

# GUIDELINES FOR SUCCESSFUL EXHIBITING

by Francesca Rapkin, FRPSI

Edited by  
Richard J. West, FRPSL



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## Preface

IT is some years since the Melville Committee published the booklet *The Way to Win*. Perhaps such a title is a little misleading; not everyone is lucky enough to carry off prizes, but this need not be a deterrent to collecting and exhibiting.

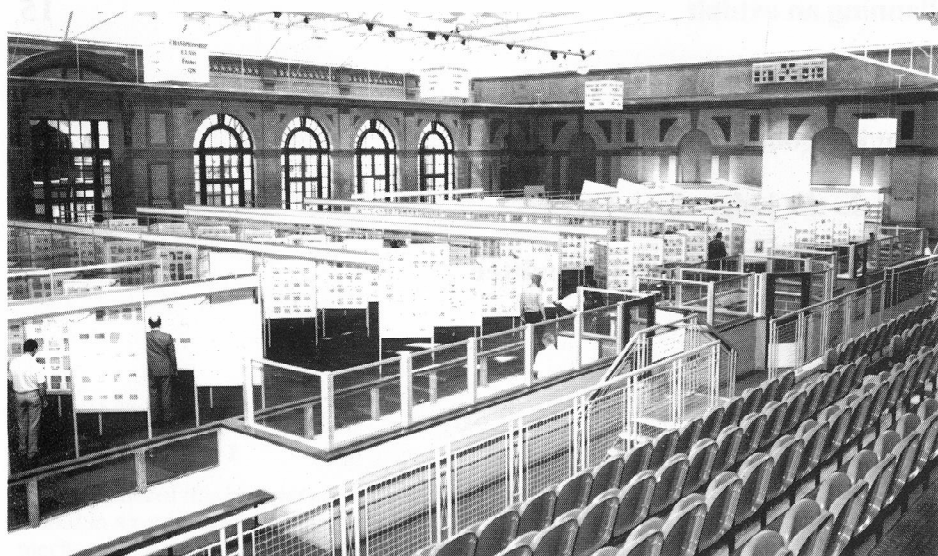
If we enjoy collecting stamps, and get pleasure from enjoying our pleasure with others, this is the greatest prize of all.

This booklet is designed to give you tips on how to become a better collector, so that you will be proud to show your pages to everyone; and then, when you enter a competition, be it Melville, locally, or one of our national

exhibitions, the judges will want to stop and study your exhibit in detail.

Stamp collecting is a hobby which means different things to different people; this is why it is enjoyed by so many people of all ages and all walks of life. It is up to each individual to make up his own mind how he wants to collect.

However, as with all games, when you are competing, there are rules that need to be followed. Most of these rules are built on sound common sense, and I believe that even the collector who has no intention of entering a competition will get more satisfaction and enjoyment from his hobby if the collection is well planned right from the beginning.



*A display of competitive entries on show in frames at a major stamp exhibition — this photograph was taken at the international exhibition held in London in May 1990.*

## Introduction

YOU may read this booklet because you want to learn more about competitive philately. On the other hand, you may be reading it only to learn a little more about the wonderful hobby of stamp collecting. Either way, a few explanations may be helpful by way of an introduction.

A country collection is one that concentrates on the stamps of one country. It can embrace all the stamps of that country, or just a small section, such as a particular reign, or a period of time. The stamps of Great Britain used during the stamps of George VI would be classed as a country collection. The stamps of Germany used during the inflation period from 1919 to 1923 would also be classed as a country collection.

Whether the subject chosen is a pure theme, ie “Horses”, “Flowers”, “Birds” or “Architecture”, where the pictures themselves are used to tell the story, or a historical theme, such as “The Red Cross”, “Olympic Games” or “The Fight against Disease”, all thematic collections should be developed according to the story and not by the date of issue of the stamp. In other words, a collection on horses could trace the development of that animal from pre-historic times, its usefulness to man, its rôle in sport, and so on. Probably very few stamps would be included that did not show a horse or its equipment as a part of the design. On the other hand, a collection devoted to the Red Cross would contain many

items that at first glance do not appear to relate to the theme, such as people associated with the movement who are better known in other spheres of activity. However, in both subjects, it is the development of the theme that must take priority and the most suitable stamps should be chosen to tell the story. Where and when they were issued is irrelevant.

A postal history collection almost invariably consists of covers. If stamps are included, these would have clearly readable cancellations. Postal history is the study of the mail: the routes used for the transport of mail, the mode of transport and the rates that were charged in the service provided.

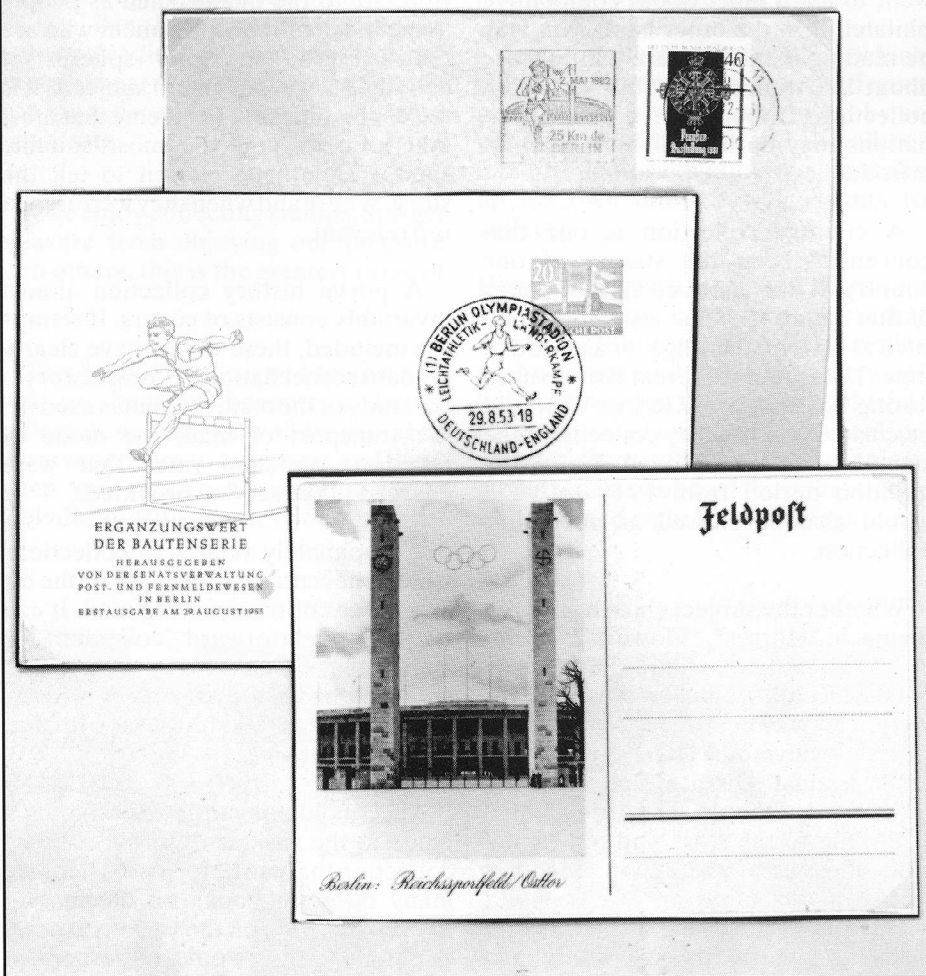
Aerophilately relates to collections which concentrate on the use of the air as a means of transporting mail. It can be a straightforward collection of stamps that were issued for airmail use; it can be a postal history collection of air routes, or it can be a study of a particular airline or airship.

