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THEMESCENE

Journal of the
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EDITORIAL

Wendy Buckle

My Editorial in the September issue is always concerned with Thematica and BTA activities, and this year is no different. Thematica was as successful as ever, but sadly we have subsequently learnt that it is under threat (p.104). I can quite understand the financial pressures of putting on a major fair and exhibition in London, but to lose it would not only rob the BTA of the obvious venue for its AGM, but would rob all of us collectors for whom Thematica is the only fair where we can guarantee a full day (or two) engaging with thematic dealers. I really do hope it can be saved, and supportive dealers, in consultation with the Friends of Thematica and the British Thematic Association, are doing their best to do so. As I write this piece they are engaged in inspecting possible premises with a view to mounting an annual event on the last weekend in June. While I am not in a position to confirm anything now, please keep an eye on our website for updated information.

I missed our AGM this year, but our President has supplied a very full report (p.106). The meeting heralded some changes in Committee membership: welcome aboard James Etherington, Ronald Hyams and Gerald Lovell, plus new Examiner Grahame Boutle. Our best wishes and support also go to Chairman Richard Wheeler and President John Hayward. Contact details are on the previous page; plus, please note, a change of address for myself (my email remains the same).

It has been a very active few weeks with a BTA meeting held at the Royal Philatelic Society of London; something I was sorry to miss (p.112).

It is with sadness that I have to include in this issue an obituary of Margaret Shaida, my predecessor as Editor of *Themescene* (p.95). Until I read the original from which this obituary is taken I had no idea of Margaret's background. She was indeed a remarkable person, whose modesty whenever I met her meant none of her deeds from the past were ever mentioned. Margaret did wonderful work building *Themescene* up, and she helped me enormously when I took over from her, very unsure of myself, my PC skills and with only a vague idea of what an Editor actually did. If I'd known what a professional writer I was taking over from I would probably never have volunteered! And of course she had an excellent thematic collection: "Forget Not the Ladies". Following her obituary is an article she wrote some time ago, not particularly thematic, but full of interesting stories about the postal history of Andorra (p.95).

I'm pleased to report on members' exhibiting internationally: page 115 has a complete list of BTA entrants for WIPA08 (there will be a full report in the next issue); and I hear from Carlo Rasmussen that his exhibit obtained a Silver at the Portland Org. ATA's National Topical Show.

I write this Editorial just as the Beijing Olympics are being launched – hence my choice of illustrations on the front cover. What a spectacle the opening ceremony was! Much as I am looking forward to 2012 I do wonder how on earth anyone can match that. If anyone would like to send me an 'Olympic' article for the next issue I would welcome it.

Finally on a personal note may I thank all those readers of *Themescene* who sent me their kind wishes after my husband's death. I will of course continue as Editor, and being now retired will have more time to devote to it. Maybe I will at last be able to eradicate the odd typo (or worse) which seems to slip into every issue! ☒

PRESIDENT'S PAGE

John Hayward

It is a great honour for me to become President of the British Thematic Association and to follow in the footsteps of our previous distinguished Presidents, the late Franceska Rapkin, Margaret Morris and Brian Sole. I only hope I can bring to the office the distinction my predecessors have brought. I shall do my best to fulfil the President's role to the best of my ability. May I also say a few words about my immediate predecessor, Brian Sole. He carried out the President's duties for five years in an exemplary manner representing the BTA at home and abroad. Brian put a tremendous amount into the role even after he had spent years as Secretary and Chairman and whilst carrying out so many other philatelic duties. His honorary membership of the BTA was richly deserved. He has also agreed to become our Patron.

I have not been totally booted upstairs! I still remain on the BTA Committee as the Displays Organiser and will soon be putting together the programme for 2009, where we hope to engage with the BTA's membership as much as we can. Following the AGM the Committee has quite a changed look. Richard Wheeler stepped into the breach as Chairman and deserves everyone's support in the coming year. I am sure he will keep pointing the BTA in the right direction. We have three new Committee Members, making almost a full Committee, except for a Vice Chairman (any volunteers?), with Gerald Lovell, James Etherington and Ronald Hyams coming on board. We have unfortunately lost Lesley Marley, Christine Earle and Michael Chapling and must thank them for all the efforts in the past for the BTA. Lesley and Christine will be particularly hard to replace.

It was good to see so many old faces at Thematica at the end of June and new ones as well. Colin Mount has missed the last two years through illness, but made it this year and I was so surprised to see Beatrix and Tom Waltman from Belgium had made the trip, reminding me so much of Eurothema last year. What a good presentation Barry Stagg provided after the AGM with his Parachutes. His delivery was delightful and more's the pity so many members missed hearing him. There was some sadness too the next day when I accompanied Brian and Anne Sole and Anne Stammers to Brian Buckle's funeral. He had been a member for many years and all our sympathies and support go out to Wendy. It is so good to know that Wendy will continue as the Editor of *Themescene*.

I was concerned to learn from the Friends of Thematica, who have worked manfully these last eleven years to promote and put on Thematica, that they are experiencing serious financial problems. Generous donations over the last few years have dried up and the number of Patrons and Friends has decreased, so that the running of the event in 2009 is having to be considered. It would be a great pity if this was to happen as the exhibition side and children's displays are so much an integral part of the whole event. Thematica would be sorely missed (see p.104).

I am looking forward to visiting Vienna in September to see WIPA 2008 and to see how our seven exhibitors get on in the Thematic Class. Good luck to them. International exhibitions are always something I particularly savour. Before I go anywhere near the dealers I make a beeline for the philatelic bureaux of which there are many. This is a great opportunity to look through what is currently available, especially booklets and postal stationery, and to buy new issues at their face value, some of which I will have been unaware of. Then it is off to see the exhibits where something new can always be learned even if your own theme is not being exhibited. ☒

CHAIRMAN'S PAGE

Richard Wheeler

It has been an eventful year. Following the enormous success of Eurothema and the effort that had been put in by the hard working sub committee chaired by John Hayward with Brian Sole, Christine Earle and Lesley Marley I was saddened when Christine and Lesley both resigned in the New Year for personal reasons. The Society was left without a Chairman. John Hayward as Vice-Chairman took over the direction of the Society to whom we offer our grateful thanks.

As we approached June 18th, no one had offered to take on the post of Chairman. It was then that, as I have been Chairman of a number of organisations in my life and now retired, I put my name forward. I am grateful for the confidence that you have placed in me. I devote myself full time to the collection and display of thematics (apart from the odd spot of gardening under my wife's direction) and look forward to my term of office.

I have collected stamps since a boy, and at one stage early on I ran a stamp approval service. During nearly seven years in the RAF as a Catering Officer, I was posted to many places abroad which took me from Cyprus to Egypt, East Africa, Aden, Sharjah, Bahrain and Pakistan, and I collected their stamps. It was not until a few years ago that Mary Claydon visited my local club with the West of England Thematic Society Roadshow. I was fascinated by what could be done in the telling of a story with philatelic material not bound by a single country. I was hooked!

Such is my involvement with stamps that I am Chairman of the Taw and Torridge Stamp Club, Treasurer for the West of England Thematic Society, a member of the Wessex Federation Committee, an accredited judge at Federation level, Lecturer and Researcher besides having the competing bug. I am also a member of other philatelic organisations.

It was with great sadness that in recent weeks we learnt that Wendy Buckle, the Editor of *Themescene*, had suffered a great loss with the sudden passing of her husband Brian, who was also a Member of the BTA. He had contributed an article "Coinage or Banknotes or Stamps" in our last issue. We offered our sincere condolences and Brian Sole, John Hayward and Anne Stammers represented the BTA at the funeral.

I have a vision for a greater awareness of the BTA and the pleasure that thematics can bring as a hobby. We wish to extend our membership and a number of ideas have been made together with a greater use of our website www.brit-thematic-assoc.com. Keep looking at it for all the latest news. Soon to be included are a list of topics and books obtainable from the American Topical Association. We have an arrangement to supply checklists and books through the BTA for Members only.

The number of children's entries at Thematica was gratifying, but the majority were from Scotland and Wales. Means must be found to create more interest. It has been stated that the preponderance of members in Stamp Societies are either elderly or in the 30 – 45 age group. It would appear that a generation has been missed out.

I am certain that all the members of the Committee will do their best in promoting our hobby but we also need help from members in encouraging others to join us. Spread the news. Could you provide an article for *Themescene*? We have a busy time ahead. ☒

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S PAGE

Peter Denly

Ordinary members	206
Family members	19
Junior members	3
Society members	15
Overseas members	19
Overseas Society members	1
Honorary members	3

Total number of members 266
(at 1st August 2008)

Each year when subscriptions are renewable, our membership numbers change quite markedly. You will notice that numbers have fallen by 20 and many of the resigning members have blamed advancing years for loss of interest in collecting; and sadly this year a number of our long serving members have passed away. However on the plus side we have already recruited four new members and there are enquiries in the pipeline from as far a field as India. It is very pleasing to see that a large proportion of new recruits, in both 2007 and 2008, are applying on the form provided on the web site. If you have the internet, do read it, as currently we are preparing lists of ATA books and check lists for inclusion, which are obtainable at reduced prices through the Association.

Do you have an interest in Burma? I have recently been contacted by a gentleman who, despite the ravages that his country has recently suffered, is maintaining his interest in philately. He has found the BTA through our web site and is offering to exchange material with overseas collectors. Should you feel interested please contact me (address in the front of the magazine) and I will be happy to put you in touch.

As mentioned in the last edition of *Themescene*, we are preparing a list of persons who are prepared to give philatelic displays to societies. A number of volunteers have already responded, and should you wish to be included, please contact the Membership Secretary or any other Committee member.

New Members joining since the June 2008 issue

Mr. R. Akers	Stoke Bruerne
Rev. J.H. Daulman	Chorley, Lancs.
Mr. A. Gurney	Coventry
Mr. P. Plant	Northwich

Deaths advised since the June 2008 issue

Mr. B. Buckle
Mr. B. Fullick
Mrs. M. Shaida

PUBLICITY OFFICER'S PAGE

Simon Moorcroft

I usually begin my Officer's Page in the September issue by writing about the success of Thematica and how much we look forward to the next one. Sadly this time, while I believe the show in June was very successful (I could not attend due to other commitments), it has been overshadowed by the very real possibility that it was the last Thematica. Maurice Gale, the organiser of the show for many years, has decided to retire. The Committee of the Friends of Thematica are urgently investigating alternatives (see page 104). Thematica has helped raise the profile of thematic philately in this country and the competitions held every June have not only brought fun and enjoyment but also a useful stepping stone for exhibitors wanting to make the transition from federation to national competitions. Discussions are taking place regarding this whole matter, with an emphasis on whether it is possible to retain certain aspects of the show, in particular the competitions and the future of Friends of Thematica. Further details will be given when they become known.

