

WETS

Newsletter No 1 Spring 1996

The West of England Thematic Society
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Subscription £1.50 per annum.

Programme for each year:-

Open all day meeting with speaker in
April.

Two members' meetings - venues advised.

New members always welcome.

MY CHOICE OF THEME

My interest in thematics was not immediate. More than 30 years ago I was a "one country man" who collected the stamps of France. I collected all the new issues at the time and later attempted to amass most of the pre-war issues in unmounted mint state on the recommendation of the author of a magazine article. - some of the best advice ever given. French stamps of the 50's and 60's contained many colourful sets of famous people, scenes and other topics and I was pleasantly surprised that some of the earlier issues were similar.

One day, as I was casually looking through an album, a designer's name "GANDON" kept catching my eye on stamps over a very long period. Could it be the same man? How old must he be? How many other stamps had he been involved with? These were a few questions that crossed my mind. In curiosity I decided to write to him via the French Postal Museum in Paris. Not long after, a reply came, "Monsieur Gandon will be pleased to answer your questions", and my interest in the work of the designer was born.

According to Gandon, only one person, from Japan, had a complete collection of his stamps which, at that time, totalled over 850. I decided to take the plunge and attempt to do the same, from France to French Colonies, to Monaco, to First Day Cover designs - it seemed endless. The more difficult stamps were financed from the sale of my early material and in 1983 I first displayed part of my collection. I have accumulated a number of appraisals, one I will never forget and which offers advice to anyone searching for a theme is "Try to find something that no-one else has thought of, display it, add to it and take it as far as possible; then you can call it your own". True words. Should I ever get fed up with thematics I will have a number of Gandon's definitive issues to display in General Competitions!

David Roseveare.

OUR FIRST OPEN MEETING

Some of you could not come to our meeting at Buckfastleigh on Saturday 10th November. For those who were unable to attend, a few notes on how we got on may interest you. Even those who did come may like to be reminded of some of the things that happened. Everyone was asked to fill in a questionnaire so that the organisers could work out what was most wanted. The answers to the questions were very helpful and very interesting.

Question. How many meeting a year would you attend in addition to the Thematic Day at Ashburton in April?

Answers

- 1 meeting - 1 "yes".
- 2 meetings - 5 "yesses", of which two said "provided one meeting further west".
- 2 or 3 meetings - 2 "yesses", of which one said "one meeting further west"
- 3 meetings - 2 "yesses" of which one asked for a meeting at Exeter.
- 3 or 4 meetings - 1 "yes", no provisos.
- 4 or more - 4 "yesses" - travel anywhere.

Proposed Action

We will try and arrange two meetings a year, apart from the Thematic Day at Ashburton in April. One meeting is likely to be at Liskeard on the same day as the Cornwall Federation Exhibition and one east of Exeter. We think we should discover how these are supported before we go any further.

Question. Would you write articles for the Newsletter?

Answers. 7 "yesses" and 4 "perhapses"

Proposed Action Roll up!!! Roll up!!!

Question. Would you support a dealer at informal meetings?

Answers. Very nearly everybody said "yes".

Proposed Action We will endeavour to get a suitable thematic dealer to come to all of our informal meetings. We think that Terry Martin with the material of Barrie Floyd went down very well.

Question. What are your Thematic Interests?

Answers. As you can imagine, many and various.

Proposed Action We will create an index of members' interests.

HOW WE STARTED

The West of England Thematic Society first met on 9th February 1985 when 11 people with Thematic interests met at a flat in Exeter. One or two meetings followed then, in November 1986, a public meeting was held in Okehampton. It was hoped that this meeting would attract more members but, unfortunately, this was not the case.

Meetings then lapsed until 1988 when 14 friends and collectors started an informal group at the house of one hospitable couple. Similar meetings followed about four times a year, with the added attraction of some superb lunches. All the lady members helped provide eatables and meetings followed which were both enjoyable and interesting.

At every meeting we set ourselves a subject for the next which we had to illustrate in however many pages we could manage. In all the years we have met no two people have ever seen the set subject in the same way. We have also had some interesting one sheet displays; some of these efforts will be

on show at Cornex next November 6th at Liskeard.

We felt that with the increasing interest in Thematics we would try an open Thematic Day with a speaker of national standing; the first of these took place at the Dartmoor Lodge, Ashburton on 17th April 1993 with Francesca Rapkin as our speaker. In the afternoon some of those attending showed some of their own collections. This has now become an annual event; we had Frank Pegley with his display "Cycling" and Margaret Morris with her display of "Astronomy". This year on 20th April, Dorothy Martin from Newcastle-on-Tyne will be our speaker with "The Impact of Christmas".

Last year we decided to widen the membership of WETS and to our delight we now have 40 plus members and are now issuing a Newsletter and planning two members meetings annually as well as the April open meeting. With the South West covering such a wide area we are hoping to have one members' meeting in the west of the area (this year at Liskeard) and one further east than Ashburton to facilitate attendance by members of the Somerset and Dorset Federation clubs.

We are a very friendly group and always extend a very warm welcome to new members. We are not in the least "high fliers"; just people interested in Thematic collecting.

We have printed a list of our Officers and quoted our subscription at the head of this Newsletter. Please contact any of the Officers for any further details you would like to know about us.

Dates to remember

1996

20th April Open Meeting at Ashburton, Dartmoor Lodge - Mrs Dorothy Martin - "The Impact of Christmas.

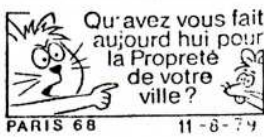
6th November 1030 Members' Meeting at Cornex - Liskeard followed by 1200 Open exhibition for the public.

PICTORIAL SLOGAN POSTMARKS

Do you only have stamps in your thematic collections?
 Have you ever thought of using other philatelic material?
 If the answer is yes to both questions why not think of using pictorial slogan postmarks.

Slogan marks were first used in Great Britain in 1917, and in the 1950's there was a rapid increase in their use. They are also used in France where they are known as Flammes. Any thematic collector will find a fertile source of material in French slogans with the additional advantage of being readily obtainable and modestly priced.

Many topics can be found among them costumes, vehicles, boats and ships, cartoon humour to promote anti litter campaigns and encouraging care in avoiding forest fires, to name but a few.



In the early 1970's a change was made to French slogans as away of overcoming the problem of slogans being used in the transposed position. The British Post Office had always argued against using slogans in this way as the dater falls across the stamp making the date difficult to read. In France this problem was overcome by putting the office name and date additionally underneath the slogan so the date can easily be read.



On the whole the French pictorial part appears to be more clean cut and the French ink seems to be slightly more grey which tends to give a neat appearance to the resulting mark, and considering of detail that is on some of the cancellations they do reproduce quite clearly.

Many other countries also produce fine pictorial post marks so get hunting you might just be able to illustrate some point of your story that cannot be found on a stamp, so rummage through the dealer's commercial cover box, they don't cater for 'Thematic Collectors' yet, so go armed with a list and have a good time and happy hunting.

