

# The Roll of Distinguished Philatelists

## New Signatories for 2025 and details of the signing ceremony

At the meeting of the Board of Election of the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists on 6 February 2025, it was unanimously agreed that the following philatelists be invited to be the new signatories to the Roll:

**Adriano Bergamini, RDP, Switzerland**

**Birthe King, RDP, United Kingdom**

**Eddie Leib, RDP, Israel**

**Simon Richards, RDP, United Kingdom**

An invitation to sign the Roll is the highest and most prestigious of honours in philately, and is the world's oldest philatelic honour. It recognises significant levels of achievement, research, publication and service in many areas of philately. The Roll was instituted in Harrogate in May 1921 and the signature of His Majesty King George V appears at its head as its first signatory. The total number of signatories up to and including those selected in 2025 (but excluding H.M. King George V) is 416 from 42 different countries. In its design, the Roll contains the names of 46 so-called "Fathers of Philately", names of great philatelists who would have been invited to sign had they been alive at the time. At the first ceremony in Harrogate the signatures of the initial 39 names were added to the Roll.

This year's signing ceremony, on the occasion of the 104th anniversary of the first signatories to the Roll, will take place on Friday 9 May 2025 at the Council House, Birmingham, during the international philatelic exhibition, EuroPhilEx, Birmingham 2025. The ceremony will be followed by a drinks reception, to which all attendees are invited. The following day, Saturday 10 May 2025, the Philatelic Congress of Great Britain will take place at EuroPhilEx and the new RDPs will be giving displays as part of the Congress programme. Everyone is invited to attend.

Attendance at the ceremony and drinks reception is open to all; there is no need to pre-book and attendees should gather for the ceremony from 4.30pm for a 5pm start. The ceremony will also be broadcast live on Zoom so that it can be seen by a worldwide audience. The login details will be announced on the ABPS website in due course. It is held at The Council House, Victoria Square, Birmingham B1 1BB, right in the City Centre. For anyone travelling from the Exhibition, free coach transport will leave from the nearby Arden Hotel at 4pm and 4.15pm, returning after the ceremony. Dress code is flexible, although most attendees wear lounge suits and ties. The main participants in the signing ceremony will wear black tie.

The new signatories join 94 other current living RDPs from 30 countries, spread over six continents. More details on the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists can be found at: <https://www.abps.org.uk/roll-of-distinguished-philatelists/>

## **Adriano Bergamini, RDP, Switzerland.**

Adriano Bergamini is a most active member of numbers of societies and in philatelic organisation within Switzerland and its surrounding territories. He has been significantly involved in organising philatelic events over many years. He is long-time president of the Philatelic Club of Lugano; he has sponsored and organised several meetings of the Royal Philatelic Society London in Lugano; he has organised a meeting of the Monte Carlo Club in Lugano in 2022. As president of the exhibition, he was involved in the organisation of the Swiss National exhibition, NABA-2018. He was also president of the successful Helvetia-2022 international exhibition, the first Swiss international exhibition held since 1974.



Adriano's collecting interests focus on the postal history of Austro-Hungary and its surrounding areas. His collections have received high awards when exhibited. One exhibit: *Postal Relations between Ticino (Switzerland) and the foreign countries before the UPU* was awarded large gold medals in London 2025, Taipei 2016 and was the winner of the grand prix at the World Stamp Championship, Helvetia 2022. His exhibit: *The Austrian Post in Hungary 1850-1867* was the winner of a large gold at Bangkok 2018 and the national grand prix at Hunphilex 2022. Other collections of significance include *Hungarian postmarks used on the first issue of Austria 1850-1858* and *The postal history of Croatia 1815-1867*.

He is always willing to be engaged in philatelic organisation and his enthusiasm enables him to spread his knowledge to a wide audience. His research is seen among the numerous articles that he has written, either individually or with other experts such as Dénes Cziráok RDP. These articles have appeared in several languages, including Italian, German and Hungarian as well as English and thus reach audiences beyond the typical.

## **Birthe King, RDP, United Kingdom.**

The name of Birthe King has become synonymous with the growth of Open Philately as an approach to collecting and exhibiting. Her promotional work has been seen across many countries and continents and her exhibits have gained high awards in competition. She has been a member and secretary of the FIP working group set up following the FIP Congress in Portugal in 2010 to examine the new class of Open Philately. The new Open Philately Guidelines were agreed at the FIP Congress in Indonesia in 2012. The Class has been a particularly popular in Europe, with more than 30 exhibits in competition at the London 2022 FIP international exhibition. As hoped, it has attracted numbers of new exhibitors who had previously not been involved in exhibiting.



