

*Affiliated
Society*

*The Journal
of the
Stamp Box Collectors Society*



Editorial

When I first mooted the idea of forming this society in autumn 1985, I was fortunate in immediately getting the services of [REDACTED] as our secretary, [REDACTED] as our treasurer and the services of a retired printer and his wife as our printers. My luck ran out this year, when the printers hung up their printing boots and left me high and dry with no professional experience in putting a journal together, and with no typing experience to produce one. Fortunately for me, and our society, the printers typed all the copy and saw to all the illustrations, including the layouts. This was no bother for them, as it was, or had been their means of earning their crust. When they told me that they were definitely shutting up shop, I will be candid and readily admit I shuddered.

Here was I with a journal to produce and no means of doing it. A round robin to the members was obligatory, so that they were kept informed and then came the process of finding substitute printers. As you can see, we have succeeded in replacing the irreplaceable with the help of two members. Although I am writing this before the journal is complete, I am confident enough of the progress we have made so far, to say that the luck of the Lawrences returned when it was most needed and we are back in action again.

Through the kind offices of Phillips, we have a new type cover, through the kind offices (and with active encouragement of our Hon. sec.) we have a new London member, [REDACTED], who will prepare all the typing, and through the kind offices of [REDACTED], we have help with any art work that is necessary. So hopefully, this Journal will be on your desks in August and for the future, we intend to publish 3 times a year, viz. January...May/June..... September.

Before you all rush and write to me asking the reason for the 3 times yearly and not the 4 times as previously undertaken. I regret to say, that now the copy has to travel backwards and forwards a number of times before printing there is a time element, also the new printers, being professionals are charging professional prices as against the last printers to whom our Journal was somewhat of a hobby, and so now the costs of production are greater. Last but not least, there is always a dearth of copy, as society members all over the country cannot or will not commit their ideas, remarks, etc. to paper and so it will be difficult to fill 4 Journals per annum should we be in a financial position to do so.


Now that you know the reason for the delay in producing the Journal, please do not hesitate to throw in any brickbats, we thrive on them!

P.S. to the above. Any help members can give in producing this Journal would be appreciated, especially if one of you are skilled enough to turn photographs into clear illustrations suitable for photocopying.

Later in the Journal, there appears a full report of our last meeting at the Royal Horticultural Hall. I was very heartened to see the members who turned up and I believe we have established a 'must' for the future of the society.

I was encouraged by the members who took the trouble to send in details of their silver items for listing. I will be grateful for follow-ups, as I believe it is in the interests of both our dealer and collector members to have as comprehensive a copy as possible for us to refer to. Incidentally, should it appear that some items are duplicated, this was a deliberate act on my part. I have in my collection two pieces, which appear to be identical, but on giving them a closer look, major differences appear, especially in size, so I decided to allow all items to be printed as sent in.

A.G.M. Stamp Box Society - March 7th - 2pm

The meeting was convened and addressed by  Hon. President

1. Apologies for absence

2. Election of Officers

Information concerning this point had already been circulated prior to the AGM. All existing officers expressed a willingness to stand again and were unanimously re-elected.

3. Prsident' s Report

The President stressed the strength of the membership and the possibility of joint meetings with the "Writing Equipment Society". He gave a report on the state of the Journal. Members were satisfied so far with its content and presentation.

4. Hon. Secretary' s Report

Membership is now very healthy and in the 90's with the various forms of advertising, it is hoped to push up membership into the 100's fairly soon. At the Chelsea Antique Show shortly to be held, Stamp Boxes were included in the displays. It was hoped that new members might be recruited at this venue.

5. Hon. Treasurer' s Report




The accounts of the Society have been published previously in the Journal. The Hon. Treasurer was unable to be present but can be contacted by post with any enquiries as to the Society's funds etc. In the Autumn (1987) the price of subscription must be reviewed. Thanks were expressed to 'Phillips' for the advertising and sponsorship of forms. This is all a contributory factor in helping the production of 4 Journals per year.


6. Any other business

None.

Member' s Display -  - 

Following the conclusion of AGM business, members, who by now included 2 new ones, were treated to an exceptional display of TUNBRIDEGWARE boxes. John had chosen to discourse about this particular topic, because not only does he collect extensively in this field, but Tunbridgeware Stamp Boxes are amongst the most sought after boxes.

In his introduction,  spoke about stamp boxes generally and how interested he had been in 's display of silver boxes and 's talk about FAERGE boxes. He had collected stamps since the 1960's, when the Philatelic Bulletin of Jan. 1969 showed colour photographs of 2 stamp boxes. As he had two Tunbridgeware boxes at home, both family possessions, his interest was aroused. One box had remained in the South near where it had been made, whereas the other had travelled and returned South via Tyneside.

In order to understand Tunbridgeware,  gave us a resume of its origins as a craft. By the mid-eighteenth century, Spa towns had become increasingly popular. The development of these and the new railway links encouraged the growth of the souvenir trade. Stamp boxes were ideal after the 1840's, because of the compactness of the gift. Spa towns had their pictures included in lids, either by mosaic or transfer, eg. MAUCLIN ware.

IN THE BOX

Unbeknowing to a lot of us, myself included there has been a similar society in being for the past 6/7 years. The membership secretary has joined our society and as he explains himself quite clearly in his letter, I thought it better for you to read the whole letter and article for yourself. It may prompt some of you to join his society! Very little new about stamp boxes, but one or two pieces of information which might be of some use to some of you, especially his address!




13th May 1987

Dear ,

I have recently become a member of your organisation, and have had three back copies of your journal.

I have taken up your invitation to submit something which I hope you will be able to use. I shall waive the fee!

For your information, if it is of any use, in our journal we list the names and addresses, and most of the telephone numbers of members, and their particular interests. The latter would not apply, perhaps, in your club. We are an open society; open to new members and all information anybody is willing to impart. We now circulate, or peep into 20 countries.

Could you please mention the Writing Equipment Society, and my name and address as the Membership Secretary, and I hope we can reciprocate. You will probably know . He is a schizophrenic; he is a member of the WES as well as the SBCS! (A bit of name-dropping might help).

Yours sincerely,



Here & There

As a member of the Writing Equipment Society I have an incidental interest in stamp boxes, rather than in them per se. For me they represent another aspect of the variety of things found on the Victorian writing desk - the junk of yesteryear which became the collectable of the thereafter, and the antique of the hereafter.

Before about 1840 letters had been posted without envelopes but the pages had been folded and the open edges had been held together by a wafer and/or sealing wax. The wafer had been kept in a container on the standish (ink stand) Once the postage stamps were introduced and sold in unperforated sheets they needed to be cut off and put somewhere until they were required. The wafer box was thus utilised, and very soon the opportunist Victorians realised there was an opening for containers specially for this new exciting product, the penny stamp. So they came to be produced in the varieties your collectors know only too well.

By about 1910 boxes were giving way to books. (The advantage of dating antiques is that one can safely say circa, or about, though a decade or two out: what's half a century between friends.)

What I like about my particular interest is the way it leads, inexorably and expensively, from one thing to another. I started off with fountain pens, from there I went to ink bottles, ink stands, stamp boxes and the SBCS. Then there were the Mauchline Ware stamp boxes and the Mauchline Ware Collectors Club; pens to pencils and the American Pencil Collectors Club. In the end it becomes rather like a family tree, with so many branches leading from the trunk as one's collecting interests blossoms. I have lately been married to paper-weights, I have tried to become divorced from them but they still hold a fascination for me.

I have two boxes of particular interest. One is a German prisoner of war's box carved, I think, in a standard design, and underneath is the name of the camp in Leigh, in which this POW stayed, also the date 1916.

The other box is a memento made from rotting timbers taken out of Winchester Cathedral in the 1890s when being replaced. The box records the year and the name of the Dean incumbent at that time.

