



# Halcyon

The Newsletter of the Redditch Philatelic Society – No. 22: Spring 2014.

## From the Chairman



Once again we have just completed another annual auction. Successful bidders are happy with their purchases and vendors have had their cheques, hopefully happy with the proceeds of the sale. This year's auction was notable for record sales. Fifty-two buyers were successful (including fifteen postal bidders) and thirty-one vendors sold material. I was particularly pleased to receive a special thank you from one of the regular vendors who could not believe how quickly he received his cheque (within ten days of the auction) or how much of his material had sold and said to me "Once again Redditch has proved it is the best auction around". The only complaint was from a postal bidder who found out his bids were not high enough to win many lots! Next year he will have to think very carefully about how high he needs to set his bids

Our auction is not only about making money for the club, but it is also a service to our members; to allow them to sell their material, combined with the opportunity to acquire new stamps and covers. Over the years we have been able to refine the auction process, perhaps most recently by using a computer to keep track of the sale and produce professional detailed and accurate invoices in a timely manner. We have tried to make the whole auction day an enjoyable experience for everyone: the chance to meet friends, enjoy the excellent food and drink on offer, to participate in the excitement of bidding and to enhance collections. We had twenty-five visitors, most of whom were 'regulars', which must prove that our auction experience is worth repeating. It is hard work for the members of the Society, but the results really do justify the effort put in.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who took part for helping to make the day such a success and especially the ladies in the kitchen, who give up their time just to keep their partners happy. It is also not too early to start putting aside potential lots for next year's auction!

**Alan Godfrey**

## The President's Piece

Whilst Christmas is now a distant memory (until the Credit Card bill comes in) it seems that philatelic activity has been non-stop since we took the Christmas tree down.

January gave an opening to spend one's pocket money in York; similarly, February provided the same opportunity in London (for two days too!). Both chances were lapped up keenly, but gloom descended when a trip to Salisbury to dispose of March's pennies had to be cancelled. Future trips are being planned for this year, but other factors will have to be taken into account as travel costs continue to escalate and home tasks pile up (you guess the priorities!!)

The stamp room, alongside other areas of Tysoe Towers, looks like a bomb has hit it. As the nights began to draw in last autumn, a *Plan of Action* was made to tidy up the stamp room. Of course such activities had to be prioritised, and sometimes other priorities took over, like "tidying under the stairs" or "tidying the loft". So we come to April and **none** of the above has been completed. I now need a PR Guru to somehow spin all this into a success!!

On the collecting front, the winter has been productive. A number of choice items have been salvaged from Dealers boxes but have yet to be fully written up, and some more research into Henry Bishop (of the Bishop Mark fame) has brought a mass of reading to be got through. Who says stamp collecting is easy?

So we come to the rest of this year and beyond. The Society's calendar continues to provide excellent value and variety; and other activities give ample opportunities for us all to gain further enjoyment from our hobby. Of course, joining in is not obligatory, but NOT joining in means missing out on so much. I for one do not see the point in just having half a hobby!

Just enough space left for me to encourage you all to at least come along to meetings. Often it is the meeting that one misses that is (was!!) the most interesting!

**Malcolm Allinson**

## EDITORIAL



A short Editorial this time, as philatelically things are very busy at present. We have just had yet another absolutely successful Auction (how many more years can we keep going??) and the weather suggests that stamp albums need to be put away and outdoor activities need to be resumed.

As well as the superb Auction, we recently held our Annual philatelic competitions and here the standard continues to grow and grow. Everyone who entered is to be congratulated on a good show which I am convinced would give any local Society lots to think about. Perhaps this will encourage other members to consider putting together an entry for next year.

We recently announced that the Society is to host a major Stamp Fair in October next year. This will coincide with us also hosting the Midland Philatelic Federation Autumn Assembly, and gives us all the opportunity to enter the Federation competitions as individuals. More news as we get closer to the event but now is the time to start on that entry; only nine sheets remember, and if you are unsure, please ask. We are not short of competition medal winners to offer advice and help.

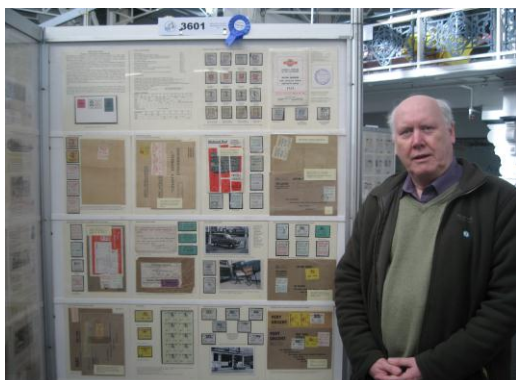
As is now customary, I would like to thank all of the contributors to this edition of *Halcyon* – **Bob Harper, Alan Godfrey, Paul Veal, David Gillespie, Lyel Swingler, and Pete & Joanna Elms.**

*Malcolm Allinson*

## MEMBERS SUCCESSES

At Stampex this spring, both Alan Godfrey and Chris Jackson entered the national competitions – Alan with a single board 16 sheet display of *'Midland Red-Parcels and Newspapers Carried by Bus'*, and Chris with 5 boards (80 sheets) of *'Needlemakers of the Arrow Valley'*.

It is a pleasure to report that both of them did exceedingly well. Alan gained a Large Vermeil and Chris won Gold again, one mark higher than when he last entered this exhibit at Perth. Many congratulations to both of you.



