

BRITISH *PHILATELIC* BULLETIN

Alternative Ways of Collecting

PUBLICATION N°8 • BY RICHARD WEST

A token
of
affection.



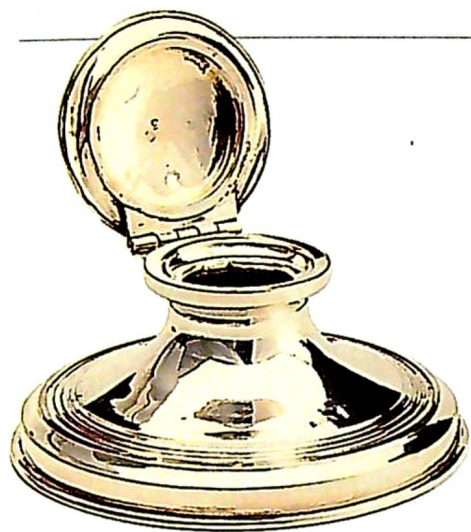
Alternative Ways of Collecting

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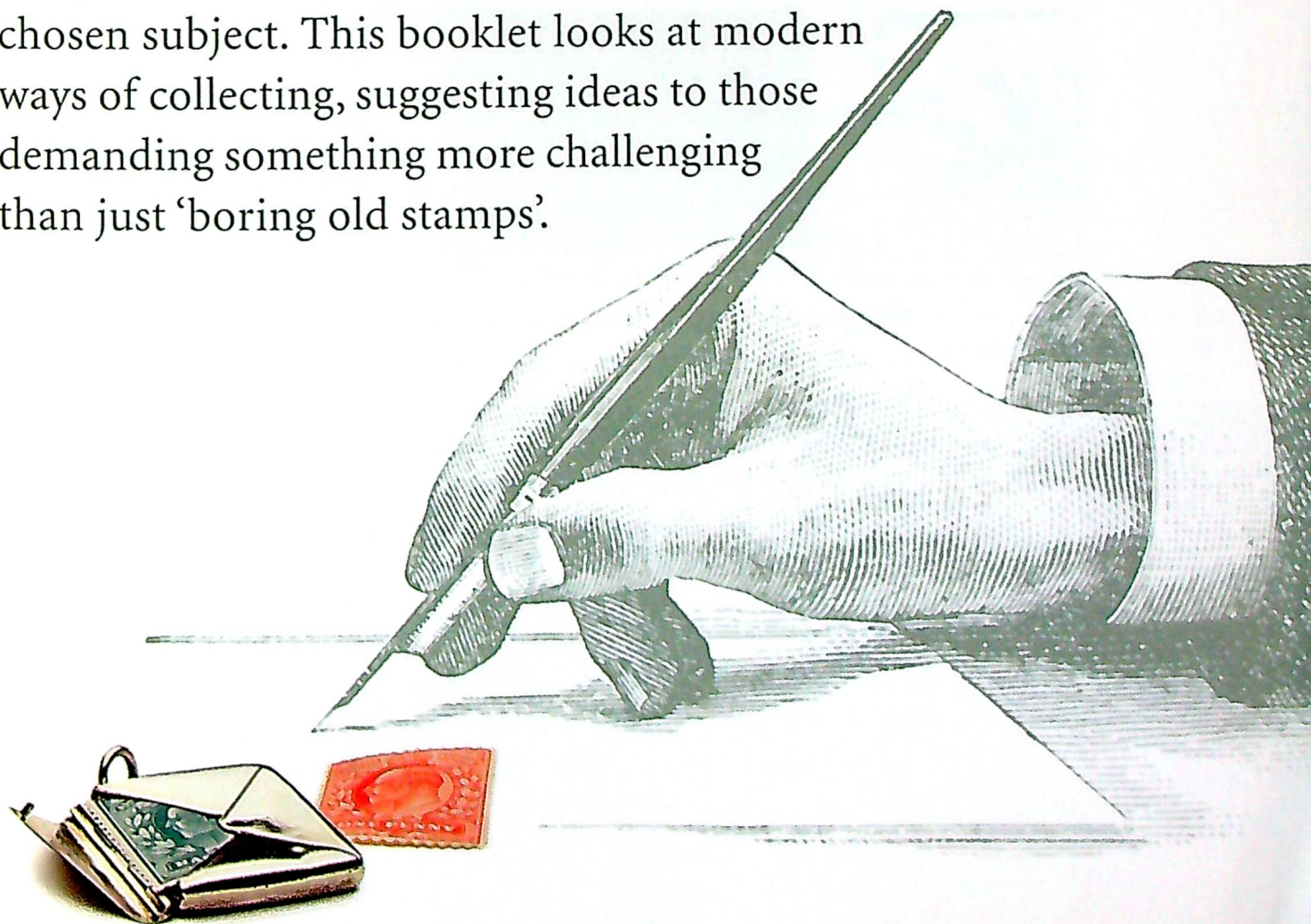
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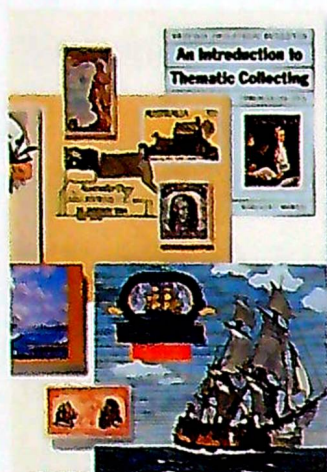
Cover Alternative ways of collecting allow for a wider diversity of material to be included than was the case a few years ago.



HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU HEARD THE WORDS 'I would not be able to include this in an exhibit; the judges don't like it'? Many will never exhibit because they disagree with the rules. But all competitions have rules. Most collectors do not compete. The collection is personal, as is its development. It may solely be for enjoyment; it could be shown to others, but not in competition. A collection conceived purely for pleasure is likely to appeal to a wider audience than one constrained by competition rules. But rules should not necessarily be ignored, even by those who have no intention of entering. They can help build a framework for the collection. Even in competitions, more flexibility is desirable, with scope for individual interpretation of the chosen subject. This booklet looks at modern ways of collecting, suggesting ideas to those demanding something more challenging than just 'boring old stamps'.



A CHANGING HOBBY



Margaret Morris's booklet *An Introduction to Thematic Collecting* (Publication No5 1998), looks at thematics in some detail.

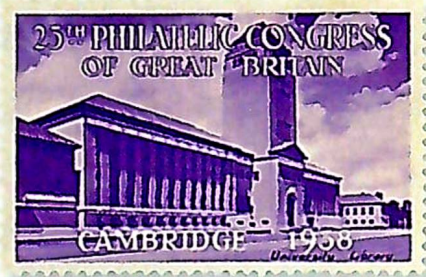
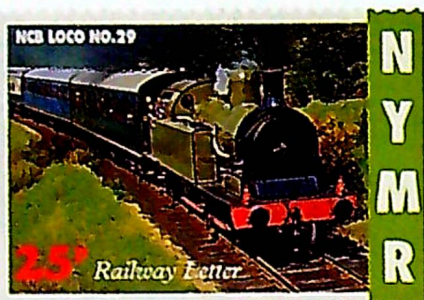
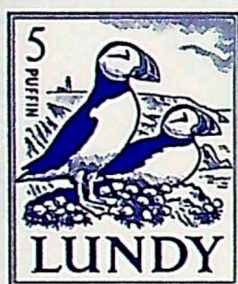
Anyone who claims that this hobby of ours is static would be denying the truth. Fashions constantly change: those with fairly recent memories may remember the furore over gutter pairs, especially traffic light gutter pairs, or the enthusiasm for postcards, so that every region of the Post Office was issuing its own.

In the wider field, circumstances have forced change. Who today could contemplate forming a general collection with 'one of each', even of the British Commonwealth?

Postal history is relatively new, with the late Robson Lowe being credited with making this branch of the hobby respectable. It is not so many years ago that few collectors would have contemplated a thematic collection, and there are still those who would not publicly admit that this is a serious branch of the hobby.

The main growth area in stamp collecting over the past 20 years has been thematic collecting, often simply called thematics, or, in the USA, 'topical collecting' (see page 14).

..... CINDERELLAS



Left to right: local carriage, railway letter, and Philatelic Congress labels.

Our predecessors were more attuned to Cinderellas, as witnessed by the popular labels which accompanied each Philatelic Congress of Great Britain, or the clear attraction that was felt for 'poster stamps'. The whole sphere of Cinderellas then rather took a back seat, but recent times have seen a resurgence in this form of collecting.

Labels such as those produced for railway letters, and even local carriage labels, can be the focus of separate studies. Some of the latter gave Cinderellas a bad name as labels, often incorrectly described as 'stamps', for uninhabited islands hardly created a feeling of credibility. Fortunately collectors are now better informed and more discriminating and are able to distinguish the more acceptable Cinderellas. Such items can, with constraint and within reason, be included in a thematic collection. (See page 14 for items not appropriate in thematic competition.)

REVENUES

For many years Revenues were a feature of Cinderella collecting. Often resembling postage stamps (indeed many played a dual function), the collecting of these has grown in recent years to the extent that there is now a separate Revenue Class in international stamp exhibitions. For many the appeal of Revenues is that they are often much less expensive than comparable stamps used postally, are as attractively designed and intricately printed, and are fully worthy of study (see page 14).



MAXIMAPHILY

Another fairly recent innovation within international exhibiting has been Maximaphily. This is the formation of a collection of postcards: the picture side is linked with the design of a stamp, which is affixed to the picture side and cancelled with an equally appropriate cancellation. Thus postcard, stamp and cancellation are related. However, stamp cards which simply reproduce the stamp design are not acceptable. For whatever reason, this form of collecting has not proved popular with British collectors, although it is commonly found on the Continent.

