

THEMESCENE

September 2019

In this issue we:

Welcome antibiotics

The road to Penicillin

With David Trowbridge



BRITISH THEMATIC



ASSOCIATION

Have a giggle

Do you Like Kipling?

With Wendy Buckle



Look into the microscope

How I Started

With David W. Walker



Visit Stockholm

Reports on Stockholmia 2019 and its seminars



*And review our meetings at
Swinpex and York*

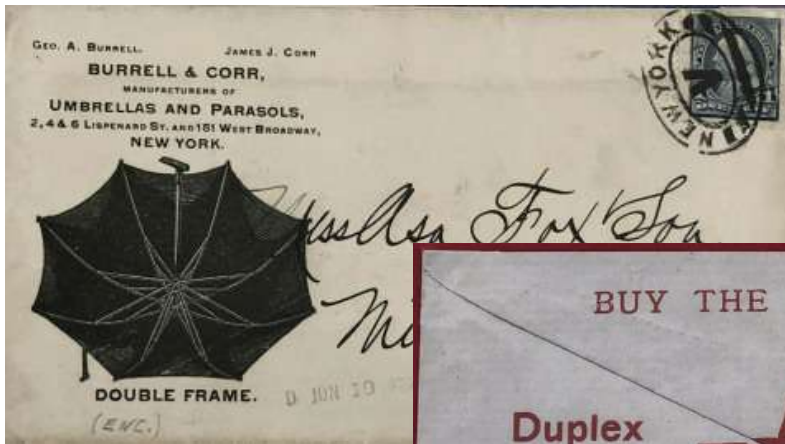


BRITISH THEMATIC ASSOCIATION

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Front and reverse of an 1895 advertising cover for Burrell & Corr, umbrella maker, of New York



David Hope and a delightful postcard of an advertising poster by Emil Cardinaux featuring a Swiss post bus in around 1925



Chinese fan paintings

THEMESCENE

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EDITORIAL

Wendy Buckle

It's been glorious summer weather for some of us, and horrendous for those living in the parts of the UK that have experienced flooding. But now we are into September and Autumn is on its way. It feels like the collecting season is getting going again, with club programmes starting up and Stampex offering four days of browsing and possible expense (is that good or bad? I'm never sure). Personally, I've spent the last month in a complete state about Brexit (and you thought *Themescene* was a Brexit-free zone; sorry). The reason being that the European Championship for Thematic Philately will be held in Verona in November, and I'm competing. Will travelling after we've left the EU (if we leave that is) affect flights? Taking collections? It all feels very uncertain, but the thought of a few days in Italy is just too tempting, so assuming all goes well a report will appear in the next issue.

It's been a good year for me for stamp-related holidays. I and BTA friends had a week in Stockholm (page 92) sightseeing and attending what turned out to be the best international exhibition I've ever been to. Efficient organisation, splendid very well-lit displays, spacious dealers areas with places to sit and chat, superb programme of events, and a very friendly and welcoming atmosphere all made for a very enjoyable experience. It has set the bar for 'internationals' very high, and London 2020 is next. They have a very hard act to follow. I'm sure many members will be attending, but there will be no BTA meeting at the event, all our energies will be focused on Autumn 2020 Stampex, when the BTA will be the lead society. And for that, we need your help, see page 96. This is your chance to showcase your material (it doesn't have to be judged) and show visitors just how varied and entertaining collecting by theme can be. Please help.

I'm very pleased to say the BTA continues to attract new members. We offer a warm welcome to Nigel Ellis of Chipping Norton and Chris Jones of Lytham St Annes.

Finally, the covers illustrated below and on the next page are all going free to any member who is interested. First-come, first-served.

- 1) Four pages promoting the Europa Collector Stamp Society of Australia.
- 2) Australia FDC with conservation / environment theme.

If you are interested in any of these please contact Charles Oppenheim. 2, Kirkbrae View, Cults, Aberdeen AB15 9RU, or [email](mailto:charles@themescene.com) Charles.




CHAIRMAN'S PAGE

Barry Stagg

Usually I don't pay much attention to GB's new issues as I so rarely see anything relevant to my collecting theme, but the D-day landing anniversary issue did provoke a second look. Although there was not a parachute in sight one of the stamps showed a group of parachutists synchronising their watches. This I must have! And, better still, there was a special handstamp showing parachutists available from Royal Mail's handstamp centre. I now have a good and unexpected addition to the collection, although I do also have a number of unwanted 1st class stamps showing D-Day events that are slowly getting used!

I hope some of you managed to get to the York fair a few weeks ago. It was good to see some old friends and solve a few of the world's problems! Lots of dealers were present and they seemed to be doing good business, and more than one of them took home some of my hard-earned money. It was hard to believe that philately was a declining hobby when you saw so many people sitting at the tables. And it was North of the M25! Perhaps there is hope yet for the hobby! As a thematic collector I find most dealers helpful (if not a little perplexed by my theme) but they struggle to find anything close to my needs. As a consequence I find myself looking through country collections on the off-chance that I've missed a parachute-related stamp (not happened yet!). But at York I was looking through a dealer's Russian stock only to find a mint copy of what I believe is the first parachute ever shown on a stamp. I do have a used copy but I was delighted with my find and I think I got change from £1! Even better.

Whilst on the topic of York, the BTA had a room on Saturday and I had a lovely afternoon looking at a range of material bought by BTA members for our 'show and tell' meeting (page 79). It was good to see a number of new faces (and many older ones) at the meeting and I hope if you were one of those who came that you enjoyed yourself. The committee are looking at what 2020 meetings we should have and where we should have them. Please let us know if you have a suggestion.

We are now only a few months away from Ardingly and our annual competitions. I hope you will consider entering an exhibit or display (details on pages 104-107) as we do get some good exposure and publicity at Ardingly, and it would be great to show the variety of theme-based collections that BTA members have. I certainly will be there, searching through dealers boxes for something, I don't know what, but when I find it I hope I can afford it! 



THE ROAD TO PENICILLIN

David Trowbridge charts life-saving investigation

My display is just 24 pages suited to the twelve page frames used by the Norfolk and Norwich Philatelic Society. I would describe it as a history of the systematic treatment of disease by chemical agencies known as chemotherapy, from classical times to the discovery of penicillin by Sir Alexander Fleming.

There are five chapters beginning in classical times in Egypt with Imhotep, credited with being the founder of medicine and author of a medical text remarkable for being devoid of magical thinking. Later Galen and Dioscorides dominated medicine at the beginning of the first millennium and their written works were to influence the course of medicine for the next 1500 years.

The Muslims were the cultural, literary and scientific leaders of their time and their published works translated into Latin influenced all medical research. Jabir ibn Hayyan has been described as the father of Arab Alchemy or Chemistry, Avicenna, possibly the most influential of all, was born in Iran in 980 AD. As a physician, his Canon of Medicine became the premier medical text in all of Europe's medical schools.

The change from Dark Age medicine started around 1050 in southern Italy. Here was a thriving medical community in touch with the Greek and Arab worlds and the intellectually advanced Abbey at Monte Cassino where Latin translations of Arabic texts were done. The earliest printed medical books were completed by 1457. For the first time physicians working in different parts of Europe could exchange ideas.

A bubonic plague swept across Europe from Asia and the Middle East in 1347 killing an estimated 25% of the human race. From this terrible experience physicians and laymen finally learned to appreciate that contagion was a fact and that disease lay somehow within the patient's system itself.

The apothecaries collected the information handed down by the ancients and preserved their knowledge and made up a variety of medicines. In its investigation of herbal and chemical ingredients, the apothecary was the precursor of the modern sciences of chemistry and pharmacology.

Fracastorius and Paracelsus' work on syphilis represented a major signpost on the way to chemotherapy. They intuitively referred to minute living organisms as the cause of infection.

Pharmacopoeias and herbals in the 16th century were significant of the changing attitude towards chemical remedies. From Peru came Cinchona used as a cure for fever, and from Brazil the root of the Ipec Shrub used as a cure for Dysentery.

Early in the seventeenth century, Galileo constructed one of the first compound microscopes and this enabled Antony van Leeuwenhoek, who made his own microscope in 1683, to be the first to sight his "little animals" or bacteria.

The eighteenth century was the great age of classification in the great work of Linnaeus. Chemistry too was emerging as a serious science with Antoine Lavoisier's work on oxygen and Edward Jenner's discovery of a vaccination against smallpox which pointed the way to the methods later adopted by Pasteur.

Justus von Liebig devised the modern laboratory-oriented teaching method of organic chemistry. He was to inspire later generations to artificially produce organic substances, an important historical factor in the development of modern chemotherapy.



