

THEMESCENE

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THEMESCENE

Journal of the
British Thematic Association
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Philatelic Societies

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Editor:

Wendy Buckle
87 Victoria Road
Bournemouth
BH1 4RS

Advertising Manager:

Mike Blackman
45 Kenwood Drive
Beckenham
Kent, BR23 2QY

Printer:

K.D.S.
Elder House, Chattisham
Ipswich
Suffolk IP8 3QE

Distributed by:

Richard Wheeler
"Kincorra"
Boode Road
Braunton
Devon, EX33 2NW

Website:

www.brit-thematic-assoc.com

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YOUR COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Patron: **Brian Sole FRPSL**

3 Stockfield Road, Claygate, Esher, Surrey KT10 0QG Tel: 01372 467652

Fax: 01372 469755 email: brian.sole@btinternet.com

President: **John Hayward**

18 Waverley Drive, Camberley, Surrey GU15 2DL

Tel: 01276 29246 email: ssasman@btinternet.com

Chairman: **Richard Wheeler**

“Kincora” Boode Road, Braunton, EX33 2NW.

Tel: 01271 813940. email: Richard.wheeler@telepuppets.com

Vice Chairman: **Wendy Buckle**

87 Victoria Road, Springbourne, Bournemouth BH1 4RS

Tel: 01202 302273 Email: wendybuckle@btinternet.com

Secretary: **Anne Stammers**

40 St. Helen's Way, Benson, Wallingford OX10 6SW

email: annies1@btopenworld.com

Membership Secretary: **Peter Denly**

9 Oaklands Park, Bishops Stortford, Herts, CM23 2BY

email: peter.denly@btinternet.com

Treasurer: **Peter Wood**

21 Loftus Road, London, W12 7EH. email: peter.wood95@btinternet.com

Publicity Officer: **Simon Moorcroft**

2 Ramparts Court, Bakers Lane, Braiswick, Colchester, Essex, CO4 5BJ

Tel: 01206 855260 email: simon.moorcroft6@btinternet.com

Editor: **Wendy Buckle** (see Vice Chairman)

Advertising Manager: **Mike Blackman**

45 Kenwood Drive, Beckenham, Kent, BR3 2QY.

Tel: 020 8658 0637 email: mblackmanwpi@tiscali.co.uk

Displays Organiser: **John Hayward** (see President)

Back issues; Themescene Distribution: **Richard Wheeler** (see Chairman)

Committee members:

James Etherington, 56 South Way, Lewes, Sussex, BN7 1LY email: jespeth@hotmail.com

Ronald Hyams, 47, The Four Tubs, Bushey Heath, Herts, WD23 4SJ.

email: ronlad@talktalk.net

Gerald Lovell, Keston Ridge, 76, West End, Silverstone, Northants,

N12 8UY. email: fdc.Silverstone@tesco.net

Charles Oppenheim, 9 Norbury Close, Market Harborough, Leicestershire, LE16 9BH

Email: c.oppenheim@btinternet.com

Brian Sole (see Patron)

OTHER APPOINTMENTS

Librarian: **Ron Backhouse** 10 Hoe Lane, Ware, Herts, SG12 9NU. Tel: 01920 484974

Web Master: **James Wigmore** email: jameswigmore@aol.com

EDITORIAL

Wendy Buckle

Regretfully, the credit crunch has caught up with the BTA. As explained in the Membership Secretary's page (87), and the Treasurer's report to the AGM (p.101), we have finally, after some years, had to increase membership fees. This will take effect from 2010. We are doing a lot for members, and for the role of thematics, with meetings in London and the provinces, but it all comes at a cost.

Brits Do Well ... (p.112) well, all over the place. This magazine is full of reports of competition success, much of which would not have been achieved without the help and advice from senior members of the BTA. Thematics is not only about competitions, indeed for the majority it is not about competitions at all - and no reason why it should be - but for those who have caught the bug it is great to see success at national and international level. Full details of the past year's success stories are given in the Chairman's report to the AGM. I'd just like to add my congratulations to them all.

Midpex, and the BTA's presence there, is well covered (page 107). Regrettably several of the references and reports contain adverse comments about the organisation of Midpex. I was there myself and feel duty-bound to print these comments, since they are all perfectly fair. The experience of being crowded, shoved and marginalised was not a happy one. Having said that, I did really enjoy our speaker at the AGM. I'm not a collector of autographed covers myself, but I was mightily impressed with the work Gerald Lovell does in raising money for charity by organising such material. He has raised over £106,000 to date, a very impressive sum.

We are delighted that Stanley Gibbons have again offered some discount to BTA members for their publications (page 120 and inside back cover). Because we are a little short of advertisers this time the New Issues feature has moved to the inside front cover. As always, if you respond to any of our advertisers please mention *Themescene*: we could not go on publishing four times a year without their support.

There is no Group News in this issue, in this case because I haven't been sent any - publicity officers please note! Free publicity is always available to you. But also no Handstamp Special or Library Listing, both of which had to be jettisoned due to lack of space. I had also intended to report on John Hayward's address to the joint meeting of the Royal Philatelic Society of London and the Thames Valley Philatelic Federation. However, in the words of the Dormouse to Alice [in Wonderland, that is] "No room, no room". It's feast or famine for your Editor: either I'm pleading for articles or I'm wielding the red pen. And I know which is preferable, so please don't stop sending material.

Like so many others I was very sorry to hear of Anne Sole's death. It was no surprise that her memorial service was packed; and like everyone else I would like to extend my condolences, and those of BTA members, to Brian.

Finally, with the prospect of Autumn on its way, may I wish you happy hunting, and time to write it all up. Continue to enjoy your collecting. ☺

PRESIDENT'S PAGE

John Hayward

I start my Page this time regretfully on a sad note. At the beginning of May 2009 we were all saddened to learn of the passing of Anne Sole, our Patron and former President's wife. Many members of the BTA will have known and met Anne over the last 20 years at Thematica and other BTA events, where she gave such willing and generous support to Brian and the BTA. Many of us too have great memories of her company at informal and more formal philatelic events in the UK and at foreign exhibitions at which she accompanied Brian. She will be sorely missed. She died at such a poignant time, as hers and Brian's first grandson William, was born shortly before she died, but it must have been of great comfort to Anne and indeed to Brian that she was able to see William – a lovely little boy who behaved so impeccably at the cremation and memorial service. Amongst the many people at these events were thematic collectors to pay their last respects to a truly lovely lady. Brian, on behalf of the BTA may I express our heartfelt sympathy to you and your family.

On a happier note it is so good to record the splendid exploits of our members at Essen in May (see page 112). Three gold medals is an excellent haul, and Jim Etherington's award is the icing on the cake. What I found so pleasing was that I had recommended to Jim two or three years ago that he obtain a particular piece of Nazi postal stationery to go in his exhibit about 1940 and he not only got it, but he also got the other seven pieces of postal stationery in the same set and included them at various stages of his exhibit! Well done Jim.

May, June and July have been busy months on the thematic front. The trip to Essen was followed by frantic work on my exhibit in Bulgaria later in May. Then there was the joint meeting with the Postal Stationery Society at Swinpex (page 116) which was very successful, and they have asked us to arrange a similar meeting in 2 to 3 years time. The new Thematix event took place at Twickenham at the end of June (page 111). The BTA had a table at the event, although my call for members to assist with its manning seemingly fell on stony ground apart from Committee Members. We were successful though in raising funds and recruiting one new member, and should support Thematix 2010. I then judged the BTA Cup prior to Midpex (see page 107) where we held our AGM which was quite well attended. I must say the organisation by the ABPS was not up to scratch – our table was badly situated where we could not attract attention and the AGM room was limited for space. The latter did not give Gerald Lovell, with our guest display afterwards, the setting he deserved for his intriguing and novel presentation. Nonetheless, congratulations are due to Anne Stammers for her *Rocks to Riches* which won the BTA Cup and which I was pleased to present to her. She is another exhibitor who has been listening to the judges and acting on their advice.

The Autumn promises to be no less busy, with our Thematic Seminar on 12th September 2009 at Handforth, Cheshire (details in June 2009 *Themescene*); those of you in the North West should make sure you come to this event. Then there is Eurothema 2009 – details on page 116. In between I am off to Italia 2009 in Rome where Ron Backhouse, Jim Etherington and myself are exhibiting in the Thematic Class. Somewhere in between I will need to finalise the BTA's Programme for 2010 so that you receive the printed copy with the next issue of *Themescene*. Any suggestions from yourselves as to what should be included in the Programme would be very welcome for consideration by myself and other members of your Committee. Indeed, Jim Etherington mentioned at the AGM that Members' Meetings held separately from philatelic events ought to be tried. What do you all think? ☐

CHAIRMAN'S PAGE

Richard Wheeler

The summer is almost over and the evenings are drawing in. It becomes a time for many many philatelists to leave their gardens and get back to the collecting of stamps in earnest.

I was reading the article by Grace Davies in the June issue about how she came to take an interest in thematics, having made a spur of the moment purchase with the New Zealand Peace Set. The subject of 'Peace' is described as being unusual. Well it is if you put it alongside popular subjects like ships, aircraft, Olympics, railways, cats, dogs, owls, plants, etc. I appreciated the way her collection grew and the lateral thinking that took over. I noted that Grace competed in the Fosbery trophy at Midpex with her exhibit. It was most interesting.

I nodded and laughed to myself at her description of forays to stamp shows when dealers would shake their heads and say they had nothing. I had exactly the same thing happen when I started my collection on puppets. I now have over two hundred display sheets of this non existent subject and still dealers tell me nothing exists. It is a different matter abroad, where I have found most of my sources have material. I comb eBay and Delcampe regularly and get any new items flagged up on a daily basis. There are a number of dealers world wide who have regular lists on the internet and some who have elusive proofs, errors, essays, imperfs, etc.

My advice to anyone starting a new subject – DON'T GIVE UP.

These past few months have seen the advent of Exhibitions to visit and John has reported on his visit to Essen and also to ThematiX 09 at Twickenham. I was able to visit Swinpex and join the crowd of collectors at this well organised event. Forty six dealer stands, exhibits in the main lecture hall, Society meetings in separate rooms, including a joint meeting of the BTA and the Postal Stationery Society where a range of varied material was shown (see page 116). All together a good day out. The dealers appeared to be very busy in the morning and the majority were most helpful. I did note one dealer however who was very offhand and had no time to answer requests – "if you can't see it, I haven't got it". Not very helpful.

Midpex was a different matter altogether. From the moment I arrived to be met by a chaotic lack of organisation in parking cars, with an over-full car park half an hour before the show opened, (it was also a Leisure Centre and their customers were there first). Having first unnecessarily toured the car park and been instructed to travel to the grounds of a rugger club down the road and walk back, I found that the abysmally small table allocated to the BTA was in a very crowded and over-heated hall. There was no proper gangway space between us and an adjoining dealer who had chairs for his clients. We could not display or talk to prospective visitors. By 11.00 a.m. the heat was unbearable and one of the visitors, who actually joined us, opened an emergency exit close by giving us some much needed air. Upstairs, there was a large room for the display of exhibits for the Fosbery Trophy, the Federation competition and the BTA cup which was won by Anne Stammers, our hard working Secretary with the equally hard working Editor Wendy Buckle in second place. Congratulations to them both. There was also a large array of exhibits in the Children's section and well done to all of them.


