

An Appreciation of Dr Alan K. Huggins MBE, RDP, Hon. FRPSL 1936-2025

Dr Alan Keith Huggins, who died on 27 May 2025 aged 89, was a former President of our Society (1990-1992), a distinguished philatelist and academic, whose lifelong contributions to postal stationery and philatelic scholarship earned him world-wide recognition at all levels of philately.

He was elected to membership of the Society on 15 February 1973, became Fellow in 1974, an Honorary Fellow in 2002, and was awarded the Bacon Medal at its inception in 2014. He was awarded the Crawford Medal, together with Marcus Samuel FRPSL (1904-1997) for *Specimen Stamps and Stationery of Great Britain*, published for The Great Britain Philatelic Society by G.B. Philatelic Publications Ltd. in 1980. In 2018 he was awarded the Tilleard Medal for his one o'clock display of *The Embossed Stamps of Great Britain 1841-1973*, given on 23 November 2017.



His displays to the Society were as follows:

19 Apr 1979, *Great Britain Postal Stationery*, with a 10-page handout.

12 Jan 1989, *Murphy & Company - Stationery Contractors to the Post Office*, with a 4-page handout.

21 Mar 1991, *Origin, Development and Usage of British Postal Stationery in the Nineteenth Century*, with a 14-page handout.

26 Mar 1992, *King Edward VII Postal Stationery*, with a 4-page handout.

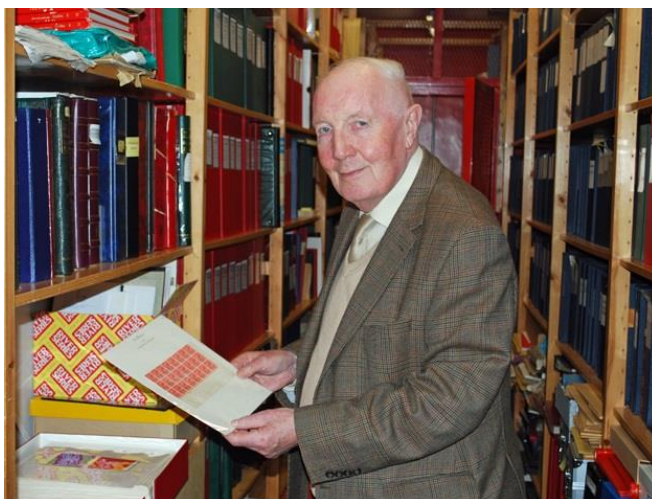
12 Dec 2002, *Great Britain before and after the Embossed issues of 1847-1854*, with a 4-page handout.

9 Jun 2011, *Display by Signatories to the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists (Great Britain QV Early Uprated Postal Stationery)*, with a 32-page handout.

29 Mar 2012, The Sir Daniel Cooper Lecture, *Sir Daniel Cooper and 'Stamps With Large Margins'*, with a 16-page handout.

23 Nov 2017, *The Embossed Stamps of Great Britain 1841-1973*, with a 20-page handout.

He was a past Curator of the Society's philatelic collections, serving from 1994-2022, remaining Curator Emeritus until his death, and a member of its Expert Committee (2009-2024).



Alan with the Society's philatelic collections. at 41 Devonshire Place

Born on 23 May 1936, Alan trained as a biochemist. His PhD thesis was *Uncoupling reagents and intermediary metabolism in isolated tissues* (1962; King's College School of Medicine and Dentistry), and he pursued an academic career before moving into university administration. He was Deputy Secretary at University College London from 1986-1990 and its Pro-Provost from 1997-2002, being elected a Fellow of the College in 2001.

His interest in stamp collecting began at the age of seven and developed into a lifelong passion for postal stationery, which he studied and collected for more than seventy years. From 1970 onwards, he exhibited his specialised postal stationery collections at international level, with one exhibit nominated for the Grand Prix in the Championship Class. His five large gold and four gold medal international exhibits included the following:

G.B. Pre stamped Queen Victoria Postcards 1870-1901
Great Britain - The Early Embossed Postal Stationery Issues
Great Britain Postal Stationery Stamped to Order Issues 1855 - 1901
Great Britain Postal Stationery Wrappers
Great Britain Pre-stamped Telegraph Forms and Cards 1870 - 1901
Great Britain Stamped to Order Postal Stationery
Mauritius Postal Stationery
Mauritius Postal Stationery - Pre-stamped Postcards
Mauritius Postal Stationery - The Stamped envelopes and Registration envelopes

Alan was a prolific author in the field of Postal Stationery, contributing numerous articles and co-authoring or writing several notable books, beginning with *British Postal Stationery* in 1970, and culminating most recently with *Great Britain Postal Stationery with Security / Advertising Collars* in 2024 which was awarded a gold medal at EuroPhilEx 2025. His publications are listed below:

