

THEMESCENE

June 2025

In this issue we:

Sail to the Seychelles

Coco de Mer

With Norman Hudson



Continue to keep a weather eye open

Weather features and philately, part 3

With Lloyd Hogg



*Spend time at philatelic events with reports from
EuroPhilEx and the Association of Scottish Philatelic
Societies Congress*

And enjoy entries from our One-page Virtual Competition

BRITISH THEMATIC ASSOCIATION

Volume 42, No.2. Whole Number 159

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The Sri Lankan Elephant – A National Treasure

The Sri Lankan elephant (*Elephas maximus maximus*) is a sub species of the Asian elephant. They hold a significant place in cultural, ecological and historical place of the island.

Physical Characteristics

Sri Lankan elephants are the largest recognized species of the Asian elephants. They have dark skin often marked with patches of pink on ears trunk and face. Only a small percentage possess tusks.

Habitat

They can be easily found in dry zone near water sources. Sri Lankan & foreign tourists can watch them in protected areas like Yala, Udawalawa, and Minneriya national parks. Specially in Minneriya is famous for gathering an annual event hundred of elephants congregate around tank during dry seasons.



Behavior and Social Structure

Sri Lankan elephant are highly social and intelligent empathetic creatures. They typically living in matriarchal herds composed of female and their off springs. Males usually spend in a solitary lives. They play a key role in maintain echo systems.

Challenges and conservation

Now a days they have lost their habitat due to deforestation and agricultural expansion. So human – elephant conflict has become a significant issue. The Department of wild life conservation and non-governmental organization, have taken actions to reduce this conflict. Pinnawala elephant orphanage provide care of injured and orphaned elephants.

Cultural Significance

They have very Significant place in Sri Lankan culture. An elephant carries sacred relic in Kandy Esala procession. Elephant were symbol of power and were used by Sri Lankan Kings in wars and traditional events.



The Sri Lankan elephant is an icon of Sri Lankan identity. It is a cultural heritage also. We should always try to protect them.



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EDITORIAL

Wendy Buckle

In my Editorial in the previous issue of *Themescene* I remarked that it was going to be a very busy few months for the BTA. Well it certainly has been. Four of us acted as judges for the latest BTA One Page Virtual Competition. With 76 entries there was a lot to do, but results are out (page 52) and every entrant has received a certificate and feedback, which we hope will spur individuals to develop and improve next time we run the competition. In particular you will see that we had a very pleasing number of Youth entries, and you can enjoy the winning entries on the cover of this issue.

Then in May we had EuroPhilEx (page 49) - dealers to see, meetings to attend, exhibits to view. Our thanks are due to Peter Cockburn who made time during a very busy event to share with us his love of what is now Sabah, on the island of Borneo. Thanks also to all of you reading this who attended our meeting there; it was lovely to see a full room. It was a packed few days and I came home feeling rather tired but with a definite feeling that it was worth the time and cost of getting and staying there.

Now it's time to get *Themescene* to the printer in good time for it to reach you well before the AGM (page 59). This will be held at Swinpex as usual, but please note change of time, now 11.30. If you are planning to attend it would help us if you could bring this copy of *Themescene* with you, containing the Agenda and Annual Accounts, and if you want to check last year's Minutes they were published in September 2024 *Themescene*.

This issue of *Themescene* is a bit 'competition-heavy'. It's the way the calendar falls. No sooner does the One-Page Virtual competition finish than we all need to start looking ahead to the annual one-frame competitions. And this year we've changed the rules. You will see on page 67 that you can now submit scanned entries instead of the 'real thing', and if you'd like to give others the chance to enjoy your work you can send entries for display only. There is no obligation to attend the South of England Stamp Fair, which will be our host on 11th October, so wherever you live, including our overseas members, please do consider taking part.

And to finish off this coverage of events, on Saturday 25th October there will be a BTA meeting at Stampex at 12.30. We would love to see you there.

At our last Committee meeting we chose the winner of this year's Francesca Rapkin Bowl, awarded for the best article published in *Themescene* the previous year. The winner was Johan Diesveld from the Netherlands, with his two-part article on Insulin. Congratulations to Johan, who has promised further contributions. Excellent! Johan has recently become a member of the BTA, as has Ken Gibb of Ayr. Welcome both of you. 📖




CHAIRMAN

Barry Stagg

I've lost them again! And not for the first time! A few days ago, I took my collection out of the cupboard to check it out before going to show it to a nearby club. A few items needed some adjustment, so I opened the drawer to take out my tweezers and they were not there! I'm sure there is a hidden drawer in this house! It has all the items that I know I have bought but cannot find; the brand-new pack of stamp mounts – disappeared never to re-surface, a reference book I bought but could not find for months (and then I found it next to the same reference book, so now I have two!) and a sharp pencil. I can find plenty of blunt pencils and pens with no ink. But no sharp pencil, yet I know I sharpened it yesterday. My wife says there is a common denominator in all of this ... me!

By the time you read this EuroPhilEx at Birmingham will be over. If you did go, I hope you enjoyed it. I know that most of you are not interested in exhibiting, but I hope you had time to see some of them. I'm often surprised at what ideas and material I can use in my own collection after seeing other collections, and there will be plenty to see at EuroPhilEx. I know there will be plenty of opportunities to spend money there, although I must admit most of the material for sale is frequently well above my financial limit! But it is good to see it. But I must admit the highlight of the show for me is meeting fellow collectors. It's always good to hear from BTA members as I'm always fascinated by the diverse, interesting, and in many cases, amazing collections you have.

Having lived in the UK for nearly 70 years I, like most of you, take a pessimistic view of weather forecasts. As I write this the forecast suggests a heat wave lasting for about a week! Seeing is believing. But if it is true then my collection will not get out of the cupboard as I will be on gardening duty every day the sun shines. On the one hand I find that very frustrating as I know I have plenty to occupy myself philatelically, but I find gardening very relaxing and rewarding. But before I get stuck into the weeds perhaps I should try again to find those tweezers. 

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS

Thank you to all those members who have paid their subscription for 2025. If you have not yet done so you will find a renewal slip with this issue of *Themescene*. (Please ignore it if you have paid in the last few weeks). We would encourage you to pay by PayPal or BACS where possible, as our bank now charges us for every cheque transaction. You have the option of paying the full renewal fee, which entitles you to a print copy of *Themescene*, or paying a reduced fee of £15.00 if you wish to receive the electronic-only version of *Themescene*. The choice of course is entirely yours, but this is a cheaper option, and for overseas members a much cheaper option. Just indicate your choice, either when emailing details of your renewal, or on the renewal form if posting a cheque.

COCO DE MER

Norman Hudson

In October 2024 I fulfilled an ambition almost as old as me when I visited the Seychelles and saw Coco de Mer palms in their natural habitat.

From the mid-1960s I had collected Seychelles' stamps but gave up in the mid-1980s when, after the Islands' independence in June 1976, new issues became more frequent and the designs often much poorer. In the Covid-19 stay-home times, when we stamp collectors usually coped so much better than many others, I looked at my old Seychelles' album for the first time in many years. I extracted from the album all stamps showing the Coco de Mer palm, an interesting tree endemic to the Seychelles, meaning the islands are its only natural habitat. I thought the stamps would make 'a nice page or two' which could be shown at my local philatelic society at some point. My Coco de Mer collection now has more than 250 pages!

Up to 1938, all Seychelles' definitive stamps had been the colonial key-type, showing only the colony's name, the monarch's profile, the value and a border. In that year, the Seychelles' first pictorial definitives were issued. Issued from 1938 to 1949, the set, with a portrait of George VI, extended to 25 stamps but had only three different designs – a Coco de Mer palm (on six values, ranging from 2c to R1.50), a Giant Tortoise and a Fishing Pirogue (a long, narrow dug-out canoe). The set has several complexities of shades, paper types and watermarks. The same image of a Coco de Mer palm was shown on a later series with a revised (forward-facing) portrait of King George. The set of fifteen was issued in March 1952, almost a month after the King's death. The Coco de Mer featured on just three values. And the same image was shown again on the first definitive series of Queen Elizabeth, issued from 1954 to 1961. The Coco de Mer featured on four values (Fig 1). The tree is so iconic for the Seychelles that it was shown on the British colony's official Badge and still features on the Republic's Badge and Coat of Arms (Fig 2). The Coco de Mer has been shown on a number of Seychelles' stamps since that first Elizabethan set.

