

Sheffield Philatelic Society

Competition Rules And Guidelines

November 2012 (revised July 2017)

1 Sheffield Philatelic Society rules

These rules apply for all entries into competitions organised by the Sheffield Philatelic Society.

1.1 Eligibility

- i) The competition shall be open only to members of the Sheffield Philatelic Society.
- ii) No winning entry will be eligible for future competitions of the Society in the same class or sub class; however, an entry on the same subject that is substantially different from a winning entry may be submitted in future years.
- iii) No person shall make more than one entry in each class except one entry will be accepted in each of the Traditional and Miscellaneous sub classes.
- iv) Any person who has not previously won an award in this Society Competition may enter the Novice class
- v) Entry to the Junior class is restricted to Junior members 15 years of age or under.

2. Classes

The classes and sub classes are;

- i) Traditional with sub classes
 - National
 - Commonwealth
 - Foreign
- ii) Thematic
- iii) Postal History
- iv) Miscellaneous, with sub classes
 - Cinderella
 - Aero-philately
 - Postal Stationery
 - Revenue
 - Open
- v) Novices
- vi) Junior

The following rules apply to entries in the individual classes.

2.1 Traditional (adhesive stamp study)

The stamps may be mint, used or on cover, but the study relates to the stamps themselves and shall not be a thematic or postal history study. The class shall cover the areas of;

2.1.1 National

This shall consist of studies of the adhesive postage stamps of the United Kingdom, including revenue stamps accepted for postal use, but specifically excluding the stamps of the Irish Free State and of the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man after postal independence.

2.1.2 British Commonwealth

This shall consist of studies of adhesive postage stamps issued by countries whilst members of the British Commonwealth, including revenue stamps accepted for postal use, but excluding those from foreign countries and the United Kingdom.

2.1.3 Foreign

This shall consist of studies of adhesive postage stamps issued by foreign countries and countries during a period when not members of the British Commonwealth, including revenue stamps accepted for postal use, but excluding stamps of the United Kingdom.

2.2 Thematic

Entries in the Thematic Class shall illustrate of a theme in which postal material is the predominant element. Apart from the minimum of maps and drawings giving information relevant to the entry, non-philatelic items, such as photographs, picture postcards, etc., shall not be included. The study of a single stamp is not a thematic entry and will be disqualified or transferred to another class, at the discretion of the Senior Judge.

2.3 Postal History

Entries in the Postal History Class shall consist of studies of official or private mail, postal markings, postal rates and routes, and/or the use of adhesive postage stamps. **It is not normally advisable to include mint stamps or mint postal stationery.**

2.4 Miscellaneous Classes

2.4.1 Cinderella

Entries in the Cinderella Class shall consist of studies of fiscals, telegraph stamps, bogus and phantom issues, forgeries, Christmas seals, advertising and exhibition labels, covers and souvenir sheets, charity and political labels, postal stationery cut outs., circular delivery companies, omnibus parcel stamps, airway letter stamps, private telegraphs, offshore island issues, and postal strike material. These definitions are not exhaustive.

2.4.2 Aero-philately

Entries in the Aero-philately Class shall consist of studies of philatelic material prepared for or carried by airmail, official or unofficial. Entries may also include material commemorating aerial events and meetings, relevant advertisements, photographs etc., as is absolutely necessary but shall not consist solely or mainly of mint or used airmail stamps. **[YPA state no mint]**

2.4.3 Postal stationery

Entries in the Postal Stationery Class shall consist of studies of cards, envelopes, wrappers or other forms issued by Postal Authorities, usually but not always with a franking device printed thereon. Stationery printed or used by private bodies under licence from the Postal Authorities, and stationery bearing additional postage stamps may also be included.

2.4.4 Revenue

Entries in the Revenue Class shall consist of studies of mint or used stamps specially issued for revenue purposes. Documents produced for the collection of taxes or fees on various items may also be included.

2.4.5 Open

Entries in the Open Class give complete freedom to present an exhibit on any subject. Material should include both philatelic and non-philatelic (but related) items. The quantity of non-philatelic items should be no greater than 50% of the total. All material shall be capable of mounting in the exhibition frames.

