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FEPA NEWS

The Journal of European Philately

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IMPRESSUM

FEPA News is the journal of the Federation of European Philatelic Associations. It is produced by the Board of the FEPA to facilitate the sharing of information among FEPA Members and to maintain a record of their philatelic activities. The editor is the FEPA President, Bill Hedley, with assistance from other members of the FEPA Board. The Board relies on contributions from its Members and friends and offers sincere thanks to all who have contributed to this issue.

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Front Cover: The mechanical bull in Birmingham is a symbol of the city where EuroPhilEx 2025 will be held in May 2025.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Philatelic Friends,

Welcome to the 46th issue of FEPA NEWS, the Journal of European Philately. It first appeared in 2002 when an improved mechanism was needed for sharing information and ideas among Members. Since then two issues have been published every year and it has extended its coverage to include developments in thinking about philately in the future and philatelic research. To reach the widest possible audience we have made it freely available through the FEPA website and the printed edition. I am proud of the contribution it makes to promotion of philately in Europe, and as editor I was delighted and honoured when the Académie Européenne de Philatélie announced in November that they had awarded the 2024 AEP Prix européenne de la Presse philatélique to FEPA NEWS. I thank the Académie most sincerely for granting us this signal honour. It gives us great encouragement to continue our work to promote this wonderful activity.

This very welcome recognition comes at a moment when we are making important changes to FEPA's communications. Our aim is to share information and ideas with as many people as possible, both in the philatelic world and beyond, and it is evident that digital communications now provide the basis on which our future plans must be based. Consequently, we will now focus our resources on developing our website (www.fepanews.com) and social media outlets as our main communications channels. The website will continue to be a Newsdesk for European philately and it will be extended to provide information and discussion about developments in philatelic organisation and research, and to build links with the wider world. For the time being we will continue to publish FEPA NEWS on the website where it will be freely available, but we will no longer produce a printed version of the Journal after this issue. Our communications will be kept under constant review to ensure we are delivering the best service we can to philately.

I hope you will enjoy this issue and I wish you all happiness and fulfilment with philately in 2025.

BILL HEDLEY

LETTRE DU PRÉSIDENT

Chers amis philatélistes,

Bienvenue dans le 46ème numéro de FEPA NEWS, le journal de la philatélie européenne. Il a été publié pour la première fois en 2002, alors qu'un mécanisme amélioré était nécessaire pour le partage d'informations et d'idées entre les membres. Depuis lors, deux numéros ont été publiés chaque année et le journal a élargi son champ d'action pour inclure les développements des réflexions sur la philatélie du futur et la recherche philatélique. Pour atteindre le public le plus large possible, nous l'avons mis à disposition gratuitement sur le site web de la FEPA et dans l'édition imprimée. Je suis fier de sa contribution à la promotion de la philatélie en Europe et, en tant qu'éditeur, j'ai été ravi et honoré lorsque l'Académie européenne de philatélie a annoncé en novembre qu'elle avait attribué le Prix européen de la Presse philatélique 2024 à FEPA NEWS. Je remercie très sincèrement l'Académie de nous avoir accordé cet honneur. Elle nous encourage à poursuivre notre travail de promotion de cette belle activité.

Cette reconnaissance très appréciée intervient à un moment où nous apportons d'importants changements à la communication de la FEPA. Notre objectif est de partager des informations et des idées avec le plus grand nombre de personnes possible, à la fois dans le monde philatélique et au-delà, et il est évident que les communications numériques constituent désormais la base sur laquelle nos plans futurs doivent être fondés. Par conséquent, nous allons maintenant concentrer nos ressources sur le développement de notre site web (www.fepanews.com) et des médias sociaux en tant que principaux canaux de communication. Le site web continuera à être un Newsdesk pour la philatélie européenne et il sera étendu pour fournir des informations et des discussions sur les développements dans l'organisation philatélique et la recherche, et pour construire des liens avec le monde en général. Pour l'instant, nous continuerons à publier FEPA NEWS sur le site web où il sera disponible gratuitement, mais nous ne produirons plus de version imprimée du journal après ce numéro. Nos communications feront l'objet d'un monitoring constant afin de nous assurer que nous fournissons le meilleur service possible à la philatélie.

J'espère que vous apprécierez ce numéro et je vous souhaite beaucoup de bonheur et de satisfactions dans le domaine de la philatélie en 2025.

BILL HEDLEY

OFFENER BRIEF DES PRÄSIDENTEN

Liebe philatelistische Freunde,

Willkommen zur 46. Ausgabe der FEPA News, der Zeitschrift zur europäischen Philatelie. Sie erschien 2002 zum ersten Mal, als eine verbesserte Möglichkeit benötigt wurde, Informationen und Ideen mit den Mitgliedern zu teilen. Seitdem wurden immer zwei Ausgaben pro Jahr herausgebracht, und sie wurden erweitert um Entwicklungen rund um die Philatelie der Zukunft und die philatelistische Forschung. Um eine möglichst große Leserschaft zu erreichen, haben wir sie kostenlos auf der FEPA Homepage und auch als gedruckte Version zur Verfügung gestellt. Ich bin stolz auf den Beitrag, den sie leisten bei der Förderung der Philatelie in Europa, und als Herausgeber war ich sehr erfreut und geehrt, als die Académie Européenne de Philatélie im November bekannt gab, dass der 2024 AEP Prix européenne de la Presse philatélique an die FEPA NEWS vergeben wurde. Ich danke der Akademie ganz herzlich, dass sie uns diese große Ehre erwiesen hat. Es gibt uns große Ermutigung, unsere Arbeit zur Förderung dieser wunderbaren Aktivität fortzusetzen.

Diese willkommene Anerkennung kommt zu einem Zeitpunkt, an dem wir wichtige Veränderungen in der Kommunikation der FEPA vornehmen. Unser Ziel ist es, Informationen und Ideen mit möglichst vielen Menschen zu teilen, und zwar in der Welt der Philatelie und darüber hinaus, und dabei ist es offensichtlich, dass die digitale Kommunikation heute die Grundlage bietet, auf der unsere künftigen Pläne basieren sollten. Folglich werden wir unsere Ressourcen auf die Entwicklung unserer Homepage (www.fepanews.com) und die Präsenzen in den Sozialen Medien konzentrieren als unsere Hauptkommunikationskanäle. Die Homepage wird weiterhin ein Nachrichtenraum für europäische Philatelie sein, und sie wird erweitert um Informationen und Diskussionen über Entwicklungen in philatelistischen Organisationen und in der Forschung, und es werden Verbindungen zur ganzen Welt aufgebaut. Vorerst werden wir weiterhin die FEPA NEWS auf der Homepage veröffentlichen, wo sie kostenlos zur Verfügung steht, aber wir werden nach dieser Ausgabe keine gedruckte Version der Zeitschrift mehr produzieren. Unsere Kommunikation wird ständig überprüft, um sicherzustellen, dass wir den bestmöglichen Service für die Philatelie bieten.

Ich hoffe, dass Ihnen diese Ausgabe gefällt, und ich wünsche Ihnen allen Glück und Erfüllung mit der Philatelie im Jahr 2025.

BILL HEDLEY

CARTA DEL PRESIDENTE

Queridos amigos filatélicos:

Bienvenidos al número 46 de FEPA NEWS, la revista de la filatelia europea. Apareció por primera vez en 2002, cuando se necesitaba un mecanismo mejor para compartir información e ideas entre los Miembros. Desde entonces, se han publicado dos números por año y ha ampliado su cobertura para incluir los avances en el pensamiento sobre la filatelia en el futuro y la investigación filatélica. Para llegar a un público lo más amplio posible, la hemos puesto a disposición de forma gratuita a través del sitio web de la FEPA y la edición impresa. Estoy orgulloso de la contribución que la revista hace a la promoción de la filatelia en Europa y, como editor, me sentí encantado y honrado cuando la Académie Européenne de Philatélie anunció en noviembre que había otorgado el Premio Europeo de la Prensa Filatélica 2024 de la AEP a FEPA NEWS. Agradezco sinceramente a la Académie por concedernos este destacado honor. Nos da un gran estímulo para continuar nuestro trabajo para promover esta maravillosa afición.

Este reconocimiento tan bienvenido llega en un momento en el que estamos realizando cambios importantes en las comunicaciones de la FEPA. Nuestro objetivo es compartir información e ideas con el mayor número posible de personas, tanto en el mundo filatélico como fuera de él, y es evidente que las comunicaciones digitales proporcionan ahora la base sobre la que deben basarse nuestros planes futuros en este sentido. Por consiguiente, ahora centraremos nuestros recursos en el desarrollo de nuestro sitio Web (www.fepanews.com) y de las redes sociales como nuestros principales canales de comunicación. La Web seguirá siendo un servicio de noticias para la filatelia europea y se ampliará para proporcionar información y debates sobre los avances en la organización y la investigación filatélicas, y para crear vínculos con el resto del mundo. Por el momento, seguiremos publicando FEPA NEWS en la Web, donde estará disponible de forma gratuita, pero ya no publicaremos una versión impresa de la revista después de este número. Nuestras comunicaciones se revisarán constantemente para garantizar que ofrecemos el mejor servicio posible a la filatelia.

Espero que disfruten de este número y les deseo toda la felicidad y el cumplimiento de sus deseos con la filatelia en 2025.

BILL HEDLEY

News from the FEPA Board



Bill Hedley writes:

Since July 2024 the Board has held five meetings, four by video conference and a live meeting in Copenhagen during the HAFNIA 2024 exhibition.

The focus of attention has been on developing plans to ensure that FEPA can continue to support its Members effectively in their shared aim of promoting philately. Proposals have been made for significant change in regard to each of FEPA's four main tasks (shown in the box below) and we expect that these will be central to the Board's work in 2025 and 2026.

In summary the proposals are:



- A revision of FEPA's communications strategy to enable information we share to have the widest possible reach.
- A programme of consultation with FEPA Members on closer cooperation aimed at making best use of modern technology to promote philately.
- A third level of FEPA support for exhibition organisers between Recognition and Patronage.
- A revision of the awards process to encourage nominations and ensure recipients' achievements are given wide publicity.

Items 1, 2 and 3 on this list are discussed in more detail elsewhere in this Journal. An approach to Item 4 is still being developed.

In addition to the programme for adapting to change, the Board was delighted to hold the 2024 FEPA Congress in very agreeable and friendly surroundings at the HAFNIA 2024 exhibition. We were very encouraged that so many Members were represented in person or by proxy and it was a great pleasure to welcome the Union of Philatelists of the Republic of Moldova into FEPA Membership. Our deepest thanks go to the Organisers for providing the necessary facilities.

Application for FEPA Membership by the Union of Philatelists of Azerbaijan (AFI)

Another important matter that the Board has considered is an application for FEPA Membership by the Union of Philatelists of Azerbaijan (AFI), submitted by its Chairman Mr Intigam Bagirli. Mr Intigam explained that the Union's origins can be traced back to 1967 but the current organisation is a Public Association that was registered in 2022 and represents the interests of all philatelists in Azerbaijan. It has c.150 members and is managed by a Board of 5 members. It holds regular meetings for members in Baku, organises exhibitions and works to promote philately, especially to young people. It also has an expert commission for assessing collections.



Mr Intigam has given FEPA the assurances we requested regarding compliance with the FEPA Statutes. The AFI is not a member of any other continental organisation or of FIP. Azerbaijan is considered a 'transcontinental' country and, as such, is a participant in the European Neighbourhood Policy, the Eastern Partnership and the Council of Europe. The Azerbaijan Football Association is a member of UEFA and its teams participate in European competitions. The Board has reviewed the application and has concluded that it should be submitted to Congress for approval. AFI membership of FEPA will bring an additional player into the organised international philatelic world which will be extremely welcome.

Record of the FEPA Congress 2024



Held in Spisehuset, Slagtehusgade 5C, 1715 Copenhagen, Denmark on 19th October 2024

1. Welcome

Bill Hedley, President of FEPA, welcomed Delegates and Observers and invited Lars Peter Svendsen, Chairman of the HAFNIA 24 Organising Committee and President of the Copenhagen Philatelic Club, to make an introductory statement.

Lars Peter Svendsen expressed gratitude for FEPA's patronage for HAFNIA 2024 and expressed his joy that so many FEPA Members had decided to participate. He welcomed all to Copenhagen and HAFNIA 24 and was delighted that so many Presidents of National Federations and other delegates were present at the FEPA Congress. The FEPA President presented him with a small memento of the occasion as a mark of FEPA's gratitude for his efforts in this exhibition commenting that, 'We will remember the Event and will have Copenhagen in our hearts for a long time'.

2. Roll Call and choice of Tellers

The Secretary made a roll call of 45 members, 40 of whom were represented (36 by delegates and four by proxies). Accordingly, all decisions of the Congress were valid. Julije Maras and Vladimir Milić were appointed as tellers. Delegates present or represented at the FEPA Congress in Copenhagen were as follows:

Country	Delegate	Country	Delegate
ALBANIA	Lenart Gjançi	LEBANON	Billy Karam
ARMENIA	Suren Simonyan	LITHUANIA	Vygintas Bubnys
AUSTRIA	Helmut Kogler	LUXEMBOURG	proxy to Switzerland
BELGIUM	Lars Jørgensen	N. MACEDONIA	Viktor Gaber
BULGARIA	Boncho Bonev	MONACO	Jean Voruz
CROATIA	Julije Maras	MONTENEGRO	proxy to Slovenia
CYPRUS	Akis Cristou	NETHERLANDS	Pieter Verbakel
CZECH Rep.	Jiri Kraus	NORWAY	Øistein Bøe
DENMARK	Lars Peter Svendsen	POLAND	Andrzej Słodźski
EGYPT	proxy to Croatia	PORTUGAL	Pedro Marcal Vaz Pereira
ESTONIA	Oliver Handschmidt	ROMANIA	Francisc Ambrus
FINLAND	Risto Pitkänen	SERBIA	Vladimir Mili
FRANCE	Bernard Jimenez	SLOVAKIA	Vojtech Jankovic
GERMANY	Walter Bernatek	SLOVENIA	Peter Suhadolc
GREECE	Andreas Nikolaidis	SPAIN	José Antonio Arruego Sanz
HUNGARY	Richárd Gáll	SWEDEN	Ricard Azelius
ICELAND	Gisli Geir Hardarson	SWITZERLAND	Jürg Roth
IRELAND	Brian Callan	TURKEY	Mehmet Akan
ISRAEL	Yigal Nathaniel	UK	Simon Richards
ITALY	Luca Lavagnini		

Andrei Adam (MOLDOVA) was also present representing the Union of Philatelists of Moldova (SFRM) which was an applicant for FEPA membership.

3. Presentation of FEPA Gold Pin

The President presented the FEPA gold pin to five Presidents of FEPA Members who had not previously received it.

4. Presentation of FEPA Awards

The President expressed great pleasure that he was able to present awards for 2023 at the Congress.

FEPA Medal for exceptional service to organised philately.

The medal was awarded to Eli Weber (Israel) but, as Mr Weber was unable to be present due to illness, but it accepted on his behalf by Yoram Lubianiker who was in attendance as an Observer.

FEPA Medal for exceptional philatelic study and research.

The medal was awarded to Colin Tabcart (UK). Mr Tabcart was also unable to be present in Copenhagen, so the President had presented the medal to him in September at a suitable event in the UK.

FEPA Certificates for Appreciation were presented to:

- Siniša Pavleski, Union of Philatelists of North Macedonia, for long service to philately (accepted by Viktor Gaber, Member of the Union's Board)
- Triestingtaler Briefmarkensammler Verein, Hirtenberg, Austria (accepted by Helmut Kogler, President of the Austrian Federation)
- Klub Filatelistu 04-01, Liberec, Czech Republic (accepted by Jiří Kraus, President of the Club).

Certificates of Appreciation were also presented to runners-up for the FEPA Medal for exceptional philatelic study and research:

- Stavros Andreadis for 'Large Hermes Head' (accepted by Andreas Nikolaidis).
- Eugenio de Quesada for 'El Correo sin Correos en España, siglos XV an XVIII' (accepted by José Antonio Arruego Sanz).
- Semaan Bassil for 'Mail in the Levant. Beirut – A Case Study in the Early Age of Steamship and Globalisation 1835-1914', (accepted by Billy Karam).

5. Approval of the Record of the 2023 FEPA Congress.

The Record of the 2023 Congress, held in Tarvisio, Italy on 23rd September 2023, was approved.

6. Receipt of reports of FEPA Board Members

The annual reports of FEPA Board members were received with approval.

7. Approval of FEPA financial statements for 2023 and the Auditor's report

The Treasurer introduced his Statement on FEPA's financial position on 31st December 2023. The Statement and Auditor's report were approved.

8. Consideration of the application for FEPA membership from the Union of Philatelists of Moldova (SFRM)

The President said that a full review of the SFRM application for FEPA membership had been undertaken and that all necessary assurances regarding compliance with the FEPA Statutes had been received. Andrei Adam, President of the SFRM, then gave a short presentation on his organisation (SFRM). It has been a member of FIP for some years and wished now to become a member of FEPA in order to participate in promoting philately both in the Republic of Moldova and in Europe.

Francisc Ambrus said that the Romanian Federation is aware of the SFRM's activities, adding that he personally is a member of their organisation and was able to give full support to its application for FEPA membership. The Vice President confirmed that the SFRM application had met all requirements.

When asked about the write-off of past debts of the former FEPA Member from Moldova, the President said that SFRM is a different organisation that could not be held responsible for liabilities previously incurred.

On a show of hands, the SFRM application for FEPA membership was approved unanimously. The President welcomed the SFRM to membership of FEPA and presented the gold pin to Andrei Adam.

9. FEPA's Future Plans

The President gave a presentation on the Board's plans for the development of FEPA in the next two years based on the four essential tasks to which FEPA is dedicated: Sharing information, Promoting innovation and cooperation, Supporting exhibitions, Rewarding achievements. The presentation is available to view on the FEPA website (www.fepanews.com).

The main points covered were:

- a. FEPA has made important advances in extending the range and reach of shared information, most evidently through the two-weekly Newsletter and the FEPA NEWS journal. Special credit for this is due to the Communications Director, Costas Chazapis.
- b. FEPA has also done much to encourage innovation and cooperation as essential elements of a survival strategy in an era dominated by the all-conquering power of digital technology. To move this forward, however, we see an urgent need for closer links between FEPA and its Members.
- c. A recent statistical review of philatelic organisations in Europe has underlined the urgency of adaptation to change. Since 2013 there appears to have been a reduction of c.50% in the numbers of societies, and a similar reduction in the number of members. It appears that there are now many collectors who prefer on-line activity to live events.
- d. FEPA's central aim is to promote philately as widely and effectively as possible within the philatelic community and to the wider world, making the best use of its limited resources. A recent review concluded that, to achieve this aim, FEPA's communications strategy needs to be concentrated on expanding its on-line activity. The review took account of the trend among collectors towards on-line activity and of increased printing and distribution costs, as well as FEPA's continuing commitment to provide a platform for discussion of innovative thinking in European philately and to maintain the Newsdesk.
- e. The FEPA website will be re-designed to accommodate articles as well as news posts and the FEPA NEWS journal will be phased out during 2025-26, with the first issue of 2025 being the last to appear in a printed version.
- f. FEPA will launch a project in 2025 aimed at increasing benefits for all through cooperation. All Members will be invited to participate. [See Item 11 of the agenda].
- g. FEPA will look at whether it could give more help to exhibition organisers by offering a third package of support, perhaps somewhere between Recognition and Patronage. This will be a subject for consultation with Members.
- h. More nominations for future jurors are needed. Six apprentices were on the jury at HAFNIA, but none had been nominated so far for the next European Exhibition in Birmingham. The President asked Members to nominate suitable candidates to take advantage of this opportunity.
- i. Regarding FEPA awards, which are always appreciated by the recipients, the President repeated his urgent request to Members to nominate more candidates for medals and certificates. The Board will look at ways of giving the awards more publicity.
- j. In conclusion, the President said that FEPA's aim - shared with its Members - is to promote philately in Europe and he asked Members to include FEPA in their forward planning.

10. Review of FEPA's financial position

The Treasurer presented the financial forecast for 2025. Without action to reduce costs, a deficit of around €9.000 over the year was envisaged which would have a severe impact on FEPA's financial position. The planned changes to FEPA NEWS would help to redress this imbalance and provide greater financial stability. To maintain FEPA's finances for future years, it was also necessary to review the membership subscription which had remained unchanged since the introduction of the Euro. The Board's proposal is to increase the subscription to €250 by 2026.

Pedro Vaz Pereira supported the proposal but commented that the amount proposed was not unduly severe for organisations like MFs and suggested that an interim increase of €50 should be applied in 2025. Boncho Bonev asked whether the subscription could vary depending on the size of the member but the Vice President argued that the principle of 'One Member, One Vote' established at the outset for FEPA – which implies that each Member is equal and pays the same subscription – was of paramount importance and must be retained.

On a show of hands 34 Delegates voted to increase the FEPA Membership subscription to € 200 in 2025 and to € 250 in 2026. This constituted a clear majority and the proposal was accordingly passed.

11. Engagement of FEPA Members in plans to promote philately in Europe

FEPA Director Lars Engelbrecht gave a presentation on 'FEPA cooperation on the future of philately in Europe'. His presentation is available to view on the FEPA website (www.fepanews.com).

The main points set out in the presentation were:

- a. Following the favourable reception for a Zoom workshop on digital philately involving some Members in October 2022, the Board will during 2025 facilitate sharing of experience between Members on topics such as 'Social Media and Organized Philately' and 'Retaining and gaining new members'.
- b. Virtual Zoom meetings will be organised with the aim of involving all FEPA Members. The meetings will be structured to include groups of MFs and two Board members, one facilitating the two-hour session.
- c. Each group will meet twice, once in March 2025 and once in October 2025.
- d. FEPA will produce a combined report from all meetings.

Delegates made several comments in discussion:

- Vojtech Jankovič raised the question of language (e.g. English or German) and suggested that to avoid difficulties some changes might be needed in the construction of the groups.
- Helmut Kogler commented that it was not enough to send the idea of the topic for discussion without an advance plan. Lars Engelbrecht added that, if someone suggests a topic, we should also have an idea of what the objective is and of how to discuss it. We will send our ideas out after the Congress but Members are also requested to offer their ideas on topics for discussion.
- The Vice President said that workshops in which participants talk to each other might provide more inspiration than a one-way webinar.
- One Delegate raised the cost of exhibitions which is a massive problem for organisers. Another theme is the cost of the frame fee for European exhibitions (comparing, for example, the frame fees for HAFNIA 24 and for EuroPhilEx).
- Peter Suhadolc thought that once a topic for discussion was agreed, the participating Members would need time to organise internal preparation for the ZOOM Meeting

12. Reports from the Vice-President

The Vice-President reported to Congress on the guidelines for FEPA Awards in 2025 and on discussions he has held about the guidelines for evaluation of philatelic literature.