Imhotep



Avicenna



Jabir ibn Hayyan



Aniline ink was used in 20% of the imprinted stamps on the first British Air Letter



Ernest Duchesne



Culture dishes



Penicillin mould

William Perkins discovered aniline purple in 1856, the first coal dye that would provide later researchers with a means to fix and stain bacilli. Perkins dye became famous when Queen Victoria wore a dress to the Great Exhibition in 1862, dyed with his mauve.


Louis Pasteur believed that germs invisible to the naked eye were transported through air and contaminated other objects. He showed that the growth of microorganisms was responsible for spoiling beverages, such as beer, wine and milk, and with Claude Bernard invented a process that became known as pasteurisation.

Joseph Lister discovered the antiseptic method, in which a germ-killing substance was applied to wounds during an operation. Antisepsis became a basic principle for the development of surgery. Amputations became less frequent, as did death from infections.

German physician Robert Koch introduced the fixing and staining of bacteria using the new chemical dyes first discovered by William Perkins and created modern methods of cultivating and studying their life forms. His research for a specific chemical to destroy or weaken these bacteria led to the discovery of both the tubercle and the cholera bacillus.

August Kekule, a German organic chemist, was the principal founder of the theory of chemical structure. His work on benzene provided the key for the synthesis of dyes. These dyes were selective with preferences for particular cells. Based on this selectivity Paul Ehrlich produced substances that could selectively destroy pathogenic organisms without harming the host. He coined the word chemotherapy.

A French physician Ernest Duchesne had noted that certain moulds kill bacteria in 1896. But it was Professor Fleming in 1928, in the course of his research on antiseptics, who made the discovery whilst investigating the life cycle of the staphylococcus. He noticed that one culture was contaminated with a mould which he identified as penicillin, and that the colonies of staphylococci that had immediately surrounded it had been destroyed. For ten years the clinical use of penicillin was limited due to difficulties in producing enough of the new drug.

Fleming's research was continued and finished by Howard Flory and Ernst Chain, researchers at Oxford who are credited with the development of penicillin for use as a medicine. Fermentation research in the United States at laboratories in Peoria enabled the production of 2.3 million doses of the new medicine in time for the invasion of Normandy in the spring of 1944. 



BTA MEETING, YORK 20 JULY 2019

This was a chance for our members living in the north of England / south of Scotland to come to a BTA meeting and share some of their material. But before the members' displays it was an opportunity for our chairman Barry Stagg to present Gary Cook with the Francesca Rapkin Memorial Bowl, awarded each year to the author of the article voted by the Committee to be best in *Themescene* the previous year. Gary won with *Consumption, the Post Office and the Sanatorium at Beneden* published in September 2018. The article is now also available on our website, together with [winners from the recent past](#).

Displays then kicked off with Mike Blackman showing umbrella and parasol manufacturers. Manufacturing of course provides the opportunity to collect much more than stamps, and Mike's sheets included illustrated covers, postal calling cards, trade cards, invoice headings and perfins. One of the trade cards had a printing interest, being printed on card with a special coating of kaolin which enabled some attractive colour printing and overall iridescent effect. While one USA illustrated cover claimed it was from "the largest umbrella factory in the world" not everything was on an industrial scale: stamps were shown from the Far East and Africa which depicted traditional methods.

David Hope then showed Swiss Post Buses with a display of a great variety of material: covers, postal stationery, booklets, postmarks, publicity cards and photographs. The system started in 1906, with a single route running approx 30 km out from Bern. At the end of World War I the army had a surplus of motorised vehicles which the Swiss Post Office took over and adapted to update their fleet. While the early services ran during the summer only, in 1925 a winter service was launched. Also in the 1920s a campaign "Holiday in Switzerland" began, aimed at the native population, and a number of new routes were inaugurated through some of the major passes through the Alps. This is a service with a long history which is still going today.

We then moved on to a display of stamps. Rodney Knight explained that he is not a thematic collector, and so brought along some of his China and Taiwan collections featuring Chinese paintings, some on silk. Some were done purely as paintings, some done to decorate items such as fans, and all delightful to look at.

Edith Knight then showed postcards of the British Mediterranean and Atlantic Fleets in Majorca. The British Mediterranean Fleet was part of the Royal Navy, formed in 1654 and disbanded in 1967. Originally based in Mahon in Menorca it later rotated its base between Gibraltar and Malta. The postcards depicted the fleets on patrol and also sailors enjoying some rest and relaxation, plus one lovely original photograph from 1903 "Supplying fresh provisions to the British Mediterranean Fleet at Palma Mallorca".

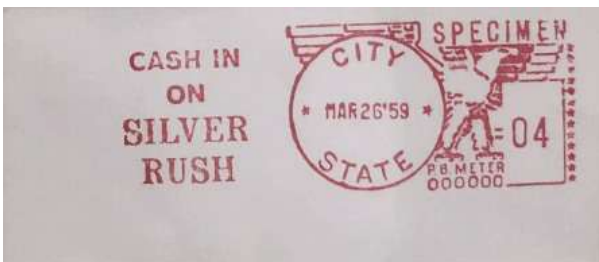
Anne Stammers showed pages depicting gold and silver mining: digging it out, refining it using cyanide, dredging from rivers and streams, and these days dredging from the sea bed. Some countries featured were to be expected, such as South Africa, but others were more unusual, such as New Guinea. At one time Canadian Airways flew prospectors out to a rumoured new source of gold in Newfoundland, but none was found. Famous names were featured, such as a Wells Fargo cover, which had actually carried gold.

Wendy Buckle gave a very brief history of the printing press, starting with Gutenberg's invention, an adaptation of existing implements such as the wine press. This was a design which stayed in use largely unchanged until the Industrial Revolution which heralded



Edith Knight. "Supplying fresh provisions to the British Mediterranean Fleet at Palma Mallorca" 1903

Gold and silver mining



An old English garden: but with daffodils and sunflowers in bloom at the same time - that will never happen!



Daffodils (if you look hard enough)

metal rather than wooden presses, first the Stanhope then the Albion and Columbia. The big breakthrough came in 1814 when *The Times* of London installed the world's first steam press, invented by Frederick Koenig. The nineteenth century also saw the introduction of lithography, originally for the reproduction of illustrations, and photogravure.

The final speaker was Barry Stagg showing Daffodils. Perhaps today they would be considered an invasive species, having originated in the Iberian Peninsular and North Africa, brought to the UK by the Romans. But despite 2,000 years of European habitation the first known depiction of them is not until between 1490 and 1508, in a painting by Leonardo da Vinci *The Virgin of the Rocks*. Sadly the flowers are on the edge of the painting, so the chances are he didn't paint that bit but left it to a studio assistant. There are 30 species of daffodil with 30,000 varieties, but despite all this choice mistakes were and are often made in depicting them. They are a flower to be reckoned with, being poisonous to horses and donkeys, not to mention humans, and their sap will kill any other plant – so don't use them in a mixed flower display.

Our meeting was held as part of the York Stamp and Coin Fair, in the spacious and attractive setting of York Racecourse. Our thanks to the organisers for their hospitality and to Edith and Rodney Knight for borrowing and transporting frames for the meeting. The BTA is committed to holding meetings across the UK, so watch this space to see where we will be next. 📖

Further illustrations inside front cover



In June 2015 Royal Mail celebrated 50 years of special stamp issues by adding plaques to 50 pillar boxes, each illustrating a commemorative stamp relating to a local landmark. This pillar box is situated adjacent to York Minster and features the York Minster 2012 stamp from the A - Z of Britain series.



Presentation of Francesca Rapkin Memorial Bowl



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“DO YOU LIKE KIPLING?”

Wendy Buckle investigates the saucy postcard

In a basement beneath the charming Royal Victoria Arcade at Ryde, Isle of Wight, nestle two small museums. One is the Ryde District Heritage Centre, and tucked up against it is the Donald McGill Museum.


Born in 1875 McGill learned his graphic skills at a London art school and began his professional career as a naval architect then as an engineering draughtsman. His postcard career began by accident when in 1904 he sent a cartoon to a nephew in hospital of a man up to his neck in a frozen pond. The caption read “Hope you get out!” and was forwarded to a publisher who commissioned his work.

The Museum is a Mecca for fans for the saucy seaside postcard, but visitors might be surprised to see some of the other areas McGill covered. He created at least 250 humorous Christmas cards, having previously produced postcards with Christmas greetings. He also designed postcards for both the First and Second World Wars, and cards supporting the Suffragette Movement. He did not serve in World War I, having lost a foot in a school rugby accident, but spent the time producing humorous cards of anti-German propaganda and issues around the home front and the difficulties faced by both soldiers and civilians.

