



Halcyon

The Newsletter of the Redditch Philatelic Society – No. 34: Spring 2021.

From the Chairman



Dear All.

Since Christmas, the Society has been able to continue holding regular meetings via the medium of Zoom. We have always welcomed visitors to our normal meetings in the past and so the tradition continues with growing success. It seems that our meetings are getting ever more popular, with an ever-increasing number of visitors joining in with us on Thursday evenings. With upwards of 23+ individuals "tuning in" regularly it can only be of benefit to all of us to converse with others and see so much more display material than we would be able to at an "in the flesh" meeting. There are of course fringe benefits in that I often see a discrete glass of wine (or two!) in the corner of other people's screens, a perk not available of course if driving to a meeting.

We are coming to the end of our regular season, but under the circumstances it has been felt appropriate to continue our Zoom meetings over the two summer months. An initial idea is to have a meeting just once each month with members displays. I am sure you will have plenty of material that the rest of us would like to see, so do please make the effort to join in.

With us all still being in lockdown in some form or other, there is plenty of time to fill each day. I understand many members are taking the opportunity to a greater or lesser degree to mount and write up material that has lain in drawers for years (or in my case, decades!) This can only be positive as the process provides a lot more material for us all to display to each other, either now via our Zoom meetings, or later when all of the restrictions are lifted. I am of course looking forward to a splendid feast for the eyes.

The good news is that the pandemic seems to be easing slowly. Many people have now been vaccinated which is helping to reduce the spread of Covid. The Government has outlined "exit" plans and it may be that we can all meet up again in person in September. To this end we are planning for that momentous occasion, but it will of course depend upon what happens in the world over the next few weeks.

The summer months tend to be traditionally quiet for stamp collecting. However, with the relaxation of lockdown restrictions, a number of philatelic events are at serious risk of taking place! In particular, do look out for details of Stafford Stamp Show, Midpex and the York Stampshow, all scheduled to take place in the next few weeks; and if you do go to any of them, don't forget to take your mask and observe all of the social distancing requirements in place. It would be such a shame if a further lockdown came about due to everyone not heeding the appropriate requirements.

Our own programme for the next Season is being finalised as I write. Once approved by the Committee it will be circulated and also be available on our Website, so do keep checking. The plan so far is for our first meeting to be held on Thursday 2nd September. There is no problem with us being able to hold a meeting following current guidelines and restrictions on social distancing, but meanwhile do keep a look out for any enforced changes that may change our ability to meet up.

2021 is our 50th Anniversary year, the Society having been formed in 1971. We have a few plans to celebrate this Anniversary, but at the moment it is impossible to firmly commit anything, so again do please watch out for further news. As a founder member I will certainly be keen to celebrate, even if it adds years to my perceived age!

With the weather gradually improving, it becomes more difficult to justify remaining in the Stamp Room for any lengthy period. However, material is continuing to be written up; friendly dealers and E-Bay continue to provide yet more material for mounting and display; and space in the stamp room gets less and less. I do hope you have the same problems, otherwise I must be doing things wrong.

The Committee have quite a few things to consider over the next few weeks, so are planning to meet up – either virtually or if possible, in person. So do watch out for the latest news. It will be sent out to you via e-mail, or appear on the Society's website. I know a few of you have neither e-mail or internet; do not despair, you will be informed.

Finally may I look forward to catching up with you all a meeting soon. Meanwhile do keep safe.

Malcolm Allinson

DAVID GILLESPIE 1948 – 2021

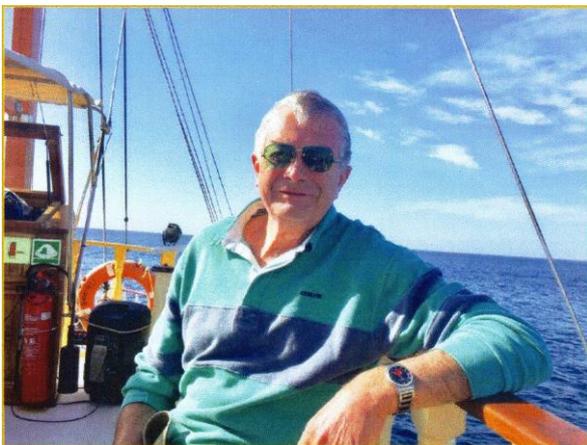
David was from Bridgewater in Somerset, coming to Birmingham to study mechanical engineering as it “didn’t take too much thinking”.

He returned to Somerset and began work at Courtaulds. As his career progressed, he was soon moved back to the midlands near Rugby. As the company diversified and expanded, David became a manager and eventually Managing Director, setting up new companies as needed. His work took him worldwide and he eventually retired in 2003. With more time on his hands David was able to devote more time to his hobbies, mainly activities stemming back to his teenage and formative years.

David joined this Society some 15 years ago and immediately became noticed as different. His collecting was, to say the least, eclectic. Any country in the world was fair game to him as long as they issued stamps.

In his own words he was definitely NOT a collector of postmarks, or postal history – envelopes as he called them; and we all had many discussions on the merits of “envelopes”, with David sticking to his guns with a glint in his eye and a wry smile.

We all saw David as a stamp collector. However, there was more to him than that. Railways and model railways – a throwback to his youth, classic cars and real ale fully occupied him together with collecting and restoring many other things including antique clocks.



David was even a part owner of an old sailing boat (again restored). He was always ready and willing to talk to anyone on any of those subjects, particularly if a pint or two of real ale were involved. We are all aware of his pedanticism regarding ‘stamps and only stamps’, but this was nothing; he was even more pedantic about real ale – nothing less than real ale

would do, and he was always ready to make that point to those around him.

He could however, mix his hobbies. One day upon visiting him to deliver some stamps this writer was commandeered to his railway shed to help out with a tricky task involving as David explained “the need for four hands”. Needless to say, my hands were placed at the “holding” end whilst David brandished what was a small hammer, but a hammer nevertheless.

His enthusiasm for classic cars led over the years to a number of awards for restorations that he had carried out. A measure of this passion was that no less than four Triumph TR’s were brought along to his funeral by fellow devotees.

In his stamp collecting, he regularly started collecting of a new country. A throw away remark that he was “looking at starting a collection from such and such a country”, would turn into a lovely display of newly acquired material (always just stamps) from that country. This form of worldwide collecting pleased his postman, as he would often say that he liked all of the colourful stamps on the packages from Dealers, eBay etc. that were delivered to David from all over the world.

David always seemed to buck the trend – in a nice way. He was always self-deprecating. Once in providing a write up of a meeting for our newsletter, he wrote of his own display that he declined to write anything as it was rubbish and apologised for having shown stamps at the stamp club. In jest of course, as his material always created discussion amongst members, especially when he delivered some quirky narrative to his displays, which too were sometimes “off the wall”.

