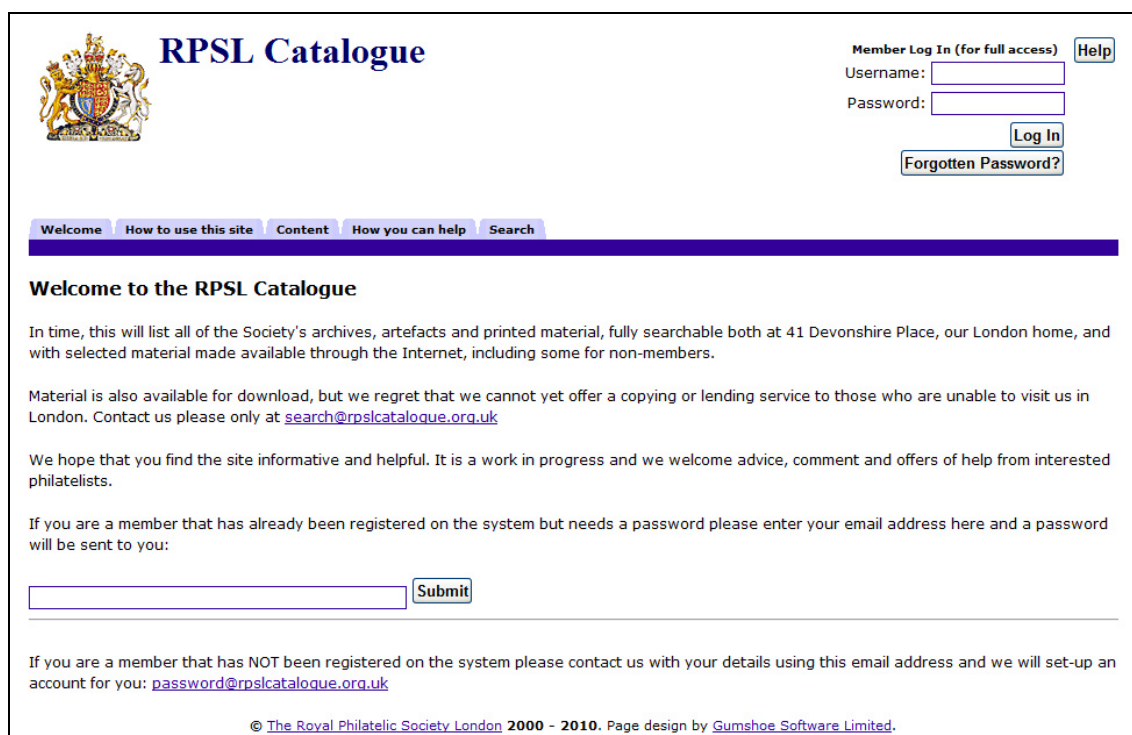


THE WORLD OF ONLINE PHILATELY
Glenn H Morgan FRPSL

The Royal Philatelic Society London
www.rpsl.org.uk and www.rpslcatalogue.org.uk



The screenshot shows the RPSL Catalogue website. At the top left is the Royal Coat of Arms. To its right is the text 'RPSL Catalogue'. Further right is a 'Member Log In (for full access)' section with a 'Help' button, 'Username:' and 'Password:' input fields, a 'Log In' button, and a 'Forgotten Password?' link. Below this is a navigation bar with tabs for 'Welcome', 'How to use this site', 'Content', 'How you can help', and 'Search'. The main content area starts with 'Welcome to the RPSL Catalogue' followed by a paragraph about the Society's archives. It then mentions that material is available for download but cannot be copied or lent. A paragraph follows stating the site is a work in progress and welcomes advice. Another paragraph asks members to provide their email and password if they need to be registered. Below this is an email input field and a 'Submit' button. At the bottom, it says if not registered, contact password@rpslcatalogue.org.uk. The footer contains copyright information: '© The Royal Philatelic Society London 2000 - 2010. Page design by Gumshoe Software Limited.'

The Royal Philatelic Society London, the oldest philatelic society in the world, was established in 1869 as The Philatelic Society, London. Permission to use the prefix 'Royal' was granted by His Majesty King Edward VII in 1906.

As would be expected from such a prestigious society, its website is to a high standard using a simple pallet of black and blue, with plenty of white space to enhance the appearance. There are nine main sections, namely About the Society, News, Membership, Events, Publications, Guides, Library, Experts and Links. I would normally go into detail about each area, but will instead use this space to focus on an exciting new venture by the society.

By visiting www.rpslcatalogue.org.uk collectors can gain access to an ever-expanding list all of the Society's archives, artefacts and printed material, fully searchable both at 41 Devonshire Place, its London home, and with selected material made available through the Internet, including some for non-members. The cumulative indexes uploaded in collaboration with many specialist societies and individual collectors around the world will gradually make this the logical site to visit for anyone researching philately. I have found so much already that interests me, often in periodicals that I would never have dreamt of checking.

The site has five main tabs to click on. The first comprises a Welcome, followed by How to Use This Site where an extensive tutorial on how to get the most from your visit is provided, together with useful screen shots. The next tab details the datasets that can be searched and we learn that everyone can access the Cumulative Indexes, London Philatelist* and Meeting Display Handouts*. Members understandably have greater access as part of their subscription and can additionally examine Auction Catalogues, The Creeke Index to 1928, Library Books and Periodicals, Museum

Artefacts, Philatelic Collections and Philatelic Exhibition literature. The fourth tab explains How You Can Help the project, while the final area enables searching to be undertaken, with the options that we have come to expect from a search engine that help narrow down the results to those most relevant.

At the time of writing, the site was under three months old and around 50 cumulative indexes had already been uploaded, some having links directly to the individual articles for downloading and printing. Naturally, the volunteer helpers adding the data would welcome more indexes from those who have only become aware of this venture through this feature and contact can be made through the website.

The Royal comprises collectors from all walks of life and collecting interests and I personally confirm that a warm welcome awaits anyone visiting its headquarters. With the database project well underway and all the other benefits that membership brings there could not be a better time to join 'The Royal'.

**a small cost applies when downloading copies of London Philatelist and meeting display handouts*

(495 words)