

# THEMESCENE

September 2025

*In this issue we:*

*Finish our meteorological journey*

**Weather features and philately, part 4**

*With Lloyd Hogg*



*Combine religion and science*

**Lotus: from the ancient to the modern world**

*With Briti Deb*



*Smile at some nonsense verse*

**Limericks**

*With Roger West*



*Plus, we investigate AI and thematic philately, and enjoy a daffodil display*

**BRITISH THEMATIC ASSOCIATION**

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**Barry Stagg**

## THE FUTURE OF THEMATIC COLLECTING

**T**he future of thematic collecting is bright, driven by its inherent flexibility and appeal to a digitally connected world. As traditional collecting methods face evolving challenges, thematic collecting offers a personalized, engaging, and sustainable approach. It allows collectors to delve deeply into subjects of personal interest, fostering a sense of discovery and connection. Digital platforms and collaborative communities will further enhance the thematic collecting experience, making it more accessible and interactive than ever before.

Thematic collecting, unlike traditional collecting focused on geography or chronology, allows for a personalized and deeply engaging experience. Collectors can choose subjects that genuinely resonate with them, be it a specific animal, historical event, or artistic style. This intrinsic motivation fuels a passion for research, discovery, and the acquisition of knowledge related to their chosen theme. The ability to create a narrative around the collection, rather than simply amassing items, adds a layer of meaning and personal connection that traditional collecting often lacks.

One of the key strengths of thematic collecting lies in its adaptability to the digital age. Online platforms and social media groups dedicated to specific themes provide collectors with unprecedented access to information, resources, and fellow enthusiasts. This fosters a sense of community and allows for collaborative research, shared learning, and the exchange of items. Digital tools can also enhance the presentation and display of thematic collections, allowing for interactive exhibits, virtual tours, and multimedia presentations.

Furthermore, thematic collecting aligns with the growing emphasis on sustainability and responsible consumption. By focusing on a specific theme, collectors can curate their collections in a more mindful and deliberate way, minimizing waste and promoting the preservation of historical and cultural artifacts. The emphasis on research and knowledge acquisition also encourages a deeper appreciation for the objects and their context, fostering a sense of stewardship rather than mere accumulation.

Looking ahead, thematic collecting will likely continue to evolve, embracing new technologies and engaging with diverse communities. As our understanding of the world and our interests change, thematic collecting will adapt and offer new avenues for exploration and discovery. Some experts predict that it will remain a vibrant and meaningful form of collecting for years to come, driven by individual passion, community engagement, and a commitment to responsible stewardship. 

# WEATHER FEATURES AND PHILATELY. PART 4

*Lloyd Hogg*

The study of cyclone behavior is of great importance to meteorologists, especially in areas that are the source of such activity. This can mean establishing weather stations in remote and isolated locations. In 1954 French authorities (in the French Antarctic Territory) built a weather station on Tromelin Island, 450 km east of Madagascar. French meteorologist Serge Frolow (1903 - 1959) was appointed the station chief at Tromelin, the station which now bears his name (Fig 31).

The idea of a 'weather ship' was first proposed in 1921 by Météo-France. Such ships, fitted with a wide range of equipment for surface and upper air meteorological observations, were primarily located in the north Atlantic Ocean and north Pacific Ocean. They replaced the use of merchant vessels that were used for observations. One of the most famous ships was the German 'Meteor', which made several observing voyages in the Atlantic (Fig 32). It was the only vessel of the German fleet saved from destruction by the Allies after World War II.

Observations from ships in the 1930s were crucial to understanding atmospheric behavior in Equatorial and North Atlantic regions. Reporting via radio, ships have now largely been replaced by automated weather buoys. The Navy Oceanographic Meteorological Automatic Device (NOMAD) automatic weather buoys are free-drifting and possess sensors and telemetry that facilitate the relay of observations to weather stations via satellite links.

At coastal locations weather stations are sometimes based inside lighthouses. On 3 June 1944, the Blacksod Lighthouse keeper delivered a weather forecast by telephone, which, when received, convinced General Dwight D. Eisenhower to delay the D-Day invasion for 24 hours, thereby averting a potential military disaster and changing the course of World War II.

Weather activity collected at each weather station is used to construct a Station Model, using internationally recognized meteorological symbols. This provides a comprehensive visual picture of what is happening and gives compatibility and clarity across the world, avoiding linguistic problems. There are also international wind velocity symbols with barbs that point in the direction the wind is coming from, and these appear in quartered circles. Both station and wind models are shown in figure 33.

Information handled internationally is coded and exchanged in 5-digit number groups called SYNOP (surface synoptic observation). In addition to the symbols used by meteorologists in their work, other symbols have been adopted as a way of conveying weather situations to the public. All data gathered for weather features is nowadays stored on super-computers which prepare weather forecasts that we all know from TV, radio, mobile phone and newspapers.

Moving on, extreme weather features are on the increase across the world. These include tornadoes, tropical storms, storms at sea, flooding and drought.

Tornadoes are violently rotating columns of air extending between a convective cloud and the Earth's surface. They are most often formed in the middle latitudes, where large

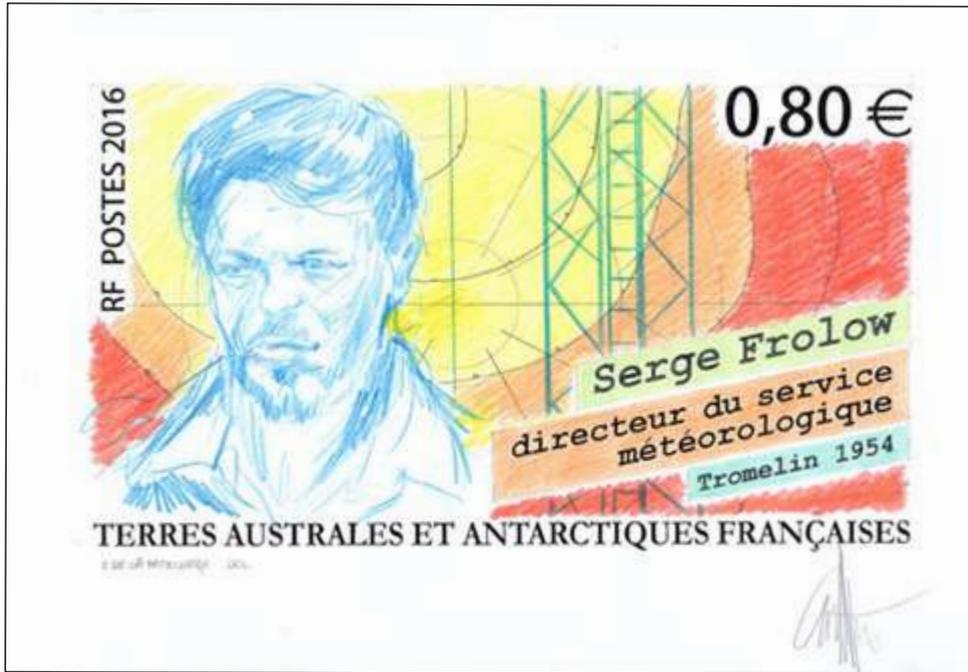


Fig 31: TAAF. Unique artwork by Cyril de La Patellière, for the stamp which was issued in 2016. Signed by the artist, who is renowned in France (where he still lives) as a painter and restorer. His stamp design career started in the 1980's and spans 20 years



Fig 32: Germany 20 July 1938. 3pf stamp paid 20-gram printed matter rate. Cancelled with a Meteor postmark on ship stationery. The cancellation was first used on board ship, for commercial mail, in June 1937 and in this case was applied during Meteor's voyage of 6 July to 21 July 1938, specifically during its return to Germany. Only a handful of examples are known



Fig 33: Jersey 2008 stamp showing weather station model and and Sweden 1977 postmark showing wind velocities



Fig 34: France 1951. Sunken die proof signed by the artist, Paul Pierre Lemagny. Plus issued



Fig 35: 27 August 1964 USA. Hollywood FL, USA to England. Post office endorsement confirming postage paid and that absence of stamp(s) was due to hurricane damage. This was from Hurricane Cleo (August 25-September 1, 1964).

temperature and humidity gradients are formed between air masses. Usually originating in cumulonimbus clouds, a funnel-shaped arm moves from the cloud towards the surface. The diameter is small and wind speeds high. Tornadoes generally happen over dry land but a related phenomenon, called a waterspout, occurs over water.

A weaker version of a tornado is called a dust devil (or 'willy-willies' in Australia). Tornado, West Virginia gained its name from tornadic storms of the 1840's. On 10 August 1925 the Dutch town of Borculo was destroyed by a tornado. Four people died and 80 people were injured. This prompted the postal authority to produce a postal card for relief funds. The French poet Arthur Rimbaud is renowned for his poem about a waterspout, and this appeared on a stamp - the artist's die proof for which is shown in figure 34.

Meanwhile a tropical storm is a very powerful, rotating, low-pressure weather system featuring strong winds, heavy rainfall and thunder characterised by the absence of fronts (boundaries separating two air masses of differing densities). When winds reach 74 miles per hour, it is classified as a hurricane, typhoon, or cyclone, depending upon where it originates in the world. Called hurricanes when they develop over the North Atlantic, central North Pacific, and eastern North Pacific, these rotating storms are known as cyclones when they form over the South Pacific and Indian Ocean, and typhoons when they develop in the Northwest Pacific.

