There is no room for misunderstanding this message about Russian science: it is being trumpeted for all to see and read through a nationalistic lens.

In 1959 the first launch of a moon rocket was celebrated with the title of *21st Congress of the Communist Party of the USSR*, one of a set of three. This stamp proclaims space research as a major achievement of the Party. It is symbolically expansive showing the title of the conference, the country index, the value plus the images of a moon rocket, and ‘sputnik’ satellites over a building that is flying the Russian flag.

The first and second manned space flights, those of Yuri Gagarin and Gherman Titov took place in 1961. Stamps commemorating these flights feature the images of the cosmonauts, the people whose achievements underlay the messages being relayed. Space research stamps appeared regularly from this date from Russia and the ‘Eastern Bloc’ countries and continued for almost 30 years.

Russia also featured its science and technology aspirations and achievements through the publication of the Communist Party Conferences and specific industry reviews (one example shown). All nine of the images show production targets to be achieved by 1980. It is worth noting that two of the four science images include a female worker. The signs of science and technology signify industrial progress. Science and technology are, in a sense, being *used* here to reinforce the political will and drive national aspirations. The extensive text in Russian suggests that the stamps were intended for local rather than international service.

Industrial Progress is also the message within the eight stamps of the 1965. These are definitive stamps covering a range of pre-payments for postal service. Previous political messages, it would appear, are intended for local use and their denomination pre-pays the within-country mail fees. These, however, show the images of a power station, steel works, chemical works and formula, machine tools production, building construction, agriculture, communications and transport with the highest value item showing scientific and space research. The purpose of these stamps issued with a range of service prices and minimal Russian text, therefore, is to indicate to the world outside Russia that industrial progress is taking place across a number of scientific disciplines. Goals are nowhere to be seen – only the present.

The 1966 definitive set of 12 Russian stamps includes many references to science and technology as a part of Russian life. Six of the issues promote science. The ‘hammer and sickle’ symbol of the Revolution appears regularly as it does on the National Emblem. Generic



Seven Year Plan



"To the Stars"



Third artificial satellite



Communist Party conferences



First launch of a moon rocket



Industrial Progress



Cosmic flights

1966 definitives



workers emphasise how science and technology development has influenced their lives. Every stamp contains a symbol of the State.

1967 saw the *50th anniversary of the October Revolution* that led to the establishment of the USSR. Ten large stamps were issued reflecting what were viewed as significant achievements during that time. Three of them show a science and technology interest and image. In each of these, science and technology is shown in a heroic context. Below are two stamps from the set. The first stamp defines the set with the date, the title of the commemoration, a Red Star and the Soviet Crest on a gold background. A hand-drawn firework display marks the celebratory nature of the set. The remaining nine stamps are embossed with the Soviet Crest and each has a title explaining the image. All ten stamps are of the same value and it is doubtful that anyone other than a collector would see all ten displayed at the one time.



In similar fashion, the *USSR 24th Soviet Union Party Congress Resolutions* of 1971 were also commemorated with the issue of a set of stamps. Two of the five images relate to science and technology and are shown below. The congress resolutions refer to Heavy Industry (“Industrial Expansion”) and Factory Production Lines (with the admonition “Increased Productivity”). Appropriate images put the list of resolutions for each industry into perspective.



These series of stamps demonstrate there is a clear desire to educate and inform, exemplified by the statement on the accompanying miniature sheet, which translates as “the main problem is to provide a significant increase of the material and cultural level of life of the people on the basis of high rates of development of socialist production, an increase in its effectiveness, scientific technical progress, and an acceleration of the growth of the productiveness of labour”.



The trend towards representing political anniversaries through a lens of scientific achievement continued until the establishment of the Russian Federation. And, of course, the USSR issued a long series of issues showing their space achievements, 46 of which featured Yuri Gagarin as ‘*the first man in space*’. The first ‘space’ research example was 1951 in which Konstantin Tsiolkovsky, rocket scientist, is described as the pioneer of the astronautic theory. He has been additionally honoured within four other issues. The USSR issued 168 separate sets of space stamps – approximately 350 different images. One 1961 stamp, issued after the first two manned space flights, is worthy of reproduction. It looks ahead to *cosmic flights* with the images of a space rocket leaving the earth, labeled USSR, into space shown with representative stars. The small amount of Russian text, the high service value and futuristic theme, in addition to the innovative printing (printed on aluminum-surfaced paper) suggest that the stamp was produced with international distribution and circulation in mind.

