



Spring is doing its springy stuff, the garden is in bloom, and a young mans fancy turns to thoughts of love.

An old mans fancy turns to thoughts of stamp designs, picture cards and strange things being constructed in the workshop.

Plans are being formulated for the Birthday Bash in July and to make an extra mark of the occasion (when I say 'mark' think along the lines of the sort of mark cats leave!)

well to MARK the occasion I am planning a little bit of sculpture.

Not your usual kind, onaplinth-vine leaves over the floppy parts- eckcetera ...

No, more of a 'Heath Robinson' way of delivering mail.

This will be a prize in one of the LBEs marking the anniversary and it will be a 'one off'

A bit like all of you lot really,

A bit on the Heath Robinson side and very definitely one offs.

toodle-pip

Zernard.

## Welcome to Issue 18

In this issue we bring you results of the last competition, a report of the recent Oz Con, how to avert stamp theft and its influence on our new special offer, the truth behind Treacle Mines, and an all-new Auction Watch price update.

## A Grand Result

We are grateful to everyone who bought one (or more) of the Truly, Madly, Pensively octagonal hare stamps. Together we raised one thousand pounds for the Comic Relief charity.

#### More Good Causes

Coming soon, two new stamps sponsored by the Guild of Alchemists. As you all know, this 'tiny, despised Guild largely devotes itself to the aid of the widows and orphans of those alchemists who had taken an overly relaxed attitude to potassium cyanide'\*. One of the stamps is therefore likely to be devoted to raising money for these worthy beneficiaries.

\* From The New Discworld Companion © Terry Pratchett and Stephen Briggs

As for the other, our lips are sealed, but it is worrying to note that Bernard has been spotted crawling around church roofs.



An Extract from THE WINCANTON ENQUIRER for last week

Police are mystified as to why some thief is taking lead from church roofs in one inch squares.

Said Sergeant Grout of the Wincanton Police, 'It's a mystery, especially as the sightings are all of a stout man wearing a mask and striped jersey. Never mind the theft, how the heck does he get up on the roofs is something we can't fathom out'. Enquiries are continuing

#### More Comings and Goings

We understand that Quirm is preparing to join the Discworld postal community and will launch two new stamps in June. The Guild of Engravers and Printers may also be producing a new stamp in the coming months. The Two Shirts 2p will be withdrawn at the end of May, as will the Guild of Merchants 3p (greengrocers' stamp).

#### ADVENTURES AT THE ROO BEER BREWERY By Narelle (Kelshandra) Cairns

Mr Howler asked me to give a short report of things of a flatalist nature from the second Discworld Convention. So I, of course, leapt into action and hid under my desk while pretending to be a chicken. But then I was told that chickens can't order LBEs. So with a great sigh, I pulled out the computer to peck out a few words.



The second Australian Discworld Convention was held at RMIT Storey Hall from Feburary 27 to March 1. There were a number of familiar faces and quite a few new faces (of course given my memory, these were often the same).

There was the usual sort of insanity that one expects when two or more Discworld fans are gathered in the one location. There was the great Competition of Death (followed by the unofficial Competition of Death of Rats - who sounded most like two famous characters). Thud was played, along with several other games.

Friday night was the official opening ceremony which was unexpectedly invaded by the Monstrous Regiment. Things were soon sorted out, however, and the opening ceremony was followed by the traditional trivia contest when most of the audience can sit around and feel slightly less sad about their geeky status in the knowledge that there are people who know more obscure facts than themselves. This was followed by virtual Terry. (An interview via the clacks with Terry, not some bizarre cardboard cut out 'make your own Terry Pratchett' competition). (Notes down idea for the next convention).

Saturday had many highlights. There was a popular sword and armour demonstration by a group of historical re-enacters, the New Varangian Guard. I was able to wear an authentic styled Byzantine helmet and we learnt about the different styles of fighting possible from the period. However, thanks to the Victorian government's laws, it was not possible for any of us to hold one of the impressive swords the re-enacters brought. So instead I held a 5 foot battle axe.

The Great Debate between witches and wizards was very popular. The question, 'Is it better to mess with people's minds rather than letting out beasts from the Dungeon dimensions due to ripping holes in the space time continuiumium', was declared a victory for the witches after Granny had a word with the judge. The evening ended at dinner in which there were many excellent costumes and some rather nice wine.