ASTROPHILATELY

As the use of air to convey the mail has grown, so has the interest in Aerophilately. A more recent derivative has been Astrophilately. In its broadest sense, this encompasses the period from the pioneers to the conquest of space, rocket mail, and manned and unmanned space programmes. It includes mail carried on space flights, and envelopes or cards posted on dates and at locations appropriate to significant space development (see page 14).



ROCKETGRAM

By Rocket Parcel Despatch.

"R. No. 61" over river
POONARAIN
CHAT.

MODERN PHILATELY AND THE OPEN CLASS

With the fear that the impression was being created that only classic issues would provide success at international exhibitions, a separate class for Modern Philately was attempted at a number of events. One of the problems that arose was where to establish the boundaries, which could vary from country to country. For example, the start of the present reign might seem appropriate for British collectors, but would 1952 be a suitable starting date for other collecting areas? As a result the concept rather faded away, to be replaced by the concept of the Open Class.

The idea was fairly straightforward. Very often within the personal collection, or in displays given to others, are included maps, postcards (shown for their picture side), and similar ephemera. All naturally has a connection with the main 'theme' of the collection or display, but is not so rigidly stamp or postal history oriented.

We have all been to society displays at which we have had to endure lengthy studies of a single stamp, which while clearly bringing much satisfaction to the owner, do nothing for the casual viewer. Just imagine how a visitor to an exhibition, perhaps not already a committed collector, must feel when confronted by such displays. We equally know that displays which are much broader in their concept, including not only stamps (perhaps with proofs and colour trials), but also artists' sketches and official publicity notices can be so much more enjoyable. So it was felt that related ephemera could be included within competitive displays. While postal related items would still form the core, up to 30 per cent can be non postal.

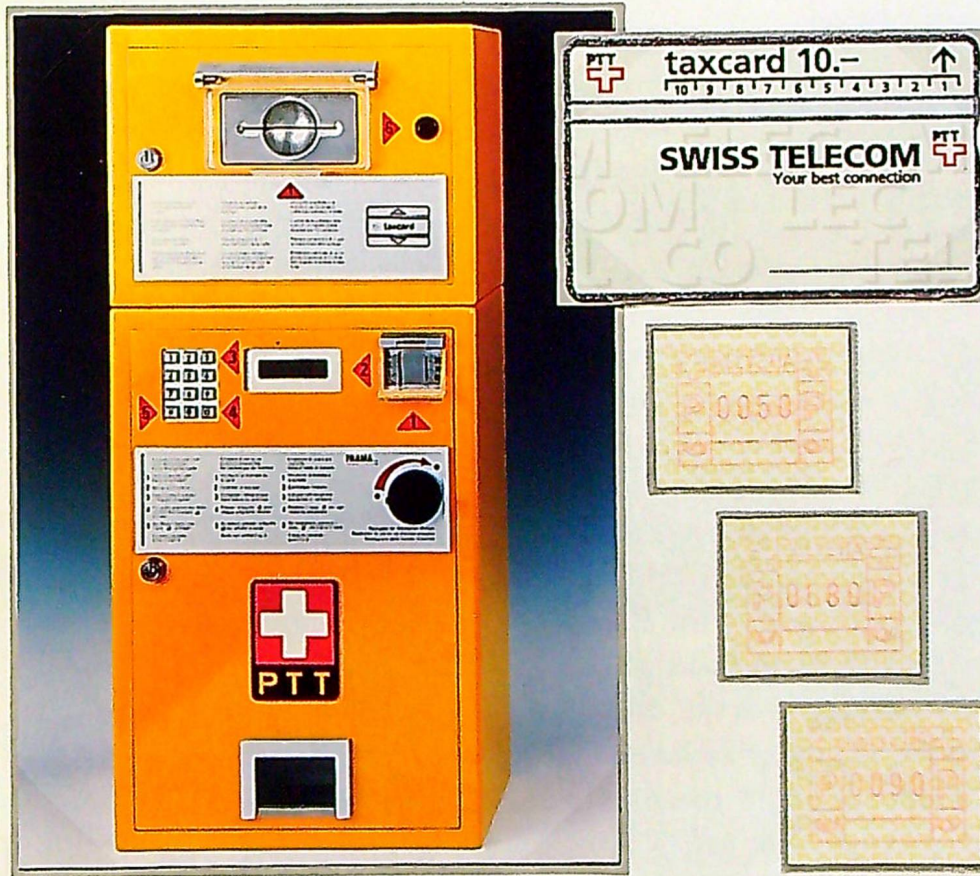
The range of such non postal items can be very wide indeed, and can encompass the full range of items which fall under the category of Cinderellas. The likes of local carriage labels and poster stamps, various tax labels etc, can all be legitimately included. Publicity posters, packaging for sheets of stamps and booklets, even telephone cards, wine bottle labels, invitations and menus, can also be included. Maps, photographs and even newspaper cuttings can all have a relevance. The key word is 'relevance': as long as there is a connection with the theme of the collection, the range of acceptable items is very wide indeed.