*Photo: Malcolm Allinson*

*Alan Godfrey with his single frame Stampex 2014 entry.*



*Photo Malcolm Allinson*

*Chris Jackson with one of his five boards at Stampex 2014*

National competitions are getting to be a habit at Redditch as we now have four members with medals at that level\*. Perhaps others will now be encouraged to follow the same path.

## STAMP PROGRAMME FOR THE REST OF 2014

Here is the latest list of Royal Mail's Stamp programme for the rest of this year.

- May 13<sup>th</sup> Great British Film
- June 5<sup>th</sup> Sustainable Fish
- July 17<sup>th</sup> Glasgow Commonwealth Games
- July 28<sup>th</sup> The Great War: 1914-1918
- September Seaside Architecture
- November Christmas

## EVENTS AND REMINDERS

Next year sees yet another International Philatelic Exhibition being staged in this country, just five years on from London 2010. At that time I wrote that London 2010 would "...unlikely to be repeated in this country for at least ten years...." as to have an annual International exhibition somewhere in the world, it would not always follow that we in the UK would have the right to stage one every ten years. We are therefore very fortunate in being able to visit yet another International Exhibition on these shores in 2015.

**LONDON 2015 EUROPHILEX** will be held between 13<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> May 2015. A long way off? Perhaps, but I am sure we all have things in our diaries already that are way beyond then. The closing date for entering the competitions has passed but with all eight International disciplines being competed, the Show promises to have plenty to keep us occupied. Follow developments on [www.london2015.net](http://www.london2015.net) The event will be at the usual Stampex venue, and will have many top class national and international Dealers present with stock for every collecting habit. Watch out too for the various commemorative items for the 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Penny Black – yet another variety of Machin perhaps????

\* Our other two be-medalled members are Richard Nicol (at Chester 2006) and Robin Jarman (at Perth 2012).



**MEETING REPORTS**

**Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2013  
The Committee Entertains**

As is now tradition at our Christmas meeting, members of your Committee provide the display for us. Tonight we saw Bob Harper and Malcolm Allinson give totally different displays.

Bob reports on 'The Flight of Man':-

My display was of an embryonic aviation project. It is thematic but it could also be in the 'Open' class since covers, cigarette cards, trade cards, photographs and brochures are included. The aim will eventually be to tell the story of 'The Flight of Man', hence its title. (pinched from Reverend Martyn Lloyd-Jones' famous religious tome "The Plight of Man")

I first began gathering the aircraft material some 3 years ago. Initially I just bought whatever interested me, 'hoovering' it up from dealers at fairs, on e-bay and Stampex among others. This ended up in three large packed stockbooks until in the early Summer of 2013 I decided that now was the time to sort it and start writing it up.

As a result, the display was very much in a 'just started' state and I was looking to the audience for ideas on how to arrange it in future. It is so easy when researching to go off on a tangent and end up with too much text.



Detail from US POST 2003 First Flight Miniature Sheet (SG.4285)

Anyway with the help of our members - and I thank them for their helpful suggestions - I think that the main section will be based on manufacturers as sub headings except for the early years and special areas such as gliders, hang gliders and balloons. Anyway it has had its first outing now and I will be more confident when showing parts in future as it builds".

**RAH**

*In order that we could have plenty of time to view the exhibits and to tuck in to the lovely refreshments provided by Members, we carried on with Malcolm and some examples from his collection of Antique Maps. He continues:-*

I have been collecting maps for over 35 years now following the purchase of one of Herefordshire for my Father's birthday, his birth county. I decided that Worcestershire should be "my County" for the same reason. The examples tonight are in no particular order, either by date or Cartographer. Some are mounted and framed; most are not (to save space!)

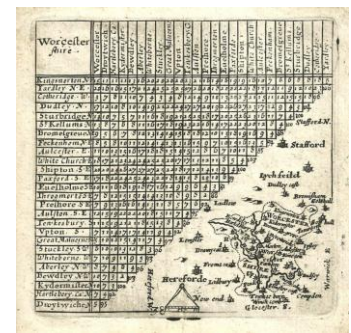
We started with **Worcestershire Defcribed** by John



Speed from the rare 1616 Latin edition of "The Theatre" publ. by Sudbury and Humble. One of our audience was heard to covet the inset city plan on this map as being of

appropriate date for page one of his Worcestershire collection!

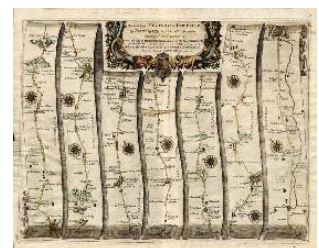
We followed with a small **Van Langeren distance table** of places in the County, from Jenner's 1657 book of "Place Names of all Parishes, Market towns, Villages, Hamlets and smallest places in England and Wales". By comparison I also showed a much larger version of the same distance table from Thomas Cox in 1720.



Next came Christopher Saxton's 1637 Map **Wigorniensis Comutatis Sabrinae** taken from Camden's Britannia, an atlas only available by subscription which was set at 50 shillings, a colossal sum in 1600's.



We then saw one of John Ogilby's Road Maps, a 1698 second Edition, of the Road from Hereford to Leicester passing through local places - Bromesgrove, Burcote and Allchurch (Alvechurch). John Ogilby (1600-1675) is credited with standardising the statute mile at 1760 yards, compared with the three vastly different values that existed in that period.