The Coco De Mer Palm

Botanically, the Coco de Mer, sometimes known as the sea coconut or double coconut, is the only species of the *Lodoicea* genus of the Arecaceae (palm) family. The name derives from *Lodoicus*, the Latinised form of *Louis*, in honour of King Louis XV of France. The palm grows naturally only on the island of Praslin and the neighbouring, uninhabited island of Curieuse. Praslin ("prar-lin") is almost 40 miles north-east of Mahé, the Seychelles' main island.

The palm can grow to a height of about 25 metres (over 80 feet) and can live for 300 years or more. It has large, fan-shaped leaves, typical of other palms. It is dioecious, which means that it has separate male and female plants. The flowers on the male tree are arranged in catkin-like growths up to a metre long. The mature fruit/nut on the female tree is 40-50cm in diameter, weighs 15-30kg and contains the largest seed in the plant kingdom. The nut takes six or seven years to mature on the tree (Fig 3).

The Coco de Mer was formerly known as the Maldive coconut. Its scientific name, *Lodoicea maldivica*, originated before the 18th century when the Seychelles were uninhabited and the origin of both the tree and the nut were as yet unknown. For centuries,



Fig 1: Coco de Mer shown on King George VI (1938 & 1952), Queen Elizabeth (1954)



Fig 2: Badge of the Colony (featuring a Coco de Mer and Giant Tortoise) from 15c postal stationery envelope (1895)



Fig 3: Female and Male Coco de Mer Palms and Coco de Mer nut (1980)



Fig 4: Vallée de Mai Nature Reserve, Praslin Zil Elwannyen Sel (Seychelles Outer Islands) (1987)



Fig 5: Black Parrot and Coco de Mer Palm (1968)

the nuts that fell from the trees and into the sea would be carried by the prevailing currents. In this way, many were found on beaches in the Maldives. Until the true source of the nut was discovered in 1768 by Marc-Joseph Marion du Fresne (or Dufresne) (1724-72) (a Breton-born French explorer) it was widely believed to grow on a mythical tree at the bottom of the sea.

The main populations of Coco de Mer palms are found in the Praslin and Curieuse National Parks, and most notably in the Vallée de Mai Nature Reserve – declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1983 - on the island of Praslin. The British Major-General Charles George Gordon (Gordon of Khartoum) (1833-85) visited the Seychelles on a military mission in 1881 and was certain that the Vallée de Mai was the original Garden of Eden and the Coco de Mer the “Tree of knowledge of good and evil” (Genesis 2:9).

A Covid-postponed Holiday

In January 2020 I booked a holiday to the Seychelles, for July 2021, as the itinerary looked perfect. It was a small-ship cruise (only 30 passengers) exploring several of the Seychelles' northern islands, including Praslin and Curieuse. But thanks – or no thanks – to Covid it didn't happen. It finally happened in October 2024. I visited the Vallée de Mai and was thrilled to see so many Coco de Mer palms (Fig 4). And I also had a lengthy walk on the island of Curieuse after landing on the sandy beach from one of the ship's inflatable rubber Zodiac boats, there to be greeted by a Giant Tortoise at the top of the beach!

In the Vallée de Mai Nature Reserve's gift shop I bought a guidebook. From it I learned about the birds, animals and reptiles that can be found in this forest of Coco de Mer and other palms. So, I've recently added appendices to my Coco de Mer collection to show birds like the very rare Black Parrot (Fig 5) and the Seychelles Sunbird, the Seychelles Green Gecko (which helps fertilise the female Coco de Mer palms) and the Seychelles Tree Frog. We collectors can so easily go off at tangents into other collecting areas! 📖



WEATHER FEATURES AND PHILATELY. PART 3

Lloyd Hogg

One of the most frightening weather features is lightning. For it to strike, air acts as an insulator between positive and negative charges in a cloud or between a cloud and the ground. When these opposing charges build up enough, the insulating capacity of the air collapses and there is a rapid discharge of electricity that we know as lightning. It is the collision of air molecules and water drops that causes the electrical charging. Lightning can occur in just one cloud or several and is associated with cumulonimbus clouds. It can take many forms - ball, blue jet, chain, spider, elves, fork - and some say it travels at 270,000 miles per hour, leading to the expression, 'as fast as lightning'. It has appeared as a symbol of power and effective communications in several designs through the ages. Some planes and ships have been proudly awarded the name 'lightning'. Attempts have been made to minimize the potentially destructive impact of lightning. In the Western world Benjamin Franklin and, independently, Prokop Divis invented the 'lightning rod' (Fig 21). A lightning rod is a metal rod mounted at the top of a building to protect it from lightning. Where lightning does strike it will hopefully hit the rod and be conducted to ground through wire, instead of passing through the structure, where it could cause a fire or electrocution. There are numerous constant printing flaws showing absence or addition of lightning rods on buildings depicted on stamps.

Meanwhile, Nikola Tesla was renowned for recreating lightning in his laboratory to better understand its potentially dangerous effects. In Africa, tribes relied on medicine men to ask the spirits to keep lightning away. The settlement of 'Lightning Ridge' in Australia (Fig 22) was named after a lightning strike there in the 1870's which killed a farmer, his dog, and 200 sheep.

Thunder is the sound caused by rapidly expanding gases in a lightning discharge. It has been included as a visible weather feature insofar as it comes from highly visible cumulonimbus clouds and often accompanies lightning and heavy rain. It is studied closely due to its inherent dangers. Thunder clouds take many forms and are a potential threat to aircraft. The French town of Tonnerre (meaning thunder) is named after the weather phenomenon. At the end of the 19th century recording of thunder was made via official postcards known as 'thunder cards'.

Very much associated with thunder and lightning is hail - a form of solid rain consisting of balls of ice, called hailstones, with a diameter of >5 mm (0.20 in). Hailstones can grow to 15 cm (6 in) and weigh more than 0.5 kg (1.1 lb.). Hail forms in strong thunderstorm clouds, particularly those with intense updrafts, high liquid-water content, great vertical extent, large water droplets and where a good portion of the cloud layer is below freezing. A thunderstorm delivering hail is known as a hailstorm. Rockets are used to suppress hail because it can cause damage to property and agricultural crops. They work by carrying silver iodide into clouds to constrain natural precipitation processes. Chinese postal cards are a rich source of inspiration here.

Meteorologists observe, measure and record weather features. In 1654 Grand Duke Ferdinand II of Sicily sponsored the first weather observing network by establishing meteorological stations across Italy and elsewhere in Europe (Fig 23). Other monarchs and political leaders have been responsible for the establishment of meteorology services. In 1854 a decree by King William III founded the Meteorology Institute of the Netherlands, which was opened under the leadership of C.H.D. Buys Ballot. The only philatelic representation of Ballot is on a meter mark (Fig 24). In 1871, President Grant put all meteorological services under the US Army and a year later President Bernardino Riva Avia created scientific organizations which led to the opening of a national Argentinian meteorological service - the first in Latin America. He appears on many Argentinian stamps but the most interesting is an unissued stamp of 1926. Harrison & Sons produced a trial printing for its 'Collogravure Recess and Surface Printing' sample booklet. It has only been identified as such in the Dutch Communications Museum and whilst unlisted in major catalogues a reference appears in the authoritative work by Kneitschel (Fig 25).

In America John Dalton was among the first to use homemade instruments to measure observations in 1793 and, later, amateur voluntary observing meteorologists emerged - many working from home. One of the most intriguing was Sarah Aaronsohn (1890-1917), who it transpired was also a Jewish spy working for the British in World War I, as shown on an Israel stamp. Back in the day, observers mailed their observations to central offices for overall collation, or sent them by telegram, and in the USA (1868 to 1891) volunteer weather reporters used postage-bearing pre-addressed stationery provided by the War Department's Signal Service to mail in their observations. Handwritten records were gradually replaced by electronic recording on computers enabling communication with an increasing range of devices on a worldwide basis.

International cooperation in meteorology started in 1873, at a conference held in the Academy of Sciences building in Vienna, organized by Adolphe Quetelet. It resulted in the creation of the International Meteorological Organization (IMO), which arranged exchange of weather data between countries. In 1950 the IMO was taken over, renamed as the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and consolidated as a specialized agency of the United Nations. The headquarters for the WMO moved to Geneva, Switzerland, where it remains today. WMO coordinates, standardizes and promotes meteorological activities throughout the world and covers all meteorology-related matters. It issued its own stamps in 1956 and 1960, under the auspices of the Swiss government, to support its work (Fig 26). In 1973, WMO celebrated its 100th year of existence and some countries, such as Chile, overprinted its stamps to mark the occasion. Other countries issued specific stamps. WMO collects and distributes meteorological data from buoys, ships, and land-based stations across the globe. It has a recognisable logo, in keeping with the UN emblem, which has frequently been used on postage stamps (Fig 27).