Surprisingly, one of the most contentious aspects of the Open Class has been how it should be judged. Should there be rules? Should there be categories under which the exhibits are assessed? Should marks be given? Should there be a formal team of judges, or perhaps the decisions can be left to the visiting public? Different exhibitions have had different views on the matter. Some have compromised, seeking views

1991 ~ SWITZERLAND

Electronic Machine Vending

The Swiss stamp vending machine manufacturer, Frama, produced a modified version of their label machine in 1991. It accepted units from the PTT's telephone card for payment.



Note card slot in top section of machine

A page from Glenn Morgan's Open Class automatic teller machines display.

of both judges and the visiting public. One would think that allowing the visiting public to make the decision as to which entry in an Open Class it prefers would have an attraction for many potential exhibitors. Those who complain about being restrained by rules and the idiosyncrasies of judges could feel more confident. Producing a display that is likely to have wide appeal could be rewarded by the visitors.

Surprisingly, enthusiasm for the Open Class at Autumn Stampex (adjudicated by visitors) has waned over the years, both in the number of exhibits received and in the number who vote for the best display. Perhaps it is because there is greater support for the next step forward, Social Philately.

SOCIAL PHILATELY

WHAT IS SOCIAL PHILATELY?

'Social Philately is the collection, study and displaying of philatelic and non-philatelic items which illustrate the inter-relationship between the postal services and a historical event, an industry, social activity or the development of a geographical area.' PAT GRIMWOOD-TAYLOR

'The collection, study, classification and exhibiting of materials and artefacts that illustrate either the social reaction to the presence of a universal and rapidly developing postal system or the development and diversification of a social activity or enterprise.' HANDBOOK OF THE AUSTRALIAN INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION

Social Philately saw its origins in Australasia in the 1980s, where it has proved immensely popular as a form of collecting. All recognise that there has always been a strong bond between the postal system and the development of social history. Trade, communities and social intercourse have all expanded with the development of the postal system, especially since the introduction of the adhesive postage stamp.

As in the Open Class, Social Philately allows a story to be told not only with stamps but with

a whole realm of associated ephemera. Social Philately came to a wider audience when it was included within the international stamp exhibition at Melbourne in 1999. Its inclusion at Glasgow 2000, in November last year, attracted nearly 30 exhibits, demonstrating that here is a form of collecting which has the potential for wide appeal.

Over the years there have been many collections formed which have not sat easily within the framework of the existing exhibiting classes. Some have been included, but often with debate as to which of the competitive classes was the most appropriate. How does one exhibit, for example, the many caricatures of the Mulready stationery, which faced such ridicule on its introduction in 1840. Such stationery offers a fascinating insight into public attitudes at the time, and could well fit into Social Philately. The Jubilee of Uniform Penny Postage in 1890 is another study far better suited to Social Philately.

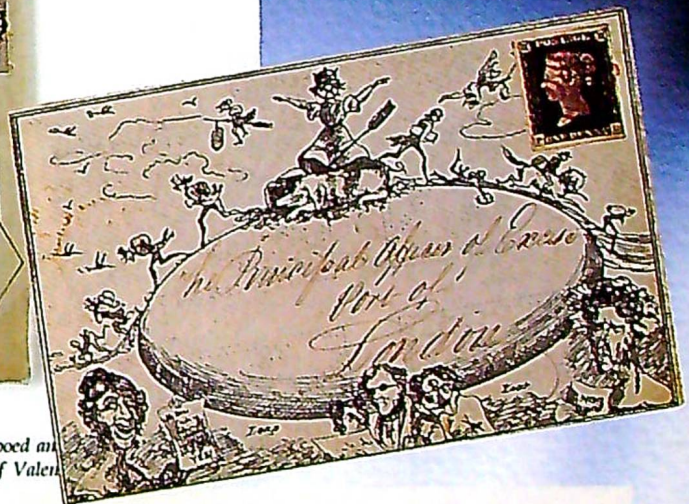
Valentine cards have for years had a keen following (and likewise some Christmas cards), but these do not fit into the more traditional forms of collecting. A collection of such cards over the years demonstrates changing attitudes to love, and would play an important role as a part of Social Philately. Mourning covers, disinfected mail, even telegrams, can demonstrate aspects of history, but again would not always fit in with a more traditional philatelic study. So Social Philately provides the opportunity to tell a story, a piece of history, which can be illustrated through stamps and postal history, but also with far more.

The regulations for Social Philately provided by the organisers of the exhibition in Melbourne read as follows: a Social Philately exhibit, by analysis of the philatelic and social objects within it, should show and explain the development, or operation, of a social need dependent on the postal system or deriving from it; the practical application of postal

The Life of a Victorian Lady.

