

THEMESCENE

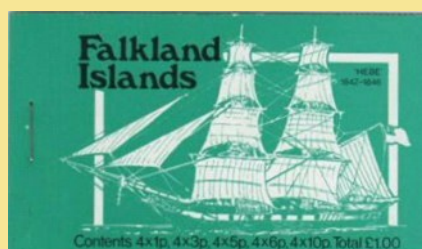
September 2012

In this issue we:

Sail the seven seas

One man's marine adventure

With Peter Denly



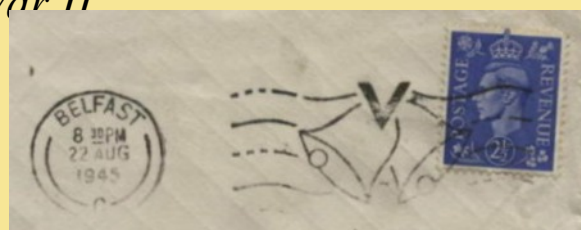
Discover Japanese art

My collection

With Ian Gray

Admire the women of World War II

They also served



Sample a spice

Globalisation of vanilla

With Mark Humfrey



*And get an update on
the future of the BTA*



BRITISH THEMATIC ASSOCIATION

Volume 29, No.3. Whole Number 108

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EDITORIAL

Wendy Buckle

Who would have thought it? The Olympic Games turned out to be a great opportunity to publicise stamp collecting. In my last President's Page I was complaining about Royal Mail jumping on the bandwagon and issuing GB gold medal winner stamps. Well I take it back. It seemed that nearly every day when I settled down to watch TV coverage of the Games there was mention of these stamps, and at least early on huge reproductions of them presented to the winners. Then Royal Mail came up with the idea of painting one post box gold in the winner's home town. More coverage. As well as all this I was delighted with the popularity of Olympex (page 84). It would be great to think that in the golden glow of these amazing Olympics (allow me the hyperbole, as I write this we are still in the middle of it, and I'm still pinching myself) there is a legacy not only for sport, but for stamp collecting.

Reading the letter columns of stamp magazines it seems many of us consider that Royal Mail does issue too many stamps. But the UK is hardly alone in this. BTA member Len Yandell drew my attention to an ongoing series of stamps issued by France's La Poste called "La France comme j'aime". There have been three sets of issues since 2009, appearing as 24 different regional sets of ten stamps each, i.e. 720 different stamps, all at the current NVI equivalent of first class, currently 89 Euro cents. Do the maths, as they say: 640.80 Euros. They are certainly very attractive, but collectors of modern France must be saying "non" in droves.



10 self-adhesive stamps in a folded sheet featuring "La Haute-Normandie"

While I'm always pleased to see stamp collecting feature in the national press, I'm not sure it's always for the best reasons. At the time of the Diamond Jubilee (4 June) the *Daily Telegraph* carried an article in its Personal Finance section entitled "Collectors eye up Jubilee stamps", suggesting that stamps can be a worthwhile investment, particularly Queen Victoria Diamond Jubilee issues (www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/personalfinance/investing/9305696/Collectors-eye-up-Jubilee-stamps.html). Maybe so, but I hate seeing non-collectors encouraged this way, it's not what this hobby is about.

Turning to *Themescene*, in this issue we have articles on two very different subjects: the merchant marine (page 89) and Japanese woodblock prints (page 94). But they have a common starting point: what made their owners start collecting on their theme. Now this is a story we can all tell, so why not consider sending me something on your own collection and what started you off. Neither of these contributors have written for *Themescene* before, so no reason why you can't!

There are fewer 'subject' articles than usual in this issue as we have so much formal material to include. The Minutes of the AGM are on page 96. This meeting gave the Association guidance on a viable way forward, following the "Future of the BTA" discussion paper in the last issue, and this is reported on page 103. Thank you to all those members who took the time to respond to the original paper.



Rapkin Memorial Bowl winner Barry Stagg being presented with his trophy at the AGM



'Top table' at the AGM: Anne Stammers and John Hayward

I was pleased to read in the Membership Page (page 87) of the success of the BTA Speakers' List. We are still getting requests for speakers, it seems this initiative is one of the most effective ways of getting publicity for the BTA and for thematics. If you enjoy displaying, even if only to societies in your area, please consider adding your name to our list. And if you haven't displayed before, why not think about it? You can start with a members evening at your own society, and then think about maybe a half evening at another society. In my experience you are on to a winner simply by collecting thematics. It doesn't require top class philatelic material, and you will be telling a story your audience can enjoy and relate to. No need for them to peer closely at a frame trying to spot that rare error, no need for them to follow lengthy descriptions of postal routes and calculations of rates, just tell the story.

The Committee is always pushing for maximum contact with members, and we will be having a members' meeting at the ABPS meeting in Perth (page 105). It's some years since we last met in Scotland, so please try and support it. Anne Stammers (Secretary) and myself will be there, and we'd love to meet you, some of whom are simply names in an email Contacts list at present.

And one final reminder about the BTA Weekend in Oxford. The outside back cover gives brief details. It's not too late to book, and if you live within reasonable distance of Oxford you would be very welcome as a day delegate, giving yourself a very inexpensive day enjoying thematics. ☺

PRESIDENT'S PAGE

Wendy Buckle




I can dream! Of course I wasn't an Olympic torch bearer, this photo comes courtesy of those nice members of the Society of Olympic Collectors who staffed a kiosk in the forecourt of the British Library for the duration of the exhibition "Olympex 2012: Collecting the Olympic Games". I had gone along to see the exhibition while in London with a ticket for the Games themselves. I was very, very impressed with it. Taking up all of the exhibition space on the ground floor of the British Library this free exhibition tells the story of the past and present

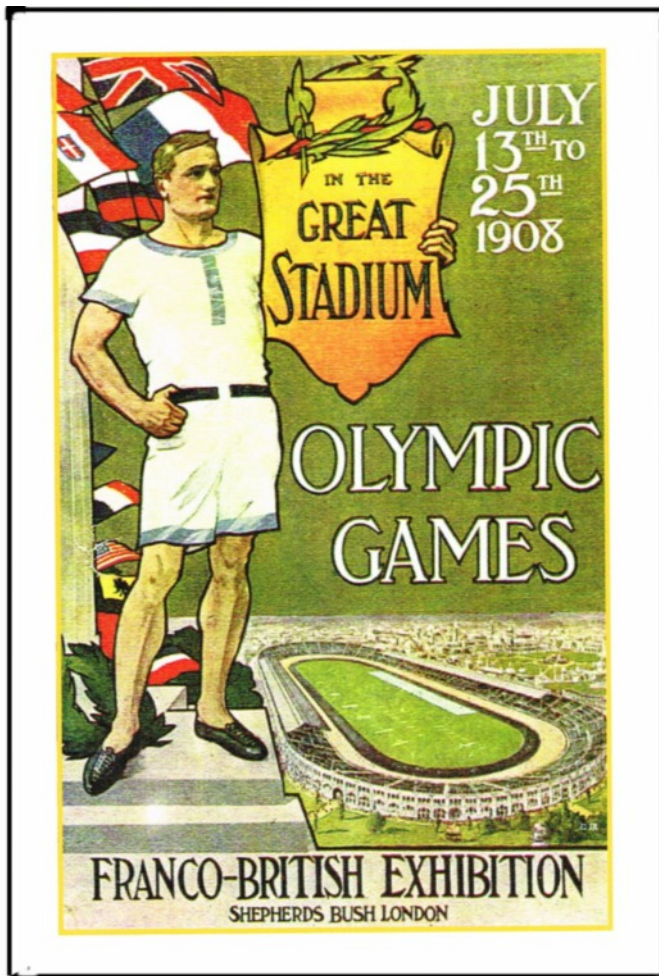
of the Olympic Games through the medium of postage stamps and related memorabilia. Juan Antonio Samaranch, President of the International Olympic Committee from 1980 to 2001 first recognised the unlikely link between philately and sport, saying: "Collecting is the sport of the spectator". He was instrumental in the organisation of the first Olympics-related philatelic exhibition "Olympilex" in Lausanne in 1985, and he proposed that philatelic events in the future should be held during the Olympic Games. Olympex 2012 carries on that idea, featuring exhibits from the collections of members of the Unione Italiana Collezionisti Olimpico e Sportiva, the Society of Olympic Collectors (SOC) and private individuals. BTA member Alan Sabey is to be congratulated for his contribution as a member of SOC.

When I was there the exhibition was buzzing with visitors, and I'm not surprised. With major funding from the International Olympic Committee and others this was a highly professional presentation with eye-catching display boards and interactive computer graphics as well as 55 frames (x 16 sheets) of exhibits. These told the story of Baron Pierre de Coubertin and his idea of the modern Olympics, The Olympic Games of Athens 1896, London 1908 and London 1948. It then went on to an A-Z of Olympic sports from Archery to Wrestling; followed by six frames on the Paralympics and seven frames on the 2012 Torch Relay. Memorabilia on display included clothing, medals, programmes and souvenirs, as well as a mannequin modelling the 2012 Torch Relay kit.

China Post sponsored the very comprehensive catalogue of the exhibition, a 62 page A4 booklet available free of charge. Thanks again to SOC for giving me a copy, which has been deposited in the BTA Library. Lavishly illustrated in full colour I would suggest anyone with an interest in collecting Olympic themes would find it worth reading. As I said, the SOC had a prominently-placed kiosk which was selling Olympic philatelic souvenirs, and it too was attracting much interest. The postcards shown on the next page are reproduced with their permission.

I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to the Exhibition, and it made the perfect curtain-raiser to a day at the Olympics - a once in a lifetime opportunity.

By the time you read this the Olympics will be over and the Paralympics in full swing. It's not too late to catch the Exhibition, which is on until 9th September. For full details see www.bl.uk/olympex2012. 