The ultimate lack of organisation was the provision of the room for our AGM where the main exhibit was an enormous table which dominated the room to the exclusion of some of our members who wished to be present. This table could not be moved outside and Anne and I were squeezed into a corner to take the meeting. The area for Gerald Lovell with his original and great display deserved far more space, as it did not provide an area to allow perusal by those members

who had managed to find a seat. My thanks to him for providing us with a memorable exhibit on Formula One racing car covers autographed by their drivers. Apparently he has been collecting these for twenty five years and raises money for charity which runs into many thousands of pounds. Tremendous!

There had obviously been organisation of the event but it was let down in its execution. The day did have its highlights. It was nice to meet Members who do not normally come to London for the AGM, but it was not a show I would wish to visit on a future occasion unless they can guarantee that they can sort themselves out.

One of my last visits before I have to go to print will be to visit an old stamping ground of mine at Bishop's Stortford in Hertfordshire where I went to school. The evening has been organised by our Membership Secretary Peter Denly and is the summer evening of the Bishop's Stortford Philatelic Society which is being held in conjunction with St. James Church, Thorley. It is to be held in the Barnabas Centre which is a 12th century barn totally renovated. The evening starts with a fish and chip supper and the odd glass of el vino. There will be six static displays by members and a talk on the barn by a historian of the building. I follow with my talk; this links with the area as it was where my interest in puppets began. I finish with my display "Masks, Mimes and the Evolution of Puppets".

I am also going to Malmo in Sweden in the latter part of August for the F.I.P. seminar on Postal History and Thematic Philately. A few of our members will also be present. I will report on this in the December issue.

Now it's time to look forward to the events lined up for the Autumn. 

Half page Advertisement for Thames Themes

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S PAGE

Peter Denly

Ordinary members	214
Family members	17
Junior members	3
Society members	15
Overseas members	18
Overseas Society members	1
Honorary members	4
Total number of members	272
(At 1 st August 2009)	

New Members joining since the June 2009 issue

Mr. M. Borthwick	Edinburgh	Mr. G. Leece	Clevedon
Mr.A. Kell	Verwood	Mrs. S. Reid	Southend

Deaths advised since the June 2009 issue

Mrs. A. Sole	Claygate
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At the completion of renewal of subscriptions, the Association normally sees a number of members deciding not to renew for various reasons. This year the loss was 4.5% which we find is restored by new members joining throughout the year, giving us an average membership close to 290. The Chairman in his report to the Annual General Meeting has touched on the reasons for loss of members and sadly, advancing years and poor health rather than lack of enthusiasm are the main causes mentioned by resigning members.

Although your Committee works hard at trying to reduce costs it has become increasingly obvious that the rental of premises, cost of representation at philatelic events, participating workshops and postage for the magazine are all costing considerably more than the income provided from the current subscription call rate plus any miscellaneous sales.

Reluctantly, therefore, it has been decided that it is no longer acceptable to run the Association in deficit, and with the approval of the members at the Annual General Meeting increases to the subscription have been made. The following rates will come into effect 31st January 2010:

Ordinary membership	£15
Family membership	£15
UK Society membership	£17 - in receipt of 2 copies of <i>Themescene</i>
Euro currency area	* £16
Overseas (non-eu) membership	* £19
Overseas (non-eu) societies	* £20 - in receipt of 2 copies of <i>Themescene</i>
Junior membership	£ 5

* The euro and US dollar values will be set at the end of 2009, when the rates against the pound sterling are known.

Note: The BTA has bank accounts only in Pounds Sterling. We are therefore not able to accept bankers drafts made out in any currency other than sterling. A number of members choose to pay their subscriptions in cash and we are currently able to accept both euros and US dollars in notes.



PUBLICITY OFFICER'S PAGE

Simon Moorcroft

I along with many other philatelists, attended the Philatelic Congress of Great Britain held in Manchester, or the City of Salford to be more precise, from 16th to 19th July. This year marked one hundred years since the first Congress was held in Manchester and the celebration of this milestone was a central theme to the weekend. A selection of interesting papers were presented during the four days, along with a number of thought-provoking lectures. For me, the story of the English Civil Wars by Malcolm Ray-Smith, which was illustrated with some superb and exceedingly rare postal history material, and the display of Rhodesia by Colin Hoffman were two very memorable displays.

The lecture by Alan Huggins, entitled *Philately: Past, Present and Future*, provoked some interesting discussions and debates, particularly with regard to where the hobby is going and whether philatelists should be concerned. Certainly my view is that while I do not particularly approve of the wealth of material produced by Royal Mail these days, it is nonetheless being collected and enjoyed: why else does Royal Mail continue to produce it? In addition, Alan rightly pointed out that the way in which material is being acquired has changed and continues to change rapidly, moving from acquisitions made at stamp fairs and exhibitions, to purchases made electronically over the internet through websites such as eBay.

The lecture by Francis Kiddle, entitled *The Evolution of Congress from The Past to The Future*, was equally interesting and again caused some interesting debate. In particular, it became apparent upon discussion about previous Congresses, that today Congress has essentially moved from being a weekend where motions are debated, matters decided upon and where representatives of all major UK philatelic societies and federations would be present, to a gathering which increasingly resembles a normal society weekend. The loss of "decision making powers" was felt by many in attendance to be to the detriment of UK philately and Congress and some expressed the view that these powers should be, in part or wholly, returned to Congress. For my part, I believe that instead of matters and motions being discussed at ABPS Council Meetings, they should instead be debated at Congress, as was the case prior to the demise of the BPF.

The RDP signing ceremony took place on Friday 17th in the wonderful surroundings of Manchester Town Hall, in the presence of the Lord Mayor of Manchester, Councillor Alison Firth. Four new philatelists were invited to sign the Roll, including two from the UK: John Sussex and George Barker. The Congress Medal (for outstanding service to philately at national level) was also presented at the ceremony, going this year to Frank Soutar of Scotland. There were also some very enjoyable dinners, including the Congress Banquet on Saturday night, and the usual opportunities to meet up with old friends.

This issue of *Themescene* once again contains two advertisements from Stanley Gibbons, one for their new specialist Aircraft publication and one for the 2010 edition of "Part 1" – GB and British Empire Stamps 1840-1970. Both are offered at discounted prices to BTA members. However, be quick as these offers are time limited. Once again, I would like to put on record my appreciation to Stanley Gibbons for providing BTA members with these generous offers.

Please do remember to try and go along and support our meeting to be held at Handforth, Cheshire on 12th September. In addition to 12 sheet displays by some of those in attendance and a special display by Margaret Morris, entitled "Doing Time", there will also be a useful thematic workshop in the afternoon. It will be a very enjoyable and informative day so please

do go along and support it. There is a charge of £10, payable on the day, to cover the cost of coffee/tea and the buffet lunch. Notification of attendance must be given in advance.

Please continue to support the BTA. ☰

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

From Lise Whittle, by email



THANK YOU, PLEASE, AND THANK YOU!

Recently 3rd Alloway Brownies were putting together a stamp competition entry about Christmas. I contacted everyone I knew who collects stamps to send any spares they had. I am really pleased to say that every single person I contacted responded, and I now have plenty of stamps for the girls. It just goes to show what kind and generous people stamp collectors are, always willing to help and share! Thank you very much.

Please could I have your help again? On 16th October, I (and three other Brown Owls) are taking 24 Brownies away for their annual Pack Holiday weekend. This year our theme will be 'A Wild West Weekend' – Yee-har!! I am collecting together stamps to do with cowboys and Indians and the Wild West for a stamp activity for the girls. For some of them it will be their first introduction to stamp collecting. Please see if you have any spare stamps depicting Cowboys, Indians, USA flag, cattle, horses, campfire, rope, cactus, snakes or anything you think might be suitable, and send them to me, Lise Whittle, 11 Nether Auchendrane, Alloway, Ayr, KA7 4EE.



And finally thank you to Richard Wheeler who sent in the super stamp from Italy which appears in this issue in Just4Kids.

Many thanks,

Lise Whittle

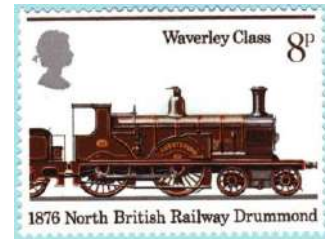
Barry Floyd has been very busy promoting stamp collecting. His article "The stamp of approval" was recently published in *The Countryman*, showing the range of UK stamps which have featured landscape views. And the article ends with a splendid plug for the BTA. An excellent way of spreading the word beyond philatelic shores.

BRITAIN'S RAILWAY EVOLUTION.PT 2

Jim Wigmore continues his look at the age of steam

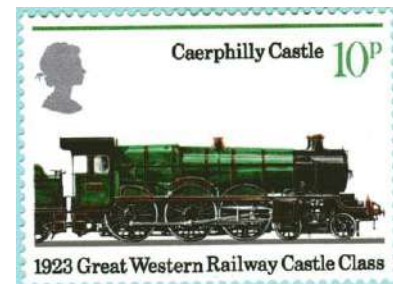
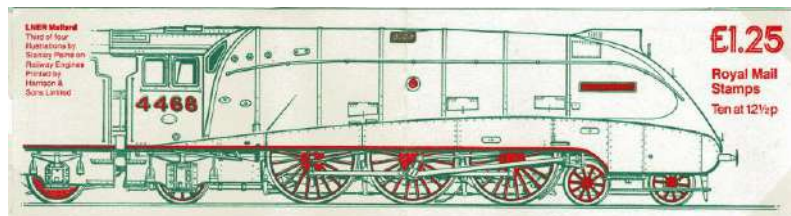
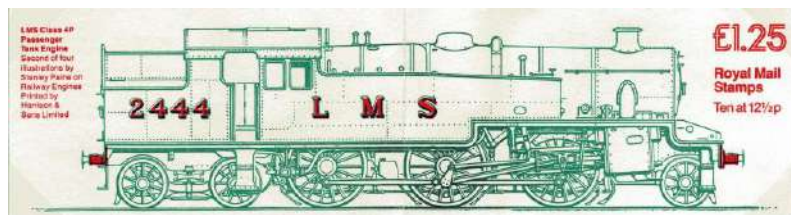
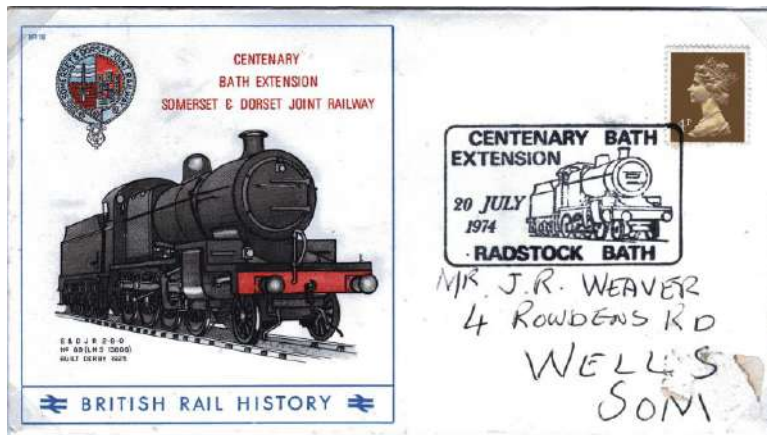
BIGGER & BETTER LOCOMOTIVES

These only came about following the Industrial Revolution which had driven the need for better machinery to build the nations' goods, brought about precision engineering and driven the need for better materials than cast iron and low carbon steels. The various railway companies were starting to build their own locomotives in their own workshops designed by their own locomotive engineers. This had the tendency to produce locomotive designs best suited for their own needs and conditions. The first coupled axle locomotives produced that could run



at any degree of speed were 2-4-0 and 0-4-2 types, soon to be followed by 4-4-0 types, all of which were much liked in the late 1800's by all the railway companies.

