

# Halcyon

The Newsletter of Redditch Philatelic Society

No. 17 - Autumn 2012

## From the Chairman

This summer was memorable for being one long celebration: not only for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations, but also for the magnificent Olympic and Paralympic Games. As stamp collectors we have been overwhelmed with Olympic issues. In the run up to the games we had the issue of thirty first class pictorial stamps showing some of the sports on offer and two first class and two worldwide 20g definitives. This was followed by two "Welcome to ..." miniature sheets and then sheetlets of six first class stamps for each Olympic gold medal win (29 in all) and sheets of two first class stamps for each Paralympic gold medal win (34 in all). All these are to be followed by a "Memories of London 2012" miniature sheet. By my reckoning this comes to £178.24 before adding in the cost of booklets, first day covers, souvenir sheets and Smilers sheets etc. It seems to me being a GB collector is getting to be a very expensive business! One of the other manifestations of the Games has been the appearance of a gold post box for each gold medal winner. You won't need to go far to see one – Alcester was lucky enough to be receive a repainted pillar box following Nick Skelton's gold medal success in the show jumping on 6<sup>th</sup> August (see above). This has proved to be extremely popular with the town and visitors and I was not the only one to have a photo taken beside the box!



Next day stamps certainly provided Royal Mail with a challenge: having just one hour to select an image of the winning gold medallists, create the stamp design, obtain approval and send on the printers. Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> August proved to be the biggest headache with four gold medals won in 45minutes and six in total on the day. The well oiled machine at Royal Mail still achieved their target and the stamps were printed and distributed to the Post Offices for the next day.

The autumn usually means that our members can turn again to thoughts of their collections and we have some excellent club meetings planned over the next few months, as well as a the usual list of fairs (except for the now defunct Philatex). For members who not been to

one of our local fairs I would recommend the MPF fair at Solihull – plenty of dealers and interesting competition entries exhibited. Something for everyone!

**Alan Godfrey**

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

Thanks to everyone who has paid their subscription quickly this year. It certainly helps to keep the accounts in a healthy position. If you haven't yet paid your annual fee, would you please do so as soon as possible.

**CRJ**

## SOCIETY PROGRAMME:

### October to March 2012

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

4 <sup>th</sup> October	Members' Show & Tell
18 <sup>th</sup> October	Bring 3 sheets or pay 50p
1 <sup>st</sup> November	Writing Up for Collections & Competitions
15 <sup>th</sup> November	Visit from Dudley PS
6 <sup>th</sup> December	Single Sheet Competition (Any Subject)
20 <sup>th</sup> December	Christmas Special - The Committee Entertains
3 <sup>rd</sup> January	Annual 9-sheet Competitions
17 <sup>th</sup> January	Aspects of the Netherlands East Indies (John Jackson)
7 <sup>th</sup> February	Visit from Evesham PS
13 <sup>th</sup> February	Annual Dinner at Archer's Restaurant
21 <sup>st</sup> February	Annual General Meeting & 1-sheet Display
7 <sup>th</sup> March	Cyprus (Mike Fulford)
21 <sup>st</sup> March	Auction Preview
23 <sup>rd</sup> March	Annual Auction

**Please make every effort to come along to meetings and support your Society.**

**GB New Issues for 2012**

The special stamps from Royal Mail for the remainder of 2012 will comprise the following:

September 27: Memories of London 2012  
(Olympic & Paralympic Games)  
October 16: Space Science  
November 8: Christmas 2012

**MEETING REPORTS****Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2012  
Visit to Coventry PS**

David Gillespie began by showing a selection of his vast British Empire (or is that Commonwealth nowadays?) collection, focussing on countries lettered C to G. What is impressive about David's display is the completeness of it. Chris Jackson followed on by showing a selection from his Redditch postal history collection, stating that whilst the display is of a particular town, it reflects the postal situation in near enough any other town in the country, containing all of the various types of postmarks used over the years, showing various postal rates to all corners of the world and how those rates were paid by the variety of postage stamps.

After the break, we continued with Richard Nicol who showed us part of his collection of Seychelles stamps, including the many (and scarce) overprints that the islands produced. These overprints came about mostly due to excess stocks of stamps with "wrong" values.