On a more positive note I am pleased to report that the 90th Philatelic Congress of Great Britain, held between 24th and 27th July at Stratford upon Avon, was a huge success. Over one hundred people in total attended the event over the four days. Some very interesting talks, lectures and papers were given during the Congress. Two Olympic displays were presented, by John Crowther and Tony Bosworth, to coincide with the one hundredth anniversary since the games were first held in London in 1908. Brian Sole gave the Kay Goodman lecture, the main Congress paper, on social philately. A detailed article in the Congress Handbook gave the background to the subject, with Brian illustrating the type of story that can be told in this discipline by giving a display of greetings telegrams. The lecture demonstrated that social philately presents a very exciting new approach to philately that could be used to attract new people into the hobby – an opportunity which all agreed must not be missed. One of the new signatories to the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists (RDP), Richard Winter, gave a presentation highlighting the fact that social history and postal history were not incompatible and that in fact they were interrelated. He illustrated this by taking two covers and not only telling the story of their routes and rates but also of the towns they were sent to and from, and also the people who they were addressed to and the people who sent them. It showed that the narrow study of postal routes and rates can be expanded upon greatly. Having not been to Congress before, I thoroughly enjoyed the RDP signing ceremony, held at Stratford Upon Avon Town Hall, and the dinners and receptions that were held every night. It proved to me that what makes our hobby special is the social aspect and weekends like Congress provide excellent opportunities for meeting friends and relaxing.

At our AGM in June Richard Wheeler was elected as our new Chairman and Jim Etherington, Ronald Hyams and Gerald Lovell were elected to the Committee. I would like to extend my congratulations to all of them and hope they enjoy their time in their positions. The workshop and meeting held at the Royal on 26th July is reported on elsewhere. Sadly I could not make this on account of being at Congress. From what I have heard it went very well.

When you read this we will be at the start of a new philatelic season. Please do try and support the hobby and in particular the BTA wherever you can over the coming year. ☒

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

THEMATIC WORKSHOP

I would like to thank John Hayward for all the work he put into organising a really great Thematic Day, and also the others members who had supplied and prepared material for the afternoon session.

It was an opportunity to see a tiny bit of other people's collections and also not only to see but also to hear about this year's winning BTA cup entry "QARL" (Quick Look All Round) about Submarines, by John Leathes who also gave another equally entertaining talk and display on "Big Cats".

The afternoon was a really useful session on what material is 'Thematic' if you want to be 'correct' and what else people will also include in their collections. Altogether an enjoyable and interesting day. It is the hope of John and the committee that this type of workshop will be able to visit the Federations all around the country - if it comes your way do go, and take some non-thematic friends with you – they could easily become 'hooked'. I strongly recommend it.

Anne Stammers

COLLECTING 1900 STYLE

I was asked to visit a lady to have a look at a collection of stamps made by her Grandfather in 1900.



It turned out that he was a woodcarver and had made a beautifully carved frame with the date 1900. The picture of a tree and birds was made up of QV stamps stuck on thin card and then pasted onto a board, completely ruining the stamps with some very old postmarks that I saw, but nevertheless another way of collecting what in those days were probably thought to be worthless stamps, but is now a family heirloom. I thought it was fun.

Richard Wheeler

DO YOU KNOW SOMEBODY

INTERESTED IN THEMATIC COLLECTING?

*WOULD THEY LIKE TO JOIN A GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO KNOW ABOUT
THEMATIC COLLECTING? IF SO, WHY NOT TELL THEM ABOUT THE...*

BRITISH THEMATIC ASSOCIATION?

A WHALE'S TALE

Lesley Marley tells the story of the mammals so longer under threat from Man

Water, the cetacean's home



The 'Whale's Tale' of cetaceans starts many millions of years ago when the planet was very different from how it is today. 250 million years ago the seven continents as we know them were grouped into two landmasses. The continent of Gondwanaland in the south and Laurasia in the north, the rest was covered by a single ocean. Gondwanaland separated and the continents moved apart to form the landmasses, seas and oceans we know today.

From space the earth looks blue, as water covers more than two thirds of its surface. This is the home of cetaceans or more commonly called whales. The species are found in all the seas of the world. Although a cetacean is a mammal and breathes air the same as humans and other land and aquatic mammals, it lives its life entirely in water.

Ancestors

In common with other animal life on the planet, cetaceans originated in the oceans. The seas teemed with aquatic reptiles, which later abandoned the seas to live on land. Early fossil evidence suggests that the first whales and dolphins evolved from a group of mammals that lived on land, the mesonychids, a wolf like animal that roamed North America. Ichthyosaurus an aquatic reptile had dolphin like features and gave birth to its young in water,



but had to breathe air like all cetaceans. Slowly cetaceans evolved over millions of years.

The family of whales are called cetaceans but are more popularly known a Porpoises, Dolphins and the larger members as the Great Whales. There are 81 species, some of them are very small and others are the largest mammals on earth. They have been classified into groups made possible by the Swedish naturalist Carolus Linnaeus.

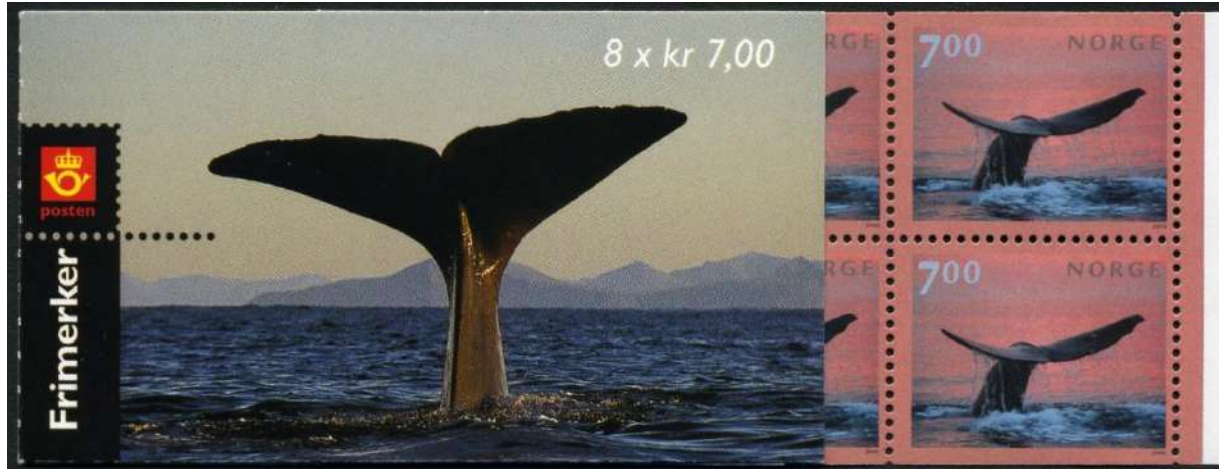
Form - Basic shape of cetaceans

Cetaceans are extraordinary creatures – warm-blooded air breathing mammals, yet living an entirely aquatic life. They are streamlined and have no visible hind limbs and swim by the up and down movement of their horizontally flattened tail. They all have a blow-hole or vent on the top of their head. This is the basic form that all cetaceans follow.

All species follow a basic pattern for breathing. The blowhole situated on top of the head opens and an explosive exhalation resulting in a blow (a condensed smoke-like water vapour), followed by an inhalation and closure of the blowhole. The blow varies in size, shape and visibility among the species. The odontoceti cetaceans have only one blowhole, while the mysticeti have two.

The skeleton of cetaceans is mostly composed of spongy bone impregnated with fat. The whale's body has evolved to provide the least hydrodynamic resistance while swimming. The tail flukes are set horizontally and beat up and down, unlike fish where the tail fin is vertical and moves from side to side. Tail markings are unique to each cetacean. The tail of the

humpback whale can measure up to 4 metres wide. Tail flukes have neither skeleton nor subcutaneous fat. An extremely rigid muscular material supports them. Many smaller species are extremely agile, especially the dolphins. These cetaceans are by far the largest group, 26 species in all. The tail fins are designed for high-speed swimming and allow for rapid movement. The rear third of the cetacean constitutes the tail.



Many whales have a dorsal fin, positioned in varying places for stability; in some it serves a secondary purpose as a temperature guide. This fin, like the tail flukes contains no skeleton, only connective tissue and interwoven fibres. The shape of the dorsal fin varies from species to species but there are at least three types. Falcate as in dolphins, triangle as in the Orca and the rounded fin as in the Hector's dolphin. The male orca has the largest dorsal fin of all, up to 1.8 meters high. Pectoral flippers help to direct and stabilize swimming, and as with the dorsal fin they vary in size from species to species. The humpback whale can be recognised by his enormous white flippers.

The food chain - Plankton

For such large mammals cetaceans eat some of the smallest creatures in the sea. The larger whales feed on what is called plankton. This is made up of organic matter, mineral nutrients, free-floating phytoplankton, krill and zooplankton. By far the largest organism in plankton is the krill - *Euphausia Superba*, this shrimp like creature grows to about 4 cm long. The whale is at the top of the Antarctic food chain, other species such as the crab eater seal, fish and squid also rely on the plankton and krill to form a large part of their diet.



The food chain - Squid

Not all cetaceans feed on small creatures. For those with teeth, squid and fish are a delicacy and large amounts are consumed. Squid belong with the family of cephalopods and have eight

arms and two long tentacles. Squid move by jet propulsion. The mantle is filled with water and when compressed the water shoots out of a tube like siphon and propels the squid forward or backwards and they can attain high speeds. If pursued they also release a jet of ink.

The Mysticeti whales - baleen whales

The Mysticeti whales use a filtering system made of baleen, which has evolved from the skin of their palates and is suspended from their upper jaws. Baleen varies in length from species to species. The inner edge is fringed and overlays the next one. Bowhead and right whales have a distinctive head shape and lower jaw to accommodate their long baleen plates. Whales use their baleen in a variety of ways, but mostly by swimming slowly through schools of their prey with their mouths open skimming out their victims.