Hurricanes generate rotating air which moves around an 'eye'. They are visible on radar and from space. Images are transmitted to monitors in control centers. In 1502 Christopher Columbus, whilst sailing off the coast of Hispaniola, recognized the signs of an approaching hurricane. Initially viewing the event by telescope, Columbus wrote a detailed account and thus became the first European to document proceedings. Columbus's fleet was unscathed by the incident, which was fortunate as one of the ships was carrying all his gold! As a result of the experience, his sponsor, Queen Isabella of Spain, forbid him to visit the area again.

Hurricane tracking is best done using reconnaissance aircraft and specialized weather satellites. Apollo 7 had the opportunity to track Hurricane Gladys from space in October 1968. When needed, police in the Caribbean are deployed to monitoring stations to assist tracking efforts. Hurricane tracks can be predicted by historical data. Hurricanes are relatively common occurrences, especially in the USA. In New York State alone, some 87 of them have been recorded since the 17th century. Settlements have been named after hurricanes, including by native American peoples who used the word Kanawha to describe them. And so relevant postmarks can be found.

Hurricanes are given their own names (for ease of identification and referencing) and have the potential to cause widespread devastation to life and property, with the costs involved in re-building during the aftermath being considerable. Homes can be demolished, and people left destitute. The Caribbean and Samoa are the areas in the North Hemisphere that seem particularly susceptible to hurricane damage and there have been tracking systems in place for some time.

Most tropical storms develop in the tropic zones around the equator, especially off the coast of Africa, the Caribbean and the Western Pacific, travelling great distances as they gain and lose strength. The cover shown (Fig 35) was sent during Hurricane 'Cleo' which was the strongest hurricane of the 1964 season (115 mph).

To help the victims of hurricanes, aid comes from private donations, directly from government or indirectly for example by via taxes on mail. The latter is achieved through surcharging stamps and postal stationery. Funds are then established to provide food and basic shelter to families affected. One of the most severe hurricanes was 'hurricane six'



Fig 36: Belize 1931. Hurricane relief perfin specimen set of five



Fig 37: Maldives 2018. Miniature sheet showing three storm scenes as depicted by the artist

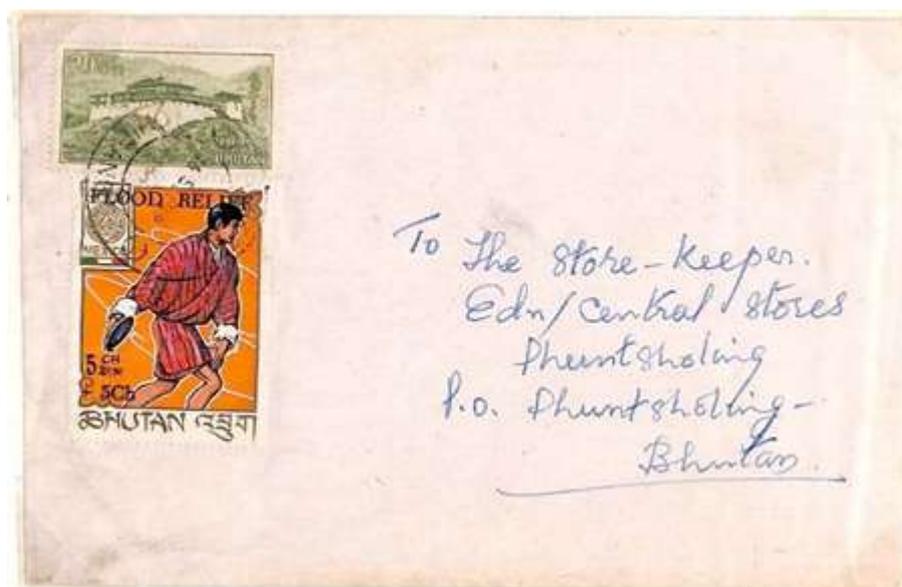


Fig 38: Bhutan 1968. Domestic letter bearing the Bhutan stamp overprinted for flood relief. This stamp was in very short supply as many were exported to earn foreign exchange

of 1931 in Belize. Graded as 3 on the 5-point 'Saffir-Simpson' Hurricane Wind Scale, it killed 2,500 people. A set of five stamps were overprinted for relief funds and paid double the denominational value (Fig 36).

In the Indian Ocean and parts of the Pacific Ocean, tropical storms are known as typhoons and cyclones respectively. Some of the most violent storms have occurred in Australia, such as Cyclone Tracey hitting Darwin in 1974, and proving to be the most severe storm in the country's history. Countries like China have advanced early warning systems in place to provide alerts about the onset of typhoons, these involve use of recognizable colour coding.

Ocean or sea storms are defined as having winds of 48 knots (55 mph) or greater. They are caused by several factors, but mostly by a combination of solar radiation and wind. Warm surface waters provide moisture that fuels a storm into a hurricane, generating waves as high as 18 metres (60 feet). Over the years, stormy waters have been the subject of many paintings, including by famous artists (Fig 37).

Whilst ships in stormy waters are in danger of sinking or running aground, the network of coast guards, lighthouses and lifeboat stations can provide 24/7 assistance. Vikings crossing the North Sea were particularly at risk as they were known to carry horses and other livestock as early as the 9th Century. According to the Acts of the Apostles, Paul was being taken to Rome for trial but the ship carrying him was caught in a violent storm. God told him that he'd be shipwrecked but that all lives would be spared. The vessel was indeed shipwrecked in Malta. Several Maltese stamps pick up this theme.

Floods are the second-most widespread natural disaster on the planet. They occur when heavy rain, hurricanes or rapid ice melt overwhelm rivers, bursting banks and sending water over flood plains. Roads can become impassable, as happened in Hanmer Springs, New Zealand in 1973, when the army was called in to handle mail services. In some areas 'markers' are permanently located in key points of population centers to indicate past flood depth.

Flood control is essential, particularly in densely populated countries like Holland. Construction of dikes, dams, and floodgates provides some defence. Meanwhile to protect the City of London in England, a huge barrier was erected in 1984 against flooding from the River Thames. To assist victims of floods, stamps of the countries affected have often been surcharged at an agreed amount, which is set aside and paid into disaster funds (Fig 38).

Drought is defined as a prolonged period of abnormally low rainfall, leading to a shortage of water for different uses - such as for sanitation, drinking, agriculture, and industry. The absence of water, exacerbated by rises in temperature and heatwaves in some parts of the world, creates insect infestation, crop failure, food shortages and famine. From drought, the term desertification has emerged, which means the process by which drylands become even drier than historically experienced and more desert-like. Desertification can also be accelerated by deforestation, climate change and inappropriate use of land. There is an emerging selection of philatelic material on the subject.

Whilst the weather/meteorological theme is uncommon amongst topical philatelists, I'm not alone in my endeavours and the most famous collector of all is arguably Raino Heino from Finland, who was an international best in class and gold medal winner. He made a major contribution to a book, 'Weather Gods to Modern Meteorology' which was published by the United Nations and serves as an excellent basis for anyone interested in taking up the subject.

In conclusion it's fair to say (no pun intended) that weather features are an everyday occurrence and something that we are accustomed to from birth to death. They provide talking points and touch many peoples' lives in many ways. There is nothing better than a summer holiday filled with sunshine, or conversely a gardener's frustration from a dry garden that needs some rain to ensure an abundance of flowers or vegetables. Equally, weather can be cruel - devastating the lives of many people - where homes, livelihoods and health and wellbeing can be lost or impaired. Nevertheless, weather features are fascinating and provide an excellent vehicle for a philatelic journey which is varied and comprehensive. And finally, in the words of Marcel Proust, the French novelist: 'A change in the weather is sufficient to recreate the world and ourselves'! 📖

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# LOTUS: FROM THE ANCIENT TO THE MODERN WORLD

*Briti Deb*

The lotus, a flower revered across cultures for millennia, has always symbolized a deep connection between spirituality, nature and human creativity. From ancient scriptures to modern scientific studies, the lotus has been both a subject of profound symbolism and a focal point for discovery. Its beauty and resilience have inspired a wealth of knowledge, helping bridge ancient wisdom with contemporary advancements. This article explores the lotus's symbolic role through the ages, its relevance in modern science, and its lasting cultural significance.

## 1. Symbolism

The lotus has long held a significant place in Hindu symbolism. The Sanskrit symbol "Om" (Fig 1) is often depicted as emerging from or resting upon a lotus flower. This connection symbolizes the purity of the lotus and the enlightenment that Om represents. Just as the lotus rises from the muddy waters to bloom, it signifies spiritual growth, emerging from the material world to reach higher consciousness. Om, on the other hand, embodies the essence of the universe and the soul's journey toward enlightenment.

In Buddhist traditions, the lotus is a central symbol, especially in the Lotus Sutra (Fig 2). The unfolding of the lotus petals is seen as a metaphor for the gradual revelation of profound truths, leading to enlightenment, compassion, and the understanding of the nature of reality.

## 2. Sacred Chants and Meditation

One of the most well-known mantras associated with the lotus is the Sanskrit phrase Om Mani Padme Hum, which translates to "The jewel is in the lotus" (postcard Fig 3). This Tibetan Buddhist mantra guides practitioners toward wisdom, compassion, and spiritual awakening. Chanting the mantra while meditating on a mandala aid in concentration and mindfulness, invoking the lotus's qualities of purity and enlightenment.