Atmospheric observations were originally made using meteorological instruments carried by kites. Benjamin Franklin used them for his lightning experiments in the 1750s but later more complex kites, made of spruce and cambric cloth, appeared in a box design. Kites carried a meteorograph, invented by Pietro Angelo Secchi, which is an instrument for recording temperature, wind velocity, humidity and barometric pressure.

In 1896 pilot (small) balloons were introduced for the first time by the French meteorologist, Léon Teisserenc de Bort. He released hundreds of them from his observatory in Trappes, France, which led to discovering the difference between the troposphere and the stratosphere and their temperatures. Balloons are inflated using metal



Fig 21: USA. America's first stamp showing Benjamin Franklin on cover dated 6 June 1848. Albany, NY to New York City. Correct 5c first class rate per 1/2 oz for not over 300 miles.



Fig 22: Australia postmarked Lightning Ridge



Fig 23: Italy. Grand Duke Ferdinand II of Sicily on cover dated 3 March 1860. Palermo to Pozzallo - letter of one sheet paying 2 grana to domestic destination.



Fig 27: Cameroun 1963. Proof signed by the designer Adolphe Eugène Lacaque. Plus issued stamp.





Fig 28: Cote d'Ivoire 1964. Artist drawing showing a balloon launch - signed by the designer Pierre Béquet (1932-2012). Plus issued stamp.



Fig 29: Ghana 1973 Imperforate proof sheet by Format International Security Printers Limited (unique).

tubes filled with helium or hydrogen. They are extremely fragile and more than 90% of weather balloons burst over 29 kilometres.

Radiosondes can be fitted to balloons (Fig 28). They are battery-powered instruments transmitting measurements of pressure, temperature, and relative humidity by radio. Whilst invented by Robert Bureau, it was Pavel Molchanov who launched the first working version on 30 January 1930, the 50th anniversary of which was celebrated on Russian postal stationery. The government of Dubai at one time used the British branded 'Kew' radiosonde, fitted with a vertical sequencer to ensure quality transmissions. Radiosondes can be dropped at one time from aircraft and are then known as 'dropsondes'. Balloons carrying radiosondes are launched from ground level and at various locations, often transported long distances by plane, ships, snow mobiles or vans depending on terrain and environmental conditions. They are tracked using a meteorological theodolite, global positioning systems (GPS) or radar. Theodolites are most used, especially in polar regions.

Meteorologists from Europe and the US were keen to reach and study the stratosphere (layer above the troposphere) and for this they used larger balloons. Auguste Piccard was the pioneer of the larger balloons (known as stratospheric balloons), and these reached the stratosphere in 1932 by hitting 17 km height in his balloon FNRS-1. The Polish Government offered Piccard a second balloon for upper air research, but the flight never took place as the balloon burst while being inflated at Zakopane. Inflating a stratospheric balloon was a major task requiring teams of up to 20 men. Upper atmosphere research by manned balloon was not without its risks. In 1934 a stratospheric balloon, known as 'Osoaviakhim-1', launched for meteorological study, crashed killing three airmen - Pavel Fedoseenko, Andrey Vasenko and Ilya Usyskin. The event has been commemorated on Russian stamps and stationery.

Radar (Radio Detection and Ranging) is used extensively by meteorologists. It can spot precipitation, wind, and tropical storms by sending out electromagnetic pulses and measuring how long they take to return. Developed in the 1940s by Robert Watson-Watt, it is based on principles established by Christian Doppler and Heinrich Hertz. Radar equipment uses an antenna, which consists of a parabolic 'bowl' with a feedhorn, sometimes covered by a protective sphere (radar dome). The equipment can be stationery or mobile. Weak radar signals can be amplified unlike sound, enabling the technology to detect objects which other methods cannot. Radar is best suited to distinguish precipitation in its many forms, including that found in clouds, storms and hurricanes. Data received from radar towers is transformed into visible scaled monitor images, allowing accurate measurements. Doppler radar is more complex. It can also determine wind speed and direction by measuring changes in the frequency of the reflected beam. Special wind finding radar is also used to track radiosondes. Mobile radar units on vans or trucks give meteorologists the ability to get closer to weather activity for pinpoint accuracy. More modern radar kit includes Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) systems using a laser technique and Sonic Detection and Ranging (SODAR) using sound as the basic element (acoustic sonde).

Meteorological rockets carry satellites into space so that they can take long range photographs of weather on Earth. Satellites are either polar orbiting at 1,000 km, thus covering the entire earth, or geostationary (hovering 36,000 km above the equator). The first weather satellite, Vanguard 1 (1958), had problems with orbit synchronization. Hermann Potocnik overcame the synchronization problem by affirming that satellites must rotate in the same way as the earth, so each location is below the satellite twice a day, thereby known as having 'synchronized orbit'. Launched by the United States in 1960,

TIROS or Television InfraRed Observation Satellite was the first fully operational weather satellite, allowing views of large-scale cloud patterns and storms. A splendid imperforate proof sheet from Ghana shows the satellite in position (Fig 29).

USA and Russia dominated weather satellite activity in the 1960s and 1970s, with Japan and China entering the picture later with their own satellite series. This included METEOR (1964) for general observations, NIMBUS II (1966) for cloud research and later HIMAWARI for Typhoons and rainstorms. Satellites transmit data to receiving dishes, which relayed to computers. Tracking of satellites can be done by fixed or mobile units.

Data from satellites is received by a weather station which is a facility, either on land or at sea, with instruments and equipment for measuring observed atmospheric conditions to inform weather forecasts. At manned weather stations, a range of observations are taken at least once a day and at automated stations the number of readings can be set at any number. Observation equipment usually housed with a meteorological station includes a large range of weather observation measurements.


Stations located on mountain peaks have increased proximity to clouds and winds, enabling intensive study and research of these features. The world's highest station is in Sonnblick, Austria and was opened in 1886. It has been represented on several stamp issues. Stations at low altitude (sea level) are helpful in observing valley microclimates. Modern stations outside of Europe have special equipment for observing extreme weather phenomena such as hurricanes and typhoons, including early warning systems. Automated weather stations are being introduced which offer continual observation and recording and to allow data collection from more isolated and inaccessible areas (Fig 30). 



Fig 30: PRC Chinese lottery postal card: 60-yuan domestic rate effective 1 March 1999.

The final part of this series will be published in September 2025 Themescene

EUROPHILEX

7 - 11 MAY 2025

National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham

With a new venue I suspect many of us did not know what to expect, and learnt a few lessons should the NEC be used for any future events: choose your hotel carefully (if staying) and be prepared for either long walks, or taxi rides, or expensive parking. But on the plus side, once there everything was together: dealers, cafe, exhibit frames and meeting rooms. It's a large hall (more walking but spacious) but thanks to the GBPS there was a seating area.

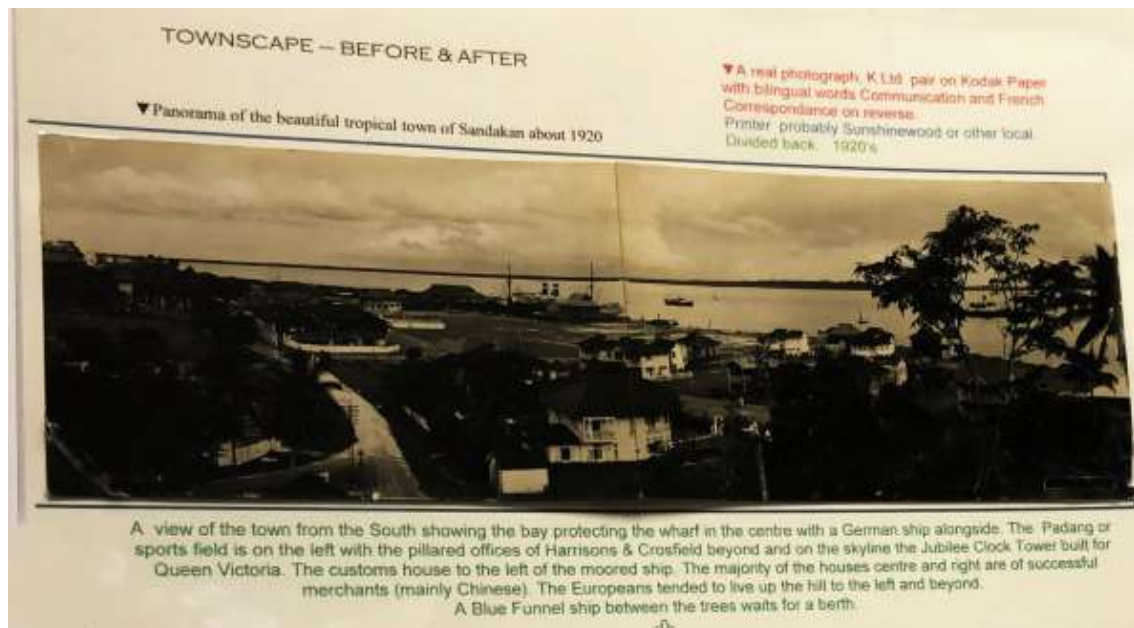
For those visiting for more than a day there was a very full programme of meetings, including our own, and here we were lucky: three of the meeting 'rooms' were simply areas partitioned off from the dealers area, which meant speakers had to compete with general noise levels, a competition some of them lost. The BTA though had a proper room with walls and door, and was able to hold a very successful meeting.

