

ANKH MORPORK

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POST OFFICE

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With Brass knobs on ... no less.

If someone had come into our place four years ago and told Isobel and I that our lives would be transformed through the sale of small sticky bits of paper I would have scoffed. Not a small scoff either, a really big scoff, with brass knobs on.

But here we are in the spring of 2006 and wow, we have never been so busy, nor had so much fun and we have completely redecorated our shop, with extra brass knobs no less.

Of course the redecoration was essential. One cannot be the purveyor and producer of what have become the Rolls Royce of Cinderella Stamps, supplying the needs of the most salubrious, discerning, intelligent, well read, & expert bunch of collectors, without a bit of posh, and of course, brass knobs.

If one's collectors call, one likes to have a bit of class, one does.

It is largely thanks to Ken James that the place looks so good. He took our bargains from a re-claim yard and turned them into a really authentic looking bank counter and grill. His skill and enthusiasm really made the difference, that and a new carpet, lights, and a lick or three of paint.

But I have to say his dedication was only matched by Hilary's brass neck in raiding the skip of the opticians opposite who in having a re-fit dumped a splendid collection of pigeon holes.

You would not believe that butter would melt, etc, in our dear Hilary. But out of the window she espied workman dumping these two cabinets that were just what we had been searching for to give a bit of period authenticity, and a load of flat storage for bits of paper.

Without a word the dear girl was out in the pouring rain and dredging these things out of the yawning maw of a ready filled skip. It was left to me to go in to the opticians, who were watching open mouthed as this lady from the shop opposite raided their skip, and apologise and offer some restitution. But they do look good, and are already full of stuff.

You will be reading in this journal about the new stamps and covers that are being launched, and I'm sure you have heard of the huge amount that one stamp sold for in auction, plus the success of our special LBE issues and all the nice prizes they have brought. But the real success is in how our community is growing. Growing without I think losing any of the spirit of fellowship and fun that has always been the hallmark of the Discworld fan and collector.

Our success is due to you. Our inspiration for the future is due to your commitment and enthusiasm for what we create and the worldwide community of collectors that have grown up over the past months.

So from Isobel, Hilary, Vince, Hannah, Colin, David, Alan, and myself, bless the lot of yer, with brass knobs on.

DEAR READER,

Welcome to another issue of the Stanley Howler Journal - we have exciting news.

To commemorate the rebuilding of the Ankh-Morpork Consulate Offices in Wincanton, the Post Office is issuing a special stamp celebrating The Big Wahooni itself.

You may recall the passage from 'Moving Pictures' that describes Ankh-Morpork:

The city that is full of 'vibrant, dynamic life', rather like an old mattress. The city that citizens hate to live in, but can't wait to get back to, so they can 'enjoy hating living there some more'.

"They put stickers on the backs of their carts saying 'Ankh-Morpork - Loathe It or Leave It'. They call it The Big Wahooni, after the fruit."

A helpful footnote goes on to describe the Wahooni:

'It's twenty feet long, covered in spikes the colour of ear wax, and smells like an anteater that's eaten a very bad ant.'

What more fitting symbol for Discworld's premier city?

And what better symbol for our commemorative stamp, free with this issue?

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Joint Winner of the Secretariat's poetry competition in September was this haiku from Rentawitch (Kris Russell):

*The Zombie
A Haiku*

*The purple Zombie
Most beautiful and most deadly*

SLIPPERY FELLOWS THOSE CINDERELLA STAMPS

By Mark Valentine

Now let us get one thing straight from the start. I do not think there are any stamps being designed in Britain today that are as good as those we see from the Discworld emporium, and I'm including in that estimation our own dear official Post Office. The letters columns and comment features in the two big monthly stamp magazines, one imaginatively called, er, The Stamp Magazine and the other, the Stanley Gibbons Stamp Monthly, are often full of what might tactfully be called rueful remarks about the quality of designs from the conventional Post Office. No such reproaches could possibly be made of the Discworld issues. The balance of the stamp, the quality of the illustrations, the intrinsic interest, the colours selected, the lettering and above all the eye for detail are all excellent.