The popularity of the railway as a load and people carrier ensured that loads continued to increase and there was an ever growing need for bigger locomotives for all manner of tasks. The freight locomotive was a much slower



machine and needed even more coupled axles to get maximum adhesion to haul the heavy freight trains.



Passengers demand for greater comfort and greater speed required a different approach and the next stage of development was the 4-6-0 type locomotive.

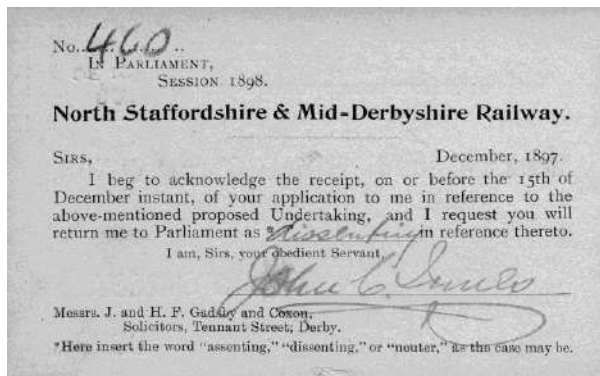
Growing suburban networks required a different approach again, with small self-contained locomotives that could accelerate and stop quickly and that could be operated equally well in either direction without turning. The ultimate design of such locomotives was achieved by the London Midland and Scottish Railway (LMS) in the 1930's.

The 1930's was the time of peak development of the steam locomotive. It saw the introduction of the A4 Pacifics designed for the London & North Eastern Railway by Nigel Gresley (later Sir Nigel Gresley) and built in the company's own works at Doncaster. "Mallard", one of these A4 Pacifics, was to gain the World Speed Record for a steam locomotive on the 3rd July 1938 when it reached 126mph between Grantham and Peterborough, reaching its maximum speed at Little Bytham. This record still stands today. This amazing feat appears only to have been philatelically recorded at the 40th Anniversary. "Mallard" has appeared variously on stamps and on the cover of a booklet and now resides in The National Railway Museum at York. Steam locomotives continued in service into the 1960's before being replaced by either diesel or electric types, mostly driven by the Beeching Reforms to our railway system. Many of the railway steam locomotives withdrawn at this time were as much as 100 years old and many were to find a new life in preservation.

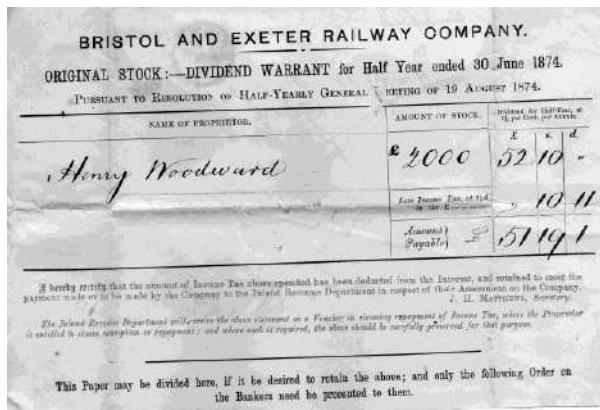
RAILWAYS SPREAD ACROSS THE COUNTRY



Following the opening of the Liverpool & Manchester Railway, then as now it was not possible just to decide to build a railway and go ploughing through the countryside at will. It was necessary to obtain public support, rights of way across the land and financial backing. In addition an Act of Parliament was necessary before a start could be made. Shown here are examples of the means by which public support was requested for those early railways. Not all persons assented, some were dissenters as can be seen left.



Those assenting were fortunately very much in the majority, and examples of such material can be found if you look in the right places.



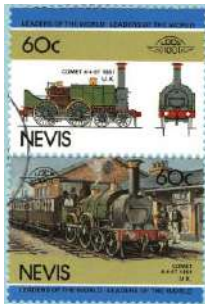
The House of Commons actually set up a special committee to review and either sanction or reject the various proposals for new railways. During the first 10 to 20 years of railway development this committee was kept very busy. People such as George Hudson, the railway king from York, were not adverse to using bribery to speed their bills through. Not all the railways given approval were actually built, as financial backers did not always deliver on the promises of funding (nothing has changed in this respect). Those that did invest, especially in the larger railway ventures in Britain, did get quite a good return on their

investments as can be seen here, in this case just over 5% per annum, a very healthy return. Better returns in the early years have also been seen. Many examples of such payments from investments in the Railway Revolution can be found.

They show why Great Britain was such a dynamic force in the Victorian era. All the above material has travelled through the postal system, and examples can be found of mail going through the postal system without stamps well into the 1870s despite the introduction of adhesive stamps in 1840. Many examples of POSTAGE PAID hand cancels can be found all adding to the interest for the Thematic collector and Postal Historian alike.

THE GAUGE WARS

Besides needing finance and an Act of Parliament, many other factors needed to be resolved, not the least of which was the track the trains would run upon and the width the rails would be set to.



George Stephenson when building the Stockton and Darlington and the Liverpool and Manchester had set the rails at 4ft 8½ inches apart, this being the width cartwheels were set to and judged by Stephenson to be a reasonable width. It was a width adopted by many railways who recognised the need for inter-operability around the country. It became the main line standard and spread to other countries around the world.

Isambard Kingdom Brunel had other ideas, and set his rails to a width of 7ft 0¼ inches, the argument being that both locomotives and rolling stock could be built with a lower centre of gravity making them both safer and capable of greater stability at speed. His engineering logic was impeccable, but he was to lose the argument. The Great Western Railway



and its subsidiaries built a very extensive network all with the tracks set to this gauge. They were a lone force and despite their size they had to change their whole system to what had become Standard Gauge.



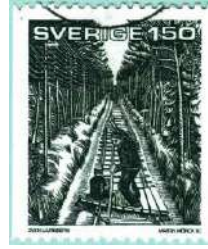
In the UK not all new railways were built to main line standards; many narrow gauge railways were built for transporting both people and goods where the need was less than a full size railway. The favoured gauge was 1ft 11½ ins. An example is the Lynton & Barnstaple (one of just two narrow gauge railways to end up in the hands of one of the big four after the railway grouping of 1926). The Welsh slate quarries built some similar lines that still survive today in preservation.

The narrowest gauge public railway in operation in the UK and in the whole world is the Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway with a gauge of just 15 inches.

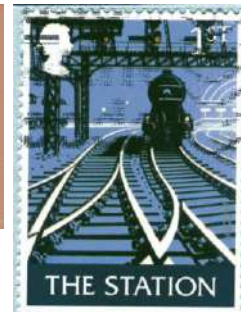


TRACK BUILDING & MAINTENANCE

At the time of the Liverpool & Manchester Railway, and for many years afterwards, all work to prepare the track bed and the laying of sleepers and rails was done by manual labour, and maintenance of the track once laid was a manual task until after WW2. The stamps right feature the maintenance of track and the platelayers trolley used by track maintenance workers.

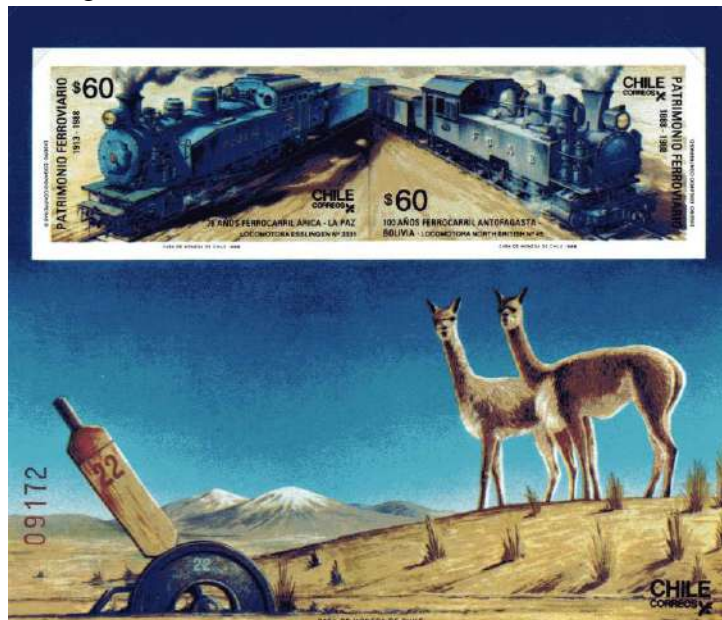


During the course of the railways' evolution, the shape of the rails has become standardised and has increased in weight as the weight of trains has increased. Examples are hard to find on stamp, but it is possible to find examples of the rail manufacturers through their advertising cancels. Track on philately is difficult to come by and only appeared on British stamps through the portrayal of Pub Signs notably "The Station" which featured both track and railway crossings.



By the end of the 1800s machinery was starting to be used for track building in the form of steam shovels and rail mounted cranes and by the middle of the 1900s machinery was being used to lay complete panels of rail and sleepers.

The means of controlling the rail crossings to move trains from one track to another was generally by means of signalmen in signal cabins. However in shunting yards and remote locations manual levers were used and one such example has appeared on a stamp. On the railways of Britain today all work on the track is controlled and managed by Railtrack and we can find examples of advertising slogans for this organisation.



CIVIL ENGINEERING

This has played an enormous part in creating our railway system. The Civil Engineer has been responsible for producing a track bed that is as level as possible. This has involved huge viaducts, bridges, tunnels and cuttings to drive the railway through the countryside. All this has meant new and untried techniques being pioneered and developed. Our railways of today still use many of the original civil engineering works, a tribute to the skill and the solid



construction of the original builders who could not have conceived today's

heavy usage which is way beyond the original requirement.

One of the original unique civil engineering solutions was that of sinking large volumes of wooden faggots into Chat Moss to create a firm bed for the Liverpool & Manchester Railway. An earlier first was that of the Stockton & Darlington Railway who pioneered the method of testing railway viaducts, shown on the postcard above. Having built their viaduct they had no means of actually testing the structure other than to run one of their heaviest locomotives to the centre of the structure and check for any deflection. It worked and many of the structures still stand today and are still in railway use.



Isambard Kingdom Brunel created some very handsome pieces of civil engineering in his construction of the Great Western Railway (GWR) between London and Bristol. The arched roof on Paddington Station was at the time the largest unsupported arch. The very flat arch of the bridge over the Thames at Maidenhead was a masterpiece of engineering. It was fully expected to fall into the Thames as soon as the first train went over it, but it is still in use today

carrying loads unheard of at the time of construction. Box Tunnel is another superb piece of engineering, where the rising sun shines right through the tunnel only on the day of Brunel's birthday.