The Russian Federation was created in late 1991 and it continued promoting space research achievements: another 21 sets until 2011, by which time the celebration was the 50th anniversary of Yuri Gagarin’s first ever manned space flight. This short set of three celebrates the 1978 *Soviet-Polish space flight*, one of a series of space flights into which Russia had invited cosmonauts from other nations to elicit additional publicity. A number of Russian cosmonauts were honoured by having research vessels named after them, as well as being celebrated on postage stamps. These stamps, although officially honouring individual cosmonauts, do not show their faces as the dominant image. One has to search the stamp to discover the man who was so honoured, which therefore reduces the importance of the foreign cosmonauts in favour of a strong technological message. The political importance of the joint flight is shown, however, by the use of the Polish flag in juxtaposition to the Russian flag either side of the joint mission symbol.



Following the death of Stalin, science stamps were underrepresented until the event of Sputnik. Similarly, following the breakup of the Soviet Union, science stamps were relatively few. These facts illustrate the importance of science and technology in delivering political messages: during times of upheaval, the messages are less clear.

Summary – the science stamps of Russia

Twentieth century Russia sought to define itself as a modern global power through agricultural reform, rapid industrialization and the excellence of its science, embracing communist ideals represented and associated with the powerful icon of the ‘hammer and sickle’. Lenin and Marx, founders of the Revolution that brought the Communists to power, have been celebrated on stamps, and during Stalin’s period of power he was the face of the new ideology. Science and Technology have subsequently become icons of Russia’s progress. Stamps have been used to convey aspirational messages and strongly support Communist Party edicts as artifacts in everyday use.

NOTES FROM A VISIT TO WETS

Jean Alexander

Waterfalls of the World was the appropriate title of the display I presented to the WETS group in Buckfastleigh on 11 April 2015. This turned out to be more than expected. Normally the display is the same for most societies, only varying in the number of sheets and frames, which in some cases may curtail the content. Every so often a new item never before shown is added, and this happened in this case. The item added was a plain Argentina lettercard, unlike the many pictorial lettercards issued by Argentina at the end of the nineteenth century, and which had a photograph pasted on to the blank side.

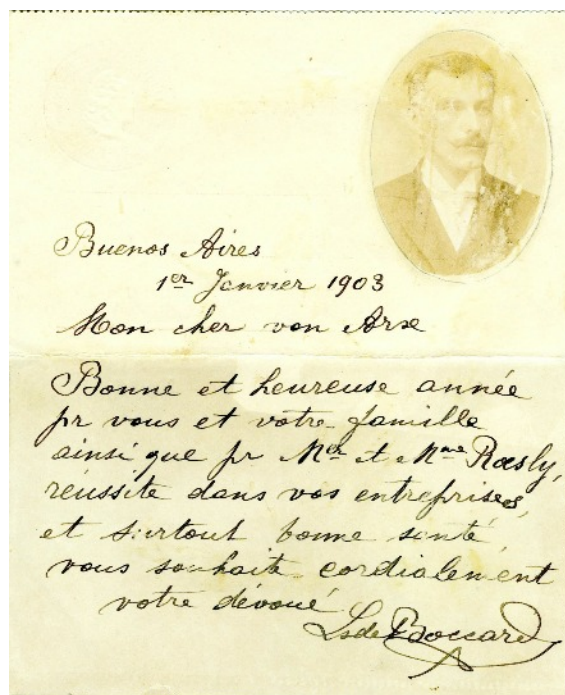
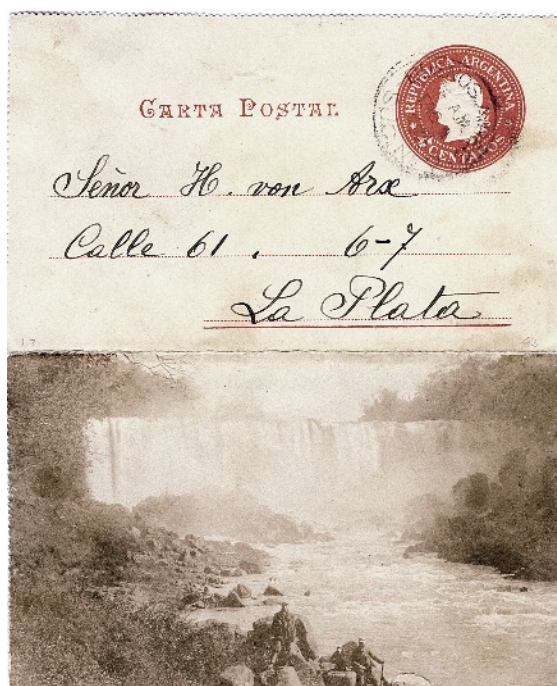
As can be seen here, this showed a lovely waterfall with two ‘hunters’ and a dog at the front. Inside however is a photograph showing what might be a writer’s portrait. Below the portrait is a letter in French wishing “A Happy New Year for 1903”.

