Album Page Designer
User Guide

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Album Page Designer

The Album Designer

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Author

William Atkin

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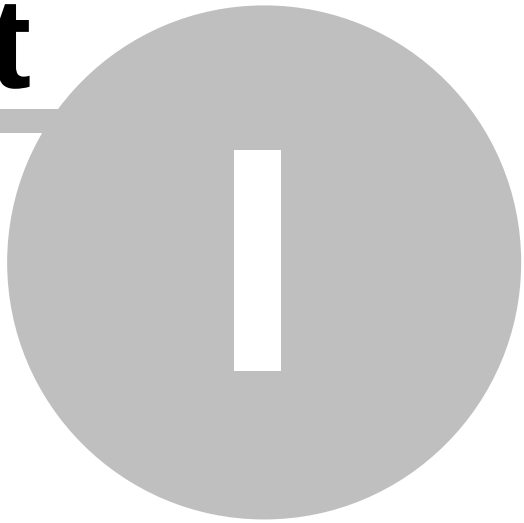
Part



1 Getting Started

1.1 Program Overview

The Album Page Designer is a companion program to the World Collector and Quick Album software and allows the simple design of multiple or single album pages. These album pages are collected together in a single file called an album file on the disc.

Albums may be started from scratch or the Quick Album program can be used to export a previously built album list to the Album Page Designer for further editing.

The program supports extended, simple text, rectangles, ellipses and images by default and allows the collector to define other more interesting shapes for inclusion in an album.

The album pages produced by the program are intended for the beginner to experienced collector.

Printers and systems are all different and can produce different results. The program attempts to produce page designs which match exactly the selected margins etc but sometimes printers etc report their margins differently or the paper in the paper bin is not lined up exactly. It is always best when printing pages of any kind that you get into a habit of checking everything first. Sometimes when starting it is best to print a few pages and adjust the design margins of the page to suit.

The program supports all page sizes that your printer will support and allows where possible the addition of custom sized album pages. Read the section on page size selection if you want anything other than A4 or letter. I have tested the program with these sizes on a couple of printers and with other sizes on my own printer.

I use 120gsm paper to print my album pages which gives a good solid sheet to mount the stamps on, especially when I place two back to back in the print safe pockets. Once in the pockets I place these in a ring binder the quality of which varies greatly. They range from very cheap versions to fairly expensive padded cover versions which can have stencilled lettering etc placed on the cover.

1.2 Starting The Programme

The program can only be started from the World collector program by clicking the Album Page Designer icon on the main form toolbar.

Figure 1. The main form toolbar

The Album Page Designer Icon is the single page with pencil.

After the program starts the main form is displayed.

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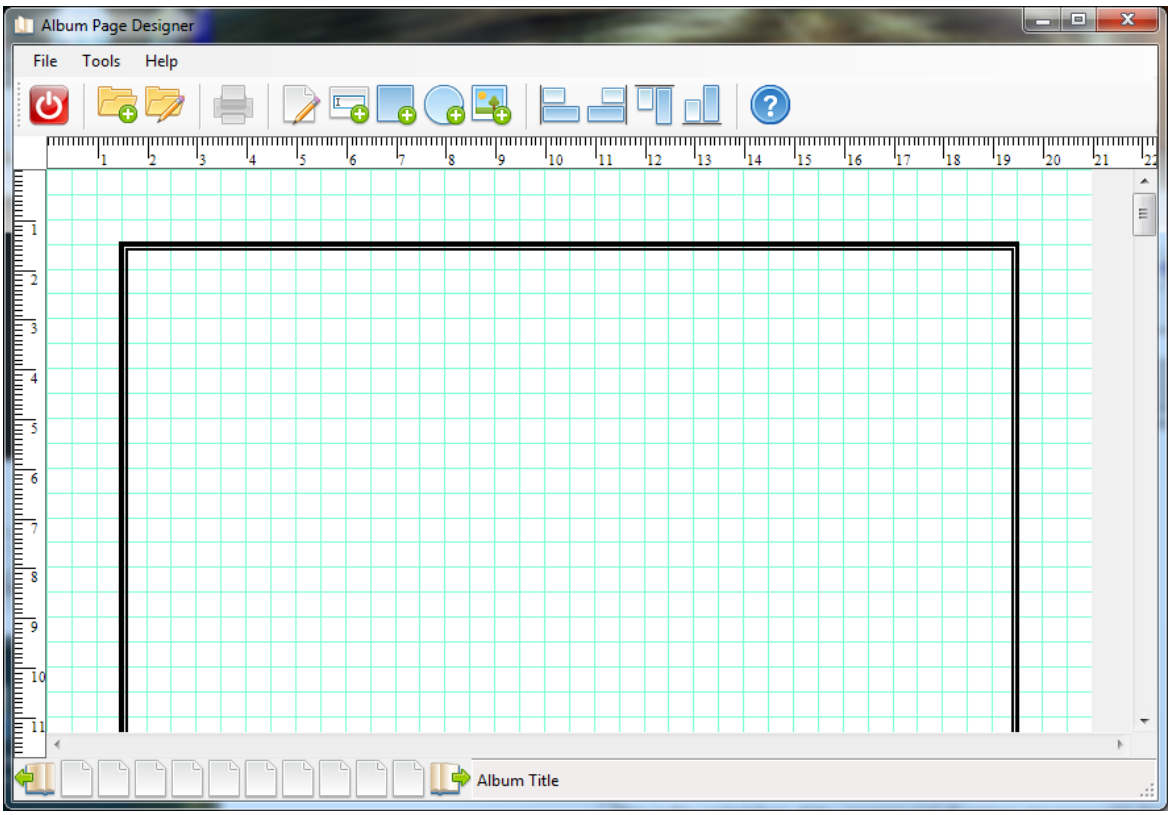

Figure 2. Album Page Designer Main Form

This is the central form of the program and all actions are accessible from here. Almost all are accessible from the menu system or the toolbar.

The form is split into three main sections.

The first is the toolbar and menu system at the top left. When you need a general program action it is found here. Each of these are described in the following sections.

The second is the album page display area where the current page is displayed and edited. This is a WYSIWYG display of the page as you build it. Two ruler lines are provided, vertical and horizontal, to help with positioning boxes etc. Scroll bars will appear as required to move around the page when it is to large to fit on the screen.

