



West of
England
Thematic
Society

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WELCOME to your new look WETS newsletter! Although all members collect stamps, covers, postmarks etc by subject rather than country, we don't have very much face to face contact to exchange material, ideas, information, or enthusiasm.

The Newsletter should be another way to swap all these things. It is hoped to issue it quarterly and offer members a new "togetherness" as well as increase your knowledge and understanding of thematics no matter what your theme is or how deeply it goes into your album pages.

If you collect e.g. Royalty, Animals, or Flowers, you can still help someone who collects e.g. Art, Explorers, or Trains. Why not tell them how you write-up your pages, keep track of new issues and postcards and mount items. If you have a good idea, send it to us. If you want advice ask your fellow members via the newsletter.

And, of course, longer articles on your particular subject are always wanted. Let other collectors share your research work.

Remember that the West of England Thematic Society Newsletter should be **READ** and **WRITTEN** by its members

Around-The-Globe Double For Devon

On August 27th 1966 a 65 years-old Devonian set off from Plymouth in a 55ft yacht, his ambition to become the first man to sail around the world single-handed.

Francis Chichester arrived in Sidney, Australia 107 days and 14,100 miles later his dream achieved. After a short break he raised the sails of "Gypsy Moth IV" again and began the homeward voyage.

He was back in Plymouth 119 days later, his 15,517 miles homeward journey being the longest ever non-stop voyage by a small vessel. He returned to The Hoe on July 27th 1967 as Sir Francis Chichester, Buckingham Palace having announced

while he was in the Pacific that the determination and strength of character, which had brought such glory to England, were deserving of a Knighthood



Some 386 years earlier another of Devon's seafarer sons, Francis Drake had been knighted by Elizabeth 1 for showing similar qualities in taking another sailing boat, the "Golden Hind" around the globe.

Although he also departed from and returned to Plymouth, Drake certainly didn't make a solo voyage. He had a full crew of around 40 men for the 100-ton boat. He was however, the first

Captain to complete such a circumnavigation, Portugal's Ferdinand Magellan having been killed en route before his crew brought the "Victoria" back to Europe in 1522.

Drake was Knighted at Deptford by the Queen on April 4th 1581 for his heroic voyage – not as many assume for his part in defeating the Spanish Armada eight years later. Even allowing for the centuries between his historic voyage and the introduction of commemorating British stamps, Drake had to wait a lot longer than Chichester for his philatelic recognition. Tavistock born Sir Francis was one of five British explorers featured in a 1973 set, a full six years after the other Sir Francis had been honoured – though only by a picture of "Gypsy Moth IV" – on a 1s 9d single stamp.

Chichester's heroics which included several long solo aeroplane flights and other solo yacht voyages, certainly deserved recognition on a British stamp before his death in Plymouth in 1972. But ahead of Drake?

Just as Chichester's efforts can be found honoured on special cancels as well as the 1967 stamp, so Drake is also remembered with many GB cancels. If you want to tell his story in full thematically, however, you must look to issues around the world.



by Jim Wigmore

This is the question that should be on the lips of every thematic collector. Despite the rise in interest in thematics, it is still not fully understood by collectors that thematics should be making use of all philatelic based material, and is not just a collection of stamps on a theme.

Judges please note. Modern computing tools allow excellent presentation of subjects to be made, and the incorporation of scanned

images of covers, markings etc. reduced in size adds to this process.

Those who use such tools, should however take note, that the marks for presentation in competition are very small, and what really matters is the idea, the validity of the idea, and the quality of material to support the story being told.

The same arguments apply to mounting methods which are designed to go beyond the process of protecting our material and allowing easy transfer without damage, to actually enhancing presentation.

The bottom line for any thematic collection is a good idea, a story with a plausible title, a well thought out plan for the collection, and good philatelic material which sits well within both the story and the plan.

If it's that good, presentation does not matter, unless of course you know differently.

TRY THIS

Black Showguard, Printz, Safe etc., mounts give you a fine frame around any stamp you put inside them, but unlike simple, basic stamp hinges they can leave a mark on your album page when you remove them to re-organise a set.

Try this. Buy a Pritt Mini-Roller at a W.H.Smiths or similar stationers – but make sure it has “Non-Permanent” on the red plastic case not “Permanent” – then simply press it along the back of your mount instead of wetting it with your tongue prior to placing it on the album page. If you later need to re-arrange the page the mount will lift off without doing any damage to the page. Indeed, it can be stuck into the new position with the existing adhesive.

SPREADING THE WORD by Mary Claydon

Some 13 years ago in my capacity as Secretary of the Tiverton Stamp Club, I received a letter from a lady in Arnhem Holland. It said she and her husband collected G.B., the Channel Islands, and the Isle of Man, and would anyone in our club be interested in swapping these stamps for those of the Netherlands.

I wrote back to say that my husband collected Netherlands and Netherlands East Indies, while I was a thematic collector doing the Royal Families of Europe, I added that we would be pleased to swap stamps. Shortly afterwards Norman and I went on holiday to Holland and I wrote to ask could we all meet.