Rather than have more of the popular rates printed, these excess stocks were overprinted with prevailing rates and then used. Our fourth speaker was Alan Godfrey, who chose some Cinderella material as his subject. Public transport was his theme and he showed a variety of bus (and tram) post stamps from Midland Red (BMMO) and Stratford Blue Bus Co. He moved on to railway stamps and showed examples from some of the smaller railway companies in Warwickshire that existed before the 1923 amalgamation into "The Big Four".

Coventry were extremely pleased with our displays and appreciative of the variety of subject and material we had shown to them.

**Malcolm Allinson**

**Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2012  
Quiz Night**

It was an exciting evening under the firm but fair supervision of visiting question master Stan Pinge (previously known as Alan Godfrey)! We were split up into (I think) five teams, including a mysterious visitor who left at half time. Most of us were puzzled straightaway by two of the names of rounds chosen by our learned inquisitor – "Olla Podrida" – a small state? No, it turned out to be a Spanish stew (remembered as a column in his old school rag, confided Stan) and "Gallimaufry" – an Irish village? No, a medley or jumble from the early French, don't y' know. It was almost a relief to actually start on

the questions with a familiar "How many penny blacks were issued?" But there wasn't much time to rest after that; even in the coffee break we were meant to enter the new names of a hefty list of former states - not easy for our team as our two best men out of three were on coffee duty and then Bob had to move his car as well! The pace seemed even faster in the second half of three rounds – it was a bit like an exam that wasn't going too well – "Pens down!" Phew! The worthy winners, Team Al Bum were then rewarded with boxes of chocs, but sadly, not the close runners up, the Funky Gibbons. Hurray!

**Paul Veal**

**Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2012  
Visiting Speaker: Richard Gillam  
Australian States**

At a very well attended meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> April 2012 Richard Gillam treated us to a display of the postal history of the Australian states (known locally as colonies) mostly prior to 1913 when the Commonwealth of Australia issued its first stamps. Richard was suffering from a sore throat and was in danger of losing his voice, however he soldiered on and made it to the end. The material spoke for itself, of course, and happily there were even a number of stamps amongst the many envelopes. Richard explained that there were six colonies which issued stamps plus the Northern Territories which were administered as a department of South Australia and Capital Territory, in which Canberra was situated.

Beginning with New South Wales we were shown a rare 'Sydney View' design on a cover which also bore a beautiful 'Ship Letter' cachet followed by covers illustrating the various postal rates in use in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and this included covers sent overseas, registered mail and surcharged mail. In this latter section was a cover bearing NSW postage due stamps. We were also shown a rare City Despatch stamp which is a private issue by the City Express Messenger Co. Ltd. The area which became the colony of Queensland was part of New South Wales until 1860 and was then called Moreton Bay – we saw covers bearing cancellations with this name used before 1860 and Richard explained that NSW stamps were in use in Queensland for almost a year after its independence. There were a good number of railway covers bearing cancellations from various stations, some applied in the station and some on the train itself.

On to the colony of Queensland itself we were shown a full range of covers bearing the beautiful Chalon Head design, including the rarer values – 2d was the local rate and 6d was the rate to England and were well used but other values are difficult to find. One aspect of Queensland postal history is the use of a sorting office and despatch station on Thursday Island. This island is in the Torres Strait just off the pointy bit on the northern coast of Queensland and here they prepared,

cancelled and despatched mail to British New Guinea and Papua to the north. It was interesting to see a range of stamps with Thursday Island cancellations including some issued by Papua. South Australia was interesting for its official issues and Richard showed us a South Australia stamp with a black 'NT' overprint which was used for official mail from the department dealing with the administration of the Northern Territory, then followed Tasmania with a range of covers. Tasmania issued the world's first pictorial stamps issued for tourism purposes and the writer was enthralled by a series of covers bearing almost the whole of this 1899 issue.

