



# Halcyon

The Newsletter of the Redditch Philatelic Society – No. 31: Autumn/Winter 2018.

## From the Chairman



Dear All. With it going dark now at 4pm we are really in the depth of winter, which is quite good for our hobby. The weather has restricted outside activities like gardening and left some time for indoor things like stamps and postal history!

I have to admit that I have not been able to add much to my postal history collection this year, but this has been offset by a substantial number of quality postcards which has enhanced that collection noticeably. The new acquisitions will enable me to put together entries on subjects that I have not been able to before.

The death of Lyle was a shock to us all, it being such a short time from when he was first taken ill. I am grateful to those members who were able to attend the funeral. The society was well represented and Ineke expressed her thanks for our support. (See elsewhere for an obituary).

Our 2019 Auction is looking good with 26 different vendors and our usual mix of material. All we need now is for a good turn out of buyers at the sale. As usual we shall be looking for as much support as possible from members on the day, the only way to ensure the event runs smoothly is to have enough people to cover all the jobs.

Something else we can all do for the benefit of the club is to talk to friends and acquaintances who we know are interested in philately and encourage them to come along to meetings. There are vast numbers of collectors out there who we never reach and who would most likely enjoy the experience of our society if only they would come along and see what it is like. Do try and 'bring a friend'.

It remains for me to wish you all a Happy Christmas and I look forward to seeing you all at meeting in the New Year.

**Chris Jackson**



## The President's Piece

This last twelve months and more have been quite hectic in trying to keep lots of plates spinning at the same time, as well as seemingly juggling with more and more balls! Fortunately none of them have fallen, and all the plates are still spinning but in a more controlled state.



Our meetings remain a bit of a haven; a place to turn up and enjoy our hobby amongst equally knowledgeable people. This is the best part of any hobby, when you can discuss things, learn, and also impart information.

Attendance at our meetings seems to have increased recently which is fantastic news. The more the merrier (especially at this time of year! Ed.). I have said previously that a thriving membership helps to attract excellent speakers and this has shown this year in that the guest speakers and our own members have all given outstanding displays. This of course helps us to attract even more quality guest speakers, as they will know from talking with others that we give them all a warm welcome and a fairly large audience to make the journey for them worthwhile.

Keeping up with all of the events and happenings in philately is almost a full time task, so in order for things to remain a hobby it is best to let the unimportant things slide away down the pole and concentrate on what **you** want from stamp collecting. For me that might have to come down to rationalising the many subject I collect.

Last year's "New Year Resolution" publicised in these pages, didn't even get off the blocks. At least I can try it again and see where it gets me this year. However, knowing that I have to display at the next President's Evening, I have been trying to pull material together suitable to show you all. It is slowly happening, and I am praying that I will get enough preparation time to mount plenty of material to do the evening justice. Only time will reveal the result.

**Best wishes for Christmas and the New Year  
Malcolm Allinson**



**LYEL SWINGLER 1939 – 2018**

It is with great sadness that we record the passing of Lyel on 15<sup>th</sup> November. He had been unwell for just a short time and it was so unexpected when we heard the news of his death.

Lyel had had a full career with the RAF, and as a result had spent his time in lots of far flung places; some with his family, some not. He was gregarious, a gentleman and generally one of those people who can truly be called a 'good egg' (or '*bon oeuf*' as his family prefer).

Lyel joined our Society in the late 1990's when he moved to Redditch after retiring. He immediately threw himself into everything, being one of those many members who can always be relied upon. One of his other retirement activities was helping at the Alexandra Hospital League of Friends Coffee Shop, and so at our meetings his skills at boiling a kettle were utilised on many occasions – although we sometimes had to suggest he let others have a go, such was his keenness to "do".

For many years another member, the late Norman Wiley, ran a scheme whereby donations of stamps to the League of Friends were converted into funds for their charity. When Norman passed away in September 2011, Lyel took over the role and continued 'making money' for them. Many members were only too pleased to have another source of stamps to look at for their collections, and also made sure that donations of stamps continued to land on Lyel's dining table. On one occasion, the League was donated a very nice collection, far far more advanced than was the norm. Lyel consulted some of us, and it was considered appropriate to ask several professional dealers to put a value on it. The result was that the hospital received a far healthier sum for that collection, all because of Lyel's philatelic interest and the Society's contacts.

Lyel's other main hobby was bowling. However, he was always complaining, especially in the summer that our Society meetings clashed with his bowls programme!! Sadly, as his illness progressed he found that he was unable to hold the bowling wood; it slipped from his hand on more than one occasion causing him to issue a few unusual expletives.

It is clear that Lyel was not one to sit still. He came up with the suggestion of operating an Exchange Packet for members, the only difference being that he was also prepared to take on the role of administering it (not always an attribute of those who put forward suggestions!) For ten years Lyel ran the Exchange Packet, exhausting members spares and swaps and gradually adding new outside contributors of material for us to peruse. He was very pleased with the computer program that I built for him to administer the system, so much so that when he decided to also run the Exchange Packet for the Netherlands Philatelic Society, he asked me if he could use the same program. "It is so easy even I can do it." was his compliment. The Packet will continue to operate in the future, mostly because of Lyel's dedication to getting it up and running, and to maintaining its usefulness to members for many years.

