



Halcyon

The Newsletter of the Redditch Philatelic Society – No. 19: Spring 2013.

From the Chairman



This year so far we have had a number of excellent talks. Those which stood out for me were John Jackson's "Aspects of the Netherlands East Indies", Mike Fulford's "Cyprus" and Alwyn Peel's "Captain Bligh: the Man and his Mutinies". Being able to see collections of this high standard displayed is a real privilege and we try to show our appreciation to our speakers by applause and by taking a genuine interest in the display.

One thing that visiting speakers really appreciate is having a reasonable size of audience to hear their talks. It has been noticeable this year that our average attendance at meetings has been declining compared to previous years, therefore I would urge all members to come to as many meetings as they can, but in particular, to those meetings where we have visiting speakers. If numbers fall off too much, we will find it much harder to attract the best speakers in the future.

Coming soon is the biennial MIDPEX 2013, which is the showplace for specialist societies as well as being an excellent stamp fair. This year the organisers have arranged for Royal Mail to provide a Post & Go machine to vend the latest pond life stamps. In addition, the event will also see the launch the Midland (GB) Postal History Society's new book "The British County Catalogue of Postal History: Midlands Edition". More than fifty dealers will be offering their wares and around 40 specialist societies will be trying to attract new members. The event also hosts the MPF Spring Convention and AGM, if you are available, do take the opportunity to sit in the meeting and learn more about how the Midland Philatelic Federation works. The show takes place at the Warwickshire Exhibition Centre near Leamington Spa on Saturday 6th July. I will be there and I hope many of you will be too; you would mad to miss it!

Finally, I would like to wish you all a relaxing summer break and I look forward to seeing you all at our first meeting of next season, on 5th September.

Alan Godfrey

The President's Piece

This year has been very busy for me so far. Visits to other Societies as part of our usual "team visits", or in my own right, have taken up a fair bit of time in preparing material for display and rehearsing the words. Displaying to others provides the rare opportunity of seeing your own material in its entirety on the display boards. I find too that in writing up, research brings up some absolute gems of information that perhaps would have gone otherwise undiscovered. There is a downside though. Having written up your entire collection on 50 or 60 sheets, you then find that the Society you are to give your display to are offering space for 90 or 100 sheets - each half!



Talking of research, I recently came across some work that another collector had done in collating information from Post Office archives about all of the Postmasters, their appointments, salaries and in some cases dismissals. Now a couple of years ago, I was searching for this very information for a few specific offices around the country and was unsuccessful in many cases. With this "find", job sorted. Just goes to show how in making your research information available to fellow collectors you can make a difference to everyone's enjoyment of our hobby.

Time seems to be an ever decreasing commodity these days. In writing this piece, I'm sure it was only last week that I was putting pen to paper for last Spring's Newsletter. Of course, missing out on the Summer and Winter editions haven't helped. Alan stepped into the breach admirably and wove two newsletters out of thin air. It is yet another example of this Society pulling together when necessary and, more importantly, coming up with the goods.

It was very good to see so many members at WORPEX recently. I hope that everyone managed to acquire some good material and I am looking forward to seeing some of it at the next members display evening. After all, why buy something that is going to just sit in a drawer or cupboard for the next 20 or 30 years until your next of kin pull it out and haven't a clue what to do with it? Get it out and enjoy it. More to the point share the enjoyment with others.

Malcolm Allinson

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the latest edition of *Halcyon*.

You may have spotted in the last two Newsletters, that contribution from your Editor was conspicuously absent. This was caused by yours truly falling foul to illness for a few months, which meant some time away from the computer. Many thanks to everyone for your kind thoughts.

You will be relieved that in my absence, your Chairman took on the task of producing your Newsletter admirably. Congratulations to Alan and also to everyone who contributed.

As I am now back in harness, it will again be me in future who requests, cajoles, entices – even harangue sometimes – everyone to send in articles for publishing in your Newsletter. (*Nothing new there then I hear you all say*) So if you wish me to stop requesting, cajoling etc. the solution is in your hands!

Meeting reports are the most regular article requested for your newsletter, and mostly every meeting gets covered. To add to the overall look and feel of the report, it would be most useful if in addition to text, writers could add some pertinent illustrations too.

Recent editions of *Halcyon* have contained a number of photographs of local postboxes and I thought it might be worthwhile to continue this trend. So please keep them coming in. We may eventually be able to have an archive of pictures of all of our local boxes.

Finally, I have had an e-mail from Pete Elms, who writes: *"As a "part time" member of the Redditch Philatelic Society, due to ridiculous shifts at work, I am not able to contribute anything lengthy to the newsletter. However, there is something that I feel that I would like to say and maybe you might like to print it. I would like to thank the Committee for the work that they do, for example, bringing in guest speakers and the general organisation of the club. I have thoroughly enjoyed the meetings that I have been able to attend this year and hopefully, we will have an equally good philatelic year next year."*

Thanks very much for those words of encouragement, Pete. It is always satisfying to know that the Committee is heading in the right direction, even if sometimes we get little feedback.

As is now customary, I would like to thank all of the contributors to this edition of *Halcyon* - **Paul Veal, Alan Godfrey, David Gillespie, Bob Harper, Robin Jarman, Mike Such, Lyel Swingler and Chris Jackson.** Please keep the articles rolling in.

Malcolm Allinson

2012 CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP

The results of last year's championship are given below and show a clear win for our Treasurer based on attendance, competition results, displays, newsletter articles and even tea making. This year we will include the top scores in the newsletter as the year progresses so get entering, writing and tea making and you might be the winner for 2013.

1 st	Chris Jackson	186 points
2 nd	Bob Harper	169 points
3 rd	Robin Jarman	168 points
4 th	Paul Veal	163 points
5 th	Lyel Swingler	158 points
6 th	Malcolm Allinson	156 points

MEETING REPORTS

Thursday 20th December 2012 The Committee Entertains

The Chairman's opening remarks emphasised the lack of any connection between the good attendance for the evening and the copious (free) feast on offer.