But I was asked to talk about Flataly matters. The Sunday morning seemed particularly noisy for some mysterious reason but a true Flatalist will always find a way to fulfil his or rather her required duties. So with the extensive notes I had for my talk that I had carefully scrawled on the back of a few beer mats, I made my way to the Roo Beer Brewery (also known as a lecture theatre) to tell people about stamps. I confess, I was rather nervous at first about my talk. But then some people turned up and things improved significantly! While it is very hard for me to judge how things went, no one fell asleep, walked out or died. In terms of public speaking, that's probably a B+. The 50 odd LBEs that I stuffed with all the stamps I never get around to trading in for GCTS were very popular and disappeared in short order.

The one small raincloud on an otherwise fantastic event was that the stamps that the generous people at Number 41 donated arrived in traditional postal fashion. Three days late. I'm not an official convention person, nor do I play one on TV, but I suspect these will be kept for the next convention (which will be in roughly two years if the timing holds true). Stay tuned for further announcements.

All in all, the convention was great fun and a lot of laughs. If you can make it to one (not necessarily the Australian one if you are geographically challenged) then I strongly recommend it.



## ANOTHER EXCUSE TO CELEBRATE



July the 9th 2004 saw the launch of Discworld stamps and it is safe to say that no-one involved could have foreseen the impact they were to have in the five years that have followed. More of this in the July issue, but for now we can say that there will a Birthday Party here in Wincanton on Saturday July 11 and like any good fifth birthday party, there will be jelly, balloons and games. Party guests will be invited to 'Walk the Walk' to become honorary Ankh-Morpork postpersons. All are welcome, whether flatalists or not.

As readers of the Stanley Howler

Journal you will also want to know that there will be, of course, a special LBE stuffed with goodies, including a 5p postage due and an example of 'tiny' post, plus prize-winning tickets. And there will be a special stamp to mark this important anniversary which will be released on the 9th.

In the last issue, Darren Hill described various ways of protecting stamps from forgery. Steve Tandy now outlines methods to prevent their unauthorized use.

### STAMPING OUT PILFERING

A Contract of the second of th

Unused stamps could be cashed in for their face value at a Post Office. (There's a DW parallel for this with Ankh Morpork citizens paying for goods in stamps.) Government departments, local councils and commercial firms might have a large number of stamps in their offices as they were not only used for regular mail, but also for fiscal uses receipts, bills and legal documents until 1970 often needed a 2d definitive stamp to be affixed as evidence of the collection

of stamp duty. (These can be identified on loose stamps by a hand written cancellation or a company rubber stamp. Best though is to have the stamp and the document complete. They are a record of a real event in real people's lives.) These organizations didn't want their staff pilfering stamps, and the potential for temptation was removed by either overprints or perfins, as a post office would accept neither of these for cash.

Overprints are self explanatory; the commonest seen have ordinary definitive stamps with I.R. (Inland Revenue) or ARMY OFFICIAL. Others include the Admiralty and both the Boards of Trade and Education. Many local councils overprinted stamps while

bR. Breetwellan OFFICIAL

company overprints are less common and more desirable for collectors. Protected overprints were required to be licensed by the Post Office otherwise they were invalid for postage. If they were purely for fiscal use licensing did not apply. Do not confuse these with overprints on British stamps for use in the Colonies or in occupied territories.



Perfins (a contraction of 'PERForated INitials'), are perforation holes within the stamp usually with the company initials. They were first allowed by the GPO in 1868. Entire books have been written about these to help collectors identify their perfins. Examples include a single K for Kodak, GWR for the Great Western

Railway or CL for Credit Lyonaisse. Revenue stamps were also perfinned, often with a crown design. A quick search through an old stamp album could reveal some perfins. They are very numerous in terms of designs and again highly collectible.

There are other measures taken, but these are much less common, such as the printing of a company name or an advert on the back of the stamp. These are termed underprints. Lastly a few firms embossed their postage stamps, as early as 1847, with the same embossing press used to personalise their stationery. An embossed stamp on a legal document as a means of revenue collection actually dates back to the reign of George III These had a metallic royal cypher in the design.

CLEANS PROFEERS SUNL SUNL SGAF

Embossing machines continued to be used for this until fairly recently, usually producing a stamp orange, blue or grey in colour, with a value and the purpose, and frequently with the date; the machines allowed this to be dialled in. Older readers (and Bernard) may remember that bank cheques used to have a small blue oval 2d embossed stamp.

All these security devices have now largely been superseded by franking machines.

If there is any doubt about the collectibility of these stamps just Google Overprint or Perfins Society. And if anyone is really interested then small accumulations of overprints and perfins can be found on auction lists, often at a reasonable price. Loads of fun to be had sorting them out.