It began with our guest speaker Peter Cockburn FRPSL, accompanied by his wife, who gave a fascinating and very personal talk and display on *Postcards of British North Borneo*. This is a collection he started some years ago while living there (and where he met his wife), and for those of us less familiar with the area he explained its history. The British gained a toehold in northeastern Borneo proper in 1872, when British merchant William Cowie founded an east-coast settlement at Sandakan, which became the country's capital. Having obtained rights to much of the territory by 1881, the British launched the private British North Borneo Company, which ran the colony as a commercial enterprise under British protection until 1941. When picture postcards became popular Cowie himself saw their potential as an advertisement for the country.

Peter's display was arranged under nine themes:

- Seascapes
- Townscapes
- Government cards
- Special events
- Religious institutions
- Recreation
- Agriculture
- Visiting ships
- Post World War II views.

Publishers included Cowie, Funk & Sons who published around 150 cards dating from 1910 onwards, and the Singapore publisher G. R. Lamberts whose cards from Borneo are scarce. This was a display of unusual material, beautifully presented (not surprising that it got Gold at the National competitions in 2024), which gave a fascinating social history of a country few of us are ever likely to visit.



Following this there was a quick-fire round of four-sheet displays by BTA members:

- Erene Grieve is on a mission to introduce philately to a wider audience, and as part of this she writes articles for *The Journal of the Writing Equipment Society*, gently pointing out that there is more to writing than pens. She showed items about which she has written: a cross-written letter of 1839, stamp holders and stamp boxes, wartime stationery, and the introduction of the postcard.
- Brian Coates showed pages on the always engaging Atlantic Puffin.
- Jon Matthias investigated how the Statue of Liberty has been used by graphic designers, both as a symbol of the USA and of the Americas more widely. Various stamps were shown, none from the USA.
- Andrew Millington collects copper, and like all of us has material which never gets, or has not yet got, into his exhibit. He showed Chinese material relating to synthetic copper pigments; an advertising cover for anti-fouling boat paint (a mix of copper sulphate, bitumen and naptha); a slogan postmark of the White Cliffs Solar Power Station; and an Israeli military service card.
- John Hayward enjoys design errors on stamps (see his article on Nicaragua in the previous issue of *Themescene*). These entertaining stories will feature in a future *Themescene*.
- Geoff Blackwell pursues his hobby of photography in philately as well as with a camera. Here he showed the invention of photography in France, early photography in the Caribbean, the first daguerreotype on a stamp (possibly), and the Trans-Mississippi set of 1898, featuring the first depiction on a stamp of a living person.



Original issue, 1898, 2 cents



Centenary issue, 1998, \$2

- Peter Wood showed some postcards and ephemera relating to T. P. O'Connor, a journalist and Irish Nationalist politician; and a passenger list which included Archbishop Mannix of Australia, on his return journey from Britain after he attended the funeral in London of Lord Mayor of Cork Terence McSwiney who had died in Brixton prison while on hunger strike fighting for Irish independence.
- Wayne Cox advised the audience to “always look at the back of a stamp” to see what themes can be found. He showed whole sheets of the Latvia 1920 Red Cross charity issue, printed on three different half-finished banknotes, those issued by various occupying forces in Latvia from a year earlier. The Bolshevik printing is notably rare.
- Our final speaker was Colin Evans who showed material from the Ross Dependency, including the RRS *James Clark Ross*, and a mixture of ‘H’s, including postcards of hospitals. 📖

BTA ONE PAGE VIRTUAL COMPETITION

Andrew Millington, Competitions Organiser

Another Virtual One-page competition is done and dusted! I hope it was an enriching experience for the competitors and judges, and that readers will be entertained and informed when they look at the exhibits on our web site and in this issue of *Themescene*.

Following the format I have used to report on previous competitions I will start with statistics. There were 76 entries from a mix of previous and new exhibitors: 41 were Thematic, 10 Open, 1 Picture Postcard and 24 were Youth class entries. How encouraging is it that a quarter of the entries came from young people? Stick with it, you are the future of our hobby. Entries came from eight countries – a new addition to the roll call of countries was Sri Lanka. A warm welcome to the stamp collectors from ‘The Pearl of the Indian Ocean’, or as one exhibitor described it in their exhibit ‘The Most Desirable Island in the World’. Students at Maliydeva College in Kurunegala, Sri Lanka, were encouraged to enter; plenty took up the challenge. While closer to home Lancaster Royal Grammar School stamp club sent ten entries. I’d also like to mention Vidya Baglore, who regularly encourages friends and family to enter. This year was no exception.

A full list of entries and awards follows, but I want to highlight the following. The best entry overall and the best entry by a non-BTA member went to Fran Adams for her exhibit on *Medusa*. Fran came close to winning the Open class in our 2023 competition, proving that if you keep trying you will succeed. But it was a close-run thing as she pipped Tom Broadhead’s *Tequila* by a single point. Fran and Tom both hail from the USA, and it is noteworthy that the best entries from overseas exhibitors in our four competitions so far have been from four countries - Australia, Canada, Italy and USA. Which country will be next? The best entry by a BTA member went to our Chairman, Barry Stagg, for his exhibit *The Candy Bomber* in the Thematic (Culture) category. Other winners in the adult classes were Salvatore Picconi *Sardinian Deer* (Thematic Nature), Kannapan Shanmugan *Christian Barnard - human-to-human heart transplant* (Thematic Technology) and Ronald J. Klimley *The Final Days of Patrice Lumumba* (Picture Postcards). We divided the Youth class entries into three age groups based on the number of entries we received rather than those originally published, to get a fairer distribution. The winners were Resanya Udukubura *The Sri Lankan Elephant* (12 and younger), Leo Daniels *Marine Life* (13-14) and Anbu Chidambaram *Ink of Ages* (15 and over). The winning Youth entries came from three different countries – Sri Lanka, UK and India respectively.

Congratulations and a heartfelt thank you to everyone who submitted an entry. As competition organiser I called on the services of four judges this year, and I thank them very much for their service. I always ask previous one-page exhibitors if they wish to enter again. This year I received a couple of negative replies which, paradoxically, were positive. Both said they had found entering one of our previous competitions helpful and had now developed one-frame exhibits based on their forays into the one-page field. So whether you are exploring a new topic, thinking about exhibiting a one- or multiple frame exhibit, or just want to have fun, we are planning our fifth competition in 2027. Plenty of time for you to prepare!