The third area is the page selection and status bar area at the bottom of the screen.

If starting the program for the first time you will need to set the general options. This is to indicate to the program the size of paper and printer to be used for albums.

The menu system is in two components. A text based menu system with the most common items mimicked with icons on a toolbar. This is illustrated below.

Figure 3. The menu and toolbar

Menu actions are accessed by clicking with mouse left button on the text, such as **File**, which produces a drop down box with further text options. The toolbar simply mimics some of these action and are from left to right in figure 3. Exit program, start new album, open existing album, print current album, insert extended text box, insert simple text box, insert rectangle shape, insert oval shape, insert picture, four alignment buttons and help. Where these are available they are described with the relevant menu action.

Some menu items and buttons are unavailable until an album is loaded.

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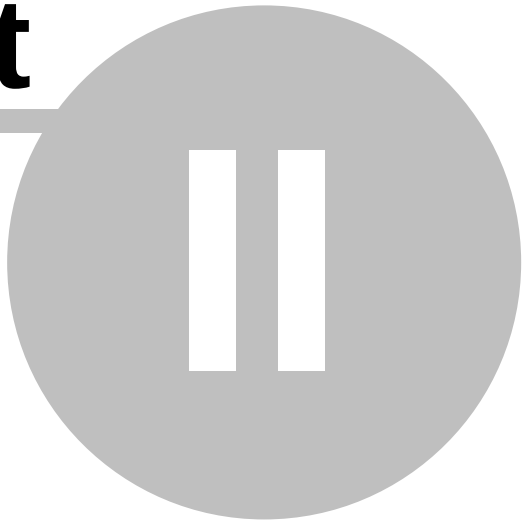

2 File Menu

2.1 New Album

To start a new album click the folder with the plus sign icon on the toolbar or use **File| New Album** from the menu system and you will be promoted for a title for the new album.

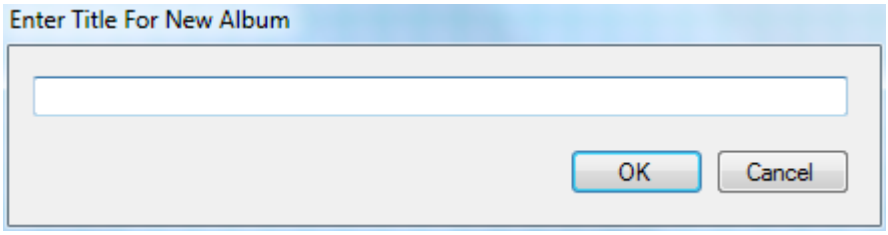

Figure 1. New Album Title Dialog

This title forms the filename for the album when stored on disc so needs to be chosen with care.

Once entered the first page of the new album is ready to be edited and is displayed as a blank album sheet. You can now add shapes and text simply by clicking the icons on the toolbar and adding these to the page.

Start by clicking the square icon. Then move the mouse pointer to the page and press and hold the left mouse button while you move the mouse. A rubber band box is displayed, simply move the mouse until the box is the correct size for the stamp and then release. The new stamp box is then fixed as part of this album page.

The box can be moved by clicking and holding down the left mouse button. Moving the mouse will then move the box around the page.

The box can also be changed by using the shape properties dialog. Move the mouse pointer to the box and then press the right mouse button and the shape properties dialog will be shown. Here you can change the size and position of the box as well as the colour of the box frame. After setting these simply click Ok and the new settings will be applied to the selected box.

It is worth here trying out the other selections on the toolbar.

Other shapes are possible as well. Use the Tools menu by clicking it once with the left mouse button and the drop down will show Add Shape as a selection. Clicking this will show a menu which shows the same items as the toolbar, Text, box, ellipse and picture with one extra triangle. The triangle is a user defined shape, more about these in a later chapter. Click **Triangle** once and then press and hold the left mouse button on the album page as before and the program will draw a triangle.

Pictures are a little different. When added to the page they simply display a blue rectangle, this is the place holder for the image. Images are added using the image properties dialog in the same way as using the shape properties dialog.

Don't forget to save the page when you are done experimenting. The program will prompt you if you forget and try to do something that may affect the page.

2.2 Open Album

To edit an existing album you first need to load that album. Click the folder with the pencil on it or use **File|Load Album** from the menu system and the program will display the open album dialog.

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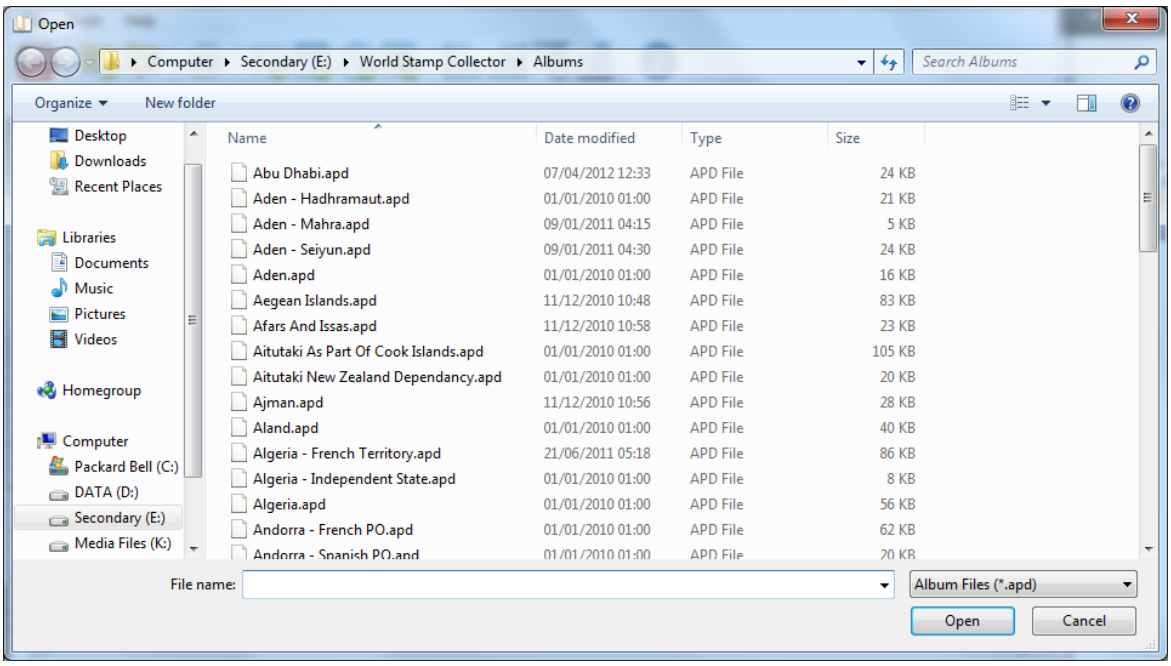

Figure 1. Open Album Dialogue

The dialogue shows a list of available albums on the system. Select the album from the list box with a click and then click Open.