There is a shop in Burford, Oxon, where stamp boxes are a particular selling interest. I cannot recall the name or exact location of the shop but it is in a side street about halfway up the main street. The village is so small that the shop could not be missed after indiscreet enquiries.

The other day at the National Postal Museum by St.Pauls I discovered that to see their collection of boxes one has to write in advance.





IN THE BOX


I am pleased to say that you have been keeping your letters rolling in, but we need a continuing supply, so keep up the good work, all correspondence is welcome, especially critical ones!

Your editor has been in touch with Shire Publications of the following address:
Shire Publications Ltd
Cromwell House, Church Street,
Princes Risborough, Aylesbury,
Bucks. HP17 9AJ. UK

They have very kindly given us permission to quote from their books on the subject we are interested in. The first such quote is in this issue of the Journal. They will gladly send you a list of their publications, all at £1.20 each. - very good value for money. If you do write, please mention our society.

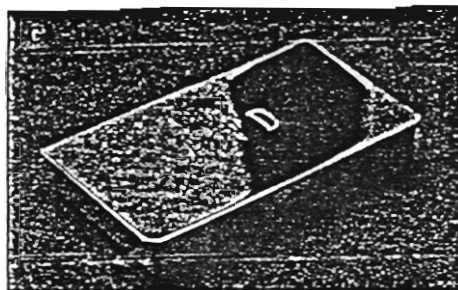
I have had our meeting at the Brighton & Hove Philatelic Soc. confirmed. We have been invited to display some of our treasures at their A.G.M. on September 28th 1987 at 7.45 p.m.

 from , who gave us such an interesting display at our last meeting has volunteered to repeat his effort that evening. Any member of our society is welcome to come and show some of his/her collection, about 10/15 minutes each will be required. Please let me know if you intend turning up so that I can make the necessary arrangements.

We have become famous! our Hon. sec. was invited to put on a display at the recent prestigious Chelsea Antique Fair held in March. We appear in the Times, no less, only under 'What's On'. However,  still put on a cracker of a display and we are hoping that some of the 2/300 leaflets that were collected, will come home to roost!

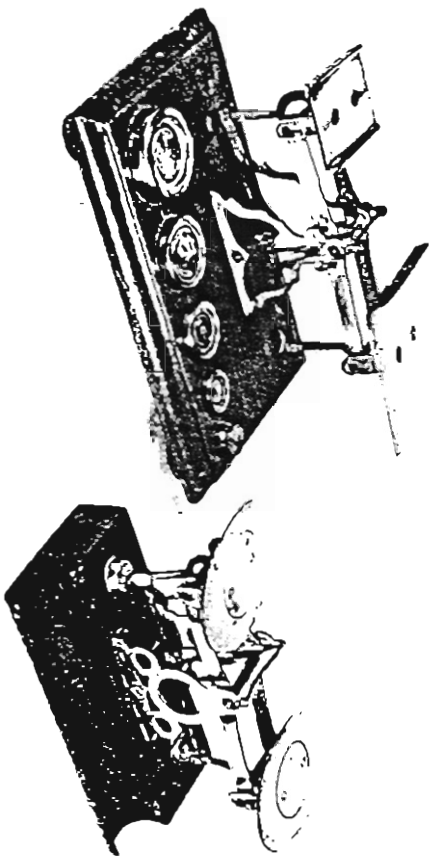
cont. from No.5 page 6.

Cherry Hill Gifts Ltd.
101-C West Jefferson St.
Falls Church, Virginia 22046



C. DOUBLE-SIDED STAMPBOX — This stampbox has a divider inside so that you put your stamps into two separate piles—perhaps letter and postcard stacks. It makes a unique and much appreciated gift, too. Have your initials monogrammed on the lid for that perfect touch of elegance. Please add \$3.00 for engraving. Specify three initials to be engraved on order form.

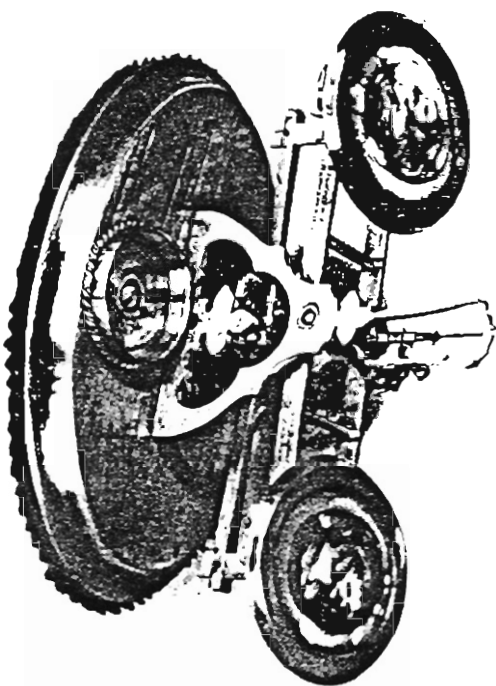
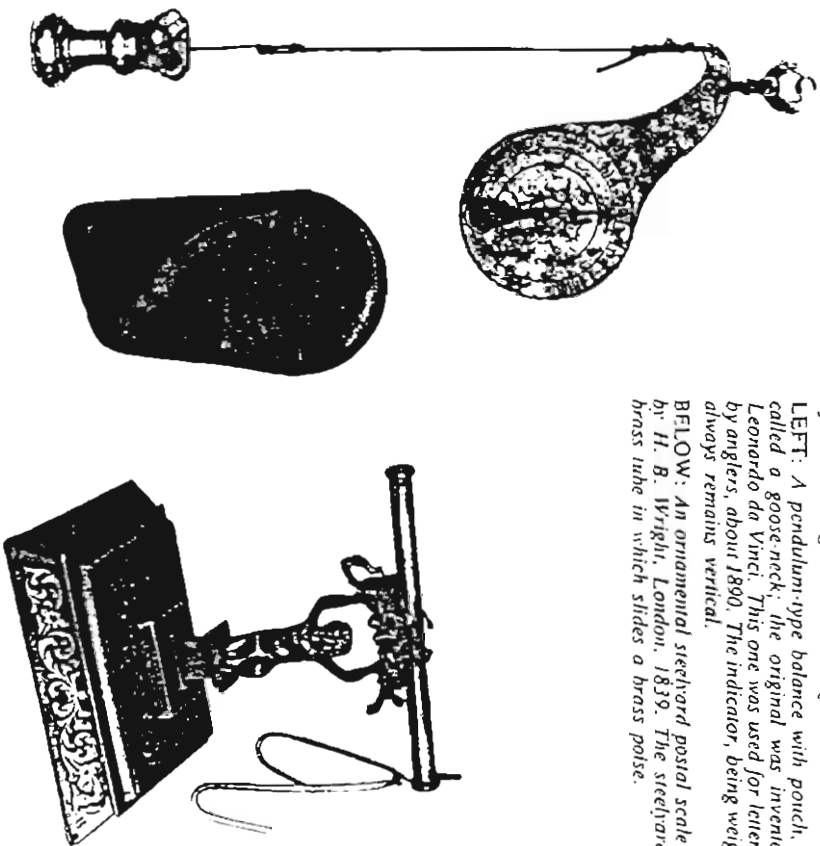
SILVER PLATE	No. 11-3SP	\$34.95
GOLD PLATE	No. 11-3GPB	37.95



ABOVE: Two postal scales of about 1875. That on the left has its original 'cased' weights.

LEFT: A pendulum-type balance with pouch, often called a goose-neck; the original was invented by Leonardo da Vinci. This one was used for letters and by anglers, about 1890. The indicator, being weighted, always remains vertical.

BELOW: An ornamental steelyard postal scale made by H. B. Wright, London, 1839. The steelyard is a brass tube in which slides a brass poise.



A Victorian letter scale with ceramic inserts on the pans; about 1860.