## 3. Geometric Patterns

The Sri Yantra, also known as the Circle or Wheel of Force or The Instrument (Fig 4) is another geometric symbol rooted in Tantric philosophy. The intricate arrangement of squares, triangles, and circles is said to represent the cosmos, reflecting the lotus's role in harmonizing spiritual vibrations and enhancing meditative power.

The Flower of Life, a sacred symbol that can be found in the temple of Osiris in Abydos, Egypt (Fig 5) is a sacred geometric pattern of overlapping circles that symbolizes spiritual interconnectedness. While it may not directly resemble the lotus, it shares a similar spiritual symbolism, appearing across various ancient cultures such as Egyptian, Assyrian, and Indian civilizations. Its presence in these diverse cultures highlights the universal significance of geometric shapes in conveying spiritual truths.

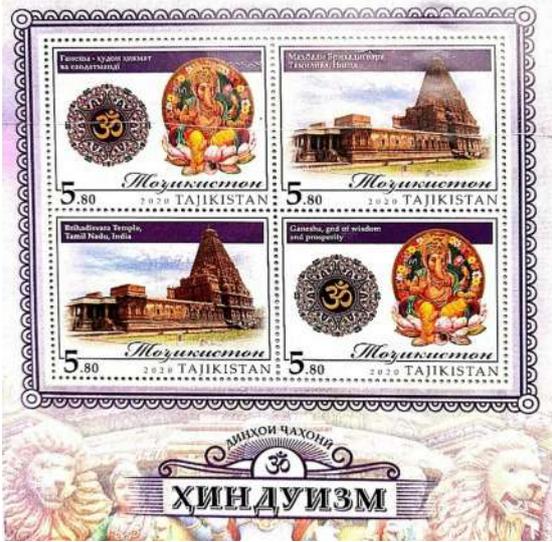


Fig 1: Sanskrit symbol Om



Fig 2: Lotus Sutra



Fig 3: "The jewel in the lotus"

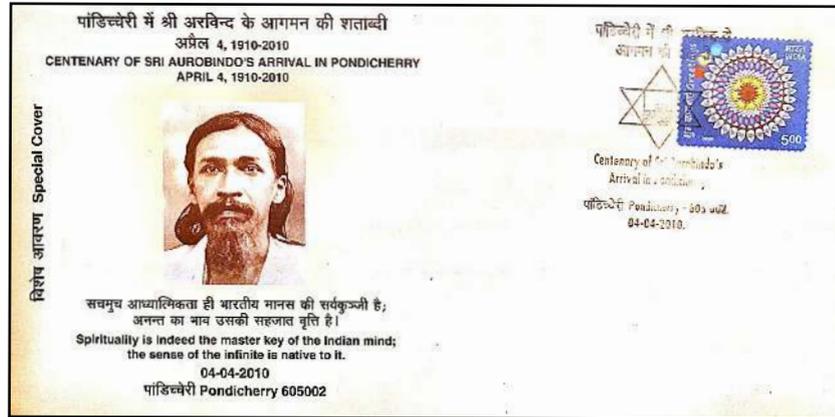


Fig 4: Circle of Force



Fig 5: Flower of Life



Fig 6: Karnak Temple complex, Egypt

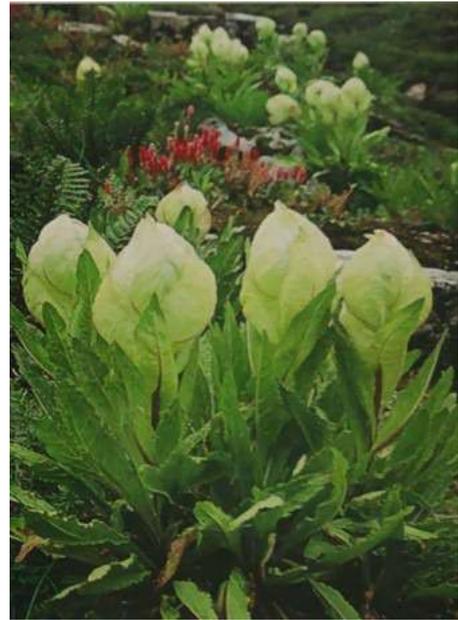


Fig 7: Brahma Kamal

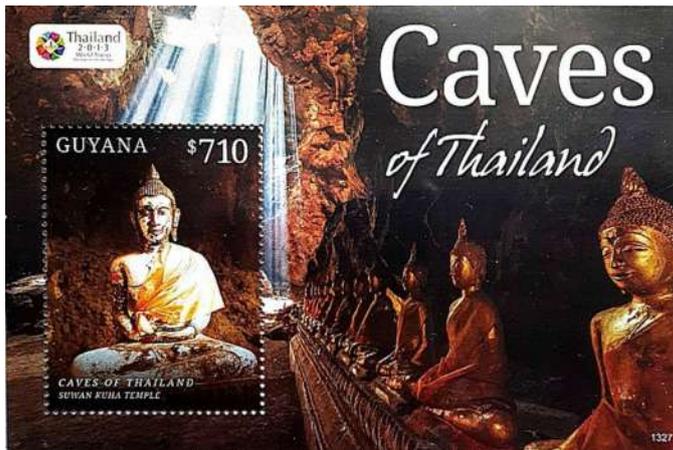


Fig 8: Lotus position



Fig 10: Vesica Piscis

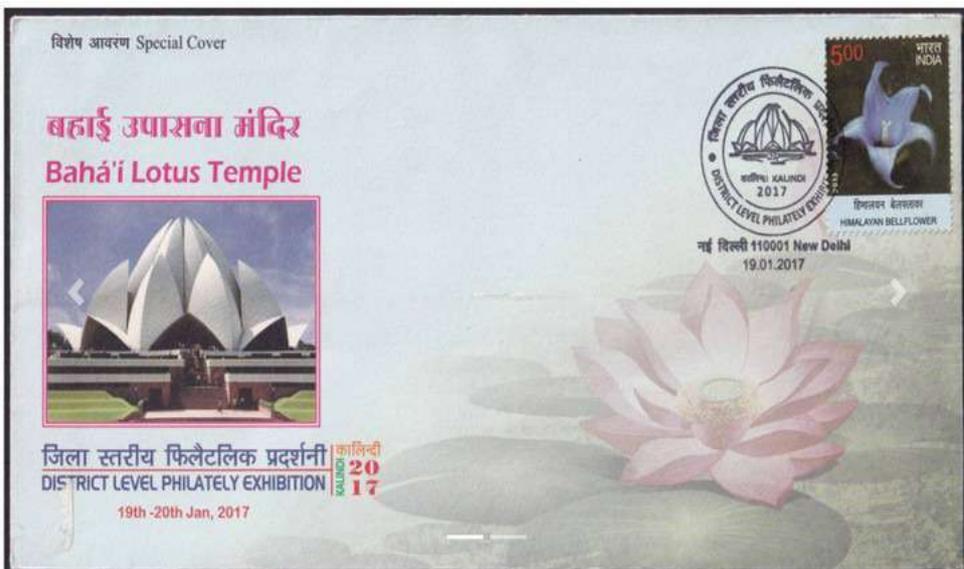


Fig 9: Lotus Temple, Delhi

#### **4. Architecture and Sacred Spaces**

The Karnak Temple Complex in Egypt (postcard Fig 6) dedicated to the god Amun-Ra, features designs inspired by the lotus, papyrus, and palm plants. These motifs are linked to the concept of “zep tepi” or “the first time,” symbolizing the creation of the world. The use of the lotus in such grand structures reflects its importance in ancient Egyptian religious thought and its embodiment of purity, rebirth, and the cosmos.

#### **5. Across Faiths**

The Brahma Kamal, also known as the “King of Himalayan Flowers” (postcard Fig 7) holds reverence in Hinduism, Buddhism, and other Eastern spiritual traditions. This mythical flower is associated with Lord Brahma, the creator deity, symbolizing divine creation and purity.

In the Sanatan practice of yoga, the padmasana (lotus position) (Fig 8) is a meditation pose where one sits cross-legged with feet on the thighs. This posture is believed to aid in maintaining a straight back, which supports energy flow along the spine, facilitating a connection to higher consciousness.

In Islam, the Lotus Temple in Delhi (Fig 9) stands as a testament to the global appeal of the lotus symbol. Its architecture, designed to resemble a fully bloomed lotus, symbolizes unity and inclusivity. The temple’s construction, focusing on environmental sustainability and energy efficiency, also mirrors the lotus's harmonious relationship with nature.

In Christianity, the Vesica Piscis shape (Fig 10) formed by the intersection of two circles, appears in art, architecture, and Christian symbolism. This sacred geometric symbol, often associated with the Christian fish symbol, can also be found in representations of the Virgin Mary and other religious imagery. The Vesica Piscis shares a connection with other cultural symbols like the Right Eye of Horus and the Egyptian Ankh, showing the cross-cultural power of geometric forms and symbolism.

The lotus is sometimes used to symbolize the presence of Tirthankaras (spiritual teachers and enlightened beings in Jainism). The Tirthankaras are often depicted sitting or standing on a lotus pedestal, representing their transcendence over worldly attachments. The lotus can also represent the Jain teachings of non-violence (ahimsa), truth (satya), and other ethical principles that guide practitioners toward spiritual freedom (postal presentation pack Fig 11).