This booklet is not intended to be a guide to the various different types of collection that can be formed. There are many different books on the market that concentrate on the various aspects of philately, and I would suggest one of these for further reading. *Stamp Collecting* by Stanley Phillips, published by Stanley Gibbons, or *Stamp Collecting* by Fred Melville in the ‘Teach Yourself’ series, are both good books for the beginner.



### 5.3. EVENTS, CULTURAL.

Werner March, the architect of the 1936 Berlin Olympic Stadium, was awarded the gold medal for architecture in the Olympic Arts competition for a town structure, as well as a silver medal for architectural design.



*A page from the author's Olympic Games thematic collection — thematic collecting is growing in popularity and offers great scope to the collector.*

There are several different types of competition, and each have their own rules and regulations and different standards of marking for their judges. School stamp club competitions may well be judged by two or three members of the local philatelic society, while the local philatelic society competition may well be judged by members of a neighbouring society.

Most competition organisers try to be fair and to ensure that they select judges who will be impartial. At local level, it is unlikely that the judges will be experienced at looking critically at stamp exhibits, so do not be too disappointed if you do well in the local competition and then fare rather worse with the same exhibit at a federation competition. The reverse is also sometimes true, so do not be put off if your entry does not do too well straight away. Look at all the exhibits, and try to see for yourself why they did not all win an award. It is possible to learn as much from a good entry as it is from a bad one.

As a general rule, federation competitions expect a somewhat higher standard than you would expect to find in a local competition; but this can vary from one country to another. Usually, three or four judges will mark the entries, and they will probably belong to a neighbouring federation. They will have had some previous experience at judging stamp exhibits.

Most local stamp competitions will not require you to send more than a dozen album pages for judging, and most federation competitions would probably not require more than sixteen pages. It is only at national level that

thirty-two pages are required.

At national exhibitions, such as Autumn Stampex (British Philatelic Exhibition), the standard of the entries is expected to be higher, and the knowledge and experience of the judges is far greater. A national judge is expected to be a learner or an apprentice for at least a year before being considered a full juror, and most of our national judges would be expected to judge only a part of the exhibition, mostly of an area with which he is familiar.

The Melville National Youth Stamp Competition is rather different, in that it is the only national competition that is planned solely for the young collector. For this reason, the classes are divided into much narrower age limits, and the number of sheets required is geared to the age of the entrants. Five judges are chosen each year, and most of them are qualified national judges, though occasionally a well-known federation judge will be invited.

On one of the days of Autumn Stampex (British Philatelic Exhibition), the judges are usually available to discuss the entries with their owners. If it is at all possible, try to talk to one of the judges about your exhibit. Often a five minute conversation in front of your exhibit will be more helpful than a page of explanation as to how an exhibit can be improved.

Every effort is also made to discuss the Melville entries personally with the entrants. In addition, a very detailed critique is sent to each competitor, with the judges comments, and this should be helpful if the advice is followed.



## All about Melville

FRED J. MELVILLE was born in 1882 and was one of the world's great authorities on postage stamps. He was a prolific writer and wrote scores of books and pamphlets, contributing to every philatelic journal of note throughout the world. As the philatelic correspondent of *The Daily Telegraph*, he wrote a regular weekly article for that paper, as well as contributing regularly to other non-philatelic journals, such as the *Illustrated London News*. He was the Editor of three British stamp magazines, the *Stamp Lover*, the *British Philatelist* and *Stamp Collector's Fortnightly*.



Fred Melville founded the Junior Philatelic Society (now the National Philatelic Society) when his application for membership to the Royal Philatelic Society was turned down, as it was considered that he was too young. He was President of the Junior Philatelic

Society for many years, and at the time of his death, he had the satisfaction of knowing that it was the largest stamp club in the British Empire.

Fred Melville was also the first President of the Postal History Society, as well as the President of the annual London Stamp Exhibition. He took an active interest in the annual Philatelic Congress of Great Britain, the forerunner of the British Philatelic Federation, and his name was among the first to be placed on the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists.

When Melville died in January 1940, a wish was expressed, at the 27th Philatelic Congress of Great Britain in Bournemouth later that year, to perpetuate his memory. When Congress next met in Brighton in 1946 after the war, a sub-committee was appointed, which recommended that a revised and updated edition of Melville's best-known book *Postage Stamps in the Making* be reissued as a suitable memorial. The original version, first published in 1916, was considered a valuable contribution to philatelic literature, and the new edition, released in 1949, could not have been a more fitting epitaph.

After publication of the new edition of *Postage Stamps in the Making*, the money left over was used as the foundation for the Melville Memorial Junior Stamp Awards, to mark Melville's great interest in young collectors. The first Melville Memorial Competition was held in 1950, and has been held annually since that time.

## Choosing suitable stamps and covers

HAVING decided that we are going to try stamp collecting as a hobby, most of us start either by buying a large packet of mixed stamps, or by asking our family and friends to pass on any interesting stamps that arrive in the mail. If you know someone who works in an office with a large international correspondence, so much the better.

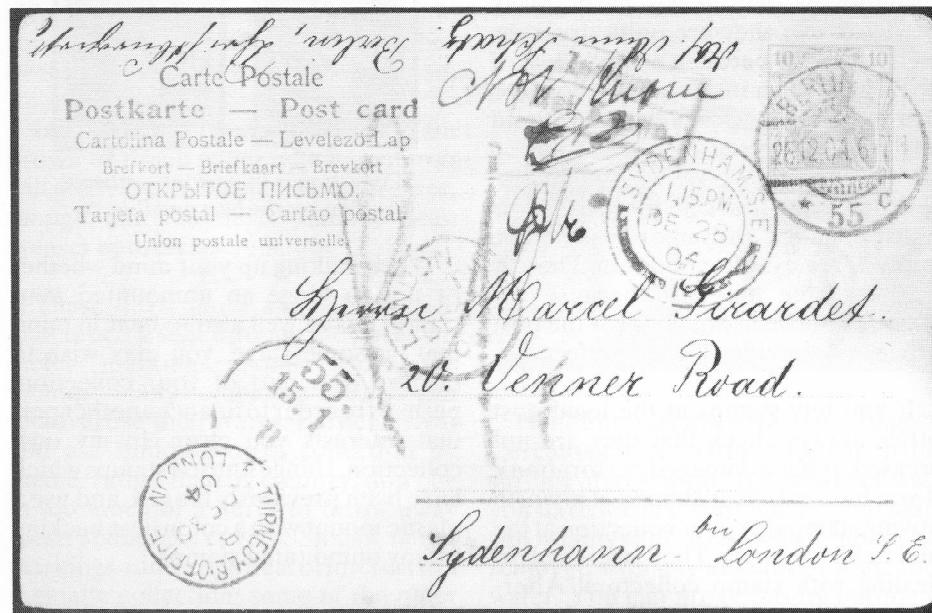
Right from the very beginning, make up your mind that you will ruthlessly discard any stamps that have torn perforations, creases, or have heavy postmarks that all but cover the stamps completely. Modern stamps are relatively easy to find, and the judges of a competition will notice that you have taken the trouble to look for perfect

stamps with light, circular cancellations.