LETTER SCALES

As a result of the Uniform Postal Act of 1840, when the present postal system began, a great number of scales were produced on which letters and parcels could be assessed for the postage due. The most popular designs were based on the Roberval principle. Many of these machines during the nineteenth century carried details of current postage rates, and without some other indication the lack of this information presupposes manufacture after about 1915 when postal rates altered much more rapidly. Rates for letters in old pennies up to 1897 were as follows:

ounces	1840	1865	1871	1897
$\frac{1}{4}$	1	1	1	—
1	2	2	1	—
$1\frac{1}{4}$	—	3	3	—
2	4	4	$1\frac{1}{4}$	—
$2\frac{1}{4}$	—	5	—	—
3	6	6	2	—
$3\frac{1}{4}$	—	7	—	—
4	8	8	$2\frac{1}{4}$	1

Dating can also be made easier by a diamond registration design or number, a patent date and sometimes by the maker's name.

There were also designs using the principles of the steelyard, the helical spring and the pendulum but also incorporating one of

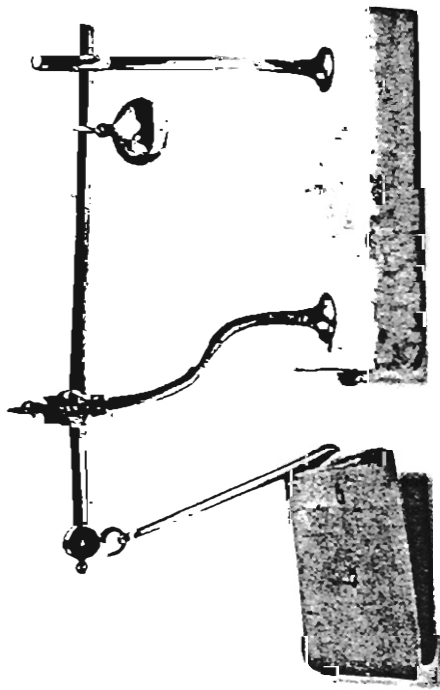
these with a part Roberval design. Nearly all the Roberval designs had split staves. Small table steelyards were made by W. and T. Avery and the 'candlestick' or 'light-house' spring scale by R. W. Winfield and J. E. Rarcliff. Small spring postal balances were produced by George Salter, John Sheldon, G. Little and J. Cooke and Son. Makers of small counter machine types include W. and T. Avery, S. Mordan and Company, De Grave, Short and Company and Perry and Company. These firms and many others were nearly all in London or Birmingham. Those made by Mordan are considered by many to be the most desirable because of their good quality. Sometimes such machines are engraved with the name and address of the supplier rather than the maker.

Some scales were ornately decorated in Victorian Gothic and Art Nouveau styles. Bases, stands or cases were in wood, alabaster, onyx, porcelain, pottery, brass and silver with decorative insets or inlays and trays for pens and drawers for stationery and stamps.

Roberval scales before 1910 were usually supplied with cased weights. These and other postal weights are described in the author's *Weights and Measures* in this

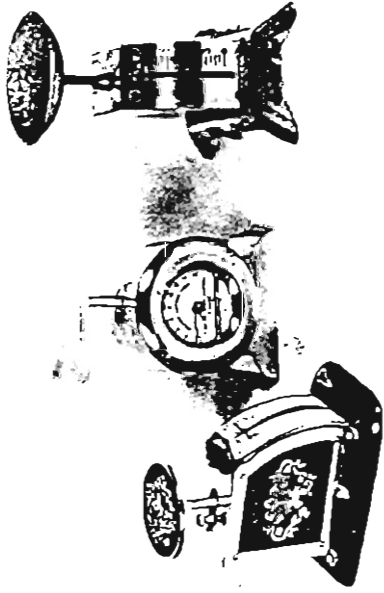
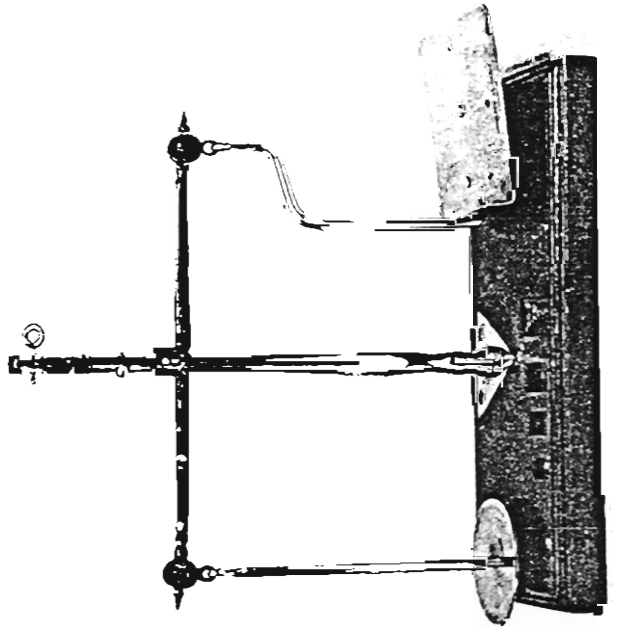
series. These scales frequently appear on sale with ordinary brass weights which neither match nor fit their recesses. New styles of postal scales are still produced for use and should not be left out

of a growing collection but reproduction nineteenth and twentieth century scales, recognisable by their bright and newly varnished appearance, ought to be ignored.

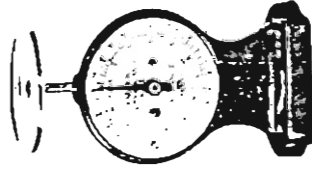


ABOVE: A brass Avery steelyard letter balance on an alabaster base; about 1860.

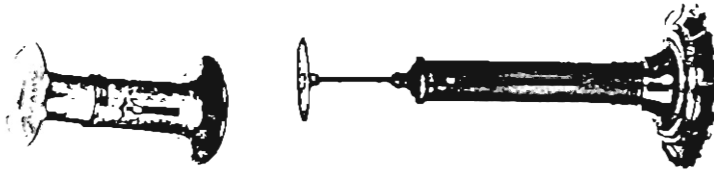
BELOW: A Post Office letter scale by De Grave Short and Company with steel beam and box-ends. The brass black weights are missing.



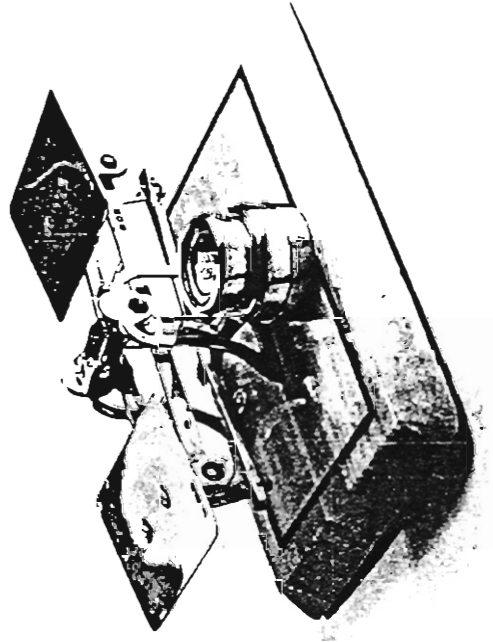
ABOVE: The two letter scales on the left, using spring and pendulum lever, have silver cases. The bliter two are respectively brass and gilt metal. All about 1900.



RIGHT: On the left is a Salter packet scale to weigh 24 ounces; about 1910. On the right is a 'candlestick' or 'lighthouse' type by R. W. Winfield; about 1880



BELOW: A silver letter scale hallmarked London 1916. The weights are silver-plated on brass.



TUNBRIDGE WARE STAMP BOXES

Sent in by...