CHAIRMAN'S PAGE

John Hayward

I would like to start by sending best wishes to very long serving BTA members Mary and Norman Claydon and John Miller. Mary and Norman were badly injured in a road accident earlier this summer. They are both now at home and recovering well. John Miller, one of our honorary life members, has been poorly for some months now. My best wishes and those of the membership go to all three of them for recovery to full health as soon as possible.

Whilst I mention recovering to full health I cannot help but think what a boon a hobby such as stamp collecting can be in such a situation. I was talking to Mark Humfrey after our AGM and his display about Vanilla and asked him how he became involved in stamp collecting and particularly thematics. Mark told me he was recovering from an operation in hospital and realised thereafter he might be housebound for a while, so he wondered how he could occupy his time. Yes, he took up stamp collecting, orchids to start with, but he realised there were too many orchid stamps to collect. However, orchids were a major source of vanilla so he progressed to collecting vanilla and of course the rest is history. The therapeutic effect naturally helped his recovery. And this of course reminds me of the late Steve Boorn who took up stamp collecting after his heart transplant 20 or more years ago. Stamp collecting is undoubtedly an ideal hobby for anyone who is recovering from ill health or an operation, or who may be disabled or housebound.

Many of you will be aware of the phrase, "*If I was going to such and such a place I would not start from here*". What relevance has this phrase got to do with thematic collecting? Well, I am asked from time to time by newcomers to thematic collecting not just about what they should collect, but how they should go about it, and even established thematic collectors ask me how they can put some new life or interest into their thematic collecting. Perhaps they collect on the theme of a famous person, explorer, sportsman, or on a chosen theme where their collection tells a story usually in chronological order. But take someone like Christopher Columbus or Marie Curie who reached the pinnacle of their success later in life after many setbacks. Why not tell their story in your collection by the technique adopted commonly in books and films by using flashback? Start off with their triumph, and ask the question how did they get there? And then embark on collecting all the related philatelic material to show how they got there. There will of course be their legacy to show in the concluding pages of your collection. In this way you can bring a lot more interest and life into your collection and tell a thematic story with greater meaning. This technique is not just applicable to people, it can apply equally to other themes. Take for example any type of fauna, where you can start with how the current family is spread around the world and deal later with how they all evolved; or transport where you can start with man's dreams for the future; or environmental protection, and then go back in time to development over the years and invention. I hope this sets you thinking about how to add some sparkle to your collections. ☐

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S PAGE

Peter Denly

Ordinary members	180	
Family members	14	
Junior members	2	
Society members	13	
Overseas members	16	
Overseas Society members	2	
Honorary members	4	
Total number of members	231	(At 1 st August 2012)

New Members joining since the June 2012 issue

Mr. E. Clayton	Chippenham	Mr. B. Knight	Burwell
Mr I. Reed	Chislehurst	Mr. G. Sandercock	Launceston
Mr. J.S. Templton	Perth		

Deaths advised since the June 2012 issue

Dr. A Arnold	Kingsteignton, Newton Abbot		
Mr. H. Duncan	Falkirk	Mr. A. Payne	Bognor Regis

We take pleasure in welcoming five new members to the Association and hope they will be able to make use of the facilities that are provided. A comparison with the membership numbers declared last quarter shows an increase of 12, which is mainly attributable to the receipt of a number of late subscription renewals.

We are also delighted to report that the BTA Speakers List now has 22 members willing to display, which provides a choice of some 34 subjects. The response from societies for requests for speakers has exceeded all expectations, which will give the BTA opportunities to do some local advertising and hopefully encourage more collectors to our Association. Should you feel tempted to display your thematic collection, contact the **Membership Secretary** (contact details inside front page) who will be pleased to add your name to the growing list. We would especially welcome some volunteers to cover the north of England where currently our representation is a bit thin.

As part of an initiative to keep my local stamp club attractive to existing and new members the committee endorsed a policy of a mixture of both philatelic and social events. This included a washing line thematic display whilst cruising on a river boat on the river Lee, and a joint meeting with St. James Church in Thorley, at their beautifully restored 16th century barn, that was accompanied by some puppetry, magic and a fish and chip supper. In the same vein, the BTA philatelic weekend at Oxford will be a friendly social occasion plus an opportunity to see some classic philatelic material in one of England's most attractive cities. So don't miss the 'boat'.

I take this opportunity to remind members, that when making changes to addresses whether postal or email, please be sure to inform the Membership Secretary, which will ensure your copy of Themescene is delivered correctly. ☐

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

From: Jim Etherington, by email

CAN I USE THIS?

When putting together a thematic exhibit one of the criteria is to include a selection of items that covers a broad span of time. With some themes this may be relatively easy. For example if your theme is nautical in character one may include pre-stamp ship mail right through to recently issued stamps. However other themes may present a greater challenge.

Recently while viewing a display at my club I noticed that in the right hand corner of a Mulready wrapper was a mother reading a letter while her two young children looked on. Fully aware that good thematic collectors often have to think laterally I decided this image would allow me to illustrate the importance of mail between loved ones for maintaining troop morale while serving abroad during 1940.

Feeling quite pleased with myself for thinking creatively and seeing a way of introducing a very early item into my exhibit I felt slightly deflated when it was suggested that the Mulready illustration was not relevant because of the time gap between the item and the subject it was being used to illustrate.

In answer to my question, what do you think and why?



ONE MAN'S MARINE ADVENTURE; or, FROM CAREER TO COLLECTION

Peter Denly charts his collecting life

JULY 1953- A CONVERSATION AT LUNCH WITH MY GRANDFATHER

Grandfather "So! Now the boy has left school, how is he going to earn a living?"
Boy's Father "Well, he seems to be keen on a career at sea!"
Grandfather (Pause)--- "It'll kill him!"
Boy "Well, that's something to look forward to!!!"

THE MARINE ADVENTURE IS LAUNCHED

After a six months spell at King Edward VII Nautical College, 680 Commercial Road, in the East End of London, learning the mechanics of my chosen profession and rowing ex-Admiralty 'whalers' up and down the East India docks; on 6th March 1954 I found myself standing on the deck of a ex-wartime T2 tanker of 16,000 tons dwt in Eastham Dock, Liverpool.



Spoon cancellation of Liverpool together with a shipping agents mark and logo showing a paddle steamer

Now an indentured Apprentice bound over to the British Tanker Company for four years, I presented myself to the Chief Officer of the *S.S. Fort Stevens* who greeted me with "Have you found your accommodation? Good! Get your boiler suit on and report to the bosun".

Later, thoroughly bewildered with both my surroundings and the nautical jargon (with a 'pool accent), I was wheeled up in my uniform to meet Captain Henry Weberling who had been a ship's Captain for more years than I had been around. His encouraging remark of "I expect we can make something of him" left me in little doubt that my Grandfather had a better appreciation of my prospects than me. I deposited my indentures with the Captain and saw the ship's stamp and the date penned on the back, and my marine adventure was under way, at the salary of £6 per month plus an allowance of 1/- to buy soap.



*M.V. 'British Esk' of the
British Tanker Company*

Apprenticeship was followed by several years in the role of a deck officer, finally achieving my Master Mariner's status after 10 years. My final ship to sea was the motor tanker *British Kiwi* of 16,000 tons deadweight; from which I was removed by an invitation to take up an appointment in Head Office as an Assistant Marine Superintendent, and placed in charge of a unit maintaining the thousands of nautical charts required for a fleet of more

than 120 ships. Thereafter a varied career followed in the complexities of running a fleet of tankers, with my final years spent overseas as the professional head of a shipping company whose business was delivering liquefied natural gas by tanker from Abu Dhabi to Japan.

GETTING BACK TO STAMPS

As a keen stamp collector in my school days, it would have been logical to collect from all the many countries visited during my days at sea. I did manage to post mail from Tristan da Cunha and buy stamps in Pitcairn, but sadly I let many great opportunities slip by. Nonetheless, my interest was soon re-kindled, as working in Britannic House located off Moorgate in the City of London there were at least six stamp shops within easy walking distance to be visited in a lunch time. There rapidly followed purchases for my King George VI collection, a small Wembley collection (later to be expanded to seven large albums), a general collection of Cyprus and another of Egypt. In my final working years during an overseas posting in the Gulf State of Abu Dhabi I found a local stamp shop and set about putting together a collection of British Post Offices in Eastern Arabia.



*British Post Office
in Eastern Arabia*



*King George VI: an
example of De La Rue
printing*



*British Empire Exhibition,
Wembley 1924*

THE MARINE ADVENTURE BECOMES A THEMATIC COLLECTION

Retirement seemed to arrive quite quickly, and having become Secretary of our local stamp club I began to look for a new collecting interest. For some time I had toyed with the idea of a thematic collection and felt that maybe my sea-going experience could form the basis. My first idea for a thematic collection involved retrieving all the correspondence to my parents and fiancée written whilst at sea, but to my dismay I found that the stamps had been removed and 'pasted' into an album. So, being a navigator, I turned to looking for stamps depicting lighthouses, which turned out to be rather a popular subject in many countries. Having planted the seed, I found that this then spread to booklets, miniature sheets and postal stationery, and quickly I realised what a splendid mixture of philatelic items were out there to improve the thematic collection.



*New Zealand Government Life
Insurance Office postal stationery*



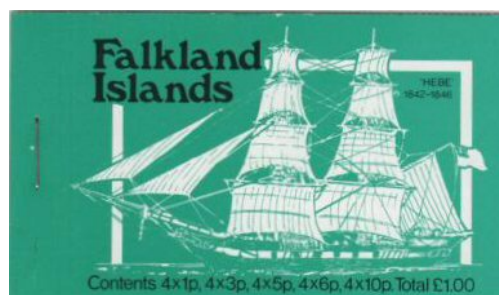
*USA Statue of Liberty,
formerly a lighthouse*

Research into one's subject means acquiring reference books, and I was fortunate to discover the 'Seamark' organisation that publishes a catalogue of Lighthouse stamps, plus a bi-monthly journal with lots of up-to-date information about lighthouses around the world. In 1990 the ABPS News carried an article from the Ashford Philatelic Society which advertised a talk on lighthouses by a retired keeper. This proved an introduction to a society called the Association of Lighthouse Keepers, which I joined and now receive another bi-monthly journal full of information and fascinating articles.

