

Mid Anglia Philatelic Federation

Newsletter

June 2020

Well what a change of scene since the last newsletter sent out at the end of February!

London 2020 GONE, postponed until February 2022.

Philanglia GONE **MAPF Convention** GONE

So let's start with something philatelic.

Terry Wagg has comprehensive collection of Slania material. Here he introduces us to the finest and most prolific stamp engraver ever.

Czeslaw Slania (1921-2005)

Have you ever considered painting or drawing a picture? Well then consider drawing something the size of a postage stamp. This is the task engravers of postage stamps undertake on a small metal plate and in reverse using a Burin which comes in two types, the Rhomboid for incising fine lines and the Rectangular for broader lines and of course a magnifying glass to ensure your image is correct. They also need an example of the subject to copy. Some engravers can incise to a depth of between one hundredth and six hundredths of a millimeter. They will periodically do a test print to check the accuracy of your work and if a mistake is made the engraver will have to start his task again. It may take between four and six weeks to complete an engraving. The finished plate must contain clarity of the image and readability of the text.

The most prolific and celebrated engraver was Czeslaw Slania (Pronounced Cheswaf Swania) he could engrave up to 10 lines in the width of 1 mm. He holds the record of engraving 1070 stamps for 32 countries and bank notes for 10 countries.

Slania's early life in Poland

Slania was born on 22nd October 1921 in Southern Poland, the son of a coal miner Ignac, mother Jozefa and sister Leokada, when he was six years old the family moved to a village near Lubin.

From his early years Czeslaw showed a talent for drawing. His great talent woke early before he could read or write, drawing was his world. His drawings were in miniature; he reproduced photographic reality and detail. He sold his drawings to school friends who handed them into their teachers and received high marks, Slania did not manage to hand his work in on time and received low marks. He lost his school bus pass, which he needed to show during checks. He promptly forged a new bus pass and signed the headmaster's signature in green ink, but he also lost his forged bus pass and sometime later he was called to the headmaster's office and shown the two bus passes. He was dismissed from school for a year with the comment "He will either end up in jail or become a famous person."

During the German occupation young Slania joined the underground (Partisans), they soon discovered his talent and he was kept busy falsifying passes and identity cards and other documents. Following the advance of the Russian troops into Poland, the Polish army units enlisted Slania into their ranks when the troops reached Zaglebia (Silesia). The war ended and Slania left the army as a Lieutenant.

After being de-mobbed in the autumn of 1945 he attempted to join the Academy of Art in Krakow. When he presented his miniature graphic work, he was at first refused, however Professor Chomicz recognised the young man's potential and persuaded the authorities to allow Slania to start his studies. For his second year, studies Slania designed and produced posters, book illustrations and other

miniature graphic works. During this period work was carried out on a handbook for students of medicine, "The Anatomy of the Human Body", directed by a professor of the University, Dr Tadeusza Rogalskiego. Slania did most of the drawings, plans and sketches of human organs from given objects.

In the spring of 1947 Slania was allowed to practice in the public printing works in Krakow, there he became acquainted with the advanced engraving art and that decided him to spend the next two years at the academy to study techniques in engraving, especially in copper and steel. These were very detailed studies, and as stated by professor, Stanislaw Jakubowski "every student of engraving must get to know and master all methods of engraving i.e. copper, aqua Forte (Acid etching) and steel" before they can carry out artistic work. When he returned from the printing room to his studies, he knew that the Burin and miniaturization was his passion. From then until the autumn of 1949 he concentrated entirely on brass and acid work. This was a long way from his first thoughts of becoming a forester, as he enjoyed the quietness and tranquility of that sort of life.

He chose "The Battle of Grunwald by Jan Matejk's as a basis for his diploma work which he carried out in steel engraving, the size of a postage stamp. This work earned him the highest award from the Academy; he received a diploma with distinction (Summa cum Laude). Slania's dream was that his diploma work would be produced as a postage stamp, although this particular subject was later engraved by another engraver, Slania's engraving was far superior than the issued one but, never issued, this was one of the disappointments in his life.