The Victorian era was a time of great change. Reform was everywhere. But whilst the postal service, businesses and the political arena witnessed much, the life of a Victorian Lady was still dictated by social convention.

This display illustrates the fashions, chief occupations and concerns of ladies of 'society' in Victorian times, whilst chronicling the impact of letter-writing and improved communications upon their day-to-day activities.



In Victorian times a "suitable marriage" was deemed most important. Ladies were wooed in the most romantic manner, and with the expansion of the postal services the sending of Valentines became a popular pastime. This example, posted in Liverpool, is a lamp-post, with the caption used as a wafer seal.

The following page shows envelopes, both addressed to the same lady, both dated 1840, the cost of sending a Valentine increased enormously.

CINZANO

The first promotion using specially printed Postal Orders.

Collars from Cinzano bottle necks during the promotion. Though the collar refers to and illustrates a cheque, a specially prepared Postal Order was in fact sent out.

Write your own cheque FOR UP TO £5

CINZANO

How can I save money whilst enjoying Cinzano? Write your own cheque for up to £5. Simply cut out the correct number of collars from any Cinzano bottles. Each collar contains a special promotional code to your own refund cheque.

Just complete the cheque section on the front of this bottle collar and send it with the required proofs of purchase to: Cinzano Office, PO Box 51, Burnley, Lancs. Your claim will be paid in Postal Orders. Don't forget to include the Cinzano labelled bottle caps and your own name and address.

CONDITIONS
Only one application per household.

Please allow 28 days for delivery. Applications will not be accepted without the requisite proofs of purchase. Responsibility cannot be accepted for applications lost, damaged or delayed in transit. Please remember that this refund cheque is only valid when sent to the special offer address. All applications must be on an official Cinzano refund cheque.

and the Cinzano logo are trademarks.

Printed by A.D. Limited

Write your own cheque FOR UP TO £5

CINZANO

REFUND CHEQUE

PAY Your Name _____ Address _____ Post Code _____

The sum of £1, £2.50 or £5

£

I enclose _____ proofs of purchase

Signed _____

10028 31 185 1054111

Method of advertising the offer:
Availability:
Method of application:

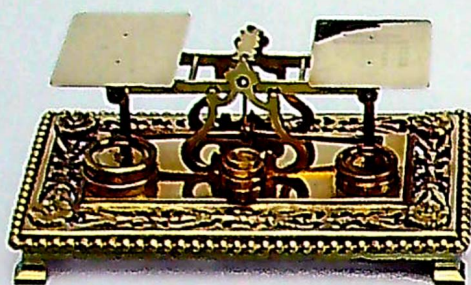
Claim:

Collars around the necks of bottles
Available to the general public but only 1 entry per household
Completed form on a collar together with requisite number of bottle caps
2 bottle caps for £1

What might be included in a Social Philately display: the introductory page from 'The Life of a Victorian Lady' by Pat Grimwood-Taylor, a caricature of the Mulready envelope, and promotional postal orders from Richard Solly's collection.

WHAT MIGHT A SOCIAL PHILATELY DISPLAY INCLUDE?

Telegram services; greetings cards including Valentines; illustrated and pictorial envelopes; Post Office and Official stationery (without imprinted stamp); philatelic history (other than literature) including albums, hinges, perforation gauges, and so on; philatelic libraries; officially issued documents bearing illustrations of postage stamps; stamp cards and objects associated with postage stamps and their use; aspects of the effect of the postal system on commerce or industry; locality studies based on postal and social history; objects associated with postage stamps and their use (letter balances, stamp boxes, model post office implements etc); Post Office equipment (mailbags, uniforms, tools etc)



systems to a social need and the study and classification of the use of such social and postal needs (including all aspects of philatelic material) to illustrate the exhibit's main subject.

There is really no limit to what might be included within a Social Philately display, as long as it is appropriate to the story being related. Examples are listed opposite. There can also be practical considerations: while it is feasible to include three-dimensional objects, clearly if a display is to be shown at an exhibition within the conventional frames, there will be limits on what can be included. However, that need not deter what is included for personal enjoyment, or indeed what is covered when displaying to others. If Social Philately catches on, exhibitions may be forced to review the display facilities.

As previously mentioned, the range of items that can be included will extend beyond the bounds of stamps, postal stationery and covers. The letter that was contained within the cover can offer so much social insight, and indeed many collectors have for years included correspondence within their collections simply for the written message and what it reveals. Maps and photographs, postcards, prints and engravings can likewise provide a picture of past and changing times. Documents and leaflets, even invoices and similar documents all add to the overall picture. It is possible to introduce coins, medals, even textiles, jewellery or seals, while stamp boxes and writing implements can be included.