One of the WETS members, a collector of France, became interested and curious about the contents of the letter and writer. A couple of days after the event I received an email giving details of the writer: Louis de Boccard, a known explorer of Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay. Born in Switzerland, he moved later to Paraguay working in the museum in La Plata. He was known for his explorations and use of photographs and postcards he produced of his travels. Many albums are known to exist of his postcards.

Further searching has produced his postcards on sale on both EBay and Delcampe.

Thank you very much to WETS for the invitation, and to David Roseveare for his help in the research. 📖

For full details of WETS go to: <http://www.wessexpf.org.uk/WETS/>



The stamp message exhorts the public to be a part of the 'revolution' as well as announcing to the World that this is a new Russia. The scientist, as an individual, has not been forgotten.

This analysis of Russia's scientific and technological stamps has clearly demonstrated how the stamps were used for political purposes. Many of the images can be classified as 'lenses' in that the message seeks to inform, direct or influence in a positive way the public's commitment to the ideology presided over by the Communist Party. One can distinguish the stamps that are intended for internal use compared to those whose service value implies they will have an international distribution. There is also a trend from images that send an internal message, such as the Five and Seven Year plans to one with a broader focus over time as Russia asserts its place in the world. In this respect there are parallels with the changing messages sent by China over the past 20 years. 📖

Part 2 of this article, featuring the stamps of East Germany, will be published in June Themescene.

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EARLY MATERIALS FEATURING THE COCOON OF A SILKWORM

Vladimir Kachan

For more than one thousand years man has been using beautiful textiles made of natural silk from chrysalises of the silkworm moth caterpillars. The first silk was produced only in China, called “shi”, after the Empress Hsi-Ling-Shi, who according to legend “discovered” silk four thousand years ago. She had tea in the garden, and a cocoon of a silkworm fell in her cup by chance. Trying to take it away by silk thread, she got the first thread, having unwound the chrysalis.


Silk fibre, from which chrysalises are composed, is the main material for silk production in the textile industry. Sericulture is part of the Brazilian economy. Brazil produces 14,000 tons of raw silk per year and ranks fourth in the world for its production. Prestamped letters of Brazil with the cancel “RIO 4” and cancel “FRANCA” in the form of a cocoon are known.

Sericulture in Spain was and still is still distributed in the regions of Valencia, Andalucia and Murcia, plus lesser production in Castille, Aragon and Catalonia. The City of Soria is situated in the Castille & Leon Autonomous Community and its local silk production is commercialised under the trademark “Soria silk”. In the period 1789-1839 Soria used red and black cancels in form of a cocoon.

In the early of 19th century Vienna prospered from sericulture. In 1841 it produced silk fabrics in Vienna to the value of 12 million guilders (61% of the whole of Austrian trading). Perhaps for this reason Vienna used a cancel in form of an oval cocoon shape in the period 1818- 1819.

For 1500 years, the Japanese have been making beautiful textiles of natural silk, prepared from the cocoons of the silkworm. Since 1911, Japan has been the world leader at natural silk production. The first special cancel in the world with a cocoon illustration was used in 1925 in Kobe/Hyogo for the Japan Silk Exhibition.

Natural silk is also used in medicine. Silk thread made from silkworm cocoons has been used in surgery as a suture material for nearly 1,000 years. Surgical suture material made from silkworm cocoons has remarkable properties: it is not rejected by the human body, it is thoroughly sterilized, and extremely thin and strong, which is very important for cosmetic and dental surgery.

I hope that my article will stimulate the interest of Lepidoptera philatelists into further research into butterflies and moths on cancels, covers and postal stationery. 

For further information on this subject see Themescene December 2005 “First philatelic materials with moths and silk” by the same author

The author is always glad to help philatelists with their philatelic exhibits of butterflies and insects. Please contact him at his address:

Vladimir Kachan, Areet Kulibina 9-49, Minsk-52, BY-220052, Republic of Belarus
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Rio 4 and Franca markings from Brazil, in a cocoon-shaped border



Soria (Spain) 1840 in cocoon-shaped marking



Vienna 1818



France 1659 with a silk thread attached

BTA LIBRARY AND THEMATIC LEAFLETS

As I hope you all know the BTA Committee decided that we should no longer keep a library of thematic books nor a collection of thematic leaflets/articles. Very few people used this resource and, with the growing use of the Internet, we don't see how that is going to change. We have decided to sell the books and give away the leaflets. The books are listed on the web and they cost between 50p and a maximum of £2 plus P&P. Please contact me if you would like one or more of them. Any books left by the end of June will be given to charity shops. The leaflets/articles are free; however, we have not listed the topics as there are hundreds if not thousands of them. If you would like one or more on a particular topic please contact me. Any left at the end of June will be heading for a paper recycling skip.