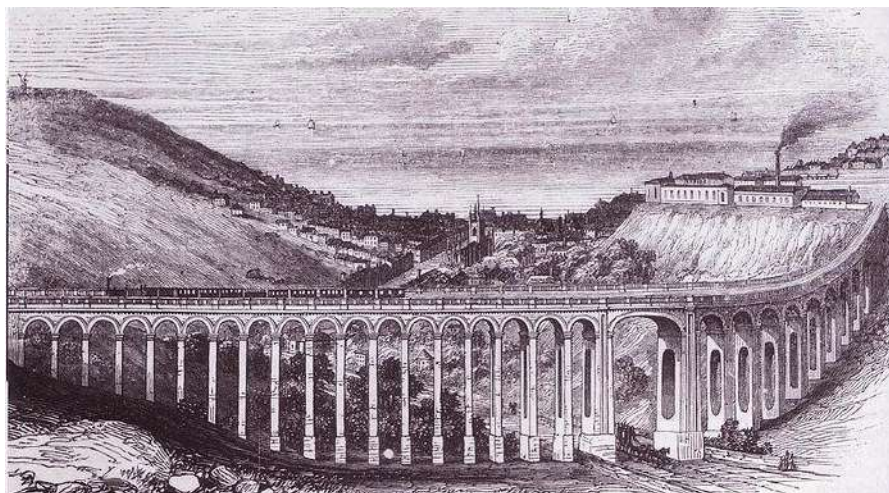
The GWR absorbed a number of other railways including the Bristol & Exeter and South Devon Railways. The quest to cross the Tamar at Plymouth was hampered by more than the river. The Admiralty insisted the bridge was high enough to allow their sailing ships to pass underneath to reach the ammunition jetty at Ernesettle. The Royal Albert Bridge was Brunel's final piece of engineering; he lived to see it finished, dying very shortly afterwards.

The London & Greenwich Railway found that the best solution to crossing the major conurbation of London was to build a series of almost continuous viaducts. This major piece of civil engineering appeared on a cancellation dated 8th February 1989 to mark the 150th Anniversary of its opening.



Other civil engineering achievements, such as the sea wall at Dawlish, can be found illustrated philatelically but sadly not on material produced by the Royal Mail. It seems sad that the country that gave the world railways shows such scant regard for its own achievements or the achievements of its brilliant engineers who have given the country so much to be proud of.

To be completed in December Themescene



THE VICTORIA CROSS ON STAMPS

William Silvester salutes the bravest of the brave

I am proud of it, proud of this tie which links the lowly brave to his Sovereign.” So wrote Queen Victoria in her journal after having presented her soldiers with the first Crimean medals in 1855. Still, it was not enough. The Queen wanted something that would single out the bravest of the brave. She requested a medal that “shall only be awarded for most conspicuous bravery, or some daring or pre-eminent act of valour or self-sacrifice or extreme devotion to duty in the presence of the enemy”. She wanted the medal available to all ranks and retrospective to June 1854 to include the Crimean War.

The Duke of Newcastle, Secretary of State for War, put forward a proposal to the Queen, suggesting that this new medal be named The Military Order of Victoria. The Queen’s husband, Prince Albert, found this too pompous and changed the name to the Victoria Cross. The Queen studied numerous drawings of how the cross should appear and at length selected one that resembled the Gold Army Cross awarded during the Peninsular War against Napoleon in the early 1800s. She also changed the inscription from “For the Brave” to “For Valour” in the event that someone would think that the only brave soldiers were those who wore the medal.

After a few false starts a medal was cast which met with the Queen’s approval. It was plain, as



she requested, suspended from a crimson ribbon for the Army and a blue ribbon for the Navy. Jewellers Messrs Hancocks, Brunton Street, were given bronze

from guns captured from the Russians at Sebastopol during the Crimean War. The medal is in the shape of a cross patté, chemically treated to a dark brown finish, showing a lion guardant (standing) over a royal crown surrounded on three sides by a scroll bearing the words “For Valour”. On the reverse is a circle with the dates of the act of gallantry engraved in the centre with the name, rank and regiment of the recipient. Traditional Roman laurel leaves decorate the suspender bar. The medal was described by *The Times* of London as “...poor looking and mean in the extreme.”

In the early days of the VC the system of awarding the decoration was haphazard at best. Sometimes, instead of awarding the medal to a specific individual, a prescribed number of VCs were granted to a unit which had done a gallant deed and a ballot was held to determine who would actually be given the decoration. The officers or men with the most votes won. This system was in use until the end of the First World War and proved effective, as the men

who nominated the candidates and cast the votes were most likely those best qualified to decide if the recipient qualified for the honour. In time the system became more elaborate and witnesses and documentation became essential before a VC recommendation was forwarded through the chain of command to be eventually approved, or not, by the monarch.

Queen Victoria personally awarded the first medals on June 26, 1857. At a gathering in Hyde Park thousands of spectators were witnesses to the spectacle despite the sweltering heat. Military bands entertained the crowds until the arrival of the dignitaries at mid-morning. The deep, heavy boom of the cannon of the Royal Artillery announced the arrival of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, on horseback for the first time at a Great Review, accompanied by Prince Albert and her future son-in-law, Prince Frederick William of Prussia.

After inspecting her troops, the Queen, still mounted, took up a position near where 62 Victoria Crosses had been laid out on a scarlet draped table. As the name of each recipient was called out they came forward, saluted and the Queen personally pinned the medal to a loop of cord on their tunic. The entire procedure was over in ten minutes and after the march past the Queen returned to Buckingham Palace before noon. She wrote in her diary, "I never saw finer troops, nor better marching...."

Since that day in June 1857, only 1,358 Victoria Crosses have been awarded. The first was pinned on the chest of Mate C. D. Lucas (GB #2396, Solomon Is. #1057) and the latest was awarded in September 2008 to SAS Trooper Mark Donaldson in Afghanistan. The medal has become one of the most coveted awards for valour in the world and the Commonwealth's highest honour for conspicuous bravery in the face of the enemy.



Edward Kenna
Australia



William Bishop
Canada



Herbert Jones
Falkland Islands



Noel Chavasse
Great Britain



Herbert Le Patourel
Guernsey



Bryan Budd
Grenada



Samuel Hodge
Solomon Islands



Charles Lucas
British Virgin Islands

Victoria Cross and Recipients on Stamps (Scott Numbers)

Australia	1434	Sergeant Thomas Currie Derrick (1943: Sattelberg, New Guinea)
	1435	Flight Sergeant Rawdon Hume Middleton (1942: Turin, Italy)
	1439a	(1438 + 1439 self adhesive of 1434 + 1435)
	1857	Captain Neville Reginald Howse (1900: Vredefort, South Africa)

	1858	2 nd Lt. Arthur Roden Cutler (1941: Merdjayoun-Samour, Lebanon)
	1859	Victoria Cross
	1860	Private Edward Kenna (1945: Wewak, New Guinea)
	1861	Warrant Officer 2 nd Class Keith Payne (1969: Ben Het, Vietnam)
British Virgin Islands		
	MS 946	Private Samuel Hodge (1866: Tubabecelong, Gambia)
Canada		
	1525	Captain William Avery Bishop (1917: Cambrai, France)
	2065	Victoria Cross
	2066	Canadian Victoria Cross
Dominica		
	521a	Victoria Cross in border of sheetlet
Equatorial Guinea		
		Major Edward Mannock (1918: France)
		Victoria Cross
Falkland Islands		
	914, 916a	Sgt Ian McKay (1982: Mount Longdon, Falkland Islands)
	915, 916b	Lt Col Herbert Jones (1982: Goose Green, Falkland Islands)
	916c	Victoria Cross
	935	Lt Col Herbert Jones (1982: Goose Green, Falkland Islands)
	936	Sgt Ian McKay (1982: Mount Longdon, Falkland Islands)
Fiji		
	279	Cpl Sefanaia Sukanaivalu (1944: Bougainville, Solomon Islands)
	722	Cpl Sefanaia Sukanaivalu (1944: Bougainville, Solomon Islands)
Gambia		
	2957d	Major David V. Currie (1944: St. Lambert, France)
Ghana		
	1808 MS	Victoria Cross (with Medal of Honor and Croix de Guerre)
Great Britain		
	1331, 1331a	Victoria Cross
	2394	Corporal Agansing Rai (1944: Mortar Bluff, India)
	2395	Boy 1st Class Jack Cornwell (1916: off Jutland, Denmark)
	2396	Mate Charles Lucas (1854: Baltic Sea)
	2397	Captain Noel Chavasse (1916: Guillemont, France & 1917: Wieltje, Belgium)
	2398	Captain Albert Ball (1917: Over France and Germany)
	2399	2 nd Lieutenant Charles Hazlett Upham (1941: Crete, Greece and 1942: El Ruweisat Ridge, Western Desert)
Grenada		
	3519	Pvt. Johnson Gideon Beharry (2004; Iraq)
	3657a	Corporal Bryan Budd (2006: Afghanistan)
	3657b	Brig Gen James Forbes-Robertson (1918: Vieux Berquin, France)
	3657c	Private Johnson Beharry (2004: Iraq)
	3657d	Sergeant William J. Gordon (1892: Gambia)
	3657e	Private Henry Tandey (1918: Marcoing, France)
	3657f	Private Jorgen Christian Jensen (1917: Noreuil, France)
	3658	L/S Jack Foreman Mantle (1940: Portland, England)
Guernsey		
	777-782	Major Herbert Wallace Le Patourel (1942: Tebourba, Tunisia)
	886-891	150 Years of Victoria Cross battles
	929	Lt Col Herbert Jones (1982: Goose Green, Falkland Islands)

Guyana	3863a	CSM Stanley Hollis (1944; Normandy, France)
Isle of Man	202	Major Robert Henry Cain (1944: Arnhem, Holland)
	249	Major George Stuart White (1879: Charasiah, Afghanistan)
	501	Major Robert Henry Cain (1944: Arnhem, Holland)
	989	W/Commander Guy Penrose Gibson (1943: Mohne Dam, Germany)
Jersey	55	Private Jack Thomas Counter (1918: Boisieux St-Marc, France)
	370	Captain George Ingouville RN (1855: Fort of Viborg, Finland)
	1202	C.D. Lucas, G. Ingouville, their ships and Victoria Cross
Kiribati	902a	TSM John Berryman (1854: Balaklava, Crimea)
	902b	Pvt William Norman (1854: Balaklava, Crimea)
	902c	SM John Grieve (1854: Balaklava, Crimea)
	902d	Pvt Thomas Beach (1854: Inkerman, Crimea)
	902e	Capt Charles Lumley (1855: Sebastopol, Crimea)
	902f	Bvt Major Frederick Elton (1855: Sebastopol, Crimea)
Lesotho	942	Lt. William Leefe Robinson (1916; Cuffley, England)
Malta	822	A/Lt. Col. John Standish Gort (1918; Flesquieres, France)
Micronesia	200a	Captain William Avery Bishop (1917: Cambrai, France)
Montserrat	899	Victoria Cross
Nauru	564a	Lt. Gerald Graham (1855; Sebastopol, Crimea)
	564b	Pvt. Roderick MacGregor (1855: Sebastopol, Crimea)
	564c	Pvt. Alexander Wright (1855: Sebastopol, Crimea)
	564d	Corp. John Ross (1855: Sebastopol, Crimea)
	564e	Sgt. William McWheeney (1854: Sebastopol, Crimea)
	564f	Bvt. Major Gerald Goodlake (1854: Inkerman, Crimea)
New Zealand	991	Lt Col Bernard Cyril Freyberg (1916: Beaucourt sur Ancre, France)
	1315	2 nd Lieutenant Charles Hazlett Upham (1941: Crete, Greece and 1942: El Ruweisat Ridge, Western Desert)
	2201u	Victoria Cross – U for Upham (New Zealand A to Z pane – 1 of 26)
Norfolk Island	588	Sergeant Thomas Currie Derrick (1943: Sattelberg, New Guinea)
Palau	823	W/Commander Guy Penrose Gibson (1943: Mohne Dam, Germany)
St Vincent	3591a	Capt. Havildar Lachhiman Gurung
	3591b	Pvt. Ernest Alvia Smith
	3591c	Nk. Yeshwani Ghadge
	3591d	Lt Col Eric Charles Twelves Wilson
	3591e	WO2 Keith Payne
	3591f	L. Cpl. Rambahadur Limbu
	3592	Piper James Richardson