Ask your friends to give you entire covers, with the stamps still attached, rather than tearing off the stamp, and perhaps damaging it, or, worse still, relegating some interesting postal marking to the waste paper bin.

Never cut a stamp from its cover before you have checked the front and back carefully. If it has any postal markings, other than the cancellation, keep the cover intact, you may find a use for it later.

If there are no markings, cut the



Never remove a stamp before examining carefully the entire envelope or postcard. This particular card is full of interest, with its various postmarks, irrespective of the stamp.

stamp out neatly, leaving a wide margin. Discard any stamps which are on coloured envelopes, as such envelopes are likely to lose their colours when they are put in water, and may discolour the stamp, and any others that are being soaked at the same time.

When you are ready to soak your stamps off the paper, place them, face upwards, in a shallow dish of cool water. Do not try to soak too many at the same time; the stamps should float freely and not be one on top of the other.

Don't try to separate the stamps from their paper by pulling them apart; stamps which are wet are easily damaged. In time, the stamps will float free from their backing paper, which will sink. Lift the stamps carefully from the water and leave them to dry on a clean piece of uncoloured kitchen paper. Under no circumstances use newspapers for this purpose, as printing ink will leave nasty black marks. When they are quite dry, they can be placed between clean sheets of absorbent paper inside a heavy book, so that they become perfectly flat, without any crinkles or creases.

When you collect mint (that is unused) stamps, the same rules as above apply as regards the condition. There is no guarantee that, just because the stamps have been bought over the post office counter, they will be perfect.

If you buy stamps at the local post office always check that they are not creased or have damaged perforations. If you have one near at hand, it is worth buying stamps for your collection at the philatelic counter. They are used to dealing with stamp collectors! Alternatively, develop friendly relations

with one of your local post office clerks. I have always found them most helpful once they know that I want the stamps for my collection. However, they won't appreciate your visit if you go in when the post office is crowded!

Some people will tell you that putting a stamp hinge on unmounted stamps will make them worthless, and that they should be kept in plastic mounts. It depends whether you are collecting stamps as a hobby or as an investment. Both hinges and plastic mounts will keep your stamps safely on the page, and you must make up your own mind which type of mount you prefer. Modern stamp hinges have such fine gum, that they hardly leave any mark when they are peeled off, but they *do* leave a trace, and this can lower the eventual selling price of a modern mint stamp.



*Condition is important — always choose the best possible.*

When making up your mind whether or not to hinge an unmounted mint stamp, it is as well also to bear in mind that, at some stage, you may wish to dispose of a part of your collection, perhaps in order to finance another part that interests you more. In my own collection, I hinge unused stamps which have been previously hinged, and use a plastic mount with a colourless backing for my unmounted stamps.

When it comes to pre-1940 mint



stamps, personally I feel that it is more important that a stamp is well-centred, has all its perforations, and generally looks clean and fresh, than that it has every trace of its original gum.

A similar approach should be applied to the condition of covers and postcards. Unless a cover has a particularly interesting or rare postal marking, discard those which are damaged or torn or have "dog-eared" corners.

Old covers which have acquired a layer of dust over the years can often be cleaned most successfully by gentle rubbing with a very soft artist's rubber or the soft part of a fresh slice of bread.

Ironing a cover under a piece of plain brown or tissue paper with a cool iron will often flatten out any minor creases, though this can never remove deep creases entirely.

These days, more and more office mail is being sent through the post with meter markings. Apart from the "stamp", many companies use a slogan to advertise their wares. Particularly if you are building up a collection by theme, rather than by country, don't be in too much of a hurry to throw away these stampless covers. Slogan meter markings add a great deal of interest to a thematic collection; some of the older ones are quite rare today, because many were thrown into the waste paper bin.

*Even meter marks can find a place in a collection.*

From the very beginning, develop the habit of handling your stamps with a pair of tweezers. There are many different types on the market; you will be able to choose the pair that suits you best. Tweezers are not very expensive, so do not try to economise by using eyebrow tweezers, as these have sharp edges that will damage paper. Using tweezers is a little awkward at first, but you will soon get used to it.

*You will soon find using the necessary equipment becomes 'second nature'.*



Handling stamps with your fingers can cause greasy marks to appear on the surface after a while, for, however well you have washed your hands, your skin still retains natural oils which cannot be removed with any amount of soap and water. You can prove this by putting a clean finger on a piece of glass or window pane.



## Reading the rules

YOU may think that it is obvious that one must read and understand the rules before preparing a stamp exhibit, but you would be surprised at how many people, including grown-ups who ought to know better, do not heed this first basic requirement.

At some local competitions, entrants are asked to send nine or twelve sheets for judging; at our national exhibitions, they require thirty-two sheets, and for the Melville Competition, between eight and thirty-two sheets are required.

Never send too many, nor too few, sheets. If you send too few, you will certainly lose marks, and if you send too many, the organisers will submit only the correct number for judging, and some of your better items may be left out.

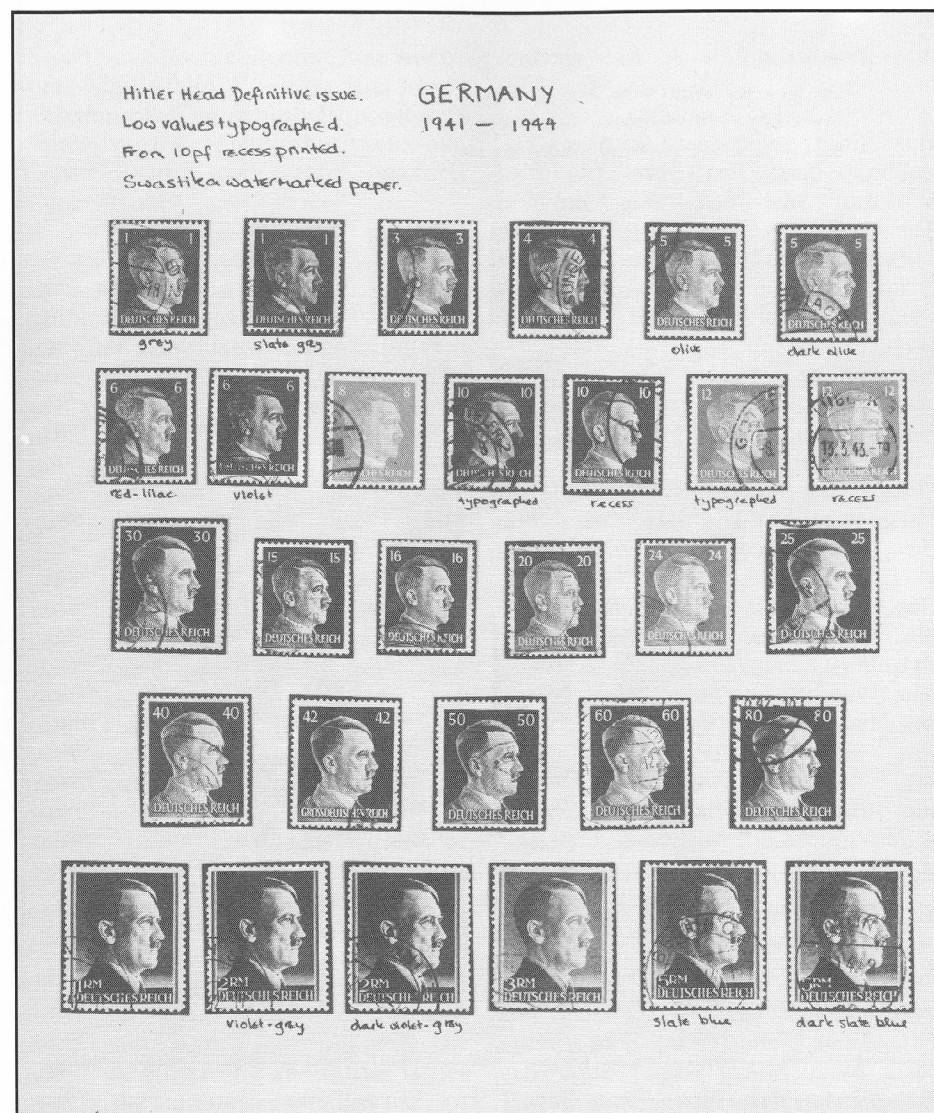
Make sure that your pages are numbered in the order in which you would like them to be shown, and do make sure that you rub out any old numbers.