#### **6. Ancient Egyptian Folklore**

In ancient Egyptian culture, the lotus was deeply intertwined with myths and religious beliefs. Gods like Nefertem, associated with beauty and healing, are often depicted holding a lotus flower. It is believed that the blue lotus (*Nymphaea caerulea*) (Fig 12) was considered a symbol of rebirth and renewal. It appeared frequently in Egyptian art, hieroglyphs, and jewelry, signifying purity and divine creation.

#### **7. Lotus in Modern Science: Pollination and Thermoregulation**

The lotus’s unique characteristics extend into the realm of modern science. This thermogenic plant can generate heat, maintaining a higher temperature than its surrounding environment. This property helps attract pollinators like beetles, particularly in cooler climates (Fig 13). The lotus’s ability to create a favorable environment for pollination is one of the many fascinating aspects of its biology.

The lotus also adheres to the golden ratio in its petal arrangement, a phenomenon known as phyllotaxis. This natural occurrence optimizes the packing of petals, maximizing

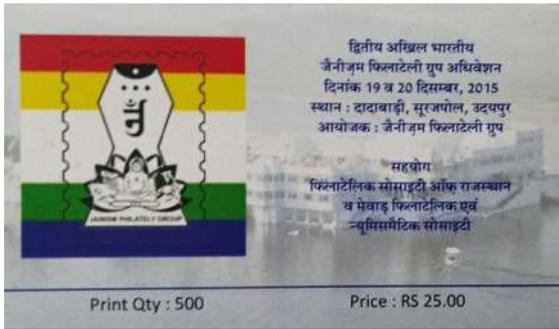


Fig 11: Ethical principles

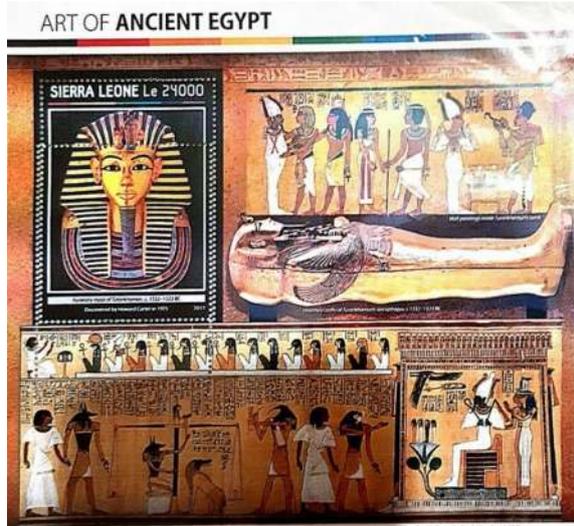


Fig 12: Blue lotus



Fig 13: Pollinators

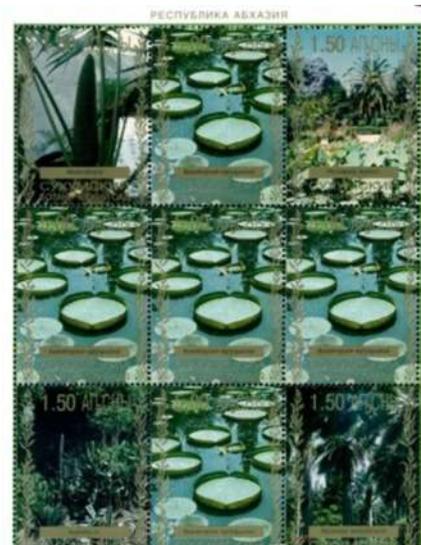


Fig 14: Water repellent



Fig 15: Fibonacci sequence



Fig 16: Pine cone

sunlight exposure and airflow, and ensuring reproductive success by aiding in pollen and seed dispersion [5]

The lotus's natural properties have inspired innovations in biomimetic technology. The lotus effect, wherein the plant's hydrophobic leaves repel water and trap air, has inspired the development of water-repellent surfaces for a variety of applications, including self-cleaning materials and anti-icing technology (Fig 14).

In medicine, the lotus has also shown promise in areas like improving blood circulation, enhancing mental alertness, and slowing the aging process. Its seeds have long been used in traditional medicine, and new studies have begun to explore its potential in modern anti-aging research [7]. Additionally, lotus seeds have been found to germinate even after centuries, opening up fascinating possibilities for longevity studies [8].

### 9. Mathematical Harmony in Nature

The Fibonacci Sequence and Golden Ratio in lotus flowers have also been researched [9] to [13] (Fig 15). The lotus flower's natural arrangement often follows the Fibonacci sequence, with its petals arranged in numbers that reflect Fibonacci numbers such as 3, 5, 8, or 13. This phenomenon connects the lotus to fundamental mathematical patterns and natural symmetry.

Moreover, the Golden Ratio, frequently found in the proportions of the lotus flower, is deeply connected to universal mathematical principles. This ratio, reflected in various natural structures, plays a key role in the aesthetic beauty of the lotus, enhancing its visual and functional harmony.

The Fibonacci sequence and the Golden Ratio are mathematical principles that govern various natural patterns. These principles are evident in the spiral arrangement of scales in a pine cone (Fig 16), which typically follows the Fibonacci sequence (3, 5, 8, 13, etc.). Similarly, the Fibonacci sequence and Golden Ratio are also found in the arrangement of petals in a lotus flower, as well as in the seed patterns of pine cones, sunflower heads and pineapples. These natural occurrences reflect the underlying mathematical structure that shapes many biological forms. 📖



*Sao Tome et Principe 2015. The Hindi Goddess Durga holding a lotus*

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# THE LIMERICK

*Roger West from Avion Stamps*

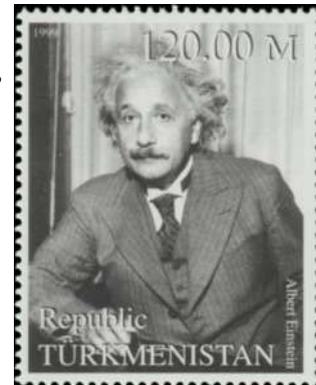
## SCIENCE

It filled Galileo with mirth  
To watch his two rocks fall to earth  
He gladly proclaimed  
'Their rates are the same  
And quite independent of girth'.

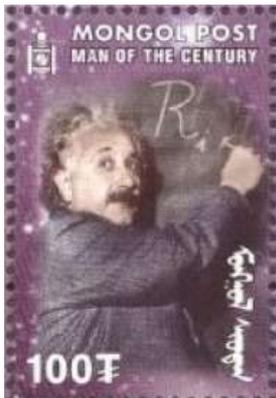


Then Newton announced in due course  
His own law of gravity's force  
'It goes, I declare  
As the inverted square  
Of the distance from object to source'.

Einstein, the frizzy-haired  
Claimed 'E equals MC squared'  
Thus mass decreases  
As activity ceases?  
Not my mass, my ass declared!



By Michael R. Burch



But remarkably, Einstein's equation  
Succeeds to describe gravitation  
As space-time that's curved  
And it's this that will serve  
As the planets' unique motivation.

Yet the end of the story's not written  
By a new way of thinking we're smitten  
We twist and we turn  
Attempting to learn  
The Superstring Theory of Witten



## TRANSPORT

I looked at a Ford Karmen Ghia  
 Then checked out the cars from Korea  
 Well built and quite nice  
 And a quarter the price  
 I ended up buying a Kia

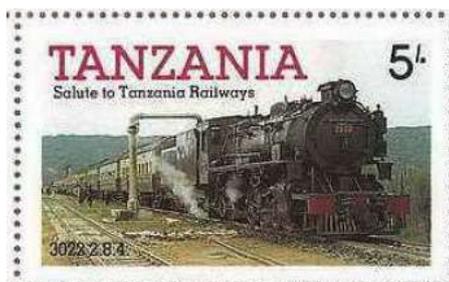


Two brothers named Wong couldn't quite  
 Pull off their first aeroplane flight  
 When their rig crashed and burned  
 They finally learned  
 Two Wongs could never make a Wright

There was a man from Dealing  
 Who caught the bus for Ealing  
 It said on the door  
 Don't spit on the floor  
 So he jumped up and spat on the ceiling



I buried my foot to the floor  
 My Mustang took off with a roar  
 The corner was tight  
 My speed out of sight  
 The funeral's tomorrow, at four!



A traveller once to his sorrow  
 Requested a ticket to Morrow  
 Said the railman "It's plain  
 That there isn't a train  
 To Morrow today, but tomorrow'

**Minutes of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2025 at Grange Leisure & Community Centre, Stratton St. Margaret, Swindon SN3 4JY, at 11.30.**

**Present:- 12 members**

**The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting**

**1 Apologies** were received from Jean Alexander, Mike Blackman, Sven Buckingham, Gillian Buckingham, John Davies, John Hayward, Lloyd Hogg, David Taylor, Andrew Millington.

**2 Minutes of the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual General Meeting, as published in September Themescene 2024** were agreed as a correct record.