(As is usual at our Christmas Meeting, not only does the Committee entertain, it also generously brings along some festive nibbles and drinks. Ed.)

He went on to issue a health and safety warning. This did not in fact concern the food, but the low levels of lighting in the car park and the dangers of uneven surfaces when returning to cars. He then made an emotional appeal for entries in the forthcoming nine-sheet competition, particularly from members who weren't habitual exhibitionists. He emphasised that assistance was available, although this did not appear to extend as far as monetary assistance.

During this preamble our philatelists were observed limbering up, and straight in at the conclusion of introductions was Chris Jackson who exposed his undated circles to an expectant audience. These were all local, and included a kaleidoscope of green, red, blue and black circles, also the only known Catshill, as well as Coughton and Rednal strikes. Undated circles were used at Post Offices with an annual turnover of less than £1000. However at the introduction of the Penny Post a number of offices fell below this 'cut-off' but were generally permitted to keep their undated circles. However volumes climbed subsequent to the cheaper postal rates so a number again rose above £1000 turnover, and many new, small offices opened with their own undated circles.

Alan Godfrey was next to appear on the Podium, with his large-silver winning Perth entry, a study of the 1998 'Angel' GB stamps issue.



The set of five 1998 Christmas stamps
 20p Angel with Hands raised in Blessing; 26p Angel Praying;
 30p Angel playing Flute; 43p Angel playing Lute; 63p Angel praying

This concept was a 'collecting' departure on Alan's part, and it was most impressive to see just how much direct and peripheral information could be gathered relating to a single stamp issue by a determined researcher.

Included were PHQ cards, an imperf strip, an Air Card, first day covers signed by the designer - Irene von Treskow; and a cover dated two days prior to the date of issue. De La Rue publicity material relating to the issue was also displayed, as were publicity photographs that were sent to the newspapers. This was the last British set of stamps that had general first day of issue postmarks, subsequently first day postmarks were only obtainable via Edinburgh.

After our dedicated members had consumed festive nibbles, Robin Jarman assumed centre stage with his 64-sheet, 4 frame Perth entry entitled 'Chilean Airmails to the end of WWII', which deservedly won a Gold Medal.

Included was a cover from a very early Chile to Argentina flight, which is stated to have crossed the Andes. Robin disputed this as the lowest Andean pass is 18,000ft whereas the maximum 'ceiling' for the type of aircraft used was 15,000ft. The next period of airmails were run by the Chilean military, a service commenced between Santiago and Arica in the far north, next to the Peruvian border

This is the area of the greatest mineral wealth. Flight covers were displayed. Services were also extended to Magellanes in the far south.



*Christmas and New Year Greetings Card from 1937
 Flown Santiago to Frankfurt.*

Also displayed were Aeropostale (which became Air France) covers, and a cover from the first official postal use, in 1930, of the existing service from Paris to Buenos Aires, the return flight being billed as 'the first service entirely by air', but the cover didn't quite make it as the aircraft couldn't get off the ground!



*Failed "1st Return Flight" cover, as noted above.
 The cover eventually took the overland and sea route
 to reach its destination.*

Also on display was a cover from the abandoned France- Chile transatlantic flight, also Chilean government 1932 Zeppelin flights. The latest cover on display was dated 1941. A vote of thanks was given to all three exhibitors, and was well supported.

David Gillespie

**Thursday 3rd January 2013
Annual Nine Sheet Competitions**

This year's Annual Competitions produced a very good turnout of entries in all but the Social Class.

The judges were Colin Searle and Terry Harrison who did a great job in getting through the entries in good time for us to view them afterwards and see where our own judgements differed, thus helping us all to understand better the intricacies of judging stamp displays.

The results at the end of the evening were as follows:

Postal History Class

Pete Elms

Birmingham Postal History –
An introduction to mail going abroad 80 marks

Alan Godfrey

The Unified Single Impressions
of Coventry 1933-96 71 marks

Malcolm Allinson

**Uniform Fourpenny Postage 1839-40 91 marks
Class winner**

Ralph Richardson

The Administration of the
Free Frank Privilege 85 marks

Traditional Class

Lyel Swingler

**Netherlands & Colonies
Air Mail Stamps 1921-44 85 marks
Class Winner**

Aerophilately

Lyel Swingler

Post War Flights from the Netherlands
Sept 1945 - May 1946 82 marks

Robin Jarman

**Airmails of Chile
The Beginnings 1927-29 90 marks
Class Winner**

Open Class

Bob Harper

The Isle of Rona 58 marks

Alan Godfrey

**Fire & Pestilence 80 marks
Class Winner**



A page from Robin's 'Airmails of Chile' Aerophilately entry showing airmail surcharge covers between Valparaiso and Santiago



A page from Lyel's 'Post War Flights from the Netherlands' Aerophilately entry, showing Curacao airmail stamps of 1942 and 1943

Many congratulations to all who entered, and also those who won. Remember, the winning entries in each Class will go forward as the combined Redditch entry at the Midland Federation Inter-Society competitions being held this year in July at Midpex.

Alan Godfrey

Thursday 17th January 2013
Guest speaker: John Jackson
Aspects of the Dutch East Indies.

John fortunately arrived before the snows came and gave an excellent presentation on various covers and postal items of the Dutch East Indies.

He opened with a brief history of the formation of the DEI and the involvement of the different nations that at one time controlled that area including the British exchange of part of Sumatra for Singapore. The collections on display included Value Added Services, Advice on Receipt, Cash on Delivery, Express Mail, Postal Markings, Railway halts and Metre marks and Advertising.



John Jackson with his display of Dutch East Indies

The first half started with a presentation named 'The Importance for the Netherlands East Indies Mail of Singapore & the P&O Connection 1845 – 1878. I quote from the introduction to this display.

