

**Stuart Rossiter**  
**1923 - 1982**



The relationship between the SPH and the Stuart Rossiter Trust is long established and deep, as many of the long term members know full well. Some SPH members remember Stuart, most of the Trustees over the years have been SPH members as have many of the authors.

Stuart Rossiter joined the SPH in 1964, he was Editor of *Postscript* 1970 – 1972, and President in 1977. He was Editor of the *London Philatelist* 1975 - 1982 for the RPSL.

The following extract is from an article he wrote in November 1982, it was Published in *Postscript* number 152 December 1982. At his request it was published as soon as could be, but this was shortly after his death which occurred on 19 December 1982.

“THE COLLECTION OF POSTAL HISTORY” by Stuart Rossiter

Philatelically speaking, my title makes sense, but as I am sure Denis Vandervelde has pointed out in print as often as he has in speech – you can write history, indeed in the true meaning of the word you can only write history, for history is the ordering of past events into accurate and consistent narrative. Extending the meaning to the events of the past themselves, you can study history. ‘Postal’ merely defines the area of history under consideration, it does not mysteriously change the concept of history itself. There seems indeed no way in which one can ‘collect’ history, be it postal or any other kind.

What indeed we collect are a limited range of artefacts from the past (and present) which illustrate an historical theme or themes in the field of postal history. If we display these to other people, it is the equivalent of publication in the archaeological sense of that word; we may show them as a local bygone museum might, as individual items tagged with a description and provenance. Or we may display them as a national museum might with a continuous (or discontinuous provided it is comprehensible) narrative – now we have arrived at history. Postal history begins when we write up our collections to the best of our scholarship (whether for publication / display or not). The study, the research, and the explanatory writing are what is important – our collections can only provide the stimulus to discovery and the illustrative proof of what we declare to be the truth that lies behind them.

This is a hard lesson for some inveterate collectors to learn, for although it does not make our collections any less valuable or any less interesting, it makes our possession of them somewhat irrelevant. I have only recently come to terms with this, although I realised its truth about ten or twelve years ago. . . . ”

An interesting insight into his thoughts, especially **‘The study, the research, and the explanatory writing are what is important’**

Stuart left his estate to provide for his Mother and subsequently to set up the Stuart Rossiter Trust. The principal object of the Trust is to promote research into the history of the postal services and written communication and to support publication in this area of study. The Trust publishes books, sponsors research and sponsors publications by individuals or specialist societies.

A list of books which have been published by, and are still available from, the SRT will be found on [www.rossitertrust.com](http://www.rossitertrust.com). There is also a list of books sponsored by the Trust, the list of Lectures promoted by the Trust and a page of useful links for research. SRT published books can be ordered from the website or directly from John Jackson.

The Trust can be contacted via the Corresponding Trustee, Andy Gould at [srtcorr@gmail.com](mailto:srtcorr@gmail.com). We are happy to talk to potential authors and / or researchers about their plans and ideas.

The entire article from which the extract is taken will be found in Postscript December 1982, available on the SPH website [www.societyofpostalhistorians.org.uk](http://www.societyofpostalhistorians.org.uk)

Susan McEwen. SPH Chairman and a Trustee of the Stuart Rossiter Trust.