

FIP Philatelic Literature Commission

Report to the 2008 FIP Congress

By Francis Kiddle, RDP, FRPSL

This Report is my last report as Chairman of the Philatelic Literature Commission. I first joined the Commission as a Bureau member in 1992, and became Vice President in 1996. I was honoured to be elected President/Chairman in 2000 and so, with this Congress, I will have served for two terms of four years. During this period, philatelic publishing has become much easier with most people having some form of self publishing capability. The birth of 'instant' communications using emails has encouraged cooperation between students, which in turn has produced more published works. Additionally, the use of the worldwide web by so many specialist societies has generated much new research. Accordingly, philatelic literature has never been so popular and it features so greatly in our FIP International Exhibitions, a result that is really pleasing.

The FIP Board has requested Commissions to undertake more judging seminars. In response to this, an all day seminar is planned to be held in London on 15 April 2008, and one at Israel 2008 on 18 May 2008.

Electronic literature continues to provide a challenge to literature judges, but the trend, starting with Malaga 2006, of judges undertaking their judgements prior to the exhibition, does provide a way forward. With good communications with an exhibition's management, this appears to get around the time problem. At Malaga 2006 the jury gave a gold medal to the set of CDs that hold in searchable and printable form the complete run of the London Philatelist 1891 to 2006, the first time a gold medal has been given to an electronic entry.

The major element the Commission provides 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 list what is available, the data is split into nine sections containing 2,941 pages! Section 1 is an Introduction, Section 2 Bibliographies (1319 pages), Section 3 Philatelic Bibliophile's Companion (468), Section 4 Cumulative Indexes (190). Philatelic Translations (130) is Section 5, Section 6 Bookplates (390 pages of illustrated and identified philatelic bookplates), Section 7 Current Awareness and Retrospective Indexes (123). Histories of Individual Periodicals (146) is Section 8 and finally Bibliography of my General Literature (175) is Section 9. The whole listing is of prime importance as a research tool, and also identifies where many scarce books can be found.

I would like to thank the members of our Bureau for all their work this year, especially Toke Norby and our hardworking Secretary, Norman Banfield. We have been strengthened by the cooption of Tony Virvilis, FRPSL of Greece, who also is responsible to FEPA for European Literature.

Three of us leave the Commission this time after completing our terms of office. I would like to pay tribute to Osvaldo Giordano, Argentina who has provided many examples of good Argentine publications to all delegates of the Commission. He is still 'Mr Literature' in South America. To my good friend Toke Norby, Denmark, a tower of strength who maintains our website at no cost to FIP and the Commission, and to whom nothing is too much trouble. It has been a great pleasure working with him. To you the delegates, thank you for your support, and I am sure the Philatelic Literature Commission will go on from strength to strength under its new leaders.

Francis Kiddle

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