Examples from other noted engravers and cartographers were seen including Robert Morden (1695), Thomas Kitchin (1786), Benjamin Capper (1808), John Cary (1809, 1812 and 1815).

Finally we saw another "Ogilby" strip map with local connections. This one from Jeffrey's Itinerary of 1775 of the road from Banbury to Bridgnorth, complete with "branch roads" from Banbury to [Chipping] Campden, and from Bridgnorth to Shifnal.

MDA

### **Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2014 Annual Nine sheet Competitions**

An excellent attendance by members so soon after the New Year was reflected in a superb array of competition entries. There were nine all together.

In the Thematic Class, Alan Godfrey showed an entry on *Seaweed* containing stamps from across the world showing many of the various forms of the plant, and also including some essays and proofs. Bob Harper showed *The Flight of Man* which interpreted the development of flight by balloon. Both entries were colourful and well presented with a variety of philatelic and non-philatelic material to portray the subjects.

In the Aerophilately Class, Robin Jarman showed *Syndicato Condor and Deutsche Lufthansa in Chile 1928-36* which covered the early German Airmail Flights to Chile during that period. Lyel Swingler's entry was *KLM Flights 1924-29* – a similar entry to Robin but covering the first airmail flights from Amsterdam to London (Croydon) and Amsterdam to Bandoeng in the Dutch East Indies.

The Traditional Stamps Class was contested by Robin Jarman with his *Airmail Stamps of Chile 1919-1950*, and Roger Wood with a reconstructed sheet of the Queen Victoria 1/- Green (SG 117 for those technical collectors). Robin's entry covered the evolution of the stamps from early private issues, through semi-officials, official overprints to actual official airmail stamps. Roger's reconstructed sheet showed all of the aspects of how a complete sheet of these stamps would have looked, including the sheet margins and gutters.

In the Postal History Class there were three entries, from Chris Jackson, Pete Elms and Ralph Richardson. Chris displayed *Shipston on Stour to 1931*, starting with the earliest recorded Shipston mark of 25 Dec 1736, and continued to show all of the town's recorded marks. Pete Elms showed another part of his Birmingham collection by showing *Mail Going Abroad*, beginning with some disinfected Mail (surely not a slur on the good people of the City – even in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century!). Ralph's entry concentrated on a single postmark the *Free Frank "O" code*. There has been much conjecture amongst collectors and in the philatelic press relating to the origin and perhaps authenticity of this mark, and Ralph showed examples from many sources and destinations – all of course because of the Franking privilege these letters had to pass via London to be accounted.

The judges for tonight were Terry and Dahlia Harrison from Leamington Spa who carried out a

difficult job with ease and seemed to enjoy it too. Their critique was extremely positive, being impressed by the variety, quality and rarity of material on show, together with the extensive knowledge showed by the entrants in their writing up.

The results of the evening were:

#### **Thematic Class**

**Bob Harper**

**The Flight of Man – development of flight by balloon. 84 marks. Class Winner**

*Alan Godfrey*

*Seaweed 81 marks*

#### **Aerophilately Class**

**Robin Jarman**

**Syndicato Condor and Duetsche Lufthansa in Chile 1928-36 84 marks. Class Winner**

*Lyel Swingler*

*KLM Flights 1924-29 80 marks*

#### **Traditional Stamps Class**

**Robin Jarman**

**Airmail Stamps of Chile 1919-50 76 marks. Class winner**

*Roger Wood*

*Queen Victoria 1 shilling green, Plate 5 60 marks*

#### **Postal History Class**

**Pete Elms**

**Birmingham Postal History: Mail going Abroad 78 marks**

**Chris Jackson**

**Shipston on Stour to 1931 82 marks**

**Ralph Richardson**

**Free Franking- The "O" Code mystery. 83 marks. Class Winner**

Congratulations to all of the winners and thanks to everyone for entering

**Malcolm Allinson**

### **Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2014 SOCIETY QUIZ EVENING**

One of the more controversial evenings in our calendar occurs when we decide to add a Quiz Night to the programme. As in previous years we asked a non-member to set the questions and run the quiz. It was, therefore, unfortunate that Mal Ready was forced to cancel at the last minute (especially as the previous year his friend, Howard Mount, also failed to appear). Apparently an incident the previous evening at his local hostelry, the 'Goat & Tweezers' meant that he was forced to spend a few days at Her Majesty's pleasure. However, in his absence, your Chairman stepped in to read the questions and keep the scores.



Four teams were chosen at random with either three or four members: the Brown Owls, the Jays, the Arrows and the Inquizitors. The quiz followed the usual pattern with six rounds of ten questions and an interval round with the chance to score twenty five points. Each team could also choose one round to play a 'joker' and double their points. Of course the round titles were suitably cryptic to thinly disguise the nature of the questions:

Round One: *Who's who?* (Famous stamp collectors) This round was notable for the questions on four pop/rock singers who admitted to being stamp collectors. Every team knew Freddie Mercury had a junior collection, but none guessed that Sophie Ellis-Bextor was a collector.

Round Two: *Perfidious Albion* (GB) Surprisingly this round attracted the lowest scores – despite the fact that many of our members would claim to have some or only interest in GB stamps.

