

1. Storage - Collectors' Albums

As soon as someone begins collecting sugar packets it is necessary to find a way to store them, but how? Past surveys of members of UKSC (see issues 16 and 26) showed that there were a wide variety of solutions to the storage dilemma. Some use genuine collectors' albums, and these are the main subject of this article. However, this can become costly, particularly as a collection grows, therefore members have found a variety of alternative methods of storing packets which will be explored in the next issue.

Notes for newcomers

Not surprisingly there is, as yet, no collection system designed for sugar packets. When I visited a local stamp and coin collecting shop the proprietor seemed a little surprised by my enquiry. Moreover, sugar packets come in a wide range of sizes and particularly when it comes to foreign packets. Nevertheless it is possible to store full or empty packets in ordinary collectors' albums, but definitely not unopened lumps or pyramids.



Courtesy of Gordon Field

For UK packets a bit of research suggests the following:

- Most lump wrappers seem to be 45mm by 60mm give or take 5mm.
- Almost all sticks and flat sticks seem to be between 90 and 115mm long with the former being 17mm wide and the latter 24mm, give or take a couple of millimetres.
- Sachets are more diverse, but most will fit in a 50mm by 70mm wallet, and very few are larger than 60mm by 80mm

All the albums surveyed here have removable plastic inserts. This allows sticks and sachets to be viewed from both sides, though not everyone seems to want to do this. Opened out lump wrappers can be stored back

to back.

WHAT ALBUMS ARE AVAILABLE?

The most easily accessible albums are the WH Smith collecting system, available in their larger stores. The albums and leaves are good quality, but not particularly flexible and definitely not cheap. In my view the Telephone Card leaves (CCR10) are the most versatile, though larger lump wrappers have to be folded slightly. Some of the other style inserts are possible, but none seem ideal. Albums cost £5.49 whilst a pack of 5 leaves costs £3.49. The great disadvantage with this system is that the leaves will not fit normal folders, so if you wish to use it you will be forced to buy the albums as well.



Courtesy of Gordon Field

Royal Mail also produce collectors' albums and some examples from Gordon Field's (No 16)

collection are shown. Gordon used to work for Royal Mail, but I was unable to find out about the range of albums and inserts. The Royal Mail website mentions some of the items available but showed different items when selected.



Courtesy of Audrey Pickett

Both the above are A4 in size and this size of album is available from other suppliers. I am grateful to Jack Watson for sending details of the system he sells, to Brenda Smith for sending me a Rob Roy Catalogue and to Lynda Lillington for a copy of CW & S Parkinson's catalogue. All these suppliers offer A4 albums and leaves. There appear to be around a dozen different types of leaves and judging by the comments I received perhaps 3 or 4 of these are



deemed most useful for sugar packet storage. Linda uses style 2 for sticks stored vertically, that is two wallets on a page 143mm high by 215mm wide. For packets she uses style 9 (9 wallets 96mm by 69mm) or 12 (12 wallets 96mm by 53mm). Prices vary but about £8 for an album and £3 for a pack of 10 leaves seems average. That is a lot cheaper than WH Smith for the inserts.

Smaller in size than A4 there is also a range of albums which appear more popular with collectors of other items, such as cigarette cards. Jack Watson again sent me details of the items he sells together with one copy of each style of insert. This confirmed my impression that the smaller size is actually more suitable because of the range of inserts. The pictures show some albums Brenda brought to the Exchange meeting containing some of her duplicates and this illustrates the diversity available. My impression is that style number 6 (Horizontal) (6 wallets, 113mm wide by 53mm) would be most useful for sticks, and No 6 (Vertical) (6 wallets, 74mm by 83mm) or No 8 (8 wallets, 55mm by 83mm) for sachets and lump wrappers, but as the pictures show other options abound. These albums (available from Jack Watson or Rob Roy, and the local stamp shop I tried) cost about £4 with leaves costing 10p each, less if bought in bulk.



Three pictures courtesy of Brenda Marsh

It is also possible to buy larger albums (40cm by 33cm) but looking at the catalogues these seem more expensive and have fewer types of leaves available. In fact none of the sizes looked quite suitable.



At least two variants on the proper collectors' albums are available. First, are trading card albums. These are identical in size to the A4 size 9 leaves mentioned above and WH Smith do the same (CCR12) but they are specially produced for things like Pokemon Cards. I found some in a local games shop and they were comparable in price with the other collectors' albums. However, Ann Hay has suggested "plastic-bucket shops" as a good source of cheap trading card albums and inserts

(by which she means those shops which sell all sorts of cheap goods).

The WH Smith telephone card leaves (CCR10) are also identical to standard business card holders. It is possible to buy packs of leaves for these from stationery suppliers. However, they aren't as cheap, or as flexible as the A4 collectors' albums, though they do fit standard folders. But occasionally stationery shops or suppliers may clear out old stock more cheaply, which is probably not true of collectors' albums.

My thanks are due to all those mentioned above, or in the captions, and my apologies if I was not able to make use of everything received. Also, thanks to Liesbeth Vergouwe, Linda Stone, Philippe Mery and John Walters whose contributions mean that I already have the backbone for the next article on other more creative or cheaper ways of storage. Further contributions would be very welcome, especially if accompanied by photos.

David

SUPPLIERS MENTIONED:

- Jack Watson, Howell House, Green Lane, Hemingby, Horncastle. LN9 5QF (Tel : 01507-578582)
- Rob Roy Cards, Crosshall, Chelfield Village, Orpington, Kent. BR6 6EN (Tel 01689-828052) www.robroyalbums.co.uk
- CW & S Parkinson, 16 Foxhills Close, Ashurst, Southampton. SO40 7ER.

