



Halcyon

The Newsletter of the Redditch Philatelic Society – No. 21: Autumn 2013.

From the Chairman



The first part of our philatelic year has been marked by a number of visits by Redditch to other local societies: Stroud, Dudley and Evesham. After Christmas we have a

further two visits: to Birmingham and to Radcliffe on Trent (a first for us!). Apart from 'flying the flag' for Redditch, this is also a great opportunity to meet other Midlands philatelists, often with similar interests; to see how other clubs run and shamelessly steal ideas for our programme or the newsletter etc. Our visits are always well received, as we present displays on four different specialisms in an attempt to provide something of interest to everyone present. If you have never been on a club visit, then do come along, either just to watch, or if you feel confident, offer to give a display.

Not as many societies are offering to make visits these days. With the increasing age of society members, fewer volunteers are willing to drive a distance at night to make a visit. This season we have two visits on the programme: from Banbury PS and Stroud PS; last year we only had one visit. However, as long as we are able, we will do our best to visit and entertain our fellow societies.

Recently, Leamington PS persuaded the MPF to launch a questionnaire for circulation amongst the MPF member societies as to the relevance of ABPS membership. Redditch along with the majority of MPF societies are currently affiliated to the ABPS. So what does the ABPS do for local societies? In a nutshell: organise and sponsor national & regional fairs and national competitions, publish a handbook & speakers' list, publish ABPS News containing philatelic news & events, acts as the national voice of UK philately, co-ordinates entries for international exhibitions (that are self-financing), runs workshops & seminars on subjects of importance to philatelists, directly supports the Stamp Active Network (to promote our hobby in schools), and runs a website to provide contact information on local & specialist societies, plus much much more! Also, the ABPS is run entirely by unpaid volunteers (of which I am one). If we didn't already have an ABPS, I am sure we would have to invent one.

Alan Godfrey

The President's Piece

The first half of our Season has been one of the most memorable I can think of. Reading through all of the meeting reports, takes me back to all of the wonderful displays we have seen from members and guest speakers. In addition, those of us who took part in our autumn programme of Society visits also saw more of "our own" material on display too, which included many new items and items that had been hidden away for many years. That is the beauty of displaying; many people get the thrill of seeing such wonderful material. Surely a much better situation than it all being locked away in a cupboard until one's descendants come across it and just turf it out. I also enjoy these visits as I meet up again with fellow collectors befriended over many years in the hobby.



Often, whilst away somewhere new, I will veer from the straight and narrow and search out a local bookshop or (rarely nowadays) a stamp shop; in itself, quite an innocent activity. The usual scenario is that nearby there is a ladies outfitters or suitable female orientated retail establishment that can occupy a partner for the allotted time, and I am getting quite expert at such timings nowadays. It is however regularly suggested to me that there always seems to be a bookshop or stamp shop where-ever we go. Just co-incidence!

The usual round of stamp fairs and exhibitions continues to attract collectors everywhere, but I was unable to go to York in the summer, nor Stampex this autumn; all of which resulted in a temporary improvement in finances together with severe withdrawal symptoms. I am looking forward very much to next year when visits to national and regional Fairs can be resumed with gusto.

As Christmas approaches, even with increases in postal charges do keep sending cards, as for many people a card at Christmas is the only contact to be had with friends and loved ones. Using your old "out of date" stamps as postage is also a profitable way of having a clear out too.

Best wishes for Christmas
Malcolm Allinson

KELVIN MOORE

We were all shocked to learn recently that Kelvin had passed away on 15th November aged just 65, less than six weeks after being diagnosed with cancer.

I first met Kelvin when he was on the Midland Philatelic Federation packet system run by Arthur Hillman. With Kelvin living at Hopwood he was the link in the chain from the south Birmingham collectors to the Redditch people on the packet circuit. As I was one of the nearest I found myself regularly receiving or delivering a packet to Kelvin. Conversations about philately led to him joining our society, this must have been in the late 70's/early 80's although I cannot put an exact date on it.

Kelvin was a quiet man, but when coaxed he soon shared his immense knowledge of stamps and all things philatelic. He was a part time dealer who was to be found at some of the local fairs with substantial stocks of material. Most of us in the Society will have purchased some prize item from Kelvin at one time or another, and quite often at a price very much lower than from other Dealers.

His own collections were a mystery to many of us until we encouraged him to enter some of the club display nights and we soon found that he had a superb collection of all the GB classics. I clearly remember the first time he showed his penny blacks and produced a sheet laid out in the form of a clock with all 12 plates on show. The quality of his collection can best be shown by noting that when he sold his Victorian collection at Cavendish Auctions a few years ago they saw fit to put his £5 orange on the front cover and his £1's green and brown on the back cover of their catalogue.

Lately he was concentrating on postal history, in particular the Isle of Man, and had built a formidable collection of Prisoner of War items. On many occasions at Fairs, on meeting him he had just made a major purchase of some rare item and he had a great beaming smile on his face which said everything. Kelvin did not enter competitions, so there are probably other collecting areas that he had, but because of his private nature we may remain unaware.

Kelvin had not been as frequent an attendee at meetings since he moved to Appleby Magna, but he always kept in touch and came to meetings when his other commitments allowed. He regularly supported our club packet and was always a big contributor to our Annual Stamp Auctions both as a vendor and as a buyer.

Kelvin was a good friend over the years and we will all miss him deeply. Our condolences go to his children and their families.