Barry (Chairman)

Lists will be found at

<http://www.britishthematic.org.uk/theme-checklists.htm>

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<http://www.britishthematic.org.uk/about/meet-your-committee.htm>

A HAPPY COINCIDENCE

Grace Davies, collector of 'Peace'

Sometimes a very modest item can bring life to a collection.

Werner Gattiker is a well-known Swiss dealer who happens to belong to the same stamp club as me, so was familiar with my collecting interest. One day, many years ago, he phoned to say he had a 1934 envelope which I might like as it had written on it 'Brotherhood of Peace and Reconciliation'. He didn't want anything for it so I said 'Yes, please' unseen.

When the envelope arrived I got very excited. On the top left hand corner was War Resisters' International, the organisation which brought my parents to England in 1939, and it was addressed to Grace Beaton in Enfield, the HQ of the WRI. Of course Werner hadn't known, but I did, that Grace Beaton was the International Secretary and I am named after her. So I persuaded my older sister to give me an original photo of a WRI gathering in Austria in 1928. Seated in the front row are my father (second from left) and Grace Beaton (seventh). I have mounted the cover and photo on the same page and it always causes interest. 📖



A Jewish Ghetto, next page



Ghetto issue 1



Ghetto issue 2



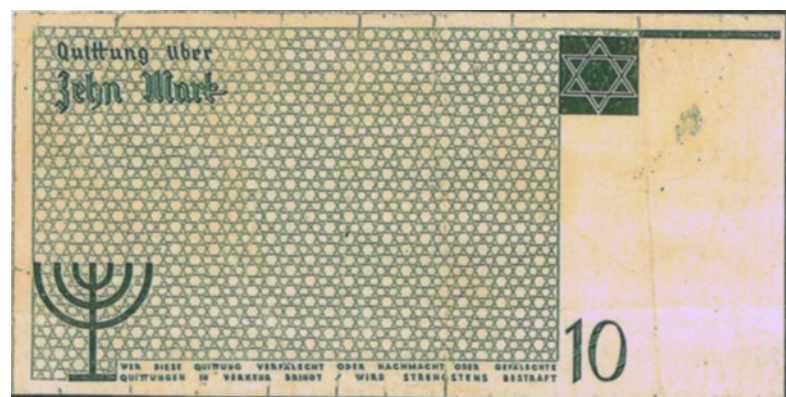
Commemorating the Ghetto



Karl Litzmann



Obverse and reverse of banknote



A JEWISH GHETTO

Rabbi Zaiden brings together stamps and banknotes

When the Germans invaded Poland in 1939 they changed the third-largest city of Poland from Łódź to Litzmannstadt. This event is of thematic interest for different reasons: the stamps and banknotes of the Ghetto; and the person after whom the city was renamed and the reasons for changing the name. This article will look only at the philatelic and numismatic creations of the creation of the Łódź Ghetto, not the tragedy of the Ghetto story itself.




Łódź had a Jewish population of approximately 250,000. They were moved into a ghetto area in the northern part of the city, and the Ghetto was closed on 03 May 1940. Personal interaction with the outside world was forbidden. The Germans appointed Chaim Mordechai Rumkowski as Elder of the Jews, or Head of the Jewish Council. He established post offices and in March 1944 issued two sets of stamps, though neither were in circulation for very long. The first issue was in denominations of 5pf and 10pf and the second issue in denominations of 5pf, 10pf and 20pf and featured a portrait of Rumkowski.

Banknotes, meanwhile, had been issued much earlier. When the Jews entered the Ghetto all their currency was confiscated and exchanged for Quittungen (receipts) which could be spent only in the Ghetto. The script was designed by the Judenrat (Jewish Council) and includes Jewish symbols. Notes to value of 50 Pfennig, and 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, and 50 Mark were issued on 15 May 1940, crudely produced on watermarked paper. Top left had a Star of David in a circle plus Quittung über (receipt for). The notes also gave place and date of issue along with “Der Alteste der Juden in Litzmannstadt” i.e. Elder of the Jews of Litzmannstadt, with the signature C. Rumkowski.