As a Director of FEPA during the period 2013-2019, Birthe promoted the FEPA Regulations for Picture Postcards, combining the rules of several of the federations and consulting with prominent exhibitors of picture postcards. These regulations were agreed at the FEPA Congress in Athens in 2015 and Picture Postcards were adopted as an FIP experimental class at their Congress in 2018.

Birthe has developed and exhibited her own Open Class exhibits, which have gained high awards at exhibitions. Among them, *Denmark: Conscience, Conflict and Camps 1932-1949* received large gold medals at Melbourne 2013 and London 2015 international exhibitions. This collection has also been featured as an Edition d'Or, published by Heinrich Köhler. The exhibit *The Re-Unification of Southern Jutland with Denmark 1864-1920* was awarded a gold medal at the Prague 2019 international.

Active in the promotion of Open Philately, articles by Birthe have been published in magazines in Europe, America and Asia promoting and explaining the concept as a collecting approach and its exhibiting. Birthe has delivered numerous PowerPoint presentations at local, national and international level and participated in discussion groups and seminars. She has also participated in several interviews for magazines and radio.

Apart from her international appointments with FEPA and FIP, Birthe has been a Council Member of the Royal Philatelic Society London from 2012-2019 and chairman of the Membership & Representatives Committee during that time.

## Eddie Leibu, RDP, Israel.

Eddie Leibu has been very active in philatelic matters both internationally and in Israel for many years. He was editor of the three volumes of *The Postal History of the Transition Period in Israel, 1948*, which is the definitive work on this period of Holy Land postal history. He is the author of numerous articles, most of which focus on Ottoman and Holy Land subjects.

A familiar figure on many juries at international exhibitions, Eddie's wide knowledge, especially in the field of postal history, is particularly valuable, both in the judging process and in the advice offered to the exhibitor on ways that they might consider improving their exhibit.



Eddie's own collecting and exhibiting focuses on two main areas. His exhibit of the postal history of *Romania: outbound mail, from the Crimean War to the UPU* was a candidate for the grand prix in the Thailand 2018 FIP international exhibition. He is also an expert and has built exhibits of the stamps and postal history of the Holy Land, including *The Stamps of British Palestine 1917-1927* and *Taxed Mail of the Holy Land 1850-1950*. He has presented and lectured on numerous occasions on subjects related to Ottoman history and postal services and including more recent periods of Holy Land postal services.

He has been philatelic adviser to the Israel Philatelic and Postal Museum and chairman of the Society of the Postal History of the Holy Land. He contributed as a member of the organising committees of various of the Israel international stamps exhibitions, including Israphil 85, Israel 98 and Israel 2008. He was president of the jury for Israel World Stamp Championship 2018 and recipient of FIP Medal of Appreciation for Jury Service (2024).

## Simon Richards, RDP, United Kingdom.

As a collector of a wide range of subjects, Simon Richards has been very active in philatelic collecting and exhibiting. He is chairman of the ABPS Exhibitions and International Committee and a director of Stamp World Exhibitions, in which roles he is much involved in the various UK and international exhibitions. He represented the UK at the FEPA Congress in Copenhagen in 2024.



He is a qualified FIP Juror and participated in the Jury at London 2022, Westpex 2024, San Francisco and Hafnia 2024, Copenhagen. Over the last year he has been acting-President of the Royal Philatelic Society London during the illness of the President and was elected President upon the recent death of Mike Roberts. He is also a member of the Royal Expert Committee.

One of Simon's core collecting interests has been the stamps of the West Indies, and he continues as President of the West Indies Philatelic Study Group and runs the society's auction. He chaired the first meeting of the combined UK and USA societies of this collecting area at the Great American Stamp Show, in Hartford in 2024. He has been treasurer of the National Philatelic Society since 2001 and of the Stuart Rossiter Trust since 2015.

Among Simon's collections and exhibits, his *British West Indies Maritime Mail* was a candidate for the Grand Prix at Hunphilex, 2022 and won large gold at Stockholmia 2019 and IBRA, Essen, 2023. High awards have also been achieved for *The Postal History of Savoy*, *The Postal Stationery of Grenada* and *Classic Victoria* (Australia). These collections formed major displays to various societies, including to the Society of Postal Historians. His display of Dominica won the Tilleard Medal for the best 1:00pm display to the RPSL.

Simon has been the author of numerous articles on a wide range of subjects. Recently published is a much expanded and researched book entitled *Dominica: Philately to 1967*. This covers both the stamps and postal history and includes considerable original research from the National Archives at The British Library and Postal Museum that was not covered in previous volumes on the subject.