

BRITISH THEMATIC ASSOCIATION

MEETING AT LONDON 2010

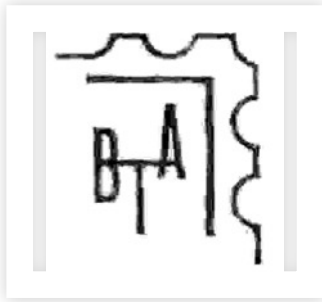
Michel Abram gave a display from his gold-medal winning display on "The Horse". This was a return visit, Michel having entertained us at Basildon in 2007. John Hayward gamely introduced him in his native language – French – while Michel gave his entire talk in English. He concentrated on showing how a collection can gain good marks. The introductory page should give a bibliography, and all rare items should be marked: something Michel said he did not agree with: the judge should be experienced enough to recognize rarity. He offered some useful tips:

- A cover must indicate its relationship to the subject, for example all early covers were transmitted by horse, but to be used in his exhibit a cover must carry a relevant cachet.
- The study of a single stamp is an important feature as it indicated philatelic knowledge.
- Maxicards are acceptable because maximaphily is accepted at F.I.P. level, but the cards must follow their rules [see

<http://www.maximaphily.info/Articles/What%20is%20MAXIMAPHILY%201.pdf> for an explanation of stamp, card and postmark].

Michel drew attention to some particularly fine items in his display. There was a Mulready with a horse advertisement; a ballon monte franked First Regiment of Cavalry, a mark used for 5 days only in 1870; an item of USA mail San Francisco to New York taking the overland route rather than via Panama; and a Netherlands cover carried by canal boat. After time for members to admire such a beautiful display at close quarters Brian Sole gave a vote of thanks for a talk with lots of information and laced with a sense of humour. Richard Wheeler then presented Michel with a Beswick pottery foal, and in return Michel presented the BTA with a book on bees thematic collecting. presented Michel with a Beswick pottery foal, and in return Michel presented the BTA with a book on bees thematic collecting.





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DISPLAY AT A G M

FROM ROCKS TO RICHES

Following the AGM Anne Stammers, last year's winner of the BTA Cup, entertained the audience with four frames from her collection. Most thematic collectors choose a topic already of interest to them, and Anne is no exception having worked at Hatton Garden. She travelled the world, bringing home as a memento from each country a pair of earrings from the gemstone of that country.

Like all good stories the collection begins at the beginning, in this case with the Big Bang, which formed rocks and minerals. It goes on to Gold in History, which featured a very nice ship letter of 1842 carried by the brig "Gold". Social history featured, with a letter from someone who was making a steam engine to crush quartz to extract gold. Treasures From the Earth covered gold, silver, platinum and diamonds. There were some fascinating illustrated cards and covers from mines, including the "Eureka" mine in Nevada and Broken Hill, New South Wales; also mining towns including an 1897 item from Potosi in Bolivia.

Sparkling Minerals looked at those gemstones long coveted man (and woman). There was a fascinating 1726 letter to a diamond dealer in Antwerp, and a beautiful 1848 cover from Brazil with a "V. Diamantina" handstamp. Famous gemstones were featured, including the Koh-i-Noor diamond. Then on to jewels and jewelry, illustrated by a range of philatelic material including colour trials.

The display ended with craftsmen's guilds and the craftsmen themselves. Among other things this featured a registered cover with a postmark from the German Goldsmith's Hall and a post stationery card of the same place. The whole display featured a complete range of philatelic materials, including postal history with highly unusual markings. Some beautiful jewelry was on show from top makers such as Faberge, and the story brought home to the audience the toil that goes into fashioning beautiful artifacts for our delight. It was quite a ride from the bowels of the earth to the houses of the rich, a story which kept everyone fascinated.