The eponymous Karl Litzmann was born in 1850 in Brandenburg. He joined the German Army in 1867 and rose in rank to command the 74th Infantry Brigade, the 39th Division, and the 3rd Guards Infantry Division. In 1914 he was the General at the victory of the Battle of Łódź between Germany and Russia. It was at this battle that he earned the nickname “The Lion of Brzeziny” and was awarded the Pour le Mérite with Oak Leaves (German Order of Merit).

In 1929 Litzmann became a member of the Nazi Party, having previously been a member of the SA (Sturmabteilung, or Storm Troopers). In 1932 he was elected to the Reichstadt but declined to serve as he felt that he had responsibilities to the Prussian State Parliament (where he was known as the Father of the House).

Litzmann died in 1936. After the Nazi invasion of Poland, on 11th April 1940 the city of Łódź was officially renamed in his honour.

Litzmann left a son Karl Sigmund; and a daughter Ameline who married Walter Lehwets, who was half Jewish. Their son Walter, was a major in World War II, a fighter pilot in the Luftwaffe who successfully flew 160 missions with the Ju88 twin-engined medium bomber. He earned the Knight’s Cross of the Iron Cross. 

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EXHIBITING PAGE 1: MORE THAN JUST STAMPS

John Davies FRPSL

It seems that OPEN PHILATELY is set to take off as the fastest growing section of our hobby as collectors begin to appreciate that adding more than just stamps to their displays can improve the story-telling.

Inclusion of non-philatelic material such as postcards, contemporary photographs, newspapers and other ephemera allow a great deal more flexibility in telling the story. In the same way that thematic collecting was treated with a degree of contempt when it was first attempted, “social philately”, as it was initially called, was also derided as not being “proper philately”.

As time goes by, and as the standard of displays improve, more and more collectors are adding other material to their displays. This has been commonplace in society displays for many years and is often appreciated by their audiences. The creation of the OPEN PHILATELY class in UK and International exhibitions now allows collectors to try their hand at competitive exhibits.

The Open class still requires that the philatelic material must still be at least 50% of the exhibit but this gives considerable scope for inclusion of a range of other items. It is not a requirement that the non-philatelic material comprises half of the exhibit but the variety of the non-philatelic material will influence the judging of “treatment” as well as “material”. Treatment gives equal weight to the philatelic and the non-philatelic material as does “importance”.

Treatment and Importance	
Title and Plan	10
Philatelic Treatment	5
Non-philatelic treatment	5
Philatelic Importance	5
Non-philatelic Importance	5
<i>Sub-total for Treatment</i>	30
Knowledge and Research	
Philatelic Knowledge and Research	20
Non-philatelic Knowledge and Research	15
<i>Sub-total for Knowledge</i>	35
Material	
Condition	10
Rarity	20
<i>Sub-total for Material</i>	30
Presentation	5
<i>Total</i>	100

Competitive philately can be a frustrating business. Despite the marking structure there will always be a degree of subjectivity in assessing a display. At the judging critique for an early attempt at a competition I was told that I would never do better than a silver medal because my topic was “not an important subject”. This might have put some people off... but not me. I liked my subject and did think that the introduction of uniform penny postage was important. In a similar way my daughter always got a bronze medal for her Disney collection until she came across a judge whose wife collected Walt Disney and who appreciated the quality of her material.

But for me, showing my collection in competition is not about medals. I like to share my enthusiasm for my subject, get to meet other people who share my interests and are willing to share their knowledge and advice. That does include judges! All this helps me to develop as a collector. It's fun.

Have a Go, Show! and why not make your exhibit “more than just stamps”. 

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*Pages from John's international gold medal exhibit:
A Jubilee Reminiscence*

A Jubilee Reminiscence

The 1890 Penny Postage Jubilee

In 1889 a general opinion was expressed that the fiftieth anniversary of the introduction of Uniform Penny Postage in Great Britain "ought not to be allowed to pass without some indication of the feelings that must actuate all who looked back at the great reform introduced in 1840".

Arrangements were made for various Jubilee celebrations to be held in 1890. Although plans for a commemorative stamp were initiated, they were later abandoned. However, several major events took place including an Exhibition organised by the City Corporation of London in co-operation with The Post Office.

There was also an official Post Office celebration in the form of a grand Conversazione at South Kensington Museum. A number of innovative displays and exhibits were assembled for these events.

They were very important in GB philately for the introduction of the first commemorative postal stationery. This was imitated in the same way as the original Mulready Envelope fifty years earlier.

The events also led to the use of special event cancellations and cachets. These could be applied by favour, thereby establishing the practice of the "philatelic souvenir".



Title page

Bibliography includes:

- GBPS Journal: March/April 2007: The 1890 Christmas Card
- GBPS Journal: January/February 2012: The Genesis of the Jubilee Envelope
- Also articles in Stamp & Coin Mail, The Nations Philatelic Society (Stamp Lover) and Gibbons Stamp Monthly.

