

Gary S. Ryan to Receive the 1998 Alfred F. Lichtenstein Memorial Award

The Alfred F. Lichtenstein Memorial Award shares a place among the highest honors of international philately, and has been presented annually since 1952 to a philatelist of worldwide renown. According to long custom, a committee comprising all previous award recipients chooses a nominee, who is presented to the Board of Governors of the Club to be voted upon for their final approval. This year's selection, by unanimous vote, was for Gary S. Ryan, of Northwood, Middlesex, England. Mr. Ryan is an exceptional choice for the 1998 Lichtenstein Award. Although there are quite a few philatelists who have attained some of the awards he has achieved, none has matched all of them. Most outstanding of these are his accomplishments as an exhibitor. It is typical for exhibitors to stay with a single discipline, such as postal history or traditional, or if they do stray afield of their chosen strength, it is often an endeavor at a more modest level. Very much an exception are exhibitors like Mr. Ryan, who has won top international awards in five different disciplines. The first of his exhibits to win a Grand Prix was an exhibit of Hungary, which won the Grand Prix International in 1975 (Vienna) and the Grand Prix d'Honneur in 1977 (Amsterdam). Since the latter award removes an exhibit from competition, he then turned to postal history, and his exhibit "Hungary: Postal History 1752-1900" received a large gold medal with special prize in Vienna in 1981.

The study required to make top award-winning exhibits obviously spurred Mr. Ryan to do a considerable amount of research. Unlike most exhibitors, he spent much time writing about his findings in his effort to share them with the philatelic world. His first major work was "The Cancellations of Hungarian Post Offices on the Stamps of Austria 1850-67," published in 1980, and that was followed eight years later by a magnificent two-volume set, "The Cancellations of Hungarian Post Offices on the First Issue of Hungary 1867-71." The latter received the greatly prized Crawford Medal of the Royal Philatelic Society, London, and the F.I.P. Medal for Research and the Grand Prix for Literature at the F.I.P. philatelic literature competition in Frankfurt (1989). For his next exhibiting class, Mr. Ryan turned to postal stationery. Again he won a large gold medal with special prize for the "Postal Stationery of Hungary" and was a candidate for the Grand Prix International at Granada '92. It should be noted that it is quite a rare occasion for a postal stationery exhibit to be nominated for that award. Finally, as a major force in the effort to have revenue collecting accepted at the international level, he formed various revenue exhibits that have received gold medals.

These outstanding achievements in five different classes of international exhibiting (and writing) are sufficient to set Mr. Ryan apart from other philatelists, but his efforts do not stop there. His work in organized philately has been remarkable in its intensity, success, and total lack of interest in how it may have helped his "political" advancement.

To see how he approached service to philately, it is instructive to observe his actions after he took over as president of the F.I.P. Commission for Traditional Philately in 1977. The work of the commission to that point had been almost nonexistent. In two years he led an effort to define the mission of the commission and to establish the basis for the development of the rules and guidelines of exhibiting in this class, which is the basis of all philately. Once he had formulated a working bureau and had satisfied himself that it would continue nicely without him, he made his exit. Had he wished to use his success as a spring-

board to higher ambitions, it would have surprised nobody, but that was never a concern for Mr. Ryan. Rather, he sees a job, attacks it, sets up a group that will carry on a sustained effort, and then moves elsewhere.

He did the same with his work for establishing a Revenue Commission within F.I.P. Aided by some very high-powered talent, including the late Robson Lowe, Mr. Ryan was in charge of a Revenue Section within the Commission for Traditional Philately until he had identified another to take command, after which he worked strongly behind the scenes to achieve his goal of a separate commission in 1996. In 1978, Mr. Ryan and a group of exhibitors who had won at least one of the three Grand Prix awards at F.I.P. world-level shows met to form the Grand Prix Club International. Although the Club's activities may seem to be primarily social in nature, its members often function to help others to understand the elements of excellence that will help them to improve their own exhibits and achieve higher awards.



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