Chris Jackson

EDITORIAL

For quite a while now, various exhortations to members to join a Specialist Society have found their way into these pages. Near enough every member who is already a member of a Specialist Society has at some time or other recommended it. As a matter of

interest I recently canvassed around the Society asking members to state which specialist or other local Society they were also a member of. The results were very interesting, with a total (so far) of 22 different specialist or other local Societies that we as Redditch members all have access to via other members. The Societies are (in alphabetical order):- *British Airmail Society; British Postmark Society; British West Indies Study Circle; Channel Islands Study Circle; Cinderella Stamp Club; Falkland Islands Philatelic Study Group; Great Britain Philatelic Society; Lundy Collectors Club; Machin Collectors Club; Midland (GB) Postal History Society; Modern British Philatelic Circle; National Philatelic Society; Polar Postal History Society; Postal History Society; Postal Order Society; Royal Philatelic Society (London); Scandinavian Philatelic Society; Society of Postal Historians; South Midlands Stamp Club; Stratford upon Avon Philatelic Society; The Netherlands Philatelic Circle; The Perfin Society.*

If you are a member of another Society not listed above, do please let me know.

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

Malcolm Allinson

MEMBERS SUCCESSES

At a recent meeting of the British Airmail Society, Robin Jarman's display of Chilean Airmails won the 9 sheet display trophy. This is only the second time in the BAMS that a new member showing for the first time has won the Trophy. Well done Robin.

Lyel Swingler

EVENTS AND REMINDERS

A couple of specific events to bring to everyone's notice this coming spring are the Annual Dinner and Society Auction.

The Dinner menu this year is reproduced here. If you wish to come along please let Alan Godfrey know, together with you menu choices, by the 16th January at the very latest. Tickets are £15, which is pleasantly less than last year's Dinner. We are limited to a maximum number so please reserve you places as early as possible.

The Society Auction in March is also on track to be yet another successful day. Please make sure that it is the second thing you put in your 2014 diary (after the Dinner!)

SOCIETY PROGRAMME:

Meetings from January 2014 for the remainder of the Season are as follows:

January 2 nd	Annual Society Competitions (9 sheet)
January 16 th	Friendly Quiz Night
February 6 th	Film Night
February 20 th	Annual General Meeting and One Sheet members display
February 27 th (Thursday)	Society Dinner at Archers Restaurant - 6:30 for 7:00 (please note change of date from original programme)
March 6 th	Two Members Displays
March 20 th	Society Auction Preview (Members Only)
March 22 nd (Sat)	Annual Society Auction
April 3 rd	Members Three sheet display
April 17 th	Society Visit from Stroud PS

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.

17th – 18th January 2014
York Stamp Fair
 York Racecourse YO23 1EX

19th – 22nd February 2014
STAMPEX
 BDC Islington LONDON N1 0QH

14th – 15th March 2014
Salisbury Stamp Fair
 Five Rivers Leisure Centre SP1 3NR

* Details may change. Please check with event organiser for confirmation.

Annual Dinner Menu
Archers Restaurant: 27th February

Warm Caerphilly and Red Onion Tart with pesto. (v)
Smoked Duck breast with Mango slices
on seasonal leaf salad.

Gallia melon platter with Parma Ham and fresh fig.

French Onion soup with Gruyere toasted flute. (v)

Pan Fried trout fillets with broad beans and rocket.
Char grilled pork steak on apple and celeriac mash.
Chicken breast with pistachio and basil mousse
filling in a tarragon cream sauce.
Green pancakes with lime butter. (v)

All served with seasonal vegetables and potatoes

Brandy snap with lemon mousse filling.
Choux paste fritters with hot apricot sauce.
Apple tarte tatin with apple brandy custard sauce.

Tea or Coffee and chocolate mint

MEETING REPORTS

Thursday 5th September 2013
Mini Auction

No less than 15 members came to our first meeting of the 2013/14 season, all looking forward to the material on offer at our traditional programme opener.

88 Lots were on display thanks to Chris Jackson, Alan Godfrey, David Gillespie, Judy Brierley, Mike Gardner and the League of Friends. There were not as many Lots as previous years but a few of our members were still on holiday so numbers will hopefully improve for future meetings.

Before the auction started Alan Godfrey presented Malcolm Allinson with the Midlands Philatelic Federation Postal History trophy for his Class winning **Uniform Fourpenny Post** entry at last seasons' Midpex (see last newsletter. Ed), and Bob Harper presented Malcolm with a corrected certificate.

Throughout the auction, bidding was brisk and sometimes humorous and most of the sellers left the auction with something in their pockets. The LoF made a good sum for the hospital charity which was much appreciated.

On a personal observation if you want to guarantee losing money on a philatelic item, carry on buying modern FDC's!!

Lyel Swingler

Thursday 19th Sept 2013
Visit from Banbury Philatelic Society

Our second meeting in September was a visit from Banbury Society. They came, as we do, mob handed with six members coming along. We were entertained by four of them with very different displays.

First up was David Hood who displayed Crete and in particular the battle of Crete in 1941. David gave a good overview of the prelude to the battle and used a large scale map to show where the battles took place. Apparently the fact that the Germans were going to attack on the 20th May was known due to the code breakers of Bletchley Park. David showed letters, postcards, notices and ephemera and interspersed the display with his personal experiences. Two F.P.O.'s were set up: 192 at Scuda Bay and 220 at Heraklion. Most mail went by sea or Sunderland Flying Boat to Egypt and so is impossible to identify unless you know an individual name or unit number. He closed with POW mail from UK and Anzac troops after the surrender.