As all competitions insist that your album leaves are sent in exhibition

covers (a wise precaution since it saves your stamps from possible damage), I have found it best to put little numbered stickers on the back of these exhibition protectors. I keep them in numerical order after the competition, and this way my sheets are always correctly numbered without marking the album leaf. I also use the back of the protector to stick on my name and address, which many competitions insist that you do.

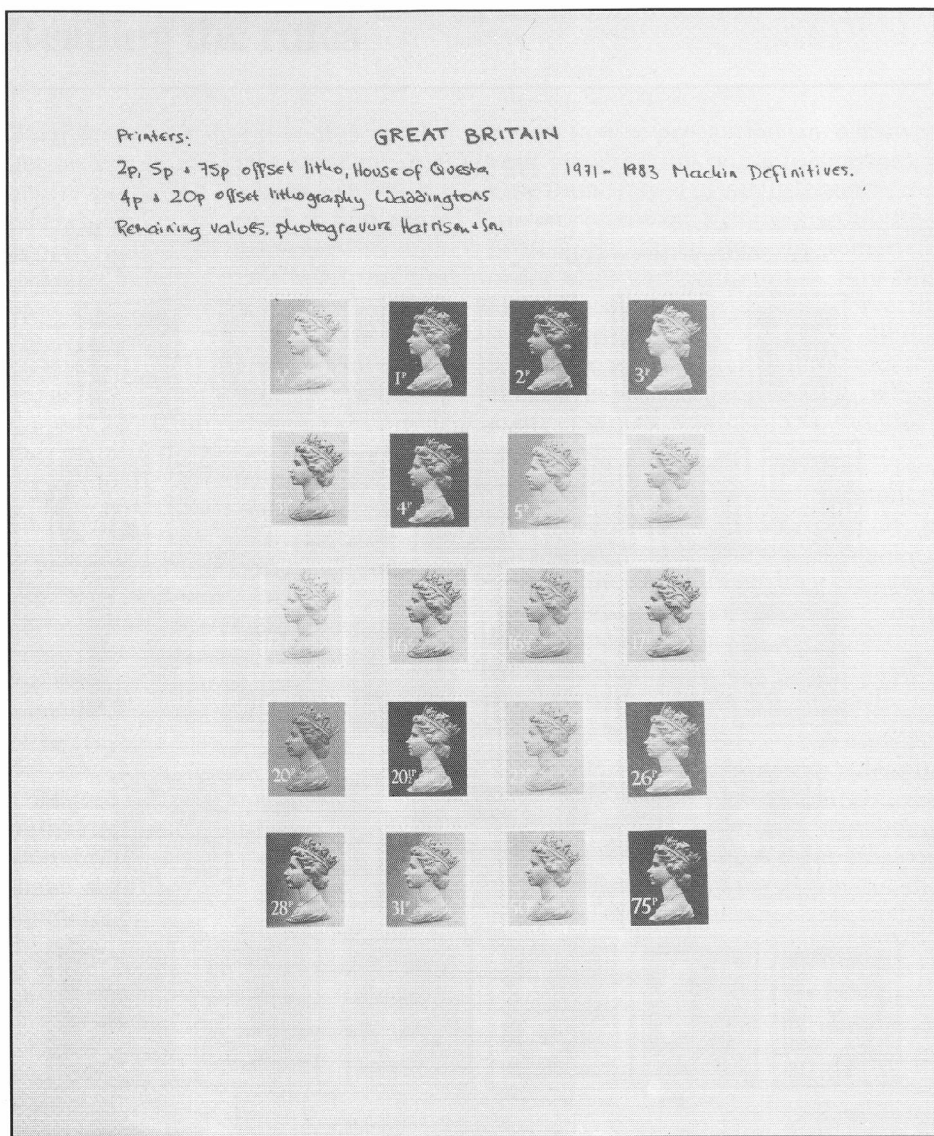
Make sure that you read and understand all the rules carefully. It is particularly important that you make a note of the dates regarding the entry forms and the exhibits. In some competitions, both are sent together, while for others, the entry form must be sent in advance of the exhibit itself.

Equally important are the rules for collecting your entry after the competition. If your entry is being returned by post, do make sure that you have sent the necessary money for the return postage, if it has been requested. Remember that the rules have not been made to make life difficult for you but to ensure the safety of your exhibit.



*This page is far too overcrowded. Using fewer stamps, thereby reducing the number of stamps in each row, and the number of rows, would make for a much more pleasing display this set could well have been split and shown on two pages.*





While there are fewer stamps on this page, the arrangement looks boring, because each of the five rows has four stamps, arranged in four straight columns.

Just turn over the page to see how a little imagination can produce a far more pleasing display. Play around with the stamps on the album page until a balanced arrangement is achieved.

## Planning an exhibit

IF you have been collecting stamps for some little while, I believe it is much better to plan an exhibit from stamps which you already have, that it is to start a new collection from scratch, just for a competition.

It always surprises me, the number of young people who put an entirely new exhibit into the Melville Competition year after year. I am not suggesting that you enter the same exhibit, unaltered each year, but if you have taken care with the original plan of your collection right from the beginning, you will find it much simpler to build on the foundation that you have already laid.

It is important to choose a suitable subject which allows you to tell a reasonably complete story in the number of pages that you have been allocated. Thus, if you are required to submit eight pages, it would not be wise to attempt an exhibit on "Flowers of the World", or even "Flowers of the United Kingdom". It would be far better to confine yourself to, say "Roses" or "Spring Flowers".