But of course the inevitable happened, and links started to develop to other aspects of the marine world and shipping industry. Country craft, sailing ships, early power driven ships, modern ships, warships, yachts, and of course the many vital services that enable a ship to sail safely every day, such as navigation and communications, all began to form chapters in the story which was structured chronologically from the earliest days to modern times.



*Vignette for Newfoundland
1861 issue*



*Booklet showing the mail
brig 'Hebe' 1842-1846*

I had always felt that until a stamp had completed its task of accompanying a letter, sometimes halfway around the world, it was not worthy of being saved. Thus my 'stamp' collections have tended to be fine used rather than mint, so it was quite a change when delving into thematic collecting to find that the most suitable stamps were mint in order to allow the design to come through clearly. Of course when tempted to try competitive exhibiting one soon discovered that a mixture of mint and used stamps was frowned upon: and of course there was a set of rules which needed careful attention regarding the material which could be used. Rules may seem draconian but they do provide a standard by which judges may compare entries.



*French submarine 'Surcouf'
lost without trace in 1942*



The design is clearer on a mint stamp

First steps at competitions when faced with the need to display 16 sheets seemed quite daunting. However as the main collection grew it became increasingly difficult to 'prune out' 16 sheets which still told a story. Nonetheless, having achieved some success in Federation and National level competitions, a request to give a talk and display to a local society saw the start of a series of displays which I now find a great deal of fun and more rewarding. However to have a presentable thematic collection, a good structured plan, well designed pages with diverse and interesting material is required so that the story comes across clearly.

It must be remembered that the audience may be unfamiliar with the subject and will not be provided with much time in a meeting to view the material once the talk is done. So a hand-out of the plan is quite useful.

I have always believed that one should achieve great joy from philately in whichever form one collects. For me the presentation of a thematic collection containing much of the knowledge gained in a career that spanned more than forty years stirs memories and experiences, which allow anecdotes and stories to flow - hopefully for the enjoyment of the audience.

Collecting a country or a set of stamps is a finite affair whereas thematic collecting is infinite. Every dealer's box contains yet another treasure to enhance a chapter, or as so often happens, a find opens up a whole new perspective on a subject. So if the purse doesn't dry up first one can keep at thematic collecting for a lifetime. ☐



*Must I go down to the sea again----?
Apologies to John Masefield*

NEW ISSUES

*The stamps below are reproduced with the kind assistance of Harry Allan,
P O Box 5, Poole, Dorset, BH12 9GF*



MY COLLECTION

Ian J. Gray is inspired by the Orient

Readers may have noticed in the ABPS and BTA speakers lists a display titled “Hiroshige – Japanese Woodblock Prints” and wondered What?, probably followed by Why?

The ‘what’ is both simple and complex. It is a display of stamps, postal cards and postcards depicting the work of Hiroshige - more information later.

The ‘who’ is very simple! Returning from a rail tour in Japan in 1996, I was wandering round a book shop in Kansai Airport (near Osaka) looking at books to use up most of my yen. As a surveyor, I was looking at books on Japanese buildings and found one on castles. This was one of a number of relatively cheap books, both in English and Japanese, by the same publisher on all sorts of Japanese subjects. There was one by an artist on Tokaido which looked interesting. On later reading, it turned out to be on one of Hiroshige’s series of 55 prints of various scenes on the Tokaido route between Edo and Kyoto, with the modern artist’s impressions combined with the originals. A year or so later, I was looking through Stanley Gibbons in connection with one of my older thematic collections when I noticed a number of stamp issues with Hiroshige’s Tokaido designs. I therefore noted all the relevant issues and in due course purchased them.

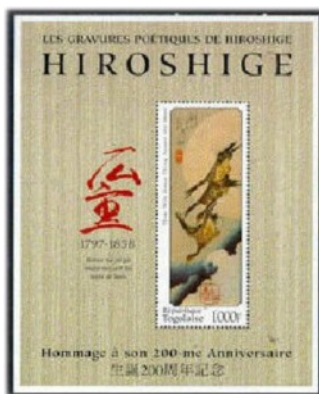
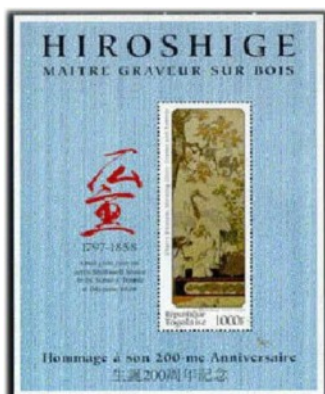


I toyed with the idea of a 16 sheet competition entry but never got round to actually doing so - luckily. As 1998 was the bicentenary of Hiroshige’s birth, a lot of countries jumped on the bandwagon and produced stamps showing his designs. The need for a Presidential display for my local philatelic society - Falkirk and District - concentrated the mind and, after purchase of a number of reference books, the stamps were suitably mounted and written up. A visit to London in 2000 for the International Philatelic Exhibition was productive. An English-based dealer in Japanese material had a stand, and I was looking through a box of postal cards (mainly Echo cards) on bridges for railway bridges when one of Hiroshige’s Tokaido designs appeared. The ensuing conversation – “That’s not a railway bridge! No, I collect Hiroshige as well. Oh, I’ve a box on that” - resulted in the purchase of a set of 55 Japanese postal cards and a set of 55 postcards of Tokaido designs. This, together with the purchase of postcards and greetings cards of Hiroshige prints from a now defunct London Asiatic art shop, resulted in a large increase in the size of the collection. I now have modern British, French (many purchased in Washington DC), American (many purchased in Paris) and German postcards and greetings cards as well as Formosa Oolong Tea postcards from the 1910 Japan Britain Exhibition at the White City, London and Japanese shipping line postcards. However, the most interesting was found by chance. On the way to a holiday in South Africa, the usual wonderful flight connections (too tight or three hours) resulted in time at Amsterdam Airport to wander round the shops. My mother noticed a Japanese-style postcard design on a display at the outstation of the Van Gogh Museum. Turned out that Van Gogh had copied two Hiroshige prints, and I eventually found the relevant stamps (ten years later!).



I should explain the system for woodblock prints. The important person was not the designer but the publisher. He commissioned the artist / designer to produce the designs, frequently in sets of six or eight,

or in series such as Tokaido. The designs were passed to the block-maker who carved on the large pieces of wood what are effectively colour separations. The blocks then went to the printer who produced the actual print. These were sold by the publisher, either directly or through vendors. Prints were usually pasted on to house walls, or bound into books. Many of the individual prints have not survived due to fire burning down the houses. Prints were in various sizes, depending on the size of the design. If the design was too big, it was split into two or three separate sections - some triptychs have appeared on sheetlets for the 200th anniversary of Hiroshige's birth.



My collection is split into four sections: Tokaido, 100 Views of Edo, Birds and Flowers, and the rest.

The Tokaido was the coastal route between Edo (now Tokyo) and Kyoto. There were 53 intermediate way-stations but travellers could do more than one leg each day. There is more than one series of prints, with different views for the stations. The original stamps obtained are split between two

different series but the postal cards and postcards mentioned earlier are of the most common series. I also have postcards of odd scenes from other series.

The 100 Views of Edo depicts scenes in and around the Eastern Capital. About three quarters of the 117 prints have appeared on stamps. These prints were also published in book form and one of the stamps shows the contents page of the book. My main reference book on these prints has used the book prints and I have followed this seasonal listing rather than the date order for the prints which were produced over several years. The two Van Gogh designs fit into this series. I have managed to obtain postcards of some of the prints which have not yet appeared on stamps, but am still missing some views.



The Birds and Flowers group is, again, based on one of my reference books and includes prints of various formats and sizes, all depicting, insects, flowers and / or trees. In this case, it is mainly greetings cards rather than postcards which are included, together with a bookmark.

As mentioned, the fourth group is the rest. This includes a few stamps (and more postcards) with views from the other series such as Kisokaido and scenes from 60-odd provinces. There were numerous prints showing views of Fujiyama - in some cases you have to look hard for the mountain. A few have been used on stamps, and again postcards and greetings cards bulk

out this section. A number of six or eight print sets of specific areas were published. The few stamps which depict these show prints mainly from the Kyoto area, predominately around Arashiyama. A number of single, two and three sheet prints do not belong to any series and are in this section. A number of guides to drawing using Hiroshige prints were published and two stamps show examples of these.

I also have some pages with prints by Hiroshige's contemporaries and these are sometimes included in a display. These are stamps which are inset with Hiroshige designs or on stamps I purchased thinking they were Hiroshige prints. ☐

BTA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the 21st Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 9th June 2012 at Swinpex, at St Joseph's Roman Catholic College, Ocotal Way, Swindon SN3 3LR

Before the meeting commenced our President Wendy Buckle presented the Franceska Rapkin Memorial Bowl to Barry Stagg for 'Best Article in Themescene' during the year 2011 for his article 'Passion and Parachuting' and congratulated him on this achievement.

Present: There were 19 members present

The Chairman, John Hayward, welcomed everyone to the 21st Annual General Meeting, particularly those who had not attended an AGM before.

1) **Apologies:** Richard Wheeler, Michael Blackman, Simon Moorcroft, Charles Oppenheim, Frank Spencer, Margaret Morris, Ursula Goulding, Mary and Norman Claydon, Jean and Alexander Crawford. It was noted that Mary and Norman Claydon had been in a bad road accident last weekend and the Secretary would send them a card.

2) Minutes of the 20th Annual General Meeting held on 11th June 2011

These had been published in Themescene September 2011 and were circulated at this meeting. Barry Stagg proposed and Gerald Lovell seconded that the Minutes be accepted as a true record – passed unanimously.