Lyel was also an active member of the British Airmail Society (BAMS) and usually was able to put up a sheet or two at its meetings. He was not always happy to have to speak about his display, preferring the material to speak for itself. One feature of BAMS meetings is that they take place at Conkers Centre in the National Forest, a venue that has a wonderful carvery restaurant. Lyel was a very enthusiastic devourer of carvery meals at these events and quite often needed a little nudge at afternoon sessions to keep him awake.

Other clubs which Lyel attended regularly were the Solihull Philatelic Society morning sessions each month and the South Midlands Stamp Club which was held in the afternoon of the third Monday each month. Inevitably Lyel would have material to display to members and often volunteered for tea duty; typical of his desire to help out. With all of the different Society meetings he attended it is any wonder he knew where home was!

A good number of members were at Lyel's funeral on 5<sup>th</sup> December, which in addition to friends from all of Lyel's many non-philatelic activities was also attended by members of the Netherlands Philatelic Society and the Aerophilately Society. We offer our sincere thoughts to Ineke and all of Lyel's family and know that he will be remembered by many for many years to come.

**Malcolm Allinson**

**EDITORIAL**

You may think that only having one issue of *Halcyon* this year means that your Editor is doing his bit to cut down on paper and so saving the planet. Not entirely, I have been a little busy for a while with family commitments and unexpected other matters that seem to arise only when you retire.

The clocks seem to rotate quicker too. Currently it feels as if the clocks are also beating the sun to the end of a day, the sun disappearing before afternoon tea on some days! Of course, that does now mean time indoors can be devoted to completing this Newsletter for you.

The amount of material that requires mounting and writing up continues to grow in Tysoe Towers. Initial cataloguing of it all is an absolute must, as when put into a box "to see to later" it miraculously inspires memory loss as to where and when it was acquired and also how much did I fork out for it! A lot easier to do this task straight away, as it also serves as a reminder to NOT buy a similar item later and end up with a duplicate. It would be nice to read of others' coping strategies on this matter.

The Stamp Room has acquired yet another bookcase at last. Initially there was serious doubt elsewhere at the Towers whether it would fit into an already crowded space only accessible by a contortionist, but weeks of delicate planning ensured said bookcase fitted in without the floor caving in. The problem now is that the bookcase is already full and the stuff it was bought for is still on the floor! Another addition to the Stamp Room is a charming pendulum wall clock which chimes the hour and half hour; just right to subconsciously monitor when to return to reality. I do have to wind it though.

As for this edition of *Halcyon* there is a lot to get through. However not all meeting reports have been included. A report can only be added if it has been written, so please do make the effort to offer a report in future.

Finally, many thanks to **Robin Jarman, David Gillespie, Chris Jackson, Bob Harper, Ralph Richardson** and **Paul Veal** for their contributions to this edition of *Halcyon*.

**Malcolm Allinson**

**SOCIETY ANNUAL DINNER.**

**With recent changes at Archers Restaurant, the Annual Dinner this year will return to an EVENING event. As shown in the Programme the Dinner is on Thursday evening, 28<sup>th</sup> February 2018. 6:30 for 7:00pm**

**Menu's are available from the Treasurer, who will require your choices and payment in advance please, and by 7<sup>th</sup> February at the latest.**

**SOCIETY PROGRAMME 2018-2019**

**The second half of our season promises to keep members interest all the way to the summer break. Meetings until June are listed here. Do come along; disappointment cannot be reversed!**

- January 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Society Competitions  
 January 17<sup>th</sup> Guest Speaker: Richard Farman – Napoleonic Mail.  
 February 7<sup>th</sup> Guest Speakers: Steve and Maggie Bence – Northamptonshire Miscellany and Penguins.  
 February 21<sup>st</sup> Annual General meeting & 1 sheet display – Members  
 February 28<sup>th</sup> Society Dinner and Presentation Evening: Archers Restaurant, HoW College. 6:30pm for 7:00pm  
 March 7<sup>th</sup> Guest Speaker: Frank Walton – Chinese Air Mail.  
 March 21<sup>st</sup> Auction Preview – Members only  
 March 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Auction  
 April 4<sup>th</sup> Members' One Board Displays: "My Favourite Country"  
 April 18<sup>th</sup> Guest Speaker: Robin Jarman – Chilean Airmails.  
 May 2<sup>nd</sup> Society Three sheet competition – "Letter A".  
 May 16<sup>th</sup> Guest Speaker: Roger West – "An Evening Wasted with Roger West".  
 June 6<sup>th</sup> Guest Speaker: Richard Wheatley - Spitfire  
 June 20<sup>th</sup> Presidents Evening.

**Meetings recommence on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2019 (7:00pm for 7:30pm)**

**Other Philatelic Events for the Diary**

The next 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.

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

**18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> January 2019**  
**YORK STAMP & COIN FAIR**  
 York Racecourse  
 YORK  
 YO23 1EX

**13<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> February 2019**  
**SPRING STAMPEX**  
 BDC Islington  
 LONDON  
 N1 0QH

If you know of any similar sized Fair that you think should be listed here please let your Editor know.