'During the early part of the 19th Century mail between Europe and the Indies was by sailing ships using the very long Cape of Good Hope route. The Dutch had no formal regular service of their own until 1878. From 1835 it became possible to use the overland route via Egypt; first developed by Thomas Waghorn. Later the P&O began a service from Suez to India. However because of the expense this was rarely used. This changed in 1845 with the extension of the P&O service to Hong Kong via Penang and Singapore. A postal treaty was concluded in 1843 between Britain and the Netherlands formalising the regular transmission of mail to and from Singapore. The Dutch then set up a regular connecting service between Batavia and Singapore and almost all the mail to and from Europe was carried by P&O. The position was further consolidated in 1878 with the establishment of Dutch postal agents in both Penang and Singapore to handle the mail to and from the Dutch Colony.'

Various covers were displayed showing items stamped in Penang and Singapore for this period to and from the DEI. Other interesting collections were The Atjeh War, The royal Packetboat Co. Railway halts and Internment mail.

In January 1891 the Company started regular services in the Indies Archipelago with its first ship the 'Camphuys'. Indonesia consists of 3000 islands and a shipping service is of supreme importance not only for commerce but also for transporting passengers. Soon after the KPM started 13 ships were ordered from Dutch boatyards.

In 1906 a period of rapid expansion started and by the end of WW1 the fleet had doubled in size to 147000 tonnes. Ships sailing from Java to Australia carried beef, butter and fruit in refrigerated holds and the luxury steamer 'Melchior Treub' was put into service with all the imaginable comfort for passengers.

Other routes included the Java to Siam, Java to Deli line to Western Australia and the Deli-Straits-China line. These routes were used for transporting rice, rubber, and tobacco, tin, Palm oil, copra and numerous other products. To oversee such a big operation offices were opened spread over the archipelago including the headquarters and seaman's technical school.

After WW1 the expansion continued and it became necessary to have a central HQ in Batavia. By 1939 the KPM had 129 ships with a tonnage of 307847 and had become the largest shipping company in the Netherlands. Ships of the KPM were seen from Cape Town to the Indian and Pacific Oceans, Shanghai, Singapore, Ceylon, Bangkok and Saigon. Australian and New Zealand ports were also on the itinerary. With the bombing of Rotterdam on 10th May 1940 the Dutch entered the war and it quickly spread to the DEI. Ships of the KPM were put on a war footing as Navy ships. They served with distinction in war zones all over the world as far apart as The Pacific and Mediterranean. A few survived after the war and continued in KPM service. In all 60 ships were lost and 477 personnel perished.

New ships and coasters were ordered and KPM carried on servicing the area. In 1957 the Indonesian government in an act of piracy stopped all KPM ships from leaving port and put armed guards on each ship and treated the Dutch crews as prisoners on their own ships. After a period of negotiation with between governments and insurance companies the ships were allowed to leave on the understanding that they would never operate in Indonesian waters again. In convoy the ships sailed to Singapore and the KPM ceased to exist.

John exhibited several covers of shipboard stamps and markings and postcards of different boats. Several boards were used showing mail and postcards from the Atjeh wars which took place in Aceh on the north part of Sumatra. For much part of the 19th Century Aceh's independence had been guaranteed by the Anglo Dutch treaty of 1819.

During the 1820s' Aceh became a political and commercial power supplying half of the world's pepper demand but growing European and American demand for this spice led to several diplomatic skirmishes between the British, French and Americans. During the 1830s' a strong sultan brought the local rajes under his control and extended his domain to the east coast. However this expansion clashed with the northwards expansion of the Dutch colonisation of Sumatra.

Following the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 and the changing shipping routes the British and the Dutch signed the 1871 Treaty of Sumatra which ended the British territorial claims to Sumatra allowing the Dutch a free hand for expansion. In return the British gained control of the Dutch Gold Coast in Africa (Ghana). Between 1873 and 1903 several wars took place, the First Dutch Offensive, The Second Aceh Expedition and the Holy War. In 1903 the Acehnese finally capitulated and General van Heutsz took the surrender. John showed a post card of this episode.

An interesting display of railway envelopes showed the development of the railways on the island of Java which had series of different gauge rails which was finally connected with the rails of the same gauge being laid. One cover of note was a letter from Djombang to The Hague on the first night express on 1st November 1936. Sent by rail to Batavia then flown to Medan on Sumatra to catch the returning mail boat to Holland. Other boards included covers of Dutch, German and British POW's that were interned in Indonesia plus some Japanese occupation material.

A super display and well received by the members. John beat a hasty retreat to miss the oncoming snow

Lyel Swingler

**Thursday 7th February 2013
Visit from Evesham Philatelic Society.**

Evesham came with four of their members, three of whom gave us displays. It never ceases to amaze me of the depth and variety of people's collections and we had three entirely different displays tonight.

After a brief introduction by Richard Ellis, Rod Spencer showed us 90 sheets of **Victoria** (the Australian State and not the Queen, although she did feature on most of the stamps). Indeed it was mostly stamps with a few covers for variety. Rod explained that it was not always easy to separate the different printings etc. for some of the earlier material (now that sounds familiar) and that there was plenty of variety in the stamps on show from wood blocks to emergency printings and times when even the paper supply ran short. We also saw some of the Stamp Duty and Postage Due issues and with an issuing period of about 50 years for the

state, Rod had a really comprehensive display and certainly something I had not seen before.

The tea/coffee interval followed, after which Alan Morrell gave us 5 boards of **Sudan**, another country I knew little about apart from Corporal Jones' well-known comments on use of cold steel. When General Kitchener conquered the country, the first stamps issued were overprinted Egyptian ones with the name spelt Soudan. As the General was apparently a man who did not like spending money, he got one of his Captains to design the next stamps rather than pay a professional £25. The result was the famous Camel Postman which lasted for many years.



We also saw some Army overprinted stamps and Postage Dues. Alan displayed some covers, including a couple of very nice first flight envelopes from the beginnings of the Imperial Airways service to South Africa, which was routed through Sudan.