Gareth Williams followed and attempted to explain "Why People Become Obsessed with Machins!" He admitted that he was eventually put off them due to the huge number of variations. He showed 3 sheets

of non-elliptical Machins which contained one of every colour and value up to 75p, this amounted to 107 stamps, and if different printers and basic phosphor bands were added the total would be 274!!! Gareth then showed the original £.s.d. large format high values. He displayed a huge variety of booklets coils, sheet and corner blocks all the time explaining how you needed to be obsessed to collect such things - a very light hearted approach to the subject.

After the break the father and son pairing of Michael (son) and Peter Furnbank (father) introduced us to "Missed Perforations" and "The Queens Staircase" respectively. Michael started with an impressive block of 95 1d reds and explained the reasons for the top or bottom rows of stamps being one perf short depending on which way the sheet was put into the perforating machine. He then showed and explained, in detail, the many effects of perforation shifts on stamps.

Peter Furnbank's subject was initially a mystery to all except Bob who recognised the stamps of Bahamas. Peter explained the background to the method of production by De La Rue and how errors on the master plate were repeated on the printing plates. His display included one of only 2 known blocks of 10 from plate 3 showing the plate number. The issue was in use for over 30 years with many varieties of both stamps and watermarks which Peter explained in great detail. The second half of Peter's presentation dealt with the arrangement between the Bahamas and Canada to exchange 600 Special Delivery stamps for use on letters between the countries.

It was unfortunate that the final two speakers took considerable time explaining their exhibits in great detail which led to insufficient time being available to view the second half properly. This is something I am glad to say that we are very careful to avoid when visiting other clubs.

Chris Jackson

Wednesday 2nd October 2013 Visit to Stroud Philatelic Society

At an unfeasibly early evening hour for working members, five of us set off south along the M5 motorway on our visit to Stroud. Malcolm Allinson, Chris Jackson, Lyel Swingler, Robin Jarman and David Gillespie made up our team for the evening. Judging from the photograph taken at our refreshment stop on the way, a motley crew we were!



One advantage of arriving early for a Society visit!

Malcolm acted as our compere, with everyone giving excellent displays – timed to perfection thus allowing plenty of intervals for our hosts to view the material on display.

David Gillespie began the evening with his display entitled *PROGRESSING BACKWARDS*. He began with a few stamps- Monaco, Dahomey, Abyssinia, N.Z. Christmas stamps - that had all grabbed the attention of an 11 year old schoolboy and so influenced an impressionable youngster to take up our hobby. David then showed some pages from his first serious country collection - Australia, written up whilst studying for 'O' levels, using UNO stencils letter by letter, and added to untidily over the years. This collection is only now being tidied up and re-written. Next came the 'detail' phase of the collection, represented by a few pages of Tasmania, showing the 1900's pictorial issues, where the 1d and 2d values exist with numerous variations in print process, watermark, perforations and shades. Finally 20 sheets of 3rd Reich Germany were shown, mounted on pages from a pre-printed one-country album, this being one of a number of similar albums of other countries, all composed in relatively simplified form which David is busily trying to add to and hopefully complete.

Chris Jackson split his display into two sections. The first was two boards of early Worcester City material including Civil War and Commonwealth period letters together with items which had been initialled either to cancel a charge, as in the case of the letter from Worcester Jail or to signify receipt of payment as by Joseph Higgins the Worcester postmaster. This display finished at 1750. By way of contrast Chris then showed two boards of Redditch material starting with the earliest known postmark of Redditch from 1795. Mileage marks, a 1d black and various 1d reds with a variety of numeral and duplex postmarks completed the display.

After the interval Lyel Swingler on his very first "Society Visit" gave a display on Dutch Airmails and Dutch East Indian Airmails, showing us two frames of Netherlands and Colonies Airmail stamps of The Netherlands, Curacao and Suriname. He pointed out the key stamps of 15 and 25 Guilders and also explained why there was missing spaces due to cost, and forgeries of the DX Dornier set of Suriname. Lyel's remaining frames were censored mail from the 1940's and he explained the "undercover letter", the Thomas Cook wartime service using Lisbon PO Box 506 and the use of Belgian censors after the war gathering information on war criminals. Lyel ended with the start of a new collection - of Curacao censor marks.

Robin Jarman completed the evening with that part of his Chilean Airmail collection which included the two French companies who flew between Europe and South America. Initially the service had been started by the aircraft manufacturer Latécoère but before it commenced operations in Brazil and Argentina, a change of ownership meant that it

became Compagnie Générale Aéropostale or simply Aéropostale. This is how it begun in Chile and various first flights and other notable events were shown.

In 1933 the airline became part of Air France and was able to afford bigger and better aircraft. The French ran several special flights to try to improve journey times. In 1930 it took the great French aviator Jean Mermoz over 21 hours to cross the South Atlantic but in 1937 the same distance was covered in 11 hours, and covers for the flights were displayed. The talk was rounded off with Jusqu'a marks and official mail.

Stroud were very pleased with our offerings and very much appreciated the variety and diversity of the displays from our usual format of four speakers.

Thanks also to all our speakers for submitting their own write-ups for this evenings report. **Ed.**



The **Red(ditch)** Arrows Indoor Display Team after a successful sortie to Stroud.

Thursday 3rd October 2013
Guest Speaker: Dane Garrod
GB Royalty and Other stories

For the second time in barely a year, the Society had a visit from Dane Garrod. After his first in 2012, he returned by popular demand. For the second time, his good friend the writer of this report was appointed as reviewer. This time I had pen and paper. However, as the lights went out to start Dane's PowerPoint presentation ...!!