Awards for 2025

Medals: He drew attention to the short deadline for nominations for awards in 2025, necessitated by the fact that the next Congress will be held in May 2025, and urged Members to nominate candidates for all three medals by 10th December 2024.

Certificates of Appreciation: There will not be a deadline in 2025 and nominations for individuals and societies can be sent to FEPA at any time during the year.

Literature Guidelines

He presented the results of work on revision of the Guidelines for evaluation of philatelic literature that followed a critique of the existing guidelines in FEPA NEWS. It took account of the fact that the digital world is extending into the field of literature dramatically so we must be prepared to evaluate digital publications. The Guidelines also need to be flexible as we cannot be sure what further changes will have occurred in two years time. This work is being done in cooperation with the FIP and is intended to inform and assist them in producing revised Guidelines. Specific points made were:

- a. The printing industry has moved from traditional to digital and in the last two years candidates for the FEPA Research Medal have been judged in PDF format only, which is sufficient for our needs.
- b. The new Guidelines will be rewritten entirely with text that will not need constant updating to reflect changes in the publishing world. Evaluation criteria should be defined in terms of general principles, while Guidelines can be flexible to meet changing needs.
- c. The final goal is to present the revised Guidelines to the FEPA Congress in May 2025.

13. Consideration of motions from the Portuguese Federation

Pedro Vaz Pereira proposed that discussion of the motions should be postponed to the next Congress. Peter Suhadolc, as FIP Director, informed the Congress that the FIP Board will offer proposals on selection of jury members at the FIP Congress in Shanghai.

Pedro Vaz Pereira congratulated the FEPA Board on its efforts and results but suggested that the high layout costs for FEPA NEWS could be reduced. The Treasurer indicated that these costs were under review.

13. Date and Venue of the 2025 FEPA Congress

The President said that the 2025 Congress will be held at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham, UK on 11th May 2025. In conclusion he thanked the Delegates for attending the Congress and for their support and contributions, and declared the meeting closed.



The FEPA President (Bill Hedley) addresses Delegates at the FEPA Congress in Copenhagen.

PHILATELIC ORGANISATIONS IN EUROPE

2024 STATISTICAL SURVEY

Giancarlo Morolli writes:

The FEPA Congress in Paris launched a project called "HOW TO CHANGE DIRECTION", aiming to share the experiences of the FEPA member federations in view of the challenges of the future. It was clear that we had to face the problems arising from the economic difficulties, the ageing of the current society members vis-à-vis the lack of new ones, the changed availability of stamps, the privatisation of the post - our natural partner and leading supporter, the impact of information technology and the social networks. At the 2013 Congress in Madrid, I presented the final report, which triggered a very open and constructive discussion with the delegates.

Thirty member Federations adhered to the project, but one dropped out in the end, so twenty-nine answers were recorded. Answers were analysed by a Project Team that also considered the contributions from the chairmen of other international organisations (ASCAT, AIJP, Club de Montecarlo, AIEP) regarding expectations for the future.

Results of the 2013 Survey

The key findings were that there were 5,258 societies within the 29 responding Federations with a total of 224,500 members, of whom only 7,892 were direct members of the national Federation. In more than 50% of the Federations, philatelists belonged to at least two societies. More than half of the members were over 60, and only 19% were under 30. Both local societies and national specialised associations, where active, had reduced their activities in recent years because of ageing and health problems of their members, the economic situation, and a loss of interest in philately. The membership decrease had been, on average, around 20% for local societies and 8% for national specialised societies.

It was agreed that for each international exhibitor in a Member country, there were 10 to 15 exhibitors and 500 to 1,000 society members. In other words, organised philately devoted most of its resources to a small minority. If the "philatelists-in-the-street" were also included - collectors of any age who put aside stamps, buy stamps, and subscribe to a philatelic service to receive their country's new issues - the picture looked even more dramatic. There were an estimated 5,000 - 40,000 collectors for each international exhibitor.

The number of exhibitions had decreased slightly in about half of the Federations, mainly locally. Participation had increased at the regional, national, and continental levels but had decreased at FIP exhibitions. Most new exhibitors (72%) were 45-60 years old. The traditional, postal history and thematic classes were of general interest but others (including youth) were becoming restricted to specialists. One frame and Open philately had been introduced successfully in almost all Federations; Picture Postcards was a competitive class in several Federations.

The report provided a complete "best guess" at the situation ten years hence. Its most significant elements were:

- A. Continuation of the decrease of members (in 60% of the Federations) with more impact on local societies than on national specialised associations.
- B. Greater importance for direct membership.
- C. Merging of local societies in the same area.
- D. Increased activity of philatelic societies within their communities.
- E. New models of exhibitions, both in content and form.
- F. Merging of some competitive classes.
- G. International look-out for fraudulent internet sales.
- H. Cooperation among philatelic libraries.

The full report is at: <https://fepanews.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/FEPA-Project-Report-Madrid-final.pdf>

What has happened since the 2013 survey?

Recently, I revisited the project conclusions. While I leave the above-bulleted conclusions as a checklist for the reader, I want to focus on the first three items.

The table on the right, put together with some difficulty, shows a decrease of about 38% in the number of societies and 50% in membership across FEPA Members since 2013. These figures are incomplete but the best obtainable. What is important is the order of magnitude of the decline. It must be highlighted that in 2013 40% of Member Federations did not expect any significant decreases.

Furthermore, the future imagined during the pandemic has not materialised fully. Virtual exhibitions and Zoom conferences are no longer frequent. The significant change is that several organisations hold board meetings more frequently on a web platform.

The next stage is critical.

The survey confirms that organised philately has missed a bus and cannot afford to miss the next one if it is to survive on any scale. Over the last few years, stamps have almost disappeared from post offices and mail, replaced by digital labels of different kinds. Used stamps and issues bought at a postal counter were the main sources for starting to collect. Dealer shops are far fewer and no longer in the commercial areas of the towns, where rent is too expensive. Even if most postal administrations issue a greater number of stamps yearly, they remain unattractive for most collectors. So, it seems that philately will be restricted to the internauts, as sales are booming (and counterfeit and fakes as well) on the web.

We are not alone: the decrease in collecting also affects other collectable items like coins, carpets, and glass because of several factors, including changes in societal interests, technological advancements, and economic shifts. People have been changing the way they use their free time.

The direction of the next bus is towards the “outer world”. Philately will no longer be the popular hobby of people waiting to store newly-issued stamps in a stock book or an album page. There will be fewer players who look at the mail more than at the stamps. We must present philately to the wider world in a new way that shows it as a cultural activity and hobby that belongs to the whole field of human communications and is innovative and beneficial. Information technology, which promises even more innovation in the future, will be a real facilitator, provided we understand its potential and exploit it with a new, outward-looking approach to philately in mind.

FEPA STATISTICAL REVIEW OF PHILATELIC SOCIETIES AND MEMBERS, 2024

A comparison of data provided by FEPA Members in 2024 with equivalent data from 2013

	Societies		Members*			
	2013	2024	2013	2024		
Albania		1		120		
Armenia		1		150		
Austria		205	10,600	7,720		
Belgium	280		10,000			
Bulgaria	142	20	5,000	500		
Croatia	34	16	1,200	200		
Cyprus	6	1	136	30		
Czech Republic	300	10	7,107	3,000		
Denmark	34		1,200			
Finland	79		3,430			
France	630	550	30,000	16,500		
Germany	1,165	782	40,289	21,000		
Greece	33	13		600		
Hungary	250	46	3,000	1,300		
Iceland	1	1				
Ireland	1	6		350		
Israel	5	12	920	1,000		
Italy	279	198	13,442	6,900		
Lebanon		1		20		
Liechtenstein	1	1		90		
Luxembourg	35	29	2,300	1,050		
Moldova		1		20		
Monaco	1	1	100	100		
Montenegro		2		60		
Netherlands	183					
North Macedonia		1		30		
Norway		89		2,583		
Poland	580	369	8,500	5,010		
Portugal	42	20	3,200			
Romania		11		240		
Serbia	19	6		300		
Slovakia	1	10	1,200	900		
Slovenia	28	27	1,000	710		
Spain	219	140	18,000	8,000		
Sweden	80	120	3,000	1,200		
Switzerland	120	95	7,050	4,171		
Turkey	11	17		1,500		
United Kingdom	300	212	20,000	10,000		
	4,859	3,014	(-37.97%)	190,674	95,354	(-49.99%)

* Includes multiple entries for members belonging to more than one society.

FEPA'S COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

During the summer of 2024 Giancarlo Morolli, Costas Chazapis and Lars Jørgensen undertook a review of FEPA's communications strategy on behalf of the FEPA Board. The Board considered their report and has decided to adopt their recommendations for the further development of FEPA communications. This report summarises the conclusions that have been agreed.

When FEPA was founded in 1989, it needed to establish links among its Members and it set up an information channel to keep together the players involved, even if the opportunities for live meetings were more frequent than today. Over time, FEPA News took on a more consistent format that served to improve the dissemination of information concerning decisions of the FEPA Board and Congress and their projects and documents, as well as the sharing of best practices and reviews of new pieces of philatelic literature. Under the current editorial policy, FEPA News has assumed a specific mission: to be the Journal of European philately. Philatelic magazines are still quite numerous in our continent, but most are focused on their national philatelic context, whereas the few international ones are essentially research journals that focus on topics related to their specialisations. FEPA News has fulfilled its mission successfully, as shown by the recent award that the Académie Européenne de Philatélie graciously granted to it.

Meanwhile, since early 2014 news has been published on the FEPA website, and a Newsletter service was launched in May 2020. Since February 2022 the Newsletter has been circulated to registered subscribers every other Monday, reaching 1500 mailboxes in December 2024. The paper edition of FEPA News has been made available free to Member Federations and philatelists related to them because of their role as managers, organisers, exhibitors, jurors and advanced collectors, and to other entities with philatelic interests such as postal administrations, experts, philatelic journalists, museums, libraries and trade. The frequently updated website presents all issues of the Journal in PDF format, both browsable and downloadable for the general public.

To achieve the most effective results our aim is to encourage active participation and to foster a sense of community. We search for and encourage discussions, reports, and feedback concerning best practice and experiences, with particular reference to developing new methods for developing and promoting philately and giving recognition to its true nature as a cultural activity, i.e. part of the history of communications. We constantly seek to stimulate more intense participation by its Member Federations and contributions from other philatelists and researchers who have shown active interest in proposing innovative subjects for discussion are also welcome.

Thus, FEPA has been prominent in promoting innovation for others, and it must also apply these principles to its own activities. In 1989, print media dominated the information-sharing landscape. As technology progressed, digital publishing platforms evolved, incorporating interactive elements, videos, and hyperlinks that enriched the reading experience. In recent years, smartphones and tablets have transformed publishing into a mobile-first environment. News apps and digital magazine subscriptions have become commonplace, catering to the fast-paced lifestyles of contemporary readers. Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have also reshaped digital publishing. They serve as essential distribution channels, enabling publishers to connect with vast audiences and engage readers in real-time. This rapid development of informational technologies and their applications offers FEPA an excellent but challenging opportunity to pursue its aims in new ways, and as a result the Board has recently decided to make significant changes.

There are also some practical problems to be addressed. The FEPA website, based on dated technology, needs both a layout refurbishment and a technological update and the costs of producing and distributing FEPA News have increased significantly. This is a general problem for magazine publishers of any size and type. Linn's Stamp News, the world's largest magazine for collectors (5,000 issues to 26th August 2024), recently stopped its paper edition started in 1928.

The Board has consequently decided to adopt a change programme for information sharing, as follows:

- The FEPA Newsletter will continue, moving to a "new" refreshed approach to be more attractive, but retaining the same format.
- The FEPA website will be the project's core, enhanced with articles and frequently updated features. The new website design will fully integrate the roles of the traditional website and the printed magazine.

The target set is the presentation of all articles on the website in modern HTML format, encompassing text, illustrations with Zoom feature, videos, animations, and attachments.

- FEPA News will cease to be produced in its current format by Autumn 2026 at the latest. By then, all the Journal's content will have moved to the website and be fully operational. The transition will be completed before the next President and Communications Director are elected in 2027.
- The aim will be to retain the same high level of quality as has been achieved in FEPA News in recent years.
- The remaining issues of FEPA News will be published in February/March and September/October.
- FN46 will be the last to appear in both paper and PDF format. Advertisers will be offered space on the website's Home Page immediately.

During the transition period both the website and its content related to the digital Journal will migrate gradually as technology allows. In other terms, a change of format will not happen overnight or on the last day. Some content will be uploaded gradually on the website in the new format. Such an approach will start on an experimental basis with sample articles and continue until the new website design fully integrates the roles of the traditional website and the printed Journal. Posts or articles will be uploaded concurrently on selected social media.

Professional support will be required for transformation of the website including the introduction of an advanced search engine, essential databases, forms, questionnaires, a password-protected members' area, and internal automation routines. An editor with basic IT skills will also be needed to handle the selection and production of the website content. The editor may be an elected Board member or a volunteer and it may be necessary to create an additional seat on the Board with statutory communications duties.

An Editorial Board should plan the main features of future publications well in advance, with individual members in charge of sections of the Journal in its website format. Each member should look for features that better facilitate sharing information, including innovative projects, novel aspects or how-to-improve remarks that will contribute to the overall aim of promoting philately.

To make this happen smoothly, the following activities have been identified:

- Guidelines for contributions from members and other sources, such as schedule and technical data of files submitted, will be needed.
- A detailed work plan, timetable, milestones, and budget will need to be set up for what is required regarding contents, structure, 'touch and feel'.
- Advertisers are being informed about the changes, and a new, possibly annual, advertising package including advertisements on the FEPA landing page will be worked out.
- We will consider whether some information on the FEPA website should be restricted to Members, i.e., the Federation Presidents/committee members.
- In addition to FEPA Seminars, presentations, videos, any third-party, good-quality video with engaging content should in principle be publicised via the website.
- Contributions from other international philatelic organisations (FIP, other continental federations, AIEP, AIJP, IFSDA, UPU, AEP, etc.) are welcome, as are those from philatelists who have shown active interest in proposing innovative subjects for discussion.

We recognise that there will be concerns about the adoption of a purely on-line approach but we hope our readers will accept that we have to move with the times. The use of digital tools is now very well-established in almost all aspects of life including the search for knowledge and opinion and, like the philatelic world as a whole, we must adapt to this new reality. We will, of course, keep our information-sharing activities under review to ensure they reach the widest possible audience. At the end of the day our business is to help our Members to promote philately as a rewarding, valuable and worthwhile activity and we need to ensure that we go about this in the best possible way within the limited resources at our disposal.

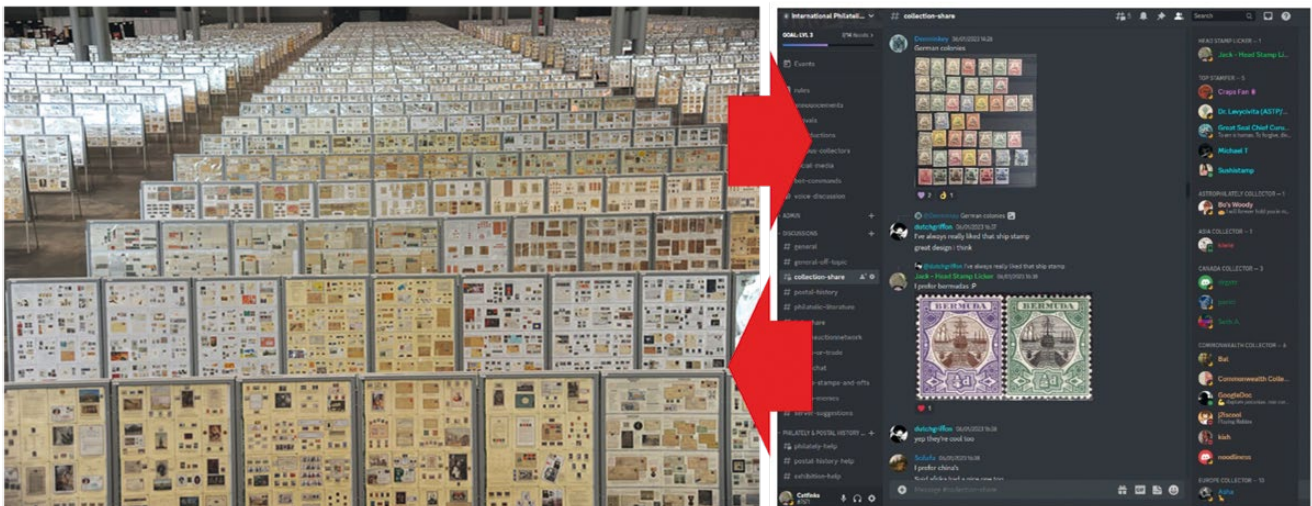
The implementation of the strategy will be thoroughly planned and tested, and checkpoints will be established to modulate it according to the better knowledge acquired in the meantime. In this respect, the FEPA Board will keep the Member Federations updated on the progress of this project, as it is aware that a number of Members have already started addressing the same issues at the national level. Feedback from such experiences will be an excellent support for this project.

Strengthening the Ties of Philately FEPA's New Initiative for Cooperation between European Federations

Lars Engelbrecht writes:

Philately has long served as a bridge across cultures, preserving history and fostering a shared appreciation for art, heritage, and communication. As technology continues to reshape our world, philately faces major challenges and opportunities that demand collective action.

Recognising this, the Federation of European Philatelic Associations (FEPA) has launched a new initiative to bring its Member Federations together in shaping the future of organised philately in Europe.



Adapting to a Digital Future

Organised philately is at a crossroads. With the rapid digitisation of hobbies and interests, the FEPA Board is determined to empower Federations to navigate this evolving landscape. The success of a Zoom workshop on “Digital Philately” in 2022 demonstrated the potential for cross-border collaboration and innovation. Building on this momentum, FEPA’s new initiative focuses on facilitating dialogue, sharing experiences, and exploring solutions to common challenges faced by Federations across Europe.

The Framework of Cooperation

The core of the initiative will be a series of virtual meetings in 2025, organised by FEPA and structured to foster meaningful interactions and inspiration. Each meeting will bring together representatives from up to eight Federations, ensuring that discussions remain intimate and participatory. Federations will have the opportunity to attend two sessions—one in the Spring and another in the Fall - to engage in discussions tailored to their needs and priorities.

Key features of the initiative include:

1. Targeted Participation

Federation Presidents, along with up to one additional board member or a specialist in a relevant area, will join the meetings. This approach ensures both strategic and practical insights are represented.

2. Facilitation by FEPA

Two FEPA Board members will participate in each session, with one serving as the facilitator. This will ensure that discussions remain focused and productive.

3. Structured Topics

Topics will be defined in advance, drawing from suggestions provided during the FEPA Congress in Copenhagen and beyond. Proposed areas of discussion include social media strategies, membership retention and recruitment, and the rising costs of exhibitions and frames.

4. Pilot and Evaluation

The initiative will serve as a pilot programme, with 2025 dedicated to testing and refining the process. Feedback will be collected after each meeting, culminating in a comprehensive evaluation in November 2025 to determine next steps.

Fostering Innovation and Growth

The initiative is designed not only to address current challenges but also to inspire innovation. Each meeting will begin with a brief presentation from one Federation, sparking dialogue and encouraging the exchange of ideas. FEPA will compile a report summarising insights and best practices, serving as a valuable resource for all Member Federations.

A Timeline for Collaboration

The journey began with the presentation at the FEPA Congress, held at HAFNIA 24 in Copenhagen in October 2024, inviting initial thoughts and input from Federation representatives. The first round of meetings is scheduled for March 2025, followed by a second round in October. The initiative's effectiveness will be assessed by the end of 2025, setting the stage for future collaboration.

A Call to Action

FEPA's initiative represents a significant step forward in strengthening the European philatelic community. By fostering closer cooperation and leveraging collective wisdom, Member Federations can navigate the challenges of a digital era while preserving the rich traditions of philately.

Participation and input by all FEPA Members is crucial to the success of this initiative. Together, let us shape a vibrant future for organised philately in Europe. We also encourage each Federation Board to discuss each subject internally prior to the Zoom meeting, so that Federation Presidents can bring input from their countries to the discussion and inspire others.

An invitation will be sent to all Federations giving more details on meeting schedules, meeting dates, and the discussion points for the Federation Boards prior to the meetings.

The FEPA Board invites its Members to join it in embarking on this journey of collaboration and innovation, with the aim of ensuring that philately continues to inspire and connect with generations to come.

FEPA MEDALS 2024

The FEPA Board is delighted to announce that the following medals have been awarded for 2024:

THE FEPA MEDAL FOR EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE TO ORGANISED PHILATELY, 2024

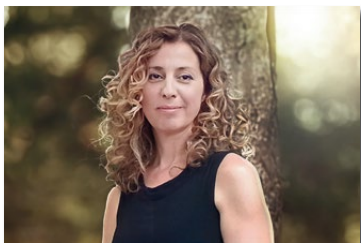
Awarded to: BRUNO CREVATO-SELVAGGI RDP (ITALY)

Dr Bruno Crevato-Selvaggi's philatelic activities have been expressed through various leadership roles within the Italian federation where he is currently President but has been a member of the board of directors since the 1990s, and in the organisation of international exhibitions Italia 98, Italia 2009, Italia 2018 and ECTP 2019. He was one of the promoters and the main organiser of philatelic exhibitions held in the seats of the Chamber of Deputies and the Presidency of the Republic, which have given extraordinary visibility to philately. He is also director of the Institute of Postal Historical Studies in Prato, a unique institution at the European and world levels, which organises periodic studies and in-depth historical-postal meetings aimed at both the philatelic and academic worlds. He was President of the European Academy of Philately from 2014 to 2017. He is an FIP juror for philatelic literature, a class whose evaluation regulations he has contributed to significantly within the FEPA framework. Dr Crevato-Selvaggi has produced a rich array of articles and volumes on philately and postal history, always of high quality. He has been the editor of the official magazine of FSFI, "Qui Filatelia", since its establishment. In 2006, he was awarded the FEPA Medal for Exceptional Study and Research, and in 2022, he signed the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists.



THE FEPA MEDAL FOR EXCEPTIONAL SUPPORT TO ORGANISED PHILATELY, 2024

Awarded to: MYRSINI VARDOPOULOU (GREECE)



Dr Myrsini Vardopoulou, a painter and engraver, has been a stamp designer for over 30 years. Formerly a professor at the Athens School of Fine Arts, she is currently a consultant for the documentation of archival material at the Philatelic and Postal Museum in Athens. Since 2013, she has designed the front covers of Opus, the annual publication of the Académie Européenne de Philatélie, along with several other highly acclaimed philatelic books. She created the logos for the two NOTOS international philatelic exhibitions and was an active member of the Organising Committee for NOTOS 2021. Dr Vardopoulou has received numerous

distinctions, including the First Prize of Asiago Philatelic Art for the Greek 2010 Europa stamps and the International Olympic Committee Silver Medal for the Greek 2012 London Olympic Games stamps. Her book, History, Ideology, and Aesthetics of Greek Stamps, was awarded a Large Gold Medal at Italia 2018.