But of course he is best known for the postcards featuring skinny men, fat ladies and buxom girls. He produced a massive 12,000 different seaside postcards throughout his career, and ranked his output according to their vulgarity as mild, medium and strong, with strong being much the best sellers. His work was recognised at the time. In 1941 George Orwell described him as “the most prolific and by far the best of contemporary postcard artists”.

But in 1954 he faced obscenity charges over his cards following an orchestrated clean-up around the country. An Isle of Wight vicar complained to his local paper and the police raided five seaside shops, confiscating more than 5,000 cards. The following year a trial was held in Lincoln where the artist was persuaded to plead guilty to breaking the 1857 Obscene Publications Act. Five cards were immediately banned and McGill and his publishers also agreed not to republish another seventeen cards once existing stocks had been sold. The ruling cost McGill thousands of pounds in lost revenue.

Most of these cards had been on sale for some years, which suggests that a sudden mood of prudish disapproval swept the country. And of course the humour did depend on how you read the caption, which might suggest the great British public should have been prosecuted! Looking back today, the cards seem very innocent, and hardly likely to destroy the moral fibre of the country. But they might still attract disapproval, this time for their flouting of political correctness. You can judge for yourself, as the Museum has reprinted the five banned cards.

McGill went on designing cards until his death in 1962. Interest in his work still continues. In 2010 Tate Britain mounted an exhibition “Rude Britannia: British Comic Art” which included some of McGill’s work. In 2015 a collection of eighteen preparatory pencil illustrations by McGill owned for many years by a private collector was sold for about £1,200. And the [Museum](#) gets many visitors. 

Illustrations inside back cover

HOW I STARTED



Fig 1: Spain 1934, the stamp believed to be the first issued depicting an optical microscope. Heathwood notes that SG incorrectly catalogues as being issued in 1931.



Fig 2: China 1966. Wergin notes that this was the first issued depicting an electron microscope. It's one of my favourites because of the fine detail.



Fig 3: Senegal 1972. The exquisite silica shell of a named radiolarian, a type of microscopic single-celled zooplankton. One of a set of five (three issued in 1972, two in 1973). Designs credited on the stamps to Pierre Opic who tells me that he lived and worked in Senegal for 14 years and proposed the designs to the Senegal post office.



Fig 4: Russia 2012. Celebrating the achievements of Marina Raskova as pilot and navigator. The slide rule, shown amongst other navigation instruments, has been identified by experts as likely to be a typical model used in Russia.



Fig 5: GB Millennium Coin Cover series 1999. Charles Babbage themed, featuring two stamps; GB 1991 (profile) Scientific Achievements and GB 1999 Inventor's Tale in the Millennium series. The Isle of Man 1995 one crown coin features part of the mechanical Analytical Engine which Babbage designed for general purpose computing.



Fig 6: British Indian Ocean Territories 2016. Official FDC. The only issue to date that I'm aware of that picks up on a 200th anniversary in the Brontë family. Charlotte Brontë was born in 1816.

HOW I STARTED

David W. Walker

I'm eternally grateful to my parents who bought me two presents as a young teenager in the 60s, a chemistry set and a toy microscope. The first inspired my career as a chemist in the petrochemicals industry, now retired and the second a lifelong hobby, exploring the macro and microscopic world around me. Amateur microscopy is not as well known as amateur astronomy but it is thriving, with some societies dating back to the 19th century and now online resources.

In 1989 the Royal Microscopical Society (RMS) celebrated their 150th anniversary and the Royal Mail issued an attractive set of four stamps on this theme with designs showing macro or microscopic subjects. As well as the presentation pack there were a variety of attractive first day covers. I bought a selection of these, and this rekindled a latent interest in stamps that had been dormant since the days I collected them rather indiscriminately as a youngster.

So, knowing nothing of philately, I began to wonder how many stamps had been published with microscopy as a theme. As a start I went back to my old stamp album gathering dust in a loft and found three stamps showing a microscope wow, I had the start of a collection! I even bought a stamp magazine and found a few dealers who had thematic catalogues of stamps. Microscopy wasn't a well established thematic at the time and I soon found that ordering sets with a medical theme, such as those celebrating the World Health Organisation or the discovery of the tubercle bacillus, hoping some may illustrate a microscope, was a rather haphazard way of collecting them.

I thought there must be a better way to collect than this, so a trip to my local university library in late 1990 had me browsing through microscopy journals to see if anyone had catalogued them. Fortunately, I didn't have to look far back. The Proceedings of the RMS had published a superb series of five articles earlier in 1990 by the American collector William Wergin on this very topic. The articles included a list of nearly 400 stamps issued worldwide (with Scott numbers) which depicted a microscope in some shape or form, and were illustrated by colour plates showing most of these stamps. The plates showed the different themes for which a microscope illustration has been used on stamps. This varies from the celebration of famous discoveries such as Koch's isolation of the tubercle bacillus, health topics such as malaria eradication and scientific endeavour.


William Wergin's articles show that many countries in the world have issued at least one stamp depicting a microscope, although I'm not aware of any GB examples at the time of writing. He noted that the first stamp issued showing a microscope was Spain in 1934 (fig 1) to celebrate the pioneer of neuroscience, Cajal. In Spring 1997, the now late William Heathwood presented his own article and checklist with SG numbers in the journal of the Quekett Microscopical Club, a British society particularly serving amateur microscopists. He kindly sent by letter an updated list to June 1997 which listed ca. 525. This was a rather daunting number for me to attempt to collect myself, not to mention expensive. Many designs featured stylised microscopes, or the microscope did not form a good proportion of the illustration. Like many fellow collectors of this thematic I decided to just collect sub-themes within microscopy with much fewer examples. To date subjects collected include electron microscopes (fig 2), finer illustrations of microscopes both antique and modern (see D. Jones, Sept. 2000 article for examples), specific groups of microorganisms

(e.g. diatoms and radiolaria, microscopic plankton which have ornate silica shells, fig 3) and pioneer 17th century microscopists Robert Hooke and Antonie van Leeuwenhoek. To date these have been shared on an amateur microscopy website I help run with a free monthly e-zine *Micscape*.

Collecting thematics in microscopy sparked a wider interest in thematics associated with my other hobbies. I particularly seek out topics with at most a few tens of stamps. The thrill of tracking them down appeals as well as keeping within a modest collecting budget. Themes include those associated with analogue calculators e.g. depicting slide rules (fig 4). Also Charles Babbage (fig 5), the 19th century polymath and pioneer of computing who invented intricate mechanical engines to automatically calculate and print logarithm tables where accuracy was paramount for e.g. navigation at sea. Stamps showing fractals are also collected.

As a fairly recent and likely naive venturer into more formal philately I gather that the prodigious stamp output of some countries on themes with no relation to the country may invoke rather mixed feelings. For the collector like myself of very narrow thematics I find such issues of value as I would otherwise not have any examples at all. The issuing countries often adopt miniature sheets where designs can be more involved than a typical commemorative. I enjoy exploring the design aspects of such sheets which are usually well thought out.

My most recent thematic challenge was chosen outside of my science / technology theme 'comfort zone'. Living only thirteen miles south of Haworth in the south Pennines, the lives and work of the Brontë sisters appealed as a casual reader of their novels rather than as a scholar. This coincided with the five year 'Brontë200' programme 2016-2020 celebrating the bicentenaries of the births of Charlotte, Emily, Anne and their brother Branwell as well as that of the start of their father's curacy at Haworth. Only four issues have been identified to date (two GB, Belgium and the British Indian Ocean Territories, fig 6) but as is typical for GB commemoratives there is a wealth of associated items available. The thematic has been supplemented with period postcards of Haworth and the south Pennine landscapes.

As fellow collectors will appreciate, one of the pleasures of collecting stamps on a theme is that it prompts research on the subject. For example, for my own thematics, it can be a challenge to identify and learn more about some of the real microscopes depicted in some designs, and many of the scientists commemorated were also unfamiliar to me. The recent Brontë themed collection prompted me to learn more about the south Pennines landscape and wider aspects of living and working in the area in the 19th century. I hadn't really explored these aspects before despite my local walks 'on the tops' being in similar landscapes to those that helped inspire the sisters and their work. 

Acknowledgement: Thank you to the Editor Wendy Buckle who kindly provided copies of the two informative and attractive articles by D. Jones discussing microscopes on stamps with examples:

"Microscopes on Stamps and Related Philatelic Material", Themescene, Vol. 17, No. 3, September 2000, pp.114-115.

