

Visit our website at www.wessexpf.org.uk/WETS



West of
England
Thematic
Society

Newsletter No.57 September 2015

Society Officers

Chairman – Jim Wigmore 20 Gilpin Close Dawlish EX7 9SZ email JamesWigmore@talktalk.net

Secretary – Sally Ellam martin.sally101@btinternet.com

Treasurer – Andrew Austen 01271 329762 email andrewausten@lineone.net

News Co-ordinator - Tony Smith 26 Ashleigh Rd. Honiton Devon EX14 1TD Tel 01404 46358

Editor - Jim Wigmore 20 Gilpin Close Dawlish EX7 9SZ

Tel 01626 864844 **email** JamesWigmore@talktalk.net

IN THIS ISSUE – WETS News by email, From our Chairman, Dates for your Diary, Feedback on previous Stories, Looking for suitable Exhibition Protectors, Fancy a Cuppa,

WETS NEWS by email –If you are not yet a recipient give your name and email address to the Editor. Increases in postal charges, mean it is important to circulate as much information as possible by this means. Look at our website www.wessexpf.org.uk/WETS for examples of the quality. Download time is very fast. **DON'T FORGET TO SAVE WHAT YOU GET.** It is suggested you create a file called WETS News to put them in.

FROM OUR CHAIRMAN – It has been a very busy Summer and I look forward to a very interesting Autumn. Thematics certainly generates a lot of interest in the clubs but the idea of collecting anything other than stamps on a theme is still a difficult idea for many to grasp. The whole idea of issued for the purpose is also a difficult aspect for general club members and the idea of actually writing up a thematic story is the biggest mystery of all. The talk “An Introduction to Thematics” is aimed at addressing all these issues, the feedback and discussion that goes on while presenting this talk is a true revelation both to club members and the presenter.

The recent 2015 Wessex Federation Competition Entries in the “Thematics” section were very good, they were all submitted by WETS Members who achieved two Gold’s and a Large Vermeil, well done.

The “Introduction to Thematics” section was very interesting as it was won by a none WETS member who achieved Gold.

I look forward to seeing as many of our members as possible at our Autumn Meeting and to seeing your display’s on “AIR” the subject chosen by attendee’s at the WETS Day.

These displays plus those on “WATER” and members competitive material should make for a really good well balanced WETS Roadshow for 2016.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY – 31st October 2015 WETS Autumn Meeting at Buckfastleigh Town Hall the room will be open from 1.30 pm. We would like to see your displays on the theme of “AIR”, also your entries for the John Hilsdon Trophy and the PIP Trophy. During the course of the meeting we will conduct our AGM. We would like to receive copies of all the entries on the subject of “WATER” for use in the 2016 Roadshow. We will be approaching others for copies of exhibition material that will also be used in the roadshow. Tea/Coffee and biscuits will be available during the meeting.

We are still hoping to book Pat Grimwood-Taylor to come and talk about Social Philately with a target date of **2nd May 2016.**

FEEDBACK ON PREVIOUS STORIES

Thematic Material for Sale – All reached in excess of the reserves despite the initial cynical response of the auctioneer to Thematic Material. It was good to see this material finding new homes and we can only hope it will re-appear as some written up displays.

2015 Wessex Federation Competitions – WETS Members did very well as reported above in the “Thematic”, “Introduction to Thematics” and the “Open Class”. Well done to all who entered.

How to put together a Thematic Collection – As always this display generated many questions over all the various issues relating to putting together such a collection. The issues relating to what can be put into a collection as opposed to what may be used in a Competition raised a few eyebrows as did the possibility of putting material into the “Open Class”. Why go to all the trouble of writing up a collection also had to be address e.g. “If you have a collection you become an archivist, you therefore have a duty to properly identify what you own, we are not going to live forever and we would all like our material to sell for its true value. If our material is not properly identified, it will not be possible for it to realise its true potential.” Another issue was that of page sizes and suitable protectors (*info follows*) for larger pages. It was suggested that everyone makes themselves familiar with rules for competition, even if you have no interest in competing as they contain some useful guidance regarding collection content and sizes of pages that are acceptable.

LOOKING FOR SUITABLE EXHIBITION PROTECTORS.

David Roseveare writes... We are adding more and more quality items to our collections thanks to eBay, Delcampe and the many auction houses who supply us with their lists. For those of us who like to present our work at exhibitions the requirement for good quality acid-free clear pockets offering protection for the pages is most important.

Some years ago, at a WETS event at Ashburton, the visiting speaker Brian Sole demonstrated how the visual impact of an exhibit could be greatly improved by the use of top quality exhibition protectors. At that time one of the few suppliers was Michael Jackson. He was a leading postal history dealer who attended stamp fairs in the region and who sold the "Permex" protectors. They were expensive but lasted a long time if handled properly. Luckily I purchased a large quantity from him. After Michael died, his stock was passed over to Vera Trinder of London and the personal touch was lost.

