

A new look, revamped and generally mucked about with Journal. Now you may wonder

Well, I suppose like so many things in life, every now and again one fancies a bit of a change.

A bloody good shake up, change the look, get a haircut and hit the town. All I got for hitting Wincanton last week was a broken walking stick, so we are mindful of not breaking this journal by too much of a shake up.

The stamps have come such a long way since we started and evolution never stops. Providing the core values don't get thrown out with the bath water then it's all to the good. The constant concern for Isobel and I is that our core values remain inviolate in spite of the changes we make to our business.

So what is important?

What we make and who we sell it to.

That's it really, it always has been.

We are not the sharpest knives in the drawer when it comes to business because we care so much about what we make and have a real duty of care to those we sell to.

Yep we make cock-ups from time to time (just made another one in fact (see page 2 for how, where and why) But in our defence, they come about out of a misguided desire to

But in our defence, they come about out of a misguided desire to make things better - in a hurry. They are not made to chisel an extra shilling, and in fact they mostly end up costing us cash, loss of face or both.

So, we are changing this journal a bit to try to make it more interesting with a bit more fun and hopefully get a few more of you to share your thoughts and words on these pages

In this issue:

• I try and explain the Amazon cock-up and present a reasoned overview.

• What's in the pipeline ~ well all things being equal it should happen.

Journal 19 Competition

• Stuff about conventions

•Ian Mitchell bares his artistic soul

• A bit about the Football Cards

• A nice article from Darren Hill about Post Boxes

• A 'spot the difference' and a competition.

When you see it all printed it makes you wonder why the bloody thing took so long to put together.

The fact is we had the Transworld Book launch squeezed into a gap between the 5th Birthday celebration, and the American and Irish Conventions. And our youngest

daughter was married in July.

Next quarter, we'll be on time - course we will!

Gavin Arnold's ebay Watch will be back in the next Journal and we'd like more contributions from you, our readers.

Send in your letters and suggestions, we could possibly have a "not a lonely hearts" section as we used to in the old Clarecraft Collector's Club days. Let us know what you think. We can't promise to publish everything, but we'll include what we can.

Fernari



Like all really 'good' ideas this one was mine, all mine.

I tended it like a rare plant, watered it with my imagination and nurtured it in gleeful anticipation of praises and approbation from all and Mrs Sundry. Well who knows, early days yet.

I reasoned thus.

We need to spread the net to garner more collectors. This benefits us and our band of faithful Flatalists.

Now is a good time to raise our profile because The Film "Going Postal" is coming up next year. This film will give considerable publicity to Discworld Stamps, especially if it gets a showing on terrestrial TV.

There are a surprising number of Discworld readers who have absolutely no idea there is 'stuff' made just for them and when Terry gets told this at signings and the like he does tend to enquire as to "why this situation is being allowed to continue".



Our options are limited. We can't place adverts in the back of the paperbacks on re-print. We used to and so did others, but this option is no longer available.

So where do you hang up your shingle? The Amazon has, it tells me, over six million transactions in the Christmas season. Six ruddy million, that's a lot of good honest folk who might just be Discworld readers and have not yet had the pleasure of buying from the Cunning Artificer. Oh how drear are their lives, how meaningless without the fun involved in collecting the stickies.

But Amazon are BIG and we are tiny which is a problem when you want to sell as a merchant not with the amateur status of an individual entrepreneur. Discussions took place. Mind you getting hold of someone who could actually make decisions was not easy, but eventually we spoke with a guy who understood the potential we have with their market exposure.

Then came the rub. They required ten individual items before we could join their gang. Not a problem given time but we needed to get something up to 'test' the system before Christmas

It was suggested that we could run with one item if it was unique to Amazon a 'special' in fact. Of course with hindsight it would have been better not to use a stamp. And we won't do that again I can assure you. But at the time it seemed the easiest option, a duty stamp that tied the product to the whole idea of 'stamps'.

Because make no mistake it is our stamps that we will be promoting strongly on Amazon. We will do this by selling the current stamps and future issues in presentation packs and selections.

But the road to hell is paved with the best of intentions, as well as some spectacular graffiti, dog poo and worse.