Now you may very well agree with all that, while mildly wondering who exactly am I to advance such acceptable opinions? Clearly I am an impartial commentator, and I indignantly deny any suggestion that I have just been plied with shix or sheven boshles of porforators perter, I mean pertorators porfer - oh well, you get the idea - while being hypnotised with the bright light from Mr Pearson's Patent Pocket Illuminating Device....*A voice adds, Tell them how good the stamps are, tell them how good the stamps are.*

[Several "missing" hours later].

Did I mention that the Discworld emporium stamps are very good indeed! did? And you want to know, says who? Well, my interest is in stamps known as Cinderellas. Discworld stamps belong to that category. A beguilingly simple definition of a Cinderella stamp is that it is any stamp not issued by a recognised postal authority. Recognised by whom, you might justly ask, and how would you recognise it if it existed on an entirely different plane from the rest of what passes for normality? There is no simple answer to that, but one definition might be "not recognised by the Universal Postal Union". Despite its name, the UPU does not cover even this known universe, but merely the vaguely spheroid blob of it on which all or perhaps most Stanley Howler readers presently pass the time. Another definition might be, "not recognised by most collectors", as perhaps best illustrated by what Mr Gibbons does or does not include in his mighty definitive catalogues.

Why Cinderella? A short answer would be I don't know, but naturally I will give you a longer answer designed to imply that in fact I know a great deal, albeit not the answer you actually seek. Such unofficial stamps had a number of names during the early years of collecting. One of these, still heard today, was "back of the album" stamps. Because earnest collectors could not place such examples on any proper page in their album, with its array of nations from Abyssinia to Zanzibar, they had to put them in that handy blank sheet at the end. Another term, which I rather like, was "phantoms". But after a while, one term gradually began to become the most widely accepted, and that was "Cinderellas".

What sort of stamp would be a Cinderella? Well, one of the easiest to

identify is what tend to be known as "poster stamps". These are usually advertising something. They might be quite literally an adhesive, perforated, much smaller version of a poster, or they might have been specially designed as stamps. But their whole purpose is not, as in postage stamps, to confirm a payment for delivery of a letter but simply to say, "buy me", say, or "visit me". There are some wonderful examples of these. Perhaps a special version of the poster stamp is the charity stamp, designed in effect to say "help me".

Less easy to identify, but also (I think) more interesting and romantic are stamps that, in one way or another, could or might be used to pay for some form of postage, but not by the main recognised postal service. The best known example of that is perhaps the stamps issued by Lundy Island in the Bristol Channel, to pay for taking mail from the island (where there is no conventional Post Office) to the mainland. The stamps from this example are much-loved by collectors, partly because of their charming mascot (the Puffin), and because the stamps are well-designed, but also because this is a service fulfilling what the stauncher sort of collector would call "a genuine postal need". That is to say, people live on and visit the island, they send letters, postcards etc, and there really is a service to deal with those. Stamps of this kind, typically from remote offshore islands, are called "locals". Our own Rockall stamp was a rather extreme version of that.

Other examples, in Britain anyway, include: railway letter stamps (used to transport mail from one station to another (some preserved, steam or little railways still do this); scout and guide stamps (used when fund-raising by delivering Christmas cards); strike stamps (when the recognised authority isn't working); college stamps (used when moving post between university buildings). Another very major type of "Cinderella" is the fiscal or revenue stamp, used to signify payment of some tax, fee or duty other than postage, such as, just at random you understand, bottles of Perforator's Porter [note to editor - illustration required here, preferably still attached to bottle, with contents. Better send a few in case, er well, just in case. A very large case. Full.].