"Microscopes Associated with Alexander Fleming's Discovery of Penicillin", Themescene, Vol. 18, No. 4, December 2001, pp.167-168.

The author can be contacted via [email](#).

Minutes of the 28th Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 8th June 2019 at Swinpex, at St Joseph's Roman Catholic College, Ocotol Way, Swindon SN3 3LR

Present: There were 23 members and 2 visitors present

The Chairman, Barry Stagg, welcomed everyone to the 28th Annual General Meeting.

Francesca Rapkin Memorial Bowl – Awarded for the best article in 2018 *Themescene* as voted for by the committee. The Chairman was pleased to announce Gary Cook the winner, with his article in the September 2018 *Themescene* 'Sanatorium at Benenden'. Gary was unable to attend the AGM so the bowl will be presented to him at the BTA Meeting at York Stamp Fair in July.

1) Apologies: Charles Oppenheim, John Hayward, Brian Sole, John Davies, Jean Alexander, Janet Nelson, Nick Nelson, Chris Wheeler

2) Minutes of the 27th Annual General Meeting held on 9th June 2018

These had been published in *Themescene* September 2018. It was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously that they were a correct record.

3) Matters Arising

There were no matters arising

4) Chairman's Report

I would like to start by thanking all the committee for all their work over the past twelve months. Without their tireless efforts the BTA would not exist. I would rather not mention each by name for fear of missing one; however, every one of the committee has put in a lot of their own time and effort into making the BTA a successful organisation. I thank you all for this commitment.

Last October we held our hugely popular weekend away at Oxford. About 30 of us got together and enjoyed a very pleasant few days. Planning has already started for the next weekend away! (26-28 March 2021)

We have had a successful meeting earlier this year. Just a few months ago we were treated to a wonderful talk on postcards by John Scott. He showed 132 sheets covering a wide range of postcards. A treat to see. In the afternoon of the same day Tony Statham showed a part of his collection of bird stamps. You name the bird he had a stamp with it on! Tony believes that about 1,000 bird stamps are issued annually and, having seen a part of Tony's collection I think he has most of them!

The BTA competitions at Ardingly last October were successful with six entries, down from last year's twelve. And we shall hear from the winner of the Thematic competition, Wayne Cox, in a moment. We agreed during the year that we would introduce a new Class to the competition and have a Championship Class, for past winners.

Planning has continued to have a Pictorial focus at the Autumn Stampex in 2020. All members will be invited to take part either competitively or non-competitively. The ABPS has agreed to this idea and I have a target of filling at least 100 frames with BTA material. I started by thanking the committee for all their work but I would like to finish by thanking you, the membership of the BTA, for your continued support and I wish you all well for the next year.

It was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously that the Chairman's report be accepted.

5) Treasurer's Report

RESULT FOR 2018

The 2018 accounts show an operating SURPLUS of £923.

The 2018 Weekend had a surplus of £407 in total - £137 was taken into the weekend reserve and £270 had been moved there in 2017.

INCOME

Subscription income was only down £40 from the 2017 level.

Advertising income held up – and this is shown offsetting the cost of *Themescene*.

Once again we are grateful for a donation of towards the cost of colour in *Themescene* and similarly this has been shown as reducing the net cost of *Themescene*.

From 2019 another donation has now been received so that the future can be all-colour.

EXPENDITURE

Costs were a little higher than last year as a result of the meeting at the Royal and the BTA Cup returning to its usual situation of giving a net expenditure rather than the income of 2017.

Offsetting this was the saving of holding a committee meeting at the Weekend and lower administration costs.

I propose subscription levels remain unchanged. We have resources for expenditure relating to our contribution to 2020 Stampex.

Again I am grateful to Grahame Boutle for examining the accounts and delighted to say he is willing to continue in that role next year.

6) Election of Officers and committee

a) All Officers and committee members were willing to stand for re-election.

It was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously that the Officers be re-elected en-bloc.

b) It was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously that the committee be re-elected en-bloc.

c) Two members, Owen Green and Andrew Millington, had been co-opted onto the committee during the year and both had agreed to stand for election to the committee. It was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously that they be elected.

7) Ratification by the membership of the Examiner

The treasurer thanked Graham Boutle for his work as Examiner and proposed that he continues as Examiner. This was seconded and agreed unanimously.

8) Ratification of the Amendments to the Constitution

It was proposed, seconded and agreed unanimously that the Amendments to the constitution as under October 2018 and March 2019 in version 7 of the Constitution as published in *Themescene* June 2019 be accepted.

9) A.O.B.

a) 5th BTA Weekend - The Secretary mentioned the 5th BTA Weekend which will take place March 2021 in Oxford. The reason behind the decision to hold it then, rather than October 2020, was because it was felt it was unfair to members to ask them to take part

in exhibiting at Autumn Stampex 2020 and to then take part in the weekend two weeks later. There were also financial implications for members.

b) Autumn Stampex 2020 – The Chairman announced the BTA had at least 160 frames for pictorial exhibits. These could be competitive or non-competitive, and non – UK members would also be taking part, including the ATA, although not with financial support. He hoped that everyone present would think about putting in at least one frame.

c) York BTA Meeting – this would be held on Saturday 20 July 2019 at the York Stamp Fair.

d) Website – Some members' collections were now on the website and hopefully more would be offered to be added.

e) BTA Speakers List – this has been updated. Please tell your society programme secretary of the list.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 2.55 p.m. and was followed by Wayne Cox, winner of the BTA Cup 2018, giving his display on 'Victorian Pillar Boxes'.

VICTORIAN LETTER BOXES

Display by Wayne Cox

Wayne is a member of the Letter Box Study Group (<http://lbsg.org/>), which, he explained, rescues and restores "fallen boxes". The Group maintains an impressive catalogue of every type of Victorian letter box, and their location in the UK. This talk was based on his winning entry for the BTA Cup in 2018, which comprised the first frame of his display, and can be seen in full on the [BTA website](#). Further frames showed much illustrative material which would not be accepted in a thematic entry.

The letter box story begins with Rowland Hill's postal reforms. Before 1840 it was normal for letters to be paid on delivery. Unpaid letters could be posted in letter boxes at post offices, but the authorities were not prepared to provide letter boxes away from post offices due to security concerns and insufficient staff. Thus street letter boxes in the UK did not appear until 1852, a late development compared to mainland Europe where for instance France had a system of roadside boxes from the 1650s. In 1851 Anthony Trollope, who worked for the Post Office as the Western District Surveyor's Clerk, was sent to the Channel Islands to investigate improvements to their postal services. The full story of the introduction of letter boxes in the Channel Islands can be found in Wayne's article in *Themescene*, June 2019, page 4. With the successful introduction of letter boxes in Jersey and Guernsey, on his return to England Trollope advocated their adoption on the mainland, introducing pillar boxes in the Western and Gloucester Districts. The very first English pillar box was installed at Botchergate, Carlisle, in September 1853 though nothing is known of its shape and size.

Where the Channel Islands boxes had been hexagonal, these were octagonal as this design had a greater capacity. It also had a vertical rather than horizontal aperture, thought to be a greater deterrent against thieves. The first square box was installed in 1854 in Northern Ireland. Early Scottish boxes were cylindrical with a large crown on the top, and

a vertical aperture which was later changed to horizontal. Fluted pillar boxes were introduced in Birmingham, Eton and Christchurch.

Letter boxes arrived in London relatively late, due to the city already having a very large number of receiving houses. When they were installed - in 1855 - they were cleared twenty times a day. The design however was criticised, being likened to a stove. The Post Office invited ideas for new designs, including from Henry Cole, one of those responsible for the Great Exhibition. Their first design, known as the 'London Ornate', omitted an aperture! To correct it the aperture was inserted at the top, ensuring rain got in! Across the country there was much variety of design as the local post office surveyor was responsible for the design, therefore the 'First National Standard' was introduced, cylindrical in shape, and which today is still made to the same dimensions, in large and small sizes. (If you want to know the difference - you can hug a small size but not a large one!). However, John St. Lawrence Beaufort, the Postmaster of Manchester, claimed these were too small for the city of Liverpool, where newspapers as well as letters could be posted, and was allowed to design a larger version in 1863, which included a large crown on top.

The Penfold, named after its designer J. W. Penfold, was hexagonal, based on the Tower of the Winds in Athens, with the royal cipher on the front. It came in three sizes and with various modifications it was in use from 1866 to 1879, after which designs reverted to cylindrical. At the end of Victoria's reign in 1900 the oval double aperture was introduced, allowing the public to partially pre-sort their mail.

