

WETS

Newsletter No 6 Autumn 1998

YOUR SWAPS

We all have stamps that are surplus to our collection, we get sets of stamps where we only want some of them or collections which leave us with a shoe box or a stock book or a glory hole of material which we regard with disdain but which may well be just what someone else is desperate for. There is a way of doing something about it.

We have a letter from Wendy Buckle who is the Auctioneer for the British Thematic Association.

She writes:-

"I am writing to you to ask for your help in advertising our twice yearly auction. Any member of any Society affiliated to the BTA is able to use the auction for either purchases or sales, and we would welcome vendors or buyers from amongst your members. Auctions are held in July and January. All sorts of material is put up for sale - stamps, covers, booklets, meter marks, postcards, ephemera; if it illustrates a theme we'll sell it. If you would like to buy or sell, please contact:-

Wendy Buckle

71 Churchward Avenue

SWINDON

Wiltshire SN2 1NW

Telephone 01793-431783 (evenings or weekends; or email

buckle@rmcs.cranfield.ac.uk

Copies of auction catalogues will be sent to any member who requests one"

COMING EVENTS

DARTMOOR LODGE

The 1999 WETS Day @ Dartmoor Lodge - please note that the date is now **Saturday March 6th 1999** when the

speaker will be Frank Jones with a "Philatelic Miscellany". See the booking form attached.

ROAD SHOW

This is a new venture where we take a very varied Thematic Show to any Club in the South West which asks for it. The current show will be continued until next May and we will then put together ROAD SHOW II which will be available from September 1999 onwards. To assemble such a show we need 128 sheets and we would be very pleased to hear from any members who would lend displays of up to 8 sheets. Please get in touch with Alison Burden, Mary Claydon or Lesley Marley if you can help.

The current show can be seen at

Exmouth 17th November 1998

Mid Devon 1st December

Liskeard 27th January 1999

Bodmin 9th February

Minehead 9th March

Tiverton 5th May

SOME THOUGHTS ON THEMATIC COLLECTING

I am sure many thematic collectors, like me, have started collecting this way because the idea of telling a story through their stamps and other philatelic material appealed to them more than the usual collecting by country, or specialising in one aspect of postal history.

To me it still is a much more fascinating way of collecting but as I have gone on with my own collection I have realised there are some pitfalls on the way.

First the question of what theme? All right we all know we do well to choose a subject in which we are already

interested and about which we have some prior knowledge. This does not guarantee successful collecting. There must be sufficient material available to tell our story coherently. Thousands of stamps have been and still are being produced - it is amazing how few of these will actually enable us to tell our story. As for finding postal history items, really good covers, booklets etc. - it is like searching for gold.

O.K. Now we have amassed what we think is enough starting material - now to get down to writing up our sheets. At this point I should say when we have this starting material, think again - double or treble this amount and you might be ready to get under way. Of course, now we need a title. Here again care is needed.

Perhaps we want to tell the story of apples - all about their roots, the earth they grow best in, the planting of the trees, the nurturing of the crop - and that is it. Now, let us suppose instead of entitling our collection "The Story of Apples" we called it "Eve's Temptation of Adam" - now think where that could lead you. Or enthusiastic beer drinkers might like to tell the story of their favourite tippie and call their collection "The Production of Beer". However, if the title was "The Story of Brewing" - now that includes not only beer but tea, coffee and many other beverages no doubt and a whole new world opens up. Have I made you think or put you off completely?

TOWNS

An article recently appeared in "Themescene" the bulletin of the British Thematic Association, written by Francesca Rapkin on the subject of the German city of Frankfurt and its thematic application.

She outlined its history including some of the major events to occur there and

illustrated the article with relevant stamps and postmarks.

We see many excellent Postal History presentations referring to towns and villages but rarely a thematic study.

I have attempted to include the French town of Versailles into my work as it is the birthplace and residence of Pierre Béquet the artist. Versailles is rich in culture and great events - the home of the French monarchs and elections and treaties that have taken place over the years. Research and the comparison of dates is all important. For example, Pierre was born in 1932 and it happens that President Lebrun was elected the same year and a number of covers were issued bearing "Congres" cancellations. A look at a list of early engravings by the artist reveals a number of places used as subjects, one of which is Trianon, a small palace in the gardens of the main chateau dating from the 17th century. Again there are a number of stamps and illustrated covers of the location. As you can see, the study of the artist becomes a study of the town.

I am confident that this development of a theme can be applied to many other subjects. The admirers of Czeslaw Slanis would have a field day with material from Poland, Austria and Sweden to use. New York city appears on a number of stamps from different countries; so how about it?

HELP PLEASE!!

This Newsletter is looking for articles from members. As this is being typed, there are now no articles "in the pipeline". We appeal to members to send us any interesting or entertaining or provocative item with a thematic nature. Alison Burden is waiting for your contributions.