His non-conformism also extended to not wearing the Society tie, especially at our annual auction or dinner. Originally, he said it was a protest for having to wear one during his career, but his excuses ranged from “I haven’t anything to wear with it”, to “It’s not in my size”; increasing in incredulity as time went on, much to the mirth of anyone within earshot. Those of us able to attend his funeral did, however, spot a photograph of him wearing a Dinner Jacket and a BOW TIE!

Due to the current restrictions for the Covid 19 pandemic, only 30 people were able to attend David’s funeral on 22nd April, although it was available as a live Webcast on the Internet. This service was a true celebration of his life. Along with his family, many friends from all his hobbies were present. David was summed up most eloquently by his step-son in his eulogy about their relationship over the years.

David was a one off, an indefatigable collector, a wit and a gentleman. We shall all miss his company, gentle banter and wry smile.

Our thoughts and condolences go to Linda and the family.

Malcolm Allinson and Chris Jackson

EDITORIAL



A nice problem to have during this pandemic is that as our meetings are currently held via PowerPoint and Zoom, there is the opportunity to re-run the displays afterwards. This of course helps with creating a write up of a meeting as one doesn't have to rely just on scribbled notes. Hopefully the meeting reports in this issue reflect that situation to some extent.

In the last Newsletter editorial I wrote ".....*At least with our meetings resuming in September there is now some activity to report on, but the articles are still rarer than a mint Penny Black!!.....*" That was a bit of a hint that very few members spotted, so here is a slightly less covert hint. **PLEASE SEND IN YOUR ARTICLES FOR THE NEWSLETTER. Without material to fill the pages there is little reason to publish a newsletter at all.** A Society newsletter is part of the glue that keeps a Society together and informs members what is going on. Surely it is up to everyone to not only read about your Society but also help to fill your newsletter for other members to read too.

Finally, many thanks to everyone who has contributed to the many displays we have had so far this year.

Malcolm Allinson

SOCIETY PROGRAMME 2021

Our plan for next season is that we, if permitted, will return to holding meetings as normal at St. Lukes on the first and third Thursdays. The first two meetings are listed below. Please check beforehand that we are still going ahead to avoid unnecessary travelling.

- September 2nd Members New Acquisitions
- September 16th Guest Speaker: Richard Capon
Money and Stamps.

ROYAL MAIL ISSUES 2021

Still being very cagy about their products, Royal Mail's schedule of new stamp issues continues to intrigue (or words to that effect). Their website has no information on forthcoming issues, so the information below has been gleaned from elsewhere. The next issues are:

- July 1st Dennis and Gnasher
- July 22nd Wild Coasts
- August 12th Industrial Revolutions
- September 2nd British Army Vehicles

Wouldn't it be marvellous if this writer could add a bit of background to these new stamps? I am not sure if any other hobby has such secretive suppliers.

Ira O'Mally

It is always pleasing to report a new member to the Society and so we welcome **Bill Pile** to our ranks. Bill is also a member of Birmingham PS, and those keen readers will notice that Bill has already contributed to our meetings with a number of displays.

SOCIETY MEETING REPORTS

**Thursday 7th January 2021
Members Displays via Zoom**

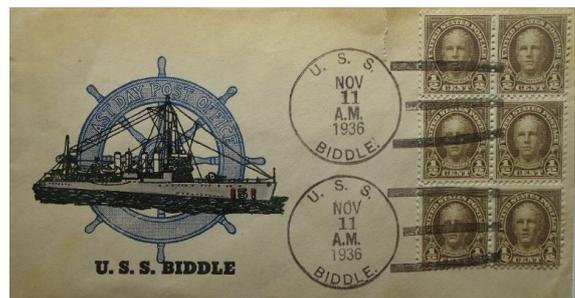
With the current Covid restrictions still in force it was decided that we could not hold our Annual Competitions via our Zoom set-up. Instead, we invited members to give an open display, perhaps of the material that would have been within their competition entries.

Although Christmas had come and gone, the theme of **Pete Elms'** display of his Errors and Varieties from modern Great Britain stamps centred around Christmas issues. We saw those from 1966, the first issue of Christmas stamps, with examples of the gold foil head missing or out of position; the 1972 issue showing a number of misalignments in printing and missing colours, and the 1973 issue with numerous colour shifts, especially striking on the 3p se-tenant strip of five stamps.

Bill Belford showed us three items of interest. Firstly, a cover from UK to Holland sent during the 1971 Postal Strike. This was actually a 9th February First Day Cover for the Europa Mail service and was franked with blocks of stamps showing famous individuals of modern history: Mahatma Gandhi, Winston Churchill, John F Kennedy, Charles de Gaulle, Franklin Roosevelt, Napoleon Bonaparte, Buzz Aldrin and Konrad Adenauer.



Bill's second slide showed stamps relating to the US Civil War. Firstly, the issue of stamps commemorating the final national Encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) in 1949 (above left) and (above right), the final reunion of the United Confederate Veterans (UCV) in 1951, followed by the 1963 5c Blues and Grays (right) at the Battle of Gettysburg, from the USPS series of stamps issued between 1961 and 1965 commemorating the Civil War centenary. For this series one stamp was issued each year from 1961 to 1965 to coincide with the centenaries of the beginning and end of the five-year war. Each stamp of the series recalled a milestone from a different year of the war.



To complete the display Bill showed (above) a Last Day

Post Office cover of 11 November 1936 from the then current USS Biddle, a DD-151 Wickes Class Destroyer. Bill narrated the story of Captain Nicholas Biddle (1750–1778) who not only sailed against the British in The American War of Independence but as a young seaman served in the 1773/5 Phipps Arctic Expedition where a fellow expedition member was none other than Horatio Nelson. He was killed in an explosion in 1778 whilst in action against HMS Plymouth. In commemoration, four ships of the US navy have been named Biddle in his honour.

Paul Veal first showed two clippings from *The Morning Herald* of the 1820s featuring red embossed 4d duty stamps (below); a lively discussion followed as to where and when these would have been applied.



Next it was two attractive blue legal seals from 1859 and the reign of George IV, complete with small solid silver inserts. These were followed by a nostalgic invoice from 1877 (below), issued by an agricultural supplier in Banbury to a farmer in Syersham, and duly receipted with an Inland Revenue Die 2 (1876) 1d purple. Finally, we saw a contract note recording the sale of 800 shares in the

Midland Railway in 1912. Two years later all the railway companies came under Government wartime control and the company was eventually merged with the LNWR in 1921.

Alan Godfrey displayed some fern related items, which can add variety to a thematic collection. The first item was an 1898 cover from the internationally renowned fern growers, W & J Birkenhead, addressed to Port of Spain, Trinidad engraved with a fancy decorated heading. Also shown was a copy of their advertising leaflet and price list, together with a picture of a selaginella, a small plant related to ferns, included in the price list.



Next was a postcard from Jamaica in 1903 showing “Fern-Walk” in Castleton Gardens, sent to Scarborough and a New Zealand picture postcard issued by the New Zealand Government Department of Tourism & Health Resorts showing Lake Manawapouri,

(right) and on the obverse an ornate engraving of Mount Earnslaw and Lake Wakitipu (which featured in the film of “The Lord of the Rings: the Two Towers”) and three tree ferns. This card was sent to Edinburgh in 1904.