Thus my notes on the night consist of half a dozen legible words climbing the page at 45°. This report is therefore being written barely half a day after the event in the hope that I remember some of it.

Dane does not call himself a philatelist, or even a postal historian. Instead he calls himself a social historian using philately as his source. The distinction is well made. His subject for us was GB Royalty and Other Stories. It was beautifully and comprehensively illustrated with a digital slide presentation – and also by the real thing on traditional display boards.

Having seen the display, it is in my opinion that Dane has a master key to the Royal Archives at Windsor Castle, and helps himself to whatever he needs! It is either that or he's a skilful cat burglar and Her Majesty does not know what she is missing. The number of remarkable covers and letters addressed to, from or about the last 250 years of royalty was incredible. Dane claimed many letters had come from eBay, at very low prices, but this seemed to be shorthand for a Great Document Heist of a few years ago, not surprisingly kept quiet by the Authorities.

The talk began with the sad tale of Amy Robsart. Dane had a letter autographed letter by her. She was the unhappy wife of Robert Dudley, 1st Earl of Leicester, who sought to marry Elizabeth I. Unfortunately Amy was in the way. On 8th September 1560 she gave all of her servants the day off but was later found at the bottom of her stairs dead from a broken neck. Was she pushed and murdered? The letter we saw from her, was dated a fortnight before the tragedy. Dudley was widely thought responsible. Elizabeth was appalled at the event and for her own reputation dared not risk a marriage with him.

Not all of Dane's stories were as dramatic as this but all were fascinating and well told.

I remember most of the sons of George III. I failed to keep count of the daughters of Queen Victoria, save the one who married into the German Royal Family, and who in these enlightened times would have inherited the English throne after Victoria. This would then have given The Kaiser the English throne; thus no First World War; no Fascism; no Hitler – oh! and no House of Windsor.



Dane Garrod, Royally connected.

I personally like this sort of philately – Here's the story; here's the person; here's the evidence. I much prefer this to endless stamp issues all looking the same, or watermarks – interesting but invisible; or perforations which have to be taken as read.

I don't know if Dane has other talks – Secrets of the Kremlin; The Lord Lucan Story; Edward VIII –the Missing Years? Whatever, we should have him again.

Ralph Richardson

Thursday 17th October 2013
Members Single Sheet Competition

There were 25 entries for the competition containing a wealth of philatelic material and information. The displays were judged by the members present and the first six are noted here.



Pride of place was awarded to Roger Wood's erudite display of his authenticated deep green £1 Waterlow "Seahorse" of 1913 (left). Roger described this acquisition as a collector's dream come true – it has the only known perfin (DB) on a £1 Seahorse. It felt like an honour to see it.

The worthy runner up was a display by Alan Godfrey – New Zealand advert stamps of 1893 featuring "Bonnington's Irish Moss", a popular remedy for sore throats since the 1870s. It is made from seaweed harvested in Northern Ireland and is still exported to New Zealand. The stamps were not universally popular though as people said the printing didn't taste good when the stamps were licked for use and they had a short lifespan. The top three places were completed by Robin Jarman's display of a cover and striking postcard of a Zeppelin evoking a commercial Condor/Luft Hansa flight on 2 September 1936 from Santiago to Germany via Recife (on the NE coast of Brazil).

Next came Lyel Swingler's display of a busy double cover deciphered by Lyel to document another flight - Batavia (Jakarta now) - London – Batavia – Shanghai in December 1941. Fifth place was awarded to Pete Elms' display of a tribute to the Australian armed forces in WW2 comprising a black and white picture and four stamps showing three servicemen and a ghostly nurse's face above them. It is sad that a note said the three servicemen did not survive the war. The final position on our points table was Chris Jackson's "The Changing Face of Our Queen", exemplified by colourful stamps from a number of Commonwealth nations. Chris said he'd tried before with this and was pleased it had been appreciated at last!

An unexpected bonus this evening was an array of four 16-sheet displays from the Midland Philatelic Federation's recent Autumn Fair at Hinckley, Leicestershire.

The first was Alan Godfrey's Open Class winning Silver Gilt display on the Royal Show, which dated from 1838 but was held at Stoneleigh, Warwickshire from 1963 to 2009 when the show was sadly abandoned. This was nostalgic for me as I attended the Royal Show in 1988 as a newly appointed secretary of a West Country agricultural supplies firm.

The second display was Chris Jackson's Gold medal winning display of "Penny Posts in Worcestershire, 1812-1840", a complete record of all of the Penny Posts of the county.

The other two 16-sheeters were compiled by non-members. The first belonged to Brian Atkins, and was the Aero-philately class winner (Gold) at Hinckley showing the Air Post Exhibition ("APEX") held in London in 1934. It comprised numerous covers franked at the exhibition, details of flights, copies of postcards and a novelty item - a banquet dinner ticket but not the menu.

The last display consisted of old covers and postal route maps, again from Brian Atkins, and addressed the Postal History of Much Wenlock from 1806 to 1905.

All of these displays were the first I'd seen to be in convincing photocopy format. People were feeling the "covers" to check if they were real.

Paul Veal

Tuesday 22nd October 2013
Visit to Dudley Philatelic Society

It seems only a couple of weeks previously, that we were on the road doing a Society visit and so we all felt well practiced for tonight's outing to Dudley.