## SOCIETY MEETING REPORTS

### Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2017 Members' New Acquisitions

Ten members brought along very varied material to treat us tonight. **Malcolm Allinson** showed us some of his newest maps including a 1627 Van Den Keere of Worcestershire (*below*) - just the right size map at 120mm x 85mm to display as the first sheet of a postal history display



**Paul Veal** displayed cigarette cards, Air Raid Precautions, covers with interesting addresses and some military mail. **John Coombes** brought two different displays. The first, a set of 18 covers of American First Day Issues between 1943 and 1951, and later in the evening a number of beautiful and colourful coin covers including a reproduction Victoria Cross and a £1 note.

**Brian Phillips** showed some interesting material relating to Robert Falcon Scott. Scott's brother-in Law was Lloyd Bruce, Rector of Binton just over the county border on the way to Stratford. Scott stayed with Bruce on his last night before leaving on his ill-fated Antarctic Expedition in 1912. Brian also showed a selection of cards with special handstamps including the Severn Valley Railway, the MG Owners Club, and a Worcester Commandery/Naseby postmark on a Civil War FDC.

**Pauline Stroud** delighted us with "Stamps I Like", showing some modern GB material including the 1981 Year of the Disabled set and the 1980 International Stamp Fair. Pauline also produced a copy of "Guide to Stamps and Stamp Collecting" which she says is most helpful in giving tips and ideas for displaying her collection.



**Ralph Richardson** showed us some more of his Free Frank covers. Tonight, we saw some covers that he had picked up recently at Midpex. William Ramsay Maule, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Panmure (*left*) laid his signature to the first cover shown. We next saw a letter from Thomas, The Lord Denman, who held several

political offices under William IV and then Queen Victoria, on a letter that had been sent to the wrong place and was marked *Missent to Leicester*. Finally Ralph showed a letter from the Bishop of Salisbury, signed 'J. Serum'.

**David Gillespie** educated us in another area of his collecting. This time we were in Argentina, as David had been recently putting a collection together from there. **Lyel Swingler** displayed additions to his collection of Rotterdam, including a 1<sup>st</sup> Flight airmail cover from Liverpool to Rotterdam. We then saw many airmail covers to worldwide destinations. Lyel then finished off in a completely different direction with some East Indies Postal Stationery. **Chris Jackson** brought along some more material from his collections of Needle makers and Worcestershire Postal History. We saw a needle makers letter to Norway from 1914, a postmark error showing WORSCETER, various Redditch and Area Billheads – mostly from needle makers, and finishing off with some Redditch at War postcards. **Pete Elms** showed us an interesting series of modern 30p stamps exhibiting various colour phosphors and flaws.

A super start to our season showing that most of our members still hunt down material even when there are no meetings.

**Malcolm Allinson**

### Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2017 Guest speaker: Barry Stagg Parachutes

At tonight's meeting we welcomed Barry Stagg with his display of parachute related material. Barry explained that his interest in parachutes and parachuting began many years ago when he lived in Ipswich. He embarked on a course of six jumps from a Cessna 172 light aircraft, but it came to a crashing end when he landed on the goalpost of a nearby football field, whilst a match was in play.



I found the layout of Barry's display to be excellent; he used a cream coloured A3 size paper in landscape orientation which showed off his diverse material to really good effect. Beginning with the history of parachuting he described how the first jumps were made from balloons in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century at which time the 'chutes were made of silk because of its strength and light weight. Experimenters dropped sheep by 'chute from hot air balloons. Woolly jumpers perhaps (Sorry!) and monkeys. During the nineteenth century parachutes were used mainly for entertainment. The first military use of parachutes was during the First World War, not for aircraft pilots though, they were for observers stationed on observation balloons who would jump out upon sighting enemy aircraft.

Barry explained that by 1937 the military were experimenting in parachute use, but silk was not as plentiful as needed so as time went by Cotton, Nylon and other man made fabrics began to be used. Barry informed us however that many a lady during the Second World War was happily wearing silk undergarments made from salvaged parachutes from downed pilots. The German army used parachutes to

invade Crete with over 5,000 paratroopers landing. The British Army trained hundreds of paratroopers at Tatton Park, whilst in the USSR parachuting was encouraged as a sport. Thus they had a ready trained reserve in time of war. More recently, parachutes were used for dropping mail and supplies – useful during the Falklands war and other conflict zones.

Whilst the dome shaped canopy is still in use, from 1980 a new design of parachute was introduced for sport and competition, the 'Air-Ram' design. This uses a wide wing shape to provide aerodynamic lift rather than a dome which produces drag.

The first half of the display showed stamps, covers and articles, even a pair of the GB stamp showing the QE2, one of which had missing grey colour and looked most impressive. Barry used this to explain the story of the SAS who parachuted on to the QE2 to deal with a bomb which turned out to be a hoax. The second half of the display used postcards, many were amusing, even risqué, and Barry said this was the 'fun' part of his display as thematic rules were less formal. It illustrated well why ladies using parachutes should really wear trousers. (???????? Ed.)

Barry was thanked for a superb display which was enjoyed by all.

**Bob Harper**

### **Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2017 Members Postcard Evening**

Although philatelists have been collecting postcards for many years, either separately or as part of their collections, it has been a relative new experience for us to devote a whole evening to this subject. Ten of us managed to find enough material to put up a display and very varied they were too, which made the event so interesting. A number even found enough to have a second go after the tea break.

Your correspondent was first up with naturally a little Chilean material but at least the postal stationery cards had not been seen before. He was followed by **Lyel Swingler** with some aircraft and a few advertising cards. Lyel also found two of a bridge he knew in Holland and even included a copy of a painting of it, together with one of his own photographs.