Postmarks with “fern” in the name are found all around the world. In the British Isles, there is the village of Ferns in County Wexford, and Fern, near Brechin, in Scotland (below)



The final five slides showed a range of material from New Zealand’s private posts, which sprang up after New Zealand deregulated its postal services in 1998. These included examples showing ferns from DX (DX Document Exchange) (right), Fastway Post, Universal Mail, Wine Post and Pete’s Post. Some of the private posts have consolidated. The largest is now New Zealand Mail Group (not to be confused with the government’s New Zealand Post).



Chris Jackson showed us items relating to the Three Counties Show. Until 1958 the shows were held sequentially in Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester. Philatelic interest in the show only became important when postal and telegraph facilities were provided at the event.



The earliest item shown (above) was a Registered

envelope posted on the 11th June 1936 when the show was held in Perdiswell Park, Worcester some months before the introduction of the Mobile Post Offices.

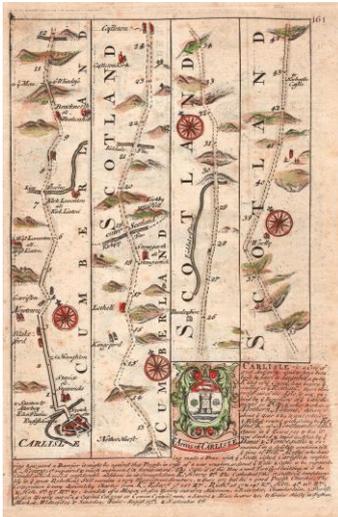
In 1949 the show was held in Spetchley Park. The Mobile Post Office attended the day prior to the show opening to the public for the benefit of exhibitors and those preparing the stands. Chris showed a cover from the day prior to the opening together with another item for the following day when the public were admitted.



Registered Letter posted at the Three Counties Showground 13th June 1949, the day before the Show opened to the public

The display continued with items cancelled with mobile post office handstamps from a number of years before 1958 when the show finally moved to a permanent site in Malvern, and followed with a number of both foreign and UK items posted from the showground.

Finally **Malcolm Allinson** showed us a few Carlisle



(Above: Page 161 of John Ogilby and Emanuel Bowen's *Britannia Depicta Road Atlas of 1720*, showing the first part of the road from Carlisle to Berwick)

PAID marks from his Cumberland postal history collection, including a not so common **CARLISLE PAID/ 1** mark from 1841. To finish with a complete contrast, we saw pages from John Ogilby's *Britannia Depicta*, an early road atlas, showing the road from Carlisle to Berwick; the route now followed by the A7 and the A698.

Thursday 21st January 2021 Zoom visit by members of Solihull PS

This evening in addition to our guests from Solihull, due to the practicalities of Zoom, we were also able to welcome three members of Banbury PS and Neil Ritchie from Sheffield. Members will recall Neil recently gave us a display on Polish Mail to the International Red Cross. Whilst not ideal, the Zoom format of our meetings at present does at least offer a much wider audience.

We got under way with a display from **Gerald Mariner**. Gerald is the current President of the Channel Islands Specialists' Society and he showed us disrupted mail to and from the Channel Islands during their World War II occupation.

The German occupation had cut off the regular postal routes, so we saw mail from and to the islands via various obscure channels. Under occupation, the use of British postage stamps for inter-island mail was allowed, but initially no post was permitted outside of the islands, and of course the post was subject to censorship and control.



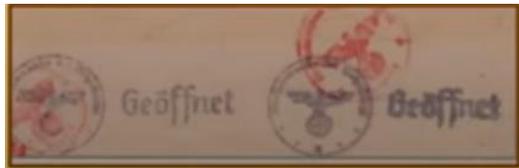
Above: 27 June 1940 cover from an evacuee in England to Guernsey, which could not be delivered. "RETURN TO SENDER/NO SERVICE" handstamp in blue.

We saw items showing the lack of a direct mail service between England and the Channel Islands; the difficulties of sending mail between Guernsey, Jersey, Sark, and Alderney; and the indirect postal routes between the Channel Islands and other occupied or neutral countries.



Evacuees in England believed they could send mail direct to the Channel Islands via Thomas Cook who acted as forwarding agents in Lisbon. The letter above was sent under cover to Thomas Cook together with a forwarding envelope to which Thomas Cook added postage. The letter was then sent on from Portugal and censored in Cologne by the German authorities but held over in Paris until the end of the War.

Even mail between the islands came under scrutiny. The letter (next page top) was sent from Guernsey to Jersey in 1943 but the Germans sent it to Paris for censorship shown by the Paris censor marks on the reverse.



and a newspaper wrapper (below) from Guernsey to Jersey was sent via Frankfurt to be censored.



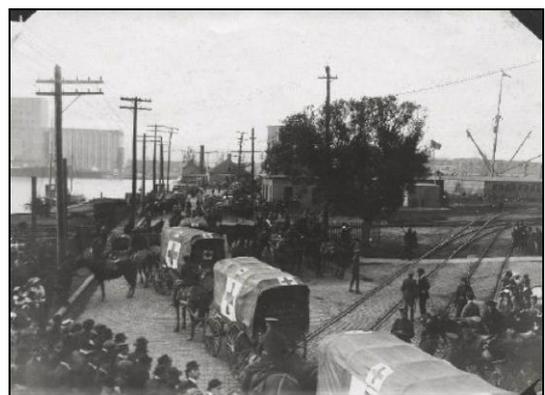
Reverse of above letter showing the Frankfurt censor mark



Above - Postcards of Valcartier Training Camp 1914.



After a few weeks training the first contingent left for Europe from Gaspé Bay (above) on 3rd October in a convoy of 32 ships and 6 cruisers, arriving in Plymouth twelve days later.



Recruits leaving Quebec

Gerald was congratulated on giving us an outstanding display of very scarce material.

Alan Spencer followed with a superb display of mainly postcards recalling the story of the First Canadian Contingent of World War I.

Even before War was declared Canada had recruited over 11,000 men to serve on the Western Front. A completely new camp was set up in late August 1914 at Valcartier just north of Quebec, as the training centre for these troops and we saw a number of illustrations of men in uniform going about their duties.



Initially the Canadians had been asked to supply an Army Division of 22,500 men. In fact, this first contingent consisted of 31,200 men and officers together with 7,500 horse. The extra 10,000 were sent as reserve troops rather than leave them in Canada and not being able to use them.

In England the troops were stationed on Salisbury Plain for further training and awaiting embarkation to France.



Whilst at Salisbury the troops were inspected by King George V.



Above and below - King George V reviewing the Canadian troops on Salisbury Plain 4th February 1915 just before they embarked for France.



Alan has given us a thoroughly informative story of just a small yet important part event of the War.