Fragment of "The Battle of Grunwald by Jan Matejk"

After his studies he started work with the Polish Post Office in Lodz in the unit of valued papers (Bonds and Money Orders). Slania soon acquainted himself with aspects of production methods and production of stamps. During 1950 the unit transferred to new premises in Warsaw. Slania was apprenticed to well-known engraver M.R.Polak, he learned the technique of steel engraving, this demanded more skill and precision.

After a while M.R.Polak allowed Slania to engrave the "Hammerhead" on the plate of a stamp "Worker & Dove" which was issued 31st August 1950, however he did not receive recognition for this, but he must have been very proud seeing the stamp on letters.



The hammerhead on the stamp, Slania's unofficial first issued stamp engraving

Slania then started engraving stamps on his own and he was given the project of engraving a stamp with the portrait of Joseph Stalin, Slania was not happy with the picture he was given of Stalin and one day while walking through the streets he noticed a large poster with Stalin's portrait, he casually tore the poster off the board, this poster he used as the basis for his engraving of Stalin.. To the surprise of everyone he finished the engraving in one month, this was during the summer of 1950. As this was a trial of Slania's work it was never released as a stamp.

In 1951 Slania and Polak jointly engraved the stamp “The 80th Anniversary of the Paris Commune”. Polak engraved the battle scene by day and Slania engraved the Dabrowski portrait by night. It was not until the stamp was issued that the authorities realized that had given the engravers the portrait of Jaroslaw Dabroski a pianist instead of General Jan Dabroski.



To be Continued

MAPF 2020 competitions and Convention

These have, of course, fallen foul of the coronavirus and there is, unfortunately, no way of just postponing them. This is disappointing as several societies have had their own competitions and selected their entries for the 9 sheet inter-society competitions as well as quite a number of individual 16 sheet exhibits. Perhaps 2021 will be a bumper year! That would be great.

LONDON 2020

This major event has been postponed but with the agreement and support of the Philatelic Traders Society, it has been re-scheduled for February 2022, in the place of Spring Stampex. The organization of this ten yearly international exhibition has had to swing into action to find out how many of the 150 stand holders will remain for the new date and arrange refunds for those not able to take part.

The same is true of the competitive exhibits and their withdrawal or not, and all this is arranged via the commissioners for each country. Add to that the fact that we were using 3 types of display frame, including several hundred from Belgium, and the logistics begin to become rather interesting!

So plans are starting to be formulated for the re-scheduled exhibition and where necessary finding new stand holders and exhibitors and trying to arrange hundreds of hotel rooms for commissioners and judges in a relatively short time frame.

AUTUMN STAMPEX 2020

This is scheduled to be held at the Design Centre in Islington from 30th September to 3rd October and I am sure many fingers are crossed in the hope that lock down and freedom of movement restrictions will have been lifted by then.

Postponed by the Philatelic Traders Society

FEDERATION STAMP DAY

At this time we have a booking for the village hall in Buckden, just off the A1 for Sunday, 18th October. This is to include the MAPF AGM, to be held AFTER the Stamp Day itself. As ever John Spencer has put in a lot of work to organize this day and it will be very disappointing if it cannot go ahead with the double hit of social distancing and our members' age profile.

A decision will be made later in the summer, and maybe in time for the next edition of this newsletter at the end of August.

FEDERATION WEBSITE

I wonder how many of our members have actually looked at our website: www.mapf.co.uk

After six years of running our website, David Alford has handed over the reins to Martin Lovegrove (KLPS). David always tried to keep the website up to date, but was frustrated at times by lack of support from societies in supplying their annual programmes and other ‘news’. Despite this David’s efforts were much appreciated and this alongside a lot of work he does at national level with the ABPS and Stampex competitions and also for the Royal Philatelic Society, London.

Many thanks, David.

Our website has now been reconfigured and is being developed to include displays which are available for all to view, and other that are to be uploaded with access restricted.

This is from Martin Lovegrove, our new webmaster:

Many changes to the website have been made this year and some may be of extra interest during these difficult times. Perhaps members could help by submitting comments or items.