So we will try and involve you lot in some of these decisions. Not all of course, unless you would like me to phone you in the early hours or on a Sunday, but as many as is practical.



We have come a long way together and it aint over yet!

In the Pipeline



The Hogswatch 2009 stamp will make its first appearance in the Grand Hogswatch Event LBE which will be issued on 28th November. There will be 1000 of these special event LBEs and there WILL be prizes.

On December 1st the Autumnal LBE will be phased out and a Hogswatch Season LBE will be on sale, this LBE will also contain the Hogswatch 2009 stamp and will run until the end of January and because it is the Festive Season one in 20 will contain a bonus voucher for a Free LBEs.

There will be an interesting pair of stamps decorating our out-going mail from 1st December. While Bernard and I were in Ireland, young Mr

Mitchell got up to no good and these are the result.

In early January, the Royal Mail are issuing some new stamps based on Classic Album Sleeves. It seems to us an appropriate time to design something for the Musician's Guild to run alongside them. We are also working on some new Unseen University stamp designs and of course the new Ankh-Morpork commons.

In addition there's bound to be the odd surprise, good idea and unexpected opportunity so watch this space....

Hopefully you've all discovered the free "downloadable" albums (the link is available from the Album section of our on-line stamp shop) and found them a useful aid. Many thanks to Mike Pleasants for all his help in compiling them.

Larry Hart responded to our challenge to produce a Family Tree for the stamps. He has been beavering away for months refining his original concept and his latest version will be available for down-load any day now.

Thanks to all of you who contribute so much to the general cataloguing and information on stamps, and help maintain the forum. Bernard and I really appreciate all your hard work and the hours of your time you put into creating the provenance and background on our creations.

HAVE A WONDERFUL HOGSWATCH, AND HEALTH, WEALTH AND HAPPINESS FOR THE NEW YEAR.

THE COMPETITION

Journal 19 Competition invited readers to submit a letter from Teemer and Spools. stamp printers to the Ankh Morpork Post Office, to explain to the Guild of Engravers why their stamps had been supplied un-gummed.

There were some ingenious excuses and downright lies from the Teemer and Spools customer relations department.

Not many apologies, which is, I suppose, the Discworld way.

Anyway a selection follows:

Danny and Su Hyam's suggestion that because the Guild of Engravers stamps were printed shortly after a batch for the Unseen University and due to ambient magic the glue disappeared out of the dispenser was one of the more plausible excuses.

Internal Memo Confidential 15 Seletofre Shools.

Re. The Guild of Engravers stump B. sup We have to give them some explanation.

We could be bonest and admit it was a mistake in the gun mix on account of young Simmel misorading the resipe and boiling up nails instead of snails, and the QA team being at his Grans funeral (Hang on , which teams were playing that day? It werd to his Grans funeral three times last month Remind no to see him Later)

But perhaps a letter along the lines of

"We at Termer & Spools are always trying to produce innovative products. The stamps recently supplied were part of an experimental range produced with edible gum in various sweet and savoury flavours. This, we now realise was a mistake, as our gum lick test team rapidly became addicted and licked dry every sheet produced . The gum application group then succumbed and before long gum was being spread on toast, dribbled over slumpy or just eaten by the reaspoonful. Quality control (a function of the lick rest team) was in this instance non existent. This resulted in the inferior product sent to you. The experiment has now been abandoned, and a new non-lick gum, containing bitter aloes, has been produced, which you will find on the replacement stamps." T

16 Tekloker T.

I prefer the letter. It wouldn't do for

them to realise we employ illiterates and time waisters. Anyway, they accepted the explanation for that earlier finder, so we know they are quite gullible. Send the letter.

Spools



Keith Matthews took the trouble to send his entry by post in an envelope

Not snails but slugs made an appearance in the letter from Larry Hart. High quality glue made from boiled Sto Plains slugs - sounds logical to me.

The Guild of Engravers Scribener Lanc Ankh-Morepork

Dear Sire

I hasten to offer an explanation of and apology for our failure to supply your recent stamp printing on gummed paper.