**3 Matters arising**  
There were no matters arising

**4 Chairman's report**

I would like to start by thanking all the committee for all their work over the past 12 months. Without their tireless efforts the BTA would not exist. I would rather not mention each by name for fear of missing one; however, every member of the committee has put in a lot of their own time and effort into making the BTA a successful organisation. I thank you all for this commitment.

Having said that I will not mention any of the committee by name I would like to mention Lesley Marley. She has been a lifelong member of the BTA and has been a member of the committee for some years. She has now retired from the committee, and I would like to thank her for all her thoughts, comments and suggestions over the years.

During 2024 we continued with our successful zoom meetings which continue to attract 20 to 30 people every time. Diverse topics such as Supermarket Philately, Alphonse Mucha and the Eiffel Tower were covered and enjoyed by all.

Our quarterly Themescene magazine continues to build on its strength and contains much useful material and information (and yes, the editor would love to have your article).

We again had our one-frame competition at Ardingly although we could have done with a few more entries. I thank all those who submitted entries.

2024 also saw another successful Oxford weekend with just under 40 delegates.

In March 2024 we celebrated our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a BTA display at the Royal Philatelic Society London on the theme of *showcasing the world of pictorial collecting*. Fifteen displays covering 54 frames showing the world what the BTA members collect. With over 90 visitors with lots of questions the event was declared a great success.

I started by thanking the committee for all their work but I would like to finish by thanking you, the membership of the BTA, for your continued support and I wish you all well for the next year.

**5 Treasurer's Report**

**i) Result for 2024**

The accounts attached show an overall deficit for the year of £721.

After allowing for the "Exceptional" cost of the booklet for the Royal display the deficit on regular activities was £319

**ii) The weekend produced a surplus (Profit) of £443**

NB. only £223 shows in the accounts because £220 was already in the reserve, being deposits paid the previous year. This has been transferred to the Weekend Reserve.

- iii) **Income**  
Subscription income was lower by about £600 – offset by about £100 from higher interest rates.  
Advertising income continued at the existing level.
- Iv) **Expenditure**  
No significant changes to our regular operating costs.
- Forecast for 2025**
- v) What would have been a deficit because of the cost of the meetings at Europhilex and STAMPEX and reduced income from subscriptions and advertising will be offset by the kind donation received on the winding up of The Guild of St. Gabriel. Our thanks to them.  
General outlook - with reducing subscription income and our existing **regular** operations, it seems likely we will be operating at a deficit of several hundred pounds each year.  
Given our reserves that could be sustained for some time.
- Vi) **Subscriptions**  
A small increase in subscription might result in a few not renewing and so make little difference and I do not propose an increase.  
It was proposed by Wayne Cox and seconded by Jon Matthias the treasurer's report be accepted. Agreed unanimously.
- 6. **Election of Officers**  
No new nominations had been received. It was proposed by Pauline Boddey and seconded by Malcolm Gascoyne that the Officers be re-elected 'en bloc'. Agreed unanimously.
- 7. **Election of Committee Members**  
Member Lloyd Hogg had offered to go onto the committee as a member without portfolio.  
Lesley Marley FIP Representative had offered her resignation from the committee, which had been, sadly, accepted.  
All other members of the committee had agreed to stand again, and it was agreed they should be re-elected 'en bloc'. Jon Matthias agreed to take on the role of Publicity Officer.
- 8. **Ratification of the appointment of Examiner**  
It was proposed by Malcolm Gascoyne and seconded by Peter Wood that Brian Turner be re-appointed as Examiner. Agreed unanimously.
- 9. **Any Other Business**
  - i) BTA Weekend 2026 – Anne Stammers reminded everyone this would be held at Oxford the Weekend of April 17th – 19th 2026
  - ii) Gerald Lovell gave a vote of thanks, and appreciation, for all the work the committee had done over the last 12 months for the BTA members.
  - iii) Peter Wood thanked Andrew for organizing and the Judges for their work with the BTA Competitions, and especially for encouraging the younger ones to enter. The next one-page competition would be held in 2027. Two members have now moved on to 'bigger' exhibitions.
  - iv) There being no other relevant business the meeting closed at 11.56 a.m.

The meeting was followed by a display on 'Daffodils' by Barry Stagg'

# DAFFODILS

*Report of a display by Barry Stagg to the BTA AGM 14 June 2025*

Many thematic collectors are drawn to their subject because of interests elsewhere, and Barry is no exception. He explained that not only does he grow and show daffodils, with a garden and allotment to cultivate, he also judges them at competitions. No wonder he was drawn into telling their story.

The display was in two parts, firstly postcards and then his ‘collection’ of anything daffodil-themed. It seems there are around 16,000 to 20,000 daffodil cultivars bred today, making it a huge business, with more daffodils bought in the UK than anywhere else in the world. And they’ve been around a long time, originating as wild flowers in the Atlas Mountains. They were first imported into this country in the Iron age, or perhaps even the Bronze Age, following trade routes from what is now Spain to Wales. To this day daffodils flower in Roman forts.

The real craze for breeding daffodils began in mid-Victorian times when there was a growing understanding of heredity and genetics. Vicars were examples of laymen with some leisure time who experimented with hybridisation, creating new varieties of daffodil. It’s why churchyards and vicarages often have lovely displays of daffs come springtime. The Rev. William Herbert is known as the first amateur plant hybridiser, and between 1882 and 1923 the Rev. George Engleheart registered 720 new daffodil varieties.



*From cylinder 1*

Some quick facts: the terms ‘daffodil’ and ‘narcissus’ both mean the same thing; there are thirteen different divisions of daffodils; a daffodil must have six petals; there are only six colours of daffodil: red, yellow, orange, green, pink and white. And the first appearance of a daffodil on a GB stamp was the George VI definitives with the frames designed by Eric Gill, where they appear in the bottom left corner as the national flower of Wales (see left).

They might be pretty, but they can be dangerous! They will make humans sick, and so until mid-Victorian times they were used medicinally as an emetic. Worse, they can be fatally poisonous to equines - horses, donkeys and mules. It’s why you never see them in farmers’ fields, they’ve all been ripped out. And don’t use them in mixed bunches if you are into flower arrangement, their sap will kill other cut flowers, being as Barry put it “the thugs of the vase”.

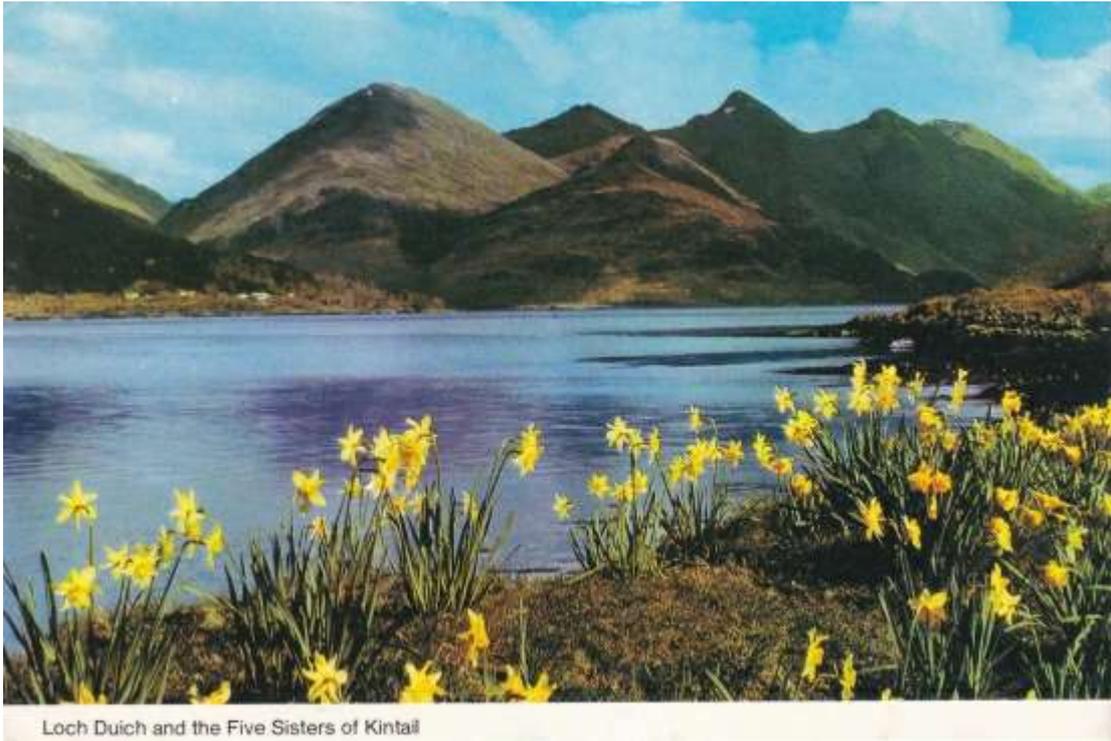
Out of all the varieties of daffodil, Barry’s personal favourite is Division 4, which have double petals and/or a double corona. This fascinating display, on a subject which by its nature has to be attractive on the page, ended with an impossibility: an early twentieth century postcard showing an idyllic cottage garden with a profusion of flowering plants including daffodils (spring flowering of course), but also sunflowers, which don’t bloom until August or later. 📖



*Division 4 daffodil with one or more flowers to a stem with a doubling of the petal segments, or corona, or both*



*Estonia booklet 2003 showing division 9, the Poeticus daffodil*



Loch Duich and the Five Sisters of Kintail

*Daffodils can be found in the far north of Scotland*



*But they can't be found flowering at the same time as sunflowers*

# A COMMENTARY ON THE CHAIRMAN'S PAGE (see page 74 )

*Barry Stagg*

I hope by the time you read this article that you have read my Chairman's page. If not, may I suggest you do so now as this page may not make much sense otherwise. When you did read my Chairman's page did you notice anything different? Perhaps a little less personal than usual? In fact every word was written by Artificial Intelligence. As AI is very much a current topic I thought I would give it a go and see what happens. I found the result interesting, worrying and a little boring!