For more information search out:
 The Canadian Army on Salisbury Plain:
 August 1914 to February 1915.
 Author T.S. Crawford
 ISBN Number 13: 9780857041555

Malcolm Allinson

**Thursday 4th February 2021
 Guest Speaker: Steve Harrison
 Perkins Bacon and The Philatelic Congress of Great Britain**

The first Philatelic Congress was held in February 1909 in conjunction with a stamp exhibition at Hulme Town Hall by the Manchester Junior Philatelic Society, for which Perkins Bacon, the printers who printed the Penny Black, were commissioned to produce souvenir labels for the event. Perkins Bacon produced similar souvenirs for many subsequent Congresses and we saw numerous examples of these from Steve's collection.

For the 1910 Congress held in London, the labels produced by Perkins Bacon were based upon the design of a Ceylonese Revenue stamp. (Right: 1910 Congress Souvenir label printed in blue. Labels of the same design were also printed in black and red)



For the 4th Congress in 1912 held in Margate, Perkins Bacon produced labels for the Queens Highcliffe Hotel, the venue for the event. Five colours were issued: black, violet (right), green, red and blue. Congress labels were also produced such as these below.



A tete-bech pair imperforate in cerise and black (above), and a 3rd May 1912 last day cover (below) sent to Dover.



For the 22nd Congress in Bath from 18th - 21st June 1935, numbered souvenir sheets were issued (below).



Congress is an opportunity for philatelists to network, view displays and attend the Congress Banquet. Each year a Congress Medal is presented, usually to a single individual, "in recognition of dedication to the hobby over many years". The first recipient of the medal was Wilfred Haworth at the 1959 Congress in Torquay.

The 27th Congress was held in Bournemouth between 3rd and 6th May 1940. Also celebrated was the centenary of the adhesive postage stamp. Labels (right) were produced by Perkins Bacon on behalf of the Postal History Society both in blue and black (5000 pairs), together with 1000 pairs of book plates, again in blue and black.



The above is but a small area of Steve's collection, concentrating on material produced by Perkins Bacon. Other printers have over the years also produced congress material, notably Harrisons, for which we are told are not related to Steve!

Steve must be congratulated on building up and acquiring such a collection and the Chairman thanked him for his wonderful display tonight.

For more information search out:
 100 years of the Philatelic Congress of Great Britain, 1909-2009.
 Author: Colin Searle
 ISBN 978 0 956 1905 0 5

Malcolm Allinson

**Thursday 18th February 2021
 Member's One Sheet Displays via Zoom**

Tonight's meeting was also scheduled as our Annual General Meeting. However, with the current pandemic restrictions the AGM will now be held whenever we are allowed to meet up in person again. Despite this, we have had a wonderful evening of displays, augmented by a number of visitors to our Zoom meetings. Most displays consisted of a number of single sheets, which added to the ingenuity of following (or not) the theme of the evening.

Roger Wood showed us two items of postal history from Clitheroe in Lancashire. First the **CLITHERO** 'horseshoe' on a letter 5 years earlier than previously recorded, followed by a **CLITHEROE** cds for APR 17 1841 on a Mulready 1d. letter sheet - Forme 4 Stereo A78. Roger then moved to an album page of KGV Seahorses including three lovely shades of the £1 value, finishing with a page of modern slogan postmarks.

Alan Spencer (Birmingham PS) told us a very sad story. In the early hours of 29th May 1914 the *RMS Empress of Ireland* collided with the Norwegian collier *Storstadt*, just off Father Point in the St. Lawrence River. Within 14 minutes the *Empress of Ireland* had sunk with the loss of 1,012 lives. The display showed a postcard of the *Empress of Ireland* and two envelopes which were subsequently salvaged. One had a cachet in purple and the other in green. In the latter case there was also the ambulance cover in which it was subsequently delivered to the recipient.

Pete Elms showed three individual items; a modern envelope postmarked 21 January 1986, the year slug having been inverted in the stamper; a letter mis-sent to Birmingham instead of Buckingham; and a 2d. Registered envelope from Birmingham (above) with a block of 4 x 2½d Jubilee stamps paying the 2oz. foreign postage rate. At that time compensation on foreign mail was limited to a maximum of £2.



Paul Veal displayed two pages of postcards of Hayling Island near Portsmouth, a place he knows well from frequent visits there. We saw eight postcards of Hayling Island, Langstone waterfront and disused water mill, and Emsworth waterfront in Hampshire. The postcards ranged from c.1900 to the 1970s and two reprints of very old views of the two mainland locations. None of the cards had seen postal service. The Hayling views comprised an aerial shot of Hayling Island Sailing Club, a rather faded shot of the railway carriage homes dating from the post First World War period (left), Salters Quay and the oldest card showing the seafront looking east featuring a tennis court and Westfield House, a mansion demolished in 1993.



carriage homes dating from the post First World War period (left), Salters Quay and the oldest card showing the seafront looking east featuring a

tennis court and Westfield House, a mansion demolished in 1993.

Colin Searle showed us items from the 1st International Gibraltar – Tangiers Airmail, the shortest International Airmail route in distance and possibly the shortest Airmail route in longevity. The first flight was on 8th October 1931 and we saw a cover from that flight (below).



The service was stopped in January 1932 and during those 3-4 months it is believed only 6 flights were made carrying Airmail.

Douglas Nethercleft (Banbury and Stratford PSs) showed a selection of Coats of Arms and Heraldic Devices found on the flaps of envelopes addressed to a Game Farm in Watlington, Oxon. These included the Crests of a variety of institutions ranging from major County Houses to Oxford Colleges and Hotels purchasing game for their dinner tables. Many of the devices bore Latin inscriptions being family, regimental or institutional mottoes - for example *Industria atque fortuna* (By industry and fortune), *Vincere vel mori* (Win or die) and *Fortiter in re* (Resolute in action). Douglas had used the exercise of providing a Zoom display to explore the possibilities offered by Microsoft Office 365 and PowerPoint presentations in particular. Although he looked forward to attending Club meetings again in person, he felt that this very successful method of showing philatelic and other material could readily be embraced by all philatelists.

A display on the *FIRST MAN TO WALK IN SPACE* came from **Bill Pile** (*Birmingham PS*). Alexei Leonov was a Soviet Cosmonaut, who on 18th March 1965 during the flight of **VOSKOD 2** became the first man to go on a space walk. The display showed stamps, and a cover from 1965, showing artistic impressions of the space walk. The 1965 souvenir sheet from USSR showed both Alexei Leonov and pilot Pavel Belyayev. The spacewalk lasted just over 12min. but Alexei was outside the spacecraft over 23min because his spacesuit ballooned during the spacewalk and he had to release suit pressure to be able to re-enter the airlock. The final slide showed the airlock arrangement, which was abandoned after Alexei returned. Voskod 2 completed an additional 16 orbits before, because of technical problems, landing some 2000km off target. The cosmonauts then spent the night in the space capsule surrounded by wolves before being rescued. Leonov went on to become the Russian commander in the Apollo Soyuz Test Project in 1975.