We have recently suffered flooding in our Washroom curn Storage Closet in consequence of which identifying labels were floated off bottles of stored supplies. These labels when reapplied mistakenly identified a bottle of "Old Crusty Mouthwash & Gargle" as "Gutta Percha Glue"

Consequently, when gluing was applied to the printed stamps, by evaporation, only an alcoholic vapour remained backing the stamps; our gluing machine developed a mechanical stutter and burp while Mr Burkitt our head printer cannot presently prise open his mouth to remove his false teeth!

For your future reference "Old Crusty Mouthwash & Gargle" can be obtained (under the counter) from "The Mended Drum".

We apologise for this misunderstanding: we reaffirm that your custom is greatly appreciated and we assure you of future prompt and reliable service.

Yours etc

for "Teemer & Spools' Doris

CEO and Cleaning Lady

Last but by no means least, the letter from John Hird was a lesson in customer relations that we will take to heart

Thanks also to the following for their entries: Martyn Ransom, Steve Tandy, Steve James, Yael Kellman, Rachel Neave, Julian Fagandini, and whoever sent the entry about Mr Teflon (let me know who you are)

THE PRIZE

A SHEET OF THOSE SPECIAL UNGUMMED STAMPS TO YOU ALL.



Dear Master Craftaman of the Guike of Engraver

With reference to your enquiry, regarding the issue of the 1/2p Stemp for the ingravers Guild and the apparent lack of guin on the reverse of said stamp.

must inform you that this was not an error or, our part; we were mere y carrying our the instructions of the Post Master General. Who, fellowing the issue of the first 10 sheets of your new stamps. V sited Messes Teemer and Spools and ordered them to print the rest of the order on ungummed paper.

When asked to give his reasons for this decision, The Post Master submitted he blowing

Although the personalisation of Stamps for the encouned Guilds of Ankh-Memork is welcomed, and indeed encouraged, it had come to the Fost Masters attention that in stance asset the system was being abused. He went on to point out that any letter/package beering a Guild Stamp would be horoured and delivered to other transches of said Guild and that small discrepancies regarding weight and size etc. would normally he overlooked.

However, he then went on to point out a recent acident where a Guild en posted the wood auts for all 7 volumes of the "Strattered Palace" to the Guild Branch n Genua. A total of 1,750 boxwood blocks wrapped in canvas and bearing one 1/2p Guild Stamp. As it took two coaches to deliver said package, the Pest Master decided that in future, all packages from the Engravers Guild hould first be taken to the Post. Office for assessment, aut the requirat number of Guild stands and the taken to the Post. Office for assessment, aut the requirat number of Guild stands and the taken to the post. allaction I believe his exact words were.

"Don't blocky well put any glue on the Engineers Stamps: the tight fisted sock are taking the "Water". They'll pay in the survice like everyone else"

Yaurs Since ets

Jonty Hinl, Ci stoner relations, Teener and Spools, Arkh-Morpork

Brian Delaney's letter made us chuckle and reminded Bernard of the time he'd confused the toothpaste with the pile cream. Don't ask.

This guarter I have been mostly travelling.

Isn't it always the same? There is either a feast or sodding famine. For years all the old lady and I did was to pooter to Birmingham, or wherever the Discworld convention was being held and back to dear old Wincanton again.

But this year, Phoenix, Arizona and now Ireland, and that's without a book launch, a 5th Birthday Bash and the normal run of events we host here.

No wonder this journal is on the drag. We certainly are.



America was something again.

Wow, what an experience. Such lovely people, such heat, such hospitality. A hotel and landscape that was straight out of a film set. Bloody great cacti and orange trees, a drink called a Margaret and stamp collectors who had never heard of Discworld Stamps. The con was very well run, slick, and busy and chock full of things to do. Because there is such a tradition of Science Fiction Conventions in the states this first Discworld one was a bit of a hybrid. It was all the better for it in a way, because the attendees knew what to expect and what to look for. The masquerade was something else, with prizes being awarded for construction, originality and all sorts of aspects that never seem to surface in the British counterpart.

They even had judges from the Guild of Convention Costumers, those folk really knew their stitching I can tell you scary or what!