Steve Tandy

#### This Issue Special Offer

Inspired by Steve Tandy's suggestion, the special offer with this issue is an A5 sheet of the special Sto Lat 25p stamp which is free with this issue, but which also carries on its reverse side advertising from Mr Joe Camels, mayor of Sto Lat and manufacturer of silk parasols.



The sheet is a limited edition of 200, costs just  $\pounds 6.00$  and can be ordered through the website shop. Please quote the new password:

#### CAMELS

Advertising on the back of stamps has plenty of precedent in the Roundworld. The reverse of a sheet of New Zealand stamps from 1893 features ads for a variety of products and services, including a Christchurch dentist, Flag Brand Pickles and Crease's Dandelion Coffee. The Italian postal service was less subtle. In 1924 stamps of Victor Emmanuel III were issued with attached labels advertising Columbia gramophone records and Singer sewing machines. To ensure that the label remained attached to the stamp there was no line of perforations between them.

#### Auction Price-Watch By Gavin Arnold

The Holy Grail of Discworld Stamps has to be the Blue Triangle Sport. With just over a handful in circulation (we think!) it really is the most sought after stamp. There has been at least one private sale in the past but it has taken over four years for it to reach the auction pages. It wasn't the frenzied bidding you sometimes see for high selling items (each sold with only one bid) but the prices reached first set, then broke and re-set the price for the highest selling Discworld Stamp. The first, in early December, reached £1,250 on an open auction and was quickly followed in early January with someone using the 'Buy it Now' option to snap it up at £1,500.

I've got to say the word envy doesn't even come close to describing my feelings towards the buyers, but at that price it really is out of my price range (and of many other collectors I suspect). Imagine the question... 'Do we have a family holiday this year, or do I buy the Blue Triangle Sport?' Hmmmm! What you need to remember is that these came out of a £5 LBE, just like many other sports.

While the Blue Triangle Sports fetched an exceptional price, other Discworld Stamps items have also fetched impressive prices over the last six months, with the best of the bunch given in the list opposite. These sales contributed to a bumper crop with 735 lots going for a total of just over £ 10,500 (£ 10,666.69 to be precise) over the last six months. Did anyone mention that we are in a recession?

The big attraction for the new collector must be the packs of assorted stamps that are now a regular feature. These packs, which sometimes include sports and occasionally something really special such as a single oversized flagrant cabbage, have been selling for anything from to 99p to £13 depending on the number and rarity of the stamps. Similar packs of empty LBEs have been selling for between 99p for four up to £20 for a near complete collection. Single empty LBEs are selling for around the 99p mark.

When buying on-line please remember that postage can considerably add to the cost of your winning bid, anything from 45p to  $\pm$  5.60 an item (although on the odd occasion it may even be free). While some postage might seem excessive (especially  $\pm$ 5.60 for an item that was only ever going to sell for around 99p!), bear in mind that depending on the size of the envelope a 1<sup>st</sup> class stamp now costs 39p or 61p with Recorded Delivery costing an extra 75p on top of this.

So what's the stamp I would really like to see up for auction now? - It has to be one of the new April Fools stamps. You paid how much? but it's a blank piece of paper!

| Item   | Average<br>Price (£) | Number<br>Sold |
|--|----------------------|----------------|
| \$5 Blue Triangle Sport                        | 1375.00              | 2              |
| \$5 Blue Triangle                              | 50.25                | 6              |
| \$5 Purple Triangle                            | 17.51                | 9              |
| East Knoyle Patrician, Block of 4              | 311.61               | 1              |
| Wadfest 2006 Sport                             | 82.00                | 1              |
| Wincanton Wrinkly                              | 87.00                | 1              |
| Bad Blintz Rat Stamp (various)                 | 65.00                | 2              |
| Klatchian Foreign Legion Stamp                 | 23.27                | 5              |
| Hogswatch 2005 50p Sport                       | 45.75                | 4              |
| Lancre \$1 Artifact                            | 51.00                | 1              |
| Owlswick 50p TOA                               | 32.06                | 2              |
| Owlswick Half Penny Orange                     | 20.88                | 4              |
| Guild Of Herald Sport                          | 18.00                | 1              |
| Discworld Convention Hinckley 2006             | 20.81                | 2              |
| Assassin's Guild Antidote                      | 51.80                | 2              |
| Assassin's Guild Postage Paid Zombie           | 13.50                | 5              |
| Sto Helit 5p Green Susan                       | 14.05                | 8              |
| GCTS Customs Clearance Stamp                   | 21.61                | 1              |
| Koom Valley Joined Pair                        | 6.58                 | 2              |
| AM 10p Red                                     | 13.00                | 3              |
| Smokeless Wahoonie Sheet                       | 170.00               | 1              |
| GCTS Sheet                                     | 68.00                | 3              |
| Military Issue Patrician Booklet               | 10.58                | 6              |
| Assassins Zombie Envelope (various)            | 233.20               | 3              |
| Twinning Envelope                              | 72.05                | 2              |
| Mrs Cosmopilite Letter (various)               | 45.12                | 5              |
| Dragon Sanctuary envelope - opened (various)   | 49.04                | 16             |
| Dragon Sanctuary envelope - unopened (various) | 52.56                | 2              |
| Complete set of "Eaten By" Envelopes           | 180.00               | 1              |

