Postal History
– Explaining the Philatelic Material

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The ***Malmö 3rd International Philatelic Summit*** *was conducted 25-27 April 2014. For the third time it was again a well-attended event with delegates from around the world - 93 participants with 19 different nationalities.*

When I six years ago (2008) started the planning for the first Summit, my long time aim was to found an event where the world's leading philatelic exhibitors regularly could meet sharing philatelic exhibiting expertizes and experiences in a context with shared friendship under social forms. With the three Summits in retrospect, I would say I have succeeded - not alone but with a fantastic response from partners as Postiljonen and Spink, with great speakers and a fantastic audience with leading philatelic exhibitors and collectors in the world.

The first Summit in 2009 proved that the individual philatelic disciplines (classes) have much in common. If one is active as collector and exhibitor in one discipline (class), one way of positive progress and efficient development is to study the other disciplines for new influences. The first Summit dealt with postal history and thematic philately. It proved that there are less differences than there are parallels.

The second Summit in 2012 was dealing with "treatment" and "development" of the story told by the concept expressed in a philatelic exhibit. The Summit proved that without a developed and clear "concept" which is story-telling too, one will never be able to succeed. One of the statements from the second Summit was that

"The perfect treatment can only be reached if you own a large proportion of the best material, but you can easily have the best material without good treatment".

In reality, when studying today's competitive philately, this statement is proven to be true. Few exhibits without a perfect treatment reaches the top level (even though they have the best material).

Our hobby is dealing with philatelic material and the third Summit dealt with the philatelic material. Exhibitors must select suitable philatelic material which will ensure continuity in the treatment and balancing the strict philatelic importance with the importance relevant to the subject. Judges' evaluation of exhibits takes into consideration the philatelic material and relevant information presented. Philatelic material impacts on the importance, requiring an evaluation of the philatelic significance, which rely on the degree of knowledge expressed in the exhibit. The variety of exhibits at international exhibitions are so broad that it cannot be likely that members of the jury have a detailed knowledge of all presented areas. The philatelic material in all exhibits should include the fullest range relevant and of the highest quality available. Knowledge is expressed by the philatelic material. Personal study is the proper analysis of the philatelic material. Research is the presentation of facts related to the philatelic material.

The Philatelic Summit Paper Series herewith continue with Paper #10 by Geoffrey Lewis from Australia. Geoff is well-known in the postal history context with his enormous successes with not less than five different exhibits in postal history with FIP large gold medals. At his presentation to the Summit audience, Geoff adapted a comprehensive approach explaining how he has selected and displays relevant material supporting the knowledge, personal study and research in his various large gold exhibits. In this Paper, Geoff adapts a very straight forward approach in writing, explaining his comprehensive approach. Through this publication Geoff's huge portion of analysis, thoughts, personal considerations and experiences are shared with the readers of the Philatelic Summit Paper Series.

Thanks Geoff for this Paper carrying on the tradition of excellence in the Philatelic Summit Paper Series.

Jonas Hällström
Editor & Chairman of the
"International Philatelic Summit" in Malmö

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Geoffrey Lewis from Australia is one of the leading postal historians in the competitive philatelic context and is dealing with mail between different countries in the pre-UPU period. Geoff is also a qualified FIP judge in Postal History. He is particularly interested in stampless maritime mail and has five different postal history exhibits which has won Large Gold medals at FIP exhibitions: "Philippines 1775-1878 – Mail Routes and other Postal History"; "Cuba Maritime Postal History"; "Stampless Mail entering Spain"; "New Orleans Postal History – Stampless Mail"; "The 1836 Anglo-French Postal Convention". Geoff also collects and exhibits aerophilately – "Philippines International Airmails up to 1941". He is co-author with Donald Peterson of the U.S.A. to the book "The Postal History of the Spanish Philippines, 1565 -1898".

Figure 1. *Manila, 22 April 1863, to Carlskrona, Sweden. Hong Kong stamped the Anglo-French accountancy mark for the bulk rate of 1 franc 62.4 centimes per ounce. Malmo cds of 18 June. 108 öre due in Sweden.*

Postal History Material in Exhibits

The cover in **Figure 1** is like my postal history career. It commenced in the Philippines, and after a long journey it passed through Malmö. The theme of Malmö 3rd International Philatelic Summit was "philatelic material". Of course material is vital to collecting and to exhibiting in all classes, except maybe in the Literature class. The different speakers at the Summit took different approaches on how they talked about material. I concentrated on how to use the knowledge of available material to select a subject that will be the basis of your collection and/or exhibit.

This Paper is definitely an expression of my personal views. It is inevitable that some people may disagree with some aspects. However I have enjoyed some success in collecting and exhibiting postal history. Each of my five postal history exhibits has won a Large Gold medal at an FIP exhibition, so I must be doing something right.

Like so many postal historians I started collecting stamps decades before I collected postal history covers. When I first entered exhibitions it was in the Traditional class. Most postal historians feel that if there is any other class to be influenced by, it is Traditional. However over the last ten years my opinion has been changing. In my opinion, Traditional exhibits have become very narrow. A typical exhibit just shows one particular issue. The story-line is minimal. If you are not collecting that issue or something very close to it, the only aspects one can learn from a typical exhibit are the details of the printing, and often this information is presented in a very dry manner. I realise this is a generalisation and there are occasional exceptions, but just have a look at the Traditional class the next time you go to an exhibition.

I have never considered forming a Thematic exhibit, and I probably never will. Like many other Postal History and Traditional collectors, I treated Thematic exhibits and exhibitors in a very condescending way. However I have been really warming up to Thematic Philately and Thematic exhibitors. Firstly, they show more enthusiasm than collectors in any other discipline. It requires a lot of lateral thinking to form a top-class Postal History or Thematic exhibit: the choice of a subject; the search for material; and the telling of the story. Thematic exhibits and most Postal History exhibits are not collections of material from some catalogue or list. I have also observed that many successful Thematic exhibitors are also collecting Postal History.

In this paper I will frequent use the term "country". I use the term very loosely. It could be a separate nation-state, a colony or a stamp-issuing entity.