Wayne ended his talk with a brief look at wall mounted boxes and smaller boxes designed to be attached to lamp posts and telegraph poles.

He showed some splendid artwork by Paul Hogarth from the 1985 GB *Royal Mail: 350 years of service* set, and - of course - a real Victorian 'Letters Only' lamp box. 📖

Further illustrations back cover



Barry and Wayne



A Victorian lamp box

STOCKHOLMIA 2019, next page



H M the King and his royal (chocolate) crown



Exhibition official label and conference centre



BTA members and friends



STOCKHOLMIA 2019


Report by Wendy Buckle

2019 sees the 150th anniversary of the Royal Philatelic Society London. A number of celebrations are being held this year, including the Stockholmia 2019 exhibition in May, which covered all five floors of the Stockholm Waterfront Congress Centre. An enormous amount of work had gone into this, resulting in a five day exhibition and fair featuring over 50 dealers and auctioneers, 288 frames of non-competitive exhibits and over 1,700 frames of competitive exhibits. Particularly impressive were the number of meetings going on all day, every day: 189 congresses, talks, discussions, seminars and masterclasses. Several featured the pictorial classes, and it was a good opportunity to learn some pointers towards improving exhibits. BTA Membership Secretary Charles Oppenheim contributed with a talk on *Copyright in Philately: Basics - Problems - Options* which your Editor found particularly useful.

The event started in a most impressive fashion with the official opening by the King of Sweden, H M King Carl XVI Gustaf. He and H M Queen Elizabeth II were joint patrons of the Exhibition, and both have fathers and grandfathers who were themselves collectors. The President of the 'Royal', Patrick Maselis, presented the King with a copy of the Swedish royal crown - in chocolate, explaining that as a Belgian he thought there were only two Belgian products ideal for presentation: beer and chocolate, and perhaps beer was not suitable for a king.

On entering the Fair, the very first stand was taken by PostNord, responsible for the postal services of Sweden and Denmark. It is difficult to avoid comparisons with Royal Mail. RM have over the years cut down their support for national and international events, and now concentrate on selling as much postal and ephemeral material as possible. PostNord on the other hand were offering a postcard service: select your choice of postcard (or multiples thereof) from their supply, write a message and address it, and return it to the stand where it received a stamp and official postmark. The whole service was free to any destination in the world. Needless to say it proved extremely popular.

There was a wide range of dealers, of course particularly good if you collect Scandinavia; the Court of Honour was stunning; and there were the above-mentioned exhibits. Among them were twenty Thematic entries, seventeen Open and three Postcard. Congratulations to those BTA members who took part: John Davies and John Davis (Open), and Grace Davies, Lesley Marley and Brian Sole (Thematic). In particular, huge congratulations to John Davies who won the Open Class with *A Jubilee Reminiscence*, attaining the only Gold medal in that class, and Lesley Marley who got a Large Gold for *The Whale's Tale*. Exhibitors and guests enjoyed a magnificent palmarès banquet at the Vasa Museum; a more stunning setting would be hard to find.

On the social side BTA members took the opportunity to have a meal out together one evening, sampling some of Stockholm's magnificent gastronomy. Stockholmia organisers laid on a cruise on an historic steamship through the archipelago to Drottinghom Palace, built in the seventeenth century and now the official home of the Swedish royal family. And of course there was the opportunity to meet up with fellow collectors you may not see too often. Stockholmia was a memorable occasion, and one that future Internationals will find hard to match. 

EXHIBITING PAGE: STOCKHOLMIA SEMINARS


Reports by Andrew Millington

A THEMATIC MASTER CLASS BY JOSHUA MAGIER

Stockholmia 2019 provided seventeen master classes on exhibiting given by renowned philatelists in different philatelic disciplines. I attended a master class on thematic exhibiting by Joshua Magier. His hour-long talk was based on his Land Cultivation exhibit, which I first saw in the Champions Class at the New York Stamp Show in 2016. It was a very impressive and interesting exhibit by that time and had received a number of Large Golds. How could he improve on that? This master class answered my question and more.

In a gentle and interesting way, he told us how he had sought out and acted on advice even after achieving a number of Golds, and that he is still taking advice and modifying his exhibit which is at the 'top of the thematic tree'. Some illustrations of this were that in 2003 he reduced the number of "\$2 postcards" from 15 to 2. Later he reduced the number of meter cancellations "even though they are much liked by thematic collectors". While on the issue of frequently seen items in thematic exhibits, I noted down his remark "...three or four small die proofs are better than twelve to fifteen large ones". Turning to judging criteria (and if you are fortunate enough to have won a gold medal!) he emphasised that the 'easiest' way to obtain that holy of holies, a Large Gold, was to improve condition and rarity. Unfortunately, this will often mean competing with traditional collectors (who all the participants agreed had quite deep pockets) for their prized items. It is likely to be an expensive undertaking, but there are exceptions and that is where a person's philatelic knowledge, and a little luck, come in.

But what can we lesser mortals learn from his advice? It is his view that if you get Large Vermeil awards you are "the expert in your thematic area already", so improvements surely must come with the philatelic aspects of your exhibit. His advice was to focus on philatelic knowledge, condition and rarity; and the important message here may be that improving your philatelic knowledge is not as costly as elevating condition and rarity. Be humble and listen carefully to advice from jurors, but also seek advice from others: and act on both. Search for hard-to-get items that fit your story very well: they are not always expensive but you probably do need to stress the difficulty of their acquisition to people looking at or judging your display. Innovation is also something we can all improve upon, be bold and try something other collectors have not done, or find something which surprises people. In another talk I attended somebody showed how he had used a penny black to introduce a surprise element, a little known link between Beethoven (the exhibit's theme) and Queen Victoria. Finally, it is important to have a balanced array of diverse material.

It was a privilege to attend this engaging talk. It was delivered well, accessible and the speaker was genuinely interested in what the twenty or so attendees collected. He knew many of their exhibits, even if had not met us all before. It was a master class delivered by a master. 

FUTURE TRENDS IN OPEN PHILATELY


A seminar on future trends in open philately was ably chaired by American airship-material collector Cheryl Ganz. It focused on what topics are most suited to open exhibits and how are they are treated. These aspects were illustrated Liz Hisey (USA), Iva Mouritsen (Germany) and Birthe King (UK) with material from their exhibits: a Christmas Dinner at the Hotel Portland, Portland Oregon in 1914; Denmark's royal ménage à trois of the 1700s and its its historical consequences; and Denmark: Conscience, Conflict and Camps 1932-1949, respectively.

This seminar encompassed what is variously known as social philately in the UK, Australia and New Zealand; the display class in North America; and open philately elsewhere in Europe. FIP has agreed Open Philately is the term for these types of exhibits, and it updated its exhibition guidelines and [rules](#) last year.

In the context of exhibiting, we learnt that North American competitive philatelists have recently abandoned philatelic classes in exhibitions. Instead each person initially sets out what they are trying to achieve with an exhibit and are then judged against these criteria. The only 'rule' is that exhibitors must own the material.

A lively discussion ensued amongst the panellists and the 25-30 participants which focused on whether open exhibits were, in effect, thematic exhibits with important material which could not be illustrated philatelically. Opinions differed, but the words of Liz Hussey "...open is thematic on steroids" resonated with many in the audience. Cheryl Ganz stressed the importance of open displays in bringing people into philately because there are more points of interest in an open display than other philatelic classes.

Whether open, social or display, it was agreed that open (and thematic) displays have to be structured around a clear storyline which is evident in all parts of a display. In America they call this 'the golden thread'. Storylines are often historical, as Iva Mouritsen illustrated with parts of her exhibit on the historical consequences for Denmark of a stormy royal marriage. But other models can be used: Liz Hisey showed how she used a celebration dinner menu to structure a prize-winning open display. An important observation was the ability to tell a story like an author, rather than as an academic or scientist.

Finally, attention turned to future trends, in particular the relationships between open philately and postal history (a nexus that was repeated in a thematic philately seminar later in the week); and picture postcard collections. Both were obvious points of discussion, so an idea 'from the floor' that philatelists might explore common ground with genealogy generated slightly more discussion. We learnt James R. Miller recently published a downloadable book on this topic in the USA and that there is a philatelic genealogy [web site](#). Interestingly, no mention was made specifically of ephemera collectors and open philatelists even though most open collections and displays have copious amounts of ephemera. 

Reference

Miller, J.R. (2016) *Philatelic Genealogy: Old Envelopes, Letters and Postcards as Genealogical Sources*. Philatelic Genealogy Inc.: Caroga Lake, New York. [this book can be downloaded, details as the [Philatelic Genealogy web site](#).