Similarly, in an eight page exhibit of the stamps of Great Britain, it would almost certainly be better to confine yourself to the stamps of one reign. For the present reign, you would probably find that either the definitive issues (that is, the stamps in every day use), or the commemorative stamps, would be sufficient for an eight page exhibit.

If you are reading a book, you would expect it to have a beginning, a middle

and an end. A stamp exhibit is no different.

To help me plan a new exhibit, I start by taking a large sheet of paper and fold it in such a way that, when unfolded, each square represents an album page within the exhibit, and the whole sheet represents, either the entire exhibit, or one frame of the exhibit.

Within these squares, I then plot my "story", marking in which stamps and covers I want to show, and where they should be placed for best effect. I usually mark any stamps or covers which are missing in red, so this first plan also acts as my wants list.

From this "multi-exhibit" I can get a very good idea how the finished exhibit will look, and I can also ensure that the most important stamps and covers are placed where they will have maximum impact.

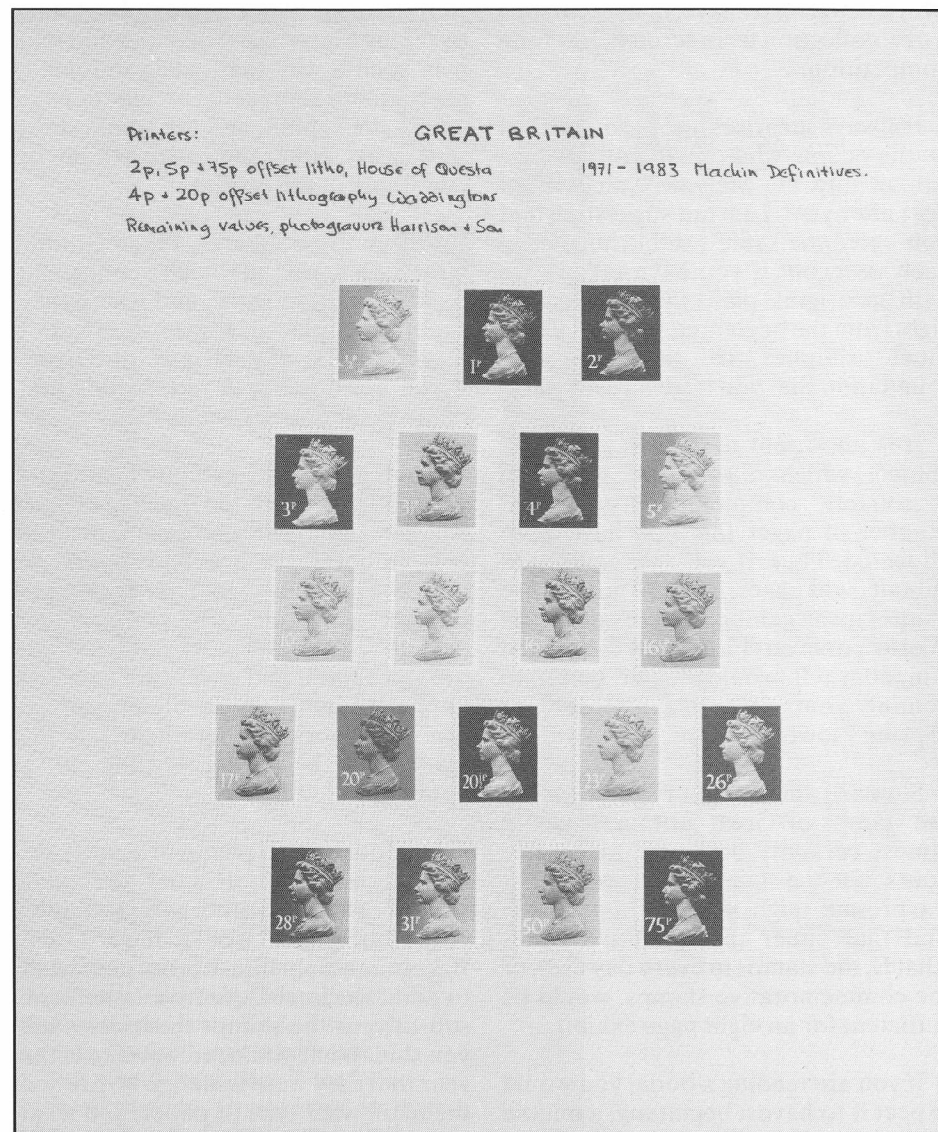
Your stamps and covers are the most important items on the album leaf, so wherever possible, let them tell the story and keep the writing to a minimum.

Obviously, your page will need a title. Let us take the decimal definitive stamps of Great Britain as an example. All your pages would have Great Britain as a main title. It is not necessary to add "Decimal Definitive Issue" as a sub-title, as the stamps themselves tell you this. What you need to write is the year that they were issued, who printed them, on what type of paper, and what

gum was used, as this type of information cannot readily be seen by looking at the stamps. You will also need to give details of the perforations, phosphor bands and watermark, if any.

You will not need to identify colours, unless a value was printed in several shades of the same colour.

If you look at the rules of most



competitions organised in the United Kingdom, you will find that the total number of marks that can be achieved is 100. The marks are generally divided into Philatelic Knowledge, Originality, Importance and Development of the Subject, Condition and Presentation.

The number of marks for each section will vary from competition to competition, but it is safe to say that the marks allotted for "Presentation" will be less in the older age groups than for the younger category.

Equally, one would expect an older person to have more philatelic knowledge, so marks would be allocated accordingly.

We have discussed "Condition" in the first chapter, and in the next chapter we will take a closer look at "Presentation", so let us now discuss the other two areas where marks can be gained or lost, namely "Originality" and "Philatelic Knowledge".

Let us consider the flower theme again for a moment. To show all the flowers produced on the stamps of Great Britain in order of their date of issue is neither original, nor does it tell a story. To show flowers that are grown in greenhouses and surround them by drawings of greenhouses may be original, but the result could well be very messy.

However, if your theme is "British Flowers", on a page devoted to daffodils, stamps issued by many different nations could be included showing this pretty Spring flower. This would be a more original way of pre-

senting the theme, and it would also show philatelic knowledge, since it would be necessary to search through the catalogue to find examples from different countries.

If you are planning a thematic collection, it is always better to choose as a subject something in which you are interested and in which you already have some knowledge. It is much easier to start a thematic collection about flowers if you are a keen gardener or about fishes if you are a keen angler.

Philatelic knowledge can be shown in many different ways. By using only stamps which are in prime condition, is one way of showing that you know the difference between good and indifferent copies.

Imperfector stamps should have four margins, if at all possible; where this is almost impossible because the stamps were printed so close together, a note to this effect will also display philatelic knowledge. If you are preparing an exhibit on recent Great Britain definitives, you can include covers which show the correct use of stamps with changed values that became necessary because of increased postal charges. This also shows philatelic knowledge.

Whether for a country exhibit or a thematic exhibit, try and avoid showing unaddressed or over-franked covers that have been especially prepared for collectors. It is much better to search for covers that have been commercially used and have seen genuine postal service.