Alan Godfrey displayed four different slides, each with a different aspect of collecting. The Imperial Fruit Show & Canners' annual exhibition displayed fruit from across the Empire. Each year it moved to a new venue around Great Britain. Six 'cinderella' advertising labels were issued in 1930s. (*Those of 1931, 1934 and 1938 shown below*)



Territory, South Georgia & South Sandwich Islands Gilbert Islands and Hungary.

Steve Harrison (*MPF and Sutton Coldfield Chairman*) showed us some GB registration material for Ocean Letters.

John Davies (*Banbury PS and GBPS Past President*) showed us items relating to the 1890 Vienna Philatelic Exhibition. Held from 20th April to 4th May at the Museum of Arts & Industry in Vienna, this celebrated fifty years since the introduction of the world's first stamp (The Penny Black). This was the first International Stamp Exhibition in the world. Labels were produced by the State Printing Works to demonstrate printing and perforation of stamps. They were produced in a variety of colours and on various coloured papers, including some brought in by visitors, in sheets of 16 (4 x 4). A copy was given to each visitor. Over 100 varieties of the labels can be collected, some of which are shown below.



A special label was printed in purple on the day of the visit of Emperor Franz Joseph on 23rd April. 147 Exhibitors took part in the competition with Messrs. M. P. Castle, Douglas Garth and Charles Colman of the London Philatelic Society (now the "Royal") all winning gold medals.

Bob Harper gave us a short display of DiscWorld stamps. Discworld is the fictional setting for the late Terry Pratchett's fantasy novels, for which there is much related ephemera collected by many avid followers.

Chris Jackson showed us some more Worcestershire Postal history including a letter (*below*) sent from Birmingham to Stourbridge which was returned on the same day, so showed two Birmingham and two Stourbridge cancellations, all for 25th May 1849!



We then saw an Undated Circular Datestamp of Wolverley, near Nuneaton. This unrecorded undated circular postmark (*left. Type D4 in the Midland (GB) PHS Undated Circle book*) in blue/green ink on cover is dated 14 April 1859. It is recorded in the GPO Proof Books as issued to Nuneaton on 18 February 1859.

This was followed by a Registered cover from RAF Snitterfield, near Stratford upon Avon – a wartime airfield in use from 1943 to 1946. The registered cover dated 20th November 1944 was franked with the RAF PO postmark used at the camp (*right*).



Alan concluded with a few words about Fabian Gottlieb Thaddeus von Bellingshausen (1778-1852). Born in Estonia, he served in the Russian navy. He was an Antarctic explorer who sailed with two ships, Mirny and Vostok, and is credited as being the first person to sight the Antarctic continent on 27 January 1820. We saw stamps illustrating Bellingshausen from Estonia (on Miniature Sheet), British Antarctic



Letter to Stourbridge backstamped Birmingham Code C and a Stourbridge skeleton (Code 4) in green (left); and the same letter returned to Birmingham showing another green Stourbridge skeleton and a Birmingham arrival cds – code L (right).

Malcolm Allinson completed the displays with a brief look at the Penny Black stamp, discussing its design

pedigree and showing some of the ways of determining the printing Plate used for any particular stamp - Zoom being most useful for seeing detailed magnification.



One Penny Black stamp and the obverse of the 1837 Wyon City Medal – the model for the design of the Queens head.

Thursday 4th March 2021
Guest Speaker: Bill Pile
The Notopfer issue of Germany.

Tonight, our guest, Bill Pile from Birmingham PS, gave us a wonderful presentation on the Emergency Victims Berlin Tax Stamps, otherwise known as The Notopfer Issue of Germany. This was a change from our programme as Bill's original display was not in a PowerPoint format to enable it to be viewed as a Zoom production. Nevertheless we were not disappointed.



(Left: German civilians watching air supply planes at Tempelhof)

The Russian blockade of West Berlin (June 1948 – May 1949) was precipitated by the West's introduction

of currency reform in Germany – the introduction of the Deutschmark. The hardships of the blockade led to the introduction of a tax throughout West Germany levied at 2% on all income and earnings to help fund the Berlin Airlift being carried out by the US, French, British, and Commonwealth countries Air Forces. Postal services were also levied from 1st December 1948 to 31st March 1956 at the rate of 2pf. per item and small blue stamp labels were introduced to signify payment.



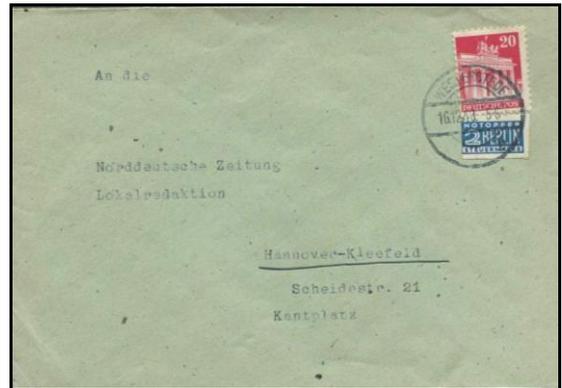
These labels, the text translating as "Emergency Victims/2 Berlin / Tax Stamp", soon became known as "Little Blue Fleas" (left), likely because the first

issue was imperforate and a nuisance to the postmen. There are 8 distinct issues of this stamp; 4 different stamp types; 6 different watermarks (one of which is inverted making 7 in total); and 6 different perforation types – plus some of the early imperforate stamps

perforated locally by individual postmasters! Stanley Gibbons lists 19 versions of this stamp but there are of course many more unlisted varieties.

To sort out these stamps is truly an unenviable task for anyone, but Bill said that he has great fun going through a box of these stamps sorting them out. This is evident as he gave us a detailed display of all of the types and varieties one could wish to see.

What we saw was a tour de force in the examination of a single stamp, even exceeding those for the Penny Black. We saw many examples of the different printings, watermarks, and perforations – too many I'm afraid to list here, even if this writer had managed to note them all down!



Cover sent from Westerstede in Lower Saxony to Kleefeld in Hanover dated 16 December 1948. Postage paid 20pf plus 2pf tax

The stamps certainly did what they were intended for. Over the eight years of their existence, some 17 billion stamps were used, raising some 430 million German marks during the life of the tax.

The standard reference for these stamps is "Die Notopfer und Wohnungsbaumarken 1948-1956" by Peter Harlos published in 1996. There is also a website dedicated to these stamps:

<http://www.arbeitsgemeinschaft-notopfer-und-wohnungsbaumarken.de/>

Malcolm Allinson

Thursday 18th March 2021
Members Displays via Zoom

Alan Godfrey began this evenings displays on the theme of Phytoplankton, displaying many stamps showing phytoplankton issued from countries all around the world.