3 Submission of Competition Entries

3.1 For prior submission to the Judges

3.1.1 The entrant shall submit their entry/ entries, by means of two photocopies, to the Competition Secretary no later than the Thursday meeting prior to the Competition Night. A covering note shall accompany each entry showing;

- i) Name of entrant (name of entrant shall not be shown on the entry itself)
- ii) Title of entry
- iii) Class, eg Foreign, Postal History.

3.1.2 The Competition Secretary will submit these to the judges at least one week prior to the Competition Night.

3.1.3 Any changes to the above procedure will be notified to members of the Society by the Competition Secretary, by means of a statement at a Society meeting,, wherever possible 6 months before Competition Night.

3.2 Competition Night

3.2.1 Entrants shall be ready to display their original sheets no later than 19.15 hours on Competition Night.

3.2.2 Entries shall be on sheets not exceeding 295mm deep by 245mm wide, but double-width sheets (each counting as two sheets) may be used if necessary or desired.

3.2.3 All entries shall be the competitor's own work and consist of sixteen sheets protected by removable transparent covers numbered on the front or rear 1 to 16 in the order in which they are to be displayed. Entrants should note the sheet sizes in the paragraph above when choosing the covers.

3.2.4 Each entry shall have a title on the first sheet.

4. Trophies – Sheffield Philatelic Society

The following trophies will be awarded each year, at the following AGM, provided that, for each class, there is an entry of sufficient quality. In addition, a certificate will be awarded to the best entry in each class and for the best entry overall. All trophies will be held for one year. Winners will be recorded in the minutes of the Society and the Competition Journal

Trophy name	Trophy	Class	YPA class
The Gabbitas Trophy	Silver Cup	Best Overall Entry	
H G Kershaw Trophy	Candelabra	National	Traditional
R. S. Sanderson Memorial Trophy	Bowl	Commonwealth	Traditional
K I Jones Cup	Cup	Foreign	Traditional
Ron Ward Salver	Salver	Thematic	Thematic
Eric Buckley Tankard	Tankard	Postal History	Postal History
<i>Miscellaneous</i>			
Alistair Watt Cup	Cup	Cinderella	Cinderella
E. K. Parker Salver	Salver	Aero-Philately	Aero-Philately
	Silver Cup	Postal Stationery	Postal Stationery
Novices Award	Music Box	Any	Any

Brian Wilkinson Trophy	Tea pot	Open	Open
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5. Judging Criteria

5.1 Traditional, Postal history and Miscellaneous classes (and sub-classes)

Treatment and philatelic importance 30 marks

Treatment 20 marks

Philatelic importance 10 marks

Relative condition and rarity 25 marks

Condition 15 marks

Rarity 10 marks

Presentation writing-up and arrangement 10 marks

Philatelic related knowledge, personal study and research 35 marks

5.2 Thematic class

Treatment 35 marks

General plan. 15 marks

Development. 15 marks

Originality 5 marks

Condition and rarity 20 marks

Condition 10 marks

Rarity 10 marks

Presentation 15 marks

Knowledge, personal study and research 30 marks

Thematic 15 marks

Philatelic 15 marks

5.3 Society/YPA medal standards

Gold 90

Silver-gilt 80

Silver 70

Silver-Bronze 60

Bronze 50

Certificate of Merit 40

6. Guidelines

6.1 All classes

6.1.1 General

- i). The content and layout of each of sheets 2 to 16 should be planned (possibly by laying out roughly on old album sheets) before beginning to prepare the actual entry. The first sheet should be left until last as it needs to be an accurate introduction to the entire entry as finally settled.
- ii). In addition to the title on the first page, that page should include a brief description of the scope of the entry and should ideally include relevant material to introduce the subject.
- iii). It should be ensured that the introductory sheet, title and the rest of the entry are in agreement
- iv). It is strongly recommended that competitors use standard sized white or cream sheets. Coloured or black sheets tend to detract from the presentation and may lose marks.
- v). Too much description, or duplication of the title on remaining pages is not advised.
- vi). Duplication of material should be avoided, regardless of value.
- vii). There shall be an introductory page with the title of the entry and an introduction to the theme.
 - a) Title shall describe the contents of the entry;

- b) Introductory statement shall explain the aim;
- c) Shall contain a plan covering all aspects of the entry;
- d) Shall indicate areas of personal investigation;
- e) Shall include important documentary sources and references;
- f) Can include an illustration or philatelic item.