H. A. Freeman suggests ways of reproducing the minute mosaic design that was a feature of Tunbridge Ware Stamp Boxes

Souvenirs for the tourist trade are nothing new. Soon after Queen Victoria came to the throne Tunbridge Wells craftsmen were turning out small boxes to sell to visitors coming to 'take the waters' at the fashionable spa in Kent.

Soon after 1840, when postage stamps were first introduced, the Tunbridge Spa craftsmen added to their already long list of souvenirs for visitors who came 'to take the waters,' several designs of small stamp boxes. These, although very varied, can be grouped under only two headings: the cheap; and the luxury. The so-called cheap ones had an 1842 penny red stamp stuck on the centre of the lid, with a normal mosaic border usually in a geometrical design. The luxury boxes did not have a real stamp. Instead a stamp-like design was used. This embodied Queen Victoria's head in a very minute mosaic, again with a normal mosaic border. This minute mosaic had 60 tesserae to the inch instead of the usual 15 to 20 to the inch. Experts on the subject of Tunbridge ware, including the late Edward Pinto, and the curator of Tunbridge Wells museum, and others, have been unable to say how this tiny mosaic was originally produced!

In the article 'Experiments in Tunbridge Ware' in *Woodworker* for November 1969, the method of producing the normal mosaic was described, i.e. match-like sticks of different coloured woods are glued into a block so that an interesting design appears on the end grain from which veneer-like slices are taken and applied to some article for decoration. This process, however, cannot be used for the minute mosaic. The method described here may not be the same as the original, but it produces results hardly distinguishable from the genuine antiques.

The method originally used, like the following, must have been very complicated and time-consuming. It is not surprising that the Tunbridge craftsmen used it for such a limited range of articles.

The process is started by making the design, based on the Queen's head wearing a golden tiara, on squared paper which for the sake of convenience can be of a much larger scale than the finished mosaic. To produce the working drawing for the small mosaic, which will be 3/4 in. square when assembled, the diagram on the squared paper should consist of 45 lines of 45 squares each, and the building-up of the pattern will allot suitably coloured varieties of wood to the appropriate squares. No colouring matter is used in the mosaic apart from the natural colours of the woods chosen.

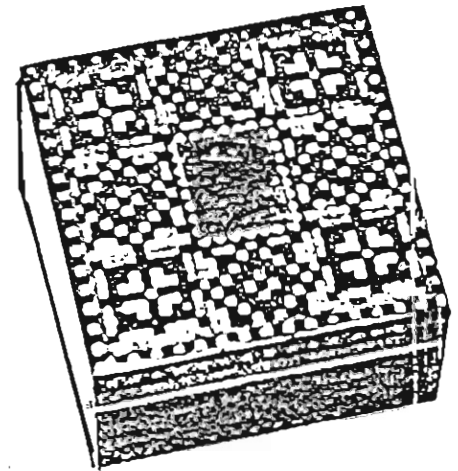
Some suggestions for the choice of wood which have proved suitable are: Background — a light-coloured hardwood such as holly or sycamore Face — beech Hair — walnut or mahogany. Tiara — berberis, or if unobtainable, yew which is not such a bright yellow. Eye — walnut Lips — plum. Shading below chin — apple.

Making the minute mosaic now involves several very lengthy processes. Having decided on the varieties of wood to be used,

strips about 3 x 1 x 1/4 in. are prepared from each of them. The exact size of these strips is not critical. Next a metal plane has its cutter sharpened keenly, straight across with no tendency to the slightest curve, and is then set accurately to take off a shaving 17/1000 in. thick. This thickness is vitally important. It ensures the required 60 tesserae to the inch and in this experiment was checked with violin callipers fitted with a clock gauge. With the plane accurately set shavings are taken from the edges of the prepared strips. Some of these shavings of the correct selection according to the design are glued face-to-face for the first line of the diagram. This gluing-up should produce a square-edged block which must be left to dry thoroughly. All the other lines in the diagram making 45 in all are treated in the same way, taking great care to number them carefully.

When all the blocks of this first stage are dry, the same plane is used to take off a shaving from the face of each one. These shavings are glued face-to-face in correct numerical sequence. When completed they will form the final block with the stamp-like design on the end grain and have the desired number of squares to the inch, namely 60.

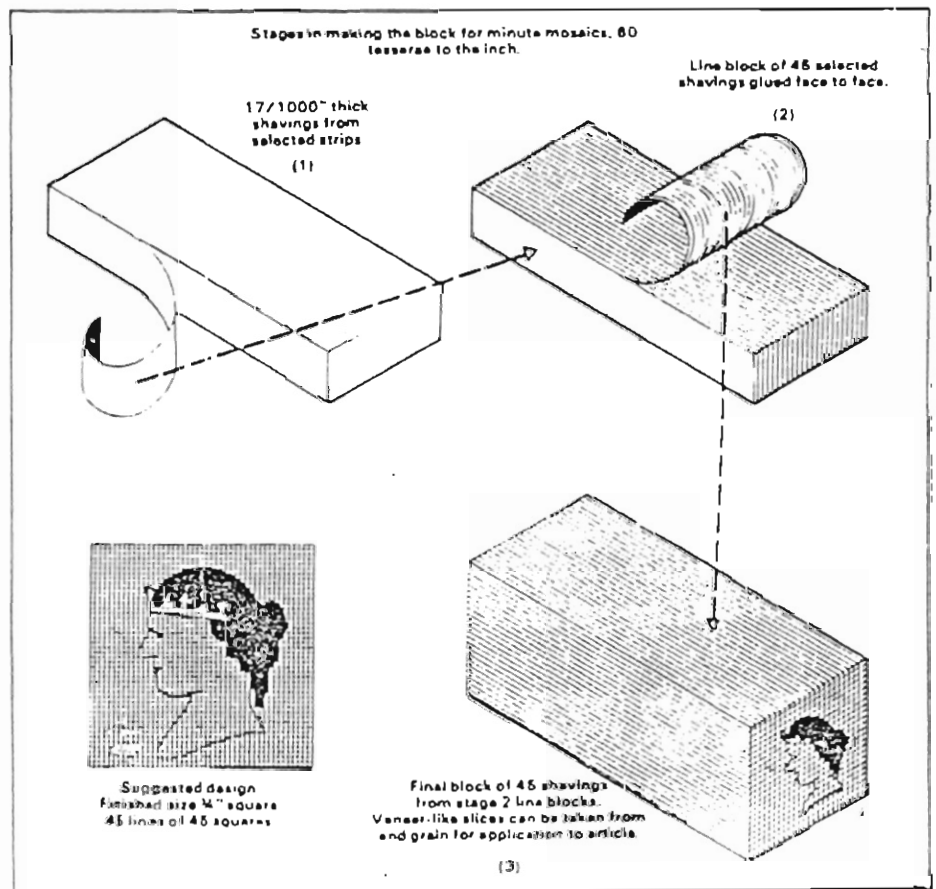
When this block is dry, thin, veneer-like slices can be cut off with a fine dovetail saw and stuck on a box. It is preferable to true up the end of the block before cutting off a slice.




This trued surface will be glued downward and the upper surface can be trued up after application. It is practically impossible to scrape or glasspaper such a small thin slice on its own without breakage.

It will be obvious that the final block will produce a good many veneers. This is fortunate considering that such a lot of work has gone into it!

To make up a small stamp box does not require a lot of description. The antique ones were about 2 x 2 x 1 in., constructed of various kinds of wood. The border round the central mosaic will be a typical Tunbridge geometrical pattern and will require 12 slices from quite a short block. A suitable finish is french polish.