Victoria was somewhat compressed as by this time Richard had almost run out of time and display boards but I was especially pleased to see those superb large charity 'semi-postals' costing one shilling or two shillings and sixpence for a postal validity of one penny or two pence halfpenny respectively - the balance was for the Hospital Charity Fund. The last few sheets showed Capital Territory postmarks. How sad that time and boards ran out before Western Australia could be shown. What Black Swan treasures must lie unseen in Richards's collection? – maybe for another day?

**Bob Harper**

### **Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2012**

#### **Visit of South Birmingham PS**

Four members of South Birmingham PS visited us on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May, but only three of them gave displays.

First to show was Tony Greaves with his south Atlantic mail. Tony started with a board of sailing ship mail, as opposed to the later steam ship mail. He explained how the Falmouth Packet commenced in 1635 on a monthly basis and showed a cover from Baltimore to Bayonne which took seven months to be delivered. A twice monthly service started in 1816 when the Black Ball Line commenced. In 1840 the Cunard Line took over and signed a seven year contract to carry mail across the Atlantic. Tony showed a number of examples carried on the various different ships used on the service.

Tony explained the accountancy marks on trans Atlantic mail which was marked in cents. (1/- equalled 24cents). When an English steamer was used the 24cent charge was split 19c to the UK and 5 to the USA, this was marked with 24c and 19c hand stamps, but when an American boat was used the charge was shown as 24c and 3c as 21c was due to the USA and only 3c to the UK. From these marks it is possible to identify the nationality of the steamship that carried a letter.

Tony showed examples which had crossed the Pacific from Honolulu via San Francisco, overland to New York and then transatlantic to London. In 1900 the UK introduced 'Imperial Penny Post' which meant a letter to Canada was charged just one penny however as the majority of the mail for Canada went via New York this caused friction and was soon stopped by the Americans.

Tony showed covers from the first ship to have Ocean telegraph, the S.S. St Paul, catapult mail sent when the ship was 600 miles offshore and so saved 24hours on the delivery time and also Zeppelin mail which made catapult mail obsolete.

After the break Peter White showed Canadian revenue stamps which included not only the usual revenue items but liquor prohibition stamps, together with electric and gas stamps. He showed stamps from the different Provinces who all produced their own versions. Unusual were the long strip stamps which went all round cigar boxes.

Finally Alan Cobb showed a miscellany starting with the American Civil War, railways and polar exploration (much to the delight of our chairman!). The final four boards were based loosely on a First World War theme. There were postcards from Ypres and coloured pictures of the different uniforms worn by the various nations involved in the conflict, finishing with postal stationery from the German Colonies in Africa.

As so often with club visits it was a very enjoyable evening with a wide range of topics and "something for everyone".

**Chris Jackson**

### **Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> May**

#### **Annual 3-sheet Competition**

The competition is for the Ian Crickmer Trophy and the topic was the letters 'N' or 'O'. The 13 entries ranged from Daniel O'Connell (Highly regarded Irish balladeer) through to GB (grievous bodily?) obliterators.

Bob Harper and the writer, both non-combatants, were 'offered' the position of judges. It proved not possible to decline. We judged, carefully observing the rules; the audience waited.

We were not permitted (for reasons which I now forget) to build the excitement and tension even higher by announcing the results in reverse order. However, since this report is being written well away from officialdom I can tell you that in sixth place were Netherlands Airmails - Lyel Swinger; fifth was the Trans-arctic Expedition of 1926 - Alan Godfrey; fourth place went to Robin Jarman's Norwegian Posthorns. The bottom end of the top three was the preserve of the 1d and 2d imperforate GB line-engraved of Malcolm Allinson. Runner-up position belonged to Ralph Richardson with his Daniel O'Connell. And the winner was.....with 91 points out of a possible 100.....The Numerical Cancels of Worcestershire - Chris Jackson.

**David Gillespie**

### **Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2012**

#### **Visiting Speaker: Les Percy**

##### **Czechoslovakia**

On 7<sup>th</sup> June 2012 we enjoyed a return visit of Les Percy from Matlock. Previously Les had given us an entertaining evening when he spoke on cacti. On arrival he was keen to establish that he had the

correct venue as he had followed his satnav as it had brought him to a different hall from his last visit!