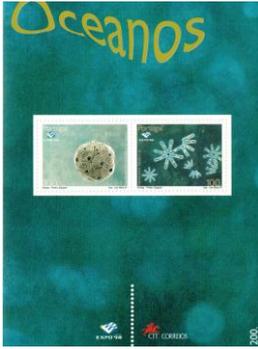
He explained that these creatures are a key part of ocean and freshwater ecosystems.

The name comes from the Greek words φυτόν (phyton), meaning "plant", and πλαγκτός (planktos), meaning "wanderer" or "drifter".



(Above: BAT 1984 £ definitive stamp showing the Antarctic marine food chain.)

Phytoplankton live in the well-lit surface layers of oceans and lakes and form the base of marine and freshwater food webs and are key players in the global carbon cycle.

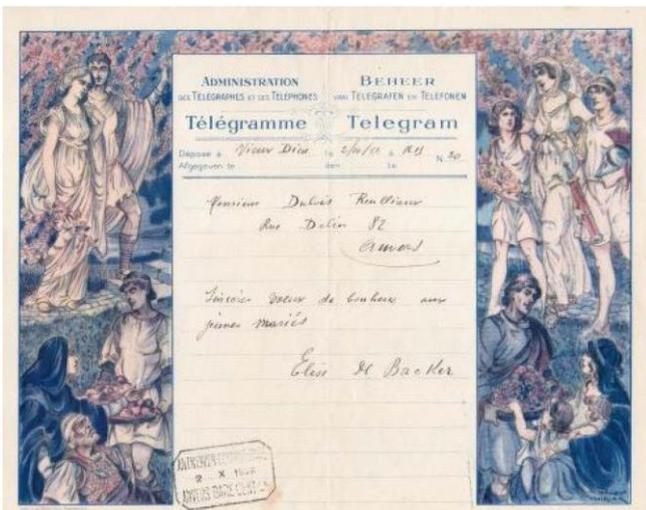
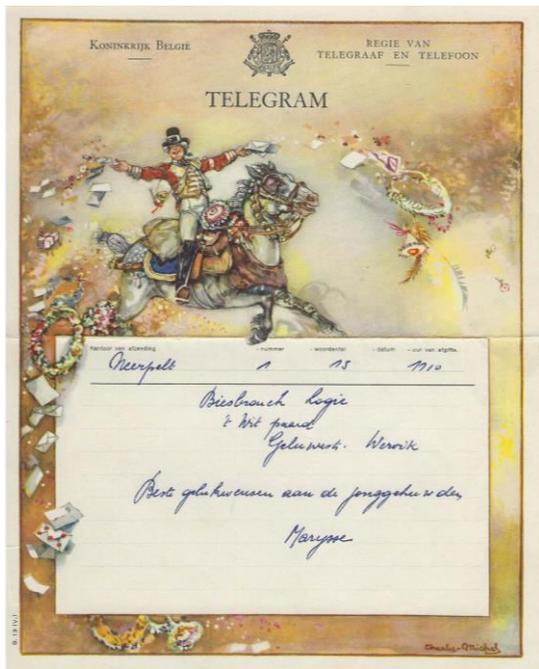


(Left: Miniature sheet from Portugal, issued for EXPO '98 showing phytoplankton Coccolithophore (left) and Dinophysis acuta (Dinoflagellate) (right).

Most phytoplankton are too small to be individually seen with the unaided eye. However, when present in high enough numbers, some varieties may be noticeable as coloured patches on the water surface due to the presence of chlorophyll within their cells.

Bill Pile showed us some beautiful Belgian Illustrated Telegrams, denoted at the time as Luxury Telegrams. The idea was for a premium Service as a charitable aid for the National Work for the Well Being of Children. This service began in July 1925 and reached a peak in the post war years of 1948-56.

Below. Examples of Luxury Telegram forms.

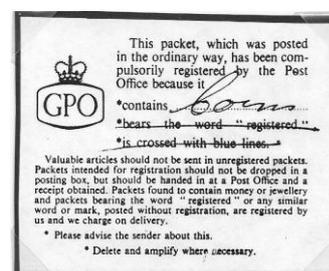


Colin Searle showed us some World War II Civilian Censorship mail from Malta., amongst which we saw a letter censored on 2nd September 1939, the day before war started; a letter with 10 farthing stamps making up the 2½d rate to Libya; an Airmail letter of 1941 from Malta to London and a 1944 Airmail letter to New York.



Above: Airmail letter dated 14 June 1941 from Malta to London during the siege (11 June 1940 – 20 November 1942), showing 5s 4d postage; Air Mail label; Registration label for the Banco di Malta; a Patriotic label "MALTA is grateful to the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force for the safe arrival of this letter"; a triangular censor handstamp; an Examiner 26 resealing label and finally a Boy Scouts "7" handstamp. A lovely item of postal history.

Dahlia Harrison showed us some Malta Instructional Marks. These were usually used to indicate a change in the postage rate for the item in question, e.g. insufficient postage. We saw a postcard from Paris to Malta in 1904 which was paid 5c, but the charge for postcards abroad was 15c.; an airmail letter from Malta to Turin which had been returned for an additional 3d charge to be added; and finally an Airmail letter from Guildford to Valetta (below) with a COMPULSORY REGISTRATION mark. The letter was accompanied by a Post Office label explaining that as the letter contained coin it had been compulsorily registered in Valetta and so was charged an extra 6d to the recipient.



Terry Harrison showed us some examples of the Crowned Circle Handstamp of St. Vincent. This mark was sent to St. Vincent from the GPO in January 1852, and used from then on on unstamped mail.

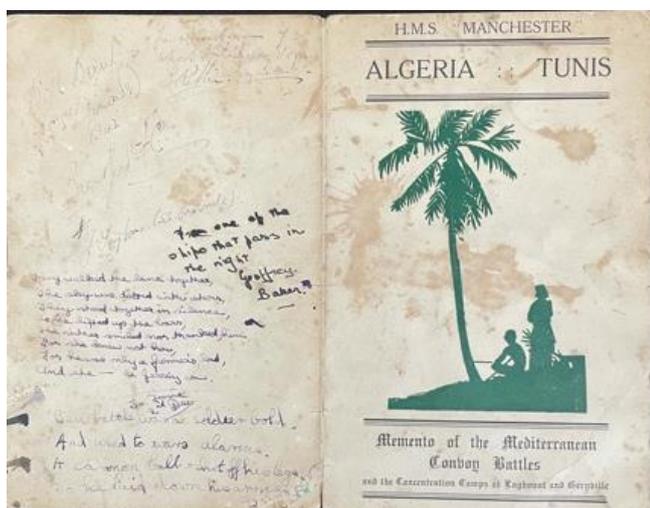


Above; Supplies of the 1861 one penny and six pence stamps were exhausted in June 1862 and this handstamp was brought into emergency use to denote payment of covers without adhesives, pending the arrival of the next consignment. Letter to London marked 'Pr Steamer', showing red crayon '5', 'PAID/AT/ST.VINCENT', small St. Vincent datestamp and red London Paid arrival c.d.s. for 30 OC 62.