Whales that are called roquals are baleen whales that swim faster and have a different method of feeding. 'Roqual' is derived from Norse and refers indirectly to the groves or pleats on their undersides. Throat pleats extend down to the belly, which makes it possible for the whale to collect large amounts of water containing food, which they filter by pressing the tongue against the roof of the mouth and expelling the water.

Humpback whales use a special hunting system. They focus on shoals of small fish, surrounding them with a net of bubbles. The whale then swims vertically up through the centre of the curtain of bubbles where the prey has been concentrated.

Uniquely among all cetaceans, the grey whale is primarily a benthic feeder, consuming a great variety of tiny bottom-dwelling organisms, which it sieves with its baleen from the top 2cm layer of mud or sand, in shallow waters of 50 meters or less.

The Odontoceti - toothed whales

By far the largest group of cetaceans is the odontoceti or toothed whales. The sperm whale weighs in at 30 tonnes and is up to 20 metres in length and is the largest toothed whale. The American whalers use 'Cachalot' as an alternative name for the sperm whale. Sperm whales dive to depths of up to 3,000 meters to catch their prey. The sperm whale's head is rectangular and reaches a third of its body length. It has teeth only in the lower jaw.



The orca (sometimes called the killer whale) is the only cetacean that feeds on warm-blooded animals. Hunting in packs enables them to attack seals, penguins and the largest of whales, besides fish and squid. They have 40 to 50 large strong teeth and are easily recognized by their jet-black backs, snow-white patches on their undersides and their large dorsal fin.

MAN'S FIRST ENCOUNTERS WITH WHALES - PROBABLY 8,000 YEARS AGO.

Some of man's first encounters with cetaceans were probably 8,000 years ago. From this earliest time man has carved, sculpted or drawn cetaceans. Primitive carvings are found throughout areas of Norway. Rock carvings from Alta, North Norway, leave us with glimpses

of the life led by early man and the animals they hunted. Stranded whales were probably the first contacts that man had with this large prey. For the aboriginal natives of the Arctic Circle these finds meant the difference between life and death. The Arctic and its surrounding countries is a cold and inhospitable place for many months of the year and food is essential for these people to survive. Nothing of a whale was wasted. The blubber was a source of food, light and heat for cooking. The controlled and contained flame of a blubber oil lamp made snow houses (igloos) possible.

Soon primitive man was learning how to make tools. He fashioned harpoon heads from the bones of stranded whales. The rock carvings of Tanum in Sweden carved by Bronze Age people revealed how man was now a hunter. Small craft enabled man to venture after the whales. For those men in small canoes or kayaks the whale must have been a frightening adversary.



Early whale men regarded whales as monsters; the wild descriptions of the sailors fired the imagination of artists. The whale was always depicted as a fearsome creature. Old-time mapmakers decorated blank spaces with pictures of whales as sea monsters. An engraving from Conrad Gesner's *Historiae Animalium* (Zurich 1551-1587) depicts the blowholes as great horns. In mythology Poseidon was foremost of all the water deities. He was known as the

king of the ocean. He is often portrayed riding a hippocampus, accompanied by dolphins and carrying a trident. Aristotle (384-322 BC) was one of the first philosophers to realise that cetaceans were different from fish, although man still persisted in calling them 'Fish', until the beginning of the 20th century. He told of legends, of how friendly dolphins were to man, how they saved young boys and men from drowning, carrying them on their back to the safety of land. Because of these friendly acts, dolphins have always been seen as sacred creatures. At Knossos on Crete a lovely frieze has been uncovered depicting dolphins.



Whales have passed into myths, folklore and legends. Some go back so far in time that there is no written evidence. The tales were learned by heart and passed down the centuries, often by the Shaman, medicine man or the holy man. According to an Inuit legend Sedna - Mother of the Sea - a young girl was killed by her outraged father, who severed her fingers as

she clung to his canoe. She sank into the sea and as each digit fell into the icy water it turned into whales, seals, fish and walrus thus populating the seas. The Haida Indians believe in the myths of a 'Killer Whale People' that are so important to their tribal laws that they carve or paint killer whales on their canoes and totem poles. Christians believe that a whale swallowed a man called Jonah. After three days and nights he was set down on dry land.

The narwhal is often called the 'Unicorn of the sea' and is probably responsible for the legend of the unicorn so widely believed in medieval times. The narwhal has one upper tooth that grows outwards through the upper lip. The tooth spirals sinistrally when viewed from the root, often reaching 2-3 metres. The existence of the unicorn was kept alive by the Alicorns (the unicorns horn) that the Vikings brought to Europe. It was a well-guarded secret that the beautiful spiralling horns were not that of the unicorn, but that of the narwhal.

Although the dolphin is a fairly common heraldic charge, it is particularly associated with the Dauphin, the eldest son of the kings of France, who bore Or, a dolphin azure marshalled with the French Royal Arms. Mont-Dauphin was a fortress of the King of France in department Hautes-Alpes. The name of this town was created to celebrate the Dauphin. From the 22nd June 1911 until 1934 Great Britain issued typographed stamps with the portrait of King George V flanked by two fanciful dolphins, a 'Royal Fish' said to symbolize Britain's maritime strength.



To be continued in December *Themescene*
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USA: POSTAGE CURRENCY AND ENCASED POSTAGE STAMPS

*Ian Paton offers a 'PS' to "Coinage or Banknotes or Stamps" by Brian Buckle
(June 2008 issue)*

I am viewing this subject as a philatelist through the Scott Specialized Stamp Catalogue 2008 ed., and as an historical event in 1862 during the American Civil War. Early in 1862, only months after the start of the war, people started hoarding coins which began to



command a premium over paper money. The public was reluctant to spend coins, fearing this might result in a loss if the premium was increased. As a first step, U.S. Treasurer Francis E. Spinner made a substitute by affixing postage stamps singly and in multiples to Treasury paper, and arranged with the Post Office to replace worn stamps with new ones when necessary. As a next step on 17th July 1862 Congress authorised the issue of 'Postage Currency' printed on Treasury paper. It was not money but a means of making stamps negotiable and remained in use until 27th May 1863. Here are examples of the 5 cent (Scott PC5) and 10 cent (Scott PC6). There were also 25 cent and 50 cent values.

They were replaced in October 1863 by printed "Fractional Currency" which did not include pictures of stamps and so were "money".

Private enterprise saw an advertising and profit potential and on 12th August 1862 John Gault was issued with a patent for a 'Design for Encasing Government Stamps' to be used as the equivalent of currency. Stamps had their corners wrapped round a cardboard circle and were visible through a thin mica covering. An outer metal frame held them secure and a heavier brass backing completed the piece with an advertising surface – in some instances the cases were silvered. Gault sold them at a small markup over the stamp values and the cost of production. Some 30 other firms took up the idea and produced their own Encased Currency. These two examples are 10 cent John Gault with silvered frame (Scott EP97) and 1 cent Ayers Cathartic Pills (Scott EP2). In both cases the advertising on the reverse is shown.



About 750,000 pieces were sold and perhaps between 3,500 and 7,000 survive in collections today, with catalogue values ranging from \$400 to \$15,000. Fractional currency

plus increased Government minting of small coins ended the use of encased postage stamps by the end of 1863. ☒

OBITUARY: MARGARET SHAIDA

Extracted from the Henley Standard 16th May 2008

Margaret Aldridge was born in Henley in 1935. In 1954 she met and married Hassan Shaida and moved to Tehran, where she promptly learnt Persian. After a short period working for The Anglo-Iranian Oil Co. (now BP) she went to Iran Air working at Tehran's Mehrabad Airport. Whilst here she joined the anti-Shah movement and got involved in transporting explosives, detonators etc via her hand luggage to Tehran.

After a brief time in England for the birth of her second son she returned to her family in Tehran where as women's page editor she, her husband and some friends launched Iran's English-language journal *Kayhan International*. Eventually she set up her own public relations and publication firm, which included a weekly bulletin for the Ministry of Information. In the 1970's she became a marketing officer for the New Zealand Embassy in Tehran. Her bravery came to the fore again during the 1979 Revolution when revolutionaries invaded the United States Embassy and captured over 100 diplomats and marines. Margaret went out in her car with the diplomatic number plate, even though she could have been mistaken for an American woman. The password her husband had given her got her past all the guards.

However by 1980 Islamic restrictions against women caused Margaret reluctantly to decide to leave Iran for good, and after a year in New Zealand returned to England. Living in Henley she resumed her writing career including *Legendary Cuisine of Persia* which won the Glenfiddich Award for best cookery book of the year in 1993; and during the 1990's of course she was Editor of *Themescene*. In 1992 they moved to Andorra, where she became a founding member of the (English) Writers' Circle of Andorra. She died in England on April 27th after a long illness. ☒

ANDORRA'S POSTAL HISTORY

Margaret Shaida explains the origins of its unique postal system

On 14th February 1838, a resident of Sant Julia sent a letter to Josep Llanes & Son. Sr. Llanes kept it, and in 1997 the letter, still in its envelope, was sold in Los Angeles at an auction of Rare Stamps and Postal History for over \$1,000. The envelope is tiny, it has no stamp and no post mark. Its high value is due entirely to the scarcity of such early postal material from Andorra. It's no surprise. Up until 1928, Andorra had no formal postal system.

This late start is compensated for today by the unusual fact that the principality has two national post offices, neither of which are Andorran. In addition, internal mail incurs no charges, either from the sender or the recipient, another unique service.

The earliest historical references to postal services go back to Egypt, China and Rome, but it was Cyrus the Great of Persia who in 550 BC first introduced an efficient relay system of postal communication to maintain control over his expanding empire. This system was unique in that it was a regular service no matter what the weather or the amount of mail.

In times of emergency, pigeons had also been used throughout the Middle East to carry messages. The first recorded pigeon post



system was established by the Sultan of Baghdad in 1150, while Genghis Khan is known to have used pigeons to keep in touch with his officers as his conquests grew. Indeed, pigeons were used to communicate urgent news as recently as the Second World War in the 1940's, but such methods were used principally to warn of invasion or disaster.