References include:

- Account of the Celebration of the Jubilee published by The General Post Office, 1891
- The Penny Postage Jubilee by Phil, 1891. A Jubilee Retrospect by J Wilson 1890, 1891
- The Penny Postage Jubilee by Werner Batschka, 1998. Special Event Postmarks by George Pearson, 1991.
- Post Office Archives Jubilee Committee Papers and British Postal Museum Archives Collection. (TIPMA)

The Guildhall Proofs



The Penny Black Die II (retouched die)

Proof impression in black on thin yellowish white wove paper. The new die II was made from an impression of Heath's original die I by retouching after The Board of the Inland Revenue agreed that a new deeper cut die be employed. William Humphrys carried out the re-engraving.

SPS Certificate 1985



The Halfpenny Die

Reprinted Die Proof of the halfpenny die. These printings can be distinguished from the 1878-9 trials by the paper and the blackening of the ink at the edge of the impression.

SPS Certificate 1985

Philatelic items

Non-philatelic items

EXHIBITING PAGE 2: INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS 2017

30 March to 02 April	Melbourne	Melbourne, Australia http://melbourne2017.com.au/
10 to 13 May	Maxiespana	Aviles, Spain www.grufia.com/web%20maxiespana%202017/Index.htm
11 to 13 May	European Championship for Thematic Philately	Essen, Germany www.ectp.de/ectp-en/index.htm
24 - 28 May	Finlandia	Tampere, Finland https://finlandia2017.fi/
03 - 07 August	Bandung	Bandung, Indonesia. http://bandung2017.org/
24 to 27 August	Gmunden	Gmunden, Germany
06 to 08 October	Övebria	Övebria, www.briefmarkenverein-hirtenberg.at/
07 to 12 October	Exfilna	Portugalete, Spain
24 to 29 October	Brasilia	Brasilia, Brazil www.stampbrasil2017.net.br/
27 to 29 October	Nordia	Vejle, Denmark www.nordia2017.dk/english

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STAMP ACTIVE

BUCKINGHAM COVERS SUPPORT STAMP ACTIVE

Buckingham Covers has made a significant donation to Stamp Active resulting from the sale of their Mr Men and Little Miss stamps First Day Covers.

Chairman of the Stamp Active Network, John Davies, said “We are delighted that Buckingham Covers have chosen to feature Stamp Active on their covers. It is pleasing to get anything that raises the profile of youth philately in the UK. I believe that the UK has one of the best programmes in the world but we need financial and other support to keep going. Thank you, Buckingham Covers.”

Their Director, Brian Austin, added “We find too many people are willing to dismiss the interest of children in stamp collecting. Yet when they can share the collecting experience, it still inspires their interest and imagination. We are pleased to recognise and support the work of Stamp Active in the UK.”

NEW STAMP ALBUM FROM KIDSTAMPS

Stamp Active has joined forces with the Philatelic Traders’ Society to produce a starter stamp album for children.

The 16 page album allows space for their favourite stamps and additional pages for stamps to be collected by country or theme. It will be given to all young visitors to the Kids Zone at Spring and Autumn Stampex and to members of the popular Kidstamps postal club free of charge.

Kidstamps is a free postal club for children between the ages of 5 and 19. Once registered, children receive a starter pack of stamps, first day covers and other items. In each pack, there is a voucher for their next pack which they return with a stamp-addressed envelope to receive even more items. Packs are sent out about four times a year. Application forms can be downloaded from the Kidstamps page of the Stamp Active website or picked up at Stampex. Alternatively, write to Stamp Active, 16 Sporhams, Basildon, Essex SS16 5TT with an SAE for a Kidstamps application leaflet.

Commenting on the latest initiative from Stamp Active, Chairman, John Davies, said “We are very grateful to the Philatelic Traders’ Society for their ongoing support. They have been very generous in providing space and resources for the Kids Zone at each Stampex. This latest project will make available stamp fun to even more young people.”

STAMP ACTIVE GETS ANOTHER PATRON

Rt. Hon. Alan Johnson MP is a former Home Secretary and was once a postman. He has offered his support to their efforts, saying, “Stamp collecting has given many hours of pleasure to millions of people over the years. It is a remarkable offshoot of Rowland Hill’s most famous initiative combining the appreciation of art, geography and communications in one satisfying pursuit.”

The Chairman of Stamp Active, John Davies, added “We are pleased that Alan Johnson has shown his support to our group. His recognition of the organisation is a real boost to help promote stamp collecting.”