Steve Harrison showed us a Last Day of Registration Letters cover from 26 June 1993 (below). By that time, the registration service had merged with the Special Delivery system, so effectively became redundant.



Roger Wood told us an interesting story about HMS Manchester and showed a card printed as a memento of the convoy battles in the Mediterranean in 1942.



The card (above) is autographed by a number of the crew. HMS Manchester was involved in convoys helping to relieve Malta during this period and was eventually sunk in August 1942.

Thursday 1st April 2021 Guest Speaker: David Hutchins From Tonga to Togo

The meeting began with the sad news that David Gillespie had passed away a few days before. Members reflected in a minute's silence. (A tribute appears elsewhere in this Newsletter Ed.)

Our guest this evening was David Hutchins, with a display having an intriguing title. David explained that Tongan stamps were first inscribe TOGA. With TOGO being only one letter different, there was plenty of opportunity for a mix-up. So David set out to get us literally from Tonga to Togo – difficult as one is in the pacific and the other in West Africa, but I am pleased to say he succeeded.

We began with a brief history of Tonga and its connection with both Captain Bligh and Captain Cook. The first King of a united Tonga was King George Tupou I (r. 1875-1896) The first Tongan stamps were supplied by the New Zealand Government Printing Office in 1886 (right 1d carmine 1886-88 SG 1.)



We then moved on to Tin Can Mail on Niufo'ou Island. Niufo'ou lacked a deep-water anchorage so ships had to station offshore. Postal deliveries were made by having mail thrown overboard in biscuit tins and retrieved by local swimmers. This Tin Can mail became popular with philatelists during the 1930's and 1940's from what had become a major tourist attraction with visiting cruise ships, by stamping all the mail and sending it on.



Our next stop was Tongan Self Adhesive Coin stamps of the 1963. Initially round in shape, future issues had interesting shapes e.g. a banana (1969 SG 208/4) and also included the shape of the island itself. (1964 SG 147/50).

David then took us on our journey to Togo; firstly, via Fiji, which as David said had no obvious links but was geographically close! The next stop was Niue which has a 'Togo chasm', a natural fissure in the volcanic rock of the island, and a beautiful tourist attraction. Samoa was our next port of call, and perhaps our main link in the chain. Under the 1899 Tripartite Agreement at the conclusion of the Samoan Civil War, Britain, in return for relinquishing its interests in Samoa, gained various rights to places such as the Solomon Islands, Gold Coast and (here's the link) Togo in West Africa.

Togo, or Togoland as it was then, was a German Protectorate. Its first stamps in 1888, were German, until in 1897 these stamps were overprinted "Togo".

In August 1914 Togo was invaded in the First World War by France and Britain who then held the territory until 1919. Overprinted stamps were used by both Britain and France during this period.



German Togoland stamps overprinted by both French (left) and British (centre) occupation forces. Britain also used overprinted Gold Coast stamps (right)

After the War, the country was divided into British Togoland and French Togoland, under the 1922 Treaty of Versailles. The British Togoland was eventually absorbed into Gold Coast which ultimately became independent Ghana in 1957.

A fascinating story, whose title link needed a little leap of faith, but nevertheless a most interesting and illustrated evening.

Malcolm Allinson

**Thursday 15th April 2021
Zoom Displays of Postcards from
Members and Guests**

This evening we were treated to 13 postcard displays by members and guests.

Bill Pile started with a postcard by Cynicus from "The Flyer" range, inviting the recipient to visit Spalding, the town of his birth. This type of card was very popular as it allowed the publisher to produce many postcards by changing the name of the town or city only. Similar series like "Our Local Express", "Our Village" and "The Lovers Walk" were also produced by Cynicus Publishing Company. The Spalding postcards showed firstly the oldest building in the town "The Old White Horse Public House", initially a dwelling built in 1553. Three postcards of shop fronts were then shown, with a short history of each shop, the last of which "Pennington's" (below) was destroyed in May 1941 during an air raid.



The final pair of postcards depicted the floats used during the "United Nonconformist Sunday School Parade of 1911", a celebration which started in 1838 with Queen Victoria's Coronation.

Chris Jackson started by showing postcards of Gustav Hamel and Benfield Hucks during the 75 mile Round Birmingham Air Race in August 1913. The old racecourse at the bottom of Beoley Road was used as a staging point on the race and the pictures were of the two pilots and their machines on the ground at Redditch.



Postcard of Benfield Hucks arriving at Redditch 30th August 1913.

The V.A.D. Hospital at Tardebigge in the First World War was the subject of the next section with cards showing the patients and staff, the premises and a rare card of the inside of the hospital ward with a message referring to the writer delaying the sending of a parcel "as it would be unfair to the postman in the heavy snow." Cards of the Church Institute and the planned V.A.D. Hospital in the upstairs room followed. A bit like the recent Nightingale Hospitals, it appears that the venue was never used as a hospital.

Finally Chris showed cards of Edith Cavell and her grave in Norwich Cathedral and briefly told the story of her famous quotation that she made the night before her execution by the German firing squad.

Dahlia Harrison displayed postcards advertising, and indeed promoting, smoking. Prior to the Great War cigarette smoking – as opposed to manly cigars and the traditional pipe – was considered to be on the effeminate side for real men and generally too inappropriate an activity for ladies. Soldiers returning from the Crimean War (1854-1856) changed those perceptions, contributing to the rise of smoking in the UK.



During the First World War, Smoking or Tobacco funds were set up as a means of supplying Troops with cigarettes. Cigarettes proved to be just the thing to keep soldiers occupied during the long stretches of relative quiet and boredom at the front. They created a sense of camaraderie when shared out among mates, and by an odd quirk of reasoning, they were also thought to help

keep the men away from hard liquor and loose ladies. (although nothing was said about loose liquor and hard ladies! Ed.)

Smokes for the Troops Funds became one of the most successful and enduring fund-raising efforts of the war. A number of tobacco funds were set up which used picture postcards in their advertising. Many of the picture postcards of the period were illustrated specifically to highlight the continued need for funds to keep front-line soldiers supplied with tobacco and cigarettes.



Above: Miss Aimée Gratton Clyndes: one of over 750 cards produced for 'The Performer Tobacco Fund'. Produced by The Newspapers Patriotic Tobacco Fund; approved by the War Office and licensed by the War Charities Act 1916.

After the war the habit of cigarette smoking among all layers of society persisted, quietly but relentlessly, taking a toll of premature death among the men who learned to smoke in the trenches. The smoking habit would be further reinforced by the experiences of another world war a generation later.

Bill Belford showed us the Norwegian Maritime Charity stamps. From 1941 to 1945 Norway issued definitive and commemorative stamps with a surcharge or "surtax" on them designed to raise money for national organizations, public events, and public charities. We saw the 1944 issue of three stamps (issued on May 20, 1944), surcharged to benefit the victims of wartime ship sinkings and their families.

