

Rob writes...

When did you start collecting stamps?

I first started collecting as a child but lapsed around the time I went to Secondary School. I continued to "hoard" any used stamps which came my way. About 20 years ago, I bought my father-in-law's collection, when he decided to retire from philately, and have been collecting ever since.

What areas do you collect and why?

I began with Southern Africa particularly the Rhodesias and Zimbabwe, where my father-in-law spent his working life, and GB. Now, I collect primarily Definitives (GV/GVI Used and EII MNH) up to 1972 from 60degW to 60degE, excluding the larger countries such as Canada, RSA and Ireland. I didn't have the money (or space) to collect all British Commonwealth and decided to base my collection around what I had already. I also have a collection of Birds on British Africa stamps up to 1980.

What made you join Guildford and District Philatelic Society?

Shortly after I started collecting seriously, I wanted to find a group of likeminded souls who could help expand my knowledge of philately. I guess I joined GDPS on a whim and found everyone was welcoming, helpful and unpretentious. I have been a member for many years,

Where do you buy your stamps from?

Initially, I bought through Postal Auctions and then in 2000 I discovered eBay. Subsequently, I have found many other Postal Auctions in UK and abroad. More recently, I have purchased from companies which sell on EasyLive, including general auction houses which have the occasional stamp collection for sale. When I have specific gaps to fill, then I buy from Stamp Dealers. I also belong to the Packet Circuit of the Rhodesian Study Circle, which has a regular specialised auction.

What advice would you give new collectors?

I would think carefully about what you want to collect and why. In addition, research what's available in terms of albums, mounting and storage before deciding what to buy and how much to spend on them. Don't spend a fortune on luxury albums when a cheaper more readily available option would suffice. Finally, sell what you don't collect.

What would you do differently with your own collection, if you were starting out again now?

I would be more selective and try not to hoard material which I'm never going to mount in albums or display. I would probably have used clear mounts from the beginning, rather than black-backed.

What are your favourite stamps?.

I like the British Commonwealth pictorial Definitives, such as the EII First Series from Southern Rhodesia, Gold Coast or Gambia, Rhodesia & Nyasaland EII Second Series and GV/GVI Bermuda. I also have a soft spot for the early British South Africa Company stamps.