**Chris Jackson** showed us cards of parts of Redditch as it used to be, and **Ray Field** found a mixed selection of subjects for our viewing. Nice to see some of our newer members having a go at displaying; more please. **Bob Harper** gave us a selection of his Barbadian advertising cards but the clean ones this time.

From **Paul Veal** we saw cards from Kent including the church where his parents had married. **John Coombes** had a board of railway cards ranging from the Settle to Carlisle to the Severn Valley via a couple of Welsh lines. Birmingham and some lovely novelty cards were shown by **Pete Elms**.

**Malcolm Allinson** found us several Post Offices from his growing collection of Cumberland material and **Alan Godfrey** finished the first half with another collection of Post Offices but this time of Warwickshire (no Studley regrettably).

After the break five of us had another go, starting with Alan continuing his theme of Post Offices with a few pubs included. Malcolm catalogued the various ups and downs of the post card rate together with a few Cumberland POW camps.

Pete had updated his A38 collection from the Lickeys into Birmingham and we saw part of his new material. I showed my entire collection (8) of Christmas and New Year Greetings airmail cards. An excellent evening was finished by Chris Jackson with more Redditch and the surrounding villages.

A large thank you should go to those members who found material to display and hopefully we will see more of you have a go in the future.

**Robin Jarman**

### **Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2017 Society Visit by Stratford upon Avon PS**

The first speaker was Rosalind Ragg who showed her "Switzerland – work in progress" which was based on the 1949 Engineering and Landscapes issue. Rosalind had tried to match covers to stamp issues showing individual value stamps not mixed frankings. This was particularly difficult with stamps such as the 3c which was for printed bulk matter and which became redundant due to lack of use. Colour trials, tête bêche and booklets were all displayed.

An unstamped cover to Lugano with Postage Due was cancelled with the very rare Italian hand stamp 'ANNULLATO'; only 10 copies are known to exist. The Alpine Post Road stamp showing the hairpin road from Vissoie to St Luc in Val D'Anniers was used to uprate a Registered letter to the UK. A final cover was an Express item posted to Hungary on 1.10.1956 which was not delivered due to the uprising in Hungary at that time and the letter was returned to sender.

John Gledhill displayed G.B. Jersey and I.O.M Postal Stationery Registered envelopes which had been uprated for a variety of reasons, mainly changes of rate, decimalisation or other fiscal reason. Some issues were out of date almost as soon as they were issued and with substantial stocks overprinting became the cheapest option, saving the need for huge write offs of original costs of production.

Colin Fountain displayed some of the 500 redundant Gloucestershire Post Offices. He had matched postcards of the Post Offices with items which were posted from them, many with rubber cancellations some which were distorted due to the use of oil-based ink rather than the water based which should have been used. Marks included UDC's, duplexes, skeletons and CDS's. A Bristol Ship Letter from Avonmouth to Ipswich and a telegram to a passenger on a boat at Bristol docks were of particular note.

Colin closed the evening with modern closure notices and the information sheets that the Post Office issued prior to a branch closing. The closures have led to Post Offices in Pubs and shops and some areas being served by mobile Post Offices for a couple of hours twice a week. All in all, a really good club visit with plenty of interesting material.

**Chris Jackson**

### **Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2017 Members Single sheet Competition**

This year's Single Sheet Competition attracted eleven members to put up displays. After all the votes had been computed, the evening was won by **Robin Jarman** with the description of how a letter travelled from Santiago to Sweden, via Buenos Aires, Natal, West Africa, and France from where it was forwarded to the Chilean Consulate in Mannheim and then onwards to Sweden.

Other scoring entries were from **Chris Jackson** – The Earliest Straight Line mark of Redditch; **Ralph Richardson** – a 1673 Bishop mark on a letter to London; **Sergio Andrioli** – an anonymous letter to a sailor warning him not to return to Genoa or he would be in trouble; **Alan Godfrey** – a modern cover from October 2017 with a postmark for VC winners; in this instance Arthur Butt VC of Coventry; and **Bill Belford** showing some Cinderella material namely Prince of Wales Hospital Fund stamps.

The non-scoring members were, in no particular order, Malcolm Allinson, Pete Elms, Paul Veal John Coombes and David Gillespie. It should be pointed out that non-scoring in this context only means being voted in less than sixth place.

**Malcolm Allinson**

### **Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2017 Members Displays – "All at Sea"**

Admiral **Chris Jackson** opened the meeting with events details, and a request for auction entry lists to be submitted asap. We then moved on to the subject for this evening's displays.

First on the gangplank was **Bob Allard**. Your ageing reporter has of necessity kept these notes brief due to being hard of hearing, and to the very poor acoustics prevailing at present in the hall. Bob showed eight covers including intra-Solomon Islands, Perth (W.A.) to Czechoslovakia, Nauru (ship mail) to Solihull, and a Ship Letter Telegram Cover and Telegram.

**Pauline Stroud** was next on deck, her theme was naval battles illustrated with stamps of GB and Norfolk Island, and two postcards of HMS Victory. This was followed by details of Goodwin Sands, an approximately 10 mile long expanse of shifting sand 6 miles off Kent at the southern end of the North Sea, and responsible for around 2000 shipwrecks.

