

FIP Commission for Traditional Philately

# Judging Traditional Philately

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Brasiliana  
November 2013

# Traditional Philately Seminar

- **What is Traditional Philately?**
- What is needed for a good exhibit?
- What is to be considered in judging an exhibit?
- What about necessarily unbalanced exhibits?
- What are the responsibilities of jurors?

# Traditional Philately

- Originally there were no exhibiting categories, just one large ‘pot’ of material for exhibits
- The remainder of that ‘pot’ is now **part** of Traditional Philately

# **What is Traditional Philately?**

**Usually the Study of Postage Stamps**

**and**

**Everything else that does NOT fit into any  
other exhibiting category**

**and**

**also everything else that DOES fit into any  
other exhibiting category!**

# Flexibility of Traditional Philately

Traditional Philately is the **ONLY** philatelic exhibiting Class that permits and encourages the use of **ALL** categories of philatelic material, but there is nothing that **MUST** be included

# Traditional Philately Seminar

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# Judging and Exhibiting

- Two sides of the same coin
- Same concepts apply
- Judges should also be exhibitors

# The Exhibit

- What makes a good exhibit?
- Relevant for exhibitor and juror
- What the exhibitor **explains**  
is  
what the juror **judges**



# Exhibiting and Exhibitors

- Exhibitors will almost certainly know more about the exhibit than the jurors
- Exhibitors need to clearly **explain** the exhibit to the jurors (and the public)
- Exhibiting is a learning process

# Usually Postage Stamps

- Core of the exhibit usually **postage stamps**
- It is about the need for and the development of the stamps
- The printing and issuing of the stamps
- The usage of the stamps (demonstrating why they were needed)

# Subject Choice

- Not too big and not too small
- Smaller in-depth is usually better than bigger superficial
- There is only limited space, 16 pages, 80 pages and 128 pages

# Material Choice

- Avoid duplication
- Show only items directly related to the subject
- Show only good quality material if possible
- If a very rare item is only known in poor condition, show it and **explain**
- Show clean covers with clear markings
- Make sure material is balanced and not weighted in favour of a particular stamp or stamp issue.

# Write Up

- Don't state the obvious
- Make it clear which part of the write up applies to which item
- Choose easily readable font and font sizes
- Don't write too much, just enough to **explain** key items
- Give relevant information only



The diagram illustrates the layout of a page with a frame. It features a large outer rectangle representing the page frame. Inside this frame, there is a smaller rectangle representing the content area. The text 'Running Title above frame' is positioned at the top of the page, outside the frame. The text 'Running Title inside frame' is positioned at the top of the content area, inside the frame. The text 'Overlapping Block or Cover' is positioned in the middle of the content area, overlapping the bottom of the running title area. The text 'Frame Line' is positioned at the bottom of the page, outside the frame.

Running Title above frame

Running Title inside frame

Overlapping Block or Cover

Frame Line

Page Frame and  
Running Title Restrict  
space  
(vs Running Headings)

Overlapping Blocks or  
Covers do not look  
attractive

# Running Headers

- Indicate the section or chapter
- Summarise the page content
- Keep an easy to follow logical sequence
- Makes it easy for judges to follow

# Backing and Mounting



**Damaged rare essay**

Clear mounting and a black frame is better than a black backing

Black backing or mount would draw the eye more to the damaged corner



# Mounting



Clear mount or black mount?

Black backing or fine line on the page?



Covers are not perfectly cut, so black shows any minor imperfections

# Typical Exhibit Structure

- Pre-adhesive stamp material (optional)
- Forerunner material (optional)
- Archival material if it exists for the subject
- All the aspects of the postage stamps
- The usage of the postage stamps

# Pre Adhesive Stamp Material

- Optional if exhibit is of a first stamp issue
- To demonstrate why stamp issue was needed
- Serve as **short** introduction to stamp issues (unless for a limited scope exhibit)
- Remember the exhibit is about the **stamps**

# Archival Material

Unaccepted Essay



Accepted Essay







Hand Drawn Essay

# Black Die Proof on Card



# Colour Die Proof on Paper



# The Issued Stamps

For example include:

- Singles and blocks, used and unused
- Positional pieces with printing information
- Paper types, watermarks, gums and perforations
- Errors and varieties