This will clear the main form and load the selected album definition.

The first page of the album will be displayed ready for editing. Other pages in the album can be selected by clicking on the album page number in the page selection area. If the album has more than ten pages clicking the right open page icon to the right of the pages display will display the next ten pages for your selection.

Editing is then a case of adding more shapes, text or pictures to the page and saving the page to the album file.

2.3 Add Page

Selecting **File|Add Page** will append a new blank page to the end of the album.

2.4 Insert Page

Selecting **File|Insert Page** will insert a new blank page before the current selected page.

2.5 Delete Page

Selecting **File|Delete Page** will delete the current selected page from the album. You will be prompted to confirm that deleting the page is what you wish to do. Clicking No will abort the page delete and clicking Yes will delete the page.

Once the page is deleted the program will display the first page possible.

Warning there is no recovery from deleting a page except to recreate the page from scratch.

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2.6 Save Page

Selecting **File|Save Page** will save the current album page contents to the album file.

2.7 Page Setup

Select **File|Page Set Up** from the menu system and the page set up dialog box will be displayed.

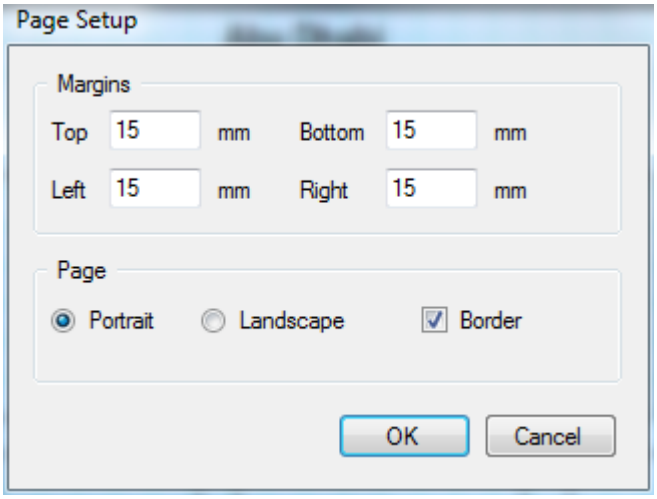

Figure 2. The Page Setup Dialogue.

This dialog allows properties for individual pages to be set. These can be different for each page in an album.

The margins simply set the bounds where the border will be displayed if required they will not restrict you in placing boxes or text on the page, but be aware that not all printers print to the edge of a page. 15mm is a good border that fits almost all printers.

You can select here whether the page will be in portrait or landscape. Usefully when attempting to fit in large boxes etc.

The border display/print is also selected here, When checked the border is displayed and printed with the page and unchecked no border is displayed or printed.

2.8 Print Preview

You can preview the album at any time during it's construction.

After adding a few stamps select **File|Preview** from the main menu. If you have not saved the album definition you will be prompted whether to save or not. If not saved all data since the last save are lost. Once saved the select pages dialog will be shown.

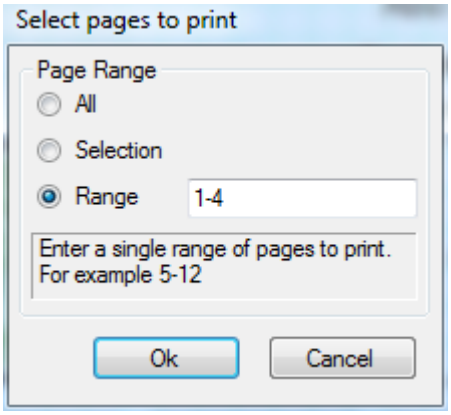

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Figure 1. Select pages dialog

To preview a single page select the selection radio button and enter the page number in the edit box. More than one page can be previewed this way. Simply enter each page number separated by a comma.

The program can also preview a range of pages. Select the range radio button and enter the range of pages you wish to preview as 2-34 in the edit box.

Clicking Ok will then preview the album pages selected.

Clicking cancel will cancel the preview operation.

