

Philatelic Pioneers

Stamp collecting and philately has been evolving ever since the mid 19th century. During this time there have been some key figures who can be said to have fulfilled the definition of pioneer and whose qualities match many of the associated synonyms. This is the first in an occasional series highlighting some of those who have been most influential in this evolution.

Pioneer,definition: a person who begins or helps develop something new and prepares the way for others to follow .

Pioneer,synonyms: developer, innovator, groundbreaker, trailblazer, pathfinder, front runner, founder, founding father, experimenter, instigator, creator.

Ian Lasok-Smith

If anyone has a particular "pioneer" they would like to write about or if they have any details of significant achievements relating to personalities previously featured but which have not been adequately reported please get in touch.

Fredrick John Melville

This series begins with arguably one of the most significant personalities of 20th century philately.



Source: File:Fred Melville, Gibbons Stamp Weekly, Feb 1905, p. 108.jpg - <https://en.wikipedia.org>



Source: File:Fred Melville in The Philatelic Record 1908.jpg - <https://en.wikipedia.org>

Melville was born in Edinburgh to Thomas J. Melville and Annie Melville but moved to London at the age of two when his father, who was a journalist, became the House of Commons correspondent for The Scotsman. Fred had brothers Cecil Balfour, Thomas B. and William. He also had sisters Kate and Helen (later Mrs Helen P. Terry). Fred was educated at Westminster School where he was the instigator of a school magazine The United Westminster School Field Club Magazine.

He was always known just as Fred.

As a young boy of just 11 he took his father to an exhibition of stamps organised by the Philatelic Society, London, now The Royal Philatelic Society London at Arundel Street. At that exhibition he met Edward Denny Bacon who handed him a copy of the Society's journal, The London Philatelist.

In 1899 he applied for membership of the Society, but was rejected as he was under 18 years of age. As a result, he formed **The Junior Philatelic Society** (now **The National Philatelic Society**) that same year. The society was a huge success, capitalising on pent-up demand for a philatelic society that anyone could join and the new society soon had to seek a larger meeting place. In 1906 Melville formed a Manchester branch of the society. Melville was President of the society from the start until his death and also edited the society's journal **The Stamp Lover**.

Melville wrote over 100 books and his works are still some of the most common encountered in Philately.

In 1897 he wrote and self-published an eight-page pamphlet called **Stamp Collecting**, priced at one penny. Fred was so embarrassed with the publication in later years that he bought up every copy that was offered for sale, with the result that it is now a very scarce item. In 1899 he became the editor of the philatelic section of a small journal known as **Hardman's Miscellany**. Soon afterwards he launched his own magazine, **Young Stamp Collector** which ran for six issues before merging with Stamp Collectors' Fortnightly. Melville also contributed philatelic articles to The Daily Telegraph, Wide World Magazine, The Straits Times of Singapore, the Illustrated London News and John O'London's Weekly.

His second philatelic book was **The A.B.C. of Stamp Collecting (1903)** which received a highly complimentary review in Morley's Philatelic Journal where it was praised as being "remarkably free from the errors

which are so often found in cheap guides to philately" despite having one fault in omitting telegraph and fiscal stamps. A new edition was published in 1922 as **The New A.B.C. of Stamp Collecting**. His 1908 book **Postage Stamps worth Fortunes** was translated into Swedish and Dutch and his last book, **Modern Stamp Collecting**, was published on 6 May 1940, the centenary of the issue of the Penny Black. Melville also edited the **Postage Stamp (1909–1929)**, **Stamp Collector's Fortnightly (1921–1939)** and **British Philatelist (1932–1939)**. He also wrote, still on a philatelic theme, The Lady Forger: an original play which was published by The Junior Philatelic Society. The play had its first performance in 1906 at the society's annual Concert-Conversazione at the Bijou Theatre, Archer Street, London. According to Brian Birch, Melville used the pseudonym Miss Fitte as a pun on misfit when writing about stamp errors.

Outside philately, Melville was editor of the Heartsease Library, Cosy Corner, Good Words and Sunday Magazine.

Source: Fred Melville - <https://en.wikipedia.org>

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The list below provides testimony to Melville's phenomenal contribution to the philatelic knowledge base.

Melville Stamp Books

British Central Africa and Nyasaland Protectorate, 1909, 84pp

British New Guinea and Papua, 1909, 63pp

Cape of Good Hope, 1913, 96pp

Cayman Islands, 1912, 72pp

Confederate States of America; Government Postage Stamps, 1913, 72pp

Gambia, 1909, 84pp.