The final category of Cinderella stamps that I'm going to mention is another quite broad one, and that is those loosely termed "fantasies" (these are also, confusingly, called "phantoms", and, less kindly, "bogus", although that term is also used more precisely for out and out forgeries). A fantasy differs from a poster stamp in that it might look like a "genuine" issue from a "real" country or authority, but is really for a fictional, playful, or invented place. Somewhere in between these are stamps issued by territories declaring their own, perhaps largely unrecognised, independence.

Now, there is an organisation devoted to all these and more, called The Cinderella Stamp Club, it publishes a journal called The Cinderella Philatelist, and I write for it a newsletter section devoted to British examples. So I feel on tolerably safe ground in saying I've seen a lot of very good British Cinderella stamps, but none quite as fine as those you collect, the splendid issues from Discworld. And I would have said that even without the lure of the, er, um, Prognosticators' Daughter....

~

Mark Valentine edits the British Private Posts Newsletter for The Cinderella Stamp Club, and contributes to the monthly Stamp Magazine. He also edits Wormwood, a journal of the fantastic, for Tartarus Press. Combining the two interests, he sometimes issues fantastical stamps. He was responsible for the

Q & A

You ask, we answer if we can. If we don't know the answer, we'll know a man (or woman) who does!

Q: Should I insure my Discworld Stamp collection, and how much for?

We're often asked for advice on valuing Discworld Stamps, so we've put the question to Darren Hill, who has much knowledge and experience in this area - this is his response.

Now that Discworld stamps have become more established, many people have begun to amass quite large collections. The initial "just for fun" or "because it's Discworld" collecting has become something of significant investment value. Value can always be defined as "whatever someone will pay for it" or "what it would cost to get a replacement", but neither can be written down in the value box on an insurance form. So how does one value a stamp collection?

For current items, the value will simply be the replacement cost from Wincanton or wherever, but what of rare (or unique) items, or those which have been discontinued? Here places like eBay auction totals (as documented on Kel's website) can give some indication and assistance. That said, these figures should be taken in context. New-to-market items will always attract a premium, but as saturation levels are reached the value can drop (as can be seen by recent final totals for triangles and zombies). However these figures can be expected to soon rise again, as both are reaching the end of their editions from Wincanton.

Items that have never come up for sale, are rarely sold, or indeed are unique present a different problem. Here a best-guess estimate would need to be obtained. Online discussion within the forum could assist here, with a baseline being whatever was initially paid for the item. If asked people may give a figure as to what they would pay if such an item came up for sale, or indeed have done for something similar in the past. A consensus of such views, along with purchase price and your own estimation will usually be sufficient to give a rough value.

As the value of items or whole collections rises, insurance may need to be seriously considered. Most household insurance policies will cover collections as general house content, but the maximum value claimable will probably be very limited. It is certainly worth calculating such value periodically and ensuring that your cover is sufficient. If it is not, then either the policy can be adjusted (almost certainly for an increased premium) or even a second specialist policy taken out (and paid for). Specific high-value items may also need to be specifically named and values given on either policy type. Proof of value may also be required in case of claim, so don't over-estimate. Just because green TOA stamps are no longer produced doesn't instantly mean they are worth £100 each!

As a result of the modern trends of items being "limited edition" and "collectable", and the collector market that this has induced, there are a number of firms offering specialist insurance for collections. Cinderella stamps are no exception, and a quick search on the internet can turn up a number of such firms. Whether they are required is obviously a case-by-case evaluation, but a discussion with your household insurance policy provider will tell you how much and what your existing policy will cover.

Depending on this, you can make your own judgement on what is needed.

Totalling up what your collection is actually worth can lead to quite a nice surprise. Just beware of also totalling up how much you've spent with The Cunning Artificer and fellow collectors to get it, as this may not be so nice to know...

Q: How many Hogswatch Sports were released?

A: 60

Q:How many of the old-style Thieves Guild stamps were issued before they were withdrawn?

A:208 sheets of the old-style 4p were issued, and 202 of the 6p.

There were 32 stamps per sheet. We would work out the totals, but the abacus is broken and we don't have that many fingers.