THE FEPA MEDAL FOR EXCEPTIONAL PHILATELIC STUDY AND RESEARCH, 2024

Awarded to: MEHMET AKAN (TURKEY) Postal Rates of the Republic of Türkiye, 1920-1950
Co-authors: SELÇUK AKAR, TURHAN TURGUT RDP, EMRE UTKU



Certificate of appreciation - Runners up

Jesús Sitjá-Prats Pacific Steam Navigation Company Mail, 1840-1854
Lorenzo Carra Italia e Iberia. La posta fra gli Stati delle due penisole 1814-1876

Certificate of appreciation

Jean-Pierre Magne Le Rattachement du duché de Savoie et du comté de Nice à la France, Oblitérations sardes 1860-1861
Hans-Joachim Soll Social Philately – Menschen in Deutsch Ostafrika
Milan Radovanović Retreat from Nis to Corfu – Silent Witnesses, 1915-1916

These six works are presented at Pages 75-76.



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From Spain





**MARE
BALTICUM**



INTERNATIONAL PHILATELIC EXHIBITION MARE BALTICUM 2024

The Estonian Philatelic Federation has organized the Multinational Philatelic Exhibition MARE BALTICUM 2024 in excellent facilities at the Estonian National Museum, on July 26th to July 28th 2024, in Tartu.

The exhibition was part of the official Tartu 2024 European Capital of Culture program, while the international philatelic bodies granted it the FEPA Recognition and respectively the FIP Sponsorship.

The Jury of MARE BALTICUM 2024, consisting of 11 judges representing nine different nationalities, judged a total of 153 exhibits, representing 11 different philatelic disciplines. They found that the exhibits shown were interestingly versatile, and the quality of the exhibits very high.

The Jury awarded 7 Large Gold medals and 25 Gold medals. One exhibit was transferred to a different exhibition class to ensure it achieved better awards. Unfortunately, three exhibits did not arrive and hence could not be judged.

The main goal was to bring back the MARE BALTICUM exhibitions to life again. The first MARE BALTICUM of the Baltic Sea countries was held in Tallinn, Estonia in 1993, the previous one in the Åland Islands, Finland, in 2005. After 19 years without any exhibitions of this status, MARE BALTICUM 2024 was a promising new start.

Everyone who was here at the exhibition gave a small part to the great success of MARE BALTICUM 2024.

On behalf of the organizers, I thank everyone involved!

Chairman of the Organizing Committee,
Mr. Oliver Hanschmidt

Tartu, 30 July 2024

Welcome to the International Philatelic Exhibition MARE BALTICUM 2024!



The opening ceremony on Friday 26.07.2024 had many speakers among FIP Director Peter Suhadolc. Musical breaks by the orchestra - Väägvere Pasunakoor (performing since 185 years).

The exhibition was opened by the sponsors and supporters each cutting a piece of the Mare Balticum ribbon.

With around 300 people at the opening ceremony and over 1000 visitors over the 3 day exhibition reached the set goals.



JURY

- Jukka Mäkinen, Finland
Chairman of the Jury
- Erik Hamberg, Sweden
- Bill Hedley, United Kingdom
- John Hotchner RDP, USA
- Lars Jørgensen, Belgium
- Wolfgang Leupold, Germany
- Jari Majander, Finland
- Andrzej Stodziński, Poland
- Peter Suhadolc, Slovenia
- Ivar Sundsbø RDP, Norway
- Thomas Løbbering, Germany
Consultant to the Jury

COMMISSIONERS

- Oliver Hanschmidt, Estonia
- Tuomo Koskiaho, Finland
- Frank Blechschmidt, Germany
- Raimonds Jonitis, Latvia
- Vygintas Bubnys, Lithuania
- Jaan Roots, Norway
- Andrzej Stodziński, Poland
- Mats Söderberg, Sweden
- Jon Aitchison, United Kingdom
- Vesma Grinfelds, United States



Brazilian flair in Haldensleben - A look back at DEBRA 2024

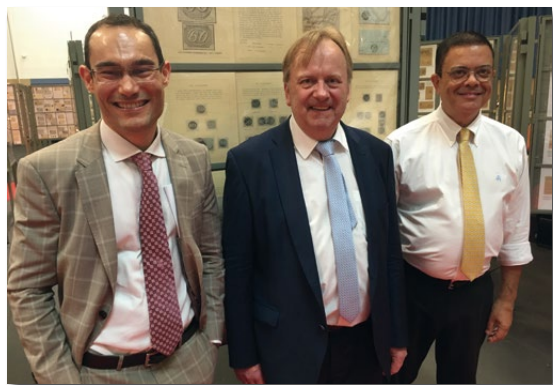
Reinhard Küchler, Managing Director of the Bund Deutscher Philatelisten Headquarters, writes:

DEBRA 2024 is now history. From 27th to 30th June 2024 philatelists from all over Germany and Brazil, but also from numerous other countries with their mix of languages, met in Haldensleben in Sachsen-Anhalt. There was a parallel national and regional stamp exhibition with a total of 185 exhibits, numerous traders' stands, a number of booths for specialist societies, a special post office with three special postmarks, a great cover programme and, thanks to the Brazilian guests, a special postmark of the Brazilian Post.

Samba dancers and batucada drummers performed at the opening which got the audience moving and excited. A special highlight was the fact that a special Deutsche Post stamp and a special Brazilian Post souvenir sheet were issued directly in connection with the exhibition to mark the 200th anniversary of German immigration to Brazil. The official handover of the German special stamp during the opening ceremony by the head of the department responsible for postage stamps at the Federal Ministry of Finance was impressive. The presence of numerous "celebrities", such as the Minister of Justice of the state of Saxony-Anhalt, the Vice President, two members of the of state parliament and the envoy from the Brazilian embassy showed how important philately is, but also how well organized and networked the stamp enthusiasts of Haldensleben and the surrounding area are. The fact that this was not the first time a national stamp exhibition had been held in Haldensleben was evident throughout the event. Everything was perfectly organized.



The DEBRA exhibition hall in Haldensleben as preparation for the day's work were underway.



Walter Bernatek, BDPH Treasurer, with two Brazilian colleagues in front of an exhibit of Brazilian 'Bull's Eyes'.

The spirit of Brazil was present throughout the entire exhibition. There were numerous exhibits directly from Brazil in the exhibition. The fact that this country also collects and exhibits at the highest level was demonstrated, among other things, by the fact that Jacques Rubin Benchimol, a Brazilian exhibitor, won the Grand Prix International. On Friday evening a Brazilian evening to celebrate the 50th anniversary of ArGe Brazil rounded off the program. But it was not least the intense heat of 30 degrees and more that created a Mediterranean atmosphere. The much cooler hall was of course even more attractive as a result, which was evident from the consistently good attendance and the numerous onlookers between the frames.

festively decorated tables invited the guests to have a good time which everyone did very well. One of the highlights of the evening was the presentation of the Grand Prix. While the Grand Prix International, as already mentioned, went to Brazil, Jürgen Herbst received his first Grand Prix National for a literary exhibit with his "Handbuch der sächsischen Francomarken sowie deren Entwertungen". On Sunday, the exhibitors then had the opportunity to take part in discussion with the jury. The jury was prominent through and through and, with the large number of exhibits, had a very special job to do. It is fair to say that they did a very good job. The author himself had the opportunity for a very constructive jury discussion with one or two great ideas for the next exhibition. DEBRA 2024 is now over and most visitors are already looking forward to the next philatelic events.

23° Premio Internazionale di Filatelia Tematica Musicale 'Augusto Massari'

Koenraad Bracke writes:

The 23rd competition for the 'Augusto Massari' Prize for music philately took place in Vasto, Italy on the occasion of the VASTOPHIL 2024 national exhibition (from 20th-22nd September 2024, at Palazzo d'Avalos, on the initiative of the 'Nino Piccirilli' Philatelic Society).

The event is organised according to the "un cuadro più" format, in which only one frame of each entry is exhibited, including the plan page and other sheets chosen by the exhibitor. The full exhibit is available on the website to the jury for evaluation, and to the public during the exhibition and afterwards. The visitors may browse the exhibits using computers available at the exhibition.



The Palazzo d'Avalos.

The four-member jury was chaired by Koenraad Bracke (Belgium) and included Peter Lang (Germany), Luciano Calenda (Italy) and Marco Occhipinti (Italy). Exhibitors came from Germany (4), Belgium (3), Italy (2), the Netherlands (2) and France (1). A full list of the exhibits, including the jury results and links to pdf files of exhibits can be seen at this link:

http://expo.fsfi.it/PaginaStandard.php?CodiceExpo=PremioMassari23&Ambito=USER&PagSec=partecipazioni_risultati.php&Lingua=IT



The competition this year was strong with the winner being Jean-Pierre Suys (BE) "From body sounds to sound bodies". A large gold medal was also awarded to Danny Jimmink (NL) for "Step by step to dancing".

The Prix Massari is organised by the Music Group of the Italian Centre for Thematic Philately (CIFT) in cooperation with the Motivgruppe Musik e.V. Since it was first held in 1980 the event has been hosted in Belgium (2 times), France (5) Germany (3), Luxembourg (4) the Netherlands (1), San Marino (1) and, of course, Italy (6).

More information is available on the FSFI exhibition portal:

<http://expo.fsfi.it/index.php?CodiceExpo=PremioMassari23&Ambito=USER&Lingua=IT>

SIBIU PHILATELISTS' CENTENARY: 6th-20th September 2024

Nicolae Salade and Horia Barbu write:

2024 was marked by an exceptional event to celebrate the centenary of the Sibiu Philatelists' Association. In 1924 the first philatelic structure officially organised and registered close to the Cibin River was the "Timbrophilia" Association. Philatelists from Sibiu, through their consistency, perseverance and passion, honoured this anniversary by organising a large national philatelic exhibition dedicated to the Great Jubilee. It enjoyed admirable support from Sibiu City Hall, the ASTRA Sibiu County Library, the Astra Association and the Romanian National Post, with patronage from the Romanian Philatelic Federation.



The exhibition was attended by collectors from 21 Romanian towns with 69 exhibits displayed on more than 200 panels. The exhibit classes included postal history, aerophilately, astrophilately, thematic philately, maximaphily, cartophilia, One frame, Open class and there was a literature section with nine philatelic works.



A large number of people from all over the country attended the opening ceremony on 6th September at the ASTRA County Library in Sibiu. Mr. Nicolae Salade, President of the Association of Philatelists of Sibiu County, opened the event, mentioning that 2024 marked the "Centenary of the Association of Philatelists of Sibiu". He added that the Sibiu

Association was one of the largest and most important in the country and that Sibiu philatelists had played a leading part in organising Romania's philatelic achievements, including the first philatelic exhibition in 1930 at the Brukenthal Palace, competitions for young people, setting up a "FRAM" Mechanical Franking Group in 1988, publishing the first independent Romanian philatelic magazine in March 1990, the Romania – Luxembourg Philatelic Exhibition in 2007 (the first such event dedicated to the European Capital of Culture) and the "Dr. Valeriu Neaga" Romanian Society of Maximaphily.

Prof. Constantin Barbu then presented a book entitled "A Brief History of Sibiu Philately".



An invitation, a poster, an envelope with a special stamp, a medal, a badge, a catalogue and a diploma of the exhibition were designed by Sibiu philatelists to mark the event. The Romanian Post also issued a postcard for the Centenary and there was a mail delivery box at the exhibition belonging to the Sibiu Post Office.

Through our Association's activities we hope to contribute to the promotion of the cultural values and traditions of our ancestors within this true art, materialised through these small symbols of value and beauty, and that the passion that brings us together will remain a valuable landmark for future generations. This is PHILATELY!

HAFNIA 24: 17th-20th October 2024

The HAFNIA 24 European philatelic exhibition was a triumph for the Copenhagen Philatelic Club. It had an abundance of outstanding exhibits, dealers and auctioneers, lectures and seminars, and visitors. The hall was just right for the event and was buzzing most of the time, and the weather was perfect. FEPA had the honour to give Patronage to HAFNIA and we offer our heartfelt thanks to the Organisers, and to the army of volunteers, who brought it to fruition and made sure it ran smoothly.

We invited **Costas Chazapis** to give us his impressions:

I arrived at Øksnehallen, the exhibition venue, a few minutes before the midday opening on Wednesday 17 October. It was a beautiful day with clear skies and sunshine, but by no means the cold, dark, and rainy weather I had expected before leaving Athens.

I received my exhibitor's HAFNIA 24 Catalogue from the information desk, by a welcoming and exceptionally kind volunteer. When I held it in my hands, I nearly fainted. "Another two kilos in my luggage," I thought to myself, and this was only the first few hours of a five-day trip to Copenhagen. Later, when I flipped through the large, 430-page volume, I realised it was a remarkable opus of philatelic literature. Thirteen research articles, collected under the main title '400 years of the Danish Post' are spread over more than the book's 300 pages, the best promotion Danish Philately could have ever imagined.

With 5,000 square metres of floor space, the Øksnehallen proved to be an ideal venue for a 1500-frame philatelic exhibition. The spacious hall, with its slender steel columns supporting the roof, offered visitors an unobstructed view in all directions. The exhibit frames were laid out in the

centre of the hall, while dealers', auctioneers' and societies' booths, utility rooms, reception areas, the main stage, and other amenities lined the perimeter. The hall's lighting was also ideal, evenly distributed across the entire floor area, providing excellent visibility for all exhibits. Additionally, the historic 125-year-old venue was conveniently located at the København H (Central Railway Station) metro station, just three stops from Kongens Nytorv, Copenhagen's city centre. The organisers' flawless and exemplary planning included the selection of the official hotel almost side-by-side with the exhibition hall, as well as the Palmarès Dinner venue just across the street on Tietgensgade.



Two minutes after the Grand Opening at noon on 17 October.



The left half of the Øksnehallen and the central hallway.

Numerous meetings and presentations took place over the four days of the exhibition. Among these were the FEPA and AIEP Annual Congresses; two FEPA-supported seminars, one by Birthe King on 'Open Philately' and another by Tobias Huylmans on 'Trends in International Expertising: Technical Innovations, Use of Databases and AI'. There was also a presentation by Simon Richards on the upcoming FEPA exhibition EuroPhilEx 2025, scheduled for May next year in Birmingham, and the auctioning of the No. 00001 exhibition sheetlet during the Opening Ceremony by Jonas Hällström RDP.



Lars Peter Svendsen, OC President, and Bill Hedley (FEPA President) at the Opening Ceremony.

The Jury was chaired by Lars Jørgensen, President, with Bill Hedley as Honorary President and Peter Suhadolc as Secretary. Impressively, the organisers succeeded in inviting jurors from 31 European Philatelic Federations! The major award winners were announced during the Palmares Dinner at CPH Conference:

- Grand Prix HAFNIA 24: Nicholas Miles Kirke (Czech Republic), The Evolution of Outbound Foreign Mail cancelled in New York City 1845-1878.
- Grand Prix International: Kai Nieminen (Finland), Grand Duchy of Finland 1856-1875.
- Grand Prix National: Erik Benny Winther (Denmark), Danish West Indies 1856-1917, Stamps and Postage Due.

Instead of the traditional medal, the exhibition offered a polished, stainless-steel bowl, of the Bloom collection, crafted by the renowned Georg Jensen innovative designers and manufacturers.



Stainless steel bowl crafted by Georg Jensen.

Spending many hours at the exhibition left me with limited time for sightseeing around one of the most charming and innovative capital cities in Europe. Nevertheless, I must report that I managed to fulfil my duty as a tourist by visiting the famous Little Mermaid statue at the harbour, one of the world's most renowned art pieces. I also climbed up the stairs of the Round Tower (Rundetårn), a 35-metre tall, 17th Century astronomical observatory which offered a breathtaking view of the Danish capital. What captured my heart though was my acquaintance with the 17 km long Øresund Link, an engineering masterpiece that combines a tunnel, an artificial island, and a bridge to connect the Danish and Swedish coasts. My wife and I left Copenhagen with so many memorable impressions that will stay with us for a very long time. We are grateful to Lars Peter Svendsen, OC President, and Lars Engelbrecht, General Commissioner, as well as to the staff, members, and volunteers of the Copenhagen Philatelic Club (KPK), who put their hearts and souls into the project and made HAFNIA 24 happen.



Stamp Fair Ulm October 2024 – The success story continues!

Thomas Höpfner writes:

The Ulm stamp fair has now seen its third year after the move from Sindelfingen, and those involved in that event would certainly agree that it has started to become a real “brand name”. The mix of commercial activities, the display of exhibits in frames and the stands of specialist societies as well as on-stage lectures makes it a highly attractive event, and many visitors had already marked the last weekend in October very early in the year. At the end of the three days starting on 24th October everybody who had been there could look back on a memorable experience packed with visits of the dealer stands, checking the exhibits of three different exhibitions and having chats with fellow philatelists.

This year the second hall with the exhibits offered three different exhibitions: the REMSMA Regional exhibition, the Postgeschichte Live (PGL) competition and the 3rd “Team-Wettbewerb”, a competition of different teams organised by Bund Deutscher Philatelisten (BDPh, the German Federation). In all they filled well over 600 frames.

There was also a literature competition for all German specialised societies (Arbeitsgemeinschaften). As is the custom at Postgeschichte Live the exhibition was accompanied by a symposium of presentations by distinguished postal historians - Luc Selis, Turhan Turgut and Dr Gerald Heschl, pictured (upper right) with DASV President Klaus Weis.



The Deutscher Altbriefsammler-Verein (DASV) which organises the Postgeschichte Live competition had invited the Turkish Academy of Philately to be this year’s partner. We were delighted to welcome around twenty philatelic friends from Turkey some of whom were pictured (left) with Klaus Weis. In addition to their excellent exhibits, they gave us very interesting philatelic insights and we thank them for their contributions.



Once again the Ulm stamp fair brought in a high number of visitors, and their purchases secured very satisfactory sales results in the trade hall. The various philatelic displays and the presence of a large number of specialist societies had obviously attracted a lot of serious philatelists making the event once more an international meeting place for collectors involved in those fields. Considering the huge number of philatelic displays on offer it is very difficult to imagine that visitors would have been able to see everything within the time available.

Amid various bad news items such as the termination of the Essen stamp fairs it is definitely encouraging to see such a positive development. The 2025 Ulm stamp fair will take place from 27th-29th October 2025. And the contracts for 2026 and 2027 with UlmMesse, the owner of the premises, have been signed as well. So now is a good time to mark your calendar, at least for 2025!

BALKANFILA XX: 13–16 November 2024

Christos Gikas writes:

Organised by the Hellenic Philatelic Society of Thessaloniki in conjunction with the Hellenic Philatelic Federation, Balkanfila XX provided an excellent opportunity for the philatelic community of Southeast Europe to meet in Thessaloniki, fostering the ideals of unity, friendship, understanding, and cooperation.

The exhibition was held at Pavilion No. 6 of the HELLEXPO, a renowned international fairgrounds complex located within walking distance of the city centre. It is a spacious hall that offered ample space with uniform lighting for the exhibits and included additional areas for dealer tables and presentations. The frames were supplied by the Hellenic Post (ELTA), a major sponsor of Balkanfila XX. All eleven member countries of the Balkanfila Working Group - Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, and Turkey - participated in the exhibition. Three countries with close philatelic ties to Southeast Europe— Cyprus, Italy, and Israel—



also took part and exhibits related to the region were submitted by exhibitors from Algeria, Canada, China, Indonesia, France, Germany, UK and USA. The exhibition featured around 700 frames, 600 with competitive exhibits, and there was a strong Literature Class comprising 40 exhibits. Four world-class exhibits were invited to the Court of Honour:

- Joseph Hackmey UK Classic Mexico.
- Stavros Andreadis Greece Greece - Large Hermes Heads.
- Louis Fanchini France The fabrication and postal usage of the Large Hermes Heads of Greece.
- Anestis Karagiannidis Canada The 1896 Olympics.

The international Jury was led by Eddie Leibu (President). Peter Suhadolc (Slovenia) was Honorary President and FIP Consultant, George Thomareis (Greece) was Vice President and Emmanouil Koutsounakis (Greece) was Jury Secretary. There were nine other jurors: Vladimir Milic (Serbia), Boncho Bonev (Bulgaria), Bruno Crevato-Selvaggi (Italy), Mehmet Akan (Turkey), Alexis Papadopoulos (Greece), Alexandru Bartoc (Romania), Julije Maras (Croatia), Igor Pirc (Slovenia), and Nikos Mallouchos (Greece). The winners of the Four Grand Prix were:

- Grand Prix BALKANFILA International: Andrei Alexandru Chirescu (Romania), The fluvial and maritime postal routes in the Romanian territories, 1840-1920.
- Grand Prix BALKANFILA National: Wolfgang Bauer (Germany), Greece – Incoming and outgoing mail and their destinations up to UPU, 1827-1875.
- Grand Prix International: Vladimir Popovic (Serbia), General classification and types of postcards of the Golden Age in the collection of Herceg Novi and its surroundings.
- Grand Prix National: George Mylonogiannis (Greece), The Hellenic pre-adhesive period.

Parallel events open to everyone included:

- Presentation of 3 books (The Large Hermes Heads of Greece—Deciphering These Magnificent Classical Stamps; Borders, Sovereignty, and Postage Stamps; The Hellenic Philatelic Society Anniversary Book “Traces of Communication”).
- A lecture by Giannis Epaminondas on “Postmarks, Covers, Stamps: Postal History of Thessaloniki”
- The Balkanfila Working Group regular meeting discussed issues related to the website and Newsletter as well a proposal for publishing a Balkanfila Yearbook in English to publicise regional philatelic knowledge to Philatelic Federations and Cultural Organisations around the World.
- A Round Table Discussion on “Investing for the Future” involving eight experienced philatelists. This is reported in more detail in a separate article on Pages 47-48 of this issue.

YEREVAN 2024



Hovik Musayelyan and Suren Simonyan write:

Sixty exhibits from Armenia, Germany, Russia, the USA, Belarus and Moldova were on display from 18th-22nd November 2024 at the National Museum of Architectural History next to the central Republic Square of Yerevan.

The appreciation of philately by government representatives and the Armenian Post was particularly impressive. Here (right) is the Honorary Board of the exhibition after stamping the first special postcards with Arman Abrahamyan, Chief Executive Officer of Armenian Post, Mkhitar Hayrapetyan, Minister of High Technology, Arayik Harutyunyan, Chief of Staff to the Prime Minister of Armenia, Dr Hovik Musayelyan, President of the Armenian Philatelic Association, Zaruhi Hayrapetyan, Director of the National Museum of Architectural History.



We were also pleased to welcome many children from Yerevan’s schools who attended exhibition in groups. There was also noticeable public interest towards the exhibition. The logistics and overall organization of the exhibition was on the high level. The days of the exhibition were characterised by an extremely harmonious and friendly relationship between the participants from all nations and the exhibition visitors. Many new contacts were made between collectors and experts. On the closing day winners in different categories and nominations were awarded with an interestingly designed medals made of local obsidian stone.