The remaining five boards were used by Evesham's third speaker John Allison with a thematic display of the **Amiens area in Picardy** in northern France. The town has a history stretching back to the very early time when man was just settling Europe and became the Woad capital because of the abundance of this plant in the region. Both Romans and the Vikings came and went before the great Cathedral was completed in the early 1300s.

By sheer co-incidence I had been reading a travelogue based on a journey taken in 1608 by Thomas Coryate and he had visited Amiens, giving a lengthy description of the Cathedral. The 100 Years War had brought the English King Edward I to the town and the French Revolution was also portrayed along with local resident Jules Verne, while World War I caused much devastation and loss of life in this area.



Set of 5 semi-officials tied to cover 7th October 1923.
Amiens Aviation meeting.

The 1923 Air Meeting at Amiens provided cards of the air show and World War II also featured in the display.

A most unusual and entertaining contribution from John, especially pertinent for him as he had family from this town. Our Chairman duly gave the vote of thanks to Evesham for a very interesting evening and perhaps we will be able to return the favour in the future.

Robin Jarman

Thursday 21st February 2013 Annual General Meeting and Members' Displays

This year's Annual General Meeting was held in seemingly record time, due I suspect to the desire of everyone present to get on afterwards with looking at the displays some members had brought along.

Fifteen members attended with all of the usual reports being presented. The main news from the meeting is that everyone agreed to an increase in our subscription from September this year. This is because our running costs have increased steadily over recent years and with no interest being received from our bank account (a familiar situation with us all) we have been losing money for a few years now. However, the increase is very modest, up to £10, which for 20 meetings a year, including some top class speakers showing excellent material, must be one of the bargains of the year.

Lyel Swingler reported that the Packet was still running, and there is capacity for more material.

Members were invited to make comments at the end of the meeting. Jack Finney posed the thought of holding some of our meetings during the day. Most members are now retired and some older members do not wish to venture out on cold winter evenings. Suggestions for speakers were invited and received. All of these comments will be considered by your Committee.

Finally, the election of officers for the current year. Malcolm Allinson continues as President for the second year of his term of office. Other officers were elected as follows:

Chairman - Alan Godfrey;

Secretary – Robin Jarman;

Treasurer – Chris Jackson;

Committee Members – Lyel Swingler, Bob Harper and Mike Such.

As Bob Harper has taken over as Secretary of the Midland Federation, he has handed over the Society's MPF representative role to Robin Jarman. Lyel Swingler continues as Packet Secretary and Alan Godfrey remains as our Programme Secretary.

Our Chairman closed the meeting at 8:25.

After the AGM and a short break, six members each gave a short display of yet more intriguing parts of their collections

Pete Elms showed us a Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge "Penny Magazine" with some wonderful engravings of the London GPO; Paul Veal presented some Doctor Who articles from Radio Times together with the recently issued stamps and also a Royal Mail magazine article on the London Underground again with the accompanying stamps set

Mike Such brought along the June 2012 Charles Dickens set and miniature sheet and Lyel Swingler showed a 1923 German Columbian Airmail the 2nd oldest in the world, and an ex POW envelope from Medan in the Dutch East Indies to Amsterdam dated December 1945. The poor soldier had still not returned home at that date.

Alan Godfrey displayed a letter written by Fridtjof Nansen the late 19th century Norwegian Polar Explorer. Written in impeccable English, the letter discusses the causes of scurvy. For good measure, Alan also showed us a Registered Money Letter to the Postmaster of Great Alne, together with a picture postcard of the same Post Office.

Robin Jarman completed the evening with a large map (approximately A2 size for the technically minded) of South America showing all of the then major airmail routes - quite an impressive item to display. Robin's second item posed a little investigation. It was a Zeppelin cover which Robin declared genuine, not from any indications or cachets on the cover but solely from the dates of the postmarks.

Overall, a great selection of material for us to view, and congratulations to the Chairman for an impressively short AGM, thus giving us lots of time to look at everything.

Malcolm Allinson

Thursday 7th March 2013 Visiting Speaker: Mike Fulford Cyprus

Mike visited us on a particularly rainy evening and after some difficulty found our meeting hall. It was good that he found us as if he had not we would have missed a superb display of Cyprus.

Mike started with an extremely early letter from 1488!! This was sent just before the end of the Lusignan Empire, a name I and many others were unfamiliar with. He then traced the history of Cyprus through the Venetians, the Ottoman Empire, the annexation in 1914 and becoming a Crown Colony in 1925 followed finally by independence in 1960.

He did not go into the entry of Cyprus into the EEC and with the current financial problems the Cypriots may well wish that they had never joined.

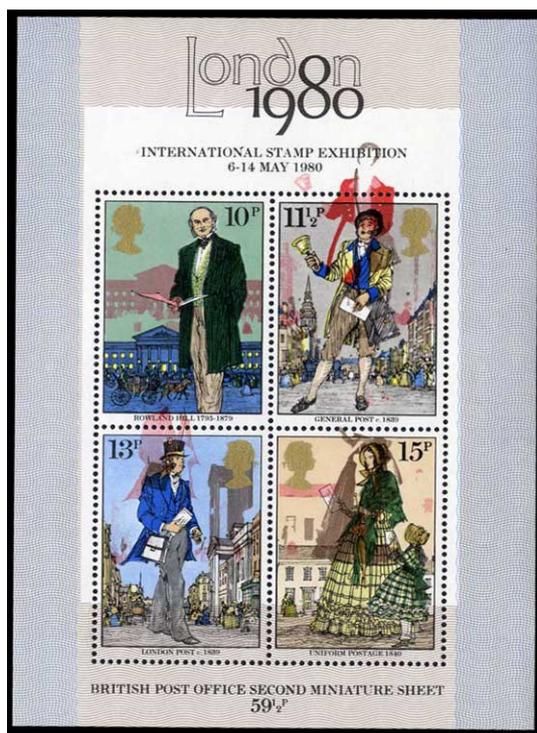
Mike included many rare and important items in his display which was comprehensive in both stamps and postal history. An unusual occurrence was the issue of numeral cancellers by the Crown Agency where four of the seven numerals issued were actually used in different places to the ones allocated. 974 was issued to Baflo but used at Kyrenia, 975 to Famagusta but used at Limassol, 981 to Limassol but used at Paphos and 982 to Kyrenia but used at Famagusta, making identification of the origin of mail rather difficult. On numerous occasions the Cyprus Post Office used overprints to get over shortages or late delivery of stamps. This has led to numerous forgeries which Mike included in his display. The first Airmails were taken by sea to Alexandria and then flown to their destination. Direct airmails only lasted a couple of years.