But a great time, very special and we made a lot of new friends.

As I mentioned the stamps were very well received and we have seen a number of collectors emerge as a result.

Ireland now was as different as you could imagine. For a start the organisers had never, ever, done anything like this before. There was no blueprint for them to follow,



they just did it.

The setting was a lovely old hotel in County Clare and the whole con had that wonderful relaxed attitude that makes Ireland so special. Isobel who is mostly Irish was well at home. Because it was their first con the lovely wenches who organised, thought up, cudgelled, corralled and cajoled the fans, guests and hotel staff created a con that was very simple and straightforward. For Isobel and I it was probably the most laid back convention we have ever attended. We made new friends, drank a lot of Guinness and enjoyed the

crack.

Terry seemed very happy with it all and as with the US Con there are huge hopes that another one will be planned for two years time.

It seems to be a 'tradition' now that we create a Commemorative Cover for the conventions to sell to raise funds for Charity. We have kept the numbers low: 100 in each case, which should lead to some secondary market interest in the future. Of course, as you know, we mirror that issue to you changing an aspect of the design in order to keep something special for all interested parties.

These conventions certainly teach Isobel and I a lot about just who collects our work. It really is surprising that even amongst Discworld fans, and that's fans who are keen enough to spend time and money getting to a Convention, many don't know just what is on offer.

I can tell you, dear friends that once these sweet souls have taken part in a Convention they certainly know who we are. And being enriched with that knowledge it is as you all know, only a matter of time.....



the return of the Tyne & Wear I

with a bespoke label on it. Do give a week or so's notice though.

INSPIRATION By Mr Ian (Snakehips) Mitchell (BA Hons) Philatelic Designer, Sculptor & Tea Boy.

Inspiration is a slippery little thing, it likes to slide just out of view, as soon as you think you have it cornered it bites you on the rump. Inspiration alone can mean very little. Like alchemy it is the base metal from which, if you are lucky, and very cunning, you can make a little piece of gold.



Firstly you need a vessel for your inspiration. let's take stamp

design as the example. A stamp is an object which is recognisable, your audience knows how to react to it, they have a visual language with which to translate it. It has an innate sense of importance, like money it is a little paper promise, it only works when people believe in it. It is a visual medium and so it needs to communicate visually that this promise will be met. A stamp is a wonderful way of containing an idea. It's tailor made for dealing with your wanton inspiration, many of the parameters you will need to clasp it down are built in innately. Suddenly you have a whole set of lovely necessities with which to structure your brainwave. A stamp needs to be designed within a set of rules to make it instinctively stampy. Suddenly raw inspiration has structure and a way forward.

This little article is aimed at showing the way we at the Discworld Emporium go about turning inspirational lead into flatalist gold. A step by step account of how we might distil our ideas into something tangible.

Firstly we choose which element of the design is to take centre stage. It could be a Guild Coat of Arms, an image for a location or a character for a stamp commemorating a special event. In the case of the recent football stamps, it was a character and the artwork supplied by Paul Kidby was the obvious choice to capitalise on.

When the artwork is so strong and so iconic it's important to choose the right stamp configuration, in this case a commemorative stamp is ideal and, in context, the only clear option. This dictates many things; firstly the portrait has to be the central design, not crowded by other elements. We now know that the text and values have to play a supporting role. It also dictates that the issuing body would have to be AMPO itself as the only body who would tackle the theme. This in turn gives us some clues to the style of the stamps. We have to allow the stamp to sit well with previous issues by this body. It has to make sense in the context of Ankh Morpork standards of production etc.

Next we contextualise the stamp. We take all the cues we can. For example if the stamp was issued in a place where dwarfs were the dominant race then the artwork would probably have developed from images and text hewn in living rock. Straight lines, heavy marks and runic influences come to mind. When dealing with Ankh Morpork the choices are much more open, as a great melting pot with so many influences and such a diversity of peoples and technology it means we can research artwork from many eras and Roundworld references. For the football stamps I looked at English design work from 1800 right through to elements from 1930's borrowing line styles, shape dynamics and classical composition structures which worked well together.