6.1.2 Treatment

1. This covers the nature of the content, individually and collectively. The items should be directly relevant and central to the chosen subject, be good specimens and be illustrative of their kind. In aggregate, the material should do justice to the depth and breadth of the subject of the entry.

6.1.3 Condition and rarity

- i). The quality of items should be of as good as is available. Condition will be judged relatively to the normal condition in which the item is found. Thus it is not reasonable to mark down early stamps that have only part gum or are heavily postmarked, if that is the condition in which they are normally found. Torn or thinned stamps should be avoided and only those with better perforations and good margins should be selected with a comment if rarity prevents this.
- ii). Modern stamps that are available with full gum or lightly postmarked should be displayed in such condition.
- iii). Wavy-line or barely legible cancels should be avoided.
- iv). Forgeries, fakes or repaired items should always be identified as such.
- v). It should always be assumed that the judges are knowledgeable about the subject. Comments such as "extremely rare" or "catalogued £12,000" should not be included, but it is permissible to help the judges with comments such as "earliest known use" or "one of only three known examples".
- vi). Rarity is not in itself an indicator of value but reflects the relative scarcity of items

6.1.4 Presentation and writing-up

6.1.4.1 Presentation

- i). Items should not be overcrowded on the sheets but large gaps should also be avoided. The aim should be to utilise the space available in an eye-pleasing way.
- ii). Gaps should not be left in the arrangement where items are missing.
- iii). Where possible, the presentation should be varied across the entry. If possible, before mounting, the complete entry should be set out on a large table or on the floor to determine the correct balance.
- iv). Sheet headings should not be too large and they and sub-headings should be consistent as regards their positioning. The title of the entry should not be repeated on each page.
- v). If using Hawid-type mounts for stamps or backing paper for covers, the size of the margins should be consistent and not be too large. Covers look better within lined frames.
- vi). Marks are not gained for non-philatelic material, so maps and diagrams should be used sparingly.
- vii). Each of the sheets should be numbered in sequence, if only to reduce the risk that they will be displayed for marking in the wrong order.

6.1.4.2 Writing-up

- i). The writing-up of the sheets should not dominate the exhibit.
- ii). Writing-up may be done by hand, typescript or computer, or by whatever method is preferred. Neat, legible writing will be preferred to that which is difficult to read.
- iii). Text should not be too small . it is recommended that main text produced by computer should be no smaller than 12pt.
- iv). If using a computer or typewriter, plain paper produces a better result than squared album sheets. Coloured fonts should be avoided and other means found to

highlight key text (e.g. coloured backgrounds, bold text or a larger font size) with footnotes or italics for references. All the main text on each page should be kept to one typeface.

v). Unnecessary words should be cut out (for example: "This page/cover shows..." when this is obvious) so that the words do not dominate the page. Four short lines usually work better than two long ones.

vi). The spelling should be correct and dates and information accurate.

vii). Vagueness, such as "an early Liverpool Ship Letter", should be avoided. The precise type, date of use, etc should be stated.

viii). It can be relevant to state what does not exist or what did not happen if this completes the picture or explanation.

ix). Ensure there is an appropriate ending- a logical stopping point. Tell the Judges why it is the end.

6.1.5 Knowledge, personal study and research

i). Knowledge can be demonstrated not only by the description of individual items but also by the choice of the content and the development of the entire entry. Pulling together difficult to find information will gain marks.

ii). Type of knowledge would include dates of first and last use, when suspended, why overprinted, early use of phosphor, rarest perforation gauge, etc.

iii). An entry should show evidence, preferably with a reference such as a footnote identifying a relevant specialist article, of personal study and research from different sources, not simply knowledge culled from the catalogue and available to all.

6.2 Traditional

6.2.1 General

i). Entries in this Class will be mainly of postage stamps, including, where appropriate, supporting material such as essays, proofs, colour trials etc. Entries may show other relevant material, such as the use of revenue stamps for postal purposes, identified forgeries, errors of printing, paper types, watermarks, gums etc. Postmarks may be included to illustrate the types in use for the period, but should be secondary to the stamps. Care should be taken not to stray into the realms of postal history by showing the postmarks in relation to the routes and rates of the mails.