# Small Positional Piece



With plate number  
and error

Folded corner with  
perforation error



## Perforation Error

Best viewed with black insert behind the error

# Inverted Overprint





## Double Print Error



# Stamps Used on Cover

- To explain why particular denominations were needed
- Show their correct usage on cover or other document
- Preferably a cover or card with only that particular denomination on it
- Interesting destinations or covers help

New airmail postage rate required a new 1s  
3d stamp (possible running header)



# Stamps Used on Cover

- If the exhibit covers several issues, preferably do not put all the usage at the end of the exhibit
- It may look like two exhibits, one Traditional and one Postal History

# The Story (Treatment)

- Somewhat like a book
- Needs a title and an introduction
- Needs a cohesive story line
- Broken into sections or chapters
- Needs an appropriate beginning and ending
- Overall it needs **balance**



# Story Line (Treatment)

- Should be easy to follow and logical
- Make sure that it flows smoothly
- Must not be disjointed or erratic
- Should do what the Introductory page described

# Introductory Page

- Brief background, not a long history
- Outline the scope of the exhibit (explain what is going to be shown)
- Philatelic material or illustration (optional)
- Bibliography (for the judges)
- **Ensure that it accurately describes what is going to be shown**

# Introductory Page

for example

- Descriptive title
- Introduction having a few lines on:
  - Background (historical)
  - Background (stamps)
  - Scope of exhibit (what is being shown)
- Contents (Sections or chapters)
- References used (Bibliography)

# Balance

- Probably the most critical element
- Balance of layout (pages, frames)
- Balance over the time period
- Balance of a particular stamp or issue
- Balance of archival material, **stamps** and usage

## South Africa 1913-20 King's Head Specimen Stamps



Pairs of the original values issued in September 1913 overprinted "Specimen".



Pairs of the three later values were handstamped rather than overprinted with the word 'Specimen'. The 1½d and the 1s3d were issued in 1920, and the £1 was issued in 1916.

Balanced Page

Balanced frame  
Balanced exhibit  
Balanced time period  
Balanced material

# Beginning and Ending

- Must have logical starting and stopping point
- Preferably a powerful ending
- Do not leave viewer looking for the next frame
- Example of ending: New stamp issue

# Ending

- Not just closing off with a powerful item
- Don't leave the viewer/judge to draw conclusions
- Use a written closure to the exhibit
- Tell them why it is the end

# End Page

## The End of the Kings Head Design

South Africa decided to change the design of its postage stamps (including the dual purpose postage and revenue stamps) after nearly ten years of the original King's Head issue of 1913. For the new issue, each denomination was to be different. On 6 September 1922 De La Rue submitted 13 design proposals, lettered A to K. The ½d and 1d proposals (A and B) were again King's Heads. Ultimately three of De La Rue's proposals were chosen, but they lost the printing contract to Waterlow and Sons.



The unaccepted King's Head design proposal B for the new 1d dual purpose stamp. It is dated 6 September 1922, but in removing it from the Correspondence Book for the De La Rue Reference Collection, part of the dated corner was left behind. It can still be seen in the Correspondence Book today.

Reason: Change of a Design

Shows new, but unaccepted essay of the particular design

Explains the change to pictorial rather than King's Head stamps



# What is Judged?

- Exhibitor has the material and the knowledge, but what has been done with this?
- How clearly and concisely has the exhibit been **explained**?
- How well has the story been told?
- **That is what is judged**

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# Judging

- We have clear guidelines, but still open to interpretation
- Need objectivity rather than subjectivity
- Hence concept of teams rather than individual judges
- Jury also needs a ‘harmonisation’ process across teams

# Judging Process

- Walk through all the team exhibits
- Do the judging with team input
- Calibrate results across judged exhibits
- Calibrate results across all exhibits (not team)
- Subsequently **explain** results to exhibitor and **encourage** improvement (critique), the most important step

# Important

- Each exhibit is judged on it's own merit
- Judged against a clearly defined set of criteria
- **Not judged against other exhibits**
- Subsequent comparison to other exhibits for relativity only (calibration)

# The Point Categories

- There to help objectively evaluate different aspects of the exhibit
- Categories do not exist in isolation, but should enhance each other and are part of a whole
- Good Presentation enhances Treatment, good Treatment enhances Importance etc.