Again, our format of four different speakers was a tremendous hit with our hosts. Lyel Swingler began with an Aerophilatelic display of KNILM and the route from Amsterdam to Batavia. Koninklijke Nederlandsch-Indische Luchtvaart Maatschappij (or Royal Dutch Indies Airways) was a totally separate airline from the more familiar KLM which operated in and around Indonesia and South East Asia. Lyel showed a number of covers and packets carried on the many flights the company undertook, together with aircraft details and other supporting background information.



Robin Jarman then took us to Chile, this time showing his growing stamp collection. Chilean stamps were initially produced by Perkins Bacon, and the similarities of the first Chilean stamps to our



own Queen Victoria Twopence Blue and Penny Red were clear to see. Most interesting were Robin's reconstructed sheets of the 1948 flora and fauna set. (left).

After the break for viewing, Pete Elms displayed Errors and Varieties beginning with a number of errors on late Victorian issues. He progressed through the reigns until we had a proliferation in the 1960's when multi-colour printing began to be used and we saw many missing colours and mis-alignments from the Battle of Hastings set. This trend continued for many years, problems with colour alignment continuing with the Rowland Hill miniature sheet of 1980. We saw plenty of different error combinations on this miniature sheet.



(Left: Missing Queens Head)

Our final display was from Alan Godfrey. Alan chose Trams, Buses and Trains and showed what used to be termed Cinderella material, and now comes under the Social Philately umbrella. We saw Parcel Post labels from the Midland Red bus company from all periods of its existence. Alan then moved onto railway labels primarily from our local lines including the Stratford and Midland Junction railway



Our hosts were very pleased with our performances saying we had given them “four most interesting and memorable presentations” They also noted that every one of us was in “uniform”; each member sporting our Society tie. We look forward to another return visit from Dudley in the near future.

Malcolm Allinson

Thursday 7th November 2013
Guest Speaker: Peter Pugh
Another Bloody Railway

Peter Pugh ably assisted by his wife Rosemary, had travelled from Rugby to deliver what proved to be an excellent display and presentation. Despite the dismissive title Peter proved, like your writer, to be a



The Trans-Siberian Railway, also showing major international connections

train spotter, and in his case an all-round good fellow. The railway in question was the iconic Trans-Siberian Railway. It was part one of Peter's presentation, covering the period from inception to the start of the Great War.

The railway was built using finance from several countries including Russia herself, France and the U.K. The main purpose was to speed travel, and in particular the passage of mails, between Europe, the Far East and America.

Hong Kong and the treaty ports including Shanghai, Amoy, Chefoo, Swatow and Ningpo (the last three definitely being ports, not ailments) were amongst the most prominent connections.

Building commenced in 1893, the Trans-Siberian itself was built in six sections, but the name was in early days popularly taken to include the 'feeder' lines into China, notably the Chinese Eastern Railway via Harbin (now the Trans Manchurian Line)

In the early days travel between the U.K. and Hong Kong was 26 days by rail compared with six weeks by P & O steamer via Suez. From 1904 to 1907 only the sea route via Suez was available due to the Russia-Japanese war.

During construction, postcards were produced showing stations - major and not so major - and principal engineering works along the line. Peter displayed a fine collection of these postcards- some with Russian inscriptions and some with English or French.



A collection of difficult-to-find covers was a major part of the display, including;

- 1895 Hong Kong to USA via Liverpool
- 1907 Shanghai to Boston
- similar period- Amoy to Denmark.

Featuring on some of these covers were rare cachets, some of which are unrecorded and possibly unique.

The Chinese railway system connects into the Trans-Siberian at Harbin, an intermediate railway junction between western Russia and the coastal port of Vladivostok.

Peter displayed a cover from 1911, from Hong Kong to Hamburg, which due to Pneumonic Plague along the Eastern China Railway route, was carried to Vladivostok by steamer and then travelled west on

the Trans-Siberian. A further cover from Swatow was diverted due to an outbreak of bubonic plague.

Tea and biscuits were plague-free and the second half commenced with information on the number of changes of train required in the system due to the different rail gauges used - principally 5'0" in Russia and 4' 8 1/2" elsewhere.

Covers shown in this section included:

- a 1910 HSBC security mark
(HSBC were underwriting railway-building loans).
- Europe-USA steamer connection marks.
- Indian troops' CEF (Commonwealth Expeditionary Force) stamps on cover- *in 1914 the CEF were protecting the lines from Boxers*
 - an exceedingly rare cover from Hong Kong to Beirut, Syria (now Lebanon).
- Scarce censor marks.
- an 8/11/17 cover- the date significant as the start of the Russian revolution.
- a cover dated the following week via Suez, as the revolution had halted train services.

In addition further postcards depicting engineering works were shown, including some major river bridges, which were very advanced for the period.



Finally Peter provided information and photographs of some of the locomotives used in the early days of the railway including examples from Kerr, Stuart of Stoke-on Trent; Baldwin of the USA and locos from Japan and from France. The display was supported by a fine collection of period maps.

In the absence of our Chairman, the President summed up and suggested that we book Part Two, immediately. He thanked Peter and Rosemary, and presented Peter with a certificate of appreciation. He then finished by asking how Peter managed to get away with mentioning the purchase of so many 'scarce', 'rare', 'very rare' and 'unique' items in the presence of his wife. Raucous applause followed.