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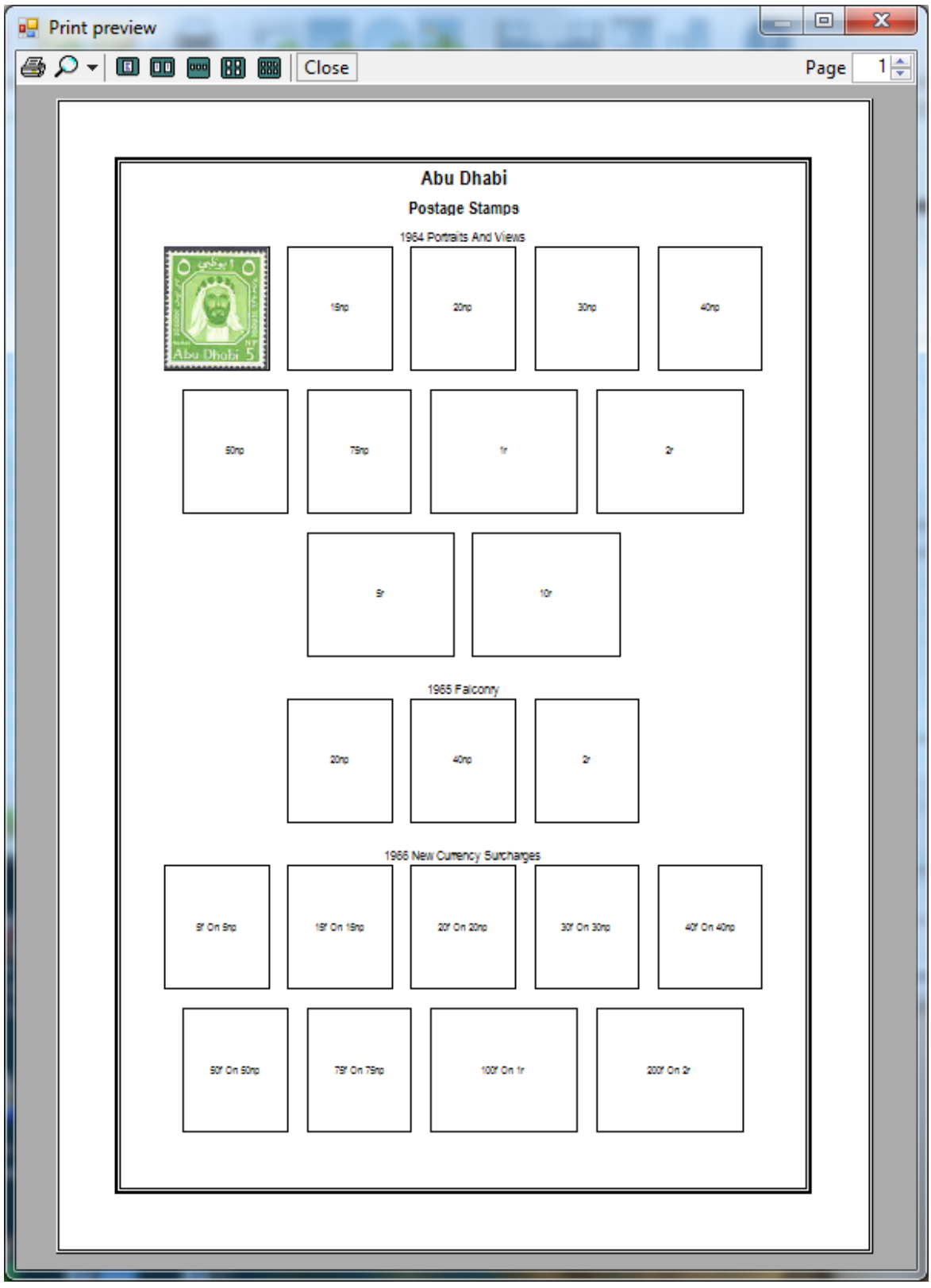

*Figure 2. Preview W*indow

The preview form has a toolbar at the top of the form where the controls for the preview are held. Referring to figure 2 these tools are Print, Zoom Selection Combo, five preview page option buttons, Close preview and on the right the page navigation area.

You can zoom in and out of the album and can move between the pages simply by selecting the page navigation buttons or the zoom drop down at the toolbar in the preview screen. The album preview includes images where these are available and have been selected.

If not happy with the layout close the preview form and you will be returned to the album definition form. Some title text may overlap the sides where the text is to long.

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If you are happy with the album pages previewed as is, they can then be printed from the preview screen by pressing the print toolbar button. Make sure your printer is connected.

2.9 Print

You can print the album at any time during it's construction.

After adding a few stamps select **File|Print** from the main menu. If you have not saved the album definition you will be prompted whether to save or not. If not saved all data since the last save are lost. Once saved the select pages dialog will be shown.

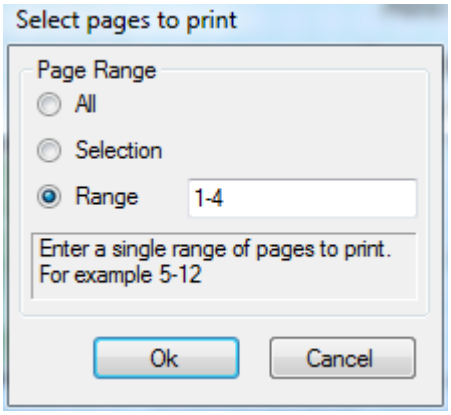

Figure 1. Select pages dialog

To print a single page select the Selection radio button and enter the page number in the edit box. More than one page can be printed this way. Simply enter each page number separated by a comma.

The program can also print a range of pages. Select the range radio button and enter the range of pages you wish to print as 2-34 in the edit box.

Clicking Ok will then print the album pages selected.

Clicking cancel will cancel the print operation.

2.10 Options

The program supports different sizes of album page including custom sized album pages where these can be defined and selected. Refer to your printer documentation for custom sized papers.

To change the page sizes and some other general options you need to access the Options dialogue available through File|Options on the album page designer main menu. This will display the options dialogue.

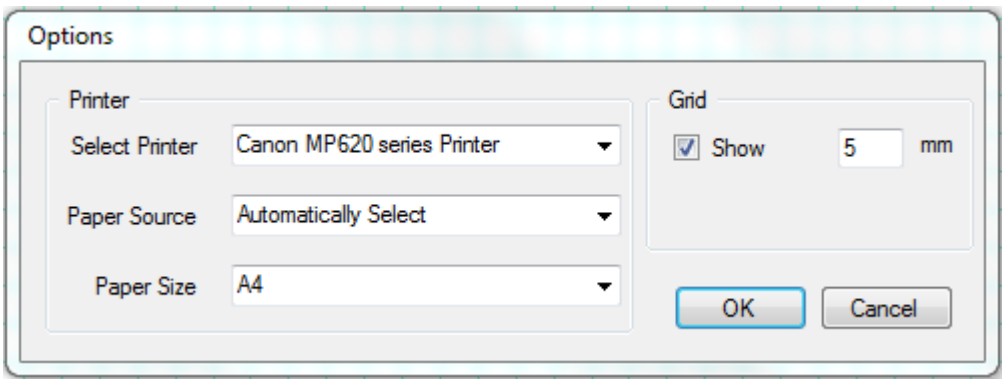

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Figure 1. The Options Dialogue.

First select the printer you wish to use and then the paper source. This will load available paper sizes into the paper size drop down box from which you can then select the current paper size.

The Grid option allows you to select whether the grid is displayed on the page or not and the spacing of the grid lines. The grid can also be turned on and off from the main menu and there is also an option to allow components to be placed using the grid or not. Simply use **Tools|Snap** to grid. Described later.

2.11 Exit

Selecting File|Exit from the menu system or clicking the Exit toolbar button will close the program.

If there is unsaved page data you will be prompted to save the page data before the program closes.

