

The Roll of Distinguished Philatelists.

Announcement of the New Signatories for 2026 and details of the signing ceremony

An invitation to sign the Roll is the highest and most prestigious of honours in philately. It recognises significant levels of achievement, research, publication and service in many areas of philately. The Roll was instituted in Harrogate, England in May 1921 and the signature of His Majesty King George V appears at its head as its first signatory. The total number of signatories, up to and including those selected in 2026 (but excluding H.M. King George V) is 420 from 44 different countries. In its design, the Roll contains the names of 46 "*Fathers of Philately*", names of great philatelists who would have been invited to sign had they still been alive when the Roll was inaugurated. At the first ceremony in Harrogate the signatures of the initial 39 names were added to the Roll.

The new signatories join 92 other current living RDPs from 31 countries, spread over six continents. More details on the background and history of the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists can be found at: <https://www.abps.org.uk/roll-of-distinguished-philatelists/>

This year's signing ceremony, on the occasion of the 105th anniversary of the first signing to the Roll, will take place at 5.00pm on Thursday 28 May 2026 in a separate room within the exhibition complex during the Boston 2026 World Stamp Expo, Boston, USA. The ceremony will be followed by a drinks reception to which all attendees are invited. Dress code is flexible, although most attendees wear lounge suits and ties. The main participants in the signing ceremony will wear black tie.

Unusually, the Board of Election met during the summer of 2025 in order to discuss a nomination for Jon Aitchison, United Kingdom, who is the Keeper of the Roll. It would have been inappropriate for this to be discussed at the main February 2026 meeting of the Board with the Keeper in attendance. It was unanimously agreed by the Board that he should be invited to sign.

At the meeting of the Board of Election on 26 February 2026, it was unanimously agreed that a further three philatelists be invited to sign. Thus the 2026 signatories to the Roll will be:

Jon Aitchison, RDP, United Kingdom
Dr. Andrew Cheung, Hong Kong, China
Alexander T. Haimann, United States of America
Ding Jinsong, People's Republic of China

Attendance at the signing ceremony is free of charge to all; there is no need to pre-book and attendees should gather for the ceremony from 4.30pm. The ceremony will also be broadcast live on Zoom so that it can be seen by a worldwide audience. The login details will be announced on the ABPS website in due course.

Jon Aitchison, RDP, United Kingdom

Jon has been active in many different areas of philately over many years, including collecting aspects that do not receive the attention of many collectors. Several of his collections would come under the heading of Cinderellas, including local posts, revenues and telegrams. He is a signatory of the Roll of Notable Cinderella Philatelists.

Jon is particularly known for his collection of the (British) Channel Islands, where his interests range beyond the main islands to the many lesser islands around the Channel Islands and French coasts, including Herm Island, Les Iles Chausey and the Isle of Man. He has written extensively on these subjects, including producing the standard catalogues for several of those collecting fields. His catalogues of Channel Island local issues and the local issues of the Isle of Man remain the main catalogues on their subjects, and he has published two editions of *The Stamps and Postal History of Lundy Island* that have sold over 1,600 copies. He is currently working on other catalogues including franking meter marks, telegrams and British parcel carrier stamps.

Jon is a prolific exhibitor and has gained numerous gold and large gold medals for a wide range of subjects, including the inaugural ABPS multi-class award for achieving British national gold medals in at least five different classes. Aspects of his collection of Egypt have gained high awards both nationally and internationally for postal stationery and officially sealed mail, as have his exhibits of Siege of Paris mail. Apart from his competitive exhibiting, Jon has provided displays to numerous societies, including the Royal Philatelic Society London, Collectors Club New York, Monacophil and at several national and international philatelic exhibitions.

His involvement in international philately extends into organisational aspects. He is managing director of Stamp World Exhibitions Ltd, the organising body behind UK philatelic exhibitions and was chairman and principal organiser of the EuroPhilEx Birmingham 2025 international exhibition. Jon has been British commissioner to more than a dozen international exhibitions and continues to be a regular attendee of such events. He has been chairman and held posts in several specialist societies, he was honorary secretary of the Royal Philatelic Society London from 2019 to 2021 and was, until recently, a long-standing member of the Council of the Society.

Jon has been Keeper of the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists since 2016 and it is his intention to continue in that role.

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Dr. Andrew Cheung, RDP, Hong Kong, China

Dr. Andrew Cheung is a familiar figure at philatelic events around the world. He is regularly in demand as a member of the Jury at international exhibitions in both Traditional and Postal History classes.

Former chairman, and current vice-chairman of the Hong Kong Philatelic Society, Andrew was for 20 years the editor of the society journal and has written numerous articles for this society and for others, including *The London Philatelist* as well as being webmaster for the HKPS. He is currently the Hong Kong, China representative for the Royal Philatelic Society London.