3) Matters arising

Subscriptions for the under 25's - this was now in place

4) Chairman's Report given by the Acting Chairman John Hayward

The Chairman said that this time last year he did not think he would be giving the BTA Chairman's Report for the last year. However, Richard Wheeler's resignation for health reasons last June did not produce a replacement Chairman and four months on, in October, the Committee felt it could carry the vacancy no longer as there was no one pulling all the strings together. It was also not fair to expect Wendy Buckle as Vice Chairman to fulfil this role and her Editorship of Themescene at the same time. So John Hayward had been Acting Chairman since 1 December 2011, having handed over the President's post to Wendy Buckle and Simon Moorcroft having stepped in as Acting Vice-Chairman. This change of personalia had worked well so far and as could be seen from the agenda, Simon and he were asking for the meeting's endorsement of their posts for the forthcoming year.

The Chairman's Report was, though, about last year and what the BTA had achieved, and more disappointingly in a few instances failed to achieve in that time, and something about the BTA's plans going forward.

One of the Committee's major concerns over the past year and even before then, has been falling membership and how possibly to arrest the decline. This had come down from a total of 263 in 2010 to 220 at present. The BTA had not sat back and simply acknowledged like many philatelic societies in the UK that this was a sign of the times, or it was due to the financial situation generally, or there was no prospect of attracting younger members. The BTA had been involved with two major initiatives on the recruitment front. It very much favoured the National Philatelic Society's initiative in aiming at a new audience via attendance at the Ideal Home Christmas Show, where not only did Simon Moorcroft and your Chairman assist on the NPS stand, but the BTA produced four publicity postcards, funded voluntarily by Committee members, advertising the BTA and thematic collecting. Disappointingly only one new member was gained, but a better focused campaign by the NPS this

year which the BTA is likely to support should do better. The Committee realised it ought to be promoting thematic collecting much more and here it is moving forward on two fronts. Peter Denly had suggested the BTA should contact all UK Philatelic Societies and ask them if they would like the BTA to give thematic displays to their members. This went along with the speakers' list which Peter recently updated. The Committee had so far emailed as many societies as possible from the Midlands down, and the response had been remarkable. Over the next season the BTA has been invited so far to give displays by teams of 2/3 thematic speakers to 15 Societies. The emphasis would be on the fun of thematic collecting and to raise awareness of thematic collecting in the UK and of the BTA. It was hoped new members would thereby be forthcoming. It is intended to contact Societies north of the Midlands in the near future.

The other front for promoting thematic collecting much more came from a suggestion by Simon Moorcroft. Members would have seen in June's *Themescene* an article by their President on the future of the BTA which encapsulates Simon's ideas and others of what we should be doing. The Chairman would like views on this under "Any Other Business" later on this afternoon especially from non-Committee members. However, he would like to thank both Peter Denly and Simon Moorcroft for their efforts and suggestions in the last year for increasing interest in thematic collecting and recruiting new members. Peter needed thanking too for his work in keeping membership records in order and chasing subscriptions. On another promotional front the booklet, *Thematic Collecting* by Margaret Morris was rather out of date and needed updating. Margaret was currently undertaking this large task. It is hoped to produce it in CD format.

On the exhibiting side of Thematics it had been felt for a number of years there was a need for a thematic exhibiting seminar at national level and he was commandeered to run this one day event at the RPSL last summer assisted most ably by Jim Etherington. Incidentally, whilst mentioning Jim the Chairman thanked him for maintaining the BTA's liaison with the American Topical Association – topical lists and handbooks etc. Back to the seminar; it was well attended and received, and achieved one of its objectives of increasing considerably the number of exhibitors and standards in the thematic class at Spring Stampex 2012. Disappointingly though, the objective of increasing the number of entries for the BTA Cup 2012 was not met – there was just one entry and even that was from a non BTA member. It was hoped that the inclusion on the BTA website of how to go about preparing a thematic exhibit, based on the presentation at the RPLS, would go some way towards encouraging more thematic entries at Federation and National level and in the BTA Cup. Congratulations were due to Mark Humfrey on winning the BTA Cup 2011 and to Richard Wheeler for the best in show award at Spring Stampex 2012. On the international exhibiting front there was only one exhibition in the last year in Japan where there was no thematic class entrant from the UK. However, the Chairman needed to congratulate one BTA member who had achieved international acclaim in 2012. This was Francis Kiddle who was awarded the Lichtenstein Medal by the Collectors Club of New York for outstanding services to philately.

On the programme of events in the last year the BTA held a very successful joint meeting with the Cinderella Stamp Club in February 2012 at the RPSL. It was well attended with some really fine displays. There would be more events coming up in this year's programme which he urged all to support, especially the large majority of members unable to be present at the AGM. *ThematiX '12* at Chessington 6/7 July, BTA members' meeting at Perth 20 October, and the new venture: the BTA Weekend at Oxford 5/7 October, into which our Secretary Anne Stammers had put a lot of work and which should be a most enjoyable couple of days (there were still vacancies for this). And at last there was news of *Olympex* which would be held at the British Library from 24 July to 9 September with invited exhibits of the three London Olympiads.

Contact with members was one of the most important aspects of the BTA and if members could not get to meetings and thematic events, *Themescene* was the best medium through which contact was made followed by the website. He could not praise too highly Wendy Buckle's work in getting the magazine published quarterly on time and for the quality she achieved in each issue. Everyone hoped the entry of *Themescene* into the prestigious international literature exhibition, IPHLA 2012, in November would bring her and the BTA a suitable award. And for budding authors out there, they

should not forget she was always looking for articles to publish. Thanks were also due to Wendy for ably fulfilling the President's role for the last 6 months. Themescene was ideal as well for attracting advertising revenue and Mike Blackman had beavered away at this despite current financial constraints with often disappointing results to his overtures. However, he was to be congratulated on bringing in £696 in 2011. Our website was regularly updated and new items placed on it for which the BTA was indebted to its webmaster James Wigmore.

On the publicity front Simon Moorcroft had done a great job trying to keep the BTA in the public eye even though he was studying away at University. The stamp magazines and ABPS were usually helpful in publishing his articles and photos, but all were singularly lacking in publicising our thematic exhibiting seminar. Simon would be badgering them even more in the future, the Chairman was sure. Regarding the financial side of affairs the Chairman did not wish to steal the Treasurer's thunder by providing details of how the BTA was getting on. Peter Wood would cover this in his following Report, but the Chairman did say that everyone was most thankful to Peter for the work he put in as Treasurer controlling the finances and advising the Committee on expenditure.

It was traditional at the AGM to thank various members of the Committee for the tasks they had undertaken in the past year, so the Chairman recorded his thanks to Barry Stagg, Charles Oppenheim and Gerald Lovell, the latter particularly in helping him as Displays Organiser. Thanks were due also to Ron Backhouse for looking after the Library and members' requests. Then there were two people who he specially wanted to thank on behalf of the membership for all the work they did for the BTA and thematic collecting generally. Ladies first – Anne Stammers, the BTA's hard working Secretary who undertook the thankless task of producing minutes of meetings and arranging meetings amongst a host of other jobs. She had put a lot of hard work into the planning and organisation of the Philatelic Weekend in the coming October which he had mentioned earlier. He then thanked the BTA's Patron, Brian Sole, who ran the Fosbery Trophy, the BTA Cup & the Barclays Cup for children, via the Friends of Thematica, on a shoestring, and who put so much back into thematic collecting. The BTA had thought long and hard about taking over some form of Thematica again, but concluded it was just not in a position to do so. However the BTA would continue to be a paying patron of the Friends. Finally the Chairman wanted to thank all those donors of material for sale for BTA funds who responded to his request in Themescene last year. The BTA had done remarkably well so far, as the Treasurer would reveal shortly. He also made a plug that this material was still available for sale on the BTA table after the meeting. To sum up, it had been a good year for the BTA despite some disappointments. The membership had got a lot to look forward to in the months ahead. The BTA was even planning to have a table at Midpex next year! Thank you.

The Chairman was thanked for his report, it was proposed by Jim Etherington and seconded by Peter Wood that the Chairman's report be accepted and it was unanimously accepted.

5) Treasurer's Report for the year ended 31 December 2011.

As shown by the attached Account for the Year ended 31 December 2011 we had a surplus of £92 which compares to a deficit of £119 in the financial year of 2010.

[Accounts were published in June Themescene, and are not reproduced here].

Income -

The fall in membership in 2011 is reflected in this income being some £600 lower.

Donations of philatelic material from members have been generous and we achieved sales worth £80. Advertising has held up and in fact shown an increase and as always we are very grateful for the support we receive from our advertisers, please mention the BTA if you deal with any of them.

Any potential leads in this regard should be passed onto our advertising manager Mike Blackman who has had some success in this often difficult task.

Costs -

Themescene costs are overall almost £200 lower. (Postage 2010- £686, 2011-£714)

Our meeting costs were reduced this year by the fact that it included the "charged-for" seminar which took place at the Royal and so recovered its costs.

If one considers the running of the Association to be committee meeting and administration costs there was a reduction of about £170. This was offset by an increase of about £100 in publicity costs -which I suggest is a constructive area of spend.

ATA

Once again the Treasurer felt he ought to mention the fact that we show an ATA net cost where income should be appearing. This is completion of the “unwinding” of the fact that ATA income in past accounts had been overstated because 50% had not been passed to the American Topical Association.

Forecast for 2012

As at 30th May there are 16 non-renewals which the Membership Secretary has costed out at a loss of almost £260 and there is the effect of increased postage rates.

The Treasurer made two assumptions, firstly that the weekend event breaks even - which is the intention - and secondly that advertising remains near the 2011 level - despite the loss of one advertiser it should reach within £100 of the 2011 level if all other current advertisers renew - he suggested that in the present financial climate this is in fact by no means certain.

Given those provisos he anticipated a similar small surplus for 2012.

Peter Wood gave his personal thanks to Graham Boutle for acting as ‘Examiner’ and who has agreed to continue to do so.