In the early Middle Ages, scattered communities and city states meant that postal services were fragmented and irregular, and usually organised by and for the sole use of ruling families. Later, the growing requirements of commerce led to the establishment of numerous postal systems, which by and large served the purpose of the merchants' need to communicate. However, such services were generally unreliable and costly.

By the 17th century, most countries had a central government strong enough to sustain a nation-wide postal system, which, though often irregular and very expensive (charges were made according to mileage), served those few people who were literate and had interests beyond their own neighbourhoods.

The remarkable growth of the economy in the 18th century combined with the increasing needs of commerce and manufacturing finally led to the introduction in Britain of the "Penny Postage" in 1840 - whereby all letters were guaranteed to be delivered by a government-run postal service anywhere in the country for the payment of one penny. Proof of payment was a postage stamp stuck on the letter. This revolutionary reform was so successful that it was quickly taken up by many other countries, including France in 1849 and Spain in 1850.

The tiny, agrarian population of Andorra had little need of a fully-fledged postal system. The pigeon post was an effective means of communicating urgent news, and pigeon towers can still be seen in many of the villages throughout Andorra. An informal courier service existed to carry larger and less urgent items of mail, whereby the first person to go to the next village or town would take along a few letters. Letters with a foreign destination were taken to the Spanish or French post offices in Seu d'Urgell or Ax-les-Thermes - where they would receive the local postmark - for onward despatch. Such mail had no official Andorran markings - the reason for the extreme rarity of examples of Andorran postal history.

It wasn't until Spanish refugees from the Carlist War of 1833-39 fled to Andorra that the lack of a formal postal system began to be felt. In 1837 the first official courier service was set up by Spain - a simple mail delivery from Seu d'Urgell to Sant Julia only. Andorra's couriers took over from there. This Spanish service was discontinued at the end of the war.

Finally, following the second Carlist War (1874-76), Thomas Rossell y Moles was appointed Postmaster to Andorra in 1877, and was authorised to sell both Spanish and French stamps. The Andorran courier service carried the stamped letters to Seu d'Urgell or Ax-les-Thermes for cancellation and onward delivery.

In 1878, the Universal Postal Union (UPU) was set up to administer the increasingly chaotic and bewildering arrangements controlling international mail. Spain was designated to administer Andorra's postal affairs, but showed little interest in setting up a system.

France was not happy with this, and in a pre-emptive strike, offered to install postal and telegraphic services and to construct roads in exchange for annexing Andorra postally as an additional Department. So certain were the French of the correctness of their decision that by 1881 they had started to erect telegraph poles, and had even prepared a datestamp for their "new" Department. (There are rare examples of this datestamp being used on both French and Spanish stamps; today, these are extremely hard to find, and very expensive.)

The Andorrans saw this as the thin end of the wedge, and protested vociferously. In the face of riots on the streets, and the intercession of the Bishop of Seu d'Urgell, the French abandoned the idea of annexation, postally or otherwise.

However, the French pressed on, setting up a daily courier service in 1887 between Porté (east of Pas de la Casa) and Andorra la Vella via Soldeu. Manned by two couriers, one resident in Soldeu, and the other in Andorra la Vella, the total cost of the service to the French government was five pesetas a day for both mailmen. When the mail was received in Andorra la Vella, it was sorted by Senyor Bride, a shoe-maker and cobbler, but the Postmaster, Senyor Rossel, personally saw to its distribution within the capital. When Senyor Rossel died in 1897, Senyor Manuel Baro, a former apprentice of Senyor Bride, took over the distribution.

Mail for other destinations in Andorra or Spain was carried by the now formally-established Andorran courier service, but mail from Escaldes, Encamp and Canillo was picked up by the French courier service en route to Soldeu.

The couriers, though not well paid, were loyal and long-serving. Their daily mule ride over the mountains from Soldeu to Porté was a lonely occupation. Before the completion of the main road, other travellers were few and far between. Everything changed on 13th August 1931. This was the day that the Mayor of Ax-les-Thermes, Doctor Gomma, drove into Andorra by car. He was the first person ever to do so. Imagine his surprise when he met the courier on his way up to Porté, "...perched superbly on a harnessed mule, with his trousers tucked into the mail pack..." Well, it was a very hot day, and the courier, not expecting to meet anyone, had stripped off his trousers and stuffed them into his half empty mailbag. It's difficult to know who was the more surprised by the encounter!

This cosy courier system continued for many years, and might have gone on for many more, had it not been for the surprise intervention of Friedrich Weilenmann from Switzerland. He had become intrigued with Andorra after meeting Andorran stock-breeders at a Swiss cattle fair.

He visited Andorra in 1925, and was shocked to find that Andorra had no regular postal service. He approached the Universal Postal Union in Berne in order to set up a postal service on behalf of the Andorrans. He envisaged an Andorran post office issuing its own stamps, including charity stamps which would raise money for local schools. The General Council of Andorra was impressed with his vision and appeared keen to accommodate Herr Weilenmann.

With the Council's encouragement, Weilenmann approached the French and Spanish authorities - who were promptly stung into action. Spain, which had up to then ignored the UPU regulations to administer Andorra's post, was suddenly eager to comply. France was reluctant to go against the UPU, but equally reluctant to give up any of its rights in Andorra. Negotiations were held between the Council, Herr Weilenmann and the French and Spanish authorities.

After a couple of years of difficult talks, Spain finally set up a post office in Andorra la Vella on 1st January 1928 - nearly eighty years after it had established its own postal administration in Spain. At the same time, agencies were set up in Canillo, Encamp, La Massana, Escaldes, Ordino and Sant Julia. Agencies at Soldeu and Santa Coloma were opened shortly after. For the first three months, the Andorran post office and agencies used Spanish

stamps, but cancelled them with an Andorran postmark. Such examples are rare. From 28th March 1928, Spain used its own stamps, overprinted with Correos Andorra.

It wasn't until 25th November 1929 that Spain issued the first ever set of three stamps in the name of "Andorra" - a one peseta stamp showing the members of the General Council of Andorra; a twenty centimos stamp showing a lammergeier (bearded vulture) flying over the Pyrenees; and a two centimos showing the



House of the Valleys (Parliament House). Some fifty years later the name shown on the stamp was altered to read “Principat d’Andorra”.

Having run an efficient courier service for nearly fifty years, France was in no mood to let Spain suddenly dominate the postal scene. Andorra, too, showed little desire to be postally administered solely by Spain, and complained bitterly to France about the Spanish “intrusion” in its affairs. France decided to apply to the UPU to amend its regulations, and in 1929 was granted equal rights to administer Andorra’s postal affairs - an extraordinary concession which makes Andorra unique in the world - it is the only country to have two national postal administrations.

France introduced the French Andorran postal service and issued its first set of Andorran stamps in 1931 in the name of Valleés d’Andorre. These depicted the Chapel of Meritxell (1 centime), St. Michael’s Church at Engolasters (25 centimes), Saint Anthony’s Bridge (25 centimes), the Valley of Sant Julia (1 franc), and Andorra la Vella (1.5 francs). From 1943 to 1962, the French post office issued stamps in the name of Andorre, and then from 1963, in both the French and Catalan versions of Andorre and Andorra. It wasn’t until 1978 that France finally produced stamps giving the name Principat d’Andorra. French-Andorran stamps are also sold at the main French post office in Paris and Perpignan, but they are only valid for use within Andorra.

In 1965, following the initiative of General de Gaulle, a further agreement was reached whereby the General Council received half the profits made by the French Post Office in Andorra. In the first three years, a total sum of nearly 17 million pesetas was received, and much of this was used to establish and promote the Social Security system.

Herr Weilenmann would have been delighted.



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NEW ISSUES

The stamps below are reproduced with the kind assistance of the CASCO Philatelic Services

THEMATICA

John Hayward reports on the UK's leading annual thematic event

Thematica was held over the last weekend of June 2008 at the usual venue, the Carisbrooke Hall, London; with Stuart Henderson, Chairman of the Friends of Thematica, cutting the tape to open the event on Saturday. The organisation on the dealers side was by Thematic Exhibitions, and the Friends of Thematica organised the exhibits and displays. These included the BTA Cup, Fosbery Trophy, Inter-Federation Competition and Barclays Cups Competition for Young Collectors, housed in the El Alamein Room. Jeffery Matthews MBE, stamp designer, once again produced a fine souvenir sheet to mark the event.

It was noticeable that the number of entries in the first three competitions was down on previous years although the numbers in the children's competition was about the same. Thematic Society tables were not so many, with only the Scouts & Guides Stamp Club, Ship Stamp Society, Guild of St Gabriel, London & Provincial Stamp Club, National Philatelic Society and the BTA present. Attendance looked to be the same as in previous years with perhaps more on Sunday than before. A good number of the public took the opportunity to view the exhibits.

The awards presentations took place on Sunday, apart from the BTA Cup. Jeffery Matthews presented the awards in the adult classes and Eric Friedman of Rushstamps Ltd presented the junior awards. Without Rushstamps support the junior competitions could not be staged. Before the commencement of the BTA's Annual General Meeting, Brian Sole, fulfilling his last duty as President, presented the Franceska Rapkin Memorial Bowl to Ian Paton for the best article in *Themescene* 2007: "The Peculiar Institution" Ian winning the Bowl for the second time. During the Annual General Meeting Brian Sole was made an honorary life member of the BTA, the fifth member so honoured, with Margaret Morris giving the citation and presenting the diploma. (Full details of the Annual General Meeting are reported separately in this issue). After the AGM Barry Stagg presented his winning display from 2007 (see below).



Presentations:

There were five 32 page entries entered for the BTA Cup, judged to national thematic class rules, with John Leathes "QARL" the winner with a large silver-gilt medal. The BTA Cup was presented to him by the President during the Thematic Workshop on 26th July. I was intrigued like everyone else with the title "QARL" until it was explained as "Quick All Round Look" – obvious really as the exhibit was about submarines. It was the deserved winner showing considerable improvement from last year and displayed a fine range of material, countries and period of time. I particularly liked the World War I items and the submarine mail. "Whale Worlds" from Peter Miller showed a very popular theme and was nicely presented. However, to my mind it needed more different philatelic material to improve the entry. I found "Reading Biscuit" by Malcolm Hawkins somewhat confusing. Expecting to see Huntley & Palmers strongly displayed I found the exhibit was all about the Reading spoon cancel (biscuit shaped) of the 19th Century, more suitable to a postal history or even social philately exhibit. It was not well presented, but did contain some excellent GB Queen Victoria embossed stamps on covers. Alan Randall-Jones exhibited "Fire Protection & Prevention" which showed a good range of material including handstamps. "Travels of Pope Paul VI" was Reginald Lyon's first entry for the BTA Cup. There seemed to be plenty of material available for this theme from countries other than Vatican City, but there were too many specially produced covers for my liking where special handstamps need only have been shown. I do hope Reginald exhibits again next year as his entry is capable of improvement.