When I first started exhibiting my work I used the "Venus" protectors and they weren't too bad to start with. It all changed sometime later when I removed a display page from the sleeve and found a clear imprint of that page on the clear surface! Acid-free was a foreign word in those days! After dabbling with "Esselte" and some other brands, I ended up using the W.H. Smith range of A4 acid-free file pockets (in packs of 100 without the cardboard insert). My display page size is 284mm high and by trimming the top and removing the hinge portion of the pocket I found it suited my requirements. Smith's also sell a similar product, in a pack of 100 but with a cardboard insert but the pockets appear 'mottled' to the naked eye. Use a craft knife and straight edge on a wood or plastic board to trim the pockets, I don't use scissors. My WETS roadshow 16 page display was recently returned to me after a period of 12 months and, apart from a few blemishes, the protectors were still nice and clear, (many thanks to the presenters for looking after them).

For my international presentation "From Grandeur to Gravure" I replaced my "Permex" protectors with the Frank Godden "Clarendon" variety. They are excellent quality but expensive. When I was in Paris I purchased an original drawing for one of Pierre Bequet's Antarctic issues. It is roughly A3 format, double width. Unfortunately the "Clarendon" protector is too high (295mm) and it has been brought to my notice that it is difficult to fit them into frames. I resolved the problem, with some advice from Lesley Marley, by using the Ryman A3 Premium clear pocket, landscape opening and trimming the top and side as per the A4 'Smiths' pocket. I am very pleased with the finished product. They are made of 80 micron polypropylene material and a packet of 10 pockets cost less than £5. Although they aren't marked 'acid-free', I contacted the Ryman head office and they, in turn, contacted the manufacturer who confirmed that they are suitable for my use. They also do an A3 portrait opening type. The cost of 'Clarendon' double size protectors (pack of 25) costs over £60. I have discovered another company, Secol Archival Products of Norfolk. Their website address is www.secol.co.uk (by Royal Appointment) and they will send you a catalogue of their products on request. They can supply a packet of 50 protectors for roughly the same price as the 'Clarendon' product. Their postage rates are more expensive but the overall cost is still cheaper. There seems to be a vast price difference between similar sized products. Sometimes I wonder if we are being exploited for what we do.

It took me a lot of time to work out what to use. Before you buy, hold the material up to the light and feel the texture. In my opinion, many products advertised as clear and of archive quality aren't very good. If you can find a sample do some checks of your own, put it on the window sill in the sun and check that it doesn't go brittle. What does it look like under a UV lamp? Does it easily crease? There are so many things to look for. You can save a lot of money if you have the time and patience.

Please remember that this article is based on my own personal experiences. I hope that my observations will prove useful to some of you. If anyone else has come up with a better product, let's hear from you.

WHY NOT PORE OVER YOUR STAMPS WITH A DRINK - "Fancy a Cuppa"?

Yes, it's the timeless invitation to share a drink of tea when chatting to a friend - maybe perhaps when poring over some stamps. But don't expect to pick up a cup and saucer on a Great Britain issue in your album.

The "friendship" drink has been a traditional part of life here for some 300 years, but to find a setting to use in a tea time display I had to go to New Zealand's 1999 "nostalgia" set, writes Tony Smith.

Historically, tea goes back to China, the evergreen bush or tree having been used to make a drink from its leaves 3000 years ago. Today tea is the most popular refreshing drink in the world.



Chinese Emperors, having discovered the taste of the leaves, encouraged the growing of the plant on plantations on the humid hillsides but decided to keep the drink a secret. Seemingly the Chinese continued to discourage spreading the story of their "secret" because it wasn't until 1994 that the first cups appeared on its stamps (SG3900-4). An actual tea plant appeared (SG4182) on a 1997 set showing the drinks history and in 2001 a pre-stamped postcard featured a modern plantation. Having then taken over Hong Kong territory and stamps, the Republic also issued a set showing different ways to prepare and pour tea.



Near neighbours Japan first "stole" tea around 700 AD and in 1991 a stamp (SG2169) marked the 800th Anniversary of its first large plantation appeared. Earlier in 1985 Japan featured teapots and kettles (SG1805-8), while in 2001 two stamps showed its magnificent Tea Ceremony houses. India and Ceylon were the next countries to import tea plants. They had a similar weather and soil to that of China, so quickly large, hillside plantations developed and poor workers toiled endlessly gathering the leaves and cutting them up ready to make the drink.



Around 1600 AD Dutch traders began importing the leaves, both brown and green, into Europe from China, Japan, and the Indian Continent. Soon the English were also making long sea voyages east to collect tea, and by the 1700's the "Coffee Shops" in Britain and elsewhere in Europe were offering more tea than coffee to those who wished to sit around and talk.

Today parts of Africa and Latin America also grow tea, with three million tons produced world wide each year, led by India (950,00 tons), China (750,00 tons), Sri Lanka (350,00 tons), Kenya (250,000 tons) and Japan (100,000 tons).