David Gillespie

Anyone wishing to study further on the subject should read:

- The Road to Power: The Trans-Siberian Railroad and the colonisation of Asian Russia.*
Steven Marks. Publ. Tauris Dec 1991
- The Trans-Siberian Railway on early postcards:*
P E Robinson. Publ. 1999
- The Great Siberian Way* P E Robinson. Publ. 2002

Monday 18th November 2013 Society Visit to Evesham PS

For our final external visit this year, we ventured closer to home and descended upon our near neighbours at Evesham. Well practiced by now, our team was led by Malcolm Allinson as our Compere, with Robin Jarman (Chile), Chris Jackson (Redditch Postal History), Pete Elms (Varieties and Errors) and Alan Godfrey (Trams Buses and Trains) providing the usual high quality displays we come to expect of ourselves.

We take a 'touring break' now until May, when we will be traveling north to Radcliffe on Trent.

Malcolm Allinson

Thursday 21st November 2013 Guest Speaker: Terry Hare-Walker African Airmails

Unfortunately our scheduled speaker Colin Searle was unable to be with us following an illness from which he is now thankfully recovering. Terry Hare-Walker kindly agreed to replace him and an excellent job he did too. We saw African themed airmails from the very early 1911 Coronation flights up to the beginning of World War II.

Most of the events were centred on or concluded in South Africa, starting with those 1911 flights over the Christmas and New Year period in a Bleriot monoplane, similar to the type used to first cross the English Channel in 1909. The Red Cross also took to the air to raise funds for relatives of the dead in World War I by arranging to fly special cards which could be purchased for this purpose. There was even a pigeon post.



Terry Hare-Walker pointing out a cover of December 1934 from Cloncurry (Queensland) flown by both Qantas Empire Airways and Imperial Airways, from Brisbane to Cape Town via Cairo.

The RAF were involved in experimental flights between Cape Town and Durban and one of Sir Alan Cobham's well-known survey flights ended in Cape Town where he bet the Captain of a Union Castle ship that he could beat the boat back to England. Of course he won. In 1931 Glen Kidson, one of the Bentley boys, thought that Imperial Airways should use American planes and made a record flight to South Africa in a Lockheed Vega to prove the point. Fortunately Imperial did not take up

his suggestion. There were numerous crashes during this period, as the African terrain is diverse and unforgiving and Terry had some marvellous examples of retrieved mail from these events.

The second half of this beautifully written up display began with a poster salvaged from a skip when a garage rented by the well-known aerophilatelist Francis Field was being cleared out. Record flights and crashes seemed to occur in almost equal numbers during the 1930's, but the 1936 Schlesinger Air Race was exceptional as all but one competitor either crashed or had mechanical problems. Even from the winner there was no mail, as this was all stolen and not recovered. The record breaking and route expansion continued right up to the start of World War II with Alex Henshaw setting a time of 39 hours 25 minutes from Gravesend to Cape Town in 1939. This concluded a wonderful evening not only for the aerophilatelists present but hopefully everyone else. Even those dismissive of covers could admire some excellent stamps affixed to the envelopes.

Robin Jarman

Thursday 5th December 2013 Members' Show and Tell.

It was extremely sad to learn this evening that one of our longest standing members Kelvin Moore had unexpectedly passed away recently. An appreciation of Kelvin appears elsewhere in this newsletter and members all stood in silent reflection as a mark of their respect for him.

Following such a melancholy start, we moved on to the chosen theme. Tonight's meeting was, as usual, exactly what the title of it said. Members were invited to bring along material to display and offer a few words about it.

We started with Paul Veal who showed us an early Lincoln stamp album from 1890, which had spaces for every stamp known, and that was worldwide. He continued with a couple of 1940's albums in which each country was described, some in terms that today would be considered very patronising or downright arrogant. Such is the way of the world.

David Gillespie showed us some very rare items which many of our members had not seen before – stamps. In deference to our postal history collectors David gave us his view of what this new-fangled hobby called stamp collecting is all about. People gather from time to time to swap these stamps; that they come in different shapes sizes and condition; there are mint stamps and used examples; and collectors decide for themselves which type they wish to collect. He then went on to explain the difference between stamps and envelopes for the benefit again of the postal history collectors who were present. Following this tongue in cheek introduction David then showed us his collection of Swiss PRO JUVENTUTE stamps. These charity stamps have been issued by Switzerland each year since 1912 and the reason for using a Latin

inscription is that Switzerland has three official languages which to put all of them on a stamp would have made the stamps the size of envelopes!

Ralph Richardson showed his re-organised collection of GB Machin stamps and explained that he may have to yet re-organise them again if any more values or varieties are issued. We saw pages of them in various formats, values and colours including the first pre-decimal set all in blocks of four. Pete Elms showed us some more of his collection of GB errors. He began with a Post Office guide listing "embarrassing packets" i.e. items of mail that are embarrassing to the Post Office! He then continued with postmark mistakes. We saw datestamps where the dates were missing, inverted or transposed; and a number of incorrect colours used for franking mail.

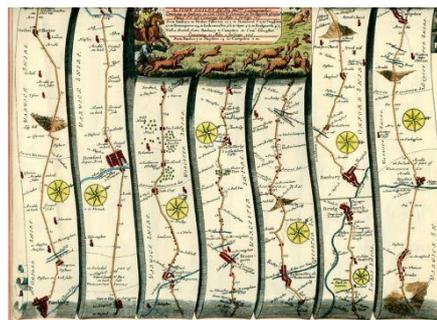
Robin Jarman displayed some of his Chilean airmail material that we had not seen before including air timetables and maps, a Zeppelin cover from 1932; Condor first Flight cover from Rio to Santiago. Robin finished with the first sets of Airmail stamps of 1932 and 1934.