Borrowing from all these styles and using design 'set pieces' can really make a design feel right without tying it down too much to a certain period. This gives an over all effect which seems familiar and yet is unique.

We then start sketching out design ideas. As a commemorative stamp it has to be celebratory, in this case celebrating an epic match, it has to be fun, lively and iconic rather than regal or overly serious. At this point we work in space for text, Vetinari's profile, value and declaration of postage paid. Further cues which steer our design. The composition needs to work on a small scale, on a sheet, as part of an illustrated envelope and singly so we need to build in all these factors at this early stage. As a standard we think a good stamp should work at any scale but it's beneficial to have a firm idea of the final scale at this point.

We begin drawing up the final design, in layers, allowing us to change elements size and fit. Each element has to be drawn at the same scale with the correct line weight so when scaled down the lines are proportionate.

Following this, we digitize the images and lay them up making sure the elements interact well and sit comfortably. Getting the textures and composition right is often best done while the image is black and white. This simply makes it easy to see the composition clearly.

We then start working out the colour levels. Often a mid-tone, highlight and background colour is used nominally to complete the composition. Once the levels look right, complementing and supporting the central image, we begin to look at colours which would work well for the final stamp. Again more background research is done to work out the right palette, looking at historical examples, printing techniques and general colour theory.

Now we have something that is beginning to look like a stamp. The central image is added and often at this point we will put in some rough text to give an indication of whether the design will work well. It's important to take a break from working the design and come back to it at a later stage to give yourself a chance to see the image afresh.

At this point we usually know if the stamp is worth developing and taking through to completion. If it is, the typography is the next important element. This is largely a matter of experience. We deal with fonts like a colour palette; fonts which work well together are collected, tested and shaped. Now it's a case of fitting the text in as effectively as possible making sure it fills the space and is clearly legible and supports the image stylistically.

At this point we still have all the elements separated on screen and now we can fine tune the design using minor shifts in scale, colour balance and texture, printing proofs at every stage constantly referring to the original design sketch. The design will naturally and inevitably develop but checking back will make sure you have stuck to your design priorities and haven't been bogged down in technique. It is also important to perforate some of your working proofs as this will frame the image and gives you some idea as to how much space to give your final stamp.

Now it is time to apply the final textures and finishes. This process really makes the stamp come to life and it's where you can insert a bit more 'personality'. It is often the most time consuming part of the whole process. Sometimes certain elements are blurred or washed out a tiny bit to highlight another element, or areas of the design are darkened to push other components forward. We balance contrast, colour and saturation and once we're happy with the final stamp it is time to lay up the sheet. This happens in much the same way as the stamp design itself, the same research, composition, typography, colouring, design and finishing techniques go into the making of a sheet.

The final artwork goes to Sir Terry for approval. Sometimes he is involved in the early stages of design contributing suggestions and images for new stamps. Sometimes, with a few words, he can crystallise a vague idea into a successful image. Very rarely the artwork has been found wanting and we go back to square one.

This is of course a very simplistic overview of the design structure we use. Every stamp has its own problems and possibilities and needs to be dealt with individually. The danger is that you can sacrifice the homogeny of a collection if you don't have a structure to work to. Designing in ranges is something which can be a real strength or your greatest weakness. By making sure you have a set of rules, however closely you follow them, means that when you want to break the rules it has a real impact. Your design philosophy can be as much a part of your style as the draughtsmanship or subject matter.

We hope this insight proves interesting if not useful. As with many things in life it is at least recyclable.

Happy Stamping!

ITS ON THE CARDS!

The launch of the Paul Kidby designed football cards has been a resounding success. We are not surprised as his artwork really is some of the best ever seen within the whole Discworld cannon.

Paul was telling us that our commission was the largest number of individual pictures he has created for one project in almost five years, the last being the Art of Discworld. Even if you are not a 'Cartophilic collector' the sheer delight of the subject matter and painting is something to be admired and we are getting quite a number of requests for the mounted and even the framed sets.

There is something about 'framing' an image which lifts it out of the ordinary, that and the fact you can hang it on a wall makes it a bit special.