As with thematic collecting it is first essential to determine the story to be told, and to prepare a 'plan' of how this story will flow coherently throughout the display. The choice of a 'theme' may well be determined by items already owned, indeed may even be an extension to an existing collection. However, as with any collection, one needs to be practical. It is essential that sufficient relevant and attractive material should be readily available, otherwise frustration will soon set in. The collection needs to be carefully planned, be creative, telling the story through the material, and written up to demonstrate the social relevance. There is no doubt that such a collection can provide far more stimulation for both the collector and the viewer.

If present indications are accurate, Social Philately could be the stimulus for more to become attracted to our hobby.

FIRST DAY COVERS



Like them or loathe them, you cannot ignore them. Many stamps used on the day of issue are extremely valuable on cover, providing confirmation of the date of release. Many covers are commercial: someone just happened to use the stamp(s) on the first day in use. Others have been produced intentionally: the 2d Tyrian Plum of King Edward VII was sent on cover on the day of issue to King George V. Who would refuse this unique item simply because it was deliberately produced? A turning point in many minds came when Post Offices around the world realised the appeal of first day covers, and started to provide a full service with specially designed envelopes and cancellations.

Thematic collectors are sometimes wary, even though stamp, envelope and cancellation are related to the theme. In contrast, first or special flight covers were often specially created, with suitably designed envelopes: such covers are not ignored by aerophilatelic collectors just because of their pedigree.

Most non-collectors associate our hobby with first day covers, frequently called 'first day issue'. Many grandparents buy each first day cover for grandchildren as 'something for their future'. Of course, there are those who have been disillusioned when trying to sell covers with the stamps badly affixed, the address not neatly hand-written and the standard (basic) 'first day of issue' handstamp. Such are prepared in their thousands and will rarely be worth their cost.

But many seriously collect first day covers: those who seek out more unusual cancellations, nevertheless related to the subject of the stamps; or those who do not necessarily buy the Royal Mail cover (albeit this is always carefully designed to complement the stamps perfectly), but instead choose a cover arranged by an organisation with links to the theme of the stamps.

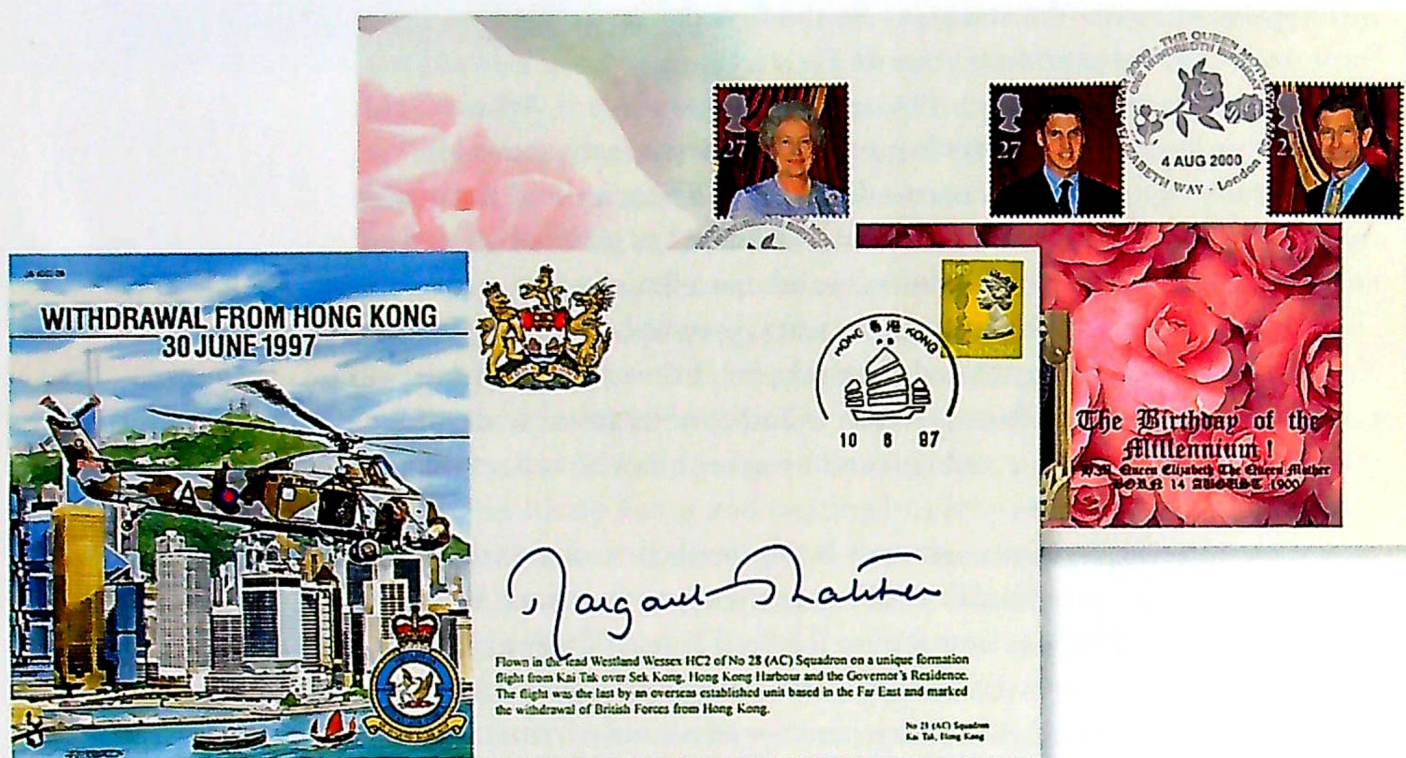
First or special flight covers were often specially created with suitably designed envelopes.