6.2.2 Treatment, originality and philatelic Importance

6.2.2.1 Originality

i). If accurate, originality in the interpretation or explanation of the material would enhance an entry's importance. For example, a study of Machin Heads has gained a gold standard in top-level competition.

6.2.2.2 Philatelic importance

i). Entrants should appreciate that there is a large measure of judges discretion in assessing importance. Mainstream philatelic material, especially from the classical period, is more likely to receive a higher marking as of more importance than obscure and little-known material of equal quality. Thus, an entry of early classic issues from a popular country is likely to receive higher marks than one from, for example Mongolia, unless it is individually exceptional in some way.

ii). Although value is, per se, irrelevant, where the content includes rare and valuable material, this will, provided it is pertinent, enhance the entry and achieve more importance through a higher level of completeness than would be the case were only the more commonplace material included.

6.2.3 Presentation

i). Preferably mint and used stamps should not be mixed on the same sheet. Stamps should be mounted in straight lines but successive lines of the same length should be avoided. When stamps and a cover are to appear on the same page, the stamps should be above the cover.

6.3 Thematic

6.3.1 General

- i). This class covers the illustration of a theme in which postal material is the predominant element.
- ii). Maps and diagrams should be kept to a minimum.
- iii). As the stamps are chosen to depict a theme, it is preferable to use stamps in mint condition wherever possible.
- iv). The theme should be told mainly by the material used, so too much writing could prove a disadvantage.

6.3.2 Knowledge, personal study and research

i). It is advisable to use as wide a range of relevant philatelic material as can be found to illustrate the theme, so the inclusion of postmarks, meter marks, postal history postal stationery, booklets etc. will enhance the entry and reveal philatelic knowledge.

6.4 Postal history

- i). This class covers a study of postmarks, rates, routes etc. It includes Private Posts such as Dockwra's Post, Peter Williamson's Post and circular delivery companies, Stamp shades etc. are not usually relevant.
- ii). Descriptions should be restricted to the philatelic content and not deal with the historical background, except where essential to the postmark, rate or route. If identifying postmarks, instructional marks by a reference number say where the number came from.
- iii). Entries in this class will typically show aspects of the development of postal services using covers and/or postal cards, and sometimes stamps with relevant cancellations. An entry may concentrate on a study of postal markings, and/or the way in which adhesive stamps are used to prepay rates. Alternatively, the emphasis may be on how mails were sent and at what rates from A to B and whether the relevant post offices were static or travelling.
- iv). It should not be attempted to cover too large a space of time in either material or years.
- v). Material or descriptions should not be crowded on the sheet. Two small covers or one large cover is quite sufficient.
- vi). Clean material with good full strikes should be used wherever possible. A good strike that is visible should not also be drawn. Strikes on the rear of covers should be drawn or photocopied where relevant.
- vii). The entry may include ephemeral material such as Post Office notices, maps, timetables, photographs etc relevant to the subject, but these should be kept to a minimum and not dominate the entry.
- viii). Entries and covers are better (if available) than pieces or stamps.

6.5 Miscellaneous

6.5.1 Cinderella

i). This class covers a study of fiscals, telegraph stamps, bogus and phantom issues, forgeries, Christmas seals, advertising and exhibition labels, covers and souvenir sheets, charity and political labels, and postal stationery cut outs. Omnibus parcel stamps, airway letter stamps, private telegraphs, offshore island issues, and postal strike material are also included.

- ii). Coins, medals, cigarette and tea cards, train and bus tickets are specifically excluded, except that these with postcards and other material of ephemeral nature may be used with discretion to illustrate an entry.
- iii). Most of the guidelines as appropriate for adhesive stamp studies above are also relevant to this class.

6.5.2 Aero-philately

- i). This class covers a study of philatelic material, prepared for, or carried by, airmail, official or unofficial and should be composed essentially of postal documents transmitted by air bearing evidence of having been flown.
- ii). The entry should represent a study of the development of air mail services by including postal documents dispatched by air; official and semi-official stamps issued for use on airmail (principally on cover); postal and other marks, vignettes and labels relating to aerial transport; material not conveyed through the postal system but important in the development of air mail; mail recovered from aircraft accidents or other incidents.
- iii). The entry may be chronological; geographical or show a means of transport, e.g. rocket or pigeon carrier.
- iv). Routes and rates are relevant to the development of the subject. Maps and drawings may be included but should be restricted in number.
- v). The entry may include material commemorating aerial events and meetings, relevant advertisements, photographs, maps etc.
- vi). Most of the guidelines for Postal History above also apply to this class.