Left picture: A group of children from a school of Yerevan visiting the exhibition. Middle picture: Valentin Levandovskiy Jury President, Suren Simonyan Commissioner General. Right picture: Dr Wolfgang Leupold, Igor Ryss Commissioners.

Dr Wolfgang Leupold / Germany won the Grand Prize of the exhibition for his postal history exhibit “Inflation in Soviet Russia”.

For the Association of Armenian Philatelists, after many years this was a new beginning with an exhibition with international participation. We hope to be able to invite such a large exhibition to Yerevan again soon.

MONACOPHIL 2024

Simon Richards writes:

Organised by the Club de Monte Carlo the MONACOPHIL 2024 exhibition took place from 5th-7th December 2024, largely in the One Monte-Carlo Exhibition Centre, a new venue. Monte-Carlo seems thoroughly to have recovered from the effects of the pandemic which lingered somewhat over the 2022 gathering. The new shopping area between the hotel and the exhibition centre sparkled, the Christmas decorations were out and dazzled and the event had everything you could expect from Monaco.



The change in venue for the exhibition was necessitated by the relocation of the Vintage Car Museum from the Terrasse de Fontvieilles and it left the display of the 100 'Rarities', which was still at the Musée des Timbres et Monnaies, a little out on a limb at a 20-minute stroll away; but as the sun shone it was a pleasant walk. The event was also moved back a week to allow American visitors to enjoy an uninterrupted Thanksgiving holiday. Judging by the significant increase in attendance by Americans, the change must be judged a success.

Thursday's Gala Dinner was graced by the presence of HSH Prince Albert II who was prevailed upon to say a few words to the guests in English. As a new event Rita Ariete, wife of Club President Olivier Stocker, had organised a watercolour artist to work with spouses to produce philatelically-related paintings that were auctioned off at the closing dinner. It was a brave husband who did not acquire his partner's masterpiece!

The Exhibition Centre incorporates a most comfortable auditorium and advantage was taken to put on a series of lectures organised by different groups: the Club de Monte-Carlo on Thursday, the European Academy of Philately (AEP) on Friday morning followed by the AIJP in the afternoon before a final session by Club de Monte Carlo members on Saturday. Attendance varied considerably between talks but the general impressions were positive.



Also in the Centre was the exhibition of Stamps and Postal History of the Far East, superbly brought together from all over the world by Peter Cockburn and turned by Vincent Schouberechts into a lighter than normal book, which had the advantage of being a guide that could be referred to whilst looking at the exhibits. The absolute high point was the display of Japan's 500 Mon large dragon with inverted centre - the world's second most expensive postage stamp. However, there were many other rarities and the catalogue is well worth perusing.

Innovation was also evident in the rarities displayed in 'poster' frames which give the proud owner a chance to tell something of the background to their item. I'm sure this idea will be developed further. As is customary there were also several book launches and an auction conducted by Maison Boule.

There was one room in the Centre for dealers with 'booths' which was dominated by auction houses. A second room with 'tabletops' was also available where material, predominantly French, could be examined by the philatelic browser. Business seemed quieter than in previous years and there were fewer dealers, presumably due to the smaller area available.

Monte Carlo Club members, gathering for the AGM on Sunday, were reassured to learn that the event is now on a firmer financial footing and that they could look forward to coming back in two years where the exhibition theme will be sub-Saharan Africa. If you haven't been before you really should come. The event is predominantly social and a wonderful opportunity to meet up with like-minded philatelists from all over the world in an environment where your significant other will also feel they are having a good time.

EUROPHILEX BIRMINGHAM 2025

7th - 11th MAY 2025

Jon Aitchison, Chair of the Organising Committee, writes:

The Association of British Philatelic Societies is proud to be host to an international philatelic exhibition, EuroPhilEx Birmingham 2025. It will be held at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham from Wednesday, 7th May until Sunday, 11th May 2025. EuroPhilEx is a continental exhibition for Members of FEPA. It has FEPA Patronage and FIP Recognition.



The National Exhibition Centre is Britain's premier purpose-built exhibition facility. The site is close to Birmingham International Airport and is easy to reach by train with Birmingham International Station close by. There are frequent and fast connections with the centre of Birmingham and to London. For visitors coming by car there are over 16,500 car parking spaces at the NEC with shuttle buses to the venue, and it is at the heart of the motorway network in the centre of England close to the M42, M40 and M6, with nearby junctions. The exhibition will be held in Hall 9 which, with 10,000 square metres of floor space at ground level, will make viewing easy and convenient.

There will be over 60 dealers and auction houses present as well as 2,000 frames of exhibits from more than 30 countries. The exhibition is open for the following classes: FEPA Grand Prix Class, Traditional Philately, Postal History, Aerophilately, Revenues, Postal Stationery, Thematic Philately, Open Philately, Picture Postcards, Maximaphily, Astrophilately, and Philatelic Literature.

The Court of Honour will feature the world's most valuable stamp, the British Guiana 1c black on magenta of 1856, which is being shown by courtesy of Stanley Gibbons, together other exhibits of great rarities. There will be a free souvenir sheet for visitors every day, and special cachets and cancellations will be in use. Thursday, 8th May will be the Society Showcase Day, with societies having tables. Several societies will also hold meetings during the event.



Events taking place during the exhibition will include:

- Thursday 8th May: 7.00pm RPSL Reception at the Arden Hotel. All are welcome. Admission free.
- Thursday 8th May: 8.00pm Four Societies Dinner at the Arden hotel for members of RPSL, Collectors Club of New York, Club de Monte Carlo, the AEP and their guests.
- Friday 9th May: Signing Ceremony of The Roll of Distinguished Philatelists
- Saturday 10th May: Annual Congress of the Association of British Philatelic Societies
- Saturday 10th May: Palmarès Dinner, Grand Hotel, Birmingham
- Sunday 11th May: Annual Congress of the Federation of European Philatelic Associations
- Sunday 11th May: Auction by Cavendish Philatelic Auctions

On the opening day, 7th May, the exhibition will be open from 11am - 6pm, and admission will cost £10 with early bird admission from 10am for £20. On all other days admission will be free and the exhibition will be open from 10am - 6pm on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, and from 10am - 4pm on Sunday 11th May.

Applications for Literature entries remain open until 31st March 2025
There are also still some spaces for late entries in other classes.

Further information, including accommodation options, is available at the EuroPhilEx 2025 website:

www.europhillex2025.co.uk



Nordia 2025 in Sweden

In 2025 it is Sweden's turn to arrange the Nordia exhibition. We are happy to announce that Nordia 2025 will take place in Malmö, Sweden from 12 to 14 September 2025.

The exhibition will take place at Malmömässan, which is a modern exhibition centre close to both Copenhagen Kastrup airport (12 minutes by train), Copenhagen city centre (25 minutes by train) and a few minutes away from the city centre of Malmö. The exhibition hotel, where the Palmarès will take place, and several hotels are situated within walking distance from the exhibition centre. This location will ensure easy and convenient access both for national, Nordic and international exhibitors and visitors.

It is our pleasure to invite the members of the Nordic Philatelic Federations as well as the members of the Scandinavian Collector's Club overseas to exhibit at Nordia 2025.

Best regards,

Ulf Nilsson
Chairman of the Nordia 2025 Committee

Rikard Azelius
President of the Swedish Philatelic Federation

nordia2025.se



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National Stamp Exhibition Liberec 2025 with International Participation, FEPA Recognition and FIP Sponsorship

19th - 22nd June 2025

Important dates

- 14th February 2025 deadline for submission of the application to the National Commissioner
- 31st March 2025 notification of acceptance or non-acceptance by the Organising Committee
- 30th April 2025 payment of the exhibition fee
- 30th April 2025 submission of a copy of the title page and synopsis to the National Commissioner
- 15th May 2025 sending the literature to the organising committee
- 19th to 22nd June 2025 exhibition

Venue

MCU Koloseum, o.p.s.,
Generála Svobody 83/47, 460 01, Liberec



Official Exhibition Hotel

Hotel LIBEREC
www.hotel-liberec.eu



Liberec



All further information including the IREX and the application form can be found on the exhibition website www.liberec2025.cz



Registration for the event is now open at <https://stampex.vfairs.com>

Suzanne Rae writes:

Virtual Stampex 2025 is a free-to-attend online event, live 24 hours a day from the 6th – 8th March 2025 so that visitors can experience the very best in philately from wherever they are in the world.

Last year visitors were able to discover and meet Philatelic Traders' Society members in the Booth Hall - the most popular hall in the show - to ask for advice, share want lists, shop direct, enquire about selling, find discount codes, and subscribe to stay connected. At Virtual Stampex 2025 visitors will be able to:

- Attend Roundtables to meet experts, philatelic friends, and discuss the latest trends and opportunities in philately.
- Shop direct with our in-built catalogue showcasing items across our Booths, with even more items than in 2024.
- Watch Talks and Webinars in our Auditorium with even more sessions than 2024.
- Visit our "Display Your Way" hall to see philatelic collections and exhibits to inspire you, with interactive Q&A and video links.
- Browse selected recent exhibits in our new National Exhibitions Hall.
- Explore world-class, specialist and welcoming societies from around the world in the Booth Hall.
- Visit our new eBay Coin Hall where you'll find coin dealers and specialists.
- Download catalogues, guide, activities, and videos into your Virtual Briefcase.
- Score points by visiting booths and attending sessions. Who will top our new Leaderboard?
- Join in on the Stampex Bug Hunt, the Philatelic Mastermind Quiz, and other giveaways and competitions.
- Chill out with fellow philatelic enthusiasts from around the world in our Collectors Lounge chat room.

All aspects of the event are fully integrated allowing visitors to move seamlessly around the show – on laptop, desktop, tablet, and mobile. Live chat and video calling is available across the event itself to help visitors to connect with friends, dealers, and fellow collectors from around the globe. Our Virtual Briefcase enables attendees to collect and download all relevant catalogues, information packs, games, price lists, and more.



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May 23–30, 2026

*at the Boston Convention & Exhibition
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www.Boston2026.org

Contact us at:

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P.O. Box 904, Sudbury, MA 01776

See you in Boston 2026!

PhilLat26 INTERNATIONAL



26 - 29 June 2026

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Rīga, Latvia**

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New FEPA Jurors at HAFNIA 2024

Lars Engelbrecht writes:

At the October FEPA exhibition HAFNIA 24 in Copenhagen, the jury included no less than seven jury apprentices. All were successful in their apprenticeship, and the FEPA Board congratulates them warmly. We are looking forward to having them in the jury at future FEPA exhibitions.

In their apprenticeship, the apprentices judged together with their teams, supervised by the team leaders who, after the judging filled in an evaluation form for each apprentice covering their performance both in judging and in their interaction with the team. Part of the apprenticeship is also to judge several exhibits individually, and then these results are compared to the team result. Finally, the apprentices also had an individual interview with the FEPA President, Bill Hedley.

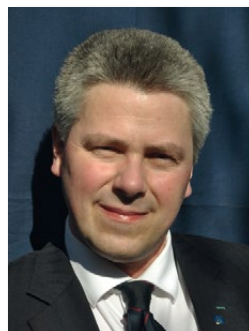
The newly-approved FEPA jurors are:



James Podger (UK)
Traditional



Paul Wreglesworth (UK)
Traditional



Richard Bodin (Sw)
Postal History



Lars Böttger (Lux)
Postal History



Bjørn Schøyen (Norway)
Aerophilately



Søren Juhl Hansen (DK)
Thematic



Wolfgang Maassen (GER)
Literature

Call for more FEPA Jury Apprentices

The FEPA Board encourages Member Federations to nominate more apprentice jurors, please. We do not have enough accredited jurors, especially in the classes of Open Philately and Picture Postcards. Based on the demography of the jurors in Traditional Philately and Postal History, in a few years' time we will also need more jurors in these two classes.

Team Leaders

And another request from the FEPA Board to experienced jurors. If you can, please take the Team Leader apprenticeship when you are judging at FIP exhibitions. **We do not have enough team leaders in Europe!**



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The BDPH Online Seminar Programme Resumes



Eric Scherer writes:

Over recent years it has become well established practice for the Federation of German Philatelists (BDPh) to offer a programme of on-line seminars on interesting philatelic themes during the winter months and this year is no exception. Participation is free and it is open to all.

The seminars are held using the Zoom software that is accessible on every internet browser without any additional downloads. Anyone who is interested is requested to register in advance and they will then be sent a link to join the presentation.

This terms focus is on public relations and social media usage for philatelic societies. Furthermore, the 175th jubilee of the famous "Sachsendreier", the first stamp of the former Kingdom of Saxony, is addressed.

To register, go to **bdph.de/seminareonline**

The programme for this season is as follows:

23rd November 2024 : 'Öffentlichkeitsarbeit und Marketing in der Philatelie und beim BDPH – Angebot, Ideen, Best Practises'

(Publicity work and marketing in philately and at the BDPH – offer, ideas, best practice).

11th January 2025 : 'Briefmarken individuell – Wie Vereine dieses Format richtig nutzen können? Hier werden u.a. die Marken aus dem Wettbewerb des BDPH vorgestellt'

(Briefmarken individuell. How can societies use this format correctly? Among other things, stamps from BDPH competitions will be shown).

25th January 2025 : 'Stärkung der Ortsvereine durch Social Media – Tipps und Erfahrungen vom Profi.'

(How to strengthen local societies through social media – tips and experience from the experts).

15th February 2025 : 'Entwurf und Druck des Sachsendreiers – ein 150jähriger Irrtum?'

(Design and printing of the Saxony 3 pfennig – a 150 year old error?).

15th March 2025 : 'Was machen die denn da? Ein Blick über die Schulter der Arbeit der Fälschungs-Experten bei internationalen Ausstellungen'

(What are they doing there? A look over the shoulder at the work of experts on forgeries at international exhibitions).

29th March 2025 : 'Storytelling in Philatelie und Postgeschichte – Wie wir von unserem Hobby spannend erzählen können.'

(Storytelling in philately and postal history - How we can use our hobby to tell exciting stories).

We are looking forward to exciting and informative presentations with lots of participants, and we hope that this contribution to the current discussions on the future of philately will give fresh ideas and guidance to those working in organised philately and also help philatelists to develop their collections while using innovative techniques to enhance its appeal to a wider audience.

A couple of additional remarks. It would of course be good to get some statistical data on the number of participants per programme or per seminar and on topics considered important from past seminars. To me the value of the seminars lies in broadening the spectrum of topics and target audiences, ideally covering all areas of organised philately as well as collectors in general and also those interested in philately without being collectors including academic researchers or authors of books.

HAFNIA 24: Two FEPA Seminars

Thomas Höpfner writes:

Many months before the start of HAFNIA 24 in Copenhagen it was clear that it would be a huge philatelic event with a programme packed with numerous highlights. FEPA was able to contribute to that with two seminars, one on “Open Philately” and the second on “Trends in Philatelic Expertising”. Both were very well received, and the large number of visitors was proof that collectors and philatelists are interested to visit such “learning sessions”. Despite the efforts and limitations involved in organising such seminars, FEPA will continue to plan similar sessions at suitable philatelic events in the future.

Open Philately

The seminar was led by Birthe King, which she described as an introduction and a ‘refresher’. She talked about a number of important aspects, starting with the planning of an “Open Philately” collection and the consequences of choosing a certain topic or title. She also analysed in detail the criteria for building an exhibit in the Open Philately class, including the issue of how to blend philatelic and non-philatelic material successfully in order to create an exhibit that tells a complete story while at the same time looking attractive and interesting. While the main focus was on exhibits and exhibiting, the rich selection of illustrations of philatelic and non-philatelic material was certainly inspiring for collectors of all shades.



Trends in Philatelic Expertising

Tobias Huylmans, Managing Director of Koehler auctions (The Global Philatelic Network) then presented the latest drawing on his extensive experience as an expert. Expertising is still focused on fraud detection and the analysis of possible manipulations of stamps and covers, and Tobias described how technical innovations such as AI (artificial intelligence) and improved spectrometry, along with the ability to make comparisons drawing on better databases, have opened up new possibilities for expertising. He gave the audience a fascinating insight, using many examples to compare genuine items with the forgeries, into how difficult it can be to detect forgeries and improvements when dealing with the work of very skilful forgers.

Videos of the two seminars, and of earlier FEPA seminars, are available to view on the FEPA website at

<https://fepanews.com/seminars/>

FEPA Seminars at EuroPhilEx, 9th May 2025

Two FEPA Seminars will be held at EuroPhilEx in the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham between 11.00am and 3.00pm on 9th May 2025. The first seminar will return to the important theme of using technology to assist expertising. The second will look at how research in philately and postal history can be enhanced by reference to non-philatelic source materials.

11.00am: Paul Leonard – Assisting Expert Committees through the use of forensic philately



Genuine or fraudulently manipulated? If an item is likely to have a high value, what reassurance can be given? The formation of an Expertising Committee in 1894 by instruction of the Philatelic Society of London Council (later the RPSL) aimed to provide such reassurance. Fundamentally, the committee members and helpers have access to reference material, and extensive knowledge of the subject matter such as rates and routes, that may often involve comparison with previously submitted items. Fraudulent manipulation such as the removal or addition of postmarks & overprints is a common challenge. Overpainting, re-gumming, repairing and fabrication of postal history are some of the topics on which submitters wish to ascertain a consensus. This may involve external consultants before the item is debated and a certificate issued as 'Genuine', 'Genuine with caveats' or 'Bad'.

Helping the Expertising Committee there is a range of equipment which may help with analysis of spectra and measurement. Winner of the London Medal for work within the Expert Committee at the Royal Philatelic Society London, Paul Leonard BSc. (Hons), CSci., FRPSL will explore aspects of the history of expertising and his research work. This should include demonstrating the Foster Freeman Video Spectral Comparator (VSC 9000), thanks to support from the Foster Freeman Team. Web link: [VSC9000 | Foster + Freeman](https://www.fosterfreeman.com/vsc9000)

1.00pm: Richard Morel – How non-philatelic archives can be used to support philatelic research

Richard Morel is Curator of the British Library's Philatelic Collections in London. After graduating from university he worked for the Royal Household; then spent a decade as an archivist for the India Office Records at the British Library. Through his extensive professional experience and knowledge, Richard is well placed to demonstrate how non-philatelic archival and library materials can be drawn upon to understand the context in which research in philately or postal history is being undertaken. He can also offer perspectives on how philatelic research can be drawn on to assist studies on other topics, a disciplinary interaction that has not always received the attention it deserves.

Richard's presentation will begin with a brief introduction to the United Kingdom's major archival resources as well as some of the major records series of philatelic significance housed within them. Through various case studies utilising books, maps, manuscripts and other materials, he will demonstrate how such widely neglected 'non-philatelic' resources actually provide valuable new insights and directions for philatelic and postal historical research. He then moves on to discuss how philately and postal history can also make significant contributions towards wider mainstream academic research. By situating philately and postal history at the centre of archives in this manner, Richard hopes the audience will begin to understand and appreciate how context philately has the potential to reinvigorate aspects of our philatelic world.



PHILATELIC LITERATURE NEW REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR THE FUTURE

Giancarlo Morolli writes:

When I was elected to the FEPA Board at the 2008 Congress in Vienna, I was charged with a project on philatelic literature. That initiative did not get much support from the Member Federations, as their general view was that tracking philatelic publications was not a high priority for them.

However, when one door shuts, another opens. The BDPH, under the driving force of its management and the passionate work of Wolfgang Maaßen, started a two-fold process: launching up-to-date regulations for national exhibitions of philatelic literature and organizing a FEPA-patronized event in Mainz, the magnificent IPHLA 2012. I was appointed as the FEPA consultant for the exhibition and had a very challenging but rewarding engagement because, in addition to reviewing the venue, the logistic arrangements, the preparatory work of jurors involved in an intensive prejudging activity, the side events, the experimental implementation of new regulations, the extensive and qualified participation of exhibitors, the comprehensive catalogue, and the social programme, I also served on the jury. IPHLA 2012 highlighted the urgent need to prepare new regulations and guidelines at the international level.

In the absence of other initiatives, the FEPA Board decided to undertake the task finalized at the FEPA Congress in Tampere and implemented experimentally at Finlandia 2017. One year later in Verona, Italia 2018 was a definitive and positive test bed for the new criteria. This exhibition was organized on the Mainz model: detailed preparation of the jury work, a two-day prejudging session in Milan with about 50% of jurors attending, ample and very qualified jury, and display during one of the leading recurrent philatelic events in Europe. Unfortunately, we were not able to share these experiences with the FIP Philatelic Literature Commission, which eventually updated the decades-old criteria at the FIP Congress. However, this only partially met the real needs, not least because of the fast and evolving move toward digital publishing. Further work was needed and this journal has duly documented the progress of these initiatives on which Ari Muhonen and I have cooperated. The results have also been presented in other contexts, with special reference to *The Philatelic Journalist*, the magazine of the AIJP, an association very attentive to giving philatelic literature exhibits the consideration they deserve in displaying and judging them at international exhibitions.

As announced at the FEPA Congress in Copenhagen Ari Muhonen and I have drafted new regulations and guidelines, which were reviewed with Wolfgang Maaßen at HAFNIA 24. Immediately afterwards the FEPA Board invited a panel of experts to assess these documents. The panel included Bruno Crevato-Selvaggi, Chris Harman, Gerald Heschl, John Hotchner, Wolfgang Maaßen, Javid Muhammad, Ari Muhonen, Peter Suhadolc and FEPA Board members Costas Chazapis, Lars Engelbrecht and Thomas Hoepfner, under my coordination.

The target schedule is as follows:

1. Assess the documents by the Panel of Experts (11/24 – 1/25)
2. Review Panel's remarks and finalise documents (2/25)
3. Present conclusions at the FEPA Congress in Birmingham (5/25).
4. In parallel, develop additional deliverables including templates of a standard application form and synopsis, a guide for organisers, an entry identifier to be adopted as in the other exhibition classes, and an awards database to be created and maintained for philatelic literature entries.

The output of this effort will be circulated to all FEPA Member Federations and then presented to the FIP Literature Commission for consideration. The fact that most of the panel members are delegates within this Commission should ensure constructive and fast cooperation. The FIP president is being kept informed about the project.

I am well aware that this is a challenging undertaking, but I have committed to prioritising this project for the last months of my term on the FEPA Board.

MAXIMAPHILY NEWS

Pascal Bandry writes:

The annual competition 'Best Maximum Card 2023' has been held under the auspices of the FIP Maximaphily Commission, and the results are in. 18 entries were received and delegates in 19 countries cast their votes.

The competition was won by the Spanish entry – a card showing the Bacchus temple in Madrid. The Slovenian entry came second and the French entry was third.

Congratulations to all the entrants, and especially to the winners, for their efforts which demonstrated the strength of this creative branch of philately. The cards that obtained first, second and third places are shown below.