This time Les brought Czechoslovakia. He started by explaining how the country came into being in 1918 as a result of the joining of Moravia, Bohemia and Slovakia, showing early material from the states. The three states had only a few months, to March 1919, to use up their stocks of stamps before the new administration brought out the first Czechoslovakian issue.

The display included stamps, postal history and many ephemera items. A series of 1914 postcards from a soldier showed he had survived the major battle of Lvov and the siege of Przemysl, was taken prisoner and eventually reappeared in 1919 on the Trans-Siberian Railway having survived the war. A series of "cinderellas" included fund raising labels and labels promoting public health and fitness, especially gymnastics. The 1920's Red Cross overprints were shown including proofs.

Postage due stamps were not issued, so each main office was allowed to overprint normal stamps, this has led to a huge variety of overprints which Les is still researching having identified over 50 different overprints to date. A major task that he has undertaken.

A range of newspaper stamps included an 1839 Prague daily paper wrapper and a variety of others for sending bundles of up to 20 papers. Express stamps were also used with the newspaper wrappers and an example of the Homey Producers newsletter sent through the post was shown.

Czechoslovakian forces in the South of France and UK produced patriotic folders to keep spirits up, and patriotic labels were used to raise funds for the resistance.

Postcards and photographs of the massacre at Lidice in response to the assassination of the German Protector Reynard Heydrich on 28<sup>th</sup> May 1943 were followed by similar material from 1968 when the Russians came back into Czechoslovakia and the memorial to the nine students who stood in the way of a tank and died when it did not stop completed the display.

Although the number of members present was less than we normally enjoy on such evenings the response and enthusiasm for an excellent evening was in no way diminished.

**Chris Jackson**

*Thanks to all our contributors in this edition, more meeting reports and articles are always needed. Please don't wait to be asked to put pen to paper.*

### **Railway Newspaper and Parcel Stamps (1899)**

Railway stamps may be divided into three classes, namely, Newspaper, Parcels, and Letter. The newspaper stamps were the first to make their appearance, for as far back as July, 1855, five companies adopted the use of these labels, the

introduction of which is mentioned in the *Illustrated London News* of July 21st, 1855, as follows:-

#### Newspaper Parcel Prepaid Stamps

*Labels like the one engraved below right [the stamp illustrated was about the size of the present North Eastern Railway newspaper stamps, and the design consisted of the shields of the five companies in the centre, with the name of the individual company at the top, and the value of the stamp at the bottom] have been adopted by the Midland, Lancashire and Yorkshire, North Eastern, Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire, and East Lancashire Railway Companies for the prepayment of newspaper parcels.*



*They are issued in pounds' worth to newspaper proprietors only; and the parcel, being duly labelled, passes free not over one, but, if a through parcel, over all the lines of the associated companies. The rates are very low, and specially adopted to enable the transmission of papers to all places. It is, in fact, the postage stamp system applied to newspaper parcels. Some time since it was proposed to apply this system to all small parcels, but some of the companies did not see their way to the change, as a general one. This excellent system is at present confined to the above companies; but surely the London and North Western and Great Northern Companies will follow, and give the Metropolitan Press the advantage of the new system, now confined to the country. The system of a cheap prepaid label or stamp avoids booking, weighing at stations, or delay; and enables the transmission of newspapers into localities where, otherwise, from high cost of conveyance, they could never penetrate, except to the houses of the rich.*

The early newspaper stamps were much larger than those at present in use. Some of the companies; the Maryport and Carlisle (illustrated below), Cambrian, and North Eastern, still use the large stamps.



Parcel stamps are not used on all lines; the Great Eastern appears to be the first to bring them into use in 1879. The following companies now use stamps to prepay carriage on parcels:- London and