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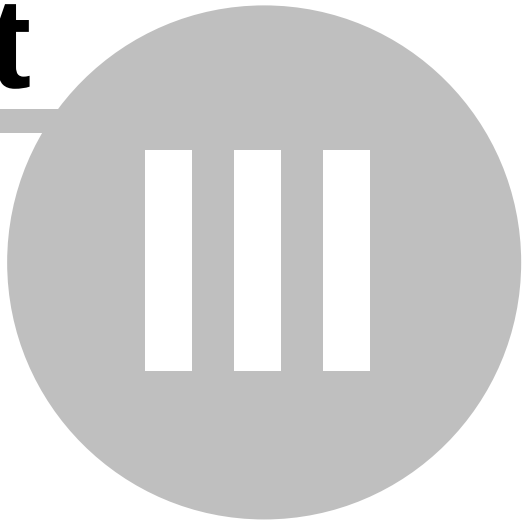

3 Tools Menu

3.1 Add Shape

Elements on the album page are all refereed to as shapes. All are dealt with in a similar way.

To add a shape click **Tools|Add Shape** which will produce a drop down of available shapes which include text etc as a shape. The first five are mapped to buttons on the toolbar and can be selected by clicking the relevant toolbar button.

The drop down list includes other shapes as well as the main five. There are user defined shapes and include a triangle and Maltese Christmas stamp shape when shipped. As you define more shapes these are added to the drop down list automatically for you to select in any other album that you build.

3.1.1 Rich Text

The Rich Text shape allows you to have areas where multi line text can be placed on the page. This text can be formatted in various ways including highlights etc.

Add a Rich Text shape by using the **Tools|Add Shape** menu item or by clicking the toolbar button icon of a page with a pencil.

Once clicked move the mouse pointer to the page area where you want the Rich text to appear then click and hold the left mouse button, move the mouse to create the Rich Text box on the page. When happy release the mouse button. As you drag the mouse over the page a white rectangle is shown which changes size as you move the mouse over the page.

Once on the page this shape can be edited by clicking the shape with right mouse button.

3.1.2 Simple Text

The Text shape allows you to have areas where single text can be placed on the page. This text can be formatted in various ways including font and colour etc.

Add a Text shape by using the **Tools|Add Shape** menu item or by clicking the toolbar button icon of a text box with a plus icon.

Once clicked move the mouse pointer to the page area where you want the text to appear then click and hold the left mouse button, move the mouse to create the Text box on the page. When happy release the mouse button. As you drag the mouse over the page a white rectangle with the text "Replace This" is shown which changes size as you move the mouse over the page.

Once on the page this shape can be edited by clicking the shape with right mouse button.

3.1.3 Box

The Box shape produces boxes or placeholder's on the album page for the stamps or other items. The colour of the line used to draw the box can be changed.
Add a n ellipse shape by using the **Tools|Add Shape** menu item or by clicking the toolbar button icon of a blue circle with a plus icon.

Once clicked move the mouse pointer to the page area where you want the ellipse to appear then click and hold the left mouse button, move the mouse to create the ellipse on the page. When happy release the mouse button. As you drag the mouse over the page a black bordered ellipse is shown which changes size as you move the mouse over the page.

Once on the page this shape can be edited by clicking the shape with right mouse button.

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3.1.4 Ellipse

The Ellipse shape produces ellipses or placeholder's on the album page for the stamps or other items. The text in the box and the colour of the line used to draw the box can both be changed.
Add a Box shape by using the **Tools|Add Shape** menu item or by clicking the toolbar button icon of a blue box with a plus icon.

Once clicked move the mouse pointer to the page area where you want the box to appear then click and hold the left mouse button, move the mouse to create the box on the page. When happy release the mouse button. As you drag the mouse over the page a black bordered rectangle is shown which changes size as you move the mouse over the page.

Once on the page this shape can be edited by clicking the shape with right mouse button.

3.1.5 Picture

The Picture shape produces boxes or place holders on the album page for images. The image displayed in the box can be changed.
Add a picture shape by using the **Tools|Add Shape** menu item or by clicking the toolbar button icon of a picture with a plus icon.

Once clicked move the mouse pointer to the page area where you want the picture to appear then click and hold the left mouse button, move the mouse to create the picture on the page. When happy release the mouse button. As you drag the mouse over the page a blue rectangle is shown which changes size as you move the mouse over the page.

Once on the page this shape can be edited by clicking the shape with right mouse button place holder's

3.1.6 Other Shapes

Other shapes produces boxes or placeholder's on the album page for stamps etc. The colour of the line used to draw the shape can be changed.
Add a shape by using the **Tools|Add Shape** menu item. These are user defined and do not have a respective toolbar button.

Once clicked move the mouse pointer to the page area where you want the shape to appear then click and hold the left mouse button, move the mouse to create the shape on the page. When happy release the mouse button. As you drag the mouse over the page a black bordered shape is shown which changes size as you move the mouse over the page.

Once on the page this shape can be edited by clicking the shape with right mouse button.

3.2 Edit User Shapes

Stamps come in all shapes and sizes with some in specially designed shapes. The Album Page Designer can cope with these by allowing the album designer to create their own shapes.

Click **Tools|Edit User Shape** on the menu system to display the Shape Designer dialog box.

