

FIP Philatelic Literature Commission
Report to the 2006 FIP Congress
By Francis Kiddle, RDP, FRPSL

The position of Philatelic Literature within FIP International Exhibitions continues to strengthen, year on year. For example, at the most recent international exhibition, Washington 2006, there were 305 entries, of which only one did not appear at the Show. The strength of philatelic literature continues to be in the handbook and catalogue sections, with a number of Large Gold medals being given in the last two years, primarily thanks to both Italy and China, both now being such strong publishing countries. Catalogues themselves have advanced significantly, thanks to major advances in the publishing technological fields. The only disappointment is that philatelic journals, in general, no longer have major research articles, instead concentrating on the more social aspects of Philately. Content must be driven by what members want from those societies that publish journals, and whilst we, from a judging point of view, would prefer more 'meat', a journal only exists as long as the society has members.

An area that continues to cause problems from a judging point of view is electronic literature. As I reported last time, we no longer organise a specific competition for websites due to the real problems in judging these within an acceptable timescale. Real time judging is just not practical at an international exhibition. Even CDs, of which we had 10 in Washington 2006, take, on average, half an hour of a judge's time, and we do not have the luxury of time at any international, especially those that are open for just say four days (Pacific Explorer 2005). However, such literature should not be excluded, and it is the responsibility of my Commission to find a way to include these important areas of philatelic writing within competition. We published our views in our Commission Newsletter, and we had quite a number of interesting comments from delegates. Subsequently, we held an informal meeting at Washington 2006, where we discussed this amongst those attending, and we have some ideas to put to our Commission Meeting at Malaga in October.

Perhaps the major element we provide is our website, <http://www.norbyhus.dk/fipliterature/>, which is masterminded by Bureau Member Toke Norby, Denmark. The website contains much information for philatelic authors, both historical and current. We are extremely grateful to Brian Birch, United Kingdom, who has permitted us to place much of his bibliographical data onto the website. To provide a measure of what is available, the data is split into four sections. Section 1 provides a list of Biographies of philatelists and philatelic dealers; this is now in its 5th Edition and runs to 1,103 pages. A new Section is 200 pages of Philatelic Bookplates, a fascinating subject! Section 3 is a Bibliography of Cumulative Indexes to Philatelic Periodicals, and contains many indexes that were published in very small numbers, often less than 10. The final Section lists over 500 Philatelic Translations. This listing is of prime importance as often the translation may only exist as a single copy, but Brian Birch does provide the information of which philatelic library holds that translation.

I would like to thank the members of our Bureau for all there work this year, especially Toke Norby and our Secretary, Norman Banfield. I would also like to thank the many countries who have provided us with their email addresses, as this is now the most effective method of communication within FIP Countries, both for speed and cost.

Francis Kiddle

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