CELLULOID STAMP CASES by 

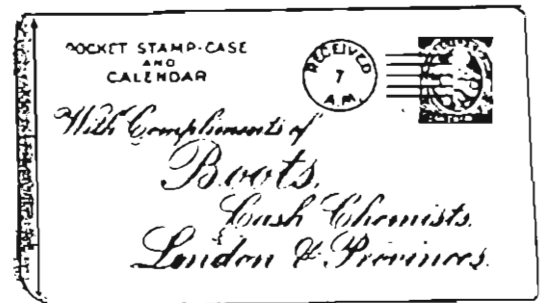
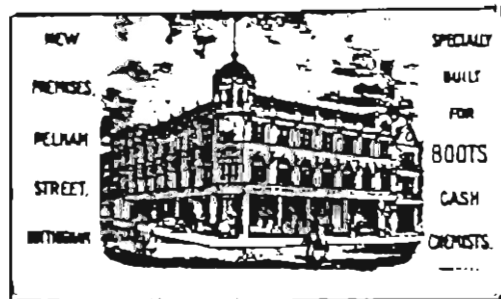
"IF IT WAS MADE TO HOLD STAMPS AND YOU COULD CARRY IT ABOUT...I'LL TAKE IT."
(Provided funds were available!) That has been my attitude for the last 25 years that I have been collecting anything made to "carry" stamps.

Around the turn of the century, a number of companies, such as Whitehead and Hoag of Newark, New Jersey, and the Ehrman Company of Boston, Massachusetts, made celluloid buttons and novelties carrying advertisements ranging from food to cigars to hotels. Stamp cases were one such item. They are found in different styles such as booklets with special waxed papers to keep the stamps from sticking or those with a swing-out aluminum tray. Often they included a calendar, note paper or a set of court plasters (forerunners of modern band-aids). As with all collecting, you must be sure that you are acquiring a genuine stamp case since some were made to contain only court plasters. Therefore, it is important that the celluloid case you bargain for has an insert made especially for stamps.

In my search for these elusive holders, I have found that the silver cases were more often kept but the free, company advertised, give-aways were thrown into the trash bins thus making them a scarcer item to locate now.

I have pictured a few examples of the types of cases including one made in the United States for the English Chemists "Boots".

HAPPY HUNTING!!!

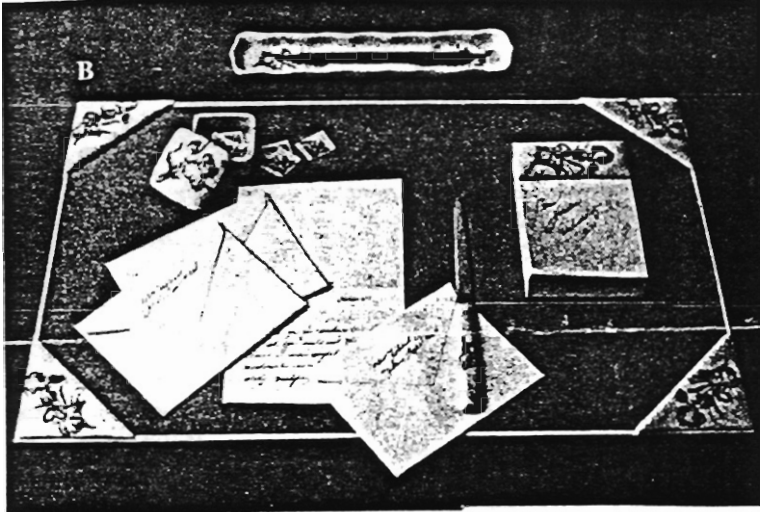


REVERSE

FRONT

from  (cont).

The Horchow Collection
P. O. Box 6200 48
Dallas, Texas 75262-0048

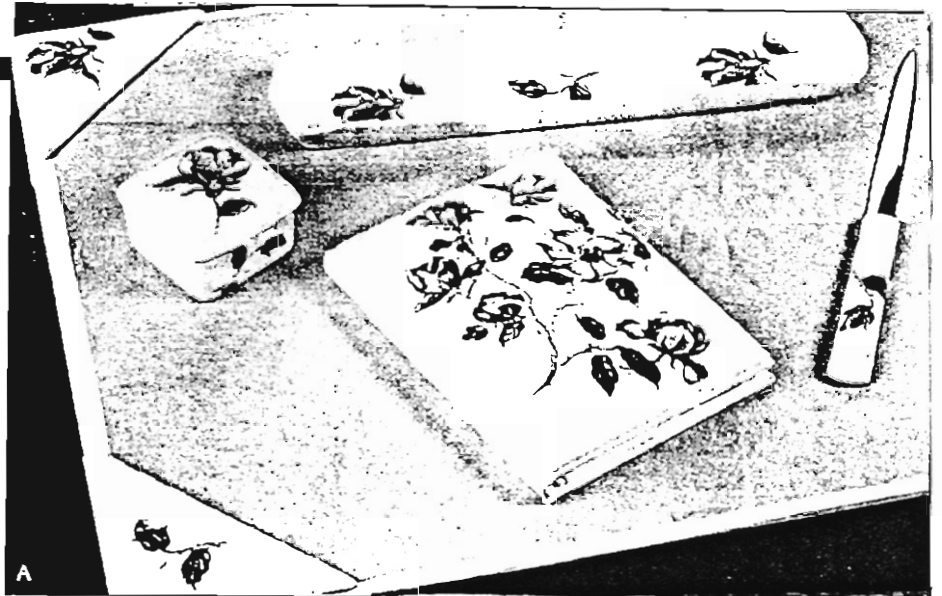


*B. Blue irises for your desk.
Hand decorated, white porcelain
Limoges desk set includes a 19" x 12"
pad with blotter, 3" x 5" note pad
holder with white note sheets, pen
and pencil tray, lidded stamp box,
and porcelain handled brass letter
opener. Set. #H600U 115.00 (6.45)*

Charles Keith, Ltd.
1265 Oakbrook Drive
Norcross, Georgia 30093

A. A LADY'S WAYS extend to a beautifully equipped writing desk. These Limoges porcelain pieces by Rochard offer the proper accessories for all her needs. Desk pad (12"x19"), stamp box, pencil tray, address book (with refillable insert), and letter opener. The complete set makes an extraordinary gift—for the woman who has everything, perhaps?

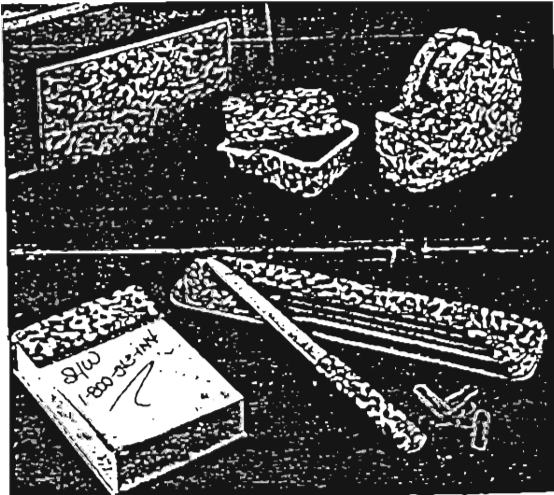
- Limoges porcelain desk accessories:
- Desk pad, #7157, 55.00 (3.25)
 - Stamp box, #7158, 15.00 (2.25)
 - Pencil tray, #7159, 15.00 (2.25)
 - Letter opener, #7160, 16.50 (2.25)
 - Address book, #7161, 40.00 (2.75)



cont/

(cont).