**John Coombs** came on watch with postcards depicting various ships and naval scenes, relating to the battle of the Falklands. Altogether 9 sheets, 18 postcards.

Midshipman **Mike Such** followed, scoring a 'hit' with your scribe as he proudly proclaimed that his display was 'all stamps'. These included two miniature sheets of the Titanic, also stamps, many from Gibraltar, depicting the Marie Celeste, HMS Hood, and cable-laying ships. From the Fo'c's'le (spelt thus, and short for 'forecastle' according to the Thesaurus) (*the Thesaurus also confirms that this is the correct spelling of Thesaurus and now that I've typed 'Thesaurus' four times I shall probably remember it*) appeared **Len Bruton**, stating 'I shall be very brief'. He was (unlike your reporter). Not so brief as to not show the Jersey Lighthouse set.

Piped aboard next was **Bill Belford**. In his Sea Chest he carried nine sheets of stamps and photos focusing on Clyde Paddle Steamers, including the Caledonia and the Duchess of Hamilton. (Anorak note; there also exists a preserved Railway Locomotive of this name, numbered 46229) and the Titanic. The Paddle Steamer display had a wartime theme showing mine and bomb damage.

Armed with fishy stories and a lot of rowlocks, **David Gillespie** showed nine sheets of Greece, with only a little relevance to the subject in hand; an example being a very strange fellow on a stamp with hair that resembled seaweed. Your reporter then declined to record any more of this rubbish. **Paul Veal** navigated us back onto a sensible course with photos of ships, a few which he believed had connections to some of his relatives. His grandfather was a Royal Naval Reserve volunteer whose third 'ship' was HMS President, believed to be a shore-based establishment for various land-based activities.

From the Fleet Air Arm came **Lyle Swingler** with a self-proclaimed 'mish-mash' of covers including Seaplane flights and Ships. Approaching from starboard came **Bob Harper** with pictures and covers of Nimrods, Sea Harriers and a Merlin Reconnaissance Flying Boat. He also produced two Kippers (he may have said Clippers), the Cutty Sark, pictures of Empire flying boats, and a large picture of a Mercury aeroplane piggy-backing on a larger 'plane to provide increased range. Your reporter didn't catch what happened to the larger 'plane when it presumably ran out of fuel.

Cmdr. **Ralph Richardson** showed some very nice (I can't believe I said that) pre-stamp covers, having proudly proclaimed that his display had a title. Pausing for several seconds for effect, he revealed to the anxiously waiting matelots that this title was 'Rear Admirals'. True to his word, he made no mention at all of Front Admirals. One of his Admirals, Ralph proclaimed, (presumably having taken advice from his legal team), had only aspired to that rank in order to produce ten illegitimate children. Another was Sir Edward Codrington, who with a little help from his friends sank the entire Turkish Fleet in the 1820's. The Cmdr. didn't say whether this was deliberate or accidental. In any event, it led to Greek Independence.

A break then occurred for (sea?) biscuits but no Grog.

**Bosun Jackson** then announced that we faced a foreshortened second half (second third? Is this mathematically possible? Can we speculate that the first half was in fact the first two-thirds?) because most of the jolly tars had already performed.

Anyway, **Alan Godfrey** descended from the wheelhouse to deliver an appreciation of the Wilkins-Ellsworth Arctic Submarine Expeditions (what else?), which were partly financed by the pre-sale of philatelic covers. Cover sales were co-ordinated by Albert C Roessler of New York, who ended up with a one-year suspended sentence for fraudulent use of mail for his troubles, which had apparently included some nefarious dealings.

Shouts of 'Avast behind' followed as jolly tar **Chris Jackson** was escorted on deck with his Ship Letters. He explained that these were letters carried by ship. Noteworthy was a letter containing needles, which had been posted in the USA with no address, but with the request 'please send to the manufacturer of these needles'. The letter found its way to Redditch.

Participants were thanked for creating a very enjoyable evening, shipped ashore, and sent home.

**David Gillespie**  
Cabin Boy

### **Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2017** **Guest speaker: Clive Jones** **Sheffield: Steel Town**

Having read the title for this evening's meeting I arrived wondering whether the talk was going to be historical rather than philatelic. What were we to be in for? The Bessemer Penny Black? Stainless Steel First Day Covers? Blast furnace perforations? The list could be endless. All became clear when our speaker – one of the best we have had – began his display of Sheffield postal History (but not Rotherham!), which was copiously illustrated throughout.

We did get the occasional crumb of history. Sheffield like so many northern industrial cities grew dramatically from hardly anything to a thriving city in no time at all. By 1795 it had its own Post Office, so covers before that date are scarce. Thereafter, they seemed legion. The first half of the talk had a vast number of covers illustrating the city's early postal history; much like other successful industrial cities, but exciting us all when Clive showed items addressed to our neck of the woods. Cocker and Sons were writing to Feckenham and Redditch acknowledging orders for steel wire to make needles.

The second half of the evening concentrated on Sheffield's industries, especially those transformed by the Industrial Revolution. We learned that the original metallic trade was lead not iron. Lead ore (Galena) was mined in Derbyshire – in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries the most important lead mining area in the world – close to Sheffield. We saw some very early covers and letters dealing with lead, before iron took over. This change was largely due to Henry Bessemer

who in the 1850's made Sheffield a steel city following his invention of better ways to smelt iron both for quality (removing impurities) and economy (bulk production). In one year, the price of steel dropped to one seventh of its price the previous year.