The most important thing to remember with AI is that it searches the internet for information and picks the items it thinks fits the question that you have asked (I used Google's Gemini AI for most of my research). If there is nothing out there on the internet it cannot give you an answer. If the information is wrong, your answer is wrong. If the question is biased or just plain wrong the answer will be incorrect or at least only partially true. Also, different AI machines will give you a slightly different answer. And, if you ask the same question twice, separated by a few weeks, you will get a slightly different answer. I found it quite interesting if not fascinating. I am sure you, like me, can imagine such a tool in the hands of the unscrupulous person, bending stories to their will.

So what has this to do with thematic collecting? To be honest it was a little worrying. I asked AI the question "What is the future of thematic collecting?". The answer talks about social media groups, interactive exhibits and multimedia presentations. I can already hear the footsteps of most of our membership running for the hills! One answer I got from AI clearly confused thematic collecting with topical collecting (the thematic collector has philatelic items that support the theme e.g. a thematic collection on owls will also show material on habitat or food for instance, whereas topical collectors will have their theme e.g. an owl, on every philatelic item). Personally, I am not worried about what or how collectors collect, but the point is that somewhere out there on the internet, there is at least one article which is wrong. And I therefore ask myself what else is wrong?

The other factor I found with the AI answers is that they are rather boring. Nothing personal, no humour, all very factual. And perhaps that is their weakness. Perhaps other AI software is better at being personal. The one I used is free. Perhaps if I had paid for the AI I might have got a better response. The exercise has thrown up some interesting thoughts on how the world might see the BTA and do we want to change that view in any way. Your thoughts on the topic would be most welcome.

Let me finish by posing the question *What is the future of the British Thematic Association?* And this is the AI answer. Enjoy!

## A New Era for Thematic Philately

The British Thematic Association stands at an exciting crossroads, poised to embrace a vibrant future. With the rise of digital platforms, the association can engage new audiences and promote thematic philately more widely. Innovative virtual exhibitions, online resources, and educational outreach will attract younger collectors and ensure the hobby's relevance. Collaborations with schools and international groups promise to broaden horizons. By fostering inclusivity and adapting to technological advances, the British

Thematic Association is set to flourish - preserving traditions while evolving to meet the needs of a dynamic and diverse membership in the decades ahead. 📖

If you have any comments on this, or can bring expert opinion to the question of AI, please email me at [themescene@britishthematic.org.uk](mailto:themescene@britishthematic.org.uk) for publication in a future issue of *Themescene*. The article deserves some debate - *Editor*

## BTA NEWS

### AWARD OF LIFE MEMBERSHIP

The BTA is delighted to announce that Lesley Marley FRPSL has accepted Life Membership of the BTA, awarded for her many contributions to philately and to our



Association. Lesley has been a member of the BTA for nearly 30 years, serving on the Committee as Vice-Chairperson from 2005-2006, Chairperson from 2007-2008, and more recently as F.I.P. Representative. In 2007 she was part of a small sub-committee which delivered the international thematic exhibition Eurothema, staged by the BTA in London. She also helped set up the West of England Thematic Society. In the 1990s she started putting together her thematic exhibit "The Whale's Tale", first shown internationally in 2006, and which achieved the highest accolade of a Large Gold at New York in 2016. In all that time she helped and encouraged many other thematic collectors to work, aspire and achieve success themselves.

### MEMBERS' MEETING AT STAMPDEX 25TH OCTOBER

Our next in-person meeting will be held at Stampdex on 25th October at 12.30. The meeting will start with guest speaker Colin Evans displaying *Railway Art*.

Although Colin isn't an artist, he does have a great interest in railways, and was introduced to the world of railway art through a friend seven years ago, and decided to start a collection. He attends the Guild of Railway Artist Exhibition at the Seven Valley Railway every year. The collection will include stamps, Cinderella's, postcards, etc, a display which is sure to bring back memories for some.

Following this the floor is open to members, displays. Please bring along up to 12 sheets on any subject of your choice.

Stampdex will be held as usual at the Business Design Centre, Islington. Nearest tube station The Angel.

### NEW MEMBERS

We are delighted to welcome three new members: Jade Knox of Sheffield, Geoff Leece of Clevedon, and Jennifer Miller of South Carolina.

### BTA RESIDENTIAL WEEKEND 2026

Full details and booking form are on pages 106 to 108

# BTA NEWS: ONE PAGE VIRTUAL COMPETITION UPDATE

We published the results of the 2025 competition in the previous issue of *Themescene* (page 52). That report highlighted the high number of Youth entrants, and the fact that stamp clubs from one UK and two Sri Lankan schools sent in multiple entries. We were absolutely delighted to get this follow-up from one of the pupils who drew our attention to coverage of the competition in the daily newspaper *Ceylon Today*. The next one-page competition will be in 2027.



SUNDAY *Teen* 05  
29 JUNE 2025




## DEVANS AND DEVIANS WINNING STAMP COMPETITIONS

*Maliyadeva and Maliyadeva Balika students excel in prestigious international stamp competition*

**BY M. P. THENURI NAVINMA KEERTHISENA**

Kurunegala, Students from both Maliyadeva Balika College and Maliyadeva College have brought pride to their schools and the nation by achieving remarkable success in the 'One-Page Virtual Competition 2025', organised by the British Thematic Association (BTA), United Kingdom.

This globally recognised event encourages young philatelists to present creative and thematic one-page stamp exhibits, promoting artistic expression and storytelling through the medium of philately. Participants are evaluated based on their originality, presentation, and the depth of their theme.

**Outstanding Achievements**

**Maliyadeva Balika College:**

- R. S. Udakumbura – Winner in the Under 12 category
- W. M. O. P. Doratiyawa – Emerald Award
- M. P. Thenuri Navinma Keerthisena – Emerald Award

**Maliyadeva College:**

- W. M. S. A. B. Doratiyawa – Ruby Award
- S. R. Udakumbura – Emerald Award
- C. D. Udakumbura – Emerald Award
- M.P. Bihandu Sandil Keerthisena – Emerald Award

The creative efforts and international participation of the Maliyadeva College participants are highly commendable. All students demonstrated exceptional dedication, innovation, and a keen interest in thematic philately, marking a proud moment for both schools and the Kurunegala region.

A thank-you note was also published in the BTA's official magazine, specifically acknowledging the outstanding performance and creativity of the students from Maliyadeva College.



The British Thematic Association (BTA) is a respected national organisation in the UK that supports collectors and exhibitors in the field of thematic philately. This practice involves collecting stamps, postcards, and related materials based on specific themes—such as nature, technology, culture, or history, encouraging both artistic and educational exploration.

This international victory was the result of a collective effort across multiple levels of support. At the school level, sincere appreciation goes to the Principal of Maliyadeva College, Mr. W. M. C. K. Mahamithawa, and the Teacher-in-Charge of the Stamps Club, Mrs. Dushmantha Hewakodikara, whose guidance and encouragement were instrumental. Equal gratitude is extended to the Principal of Maliyadeva Balika Vidyalaya, Mrs. Niroda Abeywickrama, and the Teacher-in-Charge of their Stamps Club, Mrs R.M.C.M. Rajaguru. Without their commitment, this success would not have been possible at the school level.

Heartfelt thanks go to Mr. Nandana Rodrigo and Mr. Kumara Gunarathna of the Ethugalpura Philatelic Club, whose continuous guidance, mentorship, and encouragement played a central role in nurturing these young philatelists and helping them reach international standards.

At the national level, deep appreciation is owed to Mr. Channa Munasinghe of the Sri Lanka Philatelic Bureau, whose advice, expertise, and support elevated this achievement from a regional success to national recognition.

The achievements of these young philatelists highlight the importance of nurturing creativity and global engagement among students. We extend our warmest congratulations to all participants and wish them continued success in their future endeavours.

# ZOOMING ALONG

*Wendy Buckle*

**George Henshilwood** *The William Tell Stamps of Switzerland* 27 May

I suspect the subtitle of this talk should have been “we are all thematic collectors at heart” since this talk was based around George’s serious philatelic study of these stamps, spun into a much wider look at aspects of philately and (spoiler alert, he never actually existed) the enduring myth of Switzerland’s hero.

So let’s get the myth out of the way first. William Tell, a skilled marksman, refused to bow to a hat placed on a pole by the tyrannical Austrian governor, Albrecht Gessler, in Altdorf, capital of the Swiss Canton Of Uri. As punishment, Tell was ordered to shoot an apple off his son's head with his crossbow. Set in the early 14th century, Tell became a hero who symbolized the struggle for political and individual freedom. George was first attracted to the story through the Rossini opera and *The Adventures of William Tell*, a 1958 UK television series. The story is clearly a potent one, since the opera was censored when first performed because it glorified a revolutionary figure fighting authority.