Sturbridge Yankee Workshop
Blueberry Road
Westbrook, Maine 04092



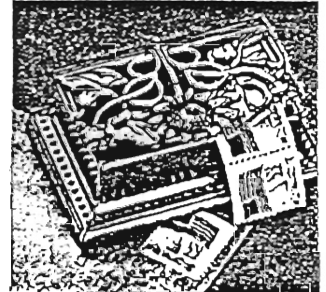
L. Porcelain Calico Desk Ensemble. Each piece is delicately crafted of porcelain, with durable, reinforcing fabric-on-metal accents.
Pen Tray & Letter Knife 1-10-0920 \$9.95
100 Sheet Note Pad 1-10-0918 \$7.95
Tape Dispenser 1-10-0917 \$8.95
Letter Rack 1-10-0916 \$9.95
Stamp Box 1-10-0919 \$5.95
6 piece set 1-10-1113 \$39.95

M. Ornate Victorian Letter rack is weighty, highly detailed solid brass, with 2 letter compartments and scalloped well to keep clips, change ready to hand. 5" h x 6" w x 6" d 1-10-0276 \$16.95

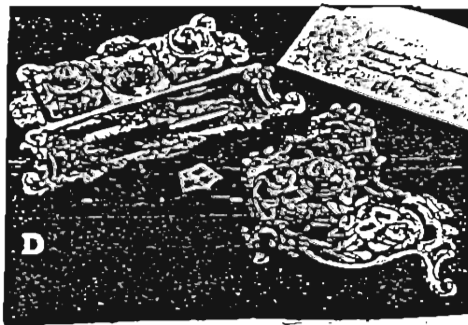
N. Handsome Solid Brass Companion to our Victorian letter rack above. Sunflower motif, fine detail. Keeps 2 rolls of stamps. For home or office desk. 2" h x 4" w x 2" d: 1-21-0265 \$11.95




M Solid Brass Victorian Letter Rack



N Brass Stamp Box



D. Ornate Victorian Ink Wells, antique finish of solid lacquered brass. Ink vials of thick bubbled, "old-fashioned" glass. Double Well with pen trough. 1 1/4" h x 6" d x 2 1/4" h 1-10-0912 \$24.95; Single Well, 8 1/4" x 6" d x 3" h 1-10-0913 \$12.95

One couples view - from 

THE STAMP CASE

British stamp cases first made their appearance around 1870 and their practical use continued into the 1930s, after which they were generally collected for decorative purposes, perhaps to be hung round the neck as an unusual pendant.

Anyone interested in these delightful objects will find that stamp cases fall into five main categories - hinged silver envelope, swivel, pull-out, locket and cylindrical - and that materials used in manufacture range from gold, rolled gold, silver, brass through to leather, papier mache and, in the later examples, plastic, many of the cases combining materials such as leather with metal. A charming limited edition of embroidered and/or inscribed card stamp cases exists, most of them home-made by dutiful Victorian daughters. Prices - reflecting the value of the material used in manufacture, the condition and the quality of decoration - thus range from as little as 50p each to as much as £75.

The type most commonly found is the hinged silver envelope, at first designed to take one common Victorian or Edwardian penny stamp, but later built to double, triple or quadruple the width. A variety of the plain silver double envelope is sometimes unearthed, which has the hinge halfway down the back (instead of along the top) with the corresponding catch halfway down the front opening, the case thus virtually divided into two parts - the bottom half containing the stamps, on edge, which pop into view, and the top comprising a form of lid which folds down to cover them.

The envelope shape with its two flat sides offers scope for a little fancy decoration, either embossed as part of the initial stamping-out process or chased or engraved after the case had been made. The purely decorative designs include geometric patterns, scrolls, flowers or leaves and a common device was the circumscribing with lined or dotted borders of a central oval, round, square or heart-shaped blank space for the engraving of the recipient's name. There are a few opulent cases where the silver or gold has been set with a gem stone, often a small, centrally-placed diamond within an engraved star or sunburst. In almost all cases the engraving was done by hand and although conventional patterns were used the detail depended upon the whim of the engraver. The larger cases appear to be less frequently decorated than the smaller ones, and very broadly the value today increases with size. The same applies to scarcity, the quadruple being one of the rarest.

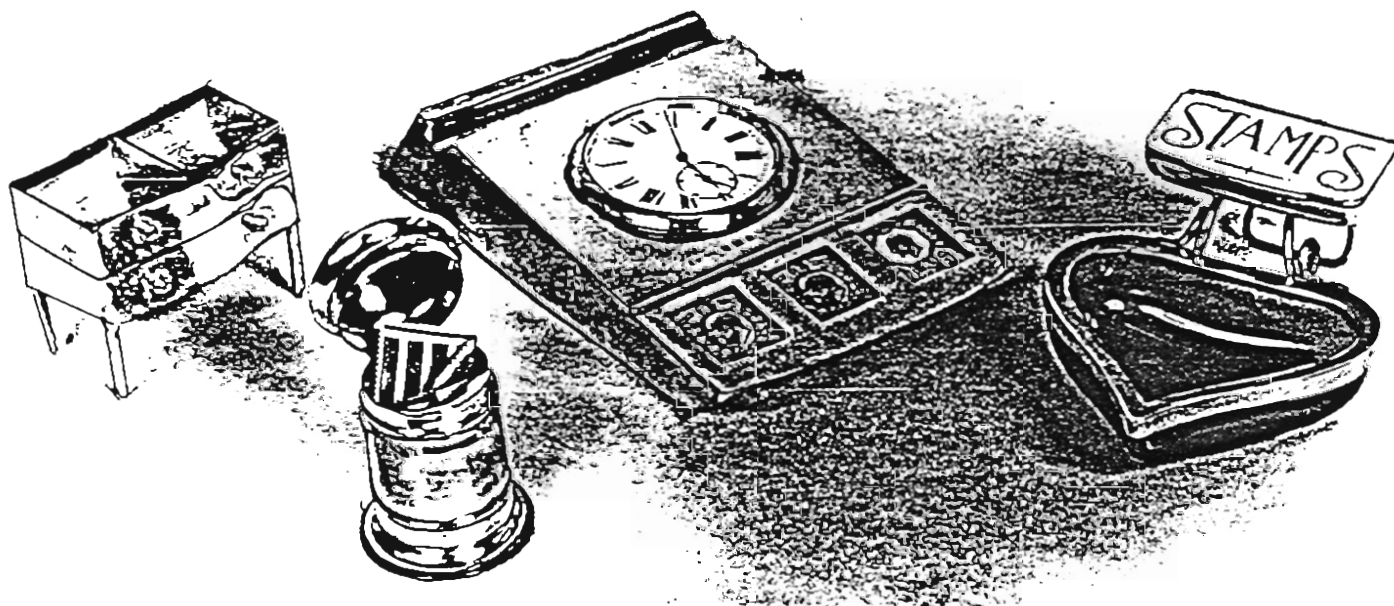
A swivel case consists of a square or oblong outer case with an open-topped container which is pinned to the case in one corner, enabling it to be swivelled out for use. They are most often found in silver or brass, plated, plain or decorated.

The pull-out case is a variant of the swivel and, as its name implies, it consists of an outer case with a pull-out drawer, very much like a tiny matchbox but with a stop to prevent the drawer from being pulled right out. This design comes in several different materials, but again is usually silver or brass, single or double, and very often highly decorated. Both the swivel and pull-out designs also sometimes have a refinement not found in the envelope - a small finger hole in the base of the drawer to enable the stamps to be pushed up for easier extraction.

The locket is now one of the scarcer types and what needs to be looked for is a plain, relatively fat square or oblong silver locket, without glass, which opens downwards, with the ring and catch together at the top and the hinge at the bottom. (Many of these, as well as pull-out and locket cases, are actually capacious enough to hold up to a dozen or more stamps if closely bunched together).

Lastly, the cylindrical case was made following the first issue of coil stamps in 1912 and can best be described as a tiny portable stamp dispenser. It consists of a short tube, like a small propelling pencil, with a suspension ring at the top, a revolving spindle inserted through the bottom and a slit down the side. A roll of stamps is fitted on to the spindle which is then pushed up into the tube and turned until the first stamp emerges through the slit. This type of case is usually made of silver and the scarcity of remaining examples suggest that it was not very popular.