North Western, Lancashire and Yorkshire, North Eastern, and Colne Valley. In the matter of design, these stamps have an advantage over the letter stamps, as the companies were not bound to one particular design, as in the latter case, consequently some very pleasing stamps were produced, as a glance at the illustrations will reveal. The stamps issued by the Manchester, South Junction, and Altrincham Railway and the North Eastern are very effective. The Furness Company had a very quaint design for their early stamps (called 1 pence); there were two values, 1d. for newspapers, and 9d. for milk, both of a salmon colour. The patriotic design of the London and North Western Company on their parcel stamps, showing Britannia seated with the British lion at her feet must not be overlooked, but I do not know why she should turn her head away from the train (London and North Western I presume) proceeding over the viaduct on the left. Special stamps are also issued for the conveyance of news correspondence, those of the London and North Western and Great Northern Companies are of red, and of three values, 2d., 3d., and 4d., the Midland labels being blue and of the values of 2d. and 3d. The Great Eastern, Great Northern and Midland Joint, Midland and Great Eastern, also issue special labels for the prepayment of carriage on corn samples, the Great Eastern label, red and yellow, being one of the largest of railway-stamps. Most of the stamps above described are produced by the process of lithography, but a few of the newspaper labels are simply type set. At this late date it would be impossible to form anything like a complete collection of the various issues of newspaper stamps, but in the case of the parcel and letter-fee stamps this difficulty does not present itself, as they are, comparatively, both of recent introduction.

Before concluding this article the writer would like to add a few remarks on letter-fee stamps, contained in the following interesting note (by Mr. Ewen) respecting the origin of such stamps:—

*"In the early part of 1890 Messrs. De La Rue, at the instance of the Stamp Department at Somerset House, on the instructions of the Post Office, prepared designs for a 3d. Postage and Railway Letter Service stamp, and the same were submitted to the Postmaster-General. The matter, however, never went beyond the designs, for at the close of the year, the idea was abandoned."*

*"It was also suggested that the ordinary 3d. postage stamp should be over-printed for railway service, and proof impressions were actually made, but this system, too, had to be abandoned, principally on account of the immense amount of book-keeping its adoption would have entailed. Eventually, as we know, each company was left to collect its own share of the postage."*

It is claimed for the collection of postage stamps that a vast amount of knowledge can be acquired respecting the various countries, historical,

geographical, etc. So it is with the collection of railway stamps, much information, historical, geographical, and statistical can be obtained from their study. In these days when so much interest is taken in our railways, the collection of the various kinds of stamps in use should prove an interesting, instructive, and certainly inexpensive hobby.

Originally published in ["The Railway Magazine"](#) in 1899, and written by H. Clark.

[Editor's Note: The Post Office did not implement its parcel post until 1883, when agreement with the railway companies was finally reached, sharing the postage: 55% to the railway companies and 45% to the Post Office.]

### The Language of Stamps



These postcards were popular in the early 1900's. The next time you stick a stamp on a letter make sure you put it on straight or you may find you are sending a hidden message!

### Antarctic Endeavours – One Hundred Years Ago

Most people will associate the year 1912 with Captain Scott's heroic, but doomed attempt, to be the first reach the South Pole, and how Amundsen got there first and lived to tell the tale. However, there were other, lesser known expeditions attempting to reach the pole at the same time.

#### The Japanese Antarctic Expedition

Japan's first Antarctic expedition left Tokyo on 1<sup>st</sup> December 1910 led by an unknown army lieutenant, Nobu Shirase. The expedition vessel was *KAINAN MARU* arrived in Wellington, New Zealand on 7<sup>th</sup> February 1911, before heading south for the Antarctic, sighting the coast of Victoria Land on 6<sup>th</sup> March.



Unfortunately, bad weather forced them to return north, to Australia. They received a cool welcome

and the future of the expedition looked bleak until a resident offered them the use of his garden to erect their hut. The captain and some crew members returned to Japan for more funds, those left behind were almost reduced to begging. The expedition finally left Sydney Harbour on 19<sup>th</sup> November 1911, although they realised they were too far behind Amundsen and Scott to realistically be first to the pole, but decided to continue with the programme of scientific work. They reached the Ross Ice Shelf on 16<sup>th</sup> January 1912 and went ashore, naming the spot Kainan Bay. However the ice was filled with crevasses, so they returned to the ship and continued westwards, surprised to see a ship dead ahead of them. They had come across Amundsen's ship, *FRAM*. Visits were exchanged, but language difficulties prevented any useful discussion. They were faced with a 300 feet high climb to the top of the ice shelf. It took 60 hours, but they cut a zigzag path to the top and the "Dash Patrol" of five men headed south pulled by teams of dogs. Again they were defeated by the weather and on 28<sup>th</sup> January, Shirase took the decision to return to the ship. They had covered 160 miles. A second party dropped at Biscoe Bay reached the foot of Alexandra Range, until then not seen at close range, before returning to the ship. After calling at Wellington on the return journey, they received a hero's welcome in Yokohama on 29<sup>th</sup> June 1912.