The covers in part 2 were many of them orders for steel. They included examples from Cunard and from Brunel – at the time building the "Great Western" at Patterson & Mercer's ship yard in Bristol – and inexplicably from Bassets, makers of liquorice Allsorts. A further selection of covers told of the invention of stainless steel in 1912. The most intriguing item was a letter to Germany stamped 2:15pm on 4<sup>th</sup> August 1914. This was the very day World War I broke out and as a result the letter was not delivered.

This was one of the very best postal history talks we have had. There was a mass of material. It was of the highest quality and the story was extremely interesting. Finally, the speaker was excellent, Clive kept our interest right to the end.

**Ralph Richardson**

### **Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2018** **Annual Society Competitions 2018**

This year just four disciplines were contested in our annual competitions. Strangely we had no entries in the Traditional Stamps class, which to this writer is a mystery indeed. However, those entries that were displayed were of a very high quality.

In the Thematic Class, **Robin Jarman** won with "The Cetacea", closely followed by **Alan Godfrey** with "Mosses and Lichens", and third, **Bill Belford** with "Native Species Plants of the World on Stamps".

The Aerophilately Class gave us two entries; **Robin Jarman** again the winner with "From Chile by Aeropostale", just three marks more than **Lyel Swingler's** "Censored Mail in Curacao & Dutch West Indies 1940-45".

The Postal History Class produced **Chris Jackson** as the winner with "Worcestershire Postal History – 2d Charged 1840-90". Second was **Alan Godfrey** with "Triangle Cancellations of Warwickshire" followed in third place by **Pete Elms** showing "Postal Inaccuracies".

A relatively new Class to Philately is the Open & Postcard Class where a greater variety of material can be shown. **Paul Veal** was the winner here with "Aspects of Redditch and Nearby", followed by "Childhood Fun" from **Pauline Stroud** and **John Coombes' "Task Force Falklands"**.

Our judge, Clive Jones, gave a very useful critique on what he had seen tonight and said that his task of judging had been made very difficult due the high standard of the material on display.

**Malcolm Allinson**

## Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2018 Members Show and Tell

A few members provided our entertainment this evening. Here is their resumé of some of the displays.

**Paul Veal:** A quick look at the East Riding of Yorkshire with a few family history references, evidenced by a Robert Morden map of c. 1695 and a handful of postcards featuring mainly York and Beverley.

**Robin Jarman** first showed a completely new theme of Chilean Postal Stationary; a collection which is very much work in progress. After the break he displayed some notes he has written to compliment his Chilean Airmails to enable them to be more easily understood by those who may come after.

**Pete Elms** displayed some more of his Perfin collection. We saw several perfin stamps from various companies and also underprints – some from the same company but in different colours. Pete concluded with showing a few superb hand drawn envelopes, the scenes generally fitted around the posting address or incorporating the actual stamp as part of the view.

## Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2018 Members Displays: Trains Boats and Planes

With a change from the original programme for this evening, instead of being entertained by our Chairman, it was the turn of members to bring along some more of their own collections. **David Gillespie** started us off with a display of Nicaragua Air Post stamps of 1937. Some of the stamps were overprinted 'Coreo Aereo Interior'. The pictorial content included maps, planes, Nicolao, a 'native' chieftain and colonists.

**Paul Veal** showed postcards featuring random images of trains, and some ships, including three that are preserved and open to the public: the Mary Rose, sunk in 1545, raised in 1982 and now in Portsmouth Dockyard, HMS Gannet (aka HMS President), the first training ship of the Royal Naval Reserve, now in Chatham Dockyard, and the famous Antarctic research ship RRS Discovery now in its home, Dundee.

**John Coombes** displayed postcards of various preserved steam lines – Leeds, Settle and Carlisle, Kent and Sussex, Ravenglass and Eskdale, Snowdon, North Yorkshire Moors, Great Orme and Llandudno, Severn Valley, Torbay and Dartmouth; all well-chosen and captioned.

**Alan Godfrey:** a medley of first day covers, the Ffestiniog Railway, Pickering and North Yorkshire Railway, the Nene Valley Railway, the Orient Express (film) and the Channel Tunnel. Also, two RAF squadrons: 617 and 31. Then the Comet in 1958 with a Duxford postmark, Airspeed/166 Squadron, Shackleton's HMS Endurance...RNIB.

**Malcolm Allinson** put up a selection of covers evoking TPO services running in and through Cumberland. There were two important South/North lines crossing the county, one the direct route over

Shap Summit, the other around the coast from Carnforth to Whitehaven. The main line carried trains between Crewe (from all points south) north to Carlisle, Glasgow and beyond. We saw covers with post marks from sorting tenders: Whitehaven ST in 1876 and 1887; Carnforth ST in 1927; the Carlisle and Glasgow Railway Post Office in 1865 and more modern examples.

After the break **Lyel Swingler** put up a colourful display of modern air mail covers from 1949 to 1960, many sent from Amsterdam – KLM flights, also BEA and postcards of some of the planes.

**Pete Elms** gave us "Birmingham Postal History". A host of local covers from 1852 posted to faraway places, also a map of Europe showing routes and a finale of four semi-humorous postcards of old planes.