Q:How many different franks have been used?

Catherine (Rabelasian) Reynolds put this question to us, and as the only response she got from us was 'um... er... hmmm', she put together her own list:

Ankh-Morpork Post Office picture frank (on twinning cover)

Anhk-Morpork

Sto Kerrig

Sto Lat

Reversed Wincanton frank (on Hogswatch 2004 FDC)

The Cautionary frank (on Assassins envelopes)

Wincanton Consulate frank

StampEx FDC Cinderella frank

Ankh-Morpork Post Office date frank mark 1 (on \$5 Merchant FDC &

Twoshirts FDC - numerals & text in circle)

Twoshirts frank

Cabbage & Brassica Movement Order frank (on DSE/SSE envelopes)

Rockall FDC frank

Ankh-Morpork Consulate frank, Woolpit field postmark & Zlobenian frank (on CCDE postcard).

CCDE 05 censor stamp.

Ankh-Morpork Post Office date frank mark 2 (Koom Valley FDC, Hogswatch 2005 FDC - number & text upright)

Koom Valley field postmark

Hogswatch 2005 (on Hogswatch 2005 FDC)

Different Ankh-Morpork frank on the front of Doc's 'Teddy Pratchett' FDC

And after much rummaging and scratching of heads, we could only add: 'Post Early for Hogswatch'.

If you have any questions, please write or email - the address is on the back cover.

It's a Rat-Eat-Rat World.... Introducing David Wyatt

The much heralded series of Bad Blintz stamps will be launched at the Spring Fate at the end of April. (See Journal issue 3 for Terry's briefing notes.)

Appropriately, the artwork has been drawn by David Wyatt who did the original illustrations for The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents. But this is not David's first brush with Discworld Stamps. He also designed the Sto Helit 5p, the King Verence April fool stamp, and this journal's freebie, The Big Wahooni. We asked him to tell us in his own words how it came about that rock and roll's loss is Discworld's gain:

I was born in November 1968, apparently in Northampton; I was adopted shortly after and transported southwards. Fortunately, whilst they were not particularly creative types themselves, my parents were keen to encourage the artistic leanings I displayed at an early age. Brought up in a small town in West Sussex, I spent a lot of time messing about in rivers, drawing and generally doing schoolboy things. I was also made to learn the piano, which I continued for five years, but at that time making music hadn't grabbed me the way making pictures had. I was also a keen reader, and the two interests combined in a love of comics.

I went to art college in Reading at the age of sixteen, which was largely awful; although it did expand my notions of what art was. The early part of the course was filled with days of studying endless arrangements of onions and bottles; very dull at the time, but an invaluable grounding in the basics of painting. The tutors were keen to funnel the students into advertising, and the fine art side gradually faded away. I received little encouragement, and spent most of my time learning play the guitar beside the nearby Thames.

About this time I got my first job, doing the occasional page for British comic 2000AD. I was very excited at the time, but despite encouragement from the then editor, I didn't have the necessary skills to make a career of it. I signed on for another year at college, but then left two weeks later when I suddenly realized what a dreadful mistake I'd made.

There followed a number of hazy years of menial jobs; working on my portfolio and playing in bands. By trudging around London and harassing art directors with my samples I picked up the odd cover commission, but I was just as keen to make a career in music. Unfortunately, after a disastrous tour of Scandinavia, it became apparent the rock and roll lifestyle wasn't for me, and I moved to Dartmoor to concentrate on illustration.

In 2001 I was asked to illustrate the cover of Terry Pratchett's 'Amazing Maurice and his Educated Rodents'. This exciting development led to a foray into the Discworld that included the design of numerous covers, calendars, beer labels and now, stamps.

I now live in an ancient house in a graveyard with an Australian and a Border collie. Currently, I'm having a wail of a time working on 'Larklight' with Philip Reeve, who lives locally. If I finish it in time, it will be published by Bloomsbury in the autumn.