When it comes to stamp-case makers, although manufacture in general was closely associated with the Birmingham jewellery trade, the extra care taken at the Chester Assay Office meant that many cases were stamped there. A hallmark was applied either in an unobtrusive position if inside, or in a central and prominent position outside so it could be incorporated in an engraved design. C & N (Crisford & Norris), HAU (Harry Adolph Unna), WV & S (William Vale & Son), A & LLD (Adie & Lovekin Ltd), AEJ (Albert Ernest Jones), CS & FS (Saunders & Shepherd), GV & CO (Gourdel Vales & CO) represent the most commonly-found makers' marks today.



At the last count, about 12 new members have joined our society through the medium of our give away leaflets, so if you think you can place some of these leaflets in strategic areas, please do not hesitate to ask for more copies.

Dear Editor,

I have been collecting stamp boxes for a long time now, and I am always fascinated by the different types I see around.

In my collection I have a lovely piece which has been intriguing me, and I wonder if you can answer my queries about it.

It is a round, silver inkwell, about $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide at the base, and on top of the lid is a flap for stamps to be stored.

The inkwell has a hallmark which I have found to be a leopard's head and an 'h' which is for the year 1903; I can just read the mark, but it is rather worn. The lid also has a hallmark, inside, which is an anchor and an 'o' and this is 1913.

What I am wondering is this. Is my piece a 1903 inkwell or does it have to be called a 1913 one because of the other mark, and why is there such a difference in the years? Also, if I were to sell it (not that I would want to) how could it best be described?

Incidentally, keep up the good work, the journal is very interesting.

Yours sincerely,



(Member 13)

More letters like this please, and I have asked our Hon Sec. to give a brief reply. Any further correspondence is very welcome. -Ed.

Dear




Strictly speaking, your piece should not be sold at all as a hallmarked silver inkwell. In fact, most auction houses will not accept items with non-compatible hallmarks, or what is called a 'marriage'.

I reckon, without having seen your inkwell, that the first lid got very damaged and was replaced at a later date by a lid from another, but damaged, inkwell. The hinge pins on the lid might tell you this, and especially as you have both a London and a Birmingham hallmark on the same item.

It sounds a nice item to keep in your collection, but a lot of people will not accept 'marriages', and rightly so, unless they have been further hallmarked together at a later date, then the piece becomes a more modern item, of course.

Incidentally, what are acceptable, are certain items where there is a difference of up to a couple of years in the date letters in the hallmarks, I believe. This is because some manufacturers would make their goods in pieces, hallmark them and then store them in pieces to be made up into composite parts into an article when the pieces were complete; the hallmark dates of silver were not so important in those days as they are now. For instance, take a silver letter scale which has a totally separate plate to weigh the letter. As the article would have been made in batches in parts, then the plate piece itself may well have been hallmarked the previous year to the main balance, or the year after, especially as the pieces were hallmarked after manufacture and not when sold.

Perhaps we can have some correspondence on the subject, because more and more items are being offered of dubious pedigree. For instance, £20 silver boxes with a silver slope put in to turn them overnight into £100 or more boxes. Should the slopes be hallmarked? How can we be sure of what we buy?

Trade Talk by 

The exhibition of stamp boxes at the Chelsea Antiques Fair for two weeks during March went down very well, and we have a few new members who we welcome, and would like to welcome personally at our next meeting at Stampex in September (see elsewhere in the Journal), we hope. The exhibition was a success, and was worth the effort of labelling and describing the items in the display - all 170 of them - from the elusive to the positively rare, a Faberge stamp box with cabouchon ruby among the highlights of the display. Hundreds of our brochures about the Stamp Box Collectors Society were picked up during the exhibition, so many have, by now, winged their way overseas in suitcases, I'm sure.

Once upon a time I used to add to my own collection of stamp boxes quite nicely through a firm of silver dealers I know well. They would be scouring the auctions for silver for their own trade, and quite often three or four items of silver would be lumped together as one lot. This was ideal for me, if there was a stamp box among the lot, as I could then just buy the one box I wanted from the lot (if I wanted it, of course) and they would then have the ordinary silver for their own trade. It saved me having to get a load of goods I did not need just to get my stamp box.

In the last year or two, the supply of stamp boxes at such auctions has dried up almost completely, alas. Where have all the boxes gone? Nowadays, even a little envelope stamp case can merit an individual lot at auction. This is because there are so many collectors chasing small collectables like silver bookmarks, pin cushions, vesta cases, miniature silver furniture, stamp boxes, etc.

Stamp boxes are still around, it just means finding them, but that is part of the fun, is it not. The key is to have the patience of Job and sooner or later something nice will turn up. The stamp auctioneers just occasionally have sales with stamp boxes, of course. For instance, Phillips, in February had about 70 lots of stamp boxes and allied items. Just look at the fun to be had with that porcelain Humpty Dumpty cap-twisting, tongue-protruding stamp wetter. How often does one of these ever turn up?

A few people have recently suggested to me that my own personal collection of stamp boxes must have shot up in value by 50%-75% because silver has gone up so much recently. I wish!! It is true that silver did jump up from £3 an ounce to £6, then down to about the £4.50-£4.80 level, a big leap from £3. This was due originally to an attempt at cartel forming between two silver producing countries, Peru and Mexico, to push the price up, and then by worldwide demand of a speculative nature. However, I can categorically say that for us all, our silver stamp boxes have certainly risen in price through demand, but, alas, not one iota through an increase in bullion price. This is, of course, unless silver reaches, say, £50 an ounce! - some chance!

The point I'm making is that an average stamp box in silver contains, say, between just 1/2 an ounce and an ounce or so of silver, so bearing in mind, the value of the stamp box as an artifact, whether silver is at £3 an ounce or £5 or even £20 an ounce makes little odds to our collections.

If only we could buy our silver stamp boxes at bullion price. I would opt, I think, for some wheelbarrow stamp boxes (or even one, I'm not greedy). They would cost about £1 based on, say, 1/4 ounce of silver. In reality, of course, one would be darned lucky to find one at two or three hundred times that figure. Oh, well.....I'll dream on!!

Happy hunting!

Advice on silver care.

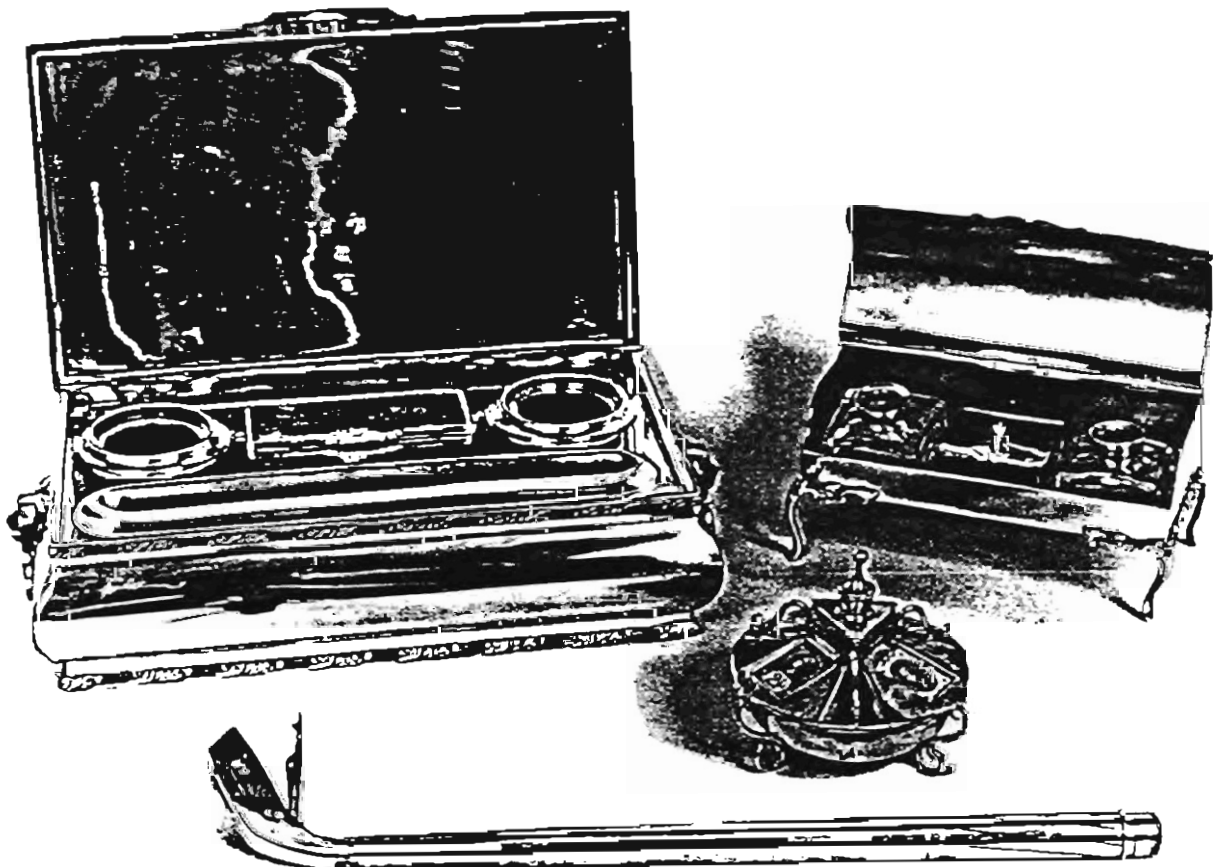
By Martin H. Leverton.