BTA NEWS

STAMPEX 2019

The Court of Honour at Autumn Stampex 2019 will feature BTA member Brian Asquith's collection "Faster Than a Bullet - the Concorde Story", 2019 being the 50th anniversary of the maiden flight of Concorde. Some information from Brian about his collection can be found on the "What's Happening" link on the [Stampex web page](#), together with details of talks on offer every day during the show. Stampex will be held from 11th to 14th September at the Business Design Centre, Islington.

THEMATIC DISPLAY AT THE ROYAL

The Royal Philatelic Society London has relatively few pictorial displays in its annual programmes, but 2020 features one of particular interest to BTA members: on 19 March 2020 BTA member Lesley Marley will be showing her international multi-award winning *A Whale's Tale*. This will be held in the Royal's new premises at 15 Abchurch Lane, EC4N 7BW

12 OCTOBER 2019 BTA COMPETITIONS AT ARDINGLY: NEW CHAMPIONSHIP CLASS

Calling all previous competition winners! 2019 see a new addition to the BTA's competitions. Open to previous winners of the BTA's Annual Competitions (Thematic, Open or Postcard) it will be called 'The BTA Championship Class' and is a chance for you to look back at previous success, enter it again - maybe changed and enhanced by the material and knowledge you have gained since winning - and pit your skills against others for the worthy 'champion' accolade.

Rules and entry form will be found on pages 104-107. Please support the BTA by putting in an entry to this or our other competitions. Barry Stagg, Andrew Millington and Wendy Buckle will be attending, and will be willing to handle your entry if you give it to them before the 11th October. All our competitions will be held at the South of England Stamp Fair, Ardingly Showground, Ardingly, RH17 6TL. A fair well worth attending anyway: over 40 dealers, free parking and an excellent cafe.

Looking further ahead: DATE FOR YOUR DIARIES

BTA WEEKEND

26 - 28 MARCH 2021

OXFORD SPIRES HOTEL

BTA AT AUTUMN STAMPEX 2020

As previously announced, the BTA will be the lead organisation for displays at Autumn Stampex 2020. This will be a rare chance for visitors to see a very wide range of pictorial displays, so please save 16-19 September 2020 in your diaries!

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

If you would like to compete:


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

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

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

Competitive or non-competitive:

- If you plan to exhibit, or are thinking about it as a possibility, please [email](#) the BTA Competitions Organiser, Andrew Millington, and let him know how many frames you plan to exhibit.
- Let Andrew know if you will be a first time exhibitor at Stampex, as this will help BTA's planning.
- You can produce more than one exhibit.
- Applications will have to be submitted through the normal process for Stampex, i.e. through the [ABPS portal](#) which involves an on-line registration and entry process. The instructions for Autumn Stampex 2019 will shortly be replaced by those for Autumn 2020. You will need to create an online account with the ABPS and then register your entry, using the above link.
- The title and a brief description of each exhibit will be published in the Stampex programme. This will be taken from your entry form.
- The normal arrangements for Stampex are that you need to mount and dismount your own exhibit(s), so you will either need to be in London on 15th and 19th September, OR pass your entry to a nominated member of the BTA Committee who will be happy to manage this for you.
- Fees are £25 per frame. The BTA is committed to producing a very wide range of material that will showcase pictorial collecting, not to mention advertise the Association, and to encourage those new to exhibiting (whether to compete or to display only) the BTA will contribute £10 towards the fee of the first (or only) frame of your exhibit.

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

BOOK AND FILM REVIEWS

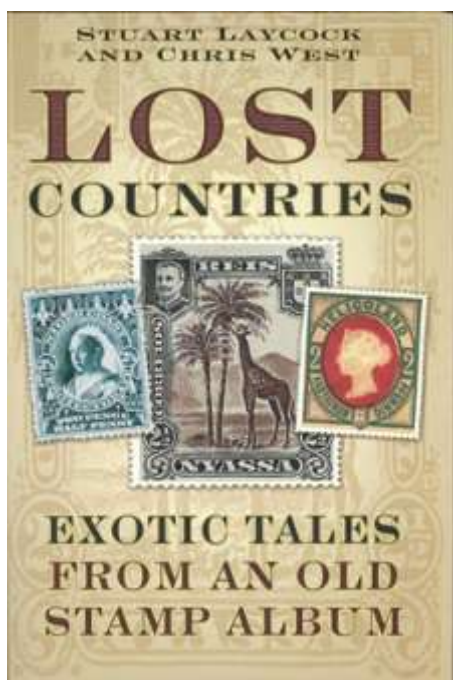
Laycock, Stuart and West, Chris

Lost Countries: Exotic tales from an old stamp album

2017, 256p. The History Press, Stroud, Gloucestershire. ISBN 978 0 7509 7949 8

Reviewed by Owen Green

This little book (13.5 x 20.5 cms) covers a big subject – all of those countries that have produced postage stamps but which no longer exist! The authors, Stuart Laycock and Chris West, are social historians with more than a passing interest in philately. Chris West is the author of the critically acclaimed *A History of Britain in 36 Postage Stamps* (2012). Together, they have compiled an excellent read that will appeal to both stamp enthusiasts and social historians, as it comments on and illustrates the use of postage stamps in the “legitimising” of commercial and colonial expansion during the past 200 years of countries and regional ‘geo-political’ areas which no longer exist, or have been consumed by other expanding empires. Furthermore, their narrative describes how the origins of many conflicts and border disputes existed years before postage stamps were in existence.



Two introductory chapters set the scene for the story, frequently told with humour and a style that reflects the enjoyment derived from philately. Familiar to many of us will be the discovery of a stamp collection or album from a relative started decades before. The authors’ starting point is the ‘rediscovery’ of a schoolboy’s stamp album, “The Lincoln Stamp Album” (1901 edition), by William Simpson Lincoln (1844–1922) the prolific 19th century stamp dealer, reputedly claimed to be ‘the oldest established stamp dealer in the world’. Such a collection reflects a past time when the world seemed ‘larger’ and countries considerably more distant and remote than today’s travel and media coverage implies. Artefacts from the “lost countries” are often difficult to obtain, with postage stamps (and the efforts of thematic collectors) providing a means of remembering “tragedy, drama, glory, despair and comedy”, many of which may have been eroded from the official records of a country.


For the non-philatelists there is a short note titled ‘stamp-speak’, a section defining terms used and applicable in understanding the main text: definitive, commemorative, overprints and of course Cinderella’s. The inclusion of this information contributes to making this the ideal gift from a philatelist to any friend or relative who does not appreciate some of the quirkier aspects of stamp collecting!

The remainder of the book, some 230 pages, is given over to the countries, areas, regions, states, companies and institutions that produced postage stamps in an attempt to gain or reinforce legitimacy. Some of the 76 names listed will be familiar: Amoy, Biafra,

Danzig, Hyderabad, Saar, Tibet etc, while others might be difficult to locate and place on the atlas: Cundinamarca, Dedeagh, Fezzan, Kurland, Sopron, Upper Yafa, etc. I will not spoil the fun or give away clues as to the site, situation and importance of the latter, other than to say that the origins of each is usually in the dim and distant past, while their philatelic history is usually extremely short, and today might provide the only evidence of their existence. It is comforting to know that (we) philatelists might be the ‘historians’ tasked to tell this tale!

Every section provides a fascinating story and insight into history and geography. I learnt why the first stamps from Heligoland, a North Sea archipelago situated near the coast of Denmark and Germany, featuring a profile portrait of Queen Victoria, and denominated in the dual currency of sterling and Germany existed! Britain gave up the territory in 1890, in a swap with the Germans for Zanzibar – apparently a better prospect for British colonial expansion. I was also fascinated to learn that the ‘Straits Settlements’ extended far beyond the Straits of Malacca and the Malay Peninsula, and was an administrative area initiated by the British East India Company, which included Dinding, Penang, Labuan, Singapore, Malacca, Christmas Island and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands of the Indian Ocean.

The final two page appendix provides the briefest explanation titled “the story of stamp collecting”. Detailing the development of collecting from the 1850’s (originating from William Lincoln in London and Stanley Gibbons in Plymouth), it mentions two of the best known 20th century collectors, namely King George V and US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1882-1945), an avid collector, reputed to say “I owe my life to my hobbies, especially stamp collecting”.

If you have not yet read this book, then I thoroughly recommend that you obtain a copy. Although it retails for £12.99, it is currently available from The Works book stores, usually at half the cost, and is possibly available from Amazon at even less. Alternatively it is available as an e-book on Apple Books and Kindle. 

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Freaks and Errors: A Rare Collection

a documentary film written, produced and directed by Mark Cwiakala. 2018.

