

Introducing the Australian Philatelic Federation

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This month I look at the contributions you can make by volunteering at your local stamp club or society and the personal benefits and satisfaction that it can bring you and the national one-frame competition to be held at Albany in Western Australia in August.

Volunteering at your stamp club

Stamp clubs (and philatelic societies) provide their members with the opportunity to meet with like-minded people and to share information about their hobby. They offer displays, visiting speakers, newsletters or magazines and purchasing schemes for books and accessories. Importantly they provide an opportunity to obtain stamps at reasonable prices through their exchange books and other activities. Many clubs also organise stamp fairs and exhibitions and some have libraries. Stamp club members can provide advice on storing and housing your collection and provide ideas on new collecting areas. Hopefully you will already have discovered the benefits of being a member of a club and how it adds your enjoyment of the hobby.

You can achieve even more from your involvement with stamp clubs and societies by actively participating in your club. Organised philately is based entirely on volunteers. It is easy to overlook the enormous amount of time and effort that volunteers put into every facet of organised philately but without that commitment the benefits of stamp clubs would be much diminished. The success of stamp clubs comes as a result of the time and commitment provided by their members who volunteer their time and effort.

Volunteering is the perfect way to feel connected to your hobby. It can provide you with the opportunity to help guide the future of your club or society, to establish a strong network of contacts with fellow collectors, to acquire new knowledge, skills and experiences, and to help advance the hobby of stamp collecting. It can also help you develop as a stamp collector as well as provide satisfaction from sharing your knowledge of the hobby, personal achievement and giving back to the club and to hobby.

At the local club level there are many ways to participate. These include responsible positions such as the president, secretary, treasurer, librarian and exchange manager of the club but if you feel that you want to start out with less responsibility then there are many other ways to help, everything from setting up meeting rooms, providing supper, volunteering to help at stamp shows or with data entry, mail-outs, sorting library materials or assisting visitors and new members. Many of the jobs don't require a great knowledge of stamp collecting so don't feel put off in volunteering by any perceived lack of experience.

Most clubs have exchange books which contain stamps which members of the club are seeking to sell. Many collectors join stamp clubs primarily for access to the exchange books which enable them to sell their duplicate stamps as well as to buy stamps at reasonable prices. The exchange manager is an important and responsible position in many clubs.

Many clubs run stamp markets, stamp days, open days or exhibitions. Whatever they are called they provide the opportunity for collectors to look for items to add to their collection. These provide many opportunities to volunteer, from preparing publicity, handing out flyers,

mail-outs, organising and selling souvenirs, helping set up the event on the day, helping on the entrance table or at the society table and dealing with members of the public.

Stamp clubs offer the friendship, knowledge and experience of their members who can help with advice on all aspects of collecting including identifying stamps, where to get stamps, storing and housing your collection and ideas on new collecting areas. You can help by providing that assistance to your fellow members especially new and less-experienced members and visitors.

Many clubs have a library which may consist only of a few catalogues and some magazines, or it may have a large and extensive collection of early books on stamps as well as magazines up to 100 years old or more! If your club has a library there will be many ways in which you can help including cataloguing books and magazines, data entry or being Librarian. You could also assist other members in finding information on their collecting areas.

Stamp clubs also provide you with a chance to share your pleasure in your collection with others. This can range from an informal talk at your local club to showing off your "gems" through local, State, National and International Competitive Exhibitions.

Many stamp clubs welcome younger collectors or provide special activities for them. Assistance is often needed for these activities (but check with your club to see that the various state rules for working with children are followed).

Club websites can be a wonderful source of information and contacts for stamp collectors and a great way to publicise the club. If you have the skills, volunteering to be webmaster would enable you to make an important contribution to your club. Even if you are not able to play that role you may be able to contribute material including articles, photos, updates and other material of interest to the website to ensure that it remains fresh and attractive to visitors. Perhaps you could assist with the development of new downloadable stamp album pages for the website to attract new members to join your club.

If writing is your forte you could write articles on stamp collecting for your local media or help with the club's newsletter/journal. Or you could create and post a video that features some aspect of the hobby. If you are not comfortable writing then perhaps you could assist with the production or distribution of the newsletter. There are also many other secretarial jobs which are important to running a club including maintaining and updating membership lists.

Your club needs you – volunteer today!

Albany - Great War Centennial Exhibition

For those interested in the one-frame class the next opportunity to enter at national level will be at the Albany - Great War Centennial Exhibition to be held at the Albany Town Hall, Albany WA from 1 - 3 August 2014. If you haven't tried it one-frame exhibiting is a great way to engage in competitive philately. The exhibition will also include postcards and banknotes as well as a state-level multi-frame exhibition. Details can be found at <http://www.apf.org.au/ALBANY%20PROSPECTUS%202014-final.pdf>. Entries close on 20 June 2014.

The Exhibition commemorates the centenary of the start of the first world war with Albany being an appropriate venue as the port from which many of the troop ships left carrying Australian soldiers to the Middle East and ultimately to ANZAC Cove and France.



Volunteers handling exhibits at an exhibition



Handling exhibits at an international exhibition



Sharing your knowledge with other collectors



Volunteers on the front door of a stamp fair