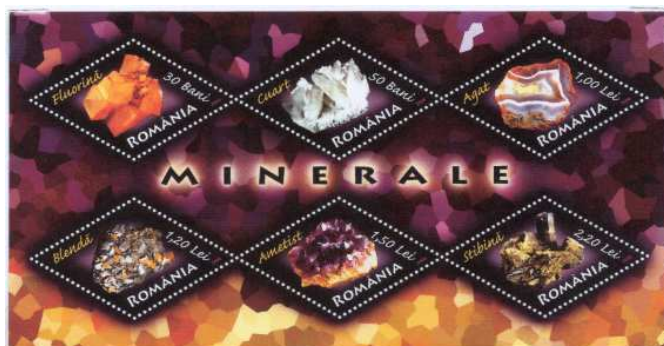


Stampwise, Ceylon has publicised its gathering of tea with more issues than any other country. Showing old style gathering 1935 (SG375), it also issued stamps for 1938, 51, and 64. Having changed its name to Sri Lanka it showed more aspects of its tea industry in 1983, 84, and 92, while India decided that the huge production from its plantations were more important than advertising, it only issued stamps in 1965 (SG1181-4) and 1993 (SG1557)

Kenya showed its increasing harvest with inclusion in a 1963 "food" issue (SG12), Pakistan featured a similar issue in 1854 (SG69) and Bangladesh in 1973 (SG30) also featured a brew up of cha - or as the Chinese first named their bush leaf, "Chajing". You can find the key word for the theme on a 1973 USA set looking back to the "Boston Tea Party" (SG1501-4) which recalled the refusal to pay a British tax on independence seeking folk's when they imported tea via the Atlantic. Perhaps that's why in the USA coffee remains the No1 drink ahead of tea? Latin wise one can order "Camellia Sinensis" to get your tea and it is surely the only drink in the English language to have given its name to a whole meal - "What time will we be sitting down to tea?"

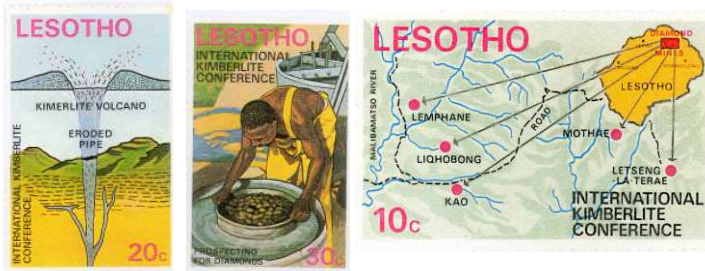


(We hope as many members as possible will join us for a cuppa on 31st October when we hold our Autumn Meeting – Ed)



DIAMONDS – Are a girl's best friend, so we are told, but few of us really know the process of mining these precious gems or where most come from. The story of the Diamond ranges from the geological formation in volcanic pipes, the search for the mineral, mining development, world distribution, treatment, surface recovery, undersea recovery and the market leading to the beautiful product. Along the way we can find falsely named Diamonds, blood Diamonds, Diamond symbolism,

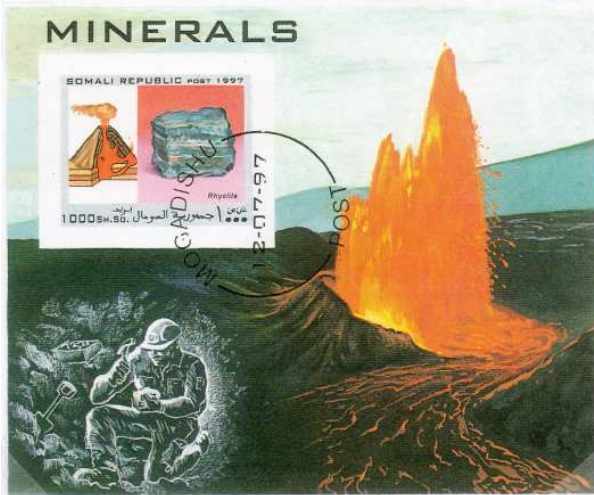
the shapes used in Philately, the Diamond Cartel and Diamond Anniversaries. All of which contribute to the fascinating bejewelled history and technical development of the Diamond. Diamonds can be found on most continents around the world, the mineralogy has been featured on quite a few stamps that show the formation process and the prospecting.



The mineral aspect alone would make an interesting story or could form one aspect of a much bigger story.

The Diamond really stands out in items produced by the jewellery trade. Before the jeweller can get to work the stones have to be cut and polished, the end result is quite spectacular as shown below. The Cullinan

Diamond is in the Royal Sceptre. Many other fine jewels have been produced featuring Diamonds.



The Diamond Club van Antwerpen is the Symbol of the Diamond Trade

representing the community for over a century its 100 year anniversary was featured on a stamp shown right.

Philatelically the Diamond has appeared in many guises, as a postmark and a control mark, it has also appeared as the result of Diamond Jubilee's.

Look for such things as postmarks and such items as the vended stamp shown below, the stamp shown has an error, the 1952-2012 has been shifted to the right by one pitch



These are just a few of the Gems that can be found (*sorry for the pun*) when putting together a thematic story of this nature. Particular care will need to be taken when deriving a plan to ensure the story has a clearly defined story line that can be expanded out within the various sub-sets laid out in the plan. Our Vice Chairman is already at work on this subject and we wish him well and thank him for providing the basis

of this article.

WE ALSO NEED YOUR STORIES FOR FUTURE BULLETINS