Available online from Amazon Prime, iTunes and other sources listed at [Freaks and Errors](#).

Distributed by Gravititas Ventures. DVD version available from Amazon.

Running time 95 minutes.

Reviewed by Estelle Shale

The title, whilst invoking terminology that is commonplace in American philatelic circles with respect to material objects, is also intended, I assume, to be provocative and to pay at least lip service to the notion that stamp collectors are at best geeks and possibly downright eccentric or worse! As a tyro collector I therefore watched the film with a little trepidation. I may not have watched it at all, in fact, except that in mentioning ‘teapots’ and ‘basketball’ in the trailer that hint of thematics made me intrigued to see if the director would venture much beyond the esoteric atmosphere of the auction room and world rarities.

The film’s website provides the following introduction:

“PHILATELY WILL GET YOU EVERYWHERE

For those who know, no explanation is necessary.

For those who don't, no explanation is possible.”

“Originally designed as a receipt for a service, postage stamp collecting quickly vaulted into a cultural phenomenon, becoming the world’s most popular hobby. A box of stamps could ignite one’s imagination with images of exotic cultures, native people, art, geography, history, music, and literature, as well as a nation’s political climate. In contemporary society, stamp collectors, or “philatelists” (as they’re commonly known), though dwindling in numbers, continue to be curators of these mini time-capsules. We follow a select group of collectors, that at first glance, seem to have only one thing in common, the love of postage stamps. A closer look though, reveals a slew of familiar traits that connect them to each other and uncovers the all-consuming influence that the hobby has had in defining many aspects of their personal and social lives. As we weave through their stories, we unveil common patterns, collecting is their primary catalyst for friendship and community in a world where modern shifts in work/life dynamics, family structure, digital media, and other factors threaten the relevance of all hobbies.”



“At the center is the Penny Magenta, a rare stamp with an amazing pedigree and outstanding worth. This stamp has had a profound impact on the personal and financial lives of those who have sacrificed to own it. In addition to showcasing the lives of these collectors, the stamps have lives of their own. One of the most famous stamps, the legendary for generations of collectors. Recently, the stamp was launched out of traditional philatelic circles and permeated mainstream media with a high-profile sale to an unexpected buyer. Though each character’s background differs, the common motives for

collecting create an undeniable bond.”

“Freaks and Errors: A Rare Collection, is a social commentary on how we all are searching for ways to control our world, make order out of chaos, connect with one another, and express our passions.”


So does the director collect stamps? On the website he says that he “has the largest stamp collection that any non-stamp collector should have” which could mean almost anything! What motivated him to produce this film? Having now watched the film, I still have no answer to those questions but I can appreciate that the director has showcased divergent views on a range of issues concerning philately whilst still, regrettably in my opinion, appealing to some of the more common preconceptions. For example, neither of the terms in the title was mentioned at all in the film, so for anyone without some philatelic knowledge the title will probably be regarded as applying to the collectors rather than the material.

Although much of the focus was on expensive stamps beyond the reach of most collectors, there was also coverage of postal history, covers, first day covers, ‘back of the book’ and overprints. Thematic or topical collecting was not mentioned, as such, but the appeal of subject based collecting was covered, with Zeppelin mail and stamps being enthusiastically described by one of the interviewees.

As the director is an independent filmmaker based in the USA there was some, not unexpected, bias towards American and British Empire material, but the many stunning close ups of stamps showed material from around the world at resolutions I had never before seen. The glory of line engraved stamps was manifest. It was perhaps inevitable that most of the interviewees would be white, male, moneyed and resident in the United States. The only stamp show and exhibition shown was almost devoid of attendees. Perhaps the film has been deliberately edited to show the end of the day or the very oldest of the collectors at the event but the images shown bore little resemblance to the difficulty of finding an empty seat or getting to the box of interest at Stampex or the York Fairs that I have experienced.

I thought some of the ‘facts’ might be a little approximate, but the interviewees were eloquent in expressing the joy of research, the thrill of the chase, the fun, the camaraderie and their passion for collecting and sharing their collections. Indeed at one point I stopped the video and went off to make a cup of tea because the exposure to others’ obsessions was getting a little too intense!

So what would I alter? I can think of two things in particular. Firstly, I would like to have seen a more global view – there was no mention of the burgeoning interest in philately around the world, India and China come to mind. That would also have been an effective balance to the hypothesis that the collecting of stamps is in terminal decline. I have never heard anyone suggest that collecting porcelain or incunabula or art is dying because children do not do so. Philately has become (like many other forms of collecting) a pursuit largely confined to those of mature years. Just because it was once the hobby of children and is no longer so does not mean the hobby is dying, it means it has changed. Secondly, the sound track of the film was poor. Not the quality of sound in the interviews but the music chosen for the opening and closing credits was decidedly funereal and in significant contrast to the vibrancy of the interviewees. There were also two episodes of incidental music that were extremely discordant in the sense that I could see no link behind the style and timing of the sound and the events being portrayed.

Would I recommend it? On balance, yes, and I think it would make a splendid item for a club or society meeting. Show this film and I am sure there would be a subsequent lively debate. 

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. Thank you.)

MUSICAL MOMENTS!

Do you play a musical instrument? Even if you don't, there is probably one instrument that you like the most. There are lots of stamps available showing hundreds of different instruments - you could start a Musical Alphabet Stamp Collection. Or perhaps you could make a collection of stamps of instruments in your school orchestra. Or you could even make a collection of famous musicians. Here are some musical instruments in alphabetical order - see if you can find some musical stamps to match some of them.

A - accordion, acoustic guitar

B - bagpipes, banjo, bassoon, bell, bongo, bugle

C - castanets, cello, clarinet, conga, cornet, cymbals, chimes, cowbell, clarinet

D - drums, didgeridoo

E - ektara, erhu, erxian

F - flute, flutophone, flugelhorn, French horn, finger cymbals, fiddle

G - glockenspiel, gongs, guitar, glass chord

H - harmonica, harp, harpsichord, horn

I - ipu, igil, Irish bouzouki, inci, Irish Uilleann, Istarski mih

J - jug jangu, Jew's harp, jiaohu, jinghu,

K - kazoo, keyboard, kettle drum

L - lute, lyre

M - mandolin, maracas



N - naqara, nyckelharpa, nadaswaram, natural trumpet, nay, ney, Northumbrian small pipes, nose flute
O - organ, oboe
P - piano, percussions, pipe organ, piccolo
Q - quinticlave, qanun, quena
R - recorder, rain stick, rattle, reed pipe
S - saxophone, snare drum, steel drum, strings, sousaphone, synthesizer,
T - tambourine, triangle, trombone, trumpet, tuba, turntables, tom-tom
U - ukulele, udu ud/ oud, Irish uilleann
V - viola, violin, vertical flute
W - whip/slapstick, Welsh pipes, willow flute, wind chimes, washtub bass
X - xylophone, xylorimba, xalam, xiaodihu, xiao, xun
Y - yun lo, yang chin, yang chi'in, yueh ch'in, yayli tanbur, yazheng, yu, yehu
Z - zither, zhongdihu, zhuihu, zampogna, zaqq, zurna



Do you know what instruments are shown on the stamps?
(Answers at the bottom of the page).

Most stamps will tell you what instrument is shown, sometimes in very small writing, and sometimes in a different language! The stamps on the next page are from an island called Jersey - see if you can find out where Jersey is. The stamps show some of the instruments you would find in an orchestra. The name of the instruments are in tiny writing down the right hand side of the stamp, but can you guess which instrument belongs to which stamp from the following list:

Accordion, Bagpipes, Didgeridoo, Harp, Mandolin, Saxophone

French Horn / Violin / Bassoon / Harp / Timpani Drum / Trumpet
 (Answers at the bottom of the page).



Now you can make your own collection of music stamps. *Write about your music stamps to win a stamp prize (children only) to: Just4Kids, c/o The Editor, Themescene, 87 Victoria Road, Bournemouth, BH1 4RS*



Find out more about stamp collecting on the [Stamp Active website](#)

37p = Violin / 50p = Trumpet / 59p = Harp / 64p = Timpani drum
 79p = Bassoon / 86p = French horn

BRITISH THEMATIC ASSOCIATION 2019 COMPETITIONS

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

SATURDAY 12 OCTOBER 2019 10.00am – 4.30pm

Competition categories are:

BTA CUP

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

JOHN FOSBERY TROPHY

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

BRIAN SOLE TROPHY

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

BTA CHAMPIONSHIP CLASS

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

See next page for Rules

Please complete the Entry Form and send it to –
Andrew Millington, Flat 4, 87 Shurdington Road, Cheltenham, GL53
0JQ. Tel: 0770 8356757. Email [Andrew Millington](mailto:Andrew.Millington@btinternet.com)

Closing date for receipt of entry forms: Monday 30th September 2019.