Round Three: *Take Your Pick!* (Multiple choice) Well answered, but only one team knew that San Marino issued the first Disney stamps.

Round Four: *Do You Remember?* Questions in this round were drawn from displays at Redditch this season.

Round Five: *Great & Good* (Classic stamps – fill in the missing letters) Two teams scored the maximum ten.

Round Six: *Spectrum* (Colours) Every answer was a colour. The highest scoring round – every team scored eight or nine.

For the Interval Round members had to match various country's stamps with a map of Africa. An exceptionally difficult round, however the Jays scored a magnificent 22 out of 25.

Overall winners were the Brown Owls (Robin, Lyel and Sergio) with 71½ points, followed by the Jays with 66½, the Inquizitors with 57 and, finally, the Arrows with a creditable 42½.

The aim of the evening was philatelic fun and education and everyone seemed to have enjoyed the quiz and, I am sure, came away with at least one new fact learnt.

**Alan Godfrey**

### **Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2014 PHILATELIC FILM EVENING**

The perpetrator of this evening's entertainment, our own Alan Godfrey, gave us a taste of things to come with his opening "Nice to see you all here at Hollywood comes to Redditch", this was then further defined as 'a series of short films on different aspects of the post'.

Alan paused from his theme to announce that the next meeting was to be the annual one-sheet display. However two sheets would also be welcome. For reasons of brevity, however, that meeting was not being billed as 'The one or possibly two sheet display', just the one-sheet display.

The audience had barely assimilated this information when the projectionist (also Alan)

launched into 'Night Mail', made by the GPO Film Unit- in black and white- and produced by Basil Wright and Harry Watt. This famous film featured the Anglo-Scottish mail train of the LMS railway. For those of a trainspotting disposition, the featured train changed engines at Crewe, from an (at that time) un-rebuilt parallel-boiled 'Patriot' class locomotive, to an un-rebuilt 'Royal Scot' class. Both designs were attributed to Sir Henry Fowler, and the majority of the 'Patriot' class of 52 locomotives, and all of the 'Royal Scot' class of 71 locomotives, were as is widely known rebuilt by Sir William Stanier FRS.

At this stage the film broke but was quickly spliced by our resident engineer, also Alan Godfrey. This was to recur, but each breakage was repaired with aplomb. Soon the words of the eponymous poem of the same name as the film were heard as the train climbed Shap Fell en route to Glasgow.

The second film was the 1987-made 'Midnight Arrows', an updated Night Mail. The theme was road/rail/air integration in the transporting of the mails, including auto-sorting, 50 million letters per 24 hours being handled by the Post Office.

A tea break was taken, followed by another GPO production, 'Air Post', an early film centred on Croydon Airport, with flights to Paris, Amsterdam and Brussels. Much of the airmail carried on these flights was collected from City of London blue airmail post-boxes.

Next came '6.30 Collection' which featured London West End collection rounds and sorting, handling 350,000 letters between 4pm and 8pm each weekday, all manually sorted.

The film 'The Flier' then featured an early automatic cancelling machine, said at the time to be 'twice as fast as a machine gun'. Mail was divided into the Counties served by 'The Great Mainline Railways'. Another train spotters' interlude with film of a Great Western 'Saint' class locomotive (designer- George Jackson Churchward) crossing the Royal Albert Bridge at Saltash.

Next was another from the GPO film unit, 'The King's Stamp'. To music by Benjamin Britten, the designing of the 1935 Silver Jubilee issue was followed from concept to completion. Some interesting shots of the Harrison printing works were included. Their printing press produced over 1/2 million stamps per hour.

Finally aspects of the early days of stamp collecting were covered. The backdrop of the rapid expansion of the mails was the Industrial Revolution, plus the population explosion of 30% in the 30 years leading up to 1840 and the fact that 'thousands of grown-up people learnt to write'. Postal revolution and expansion depended upon there being a method of paying for letters in advance, this was of course accomplished by means of the 'Label' which subsequently became known as the 'Stamp'.

Brazil was the second country to issue stamps, and soon schoolboys were becoming the first serious collectors. This was 'soon raised to a higher dignity' as grown-ups started collecting (no doubt envelopes, and no doubt they soon called it 'Philately').

**David Gillespie**

*Whilst David might be considered an Anorak with his highly technical descriptions of various locomotives featured in these films, I have refrained from "editing out" these details on the basis of my own Anorak tendencies!! Ed.*

### **Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2014 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

In his Chairman's Report, Alan Godfrey stated that this had been another busy year for the Society. We had made visits to no less than three Societies and also received visits from three others. Our guest speakers had provided an immense variety of material for us to see, and Alan was personally pleased to have seen Alwyn Peel's display on Captain Bligh

Our annual competitions were well supported and the winners of the four classes were then entered into the Midland Philatelic Federation's inter-society competitions later in the year. This resulted in Gold medal awards for Malcolm Allinson, Lyel Swingler and Robin Jarman, and a silver medal for Alan Godfrey. As a bonus Malcolm's *Uniform Fourpenny Post* entry also received a much deserved "Best in Show".

This year, for the first time, we had a "Movie Night" with a number of short films on various postal related subjects. Despite a few technical difficulties in the first half, the evening was enjoyable. Once again the annual Society Auction proved to be very successful despite snow on the ground, which deterred a number of room bidders from attending but we still achieved our highest sales for 5 years.