Raffle Round-Up by Darren Hill

Well gentle reader, another journal is upon us, and yet more funds have been raised for worthy causes by members of the flatalic community. Indeed the charitable activities on the forum have now become so well recognised and frequent that steps have needed to be taken to oversee and guide such endeavours, but more of that later.

The honour of running the first fundraiser of the year fell to Alpha1. His efforts were in support of two causes, NCH Action for Children and to assist his Grandfather with funeral expenses for his Grandmother, who passed away late last year. The funds were split equally between both causes, and in total there were eight prizes available to be won. A fine total of £274 was raised overall, so a nice tidy sum for each of the recipient causes.

And like the proverbial omnibus, no sooner had Alpha1's raffle ended than the next one came along. This is linked again to a worthy cause, the Marie Curie Cancer Care charity. On 25th March, Steve James (Steeljam), Dave Sherman (Addicted) and Pat Harkin (Pat), plus Bernard Bear (Northern Regional mascot, brains of the bunch and Teddy Pratchett's stunt double) abseiled down from the top of the Bobby Moore Stadium, home ground of West Ham United FC. To commemorate this act of charitable lunacy, 50 special covers were produced bearing franked new-style TOAs, which were carried by our intrepid abseilers on their decent. Four random covers are to contain special items, namely a TOA sport (the "Jenny" inverted tower stamp), a blue triangle, an old-style falling man TOA sport and a "Pain of Pain" Patrician Rainbow sheet. The wonderful endeavour has raised £816 for the charity, and no small amount of eyebrows as to the madness of these fine fellows (who are all also forum moderators, which may explain some of the lunacy). And we can happily report that all fellows survived their ordeal, although Pat is now a wizard without a knob on the end of his staff, due to an unfortunate accident.

Lastly, we come to the aforementioned overseeing of forum charity fundraising events. The Stout one himself has mused over the matter, and has announced that to co-ordinate matters, a new section on the forum shall be created. This will be for the express purpose of housing details of fundraising events, and will be controlled by Granny Isobel. Thus our esteemed patrons will have full knowledge of all such events being run, as a duty of care toward the membership, and to allow their full and active support to the endeavours. This charity section is to be used for all such endeavours, with access for use being granted by Isobel following a successful application to her by email.

Editor's note: as ever, we are grateful to Darren for his contributions to the Journal, and also to Helen Hill, who has once again produced an addendum to the list of definitive stamps, enclosed with this issue.

Discworld meets Big Brother - by Karen (Maxie) Carr

The start of a new Big Brother season in January saw me preparing for the fray again - having attended 3 series of BB, my friends and I are now all battle hardened veterans. We started with the launch night, then managed to get tickets for 4 evictions and the final night. Six events and all for free!!

When I announced on the forum that I was attending BB it was met by cries of derision, with only 3 people admitting that they would be watching. There may have been some justification in the cries of madness because attending a BB eviction means some frantic kiddie feeding and washing followed by a mad hour-long dash round the M25 in order to get there on time, only to stand in a queue in the freezing cold for up to four hours. For those who have yet to work out the appeal of BB let me try and explain briefly - contrary to popular opinion it has nothing to do with supporting housemates or with having favourites. It is all to do with watching nasty people get what's coming to them and booing loudly - panto for grown ups.

Gaspode suggested that I take a "HelloDiscWorldStamps" banner with me. However due to size restrictions (plus the fact I have to hold it up) this proved too much to fit on a banner. It was then put to the forum to come up with suggestions for a banner and after a few suggestions Pat came up with the wonderful idea of putting a VERY large stamp on one. So after a quick email to Bernard to get permission, Pat printed a huge Penny Black and an Assassins 3p. I then made the banner and did a poll on the forum to find the best slogan to go with the stamp. As I had decided to use the Penny Black, "THE REAL BB" seemed the most appropriate way of confusing those lesser mortals who have no knowledge of Flataly or Discworld. I put a photo of the finished banner on the forum so everyone would know what to look out for.