Maybe the journey from despatch to destination has been adventurous. Consider the first few special stamps from Royal Mail in 2001: there are opportunities for covers to be carried by rocket (The Future), dog sleigh (Cats and Dogs), by weather balloon (The Weather), on a submarine (Submarines), or on a classic bus (Buses).

There are companies which specialise in organising first day covers. Each seeks organisations linked with each new British set of stamps to produce a first day cover with added appeal. Considerable research is undertaken on the design of the envelope, and on the design and location of the cancellation. Added features which will make the cover something special are sought.

Many collectors prefer to create their own covers, taking the time and trouble to produce something different. Examples of such have been shown in articles by Derek Williams in the *Bulletin* in recent years.

Of course, covers need not always be for a first day of issue. Just as significant can be covers recalling special events.



An autograph will add a personal touch to a first day cover.

..... AUTOGRAPHS

Signed covers can be an adjunct. Over the years there has been a growing trend to find appropriate personalities to autograph covers. Many celebrities will gladly sign covers if they feel someone else will benefit as a result. Most support a charity or similar special cause, and are only too happy to apply their signature for a small donation.

THERE IS MORE

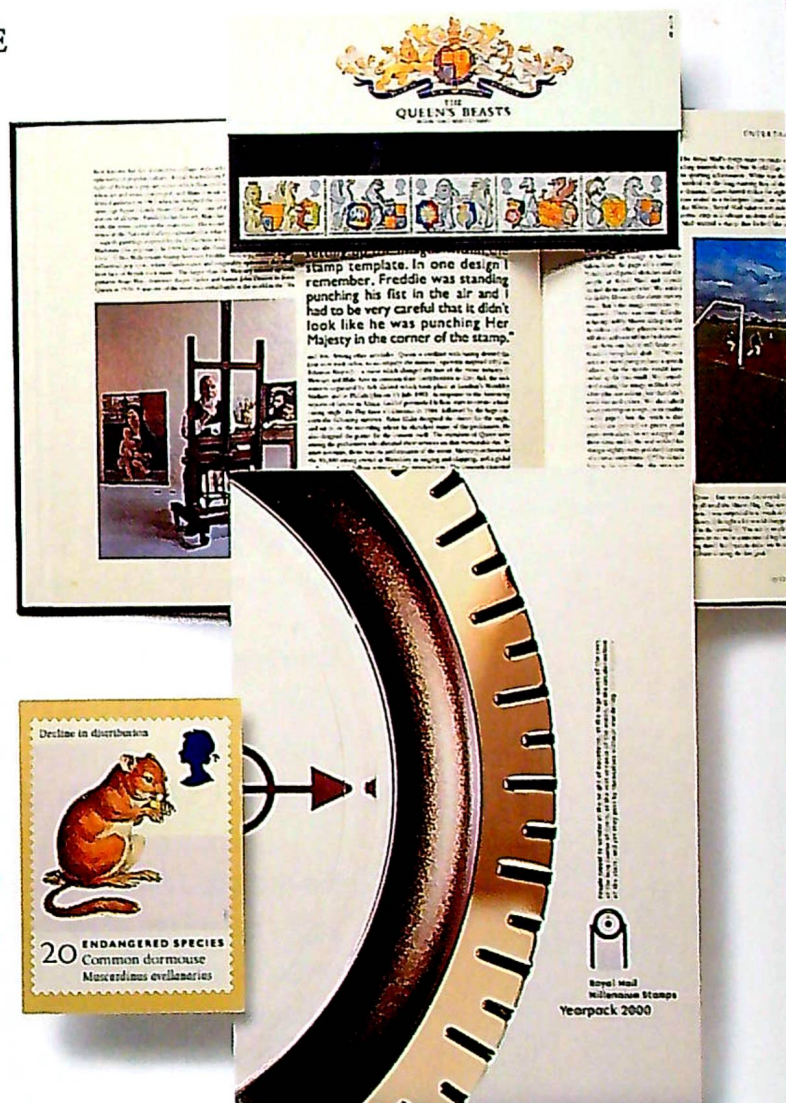
When it comes to the personal collection there are of course many other ways in which it can be developed.