There were also five entries of 16 pages for the John Fosbery Trophy, which is a totally open thematic class with no formal rules, judged by the public attending Thematica. I was quite impressed by three of the entries which told very good stories and had some good material. These entries alone fully lived up to the late John Fosbery's expectations when, as the event's founder, he donated the Trophy 20 or so years ago. The winner was David Alford with "Let me introduce myself; my name is Cocos". This is the story of the Cocos coconut, the sea journey it takes and its various uses. It borrows its title from a well known international exhibit from London 1990 and subsequently, but the story is nicely done nonetheless. I thought there were some very good stamps included. "My Family" by Dr Bill Sammons was a good original idea to present family history philatelicly. We had Sudan to the present day where various members of the family were involved, and the philatelic material to complement it. "Menace of the Mantle" by Peter Miller conveyed a simple but very serious message about our world's fragility – vulcanology and its terrifying effects. Peter Duck's "Aftermath of War: Boy Scouts in Displaced Camps" had some lovely material, some of which I suspect is very rare. "Welcome to Crufts" by Gary Green showed dogs, dogs and more dogs, all very pretty, but it did not get my vote.

There were seven entries of 16 pages in the Inter-Federation competition, judged to national thematic class rules for the Friends of Thematica Healey & Wise Salver. Four entries were awarded silver-gilt medals, amongst which was the winner, Gary Green (Wessex Federation) with "Bee Keeping & the Life of the Honey Bee". He exhibited a lovely range of material interwoven nicely throughout the pages, though I was not sure of his use of yellow pages. "100 Years of the Teddy Bear" from Pam Hiscock was a charmingly presented exhibit. It properly starts with Theodore Roosevelt and demonstrated what a popular theme this would

be to take up. Peter Denly's "Man's Marine Adventure" is not new to us as it is a cut down version of his good national exhibit. It contains some fine material including a USA 1869 plate proof and a lovely touch with the St. Kitts design error of a telescope being used by Columbus several years before its invention! "Waterbirds" by Linda Page was too full of stamps for my mind and needed other material.



However it kept all the birds nicely in their categories. Michael Thompson exhibited "History of Archery – The Sport for All". Shades of Christine Earle here I think. It justified its silver-gilt medal and I loved the "Target" handstamp from the USA. "Country in Crisis" by Sheila Foster exhibited threats to the countryside from land, water, air and energy. I thought this was a very good idea and nicely put together for a big subject. "Giraffes" by Peter Kirk looked too much like pages from an album, but some nice older items from Northern & Southern Rhodesia were included. It could do with different philatelic items, e.g. postal stationery, where there is plenty from South Africa.

Barry Stagg won the BTA Cup in 2007 with "The History, Development and Uses of Parachutes" and therefore his lot was to give a display to BTA members after their 2008 Annual General Meeting. What a delightful presentation he made. Parachuting is his hobby, hence his collection, but he is clearly a raconteur and he provided us with plenty of parachuting anecdotes during his display. One such story saw him landing on a football pitch whilst a game was in progress. Of course the display started with Leonardo da Vinci and his famous drawing of a parachute, then on to the 19th Century with the first recorded successful descent jumping from a tall tower – jumping from balloons was apparently unsuccessful. There was some material from World War I when parachuting really got under way particularly with the Americans. In the 1920s Billy Mitchell, an American pilot, led the way, followed in the 1930s by a Romanian lady who became the mother of parachuting. Examples of parachute training were shown and then plenty of material as one would expect from World War II. The invasions of Norway, Belgium and Crete were included. On to the D-Day landings which were illustrated by various issues. Agents dropped by parachute behind enemy lines were not forgotten. The Israel stamps of the late 1940s depicting parachutists were interesting, being authorised for issue locally. Barry had acquired them relatively cheaply from auction and had not realised until last year what they were and their worth. The Judges had consulted an Israel catalogue in the RPSL library and noted they were authentic and more keenly noted two or three noughts after the values in the catalogue! Barry showed examples of people coming out of planes without parachutes and surviving and others not so lucky, like the Russian cosmonaut, Kamarov. There were examples of members of the Caterpillar Club, whose lives were saved by parachutes. These included Lindbergh and President Bush senior. There were also examples of spaceship descents to Earth and other planes assisted by parachutes. One stamp contained a design error of four parachutes when there had in fact only been three. In recent years there has been much use of parachutes for leisure and sporting purposes and Barry showed us examples of these, including freefall, paraskiing, paragliding and hitting the plate on the ground which demands great accuracy. Parachutes are also used for emergencies such as fire fighting and dropping supplies, so we had examples of these too. This was a fine display and Richard Wheeler, our new Chairman, and John Hayward, our new President, congratulated Barry and thanked him for entertaining us so well. ☒

END OF THEMATICA AT VICTORY SERVICES CLUB

From the official press release

Thematic Exhibitions and The Friends of Thematica regret to announce that at the moment there are no plans to stage further Thematica exhibitions.

Thematica was the brainchild of the late John Fosbery 22 years ago, as a way of providing thematic philately collectors with their own event, and to encourage collectors to exhibit, albeit with no formal judging rules. Initially held once a year, the popularity of the event meant that in recent years it has been held twice a year, in June and November. The summer event has always witnessed a combination of dealers and exhibits. A pinnacle was reached in November 2007 when the British Thematic Association combined with Thematica to host a European thematic exhibition, Eurothema.

However, the rising costs of a suitable venue in central London means that it is no longer financially viable to continue the event. The joint organisers wish to thank all those, dealers and collectors, who have supported Thematica over the years.

The Friends of Thematica are hopeful that competitions will continue, although not in central London. This includes The Barclays Cup competitions for Children, which have attracted about 50 entries each year and the Friends would be sorry if they had to be discontinued. As soon as the Friends' plans are firm they will issue a further Press Release.

Advertisement for Thames Themes

JERSEY NEW ISSUES

MAY AND JUNE 2008

JERSEY COWS

Commemorates the Royal Jersey Agricultural and Horticultural Society hosting of the World Jersey Cattle Bureau Conference. The Bureau was formed in 1951, bringing together Jersey cattle breeders around the world. Today the Jersey is the second largest breed of dairy cattle in the world. By the 1700s Jerseys were being exported in large numbers to England, being recognised for their superior quality milk. In 1878 the Courts of Jersey passed a law prohibiting any bovine animals into the Island. The 1860s to the First World War was the period of greatest development for the breed worldwide: they were first exported to Canada in 1868, to South Africa in 1880, New Zealand 1862, Scandinavia the 1890s and Latin America by 1900.

JERSEY ORCHIDS

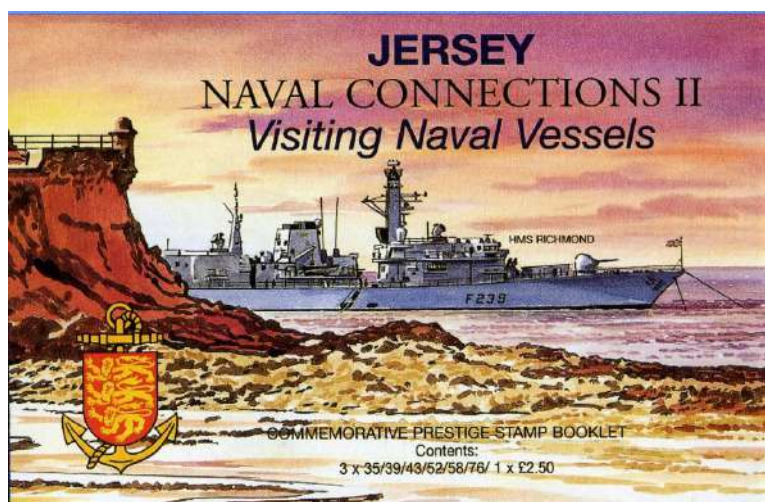
Six different orchids feature of the stamps with the background image on the miniature sheet being the Eric Young Orchid Foundation display at the 18th World Orchid Conference held in Dijon in 2005. The Foundation received a gold medal at the 2007 Chelsea Flower Show

JERSEY CRICKET – WORLD CRICKET LEAGUE

This miniature sheet commemorates the designation of Jersey as host for the 2008 World Cricket League Division 5 Tournament. The tournament will see twelve different countries from around the world (including Jersey) competing to go through to Division 4: a six team event being held later in 2008. The miniature sheet surround features the Victoria College Cricket Ground.

JERSEY NAVAL CONNECTIONS II “VISITING NAVAL VESSELS”

Features seven of the naval vessels that have visited the Island over the years. The Prestige Booklet provides an account of many more vessels, their capabilities and the relationship Jersey has with the Royal Navy.



Minutes of the 17th Annual General Meeting held on Sunday 29th June 2008 in the Allenby Room, Victory Services Club, Seymour Street, London W2 at 2.30p.m.

Present: The Acting Chairman and 16 other members present.

The Acting Chairman opened the meeting by asking the President, Brian Sole, to present the Franceska Rapkin Memorial Bowl to Ian Paton for his article 'The Peculiar Institution' in the June and September 2007 *Themescenes*.

Apologies: Jean Alexander, Ron Backhouse Michael Blackman, Wendy Buckle, Michael Chapling, Jim Ethrington, Peter Greening, John Leathes, Lesley Marley, Simon Moorcroft, Edward Quinton , Alan Sabey.

John Hayward, as Acting Chairman due to the resignation of Lesley Marley, welcomed everyone to the 17th Annual General Meeting.

Minutes of the 16th Annual General Meeting held on June 24th 2007

These had been published in *Themescene* September 2007 and were circulated at this meeting. Ian Paton proposed and Ron Hyams seconded that the Minutes be accepted as a true record – passed unanimously.