A very unusual part of the display (not seen before by your reporter) was a number of circular date stamp cancellers which incorporated advertising slogans and a map of Cyprus. The slogans "CYPRUS FOR A HOLIDAY and "VISIT CYPRUS" encouraged the tourist trade and "CYPRUS ORANGES" the fruit trade.

Chris Jackson

**Thursday 4th April 2013
Two Talks by Members**

For tonight our two members were Pete Elms and Chris Jackson.



Rowland Hill miniature sheet showing dramatic upward shift of rosine and bistre-brown

Pete led off with a display entitled **What I collect**. Errors are one subject collected by Pete and he showed us some from the 1966 Battle of Hastings set. There were some lovely colour shifts and missing colours some causing the illustrations of participants in the battle to have missing limbs, a bit like the real event no doubt. The Rowland Hill miniature sheet was next with a number of examples shown of missing colours and shifts.

Pete then moved on to another of his interests - postal history of Birmingham, especially Northfield where he was born and we saw a number of 'envelopes' with Birmingham markings. For me, the most poignant part of his display came next, a walk along the A38 Bristol Road illustrated by postcards. The cards were dated from about 1909 to just before the Second World War and showed the stretch from Lickey to Northfield.



Photographic picture postcard of Northfield village 1913

As a teenager in the late 1950's and early 1960's I regularly cycled this road and the display brought back many memories. I also thought that this was an excellent way of organising a display of this sort. We now left stamps and postal history as we were treated to angling ephemera. Billheads were shown from local fishing tackle manufacturers; we saw flies, hooks of all sorts, a reel made by a real craftsman (pun intended) and finally to the shock of the members, a huge rod (or was it a pole?).

(Certainly wasn't a perch, but it could easily have been 16.5 feet! Ed.)

After the break, Chris gave us the **Postal History of the City of Worcester**.



John Speed's plan of Worcester at the time of the Civil War battle in 1651 showing Fort Royal, Sidbury suburb, Lowesmoor and Foregate Street.

We saw a 17th Century map of the city followed by an incredible 1567 Queen Elizabeth warrant, a 1646 letter from the Civil War & Commonwealth period, a letter from a prisoner to his MP and a letter sent in

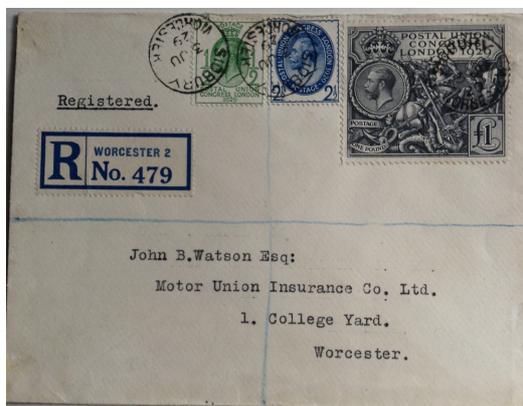
1715 to Naples. Chris also disproved the published earliest known date of use of the 1720 Worcester mark.



Post Office Express label on cover from Worcester to Birmingham

Moving on we saw Cross post letters, Free Fronts, Mileage marks (117 miles) 1812 penny posts for Malvern and Malvern Wells. On 5th December 1839 the uniform 4d postage was introduced and we saw a cover with Worcester's handstruck '4'.

There was also an 1840 1d postage 'free' cover with 1d postage paid for the local delivery. We entered the pre-paid era with a Mulready caricature cover, 1d blacks, 2d blues all on cover and a one shilling registered cover, 1844 '918' covers, spoon cancellations and to end the display an incredible cover commercially used with a P.U.C. £1.00 stamp of 1929.



Remarkable first day cover with PUC £1 on registered cover from Sidbury to Worcester.

Altogether this was a superb evening and was enjoyed by all.

Bob Harper

Thursday 18th April 2013 Visiting Speaker: Keith Downing Railways

Keith started off by telling us that it would be an evening of "mini themes" and that we wouldn't see many trains on the material - mainly covers or postal stationery from far and wide. The first example of a mini-theme was **Hand-propelled Wagons** or "hand

cars", often now turned into a tourist activity. Some of Keith's references were fleeting - too much so for this scribe at times...

The second, much larger theme was **Railways at War**, very soon turned to military use in the nineteenth century, the Boer war and World War 1. "Railway battalions" of engineers were created to operate and guard railways, which became the main form of transport for troops, artillery and materials on both sides. This was encapsulated later in an American postal slogan from 1944: "serving the services to serve you". But railways also became targets in war, especially the bridges. There were Red Cross trains to get the wounded away from battle areas. There were free stamps for German soldiers to write home. There was a war train, a fund-raiser? Trains took unfortunate people to Auschwitz and other death camps; others were saved by the Kindertransport (sic). Stalin used trains to deport Lithuanians under the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (1939). In Yugoslavia, partisans used rogue trains to disrupt the German occupation. Much later, in Kosovo, the only safe way out was to walk along the railway line due to mines. In Berlin the trams were only halted for three days in the whole of the war. After the war a British military train was used to keep a line going from the Hook of Holland to Berlin - the Cold War Express. In the Far East - the Burma Railway was fictionalised in *The Bridge over the River Kwai*.