St Vincent Grenadines	MS 695	Guy Gibson's Aircraft
Solomon Islands	1056	Russian guns at Balaklava
	1057	Mate Charles Lucas (1864: Baltic Sea)
	1058	Queen Victoria presenting first VCs
	1059	Corporal Sefanaia Sukanaivalu (1944: Bougainville, Solomon Islands)
	1060	Corporal Reginald Rattey (1945: Bougainville, Solomon Islands)
	1061	Private Frank Partridge (1945: Bougainville, Solomon Islands)
		W/Comdr Guy Penrose Gibson (1943: Mohne Dam, Germany)
South Africa	MS 521a	Centenary of Zulu War – Victoria Cross on tab
Africa	1260	Captain Thomas Crean (1901: Tygerkloof Spruit, South Africa)
Turks & Caicos	724	HMS Victoria and Victoria Cross
Victoria	B3	Victoria Cross

Half page advertisement for Stamp Insurance Services

Minutes of the 18^h Annual General Meeting of the British Thematic Association held on Saturday 11th July 2009 in the Board Room, Xcel Leisure Centre, Canley , Coventry, at 12noon.

Present: The Chairman and 21 other members.

The Chairman opened the meeting by asking the President, John Hayward, to present the Franceska Rapkin Memorial Bowl to Lesley Marley for her article 'The Whales Tale' published in the September and December 2008 *Themescenes*. Lesley thanked the Committee for voting for her articles and hoped that they gave the readers inspiration for their own collections.

Apologies: Charles Oppenheim

The Chairman, Richard Wheeler, welcomed everyone to the 18th Annual General Meeting, particularly those who had not attended an AGM before and a new member who joined today from Norway.

Minutes of the 17th Annual General Meeting held on June 29th 2008

These had been published in *Themescene* September 2008 and were circulated at this meeting. Gerald Lovell proposed and Michael Blackman seconded that the Minutes be accepted as a true record – passed unanimously.

Matters arising

There were no matters arising

Chairman's report

My report covers the period from the last AGM on the 29th June 2008 to the present day Saturday 11th July 2009. The Treasurer's report is for the calendar year 2008.

Little did we realise at last year's AGM that it would be the last occasion that Thematica would be held and that we would no longer be in Central London at the Victory Services Club. Whilst it was a great success, our thanks go to Thematic Exhibitions and the Friends of Thematica who worked so hard to promote this two day event that attracted so many collectors from home and also from abroad. Costs of staging such an event in London became financially unviable. News was received that many of the dealers who had previously supported this event were able to stage a new Stamp Fair venue for thematic collectors at the Harlequins Rugby Club at Twickenham under the title of Thematix 09. We wished them every success and were able to have a presence there. In June Swinpex was staged and again we were able to arrange a presence with a joint meeting with the Postal Stationery Society.

However we are delighted to be here today for the welcome given to us by organisers of Midpex, and the opportunity for the Friends of Thematica to stage the Fosbery Trophy, the

Inter Federation Thematic Competition, the Barclays Cup Young Collectors Competition and for the BTA to stage the BTA Cup. It has given us one of the opportunities to meet members from the Midlands who may not have been able previously to come to London. For this change of venue and the organisation of the competitions we have to thank the Friends of Thematica for all their efforts and in particular Brian Sole. It has been one of the aims of the BTA Committee to spread events throughout the country, but whilst this is not a BTA event, it has given us the opportunity to hold our Annual General Meeting with a display to follow by Gerald Lovell with his exhibit "Covering Expenses". It is usual for the previous year's winner of the BTA cup to present the display, but John Leathes, who was the winner with his exhibit on submarines QARL (Quick All Round Look), is unable to attend.

Despite the efforts of the Committee there has been a slight drop in the membership which at the last count was 267. At last year's AGM the figure was 263 but the number did build up over the course of the year and we can only hope that it will be the same this coming year. We are not the only society to face this problem. Age and ill health pays its toll. We were all saddened to hear of the passing of Anne Sole who has given such a great support to our Patron Brian over the years. We have enjoyed her company at so many events over the years and she will be sorely missed.

Your Membership Secretary, Peter Denly, does a great job in chasing up members who may have overlooked subscriptions, answering queries, and keeping the membership records. It is a time consuming job and he is regularly in touch with me, ensuring my list of members is up to date in my other capacity with the *Themescene* Distribution.

The problem of a decreasing membership is one that Committee have been addressing through holding events in other parts of the country, spreading the word at displays that we give which does attract a few new members, advertising, articles in magazines and attendance at exhibitions.

The Chairman particularly wanted to mention that stalwart of the BTA, our President, who does so much in his other role as Displays Organiser. In July he ran a thematic workshop at the RPSL which although not very well attended was a great chance to see the many types and varieties of material that can be included in a thematic exhibit. The guest speaker was John Leathes with a very entertaining display.

In March the format was repeated at Emsworth in Hampshire with David Hunter as the Guest Speaker. Again the attendance could have been greater. A lot of effort goes into these workshops which are being staged for the membership. The next one is to be held at Handforth in Cheshire in September. This will be in conjunction with the North Western Philatelic Federation. The Guest Speaker will be Margaret Morris. The promise was made a year ago that the BTA would get out of London for the benefit of members and here we are today in another part of the country.

During the year, John has been a great support to the Chairman and they are in regular contact. The Chairman's sincere thanks go to him and all he does for the BTA. It is also of note that he is the U.K. Commissioner for London 2010.

Wendy Buckle, the Editor of *Themescene*, provides us with a magazine that is full of interest and one which keeps us all in touch about events and articles in the collecting of thematics, other societies, Just4Kids, hand stamps, new issues, and so much more. Wendy did exceptionally well to produce the September '08 issue especially after the sad loss of her husband, Brian. Whilst Richard understood that she has a backlog of articles at the moment, she still needs more. Keep them coming. To put this together all takes time and it is to her credit that it arrives on time from the printers meeting the deadline for distribution. The

Committee are also looking into the practicality of producing *Themescene* in its entirety on a CD.

Mike Blackman, our Advertising Manager, has been following up leads to get advertising into our Magazine at a time when there have been cutbacks all round. If anyone has any useful contacts, please let Mike know. It is a hard job for which we are grateful in the current financial climate.

The magazine has been going out on time with no problems, BUT Royal Mail has once again increased the cost of postage. This is another £70 increase spread over the year. In the last three years postal costs for the U.K. alone rose by 7p an issue.

Other advertising will have been noted in the June issue from Stanley Gibbons. This is due to the efforts of our Publicist, Simon Moorcroft who has worked extremely hard over the past year in providing new publicity leaflets. He has arranged with Stanley Gibbons to have a two fold leaflet outlining the advantages of membership of the BTA to be placed in an area at the entrance to their shop in the Strand. In return we have provided the advertising space in the magazine with the special offers for the BTA membership. Very well done indeed.

For those who follow magazines, both John Hayward and the Chairman have had articles published in *Stamp and Coin Mart* – the June issue being devoted to Thematics.

At the beginning of the year, as part of the strengthening of our affiliation with the American Topical Association, Richard had an article published in *Topical Time*, and gave help with the updating of checklists of topics (volunteers to help with your own topics would be welcomed by them). These lists are available to our members at a nominal cost per sheet. Currently there are over 500 topics available. For these contact Ronald Hyams. Topical handbooks are also available at reduced prices. There is a link to our website on the ATA site. The Chairman also supplied an exhibit for display at their National Topical Stamp Exhibition in Dayton, Ohio, as he was unfortunately unable to attend.

The BTA website goes from strength to strength and we now welcome James Wigmore, our volunteer webmaster, as a member of the BTA in his own right. If you think that there is anything which should be advertised or included, Jim doesn't have a crystal ball. Please make contact with Richard so that he can check the information and pass it on to Jim immediately. Anything he gives to him is usually on the site the same day. He does a great job.

A big thank you goes to the various Committee members who have helped to keep the smooth running of the BTA throughout the year. Our Treasurer Peter Wood has been very mindful of the increased costs of running the Association and will be giving a full report of our finances. The Chairman trusts that you all join in thanking him in advance for balancing the books in these difficult times. Anne Stammers, our Secretary, is a tower of strength whether it is answering queries, arranging meetings, preparing minutes and a fund of knowledge relating to the BTA – my grateful thanks. Ron Backhouse, our Librarian, keeps us all up to date with the latest library listings which are published in *Themescene*, and provides a much needed service to the membership.

An organisation such as the BTA cannot exist without Committee members who are dedicated and contribute to its well being. To this end Richard thanked James Etherington, Ronald Hyams and Gerald Lovell who have all helped throughout the year.

During this past year members of the BTA have been very successful. At Olympex in Beijing, organised by the Society of Olympic collectors, Alan Sabey was awarded a Silver-Gilt for his entry on the '1948 Olympics'. David Griffiths, exhibiting at the World exhibition in Tel-Aviv, won Gold with 'Here be Dragons'. At the World Exhibition EFIRO in Bucharest in June, Peter Wood won a Large Silver. WIPA08 held at the Austria Center, Vienna, in September, was a great success when Lesley Marley won Gold with 'A Whales Tale', Ian Paton won Gold with

'From Texas Statehood to the Assassination of President McKinley', and Brian Sole with his 'Go by Cycle' also won Gold. Vermeils went to Ron Backhouse – 'Anyone for Tennis', Geoff Hood – 'More than a Pretty Picture', Richard Wheeler – 'Masks, Mimes and the Evolution of Puppets'. A Large Silver was awarded to Peter Wood with 'Irish Life', whilst in the Revenue Class Francis Kiddle won a Large Vermeil with 'Tasmania Revenues'. For Aero Philately, Joyce Boyer won a Large Silver with 'Austrian Airmails 1918 – 1938' and in the Philatelic Literature Class Barry Floyd won a Silver medal for 'Captain James Cook the Explorer'. Bulgaria 2009 Sofia brought success for David Hunter with a Large Vermeil, whilst John Hayward won a Vermeil with 'The Iron Steed'. At the China World Exhibition at Luo Yang, Brian Sole won another Gold, whilst David Hunter won another Large Vermeil. Essen figured again with IBRA 09. Lesley Marley also gained a second gold with 'A Whales Tale'. Sheila Foster did likewise gaining yet another gold with 'The Rose'. Jim Etherington in his first entry at International level won Gold and a Special Prize for '1940. A desperate year for Britain' and David Hunter won yet another Large Vermeil.

