

STAMPING AROUND

with NICK

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If you are a topical collector, then membership in the 10,000-strong American Topical Association is highly recommended for the best source of information, fellowship and inspiration in your field of philatelic activity. Several publications, in the form of handbooks, and including "Topical Time", a bi-monthly fund of articles, check-lists and notes, are available.

One recent venture of A.T.A. is a series entitled "Topical Digest", indeed a digest of the cream of topical articles that have appeared scattered in various philatelic periodicals over the years. Received on my desk recently is "Topical Digest No. 8", incorporating sixteen different articles dealing with a wide range of topics. Priced at a modest \$5.00, it can be obtained by writing to A.T.A., 3308 North 50th Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53216, U.S.A.

And if you collect the Holy Family on Stamps, then I suggest A.T.A.'s handbook No. 92 — "The Holy Family", — which gives a complete checklist of the World's Stamps (1867-1977) depicting members of the Holy Family. Its cost, \$8.00, is more than justified considering the amount of research that has gone into its compilation. A list of A.T.A. publications as well as a publicity flyer are available for a stamped s.a.c. from yours very truly.

This past year, Canada's stamps have attracted unprecedented demand following CAPEX 78, resulting in a spiralling increase in most prices. Witness to this is the "1979 Canada Specialized Postage Stamp Catalogue" published by Philatelic Supply Company, of Dept. 222, 127 Cartwright Ave., Toronto,

Ontario, Canada, M6A 1V4. The sixth edition under review covers most aspects of Canadian philately, and the publishers should be proud as their "Specialized" is now well accepted as a standard reference for BNA philately.

The major portion of Sir Henry Tucker's collection of the stamps of Bermuda was sold at Harmers Bond Street Auction rooms for a total of £400,357 on October 17th — a record for a one-country sale, and the highest figure ever achieved by Harmers of London. Competition for the 581 lots was fierce, with four-figure realisations a norm, four lots fetched over £20,000 each, and record prices for postal history. B.B.C. Television cameras recorded the sale of four lots in the Postmasters' Provisional Stamps of 1848-1863, which fetched a total of £115,000, the top price of £36,000 being paid for an envelope bearing the second "PAID AT HAMILTON, BERMUDA" crowned circle stamp, while a copy of the first "Perot" stamp in red dated 1853 went to a continental buyer for £32,000. This stamp once formed a pair with a copy in the Queen's collection. The second portion will be auctioned by Harmers of New York on April 24th, 1979.

And talking of Television and philately, Britain after all has its first ever "Stamps Only" TV show. Pressure for such a programme has only been on for about a couple of years. Our member Ted Collins, on his return to U.K. wrote a couple of letters to a few philatelic periodicals, and mention was made of Malta's TV documentaries on the Postal History of Malta, with member Graham Smeed illustrating a "Letter to the Editor" with a shot he took while in Malta last year during the transmission of the final documentary. The British TV show is scheduled to appear on BBC 2 on Saturday mornings starting on January 1979. The series is composed of ten programmes under the title "In the Post".

The "Missing Virgin" turned up at Harmers Bond Street Auction recently. Issued in the British Virgin Islands between 1867 and 1870, the 1/- stamp should have a central figure of St. Ursula printed in black, but a few copies show only the surrounding rose-carmine printing. An example, listed as the last lot in an auction of world rarities marking Harmers sixty years as stamp auctioneers, was estimated to realise £25,000. It fetched £19,500.

Starting with 1979, collectors of the issues of the U.N.P.A. will have to add U.N. stamps expressed in Austrian schillings. The first stamps so denominated are expected in August this year, when the "Vienna International Centre for the United Nations" will be inaugurated. A postal agreement, similar to those concluded with the United States and the Swiss Postal Authorities, has already been signed between the U.N. and the Austrian Authorities. The stamps would

be available at the Vienna International Centre for the Centre's mailing and sold to collectors as well. The threesome combination of U.N. issues are unique in the world of stamps, reflecting the international character of the Organization.

From the International Philatelic Press Club, comes the news that the Malta Post Office has been selected as the recipient of the I.P.P.C. Award for 1978. The Award, the highest tribute that a Postal Administration can receive from those directly connected with philatelic journalism, is offered annually to that Postal Authority considered to provide philatelic journalists and publicists with outstanding and detailed information about new stamp issues.

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