PALMARES

THEMATIC (Culture) CLASS

Diamond	Barry Stagg	The Candy Bomber (Class winner)
Ruby	Erene Grieve	The Times (They are a changin')
Emerald	Augusto Zavala Rojas	The Inca Chess Player
	Klimley, Ronald J.	1932 & 1980: The Winter Olympics Come to Lake Placid
Opal		
<u>Kishore K.</u>	Baglodi	UNESCO Heritage Sites of India
<u>Kishore K.</u>	Baglodi	Bi-Lateral Relations between India and other countries: joint issues through stamps
<u>Bhavana K.</u>	Baglodi	Shri Ram Janmbhoomi Kshetra Prana Prathishta Celebrations
<u>Bhavana K.</u>	Baglodi	UNESCO Heritage Sites of India
Vidya K.	Baglodi	The Great Indian Epic Ramayan through Philately
Shruthikaa	Balaji	Save Mohenjo Daro, the 'Mounds of the Dead'
Shruthikaa	Balaji	Thirukkural - The Ethical Guide to Humanity
Devershi	Bhagat	From Isolation to Unity: Stamps of Solidarity Amidst the Pandemic
Devershi	Bhagat	The Extraordinary Efforts of Postal Employees in Pandemic Time
Purander	Bhat	Great Warrior Rani Abbaka Chouta
Praveen	Ganeshan	Saint Alphonsa
Nelson	Koildoss	Satyajit Ray: A Visionary Filmmaker and Cultural Icon
K. Ramarathnam		Tribal Jewellery
K. Ramarathnam		Nritya in Bhararath
Anush D.	Rao	Lady Warriors
K. Dinakar	Rao	Beautiful India
Ranjan	Rao	Musical Instruments of Wandering Minstrels
Ranjan	Rao	Master Healers of Ayush
Sharada D.	Rao	Wandering Minstrels: Musical Instruments of Wandering Minstrels
S. H.	Ruchita	Christmas Greetings
Apeksha P.	Shet	Terracotta temples of Bishnapur
Radika P.	Shet	Mohanchand Karamchand Ghandi (1869-1969)
Prashanth S.	Shet	Champaran Satagraha Centenary

OPEN CLASS WINNER

The mortal child of two gods, Medusa was a beautiful woman with hair the envy of other Greek women. Her beauty attracted many men including the god Poseidon, ruler of the seas. However, as an acolyte of the goddess Athena, she maintained her purity to serve in Athena's temple.

When asked to consummate a relationship with Poseidon, she ran into the Temple of Athena. Begging for help in repelling Poseidon's attentions. She found none and Poseidon seduced her in the temple. Found afterwards, Athena became outraged at the defilement of her temple.

Being unable to punish Poseidon, Athena punished Medusa for being party to the transgression and cursed her. Medusa's once treasured hair changed into horrid poisonous serpents and her gaze turned innocents and soldiers into stone.



Medusa
Revenue
circa 1820



Athena
School Book Revenue
1946



Parthenon
Commemorative Issue
1987



Poseidon
Color Essay - 1947

Head of Medusa in advertising slug of machine cancel - 1987

Greek heroes attempted to capture Medusa for her actions but she fled Athens. She hid in a secret and concealed cave on a desolate island to prevent turning more people to stone, sadly, without success.

The Tragedy that was Medusa

Hyperlinks are embedded in images and text.



Postage meter with name *Medusa* in the advertising slug, domestic printed matter rate Prague to Lüneburg-Hagen, Czechoslovakia, 17 September 1930



Sailor's Fear of Medusa
Revenue Block of 4 - 1942

Danaë, the mother of Greek hero Perseus was desired by king Polydectes. In an effort to protect her from him, Perseus agreed to bring him Medusa's head.

The gods of Olympus gave Perseus weapons to perform this gruesome task - winged shoes, a sacred bag, a sword, a cloak of invisibility and a mirrored shield.

Looking only at Medusa's reclining figure in the mirrored shield's reflection, he cut off her head as she slept and slipped it into the sacred bag.



Death of Medusa
Liebig Advertising Card - circa 1932

Perseus returned, turned Polydectes to stone, freed his mother and presented the head to Athena.



Perseus
with Head - 1950



Medusa
Mosaic - 1942

OPEN CLASS RUNNER UP

Tequila!

Thomas W. Broadhead
broadhead@utk.edu

Spirits created from the sap of agave plants in Mexico are reported to have originated during the early Toltec period, and the post-mythological legend has the woman, Xochitl offering a bowl of fermented agave sap, now known as pulque, to the emperor Tecpancaltzin Itzacaltzin in 843 CE. Naturally, soon after, he married her. Much later, in the early 17th century, agave juice began to be distilled, creating mezcal. Mezcal produced in the state of Jalisco and surrounding areas was distilled from the juice of the blue agave plant (*Agave tequilana*), and became known as tequila, after the city in Jalisco. Today, tequila is distilled only in Jalisco and limited areas in surrounding states. Most is bottled in Mexico, but bulk exports are bottled in other countries.



Xochitl presenting pulque to the Toltec emperor. (postcard ca 1905)



Collection of juice from a large agave to ferment for making pulque. Two-centavo UPU international postcard rate. 1906.



Early tequila distillery facilities and commercial blue agave fields. Note that agave plants shown on the stamp are not blue agave.



Tequila was featured on the 1978 10-peso and 1990 1700-peso stamps of the Exports series of Mexico (1975-1992). Images X 150%



The agave fields and distilleries around Tequila were collectively named a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2006. (postal card of China).

While you are enjoying a delicious shot of Tequila, sit back and enjoy the song "[Tequila](#)" by The Champs (1958).

THEMATIC (Nature) CLASS

Ruby

Salvatori Picconi

Ramani Srinivasan

Emerald

Selvanambi Balasundaram

T Murugavel

T Murugavel

Sardinian Deer (**Class winner**)

Praying Mantis

Migratory Birds of Pallikaranai Marsh

The Bite of Knowledge - Snakes on Stamps

Majestic Elephants - Icons of the Wild

THEMATIC (Nature) CLASS cont.

Opal

Hansraj Alva

Vidya K. Baglodi.

Praveen Ganeshan

Ramani Srinivasan

M. Vasantha

Flora Nature's Gift

Sparrow

Royal Bengal Tiger

Study of Insects on Stamps

Mammals Endemic to the Western Ghats

THEMATIC (Technology) CLASS

Emerald

Kannapan Shanmugan

Colin Evans

Arun Kumar

Abilashini Narayanaswamy

Kabali Ravathi

Christian Barnard - Human-to-Human Heart Transplant (**Class winner**)

The Parabolic Antenna

The Fascinating World of Motorcycle Sidecars

From Ink to Innovation. The Impact of Technology on Stamps

Egas Moniz - Founder of Modern Psychosurgery

OPEN CLASS

Diamond

Fran Adams

Thomas W. Broadhead

Ruby

Fran Adams

Thomas W. Broadhead

Wayne Cox

James Dickinson

Salvatore Picconi

Emerald

Briti Deb

M Gurudath Kamath

Opal

Mohan P. Vaze

Medusa (**Class winner**)

Tequila

International Peace Bureau

The Great Gate of Kyiv

The Type-K Pillar Box - Love It or Hate It

Around the World in 3163 Days

Cagliari

Megaliths on the Air: Connecting Ancient Megaliths through Radio

Fauna

Glimpses of Kala Nagri Vadodara

PICTURE POSTCARD CLASS

Emerald Klimley, Ronald J.

The Final days of Patrice Lumumba (**Class winner**)

YOUTH CLASSES

Youth 12 and under

Ruby

R. S. Udukumbura

The Sri Lankan Elephant - A National Treasure (**Age group winner**)

W. M. S. A. B. Doratiyawa

Ceylon Tea: globally enchanted Sri Lankan taste

Emerald

W. M. O. P. Doratiyawa

Esala Peraera

Sushanth P. Bhat

Great Warrior Rani Abbaka Chouta

Youth 13-14

Ruby

Leo Daniels

Marine Life (**Age group winner**)

Ollie Baxendale

First Flights

Ruben Surridge

A Celebration of Trees

Emerald

Bimandu Sandil Keerthisena

The sould of Sri Lankans, a timeless monument to a lost kingdom: Sigiriya

Thenuri Navinma Keerthisena

A thousand lights, a million dreams: Kandy's enchanting heartbeat of Esala Perahera

Ewan Livingstone

Sailing

Patrick Pammenter

Birds of the Caribbean

Krithikka Shanmugam

Streptomycin - Selman Abraham Waksman

Ben Smith

Fishing Boats

Seb Smith

British Wildlife

Peter Talks

Charles Darwin and the Origin of Species

Peter Talks & Robin Lee

Monarchy and Culture

Dylan Tann

Trains and Stamps

S. K. Udukumbura

Mysterious Rock Fortress - Sigiriya

Youth 15-17

Emerald

Anbu S. Chidambaram

Ink of the Ages (**Age group winner**)

Rochan S. Hegade

Diwali

C. D. Udukumbura

The Most Desirable Island in the World

Opal

A. A. G. P. Amarasinghe

Sri Lankan Sporting Achievement

Sivakumar Kannammai

A Pillar of Pride

M. M. M. C. Mapa

Queen of Hearts: Queen Elizabeth II

THEMATIC CLASS OVERALL WINNER

The Candy Bomber

Introduction During the Cold War Soviet forces blockaded Berlin. This blockade was broken by the Allies by airlifting all supplies (e.g. coal, cooking oil and food) into Berlin airport for nearly a year.