Friday arrived and off we went for the first eviction. The stamp was seen, but not very well, and I had some very weird looks and questions from the production crew as to what my banner meant and what the stamp represented. After its first outing and following a comment on the show by Pete Burns (one of the inmates) regarding the sanity of his fellow housemates, it was decided that I should change the wording to "WE ARE ALL UNHINGED."

The new banner was taken to the house on the Wednesday for the eviction of George Galloway and Dennis Rodman. Standing in the queue was different this time, as the production crew remembered the banner and we were able to stand in a fantastic spot where the banner would be seen by everybody. In fact this time we were so visible that we were seen in New Zealand!! We even got spotted by our local radio station and asked for an interview the following day!! Famous at last.

Final night was the 3rd outing for the Penny Black but so far I had had no luck getting those elusive celebrity signatures needed if I was going to auction it for the Orangutang Foundation. The night started well with an interview with Capital Radio while in the queue, and figuring that any autograph was better

than none, I got the interviewer from Capital to sign the banner. Once inside I faced a tough decision - we were in an ideal position to get the banner signed by Davina but a lousy spot for getting ourselves seen on TV. We chose to stick with our front row spots and hope for a signature.

At last during a break our flirting with the security guards paid off and Davina came over to sign our two banners. Success!! And for anyone thinking that Davina's signature is easy to get, I can tell you those two banners were the only ones signed that night!! Our second sign will be auctioned locally for charity this time to raise funds for cystic fibrosis and D.E.B.R.A.

We had a fantastic time - it was cold, but we managed to wrap up warm enough to avoid frost bite despite the snow.

Flataly has now featured on national TV, and BB has a few extra viewers - it is even rumoured that a certain hat wearing author tuned in for a bit of stamp spotting!!

Now that April's There!

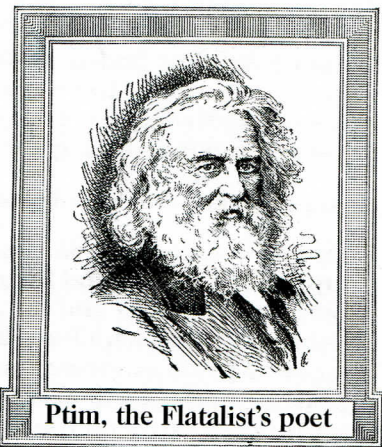
The other joint winner of the Secretariat's poetry competition was Ptim (Tim Williams) with his poem, 'Midnight on Hogswatch'. As spring has finally arrived in Ankh-Morpork, we've decided to hold this festive offering until later in the year, so Ptim has kindly contributed something more fitting to the season.

With reality thinning between the two worlds again I have written two odes (depending on where you're standing)

Oh, to be on Discworld
Now that April's there,
Whoever wakes in The Shades
Sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and brushwood sheaf
Bound together to beat you, hurts beyond belief,
While the chafing stings, on your bum, and how!!
Oh to be on Discworld now!

Oh to be in Wincanton
Now that April's there,
As all the DiscFans gather
For the opening of The Bear,
That the lowest jokes and great mischief
Round, town, go like a wind tossed leaf,
While our money into The Shop we plough
Oh to be in Wincanton now!

Ptim The Odemeister



Ptim, the Flatalist's poet

Yet another fun filled three months has passed. Hogswatch is now a pleasant, if somewhat blurred memory and The Spring Fate is tantalisingly close. In an announcement the other day, Bernard mentioned that our forum is possibly the most active fan base, within the current Discworld community and I have to say that doesn't surprise me. Not a week goes by without something significant happening. My problem isn't finding things to write about, it's being able to reduce it into the space I'm allowed in the Journal. I have to throw out the literary anchor halfway down page two so that my writing can grind to a halt before the page runs out. So without further ado and in keeping with tradition I shall start with The Society.