Richard Nicol showed us examples of all of the Seychelles miniature sheets that were issued prior to Independence in June 1976. He pointed out that there were "fortunately" not many, as after Independence these issues positively exploded. (*Like everywhere else! Ed.*)

Like Robin, Chris Jackson showed us some of his Needlemakers material that we had not seen before; a John English cover from the Uniform 4d Post period; a pre-printed envelope from Redditch to America; a very rare Lewis's Advertising ring and some advertising ephemera for Milwards needles. Bob Harper followed and put up a delightful frame of thematic material on Flying Boat stamps with details of the various machines that were featured.

Our Chairman rounded off the displays with a selection from his map collection of Warwickshire. This included an early 17th century Van Langeren/Jenner mileage chart; a John Ogilby strip map showing the route between Banbury and Bromsgrove, and a Robert Morden county map from the early 18th century, together with some slightly more modern examples of a number of cartographers work.

Malcolm Allinson



John Ogilby 1675 strip map of the route from Banbury to Bridgnorth

Chilean Airmails The French connection - A Faster Postal Service in 1937.

Robin's Chilean Airmail collection continues to expand to include special flights and other out of the ordinary covers and cards. These are integral to the whole story where the French are concerned, and provide an insight into their thinking at the time.

After the takeover of Aéropostale in 1933 by the newly formed Air France, it at last became possible to operate faster and larger aircraft along the French South American route to Brazil, Argentina and Chile. In 1937 Air France decided to try an experiment to see how quickly it could deliver mail to Santiago, the capital of Chile.



The new Farman F2231 was chosen as this could cover distances of up to 8,000 km at a speed of almost 300 km/hr. It had four Hispano Suiza engines and weighed 22 tonnes fully laden. The aircraft, F-APUZ, was christened *Chef Pilote Laurent Guerrero* in honour of a French pilot who had disappeared on this route. The crew was:

Paul Codos (chief pilot), Reine (co-pilot), Gimié (radio operator) and Vauthier (mechanic).

They left Le Bourget (Paris) on 20th November 1937 for Istres (south of France) and then to Dakar in Senegal. The crossing of the South Atlantic from there to Natal in Brazil took 11 hours and 5 minutes, a new record. After stopping at Buenos Aires, Santiago was reached on 22nd November in a total time of 58 hours 41 minutes.



*The flight of F-APUZ
on arrival at Santiago on 22nd November 1937*

On board were 1,700 special postcards as shown here and these were reposted in Santiago for return to Paris by the normal airmail schedule; hence the Chilean stamps also appearing on the cards. They

arrived back in Paris on 2nd December, having crossed the ocean aboard another Farman F2200 series aircraft the *Ville de Dakar*.



I was lucky enough to obtain the above card on that well-known internet auction site at a quite reasonable cost and am indebted to John Smith of Solihull for providing me with a copy of a page of a book in his possession, which has provided the information for this article.

Robin Jarman

THE OLD POSTING HOUSE

In the last Newsletter, my eye was caught by the page from Alan Godfrey's Midland Federation competition entry, which showed a rather "Damaged by Snails" cover, posted at Pardshaw in Cumbria. Knowing that area very well, I was reminded that nearby at Deanscales (less than ½ mile across the fields) on the main Cockermouth to Egremont road, is a public house currently called "The Old Posting House".



*The Old Posting House with a wintery
Hattering Ghyll and Fellbarrow as a backdrop.*

An appropriate name, because it was indeed an old posting house on the Coaching route from Carlisle to Whitehaven. Inside this pub there is still built into the wall of one of the rooms, a set of wooden posting boxes (right) that would have been used for sorting and holding mail for the local farmers and gentry.



The pub itself dates from around 1600 and I understand the old Post Boxes are protected so any future Landlord has to be careful.

The Glasgow to Whitehaven coach route via Carlisle was one of the most important services in the North West, leaving Carlisle each morning at "½ past 6" on its 42 mile journey south. It connected the great ports of Glasgow and Whitehaven – Whitehaven in the late 18th and early 19th centuries being only second to London due to the amount of coal and iron ore shipped out from Lord Lowther's mines and quarries, and also being a quicker sea route to the West Indies trading area – and gave a quick direct post service to merchants buying and selling goods that landed at either place. At 166 miles between them, this distance was easily covered in 24 hours by the Mail at 10d a letter (plus, after 1815 the ½d coach tax).

The mail route between Whitehaven and Cockermouth passes the birthplace of one Fletcher Christian at Moreland Close*, so it is quite possible that he would have used the service. As a flavour of coaching in those days, a Whitehaven eye witness account of the time recorded that they had "...just witnessed the arrival of the old Mail Coach from Carlisle, a large lumbering vehicle. Mr Mawson was the driver for many years; the Guard whose name I forget was a short stout man with a red coat and gold lace, and a gold band around his hat, which gave him a very imposing appearance."

One incident that occurred to this Mail coach was on 17th August 1844, when it was involved in a fatal accident. The vehicle hit a wall and turned over in English Street, Carlisle. One of the outside passengers was killed, but lucky to survive was no less than Thomas Bouch, who lived at nearby Thursby. Bouch went on to design the infamous Tay Bridge, which collapsed in a fierce storm on 28th December 1879, and effectively ruined his career.