There were no questions for the Treasurer and Alan Sabey proposed and Gerald Lovell seconded that the report be accepted. *Agreed unanimously.*

6) Election of Officers

Chairman – John Hayward; Vice Chairman – Simon Moorcroft.

Treasurer and Secretary - Peter Wood and Anne Stammers were both willing to stand again – John Baron proposed and Keith Lloyd seconded that all the officers be re-elected ‘en bloc’ – *agreed unanimously.*

7) Election of Committee Members

The following members of the committee were willing to stand again –

Brian Sole, Michael Blackman, Gerald Lovell, Jim Etherington, Charles Oppenheim and Barry Stagg Gwyn Hughes proposed and Janet Nelson seconded that the committee members be re-elected ‘en-bloc’ – *agreed unanimously.*

8) Ratification of Librarian and Examiner

Ron Backhouse, Librarian and Graham Boutle, Examiner – it was proposed by John Baron and seconded by Brian Sole that these positions be ratified – *carried unanimously.*

9) Motions for Discussion

It was *agreed* to remove Agenda item 9 (ii) as this had been due to bad printing.

- (i) This Meeting agrees that the Constitution of the British Thematic Association be amended

in Clause 3 (d) by deleting at the beginning of the second line the words “publish other booklets, newsletters,” and inserting “issue any other publications” instead. The Chairman explained that the amendment was necessary to take account of modern means of communication by IT. This had been proposed by the Committee and was *agreed unanimously.*

10) Any Other Business

a) Auction – Jim Etherington thought that it would be a good idea to run an auction and suggested that the Committee look into this either as a postal or internet auction. Brian Sole explained that Bob Lee had offered, some years ago, to take it over but after 1 year there were not enough Lots so it was given up. It would need a dedicated person(s) to run it who had experience to do so. Wendy Buckle had run it through Themescene but a major problem was the quality of the material as good quality lots that are not too low in value are required. She said it is a huge amount of work.

Would need to look at just thematic material or to include other, members only or open it up to other participants. It was agreed that the Committee would discuss this.

b) Open Class Philately – John Baron said there was no Society, as yet, that catered for those wanting to collect and exhibit in this way and felt that if the BTA included this it could increase the membership. This would be discussed in the next item.

c) Future of the BTA – There had been a one page article in the June Themescene where several suggestions had been made as to how it might be possible to increase membership e.g. to include collectors of ‘open philately’ and also of Postcards, or to change the name to British Topical Association. So far there had been 9 written responses 5 of whom asked not to change the name.

There is a need to appeal to a wider audience – but how?

John Baron mentioned that there had been disappointment at Spring Stampex in the lower level of thematic entries, the numbers attending the seminar had been good.

d) The ABPS and other societies – JB said he would like to see a bigger relationship between the ABPS and the BTA and that the ABPS News should be taking articles from other society magazines to encourage membership in their societies too, rather than just taking news of past events. JH would ask SM to get in touch with regard to this. Simon had given a detailed article to ABPS on the Exhibiting seminar but it was not published!

e) Spring Stampex – There had been the biggest number of Thematic entries for a National exhibition than there had been for a long time (16 in total) and of a good standard. Janet Nelson said she collected ‘Thematically’ but felt that there was too much emphasis on exhibiting and suggested that there should be a page for ‘Beginners of Thematic Collecting’ possibly instead of the ‘Kids page’ or as a pull-out. Possibly use the website for the exhibiting details rather than Themescene?

Mark Humfrey – said his display to be shown after the meeting ‘falls apart’ as it is not totally thematic but more open class because of some of the items displayed.

JE stressed that the BTA is trying to get away from the image of ‘class’ – Perhaps it could be ‘re-launched’ through the ABPS Magazine and try to get away from being bedeviled by Rules.

The BTA must establish a liaison with the ABPS and embrace change.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their comments and the Committee would discuss the issue at their next meeting.

f) Olympex 2012 - Alan Sabey drew members' attention to this event to be held at the British Library.

g) Thematica – and the BTA Cup and Fosbery Trophy. Brian Sole reported that there were just three people that were now involved with Friends of Thematica and that they ran the two competitions mentioned. Without a permanent base to hold the competitions, as they had when Thematica was at the Victory Services Club, they have to think seriously as to whether or not they can carry on.

There is a possibility that the BTA could take over the Fosbery Trophy – a competition without rules, which is what much of this meeting’s discussion has been about. The Children’s competitions need to be kept going if possible and the Barclay’s Cup is for originality rather than for a good competitive exhibit. The Committee to discuss.

h) Thank you – Brian Sole thanked Wendy Buckle for stepping in as President and John Hayward for taking over the Chairmanship again, also Anne Stammers, Secretary and Peter Wood for their work and he thanked all the Committee members for all the work they do to keep the BTA a successful society.

There being no other business the meeting closed and was followed by the display on ‘Globalisation of Vanilla’ by Mark Humfrey, winner of the BTA Cup in 2011.

GLOBALISATION OF VANILLA

Mark Humfrey sheds light on a very widely used plant

Following the AGM BTA Cup winner Mark Humfrey displayed his exhibit “Globalisation of Vanilla”. He explained that he had collected orchids on stamps for about 25 years but found it difficult to tell a story about them. Vanilla, itself a member of the orchid family, is however found almost everywhere today and the journey it has made makes a great story to tell.

His display started with Mexican vanilla, the species from which the modern plant is descended. It went on to the vanilla plant today, the history of its cultivation, the supply of both natural and artificial vanilla flavouring, and its uses. Ironically artificial vanilla is made from rice, and because of that can be sold in the USA as a “natural” product.



Guadeloupe. Vanilla producing French colony. The Vanilla integrated into the frame of the stamp. Used on cover to Paris and on a unused 5c prepaid postcard.

The display included some particularly interesting pieces such as a letter to the first person who grew vanilla in Paris and to the first perfume maker in the French Village of Grasse which used Vanilla in perfume.



Perpaid Suchard advertising postcards. These each contain a recipe using Vanilla and chocolate.



Mark exhibited at Spring Stampex this year, and used that experience to highlight some of the pitfalls of competing in the thematic class, which meant ruling out using some of his very entertaining items such as perfume advertisements, and his struggle with interpreting some of the arcane rules about competing. A sobering lesson which reinforced the need for the BTA to get away from competing and concentrate on enjoying collecting. ☐

A POSITIVE FUTURE FOR THE BTA

The last issue of *Themescene* included an article “Future of the BTA: Discussion Paper” which outlined the problem of our falling membership and possible ways to address it. The article struck a chord, as nine people submitted detailed written comments outlining their thoughts on what they saw as the good and bad points of the argument.

Everyone commented on the possible idea of changing the name to British Topical Association, in order to rid the BTA of any association with thematic exhibiting rather than thematic collecting. Not one person was in favour of this idea, and several drew attention to the ongoing debate in *Topical Time* arguing that ‘topical’ no longer describes the way people collect. The Americans, it seems, are slowly catching up with Europe.

The suggestion that the BTA should widen its remit to embrace all the pictorial classes was widely welcomed, particularly since most of us who collect thematics include all sorts of collateral material of relevance to our theme. And that point more than any other highlights where perhaps the BTA could be at fault. To quote from one of the submissions:

“If ‘some people equate thematic collecting with thematic exhibiting’ then that is our fault. In fact, at one time there were very frequent articles in *Themescene* about exhibiting and perhaps that gave the wrong impression to casual readers. Prominent mention of awards gained can also be off-putting to a collector on a more ‘lowly’ level. A balance has to be maintained ... If there is a perception that the BTA is skewed towards exhibiting, then this should be corrected. If we are aiming at collectors, then let us write about collecting; if we are aiming at exhibitors, then by all means write about exhibiting”.

Interest was maintained at the AGM which saw an attendance of 19, far more than we have had for some years.

Chairman John Hayward opened the debate on the future under Any Other Business, outlining the main points of the submissions, and quoting from some of the written comments received. He suggested that we spend no time debating changing the name, since the idea was so unpopular (and no-one from the floor challenged that), and then opened it to the floor for comments. The detailed debate is recorded in the Minutes (see page ...). In brief, a number of actions were agreed:

- ❖ Establish a close liaison with the ABPS (something that would be welcomed by them), starting with an article by the BTA on how it sees its future, to be published in *ABPS News*.
- ❖ Embrace the other pictorial classes. Keep the title British Thematic Association, but treat the word ‘thematic’ for what it means – appertaining to a topic or theme; do not treat it according to the very strict definition applied by philatelic authorities.
- ❖ Use *Themescene* as a vehicle for the broad remit of the BTA, and use the BTA website to report on exhibiting. Those few members who want to know about exhibitions, competitions, rules and results will be pointed in that direction.

Following the meeting the Committee has been working on a number of fronts:

- ❖ The possible demise of Friends of Thematica (see AGM Minutes para 10g) has meant that we must consider taking back the organisation of the Fosbery Trophy and BTA Cup. And before anyone says “But you’ve just said you want to move away from competitions” please remember that the Fosbery Trophy has NO RULES. Put together 16 sheets of absolutely anything you like, and have it judged by popular vote. More on that in the next issue.

- ❖ The BTA will push for maximum exposure, including Midpex and ThematiX.
- ❖ The 'Exhibiting' page of the BTA website will be redesigned and extended; while *Themescene* will broaden its coverage. We have plenty of members who collect postcards and 'open' category themes, and the Editor would welcome an article from you.
- ❖ We are investigating the possibility of running a regular postal auction.
- ❖ The tremendous success of offering BTA displays to programme societies, as outlined in the Minutes, needs to be extended to the north. But for that we need more speakers, see page ...
- ❖ On a broader front the BTA will try and identify what it is doing wrong at the moment that is causing the drop in membership, and develop a plan to change things.