During the year discussion took place as to whether the BTA should take Social Philately formally under its wing. Views were expressed by the Committee and ordinary members of the Association that we should not adopt this course of action. Social Philately is already part of thematics and as many members already have social items in their collections there is no need to alter our constitution. However the Committee will watch the trends in the development of Social Philately and Open Class. There is an opportunity for members to have a further say in this matter under AOB.

The age factor has been influencing the drop in membership of societies throughout the country and the BTA has not escaped. For the continuation of collecting stamps it behoves us to encourage youngsters who show an interest. What better way than with thematics. The work done by Stamp Active and those who have encouraged children into the hobby are to be congratulated.

We look forward to the autumn and the return of Stampex at the Business Design Centre. At the end of October Italia 2009 is held in Rome and November heralds Eurothema at Roskilde in Denmark where we have a strong team participating. In the new year April sees Antwerp 2010 followed in May by London 2010 International Exhibition. We wish all our participants the best of luck. No doubt there will be plenty to report about at next year's AGM.

Finally Richard emphasised the need to encourage youngsters to the hobby that we have so much enjoyed. They are our future.

The Chairman's report was accepted unanimously.

Treasurer's Report and adoption of Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2008

As shown by the Income and Expenditure statement for the Year ended 31 December 2008 we had a deficit of £361 which compares to the 2007 deficit of £676 which remained when the impact of EUROTHEMA was removed.

Income - year on year comparison

Income, other than advertising, rose by £69, with subscription receipts holding up well. Also included was £117 of interest but this source has virtually disappeared for 2009.

Advertising did well - again, the Treasurer asked that members please mention *Thamescene* if they respond, we are grateful for the support they give us.

Costs - year on year comparison

The cost of *Thamescene* was £234 lower. The Committee has reduced the possible excess copies printed and tried to ensure that the correct postal weight is kept. This has become more critical with recent postal rate increases.

Meeting costs were up and included the workshop at the Royal.

The effect of the increase in ABPS fees is seen in the higher 'Affiliation' figure.

Forecast for 2009

The Treasurer said he expected a deficit at about the same level for 2009 (i.e. £300-400) which will be the sixth consecutive year with a deficit.

Subscription (Dues)

Your Committee wants to protect the reserves and thus the future existence of the BTA, and importantly ensure that we continue to provide and support events that publicise and popularise thematic collecting. Therefore it is with reluctance that an increase in subscription has to be announced.

The subscription from 1st February 2010 will be £15 for single and family memberships. (Junior remains unchanged at £5)

The other memberships to be as follows:	Europe	£16
	Overseas	£19
	Groups (UK)	£17
	Groups (Overseas)	£20

Peter Wood gave his grateful thanks, both personally and on behalf of the Association, to Graham Boutle for acting as our examiner.

It was proposed by Lesley Marley and seconded by Wendy Buckle that the Treasurer's report be accepted. It was agreed unanimously.

Election of Officers

Chairman – Richard Wheeler

Vice Chairman – Wendy Buckle

Secretary – Anne Stammers

Treasurer – Peter Wood

Simon Moorcroft proposed and John Hayward seconded that the above be re-elected

Election of Committee Members

There was one nomination for the Committee in addition to those willing to stand for re-election as listed below. Charles Oppenheim was nominated by Michael Blackman, seconded by Richard Wheeler, and elected.

It was proposed by Barry Stagg and seconded by John Crowther that those willing to stand again be re-elected 'en bloc'

Peter Denly	Membership Secretary
Simon Moorcroft	Publicity Officer
Michael Blackman	Advertising Manager
Brian Sole	Committee member
Jim Etherington	Committee member
Gerald Lovell	Committee member
Ron Hyams	Committee member

Ratification by the membership of the appointment of

Ron Backhouse	Librarian
Grahame Boutle	Examiner of the Accounts

Brian Sole proposed and Lesley Marley seconded that these appointments be ratified. This was carried unanimously.

Any Other Business

Social Philately – Jim Etherington said that at the moment the BTA would not be changing the constitution to include Social Philately.

There were other classes that included thematic philatelic material as well as other items e.g.

Open Class – could include up to 50% Cinderella

Special Studies could include up to 10% non-philatelic material

Social Philately – could include 50% non-philatelic material, but it must relate to social history and therefore a thematic collection may not meet the requirement, but if it did it would have to be re-written for competition into a social philately class.

Jim commented that many thematic collectors also included non-philatelic items in their collections (e.g. postcards) and it was up to the individual which competition class to enter. He asked if it was thought that the BTA was ‘transfixed’ with competition and felt that there was a need for a balance of exhibitor/collector and that there should not be such an emphasis on rules of competition. Social Philately may ‘take care of itself’ but neither it nor special studies were included in FIPA. The open class was second to social class.

It was suggested that the BTA should take informal responsibility for the Open Class and to include it in the workshops that we run – the next one being in Cheshire. This does not answer the question as to whether or not the BTA should welcome Open Class and Social Philatelists. Simon Moorcroft thought this could have an issue with our own name, particularly as exhibitors in these classes think of Thematics as a different class and way of collecting. He thought it was therefore best kept an informal arrangement.

Members’ Meetings - Jim Lovell asked if the BTA should consider holding a programme of members’ meetings during the course of the year, as other specialist societies do. He thought it might build on the interest generated in thematic collecting by John Hayward’s workshops. Some members thought this might increase the BTA costs and no decision was made.

Themescene on CD-Rom – Lesley Marley reported that the Polar Post Society offered a CD-Rom of all their back issue and other items such as Steve Boorn’s *The Heart is Life*.

Wendy Buckle replied that her technical knowledge did not include the best way to get *Themescene* onto CD and if there was anyone with this knowledge she would be delighted to hear from them.

Festival of Stamps – Jim Bannerman asked if there as any ‘mileage’ in a Festival of Stamps Event where there would be a room available for meetings such as at WestBex 2010 and Colchester 2010.

These items of any other business and relevant comments would be taken to the next committee meeting for discussion.

John Hayward proposed a vote of thanks to the whole Committee for their work and to Richard Wheeler as Chairman for all his work to ‘learn the ropes’ so quickly.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 12.51 p.m.

The AGM was followed by a display by Gerald Lovell ‘Covering the Cost’ an intriguing, fascinating and interesting display about the village of Silverstone and Formula 1..

MIDPEX AND THE BTA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Simon Moorcroft enjoys dealers, competitions and our speaker

Midpex, the bi-annual national exhibition, was held on 11th July at the Xcel Leisure Centre, a recently completed leisure complex in Canley, which is close to the city of Coventry. This was the first time the exhibition had been staged here, the organisers having been forced to find an alternative venue following the demolition of the old one. However, the venue, as used on the day, proved to be inadequate, either for the number of visitors or the number of trade and society stands which the organisers had allowed. The car park was overcrowded for most of the day, with many people having to resort to grass verges or the avenue on which the leisure centre was situated. The main hall was terribly congested due to trade stands being placed in very close proximity to specialist society tables with very narrow gangways for access. Indeed, the BTA's table was practically inaccessible, being only about five feet from a dealer's table and behind another society stand.



However, despite these problems, the number of visitors throughout the day was very high with many having travelled from London, the south and in some cases further afield. They were able to enjoy an excellent number of dealers offering a very wide range of material for quite reasonable prices. In addition to specialist stamp and postal history vendors, accessories and ephemera were also on offer. From the comments which were made, many people were able to find something of interest.

The number of societies represented at the show was very high. Midpex has always been centred on showcasing the many specialist societies which exist in the UK. From what could be seen, many people were taking the time to talk to society representatives, examine the promotional material on display and enquire about membership. Sadly for the BTA, and a few other societies, the appalling lack of space meant many people simply could not access the table and as a consequence no new members were attracted. However, in the past at previous venues this has not been the case.



Bryan Jones, Chairman of MidPex, The Right Worshipful Jack Harrison, Lord Mayor of Coventry, and Brian Sole, Friends of Thematica.

The show also featured, for the first time, the Friends of Thematica thematic competitions. These competitions were previously staged at the June Thematica in London but had to be moved following the demise of this exhibition last year. Unlike the dealers' hall, the room which housed the display frames was both spacious and light. Indeed there was excess space which could have been used for society tables. A good number of entries had once again been submitted into all classes of competition. In particular, the Barclays Cup Competition for Young Collectors was very well supported with over 50 young people submitting material across the four different age classes. It is excellent to see so many children and young people putting so much time and effort into their exhibits.

The BTA Cup (32 sheets, national rules) had six entries this year. Wendy Buckle's "Tell it in Print" was the story of the history and development of printing. The exhibit began by highlighting the pioneering work of Johann Gutenberg, who invented and refined the printing process in Mainz in the 1440s. His most notable achievement was moveable type, which helped make books and publications more widely available. William Caxton, who was the first person to introduce a printing press into England and who was also the first English book retailer, was also featured.

Anne Stammer's exhibit, "From Rocks to Riches", was this year's winner of the BTA Cup. A very enjoyable exhibit, which has developed over a number of years, it chronicles the story of how minerals were discovered and how man then used their unique properties to fashion luxury goods such as jewellery and precious stones. The exhibit also showed how these minerals have been put to actual practical use in addition to their decorative purposes.

"St George and the Dragon", submitted by Erica Banks, told the story of this famous legend. Illustrated well throughout with a wide range of material it was a most enjoyable and informative exhibit. Beryl Jones' "George III, His Life and Times" was an equally interesting exhibit detailing the life story of the monarch as well as some of the important events which occurred during his reign, including the development of industry, the explorations by Captain Cook, the exploits of Wellington and Nelson during the Napoleonic Wars as well as literature and writings from the time.

Gary Green's entry, entitled "Bee Keeping and the Life of the Honey Bee", provided an illustrated story of the habitat of bees and the very important functions which they alone carry out. There was a comprehensive section devoted to the products which bees produce and how these have been marketed and sold. The predators of bees and famous bee keepers were also mentioned.

Anyone interested in naval or maritime affairs would have been attracted by the entry "Iron Walls: The Rise and Fall of the Battleship". Peter Miller's entry told the story of the early ironclad battleships from around the turn of the last century and how these early prototypes became the basis for the development of the Dreadnought – the world's most powerful surface ship when introduced into service. The role of battleships in sea warfare was illustrated. The story ended with HMS Vanguard, the last "battleship" to sail under the White Ensign. Technological developments in areas of maritime warfare and weaponry rendered such ships surplus to requirements. Results:

WINNER		
Large vermeil	Anne Stammers	Rocks to riches
Vermeil	Gary Green	Bee keeping and the life of the honey bee
Vermeil	Wendy Buckle	Tell it in print
Silver	Erica Banks	St. George and the dragon
Silver	Peter Miller	Iron walls: the rise and fall of the battleship
Bronze-silver	Beryl Jones	George III: his life and times

The Healey and Wise Salver Inter-Federation competition was won this year by Sussex with the entry “Story of the Peace Rose” (vermeil), submitted by Grace Davies. Jim Wigmore for Wessex gained a Bronze-Silver for “Along lost lines” and A. Randall Jones of North West Federation gained a bronze for “Nobel prize winners”.