Andrew has built many fine collections which have achieved high international awards, including Postal History of Hong Kong and the Treaty Ports (Large Gold and FIAP Grand Prix d'Honneur), British Treaty Port Post Offices in China (Gold), Russian Post Offices in China - overprints 1899-1920 (Gold), Imperial Russian Postal Stationery used in China (Gold), Guatemala Airmails 1924-1945 (Gold).

Other activities have included being secretary to the FIP Postal History Commission from 2008-2022 and since then serving as the secretary of the FIP Traditional Commission. In appreciation of his contribution, he was awarded the FIP Medal of Appreciation. One of his contributions has been to hold training sessions for aspiring judges within the FIAP (Federation of Inter-Asian Philately) and FIP organisations. He has been a long-standing member of the FIAP executive committee and for each of the FIAP exhibitions held in Hong Kong in 2001, 2004, 2009 and 2015, he served as chairman of the exhibition committee.

Generous with his considerable knowledge on postal history and Chinese philately generally, he has been a member of AIEP (Association Internationale des Experts en Philatélie) for many years and is involved in offering expert opinion on material.

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Alexander T. Haimann, RDP, United States of America

The impact of Alex Haimann on organised philately over the past 25 years has been significant, both within the United States and internationally. From an early stage in his philatelic journey, he has sought innovative ways to present philately to wider audiences, including many with no prior exposure to the field.

In 2008 he initiated and developed the Young Philatelic Leaders Fellowship programme of the American Philatelic Society (APS). More than 35 graduates have since emerged from the programme, with several taking on important roles within professional philately and volunteer leadership positions across organised philately. He served as Chairman of the APS Board of Vice Presidents from 2013 to 2016 and as Chairman of the APS Campaign for Philately Committee from 2016 to 2022, during which time the APS reorganised and strengthened its principal annual events.

Alex has also played a leading role in fundraising for major philatelic initiatives. He helped secure more than \$250,000 in support of the New York 2026 World Stamp Show and encouraged substantial American participation at international exhibitions, including Stockholmia 2019. He was instrumental in mobilising support among American members for the establishment of the American Tea Room at the Royal Philatelic Society London (RPSL) headquarters in the City of London.

His principal collecting interest has long been the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879. He has formed a comprehensive collection of philatelic and postal history material alongside a broad range of non-philatelic artefacts connected with this period of southern African history. Over a period of years, he developed an innovative exhibition concept integrating these varied artefacts to present the subject within its broader historical context. This work culminated in a major public exhibition at the RPSL in July 2023, attracting more than 2,000 visitors, many of whom were encountering philately for the first time. The exhibition's impact has extended beyond the gallery through online presentations derived from its content, which have attracted over 1.4 million views.

Dozens of articles by Alex have appeared in a wide range of publications, including *The London Philatelist*, *The American Philatelist*, *The Chronicle*, and *Linn's Stamp News*. He also developed numerous online exhibits and mini-articles for the Smithsonian National Postal Museum's virtual collections website, focused on expanding digital access to philatelic scholarship. He regularly presents displays and lectures on a wide range of subjects to philatelic and non-philatelic audiences in the United States and internationally, both in person and via Zoom.

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Ding Jinsong, RDP, People's Republic of China

Ding Jingson ranks as one of the most important philatelists within the People's Republic of China (PRC). His contributions cover both his studies of the classic stamps of China, which form his collecting areas, and his involvements in the organisational and promotional aspects of philately.

Ding's main areas of study and collecting cover the classic issues of China from the Large Dragon and Small Dragons up to the stamps of the Liberated Areas. In particular, he has made a study of the Red Revenue surcharges of 1897. The Red Revenues collection was shown at the Royal Philatelic Society London as part of the cultural events organised around the 2012 London Book Fair by the State Post of China and the ACPF. It again formed part of the cultural backdrop to the 2015 American Book Fair when it was shown at the Collectors Club New York, organised by the ACPF and the American Philatelic Federation.

He is vice-president of the Shanghai Philatelic Federation and also vice-president of the All-China Philatelic Federation (ACPF), the national philatelic organisation within the PRC. He has participated in the management and organisation of the various exhibitions in Shanghai and across China. These have drawn in huge numbers of visitors. He has always been willing to provide material from his own collections in order to attract visitors. His collections have also had an international audience through many exhibitions, both in the Asian region and worldwide.

When shown at exhibition, Ding's collections have achieved high awards, including winning Grand Prix in both FIAP and FIP exhibitions for both his 1897 Red Revenues exhibit and his exhibit of The Postal History of Mongolia (1854-1921). He is known for his detailed knowledge of the many aspects of Chinese philately and his various studies, in particular relating to the 1897 Red Revenues, have been the subject of numerous articles with details of his research and discoveries. The major book on the subject, written by him, was published in 2024 in Chinese and will shortly be available in an English translation. The book was awarded a Large Gold medal in 2025 at PhilaKorea World Stamp Exhibition.

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