#### The Deutschland Antarctic Expedition

The second German Antarctic expedition left Bremerhaven on 6<sup>th</sup> May 1911 aboard the bark, *DEUTSCHLAND* aiming to explore the Weddell Sea area of Antarctica. The leader of the expedition was Wilhelm Filchner, who clashed frequently with the ship's captain Richard Vahsel. The expedition reached 78° south, where they encountered the Filchner-Ronne ice shelf. Here they were able to prove that the Antarctic Peninsula was indeed connected to the mainland and not an island. Their winter station on part of the ice shelf broke away and so had to be abandoned. Filchner decided to return to South Georgia.



Unfortunately, the ship became trapped in the ice for nine months. Filchner and Vahsel were not speaking, the crew was divided: half siding with the captain and half with Filchner. Filchner took to locking his door and carrying a loaded pistol. By August Captain Vahsel was dead of syphilis, but relations between the two sides did not improve. The ice began to melt and they at last set course northwards. When they reached South Georgia, a fight broke out and was put down by the British

chief of police. They left for home, but on the return voyage Filchner challenged the navigation officer to a duel, which was postponed until they reached dry land, where he was persuaded to drop the matter. In spite of the difficulties, the expedition made extensive new scientific findings, however with the commencement of World War I, the voyage received very little attention.



Label used by the Deutschland expedition on outgoing mail

### **A Trip to from London to Sydney in the late 1930's**

#### **Day One**

Albert, the well-seasoned traveller, departed by coach from the London KLM office at Horseferry House SW1 and was taken to Croydon for the flight to Schiphol. After a short drive he arrived at the hotel for an overnight stay.

Early the next morning he joined the KLM DC-3 departure for the Far East with Mail for the colonies and passengers for Egypt, India, Siam, Malay, Java and Australia. A brief stop at Marseilles and then over Corsica to Naples for the next night stop. After a meal there he had enough time for a visit to the museum and climbs the hill at Naples to view Sorrento and Vesuvius across the bay.

#### **Day Two**

The route followed the foot of Italy and the West coast of Greece direct to Athens where lunch was served. From Athens the flight continued over the beautiful Aegean islands to Crete. The next halt was at the large semi-European city of Alexandria where the sand and palm trees reminded him that he had left Europe far behind.

#### **Day Three**

Next morning a two hour flight from Alexandria took the DC-3 to Lydda in Palestine near Tel-Aviv where he enjoyed a second breakfast. Lydda was one of the best airports en-route and also served Jerusalem and Jaffa. The flight continued towards Baghdad flying over the fertile coastal belt, the River Jordan and the featureless desert broken only by the Iraq Petroleum Company's never ending pipeline. Crossing the Euphrates River the aircraft landed at Baghdad in the sunset. Tea was served here and after a short flight Mr Smith booked in for night stop in Basra.

The luxurious hotel faced on one side the airport and on the other the Shatt-el-Arab River where the Empire Flying boats alighted. Imperial Airways, Air France and KLM all used the same hotel and in the evening the dining room was full of different languages and nationalities outward or homeward bound.

**Day Four**

The next morning flight was down the Persian Gulf one of the hottest places on earth however the aircraft's air conditioning maintained a fresh temperature and he remained enjoyably cool. A short stop was made in Jask for tea and refreshments on the beach where he had the opportunity of posting letters and cards with Persian stamps.

After Jask luncheon was served on board consisting of hot soup, cold meats, salad, fruit and cheese plus he had a Dutch coffee which was considered the best in the world. At Karachi a brief medical examination was made of all passengers before proceeding to Jodhpur. Here he enjoyed a night stop at the magnificent hotel built by the Maharajah for air passengers and state guests.