Tell has featured in four stamp designs, issued in 1907 (the ‘Tell Boy’ stamps, showing the son), in 1911 (a modified version of the design), in 1914 (showing head and shoulders of William), and a single design in 1941 as part of a definitive set (showing the full figure). All these issues were shown in detail, including design and colour varieties. Then George went on the main part of the talk, an A - Z of Tell-related items, from hotel Advertising cards through to Paare mit Zwischenstag, or gutter pairs. Yes, on occasion George had to be creative in his choice of subject, but every letter was used. (If you are wondering, Q was for sQuare, showing postcards of town squares). Other initials were rather more obvious. H showed an item of postal stationery with Tell Boy indicia, the picture side showing Mother Helvetia protecting her children; J showed some Pro Juventute stamps, Lake Lucerne had a picture of the William Tell Chapel, where Tell escaped his captors (or so ‘tis said). Through this alphabetic journey we were treated to some fine philatelic items, including express letters, pioneer flights, illegal use of stamps on cover (by a particularly enterprising stamp dealer), railway TPOs and stamp varieties. We all came away impressed by the depth of George’s philatelic knowledge, and (at least in my case) an ear-worm of the William Tell Overture.

**Wendy Buckle** *A history of writing materials: animal, vegetable and mineral* 20 June

Paper has been around for about 2,000 years, but writing systems have been used for nearly 5,000 years, and in that time many different materials have been used. The Egyptians used stone, carving inscriptions into obelisks and painting the walls of tombs. At much the same time civilizations in Mesopotamia (modern Iraq) were using clay: the marks were impressed into wet clay with a stylus, then the clay was left to dry in the sun. While examples of clay and stone have survived to the modern day, the same is not true for wood, so far fewer artifacts survive, but as a material it has been used for around 3,000 years in many parts of the world. Wooden tablets were discovered at the Roman Vindolanda Fort at Hadrian’s Wall, giving us an insight into daily life there. As well as wood, other parts of the tree have been used: both birchbark and cork, the bark of the cork oak tree, have been used; the stems of the papyrus plant was used to make papyrus; and in the Far East palm leaves were

cleaned, polished and strung together. Then there were animal products, including turtle shells used by the ancient Chinese for divination. Animal skins could be turned into leather, or for a better quality writing material, parchment and vellum.

Stamps, covers and commemorative postmarks were used to illustrate all of these; and to expand examples of writing on unusual materials Wendy showed a variety of novelty postcards made during the height of postcard collecting in the early twentieth century. These included cards made of aluminium, wood, bark, peat, leather, celluloid, and perhaps most unusually, a leaf, posted from Stewart Island, New Zealand. It seems there was no end to the ingenuity of postcard manufacturers.

## NEWLY PUBLISHED ONLINE WORKS

These recently released searchable pdf e-books have been produced by Glenn H. Morgan and Graham M. Wilson. *Enquiries: glennmorgan1840@gmail.com*

Tinyurl.com download links appear below, enabling long links (aka destination URLs) to be shortened to one that's easier to share. They are case-sensitive.

### **The Handbook of Stamp Production** by Glenn H Morgan, 2025

This handbook celebrates 185 years of the postage stamp and is the culmination of decades of collecting and research into technical aspects of stamp production and dummy stamps. It promotes the collecting and dissemination of information about an important aspect of stamps, namely how they were made and the printers involved in their production.

Section 1: British Stamp Printers <https://tinyurl.com/5n6hvkwe> (1,508 pages, 965mb file size)

Section 2: Foreign Stamp Printers <https://tinyurl.com/3tuw5e85> (2,392 pages, 1.37gb file size)

Section 3: A Stamp is Made <https://tinyurl.com/bddtzcd2> (1,132 pages, 513mb file size)

Section 4: *Dummy Stamps* Newsletter <https://tinyurl.com/yc3f7b7e> (760 pages, 84mb file size)

### **Philately and the Letter Box** by Glenn H Morgan, 2025

<https://tinyurl.com/y46vkezu> (1,812 pages, 769mb file size)

This e-book covers most aspects of letter boxes in a worldwide philatelic context and promotes an important aspect of the postal system in what has become a popular thematic/topic, both with collectors and postal administrations.

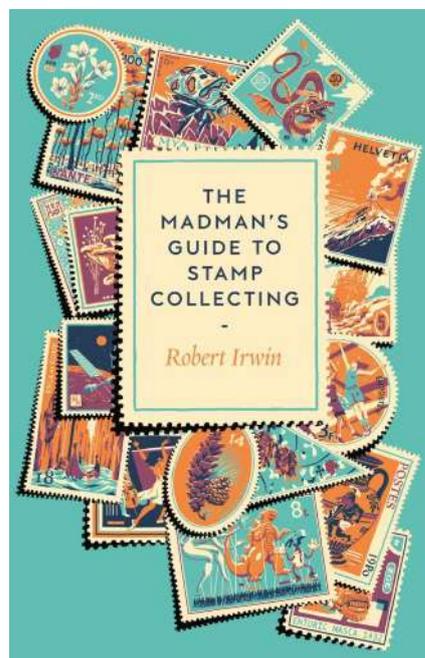
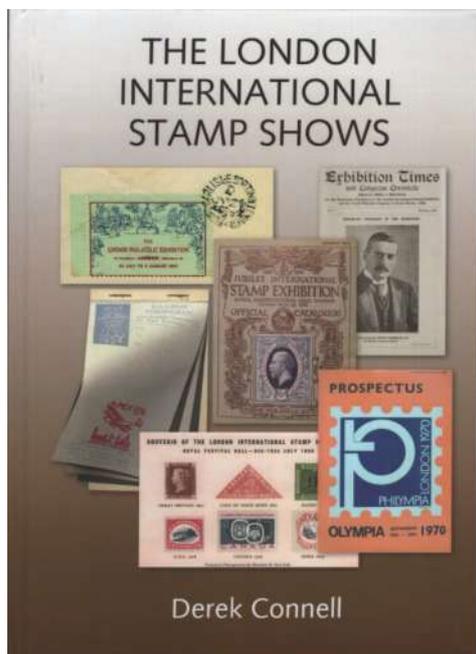
### **British Stamp Exhibitions, Philatelic Events and Anniversaries**

by Graham M Wilson, 2025

<https://tinyurl.com/52w577de> (4,264 pages, 2.38gb file size in 10 downloadable sections)

*BSE1* to *BSE3* were published by Glenn Morgan alone. Graham Wilson then worked jointly with him by co-editing *BSE4*, while *BSE5* updates are solely the research of Graham. It will become the standard work on the subject for decades to come. At the last count it listed 2,311 philatelic events from 1862 to 2020, ran to 4,264 pages, and featured 20,722 images. The Great Britain Philatelic Society (GBPS) has generously offered to act as host for downloads of this new work.

# NEW BOOKS



## **LONDON INTERNATIONAL STAMP SHOWS**

BTA member Derek Connell has published a new book which was launched at EuroPhilEx. The 280 page *The London International Stamp Shows* covers the historical information, the background, and trials and tribulations of the various philatelic exhibitions held in London from 1890 to 2022, with no fewer than 680 illustrations. It is sponsored by Bill Barrell Ltd. and published by the Cinderella Stamp Club; purchase details are available from Club member David Gottesmann: [dgottesmann@netscape.net](mailto:dgottesmann@netscape.net)

## **THE MADMAN'S GUIDE TO STAMP COLLECTING**

Author and historian Robert Irwin wrote this book towards the end of his life. In it he makes clear from the start that this book is not aimed at the readership of philatelic publications: "I doubt the book will be of much interest to real-life stamp collectors", but at the same time he dangles spicy ideas before the reader: "The story of stamp collecting embraces murder, theft, strange erotic practices, conspiracy theories and various deep philosophies". What stamp collector would not want to read on?

The book consists largely of quotations from others on the subject of stamp collectors, and collecting in general. It will come as no surprise that we get a bad press: "a strange, silent, fish-like breed, of all ages" (George Orwell), but that's only one topic. The publisher's website sums this book up as a "mosaic of fiction, philosophy, sociology, biography and autobiography ... a wayward journey through the art of collecting, and [the author's] own intellectual passions". A fair summary of the book, but a word of warning: if you are a reader who likes to follow up specific ideas, or chase down the juicy bits such as those listed above, you will be disappointed: the book has no index, you will have to read it all the way through. It's an entertaining read though.

Pushkin Press. 2025. 237 pp. £16.99

# BTA ONE FRAME COMPETITIONS

@South of England Stamp & Postcard Fair, 11<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](https://www.sussexphilately.org.uk/2024_South_of_England_Stamp_Fair.php)

# BTA PROGRAMME 2025

19 September  
19.00 for 19.30

## **Zoom meeting**

Lloyd Hogg

*Talk like a pirate*

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**

At South of England Stamp Fair & Sussex Convention  
Ardingly Showground, RH17 6TL.

25 October  
12.30

## **BTA meeting at Stampex**

*Guest speaker: Colin Evans*

*Railway Art*

Although Colin isn't an artist, he does have a great interest in railways, and was introduced to the world of railway art through a friend seven years ago, and decided to start a collection. He attends the Guild of Railway Artist Exhibition at the Seven Valley Railway every year.

