

Figure 17-1.

## Tip 17 – Make a Plan

Winston Churchill was a prolific writer. He wrote more than 40 books, thousands of newspaper and magazine articles, and was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1953. In his autobiography *My Early Life*, he reflects upon his writing and his approach to writing books. I was struck how his observations on writing books apply to developing philatelic exhibits. Imagine if he had been a stamp exhibitor; how many exhibits might he have prepared and what honors would they have won?

Churchill's words are in italics.

*"I began to see that writing, especially narrative, was not only an affair of sentences, but of paragraphs."*

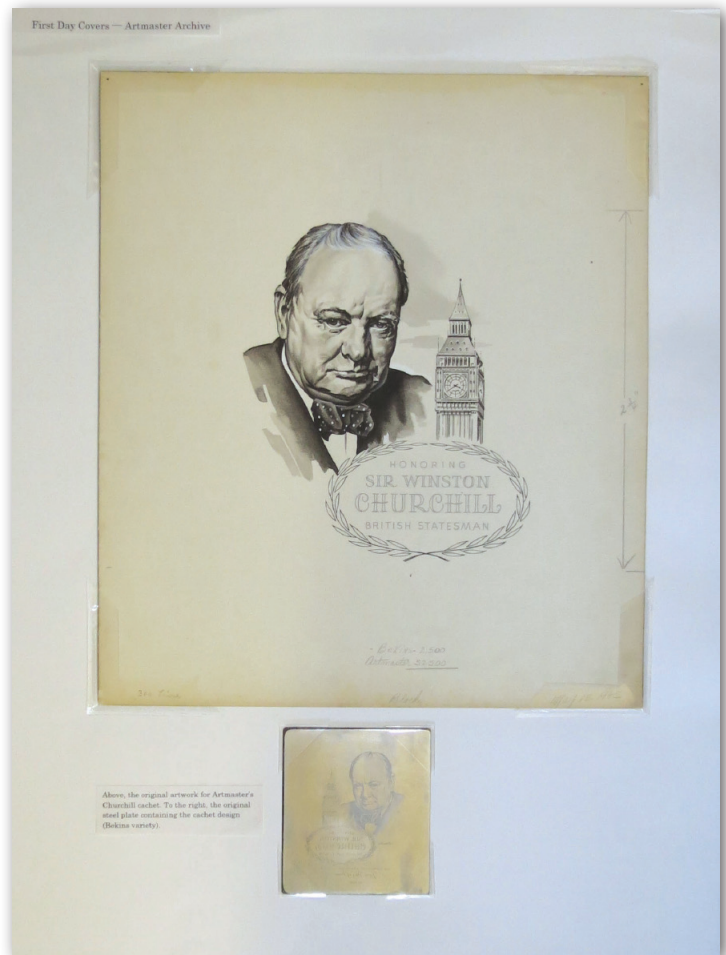
If we consider philatelic items as sentences and complete exhibit pages as paragraphs, we realize that exhibits are not merely philatelic items (sentences) arrayed on a page; instead they are combined with descriptive information to convey an entire thought, so an exhibit page is like a paragraph in a story.

*"Indeed I thought the paragraph no less important than the sentence....Just as the sentence contains one idea in all its fullness, so the paragraph should embrace a distinct episode; and as sentences should follow one another in harmonious sequence, so the paragraphs must fit on to one another like the automatic couplings of railway carriages."*

As each philatelic item communicates a thought, and as the entire page communicates a concept, the pages must follow one another in a logical and satisfying manner. We have all heard the criticism sometimes articulated at a judges' critique for an exhibit where the pages do not fit together in a logical sequence: "If we threw the pages of the exhibit up in the air and they fell randomly to the floor, when we picked them up would we know the proper sequence of the pages to be able to put them in the frames?" Judges only ask this question when the answer is "No."

*"Chapterisation (sic) also began to dawn upon me. Each chapter must be self-contained. All the chapters should be of equal value and more or less of equal length. Some chapters define themselves naturally and obviously; but much difficulty arises when a number of heterogeneous incidents none of which can be omitted have to be woven together into what looks like an integrated theme."*

Sections of an exhibit should be of equal importance even if they differ in length. Determining section endings can be difficult, as it is not always clear where breaks occur in our story. But, if we cannot determine where breaks occur, we run the risk of a very long run-on exhibit that has no breathing or pausing point. More importantly, if we do not understand the sections of our own exhibit, we must ask ourselves how well we know our material. See Figures 1-3 for an example of a self-contained chapter in a First Day Cover exhibit.