Alan reported that we were all shocked to hear of the death of Kelvin Moore on 15<sup>th</sup> November. Kelvin had been a longstanding member of the Society and although quiet by nature possessed a wealth of knowledge of stamps and philately, which he was happy to share with us all.

Finally in Alan's own words "Overall, another successful year, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee for their help and support, which made my job so much easier."

The following Committee were elected for the coming year:

President: Malcolm Allinson

Chairman: Alan Godfrey

Secretary: Robin Jarman

Treasurer: Chris Jackson

Committee Members:

Lyel Swingler, Bob Harper and Mike Such.

Following the AGM, we were treated to a number of displays from Members.

**Bob Harper** started the proceedings with his Flight of Man Airships, an ongoing study of man's conquest of the air. The display consisted of covers and stamps from around the world. We saw a section on 'How to build a Zeppelin' and an interesting postcard of Skyship 500 at RAF Cardington which was used in one of the Bond films. **Lyel Swingler** showed three air mail covers and **Paul Veal** brought some seaside postcards which were personal memories from his time on Hayling Island. One particular memory was of how old railway carriages were used as holiday homes.

**Alan Godfrey** showed WW1 material to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Great War. One item was a photograph of Polar explorer and WW1 photographer Capt. George Hubert Wilkins - the only war photographer to be awarded the Military Cross and a subsequent Bar for his courage in rescuing some wounded men on the Western Front. A selection of Express and Hospital cards were also included in the display. **Chris Jackson** showed us photographs and postmarks of Worcestershire sub post offices Abberley, Bayton, Lickey End and Hollywood.

**Ralph Richardson** gave his usual history lesson with some Free Franks signed by Lord Melbourne's brother George Lamb who was Member of Parliament for Dungarvan and Under Secretary of State at the Home Office (Lord Melbourne was Home Secretary at the time [1831] which must have created some consternation amongst the Civil Servants) We saw two items, one from London in 1831 to William Whewell, Master of Trinity College Cambridge, and one dated 1835 to Mr Speaker Abercromby in Chesterfield. **Pete Elms** brought in his pride and joy, an error on the 1973 7½p Sir Joshua Reynolds stamp, [not] showing "missing cinnamon", resulting in the loss of background colour at the top of the stamp. This is one of only seven known so far, so keep looking. **Bob Allard** showed an unusual collection of forgeries of the British Solomon Islands 1907 Large Canoe issue and showed us how to distinguish them from the real thing. **Robin Jarman** concluded the evening with a display of PANAGRA airmail covers plus a selection of airmail stamps of Chile.

**Lyel Swingler**

### **Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2014 ANNUAL SOCIETY DINNER**

We attended the Society's annual dinner at Archer's Restaurant – part of NEW College's catering school. We were very impressed with the number of attendees. Our fellow dinners filled the restaurant. We were half an hour earlier this year and we wonder if this contributed to the increased numbers.

Various starters were on offer. I and Jo had cheese and French onion tart and the duck. There was enough duck on the plate to serve as both a starter and a main! We then indulged in trout and chicken, followed by a brandy basket with fruit and cream. All in all, the food was first class.

The table layouts were well thought through and the room was continuously full of the sounds of masticating jaws and chatter. The only time it stopped was when the very well deserved trophies were presented. Congratulations to all on your efforts and hard work. It gives the rest of us something to aspire to over the next year.

**Pete and Joanna Elms**

### **CONFESSIONS OF AN AUCTIONEER or A Bird's Eye View of the Sale.**

Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> March dawned bright and cool for our Annual Society Stamp Auction, with everyone eager to join in and get ready for the afternoon's excitement. So eager and willing was everyone that all of the Lots were laid out in record time giving us all time for a relaxing coffee before we opened the doors for viewing. As always our Refreshment Team swing into action very early to keep thirsty workers on the right side of dehydration.

We had already had advanced bids from all over the country – stretching from Kent all the way into The Peak District. I would defy any similar Society Auction to have such a widespread following year after year. We also had very strong bids from some regular visitors who were unable to come this year (please put the date of NEXT year's Sale in your diary now!). Of course all of this advanced paperwork keeps your Auctioneer busy the previous evening sorting them all out.

Viewing is always a pleasant couple of hours as we are able to meet and chat with fellow collectors in relaxed surroundings and when time for the Sale start approaches, anticipation and excitement around the room is very noticeable. Lunch is always a joy. The refreshments on offer, provided by the generosity of members, make choosing a sandwich very difficult. A way round the choice issue is to have one of each but as the Mem-Sahib is already in the kitchen that ruse doesn't always work.

From my perch as Auctioneer, I get a unique view of the whole proceedings - ensuring my colleagues on the rostrum are happy with what they are doing; watching the material being shuffled and sorted as it gets sold; seeing the general smooth panic at the back of the room as bidding information is processed; taking bids from all of parts of the audience (hopefully not missing anyone because they hide out of sighting range!!!); seeing how the ladies are coping with the refreshments. As you can guess, I see the complete picture as it all unfolds and it does raise a few smiles as we go. Sometimes

I have also been known to convey latest rugby scores.