Matters arising

Room Hire – this was queried as committee meetings had been held at the VSC and the room hire was for a whole day but the room was used for half a day. The foyer at the Royal Festival Hall had been tried as it was free but it was found to be too noisy and with many distractions, so future committee meetings will be held at the VSC.

Chairman's report

Whilst the Treasurer's Report will be for the calendar year 2007, my Report will cover AGM to AGM, 25th June 2007 to 29th June 2008.

It has been quite a year with some lows as well as some highs, which I will mention. Let me start with the membership. At last year's AGM we had 289 members. As of today we have 263, which is very disappointing. There is some sadness however as six members have died in the year including Margaret Shaida, a previous Editor of *Themescene*, Dr David Jones a regular contributor to *Themescene*, and very recently, Brian Buckle. 18 of the lost members failed to renew their membership after the usual March reminders. Quite a number of them are former Philatelic Music Society members to whom we gave one year's BTA membership free. Your Committee will have to address this problem of decreasing membership as a matter of priority. Nonetheless, I have to commend Membership Secretary Peter Denly's efforts in keeping our membership records up to date, dealing with enquiries and chasing subscriptions.

Turning to members' meetings, the Committee made a decision 18 months ago, when we knew we would be more than fully committed to Eurothema in November 2007, that we would

not hold members' meetings until after that event. This has not prevented us from providing an attendance at important events such as Midpex 2007 where we had a table and frames, and at Harrogate 2008 where we had a table. We were able to gain only one new member from these events, but we did gain an important advertiser for *Themescene* in Christoph Gartner. Thank you to Gerald Lovell, Mike Chapling and Wendy Buckle for manning our tables at these events. We will recommence members' meetings shortly with a Thematic Workshop at the RPSL on 26th July, and next year we are proposing to have a joint meeting with the Postal Stationery Society. We do not hold members' meetings at Thematica as the whole event is a focal point for thematics and our members. We do of course provide a display after the AGM by the previous year's winner of the BTA Cup. Thematica itself and its organisation does not come about by waving a magic wand. We have to thank the Friends of Thematica once again for their sterling efforts in promoting and producing the event, and in particular Brian Sole for organising the BTA Cup, Fosbery Trophy and Federation competition, besides of course fulfilling his Presidential duties (but more of that later).

The BTA remains affiliated to the American Topical Association which supplies us with checklists of topics available to our members for the cost of photocopying, and with their topical handbooks at reduced prices. These services to members were formerly provided by Lesley Marley and Chris Earle respectively, to whom many thanks are due. We will shortly have someone else responsible for these services and will advise members via *Themescene* and our website, but we ought to be availing ourselves more of these services.

Having mentioned *Themescene* let me say something about it and its Editor, Wendy Buckle. The magazine is the lifeblood of the BTA in keeping members in touch and providing details of our affiliated thematic societies. Its quality and content is a tribute to Wendy's skill and hard work. We are going to enter it for the Literary section of the 2010 Festival of Stamps. Meanwhile, please bear in mind her pleas for articles, letters etc – she does need them. I am sure I speak for all of you when I say that our sympathies go out to her at this very poignant time. There are two other aspects of *Themescene* that I should mention – its distribution and advertising. Richard Wheeler works his socks off four times a year to get the magazine out to members via the post. We have looked at ways to reduce his workload and the postage costs, but it really comes down to the same old process of addressing envelopes, with labels, sticking them down and affixing postage stamps – all time consuming and tedious. We looked at having a meter franking machine, but the costs were prohibitive. Thanks for all your efforts Richard. On the advertising side Mike Blackman has done an admirable job in keeping a steady flow of adverts for the Magazine and of course producing the much needed revenue they bring in. The income is going down though – estimated at £820 next year. New leads are always followed up, and if any of the membership have ideas of useful contacts please let Mike or a Committee member know.

The BTA website is another very useful facility for publicising the BTA. We have been making increasing use of it via our volunteer webmaster, James Wigmore. There has been some criticism of delays in getting information on the website, not James' fault I hasten to add, and we will be addressing this to ensure information gets to James expeditiously, particularly results of exhibitions and details of meetings. We must thank James for his work for us.

Let me now turn to an area where our members have done us proud in the last year – exhibitions. Starting at international level and the Third European Thematic Championship 2008 at Essen. Sheila Foster's *The Rose* was awarded 92 points, equalling the highest marks ever achieved by a British entrant in the thematic class of an international exhibition. She was also second in her category and was awarded a special prize for aesthetic appeal. Lesley Marley with *A Whale's Tale* gained 89 points, David Hunter with *Sugar* 84 and Richard

Wheeler with *Masks, Myths, Mimes & the Evolution of Puppets* 75. Then at Israel 2008 David Griffiths won a gold medal with his *Here Be Dragons*. At Eurothema 2007 Jim Etherington with *1940: A Desperate Year* gained 76 points, Richard Wheeler *Masks, Myths, Mimes & the Evolution of Puppets* (75), Peter Wood *Irish Life* (73), Peter Denly *Man's Marine Adventure* (67), Stuart Henderson *Legacy of World War I* (67) and Sheila Foster *Aspects of Still Photography* (62). Congratulations to all of them. All this international success needs some co-ordination and assistance behind the scenes and this has been provided by our FIP Co-ordinator, Chris Earle for some years until recently, particularly regarding past Eurothemas and the European Thematic Championships at Essen. All Chris's efforts on this front are gratefully appreciated. At national level in the thematic class at the National Philatelic Exhibition Croydon 2007 David Swindells was the winner with his *Glimpse into the World of Beer*. At Stampa (Dublin) 2007 Richard Wheeler won a gold medal with his *Masks, Myths, Mimes & the Evolution of Puppets* and the C.O'Neill Memorial Trophy. At Harrogate notable achievements were Chris Earle with her *Extracts from a Wartime Diary 1939-45* which won a gold medal and the BTA Cup for the best thematic entry, and Glen Morgan for his *Through the Letter Box* which also won gold. The seal of approval on all this success and the prestige earned for the BTA by our past international gold medallists was acknowledged in a display given to the RPSL last December by Ian Paton, Brian Sole, Steve Boorn, Sheila Foster and Chris Earle.

Next a big thank you is also due to the various Committee members who do all the background jobs which are key to keeping the BTA up and running. Our Treasurer, Peter Wood, will be giving a full report of our finances next, so I will not go through any details. May I thank him on your behalf for balancing the books as usual and keeping us in check from any excesses? The business of arranging Committee meetings, preparing minutes and dealing with numerous enquiries falls on our Secretary, Anne Stammers, who deals with all this so well. We are indebted to her. On the publicity side there is the indefatigable Simon Moorcroft whose youthful enthusiasm is such a bonus to the BTA. He has publicised the BTA high and low for the last year, most noticeably regarding Eurothema and contributed greatly to its undoubted success. Ron Backhouse, our Librarian, beavers away in the background providing a much needed service to our members especially with the cuttings from stamp magazines which he publicises in *Themescene* for members. And finally, pulling this altogether and making the BTA work and keep up to scratch is the Chairman. During the last year Lesley Marley carried out this role most admirably, representing the BTA where appropriate. She made an outstanding contribution to the success of Eurothema and whilst she has decided not to stand again as Chairman for personal reasons, nonetheless we must thank her greatly for all the time and effort she has put in during the last year for the BTA, and also previously as Vice-Chairman.

Finally, I can only end on the one true event of the past year where the BTA excelled itself - hosting Eurothema. It took 18 months in the planning and only three days in the execution, but what an event it turned out to be. The BTA has received plaudits from numerous places congratulating it on the event. Margaret Morris, our past President and honorary life member, graciously accepted patronage of the event. All the hard work put in by the organising sub-committee, the main committee, the members, the visitors etc paid off. A huge thank you needs to be said once again to all of you who were involved, especially to those involved with myself on the organising sub-committee: Chris Earle, Lesley Marley and Brian Sole, who at a particularly difficult time for himself personally gave his usual 110%. We set ourselves a budget of £5,000 for Eurothema and in the event it cost us £3,079 thanks in part to an anonymous donation and a generous donation of £750 from the Philatelic Music

Society. There were five participating nations almost filling the El Alamein Room with a high standard of entries. The Netherlands took home the winners trophy with Great Britain coming third. The social events of the weekend and the bonhomie generated with our continental guests produced a wonderful atmosphere that will long be remembered. (I even ended up with this tie!). The BTA's standing in organising and competing in European thematic philately was firmly cemented.

That was not quite all under the heading of "finally". Just a few words are due about the BTA's future. Under our new Chairman and with some new faces on the Committee, and hopefully with new ideas, we intend to build on what we have achieved at home and abroad. We are thinking about offering a Thematic Roadshow to the UK Federations. We need to use our website better. We must do something about our decreasing membership, a problem we must address soon. We will only retain members if we provide something for them. As our Secretary reminded me only this week, more member participation could be the key so they can show their displays, enjoy doing so and also see others and so learn more about thematic collecting. We need to gear ourselves up for the 2010 Festival of Stamps. Perhaps we will get round at last to developing a connection with the University of the Third Age (U3A). We have the means and the people to do all these things and more. Let us get about it with your support.

Richard Wheeler thanked John Hayward, on behalf of the members, for the tremendous amount of work he had done over the past year.

Ron Hyams gave a vote of thanks to the Acting Chairman and proposed his report be adopted, Peter Powles seconded this and it was agreed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report and adoption of Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2007.

As shown by the Income and Expenditure statement for the Year ended 31 December 2007 (published in *Themescene* June 2008) there was a deficit of £ 3,755 of which £ 3,079 was the net cost to the Association of EUROTHEMA (for which a separate detailed statement was provided to the sub-committee). If the effect of EUROTHEMA is removed the year deficit on 'normal' operations is £676. This compares to the deficit of £ 686 in 2006 when Stampex 'Village Green' and "Donation to 2010" is omitted from that year.

Income - year on year comparison

(This is when leaving aside advertising income which is, as usual, shown offsetting *Themescene* costs and the fact that the BTA Cup gave a small surplus.).

Income fell by £ 331, primarily as a result of subscriptions being £ 298 lower.

Advertising has held up well - please mention *Themescene* if you respond to them, we are grateful for their support.

The effect of lower Savings Account balances has not yet hit the interest earned, that effect of about £100, will be seen in 2008.

Costs - year on year comparison

The overall net cost of *Themescene* was £ 170 lower. With only the AGM significant in 2007 "meetings" were lower by £ 264. Officer's expenses also down by £ 115.