Arguably the first big crises of the Cold War, the Berlin Airlift lasted from June 24 1948 to May 12 1949.

Note the lack of vertical perforations.



On July 18, 1948, flying his DC4 Skymaster into Berlin, Lieutenant Gail Halvorsen saw many children watching him land ...



... and waving from the other side of the airfield fence in Berlin.



After talking to the children, he realised that they had no sweets. So, on his next flight Gail tied his candy rations together and ...



... he dropped them when he flew over the children, attached to a home-made parachute.



But Gail ran out of material to make parachutes, so others started to help him make them and by the end of the airlift many were even made in the USA and sent to Gail.



Other pilots started to drop candy parachutes to the children ...



... and the children were very happy.



Lt Gail Halvorsen – the candy bomber.

By the end of the Berlin Airlift in September 1949, American pilots dropped more than 250,000 parachutes and 23 tons of candy to Berlin children. When he returned to the USA he was awarded the **Cheney Award**, an aviation award presented by the United States Air Force for acts of *self-sacrifice in a humanitarian interest*.

AGENDA

For the 32nd Annual General Meeting of the British Thematic Association to be held on
Saturday **June 14th 2025 at 11.30 a.m.** at Swinpex at Grange Leisure &
Community Centre, Stratton St. Margaret, Swindon, SN3 4JY

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the 31st Annual General Meeting published in *Themescene* September 2024
3. Matters Arising
4. Chairman's report
5. Treasurer's report and adoption of Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2024
6. Election of Officers

The following Officers have been nominated or are willing to stand for re-election:

Barry Stagg	Chairman
Anne Stammers	Secretary
Peter Wood	Treasurer

Election of Committee members

7. The following members have indicated that they are willing to stand for re-election:

Currently	Wendy Buckle	Editor Themescene
Currently	Michael Blackman	Advertising Manager
Currently	Jon Matthias	Webmaster
Currently	Owen Green	Membership Secretary & ATA Liaison Officer
Currently	Andrew Millington	Competitions Organiser
Currently	Wayne Cox	

NB. There is a Committee Vacancy for a Press / Publicity Officer please let the Chairman or Secretary know, prior to or at the meeting, if you are interested in this position.

8. Ratification by the membership of appointment of
Brian Turner Examiner

9. Any Other Business

Nominations for Officers and Committee Members and any other motions for discussion should be received by the Secretary (annies1@btopenworld.com) by June 2nd 2024.

Following the AGM there will be a display by our Chairman, Barry Stagg on 'Daffodils'

Signed: *M. Anne Stammers* (Hon. Secretary)

Dated: 3rd April 2024

Please note change of timing: the meeting will be held in the Studio from **11.30 - 13.00.**

THE BRITISH THEMATIC ASSOCIATION
Account for the year ended 31 December 2024

2023	INCOME		2024
2,722	Subscriptions		2,116
	Weekend income	9,076	
	less: Expenditure	<u>-8,853</u>	
			223
85	Other income - Bank interest.		205
<u>2,807</u>			<u>2,544</u>
	EXPENDITURE		
1,924	"Therescene" - Printing and distribution expenses	1,995	
-400	less : Advertising Income	<u>395</u>	1,600
384	Meetings (incl. Zoom)		216
243	BIA Cup costs (incl. Ardingley)	171	
-50	Less : Entry fees	<u>-30</u>	141
20	Publicity		0
152	Web Site		137
157	Insurance		164
0	RPSI Display (Booklet net cost)		402
264	Affiliations		246
0	Administration expenses		38
108	Bank charges (incl. Paypal fees)		98
0	Transfer to weekend reserve		<u>223</u>
2,802			3,265
5	Surplus / Deficit		<u>-721</u>
<u>2,807</u>			<u>2,544</u>
	BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2024		
	Accumulated fund		
13,448	Balance at 1.1.2024	13,453	
5	add : Surplus/Deficit for the year	<u>-721</u>	12,732
1,269	Weekend Events Reserve/Deposits		<u>1,492</u>
<u>14,722</u>			<u>14,224</u>
	Represented by:		
4,890	Cash at Bank: Deposit Account		11,890
10,514	Current Account		<u>2,385</u>
15,404			14,275
-692	less: Subs. Received in advance & Creditors		<u>-567</u>
10	add: Amounts due and paid in advance		516
<u>14,722</u>			<u>14,224</u>

Hon Treasurer, P.J.Wood

P. Wood 14/3/25.

Examiners report.

I have examined the above Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet and confirm that they are in accordance with the Associations accounting records which have been properly kept.

Hon. Examiner, B. Turner.

Brian Turner 25/3/2025

REPORT FROM ASPS 2025 CONGRESS

Paula Cleary

The Association of Scottish Philatelic Societies (ASPS) held its annual Congress event on 04 and 05 April at the Vine Conference Centre in Dunfermline, Fife. This was the first time at this venue and there was unanimous agreement that it provided a good atmosphere, with a large main hall for dealers and displays, a fine café serving hot and cold food and drinks, and the staff had been wonderfully helpful and welcoming.

Host Society, the Glasgow Thematic, put on a good show of 40 frames of thematic work showing off the range and variety of topics collected. Best Host Society award went to former member Mike Cleary (1943-2024) for his display on different aspects of medicine. His daughter, Paula, collected the Robert Burns quaich trophy in his memory. Other Thematic Society members did well in the awards – Brian Dow and Robert Watt were awarded the trophy for Best Philatelic Literature category, and Alistair Burrow won Best First Time Entrant in the National Exhibition competition. Members George Henshilwood and Graham U'ren were also winners. Trophies were presented at the Friday evening dinner by Julia Mill, wife of ASPS President Graham (also of the Thematic Society).



The event was attended by the Deputy Provost of Fife, Mr Dave Dempsey and his wife, who enjoyed viewing the displays and hearing the Tom Rielly presentation given by Maureen Mathieson on the topic of 'Butterflies'.

There were more than 20 philatelic dealers attending the two-day event – some had made the long journey north from England - and business seemed brisk as people browsed the tables and made their purchases – in one case, an old postcard of Queen Street railway station

in Glasgow delighted its finder who had spent three years searching for the item!

Throughout the two days, members of the Glasgow Thematic Society staffed the host society table, which offered free literature about thematic collecting, including some materials kindly donated by the BTA. One visitor who expressed interest was an individual collector who had not previously attended such an event as this and was not a member of any club; on enquiry, she confessed that her favourite thematic topic was sheep on stamps! She did not go away empty handed. On sale at the table was the souvenir cover stamped with a special cancellation of the Dunfermline City Hall and steeple – all designed by Andrew Black (Caledonian Philatelic Society). The Association of British Philatelic Societies (ABPS) were kind donators of a grant to support the printing of the cover.

The whole Congress event went smoothly – from set-up to closure – thanks to the efforts of Norrie Kelso (ASPS Secretary and Congress organiser), the dealers, members of the Glasgow Thematic Society, the staff at the Vine Centre, and all those who attended. The next Congress event will take place at the same venue in April 2026, when the newly formed Glasgow Caledonian Philatelic Society (Glasgow P. S. merged with Caledonian P. S. on 10 April) will play host. 📖



The Deputy Provost of Fife, Mr Dave Dempsey (centre) met ASPS President Graham Mill (left) and Frank Bettie (right), President of the Glasgow Thematic Society.



At the host society table (l to r): Ken McChlery, Paula Cleary and Julia Mill.

HERE AND THERE

VOTE FOR THE BEST MUSIC STAMP OF 2024

Motivgruppe Musik, the International Philatelic Music Study Group, is again inviting all collectors around the world to vote for the most popular music stamp of the past year. Members of the Motivgruppe Musik have selected 66 stamps from more than 400 stamps issued world-wide on the subject of music. The winner will be awarded the Yehudi Menuhin Trophy 2025. Go to the website www.motivgruppe-musik.com/en/ and click on “Most popular music stamp 2024”. From there you can nominate your top three choices. Voting is open until 31st July.