For more information about the Stamp Active Network go to www.stampactive.co.uk

STAMP ACTIVE COMPETITION SPRING 2017

More entering for the first time

Many youngsters entered this year's Spring Stamp Active Competition for the first time. The judges (Christine Earle, Dave Armitage, John Davies and Richard West) were pleased to see the imaginative approach that many showed with their entries. The competition, sponsored by the Great Britain Philatelic Society, was judged at the premises of The Royal Philatelic Society London, with the entries shown at Spring Stampex thanks to the Philatelic Traders' Society.

The major trophies were awarded as follows.

Kidstamps Trophy (for the best overall exhibit): Ellie Doidge – Snake Facts

Best entry in Class B: Anna Likeman – Raining Cats and Dogs

Best entry in Class C: Ellie Doidge – Snake Facts

Best entry in Class D: Rhys Hart – The Battle of Britain

Best Group entry: The Dell Stamp Club – Only One World

Schools Trophy: Bishop Carpenter School

The results in the various classes were as follows.

Class B (12 and 13)

Anna Likeman: Raining Cats and Dogs – Silver-gilt and winner of the Class B Trophy

Class C (10 and 11)

Ellie Doidge: Snake Facts – Gold, and winner of the Class C Trophy and the Kidstamps Cup for the best overall entry

Sarah Likeman: Flower Power – Silver

Ffion Llewellyn: Up and Down the Rails – Silver-gilt

Beatrice Shelley: Walt Disney – Silver-bronze

Dorothy Wild: Endangered Animals – Silver

Class D (under 10)

Thomas Absalom: Space – Silver

Joyce Bazley: My Favourite Stamps – Silver-bronze

Sam Evans: Large Wild Animals – Silver-bronze

Alex Faversham: The History of Stamps – Silver-bronze

Max Fenn: Wales – Silver-bronze

Rhys Hart: The Battle of Britain – Gold, and winner of the Class D Trophy

Eva James – Owls – Silver-gilt

Nia Llewellyn: Childhood – Silver-gilt

Evie Mills: The Coast – Silver

Iwan Morgan: Transport – Silver-bronze

Toby Roberts: Famous British People – Silver-bronze

Melissa Thomas: Flowers – Silver-bronze

Group entry

The Dell Stamp Club: Only One World – Silver-gilt

Just4Kids by Lise Whittle

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

'MY FAVOURITE THINGS' COMPETITION

What are your favourite things?

Why not enter the Stamp Active Network's one page Stamp competition about your **Favourite Things?**



You could choose something like your favourite place, favourite people, your hobby, favourite object, favourite season of the year; or maybe your



favourite flowers, author, story, toys, or your favourite animals, sports or transport, or even your favourite colour . . . in fact it could be anything that you like to do or see or places you like to go to. The possibilities are endless. You could choose to focus on one area - like football or cars - or you may wish to cover a range such as Sports or Transport.

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



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



For example, if your favourite sport is gymnastics or football, you could collect gymnastics or football stamps that show some of your favourite moves. Maybe you like visiting castles, you could collect stamps showing some famous castles. What's



your favourite book? Perhaps you could find stamps to illustrate the story. Maybe you like watching birds? You could collect bird stamps



and find out what they eat, where they live, and so on. If you are interested in history, you could collect stamps showing kings and queens. You could collect stamps from your favourite country, or somewhere you have been on holiday. Perhaps you like animals, you could display stamps

of pets or wild animals. Or you could find stamps to illustrate your favourite song.

Ask your parent/carer's permission to enter. Anyone up to the age of 12 (on 1st September 2017) can enter. Stamps, covers and other philatelic items can be used. Entries should be on good quality paper (A4) or a similar size album page, and placed in a clear protector. The entries can be either hand-written or prepared using a computer.

The page must have a title, and either captions or a short write up that tells the story or gives information. Your full name and address (home or school) should be on the back of the page, also your age on 1st September 2017. **Entries will only be returned if a stamp-addressed envelope is enclosed with the entry.**



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

THE DEADLINE FOR RECEIVING ENTRIES IS 1st SEPTEMBER 2017. Only one entry per person is allowed. UK entrants only. Winners will be announced in the philatelic press and on the Stamp Active Website. The best entries will be on display at Stampex at the Business and Design Centre in London. Send entries to: Stamp Active Network, 3 Longfellow Road, Banbury, OX16 9LB. See more information about competitions on the Stamp Active website www.stampactive.co.uk



HANDSTAMP SPECIAL

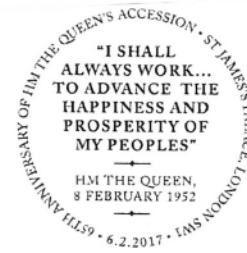
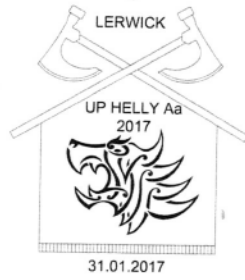
Handstamps reprinted on these pages first appeared in the "British Postmark Bulletin".