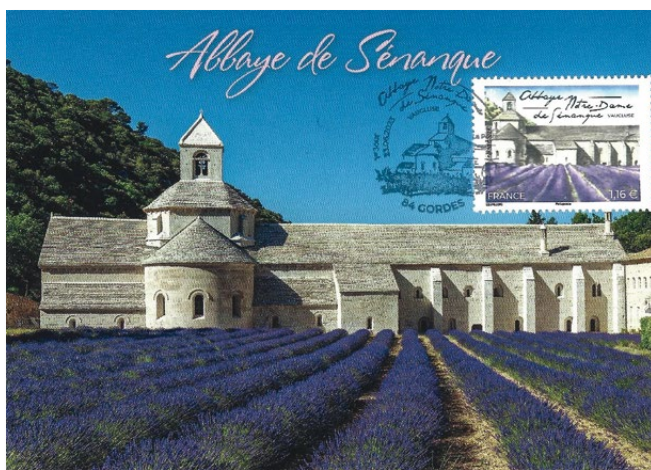
FIRST

Bacchus Temple in Madrid Park
 Creator: Vicente Ramón Canovas Guillem
 Postcard: Commercial edition
 Cancellation: First Day, Madrid, 5.10.2023



SECOND

The Oldest Pharmacy in Slovenia
 Creator: Borut Boncina
 Postcard: KFD
 Cancellation: First Day, Podcetrtek, 31.03.2023



THIRD

Abbaye de Sénanque
 Creator: Les Maximaphiles Français
 Postcard: Jack
 Cancellation: First Day, Gordes, 23.06.2023

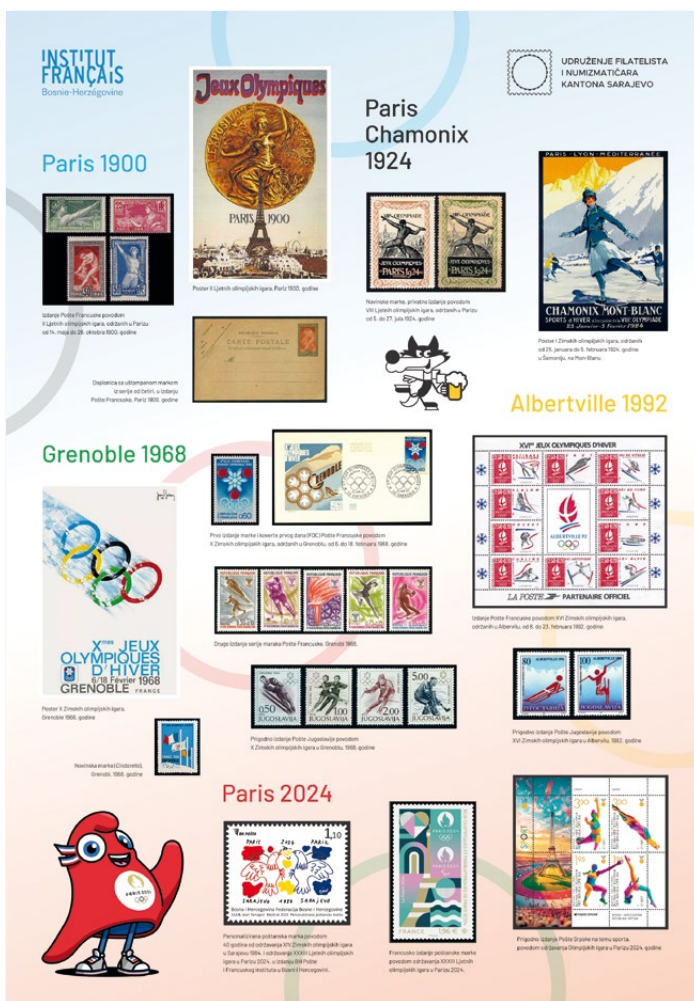
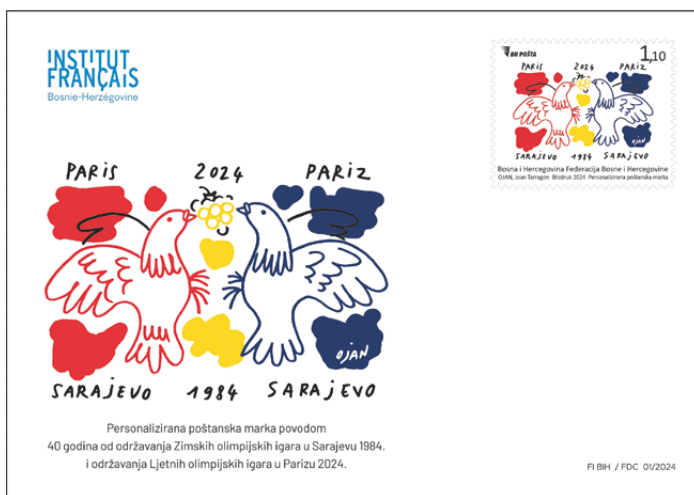
The Olympic Games are celebrated in Sarajevo

The Society of Philatelists and Numismatics of the Canton of Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina) has been active in celebrating the 2024 Paris Olympic Games, as Omer Merzić reports:

To celebrate the opening of the Paris Olympic Games and commemorate the 1984 Winter Olympic Games in Sarajevo, a special stamp was created and promoted in cooperation between the French Embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Ambassador François Delmas, the French Institute in Bosnia and Herzegovina and its Director Loé Lagrange, and BH Post with help from the Society of Philatelists and Numismatics of the Canton of Sarajevo. The personalised stamp, called Sarajevo 1984 - Paris 2024, was designed by French artist OJAN (Joan Tarragon). It depicts two doves, a universal symbol of peace and freedom, representing the Olympic spirit and the long-term cooperation between Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of France.

The Paris Olympics were also celebrated in an exhibition that reflected on France's previous involvement in hosting the Olympics. It was organised by Bernard Pavlinović in collaboration with the French Embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the French Institute in Sarajevo and the Society of Philatelists and Numismatics of the Canton of Sarajevo. It showcased a selection of stamps from all the Olympic Games held in France. Visitors had the opportunity to explore a rich collection that highlighted the historical significance and cultural impact of the Olympics through philately. Besides stamps commemorating the 2024 Paris Games visitors had the chance to look at stamps and other philatelic materials from the Paris 1900, Paris Chamonix 1924, Grenoble 1968, and Albertville 1992 Games.

Ahead of the Games BH Pošta issued a stamp featuring "Lana Pudar, European Champion" under the Mediterranean Postal Union theme "Euromed Postal - Sports in the Mediterranean." On 31st July the Society of Philatelists and Numismatics of the Canton of Sarajevo also followed this with a card designed by Bernard Pavlinović marking Lana Pudar's participation in the Olympics.



IPHF, the unknown “brotherhood” of postal historians

Pol Wijnants, FRPSL IPHF writes:

I.P.H.F: the International Postal History Fellowship is an exception within the world of organised philately. Contrary to other societies where you have a President, Secretary and Treasurer, IPHF doesn't have any of these. It's more a brotherhood of kindred minds, all with the same mindset when it comes to the study of postal history.

It started in 1978 with a letter sent by James Van der Linden to six well-known postal historians in Belgium and the Netherlands, inviting them for a meeting in January 1979 in Gent. The purpose of the letter was to suggest 'a reunion to study and discuss postal history problems with support of own covers or collection'. We agreed from the beginning that this was not to be a new society, but a social reunion where results could be shared. In 1989 it was decided to limit the group to 10 members but agree that each member could invite a friend to the meetings. The idea of holding international meetings first appeared 1990 in London where I had invited colleagues for a group meeting at the World Exhibition. At that event the American Richard Winter joined us, and he was enthusiastic about the idea.



At the FIP exhibition in Washington in 1994, the IPHF organised its seminar during the expo and was joined by Dick Winter and Jeff Bohn. This marked the official beginning of this exceptional group. The International Postal History Fellows (I.P.H.F.) became a fact and James Van der Linden designed a superb logo.

The concept is unique. Without having a board that controls everything, they just appoint a coordinator and a host for the following year. These people then organise each new event in another country. Costs are shared and the central topics are chosen by the 10 Fellows. They have a year to make a new study/project. Each Fellow can invite a guest. All Fellows and guests give a presentation of their new findings and limited printed hand-outs are distributed among all attendees. Since the actual lift-off in 1994 over 450 studies have been published on the most diverse subjects. Not one society or organization did so much for postal history as the Fellows and guests of IPHF, regardless of the fact that for 99,9% of the philatelic world this fine “brotherhood” is practically unknown.

Being invited as a guest should be considered as a great honour since these Fellows are very, very selective. Only 18 people have succeeded in becoming a Fellow so far which says a lot about the standards set by the Fellows. Sometimes a place stays vacant for several years. They just look for the right person, no matter how long it takes. Any lady or gentleman who is already a keen postal historian is a nice start, but she or he should be willing to step out of her/his comfort zone and should be prepared to walk on undiscovered territory to study and learn more. Even on subjects they don't collect. There lies the biggest challenge!

For me, as one of the 10 Fellows, IPHF was a “live saver”. IPHF gave me back the joy I had in philately when I was a little boy. Reading all those wonderful studies when I visited James Van der Linden made me feel I was coming home again, back to the habitat I feel most comfortable with. Last October the seminar/meeting was in Budapest while next year it will be in London with central topics to work with being “UPU” and “British mail”. A few “open” meetings have been organised in the past, for example at New York 2016 and Monacophil 2019. A meeting will also be held in Boston 2026. All philatelists will be able to attend this meeting.

Currently the following postal historians have the honour to call themselves IPHF Fellow:

Robert Abensur (France), Jeff Bohn (USA), Luis Frazao (Portugal), Gerald Heschl (Austria), Yamil Kouri (USA), Thomas Mathà (Italy), Georg Mehrtens (Germany), Jesus Sitjá (Spain), Paul Wijnants (Belgium) leaving one spot open after the resignation of Mario Mentaschi this year.

In 2022 a book was published entitled "25 years of International Postal History Fellowship 1994-2019". With 316 pages this book contains not only the history, but also an index list on subjects of all presentations given (first 122 pages). The second part is a contribution by each member with a superb postal historical article on diverse subjects including Norway-Sardinia printed matter, Mail exchange Rupert's Land - France, Port/British accountancy mark, Austria-Greece postal relations up to 1837, the HABANA markings in Cuba, redirected letters in old Italian States, Le Courier Français de Rome, the maritime mail of Austria 1837-1875, Rise and fall of the Danube Black Sea Railway and Kustendjie Harbour Company, Freight money covers, an update.

A few copies are still available and can be ordered from the distributor: International Postal History Library at: iphpostalhistory@gmail.com. For further information on IPHF, please e-mail me at paul.wijnants@scarlet.be



THE ISTITUTO DI STUDI STORICI POSTALI 'ALDO CECCHI': AN APPEAL

The Institute for Postal Historical Studies 'Aldo Cecchi' in Prato, Italy launched an appeal in late 2024 for donors to help cover the costs of moving it to more convenient facilities.



The Institute is well advanced in conservation of its extensive records, and in making them available to researchers. It has also played a major role in bringing together academic researchers and postal historians.

Christmas is gone for another year, but we still draw your attention to their appeal in the hope that you will give it your support.

For Christmas Adopt a shelf!
A bookshelf for the Istituto di studi storici postali "Aldo Cecchi" odv

The Istituto di studi storici postali "Aldo Cecchi" odv is moving to a larger and more convenient facility, also in Prato. Work is now in progress to adapt the rooms and equip them with the security measures required by the law. Meanwhile, work is in progress on the move.

It goes without saying that you can donate a higher sum, for example:
- 1,000 € for an entire piece of furniture
- 2,000 € for a table and chairs
- 20,000 € for a whole room

That is why we are promoting the initiative **"A shelf for the Institute"**. To cover the costs and involve all those who care about the preservation of postal culture, we have a proposal: **donate 100€ to "adopt" a shelf in the library, which will bear the name of the donor with a special plaque.**

Bank transfer on Issp bank account
IBAN
IT09A0306921531100000004941;
BIC BCITITMM
Banca Intesa San Paolo, office of Prato (Italy)
Reference: A shelf for the Institute

‘Investing for the Future’: A Round Table Discussion in Thessaloniki

Costas Chazapis writes: On 15 November 2024 during Balkanfila XX I acted as Moderator in an open discussion titled ‘Investing for the Future’ with eight prominent philatelists. Each speaker was asked to lead the discussion on a topic selected from a list or of their own choice. Each presentation was limited to seven minutes (roughly 1000 words) followed by a brief Q&A session.

The highlights of each presentation were as follows:

Ambassador Viktor Gaber (North Macedonia) on **Our Good or Bad Habits.**

Do we welcome younger participants or drive them away? Our Union has launched a programme to promote philately among students and youngsters. We believe that philately emphasises the development of personal focus, a desire to explore new subjects, and the willingness to compare and learn—key elements that form the essence of stamp collecting. We inspired curiosity by encouraging participants to search for forgotten stamp collections in their homes—hidden in drawers or basements by parents or grandparents.

Do we respect tradition or idolise it? Is it adequately represented in philatelic publications and presented in our exhibitions? Do we, through philately, properly educate new generations of solidarity, empathy, humanism, and philanthropy? Or do we consciously or unconsciously create animosity in others with different national traditions and education?

Are we introverted or extroverted? We are introverted when we tie our personality to our collection, and extroverted when we want to present our material publicly. Obsession with extroversion only for self-interest, i.e. strictly commercial interest, can only contribute to degradation of the role of philately in our societies.

Christos Gikas (Greece) on **Communication.**

Do we communicate? Yes! Are we communicating philately beyond stamp perforations and postal rates? On most occasions, we do not. Do we communicate effectively? No.

Required skills? Clarity, Brevity, Simplicity, Humanity, Authenticity.

The Essence of Philately? Look at: Postage stamps as carriers of an unspoken visual message, similar to trademarks or logos, exporting national or multinational positioning on official ideology and world viewing. Covers as packaging with interesting information whilst letters hold the attractive essence of communication.

Our Strengths: Exciting stories; unknown documents & testimonials; posted & postal history; low-cost technologies. **Weaknesses:** Self-centred approach; inability to communicate effectively outside our closed circle; digital illiteracy; a mentality of ‘the non-philatelists do not understand us’. **Opportunities:** Shaping public opinion; philately includes art, message, ideology, and history; niche exhibiting. **Threats:** A misleading, short-term euphoria after a successful exhibition; the digital world filled with images and stories where we have no voice; an ageing group of philatelists.

Effective communication proposal: Design a communication strategy and execute it by setting goals; open a steady ‘Communication Philatelic Corridor’ among societies and regional federations.

Dr Bruno Crevato-Selvaggi RDP, FRPSL (Italy) on **Cooperation.**

Let me tell you my ideas about cooperating with Academia. I am the Director of the Istituto di Studi Storici Postali ‘Aldo Cecchi’ in Prato, Tuscany. The Institute’s role is to share knowledge on postal history and organised communication. Its missions are: (a) **conserving** its bibliographic, archival, documentary, and museum collections; (b) making its **heritage** accessible to researchers; (c) organising **cultural events**; and (d) conducting scientific **research**.

We look to the future while staying rooted in tradition and striving for international engagement. The Institute constitutes an international reference point for those working in the area of postal history, scholars and philatelists. We collaborate with universities and professors, who use our resources. Every two years we organise an international scientific conference aimed at universities. Our target is to create a **Disciplinary Statute of Postal History** as a field of studies with its set of definitions, tools and rules. In the academic sense, **Philately** is a very important part of postal history and this is a virtuous example of collaboration.

What is the focal point? To present philately as a research tool—a material approach to history—reading history through documents and exploring the concept of ‘postal archaeology’. Collaboration with Academia is both possible and necessary. I firmly believe this collaboration represents the future.

Vladimir Milich (Serbia) on **Effective Use of Technology.**

Literature — Digitalization and online access. The digitisation of literature and its online accessibility is a revolution. Preservation of fragile works is a key point. Readers can carry thousands of books and magazines on their laptops or smartphones. Our Union carried out the digitisation (with searchable text) of our Philatelist magazine since its first issue in 1949.

Correspondence — email vs. paper. The advantages of electronic communication stand out: speed, cost-efficiency, accessibility, and ease of storage. Applications for instant messaging have surpassed email in popularity, elevating digitisation even further.

Examination of stamps, overprints and covers has evolved significantly with the introduction of modern technologies such as high-resolution scanning, improving accuracy, authentication, and analysis processes.

Exhibits — Digital creation, development, and visual presentation. A computer and appropriate software are basic tools to make exhibits visually appealing. Few exhibitors still use the old methods of preparing exhibits.

Dr. Claudio Ernesto Manzati FRPSL (Italy) on **Innovation.**

Are we innovative? Are we spreading our innovative ideas? Have they made a difference? The answer is NO! So far we have not produced any practical result. Take the training in schools, producing educational brochures, etc. The collections we exhibit are mostly unattractive to a non-philatelic public.

Innovation will come from ideas arrived at through brainstorming by a team of philatelists working with many participants from other sectors, including women and younger people.

Concrete proposals? Organise brainstorming on the future of philately; to be transformed later into a 3-5 year strategic plan. Take the competition events to a shopping centre, fashion show, or the foyer of a theatre. Display the reproduction of a single frame with a QR Code.

When we created the Post Horn Magazine, we asked ourselves, what do we need to do to be different? What are the factors for success? To attract a wider audience, we focused on an innovative editorial line that would tell stories, also on graphics and images, and tried to be elegant.

We must all ask ourselves three questions for the future of philately: What should we stop doing? What should we start doing? What good must we maintain and strengthen?

Prof. Peter Suhadolc FRPSL (Slovenia) on **Exhibitions.**

Why do we have exhibitions? Collectors present their best exhibits, compete for the top awards, learn from other exhibits, search for material, meet other collectors, and socialise. Organisers help collectors and exhibitors to gather, attract them to their country, and increase their visibility within the philatelic world.

A big headache for all organisers! The biggest problem in organising an exhibition is funding. In Europe, postal administrations do not sponsor the exhibitions. Dealers, auctioneers, and collectors will probably support the events, but additional sources of income are essential, so we need to be innovative!

Will this go on in the future? Exhibitions will likely persist, at least at a regional level.

Do we have alternatives to exhibitions? Digital exhibitions reduce costs. The disadvantages are no dealers and no meetings in person. There is always a possibility of fraud, as scans are used instead of originals. Maybe a mixture of real and digital exhibits is a future possibility.

Exhibitions depend on exhibitors. It is our duty to encourage existing collectors to turn into exhibitors.

Kemal Giray FRPSL (Turkey), on **Philately: Hobby or Investment?**

Is it a hobby? Definitely yes, if it satisfies a collector's needs by providing the pleasure of filling gaps in their collection, offering education, and creating opportunities to socialise.

Can It be an investment? Absolutely, if collectors can buy at low prices and sell significantly higher. All collectable rarities are potential candidates for investment and philately is no exception, but stamps should never be offered as an investment. This has been, and still is, a trend initiated by investment portfolios and postal authorities, which often leads to financial losses. Most philatelists understand when they buy that the items may later sell for only a fraction of the money spent. Yet, the enjoyment of adding to the collection, the time devoted to research, or the delight of solving a philatelic riddle is truly invaluable.

Iulian Cherata AIEP (Romania), on **Threats to the Future of Philately.**

Forgeries: Forgers now have the tools to produce forgeries that are difficult to detect. Some forgeries target inexpensive items, for which collectors never think to seek certificates. Forgeries on contemporary issues may even drive postal authorities to discontinue issuing postage stamps.

Demographics: Philately loses its most experienced members over time, and younger enthusiasts replace them only partially. This demographic shift poses a significant long-term challenge to the survival of our hobby.

Falling prices: An oversupply of material has led to declining prices for common items.

Collaboration: Encouraging a spirit of cooperation can help create an environment where everyone benefits and the hobby thrives.

Exhibitor's disappointment: When exhibitors receive fewer points than in previous presentations of the same exhibit, or encounter critiques lacking constructive feedback, they feel discouraged. This may lead them to abandon exhibiting—or even philately—altogether. By identifying these challenges, we can work together to protect and revitalise philately. Let's use this moment as a call to action to innovate, collaborate, and inspire.

Conclusion by the Moderator: The chosen format—short speeches followed by even shorter Q&A sessions—was highly effective and the discussion concluded smoothly after just 90 minutes. It was a rare opportunity to hear so many constructive contributions in such a short time. The detailed proceedings have been published online.

Context Philately - A New Brand for an Existing Idea

An update of developments during the past months

David R Beech MBE FRPSL writes:

Context Philately is a new name given to an old idea – it was first used in January 2023. It is an exercise in what in modern marketing terms is called branding, that is giving something – in this case an approach to philately - an identity. Readers of FEPA News might have seen the article Context Philately: An Introduction in the July 2023 number.

Philately is a subject that is just what you want it to be. It can be relatively simple in collecting stamps or more complex in the study of stamps and aspects of postal (not to mention revenue/taxation) history. It can be seen as a hobby or an academic study and interest, and all stages between. Context Philately aims to extend the understanding of the aspect of philately that you have decided upon, to collect or study, by setting it in a wider context. This wider context may be as broad or as focused as you please; examples might be to see your collection or subject as a part of historical development in political, economic, social, geographical, human, cultural or other terms, and thereby gain a better understanding of its significance and ability to describe it fully. You might examine or collect historical documents, books, newspapers, maps, legislation, photographs, posters and even three-dimensional objects or artifacts such as post boxes, medals, badges, handstamps, flags. Nothing in a Context Philately approach to a collection, a display, or any media, is intended to be prescriptive. Key is the information and educational benefit to the collector him or herself or to someone seeing a display or listening to a presentation at a society meeting, an exhibition, on YouTube or elsewhere. The trend within philately to this expansion of the parameters of interest has been growing for some years. Some feel that Context Philately needs to be promoted to those who may wish to engage with philately, as collectors or students, but who want to see it within a wider historical context. The challenge to the philatelic establishment is to embrace this opportunity to develop the subject, especially in the form of public exhibitions, philatelic society meetings and the many facets of the media.

The concept of Context Philately might be applied in any aspect of philately, including postal history, be it to a particular subject, any competitive exhibition class, a collection, an exhibit, an article, a book (printed or digital), or YouTube or to websites in general.

So how has the idea of Context Philately been taken forward? Perhaps the most significant event took place during July 2023 in the staging of the Clash of Empires the 1879 Anglo-Zulu War exhibition. This month-long exhibition took place at The Royal Philatelic Society London. It told the story of the war using not only philatelic objects, such as letters, covers, and stamps, but also materials such as guns, shields, spears, historical records, photographs, medals, newspapers, drawings, engravings, flags, printed books and maps. A diorama of the Battle of Rorke's Drift was a highlight. A splendid book entitled Clash of Empires the 1879 Anglo-Zulu War Exhibition of some 340 pages was published by the Society and included a special message from the late Prince Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi (1928-2023) the traditional Prime Minister to the Zulu Monarch and Nation. Alex Haimann and Ian Knight were curators of the exhibition which was the product of many years work. Over 2,000 visitors attended from 29 countries, while videos created around the content of the exhibition have generated over 1,000,000 views on YouTube. Four days of presentations and talks added much to the event including a one-day session chaired by Bill Hedley, President of FEPA which introduced and explored Context Philately. The overall effect was that, by placing the philatelic material in a wider context, the exhibition explained its significance far more effectively than would have been possible if it had been shown on its own.