Being Auctioneer does however have a few pitfalls. In order for the Sale to go as smoothly as possible, almost every eventuality has to be planned for, as the chances are that if we can think it, then IT WILL HAPPEN – eventually. What happens when a Lot gets "lost" as it is about to be sold? How do you deal with a Buyer who has already paid for his material but suddenly decides he wishes to buy some more material?? What to do when THREE bidders all pull out at exactly the same moment??? What happens when a bidder either bids for his own material(!!) or bids against postal bids he has already submitted???? - and those are all of the easy ones!

Yes, you see it all from the rostrum – and of course have to deal with it immediately or else the Auction comes to a grinding halt.

Over the years many funny occasions come to mind;- our resident admin team (of three) all bidding for the same Lot - they all sit in a row at the back of the room and I thought they were giving me their scores on my performance; your Auctioneer selling an Item to Buyer number 6 only to find out later that the silly chap had his card upside down; many individuals being disappointed as they "lost" their bidding cards – your Auctioneer quite rightly doesn't take bids from a nose twitch or surreptitious wave of the hand - he is not selling cattle (Best in Show or otherwise!).

It is great fun though. It can feel like trying to keep a load of spinning plates going at the same time as rubbing ones tummy and patting one's head, but we always get to the end with smiles all round (or I have wondered sometimes whether it is "grimaces all round") . Bidders are happy with their purchases; vendors are happy with the good prices they receive; our ladies are ecstatic with the results from the refreshments and your Auctioneer is relieved that his voice has held out again.

Everyone goes home happy at this stage, except that for members, there is still plenty to do:- sort out all of the material for our Absentee bidders; sort out unsold material so that it gets back to the right seller; reconcile all of the paperwork to ensure we have sold the right material to the right buyer; and of course tidy the room up and put all of the chairs and tables back where they should go. The six o'clock glass of wine is always a welcome sight.

The Society has had yet another successful Auction and it appears with record prices (again). None of us are getting younger though and it is noticeable that we are all getting slower. However whilst we can, we should carry on with our Auctions, especially with an excellent reputation to keep, and interest from the length and breadth of the country together with damn good prices for the Lots.

**Malcolm Allinson**



**Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2014**  
**BRING THREE SHEETS OR PAY 50p**

Before the main proceedings began we were given news on the recent Society Auction. Over 60% of the Lots were sold; record sales figures were achieved and record sales on our refreshments too. The best results for years.

Fourteen members had brought displays and a few more were asked to pay 50p to the treasurer.

*Bob Harper* started off with the latest Post and Go issues acquired at Stampex. These featured the Jersey Post and a commemorative of the centenary of postage due stamps, issued by the BPMA.

*Pete Elms* chose the Victoria Cross as his theme showing a miniature medal and GB and other commemoratives, also a cover to a Captain Scobell who proposed the creation of the medal.

*Malcolm Allinson* produced four Acts of Parliament with philatelic content, the new Gregorian Calendar of 1752, the introduction of mail coaches, uniform postage of 1839, and various postal regulations for 1847.

*Mike Such* gave us a potted history of the Scout movement, supported by scouting commemoratives.

*Bob Allard* displayed the first airmail stamps of Czechoslovakia from 1918. These were fascinating simple stamps – just a frail aircraft and the value.

*Peter Baker* explained and displayed the intricate security features of Machins from 2009 to 2013.



A page from Peter Baker's display of modern Machin stamps showing the issues from 2012

*David Gillespie* described Liechtenstein, a tiny state, independent since 1866, with strong links to Switzerland, which it adjoins, and with Austria to its east. The stamps dated from 1912 and for comparison the first Australian stamps of 1913. *Ralph Richardson* who once had lunch in Liechtenstein showed us the four stamps of King Edward VIII in various settings. Ralph was born in his reign but made it clear that he is not an admirer of this monarch. *Robin Jarman* talked us through the flights of "LATI" (Lines Aeree Transcontinentali Italiene). These linked Europe to South America in the early years of WW2 but were stopped due to a clever deception by the Allies. For good measure

Robin also put up three sheets of early Norwegian "Posthorn" stamps. *Sergio Andrioli* told us about the Italian Kings from 1861 to 1945 supported by suitable old stamps. *Chris Jackson* displayed a number of old covers - a penny black with C and J in the corners, a letter from a vicar about an award to the most deserving poor villager, covers from Tristan de Cuna, a silk WW1 postcard of Hazely Down Camp, Winchester and an insured letter about needles. *Lyel Swingler* showed us his recent Curaçao acquisitions – three sheets of early issues. Curaçao is an island off the coast of Venezuela. *Alan Godfrey* talked about and displayed the parcel labels in use from 1947 to 1971, like bus tickets and applied by Post Office clerks like the current gold parcel labels.

Finally, *Paul Veal* showed some old outsize postcards, some postcards showing QV essays and a first day cover from 1975 of the Isle of Man TT races stamps featuring Geoff Duke whom Paul had met as a boy.

In concluding the evening, Alan rightly praised the displays as a whole proving the breadth of all our collecting spheres and endless interest of the hobby.