The Society at last has its own web presence. Our beloved administrator Tom has registered our domain, www.flatalists.org. Steve James (Steeljam) has created the Ankh-Morpork & District Society of Flatalists' website. It has a lovely Victoriana style and is easy to navigate. The current content already makes it a good read; there's plenty to see, from stamp data to book signing venues and it's only the beginning. Go to www.flatalists.org and have a wander around; Steve is more than happy to accept submissions to add to the site. So please help make the site one everyone will like to visit.

The Society was delighted to be able to declare that it had not just an Odemeister in the shape of Ptim (Tim Williams) but an artist who was prepared to draw caricatures of members and use them in a comic strip. The creator Zephyr (Jenn Davis) is a luvverly American lady with a mischievous sense of humour. Many forum members wrote to her and sent photos and received their own wonderfully observant caricature. A poll was held to choose a name for it and we all settled on, 'A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Wincanton'. I managed to catch Jenn and interview her via MSN and she had this to say;

"I had a dog-related comic strip in the past that ran for a couple of years in a US dog sports magazine, Dog & Handler. I just love doing comic strips. The concept of the short story in four frames is a fun challenge, but inspiration for an ongoing comic strip is tough to find. When I became a member of the Cunning Artificer board, I was amazed at the camaraderie and fun the members enjoyed. After a few months, I had found that inspiration in the goings on at the board. The ways various personalities of people from all over the world interact are a great source of new material"

If you have an idea for a comic, feel free to PM Zephyr at the forum.

After an absence of some weeks, the forum was pleased to welcome back Strapper and The Grand Secretary; Pusha-da-Quil. The Sod Awards were promptly dished out and the unselfish Matthej (John Matthews) and stylish Welshman Tonyblack (Tony Blackmore) were the recipients this time. The new Strapper FDC is now ready and will be hitting doormats from March. All birthday greetings will also have new 2006 Strapper Postage Stamp. They will run for a year and everyone that has sent their birthday dates to The Grand

Secretary will get one. Strapper announced a forth coming Huge Sometime-Between-Easter-and-Whitsun Raffle and renamed it 'The Ruffle', (don't ask me why I haven't a clue and have no intention of prying into the gnome's mind). I can tell you though, that in the tradition of the Society, it'll be impossible not to have a winning ticket. Recent elections for vacant Secretariat posts resulted in the re-election of Colin as chairperson. Worblelook (Jean Guittet), Statsman (Mark Lewis) and Vampire Cat (Jem Miller) join the Secretariat team. Congratulations all.

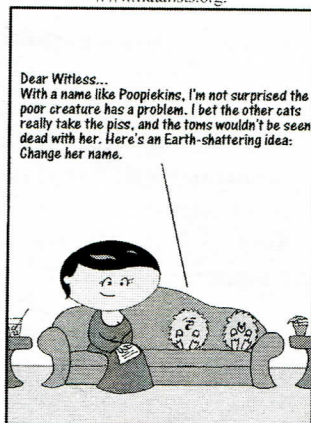
The local meetings are still going strong, twenty-six people turned out for The Post Christmas Essex/London Lodge Meet in January at Chafford Hundred Thurrock Inn, where much comment was made on Steeljam's totally mind boggling, anagram packed quiz, even if that comment was "Arrgrhh!!!" During March at the Narrowboat in Skipton The Northern Institute of Flatalists 2006 Spring Meet took place and the attendees were treated to Paul Bezler's (Hansolobiker) fine interpretation of 'Where's My Cow'. Not content enough with regional meetings alone, Hansolobiker and Mooresey (John Moore) created a new event, The Inter-lodge Bowling Tournament held at The Hollywood Bowl in Leicester, with a trophy for the winning team and of course the obligatory quiz.

Talking about quizzes and competitions, we have had some great ones on the forum; Vimesy (Shaun Main) started The Riddle thread, which was won by Zephyr and Stu d'apples. The mysterious The Mighty Quizmaster has been challenging us in The Mighty Quizmaster Strikes, to answer a series of 50 questions about the Discworld books. The prize is some GENUINE ANKH-MORPORK AIR which for safety purposes will be in a small cork-sealed bottle. Zencore (Tom Flannagan) has been running a Name that Book quiz and the February Flatalist competition was won by NiDochartaigh (Aine Doherty).