The next theme was **Railway Signalling**. This started with a man with a flag, and then semaphore signals and other hand operated systems that required a strong arm and meant that signals could not be too far from the signal box. Railwayman's motto: signals keep trains moving. Most railway signals now are electrically operated from centralised locations. Level crossings are the source of many accidents, especially in the USA where long trains can mean long waits.

After the coffee break Keith continued with **The Channel Tunnel**, a long-envisioned project eventually opened in 1994. Before this we had a train ferry and military lines had been set up in wartime. Rather disappointingly there was very little philatelic activity on the other side of the Channel to commemorate the famous Tunnel but this has been made up for since by the deluge of phoney rubbish produced to lure cash from collectors.

The final section was **Problems on the Line** - train crashes; mailbags run over by the train, fires and explosions on the train, just "train late". We had charred letters and explanations on covers like "train late, mail delayed" or on intended air mail - "dispatched by train to avoid delay". Railway strikes, railway police, all somehow well reflected by the material.

All in all this was an evening of wide interest and fun put over by the speaker with a light touch.

Paul Veal

CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP 2013

As at 7th March the leader board for this years' Club Championship is detailed below.

1 st	Lyel Swingler	71 points
2 nd	Alan Godfrey	65 points
3 rd	Pete Elms	56 points
4 th	Robin Jarman	53 points
5 th =	Paul Veal	44 points
5 th =	Mike Such	44 points

It is early days, so there is plenty of time for all of us to challenge for a top five place.

100 years ago.....

David Gillespie has been looking back at the early days of stamp collecting and gives us all an insight into the Edwardian era.

I have been reading through a 'Hobby' book on stamp collecting; undated, but which, based on comments within, was published between 1910 and 1920, probably in the earlier part of that period. Some of the views expressed deserve to be revisited; either because of their continued relevance 100 years on, or because views on 'correctness' have changed considerably.

Unnecessary Issues. There briefly existed, founded in May 1895, the 'S.S.S.S.'-a society for the suppression of speculative stamps (I am not making this up!)* Its main purpose was to 'blacklist' stamps which had there been no collectors, would never have been issued. **Confirmed (Ed.)*

They ran into problems; particularly as a result of, on a number of occasions, defining an issue as 'unnecessary', that issue then unexpectedly remaining on sale and in use for a number of years!

An example given was the Greek Olympic Games set of 1896 (a very early 'commemorative' issue) - which then remained on sale as an ordinary issue of that country for a further six years. The writer comments; 'Portugal, for instance, has become hopeless, and even friendly France has, by the numerous stamps issued in the colonies, brought her 'colonials' almost down to the level of 'bobbin-labels'.

He continues; 'Great Britain's possessions are not free from the taint- Borneo, Labuan and Newfoundland afford glaring instances of the exploitation of the unfortunate collector'. He adds, relating to the general type, 'Their issue appears to be a polite form of robbery'. If only he could see the way this 'robbery' has developed even (particularly?) within the then-conservative British Post Office.

Printing Processes. In addition to the common processes of recess-printing, surface-printing and lithography our writer describes 'photography'- as 'a curious method of producing stamps (with some similarities to) lithography, for the resulting print is also flat. It seems hardly necessary to state that a glass negative- reversed in the design and in the colours, which appear as black and white- is 'taken' with the aid of a camera; and that from it, positive prints- design and colouring normal, that is, reversed from the negative- are reproduced by exposure to light, and chemically fixed on the sensitive paper'. Sounds simple doesn't it!

How to mount a stamp. In order to protect a stamp from the inevitable damage cause by multiple hinge-mounting and demounting over a period of time, 'a 'buffer' is needed between the valuable, delicate stamp and the more or less temporary hinge.' 'Get some very thin, tough, grease-proof paper, gummed on one side and heavily glazed on the other. Affix this to the upper part of the back of the stamp, so that its outside edge is level with the extreme top. Then to this 'buffer' attach the hinge'. The writer recommends this method for mint stamps! To our present-day perception this would be viewed in the same way as throwing banknotes on the fire!

The Catalogue. He observes; 'some collectors get along without a catalogue, but they probably contrive to borrow one every now and then for private perusal. Such self-denial is not recommended.'

Commemorative Stamps. 'Are not regarded... with particular favour. They are not necessary for they supersede- temporarily (generally) or permanently (rarely) - an existing and quite adequate series. 'Commemorating' is not a *raison d'être* of a postal system; and the quite unimportant incidents 'commemorated' justify the conclusion that (this is) merely a polite name for philatelic robbery'

What's new then, 100 years ago?

What to include in the collection? 'To take a well-known instance; the Mauritius twopence of 1848 was engraved by hand on copper, there being twelve devices on the plate. All were more or less identical, but being hand-work were not absolutely similar. So far as eleven of the twelve are concerned one is as good as any other of the remaining ten, and is amply sufficient for the general collector; but the twelfth variety is worthy of special acquisition... the engraver made a slip and spelled pence as penoe. This is so much a variety that it may be called an error and is distinctly admissible into any collection'. *N.B. 2009 catalogue values for the 2d vary from £750 to £16,000 used and from £4000 to £40,000 mint, and the error from £1300 to £28,000 used and from £7000 to £80,000 mint. Just the job for a 'general' collection!*

And finally *Generalising*. 'To take a familiar stamp-the Penny Black of 1840; (twenty-five years ago or thereabouts)... a single copy was deemed sufficient. Now even the 'ordinary' collector likes to have two or three specimens. The specialist probably has a made-up sheet of 240 used, or even unused, copies in addition to special single copies, pairs, blocks, strips, corner blocks showing plate numbers, specimens with varieties of lettering, copies showing 'hair-lines', 'double-entry' etc.- perhaps five hundred or more, as against the solitary 'black' in the album of 30 years ago. Naturally this decreases very materially the number of specimens on the market, and as a consequence up goes the price'. Our editor was last seen disappearing into his garage to work on the time machine project.