**Len Bruton** showed a display of eight 'information cards' containing high quality Nevis stamp-portraits over biographies of great railway or locomotive engineers from Isambard K Brunel to Oliver Bulleid.

**Alan Godfrey** (part 2): a wide collection of memorabilia kept by the family of a sailor on HMS Despatch, a light cruiser launched in 1919 and broken up in 1946. The ship had spent some time in the Falkland Islands and the material covered its presence there and in other Atlantic locations.

**John Coombes** (part 2): a comprehensive display of photos of the Falklands Task Force at rest and in action, all well captioned.

**Chris Jackson** put up some old covers – rail and sea journeys to or from local and faraway places, one letter from Worcester travelled on the Trans-Siberian Railway. Then there were some early airmails including from Worcester, Malvern and Bromsgrove. Some curiosities: "couldn't deliver" – postage refunded – China, two for Australia mis-sent to Thailand, a letter returned 'cos the postage rate had just gone up...finally some covers of John English & Co, needle makers in Feckenham, from 1837.

To finish, **Bob Harper** showed us samples from a recently acquired set of 62 attractive picture cards of WW1 aeroplanes painted by Tony Theobald.

This was a great evening.

*Paul Veal*

## Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2018 Guest speaker: Theo Schilderman Diamonds and Gold

The penultimate meeting of our season saw an interesting and enjoyable display on Diamonds and Gold from Theo Schilderman, President of Rugby Philatelic Society. Theo began with diamonds and, using mainly postcards and ephemera, explained the history of these stones. The love of diamonds and their use in jewellery and decoration apparently began in India or Persia centuries ago. Supplies of diamonds increased substantially in 1870's with the discovery and exploitation of the diamond mines in South Africa. Cecil Rhodes and Barney Barnato arrived in Africa in 1871 as teenagers and both prospered to the point of becoming rivals in the Diamond trade. Their rivalry so depressed diamond prices that the only solution was to join forces and this they did by forming De Beers

Consolidated Mines Limited (the name was from the farm on which the first diamonds were found).

Theo displayed contemporary postcards which showed the mines, workers and equipment. There was some interesting postal history too, but stamps were a little scarce. The large mine at Kimberley featured on many postcards. Theo explained that diamonds were found in a rock called Kimberlite which originates in the 'Pipe' which is formed by volcanoes to eject their lava. Fascinatingly the Kimberley 'pipe' is circular. Another postcard showed a photograph of a cheque for an amount of £5,358,650 written by Rhodes when he bought out Barney Barnato. These days Diamonds are found in most neighbouring African countries with Namibia being almost as big a producer as South Africa.

Theo's second half was dedicated to gold. Gold is mostly found as metal which is sieved out of the ground by panning, sieving, sluicing as well as mining. This part of the display contained many more stamps than the first half, reflecting on the world-wide distribution of this metal and although it seems to be 'common' Theo said that if all the gold ever mined was brought together it would barely fill two Olympic sized swimming pools!

This was a display of 180 sheets which was very interesting indeed. In my case I learned a lot of facts about these subjects which I never knew.

**Bob Harper**

### **Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2018 Visit by Herefordshire and Mid Wales PS**

Before we began our meeting our Chairman announced that Lyle Swingler, who had compiled the Club 'packet' since time began, had hung up his hinges due to illness. Lyle was thanked for all his tireless enthusiasm over the years. Bill Belford who was unable to be present at the meeting, was therefore ordained as the new Packet Secretary, to avoid confusion to be re-named New Secretary of Packets, at least for the first few weeks.



*Anthony Mills, John Setchfield and Peter Hellberg,  
members of Herefordshire & Mid Wales PS*

The first Hereford member to display was Anthony Mills, who admitted to having been born and bred in Worcester, but evidently had migrated westwards.

Anthony had decided that he wanted to prepare a display to commemorate a Royal Event, although not modern ("modern stamps were wallpaper"- a sentiment shared by your scribe). He settled upon Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, which occurred in 1897.

His sheets were Wallace Bros, also Linton Commemorative Labels – attractively printed but not valid for postal use. Next were De La Rue 1/- and 2/6d charity labels and although again not valid for postal use, two shown had actually been through the post. Funds were raised for a local hospital; whose patron was the then Princess Royal. Anthony displayed a letter of thanks from The Princess, "whose writing was like that of a Demented Spider". Included in the display was a booklet of the official Ceremonial Procession. Some (but not much) Postal Stationary was produced and Anthony had obtained some examples. The Barbados 1897 Jubilee Set of 9 stamps was shown together with Covers, as was the 1898 British Guiana Set of five. All were also shown on cover, frequently to Germany. These were the first British Guiana Pictorials (in the modern sense) although were preceded by the various Galleon stamps.

In 1899 The Imperial Penny Post came into operation, resulting in the three high value stamps of the set (5c 10c and 15c) being overprinted with the words TWO CENTS. Canada came into the Act with the famous set of sixteen showing Victoria at accession and at the time of the Jubilee, up to \$5 in face value. The ½c and 1c were said to be difficult, if you wanted those you had to buy the set up to \$5. The 2c is the most common. Canada also issued commemorating Postal Stationary.