**Paul Veal**

**MAIL RAIL**

The British Postal Museum and Archive has announced its plans for the new Postal Museum premises, and also to restore some of the Post Office Underground Railway. If all goes well, you will be able to ride the old trains under Mount Pleasant in 2016. More information is available on the BPMA website [www.postalheritage.org.uk](http://www.postalheritage.org.uk)



Photo BPMA

What Mail Rail might look like at the new BPMA

**SOCIETY PROGRAMME:**

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

- |                       |                                 |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| May 1 <sup>st</sup>   | Members Three Sheet Competition |
| May 15 <sup>th</sup>  | Ian Shaw – Two Kings display    |
| June 5 <sup>th</sup>  | Ken Flint – Canada display      |
| June 19 <sup>th</sup> | Chairman's Evening              |

Meetings will recommence after the summer break on **Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2014.**



## The Australasian Antarctic Expedition 1911-14

There were a large number of Antarctic expeditions during the early years of the nineteenth century, some achieved international prominence, especially those involving Scott, Shackleton and Amundsen; others received less publicity.



Douglas Mawson (*left*) turned down the opportunity to join Scott's Terra Nova Expedition in 1910 and chose to organise an expedition to map King George V Land and Adelie Land, the 1000 mile Antarctic coastline to the south of Australia. He received financial backing from the *Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science*, the British and the Australian governments and from commercial backers interested in mining or whaling.

Mawson acquired a ship, SY Aurora (*right*), a 50 metre long Newfoundland sealing vessel and recruited a team, which included veteran explorers Frank Wild and John King Davis, who captained the ship.



Frank Wild



Capt. John King Davis

The team comprised twenty-two Australians, four New Zealanders, three British and one Swiss. Mawson, who was born in Yorkshire, had previously taken part in Shackleton's Nimrod Expedition in 1907-9.

They set sail from Hobart on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1911, stopping at Macquarie Island to set up a wireless relay station, before reaching Cape Denison (named after Hugh Denison, one of the financial supporters of the expedition) on 8<sup>th</sup> January 1912. Cape Denison proved to be an inhospitable location for a camp with average wind speeds of 50mph and with some winds approaching 200mph. A second camp was set up to the west on the ice shelf in Queen Mary Land.



Mawson's Huts at Cape Denison



Mawson formed part of a three man sledging team, the Far Eastern Team, with Xavier Mertz and Lieut. Belgrave Ninnis, who planned to survey King George V Land. (*left: the last photograph of the Far East Team 17 November 1912*).

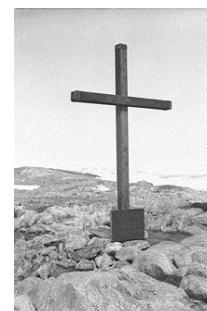
After five weeks of good progress mapping the coastline and collecting geological samples, the team was crossing the Ninnis Glacier, 480km from Cape Dennison, when Ninnis, together with his sled and dog team, disappeared through the lid of a crevasse. The six best dogs, the tent, most of the rations and other essential supplies disappeared into the massive crevasse. Mawson and Mertz could see a dog on a ledge 165 feet below them, but Ninnis (*right*) was never seen again.



The two remaining members of the team immediately turned back. They had about ten day's supplies, plenty of fuel and a primus, but no dog food. They retraced their steps to find a spare tent cover, which had been left behind previously, and improvised a tent frame. The lack of provisions forced them to use some of the sled dogs to feed the other dogs, and themselves. Both men's physical condition rapidly deteriorated, but Mawson noticed Mertz (*left*) was suffering from diarrhoea and bouts of irrational behaviour. His condition worsened and he became incoherent and incapacitated. To nurse him back to health Mawson fed him most of the dog livers, which he considered more nourishing than the tough flesh. Unwittingly this diet was making his condition worse, the dog's livers contained high levels of vitamin A, poisonous in large quantities. Mertz fell into a coma and died on 8<sup>th</sup> January 1913.

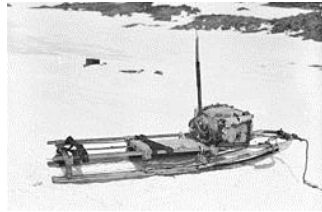


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Memorial at Cape Denison to Metz and Ninnis

Mawson continued the final 100 miles alone. He cut his sled (right) in half with a pen knife and dragged the remaining part of the sled, loaded with geological specimens, but with hardly any food, back to the base at Cape Denison. During his trip he fell through the lid of a crevasse and was only saved when his sled wedged itself in the ice above him. He climbed out using the harness that attached himself to the sled.



Mawson finally reached the base on 8<sup>th</sup> February 1913; just hours after Davis' recovery party had left aboard Aurora. The ship was recalled by wireless communication, but bad weather prevented its return. Fortunately six men had remained behind to look for the missing team. They were all forced to spend a second unplanned winter until December 1913. The Cape Denison party was picked up by Aurora and returned to Australia, arriving in Adelaide on 26<sup>th</sup> February 1914.



Alan Godfrey



The Home of the Blizzard & Mawson



Mawson and Crew on Aurora



Metz and Ninnis



Capt. Davis and Aurora



Radio and Frank Wild

**Stamps of the Australian Antarctic Territory commemorating the 1911 Mawson Expedition, issued over three years, 2011 -2014, to commemorate the centenary of the whole Expedition.**

For further reading of this story:

**Alone on the Ice: The Greatest Survival Story in the History of Exploration** by David Roberts ISBN 9780393240160

**The Home of the Blizzard: A Heroic Tale of Antarctic Exploration and Survival** by Sir Douglas Mawson ISBN 9781620874097

## BOOK REVIEW

### The British County Catalogue of Postal History

Publ. – Midlands (GB) Postal History Society – June 2013 ISBN 978 0951331187 RRP £20



This latest book from the Midlands (GB) Postal History Society continues the high standard of their previous publications. It is an updated edition of the British County Catalogue, first published in the 1970's and 1980's by Martin Willcocks and Professor Barrie Jay, and brings together the 12

Midlands Counties of Derbyshire, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Leicestershire, Rutland, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire in one volume. Sensibly, it also includes Birmingham as a separate "county" to complete the full geographical area.