David Gillespie

[I would indeed covet **any** 1d Black and am prepared to offer full 1900 catalogue price for four margined examples, used or unused. Ed.]

STAMPS AND SCOUTING

Looking at my collection of Scouting stamps recently I found that they fell into three main categories, the most frequently used symbol being the fleur-de-lys, secondly a picture of the founder Lord Baden Powell and thirdly the three fingered salute carried out by all sections of Scouting.

It is obvious that B.P. (as he is known in the Scouting movement) should be depicted as the founder of the Scout Movement but why the fleur-de-lys and why was it used as the World Scout Emblem?

If you study most maps they show the fleur-de-lys symbol for North. B.P. suggested that this would show the way for Scouts to follow a true path in doing their duty and helping others. The plumes of the fleur-de-lys became the symbol for Service to others a Duty to God and obedience to the Scout Law; these three principles form the Scout Promise. All sections of Scouts and Leaders make this promise when joining the movement.

Two five pointed stars were added to the fleur-de-lys to symbolize knowledge and truth together with bands across the plumes symbolizing the family of Scouting.

Baden Powell first issued brass badges in the shape of the fleur-de-lys to his army scouts that he had trained when serving in India, and later awarding to all the boys that took part in the experimental camp he held at Brownsea Island in 1907.

The current World Scout Emblem was created in 1955 and has a white fleur-de-lys against a circular purple background encircled by a rope tied at the ends with a reef knot. This has been adopted by most countries throughout the world. The three fingered salute signifies the three duties to honour God and the Queen, to help others and to keep the Scout law.

Mike Such

DO WE CARE FOR OUR COLLECTIONS?

Part One appeared in the Spring 2012 (No.16) edition of *Halcyon*, and we continue here with Part 2 and more detail on those three main areas of care under our direct influence:

Storage, handling and display.

STORAGE

Our collections will spend most of their time in storage – either in albums, stock-books or mounted up on display sheets, so this is the most important environment to get right. The Do's and Don'ts of storage are quite simple

DO NOT STORE

In a damp environment
Near any exposed source of high temperature, such as a fire or radiator
In any exposure to sunlight
In a smoky atmosphere

DO STORE

In a stable environment - where there is as little fluctuation in temperature and humidity as possible, and light levels are minimal (in darkness is ideal)
In a secure place, resilient to theft.
In an acid free container that has sufficient holes for a reasonable circulation of fresh air.

This last point is probably the most important one. When we mount our collections, do we consider what we are using? We will consider stamp hinges, enclosing mounts and corner mounts later. First we will look at paper. Most paper is manufactured using a variety of chemicals and the result is a very acidic product. If your collection is mounted on whiter than white paper that you have bought from a High Street Office Stationers, then it is probable that you are using the worst product possible to keep your collection safe. In addition, you may be using an off-the-shelf box file to house all those sheets of acidic paper. Either made of plastic or heavy card, that too is made with chemicals and also creates a closed environment inside. It is a miracle that any of our stamps last at all in such a situation. For those who collect mint stamps, why then deposit them into a harsh environment and expect them to remain mint stamps in 30 of 40 years time?

Stamp mounts and hinges are not too great a problem as they tend to be made nowadays with conservation in mind, but don't be tempted to buy the biggest bulk packet of hinges. It is far better to go for better quality. Large items such as letters or envelopes are usually mounted using transparent corner mounts. Photographic shops sell them to mount prints in photo albums. The problem here is that these mounts are very small, and provide very little support to the item (In addition, photographs tend to be on pretty good grade paper which supports itself, so do not need that much help). Again, your dealer will have the right thing. Special large size corner mounts designed for collectors

should be used. They give adequate support and are flexible enough to make slotting in the corners of envelopes fairly easy. They are also non-acidic so will not affect the item being mounted. There is nothing worse than spotting someone's prized envelope with little triangular blemishes, or even fraying, at each corner where it has been mounted for many years with small photographic corner mounts. The damage is irreversible.

The solution is to use the best quality material for mounting our stamps. That does mean spending a little more than going to **cheeppaper.com** or **printityourself.co.uk** (**) but it has to be the only option if we are serious about our hobby.

Most stamp dealers will either stock a variety of tailor made album pages, or can recommend the right sort; and as with all things, there are different ranges to suit all pockets. The important thing is to **not** use unsuitable material.

HANDLING

At some point we will want to look at our stamps, which will involve taking them out of storage. This may simply be taking an album from the shelf and looking at them, or perhaps re-mounting them on a new display sheet. Whatever the reason, as much care as possible should be given to what we are handling.

Stamps should always be handled with tweezers. Also try not to drop any stamps on the floor. The floor, even in the cleanest home, will host dirt, dust and pests; and there is always the chance of treading on the stamp you have just dropped, as you are looking for it! So always do any handling over a table or desk top, which is also free from extraneous clutter. Consider also the environment you are working in. Keep drinks well away from your desk or table, and if you do smoke, perhaps refrain whilst you are anywhere near your stamps.

DISPLAYING YOUR MATERIAL

If we display our collections at meetings or even enter competitions, your material is open to all sorts of prodding and poking, especially by everyone else interested in looking at your material. The first "must do" is to enclose the page in some sort of transparent protector. This helps keep the material protected if it happens to fall on the floor, which at some point is inevitable. It protects the material from excessive handling, either by you or others. How often do we see at meetings around the country where the time given over to viewing the lovely material is also the time when drinks are served? It is so easy to be standing looking at someone's prized unique stamp, and get nudged from behind; and all that the poor owner of the now wet stamp can then do is send it to an expertising Committee claiming it is a previously unrecorded shade!. We are not going to stop collectors viewing stamps with a coffee in their hand so protection is the only answer.