*"Finally the work must be surveyed as a whole and due proportion and strict order established from the beginning to the end..."*

Ideally, not only do you review your exhibit alone, but your friends and philatelic colleagues do so as well to ensure that you have met your exhibit goals (as expressed on the title page), that the pages proceed in a logical sequence, that the sections are clearly delineated, and that important issues are addressed. One of the criteria I use in reviewing an exhibit is how well the text communicates the essence of the exhibit even without a single item mounted on the pages.

*"Writing a book is not unlike building a house or planning a battle or painting a picture. The technique is different, the materials are different, but the principle is the same. The foundations have to be laid, the data assembled, and the premises must bear the weight of their conclusions."*

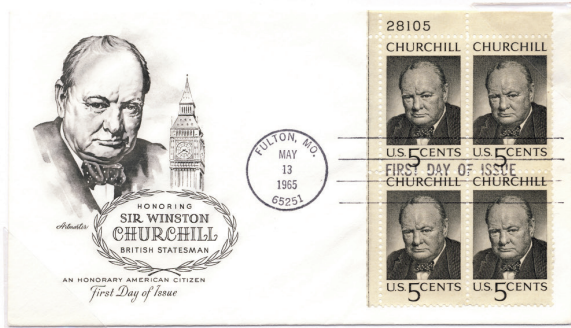
What a wonderful one sentence description of how to approach preparing an exhibit: lay a foundation, assemble the component parts, and ensure that they support the theme/conclusion of the exhibit.

*"Ornaments or refinements may then be added. The whole when finished is only the successful presentation of a theme."*

A key point! Sometimes we are so enamored with an unusual item that we plan our exhibit or the presentation around the unusual or highly significant item instead of focusing our efforts and our exhibit on the theme and on the story. The special items (ornaments) are usually supplemental to the story; they are not a goal in themselves. An exhibit is complete when it successfully presents the story or the theme.

First Day Covers — Single Color

Artmaster



This Artmaster cover is franked with a plate block of four and is postmarked with the rubber handstamp First Day of Issue postmark. Note how it differs from the machine-applied postmark on the cover below.



Artmaster FDC sent surface mail to Japan (overpaid 4¢); returned as undeliverable. July 12, 1965 Tokyo backstamp.

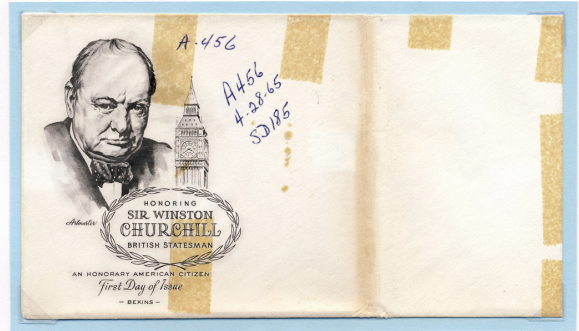
Figure 17-3.

To illustrate a Churchill quote, what could be better than a Churchill exhibit? Three pages from Todd Ronnei's *The U.S. Winston Churchill Memorial Stamp and its First Day Covers* exhibit—which are wonderful on their own and which could form an Artmaster chapter in a Churchill First Day Cover exhibit—are shown. Figure 17-1 is a quadruple page (17" by 23") which shows the original artwork for Artmaster's Churchill cachet and the original steel plate. Figure 17-2 shows the cachet prepared from the plate

Figure 17-2..

First Day Covers — Artmaster Archive

Artmaster Bekins variety



Bekins Van & Storage Co. of New York City contracted with Artmaster to produce a variety of its cachet with the Bekins name added to the bottom of the design. Evidence suggests Artmaster printed 2,500 of this variety for Bekins to mail to its customers, however, no serviced covers are known. *The above unserviced envelope from Artmaster's archives is the only known surviving example.* Bekins covers for other issues are extremely scarce; examples are known as early as the 1962 Girl Scouts issue and as late as the 1969 California Settlement issue.



Enlargement of the Bekins name on the cachet.

on the previous page with a machine and a hand cancel. Rather than showing two identically appearing covers—except for the cancel—the second cover has an unusual usage and is visually interesting. Figure 17-3, the last page in this Artmaster section, is a unique archive copy of an Artmaster variety.

This is a wonderful and complete presentation of a subject which fits within his larger Churchill first day cover exhibit.