On the first page of the site are links to ‘**Exhibits**’ and ‘**On Line Displays**’. The exhibits section is for the winners of classes in MAPF competitions; there are currently two exhibits, both from the same person. **We need more – from different people and different subjects.**

The displays are for general interest and may be completed exhibits, exhibits under development or just interesting displays. There is just one display here at the moment, so have a look and see if you can supply another. **Items in this section can be password protected** in order to limit viewing to members of MAPF affiliated societies. It is envisaged that just a single password will be used to cover all protected displays, but that may change if the system is abused. **The password** will be known by the secretary of your society.

If you have an exhibit or display, it can be submitted by email to the webmaster at: web@mapf.co.uk as can any questions you may have. The preferred format is a pdf file, but images of the pages are also acceptable and the webmaster will produce the pdf file for you. It is possible that a power point presentation will be suitable; the main restriction we have is the amount of disk space that gets used by all of these goodies. That, however is the webmaster’s problem!

Of course, you may have some ideas about other things that could be added to the website. Please let us know.

Finally, just in case you have forgotten, the website is: www.mapf.co.uk.

Machin Update, including modern definitives – with Peter Morton

Walsall sheet stamp printings (self adhesive)

New “20” date code stamps have now appeared

Value	Printer	Code	Comments
£1.42	Walsall	No code	sheet printing (08.01.20)
£1.68	Walsall	No code	sheet printing (08.01.20)
£2.42	Walsall	No code	sheet printing (09.01.20)
£2.97	Walsall	No code	sheet printing (09.01.20)
£2.97	Walsall	No code	sheet printing (09.01.20)

£3.66	Walsall	No code	sheet printing (09.01.20)
£3.82	Walsall	No code	sheet printing (09.01.20)

(Note that sheet printings of £1.68 and £2.42 from 09.01.20 print runs appear in a much deeper shade and a deeper Queen's head)

Conventionally gummed stamps "19" date code

2p dark green	Cartor	P	Behind scenes James Bond booklet
2 nd pale bright blue	Cartor	P	Behind scenes James Bond booklet

Conventionally gummed stamps "20" date code

5p ash pink	Cartor	P	End of World War booklet
50p slate grey	Cartor	P	End of World War booklet
£1.63 sunset red	Cartor	P	End of World War booklet

NVI stamps

New "20" date stamps have now appeared as follows:

1 st , large, signed for	Walsall	None	Ex 03.02.20 printing
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Country issues

Cartor Litho printed stamps to meet the new tariff change effective 25th March 2020:

England	£1.42 Oak and £1.63 Tudor rose
Northern Ireland	£1.42 Linen and £1.63 Belleek China
Scotland	£1.42 Thistle and £1.63 Tartan
Wales	£1.42 Daffodil and £1.63 Prince of Wales Feathers

Scotland	2 nd Saltire (much deeper blue and darker grey, ex James Bond booklet)
Scotland	Declaration of Arbroath miniature sheet: (contains 2 nd Saltire, 1 st Lion, £1.42 Thistle and £1.63 Tartan. Apart from 1 st Lion, other stamps are shade variations from sheet printings)



This miniature sheet commemorates a letter written on 6th April 1320 by Scottish barons and addressed to Pope John XXII. King Robert I had been excommunicated by the Pope for disobeying his demand in 1317 for a truce in the 1st war of Scottish independence. The letter sought to establish the

independence of the ancient Kingdom of Scotland denouncing the attempts of England to rule over it.

It was written in Latin and was intended to assert Scotland's status as a sovereign, independent country and to confirm that they had the right to use military force if attacked.

This was, perhaps, Scotland's first attempt at independence!

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Federation Committee

President	Mike Kentzer	King's Lynn
Vice President	John Spencer	Leighton Buzzard
Secretary	Peter Morton	Cambridge
Treasurer	Richard Husband	Cambridge
Competition Secretary	Mike Kentzer	
Webmaster	Martin Lovegrove	King's Lynn

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4. 1942 KGVI 5/- BOOKLET (BD26). A fine 1942
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inverted all others upright watermark. Perforations
on 1 x 2½d pane and ½d pane "average", other
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