6.5.3 Postal stationery

- i). This class covers a study of postal stationery cards, envelopes, wrappers etc., and of the various types, printings and varieties of these issues and their uses.
- ii). Non-philatelic material should not be included.
- iii). Postal Stationery may either be printed with a stamp, or plain, and can be printed by a government or in some cases by a private firm. Adhesive stamps on plain stationery may be included, and also additional adhesive stamps on printed stationery for changes in rate.
- iv). Entries can be mint or used. If used, no mention of the postmark or route should be made although it is necessary to mention rates. Usually it is inadvisable to mix mint and used on the same sheet. Some judges prefer the entry to be completely mint, whilst others prefer used material to be included.
- v). The entry should not cover too large a period. Overcrowding by overlapping material on the sheet or overfilling the sheet constitutes poor presentation.
- vi). The presentation should be varied, especially with postal cards that are all the same size. Regimentation is boring so, where possible, one should be positioned on one sheet and two on another.
- vii). Good, clean material should be used wherever possible. Items in poor condition, for example with damaged comers, spoil the overall appearance.
- viii). For reply cards, two cards should be used where possible, one each way, rather than photocopies. For wrappers, the width or the length of the item should be shown, for it is not usually possible to show both.

6.5.4 Revenue

- i). This class covers a study of Revenue stamps, which are Tax Stamps; Fee Stamps and Credit Stamps and the entry should consist of unused or used embossed, imprinted or adhesive revenue stamps.
- ii). If used on documents, the items should illustrate the pertinent usage.
- iii). The entry may contain: -Registration of deeds or documents; General Revenues; Judicial or Court; Transfer of ownership; Receipts; Documentary; Public Service; Bills; Duty stamps; Funds; Assurances and policies; Consular services; Inspections; Weights and measures; Licenses; postage stamps used as revenue stamps; Revenue stamps used as postage stamps; other revenue stamps.

- iv). Where it improves the composition, the entry may contain:-Essays, proofs or rejected designs; Legal documents and postal covers; varieties; maps, prints, decrees and similar associated material.
- v). The write-up may be longer than for traditional classes but should still remain as clear and concise as possible.

6.5.5 Open

- i). This class covers any subject.
Examples are; Telegraph services, Greeting cards, Illustrated, pictorial commercial envelopes, Geographical history and local studies, studies related to an event or historical landmark.
- ii). The theme should be developed using both philatelic and non-philatelic (but related) material. Non-philatelic material shall comprise a maximum of 50% of the items in the entry and should support and enhance the philatelic items in the development of the theme.
- iii). Avoid chronological gaps where possible.
- iv). Coloured photographs or reproductions should be at least 25% different in size from the original; all material should preferably be original. Full size reproductions of single cancellations or part of covers are permitted.

7. References

The following publications may be consulted for further guidance.

- ***Competitive Exhibiting At Local And Federation Level*** by Dr Alan Huggins (ABPS Booklet No3)
- ***The Way To Win (Hints For Juniors)*** based on a booklet by WB Howarth
- ***Competitive Exhibiting At FIP International Exhibitions*** (ABPS: British Philatelic Trust International Committee)
- ***Introducing Thematic Collecting*** by Alma Lee (British Philatelic Trust)
- ***Guidelines For Thematic Judges And Exhibitors*** by Franceska Rapkin (British Philatelic Trust)
- ***Handbook Of Thematic Philately*** by W.E.J. van den Bold.
- ***Introducing Postal History*** by Vivien Sussex (Philatelic Trust)
- ***Narratives of various Seminars can be found on the ABPS website***

Rules for the YPA Competition can be found on the YPA web-site.

The two main differences are that for the YPA Competition, entries of National, Commonwealth and Foreign should be entered as Traditional. YPA have a Postcard Class which Sheffield Philatelic Society do not. Any entries in this class would therefore be individual entries and not representing the Society and the appropriate fee would have to be paid.