Discworld Stamps Resale Price Guide (~ based on average auction prices between October 2008 and March 2009 inclusive)

### Ask Me about Treacle Mines

Treacle Mine Road, once unique to Ankh-Morpork, will shortly become a street name in Wincanton. But as Terry is quick to acknowledge, inspiration for the name came from the many legends scattered across England and recounted in the excellent publication 'Lore of the Land', written by Jacqueline Simpson (his co-author on The Folklore of Discworld) and Jennifer Westwood. Jacqueline recalls discussing with Terry how they both, as children, were told by their fathers about local treacle mines. Indeed Jacqueline's home town of Worthing claims a treacle mine at nearby Sompting in Sussex, established by Jimmy Smuggles, the town's allpurpose Jack the lad who, busy fellow, also founded a factory making handkerchiefs for weeping willows and a porridge quarry.



The village of Tadley in Hampshire prides itself on its legendary treacle mine, but there are conflicting explanations as to the source of the legend. The options include a 'large and odoriferous pig farm', a cache of waste oil dumped by US airmen from nearby Aldermaston, and abandoned gravel pits which had turned into quicksands. But according to local paper, the Reading Midweek, in 1984, 'the idea is more likely to have come from the discovery by a small boy in a garden in Back Lane of a treacle tin containing twenty-one guineas and half guineas of George III (1768-1801)'.

Sabden in Lancashire seems to take its treacle mine, on the slopes of Pendle Hill, more seriously. One local expert, Mr Bill Dewhurst, was the managing director of a toy company making figures of treacle miners, and developed a theory on the origin of the mines. Apparently the word treacle derives from the medieval Latin theracium meaning a medical antidote for snakebite, and hence any form of healing drink or ointment. Mr Dewhurst argued that there is or was a holy well with healing properties, strengthened by seepage of antiseptic pitch from nearby coal seams.

This theory is echoed in the story of the treacle mine in Natland in the Lake District. In 1211 a man searching for Roman treasure in a cavern found an ancient pot apparently filled with gold, guarded by a snake which bit his hand. He fainted, breaking the pot and releasing not gold, but golden syrup which cured his hand at once. A further search of the cave revealed a spring of treacle which brought health and wealth to the villagers for centuries.

According to 'Lore of the Land' there are at least thirty villages in Britain claiming a treacle mine, often using the story to take in gullible strangers and devising complicated stories to back up the hoax. The treacle mine in Patcham in Sussex, for example, is alleged to be the site of a fossilised field of sugar cane, buried before the Ice Age.

'Lore of the Land' is published by Penguin Reference, and covers every legend from King Arthur to Sweeny Todd, including one about Wincanton.

At Chobham in Surrey the site of a treacle mine has been claimed since the early twentieth century, if not longer. One theory dated back to the aftermath of the First World War when American (or Canadian) troops departed leaving behind a buried stockpile of supplies including drums of treacle or syrup. In time, the drums corroded, releasing sticky stuff into the local Bagshot sands.

However this story was disputed by a correspondent to the Daily Mail who claimed the mine dated much further back, to 1853 and the start of the Crimean War. More than 8000 soldiers were camped on the common before embarkation, and they left behind thirty hogsheads of molasses, each containing 56 gallons, buried underground. In 1901 the barrels burst and the ageing molasses flowed downhill, leading local people to believe a natural source of treacle had been revealed.

But treacle mines weren't just a source of health and wealth, they needed to be treated with caution. In the 1960s an elderly ex-seaman who lived in a caravan in the village of Tadley composed a long ballad on a tragedy in the mines:

'Twas on the third day of July And twelve strong men were about to die At the Tadley Treacle Mines.

They were working fast without a care When a tunnel collapsed and trapped them there At the Tadley Treacle Mines.

No noise was heard above the ground When evening came they couldn't be found At the Tadley Treacle Mines...

So gentlemen take heed I pray And do not go to work today In the Tadley Treacle Mines.