“Postal History – Which is more important, the postal or the history aspect?” was the title of the 2024 Stuart Rossiter Lecture given on 15th May by Simon Martin-Redman. The thrust of Simon's presentation was that the rules of competitive philately tend to focus excessively on purely postal history factors such as rates, routes, and postal markings and do not give sufficient credit to the historical aspects of a subject or a philatelic item which may be far more interesting. He gave several examples of items from his Grand Prix winning collection of Sarawak where the context of an item, perhaps the political or economic aspect, is more relevant to understanding its significance and so more important than the purely postal aspects.

Alex Haimann and I (Right, at an event in the City of London) gave a presentation entitled “Exploring The Contours of Context Philately” at the 105th Philatelic Congress of Great Britain (organised by the Association of British Philatelic Societies) held in July 2024 with the theme ‘New Directions in Philately’. The presentation, given on 12th July, was made simultaneously via Zoom to the Philatelic Congress of Great Britain in Southampton and the Congress of the Philatelic Federation in Pietermaritzburg in South Africa (I was in the UK and Alex was in South Africa). Context Philately was fully described with several examples being given by way of explanation. A focus on its future development was explored and this was reflected in the questions and answers session which lasted for about half an hour. During the presentation several - some new - target audiences were identified ranging from youth inside and outside schools through the academic world and City of London institutions such as the Livery Companies to senior citizens through, for example, the University of the Third Age (U3A).



Probably the best way of describing Context Philately is by example. I have chosen the Great Britain Penny Black postage stamp and the postal reforms of 1840 to illustrate in a simple way how Context Philately may be applied and understood at several levels.

Level 1 Basic

The existence of the stamp. The reason for it being issued. The designer. The name of the printer. The date of issue. The postage rate and the use of the stamp. The number printed. What features made the production of forgeries difficult in the design?

Level 2 Standard

Who engraved the stamp? By which method was it printed? How many printing plates were used and how can these be told apart? When did the colour of the 1d stamp change to red? What caused the postal reforms to make the postage stamp and postal stationery necessary? – the Mercantile Committee on Postage and the work of Rowland Hill (Left) and Henry Cole (Right). The department of Government that issued the stamp – the Office of Stamps and Taxes (established as The Stamp Office in 1694), not the Post Office.



Level 3 Advanced

Which political party introduced the postal reforms and why? What were the economic and social effects of the reduction of the rates of postage? Did the developing new railways play a part in advancing the work of the Post Office? How did the postal reforms and other reforms of the period transform Britain?

This example shows how, by setting philatelic material in the context of its time and thus making the subject more informative and rounded, philately can spark the interest of other groups who may come to have a clearer appreciation of its significance and importance. Some may say that adding context information is nothing new and they would be right. Others may point out that forms such as social philately and open philately already exist. The point is that Context Philately should not be seen as an exhibition class or as an innovation. It is an attitude and mindset that many collectors have long held and that may be applied to all philatelic endeavours.

Conclusion

Context Philately enriches the activity and makes it much easier to explain why it is worthwhile and valuable to the wider world that knows little or nothing about philately and tends to look at it from a negative standpoint, often seeing it as a small-minded hobby undertaken by eccentrics. They are completely unaware of its serious and worthwhile nature. The image of philately in the wider world – which broadly ranges from incomprehension to contempt - needs to be confronted. By presenting a philatelic subject in a wider historical context, it is possible that it could be improved over time and that the contribution it can make to multi-disciplinary research, especially with the academic world in the history of communications, can be better appreciated (this will, of course, take time and will depend on written work being produced to high academic standards). It may also encourage philatelists to extend their research into non-philatelic sources such as Patents of Inventions that have much to offer in understanding of paper manufacture, printing methods, production factors, and postal mechanisation. This may also have the effect of encouraging a wider range of people from different directions to take more interest in philately and what it can offer. Much interest has been expressed in the concept of context philately since my original article appeared in July 2023, suggesting that it is an approach that is attractive to many philatelists. I hope this will continue and that more good examples will appear showing how it is beneficial to look at philately in the context of the wider world, thereby enhancing its importance and relevance to everybody.

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Addendum to David Beech's article in FN45 pp60-61 on 'The evaluation of philatelic literature'.

The following section was inadvertently omitted.

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How do we make Philately better? Collaborate!

Harold Krische is a lifelong philatelist with a postal history focus who lives near Vancouver. He is a Co-chair and founding member of Collaboration Crew, President of the Military Postal History Society and member of many philatelic societies. He has contributed numerous articles and online presentations for a broad range of Journals and Philatelic Societies and kindly accepted our invitation to write an article for FEPA NEWS on recent developments he has led to promote collaboration between philatelic groups as they adapt to rapid change.

As a passionate philatelist, the question “How can we make philately better?” immediately attracts my attention. It is thus with considerable interest that I read the July 2024, Issue 45 of FEPA NEWS. In particular, I found the article by Bill Hedley, whereby he shared “news” from the FEPA Board, to resonate with me on numerous levels and to provoke further thoughts on these matters.

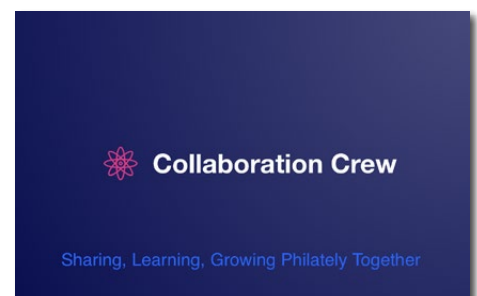
Importantly, Bill reviewed the FEPA Board analytics of where philately has been and where it is predicted to be by 2030. I contend that these are now universal understandings and underscore the urgency for proactive responsiveness, especially from philatelic organizations and societies. This is not easy when resources are limited and societies “rarely seek advice or share information on best practice” [1]. Such challenges need to become priorities for us all. They require prudent focus, vision, a mission and development of a broad range of strategies.

Most importantly, the challenges philately faces benefit from meaningful ‘Collaboration’. I have been fortunate to be able to engage with numerous passionate philatelists who share this perspective and who demonstrate an equal level of commitment for ‘making philately better’. Each of them values the power of collaboration to foster efficiency, innovation and the sharing of knowledge in support of philately. We have become known as the “Collaboration Crew” and have engaged in organizational efforts that created a mission statement:

We will promote further innovative collaboration amongst philatelic societies and organizations worldwide. These efforts are diverse and will support the growth and positive evolution of philately. We seek to role-model, support and facilitate collaborative opportunities.

Our initial strategies focused upon a few smaller projects that would promote collaboration. One such project, at PIPEX 2024, involved working with Exhibition organizers and the five convening societies attending the show to develop two focused sessions. Society executives were keen to have an opportunity to learn about successes being attained by other philatelic societies and to understand how they were responding to emerging challenges. The dialogue was rich; the sharing was superb and impactful. James Buckner, president of the Society for Czechoslovak Philately, stated: “I now firmly believe that every World Series of Philately show (and perhaps larger FIP type shows too) should host a meeting with the convening societies present to discuss ways to collaborate.” The sessions included shared resources and the development of a tool to help assess ‘the successful society’ and its needs [2].

The Collaboration Crew has embraced the motto “Sharing, Learning, Growing Philately Together” that was put forward by Cheryl Ganz and provided its first formal presentation at the 2024 Great American Stamp Show. Currently we have several other projects underway that endeavour to broaden the base of supports that can be accessed by philatelic groups. I encourage readers to join the Collaboration Crew Facebook page and to explore the website at collaborationcrew.org [3]. Numerous resources that are designed to support philatelic clubs and organizations have been posted on these web pages. Conceptually, the site becomes a consequential resource with further contributions from international philatelic organizations. Never has it been more important to share successful practices.



I would contend that the FEPA objectives of Promoting Innovation and Cooperation and Sharing Information should be inherent in the vision of the larger philatelic community. Ideally, these objectives and resultant initiatives need not develop in isolation. They become substantially more impactful when being supported, developed and enhanced via education to which our entire community has the capacity to contribute.

The strong existing parallels of vision and focus between the Collaboration Crew and the FEPA Board suggest that exploration of cooperative initiatives would be beneficial. Such efforts would undoubtedly bring further meaningful supports to our larger philatelic community. Many of my 'Collaboration Crew' colleagues have expressed their thankfulness for the positive, meaningful and educational development that the realm of philately has contributed to their life. It is one of the reasons we strive to make philately stronger and encourage strategic collaboration.

I encourage all members of FEPA to collaborate and share, especially those initiatives undertaken that have generated successful experiences. We must remember that 'education' will promote resilience, creativity, innovation and critical thinking.

[1] Hedley, Bill. News from the FEPA Board. FEPA News, Issue 45, July 2024, p7

[2] Krische, Harold. Join the Collaboration Crew. The American Philatelist, July 2024, p26-27

[3] The Collaboration Crew Facebook page can be accessed with the following URL
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/394822260223524>



The Balkanfila Working Group plans closer cooperation

Igor Pirc writes:

Representatives of Balkan Member Federations met at the BALKANFILA XX Exhibition on 13th November 2024. Albania, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia and Turkey were represented, in the absence of North Macedonia and Moldova.

An assessment of the current exhibition is usually given at the meeting. The basis for the preparation is the Balkanfila Working Group Exhibition Regulations, which were presented at the 2012 meeting in Maribor, Slovenia and signed by the Member Representatives at the meeting in Vidin, Bulgaria in 2014. The general opinion was that the Balkanfila XX Exhibition was well organised, the hall was spacious and bright, and the host prepared an accompanying event – a Round Table discussion on the future of philately. The quality of exhibits was high, indicating the strength of the Balkan exhibiting.

The discussion focused on the development of philatelic cooperation among Balkanfila member federations. The website www.balkanfila.eu, run by Francisc Ambrus (Romania) for many years, already contains all basic information on the history of the Balkanfila exhibitions and members. The Editorial board of the website (F. Ambrus, Ch. Gikas, I. Pirc) will prepare a more transparent structure for the branching of areas and provide a home page for news.

A year after the agreement to publish a Balkanfila Newsletter, we were pleased to note that five issues have been published, with contributions from all countries and excellent editing by Christos Gikas. He proposed upgrading the cooperation by editing and publishing a digital Balkanfila Yearbook that would draw important contributions of members to the attention of European and world philately. The first Yearbook will be edited by early Spring 2025 and forwarded to the European and global philatelic environment. Furthermore, all member Federations will join a WEBEX video meeting in April to discuss progress and how it can be extended. Julian Demeti, President of the Albanian Federation, also proposed (and immediately implemented) a Balkanfila group on WhatsApp.

In electing the President of the Working Group it is traditional for the organiser of the current exhibition to take over the presidency until the next exhibition. Thus, Ioannis Refanidis replaced Kolja Ljubičić and will hold office until the next exhibition, most likely in Belgrade in 2026. After 14 years Igor Pirc will continue to serve as the Secretary.

PHILATELY AS AN ALTERNATIVE 'MEDICINE' FOR DEMENTIA, ALZHEIMER AND PARKINSON'S

Paul Wijnants has provided us with this article on an aspect of philately that rarely receives much attention. It was written by Mr W. Eilaers, a journalist in Belgium, and we are very grateful to him for allowing us to reproduce it in FEPA NEWS. Mr Eilaers retains all rights to this article.

On a cold, rainy Tuesday afternoon in November, I was a guest at De Wingerd residential care centre in Leuven. Here I had a meeting with Marieke Verbiest, an always cheerful bouncy 71-year-old. Marieke made a career switch at age 50 and graduated from the University of Leuven with a special interest in people with early dementia, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease. After her studies she ended up at De Wingerd.

This residential care centre, of which there are hundreds in Belgium, is special considering all the residents have either dementia, Alzheimer's or Parkinson's. There are no other seniors. They live in communities of eight where, helped by care staff, they do things together such as make lunch. Marieke noticed that many people with dementia gradually lost all contact and often stared into space, even when family members visited on Sundays. Their gaze was infinite, and they were almost completely uncommunicative towards children or grandchildren. She also experienced this daily in the living groups in the afternoon when these people were sitting in the common areas. Staring ahead into nothingness, trapped in their own world. The second group, the Parkinson's patients, had their own specific problems in which control over so-called fine motor skills becomes very problematic. As a result, at some point they can no longer feed themselves, which puts enormous pressure on the care staff. After all, each caregiver only has two helping hands.

It wouldn't be Marieke if she didn't come up with a solution to allow these people to still be part of what we consider to be a normal living environment for longer and no longer forcibly trapped in a world over which they have absolutely no control. One of Marieke's hobbies is philately. And as a member of the philately circle of Begijnendijk, Belgium, she found in the person of chairman Pol Wijnants a listening ear (and quiet force) for the issues she had identified professionally.

Her plan was to make "philately" a daily social activity with a small group of interested residents. Both dementia, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's patients. It started with a group of 4 who were in the early stages of these conditions. The task was to sort stamps first by country, then soak them and then stick them in dry books with tweezers. Marieke saw it not only as an occupational therapy for those people but also as a social experiment. Would one observe, possibly over time, an improvement in social intercourse or longer use of fine motor skills? Especially the problem that the group faced both death and increasing deterioration of their condition did not really make the experiment easier. After about 6 months, Marieke saw the first results that were significant enough to state: Philately is a wonderful alternative "medicine" for people with these conditions. Observing her small group she observed that people suddenly became very communicative among themselves, talking about past trips when sorting foreign stamps. Not everyone still knew where certain cities were located and sometimes the geography of our planet, theoretically was very much redrawn by them. For example, for person A the city of Rome was located near Paris while the other knew with absolute certainty that it was in Spain. No big deal, they communicated back, and Marieke also noted that this carried over to family, children and grandchildren. The patients were proud to show their album and tell all about the stamps to their children and grandchildren. With the Parkinson's patients, given they had to constantly use tweezers to soak the stamps, dry them and then put them in an album, the care staff noticed that those in the group were able to eat independently for longer, compared to those not in the group. Which in turn led to joy among the care staff considering they could now divide their time differently.

Meanwhile, the project gained some resonance within the management of the care group and Marieke was asked to train people elsewhere in other similar residential care centres and implement the initiative. As a result of deaths and deteriorating condition of some resident, this became one project of trial and error. Also, Covid-19, poor management and mergers of some residential care centres were not much help. Before Covid-19, there was such a project in as many as 14 residential care centres. Currently still a handful, mostly due to savings from the coordinating residential care groups.

The silent force behind this project is our colleague and well-known postal historian Pol Wijnants. He provides everyone with stamps, tweezers, albums and anything else needed to support this project and Marieke. Donations of surplus stamps on paper, covers, FDCs to support this charity would be much appreciated and can be sent to: PhilaMedica Project, att'n Pol Wijnants, Saffraanberg 11, B-3130 Begijnendijk, Belgium.

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The Library of the Royal Netherlands Philatelic Association (KNBF)

The excellent research library of the Royal Netherlands Philatelic Federation was recently drawn to our attention, and we invited the Librarian, Mr Harry Dietz, to write about it for FEPA NEWS. He kindly agreed and provided the following article:



The library of the Royal Netherlands Philatelic Association is one of the largest and oldest philatelic libraries in the world. The collection includes more than 28,000 publications on philately and postal history from all over the world.

The library possesses a wide variety of material on topics such as censorship mail, airmail, sea/ship mail, revenues and forgeries. The publications are arranged separately and can be consulted and borrowed. It also holds a large number of thematic publications on all kinds of theme and there is a separate department for atlases, some of them over 200 years old. The collection includes various encyclopaedias, yearbooks and anniversary books of national and foreign stamp clubs as well as publications on picture postcards and numismatics. In addition, the library has over 250 subscriptions for periodical publications from Dutch and foreign societies and publishers.

The main focus, as might be expected, is on Dutch postal history including, of course, the overseas territories and the former Dutch colonies. As a consequence, we have dozens of volumes with Postal Regulations, Official Gazettes and supplements to Official Gazettes. Many complete or nearly complete volumes of various renowned and lesser-known philatelic magazines can also be found in the library and (philatelic) publications on a variety of countries and regions are reasonably to very well represented.



At the present time we are slowly starting to catch up digitally and categorise the many digital files we have received over the years to make them available to visitors to the library in a logical way. A catalogue of the entire collection has been available online at <https://app.colibris.be/knbf/> for some time now.



The library of the Royal Netherlands Philatelic Association is located at its headquarters in Houten (Nieuwe Schaft 23, 3991 AS Houten, the Netherlands) and can be visited every Wednesday. Please do notify us in advance if you wish to come. Our e-mail address is: bibliotheek@knbf.nl and our telephone number is: +31 30 3075469.

ADDRESSING LETTER CARRIERS IN THE ROMAN WORLD

Linda McGuire, Director of The Epistolary Research Network (TERN), addressed the Third International Congress at the Istituto di Studi Storici Postali in Prato in June 2024 on the topic, 'Profile of an ancient letter carrier: evidence from the late Roman Republic'. We invited her to contribute to FEPA NEWS on an aspect of postal history in the ancient world, and she very graciously provided us with this article, for which we thank her profusely. Our thanks are also due to Dr Eleanor Loughlin who very kindly produced drawings of two tablets specifically for this article.

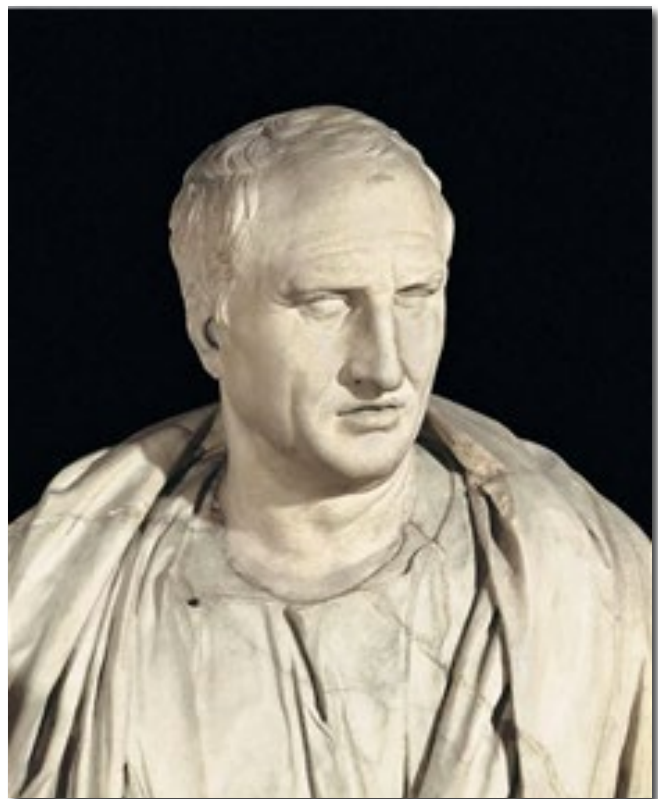
You can learn a lot from reading the correspondence of Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BCE). The letters touch on many aspects of Roman political life, like violence and exile, and put on display his relations with a variety of people such as friends who never entered politics, his banker, his wives and children. Readers also find out who once carried the Republican senator's letters, as Cicero identifies in the contents which letter he received by naming its carrier.

In the absence of any institutionalised postal service, Cicero belonged to complex networks peopled by those in a position to transport letters, parcels, books and much else. They derived from all parts of society and included Lucius Quinctius, formerly tribune of the plebs, philosopher Lucius Saufeius, an Athenian called Xeno, the freed slave Philogenes, Cicero's brother and daughter, Quintus and Tullia. While such informal networks were possibly common throughout Roman history, Cicero alone of surviving Rome-based letter writers mentions those involved, describes his relationship to them and comments on their characters.

Cicero's epistolary writings, like those of the younger Seneca and Pliny, were transmitted as edited collections that circulated publicly. The originals are lost. So even if Cicero names their carriers, it is no longer possible to see how the letters he sent and received were addressed.

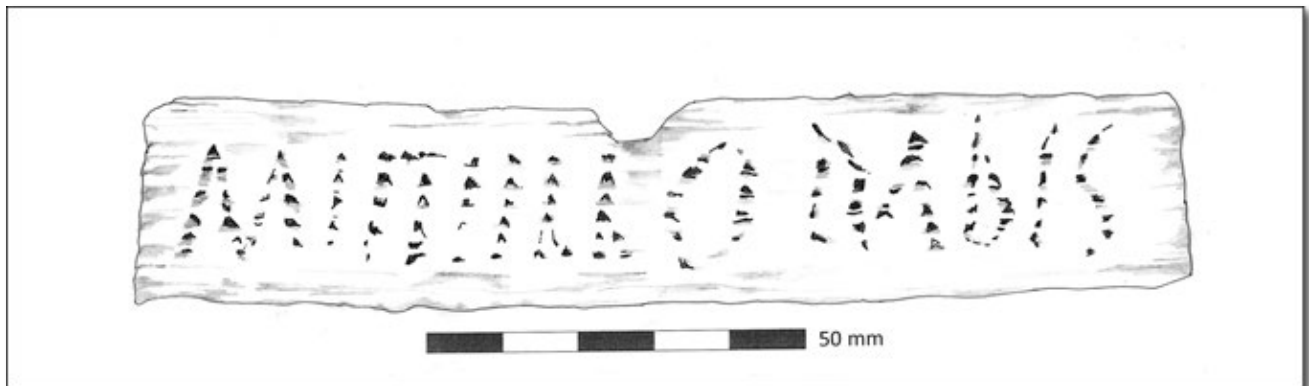
The quest to find addresses on Latin-language letters from the Roman world leads to its outposts. Since March 1973, archaeologists have excavated hundreds of letters at the military fort of Vindolanda in northern England. The 2010-2014 excavations, one of many undertaken in London, revealed another equally significant cache dating to the earliest years of Roman occupation. Although often fragmentary, some addresses can still be deciphered.

Their material support differed. Most letters dug up at Vindolanda were composed on wooden leaf tablets (sectiles or laminae) fabricated from the saplings of local alder and birch trees. Once written, the two leaves were bent inwards leaving the outer surface for the address. In contrast, London-excavated tablets tended to be made of light-coloured wood, from silver fir, larch and spruce trees, filled with blackened wax (tabula cerata). Letters were formed by binding several together to protect the wax-inscribed contents.