# Presentation

LET us start with a blank album leaf. Choose leaves that are as plain and unfussy as possible, and avoid the temptation to draw fancy scrolls or other designs around each page. It may show that you have great artistic skill, but it detracts from the stamps.

To show your stamps off to the best advantage, choose an album leaf either in white, very pale grey or cream. Do not use black album leaves. They overpower the stamps, and some competition organisers will not accept entries mounted on black leaves. An off-white leaf can look particularly attractive with older stamps.

As I wrote in the first chapter, whether you use stamp hinges or plastic mounts for your stamps is a matter of personal choice. However, if you use transparent mounts, ensure that the stamps are inserted firmly into them.

Remember that the organisers of an exhibition are under no obligation to check your pages for you; misaligned stamps look unsightly and detract from the general appearance of the exhibit.

If you are using mounts with a black backing, make sure that these are cut evenly and as close to the stamps as possible. Thick, unevenly cut mounts, whether black or any other colour, look ugly.

Whether using hinges or plastic mounts, make sure that your stamps are stuck straight onto the pages, and mounted evenly apart. Only use different spacings between your stamps when you wish to emphasise differ-

ences, such as different printings or another issue.

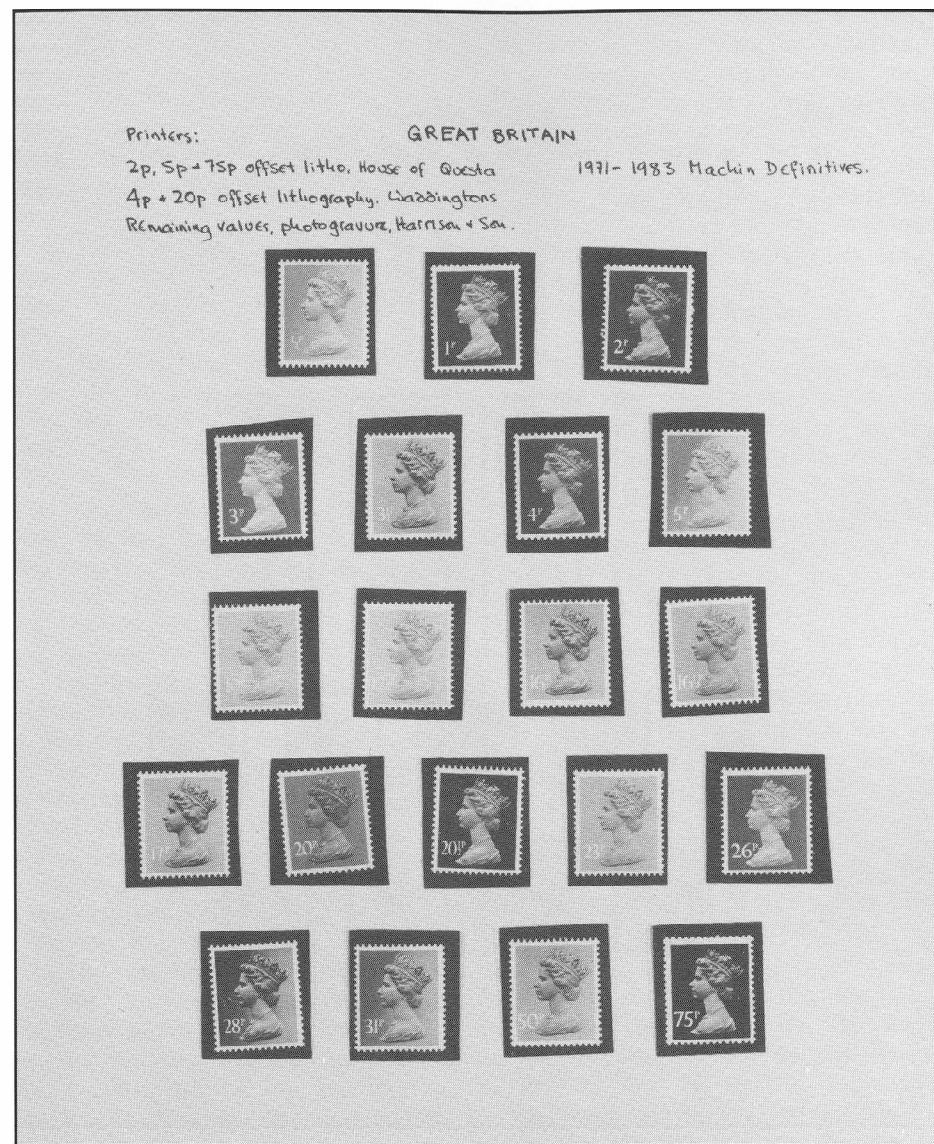
Instead of using a mount, you may like to consider using a fine pen or pencil line around each stamp. It does set them off very well, but make sure that the lines finish neatly at the point of each corner. Make sure that you avoid using different coloured pencils for doing this, as it detracts from the stamps.

Whatever type of presentation you choose, always remember that the most important things on your album leaf are your stamps and your covers. I cannot stress this strongly enough.

Today there is no excuse for an entry that is badly written up. Not all of us are blessed with good writing that comes naturally. However, I believe that most of us can improve our writing with practice, and a good mapping pen.

If, nevertheless, you believe that beautiful writing is completely beyond you, there are many typewriters on the market today which have a pleasing type-face. Stencils and dry transfer lettering are attractive alternatives.

Grey or black ink is always acceptable, and it might be worth experimenting with brown ink if you are using a cream album leaf; but apart from brown, avoid using coloured inks. At all costs, avoid underlining in red to stress a point, as it can look very untidy. It is much better to add emphasis by using a slightly larger script, or by using capital letters.



*Black surrounds to your stamps can look attractive, and can bring out the colours of your stamps to better advantage, as well as clearly identifying the perforations. But if you are not careful these black margins can look very ugly, as in the example above.*



Printers:

# GREAT BRITAIN

2p. 5p + 75p offset litho. House of Gesta.

1971-1983 Machin Definitives.

4p + 20p offset lithography. Waddingtons.

Remaining values, photogravure, Harrison & Son



*If you ensure the margins are narrow and even, a most attractive looking page of stamps can be achieved. You will need to take extra care cutting the black mounts for your stamps (and be careful not to damage any stamps) but the result is well worth the trouble and effort.*

Try to cut out unnecessary wording as much as possible. Avoid starting sentences by saying "This cover shows...". That it is a cover, is obvious; that you are showing it to make a point should also be obvious. Simply explain the necessary markings.

It is not always possible to keep a description to a few, well-chosen words. When it is necessary to write a few lines, it is better to write eight short lines than four long ones. Short lines are easier for the eye to read, and do not have the effect of cutting the page in half.

It is also much better to arrange your write-up in small blocks than in one large mass, but it is only possible to do this if you plan your whole page in one go.

Try to avoid arranging your stamps in uninspiring uniform rows which produce square blocks. It is much better, and looks much more interesting, if you can vary the length of your rows, particularly with large sets. However, unduly fancy patterns are equally to be avoided in a well presented exhibit.

An important principle is to keep the "weight" towards the bottom of each page. For example, if you are showing stamps and a cover on the same page, it will visually appear top heavy if the cover is at the top of the page and the stamps are below. By the same rule, unless it is unavoidable, it is usually better to have a long row of stamps near the bottom of the page and a single stamp at the top, rather than the other way around.