(**) **Fictitious website names – I've checked. Ed.**

The protection has to be the right sort however. Quite often, we see at meetings a visiting speaker showing some marvellous and often unique material, yet it is let down in being housed in those plastic office wallets with a variety of punching holes down the side. Again, this is the worst situation anyone can think of for caring for our collections. The problem is the plastic material itself. The chemical formula is unpronounceable, but it has enough volatiles in it to turn anything inside it to powder in a very short time. If you have anything stored in such a wallet, take it out and have a look at both it and the empty wallet. If it has been in there for any time, you will notice an imprint of the item on the inside of the wallet. The chemicals in the plastic have leached, and will ultimately destroy the "protected" object. Better still, once your display is over and you return your stamp pages to their album, to remove the transparent protectors first

Again the solution is to use a tailor made product, and again you local dealer will have something to suit.

Finally, I have talked about the acidity of all of the nasty things we shouldn't be using to house our stamps. Alkalinity is equally fatal. For the technically minded, a product with a neutral pH value, or at least in the range 6.5 to 7.5. should always be used to house our collections.

Still need a bit of guidance? A good guide is to use something recommended either by professionals, such as Museum or Library staff, or that is advertised in the philatelic press. If you are unsure about a particular product talk with you local Dealer. This is not a sales drive to shame anyone into buying the most expensive album pages there are, it is simply to highlight the risks we all face in not using the right storage and display materials and provide a few pointers in the best ways of keeping our collections in tip top condition.

Malcolm Allinson

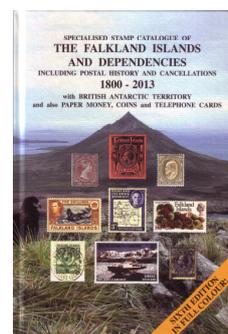
(Members views on storage of collections are welcomed. If anyone wishes to investigate the market for products, "acid free archival storage" is a good phrase to start off in your computer search engine. Ed.)

BOOK REVIEW

The Specialised Stamp Catalogue of the Falkland Islands and Dependencies 1800-2013.

Stefan Heijtz
Sixth Edition
ISBN Not yet allocated

This so much more than a catalogue, perhaps it is better described as the complete handbook to the furthest south Atlantic stamps and collectables. It not only has a priced list all the stamps (with



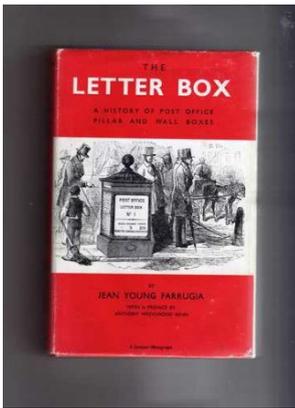
varieties) of the Falkland Islands, but also those of South Georgia, Falklands Is Dependencies and British Antarctic Territory. It extends the list to include pre-stamp material and illustrates all the postmarks in use from 1800 to 2013, including local cachets and instructional marks. Added to this is a detailed list of postal stationery, postal orders, phone cards, coins, registration labels, calendar cards, money orders, banknotes, meter marks and much, much more. The result is a really comprehensive manual of Falklands' life, containing information for the stamp collector, postal historian and collector of ephemera. If I had a complaint it would only be that this latest edition has reduced the stamp illustrations for issues after 1985 to about one quarter scale in order to keep the book to a manageable size of 272 pages. Highly recommended.

ADG

The Letter Box - A History of Post Office Pillar and Wall Boxes.

Jean Young Farrugia

Published 1969. Centaur Press



Not a new book this, but it has been on the "shopping list" for a long time. I recently acquired my copy at last and I haven't been disappointed.

This book is considered the 'bible' by Letter Box hunters across the UK. It gives a good history of Letter boxes. Whilst our familiar knowledge tells

us that the letter box was invented or at least suggested by Anthony Trollop, we find examples here going back to mid-17th Century Paris.

We are guided through their history and uses and given a lot of detail on the designs and manufacture. There are also chapters on overseas use of Letter Boxes

The book is liberally furnished with black and white plate illustrations - there are 87 of them - from all corners of the globe.

An excellent read and well worth waiting all of those years for a copy to land on my bookshelves

MDA

EVENTS AND REMINDERS

SOCIETY PROGRAMME:

The first meetings of next season are confirmed as follows

Sept 5 th	Mini Auction
Sept 19 th	Visit from Banbury PS
Oct 2 nd (Wed)	Visit TO Stroud
Oct 3 rd	Visiting Speaker: Dane Garrod – GB Royalty and Other Stories
Oct 17 th	Single Sheet Competition
Oct 22 nd (Tues)	Visit TO Dudley PS

Meetings are held at St Luke Memorial Hall, Headless Cross from 7:30pm. The main business of the evening starts at 8:00pm prompt.

Other Philatelic Events for the Diary

The next few regional and national events are listed together here. Please add these events to your diaries, and support them by attending where you can. Only patronage helps ensure these events continue.

6TH July 2013

MIDLAND PHILATELIC FEDERATION

Spring Convention,
In conjunction with MIDPEX
Warwickshire Exhibition Centre
LEAMINGTON SPA
CV31 1XN

19th – 20th July 2013

YORK Stamp Show

York Racecourse
YO23 1EX

18th – 21st Sept 2013

STAMPEX

BDC Islington LONDON

If there is an event that you know of that isn't listed here and should be, please let your Editor know so that it can be included next time.

.....and finally.

Do all have a relaxing summer break and if you are able to go away do look out for a local Fair to visit. Also, please don't forget that you will want something to read when you return in the Autumn. Please do put pen to paper with an article for your next newsletter – maybe a report on your visit to AZERBAIJANpex.

Regards, Malcolm.

Halcyon is produced for members of the Redditch Philatelic Society and anyone else with an interest in stamp collecting. If you are not a member of the Society and are interested in joining, please come along to one of our meetings, on the first and third Thursday of the month (September to June) at St. Luke's Memorial Hall, Headless Cross, Redditch B97 4JX. Visitors are also welcome to any of our meetings.

You are welcome to visit our website www.redditch-philatelic.org.uk for our programme, news and other Society activities. Articles and statements made in this Newsletter are by individuals and are not necessarily the views or policies of the Society.