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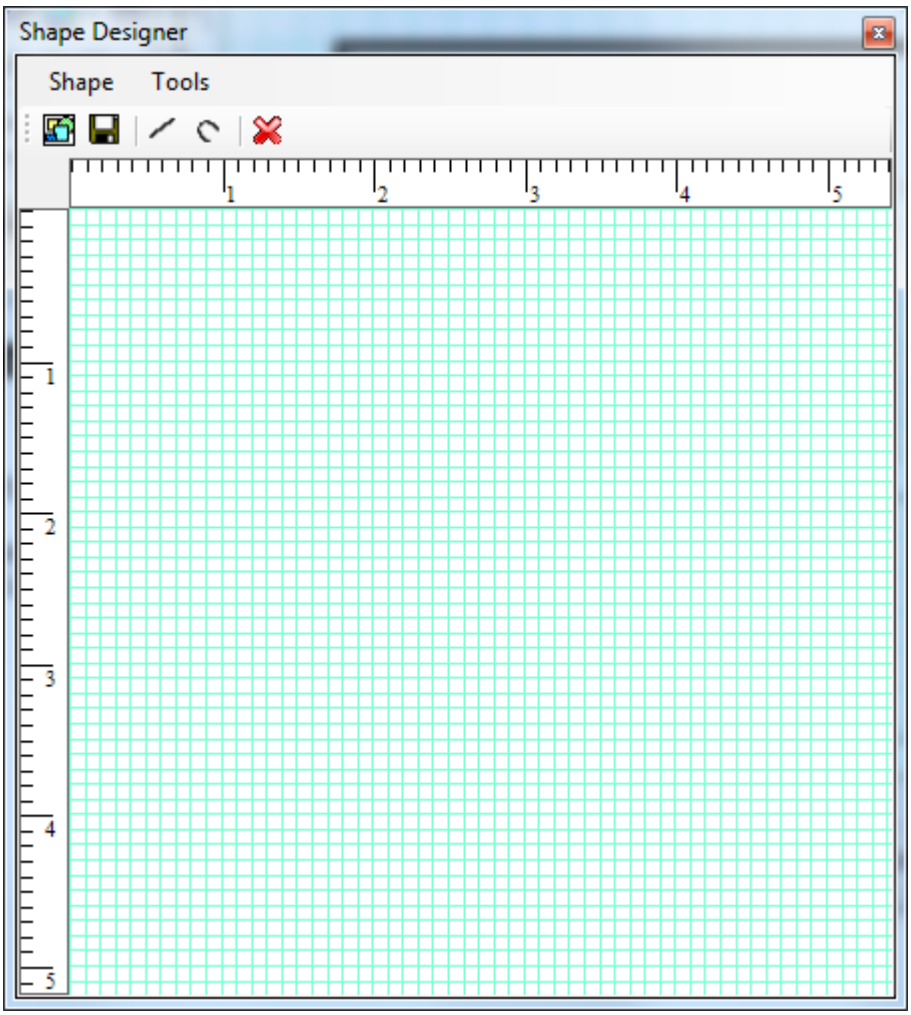

Figure 1. Shape Designer Dialog

The shape designer is a very basic tool to design shapes using lines and curves. You can load an existing shape to be edited further by clicking the Load Shape toolbar button or selecting **Shape|Load Shape** from the menu system. Or you simply start adding lines and curves to the shape on the dialog.

The grid of the dialog is laid out in spaces of 1mm to allow drawing of the shape. It is the shape here that is important not the sizing though, as each shape when added to an album page can be stretched or shrunk to fit.

To add a line click the line button on the toolbar and move the mouse to the grid area and click the left mouse button where you want the line to start then move the mouse to where the line is to end and click again.

To add a curve follow the same instructions as for a line.

To select a line or curve click the end point of the line and limit boxes will appear. Click inside one of these and hold down the mouse button to move the start or end point or in the case of a curve the central box will allow the curve to be defined.

Once an element is selected it can be deleted by clicking the red cross on the toolbar.

Once happy with the shape click the save button or select Save or Save As from the menu system to save the shape. You will be prompted for a title for the shape that will appear in the main form menu system so give your shape a meaningful title to remind you of the shape when creating albums.

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3.3 Align

Select **Tools|Align** from the main menu to use the alignment tools supplied.

After adding several boxes if they are all the same size the menu provides a make same size action. Simply select all the boxes whichg should be the same size ensuring the last one clicked is at the correct size then select Make Same Size from the **Tools|Align** menu and all the selected shapes will be changed to be the same size.

The other four menu actions Align Lefts, Align Rights, Align Tops and Align Bottoms are all mimicked on the toolbar.

To use these simply select all the shapes to be aligned ensuring that the last one selected is the shape to align to and then click the required alignment button on the toolbar or select the correct alignment from the **Tools|Align** menu system and the shapes will be aligned as selected.

3.4 Grid

This action is used to control the display of the grid on the album page. Use the **Tools|Grid** menu item to turn the grid on and off.

The grid spacing and its default display can be set in Options.

When the grid is on a small tick is placed next to the Grid menu item and the grid is displayed for the album page.

This is usefully for turning off the grid to get a quick look at how the album page will look when printed without using the Print Preview feature which with large albums can take some time.

3.5 Snap To Grid

This action is used to control the action of inserting or moving shapes on an album page. Use the **Tools|Snap To Grid** menu item to turn snap to grid on and off.

The grid spacing and its default display can be set in Options.

When snap to grid is on a small tick is placed next to the Snap To Grid menu item and any shape added to the page or moved will always be added or moved at the grid spacing.

This is sometimes helpful in aligning shapes etc on the page during initial building of an album.

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Part IV

4 Editing Shapes

4.1 Selecting Shapes To Edit

Once some shapes are placed on the page they can be selected either individually or together. Some operations, such align bottoms, require that more than one text area or shape is selected. Simply click on the first text area then press and hold the CTRL button and click the next shape or text area. Each shape when selected will have corner tabs placed on each corner.

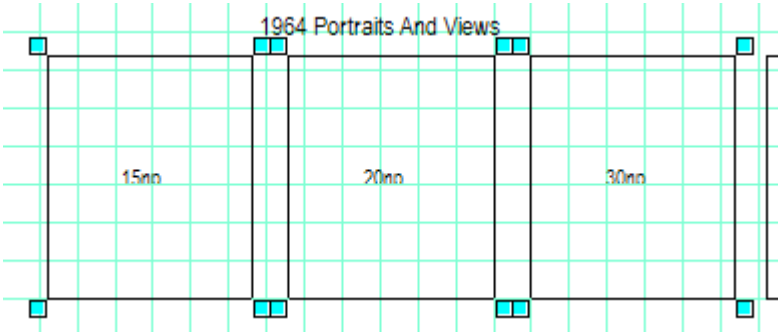

Figure 1. Selected shapes

Once selected operations carried out will apply to all the selected text areas.

To move a shape once placed on the page simply press and hold the left mouse button when the pointer is over the shape and the shape will be selected shown by the tabbed boxes and any movement of the mouse button will also move the shape.

When several shapes are selected hold the mouse button down on the last shape selected and all selected shapes will be moved.

To delete a shape first select the shape to be deleted and then press the delete button.

4.2 Rich Text

Rich Text shapes hold formatted text. There is no restraint on the text formatting that can be present, however only text which will fit in the shape on the page will be displayed. This text always starts from the top left corner of the box.

