



“Show them stamp magazines and catalogues”

Remember - involve the children in the meeting and have fun!

The other leaflets in this series are-

'Developing Your Club'

'Understanding the Basics of Stamp Collecting'

'Safeguarding Your Members'

'Need More Help with Your Club?'



Let's get
**STAMP
ACTIVE**



how to start your stamp club





“You will find that children need little encouragement to show their collections to others”

Getting Started

The first task is to find somewhere to hold your stamp club. The perfect answer is often a school, since there you already have a captive audience, with many probably already collecting stamps. However, libraries, church or village halls may provide other venues. Your local council should be able to help here, but check if charges or special conditions apply. Whilst a club run from a school may be restricted to those attending that school, one meeting at other premises can open its doors to a wider membership. The guidelines below for starting your club will still apply.

Finding Support in Schools

If you are known in a school as a teacher, parent or governor it will be easier for you to start up a school club. However, many people from outside the school community run school stamp clubs.

Start by telephoning a local junior school and arrange a meeting with the Head Teacher. (The Head may wish to find out during a school assembly the number of children interested and those who already collect stamps.) It is always better to visit than to write, as this demonstrates a greater personal interest and is more likely to convey your enthusiasm. Explain your willingness to help and show the Head Teacher the Stamp Active materials. Emphasise that the British Philatelic Trust is a sponsor and keen to support young collectors and club organisers.

Discuss with the Head the best time for your group to hold an initial exploratory meeting. This might be during the lunch break or it could be during normal school hours - the school may provide for such activities. Alternatively it could be after school - the school will undoubtedly have its own procedures to let parents know of after-school activities.

range of accessories (such as perforation gauges) to be purchased for the general benefit of the members. Alternatively, approval books can be made up and circulated within the club.

- Stamp auction - This is an interesting challenge and, while developing knowledge of stamp collecting, it will also educate members in organisational skills - see the leaflet 'Developing Your Club' for tips on running auctions.
- Raffles and sponsored events - these are particularly useful for fund-raising for specific purposes - such as buying reference books or catalogues for the club.
- Local sources - Your local authority should be able to advise you of charities which consider financial support for local groups and which might have funds available for distribution.

Your First Proper Meeting

Give every child a small packet of stamps (about ten will do). The members can work on their albums or swap with friends during the first part of the meeting. An exercise book or loose-leaf folder will suffice for an album, but the children should be encouraged to obtain a proper one as soon as possible (see the leaflet 'Need More Help with Your Club?' for sources of materials).

Next, invite the children to talk about their collections and share their interests. Have they any new stamps? What have they acquired recently? Have they completed any sets?

Tell them about new stamp issues, and about local fairs, exhibitions or even adult philatelic society meetings (make sure that those you recommend will welcome them). Show them stamp magazines and catalogues, explaining their usefulness. Let them know about any competitions open to young collectors - information about these is on the website 'www.planetstamp.co.uk'.

After these general introductions, try to select a single activity on which to concentrate - there is no point including too many different things to do at one meeting as you probably won't have the time to carry them out to their full effect.



“Give every child a small packet of stamps”



“If you organise an interesting club meeting you’ll get an active audience”

Obtaining Materials

The first requirement for a successful club is plenty of stamps. Give a few to every child at every meeting. Encourage the children to join the NYSC ‘Kidstamps’ club through which they will receive stamps and activities they can do at home (membership is free and details are in the NYSC leaflet enclosed). A cheap stock of stamps for sale can be obtained from several sources (see ‘Need More Help with Your Club?’ leaflet), and this is worthwhile both to help members build their own collections and to provide a small source of income for the club.

Kiloware can be purchased or sorted, or stamps acquired from dealers or stamp auction houses for resale. Stamp magazines will be helpful here, and the Philatelic Traders’ Society at P.O. Box 371 • Fleet • Hampshire • GU52 6ZX • TEL: (01252) 628006 • FAX: (01252) 684674 can provide the names of reputable dealers in your area.

The children should help in the running of a stamp shop - something they will enjoy and which has great educational value (see ‘Developing Your Club’ leaflet).

Funding

An important decision you will have to make is how to finance your club. If the club is to maintain stocks of stamps, plus obtain books about stamps, a regular income will be needed. Here are a few ideas of ways to raise cash for your club.

- Membership subscriptions - An initial membership subscription can cover the cost of Stamp Active Membership and provide an initial float.
- Meeting fees - a small fee at each meeting maintains a regular inflow of cash and prevents children and parents taking all the work for granted.
- Sponsorship - The PTA, a local business or stamp dealer may be willing to donate money or goods to help with setting up and running your club. The more people you ask, the better your chances of getting the support you need.
- Stamp sales - a club shop can be run at a small profit to enable a

Recruitment Letter

As a follow up, you can produce a letter for the children to take home to publicise the club and obtain subscriptions. This will promote the club to parents; you may as a result be lucky and get some volunteers to help you, or even some financial support. The letter should invite parents and teachers to the first meeting, informing them of the start and finish times.