All in all I hope you agree that the Association is actively trying to become a body to offer a "keep it simple, keep it fun" approach to our hobby. ☐

Current Membership Rates

	<u>Ordinary</u>	<u>Family</u>
<u>UK</u>	£15.00	£15.00
<u>Euro Currency Zone</u>	£17.00	£17.00
<u>Rest of World</u>	£19.00	£19.00

CHRISTIAN WAPLER AUCTIONS

CHRISTIAN WAPLER: 55TH AUCTION FOR THEMATIC PHILATELY, TOPICS, HISTORY & POSTAL HISTORY, DEC. 29TH, 2013

My next regular auction is my 55th thematic & postal history sale in December 2013. I offer over 5000 single lots, mainly covers, postmarks, postal stationary and historical documents of high quality and superb variety. The catalogue index lists over 500 different branches and sections. Among many others you will find the following sections: A large airmail section (over 35 detailed sub-sections like air-pioneers, catapult mail, first flights of all kind, balloon, glider, Zeppelin mail & Zeppelin memorabilia, air fieldpost of WWI and WWII and many others), art & artist (incl. comics, famous painters etc.) automobile & traffic (over 35 sections from auto-pioneers to accident prevention), archaeology (pre-history to Romans, about 8 sections), astronomy, Christian topics (from popes, saints & passion plays, Bible, Christian festivals to Martin Luther.), European & German history (all together over 50 sub-sections), fire & fire brigades, photo, film & cinema, geography incl. Columbus, Humboldt, seafarer, discoverer etc., porcelain, children & school (incl. toys, teddys, geology & mining (gold, silver, minerals), Judaica, railways (incl. subway, tram, rail jubilees, special runs, mountain rails etc.), bicycle, mathematic & computers, music (over 25 sub-sections including composers, festivals, instruments, dance, opera & musical etc. The catalogue contains all abbreviations in English, French and German. About 90% of the offered material is illustrated on my photoplates. You can order the printed catalogue against a fee of 15.- € (Europe) or 20.- € (overseas). Some days after my printed catalogues is edited you will find the complete catalogue online under: www.wapler-katalog.de

All additional information, dates and samples you will find on my website under: www.wapler-themaphil.de

Christian Wapler, Postfach 30 37 69, D - 10 726 Berlin (Germany)

BTA NEWS

MEMBERS' MEETING 20TH OCTOBER 2012 DEWAR CENTRE, PERTH PH2 8HB

This is a reminder that the British Thematic Association will be holding a members' meeting at the ABPS National Philatelic Exhibition, Perth 2012, at the above venue from 1000 to 1200 hrs on Saturday 20th October 2012. The meeting will comprise displays by members, so please bring along up to 12 sheets on any thematic subject you like to display and talk about for no more than 3 minutes. We also hope to have on sale some of the material recently donated by members.

The BTA has not held a members' meeting in Scotland for 12 years, so let us make it a very welcome occasion. Our President and Secretary are hoping to attend. So would our Scottish members and BTA members visiting the Exhibition please make a special effort to come to the meeting. You do not have to display if you do not wish to. There will be a small nominal charge of £1 per person to help defray the cost of the meeting.

Members may also wish to note that Jonas Hallstrom from Sweden, the FIP Thematic Commission President, will be running a thematic seminar at the Exhibition on Friday 19th October 2012.

More details about the event are given on page 110.

BTA SPEAKERS' LIST

The BTA is very pleased at the growing number of members who are willing to have their names listed on our Speakers' List, which is published on our web page at

www.brit-thematic-assoc.com/displays.htm.

The BTA Committee has now contacted programme secretaries of the majority of local societies in the Midlands and South, offering BTA speakers. This offer has been taken up enthusiastically, and we'd like to roll it out to the north of England and to Scotland. However, for that we need more names. So if you give talks to societies, and haven't let us know, please consider doing so by contacting Membership Secretary Peter Denly (contact details inside front cover). Your contact details will not appear on the web. Thank you.

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THEMATIC-CLUB INTERNATIONAL**

www.thematic-club.com

Cancellations on covers, FDCs, postal stationery, meter, aso

CINDERELLA MEETS THEMATICS

Simon Moorcroft enjoys an exchange of interests

On Saturday 25th February the BTA held a joint meeting with the Cinderella Society at the Royal Philatelic Society London. The BTA had previously held a very successful joint meeting back in 2005 and was excited about repeating the event. One of the most enjoyable aspects of joint meetings is the wider range of material that is on show and the breadth of stories one is able to hear during the day. There is nearly always something for everyone.

The first display was by Cinderella Society President Christopher Harman and featured Russian Zemstvo stamps alongside other local issues. He amazed the assembled audience by describing the intricate and detailed printing processes used for some Zemstvo stamps, including processes which allowed for five different colours to be printed on one stamp. An extraordinary achievement, given the time and relatively primitive technology available.

The next display showed a huge variety of advertising labels and material connected with petroleum and oil based products. The displayer had an interest in this field, having previously worked for Shell. Our President, Wendy Buckle, then showed advertising labels for paper products and manufacturers, in line with her theme. It was noted by many of the thematic collectors present at the meeting that it was lovely to be able to bring out and show material connected with their themes that would otherwise not see the light of day!

Stuart Henderson showed a wide selection of poster stamps pertaining to a plethora of different and diverse themes, including bikes, Bovril Foods, animals, Margate Hospital, Concorde and various national exhibitions. The breadth and colour of the material was quite extraordinary and of great interest to study. What was striking was the originality and quality of many of the designs.

Charles Kiddle did not disappoint with his display showing some very rare and wonderful Cinderella material from World War Two. He also showed various poster stamps and labels connected with the theme of birds. Maggie Thompson took us into another atmosphere with her collection of mail carried on rockets. She told some very interesting stories about early rocket flights including some of the first rocket experiments between 1928 and 1931. The rockets were taken up in hot air balloons and then launched high up in the air. The covers, purporting to have travelled on the rocket, were in fact merely carried on the balloon! She also showed pigeon post from New Zealand and triangular airmail labels.

Our Chairman, John Hayward, showed Christmas labels, strike post mail and labels and various Egyptian Express Delivery stamps. John explained, rather amusingly, that the various "Royal" printings were done on the orders of King Farouk, who also decreed that various flaws and varieties, including imperforate and perforation varieties should "accidentally" emerge from the printing process!

Michael Blackman showed material connected with his themes of umbrellas. His display included poster stamps showing various manufacturers, suppliers



and retailers of umbrellas.. He alluded to the history of umbrellas and to their status in historical times, particularly in the Far East where they conveyed an image of wealth and power.

The next display concerned Indian telegraph stamps with examples shown overprinted "SPECIMUM" and overprinted surcharges. The display contained a truly excellent range of rare and interesting material. Of particular note were the 1861 maroon stamps of denominations, 4 Anna, 1 Rupee and 4 Rupee. This display was followed by Peter Wood who gave another very entertaining and informative display and talk on various aspects of Irish history and culture, including religion, literature and motorsport. This was beautifully illustrated with a good range of material, including some rare Cinderella material such as cigar case covers and labels.

Another display showed designs for labels and Cinderella material connected for Europa issues. In the field of exhibition material, a particularly fascinating display showed postcards and other promotional material and literature from the 1908 Franco-British Exhibition, held at the Great White City Exhibition arena in London. Commemorative private issue stamps were shown and the picture postcards were able to vividly illustrate what visiting the exhibition would have been like. A fascinating insight to a relatively less well known exhibition.

Possibly one of the most interesting and quirkiest displays of the day was provided by John Aitchinson. He began his display by passing around glasses of port for the assembled audience to enjoy (most definitely a first for a BTA meeting!!). Following a brief description of the contents of the glass, which was in fact a very fine vintage port, he proceeded to amaze the audience with an extraordinary array of material and items, all being produced from his large suitcase. Out came teddy bears, which John explained are so-called due to President Theodore Roosevelt refusing to shoot a baby bear while out hunting; advertising cards and material showing actresses with teddy bears; postal stationery and stamps from Russian provinces not members of the UPU, wine advertising labels, spirit revenue stamps, champagne bottle labels and a selection of unopened vintage champagnes and ports, including a particularly fine Dom Perignon 1966 vintage. Sadly these latter items were for display only and not consumption!! A truly remarkable breadth of material and items which was able to show how a philatelic display can encompass so many elements and still be extremely enjoyable and informative.



The whole day was a great success and enjoyed by all who attended. Lunch was taken at the local King's Head public house with tea and coffee provided at the Royal, which proved to be a wonderful and spacious venue. It showed again the value of holding joint meetings, something the BTA committee will continue to strive to organise. The BTA would like to extend its thanks to the Cinderella Society for agreeing to host the joint meeting. ☐

HERE AND THERE

STAMP AND POSTCARD FESTIVAL AND EXHIBITION IN PRESTWICK - AND YOUNGSTERS GET THEIR HANDS ON A PANDA SKULL!

South West Scotland Philatelic Societies will be holding their 50th Annual Stamp and Postcard Festival and Exhibition. Members of the public (collectors and non-collectors alike) are invited to come along on Saturday 6th October to Prestwick Community Centre, Caerlaverock Road, Prestwick, Scotland, KA9 1HR, to look at a variety of stamp and postcard displays by Society members. Dealers from across Scotland will be on hand with their stocks of stamps and postcards, together with a wide range of accessories. New members and enquiries are always welcomed - details of the Philatelic Societies and Stamp Clubs in Ayrshire and South West Scotland can be obtained at the event, or from Ian Barker, tel: 01294 276990.

The Society greatly encourages junior collectors, and in the 'Kid's Corner' Edinburgh Zoo's Sandie Robb will be holding a Wild Stamp Workshop for youngsters entitled 'Amazing Asia'. Sandie is a member of the Zoological Society of Scotland and she will be bringing skulls and bones from different Asian animals (including pandas) which will be available for investigation, as well as giving demonstrations of how to make wildlife stamp albums, cards and scrapbook pages. Free materials and stamps will be provided. The workshop is free for children accompanied by an adult.

Doors open at 10am – 4pm, entry is free, refreshments will be available, and there is plenty of free parking at the Centre.