We would love to do something like this with stamps. When you develop the artwork and design of a stamp and it all starts 'coming together' you can really get a gem of design and colour. Enlarge that beyond its natural scale and sometimes something is lost.

But it's not just the size of a stamp which is against mounting and framing stamps, there is no tradition of doing this; well not that I know of, but if you do, we would be really pleased to know about it for obvious reasons

You can see all the football cards on our site, they're worth a look.



BOXING CLEVER.

By Darren Hill

The humble post box is such a common and useful piece of street furniture that most people take it for granted, overlooking it except when there is mail to be sent. Many people would be surprised to learn that this year saw the 200th anniversary of the earliest known "posting slot" still in existence, build into the wall of Wakefield Post Office. As fitting tribute the Royal Mail produced a commemorative issue in August, and this was of course mirrored in a highly quantum way by our own dear Ankh-Morpork PO.

One of the first surprises was that after the concept was thought of, it took another 43 years until the first pillar box was erected. This first trial, in 1852, was conducted on the isle of Jersey.



The principle motivator behind it was the novelist Anthony Trollope, then working for the Post Office as a Surveyors Clerk. The

idea had been suggested by Sir Roland Hill some 12 years earlier, but it took Trollope's persistence to achieve the trial based on boxes he had seen beside roads in France.

The first mainland pillar box followed the year after in Carlisle, and for the next few years they appeared around the country but without any common standard of design or manufacturer. It took until 1859 for agreement to be reached on a standardised design, and a further 7 years for that design to be commissioned. This was awarded to J.W. Penfold, for a hexagonal box design that still bears his name and which can be seen in historic locations such as Bath.

These pillar boxes were quite expensive though, so for rural, remote or less populous areas a cheaper option was needed. These were the wall, building or pillar-mounted boxes as depicted in both the RoundWorld and Discworld stamps



Around the turn of the century these locations were expanded to include attachment to lamp posts, telegraph poles or indeed their own free-standing pedestal posts. Indeed the modern versions of these iconic items would be very recognisable to our grandparents' generation from the 1930's, although their slots have been widened over the years to accommodate the increasing dimensions of the mail. By the 1960's there were over 20,000 of them in the UK alone.

The modern pillar box shape was introduced in 1936, with the current EIIR style arriving in 1952. Current versions of this are produced from cast iron, and feature rotary dials indicating when the next collection will be.

This is also presumably to tell any poor soul who manages to emulate our Discworld prisoner quite how long their sentence of incarceration will be.

COMPETITION TIME



A cunning competition for this 'New Look' Journal.

I believe that Tempe to Wincanton is some 5,218 miles.

Wincanton to Ennistymon is 355 miles. Mind you, it seemed like a lot more at 5 am this morning (11 Nov) when we arrived home from driving back from the ferry port at Pembroke in thick fog.

So you clever and numerate lot, the first 3 entries to tell granny and I just how many Tower of Art Stamps it would take if laid end to end to cover 5,573 miles.

You can use your fingers, toes and other parts to calculate this sum and we will want to see your calculations.

THE JOURNAL 20 OFFER



An A5 sheet of 1 penny stamps printed by Teemer & Spools for the AM Post Office.

They commemorate the founding of the Ankh-Morpork Football Association.

The stamps are 24 x 35mm and are shades of green representing the football field. The central motif is the AM Football Association badge The price for this little Gem is $\pounds 8.00 + 50p$ postage. To Order: As per usual on our web site but

type in FOOTBALL in the comments box.

That way we know you are one of the chosen.



SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

We used this photograph in Issue 17. No one commented on the subject matter, so with some 'cunning' alteration, there are 5 differences between the pictures.



All correct entries will be put in an old bin bag and the first drawn will get a special label LBE. Make sure your entry is in by 31st December 2009

The STAMP Journal

A quarterly review of Discworld Stamps, and the sort of stuff we all hope you might just find interesting and or amusing. With contributions from collectors, friends, and anyone holding an opinion, a pen. or both.

This month's Free Stamp

The One Penny Commemorative for the A-M F.A. In shades of green with just a hint of brown reminding one of going to a football match on a foggy winters day.



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