If you are showing several pages

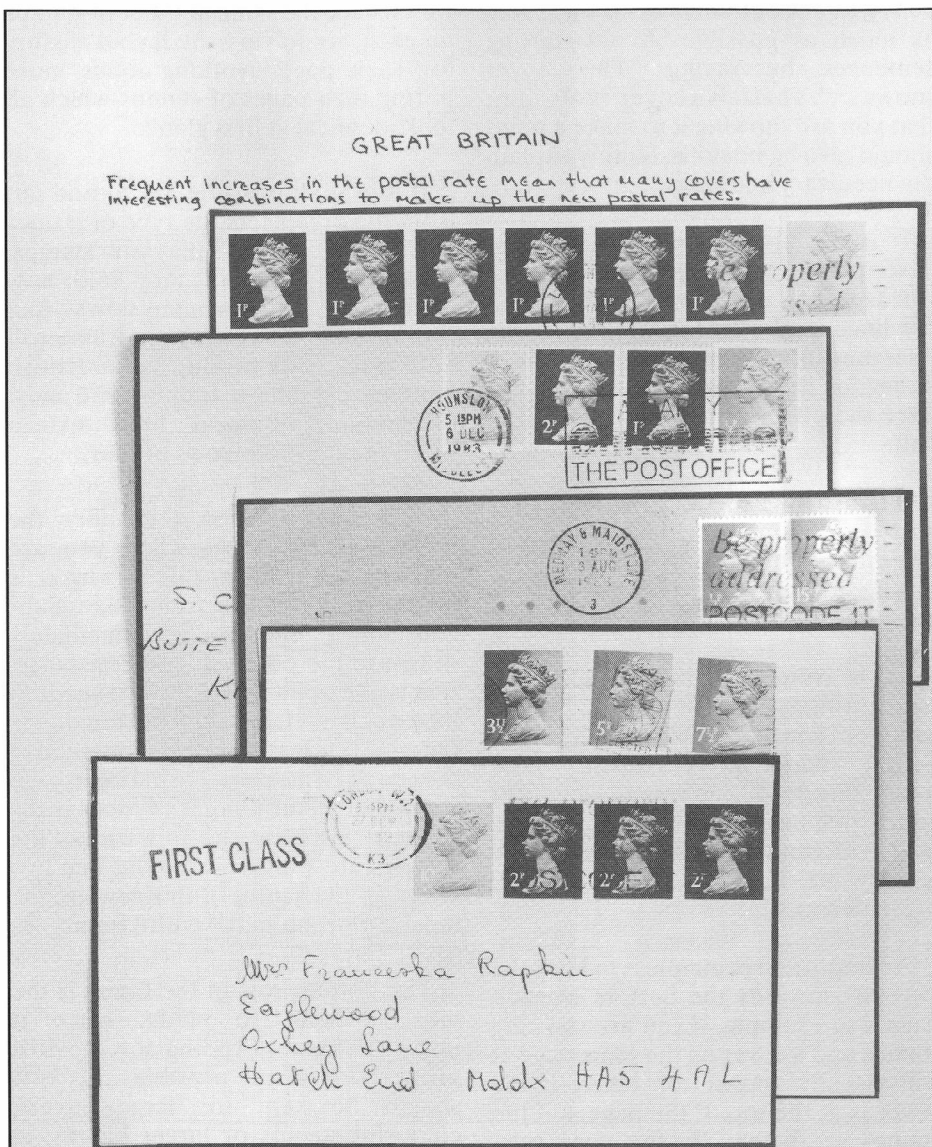
which have the same number of stamps on each, try to vary the layout slightly for each page. Nothing looks more boring than pages of stamps which all look identical at first glance.

If it is at all possible, try to find out from the organisers the type of frames that they will use to display your stamps. How many pages will they hold; how many across, and how many down? As a general rule, a twelve page frame will hold three rows of four pages. British national exhibition frames (and most international frames) hold sixteen pages, namely four rows of four.

It is important to remember the impact at eye level when you are planning an exhibit; this is why it is helpful to know the frame size. Subconsciously, the eye is immediately drawn to the point of least resistance, that is, the point where the eye needs to look neither left nor right, up nor down. On an album leaf, this point is just above the centre of the page. On a sixteen page frame, the natural point of focus is the second row from the top, unless the viewers are giants or dwarfs. The two sheets in the centre of this row are the most important in the entire frame.

The bottom row in the frame is the most difficult to study, since it invariably means bending down to do it properly. If at all possible, this row should be kept for large covers, colourful stamps or larger blocks; in other words, items which draw the eye, in spite of its natural inclination.

Try to avoid overcrowding your pages. Four squares of a quadrille album leaf, approximately half an inch, should, if at all possible, be allowed



Envelopes, known to collectors as 'covers', need to be carefully arranged. Overlapping as shown here is acceptable, but in this case too many covers have been placed on the page, spoiling the effect, making the page look overcrowded.

between each stamp. If the stamps are crowded too closely together, they do not have a chance to "breathe".

It is better to mount a long set of stamps over two album pages than to crowd them onto one page, even though it is preferable that each page should be complete within itself.

The same rule applies to covers. One large cover and its write-up is sufficient on one page, and unless you are showing only the cancellations on covers and are covering up the rest, more than two covers or cards should not be shown on one page. Try to avoid producing repetitive layouts of covers or cards on successive sheets; undue regularity can detract from the overall attractiveness of an exhibit.

Sometimes, to make a point more clearly, it is necessary to use coloured arrows. Use these very sparingly. Nothing looks worse than a page covered in little red arrows! If you must use more than one, avoid sticking them on at different angles. If you can point out the differences in a few well-chosen words, so much the better. Another alternative, favoured by many experienced collectors, is to use the letter "O" from dry transfer letters and place this on the exhibition protector or plastic stamp mount. Do not use dry transfer lettering directly onto your stamps, as it will permanently damage them.

At other times, it may be desirable to draw a map or a diagram to illustrate a point more clearly. These should always be kept as small as possible without losing clarity and with only the

relevant parts included. Other than for postal history exhibits, where postal documents may need to be shown, avoid showing any non-philatelic items. They are fine for your collection, or for a society display, but unless their inclusion can be justified, they should be avoided in a competitive exhibit.

If you are using fine pencil lines around your stamps and covers, make sure that you use a similar style of presentation on all the pages of your exhibit. Exhibits which have black mounts on some pages and no mounts on others, look untidy. The same rule applies to your writing up. Be consistent. If you do your titles in black ink in block capitals, keep this style throughout your exhibit.