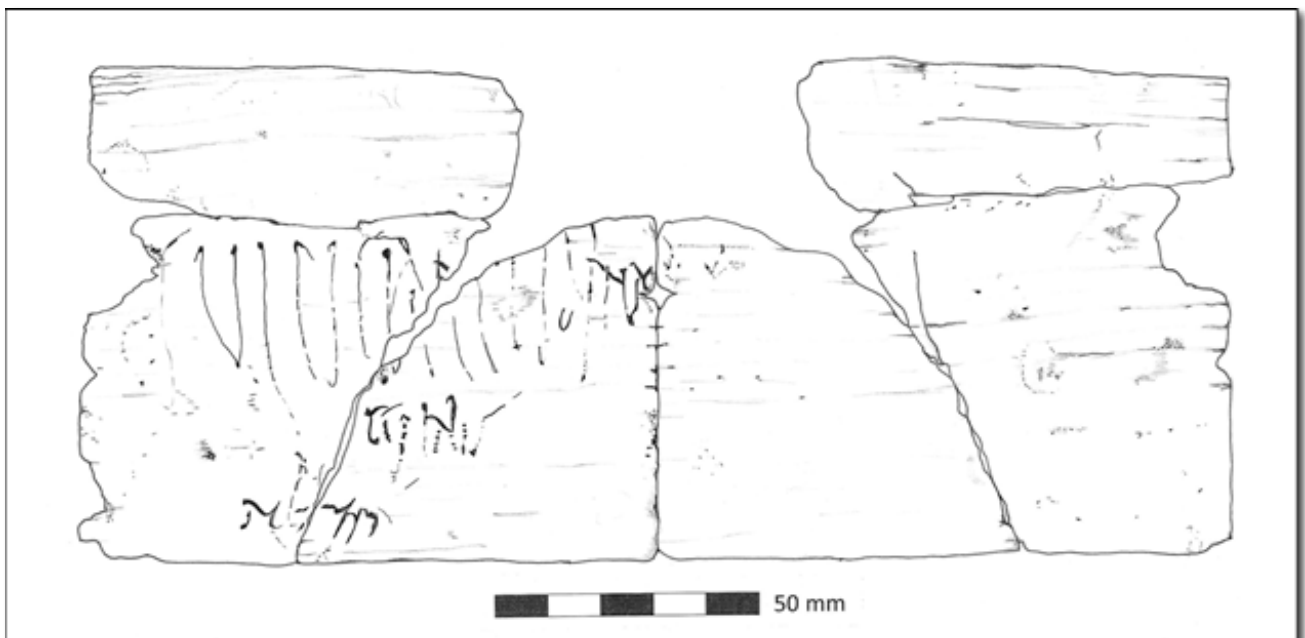
***Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BCE)
Roman statesman and orator***

As with leaf tablets, the address was written outside in enlarged lettering, today referred to as an address script.



Writing Tablet (WT1) with Latin address 'Metello dabis' (© Dr Eleanor Loughlin)

The information supplied about the addressee varies. The most basic examples include the recipient's name, as in WT1. In this case the message was simply addressed: 'Metello dabis' (You will give this to Metellus). One complete address (WT4) refers to the intended reader as 'Luguseluus, the son of Junius'. In others, the name was accompanied with an occupation such as 'Tertius the brewer', or 'Vitalis the pharmacist' (WT12, Tab. Vindol. 877). Several tablets are addressed to 'Flavio Ceriali praefecto', or 'Flavius Cerialis, the prefect' who was stationed at Vindolanda fort around 97-103 CE (Tab. Vindol. 824). Sometimes the sender's name is also supplied, for example: 'To Flavius Cerialis, prefect of the cohort, from his colleague Iustinus.' (Tab. Vindol. 260).



Vindolanda Tablet (Tab. Vindol. 291). 97-105 CE. In translation the fragments of Latin read: "To Sulpicia Lepidina, wife of Cerialis, from Severa." (© Dr Eleanor Loughlin)

Tab. Vindol. 291 was sent by Claudia Severa to a friend, wife of the prefect, inviting her to join Severa on her birthday. It is considered to contain the earliest handwriting of a woman in Latin.

While names are integral features of ancient addresses, references to geographical location are not. Romans did not tend to name urban streets, and street signs had not yet been invented. Even buildings or city names are difficult to find with only a few tablets specifying Vindolanda or Londinium as the destination, for example, Londinio Mogontio, or In London, to Mogontius (Tab. Vindol. 716, 876; WT6, WT18, WT24). One provides additional information about where to find the recipient with the carrier instructed to give this letter to the cooper Julius, opposite Catullus (WT14).

These differences have little to do with the fragmentary condition of the tablets, their material form or findspot, but rather who transported them. However, these tablets do not identify their carriers. During the lives of these Romano-British inhabitants, the *cursus publicus*, an Augustan-age innovation, was in operation. It was a network of relays facilitating communication between the Roman government and its provinces. Perhaps, it extended northwards as far as Vindolanda. Alternatively, the Romano-British residents may have employed private networks, never completely replaced by imperial relays, like the ruling elite in Rome.

Thus, how did a letter reach someone among the 30,000-odd people that inhabited London under the rule of Hadrian? Without having one example of a letter with both the carrier's identity and an address, it remains difficult to formulate a more detailed idea how ancient letter delivery worked. Nevertheless, several observations are possible.

Buildings such as the houses of prominent people could act as landmarks. The young and ambitious Cicero took the trouble to learn the names of important Romans, as well as where they lived and who were their friends and neighbours. Early London was inhabited by government and military officials, who might have resided in the houses excavated at 72-75 Cheapside, around the forum or in upmarket areas like that known today as Southwark.

Some non-residential buildings served as geographical references. In Rome, the poet Catullus directs his readers to a bar that he describes as nine pillars down from the capped Brethren, meaning the Temple of Castor and Pollux. Many letter carriers might have been sent to the London forum where merchants, moneylenders and civilian traders transacted business. It was one of ancient London's largest structures, a site now occupied partly by Leadenhall Market on Gracechurch Street.

Certain production activities might have been easy to locate. Noxious industries like glass-making were situated on London's outskirts. Others were recognisable by product, or smell. Archaeologists struggle to locate a London-based brewery with any certainty, something any local resident at the time could have done. Smaller workshops required specific directions. One character in a play directs another to a carpenter's workshop: Go past the house of Crassus, turn right at the Temple of Diana, just before the town gate, there is a small bakery. It is opposite.

Roman London was a military supply hub for the army stationed throughout the province of Britannia. Soldiers built London's earliest roads to accommodate wagons moving goods. Commodities like olive oil from Baetica, Spain, and wine from the Rhineland passed through its well-situated port. Letters could have travelled with supplies, an option that could also have applied to non-military business. A 62 CE financial contract concerns the transport of provisions, and possibly letters, from Verulamium, today St Albans, to London (WT45).

Romans gave names to roads connecting cities like the Appian Way, brainchild of the blind senator, Appius Claudius Caecus. Once extended from Rome to Brindisi, it became a main thoroughfare for soldiers, traders and senators heading east. When travelling on it Cicero specified the place where he composed his letters, usually villages where friends lived or where he owned lodges. This allowed his correspondents to calculate where to send a reply and find someone passing through there. Similarly, there might have been frequent traffic between the forts guarding the northern frontier.

For those who understand letters as pieces of paper sent in envelopes bearing standard addresses and official stamps, mail delivery in the ancient world might seem makeshift and unreliable. It is true that Cicero complained whenever a letter was lost or stolen. Yet on the whole, these informal networks seemed to work well. For that to happen the address needed to contain enough information to direct the carrier. The different detail in addresses suggest that various people were given this task.

You can also learn a great deal from physical finds. It is to be hoped that future archaeological fieldwork will excavate more tablets to contribute to the above picture. Studying ancient Roman letter-tablets is worthwhile if for no other reason than that they belong to the origins of letter delivery. Postal history would not be complete without them.

Further Reading:

Tablets referenced in this article can be consulted at: <https://romaninscriptionsofbritain.org/>.

The Vindolanda Writing Tablets by A.K. Bowman and J.D. Thomas offers background on the Vindolanda finds and can be found at <http://vindolanda.csad.ox.ac.uk>

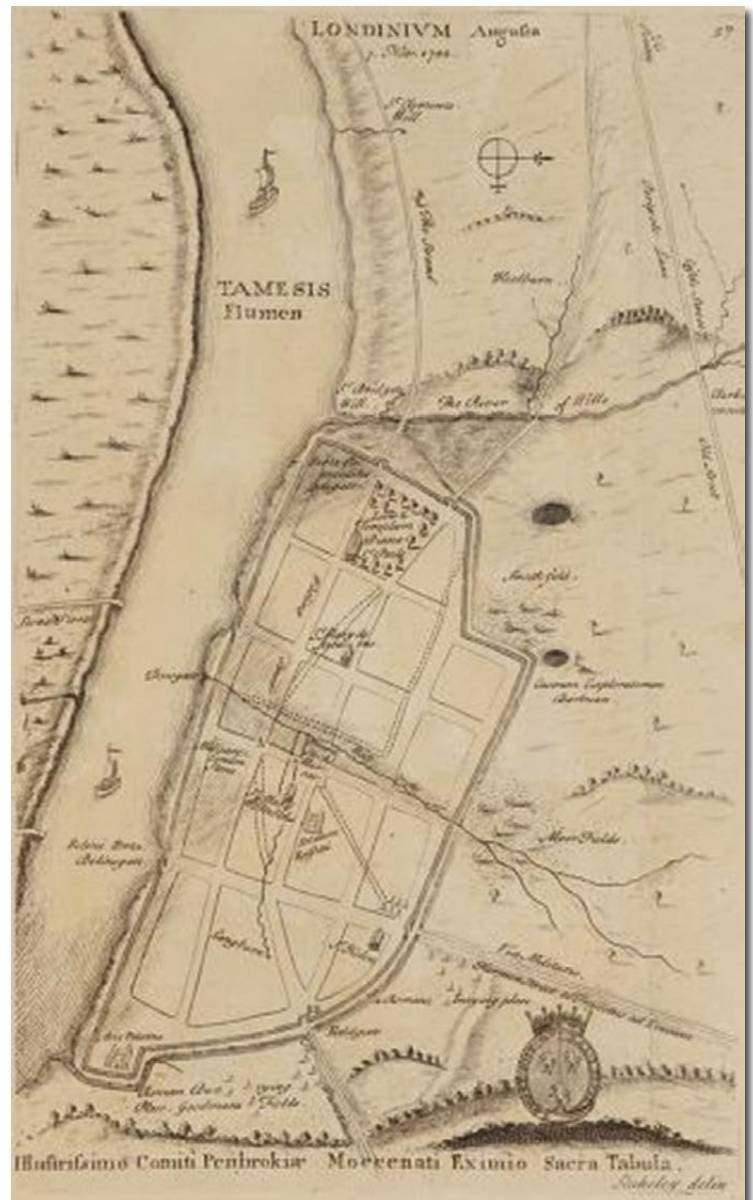
Roman London's first voices by RSO Tomlin (MOLA monograph 2016) provides an edited catalogue of the London tablets. [Ed: MOLA is an independent research organisation in British archaeology and educational charity].

London in the Roman World by Dominic Perring (Oxford University Press, 2022) sets archaeological discoveries uncovered in London within their historical context.

The Epistolary Research Network (TERN) was created by researchers keen to generate, discuss, and publish critical scholarship at the crossroads of communication, technology, and history. Further information on its activities can be found at <https://www.epistolaryresearch.org/>

(Right) Map of Roman London drawn by William Stukeley in 1722.

Taken from Stukeley, 'Itinerarium Curiosum', or 'An account of the Antiquities and Remarkable Curiosities in Nature or Art', 1776, Plate 57.



WRITING THE STORY OF ANGUILLA'S POSTAL HISTORY

There are relatively few aspects of philately that have not been explored in depth at some time during the last 150 years, but a team of researchers in the UK recently published the first book on the philately of the Caribbean island of Anguilla. We invited the team, which includes Susan Taylor, Julian Waldron and Graham Stockdale, to give us an insight into how they went about it and they graciously provided this article.

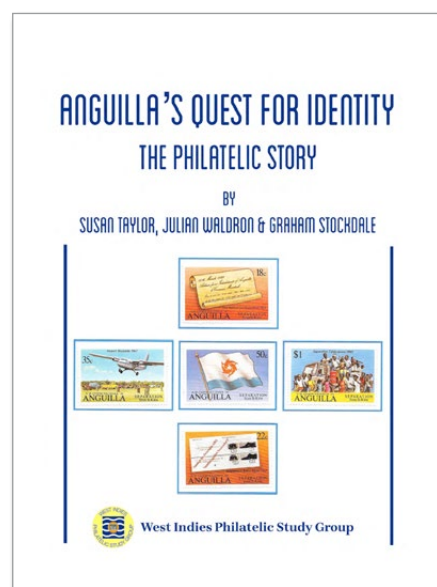
During 2022 and 2023, we researched, wrote and published the book 'Anguilla's Quest for Identity, The Philatelic Story'(Right) - the first book devoted to the philately of Anguilla. This article summarises why the book came about, how we researched our subject and what can be found in it.

Origins of the book

There seemed to us many reasons to devote time and study to Anguilla. Although we each have other philatelic interests, Caribbean philately is a core passion. The region has been widely studied and as a result gaps in knowledge are few and far between, but Anguilla had been neglected and we wanted to address that gap.

Anguilla was attached to St Kitts/St Christopher for most of the colonial period, until its revolution and secession in 1967. For all that the island is relatively unknown, the events of 1967 mean that Anguilla has the distinction of being the issuer of one of the great rarities of QEII philately – the 1967 “Independence” overprint set. Only a handful of mint sets of the sixteen stamps are known and not many more used. These stamps made Anguilla a magnet for stamp dealers and these often-colourful characters fascinated us. The interest was global - there was as much interest in the US and Europe as in the UK (Fig.1).

Before 1967, our focus was on postal markings and links with the St Kitts post office and the other surrounding Caribbean islands, for example St Thomas and St Maarten. After 1967, we covered the regular stamp issues highlighting the usual range of errors and varieties.



Cover of the book showing the 1980 Separation commemoratives.



Fig. 1: The 1967 overprints on cover 15 NOV 1967

Above all, the story of Anguilla, and of the 1967 overprints in particular, is one of the best examples of postal history being at the centre of general historical events. Mail was vital to the Anguillian economy in 1967, and so to the success of its bid for autonomy. Keeping remittances, commercial and personal mail flowing in and out was a herculean task, leading to the creation of innovative postal channels and considerable complexity. Although fast receding, the revolution is still at the heart of Anguilla's identity. The role of the post office in those events and in the life generally of the island continues to be recognised. In short, Anguilla offered us the opportunity to contribute to philatelic knowledge and to write an engaging history.

Researching the book

- We were able to draw on a broader range of primary and secondary sources in our research than we had expected, in particular concerning the secession period and notably:
- The local archives, frequently digitalised, had a substantial amount of material from the 1967 revolution. Susan spent weeks reading all the editions of *The Beacon*, Anguilla's local newspaper from the time. This devoted many columns to the postal service for the reasons noted above.
- Direct testimony: we were fortunate to have the support of Anguillians who were themselves part of the 1967 events, such as local historian Colville Petty and Eustace Brooks, former Postmaster and Deputy Postmaster at that time.
- UK Government records: the St Kitts colonial records can be found online, in the British Library or the UK Public Records service. Church of England records were useful, as were those of Missionary societies.
- St Kitts records are copious. For example, the Council deliberations from the 19th Century still exist, even if entries relating to Anguilla are sporadic.
- Many of the major participants in the events of 1967 have written their own stories including Ronald Webster, the Anguillian leader of the time. These affirm how important it was to the island to maintain good postal services.
- Last, the Valley Post Office on Anguilla was more than helpful and our contacts Marcia Richardson and Sherri-Ann Roberts remain very supportive today.

Postal material was scattered. The two most comprehensive groups were Reuben Ramkisson's Anguilla collection and Brian Brookes' St Kitts collection. Auction catalogues were a good source of data both from 1967 and earlier. The dealers' and collectors' letters sent to and from the post office on Anguilla, although often philatelic, were invaluable. The letters from the Field Post Office set up by the British forces in 1969 were franked with GB stamps and these have largely remained in GB-themed collections. All the core postal material is either scanned in the book or made available on the associated website.

The book contains a comprehensive listing of sources we used.

The Anguilla story in the book

Anguilla is a relatively small island, off the beaten track: a neglected northerly part of the Leeward Islands colony. It was placed under the control of the governor of St Kitts in 1825 and remained part of the St Kitts – Nevis – Anguilla colonial organisation until 1967, much against its wishes. Anguilla wanted direct association with Britain, not St Kitts. They requested this on several occasions, but the idea was rejected by Britain every time.

There is plenty of evidence of early communication, both with the British Empire and with the other surrounding islands. In 1702 a British packet service commenced to the Leeward Islands, but Anguilla had no direct service and, in any case, traffic was notoriously susceptible to shipwrecks, piracy, and other breaks in service. We have wills, deeds, and other records from this period, but the earliest letter is an 1837 ship letter written by Mary Armstrong, the pastor's wife – which is full of comments about letters received and written.



Fig. 2: Leeward Islands postage envelope with Anguilla's "AN" canceller (transit through St Kitts and the USA) 30 MAR 1915

St Kitts issued its first stamps in 1870. From 1900, although Anguilla had its own date-stamps, it used the stamps and stationary of the Leeward Islands and St Kitts Nevis (Fig.2). Anguilla's name does not appear on stamps until 1950 – as an overprint on a St Kitts issue. Only in 1952 was the colony's name changed to St Christopher Nevis Anguilla.

The Leeward Islands organisation was ended in 1958 when the West Indies Federation was formed, an ill-fated and short-lived attempt to unite all of Britain's Caribbean colonies. This broke up as the larger islands sought independence. In 1966 the British proposed that St Kitts Nevis and Anguilla become an Associated State, governed through St Kitts. Two Anguillian requests for direct administration by Britain were ignored.

Anguillian resentment grew when it was announced that a Statehood Day event would be organised by St Kitts but held in Anguilla on Saturday 4 February 1967. Considered a step too far, Anguillians disrupted the event. The St Kitts police stationed on the island responded with gunshots and tear gas. Ten days later HMS Salisbury landed more St Kitts police as well as a detachment of marines. A new date-stamp for Statehood was issued to Anguilla but understandably this was very rarely used.



Fig. 3: A rare example of the controversial Statehood canceller on cover 17 MAR 1967

By May 1967 Anguillians had seceded from the Statehood arrangement. There were no communications channels to and from Anguilla except through St Kitts and the authorities there impounded all mail destined for the island and halted all banking channels – intending essentially to shut Anguilla off from the remittances and commerce that kept the island functioning. As a result, the Anguillians made the establishment of a functioning postal service their top priority. Various emergency arrangements were used most notably a system whereby mail to and from Anguilla could travel via post office boxes on neighboring islands. Anguillian post office employee Eustace Brooks travelled to nearby St Martin by fishing boat twice weekly to carry and collect mail. A fledgling air service was also founded.

As no stamps were obviously available, an emergency Postage Paid postmark was trialled from 30 June to 7 July 1967 and put into general use on three separate occasions (Fig.4). Some residual St Kitts stamps were also used. Eventually, the island appointed John Lister Ltd, represented by John King, as philatelic agent to help redevelop the postal service.

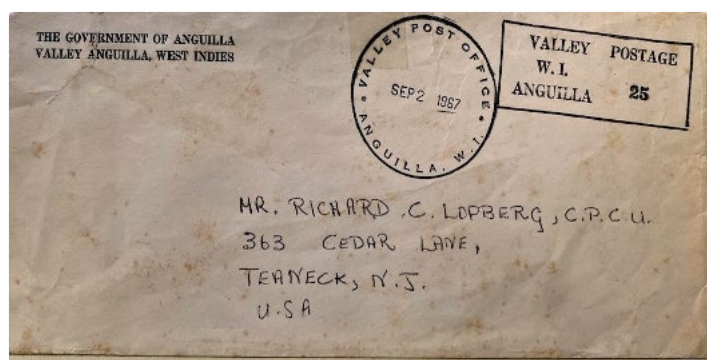


Fig. 4: Emergency handstamps used on 2 SEP 1967
were also overprinted 'Independent Anguilla'.

With John King's support, the remaining supply of the then-current St Christopher Nevis Anguilla stamps was removed from the Anguillian magistrate's safe, supplemented by supplies that King obtained from the Crown Office. The "St Christopher Nevis Anguilla" inscription was blocked out and the stamps overprinted 'Independent Anguilla' before being released for sale on 4 September 1967 (as shown above). For reasons described in the book, only 100 full sets of this issue can exist, and they are highly sought after. Both 5c and 15c airmail letter sheets

Anguilla then moved to issue its own stamps. The first definitive stamps were released on 27 November 1967. These were followed by four further commemorative series in 1968. The stamps became renowned for their design quality and attractive colourful themes. Postage revenue made an important contribution to the island's economy, allowing

remittances to flow in and demonstrating that the island's independence was sustainable.

Meanwhile, there arose a political impasse. Negotiations during a one-year standstill failed to produce a settlement agreeable to Anguilla, St Kitts and Britain. In January 1969, Anguilla reaffirmed its independence, issuing a set of its 1967 stamps overprinted 'Independence January 1969' (Fig.5). The British (over)

reacted: on 19 March 1969 Anguilla was invaded by British paratroopers, marines, and a British police force — Operation Sheepskin. The paratroopers established their own Field Post Office, FPO 1046, on Anguilla and forces mail was also sent from HMS Minerva, the ship that landed the forces and that ferried supplies from Antigua.



Fig. 5: Anguilla's second set of independence overprints 5 APR 1969



Fig. 6: Letter from Forces Post Office 1 APR 1969

from around the world seeking philatelic penfriends and wishing to purchase stamps.

On 20 October 1976 a new constitution was signed arranging for Anguilla's separation from St Kitts but it was only on 19 December 1980 that the Anguilla Act 1980 finally ended the island's formal membership of the St Kitts Nevis Anguilla Associated State. The new constitution took effect on 1 April 1982 granting Anguilla autonomy. Anguilla issued a set of stamps to commemorate separation on 18 December 1980 (SG443–447/ SC424–428). The first stamp in the series displays the 1825 petition for independence under British rule – these feature on the cover of the book. Anguilla last issued new postage stamps 'National Symbols of Anguilla' on 10 October 2016 (SG1286–1293/ SC1240–1247). Postal revenue is no longer a key contributor to the island's economy. Today, there are active tourism and banking sectors. Anguilla's postal history is integral to its centuries-long quest for identity, most evident in the events of 1967. Anguillians are justly proud of the role their stamps have played in recording the historical and constitutional events of the island and its economy. That is the story in summary, but the book gives the full account, detailing all of the issues, overprints, forgeries and postmarks/handstamps for a philatelist to collect. The chapters are intended to be largely self standing so that readers can follow their own areas of interest.