It was arranged they would pick us up at Arnhem station and take us to their home for the evening. We talked into the small hours of the morning. Today we are extremely close friends. We have met their fathers, mothers, brothers, and watched their children grow-up- all the time talking amongst other things, STAMPS.

When they came to visit us my collection of Royalty was in its relatively early stage – they have watched it grow – and in the process become more interested in Thematics. They now have an ever growing collection on Alpine Sports – Flora and Fauna – etc.

This year while they were visiting us, I showed them the Handbook of Thematic Philately by W.E.J. Van den Bold. Chatting about societies, I said “*Watch you don't get drawn into running anything unless you want to, since you are both still working full time!!!*”. Famous words of warning.

Soon after returning home they visited a Stamp Fair, taking particular interest in the thematic section. They got into conversation with a gentleman who helped organise and run a large thematic society – his name? Mr. Van den Bold! Before they left the fair Mr. Van den Bold had

suggested they might like to join the society and that Henk (*Henk is the male friend, Heidi his wife*) might like to become Treasurer – being an ex-banker. To cut a long story short, Henk will take over as society treasurer at the next AGM and meanwhile is understudying the present treasurer, They are travelling to numerous thematic meetings and this month will be going to a very large thematic society meeting in Belgium.

All this has arisen from a chance letter, so be sure you always reply to any such appeal. You never know where it will lead, and if we spread the word the interest in thematics will grow – and so will our society.

NEXT time you've got a friend, relation or neighbor going on holiday to a more distant destination than the Mediterranean, say the U.S.A., the Caribbean or "Down Under", why not suggest how they can get rid of those last few dollars or whatever at the airport before the return flight. Buy a stamp magazine.

Having recently had friends do this at Sydney and Boston, I can tell you such magazines are worth acquiring just for the adverts never mind the articles

WANTED - If anyone has any pre- 1975 Stamp magazines, bulletins, or leaflets (*even ones where you have removed the articles that interest you*), I would be more than happy to collect them or pay the postage to get them sent to me. Tony Smith Tel 01404 46358



Although he was born when Henry VIII was on the throne, all Drakes epic voyages, his battle glory, and "patriotic piracy" came during Elizabeth 1 reign.

Researching Drake for my "Westward Ho!" entry in THEMATICA 2000, I discovered the Drake Exploration Society. This group has many members who between them have covered almost every aspect of the great seaman's life, yet when I told them that I could muster almost 50 stamps, cancels, booklets and miniature sheets featuring him, his routes, and his ship, I was met with disbelief.

The earliest recognition of his efforts is, perhaps a pre-decimal 4s 6d G.B. booklet with "Golden Hind" on the cover, while Commonwealth countries which have recalled his visiting their shores include Norfolk Island, The British Virgin Islands, and Tristan da Cunha.

Drake reached California, calling it "Nova Albion", in 1579-80 and the U.S. remembers this with a pre-stamped postal card plus many special cancels. For some reason though, they call his ship the "Golden Hinde". Does anyone know why the final E!

Pick out any of those countries which issue stamps for no other reason than to tempt collectors and you are

almost certain to find at least one featuring the great 16th century Devonian or his ship.

An Emergency Delivery Service set issued in Exeter during the 1971 postal strike certainly had more reason to feature Drake. So did, well almost a Cinderella set from Sealand off the U.K. coast.

He also has a channel he used off the tip of South America named after him, plus an island in Plymouth Harbour – more Cinderella issues here – so perhaps more of his efforts have been remembered in the album and the atlas than Sir Francis Chichester's – even if he did have to wait a little longer.- *Tony Smith*



CHAIRMANS REPORT by Mary Claydon

This newsletter will be produced for our AGM at Buckfastleigh on November 11th, so first of all I would like to thank all those who have worked for WETS during the past year. I would particularly like to mention Alison Burden, Lesley Marley, and Pamela McDowall. May I also thank Peter Burden for his contribution to our newsletters.

Now I have to welcome two new names to the team. Tony Smith and Jim Wigmore have agreed to take over the newsletter and today's is their first combined effort. I feel the newsletter is the best way for members to keep in touch with each other. We have only two meetings per year – the Thematics Day and our AGM so it is through the columns of the newsletter that we can air our questions, wants and suggestions and anything else of interest we would like to contribute.



Which leads me on to **“please use your Newsletter!”** We can advertise for our wants or items we wish to sell, we can say if we think some of the rules for exhibiting are not what we like, or just write an article on our own particular theme. Please do this - Tony and Jim cannot be expected to fill the newsletter themselves.

The Thematic Day in 2001 is March 31st at the usual venue – Dartmoor Lodge Hotel. The speaker will be Mrs Christine Earle showing her much acclaimed “The Grey Goose Wing” collection. Please spread this news around and see if we can attract some new members by getting them to come on this day.



THE WETS PACKET

How many of you have had a good sort through the thematic packet now circulating due to some sterling efforts from Pamela McDowall.

What no covers, booklets, M/S,

Have you noticed anything odd about the material?, that's right it is only stamps. Where are all the other thematic materials, slogan cancels, postal history, booklets, etc. etc. Your views on this subject are requested for the next issue.

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