The John Fosbery competition had six exhibits, which were judged and voted on by the visiting public. The winner was David Rossall with the very unusual entry “Luke Howard - A Remarkable Man”. All entries included varied and in some cases rare material and it was fascinating to see how the different exhibitors had approached and treated their individual themes.

In the Barclays Cup competition for young collectors, there were no fewer than 57 entries. The winners in the three age groups were:

Group A (up to 8 years)			Group B (9 to 12 years)	
Winner	Portia Girvan	Food for thought	Claire Mitchell	A Walk in the Park
Second	Hannah Myers	Pets	Abbie Skilton	Dogs
Third	Eleri Edwards	My Favourites	Lynne Mitchell	The Arctic Lands
Joint Third			Jannah Kehoe	Taking a look

Group C (13 to 18 years)		
Winner	Jacqs Scourfield	A Childhood in Stamps
Second	Jack Roberts	The Story of Flight'
Third	James Ribbon	Ocean Wildlife'

All entrants receive a certificate and one of The Friends of Thematica souvenir sheets, designed by Jeffery Matthews and printed by Cartor. Visitors to Midpex were also each given one of the souvenir sheets.

The BTA AGM took place at 12:00 in one of the side meeting rooms which, like other areas of the venue, was of insufficient size due to a large boardroom table occupying half the room. Full Minutes precede this article. Following the AGM the floor was handed to Gerald Lovell who gave a talk and display on Silverstone and more specifically the covers he has, over a number of years, produced and got signed by famous racing car drivers and other celebrities for the purposes of selling to raise funds for charitable causes and organisations.



Gerald explained that it was important that these covers came with letters of authenticity to confirm that the signatures were genuine, rather than mere facsimile copies. He showed a cover commemorating the first British Grand Prix to be held at Silverstone in 1948. Indeed since 1987 the Grand Prix has been held every year at the circuit. From 1950 to 1971 the British Post Office sent mobile post offices to Silverstone and examples of covers

cancelled by this service were shown. Gerald told the interesting story of how the Isle of Man Postal Authority spelt the name of Bob Gerard, the legendary motor racing driver, wrong on

the stamp issued to commemorate the 1950 British Empire Motor Racing Cup, believing his name to be Gerrard. The Authority sent Gerard a letter of apology which was shown in the display.



Gerald explained that it was vital to ensure that when handing covers to people to sign, as much of the cover as possible must be left blank. This is essential as many racing drivers always sign in the same place, whatever happens to be on the cover. Thus, Gerald only applies the stamps and gets them cancelled following the signing and not before, unless he knows for certain where the person will sign. Therefore, he was able to display a variety of covers where the stamps and cancellations were in a number of different positions, such as the bottom left hand corner. Gerald explained that he always tries to get the stamps located as close to the top right hand corner as possible, but this is not always possible.

Gerald also included in his display covers from the year 2000, commemorating the first Grand Prix as well as covers, with letters of authenticity, signed by people other than motor racing drivers, including commentators such as Murray Walker and other celebrities who were present at events where Gerald was in attendance, such as Mick Jagger and Sir Derek Jacobi. A cover signed by Bernie Ecclestone was also included – Gerald was unsure as to whether this was a positive or negative item to include! He explained that certain covers sell for significant sums of money with some, especially those where small quantities are produced, selling for up to £100. The Ecclestone covers he explained, of which only fifteen were produced, all sold very quickly for around £75 each.



Gerald concluded his display by saying that it was still doubtful as to whether Silverstone would remain the home of the British Grand Prix in the foreseeable future. But he expressed the view that he hoped it would. The President, John Hayward, proposed a vote of thanks to the speaker, pointing to the very interesting material he had shown, which was testament to much work, dedication and effort on the part of Gerald. ☐

THEMATIX 09

Collectors scrum down at Twickenham

The inaugural National Thematic Stamp Show, ThematiX '09, saw hundreds of keen collectors pack down to the Harlequins Rugby Ground at Twickenham in search of their elusive philatelic needs. The two day fair on 26th & 27th June has replaced the long running Thematica event and the organising team of Paula & Phil Cant, Bob Lee and Randal Frank were delighted with the support given to them by the collecting public, the philatelic trade, the thematic clubs and the British Thematic Association.

The facilities were excellent, the room being lighter and far more spacious than the Victory Services Club, which made for relaxed and comfortable browsing. Specialist thematic societies were made very welcome, also being given plenty of space. Unfortunately there was no room (at least this year) for the Friends of Thematica competitions, which went to Midpex. Convenience of the location depended on how you intended getting there – a car was somewhat easier than a march from the railway station. However, overall it proved a successful event and it is hoped this will be repeated next year. The proposed dates for ThematiX'10 will be either 25th/26th June or 2nd/3rd July depending upon the Rugby fixture list, which will be released in early December, so watch this space for further information. ☰



HERE AND THERE

THEMATIC DISPLAY AT THE ROYAL

On 28th January 2010 Jonas Hallstrom from Sweden will be presenting his acclaimed thematic exhibit, *The History of Square-Rigged Sailing Vessels*, at the Royal Philatelic Society London (RPSL), 41 Devonshire Place, London W1G 6JY. Members may recall his double-paged exhibit and his new concept of a thematic exhibit which the BTA was given permission by the London Philatelist to publish in *Themescene* June 2007 pages 51/55, "How to Deal with 'Concept' in a Thematic Collection". The display commences at 1pm and Jonas will give a presentation at 5pm. Members of the BTA who are Fellows or Members of the RPSL will no doubt welcome this opportunity to see this outstanding thematic display. BTA members who are not Members of the RPSL may attend the display as guests of Members of the RPSL, but because of the security arrangements will need to inform John Hayward beforehand of their attendance to gain admittance. ☰

BRITS DO WELL AT ... ESSEN

John Hayward enjoys some BTA success stories

The International Stamp Exhibition IBRA 2009 was held at Essen from 6-10th May 2009 at the usual location for, and in place of, the European Thematic Championship. It also included the German National Stamp Exhibition, Naposta, the equivalent of our Stampex. It was extremely well attended on the two days I was there. Although there were not many members of the BTA attending, they did extremely well in the Thematic Class of the Exhibition. Sheila Foster won another gold medal for *The Rose* which is such an excellent exhibit and Lesley Marley followed up her success at Vienna 2009 with another gold medal for her *Whale's Tale*. I particularly liked her registration label from a South Georgia whaling station. David Hunter achieved a large vermeil medal for his *Sugar*.

The greatest achievement by a Brit in my view was Jim Etherington's gold medal and special prize for *1940: A Desperate Year for Britain*. Jim has achieved the virtual impossible by gaining a gold medal at his first international exhibition with only five frames, not the usual eight frames! It just shows what can be done. Over the last few years Jim has progressed from the BTA Cup to Stampex to Eurothema and to IBRA 2009. He has obviously listened to the judges (Brian Sole and myself amongst them) at each stage and improved his exhibit tremendously. One of the judges at IBRA 2009 actually mentioned to me how much they were impressed by his novel subject and how he presented it. I could not help feeling the irony that Jim should be awarded a gold medal in Essen of all places for an exhibit the subject of which portrayed the effects of German military might.

There were some striking exhibits in the Thematic Class. I thought *The Wheels of*



David with his entry

Chance – the Bicycling Society by Jari Majander from Finland was an outstanding exhibit and his skilful use of double pages contributed to his large gold medal. The entries in the German National Thematic Class were interesting, especially to compare them with what we see from thematic exhibitors in the UK. What struck me were the numerous exhibits on Luther and Goethe, which I suppose are our equivalent of Churchill, Nelson etc.

The exhibition was an occasion to meet up with old continental friends and attend a meeting of the Motorised Vehicle Study Group of which I am a member. There were many dealers to visit as well, but the philatelic bureaux were most profitable so far as I was concerned, where I was able to pick up at cost new issues of which I was unaware, especially from North Korea whose wares we rarely see in the UK. ☺

BRITS DO WELL AT ... SOFIA

David Hunter boldly goes the slow way south

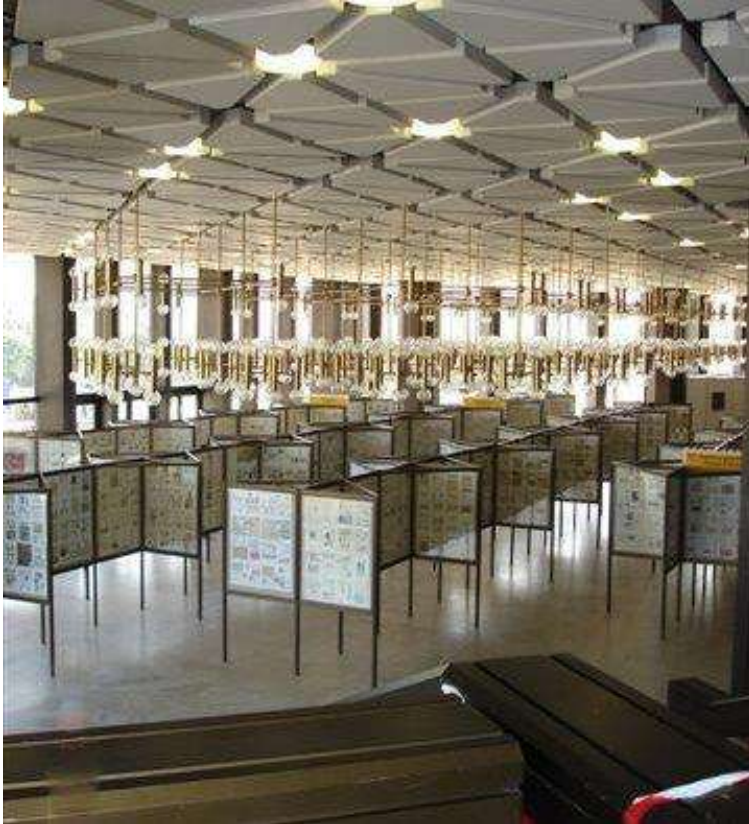
The seventh European Philatelic Exhibition “Bulgaria 2009” took place from 27th to 31st May 2009 in the National Palace of Culture, Sofia, a modern building inaugurated in 1981. The exhibition was recognised by FIP and the patronage of FEPA. (N.B. FEPA was founded in Sofia in 1989 and the first president was Alan Higgins of Great Britain). A head-count on Saturday indicated about 150-200 people present, including officials, of which 30 were in the queue for the Post Office counter. Friday and Sunday had about the same number of visitors.



National Palace of Culture

Only 10 stand holders were booked, including:

1. Bulgarian Post PLC
2. Bulgarian Philatelic and Numismatics
3. Linder Falzlos GmbH
4. Schaubek-Verlag GmbH
5. Leyuchturn Albenverlag, Germany
6. Philatelia Hungarica LLC
7. A. Karamitsos Auctions
8. Georg Roll Briemarken GmbH
9. A. N Other (A Cyrillic name)
10. Cover Story (not in attendance)



It is worth noting that today students in Bulgaria must learn a second language and many opt for English, although German is usually preferred in the Black Sea resorts.

Approximately 1200 exhibition frames were distributed in the foyer and the upper galleries, to the front of the halls.