Thoughts of a **Sensive Hare** The competition in issue 17 invited readers to suggest what occupied the mind of the Pensive Hare



NATALIE SMITH SUGGESTED: 'Ah. March approaches. I wonder if I will miss out the men in white coats this year?'

JEAN TILLSON wondered if he is pensive 'because he smells Greebo approaching and the only other creature nearby is a hedgehog'.

Larry Hart thought the hare is 'thinking about the new dwarves from Meadow Bank Mines. He's heard that there were no rats, but plenty of sticks."

> STEVE JAMES THOUGHT HE MIGHT BE PONDERING AS FOLLOWS: This year is mine. At least I think it is. Enough chat chat. Pause for thought. Lucky rabbit foot? For me a pretty limp idea. Paws for thought. Let's hope this Albrecht Dürer pays plenty of green stuff.

PETER ELLIOTT'S HARE DREAMS OF FOOD AND SEX: 'Mmmm carrots... I hate February, nothing much doing, could kill some lettuce. Roll on March, now that's a month, can't wait for the ladies to come out, how about some cabbage, mmmmm...!

A SIMILAR LINE OF THOUGHT WAS ON THE MIND OF JAMES PAGE'S HARE:

'Everyone was talking about a King Carrot, so I come to Ankh-Morpork only to get a Nobby.'

The Muppets, as usual, based their funniest effort on a UK cultural icon: 'After a trivial post dinner argument with Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall about the best way to cook game, George the Hare carefully reconsidered the phrase splitting hares while waiting for dessert to arrive.' A more globally accessible option was: 'With the release of his picture on the recent patrician stamp, hare was wondering thoughtfully if this would make him an ex-pensive hare'.

BUT THERE IS ONLY TOPIC OF INTEREST TO BRIAN DELANEY'S HARE, AS

DEMONSTRATED BY A SERIES OF THOUGHT LINES:

Drowsing. Browsing. Brooding. Breeding. SEX!

Mathematics. Multiplication. Replication. Procreation. SEX! Banking. Compound Interest. Accumulated Interest. Interest. SEX! Banking. Money Making. Making 'dough'. Making Doe. SEX!



A TORTOISE! A BLOODY TORTOISE!

IT MUST HAVE HAD WINGS

Philip Ramsden's tortoise has had some help from a higher authority:



Wilfred Brusse offered this sly dig at our new LBE policy:



UNSURPRISINGLY, JONTY HIRD'S HARE SHARES THE SAME INTEREST:

'Hah! Another "what is the hare thinking?" competition. Better prepare for some humorous and smutty quips which include the word pubic. No wonder I feel pensive. All I really think about is "Eat, Sow, Thankyou Doe". NIGEL ROGERS OFFERED A CLEVER LIMERICK: There once was a hare by Dürer, Who pondered just how he would draw her.

But what's on her mind? Being medically inclined, The answer is obviously dura\*

> \*A dense fibrous protective membrane covering the brain

Julian Fagandini also suggested the Pen Sieve Hair, along with this Death of Hares



THE THEME OF RACES BETWEEN HARES AND TORTOISES OR TURTLES FEATURED IN A FEW ENTRIES. TWINS JACK AND TOM JAMES SUGGESTED THAT THE HARE: 'CONSTANTLY THINKS OF HOW HE LOSES ALL THE MONEY HE MAKES BY LOSING THE SPACE RACES TO THE TURTLE ALTHOUGH HE CARRIES FOUR ELEPHANTS AND DISCWORLD ON HIS BACK.'





A prize for everyone, plus special merit prizes to Philip Ramsden, Nigel Rogers, Mark Holloway, James Page, Steve Tandy and Julian Fagandini.

## Your Editorial Team Editor in Chief Mr Stanley Howler

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Ink Monitor Granny Pearson

## Journal 18 Competition

Thanks to everyone who contributed ideas for the Journal Competition. We now have a very useful stockpile to draw on.

First up is an idea from Su and Danny Hyam, to get us (in the northern hemisphere, that is) in training for summer.

Staff at the Ankh-Morpork sorting office, like all other postal workers, enjoy the summer season as they can read everyone's postcards and even add comment as they see fit. Write a postcard back to your dearly beloved/friend/family/workmate in A-M from your destination of choice. No more than 50 words, and add an A-M postal worker's comment of not more than 10 words for comedy value.

# Number



All about STAMPS from the home of STAMPS









If any of these items are missing from your Journal, please contact the editor, who will make the usual excuses.

Kindly address all correspondence, abuse, valedictory communications, or marriage proposals to:

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