The forum celebrated its first birthday in February and Pat (Pat), organised a wonderful (and large) birthday card that he sent to The Cunning Artificer, who planned to live beneath it whilst the shop was being redecorated. To commemorate the anniversary Bernard was most generous and created not one, but two gifts for us, first an easily downloadable certificate for us all, plus our very own FREE birthday stamp. The stamps were distributed by Helen Hill (Marmaduke) for the UK, France, Switzerland or Germany (where the wandering postman (Darren) will do his thing), Catch-up (Su Vanden Bosch) for the USA, Ceriphinz (Paul) for New Zealand and Stalby (Per) for Scandinavia. Addicted (Dave Sherman) and Unohoo (Pete Chapman) decided to put together a Forum Year Book and we await the publication with bated breath.

As always I'll finish with a few statistics, we have managed to post a total of 218,578 articles, there are 680 registered users AND we hit a maximum of 40 people online simultaneously on Sun Mar 12, 2006 at 9:25 pm.

A teaser clip from the new Flatalist forum comic strip by Jenn Davis. The comic is updated regularly and can be seen at www.flatalists.org.



THINGS TO DO WITH STAMPS

Many of you responded to the competition in Issue 5 to suggest uses for surplus stamps. What an inventive bunch you are - but we knew that already!

Lucy Jefferies suggesting using Blue Triangles as decorative picture mounts - which is an interesting interpretation of the phrase 'surplus stamps'. Peter Tyler thought they could be stuck in colour coded lines to guide visitors to the house, in the same way hospitals use coloured floor tapes. (Wouldn't it be easier to say the loo is up the stairs, second door on the left, Peter?) Jan Wise recommended their use as emergency field bandages for dog-bitten postmen, keeping the flame-proof ones for Dragon Sanctuary run. Or as emergency tattoos. (We're not clear when you would need a tattoo in an emergency, but they do things differently in Hampstead.)

Several people suggested mobiles - dangle things on strings, rather than annoying little lumps of plastic and toxic chemicals that go bingley, bingley beep. Even more thought of wallpaper, thus proving that they hadn't read Issue 1 nearly carefully enough. Others will undoubtedly feature in forthcoming issues of the journal. But the three winners are Shaun (Qvize) Rippon for his illustration of a Flatalist's Best Friend, and these two:

'Spice up your life with a stamp striptease! Dancing seductively into the living room, your whole body adorned with carefully placed commons, is a sure way to get your partner's attention. Invite him/her to 'peel and reveal'. Get creative - make patterns with various shapes and colours, or use one kind of stamp per body area - Tower of Art stamps on legs, Leshp stamps on shoulders, Tuppn'y Uprights... wherever you feel appropriate'

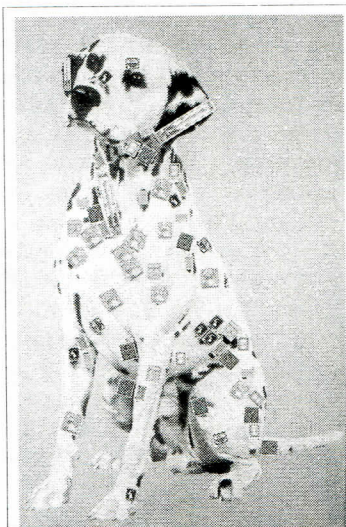
Catherine

(Rabelasian) Reynolds

'Using only 8 lbs of old stamps, set light to them, and then gather all the ash together and wrap in cellotape until you have a fist-sized ball. Then bury this in the garden, and wait 98,000 years. You will now be the proud owner of a thumbnail-sized diamond. Worth the wait, eh?'

Ian Dulson

Prizes will sally forth in due course!



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Number



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