RPSL LAUNCHES NEW RESEARCH FACILITY

The launch of the Global Philatelic Library website (www.globalphilatelibrary.org), a centralised information gateway to the world's greatest philatelic research, has been announced by the founding partners, including The Royal Philatelic Society London, The National Postal Museum and Smithsonian Libraries in Washington, DC, and The American Philatelic Research Library in Bellefonte, Pa.

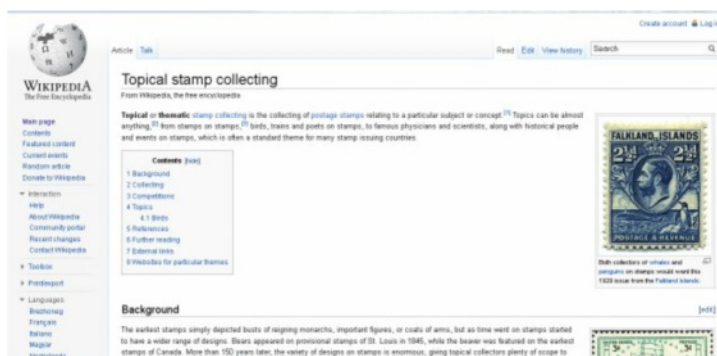
The website establishes a single destination – a responsive centralised gateway – by which philatelists around the world can search, locate and access philatelic research from partner libraries instantly, from any computer. Searchable listings of books and publications, as well as resource locations and access, are now instantly available, providing invaluable resources for those undertaking philatelic research. It provides:

- A world-class collection of printed, electronic and other media;
- Access and support for beginners, hobbyists, specialists, postal historians and writers;
- International collaboration and co-operation with philatelic libraries and museums around the world;
- An Anthology of fascinating, informative and sometimes even scandalous articles written throughout the past century about philately and some of the people involved in its history.

The Royal Philatelic Society London is proud to be playing such an active and vital role in this initiative, its own library being the most significant and comprehensive in the world. The full range of services available from the Society can be seen by visiting www.rpsl.org.uk.

CALLING ALL WIKIPEDIA FANS

We all know we need to be careful using Wikipedia, but let's face it, we all find it incredibly useful for quick bits of research. But have you ever thought of contributing to it? The British Library will be running a seminar for collectors interested in contributing philatelic articles to Wikipedia on 18 September at the British Library. It will be a full day event and will explain how Wikipedia works, and offer practical experience of writing and editing articles. Training and support will be provided by curators of the Library's philatelic collections and by experienced Wikipedia editors. Places are free but limited. For more details or to register your interest please email philatelic@bl.co.uk. The Library would find it helpful to know participants' collecting, research or writing interests.



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NATIONAL PHILATELIC EXHIBITION & 94th PHILATELIC CONGRESS OF GREAT BRITAIN 19-22 OCTOBER 2012 PERTH

For a second time this year a major philatelic event will take place in Perth. In May the Association of Scottish Philatelic Societies held its 83rd Annual Congress, and the Association, on behalf of the Association of British Philatelic Societies, will host two national events - a National Philatelic Exhibition (19-20 Oct) and the 94th Philatelic Congress of Great Britain (20-22 Oct).

The National Philatelic Exhibition will be held in the Dewars Centre, Perth on Friday 19 October 2012: 10.00 - 17.00, and Saturday 20 October 2012: 09.00 - 16.00. Both entry and car parking are free.

There will be a wide range of dealers of stamps, postal history and postcards. The event will also have a large range of exhibits that will be of interest to philatelists and non-philatelists. These include material from the Royal Collection. Some of the best exhibits from the UK and beyond will be displayed in approx. 400 frames in the UK National Competition. This display will have a Scandinavian flavour with entries from collectors in the Nordic countries as well as the UK. The Interfederation Competition will also feature in the displays. Other activities will include a display of artefacts by the Museum of Communication with some interactive displays and an area in the main hall for activities and demonstrations.

94th Philatelic Congress of Great Britain will be held in the Queens Hotel, Perth on Saturday 20 to Monday 22 October.

The first Philatelic Congress of Great Britain was held in Manchester in 1909. Barring interruptions due to war, they have been held annually ever since. The venue moves each year. The last time it was held in Scotland was in 2006 in Renfrew.

Congress is the opportunity to meet with fellow collectors for a relaxing few days in pleasant surroundings. The events include discussions, displays and visits. The highlight for many is the occasion at which both the Congress Medal is presented, and the new signatories to the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists are invited to sign the Roll. This ceremony will be held in the St John's Kirk on 21st October when the new signatories will be:

Jamie Gough FRPSL	United States
Robin Gwynn FRPSL	New Zealand
Patrick Maselis FRPSL	Belgium
Michael Sefi FRPSL	United Kingdom

More information can be found at www.perth2012.com



83RD ANNUAL CONGRESS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF SCOTTISH PHILATELIC SOCIETIES 11-12 MAY 2012

The Congress was hosted by Kirkcudbright Philatelic Society. Setting up the numerous stands on the 10th was undertaken by a band of willing volunteers and the day ended with the informal Scottish Philatelists Dinner. Over 500 attended during the two days. On both days large queues formed at the entrance as collectors were eager for the doors to open. The Junior Corner used the theme of 'Wild Animals' to attract enthusiastic young collectors. The Tom Rielly Display Introduction was given to a large audience by Alexander McCulloch, president of ASPS, past president of the host society and founder of the Scottish Section of the New Zealand Society of Great Britain. The PowerPoint presentation and informative talk allowed collectors to better appreciate the display in the main hall. A civic reception, hosted by Councillor Grant of Perth, was followed by the annual dinner after which the guest of honour, The Rt. Hon. Alex Ferguson MSP gave an entertaining insight into his life and work as a Presiding Officer in the Scottish Parliament and as an MSP. The awards ceremony followed with awards presented by Mrs McCulloch, wife of the president of ASPS as follows:

William McKinley	Scottish Thematic Rose Bowl for the Thematic Class
Jean Osborne	The Bridge of Allan Trophy for Traditional (non GB) post 1900
William Steel	The Glasgow 800 Cup for General Postal History
Alexander Walker	The Iain T. Boyle Vase for Social Philately
Dr Stewart Gardiner	The Robson Lowe Award for Philatelic Literature
Michael Kirwan	The Cowal Salver for Best First Time Entrant
James Crawford	The Bruce Auckland Centennial Quaich for Scottish Postal History
John Coltman	The Carson Trophy for traditional GB
John Coltman	The Dr Hirst Bowl for the Best Overall Presentation
James McDonell	Scottish Postcard Trophy
William Steel	The Robert Burns Quaich for the most interesting Host Society Display
Keith Robinson	The ASPS Award of Merit
Jean Osborne	The ABPS Award of Merit

At the AGM, Alex McCulloch passed the presidency of ASPS to Mike Turnbull of the Alba Stamp Group. Plans are already in motion for the next ASPS Congress on 19/20 April 2013. The venue will again be the Dewars Centre, Perth. Details will appear in the ASPS website at www.scottishphilately.co.uk

FRIENDS OF THEMATICA

For the second time the Association of Scottish Philatelic Societies welcomed The Friends of Thematica to its annual Congress held in Perth. On display were the entries in four competitions. The first was for the British Thematic Association Thematic Trophy, which was won by G. V. Sandercock with his exhibit 'Mining – Man's Quest for Minerals', which also won a Large Silver medal. The John Fosbery Thematic Trophy was won by Jeff Dugdale with 'Vikings Misunderstood'.

The Inter-Federation Friends of Thematica Healey & Wise Salver went to the Association of Scottish Philatelic Societies with entries by Margaret Morris 'Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star', William McKinley 'Clouds' and Alan Watson 'British Royal Heraldry'. A close second came the entries submitted by Hampshire.

The Barclays Cup Competition is for young collectors, and the judges look especially for Originality. The winners in the three age groups were:

Up to 8 years old Pearce Belshaw with "Stamp Collecting";

Aged 9 to 12 Justin Szabo with 'O' Canada';

Aged 13 to 18 The judges simply could not decide between two of the entries, and so awarded joint first places to Claire Mitchell with 'What is a Church?' and Lynne Mitchell for 'A Helping Hand'.



Scenes from ASPS and Thematica

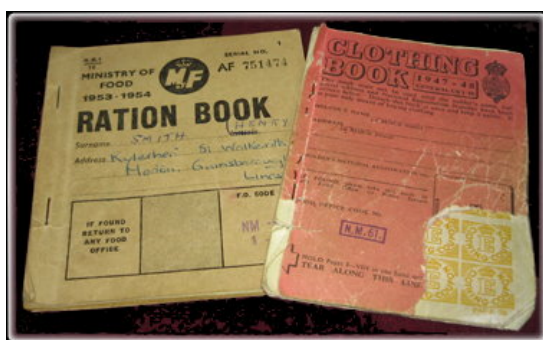
THEY ALSO SERVED

Presentation given to a meeting of Thames Valley Federation 16 Jun 2012 by Chris Earle

Chris explained in her introduction that she was showing part of her World War II Home Front collection, looking at the role of women in the war. World War II was a total war, affecting every household in the country, and in which women had vital roles to play.

The first role was on the home front, starting early on the war with the evacuation of children to the countryside from identified areas of danger. The Women's Voluntary Service was heavily involved in administering the evacuations. Not that the authorities always got it right – large parts of South East England identified as 'safe areas' were later pounded by bombers because they were near air force bases and en route to London. Even before war was declared women worked in the ARP (Air Raid Precautions), and as the armed forces expanded women were called up to take their place in the factories, or to join the Women's Land Army.