Our own Post Office has been innovative in many ways over the years, offering easy ways of forming a collection. Almost coincidentally along with the official first day cover came the presentation pack. While at first not all issues were accompanied by a pack, now such items are commonplace, being provided not only for special issues but also for new definitives. Year collections came along at almost the same time, providing the opportunity to acquire a year's special issues in a single 'pack' with useful accompanying background information. The yearpack was developed further to form the yearbook, again supplying the year's issues but within the form of a book, closely resembling a stamp album, which can be housed on a bookshelf. Over the years many other countries have followed Royal Mail's lead, and provide presentation packs and yearbooks for their new special issues.

The next development was stamp cards, depicting in enlarged form the design of a stamp, and even of the commemorative labels found in certain stamp books. Collectors can keep the cards alone, or can affix the appropriate stamp on either the picture or reverse side (but do note that such cards do not qualify as maximum cards).

The evolution of the postal system has seen collectors focusing on certain aspects, such as stamp booklets, the use of labels on which the postal value is printed at the time of purchase (often known as Frama), the use of meter marks, and now the growth in the acceptance of self-adhesive stamps. Indeed, who knows what the future might reveal? Attempts have been made at providing stamps through automatic teller machines, although only Singapore has developed this to any extent. The use of smart cards to pay for postage may well come in the future.

The fact is, of course, that this is a personal hobby and how it is approached can vary with the individual. That is its strength, and no one would wish it otherwise.



Some easy ways to form a collection: a presentation pack, Yearbook, stamp card and Yearpack, from Royal Mail.

NOTES AND CONTACT ADDRESSES

Thematic collecting In the UK, thematic collecting is co-ordinated by the British Thematic Association and there are specialised groups covering astro-space, bicycles, birds, butterflies and moths, Captain Cook, chess, Churchill, Concorde, cricket, football, golf, masonic, medical, Methodist, music, Olympics, railways, religion, rotary, scouts and guides, and windmills.

In competition, the following are inappropriate in a thematic exhibit: fantasy issues from non-existent postal territories; private additional cancellations; picture postcards; private additional prints on postal stationery; administrative marks (not postal); private decorations on envelopes or cards; private vignettes (advertising labels).

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Cinderellas For further information contact The Cinderella Stamp Club: P F Rogers, 31 Springfield Road, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 3AR. The Club's current Chairman is Francis Kiddle, who writes a regular column on Cinderella material in *Stamp Magazine*.

.....
Revenues Internationally, the realm of Revenues includes the following: registration of deeds and documents, judicial or Court, receipts, public service, bills, duty stamps, Consular services, licenses, postage stamps used for revenue or revenue stamps used for postage.

The Revenue Society of Great Britain, founded in 1990, hosted the Philatelic Congress of Great Britain in 2000. Its secretary is E A Hall, 53a High Street, Whitwell, Hitchin SG4 8AJ.

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Astrophilately There is an Astro Space Stamp Club whose secretary is B J Lockyer, 21 Exford Close, Weston super Mare, BS23 4RE. With the special connotations of the year 2001, part of the exhibits at Autumn Stampex in September will be devoted to Astro Philately.

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First day covers Collectors of FDCs are catered for by the GB FDC Association, 2 Chaffinch Close, Horsham RH12 4HA.

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Competitive exhibitions If you would like to exhibit competitively, and would like to know the regulations and guidelines for the evaluation of exhibits at FIP (Fédération Internationale de Philatélie) exhibitions, a booklet is available, free of charge, on receipt of a stamped, addressed A5 envelope, from The British Philatelic Trust, 107 Charterhouse Street, London EC1M 6PT.

Richard West started collecting at the age of eight. His interests are fairly wide, including Pacific Islands and Great Britain stamp booklets. On leaving university, after a short spell of teaching, he joined Link House Magazines in 1971 initially on *Stamp Weekly*, becoming Editor of *Stamp Magazine* in 1972. Today he is the Editor-at-Large of *Stamp Magazine*.

Within organised philately his roles have included: a Trustee of the British Philatelic Trust; Past President of the National Philatelic Society; President and Secretary (the latter for 30 years) of Brighton and Hove Philatelic Society; a member of the Stampex organising committee; a member of the National Youth Stamp Group; Public Relations Officer for the Friends of Thematica; Editor of the newsletter of the Association of British Philatelic Societies.

He is an international judge of youth exhibits, a member of the FIP Youth Commission, and invariably UK Commissioner for youth international exhibitions. At a national level he judges both youth and literature exhibits.

He was on the organising team of Philypia 1970, London 1980, Stamp World London 1990 and The Stamp Show 2000.



Other publications in this series

- The Early Days of the Postal Service (1986)
- British Special Stamps 1985-86 (no1 1993)
- British Stamp Design 1993 (no2 1994)
- Burns Bicentenary 1996 (no3 1996)
- British Victorian Stamps (no4 1997)
- An Introduction to Thematic Collecting (no5 1998)
- British Empire Exhibition Stamps, 1924-25 (no6 1999)
- New Technology for Stamp Collectors (no7 2000)

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