

let's talk EXHIBITING

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EXHIBITING MODERN MATERIAL

Exhibiting modern material, sometimes referred to as “mophilia”¹ in international philatelic parlance, can be a very challenging, yet nevertheless rewarding, area for any exhibitor to attempt. In fact, to encourage such exhibiting the American Philatelic Society offers a “Medal of Excellence - Post-1980” for exhibits at US National (WSP) shows, that “consist primarily of such material” and “which impress [the judges] with the clarity of presentation, originality and research that sets the exhibit apart” from others in that time period. This medal may be also awarded at any of our Canadian national shows should any of our Show Committees plan to offer the full range of APS Medals of Excellence too. In similar fashion, BNAPS too offers the Corgi Medal for best Canadian Elizabethan exhibits at many of our Canadian or American shows.

Modern material, loosely defined herein, is any and all philatelic material produced between the near recent past and the current day. It includes, e.g., large and challenging definitive sets like any of those from Canada in the Elizabethan period; the British “Machin Head” definitives, a continuing series begun almost 50 years ago now; the Irish “Gerl” definitives 1968-1979; the Finnish “Lion Type” definitives from 1953-1974; the Mexican “Exporta” series 1975-1992; the US “Transportation” coils or the “Americana” series between 1975 and 1995; or indeed any other recent or current definitive set from another country, as well as all the contemporary

commemorative issues of most any country one may choose to collect. And, since the vast majority of all worldwide philatelic material has only been issued in the past 20 years or so, the scope of what could potentially be exhibited is immense.

The exhibitor needs only to keep in mind that any exhibit of modern material will be judged in terms of Treatment, Knowledge, Study and Research, Rarity and Condition, and Presentation, in identical fashion to how these “Big Four” areas are used in the evaluation of all other exhibits too.



of specialized material just of this one denomination from this long-serving series depicting Queen Elizabeth II. Indeed, the scope of this series is such that one must, as Weiner has, find a way to delimit what will be shown in order to fit it all in the frames; and the challenge is then to explain in simple enough fashion all its complexities so the viewer can fully appreciate the philately of the issue.

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Shown here, as an example, is one page from Edmonton exhibitor Joel Weiner’s “The Penny Crimson: The One Penny Machin of Great Britain”. This page shows one of the many variations of this denomination, the 1971 coil strip issue on original coated paper with phosphor band, the varieties found in the printing of the phosphor bands, and even includes a test strip used in calibrating the coil vending machines. Rare material is highlighted within red frame lines. An extremely complex issue to analyse and describe, his complete exhibit consists of 10 frames (160) pages

Yet exhibitors of such modern material face some major challenges, the biggest one being that perhaps modern material is perceived as being relatively more available than classic or other earlier material, and as such does not usually warrant in the eyes of the judges due acknowledgement of its rarity. Yet ask any serious collector of modern material instead about “difficulty of acquisition”, particularly in terms of short-lived postal rates, general availability of non-philatelic covers, printings on different paper stocks, or limited distribution of uncom-

Kiosk 2012 Rates - Stamps

Computer Postage

The initial rates produced were only available for 30 days, the 61c, \$1.05, \$1.80 which could be easily selected by the customer, other rates required a package of the correct weight at the time of printing were \$1.22, \$1.29, \$2.10, \$2.95, \$3.40 and \$3.65 – these 6 rates are very rare and there are NO known copies of the \$1.22. Each label is actually unique. While the coil roll has the stylized Maple Leaf and CANADA preprinted on the stamp, the 2D Barcode and denomination were printed when the stamp was dispensed. The 2D barcode has information such as DateTimeStamp, Location, Rate etc thus making the barcode unique to each stamp. The labels were printed by the Data Group of Drummondville Quebec, using a 4 colour process plus Metallic Silver for the CANADA on Direct Thermal face stock using a 9 unit Marathon press.



The 61c, \$1.05 and \$1.80 are shown above left. While this group of labels are scarce, the \$1.05 is the scarcest of these 3. It is believed that at least 300 copies of the 61c and \$1.85 exist in collector hands, and only 200 copies of the \$1.05.



Shown above are 5 of the 6 Non-Standard rates – there are NO known copies of the \$1.22. There are 3 known sets of these 5 values, along with 2 additional copies of the \$1.29, and 1 additional copy of the \$2.10 and \$2.95.

mon perforations, and the real challenge of finding such material, in proper period of use, becomes apparent. Simply put, it might take a significant amount of searching, followed by some rather arduous primary research, to fully outline, categorize and describe the significance of what is being shown.

In Canada we have several exhibitors actively producing exhibits of modern definitive series, modern postal stationery, experimental vending machine postage, picture (personal) stamps, prepaid picture postal cards, and the newest forms of permit indicia, and many of these exhibitors are receiving high awards at national shows, deservedly so.

Illustrated here, for example, is one of the pages (page 5) from Calgary exhibitor Dave Bartlet's "Canadian Computer Generated Postage" single-frame exhibit, relating the story of the Nixdorf stamp vending machines used in only a very few cities for a limited period during 2012-13 before this experiment on postal patron convenience was terminated. Because there was also a rate change during the approximate 6-month period of these machines' use, finding all the possible mint examples, let alone postally used examples, even of the various letter mail rates (the machines also vended certain parcel rates as well), has proven of significant challenge. Indeed, his exhibit shows a few of the "only known ex-

amples" discovered to date. In particular, this page includes mint examples of the scarcest non-standard (i.e., parcel) 2012 rates.

Without such documentation as provided by this exhibit, this little-known computer generated postage stamp experiment would be relatively unknown beyond a small group of modern specialists.

In many ways, the exhibitor of such modern material is thus a pioneer. Not only may little published information be yet available on the complexities of some issues, what may exist is only still a beginning, as it often takes many years for philatelic research to catch up with the full complexity of the postal issues, for commercial usages to be discovered in dealers' stocks, and for such issues to be recognized as "worthy" of serious pursuit by our more hidebound pontificates of all things philatelic. But press on, for it is only by showing such stuff that its significance eventually becomes established and recognized for the modern rarities they are.

Exhibitors should be aware that the American Philatelic Society is preparing a new, Seventh Edition, of the Manual of Philatelic Judging and Exhibiting which will include significant changes for how exhibits are judged and awarded medals, and will give greater scope for exhibitors to show their material. Once officially ratified, a fuller explanation of these changes will appear in a subsequent column. ☒

NOTES

1. "Mophilia Salons" were once encouraged by the FIP, the international body responsible for the rules and standards for world philatelic exhibitions. However, such exhibits were restricted to material from only the previous 10 years, and were most often judged by the public, as opposed to the exhibition's judges, and were limited in the sorts of prizes to be awarded.