Malcolm Allinson

130 YEARS OF THE PARCEL POST (1883-2013)

Many of the nineteenth century's greatest improvements in the operation of the postal service were implemented by Rowland Hill and took place after the start of the Uniform Penny Post in 1840. However, although he suggested it in 1842, the introduction of a parcel post eluded Rowland Hill. Parcels had always been the preserve of private carriers and from the 1830's this market was dominated by the railway companies. Rowland Hill's brother, Frederick, also raised the subject again in the 1860's, again without success. The railway companies and the carriers, notably Pickford's, formed a powerful lobby and jealously

guarded their market position. Despite this, sending parcels by rail was fraught with problems: there were many railway companies and sending 'through' parcels required a degree of co-ordination that many companies struggled to provide.

The Post Office did make moves towards the start of a parcel post by introducing the Book Post service in 1848 and the Pattern Post (for the posting of manufacturers' samples) in 1863. The impetus for restarting negotiations with the railway companies, however, came from the UPU. At the UPU conference held in Paris in 1880, the delegates proposed the establishment of an international parcel post, commencing in 1882, but the prerequisite for participation was to have a domestic parcel post in operation.

Professor Henry Fawcett, (right) although he was blind, became Post Master General in 1880 (to 1884). He firmly believed that the Post Office should offer as comprehensive a service as possible and was a strong advocate of the parcel post. He entered negotiations with the railway



companies and agreed to terms, which would give them 55% of the postage on parcels carried by rail and the Post Office would retain 45%. The Post Office (Parcels) Act was passed on 18th August 1882 and Fawcett planned to introduce the parcel post service on 1st August 1883; less than a year later! It was necessary to rebuild or adapt almost 1,000 Head or Branch Offices as well as arrange the collection and delivery of parcels in 15,000 postal districts. It also meant that letter carriers would in future be known as postmen. To communicate the changes to the general public, a four-page handbill was delivered to every household in the country.

The launch of the Parcels Post (in 1884 changed to Parcel Post) proved to be a success. The next day the Daily News stated that: ".....on the whole, the very important and very anxious experiment of yesterday seems to have passed off satisfactorily." The Parcel Post was not a financial success at first, but soon, by 1885, the Post Office was handling 26.5 million parcels, which increased to 50 million by the 1890's. Initially the minimum cost was 3d for a 1lb parcel; this rate remained unchanged until 1915.

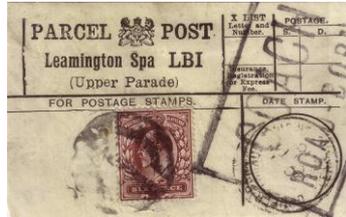
With the introduction of the Parcel Post, the Post Office brought in the use of labels, each being pre-printed with the office of use and its telegraphic code, where issued.



First type Parcels Post label issued 1st August 1883

* See Newsletter No 20 for the report on The Bounty Mutiny.

These labels were required to have the adhesive stamps, for the postage cost, attached and were cancelled, often with a circular undated cancel, although circular date stamps were also used where available. Labels were intended to help the Post Office account for the proportion of postage due to the railway companies. In London blue labels were used to indicate coach-borne parcels, on the London-Brighton parcel coach orange-yellow labels had the same effect. Labels were also stamped "COACH ROAD-BORNE" or "RAILWAY BORNE" to give the same information, as shown *right* from Upper Parade, Leamington. This style of label was issued in 1909. This label shows the 'COACH ROAD BORNE' hand stamp, showing that all the postage should be received by the Post Office, rather than part by the railway companies.



The rare third type 'anonymous' parcel post label only used experimentally in the larger offices and issued 28th October 1884. This label used in Ludgate Circus, London EC.



The fifth type of label was issued on 2nd February 1886 and included the office's telegraphic address code. This label was used in Westbury, Wilts on 16th August 1886.



Lillington, Leamington Spa. This style of label was issued in 1900. This label was completed in manuscript as Lillington had not been issued with a date stamp. Postage was 4d and registration a further 2d.

Several styles of label were in use until 1918, when the name of the office was left off the label, by which time the need to separate the railway/road proportion was less important. In the same year most large offices received rubber stamps, which were facsimiles of the labels and dated. Other options which were introduced included the registration of parcels, insurance of parcels,

payment in cash for bulk parcels, cash on delivery and an express service.

By 1980's Royal Mail was still the county's number one parcel carrier, processing around 175 million packages, using 30 parcel sorting centres and with a fleet of 27,000 vehicles. In 1986 Royal Mail was separated into three divisions (Royal Mail, Post Office Counters and Royal Mail Parcels) and in 1990 Royal Mail Parcels was rebranded as Parcelforce.

In 2002 the universal parcels service was transferred to Royal Mail leaving Parcelforce to concentrate on time-guaranteed, next day and two day express deliveries. The latest change in 2013 is the introduction of a small and medium parcel service.

The twenty-first century has presented new challenges to Royal Mail, the increasing use of e-mail reduced the volume of letters carried, but the increasing use of internet shopping has increased the volume of parcels being carried, despite the competition from the private parcel carriers. The future of Royal Mail as a privatised business will no doubt give rise to further changes to the 130 year old parcel delivery service.

Alan Godfrey

POSTBOXES

Post-boxes seem to feature regularly in these columns, so on a recent visit to Carlisle I took a picture of this post-box which is situated outside of the old Town Hall.

The original Carlisle box was a square design (now sadly disappeared) erected in 1853 in Botchergate in the middle of the city. Thus Carlisle was the first place in mainland Britain to have a roadside pillar box, and this replica Penfold box made in the 1980's has a brass plaque commemorating this.



Malcolm Allinson

AND FINALLY....

...the Committee wish everyone a Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

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.

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