Laid out in alphabetical order by County it is a record of every town handstamp used up to 1843. Each County is laid out in town and date order based upon the known dates of use of the handstamp, together with copious illustrations of most of the marks, either reproduced, or fully illustrated on covers. It is packed full of information and increasing the size to A4 from the original A5 works for me. I particularly like the enlarged illustrations of the Cary road maps that preface each County section.

The introduction usefully gives notes on how to use the catalogue and explains its genesis in the original series of the "BCC". It has been described elsewhere as a "huge improvement over the original Catalogues". I would not disagree as this is praise indeed when following such a magnificent undertaking as the initial versions. The information in the catalogue is comprehensive and will serve Postal Historians for many years to come. The County Editors, of which two are members of our own Society, and the Coordinating Editor, John Calladine, are to be congratulated on putting together an impressive and cohesive record.

The publication of this book has also had two effects - good and bad depending on your view. Good, that it has brought to the surface a number of "previously unknown" or "earlier" examples of marks; bad, as some unscrupulous collectors have intentionally held back material until this book was published, in order to be able to continue claiming particular items as "unrecorded". For this writer, definitely only to be recommended as a course of action if you want to lose friends.

It is unlikely that a similar project will ever be attempted again in order to update the remaining volumes of the BCC, but if it were, this book would be the model to follow.

**Malcolm Allinson**



## VAPOUR agreement

It is pleasing to be the first to announce the recently crafted VAPOUR agreement, this article being timed to coincide with the launch of the concept to the international philatelic world on 1<sup>st</sup> April this year.

VAPOUR is of course the acronym for **V**irtual **A**rrangements for **P**hilatelic **O**rganisations - **U**pgraded **R**egulations.

VAPOUR was conceived to meet the recognized need to protect valuable philatelic material whilst permitting some of the world's most notable philatelic artefacts to be entered into competitions at all levels- from club to international- thus making many previously unseen treasures from private and museum collections accessible to all. These concepts also bring the philatelic world into line with best environmental and conservation practice. The concepts are a natural progression from the hugely successful trials of competition and exhibition entries being submitted in photocopy format

VAPOUR comes into being as a result of the commendable efforts of the working party within the auspices of the recent International Philatelic Congress in Stockholm, arranged to coincide with the World Stamp Fair at the Stockholm Tivoli Hall.

The regulations are designed to take full account of the principal requirements for successful competition and exhibition entries, viz.-

- Philatelic knowledge
- Quality of material
- Layout of entry
- Original research

Full regulations are obtainable from your national philatelic organisation, and are summarized thus:-

At the end of the transition period (July 2015) photocopies of entries will no longer be required.

Entries must be in digital format and can either be emailed, or posted to exhibition organisers on memory cards.

Judging will be fully automated but will be required to be by three separately written and independently composed software programs.

The computer's decision will be final.

Competition entries will be formatted as follows;

The virtual stamps will be identified by SG catalogue number only. Each stamp's position on the sheet will be identified by four sets of numerical co-ordinates, one for each corner of the stamp. Each set of co-

ordinates will comprise a number representing a square on the x-axis (from 1 to 50) followed by a number representing a square on the y-axis (from 1 to 68). This coincides with standard quadrille on exhibition sheets.

Thus a co-ordinate might read 1137, and a stamp's position on the sheet be represented by four such co-ordinates, being recorded clockwise from the top left, e.g. 1137 1737 1731 1131, and preceded by the SG catalogue number, e.g. Bahamas 342b.

Descriptions, text and commentary must be extracted from any of a series of 25 philatelic text books which have been specially selected for the purpose and are listed and numbered from 1 to 25 in the appropriate competition Rules, making it much easier for Exhibition Organisers to change the list of approved books at the last minute.

Page number, line number and position of word on the line are to be recorded numerically, with a prefix 'T' for text. Thus a part-page of a competition entry may be represented by;

'SGbahamas397b113717371731113149SGbahama s451.384950416341381827193718012042T21.173.-28.7.'

The Appendix to the new regulations, available from the Olaf Riplo website ([www.or0104.phil.uk](http://www.or0104.phil.uk)), provides further information e.g. how to digitally identify the type of stamp (ordinary mail, airmail, postage due, semi-postal, etc.), also whether mint or used, condition of stamp (graded 1-10) and catalogue value (extra competition points are awarded for rarity of material based solely on high catalogue value.)

No consideration has been given for the inclusion of envelopes since it is considered that there will be insufficient demand.

It is felt that the following advantages will accrue when compared with the older style of 'Travel and arrive' exhibitions;

Considerable savings of time and expense since digitally equipped exhibitors, judges, and exhibition 'visitors' can remain at home.

Green 'negative miles' benefits.

More suited to the elderly and infirm (also, the numerical exhibit can be viewed in large print).

Reduced insurance premiums.

No need to own the material or buy any stamps, leading to removal of 'elitism' from our hobby.

We are certain that you will embrace this new system with enthusiasm.

**David Gillespie**

*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.