# Exhibit Judging Point Categories

- Treatment (20) and Importance (10) 30 points
- Knowledge and Research 35 points
- Condition (10) and Rarity (20) 30 points
- Presentation 5 points
- Total points 100

# Point Category Sequence?

- Why are they listed in this sequence?
- Perceived more important to less important?
- Preference is for easiest to most difficult
- This is the reverse order to the listing



# Judging Sequence

- Presentation - the appearance of the exhibit
- Condition and Rarity - the material included
- Knowledge and Personal Study - what the exhibitor has **explained** about the material
- Treatment and Importance - the story and how well it has been told

# Point Categories

- Some point categories are more easily assessed and **explained** than others:
- Presentation - more easily
- Condition and Rarity - somewhat easily
- Knowledge and Research - neutral
- Treatment and Importance - less easily

# Presentation (5 points)

- A very important element
- While not accounting for many points, it sets the mood
- A glass half full rather than a glass half empty

# Presentation

- The appearance should complement the treatment by its general layout and clarity.
- Evaluate the work put into the appearance of the exhibit from the point of view of how it facilitates the **understanding** and **attraction** of the exhibit

# Presentation - Understanding

- Is there clear connection between the philatelic material and text?
- Does font size and style of text makes it easy to read?
- Does use of tables and short paragraphs facilitates understanding?
- No excessive and irrelevant text?

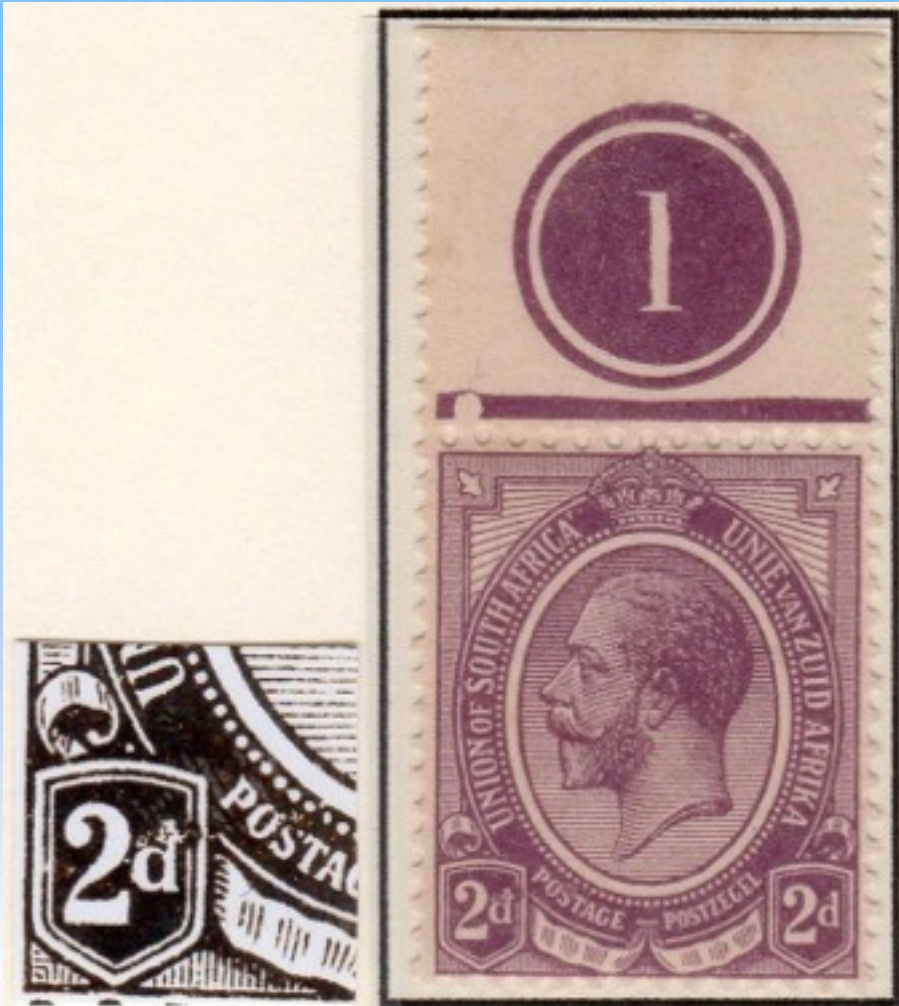
# Presentation - Attraction

- Balance on each page?
- Balance of the frame?
- Mounting neat and attractive?
- Wasted space?
  - Empty space (except where carefully used for rarity emphasis)?
  - Space filled with unrelated illustrations, maps, or other space filler techniques?