The unaddressed cover shown (Left, Fig 6) suggests that some of the soldiers were keen philatelists – a curious side to Anguilla's philatelic history. Anguilla's stamps continued to be designed and produced by John Lister Ltd and Anguillian stamps remained popular and were contributing to the island's economy and social life (Fig.7). Many philatelists contacted the postmaster, Harrigan, at the Valley post office, and placed advertisements in Anguilla's Beacon Newsletter



Fig. 7: Registered mail from the travelling post office 20 OCT 1976

The book, published by the West Indies Philatelic Study Group, can be purchased through Pennymead - <https://pennymead.com/cataloguelist?ct=0&sch=anguilla&desc=0> – in both hardback and softback formats. The Valley Post Office on Anguilla has kindly confirmed that Marcia Richardson (Marcia.Richardson@gov.ai) and Sherri-Ann Roberts (Sherri-Ann.Roberts@gov.ai) are points of contact for enquiries.

Armenia 1929: Charity issue for children

Hans-Günther Grigoleit has kindly sent us this article from Wiesbaden:

Largely unknown in philately is the issue of Armenian stamps “ филателия детям” (Philately for Children) in April 1929 for use in the Soviet Socialist Republic of Armenia (SSRA). These are charity stamps to support homeless children. The magazine филателия (Philately) first reported their discovery in 1931 in the section “Кто знает “ (Who knows). Pevsner then described the story in detail in the August 2003 issue of филателия.

Production was ordered by the Central Executive Committee of the SSRA and was probably carried out together with the “Comité De Secours Pour l’Arménie, Administration Central”. Twelve stamps from the 1927/28 Soviet issues were overprinted, eleven of which were used in postal traffic. The catalogue listings are:

Nominal (kopek)	Michel	Scott	Stanley Gibb.
1	339	382	508
2	340	383	509
3	273 I AX	306	432
4	341	385	510
5	342	386	511
7	343	388	512
10	345	391	514
18	347	393	516
20	349	395	518
50	351	397	520
70	352	399	521
5 roubles*	359 C	302b	454b
*Not issued with overprint			



The 3 kopek stamp is only genuine with the watermark as shown

One rubber hand stamp was produced for the overprint. It has external dimensions of 18x22 mm with an inscription in Russian “ССРА, филателия детям, 23-25-IV-29” (SSRA, Philately for Children, 23-25-IV-29) and identical text in Armenian. The stamp was applied with the longitudinal axis rotated by 180° in both directions (as shown in Fig. 3a

below). The overprint colours are purple, red and black although only purple and red have been documented to date. According to the information in the catalogues of Zakiyan and Saltykov only the 2 and 4 kopek stamps were overprinted in red and violet, all others only in violet. The red overprints are valued higher. Fig 2 below shows a cover on which all three colours may have been used. The stamps from the Karadian collection (Fig. 3a) as well as the covers (Figs. 4 and 5) have violet overprints. The black stamp shown in Fig. 7 is a forgery, as is the red overprint in Fig. 8. The cancelling ink is water-soluble and so the stamps should be kept dry. The handstamp was later destroyed in the presence of a commission consisting of representatives of the Comité De Secours Pour l’Arménie and the postal administration.

It remains to be seen whether the overprint is identical to that on the Karadian stamps (Fig. 3a), as in филателия the second и is smaller and above the baseline. In Fig. 2, the second и is also smaller and above the baseline. The imprints in Figs 4a and 6 are of limited judgeable quality although the date stamp (25.4.29) is correct



Fig. 1. Impression of the handstamp in violet and red; the source is unclear.

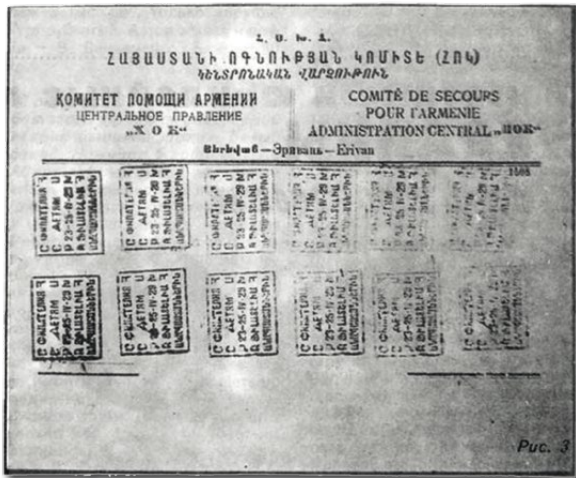


Fig. 2: The use of a handstamp made of rubber and ink pad has led to different characteristics of the stamp image depending on the individual application. (Copy from *филателия* 2003, illustration in black and white).



Fig.3a: Ten of the eleven stamps issued, from the Stefan Karadian (1929-2012) collection. It is notable that the overprint was reversed between the 1K and 2K stamps.



Fig.4a: Letter Yerevan 25.4.29 to New York, postage 20 kopecks. Handstamp overprints incomplete; the stamps show the typical shapes in the clear numerals (Fig. 4b).



Fig. 3b: Enlargements from Fig. 3a; stamp rotated by 180° on the right.



Fig. 4b: Enlargement from Fig. 4a.

The stamps in Fig 3a are considered to be genuine as they correspond to genuinely used postal items. The numbers are identical, the outer size is 18x22 mm and the 3-kopek stamp has the typical watermark. Deviations may be due to the individual handling of the handstamp. The genuinely used cover in Fig. 5 below also shows the same position and size of the **и** (enlargement Fig. 1b, above). Pevsner points out, however, that both stamps and postal items were forged due to rarity and thus attractiveness of the issue so careful comparison with an original is recommended.

The sale of the stamps was scheduled for 23-25 April 1929. On 23rd April, the Directorate of Posts and Telegraphs of the Central Executive Committee of the SSRA in Yerevan asked the Transcaucasian People's Commissariat for Posts and Telegraphs of the USSR in Tbilisi, Georgia for approval of the issue. This was granted by telegraph on the evening of 24th April. The stamps were sold without charity surcharge at the Yerevan post office on 25th April only. Thus, genuine cancelled stamps or letters can only bear this date.

After analysing documents from the Central Archive of the October Revolution SSRA in the State Museum of the History of Armenia two Armenian philatelists, S. Saltykov and A. Zakiyan, reported that the total circulation was 4313 stamps. Of these, 458 were used for postal items, 34 were purchased by collectors and 3821 were handed over to the State Museum of the History of Armenia. The covers in Figs. 2 and 6 are said to have been found during their research. The stamps were undoubtedly used for postal purposes, as the covers at Figs 4-6 show. All three letters, as well as the document in Fig. 2, show the overprint “Comité De Secours Pour l’Arménie, Administration Central”, Yerevan in three languages (Armenian, Russian, French). Possibly the stamps were only issued with the pre-printed envelopes.



Fig.5: Express letter with Yerevan 25.4.29 postmark to Baku, arrival 30.4.29 via Leninakan, formerly Alexandropol, today called Gyumri, postage 28 kopecks. There was no direct railway connection between Yerevan and Baku. The 7 kopek stamps show the typical shapes of the numerals 2 and 3.



Fig.6: Letter Yerevan 25.4.29 to Lancey (France), postage 38 kopecks? Possible handwritten date of arrival 12 July 1929 (copy from филателия 2003, illustration in black and white)



(Fig 7. Left forgery, black overprint (70 kopeks); right original violet (2 kopeks). Comparison: left 3 bent at the top, right horizontal; the numbers do not match; second Armenian u [sê] in the first line above the baseline of the word; Russian Я in дѣтям too wide on the left.



Fig. 8: Forgeries in violet and red; Имитация (imitation)

Why does the issue not appear in any major catalogue even though it was both officially issued and used for postal purposes. There are parallels with the Tbilisi City Post. This stamp appeared in 1857 and remained virtually unknown until 1913. The print runs of both stamps were small, their use was very limited and knowledge of them was also restricted by the decades-long isolation of the Russian-Soviet area.

I would like to thank Igor Ryss, St. Petersburg, for his help in obtaining and translating literature.

NOMINATIONS FOR THE FEPA RESEARCH MEDAL, 2024

Six works were nominated for the FEPA Research Medal for 2024. The awards are shown on Page 19 (above). As is customary all of these distinguished works that have been nominated are described here with information on how they can be obtained.

Jean-Pierre Magne – Le Rattachement du duché de Savoie et du comté de Nice à la France / Oblitérations sardes 1860-1861

(Reattachment of the Duchy of Savoy and the County of Nice to France / Sardinian cancellations 1860-1861)

This 344-page book (in French) focuses on the postal and philatelic effects that followed France's annexation of the County of Nice and the Duchy of Savoy in 1860. It is based on an inventory of mail sent from post offices between the entrance of the French postal administration on 14 June 1860 and the adoption of French cancellations in late September 1860. It is the product of more than two decades of painstaking research. In this publication, Jean-Pierre Magne FRPSL, a renowned authority on the Second Empire's imperforate issues (1853–1860), illuminates a rare era in which French postage stamps were cancelled with Sardinian postmarks, known as 'Sardegna sur France'. The book is divided into multiple chapters, one devoted to cancellations from conventional offices and another to cancellations from travelling post offices. It also includes a rate and philatelic analysis, a historical introduction, and summary tables that clearly show the cancellations and their rarity. Published by Yvert et Tellier, the book is available online at a retail price of €59.90 (ref. 138668).

For details and how to order: <https://www.yvert.com/A-292084-le-rattachement-du-duche-de-savoie-et-du-comte-de-nice-a-la-france-obliterations-sardes-1860-1861-de-jean-pierre-magne>

**Hans-Joachim Soll – Social Philately - Menschen in Deutsch Ostafrika
(Social Philately - People in German East Africa)**

Initially this book was based on a purely postal history collection of German East Africa. Later, the author became inspired by social philately and began examining the collection from the perspective of senders and recipients. Before long, letters from historically significant individuals were discovered, greatly increasing the motivation to continue the research. In this context, the question arose about whether and how philatelically collected mail could be used as a historical source. This depends on whether the text on the collected cards or letters provides information about the sender: thoughts and actions, motivations, concerns and hardships. Letters with no sender or text are socially and historically useless, although they may be valuable in postal history. Conversely, insignificant items from a postal history perspective can be immensely important for social philately. The result of years of research was that 70% of the author's collection could be attributed to specific individuals, and the available texts were analysed. These individuals ranged from indigenous people to governors, and their societal positions could be identified, creating a picture of colonial society in East Africa.

Published in German by the Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Sammler Deutscher Kolonialpostwertzeichen e.V. It features 528 pages, 17 x 25 cm dimensions, a coated hardcover, and high-quality thread stitching. Price: €39.00 plus shipping (within Germany: €4; EU: €11; rest of the world: €19). Available from Tilmann Nössig, Kopenstr. 16, 10243 Berlin, email: Geschaefsfuehrer@kolonialmarken.de

**Lorenzo Carra – Italia e Iberia: La posta fra gli Stati delle due penisole 1814–1876
(Italy and Iberia: Postal Relations between the States of the Two Peninsulas 1814–1876)**

This bilingual publication (Italian/English), published by Unificato in collaboration with AIFSP, examines postal connections from 1814-1876 between Spain, Portugal, Gibraltar, and the Spanish and Portuguese non-metropolitan territories: Ceuta and Melilla, Canary Islands, Azores and Madeira, Cape Verde, as well as the Tangier area on the one hand, and the former Italian states: Sardinia (and later Italy), Lombardy-Venetia, Trentino-Alto Adige and Trieste, Modena, Parma, Tuscany, the Papal States, Naples, and Sicily on the other.

The author analyses the rates, postmarks, and routes in both directions for each postal relationship by studying postal conventions and examining postal documents. Numerous letters are reproduced and meticulously described. The accompanying resources are comprehensive and highly useful: an index of postal conventions, an index of names and places, an index of postmarks, signs, and postal markings, and an extensive bibliography. The volume is an exemplary treatment of a theme of wide European breadth.

The 320-page, A4-format, hardcover book is available from Unificato at €80. Contact: info@unificato.it

Milan Radovanović – Retreat from Nis to Corfu – Silent Witnesses, 1915-1916 (Повлачење: Од Ниша До Крфа (1915-1916) – Неми Сведоци)

Part of the material, relating to the retreat of the Serbian army and the role of foreign medical and military missions, was published in Milan Radovanović's previous two books: *Allies and Serbs in the Great War (1914-1915) – Silent Witnesses* and *Allies and Serbs in the Great War (1916-1918) – Silent Witnesses*. In those works, insufficient attention and space were dedicated to the withdrawal of Serbian refugees, Allied military and medical missions, as well as prisoners of war in enemy territories. Considering what has been written so far it is evident that this tragic and painful chapter of Serbian history has not received adequate attention, nor have the harrowing events during the march through Montenegro and Albania to Greece in winter—amid Albanian attacks—been fully acknowledged. The subtitle of this book is also *Silent Witnesses*, referring to documents, photographs, and correspondence. Wartime correspondence was especially significant as it served as a primary news source. It caused happiness or unhappiness, joy or sadness, hope or disappointment for both the soldiers in retreat and their families left behind in Serbia. A substantial portion of the historical documents from this period reflect the personal perspectives of foreign participants (the Allies) and examples of postal history.

Written in Serbian; published in Belgrade in 2023. Available from the author at radmi@sbb.rs, mobile: +381 638024913.

Jesús Sitjá-Prats - Correo de la Pacific Steam Navigation Company, 1840-1854 (Pacific Steam Navigation Company Mail, 1840-1854)

The 324-page bilingual book (Spanish and English) offers a census of the known letters carried by the first steamers of the British Pacific Steam Navigation Company in the South American Pacific, along with a description of the handstamps applied. These markings, of the type "VAPOR PERU/P," were in use from the 1840s until 1854 when the company discontinued their use. It also presents the steamers' routes, the part of the postage paid to the company, and the countries' administrations: Chile, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, current Colombia and Panama (the last two were part of the Republic of New Granada).

The Real Academia Hispánica De Filatelia e Historia Postal (Royal Spanish Academy of Philately and Postal History) published the book as Vol. XIV of the RAHFeHP Specialised Library. Contact: info@rahf.es. For more details, go to: <https://www.rahf.es/nueva-publicacion-de-la-real-academia-hispanica-de-filatelia-e-historia-postal-3/>. For Table of Contents sample pages, go to: <https://fe-panews.com/wpcontent/uploads/2024/03/Resumen-Capitulos-Tomo-XIV-PDF-7-paginas.pdf>

Mehmet Akan, Selçuk Akar, Turhan Turgut, Emre Utku

Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Posta Tarifeleri, 1920-1950 (Postal Rates of the Republic of Türkiye, 1920-1950)

The book is a project by the Postal Rates Research Group of the Turkish Philatelic Academy based on a collaborative effort by Mehmet Akan, Selçuk Akar, and Emre Utku, prominent figures from the new generation of philatelists, along with respected philatelist Turhan Turgut RDP. This 350-page, full-colour, and fully bilingual book (Turkish-English) documents Turkey's postal rates from 1920 -1950, covering all postage services defined in UPU Congress publications and airmail rates. It also includes comprehensive information on special rates and services, examining many categories that had not previously been catalogued or thoroughly analysed. The book is a very comprehensive reference work on postal rates in the Turkish Republic. The information was collected in easy-to-use tables; the relevant source information is provided for each rate. This allows the reader to check the accuracy of the rates if necessary. The work draws on significant collections and meticulously scanned official archives, ensuring all rate-related information is supported by references to archival sources. Philatelic collections often risk being divided over time, but reference publications like this help preserve the subject's legacy. This book will become an essential reference work, addressing a critical gap in Turkish philatelic studies in scope and content.

For further information, contact: studiotasarim@gmail.com

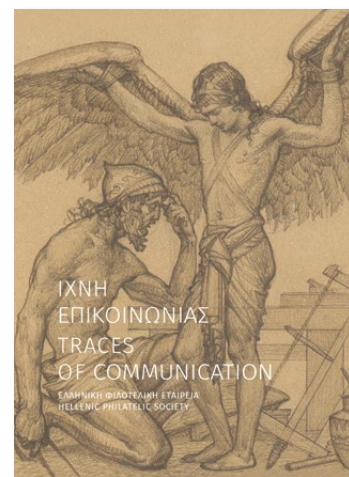
NEW BOOKS

TRACES OF COMMUNICATION

Published by the Hellenic Philatelic Society, Athens, 270pp, col., ISBN 978-618-87335-0-3 Price € / Available from

To mark the 100th anniversary of the Hellenic Philatelic Society almost 100 members and friends from Greece and elsewhere have contributed to this 'album' which targets a broader readership less familiar with philately and serves as a testament to the outward-facing activities of the HPS. It features more than 200 philatelic items (one per page) from many aspects of Greek philately that were selected not only for their philatelic characteristics but also because of their broader social content. In doing so its aim is to capture the close links between philately and history, society, the economy, arts and culture. Following this aim, the items selected have been grouped under 14 headings focused on characteristics ranging from art (including classic philatelic designs) through political and military developments to social and economic questions. The flow is nicely presented and easy to follow with all text provided in Greek and English.

This book will be of great interest to collectors of Greek stamps and postal materials. The descriptions are clear, concise and authoritative, the illustrations are of excellent quality and there is a plethora of opportunities for picking up ideas on how to develop 'The story behind the cover'. It is also a splendid illustration of the thinking underlying the idea of Context Philately.



SARAWAK, The First Forty Years 1858-1898

Published by the Museum of Philately; 151pp, col., ISBN 978-2-940595-26-6.

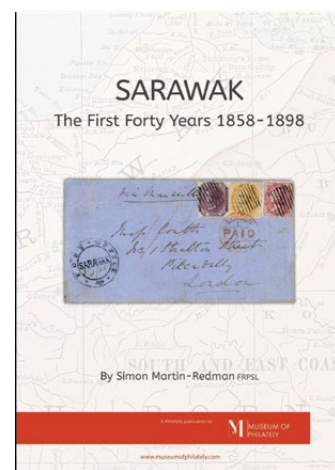
Price £40; Available from the Royal Philatelic Society London, Shop at www.rpsl.org.uk



In honor of our Museum President, we are delighted to announce the publication of a book presenting Simon Martin-Redman's acclaimed Grand Prix Collection of Sarawak. Sponsored by the David Feldman Company, this exceptional publication—an extraordinary exception for us as a primarily virtual entity—was officially launched at Monacophil on December 5th, with a presentation by the Club de Monte Carlo's esteemed past President, Patrick Maselis.















Over the last two decades, Simon Martin-Redman has become one of the most prominent and active figures in the world of philately. Starting with a personal passion for building his own collections, he has rapidly ascended to become a celebrated and rising star in the philatelic galaxy. Currently serving as Vice President of the Royal Philatelic Society London, he is also a Past President of the Sarawak Specialists' Society and a member of the European Academy of Philately, the Collectors Club of New York, the United Postal Stationery Society, and the Society of Postal Historians. A distinguished keynote speaker, he recently delivered the prestigious Annual 'Stuart Rossiter Lecture' on postal history.

His philatelic expertise has focused on Sarawak, where his collections have achieved multiple Large Gold medals, including the International Grand Prix for his traditional collection—a crowning achievement that granted him membership of the Grand Prix Club. He later received the Rowland Hill Medal for this collection, presented at Monacophil 2022. His dedication to philatelic events and initiatives has led to invitations to join the Board of the Club de Monte Carlo and, most notably, to become the inaugural President of the Museum of Philately. To honour this appointment, the Museum has undertaken this special publication of his highly esteemed Grand Prix Collection of Sarawak. This book is expected to be a valuable addition to the libraries of specialists and enthusiasts eager to deepen their knowledge of this fascinating region.



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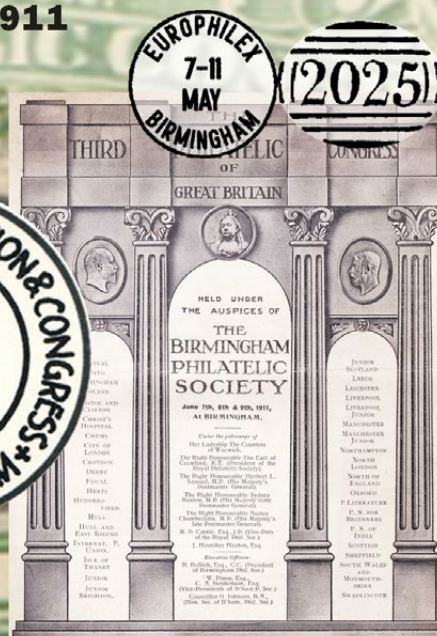
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Events Calendar

2025		
17-22 February	URUGUAY 2025, Punta del Este, Uruguay	Specialised World Exhibition, FIP Patronage https://uruguay2025.com
6-8 March	VIRTUAL STAMPEX 2025	Stamp Fair https://stampex.vfairs.com
7-11 May	EUROPHILEX BIRMINGHAM 2025, UK	European Exhibition, FEPA Patronage, FIP Recognition https://europhilex2025.co.uk
11 May	FEPA CONGRESS 2025, Birmingham, UK	Annual FEPA Congress https://www.fepanews.com
14-17 May	BERNABA & MULTILATERALE 2025, Bern, Switzerland	National & Multinational Exhibition https://www.bernaba25.ch
6-9 June	PHILA-FRANCE COLMAR 2025	Championnat de France de philatélie, 98e Congrès national https://ffap.net/event/phila-france-2025-colmar-68
14-15 June	ABRIA 2025, Stendal, Germany	Regional Exhibition http://www.aba2025stendal.de
19-22 June	LIBEREC 2025, Czech Republic	International Exhibition, FEPA Recognition https://www.liberec2025.cz
5 July 2025	MIDPEX 2025, Leamington Spa, United Kingdom	Stamp Fair https://sites.google.com/site/midpex
12-14 September	NORDIA 2025, Malmö, Sweden	Multinational Exhibition, FEPA Recognition https://nordia2025.se
17-21 September	PHILAKOREA 2025, Seoul, South Korea	Specialised World Exhibition, WSC, FIP Patronage https://philakorea2025.kr
22-25 October	STAMPEX 2025, London, UK	Stamp Fair https://www.stampexinternational.com
2026		
4-8 February	DUBAI 2026, UAE	Specialised World Exhibition, FIP Patronage
23-30 May	BOSTON 2026, Boston MA, United States	General World Exhibition, FIP and FEPA Recognition https://boston2026.org
26-29 June	PhilLat26, Riga, Latvia	International Exhibition, FEPA Recognition
26 June - 1 July	MACAO 2026, Macao, China	Specialised World Exhibition, FIP Patronage https://www.macao2026.org.mo
17-19 July	BEPHILA 2026, Bernau, Germany	Germany-Sweden Bilateral Exhibition, FEPA Recognition https://www.bephila.de
19-24 November	PHILATAIPEI 2026, Chinese Taipei	Specialised World Exhibition, WSC, FIP Patronage
2027		
June 2027	SLOVFILEX 2027, Bratislava, Slovakia	Specialised World Exhibition, FIP Patronage
October 2027	BELGRADE 2027, Serbia	General World Exhibition, FIP Patronage

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