



Editorial

Should Conventions Have Tours?

Remembering back a quarter of a century ago when I first entered the hobby [*I could have said 25 years ago, but a quarter of a century sounds so much longer*], the question never seemed to be posed—Should conventions have tours? But it *is* being posed now, and it's actually been something of a bone of contention for at least the last several years—in some camps.

I wasn't around when the first conventions were formed, or when tours became an established convention activity, but I can certainly see the reasoning behind it. But, I can also see the 'other side's' argument, as well. And, looking at both, I don't think it's unfair to see the controversy as yet another example of the split between the 'socially-driven' collectors and the 'collecting-driven' collectors.

Pro:

- Most convention attendees come from outside the local area and, thus, might appreciate the opportunity to 'see the sights'.
- The accompanying spouse may not be a collector and should have something to do, or something to do *with* his or her spouse, so that he or she isn't just shut up in a hotel room for several days while the husband or wife is busy with the convention.'
- Provides a pleasant opportunity for an inclusive activity where new people can make acquaintances, etc.
- People who don't want to attend the tours don't have to.
- The conventions should be balanced between the 'intense' collecting activities and the social activities.

Con:

- There shouldn't be convention activities that take you *away* from the convention.
- Tours don't have anything to do with collecting.
- It's expensive to attend a convention, and "I didn't come all this way and spend all this money to sightsee."
- "Even if I opt not to attend the tour, there's nothing else for me to do because no other major activity has been scheduled for that time because—that's when the tour is!"
- These conventions are hobby activities; they should be hobby-focused. I can golf or take tours anywhere.

Looking at how things are going at the moment, I'd have to say that the pendulum is swinging away from the social activities and toward more cover-oriented activities [*and I'd say that even if I weren't in the latter camp*]. I think part of the reason for that is that as the hobby has shrunk, we're basically left with the more serious collectors now—and they're more focused on building their collections [*which is why they're the 'more-serious' collectors!*]. Another part might be that the costs for everything have been soaring over recent years, so perhaps there's more of a push to 'get your money's worth'—i.e., "After spending hundreds of dollars to attend this conference, I want to be *immersed* in cover-related activities, hopefully those which will enhance my collecting or collections."

So, what do you think?