# Presentation - Attraction

- Is the **philatelic** material prominent?
- No excessive and unnecessary illustrations?
- Do illustrations dominate the page?
- Is the page layout pleasing to the eye?
- Is there variation in layout?
- Is the overall impression attractive?

# Illustration of an Error



## Example

Damaged 'd' in '2d'

Enlarged, but only relevant section shown

No bright colours  
(could be in grey?)



# Giving Points for Presentation

## Personal pointing guideline

- For a very good presentation 4 out of 5
- Only 5 out of 5 if I cannot advise the exhibitor how I believe it could be improved

# Condition (10 points)

- Early material is not usually in the same condition as more modern material
- Condition of material available for chosen subject is relevant
- Exhibit material is evaluated in this context
- Condition must be objectively evaluated



Some stamps are difficult to get with 4 margins because of limited cutting margin and non alignment.

# Condition

- Is material of the best possible quality?
- Is ordinary material without defects?
- Are more difficult items the best available?
- Are postmarks clear and covers clean ?
- Are there tears, folds, stains, or missing perforations?

# Condition Context - Stamp Usage



Interesting Postal  
History usage, poor  
Traditional usage

Not the rate the  
stamp was intended  
for

Damaged stamp

# Rarity (20 points)

- Rarity and value are not the same
- Rarity is about the numbers available and desirability
- Are the known rarities of the subject exhibited and described?
- Rarity should be evaluated on what is known to exist

# Rarity

- Are examples of the major rarities and varieties shown?
- Are essays and proofs (if they exist) shown?
- How difficult is it to find the items shown?
- How difficult will it be to duplicate the exhibit?

# Rarity

- Does the exhibitor **explain why** an item is rare?
- Consider **only** what the exhibit contains
  - Only ordinary material cannot get high points
  - Many rare items should get high points

# Relative Rarity

- Major rarities
- Important rarities
- Minor rarities



# Relative Rarity

- Based on general interest and desirability
- For stamps this tends to be more visual than some other categories
- Desirability and demand are enhanced when the rarity reason is more visible

# Relative Rarity - Visual



# Relative Rarity - Context

## Basutoland Official Stamps Usage

Basutoland decided to follow what several other countries did and overprint stamps for official use. These stamps were intended for government officials to use on external mail sendings, as local official mail was sent free of charge.



An Official cover sent from Maseru to the Director of the Colonial Office Library in London. This was sent at the external rate of 2d for the first ounce.

These were prepared without the consent of the High Commissioner, and were not sold to the public. There were 300 each of ½d, 1d, 2d and 6d overprinted. They were supplied in January 1934 for use by the Secretariat in Maseru. Limited usage is recorded between 28 February 1934 and 8 June 1934. The issue was then withdrawn and the remainders destroyed. Only the following numbers were issued, 24 of the ½d, 34 of the 1d, 54 of the 2d and 27 of the 6d. It is believed that some 10 of each are unused copies.

Basutoland Traditional exhibit: very rare stamps correctly used

Basutoland Postal History exhibit: very ordinary rate and destination with very rare stamps

Much greater rarity in the Traditional context than the Postal History context

# Philatelic Knowledge and Personal Study (35 points)

- Having knowledge is not enough
- Need to **demonstrate** knowledge
- Research shown wherever possible
- **Explanation**, analysis and new facts

# Knowledge and Treatment

Knowledge is what is **known**  
about what is shown

Treatment is what is **done** with  
what is shown

# Philatelic Knowledge Demonstrated?

- Is there evidence of the understanding of the literature for the subject?
- Are the numbers printed recorded?
- Are watermarks, perforations, paper etc described?
- Has research and/or analysis been done?
- Does the choice of items reflect knowledge?
- Are descriptions of rates and usage correct?
- Are unusual items correctly described?

# Knowledge

- Implicit Knowledge - Material selected?
- Explicit Knowledge - **Explanations** and analysis?
- Research & Personal Study - New Information?

# Explicit Knowledge

- Does the write-up describe the important and relevant facts of each item shown?
- Are lengthy write-ups of primary and especially secondary information avoided?

Write-up that only states the obvious and nothing else will **not** score well for knowledge points



# Explicit Knowledge Example



Triangular punch hole on 4d Courier stamp



### Triangular punch hole on 4d Courier stamp

Believed to be a form of control used by a settler at Campbell Town. Known on covers addressed to government officials or solicitors. All recorded items are cancelled by the numeral 18 canceller between May and October 1855.