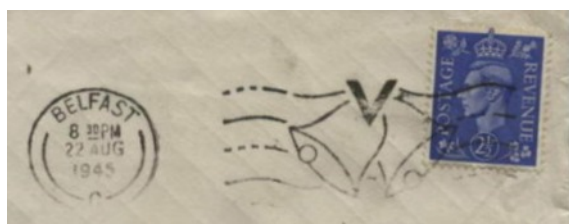
The second role was as part of the domestic war effort. At home they had to cope with rationing. The ration book was, Chris said, the most important document you had. Without it you didn't eat. At the outbreak of war The General Post Office played its propaganda part



by using many slogan cancels aimed at the housewife such as "Dig for Victory". However in 1941 they removed all slogan cancels because the government refused to pay for them! Rationing also controlled clothes and furniture, where 'Make Do and Mend' became the watchword. National Savings Groups were set up, usually run by women, and people were exhorted to save raw materials such as aluminium pots and pans for the Spitfire Fund, ostensibly to build them, although this was totally impractical and never carried out. Of more success was a scheme to 'sponsor' a spitfire: for £5,000 (perhaps £250,000 in today's money) you could have a plane named after you. Some names were quite clever, Hoover for example paid for "The Sky Sweeper", Marks & Spencer for "The Marksman" and the Kennel Club "The Dogfighter".

The third role for women was in support of military operations. Unlike today they could not fight, but did do military service in all three services via the Auxiliary Territorial Service, the Women's Royal Air Force and the Women's Royal Naval Service. Many women worked at the famous code-breaking establishment at Bletchley Park, roles which have only come to light after years of secrecy. And of course women were nurses, working with the Red Cross and the St. John's Ambulance. They set up a highly valued service trying to locate missing persons. Finally, on the lighter side, there was ENSA: the Entertainments National Service

Association, in which entertainers such as Vera Lynne travelled all over the world entertaining the troops.



As we know, victory in Europe was declared on 8 May 1945, prompting celebrations and street parties. The GPO had really planned ahead: victory slogan cancels featuring bells and the Morse dot-dot-dot-dash V for Victory had been sent to post offices in 1943, who were instructed not to open them until told. The official day of issue was 10 May 1945, but one

can find examples stamped on 8 or 9 May.

Life for women in the aftermath of war was still not easy. Rationing continued until 1954, and as the men returned home they expected their jobs back. Women were expected to go back to a domestic life. ☰



GROUP MEMBERS

Alba Stamp Group

Mr. S. Brown, 14 Buchan Drive, Perth, PH1 1NQ.

Astro Space Stamp Society

Mr. B. Lockyer, 21 Exford Close, Weston-Super-Mare, Somerset, BS23 4RE

Web: <http://astropacestampsociety.com/>

Bicycle Stamps Club

49 West Carr Lane, Hersham, Walton-On-Thames, Surrey, KT12 5ER

Web: <http://www.members.tripod.com/~bicyclestamps/>

Bird Stamp Society

Mr G. Horsman, 23a East Main Street, Blackburn, West Lothian, EH47 7QR.

Web: <http://www.birdstampsociety.org>

Captain Cook Society

Mr I. A. Peel, 13 Caudry Close, Thornhill, Dewsbury, West Yorkshire, WF12 0LW.

Web: <http://www.captaincooksociety.com/ccsu1.htm>

Concorde Study Circle

Mr B. L. Asquith, Alandale, Radcliffe Gardens, Carshalton Beeches, Surrey,

SM5 4PQ. Web: http://www.concorde-jet.com/e_concorde_study_circle.htm

Glasgow Thematic Society

Mrs M. Mathieson, 17 Hairmyers Park, East Kilbride, Glasgow, G75 8SS.

Guild of St. Gabriel

Rev. D. C. Hague, 16 Filder Close, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN22 8SY.

Masonic Philatelic Club

Mr. M. Beazley, 216 West Dyke Road, Redcar, N. Yorks, TS10 4JS

Web: <http://www.masonicphilatelicclub.org.uk/>

Scout and Guide Stamp Club

Mr. T. Simister, 1 Falcon Way, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 8AY

Web: <http://www.sgsc.org.uk/index.shtml>

Ship Stamp Society

Mr. T. Broadley, 10 Heyes Drive, Lymm, Cheshire, WA13 0PB.

Web: http://www.chez.com/philateliemarine/phil_mar_e/SSS.htm

West of England Thematic Society

Mrs. G. Gray, 6 Compton Avenue, Mannamead, Plymouth, Devon, PL3 5BZ

Web: <http://www.wessexpf.org.uk/WETS/>

THEMATIX

Chessington 6 - 7 July

ThematiX has moved to new venue, at the Bowls Club at Chessington. It proved to be less spacious than Twickenham, but had the great advantage of offering excellent value full catering all day and a licenced bar, both features which were in constant use, or at least I observed them to be all the time I was there. It's always nice to go to a fair where the dealers expect you to ask for something by theme rather than country, and actually show an interest in your subject rather than look blankly at you. There was a mix of UK and European dealers, but very unfortunately, one of the Belgian dealers was let down at the last minute and was unable to bring his stock. I suspect he would have had a very successful two days.

The BTA had a large table there and was able to offer a whole range of material for sale, donated by members. This proved extremely successful and must have brought a big smile to our Treasurer's face.

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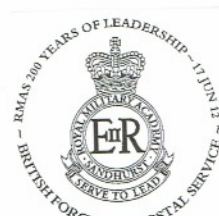
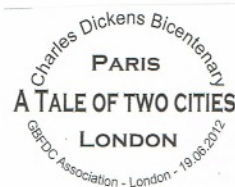
WETS: Mary Claydon (01398 331731) mary@claydons.eclipse.co.uk
Fair: Paula Cant (01256 415699) paula@paulacantstamps.co.uk
Hotel: Dartmoor Lodge Hotel (01364 652232) www.dartmoorlodge.co.uk

HANDSTAMP SPECIAL

Handstamps reprinted on these pages first appeared in the "British Postmark Bulletin".

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JUST4KIDS

By Lise Whittle

(Adult members - please photocopy these pages and pass them on to a youngster you know, and perhaps include some stamps to help them.

When you photocopy this, please enlarge each page to A4 size (enlarge to 141%).

Thank you

CALLING ALL WILD YOUNG STAMP COLLECTORS!!!!



Ever held a panda skull?

Want to learn how to identify what animals eat by looking at their teeth?

Then come along to Prestwick in Ayrshire, Scotland, on Saturday 6th October to meet Edinburgh Zoo's Sandie Robb who will be holding a Wild Stamp Workshop for youngsters called 'Amazing Asia'.

Sandie is a member of the Zoological Society of Scotland and she will be bringing skulls, bones and teeth from different Asian animals (including pandas) which will be available for investigation, as well as wildlife stamps, and giving demonstrations of how to make wildlife stamp albums, cards and scrapbook pages.



Free materials and stamps will be provided.

The workshop is free for children accompanied by an adult.



It will be held at Prestwick Community Centre, Caerlaverock Road, Prestwick, Scotland KA9 1HR as part of the 'Annual Stamp And Postcard Exhibition and Festival' held by the South West Scotland Philatelic Societies.

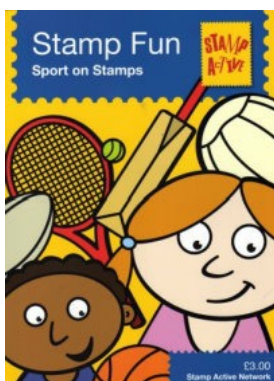
Saturday 6th October, 10.00am to 4.00pm

Free admission and free parking.

This is stamp collecting with a *WILD* difference!!!

This is a stamp from Kampuchea (Cambodia) showing a Kouprey – or wild cow. It is an endangered species. Find out more about it in a wildlife book or on the Internet.





DID YOU ENJOY WATCHING THE OLYMPIC GAMES?
Do you fancy finding out more about the Olympics and collecting Olympics sports stamps?

The Stamp Active Network have produced a full-colour collecting book for young collectors called 'STAMP FUN – SPORT ON STAMPS' and it is *FREE* to young collectors!

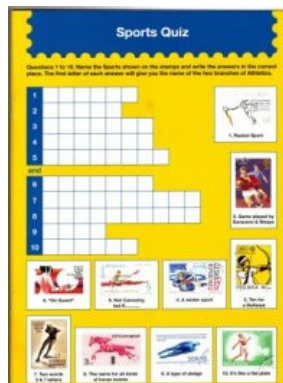


In it there are full-colour pictures of stamps and spaces for you to put your own stamps.

You can find out more about the Olympic and Paralympic Games.



- You can learn about the Summer and Winter Olympics.
- You can discover the names of different Olympic cities.
- You can find out how many players there are in different team sports.
- You can fill in an A – Z of sport stamps.
- You can discover what 'Multi-sports' are.
- And you can have fun with a sports quiz.



TO REQUEST YOUR FREE COPY, SEND YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS AND AGE TO THE ADDRESS BELOW. Free to junior collectors.
(Adults may purchase a copy at cost of £3.00 – cheques made to Stamp Active Network)

WRITE TO US; Send your jokes, poems, drawings and letters with your name and address to; Just4Kids, c/o The Editor, Themescene, 87 Victoria Road, Bournemouth. BH1 4RS.
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JOURNAL ARTICLES

Authors

- 4 Sacks, A. Stamping around with Charles Dickens Gibbons S. M. 12/2010

Churches

- 6 De Jager, M. The history of the Church Of The Vow, Pietermaritzburg Stamp News 2/12

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BTA FUN WITH PHILATELY WEEKEND

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PROGRAMME WILL INCLUDE

Speakers:

Richard Wheeler "Puppetry" and a little magic

Ron Backhouse "Anyone for Tennis?"

Grace Davies "Symbols of Peace"

Peter Weir "Liquid of Life"

Other events include:

Members displays (2 sessions)

Question and Answer session

Light-hearted quiz

Thematic dealer David Griffiths *Thames Themes* will be in attendance for part of the weekend

The BTA will have a table sale offering a wide variety of stamps, covers, meter marks etc.

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Full Delegates

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Day Delegates very welcome

Saturday £10.00

Sunday £5.00

Booking form and further details are available in June *Themescene*, on the BTA web site:

www.brit-thematic-assoc.com/programme.htm

Or email BTA Secretary Anne Stammers: annies1@btinternet.com