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## Editorial

As you will read on page 26 of this issue our Honourary Secretary, Richard Harlow, has been honoured during the highly successful celebrations of the Centenary of the Italian Federation of Philatelic Societies held at Verona-Fil last November. The grand event included a European Thematic Philately Champion of Champions exhibition and attracted international visitors from 50 countries as well as being privileged by the presence of Federation of International Philately (FIP) President Bernard Beston.

We can all congratulate Richard on this highly deserved accolade which has been bestowed on a truly meritorious philatelist of the highest caliber. For 46 years Richard has been heading ICSC in the right direction while at the same time promoting and divulging Italian philately and postal history at an international level which has greatly and positively achieved global popularity. We can definitely say that his was and is a true labour of love; his steadfast commitment is an inspiration for all the philatelic world.

When I first met him in 1973 he was very busy preparing the launching of The Italy and Colonies Study Circle; although at the time I had been professionally involved in philately for about five years I immediately recognised that Richard was a mover and shaker as well as a highly knowledgeable philatelist. A most affable person he never raised his voice and never indulged in gossip or polemics: these qualities make him a "rara avis" - a rare bird - in our complex but interesting philatelic world.

We are used to hear about who is being knighted and I must unflinchingly admit that Richard is a most respected and most humble Knight of Philately.

The citation on the award is very much on target when it so aptly describes him as "a *de facto* ambassador at large of Italian Philately as well as the quintessential and authoritative reference point".

GM