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ASTRO SPACE STAMP SOCIETY

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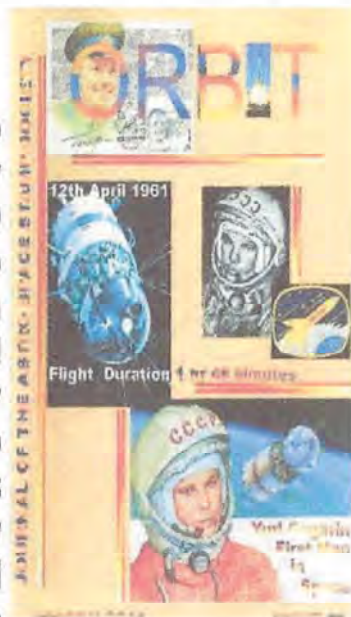
TOGETHER WE CAN ENJOY  
**ASTROPHILATELY!**



From top—first space walk by Alexei Leonov, first circumnavigation of Moon, first Moonlanding, first space tourist (Dennis Tito) and first Chinese in space (Yang Liwei).

Astrophilately was born soon after the launch of the first ever earth orbiting satellite, the Soviet Union's **Sputnik** on 4th October 1957, reached its peak during the Apollo mission years 1969—1972 when it was very near the top of the thematic interest lists and continues to engage and fascinate thousands of collectors all over the world.

The British based Astro Space Stamp Society has over 120 subscribers, about two thirds of whom reside in the United Kingdom and **Orbit** its quarterly magazine is sent to overseas members as far away as New Zealand, China and Saudi Arabia and to readers in exotic places like Nepal and Mongolia, as well as to over twenty in the USA and Canada. The A.S.S.S. has an excellent website which complements *Orbit*.



So what do we do? You would have a very wide choice of aspects of our hobby to select from such as Manned Space Flight, Unmanned Space Flight and Astronomy, each of which can be subdivided offering many much smaller and more manageable topics.

You could collect the American **Apollo Program**, but before that came **Gemini** (two pilot craft) or **Mercury** (single pilot). Before that you could look into the history of American planning for going to the Moon and the captured German scientists and their V2/A4 rockets. Perhaps you

have heard of Wernher von Braun? Simultaneously the Soviets were taking away captured scientists and hardware from the Peenemünde rocket site for their own space programme, which then led to Sputnik and within a few years to **Vostok**,

**Voskhod**, and the old warhorse **Soyuz** manned ferry, which first flew in 1971 and newer versions of which still make journeys to orbiting space stations. (You will know the name Yuri Gagarin (above on Russia 2009) but have you heard of **Sergei Korolev** and Valentin Glushko?)



After Apollo, came the first signs of international cooperation with the **Apollo-Soyuz Test Project** in 1976, which could be a theme all on its own, such was the proliferation of stamps for it. The first American space station was called **Skylab** whilst the Soviets began with a series of Salyut stations, all shrouded in secrecy and some still very mysterious. Then followed **MIR** which the Americans latterly visited in their **space shuttle** on several occasions and today the **International Space Station** is serviced both by shuttles and Soyuz craft two or three times a year.

The third country to put a man in space by themselves was China with its **Shen Zhou Craft** and to date three such launches will have occurred, in October '03, in October '05 and in September '08.

Any one of the above programmes could provide a starting point for you within astrophilately but the number of options provided so far is dwarfed by the possibilities in collecting unmanned missions.

The Russians launched their **Sputnik** first and followed this quickly with other Sputniks carrying **dogs**, whilst shortly after the Americans began with ballistic launches and orbiting craft carrying monkeys and other biota. So Animals in Space could be another theme. (*Hungary 2007 shows Sputnik and first dog in space, Laika*)



Soon both countries began sending craft to **planets in our solar system** with **Mars** being by far the most attractive (and frustrating) to both countries. Today our **Moon** and every single **planet**, apart from Pluto (which ironically since 2007 is no longer classed as a planet) has had at least one probe sent to it and the Pluto/Charon binary system will be closely examined by an American craft when it arrives in a year or so. A collection for each of the planets, or indeed our Sun, would be a fascinating one to research and put together. Then of course man has sent probes well beyond the solar system—**Pioneer and Voyager**, still faintly active in the depths of space after 40 Years—and to several comets which have passed through our solar system, notably **Halley's comet** in 1986 which was a major collecting theme. Many nations have now launched craft such as **communications satellites** (either by themselves or with American, Soviet, Chinese or French help) including ones with considerable poverty on their

territory e.g. Mexico, Pakistan and **India**. One could collect all the space issues of such a single country.



**Astronomy** is of course a vast theme with literally infinite possibilities to collect: star systems, constellations, **famous observatories**, earth bound and orbiting (like the **Hubble Space Telescope**), **famous astronomers and cosmologists** from cultures long and recently past. UFO's and Aliens could also be a sub theme for you.



(*The Space shuttle services the Hubble Space Telescope on Bulgaria 1991*)

As with any theme one can collect stamps, souvenir sheets, covers, maxim cards, special cancels and for the risk takers—autographs. Some shuttle covers signed by all crew members now change hands for hundreds of dollars, but how can you tell if the signatures are authentic?

If you would like to start an aspect of this theme we have members throughout the U.K. who would be delighted to get you started. Please just ask!

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