All other costs were similar with the exception of Committee meetings where we had one more meeting and the room costs were up, so costs were up by £173.

Forecast for 2008

With a decline in membership of some 25 people subscription income appears to have fallen by about £ 300 once again, interest is likely to be £100 lower – The Treasurer said he would expect there to be a deficit of about £ 600 in 2008.

General Comments.

The reserves now stand at just below the £ 6,000 mark and so while we still have the ability to operate with an annual deficit of £ 600 for some years yet it cannot go on indefinitely and we have less scope to fund one-off events or support the wider philatelic scene. There is the fear that increasing the subscription would cost us more members than we are losing at present. That will have to be faced one day but I am not proposing it for 2009.

The Treasurer thanked Ronald Hyams for acting as examiner once again.

It was proposed by Grahame Boutle and seconded by Peter Denly that the Treasurer's report be accepted. Agreed unanimously.

Election of Officers

President – This post is a committee appointment, as stated in the constitution, and at the last committee meeting John Hayward was elected President for the next four years. Immediate Past President Brian Sole presented John Hayward with the Badge of Office for President and wished him well for his four years in office.

Chairman – Richard Wheeler had volunteered to be Chairman, there were no other nominations and Richard Wheeler was duly elected.

Vice Chairman - Vacant.

Secretary and Treasurer – Ron Hyams proposed and Margaret Morris seconded that Anne Stammers be elected as Secretary and Peter Wood as Treasurer – agreed unanimously.

Election of Committee Members

It was proposed by Margaret Morris and seconded by Peter Powles that those willing to stand again be re-elected 'en bloc' and that the nominees as on the Agenda be elected; and to include Ron Hyams who offered to stand for committee, this was carried unanimously.

Wendy Buckle	Editor <i>Thamescene</i>
Peter Denly	Membership Secretary
Simon Moorcroft	Publicity Officer
Richard Wheeler	Distribution <i>Thamescene</i>
Michael Blackman	Advertising
Brian Sole	Committee member
Jim Etherington	Committee member
Gerald Lovell	Committee member
Ron Hyams	Committee member

Ratification by the membership of the appointment of

Ron Backhouse	Librarian
Grahame Boutle	Examiner of the Accounts

Brian Sole proposed and Gerald Lovell seconded that these appointments be ratified. This was carried unanimously.

Motions for Discussion

That this meeting invites Brian Sole to become an Honorary Life Member of the BTA.

Another Honorary Life Member – Margaret Morris - wished John Hayward a happy term of office.

Margaret Morris was then invited to propose Brian Sole as an Honorary Life Member of the BTA. She commenced by saying how delighted and honoured she was to have been invited to say a few words about Brian Sole. She asked those present to come on a little "time travel" with her as she wanted to return to the late 1970s when there was agitation for representation

of thematic collectors in Great Britain. In 1984 the BTA was given its independence and founding members 1, 2 and 3 were, respectively, Franceska Rapkin, herself and Brian Sole. Initially, Margaret was Secretary with Brian as her Assistant Secretary and the Editor of *Themescene* was Tom Wilson. Although Tom was well qualified with editorial skills, he did not have access to the sort of technology that was required for the publication and so Margaret became Editor, and at that time Brian took over as Secretary and continued in that rôle for many years. He carried out his duties with enthusiasm and later served as Chairman and, until today, President. During his presidency, the BTA celebrated its 21st anniversary and the celebrations included the exhibition on the Village Green at STAMPEX and a major display to the Royal Philatelic Society London. Most recently, Brian travelled to Glasgow to join in the celebrations for the 60th anniversary of the Glasgow Thematic Society and that was greatly appreciated.

Brian has consistently “flown the flag” for thematic philately not only in Britain but also in Europe and worldwide through his award winning exhibits. The successful EUROTHEMA exhibition here last November was an endorsement of this outreach.

Brian continues to work quietly but effectively behind the scenes and to encourage young collectors. His service to philately is outstanding and for this he has received the prestigious Congress Medal.

Margaret said she had much pleasure in commending to the members the award of Honorary Life Membership which, in Brian’s case, was long overdue but never better

This proposal was received with acclamation by the meeting and Margaret Morris then presented Brian Sole with his diploma for Honorary Life Membership.

Any Other Business

Ron Hyams, as Examiner for the accounts for some years wished to propose a vote of thanks to the Treasurer for all his work, this was seconded by Peter Denly and agreed.

BTA Meeting and Workshop – John Hayward reminded everyone that this would be held at The Royal Philatelic Society on Saturday July 26th at 10.30 – 16.45. It was hoped that as many members as possible would attend and would those interested please let him know.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 3.12 p.m. and was followed by Barry Stagg, winner of the BTA Cup at Thematica 2007 giving his winning display on ‘The History, Development and Uses of Parachutes’.

Date For Your Diaries:
Autumn Stampex 2008
17th - 20th September

Featuring:

Display on the Village Green - “Military Messengers” including equipment from Bletchley Park;

Display by the British Postal Museum and Archive - “Timeless & Classic: Elizabeth Queen & Icon”;

At least 7 specialist society meetings;

Free auction for young collectors.

THEMATIC WORKSHOP: ROYAL PHILATELIC SOCIETY, 26th JULY 2008

John Hayward reports on a very successful BTA event

A whole day thematic workshop was run by John Hayward, the BTA's Display Organiser, for twelve of our members and one guest at the Royal Philatelic Society London. The Workshop started with thematic displays by several of the members attending. Peter Wood got the ball rolling with his Irish Connections. These included registration labels and postal town numerical cancellations from Australian towns with Irish connections. He also showed a 1663 receipt. Lesley Marley followed with a display of postcards on Whaling and some fine 18th century Parliamentary rules for fishing that mentioned whaling. Barry Stagg entertained us again with Parachuting, showing its origins and how parachutes work. World War II usage was included, as were people who had been saved by parachutes. Graeme Boutle displayed Safety at Sea, beautifully written up by hand. He asked for comments on his pages as a thematic exhibit. Minerals and Gemstones were the theme of Anne Stammers' display. This included gold and diamonds with goldfield cancellations and some nice social philately items plus a Black Diamond town handstamp. Ships were next from Peter Denly. His display included the Cutty Sark, Viking longships, charts and navigation, a ship's letter, an ice breaker and a dry dock. The star item was a reply coupon showing a sailing ship. Richard Wheeler displayed Puppets, with some of his latest acquisitions which included postal stationery, telegrammes and Punch magazine. Ron Trevellyan took us on a Trip to Paris for the 1937 International Exposition. There were many Cinderellas for this event and plenty of propaganda contained in the philatelic items issued by Germany, Italy and Russia. John Hayward rounded off the first session with Postal Services by Motor-Cycle, with emphasis on express and special delivery stamps and covers.



Our guest speaker, John Leathes, was next. He provided a very entertaining display from his two thematic collections – Submarines and Tigers – with a strong emphasis on the fun of thematic collecting. John explained that he was a reborn philatelist in 1970, starting with Warships and then the Royal Navy, realising as he went along that these were huge subjects and he needed to downsize. So he progressed from Minesweepers to Submarines and settled there especially as his father had been a submariner. Even the Submarine collection had developed into another collection of German U Boat Mail from World Wars I and II. For our benefit he displayed the A – Z of Submarines. One page for each letter of the alphabet, but as he had 32 pages he included the Cyrillic alphabet! There was some wonderful Cinderella material in the display with a large variety of poster stamps and some beautiful German coloured labels for Charity use.

He told us his favourite thematic collection was Tigers. A passion for the big cats had been there since he was very young. There was as to be expected some fine material from the Federated Malay States, also from HMS Tiger, and his “Save the Tiger” Open Class exhibit which had been highly acclaimed in one exhibition and savaged (the appropriate word) in the next. It was a fun exhibit in the Open Class and John’s opinion of the second set of Judges



cannot be repeated here! He moved on to items showing cheetahs and snow leopards and ended with what he described as “rubbish”. By then his audience had firmly grasped that John was a master of the understatement and there was clearly no rubbish in his display. Richard Wheeler, BTA Chairman, gave an appropriate vote of thanks for an immensely enjoyable presentation and display and John Hayward, with his BTA President’s hat on, presented John with the BTA Cup which he had deservedly won at

Thematica. John Leathes left us with some notes on Collecting Tigers which should soon be available on the BTA’s website.

The afternoon sessions were given over to all the various types of philatelic material that may be included in a thematic collection, with details of where to obtain them and much discussion from those attending on the items themselves as they were displayed. So we saw a full range of stamps including locals, Cinderellas and machine labels, plus miniature sheets and booklets and even what was printed on the selvedge of stamps. There were pages displayed showing handstamps, metermarks, cachets, postal markings of all kinds, registered labels, perfins, essays and proofs, artists drawings, presentation packs, PHQ cards, maximum cards, and publicity material. There were also pages of postal stationery, postal history, telegrammes, postcards, letterheads and privately illustrated envelopes. Indeed, much may be collected by the thematic collector and more for the full enjoyment of thematic collecting. It was noticeable that the attendees were making notes as to where items could be obtained.

Greame Boutle expressed everyone’s thanks for a most enjoyable day. The BTA Committee will be giving serious thought to running similar workshops in 2009 outside of London, possibly in conjunction with regional Philatelic Federations. ☒

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP FOR THEMATIC PHILATELY, ESSEN

8th – 10th MAY 2008

Richard Wheeler gives his “newbie” perspective

The sun shone brightly over the Thematic Championships this year, literally, but we were all indoors!

As a first time entrant I really enjoyed the exhibition and displays. My only criticism was the lack of information in the whole of the vast Essen Messe complex initially on where to hand in the exhibit. The information stands in other vast complexes did not know that there was an exhibition for philately taking place. Eventually a helpful person who had nothing to do with the exhibition pointed out some stairs which led to an underground garage and parking area with an entrance to the exhibition floor. Once inside a welcome awaited, and everything was well organised and efficient.

The British contestants were:

Class no.	Contestant	Title	Class name
3	Richard Wheeler	Masks, Myths, Mimes and the Evolution of Puppets	Man and Everyday Life
7	Lesley Marley	The Whales Tale	Animals and Plants
8	Sheila Foster	The Rose	Agriculture and Pets
8	David Hunter	Sugar	Agriculture and Pets



David Griffiths was in attendance as a dealer and along with his wife Jane completed the party. We all stayed at the same Hotel Ypsilon and spent very convivial evenings together.