The Leeward Islands produced commemorative overprints (hand stamped) on the then current definitive issue. Not surprisingly forgeries are common. A catalogue has been produced of all known forgeries of this issue. Anthony has one forgery on cover, but suspects that the overprint has been added later. Newfoundland issued one stamp, part of the 400th Anniversary Set. New South Wales and Victoria issued special postcards. New South Wales produced commemorative stamps – similar to the then current definitives and Victoria a stamp costing 1/-, comprising 1d postage and 11d donation to Consumptive Homes.

The second display was by John Setchfield. John announces himself (to cheers from one of the assembled audience) as a STAMP COLLECTOR ONLY!! He showed extracts from his excellent collection of South American countries.

Argentina: five representative sets from different periods, plus some Officials and some Military overprints. Bolivia: five sets, from various periods and including Airmails. Brazil: six sheets including the 'Bullseye' centenary issue. Chile: four sheets including the miniature sheets of the flora/fauna issue. Columbia: four sheets, mainly of the Private Airmail Companies. Ecuador: six sheets including Seebecks, reprints and moderns. French Guiana: 1 sheet. The

stamps being described as 'Wallpaper'. British Guiana: the 1966 independence overprints, now described as Guyana, and defining the commencement of a very sad philatelic history. Gibbons list the first of this set as no. 399, and by the year 2000 has listed stamps up to the cat. no. 5762. Rather more than could be justified by that Country's postal requirements. Paraguay: three representative sheets. Peru: six sheets each. Uruguay: seven sheets including the first stamps. John was unable to tell if these were genuine or copies. Venezuela: five sheets including Airs and a representative set of the 1950's Arms Issues (a set for the Arms of each of the Venezuelan Departments.) The stamps number in the hundreds.

After the break came Peter Hellberg, who, it became quickly apparent, was an expert (The Expert!) on the Taxe Marks (i.e. Postage Due) of Sweden from 1890 to 1992. Peter displayed 64 sheets of covers showing this rarely appreciated material.

The display predictably was very detailed with the cachets existing in various formats, often several different colours per format. For overseas covers, the amount payable had been translated into the currency of the receiving country. Unfortunately, all of the Redditch club experts on this subject were absent on this occasion. On concluding there was rapturous applause.

Finally, John Setchfield re-appeared showing material of Nick Nelson, who had been unable to make the trip. This was interesting material, mostly stamps of the Spanish Colony of Ifni, which as it turned out was a Port Town enclosed on all landward sides by Morocco. John was asked not to make commentary on the material as it was not his own, the information for these notes was therefore gathered from the written notes.

On January 4<sup>th</sup> 1969 Ifni was ceded by Spain to Morocco, the transfer occurring on the 30<sup>th</sup> June. Rubber stamps were used for postage from 1935 to 1941; thereafter overprints reading either 'IFNI' or 'SPANISH OCCIDENTAL AFRICA' (The Spanish West Africa general issue) were used right up to the handover to Morocco. Between these overprint issues were sets of specific Ifni stamps.

At the end of all of the displays our guests were warmly applauded for their wonderful displays.

**David Gillespie.**

**Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2018  
Single Sheet Competition**

The meeting looked a bit thin at first due to some unavoidable absences, however there were 24 entries to this annual competition including several multiple entries vying for a place in the first six, voted by the members present on a personal basis. Each entrant

was confined to one place in the first six, a rule that eliminated the chance of two members scooping all six places. This rule was exercised tonight several times highlighting the quality of the winners' material.

First place fell to Alan Godfrey's splendid entry featuring a rare coach ticket (and a wordy one too) sold at the Bull and Mouth Inn in the City of London. This was found attached to a letter dated 1819. The inn was a terminus for stage coaches to and from all parts. Named originally the Boulogne Mouth, the inn was demolished in 1887/88.

Second place for an entry that attained the same total score as the winner was awarded to Bob Harper's exposition of the Hawker Hurricane. The MC Chris Jackson had to grade these by the number of 1<sup>st</sup> choices within the total scores. The Hurricane was the workhorse fighter of WW2. Bob said that 60% of the German bombers destroyed in the Battle of Britain were down to Hurricanes.

Third place went to Ralph Richardson's entry featuring "an entire" sporting a 1d black above some more 1d blacks, and 2d blues of 1840. Fourth was Chris Jackson's colourful entry under the series title The Postal History of Redditch. This featured the former Public Hall in Church Road including a postcard advertising a play there. Fifth was Pete Elms' entry featuring some attractive 'labels' produced in response to dissatisfaction with the first George V definitives and displayed at the 1912 International Stamp Exhibition at the Royal Agricultural Hall in London. Sixth place fell to Ray Field's display of attractive stamps featuring butterflies. Ray said he liked these as they were likely to appeal to younger collectors.

After the announcement of the winners Chris invited the competitors to say a few words about their entries. As Alan could not be present, Chris did this for him.

**Paul Veal**

**MIDLAND PHILATELIC FEDERATION**

At this year's Federation Autumn Rally competitions held at Rugby, Alan Godfrey entered the Open Class with an exhibit entitled *Hi-De-Hi Mail from Butlins* and gained a well-deserved Silver Bronze. Congratulations to Alan. It is also noted that there were no entries at all in the Traditional Stamps category, so if you had entered you would probably have won it. Maybe this will encourage members to enter next time.

**and FINALLY .....**

.....there remains just enough space to wish you all a Happy Christmas, and a good New Year in hunting out more material for your collection. Please also take the time to write articles and meeting reports for this, YOUR *Halcyon* newsletter.

*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](http://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.