**Day Five**

The following morning the crossing of the Sind desert was completed for a landing at Allahabad for a second breakfast much appreciated by himself the crew and other passengers after an early start. Allahabad is the meeting place of the Jumna and the Ganges the two sacred rivers of India. The plane left Allahabad for Calcutta in time for lunch. From Calcutta the aircraft flew over the dense forests of the Ganges Delta where he had a magnificent view through the cabin window and then over the northern fringes of the Bay of Bengal to Rangoon. He stayed at the Minto Mansions hotel where he joined a special tour to visit the Shwe Dragon Golden Pagoda.

**Day Six**

Bangkok was the next destination and after he had had breakfast at the airport he was soon flying over the many temples in the area. The DC-3 continued over the teak forests of Malaya to Penang where lunch was served at the Penang Flying Club. From Penang the journey continued to Medan which is the capital of Sumatra and the first port of call in the Dutch Colonial Empire. Here he and his fellow passengers were served a native lunch. Leaving Medan the mainland was soon reached and the next port of call was Singapore where he spent the night at the Sea View hotel

**Day Seven**

He left Singapore the next morning and saw the jungles of Sumatra below and an immense clearing in the trees marked Palembang Airport. A short time after he left here the Equator was crossed and it was soon time for a landing at Batavia. Batavia is a large old colonial town with many old buildings as well as examples of fine modern Dutch architecture. Albert and some of the other passengers visited one of the finest hotels in the Far East the 'Hotel des Indies' famous for its 'Rijstafel' a native dish with rice and various spicy side dishes of exotic food.

**Day Eight**

Departing Bali the plane flew over the islands of Lombok, Sumatra and Koepeng. Set in a tropical sea these islands are acknowledged as some of the most beautiful in the world.

## A short description of the air route between LONDON and SYDNEY

**K.L.M. - ROYAL DUTCH AIR LINES**  
**K.N.I.L.M. - ROYAL NETHERLANDS INDIES AIRWAYS**

A journey from London to Australia or vice versa by air in nine days is an experience which many travellers have envied but hesitated to undertake. Often they are afraid that so long an air journey may be tiring and uncomfortable, but with the modern aircraft now in use it is as easy and comfortable as a trip between Sydney and Melbourne. Another deterrent to air travel is the fear of boredom from travelling so many hours by air each day. In reality, anyone travelling from London to Australia will find the journey is full of interest from beginning to end, and that the calls at the different airports for refuelling give passengers plenty of time for a stroll to stretch their legs and a meal at the excellent restaurants on the route. If tired of watching the scenery, passengers are supplied with magazines, newspapers, and instructive maps of the route, while on board the plane Tea, Coffee, Iced Drinks and other refreshments are served at any Time of day.



The fast and luxurious Douglas air-liners used between London and Batavia, instead of carrying 21 passengers as they do in Europe and Australia, are arranged for only 11 which gives each passenger double the amount of space, and room to extend his chair full length, so that he can lie down on it. The even faster Lockheed 14 planes which fly between Batavia and Sydney are also roomy and are fitted for 8 passengers. Meals are usually served at the hotels and restaurants at the airports, but some excellent meals are served on board the plane as well. Two special air suit-cases are provided free to each passenger. All the crew speak English. All transport, tips *en route*, refreshments, even including beer and mineral waters with meals, and accommodation at the hotels at night are included in the fare so that extra expenses are reduced to a minimum.

Insert (part of cover)

Part of a brochure for the flight

From Koepeng the flight was over the Timor Sea to Bathurst Island and he caught his first glimpse of Australia before setting down at Darwin. After the necessary formalities were completed the aircraft departed for Cloncurry. The route transited over the sparsely populated Northern Territory and the enormous cattle ranches, serviced by the 'flying doctors,' and over Mount Isa and the rich lead ore mines and finally landed at Cloncurry the centre of

the sheep farming country which stretches right down the coast of Queensland.

**Day Nine**

From Cloncurry to Brisbane the route follows the coast to Sydney and scenically is considered one of the best of the stretches of the trip. The weary Albert and his fellow travellers finally landed at journeys end at Sydney, the second city of the British Empire and a fitting climax to nine days of luxurious travel.