Great Britain: Embossed Adhesive Stamps, 1910, 39pp

Great Britain: King Edward VII Stamps, 1911, 83pp

Holland, 1909, 77pp

Jamaica, 1910, 89pp

Nevis, 2nd edition 1910, 60pp (1st edition 1909)

Portugal: Postage Stamps, 1880-1911, 1911, 85pp

Portugal; The cameo stamps, 1911, 90pp

St Helena, 1912, 92pp

Tonga, 1909, 65pp

United States Postage Stamps 1870-1893, 1910, 55pp

United States Postage Stamps 1894-1910, 1910, 76pp

Philatelic Institute publications

Aero Stamp Collecting: A Practical Guide and Descriptive Catalogue, 2nd edition, 1924, 62p. (1st edition, 1923, 56p.)

Aero Stamps: A descriptive catalogue with prices, November 1920, 16p.

Andorra, 1936, 48p.

Antigua, 1929, 57p.

Azerbaijan, n.d. (1924), 24p. Philatelic Institute papers; no. 17.

Baden, 1928, 59p.

The Boys Own Guide to Stamp Collecting, 1924, 55p.

The British Prisoners' Stamps of Ruhleben, 1919, 4p. Philatelic Institute papers; no. 2.

Brunei, 1932, 37p.

Cape of Good Hope: The Fourpence Black Triangular Stamp, 1927, 7p. Philatelic Institute papers; no. 19.

The Complete Philatelist, 1924, 246p.

The Grammar Of Philately, 1924, 18p. Philatelic Institute papers; no. 8.

Great Britain: The Line Engraved Stamps, 3rd Edition, 1925, 82p. (Previous editions: 1909 and 1910).

History from the Stamp Album, 1924, 16p. Philatelic Institute papers; no. 11.

How to Collect War Stamps: practical and suggestive hints for the collector accompanying a representative collection of 100 different stamps issued during the Great War, 1919, 16p.

Local Postage Stamps, 1924, 14p. Philatelic Institute papers; no. 13.

Oil Rivers and Niger Coast Protectorates, 1924, 58p.

Origins of the Penny Post, 1930, 130p.

Phantom Philately: A descriptive list of stamps that are not what they seem, 1923, 204p.

Philatelic Accessories, 1924, 15p. Philatelic Institute papers; no. 9.

The Philatelic Library, 1924, 20p. Philatelic Institute papers; no. 16.

The Postage Stamps of the Mozambique Company, 1918, 9p. Philatelic Institute papers; no. 3.

Postal Stationery, c1924, 12p. Philatelic Institute papers; no. 14.

Postmarks, c1924, 11p. Philatelic Institute papers; no. 15.

A Simplified Collection, 1924, 8p. Philatelic Institute papers; no. 12.

Switzerland: The Children's Stamps, Pro Juventute, 1925, 14p. Philatelic Institute papers; no. 10.

United States Postage Stamps 1922-1925, 1925, 93p.

The Victory Album Of War Stamps, 1920, 44p.

Virgin Islands, 1928, 68p.

Other publications

A Penny All the Way. The Story of Penny Postage, W H Peckitt, 2nd edition, 1908, 48pp

A Penny All the Way. The Story of Penny Postage, Warren H Colson, American edition, 1908, 34pp

Abyssinia, C Baldwin, 1909, 31pp

All about Postage Stamps, T. Werner Laurie, London, 1914, 255pp

An Historical Catalogue of the Stamps of the New Europe, 2nd edition 1919, 48pp

An Innocent Afloat, F J Melville, 1926, 15pp

Catalogue of War Stamps, 1914–15, J F Spriggs, 1st edition 1915, 16pp

Catalogue of War Stamps, 1914–15, J F Spriggs, 2nd edition 1915, 48pp

Chats on Postage Stamps, Fisher & Unwin, 1911, 362pp

Chats on Postage Stamps, Frederick A Stokes Company, American edition, 1911, 362pp

El nuevo ABC del coleccionista de sellos, Santiago de Cuba, Arroyo Hnos, Castilian edition of The New ABC of Stamp Collecting translated by J D Sague, 1926, 166pp

Egypt, Stanley Gibbons, London, 1915, 84pp

Frimärken Värda Förmögenheter, Sveriges Filatelist-Förenings Förlag, Swedish edition of Postage Stamps Worth Fortunes translated by L Harald Kjellstedt, 1910, 43pp

Great Britain: Reel printing for postage stamps, 1924, 7pp

Guide to Stamp Collecting, G F Rapkin, 1924, 60pp

How to Start a Philatelic Society, Peckitt, 1910

Latvia Map Stamps. A tentative check list, 1922

Les premières émissions de timbres de la Grande-Bretagne, Mendel, French edition of Great Britain: The Line Engraved Stamps translated by Georges Brunel, 1912

Les timbres de Gambie, Édition des publications modernes, French edition of Gambia translated by Georges Brunel, 1914