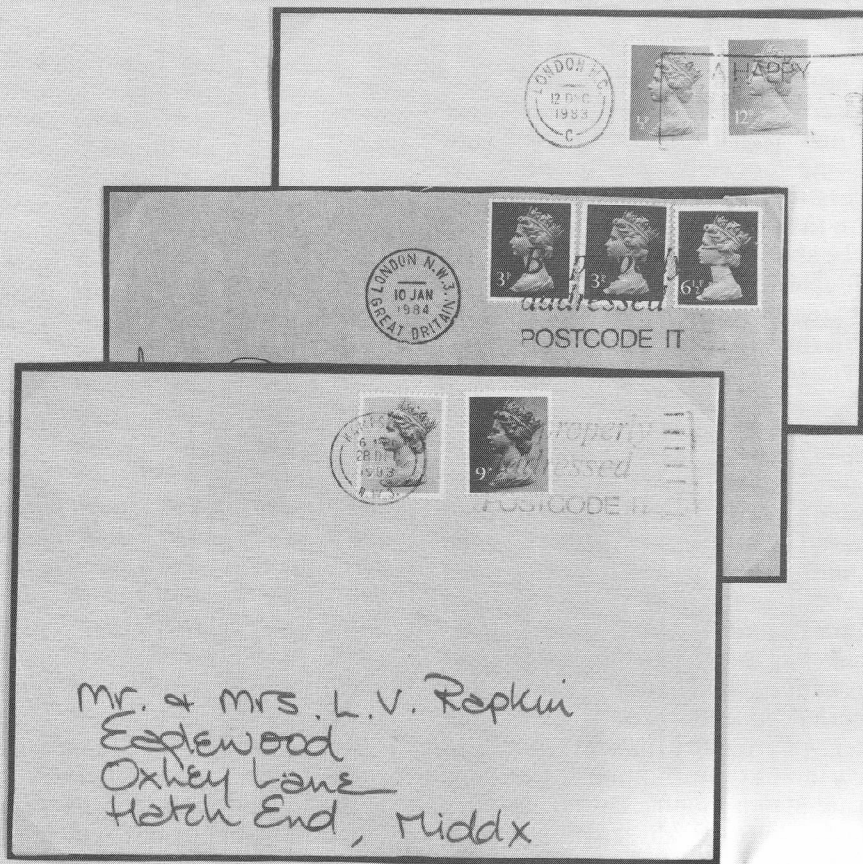
Make sure that you use the same type of album leaf and in the same colour throughout your exhibit. Otherwise your entry will look as though you took pages at random out of your collection. If the competition is worth entering, it is worth taking the time and making the effort to create an exhibit especially for it; even if it means rewriting and remounting some of your collection.

Check your spellings! You will be surprised how many otherwise fine exhibits are marred by consistent poor spelling. If it happens once or twice within an exhibit, it will probably be overlooked, but if there are spelling mistakes on many pages, the judges are likely to pass some comment and many deduct a few marks, especially if the mistakes occur on some important philatelic terms which the competitor should know.



## GREAT BRITAIN

Frequent increases in the postal rate mean that many covers have interesting combinations to make up the new rates.



*Fewer covers look much better. Obviously when overlapping you will be careful not to hide any important postmarks, stamps or other markings. Occasionally, you may be able to show one or perhaps two covers on your page, so as to avoid hiding any aspect of importance.*

## What is a good exhibit?

I believe that the first criteria of a good exhibit is that it should catch the eye, whether it is that of the judge, or of the visitor to the exhibition.

It will do this if it is clean, well mounted and well arranged. Beyond the superficial first glance, a good exhibit is one where the collector makes the most of the material that he is showing; by the way the story unfolds, and by the philatelic knowledge shown in the writing up.

A good exhibit will have a beginning, a middle and an end, but unlike a book, the stamps and other philatelic material rather than words will supply the story.

As far as the judges for the Melville National Youth Stamp Competition are concerned, I believe that the first impression is vitally important. If the exhibit is pleasing to the eye, the judges will wish to look again. Unless the material itself is outstanding (and in

junior competitions no marks are awarded for rarity), an untidy and badly presented entry will fall by the wayside very early in the judging procedure. It is only natural. We all like to look at pretty objects; why should judges be different from the rest of us?

Most judges like to have a quick look at all the entries in a class to get an overall impression of the general standard of the exhibits. It is very important your entry gets beyond this first thinning-out process if you are aiming for one of the higher awards.

If you have studied this booklet, and heeded the advice given, there is no reason why your entry should not be among those selected by the judges for a higher award.

In the final analysis, however, we collect stamps for our own pleasure, and if, in gaining pleasure ourselves we also give pleasure to others, that is an added bonus.



# What do the judges look for?

FOR those planning to exhibit internationally (and indeed nationally) it is well worth knowing the many aspects which the judges consider when reaching their decisions.

In the case of Traditional, Postal History and Aerophilatelic exhibits, the judges would look at the following:

## Presentation

- Has a title page been provided?
- Is there an attractive balance between the stamps and the writing up on the pages?
- Has the mounting been carried out well (particularly when using plastic mounts or drawing borders around stamps)?
- Does the writing up show correct spelling and good use of the language?
- Is the writing up clean and neat?
- Is there a good general impression conveyed by the entire exhibit?

## Philatelic material

- Is the relative condition of the stamps and other items good?
- Are the cancellations clean?
- Are any unusual philatelic items included?

## Philatelic treatment

- Has the collection been well developed?
- How difficult is such a collection to compile?
- Has the exhibitor conducted his own research?

## Philatelic Knowledge

- Has the exhibitor demonstrated a basic and special philatelic knowledge?
- Items shown which have been sent through the post should carry stamps for the correct postage rate for the item, bearing in mind from where it was sent, its weight, the method of posting, and the address.
- Has the exhibitor specialised in one or more stamp issues in the exhibit?

In the case of Thematic exhibits, the criteria would be:

## Presentation

Has a title page and a *separate* page showing the Plan of the collection been included? (*Although a title page and separate Plan are required for thematic entries in the Youth Class of international exhibitions, a combined title page and Plan is acceptable at national exhibitions.*)

- Is there an attractive balance between the stamps and writing up on the pages?
- How well has the mounting been carried out (particularly in relation to the use of plastic mounts, line-drawn borders around stamps and so on)?
- Is the writing up correctly spelt and does it reveal a correct use of the language?
- Is the writing up clean and neat?
- Is the overall impression of the exhibit good?

## Treatment of the theme

- Has the exhibitor developed his collection in the manner outlined by the Plan?
- Does the exhibitor reveal a thorough knowledge of the theme?
- How good and appropriate is the writing up in relation to the theme?
- How difficult is the particular theme?
- How well has the collection been developed bearing in mind the chosen theme and the material which is available?

## Philatelic material and knowledge

- Is the condition of the stamps and other material good, particularly bearing in mind their scarcity?
- Are there cancellations shown which are relevant to the theme?
- Has basic and special philatelic knowledge been demonstrated?
- Have any particularly unusual items been included which are relevant to the theme?

The above is in fact only a list of the main headings which the judges consider; under each heading there are further aspects under consideration, among which are:

- are the sheets overcrowded or too bare
- do the stamps have all their perforations, are they well centred, without tears, thins, folds and so on
- are the cancellations clean, and has the exhibitor tried to avoid 'cancelled to order' is a mixture of material shown (in other words, not just stamps)
- is it obvious that the exhibitor has read a great deal philatelically, or has he simply referred to a stamp catalogue
- are variations in the stamps noted, such as perforation, paper, watermark, shades, printings, errors and varieties?

While each of these aspects may only account for one or two marks, such marks quickly add up, and can easily mean the difference between one medal and the next.