Please send sheets to the same address between

Wednesday 2nd to Wednesday 9th October 2019, but no later.

Or deliver them to the Fair (first floor) by 10.00 on 12th October

RULES

All classes

1. Every exhibit must have an Introductory Page as the first sheet. All sheets must be enclosed in protectors and the pages numbered at the foot of the page.
2. There will be an entry fee of £10 for each competition. A receipt will be issued and must be produced if collecting the entry after the Exhibition has closed. All four competitions will be open to all and not restricted to BTA members.
3. Judges will be appointed who are qualified in judging Thematic Philately and/or Open Philately and/or Picture Postcard exhibits at Federation or National level.

Thematic, Open and Postcard Class

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

Championship Class

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

*All previous winners of all competitions
can be found listed on the [BTA website](#)*

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

90.

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

MARKING Thematic Philately – BTA Cup

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

MARKING Open Philately – John Fosbery Thematic Trophy

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

MARKING Picture Postcard Class - Brian Sole Trophy

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

British Thematic Association Competitions 2019 Entry Form

I wish to enter

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

AND/OR

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

AND/OR

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

AND/OR

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

Name

Tel No.....

Address.....

.....

.....

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

Title of Entry (A).....

Title of Entry (B).....

Title of Entry (C).....

Title of Entry (D).....

Please indicate Thematic Open Picture Postcards

I accept that the material is submitted entirely at my own risk and I undertake to make my own arrangements with regard to the insurance of the entry whilst it is out of my possession; this includes all transit risks, temporary housing of the entry and its display at Ardingly Showground. I confirm that all information on this form is correct and I am enclosing a remittance of £10, per entry, payable to the British Thematic Association.

TOTAL REMITTANCE enclosed £

Please tick to indicate how your entry will be delivered:

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

Signed.....

Date.....



GROUP MEMBERS

Alba Stamp Group

Mrs. Elizabeth Nairn, 4 Strenaby Avenue, Burnside, Rutherglen, G73 5DL
Email: [Elizabeth Nairn](#)

Astro Space Stamp Society

Mr. J. Dugdale, Glebe Cottage, Speymouth, Mosstodloch, Fochabers, Moray, IV32 7LE
Email: [Jeff Dugdale](#)

Bicycle Stamp Club

Mr. B. J. Sole, 49 West Carr Lane, Hersham, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey, KT12 5ER
Email: [Brian Sole](#)

Bird Stamp Society

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Email: [Tony Statham](#)

Captain Cook Society

Mr I. A. Peel, 13 Caudry Close, Thornhill, Dewsbury, West Yorkshire, WF12 0LW.
Email: [Alwyn Peel](#)

Concorde Study Circle

Mr B. L. Asquith, Alandale, Radcliffe Gardens, Carshalton Beeches, Surrey,
SM5 4PQ
Email: [Brian Asquith](#)

Exhibition Study Group

Mr. D. Knight, 2 Crescent Road, New Barnet, Herts. EN4 9RF.
Email: [Donald Knight](#)

Glasgow Thematic Society

Mrs M. Mathieson, 17 Hairmyers Park, East Kilbride, Glasgow, G75 8SS.
Email: [Maureen Mathieson](#)

Guild of St. Gabriel

Rev. Derek West, 35 Wallasey Crescent, Ickenham, Middlesex, UB10 8SA.

Masonic Philatelic Club

Mr. K. J. Elston, 21 Copperbeech Close, Harborne, Birmingham, B32 2HT.
Email: [The Club](#)

Scout and Guide Stamp Club

Mr. B. Tewksbury, 11 Claypits Road, Boreham, Chelmsford, Essex, CM3 3BZ
Email: [Bernard Tewkesbury](#)

Ship Stamp Society

Mr. R. E. Robertson, 17 Whitehall Road, Northburn Park, Cramlington,
Northumberland, NE23 3QW.

West of England Thematic Society

Mrs. S. Ellam, 101 Dunraven Drive, Derriford, Plymouth, PL6 6AT
Email: [Sally Ellam](#)

“Do you like Kipling?”
“I don’t know, you naughty boy,
I’ve never kiplled!”



One of McGill's best sellers

“I want to back the favourite, please.
My sweetheart gave me a pound,
to do it both ways!”

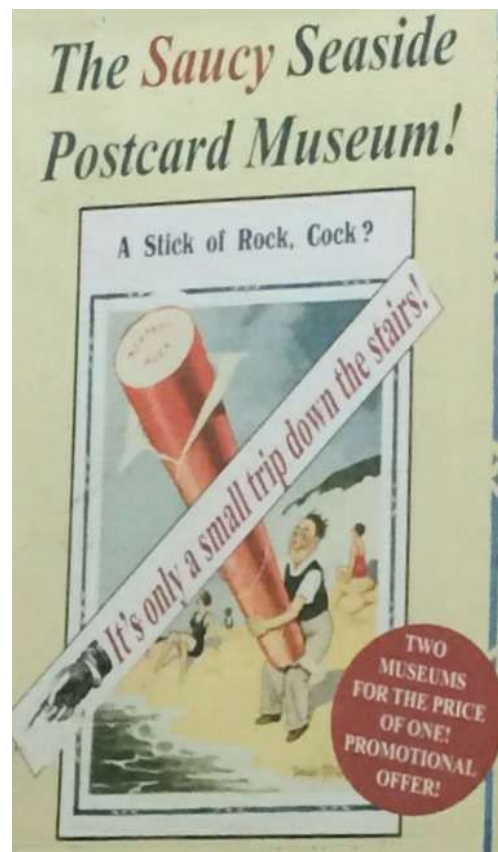


Banned in 1954



WHAT DID YOU DO
IN THE GREAT WAR ?

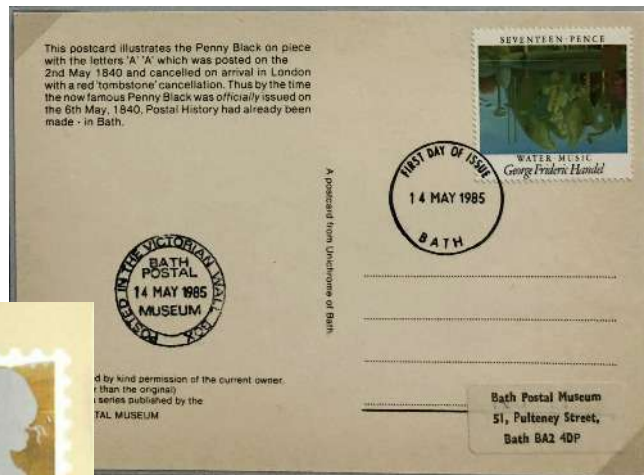
World War I



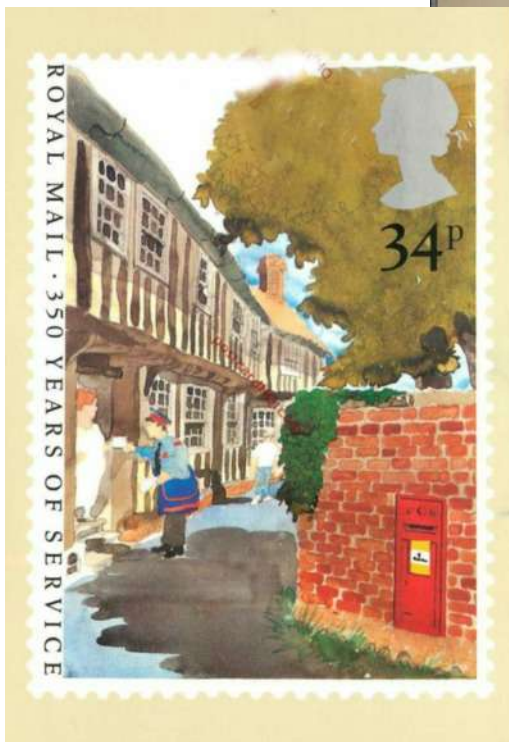
VICTORIAN LETTER BOXES, page 89



FDC produced by the Trollope Society for the 150th anniversary of the pillar box issue of 2002. The cover is signed by the artist, David Eccles, and each of the montage of letters is addressed to a different character from a Trollope novel.



Cachet applied to items posted in the Victorian wall box at Bath Postal



Post Office Picture Card series PHQ 85(d) 7/85 'Letter Post'