To edit the text in a Rich Text shape click the shape with the right mouse button which will display the Rich Text properties dialog.

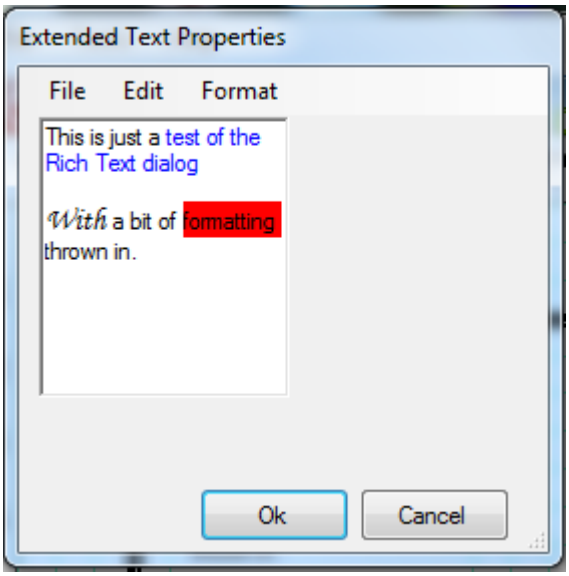

Figure 1. Rich Text Properties Dialog

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When the dialog displays the edit able area is set to the same size and shape as the Rich Text shape on the album page. This will show what can be fitted into the shape on the page. If more space is required then exit from the dialog and increase the size of the shape on the page.

This dialog is a mini word processor and carries its own menu system. The actions of this menu system are very similar to many word processors with fonts, cut, copy, paste etc and as such are not described here. Experimentation is the order of the day.

Text from other applications can be copied into the edit area of the Rich Text dialog. Select the text from the other application, such as notepad and then click inside the edit able area where you want that text to be placed and press and hold the ctrl button and then press V. This will insert the text at that point.

Remember that only text that can be displayed in the edit able area can be displayed in the shape.

4.3 Simple Text

Various properties of a text shape can be edited manually.

Position the mouse pointer over the text that you wish to edit and click the right mouse button, this will display the Text Properties Dialog. This action will allow the properties of a single text area to be edited not multiple areas so only the area over which the mouse was placed at the time of the right click will be edited.

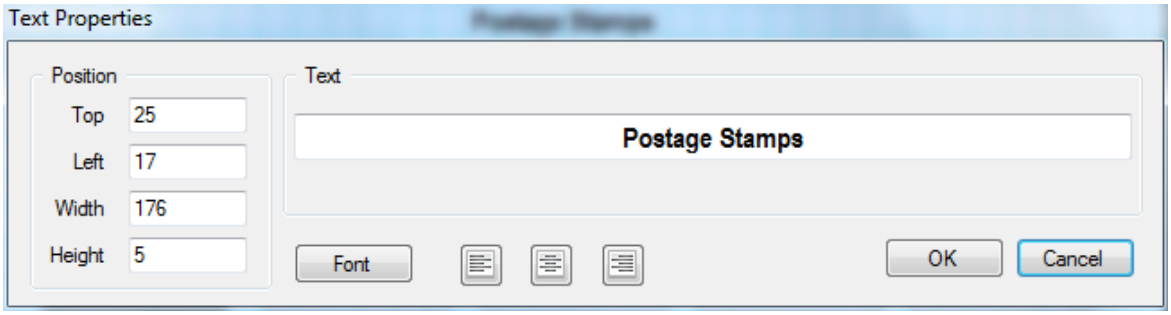

Figure 1. Text Properties Dialog

This allows the position and size to be set directly. These sizes are the actual sizes used to place the text area and also to size the text area no margins etc are added to these to position or size the area. The height is set manually so if a height is entered that is less than the height of the selected text and font etc then part of the text will be cut off and not displayed.

The text contained in the area is displayed in the text editing box as it will appear on the page. This can be edited directly, simply click the mouse button in the box and start typing or deleting text.

There are three text alignment buttons on the dialog and these allow you to align the text either with the left edge, centre or right edge of the text area.

The font button when clicked will display the font definition dialog.

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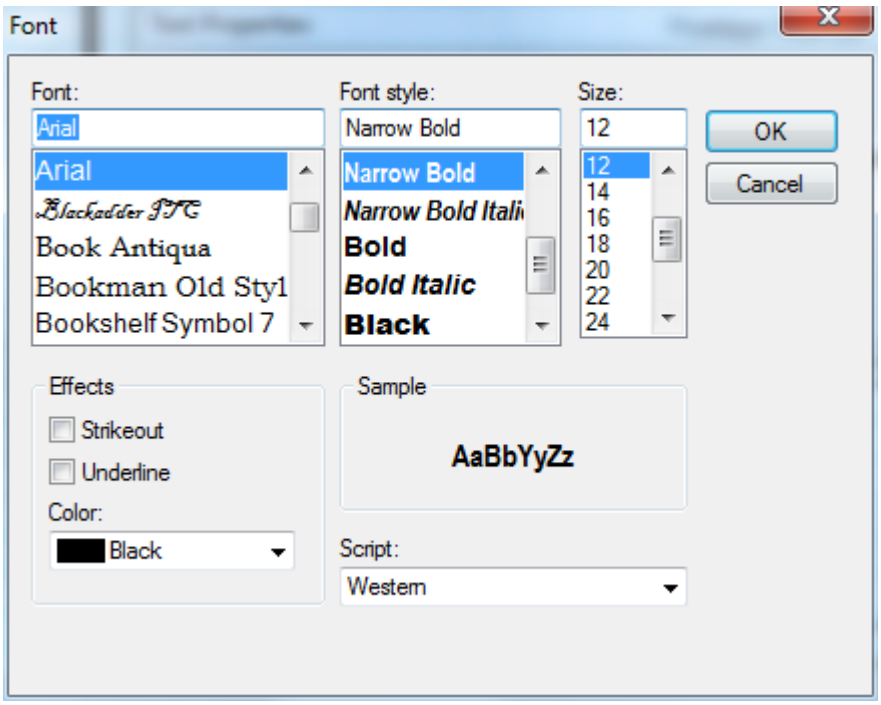

Figure 2. Font definition dialog

This allows you to choose exactly how the text will appear including the colour of the finished text.