The three stamp designs feature (below left) the SS Barøy sinking (10ø+10ø), (below centre) the SS Irma sinking (20ø+10ø), and (below right) the SS Sanct Svithun (15ø+10ø) being attacked by a British aircraft. The stamps are inscribed either "Help the Victims" or "Do Not Forget the Victims" in Norwegian.



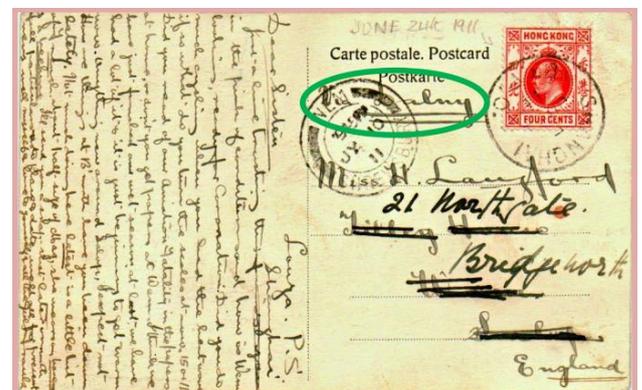
Roger Wood's exhibit comprised examples of Azemar and Hoster Trial Posting Machines, three scarce examples of the Experimental Squared Circle for Hordeen and Hebden Bridge, a less than usual Skeleton cancellation in purple and a Printed Postcard for Harrison & Camm - Rotherham Wagon Works.

Pete Elms showed a selection of postcards commemorating the Royal visit to Birmingham by King Edward VI and Queen Alexandra on 7th July 1909. We saw a number of cards depicting the suitably decorated route taken and a souvenir card (below) of the Opening of Birmingham University, the main focus of the visit.



Alan Spencer brought "a bit of nonsense" to the meeting, showing postcards with spelling mistakes, incorrect information and general "faux pas". One card showed the same picture, yet on three examples shown was described as Maple Avenue, MaRple Grove and Princes Avenue; all supposedly in Hull.

Brian Atkins showed us a number of postcards relating to Wem in Shropshire, his home town. A postcard from Shaghai (below), travelling via the Trans-Siberian Express, stood out. Marked "via Dalny" in manuscript, showed the card went by rail via Harbin to



Manchuria, overland to Irkutsk, and then took the Trans Siberian to Moscow. From Moscow it went via Warsaw, Berlin and Ostend to reach Wem in just 17 days, where it was then re-directed to Bridgnorth!

Toby Mottram showed us a selection of postcards posted in Royal Leamington Spa. We saw a number of Leamington squared circle marks from between



1892 to 1906; one showing two squared circles on an undelivered card from a local bootmaker. (Left)

Colin Searle showed us "Some Interesting Gibraltar postcards", including a 1910 postcard from Spain to the Gibraltar Military Foot Police paid with 39 Spanish ¼ céntimo stamps (which makes an odd sounding rate of 9¾ céntimo), and a lovely card sent during World War II on 28 May 1940 to Argentina (below).



Stato Pontificio (Vatican State)

In 1852 the Stato Pontificio consisted of large parts of central Italy. It was divided into provinces which were known as Legazioni (Legations) or Delegazioni (Delegations) depending upon whether they were administered by a Cardinal Legate or a Monsignor Delegate. At that time, the State consisted of approximately 25,500 sq. km. and was inhabited by 3,125,000 people.

During the Italian war of independence (1858/9) most of the Legations and Delegations Provinces chose in a referendum to be united with the kingdom of Italy. The remaining territory was not annexed to the Italian state until Italian troops entered Rome on 20th September 1870. In June 1871 Rome became the capital of the new Italian state. The Church was left with a small enclave within the city of Rome which is now known as the Vatican state.

The first stamps of the Stato Pontificio became available on 1st January 1852. They were the work of the Reverenda Camera Apostolica (the Papal Treasury) and were printed in sheets of 100 divided into four panes of 25. The currency was 100 Bajocchi to 1 Scudo and after 18th June 1866, 100 centesimi to 1 Lira. These first stamps comprised of 9 values from

½ to 8 bajocchi, and showed the Pontifical Emblem (tiara and keys left). The Emblem was used in all subsequent sets until 1929 when a set known as "Reconciliation" was produced to celebrate the Lateran pacts which ended the conflict between The Vatican and the Italian State.

Since then, The Vatican has been producing a range of postage stamps to celebrate various religious events. Some of the stamps produced are of very good quality but the amount of sets issued seems to increase every year. One cannot help but think that a

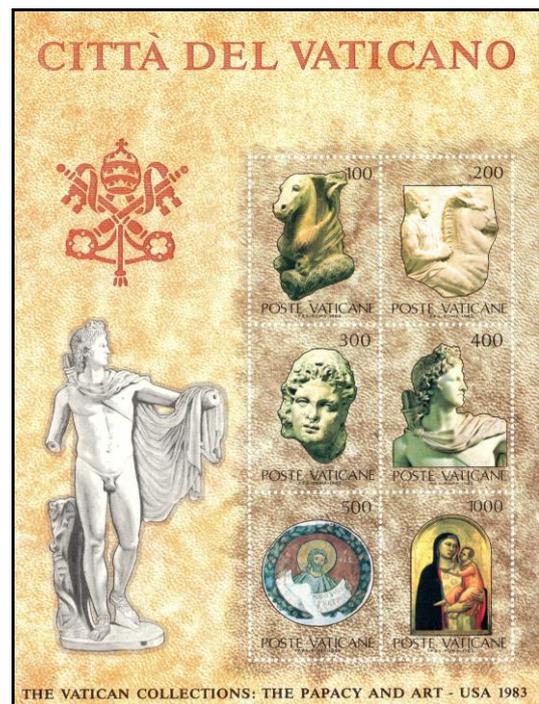
Halcyon is produced for members of the Redditch Philatelic Society and anyone else with an interest in stamp collecting. If you are not a member of the Society and are interested in joining, please come along to one of our meetings, on the first and third Thursday of the month (September to June) at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

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

commercial ethos is overtaking other considerations. However, some of the Miniature Sheets produced are worth collecting in view of the high quality of the design and print. In addition to the normal postage stamps several sets of *Espressi* (Express Delivery), *Pacchi Postali* (Parcels Post), *Segantasse* (Postage Due) and *Posta Aerea* (Air Mail) have been produced.

Stamps of The Vatican are easy to find and very reasonable to purchase. The sets produced by the *Stato Pontificio* are sought after by collectors the world over and can be quite expensive, but not impossible to find. Anyone starting to collect *Stato Pontificio* and The Vatican will be very pleased with the variety, quality and historical themes available.

Sergio Andrioli



Second (of three) Vatican Souvenir sheet of six stamps. 14 June 1983. (SG: MS802).

FROM THE ARCHIVES



A 'newer' picture postcard this time, of The Parade – or Church Green West if you like. Still recognisable today, the main change is the existence of a new Midland Bank (HSBC) building and the replacement of those awful streetlights!