**Recorded on 3 covers and this piece.**

# Personal Study and Research

- A relatively new subject should have personal study and be given credit for this
- For a more developed subject the amount of personal study is shown by the grasp and the analysis of the literature

# Treatment (20 points)

- Is the title and exhibit consistent?
- Does the exhibit show what the introductory page described?
- Is the subject appropriate?
- Coverage of the subject (comprehensive)?
- Balance, balance and balance!

# Treatment

- Focus – are different stamp issues and aspects covered by the exhibit? (archival, issued stamps, errors and varieties, usage)
- Consistency – is there balance across stamp issues and stamp aspects?
- Scope – is the exhibit scope clear and logical?
- Subject Development – does it match the scope?

# Treatment - Scope

- Are there well defined **start** and **end** points? (like a new stamp issue)
- Is stamp issue coverage well defined? (what is included, provisional stamps, postal fiscals etc.)
- Is geographic coverage well defined? (changing state names or boundaries)

# Treatment - Development

- Is there section or chapter balance?
- Is this logically based on the exhibit subject?
- Is there too much or not enough material to properly **explain** the subject?

# Treatment - Development

- Is the structure and sequence appropriate?
- Is the sequence clearly defined?  
(chronological)
- Are there any **unexplained** gaps?



# Treatment - Development

- Is the appropriate material selected?
- Is the material adequate to **explain** the subject?
- Are there few or no redundant examples - including rarities?
- Is it missing important items?

# Importance (10 points)

- This is in part philatelic importance (or significance) of the subject
- Involves general philatelic interest and difficulty of the subject
- Also in part exhibit content in relation to the subject (how comprehensive is it?)

# Importance

- How difficult is the selected subject?
- What is the significance of the selected subject compared to the national philately of the country?
- What is the significance of the selected subject compared to world philately?
- How comprehensive is the material shown compared to the selected subject?

# Importance - Example

Total 10 points

Unofficial personal guideline:

- 5 points for general philatelic significance
- 5 points for the content within that choice
- Even if low significance (say 3 points), but comprehensive content (say 5 points), total 8

# Importance - Time Period

Philately of a country founded within a later time period is as important as the philately of an earlier one - as are later issues compared to earlier ones

# Importance - Scope

Broad scope subjects can be more important than narrow scope subjects. **However**, treatment of broad scope exhibits is more difficult.

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# **Unbalanced Exhibit**

**No one should be excluded  
from exhibiting their  
collecting passion!**



# Passion of the Collector

- Must always be allowed to exhibit his or her passion in some exhibiting Class
- A small, or short lived country, or issue may not have enough of any specific philatelic material for a good exhibit
- Can always exhibit in Traditional Philately, but will have lower points for Treatment if there is an imbalance

# Examples

- Small Country: Samoa
- Short lived country: Zululand
- Narrow issue: Cape Triangulars

# Zululand

- Traders and missionaries before 1879
  - Anglo Zulu War of 1879
  - Zululand a Crown Colony 1887
  - Overprinted British/Natal stamps
  - One Zululand issue
  - Zululand annexed as part of Natal 1897
- 
- A 10 year life and two stamp issues

# 1881 Missionary Mail



# It all comes down to the story and how well it is told (the treatment)

- Knowledge (20) and Research (15)      35 points
- Condition (10) and Rarity (20)      30 points
- Presentation points      5

# **It all comes down to the story and how well it is told**

- Importance (10): Unaffected by imbalance
- Treatment (20 points): imbalance will lose points
- But well told story will minimise the loss of points
- Such an exhibit can still score well in Traditional Philately.

# Conclusion

- Since such a Zululand exhibit can still score very well in Traditional Philately
- The same is true for all small, or short lived, countries or small issue exhibits

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# Jurors Responsibility

- To be liberal in interpreting the regulations
- To give the exhibit as shown the highest possible award
- To give helpful and positive feedback
- To help the exhibitor improve and achieve an even better result

# Jurors Responsibility

- The subject is the exhibitors passion
- With very few exceptions, exhibitors knowledge will be greater than the jurors
- Help the exhibitor to portray that knowledge and tell a good story in an attractive way
- In other words, to help the exhibitor improve and get the highest award possible

# Judges Responsibility

Judges responsibility is to  
**ENCOURAGE** and **GROW**  
exhibiting

# Traditional Philately Seminar

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# **Thank you for listening**

- Questions are welcome