For a free sample copy, write to:

British Postmark Bulletin, Royal Mail, 35 – 50 Rathbone Place, London, W1T 1HQ

Annual subscription £12.25 UK. Subscription address:

Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh, EH12 9PB



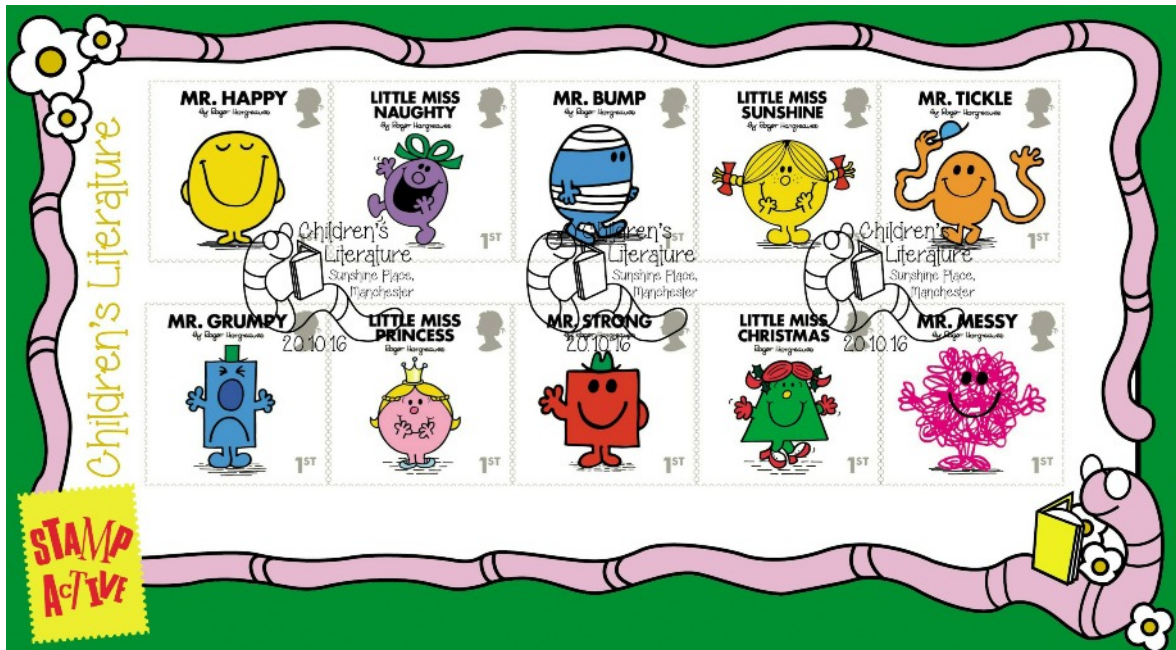
BTA PROGRAMME 2017

- May 20th **Joint Meeting with Guild of St Gabriel**
Members displays of 12 sheets with a religious theme or association
St. Wilfrid's Convent
29 Tite Street, Chelsea, London, SW3 4JX
- June 10th **Annual General Meeting and display by Brian Sole**
BTA table, thematic sales, BTA Library sale, and recruitment drive
At: Swinpex, St. Joseph's Roman Catholic College
Ocotal Way, Swindon, SN3 3LR
<https://sites.google.com/site/swindonphilatelicsociety/swinpex>
- July 8th **Midpex**
BTA table, thematic sales, and recruitment drive
Warwickshire Exhibition Centre
Leamington Spa
CV31 1XN
If you are coming by rail there will be a shuttle service from the station
<https://midpex.wordpress.com/>
- Autumn Stampex**
BTA Meeting to be confirmed
Business Design Centre, Islington, London, N1 0QH
National competitions, including Thematic, Open and Postcard.
Application forms can be downloaded from
http://www.abps.org.uk/Exhibiting/Exhibitions/National_Exhibitions/16-02-17_Spring-Stampex.xalter
No BTA meeting
- October 14th **BTA Competitions**
At: South of England Stamp Fair
Ardingly Showground, RH17 6TL
www.sussexphilately.org.uk/South_of_England_Stamp_Fair.php

Notes from a visit to WETS, page 17



Stamp Active, page 30



NEW ISSUES

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