Adult Helpers

It is very important that there are enough adult helpers, whether parents or staff, to supervise the children. By emphasising the educational benefits of stamp collecting you may encourage their support. In the early stages of the philatelic learning curve children require a great deal of personal time and attention. You should aim for at least one helper for every ten children. It is also important that the helpers are properly screened and briefed - the leaflet entitled ‘Safeguarding Your Members’ provides guidelines about this.

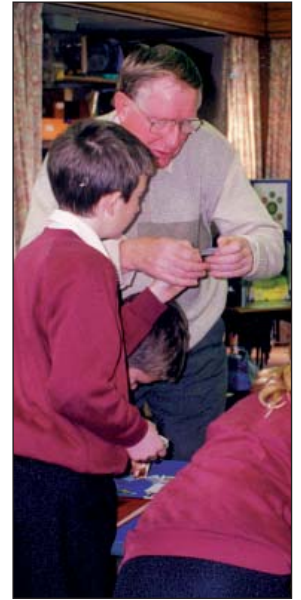
Adult supporters do not have to be expert philatelists to help organise or promote the stamp club - a bit of imagination, a lot of enthusiasm and a little knowledge about stamps in general are all that is required. When you have assessed the support and ascertained that it is worth proceeding, you can organise your first meeting.

Support from Other Areas

In most localities there is a stamp club or philatelic society aimed specifically at older collectors. It might well have appointed someone to act as a Youth Officer. This person could visit your club or school and help encourage members, assist in the establishment and running of your new club and, more generally, stimulate interest in youth philately. You can ascertain the name of your local Youth Officer or Federation representative by contacting us via the adult section of our website (www.planetstamp.co.uk).

Philatelic Societies

The meetings of adult societies are rarely suitable for young collectors because they will discuss specialised topics, and last



“It is important that there are enough adult supporters”



“Clubs meeting at other premises can open their membership more widely”

about two hours (usually during the late evening). More importantly, they are unlikely to offer active involvement and will therefore be unattractive to children.

Some philatelic societies arrange separate meetings before their main activities to allow for a youth section with its own programme. If you find that you are not able to start your own club in a school or hall, an approach to the local adult society suggesting an earlier separate meeting for youngsters might prove fruitful.

Attracting More Members

If you are able to welcome members from a wide area, articles sent to the local newspapers might very well be productive. Your club can also be listed on the 'planetstamp' website and with the A.B.P.S. (Association of British Philatelic Societies) and the British Philatelic Trust.

Local community centres, supermarkets, other schools and libraries may allow you to put posters on their noticeboards promoting your stamp club.

Planning the Meeting

Pick the day, time and place for your club to meet. Try to avoid clashes with other clubs or activities which might reduce the number of children who can attend.

Make sure the starting and finishing times are regular, and that everyone knows what they are. If the meetings are held after school or in the early evening, parents must be quite clear on the arrangements for collecting their children.

Some club organisers worry that parents will be reluctant to make the effort necessary for their children to go to evening meetings. Don't let this discourage you. The Cubs, Brownies, Scouts and Guides are well supported because the children want to go - therefore the parents make the necessary arrangements to get them there and back.

If you organise an interesting and fun club meeting, you'll get an active audience.

Pre-planning your meetings will give you confidence and ensure that each meeting has an objective which can be fulfilled.

Thematic collecting (see 'Understanding the Basics of Stamp Collecting' leaflet) is usually the most popular with children, and thus is an easily accessible starting point.

Remember - active involvement by the children is essential.

A Case History

Erene Grieve recalls how she started a school club in a secondary school.

The Club was launched about five years ago following a lunchtime stamp exhibition at the school. We meet once a month at lunchtime in the school library. The librarian puts up the notices about the meeting, and arranges for a tannoy message to announce its start. The whole of the lunch hour is used, and most people tend to come in for part of the time, though some do stay for the full hour having had their lunch during the break.

I am helped by two members from the local philatelic society, who talk to the pupils individually about stamp collecting and help them to choose stamps. There is usually a small display and a quiz to go with it - this makes sure that the children actually look at the display. When people sign in they do a quick quiz and find out the latest news about stamps, events and competitions. Pupils always choose some free stamps to take home, and can win stamps by taking part in the quizzes which always focus on stamps.

About 20 pupils attend each time, though there are about 35 members. They don't pay to join, but they can buy stamps and albums from us very cheaply. We get our stamps from what we have accumulated ourselves, from what people give us and what we have bought.



Erene Grieve with some of her young collectors