I have been approached by a few collectors about how they can keep their silver stamp boxes looking good.

Now, a tip or two about cleaning silver. Loving care and attention is all very well, but it can cause harm to silver in the long term. I have seen so many silver articles which have been laboriously cleaned over the years, and especially things like candlesticks, salvers, etc., which were cleaned by heavy-handed servants in yesteryear when the hallmarking was of little importance provided the item was silver, or looked like it.

Constant cleaning and rubbing of silver very gradually erodes away the metal. This is not even noticeable apart from the fact that the hallmark will become unreadable, but it is sacrilege. I see so many stamp boxes with now illegible hallmarks through cleaning over the years.

Clean the articles by all means, with a silver polish or foam or a silver cloth (the last method is the lazy way of doing it and is not advisable to do too often, as this method rubs more than the others), BUT, and this is a big BUT, avoid cleaning the hallmarks themselves at all costs. I know that in time the hallmark indentations will turn greyish and with ingrained dirt. So, then, occasionally, a little liquid polish or a gel polish on a soft toothbrush will clean up inside the marks when rubbed gently. Don't forget to wash the toothbrush after using it for this, if it is going back in the bathroom!! Of course, keeping silver items in cabinets away from the air prevents most tarnishing, and will help keep the items clean and bright for several times as long. But you all knew all of that!



Make a note in your diaries Saturday, September 26th.

AUTUMN STAMPEX MEETING

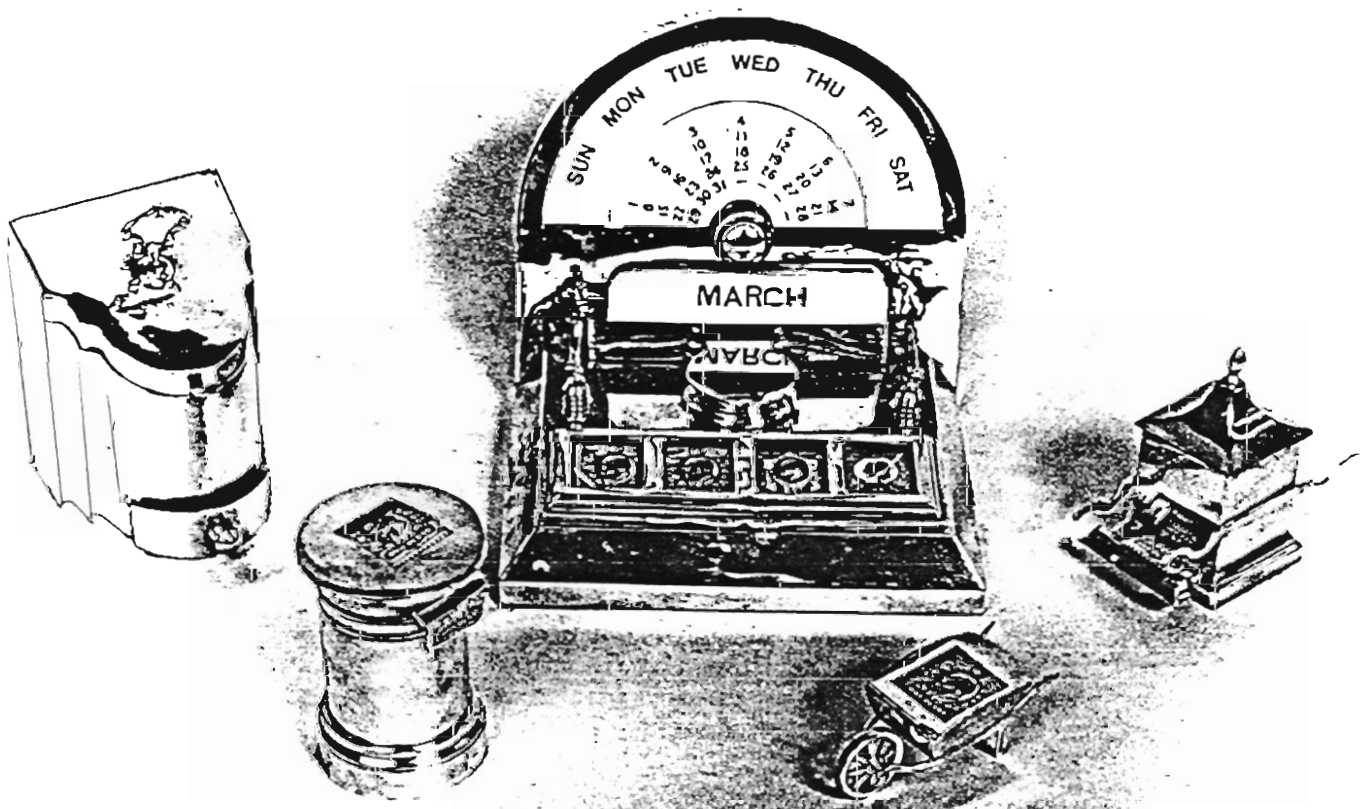
The next meeting of the Stamp Box Collectors Society will be on Saturday morning, September 26th. 1987 10.30a.m. until 1p.m.(ish)

It will be at the Autumn Stampex (the old Br. Phil. Exhibition) at the Royal Horticultural Hall, Elverton Street, Victoria, London, S.W.1. in the Floral 'B' Room (note, not the normal 'A' Room).

May we expect to see as many of our members as possible.

Tables will be available, as always, for displays, and we hope to have a short talk and informal get-together where fellow enthusiasts can meet one another and discuss their interests over some light refreshments. Under the 'umbrella' of 'stamp boxes and related items' (esp. desk furniture), we are inviting our members to bring items of interest from their collections for display and talk as well as actual stamp boxes themselves, provided they are roughly of relevance (e.g. postal scales), but not too tenuously connected, please.

We look forward to a jolly good turn out, so see you there.





Stamp Boxes and Balances

often feature in our auctions. When there are a reasonable quantity of lots, we arrange to send catalogues to members of the Stamp Box Collectors Society.



*If you are contemplating selling stamp boxes or related items,
please contact Simon Green or David Boyd at*

Phillips
Blenstock House, 7 Blenheim Street,
New Bond Street, London W1Y 0AS

Telephone: 01-629 1877