Cover of the opening service Batavia to Sydney 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1938

**Fares London to Sydney**

Single £160  
Return £274

**LYEL SWINGLER**

**IT IS AMAZING WHAT YOU CAN FIND!**

At the mini auction last meeting one lot was a large bundle of 1950's/60's envelopes. I noticed a couple of Worcestershire items in amongst them and asked the buyer if I could have any such items if he did not particularly want them.

A few days later he gave me half a dozen envelopes from the lot. One that I had already spotted was addressed to Mr E Rowberry of Worcester, Pat's uncle, one of a series he sent to himself to get used new issue stamps. In the middle was a rectangular envelope sent from Malvern to Worcester of the 20<sup>th</sup> Dec 1965 also to Pat's uncle Ted, but this one was in Pat's handwriting!! It was fairly obviously the envelope from the Christmas card she had sent her uncle 47 years ago.

The next one was even more amazing, a small envelope sent from Malvern to Worcester with a Three Counties Show advertising cancellation in 1964, this time addressed to Pat's paternal grandparents and in her mother's handwriting!!!!

You just never know what you may find at an R.P.S. auction.

**Chris Jackson**

**Interesting websites**

Some time ago, there was a request in the Newsletter for the names of any websites that members have found interesting in pursuit of our hobby. These are a selection that I have found useful:

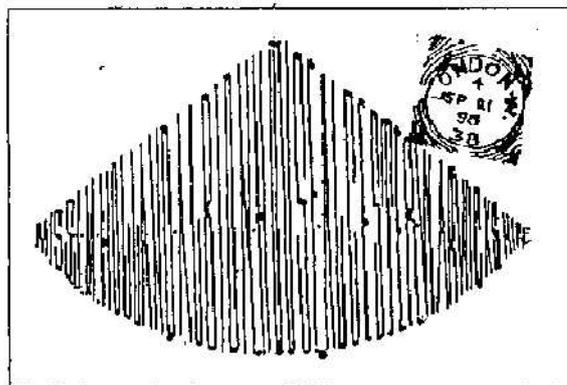
**www.falklandstamps.com** is the Falkland Islands Philatelic Bureau site. It is also possible to search here for both South Georgia and British Antarctic Territory offerings as well.

**www.postagelabelsUK.com** This site has much information on the machine dispensed stamps currently offered by Royal Mail.

**www.vgira.narod.ru** Although a Russian website, this is an amazingly comprehensive site, listing plants on stamps with cross-references to Latin and English names and plant taxonomy.

**www.goldpostboxes.com** Find out where all the gold post-boxes painted in honour of the Olympic and Paralympic gold medal winning athletes can be found.

Please send in your favourite sites with a brief description of what you get, excluding of course any commercially orientated ones



The front of this envelope looks hopeless to decipher at first glance. It is a fair sample of the kind of thing invented to try the patience of Victorian GPO officials. It was posted in 1890 and this illustration of it appeared in the Strand Magazine in 1897. If you hold the page on a level with your eyes, the address reads: "Miss B M Holland Albion House Alcester Warwickshire". There was no indication given as to whether the envelope was successfully delivered or not!

**OTHER PHILATELIC EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY**

Many members follow where and when major events, particularly Stamp Fairs, are being held so here are listed some that may be of interest:





(top left) Alcester gold pillar box receiving a first undercoat.

(top right) Rustic GVR wall box at Lower Slaughter, Glos.

(above left) Stratford upon Avon's gold twin pillar boxes recognising James Roe's Paralympic success in the Mixed Coxed Fours.

(above right) VR large Penfold pillar box on the promenade at Llandudno.

(right) Large "stamp" showing the Olympic equestrian team including Nick Skelton, before presentation to Alcester's mayor.

(above) VR wall box at Oversley Green, note the original flap in the aperture is still in place.



You are welcome to visit our website [www.redditch-philatelic.org.uk](http://www.redditch-philatelic.org.uk) for our programme, news and other Society activities. Article and statements made in this newsletter are by individuals and are not necessarily the views or policies of the Society.

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