The entries from G.B. were:

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| 1. Idor Gatti | Bulgaria: Austrian Post office |
| 2. Joanna Williamson | Ireland – The map stamp 1922-1949 |
| 3. Gregory Todd | Venezuela. The “Miranda” map issue of 1896 |
| 4. Christopher | Cyprus Revenue stamps of the Ottoman Period to King George V |
| 5. Peter Baker | Censor marks cachets- Postal markings of the free French 1940-45 |
| 6. Christopher King | The Duchy of Slesvig: Language and Land 1868-1920 |
| 7. Colin Hepper | Nepal Postal history 1810-1911 |
| 8. Arthur Woo | The fifth South American Zeppelin flight of 1933 |
| 9. John Hayward | The Iron Steed |
| 10. David Hunter | Sugar |
| 11. Edward Proud | Intercontinental Airmails volume one: Transatlantic and Pacific |
| | Intercontinental Airmails volume two: Asia and Australasia |

The train journey from London to Sofia, Bulgaria takes 38 hours 41 minutes. Starting at London’s St Pancras International station on the 14:34 Eurostar to Brussels it reached the Belgian capital in roughly 3 hours. An 18 min. transfer and on to the Intercity-Express bound for Frankfurt am Main station. Crossing over to platform 9 I joined the City Night Line train to Wien (Vienna). Before bedding down in a single-bed room with washbasin for the night, the sleeping-car carriage attendant said a wake-up call would be at 07:15 followed by a continental breakfast. Arriving in Wien Westbahnhof at 09:04 I refreshed and ready for the next stage of the journey.

Leaving Austria for Budapest on the fast air-conditioned EuroCity takes just 3 hours. Now it's on to Serbia. It turned out to be a day time journey of about 7½ hours, and a day of fasting. Although the route planner indicated a snack bar / restaurant would be available on board nobody seemed to be surprised that snacks and beverages were not available on the train. The first port-of-call on arriving in Beograd at 20:31 hours was a visit to the nearest café.

Carrying a big bun stuffed with ham, cheese and the inevitable slice of cucumber, and a bottle of water, I joined the "nachttrein/train de nuit 2nd class only seated accommodation" on the last leg of the journey to Sofia. Although there seemed to be very few passengers my pre-booked seat was already occupied when I joined the train. Even though the other five seats in the compartment were unoccupied, I said to the occupant "Excuse me! But this is my seat" to which he completely ignored me. Raising my voice slightly, as one does with Johnny Foreigner, I repeated my claim to the seat. Making myself abundantly clear for the third time I said "Me seat" to which he promptly jumped up and left the compartment. On reflection I think I was probably the only person on the train who had a reserved seat. With the compartment to myself I stretched out for reasonably restful night's sleep. That is until 04:52 when we arrived at the Serbia/Bulgarian border, with shouts of "Border Control", or words to that effect. During the 45 min stopover two sets of police, customs and immigration officials checked and, seemed to recheck, my passport. We arrived in Sofia, our final destination 07:15.

In antiquity Bulgaria was the home of Orpheus and Spartacus, and in the 4th century BC ruled by Philip II of Macedonia and his son Alexander the Great. (Spartacus and Alexander, two of my greatest heroes). From 29AD Bulgaria had been part of the Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman Empires, and in the two World Wars of the 20th century elected to join the side of the Germans. As a result of the Yalta agreements Bulgaria ended up under the influence of the Soviet Union. In 2001 the monarch made a comeback, when King Simeon II was elected prime minister. Membership of NATO was granted in 2004 and in 2007 Bulgaria entered into the European Union.



Sofia has a compact city centre with most attractions easily accessible on foot, weather permitting. The Sofia Map available from the National Tourist Information Centre is printed in English and includes a good tourist map of the city centre; unfortunately all the street names are in Cyrillic and bear no resemblance to map references. Arriving at the end of the rainy season with rain on Friday and Saturday put a slight damper on sightseeing and a missed opportunity, since the stamp shops were closed on Saturday afternoon and all day Sunday even with an international stamp exhibition in progress. Sunday, on the other hand, was glorious, with clear blue skies from dawn to dusk, and a temperature of around 8/10° C

depending on which direction the time/temperature indicator on the buildings were facing. Western fast food and pizza outlets are to be found all over the city centre, including McDonald's "I'm lovin' it", a major sponsor of the official Tourist Map and Guide. In the restaurants meat dishes are relatively expensive but this not surprising with a noticeable absence of animals in the undulating grass lands on the route between Austria and Bulgaria.

The return journey to Gatwick by EasyJet takes about 3 hours but is not nearly as interesting. ☰

BTA NEWS

THEMATIC DISPLAYS AT PINNER

On Tuesday 6th October 2009 David Hunter and John Hayward will be giving thematic displays to the Pinner Philatelic Society on behalf of the BTA. David will display *Sugar* and John will show *Motor-Cycles*. BTA members are welcome to attend the meeting which will be held at 8pm at the Methodist Church Hall, Love Lane, Pinner, Middlesex; near Pinner Underground station Metropolitan Line.

EUROTHEMA 2009

This International Thematic Competition which the BTA hosted very successfully in 2007 is being hosted this year in Denmark by the Danish Thematic Association. Eurothema 2009 is being held from 6-8th November 2009 at the Roskilde Conference and Sports Centre, Mollehusvej 15, DK 40000 Roskilde, Denmark, along with the Danish National Thematic Exhibition and Annual Stamp Fair, *Frimaerkforum*, which usually attracts around 5,000 visitors.

The International Competition retains its customary format of teams from Germany, Belgium, Great Britain, Denmark, France, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. This time Norway and Sweden have also been invited to participate. All will compete in the Thematic Class for the coveted Eurothema Trophy, with exhibits judged at International level. The four highest results obtained by each country are added together to obtain the winner.

The BTA has selected the following British team to take part:-

Gary Green	<i>Bee Keeping & the Life of the Honey Bee</i>	2 frames
Bill McKinlay	<i>Gears – the Wheels of Industry</i>	5 frames
Simon Moorcroft	<i>Walking with Destiny</i>	2 frames
David Roseveare	<i>From Grandeur to Gravure</i>	5 frames
Roger Swindells	<i>A Glimpse into the World of Beer</i>	5 frames
Peter Weir	<i>Liquid of Life</i>	5 frames

They represent a mixture of experienced exhibitors and relative newcomers who will take up a total of 24 frames out of the 25 offered to Great Britain. We hope they all do well.

The event is a big attraction, as is Roskilde itself which is an old city with a cathedral where the Danish Kings and Queens are buried and a Viking ship museum. Roskilde is a short train ride from Copenhagen and 30 minutes by train from Copenhagen Airport. If any member wishes to obtain more details of the event and perhaps is thinking of attending, please contact John Hayward who may also be able to assist with hotels in Roskilde.

JOINT BTA / POSTAL STATIONERY SOCIETY MEETING, SWINPEX JUNE 2009

Colin Baker and Wendy Buckle report

The BTA held a joint meeting with the Postal Stationery Society during the afternoon of the Swinpex fair at Swindon. It's probably fair to say that neither side was quite sure what the other would have to interest them, but in the event we were all treated to some wonderful displays of very diverse material. Unfortunately we only had two 15 sheet boards to use, but Edward Caesley (PSS) chaired the meeting and kept everyone under control (more or less). Each society took it in turns to put up their displays and this helped to maintain the interest of all those present. There were about twenty members present altogether, but with so many comings and goings it was difficult to be exact. (There are so many meetings going on at

Swinpex that people are constantly swapping from one room to another to catch them all.) We had about equal numbers from each society, with some people being members of both.

John Hayward (BTA President and displays organiser) kicked off the meeting with a frame of commercial advertising envelopes from several European countries, on the theme of motorcycles. Included was a curious item from Israel consisting of a pad of adverts, with prepaid postcards interleaved. Colin Baker followed with a selection of 16 sheets of Great Britain Edward VII advertising envelopes. Wendy Buckle (BTA) showed one frame of postal stationery on the history of printing from around the world. She finished with three British air letters celebrating favourite children's books. Michael Goodman started his one frame display with toy postcards from children's post office sets. One of these half size postcards had been postally used and surcharged accordingly. He continued with other illustrated postcards, including some of the Victorian Eddystone Lighthouse postcards. Jean Alexander (BTA/PSS) is an avid waterfall collector and filled both frames with many worldwide postcards on this theme. She ended her display with Beijing Olympics postcards which showed British scenes, such as Tower Bridge and the Houses of Parliament. George King took up two frames (and more) with a huge variety of WH Smith newspaper wrappers stamped with advertising rings, embossed and letterpress stamps. He even showed a parcel wrapping which would have been used for sending books. Brian Sole (BTA) filled a frame with a display of cycling from Victorian times to the present day. Arthur Roberts followed this with air letters from the King George VI period, showing the different printings and settings. He included one printed as a newsletter from the WVS. Rolf Scharning (BTA) gave us a frame of postcards from the WIPA International Philatelic Exhibition held in Vienna from 24 June to 7 July 1933. Impressed stamps were collected on special postcards, with a different colour being used each day, making it difficult to complete the whole set. Keith Lloyd (BTA/PSS) showed a frame of postcards from China - post World War Two to the present day. Barry Stagg (BTA/PSS) filled a frame with parachuting and paragliding items. He explained how parachutes could be steered and how the landing spot in parachuting competitions has reduced to a 3cm circle. Edward Caesley filled the other frame with early philatelic magazines, price lists, and other philatelic dealers' memorabilia. He finished with some censored cablegrams and illustrated greetings telegrams. Finally Michael Goodman returned to the floor to put up two frames of postal stationery addressed to or sent by well known philatelic figures.

Both Edward Caesley and John Hayward expressed their thanks to everyone for participating in the meeting and noted what a superb set of displays had been produced, which had been exciting for both societies. ☰



Rolf Scharning



Chairman, Jean Alexander and others

Just4Kids



(Adults – please photocopy this or pass it on to a youngster you know)



HOW CAN YOU GET FREE STAMPS!!!



Do you wish you had more stamps for your collection, but aren't sure how to get them for free? One way to receive free stamps is to join KIDSTAMPS – it's free for young collectors to join and you get free stamps! Get two envelopes and write your name and address on one and put a new unused stamp on it (they will use this envelope to send you your free stamps). Put this envelope inside the other envelope and post it to KIDSTAMPS (Stamp Active Network), 46 Moorfield Road, Rothwell, Nr Kettering, Northants, NN14 6AT.



And while you are waiting for your free stamps to arrive, why not try out the Stamp Active website for more info, fun and games;

www.planetstamp.co.uk



Another way to get free stamps is to ask your family and friends to collect them for you from letters that come through their letterboxes. If any of your relatives or friends live abroad that would be even better as they can send you foreign stamps. Why not write a letter to them and ask them to help you collect stamps (check with your parents first). You could even write a 'stamp letter' like this one on the next page:



Dear



Daisy



Hello. How are you?



Can you help me please?



I love stamp collecting, I have a great stamp collection from all over the world.



But I am running out of stamps. Please can you save all the stamps on letters



you receive, and post the stamps to me.



Best wishes.



Love



from

Robin

***(To win a PRIZE, send all your jokes, poems, drawings and letters to:
Just4Kids, Editor, Themescene, 87 Victoria Road, Bournemouth, BH1 4RS)***

**Full page advertisement for
Stanley Gibbons (1)**