British Postal Stationery: A Priced Handbook of the Postal Stationery of Great Britain, London, Great Britain Philatelic Society, London, 1970, 188p.
The De La Rue Punch Book, London: Robson Lowe, ISBN 0-85397-080-7 16p. (Published as a Supplement to The Philatelic Journal of Great Britain, June 1979.), 1979, 23p.
Specimen Stamps and Stationery of Great Britain, Saffron Walden, G.B. Philatelic Publications Ltd., 1980, 254p. (with Marcus Samuel)
The Origin, Development and Usage of British Postal Stationery in the Nineteenth Century; notes on a display presented to The Collectors Club, New York, Wednesday, 5th June 1991, London, The Author, 1991, 8p.
Competitive Exhibiting at Local and Federation Level, London, The Association of British Philatelic Societies Ltd, with support by the British Philatelic Trust, 2001, 12p. Series Title: ABPS Booklet; No. 3.
The Telegraph Stamps and Stationery of Great Britain 1851-1954, Putney, G.B. Philatelic Publications Ltd. for the Great Britain Philatelic Society, 2003, ISBN 0-907630-14-6, 190p. (with Peter Langmead)
Collect British Postal Stationery: A Simplified Listing of British Postal Stationery 1840 to 2007, Gerrards Cross, G.B. Philatelic Publications Ltd, 2007, ISBN 978-0-907630-22-7, 151p. (with Colin Baker)
Great Britain: The 1840 Prepaid Parliamentary Envelopes, London, The Royal Philatelic Society London, 2013, ISBN 9780900631740, 99p. (with Edward Klempka)
The Mulready Postal Stationery: Its Genesis, Production and Usage, Sutton Coldfield, G.B. Philatelic Publications, 2015, ISBN 978-0-907630-29-6, 211p. (with Alan Holyoake)
The 1840 Embossed Wyon-Whiting Essays, London, The Royal Philatelic Society London, 2021, ISBN 978-1-913015-10-7, 187p. (with Tony Wicks)
Great Britain Postal Stationery with Security / Advertising Collars, London, The Royal Philatelic Society London, 2024, ISBN 978-1-913015-32-9, 158p.

He was a Fédération Internationale de Philatélie (FIP) accredited international juror from 1974, serving on the juries of more than twenty-five international exhibitions and frequently acting as Secretary to the Jury. He also served as Chairman of the Organising Committee for Stamp World London 90 and chaired the British Philatelic Trust from 1985 to 1996.

He held many positions of leadership across the philatelic community, including President of the Great Britain Philatelic Society 1976-1978, becoming an Honorary Life Member in 1986, and the Postal Stationery Society, of which he was Life President. Internationally, he was an Honorary President of the Federation of European Philatelic Associations (FEPA), an Honorary Member of the Académie Européenne de Philatélie, and a Membre Correspondant Étranger of the Académie de Philatélie de Belgique. He was Chairman of the FIP Postal Stationery Commission 1990-2004, and remained an honorary member of the Commission at his death.

In writing an appreciation of his life, Bill Hedley FRPSL, President of FEPA wrote, “His far-sighted belief in the importance of international cooperation led him in the 1980s to become a leading advocate for setting up a European Federation of Philatelic Associations to promote closer cooperation between national philatelic organisations. In 1989 this resulted in the foundation of FEPA with Alan as its first President. He served as President until 1993, by which time FEPA was firmly established with a growing membership. He was then appointed to be the first Honorary President of FEPA and to this day we are indebted to him for the clarity and determination that he brought to the foundation of FEPA. We remain committed to the objectives that he outlined at that time.”

The origins of FEPA are recorded in the handbook for EUROFILEX held in Budapest in September 1992. Between the HAFNIA International Exhibition held in Copenhagen in October 1987 and the World Philatelic Exhibition held in Sofia, Bulgaria in May 1989, FEPA was created, its statutes formulated, and Alan became its first President, presiding over the Congresses held between 1989 and 1993, in Sofia, London, Dresden, Granada, and Poznan, and attending the 25th Anniversary Congress in Lugano, Switzerland in 2014.

He signed the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists in 1983 and later served as its Keeper (2003-2008), and as a member of the Board of Election (2009-2019). He was elected a Membre Associé Étranger of the French Académie de Philatélie on 6 October 1990 and joined the International Association of Philatelic Experts (AIEP) in 2001.

His contributions were recognised with other honours, including the Lichtenstein Medal of the Collectors Club of New York (1994) given annually to a living individual for outstanding service to philately; the FEPA Award for Service (2009); and the FIP Medal for Service (2004). In the January 1996 New Year Honours list, he was appointed to Membership of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) for services to the British Philatelic Trust. He also served on the Stamp Advisory Committee of the British Post Office and chaired the Philatelic Advisory Committee of the British Postal Museum & Archive.

He was supportive of exhibitors and displayers at all levels of philately, and perhaps less well known is his mentoring of new exhibitors at the international level. There are quite a number of successful international exhibitors for whom the support and advice of Alan Huggins has been important for their success.

Throughout his life, Alan brought scholarly rigour, quiet dedication, and occasionally steely determination, to his chosen field, remaining active in philately into his final year. He is survived by his wife Mary and two sons.

C.M.B. King 27 June 2025
Updated 2 July 2025