

POSTCARD EXHIBITING - HAVE A GO !!

Why create an Exhibit ?

Exhibiting adds to the enjoyment of collecting.

- You get to show your collection to other collectors.
- Most people collect cards because they have already an interest in the topic. Putting an exhibit together is a way of combining your knowledge of the topic with the cards you have collected. And you will also learn more about your topic as you continue to research.
- Exhibiting gives direction to your collecting as you start to look for cards to fill the gaps in your story.
- You develop contacts with other collectors and dealers who know what you collect, and look for material for you

Size Doesn't Matter !

How many pages do I need for my exhibit ?

Your exhibit can be as small as one frame of 16 pages, or it can be as large as five frames totalling 80 pages, or somewhere in between (32, 48 or 64 pages)

You can start small and grow.

Do I have to enter my exhibit competitively ?

If you enter a national exhibition, the answer is generally yes, but sometimes there may be invited exhibits, and there are other opportunities for exhibiting below national level that aren't necessarily competitive

What Does an Exhibit Look Like ?

The Main Idea

Mostly the exhibit is about the story you want to tell based on the pictures on the cards, but as you tell this story, you also demonstrate your technical knowledge of postcards with information about photographers, printers, printing techniques, distributors, etc.

What could I exhibit ?

Anything that interests you, and for which you can develop a "storyline" This might be a geographical area (Southland), town (Napier), person (Queen Elizabeth), photographer (Thomas Pringle), postcard distributor (W & T), an event (visit of the Great White Fleet), a period (the Edwardians), an object (elephants), etc. There is no limit to what you could collect and exhibit.

How do I string together a story ?

This is the creative bit. An exhibit should have a structure like any story - an introduction, the main part, and a conclusion. You need to select a topic that enables a story to be told, and use cards and some words to develop the story. The cards themselves should do most of the story-telling.

The story can take many forms – your imagination is the only limit. If you are focussing on a geographical area, for instance, you might develop your story around a coach trip, or cards sent while "on holiday", or organising cards by location or activity. Other possibilities are available in the exhibiting guidelines.

Should I be writing a “book ?”

No, you are producing an illustrative display with some explanatory text. A book would usually have far more writing. Feel free to write a book if you have a lot more useful or interesting information that you think would be of interest to a publisher, rather than to a viewer at an exhibition.

What written information should I have ?

Information on some cards is obvious, and doesn't need repeating. Also remember that a picture tells a thousand words. Your role is to highlight those aspects of the cards that help develop your story.

What is the meaning of technical information?

Alongside the storyline, there are points for showing your technical knowledge of the cards. Generally, this is not needed for every card. Technical information could be about the printer, the printing technique, where the cards were printed, the photographer, the photographic firm, distribution details, etc. ie anything about the card itself except about what it shows

How do I distinguish between technical and picture information ?

An easy way to do this is to have a different font size or style for your technical information, which should generally be more in the background so it doesn't detract from your storyline. Make it a smaller font size and print in italics, for instance.

Can I use information on the back of the cards ?

Certainly, in terms of information about the printer, photographer or publisher etc, but generally not about the message unless it adds to your storyline. Even so, remember you are using the picture side of the card to tell the story.

Should I have information about the postal aspects – date, route, postage rate ?

Generally not. Remember you are using the picture side of the card to tell your story, so any postal details would have to tie in very closely to justify using them.

How do I select the cards ?

Select good quality cards with as few faults as possible, and which you can tie in with your storyline.

What about using modern cards ?

These are fine, but remember there are the two collecting time periods – the classic period pre 1940, and the modern period 1940-1980.

What if some of my cards are a bit scrappy ?

ie bent corners, bits missing, faded etc. It is best not to use these unless essential to your story and are scarce

Can I use items other than postcards ?

Yes, on your title page, but otherwise you are straying into the territory of social exhibiting. If you feel you must use a label or some associated item, be very sparing. Remember, this is a *postcard* exhibit

Technical Stuff

Do I need an exhibit plan ?

Yes, certainly if you are going to have more than one frame. It may have a structure, or might be a paragraph, depending on how divisible your exhibit is into “chapters”

What is a title page, and what should be on it ?