ASSISTING EXPERT COMMITTEE THROUGH THE USE OF FORENSIC PHILATELY

BTA member Paul Leonard gave this presentation at EuroPhilEx, covering the work of an Expert Committee, adding value through forensic philately, helping Royal Mail, and ongoing research. His talk is now freely available on YouTube:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=R_HCk-3FksM

It is recommended you view with subtitles on:



BEST MAXIMAPHILY CARD 2023

This feels like it's a bit of old news, but the March / April 2025 Newsletter of the F.I.P. Maximaphily Commission has just announced the winners of the Best Maximum Card for 2023. The winner was Spain, with Slovenia second and France third.



EXHIBITING PAGE: RESULTS

ABPS SPRING NATIONAL COMPETITION FEBRUARY/MARCH 2025

This was held at the end of February, hosted by the Royal Philatelic Society London. Sadly there were not many entries in the pictorial classes - two Thematic, two Open, one Literature and no Picture Postcards. However of the five entries three were from BTA members, who all achieved Gold Medal standard. Congratulations to them:

THEMATIC PHILATELY

Lloyd Hogg	Telling the time
Jan Nyeki	Tell me please, why Sudan was the last one?

PHILATELIC LITERATURE

Brian Sole	A reminder of the British Greetings Telegram Service
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EUROPHILEX MAY 2025

Being an International competition this was marked to a higher standard than the National competitions above. Congratulations to everyone who took part, and particular congratulations to John Davies, and also to Wayne Cox who was awarded Gold plus a specific commendation for Originality.

Name	Title	No. Frames	Award
THEMATIC PHILATELY			
Wendy Buckle	Paper past and present	8	LV
George Henshilwood	Having fun with numbers	8	LV
Lloyd Hogg	Exploring the weather	5	V
Jan Nyeki	Tell me please, why was Sudan the last one?	2	LV
Anne Stammers	The seductive power of gold	5	V
OPEN PHILATELY			
Wayne Cox	Pillars of the Community	5	G
John Davies	A Jubilee reminiscence	8	LG
Andrew Millington	Falu Gruva: the mine that made a nation	1	LV
Peter Wood	The road to Irish independence	5	LV
LITERATURE			
Brian Sole	A reminder of the British Greetings Telegram Service		LV
Vijay Wadhwa	Six digital publications on birds		S

AUSVIPEX 2025 VIRTUAL PHILATELIC EXHIBITION

This virtual competition is being organised by the Australian Philatelic Federation. There are no fewer than eighteen classes, including Thematic, Open and Picture Postcards. Participation in the Exhibition is open to all exhibitors worldwide; they do not need to be a member of an affiliated organisation. There is no one-frame class, all exhibits may be between two and eight frames. The extremely modest entry fees are A\$20 per frame. Feedback after the event will be via Zoom, so a chance to talk to the judges. Full details will be found at <https://ausvipex2025.com/> including the online application form. Closing date for applications is 28th September 2025.

FUTURE BTA EVENTS

<p>BTA meeting at Stampex Saturday 25th October 12.30</p> <p>Stampex Business Design Centre Islington</p> <p><i>Nearest Tube station: Angel Islington</i></p>	<p>BTA Weekend at Oxford Spire Hotel 17 - 19 April 2026</p> <p><i>With guest speakers on:</i></p> <p>Philatelic firsts Astronomy Royalty</p>
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ZOOMING ALONG

Barry Stagg, Wendy Buckle

Sue Burn. *Flying boats and the Empire Air Scheme*. 20 February

Twenty-three BTA members and friends were treated to a marvellous presentation from Sue. A fascinating tour of the various routes, aircraft and people who 'opened up' Australia and New Zealand to the transportation of mail by air. Using ephemera and postal items Sue showed how dangerous long-distance flying was in the 1930s and throughout World War II, and how pilots were the personalities of the day!

From examples of route maps to photographs of pilots and planes, ticket stubs and maps, newspaper cuttings and letters, luggage labels and advertising materials, this was a masterclass in using ephemera. And there were a good number of envelopes, many signed by the pilot(s), to see as well. All knitted together to show how the Short Brothers flying boats, brave pilots and the Empire Airmail Scheme joined forces to be the mail communications channel in the 1930s and through World War II. Thank you Sue for a most enjoyable presentation.

Jean Alexander. *Supermarket Philately, part 4*. 04 April

This was the fourth instalment of Jean's talk, and we started in familiar territory - buy a product, get a free stamp - in this case birthday cards from Boots. These were marketed in what from a current perspective seems a slightly odd way, which I suspect would not be done today. The cards were coded: M for Male (cars, golf, gardening etc.), F for Female (cats, cottage gardens etc.), and C for Cute (gender unspecified, fluffy animals). They even had colour-coded envelopes: blue for male, pink for female and yellow for cute. Further series followed for different events, and Jean's husband, being a philatelist himself and understanding how one collects, sent Jean a Christmas card - still in its cellophane wrapper and with the receipt. Romance is not dead! Later, Marks and Spencer sold birthday cards with a first class prepaid envelope.

Then in 1995 Royal Mail trialled booklets, sold in smaller newsagents. Dummy packs were put on show, exchangeable on payment for the actual booklets. This system was also used at National Trust sites, featuring blocks of 4 stamps from the 1995 National Trust issue in packs. This trial was not repeated.

In 1998 the Birdpex Exhibition (an international event held every four years) was held at Wembley. Royal Mail decided to use the event to trial a new product. They wanted to prepackage stamps in such a way that they could be sold in the style of supermarkets. The answer to this was Format Packs, which could be put in a basket and taken to the till. A lot of stamp issues were packaged in this way. Cylinder blocks, quarter sheets, gutter pairs, the marketing possibilities seemed endless. So while other visitors to the exhibition enjoyed the bird-themed displays by major collectors, Jean grabbed her supermarket basket and carefully examined everything on offer at the Royal Mail stand. Let's just say the bill at the checkout could have bought a week's groceries! The trial was clearly successful, and format packs were then sold at Stamp Show 2000 at Earls Court.

What an amazing collection we have been shown over the four talks. Jean demonstrated her tenacity and deep philatelic knowledge in collecting these ephemeral, and now often very difficult to get items, giving us an object lesson in the intricacies of modern philately.

BTA ONE FRAME COMPETITIONS

@South of England Stamp & Postcard Fair, 11th October

Our annual competitions are changing!

What has changed?

- We will now accept scanned exhibits from anybody (previously only from overseas entrants) as well as normal entries.
- We have simplified entry procedures.
- We will accept display entries, if you do not want to compete.

What hasn't changed?

- The classes, guidelines and scoring systems, except they will not apply to display entries.
- The competition will still be held at the South of England Stamp Show in October.
- Basking in the glory of winning a trophy and getting a diploma and feedback.

Will this encourage you to enter? We hope so, and remember you are not expected to attend the South of England show to enter.

Our Classes:

- Thematic Philately (the winner receives the BTA Cup)
- Open Philately (the winner receives the John Fosbery Trophy)
- Picture Postcards (the winner receives the Brian Sole Trophy)
- Entries for these classes are subject to the National Rules and Regulations for the relevant class.
- Championship Class for previous winners in any class (Rules and Regulations are on the BTA website)

Additional rules for all classes

- Every exhibit must have an Introductory Page as the first sheet and all pages should be numbered at the foot of the page. Entries which are not scans must be in protectors.
- Scanned entries should be 300-400 dpi jpg format
- Previous winners of the Thematic, Open and Picture Postcard classes cannot enter the same exhibit in the same class in future competitions.

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

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

MARKING Thematic Philately – BTA Cup

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

MARKING Open Philately – John Fosbery Trophy

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

MARKING Picture Postcard Class - Brian Sole Trophy

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

Judging will be carried out by Federation and/or National-level qualified judges.

To enter:

Please send a 'notification of entry' e-mail to competitions@britishthematic.org.uk with the following information:

- Your name
- Title of entry or entries
- Class or classes you wish to enter, and
- How you intend to pay your entry fee(s) – see below.

You may submit more than one entry.

Deadlines

1. 'Notification of entry' e-mail by 24th September.
2. Scanned entries should be submitted to competitions@britishthematic.org.uk by 1st October.
3. Original entries that cannot be delivered to the South of England Stamp and Postcard Fair should be posted to Andrew Millington, Flat 4, 87 Shurdington Rd., Cheltenham, GL53 0J; to arrive by 1st October.
4. Original entries which can be taken to the South of England Stamp and Postcard Fair should be delivered to the competition organiser by 10.00 am, 11th October.

If you are sending original material to exhibit we advise your exhibits are insured as the BTA bears no liability for your material.