Les timbres de la Jamaïque, Édition des publications modernes, French edition of Jamaica translated by Georges Brunel, 1914

Modern Stamp Collecting, English Universities Press Ltd, 1940, 316pp

New Hebrides, C Baldwin, c1910, 20pp

Phantom Philately; a descriptive list of stamps that are not what they seem, Emile Bertrand, 1950, 204pp (with a foreword by Lowell Ragatz)

Pioneer Stamp Men of Liverpool, W G Warner, 1926, 19pp

Postage Stamp Printing, Pardy, 1925, 19pp

Postage Stamps in the Making, Stanley Gibbons, 1916, 198pp

Postage Stamps of the Hawaiian Islands in the Collection of Henry J. Crocker of San Francisco, Stamp Lover, 1908, 9pp

Postage Stamps of the United States of America, Junior Philatelic Society, 1905, 116pp

Postage Stamps worth Fortunes, (self published), 1908, 46pp

Postage Stamps worth Fortunes, Severn-Wylie-Jewett Co, American edition, 1918

Rare stamps: How to Recognize Them, Melville Book Co, 1922, 46pp

Siam: Its Posts and Postage Stamps, Stamp Collectors' Fortnightly, 1906, 53pp.

Stamp Collecting, 1897.

Stamp Collections for War Museums, Stanley Gibbons, 1918, 40pp

Stamps of the Steamship Companies: A Rough List, 1915, 34pp

The ABC of Stamp Collecting, Henry J Drane, 1903, 159pp

The Boys Friend Book of Stamps of the British Empire, 1925, 19pp

The Cradle of the Postage Stamp, Harmer Rooke, 1923 30pp

The Lady Forger: an original play, Junior Philatelic Society, 1906

The Mayfair find of Rare Stamps, H R Harmer, 1925, 44pp

The Mystery Of the Shilling Green, Chas Nissen & Co Ltd, 1926, 16pp

The New ABC of Stamp Collecting, Melville Stamp Company, 1922, 145pp

The Postage Stamp in War, 1915, 160pp

The Postage Stamps of British Central Africa, Severn-Wylie-Jewett, 1918, 28pp

The postage stamps of China; with a history of the Chinese Imperial Post, 1908, 44pp

The Postage Stamps of Great Britain, Junior Philatelic Society, 1904, 56pp

The Postage Stamps of Hayti, C Nissen & Co, 1905, 69pp

The Postage Stamps of Sarawak 1869-1906, C Nissen & Co, 1907, 84pp

The Postage Stamps of the Cayman Islands, Severn-Wylie-Jewett, 1920, 22pp

The Romance of Postage Stamps, W.H. Peckitt, London, 1910, 36pp

The Romance of Postage Stamps: A Short Introduction to the Joys of the Stamp album, Peckitt, 1908, 30pp

The Soldier and His Stamps Together with the Junior Philatelic Society's Roll of Honour, Stanley Gibbons, 1918, 60pp.

The Taping Collection of Stamps and Postal Stationery at the British Museum, 1905.

The Wm. H. Crocker Collection of rare stamps of the whole World, Harmer Rooke & Co., 1938, 42pp

The World's Stamp Errors Part I The British Empire, W H Peckitt, 1910, 59pp (under pseudonym Miss Fitte)

The World's Stamp Errors Part II Foreign Countries, W H Peckitt, 1910, 50pp (under pseudonym Miss Fitte)

Then and Now, Whitfield King, 1938, 43pp

United States Postage Stamps 1847-1869, Stanley Gibbons, 3rd edition 1915, 71pp

United States Special Service Stamps, Stanley Gibbons, 1915, 69pp

War Stamps of Salonika & Long Island, Stanley Gibbons, 1916, 54pp

Source: List of publications by Fred Melville - <https://en.wikipedia.org>

The following extract I see as relevant to the objectives of The Philatelic Register, rather profound, and from which we could all benefit by contemplating.

It is not given to all collectors to know their postage stamps. There is the collector who merely accumulates specimens without studying them. He has eyes, but he does not see more than that this stamp is red and that one is blue. He has ears, but they only hear that this stamp cost £1,000, and that this other can be purchased wholesale at sixpence the dozen. What shall it profit him if he collect many stamps, but , never discover their significance as factors in the rapid spread of civilisation in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries? The true student of stamps will extract from them all that they have to teach; he will read from them the development of arts and manufactures, social, commercial and political progress, and the rise and fall of nations.

To the young student our pleasant pastime of stamp-collecting has to offer an encouragement to habits of method and order, for without these collecting can be productive of little but pleasure or satisfaction. It will train him to be ever observant of the minutiae that matter, and it will broaden his outlook as he surveys his stamps "from China to Peru".

Chats on Postage Stamps" by F. J Melville 1911