This is just as it sounds; the name of your exhibit, plus some introductory comments explaining what you are going to display, perhaps plus a bibliography and a reference to highlighted items. You can have what you like on this page so a nice item that is interesting and would encourage the viewer to look further is a good idea.

How should I use headings and sub-headings ?

These should be used to develop the storyline. The headings should be derived from the plan. You can have the plan headings on each page, and also sub-headings to develop the storyline. If your whole exhibit is about Timaru, for instance, you won't want this heading on every page, but you could have sub-headings about the wharves, swimming beaches, rail, coronation celebrations, etc.

Should I have a border around my cards ?

This is a matter of personal taste. It does help highlight the cards, but it also highlights any weak corners etc. Another way of highlighting the cards is to mount them onto a backing card, but this means you need to have very even borders all the way around the card or it looks untidy.

How many cards should I have on a page ?

This depends on the format of the cards. One horizontal card and two vertical cards fit very nicely on a page, but usually your storyline means you may not want the cards in this order. Murphy's law ! Two horizontal cards also fit well. Once you get to wanting three vertical or horizontal cards on a page, unless you have bigger pages, or use double pages or have cards overlapping, then the pages start to look very crowded. One page may look fine, but remember that you will have 16 of them in a display frame.

Can I overlap cards ?

This is not advisable. Judges may think you may be covering card defects, but mainly because it results in pages looking over-crowded, so overlapping should be used sparingly.

What do I mount my cards on ?

Heavier- weight paper (say 200 gms) or light card. Remember, it must be able to feed the paper through your printer if your write-up is on a computer.

What colour/quality of paper should I use ?

The paper or card should be acid-free (ask your specialist paper provider) so it doesn't react with chemicals in the cad or anything on the reverse of the card. The colour of the paper should be white or a very pale colour; otherwise, the colour will detract from the cards.

How big can my pages be ?

Most exhibition frames limit the page size to 29mm high by 25mm wide. You can develop “double pages” which would be side by side, either vertically or horizontally. Anything bigger than this is a problem to transport and mount in the frames

What do I use to mount the cards on the paper ?

Use photo-corners. Small size corners of good quality available in NZ are *Henzo*. Larger size are expensive but good for larger items such as fold out cards. The brand most readily available in NZ is *Herma*, and they are available from most stamp dealers.

What is a protector and where do I get them from ?

This is a clear envelope of plastic into which you slip your display page. They protect the material, and are compulsory at exhibitions. They can be obtained from stamp dealers or from the Philatelic Youth Council, P O Box 2979, Auckland

How do I keep the pages in order ?

You number them on the reverse of the pages. There are two ways of doing this; either 1 through to 64 or 80 or however many pages you have. An alternative is to remember that there are 16 pages to a display frame, so use frame 1, number 1 through to frame 1 number 16, and then similarly for frame 2 etc. This can be abbreviated to 1/1, 1/2 1/3 etc. Incidentally, you should also have your name on the reverse of each page.

How do I get my exhibit to the exhibition?

Usually, by courier or delivering it yourself. In some cases, someone from near your area may be going, or a Commissioner may be appointed. Remember that exhibits have to be with the exhibition organisers in time for the exhibit to be mounted in the frames, and for judging to commence. For exhibitions in Australia, a Commissioner is usually appointed

*Who can I ask for Help !***How do I find new cards for my exhibit ?**

Make known your collecting interests through the *Postcard Pillar*, and to friends and dealers. Look on *eBay* or *Trademe*. Don't be too much of a closet collector !

How can I dispose of my spare cards ?

Through the same channels as above

Can I get some help from software ?

If you have a computer, products like Microsoft 'Publisher' or a word processing package can be of help.

Are further guidelines available?

Yes, the Postcard Society has a full set of rules and guidelines. You should start with these; they also have information about how your exhibit will be judged. Exhibiting is like a sport – play by the rules and you will do much better than if you develop your own rules. Exhibiting is a brain sport!

People to contact for Help

Contact our Secretary for help: jenny.long@paradise.net.nz and she will find someone to provide an answer. Or write to our Editor of the Postcard Pillar; he can publish your questions, along with an answer, so we can all learn.

If it is a question about the rules, these were mainly drawn up by Jeff Long jefflong@xtra.co.nz or Doug South tuiville@xtra.co.nz