4.4 General Shapes

Various properties of a general shape can be edited manually. This gives greater positioning accuracy and also allows the colour of the box to be selected.

Position the mouse pointer over the shape that you wish to edit and click the right mouse button, this will display the Shape Properties Dialog. This action will allow the properties of a single shape to be edited not multiple shapes so only the shape over which the mouse was placed at the time of the right click will be edited.

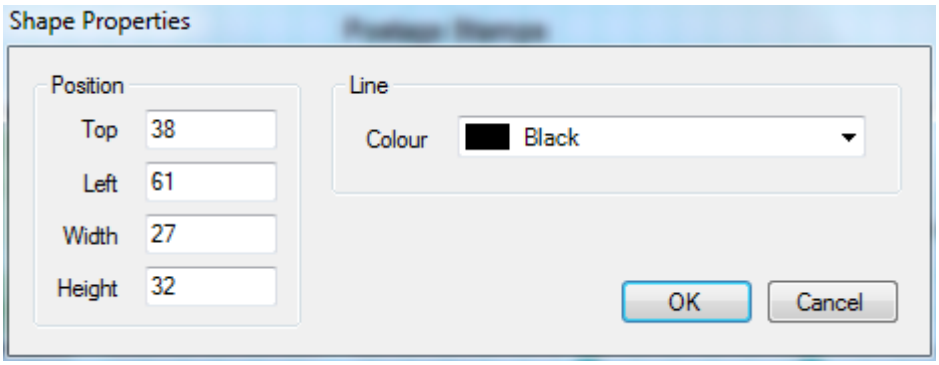

Figure 1. Shape Properties Dialog

This allows the position and size to be set directly. These sizes are the actual sizes used to place the shape and also to size the shape no margins etc are added to these to position or size the shape.

The colour of the line used to draw the shape can also be defined. Clicking the drop down box will display a list of colours available. Select one from the list and once you click Ok that colour will be used to draw that shape.

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4.5 Pictures

Various properties of a Picture shape can be edited manually this includes selecting the image to be displayed.

Position the mouse pointer over the image that you wish to edit and click the right mouse button, this will display the Image Properties Dialog. This action will allow the properties of a single image to be edited not multiple images so only the image over which the mouse was placed at the time of the right click will be edited.

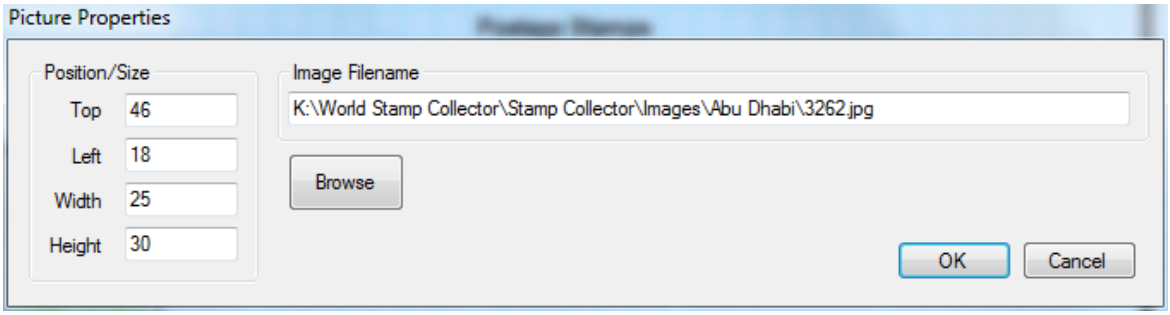

Figure 1. Image Properties Dialog

This allows the position and size to be set directly. These sizes are the actual sizes used to place the Picture shape and also to size the Picture shape no margins etc are added to these to position or size the shape.

The filename of the picture displayed in the box is shown in the Image Filename text box.

You can enter this filename manually or you can click the Browse button which will display the image selection dialog.

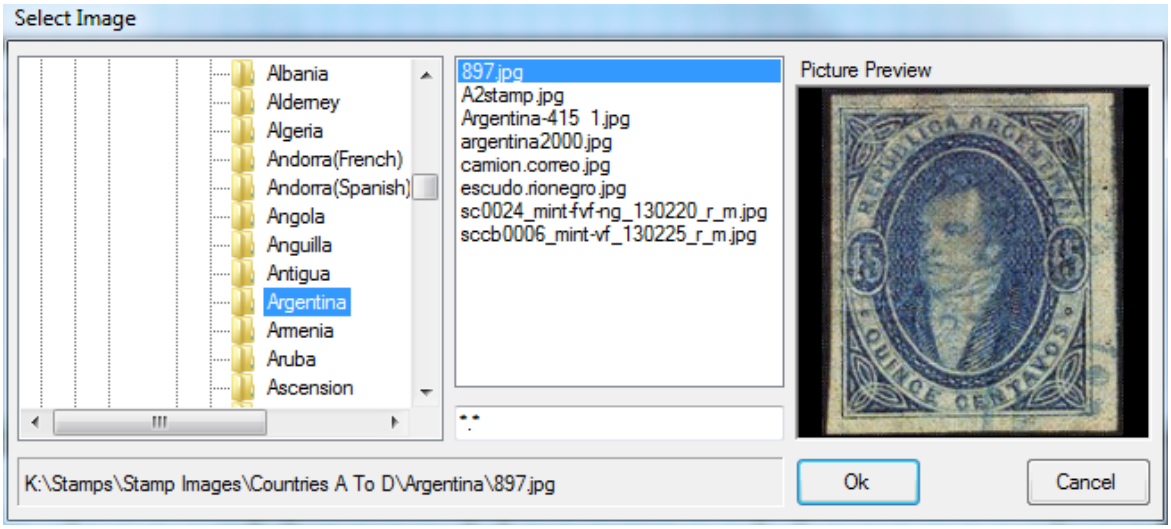

Figure 2. Select Image Dialog

To select an image use the tree view on the left hand side to navigate to the image on your computer and then select the image from the middle list box. The selected image will be displayed in the right hand box to show that the image can be displayed and used in the album..

Once you have located the correct image click Ok and that image will be displayed in the position of and at the size of the image box on the album page.

Images used by the album designer are not stored with the album file so if the image selected is moved or deleted it will no longer appear in the album.

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