The collection will include stamps, Cinderella's, postcards, etc, a display which is sure to bring back memories for some.

Followed by Members' displays. Please bring along up to 16 sheets on any subject of your choice

Business Design Centre, London

11 November  
19.00 for 19.30

## **Zoom meeting**

Les Ashton-Smith

*Albert Einstein*

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!

# BTA WEEKEND AT OXFORD

## 17th - 19th APRIL 2026

Arrangements for our seventh residential weekend are in place.

### Hotel

We look forward to seeing you at our usual venue of voco Oxford Spires Hotel:

<https://oxfordspires.vocohotels.com/> The hotel has a gym, swimming pool, spa, sauna and steam room.

We have reserved a number of accessible rooms for guests with additional needs. These rooms feature lowered sinks, visual aids and grab rails, please note there is a small step to access the shower. Please indicate on the booking form if you require one of these rooms. Parking is free during the duration of your stay provided you register your car on arrival. The hotel's location is a pleasant stroll into Oxford, along the Thames towpath which runs behind the hotel.

### Programme

We are delighted to welcome three guest speakers:

Friday evening: Les Ashton-Smith, a thematic collector mainly interested in scientists, particular Leonardo da Vinci, who keeps going down collecting rabbit holes when he finds something philatelically interesting! He will present *Philatelic Firsts*, not the SG1's, but a fun journey though the first time different innovative materials, techniques, shapes, oddities and some really bizarre techniques were used on postage stamps. Smells, textures and right up to date with blockchain non fungible tokens.

Saturday: Katrin Raynor, a freelance astronomy writer and Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society and the Royal Geographical Society. She is also (as far as your Editor knows) the only BTA speaker to have an asteroid named after her. Katrin will give a talk on *Exploring Astronomy and Space Through Philately*.

Sunday: Ian Shapiro, a collector and dealer in royal and historical items, and consultant to Spink Auctioneers, London. He will be displaying *Royal Household Mail* showing a range of postal history related to the Royal Family, including selected ephemera and historical documents from Elizabeth I to Elizabeth II.

In addition there will be four sessions of members' displays (feel free to interpret the subjects as liberally as you like, with all types of material including postcards), and Paula Cant Stamps will be in attendance on the Saturday afternoon with a range of her stock.

### Still thinking about it?

If you have been to a previous Weekend you will know how enjoyable the event is. But don't take our word for it. Feedback from the 2024 event included:

"... excellent weekend of events, ably run and most interesting variety of speakers and collections"

"I met some great people in a very friendly atmosphere ... The programme was great and the food and venue excellent"

If you have any queries at all do please contact the Weekend Organiser Anne Stammers on [annies1@btopenworld.com](mailto:annies1@btopenworld.com)

# BTA FUN WITH PHILATELY WEEKEND

Friday 17th to Sunday 19th April 2026

## voco Oxford Spires Hotel

### PROGRAMME

#### Friday

p.m.

Arrival.

18.00

Welcome, with Pimms and soft drinks.

Members' displays (6 sheets, one minute).

19.30

Dinner; followed by invited display by Les Ashton-Smith:  
*Philatelic firsts.*

#### Saturday

09.00

Invited display by Katrin Raynor: *Exploring Astronomy and Space Through Philately*

Coffee.

11.00

Members' displays: 'By land, sea or air' (12 sheets).

13.00

Buffet lunch

Saturday afternoon

Paula Cant Stamps will be present with a selection of stock.

*Or:*

Free time for sightseeing.

16.00

Members displays: 'Latest Acquisitions' or 'Animal, vegetable or mineral' (12 sheets).

19.00

Pre-dinner drink. Plus raffle.

19.30

Dinner, followed by optional social gathering.

#### Sunday

09.00

Invited display by Ian Shapiro: *Royal Household Mail.*

Coffee.

11.00

Members displays: 'These are a few of my favourite things' (12 sheets).

Booking form is on the next page. At this stage we are only requesting £25 deposit. The full package covers two nights' dinner, bed and breakfast; pre-dinner drink both evenings; wine with dinner; lunch on the Saturday; teas, coffees and biscuits or pastries between the sessions.

Saturday day delegate covers lunch plus coffee break refreshments x 2.

Sunday day delegate covers coffee break refreshments x 1.

See the booking form for options of extra nights and specific meal options.

## BTA WEEKEND BOOKING FORM

I wish to book:

- |                          |                                     |   |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Rooms based on two people sharing   | £310 per head   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | With single room supplement         | £365 per head   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Extra dinner/bed/breakfast Thursday | £107.50 per head;<br>[plus single room supplement £27.50] |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Extra dinner/bed/breakfast Sunday   | £107.50 per head;<br>[plus single room supplement £27.50] |

Or:

- |                          |                       |                               |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Evening meal Friday   | £65.00 per head (inc. drinks) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day delegate Saturday | £43.00 per head               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Evening meal Saturday | £65.00 per head (inc. drinks) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day delegate Sunday   | £15.00 per head               |

### Deposit

£25.00 per person (non-refundable). Or: Day delegate rate per person

*Please tick as appropriate (BACS preferred due to bank charges on every cheque):*

- I have paid £..... by BACS. Sort code 40-03-29; account number 71157701. Please add your name and '2026 Weekend' in the 'Reference' box.
- I enclose a cheque for £..... made out to BRITISH THEMATIC ASSOCIATION

Please email Peter Wood and inform him when you have paid:  
peter.wood95@btinternet.com

### Your details

Name.....

Name of partner .....

Address.....

..... Post code .....

Telephone number (home) ..... Mobile.....

Email.....

Tick here if you require an Accessible room

*Rooms are limited so please send this form (or a copy) plus deposit, as soon as possible, to:*

Mrs. A. Stammers, 40 St. Helen's Way, Benson, Wallingford, Oxon, OX10 6SW  
*Please do NOT book directly with the hotel. [You will be asked when you book out to pay the hotel direct for any extra rooms booked on top of the full Weekend package, but the BTA will make the booking on your behalf].*



# BTA PROGRAMME 2026

- 09 January  
19.00 for 19.30
- Zoom meeting**  
Jean Wang  
*Covid-19 related philately. Part 1*  
Postage stamps, meter stamps with slogans, Cinderellas and private post stamps.
- 15 January  
19.00 for 19.30
- Zoom meeting**  
Sue Burn  
*Post War Civil Aviation*  
Examines what was the "new normal" for civil aviation as World War II ended. Focusing on BOAC, Qantas, TEAL and BCPA, it looks at the changes in the way airmail charges were calculated, the end of some censorship and the impact of continued conflict such as China on the airmails. For the first time airlines were able to show that you could fly round the world in either direction.
- 05 February  
19.00 for 19.30
- Zoom meeting**  
Yamil Kouri  
*The story of Boston 2026 preparation.*  
The biggest international stamp exhibition of 2026 will be held on 23rd to 30th May 2026. This will be an entertaining look at how we prepared for Boston 2026 - the challenges and thrills .
- 27 March  
19.00 for 19.30
- Zoom meeting**  
Jean Wang  
*Covid-19 related philately. Part 2*  
Machine cancels, pictorial postmarks, postal stationery, pandemic-related postal history.
- 17 - 19 April
- BTA Weekend at Oxford.**
- 13 June
- Annual General Meeting**  
To be held as part of Swinpex 2026  
The Grange Leisure and Community Centre, Stratton St. Margaret, Swindon, SN3 4JY  
*To be confirmed*
- 14 August  
19.00 for 19.30
- Zoom meeting**  
Chris King  
*Trouble with Tariffs*  
A postcard display suggesting that you should beware what you wish for. Joseph Chamberlain's 1903 tariff reform campaign challenged free trade, promoting imperial unity through protective tariffs. Fierce opposition warned of higher food costs and political division. The 1906 Liberal landslide ushered in reform, culminating in the 1911 Parliament Act. Chamberlain's efforts ultimately reshaped Britain's political landscape before World War I, but not as he intended.

# BTA PROGRAMME 2026

- 15 September  
19.00 for 19.30
- Zoom meeting**  
Christopher Dahle  
*The Universal Declaration of Human Rights: origins, development and ramifications.*  
Between 1989 and 1993, the UN Philatelic Administration released a series of stamps and labels in blocks of six for each of 30 Articles of the UDHR. The labels show the text of each Article in three languages. The intent is to showcase this series, plus some history and the consequences of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- 10 October  
10.00 - 16.00
- BTA One-Frame Competitions  
*At South of England Stamp Fair & Sussex Convention*  
Ardingly Showground, RH17 6TL.  
*To be confirmed*
- 16 October  
19.00 for 19.30
- Zoom meeting**  
Jean Wang  
*Blood: a modern medicine. Part 1*  
Examples of diverse philatelic material to include in a thematic collection about blood.
- 13 November  
19.00 for 19.30
- Zoom meeting**  
Jean Wang  
*Blood: a modern medicine. Part 2*  
Using postal aspects of philatelic material to tell a story in thematics.
- 04 December
- Zoom meeting**  
Lloyd Hogg  
*Blood: a From Pasture to Table and Beyond: a bovine story*  
A look at how cattle have been the greatest of companions to mankind over the centuries - providing labour for arduous tasks, transporting us, giving us spiritual fulfilment and above all producing food in abundance - from beef to milk and of course the beloved ice cream!

*Further dates to be confirmed.*