

## EDITORIAL

Up to a few years ago, a Philatelist could qualify for this term if he collected or accumulated stamps. Some collected straight forward Mint or Used sets, but the majority were quite happy to stick to their album leaves every variety they came across. Others enjoyed themselves tearing every stamp from every envelope they could lay their hands on, immerse them in hot water to peel off the paper, and after putting them face downwards on blotting paper to dry, sorted them out in bundles of hundred each to be sold locally or overseas.

To day Philately has grown much more than this. It embraces, the collection of straight Mint and Used sets, block of fours, Plate, Imprint, Traffic lights, or any other marginal markings. Proofs, Essays, Artists Drawings, Varieties. Moreover a new term has established itself, called POPSTAL HISTORY.

First Day Covers have always been popular, but Postal History, from a very humble beginning has grown, and matured into a very sophisticated giant.

It embraces all the knowledge one is able to extract out of the markings on the Entire or Envelope or Used Post Card. Before the introduction of the Envelope or Post Card, letters were folded up and the address was written on the face of the folded letter. This came to be known as an Entire. The markings usually found on these Entires as well as on the Letters and Postcards, tell us the period, the rate charged, the route by which the letter travelled, the various stops it made, whether brought over by some organised postal service or handed personally to the Captain of a ship, or given to a courier, or friend. This information is usually collected under various names, such as the very early Entires, The Knights of Malta Period, The Napoleonic Period, The Preadhesive Period, Early British Stamps used in Malta, The Early and subsequent Maltese adhesives, Postage Due markings, Rates etc. Maritime Mail, Air Mail, Disinfection Mail, Up to Modern Markings, such as Post Offices, Slogans, Hand Stamps Machine Markings, Bank Labels, Envelopes with names of Firms, etc. So the list grows longer and longer.

To day all letters and postcards are preserved. The rubbish of to day can be Postal History of tomorrow. Do not part with such material before seeking the advice of senior members of the Society. Unfortunately an enormous amount of material has been destroyed or sold to overseas buyers, never to return.

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