At the Palmares celebration on the Friday afternoon, the results were announced. Lesley Marley and Sheila Foster each gained a second place in their class. Then the sun became even brighter for it was announced that the judges wished to give 6.5 marks out of 5 to Sheila winning the Special Prize for Aesthetic Appeal.

Dinner followed in the same building, the only hiccup being a shortfall in the number of tickets being printed for entry. It was gradually sorted out and concluded an enjoyable day. Sheila and Lesley were walking on air, so we joined them and walked back to our hotel where we collapsed in the bar and helped them to celebrate.

On the Saturday morning the jury critique was held for each of us in front of our exhibits. As always on these occasions, whatever our own views might be, the jury members go out of their way to be constructive and helpful. The Jury President Damian Läge cast a benevolent eye over the proceedings and ensured that we had all benefited from our participation. ☒

BTA NEWS

ATA CHECKLISTS

The BTA web page now has a full listing of the American Topical Association checklists. These are available to members via our membership of the ATA. There is a downloadable form on the web page with full details of how to order. Do check this out – if there is list on your topic and you don't have a copy do order one: they are of consistently high quality and could save you quite a lot of research time. Hundreds of topics are covered, so check them out at <http://www.brit-thematic-assoc.com/publications.htm> They can be ordered via:

Ronald Hyams

47 The Four Tubs

Bushey Heath

Herts

WD23 4SJ

On the same page is a list of ATA books for sale, again with order form. As I write this there is also a Book Sale on the page – hurry to get your bargains.

WIPA 2008

WIPA 2008 will be held at the Austria Center Vienna from 18th – 21st September. The full list of BTA entrants (various classes) is: Ron Backhouse, Joyce Boyer, Barry Floyd, Geoff Hood, Francis Kiddle, Lesley Marley, Ian Paton, Brian Sole, Richard Wheeler, and Peter Wood. We wish them all great success.

HERE AND THERE

ANNE DUMMER AWARD 2009

The Stamp Active Network is inviting nominations for the second year of this prestigious award for 'Young Collector of the Year'.

Anne Dummer came back to collecting later in life and devoted most of her time to encouraging collecting among children. She started a junior club in her home town of Kettering in 1994 which soon built up to a steady membership of 36 enthusiasts who enjoyed much success at both local and national levels. This led on to the founding of Kidstamps under the umbrella of the National Youth Stamp Group – now Stamp Active Network. This gave her contact with over 700 young collectors nationwide, many of whom she was able to meet and encourage with her participation in the children's corners at Stampex and Thematica which she attended from 1998 until her untimely death from cancer in 2006.

The Award, made available by Midpex in her memory, is given not to the candidate who has achieved most in competitions and recognition, but to the one who is judged to have encouraged their peers in the hobby by their example, communication and enthusiasm for stamp collecting – not thinking of themselves, but sharing with and helping others in the hobby, just as Anne is remembered by all those who had the privilege of knowing her.

If you know of a young collector who fits these criteria, please let us know. Sing their praises (truthfully) and send your nominations to:

Alan Randall Jones, Stamp Active Network – Anne Dummer Award, 61, Cloverley, Brooklands Road, Sale, Cheshire, M33 3QE or by email to:

alan@philatelix.orangehome.co.uk

SECRETS OF THE SAUCY SEASIDE POSTCARD

**Exhibition at Russell-Cotes Art Gallery & Museum, Bournemouth,
21st October 2008 – 1st February 2009**

www.russell-cotes.bournemouth.gov.uk

Secrets of the Saucy Seaside Postcard takes a behind-the-scenes look at the artwork that went into creating the red-nosed husbands, buxom beauties and other cheeky characters associated with Bamforth's comic postcard. Tracing the journey from the artist's rough sketch to the final print, 200 original artworks will be shown alongside the original postcards.

James Bamforth was the son of a painter and decorator. In 1870 he set up business in Holmfirth as a portrait photographer. James was a highly skilled artist and he painted his own backdrops for people to stand in front of when they posed.

James was also a keen businessman and he soon realised that he could use his photography skills and equipment to make lantern slides, which were popular in the late 19th century. Lantern slides were used to illustrate lectures, songs and stories.

James Bamforth and his family – his three children Janie, Edwin and Frank were all involved – were especially skilled at creating effective settings using props and the enormous painted backdrops from the photography studio. They often illustrated popular musical songs. Local friends and family members often posed for the lantern slides, as well as actors who might be performing locally.

The Bamforth's always had an eye for a good business opportunity, especially one that would build on existing skills. This led them to try both film production and postcards. In 1899 James Bamforth became one of the first people to make films for entertainment purposes. Between 1899 and 1915 they made over 50 short films, mostly comedies, and often with a risqué element. Production was brought to an end by war conditions.

By then, however, postcard production was in full swing. Post Office rules changed in 1902, so that, for the first time, the address and message could be written on the same side. This meant the obverse could be given over entirely to an image. The first Bamforth postcards probably appeared in 1903. The oldest one we know of is in the exhibition, dated July 1903. Many of the early cards were photographic views; however the family soon began re-using images created for lantern slides. These were published as a series, of up to 6 cards in a set. These were highly collectible almost instantly. International success followed and Bamforth & Co became a limited company in 1910. At times they had offices in London and New York.

Edwin took over running the business in 1911, when his father died. Edwin was followed by his own son, Derek, after World War Two. Derek owned the business until 1987. However, with retirement beckoning and no children willing to take the business on, he sold it to ETW Dennis and Sons of Scarborough. The Holmfirth studio continued to operate until 1993 and no new designs have been created since then. Dennis & Sons went into receivership in 2000. The company name was bought by Ian Wallace, who now publishes a selection of the old designs.

The company is now best remembered for its comic holiday postcards, though there is still a collectors market for the song series of the 1900s and 1910s. However, since the Second World War they have published a range of products. Photographic view postcards were as important financially as the comic cards. They also produced calendars and greetings cards of various types and styles.

An important aspect of this production is the artist drawn pieces, be they postcards, calendars or greeting cards. Bamforth's first artist-drawn postcard appeared in 1910. The first house artist, Douglas Tempest, was employed on a permanent basis from about 1912 and they maintained an active artists' studio until the office closed. Long service and a system of in-house training established and maintained a distinctive house style with bright colours, exaggerated characters and an emphasis on interaction.

There were only four major staff artists in all. Douglas Tempest worked until his death in 1954. Arnold Taylor joined in 1926 aged 16 and stayed until 1987. Philip W. Taylor joined the team in the 1930s. After World War two he moved to New Zealand, but continued to submit designs. Brian Fitzpatrick joined in the 1950s, to replace Tempest, but died of leukaemia in 1974.



Editor's note:

Non-post office issued postcards should not, of course, be used in thematic competitions (although they make an excellent contribution to a social philately entry). However I have included this press release because many of us have postcards in our collections – and we collect what interests us, irrespective of rules. Bamforth cards are a great piece of British traditional seaside humour, and I hope this exhibition raises a smile for those who can get to it.



GROUP NEWS

CAPTAIN COOK SOCIETY



The UK Weekend Meeting will be held on 24th – 26th October 2008 at the Blue Bell Lodge Hotel, Acklam Road, Middlesbrough, TS5 7HL. There will be an informal dinner and meeting on the Friday evening, with the main event being held in the Captain Cook Birthplace Museum on the Saturday. There will be a number of talks during the day, followed by an auction. Sunday will be free to allow visits to places in the area. Further details are available from Mr. A. Peel, 13 Cowdry Close, Thornhill, Dewsbury, West Yorkshire, WF 12 0LW.

GUILD OF ST GABRIEL



The programme for the rest of the year is:

September 20 th	Ecumenical movement	Rev Noel Shepherd
October 18 th	Illuminated manuscripts	Peter Greening
November 15 th	Postcards plus Bring & Buy	Members
December 6 th	Christmas meetings, carols, quizzes and tea	
	Hugh Morgan Cup for best entry on "Christmas"	

HANDSTAMP SPECIAL

*The Handstamps reprinted on these pages first appeared in the "British Postmark Bulletin".
For a free sample copy, write to: The Editor, Postmark Bulletin, Royal Mail, 35 – 50
Rathbone Place, London, W1T 1HQ*

Just4kiDs

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

“KENNY THE KINGFISHER”

(taken from a competition entry by Rory, aged 10)



“Hi, my name is Kenny the Kingfisher. I am a Common Kingfisher. How dare they call me common when I am a protected species!

I live near rivers, estuaries and large ponds.

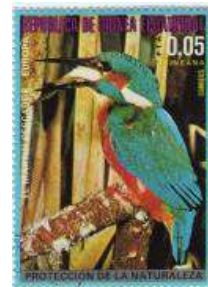


I am only 16cm long, but I am very good at fishing. Here is my cousin Mike who is a Mangrove kingfisher and he will show you how we catch fish.



First we sit still and wait for a fish. Then we dive in the water with our dagger-like bills. We can dive but we can't swim. Then we fly away with our fish.

We bash the fish on a branch to kill it, then we eat our fish head first so that the fins and scales don't open and choke



us.



The female Common Kingfisher has a red bit on her bill. If I want a wife I offer her a fish. If she likes me she will take it, but if she doesn't like me she turns away. Then we dig a nest underground in a sandy riverbank. Then my wife lays six or seven eggs.

I have lots of kingfisher cousins. Here are some of them.



Wendy the White Tailed Kingfisher



Brian the Blue-breasted Kingfisher



Alan the Azure Kingfisher



Christine the Kookaburra



Simon the Sacred Kingfisher



Ron the Ringed Kingfisher



Willie the White-breasted Kingfisher



***“That’s all for now. Bye.
From Kenny”***

Did you enjoy this? What's your favourite bird? WRITE AND TELL US!

ON THE WEB

Tried out the Planetstamp website yet? (check with your parent first)

www.planetstamp.co.uk

WRITE TO US!

Send all your jokes, poems, drawings and letters to:

Just4Kids,

The Editor, Themescene, 87 Victoria Road, Springbourne, Bournemouth,

BH1 4RS

A PRIZE WILL BE SENT TO EVERYONE WHO WRITES IN