Entry fees

£10 per competitive entry

£5 per display entry.

Payment can be made by:

BACS to British Thematic Association, Sort Code 40-03-29, Account 71157701 from a UK bank account;

or

Cash at the Show;

or

PayPal if you live overseas.

More information about this year's show can be found at

https://www.sussexphilately.org.uk/2024_South_of_England_Stamp_Fair.php

BTA PROGRAMME 2025

- | | |
|---|---|
| 14 June
11.30 - 13.00
Studio Room | Annual General Meeting
Guest speaker: Barry Stagg <i>Daffodils</i>
To be held as part of Swinpex 2024.
The Grange Leisure and Community Centre, Stratton St. Margaret,
Swindon, SN3 4JY |
| 20 June
19.00 for 19.30 | Zoom meeting
Wendy Buckle
<i>A history of writing materials: animal, vegetable and mineral</i>
Codified writing systems began around 6,000 years ago. Before the invention of paper, cultures used whatever raw materials were plentiful in their area, and this presentation will look at the surprisingly wide range of materials which have been used. |
| 19 September
19.00 for 19.30 | Zoom meeting
Lloyd Hogg
<i>Talk like a pirate</i>
Ahoy me hearties. Shiver me timbers that Lloyd should be giving this talk to all you lubbers. He shall be taking yarr through 'is booty in the exhibit. Avast, or e'll have you down Davy Jones's Locker! It won't be scuttlebutt either, but rather a fun but seriously philatelic journey. Fair winds to you all. |
| 11 October
10.00 - 16.00 | BTA One-Frame Competitions
<i>At</i> South of England Stamp Fair & Sussex Convention
Ardingly Showground, RH17 6TL. |
| 25 October
12.30 | BTA meeting at Stampex
<i>Full details to follow</i>
Business Design Centre, London |
| 11 November
19.00 for 19.30 | Zoom meeting
Les Ashton-Smith
<i>Albert Einstein</i>
The life and legacy of Albert Einstein, one of the most brilliant thinkers the world has seen, he was voted the "Times person of the century".
A scientist whose discoveries and theories led to TV and the atomic bomb. He led a complicated and varied life and was even offered, but refused, the position of President of Israel.
A peace loving guy with a great sense of humour and really crazy hair! |

Just4Kids by Lise Whittle

www.stampactive.co.uk

The website for young stamp collectors

Food Glorious Food!



Perhaps you like to collect the recipes of your favourite foods? Or you could start a collection and keep your favourite recipes in a book or a box. You could decorate your recipes and your book or box with food stamps. Or start a separate collection of food stamps in your stamp album.

Here is a delicious recipe for yummy cereal bars you could try. Please remember to have adult supervision when you are cooking.

Yummy Cereal Bars

Adult supervision required - ask an adult to help you.

INGREDIENTS - *what you will need to make Yummy Cereal Bars:*

- 225g (8oz) butter
- 175g (6oz) golden syrup (*weigh a glass bowl first, then add 175g syrup*)
- 300g (11oz) porridge oats
- A large handful of your favourite ingredients of mixed seeds, dried fruits and/or nuts - eg sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, linseed; any dried fruits eg chopped dates, apricots, orange, apple, raisins, blueberries; chopped nuts; chunks of crystallised ginger; mashed banana; shredded coconut; ground mixed spice etc; or any other flavours you like!



METHOD - how to make your Yummy Cereal Bars:

1. Turn on oven to 180 degrees/170 degees fan/Gas 4/350 degrees F
2. Grease and line a deep cake tin or deep baking tray, approx 28 x 18cm, 5cm deep.
3. Slowly melt the butter and syrup in a saucepan over a low heat, strirring gently. When melted, remove from heat.
4. Add the seeds/fruit/nuts/ginger. Stir in the porridge oats. Stir the mixture thoroughly.
5. Pour the mixture into the tin, and level the surface.
6. Using oven gloves, carefully place the tin in the centre of the oven. Bake for 30 - 35 minutes, watching carefully - if it overcooks it can become brittle. When it begins to brown at the edge but still looks soft and pale in the middle, take it out using oven gloves. It continues browning as it cools.
7. Leave to cool in the tin for 15 minutes, then carefully score with a knife into bars but leave in the tin. When completely cool, turn out, remove the lining paper, and cut into bars.



Did you enjoy your Yummy Cereal Bars? What are your favourite foods? To receive a FREE Stamp Active album and stamps (children only), write to us and tell us about your favourite foods and stamps. Just4Kids,c/o The Editor, Themescene, 87 Victoria Road, Bournemouth BH1 4RS.

One-Page Virtual Competition. Winner: age 13 - 14

Trapezia

This is a type of coral crab. They have a diet of coral mucus. They also carry babies on their backs. They can also be very deadly as they store 2 of the deadliest poisons in the world, tetrodotoxin and saxitoxin.

Marine life

Coral

Most coral is made of calcium carbonate (CaCO_3). It has a type of algae called zooxanthellae which gives it its nice color. These animals have been around for about 450 million years, and they support 25% of ocean life.

Whale Facts

Wales' scientific name is Cetaceas. They can also swim at 20 mph. Also, they can hold their breath for 15 minutes. Their main diet is of plankton and small fish showing how humble these giants of the ocean.

Pagurus Burnhardus

This is a type of hermit crab that can live up to 30 years and mainly feeds on invertebrates and small fish. They live by rocky coasts and can survive on land or water. Also, a group of crabs is called a cast.

One-Page Virtual Competition. Winner: age 15 - 17

INK OF THE AGES

In Archaeology, Inscriptions are like little windows into the past, found on towering monuments or tucked away on a humble coin, inscriptions can commemorate achievements, immortalize loved ones or simply mark a moment in a time. The science of studying and interpreting inscriptions of past is called epigraphy. The word is taken from the Greek word "epigraphe" meaning inscription.

All that is written on hard materials is called inscriptions. Examples are stone - marble, rocks, metal - coins, clay-potsherd and clay tablet. Each were used for different purpose as wanted.

Metal Inscription



Date of Issue: 27.07.1978



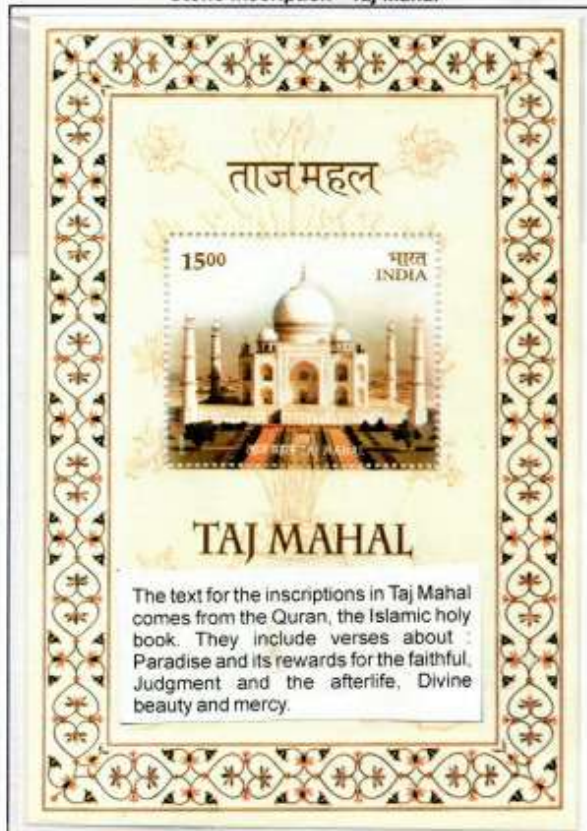
Date of Issue: 20.12.2011

Clay Inscription



Date of Issue: 26.01.2018

Stone Inscription - Taj Mahal



Date of Issue: 16.12.2004

Stone Inscription - Uttiramerur



Date of Issue: 25.01.2024

Democracy is not new to us Indians. It has existed from 921 CE during period of Chola King Parantaka- I who laid down the rules for elections for several committees which administered a village. The Uttiramerur inscription stands as a proof of this.

Hampi Permanent Pictorial Cancellation



Date of Issue: 15.08.2018

Tools

The tools used for making inscriptions are chisels, hammer



Stone Inscription Brihadeeshwara Temple

Walls of Brihadeeshwara temple have inscriptions on a Kings greatness, gifts to the temple and temple personnel's in Tamil, Grantham and Sanskrit languages

Date of Issue: 26.09.2010



Date of Issue: 31.12.2018