



Halcyon

The Newsletter of the Redditch Philatelic Society – No. 29: Winter 2016.

From the Chairman



I hope, like me, you were able to watch the recent Time Watch programme: "Penny Blacks & Twopenny Blues: How Britain Got Stuck on Stamps". Our hobby needs all the exposure it can get and this programme provided a balanced view on the history of stamp collecting and how philately is pursued today (without making philatelists appear to be 'geeks'). I felt the presenter Andrew Martin was clearly enthusiastic about collecting, although he admitted he had not collected stamps since he was a boy. He started by looking at the history of stamps, before following the lives of some of the great collectors, including the Count Phillipp von Ferarry, who owned the 1856 British Guiana 1c black on magenta, and the Swedish treskilling yellow.

He spoke to Erene Grieve, who coordinates the "Stamp Active" programme in schools. Erene was extremely positive about how children were fascinated by stamp collecting, regardless of the type of school. She was clear that more volunteers were needed to go into schools to continue her work.

He visited a meeting at Croydon Philatelic Society (an event that superficially resembled one of our own meetings) and expressed surprise that the members were not sitting round comparing albums, but had pages displayed on frames so that everyone could see what was being described. Is this how the general public imagine our meetings are run? At the other end of the scale, Andrew Martin travelled to Geneva to talk to David Feldman to see Feldman's auction house in action with a sale of postal history - selling at prices enough to make your eyes water!

Many non-philatelists seem to associate stamp collecting with new issues from the Post Office and first day covers. At least Andrew Martin made it plain that these should not be collected as an investment, but only for the interest in the stamps. He ended the programme by going to Trafalgar Square Post Office to buy a blank FDC and stamps to post to himself.

Perhaps if the programme really did have a positive effect on the television audience, we can expect to see further programmes on this subject. I really hope so.

Alan Godfrey

The President's Piece

This year seems to have flown by, both generally and in collecting activities. Only this last week I was going through some recent purchases and found that a lot of them were not that recent at all. They were in fact from last January's visit to York!!!



I only know this because about that time I decided that I must keep a record of what I acquire, from where and when. So I now write on the packets as I buy material from Dealers. What is worse, I then found a number of other "unopened" packets of material from various Fairs throughout the year. Don't ask me why I do this. I think it helps keep track of everything; you may have other methods, or even think it is a daft thing to do, but it does make you realise how far behind you are in writing up material! There now looms yet another Christmas of stamp collecting backlog; and probably broken New Year resolutions too, but at least I know where everything came from!

I am very encouraged by Society meetings. A little while ago we seemed to have fewer members coming along to meetings but I think this has now changed for the better. This year has seen some new members join the Society and I hope that you all take as much enjoyment from meetings as everyone else. Displays from members and guest speakers all add to the enjoyment of our meetings, by adding to our collective knowledge of our hobby. A thriving membership helps to attract excellent speakers and the number of guest speakers this year has been higher than in the past; all of them have been memorable and we have seen material that we may otherwise not have seen

I am sure we can build on this over the next few years and continue to increase our active membership. This does of course need quite a bit of help from all members however, so it is up to all of us to put the word out; firstly that we exist; and secondly that as a stamp collector there is much advantage in being a member of a Society than not.

This newsletter should reach you in time for the Christmas holiday so can I simply offer you my seasonal greetings and best wishes for the New Year. Furthermore I do hope to see you all (and perhaps more new members) at future meetings.

**Best wishes
Malcolm Allinson**

EDITORIAL



Again it is some time since the last newsletter and this one now makes just two editions for this year. I am immensely grateful to contributors to *Halcyon* and this time we have a wide selection of subjects being covered. Members have certainly pulled out the stops this time and I would really wish it to continue.

In this column I usually related the various pitfalls that I go through to enjoy my collecting – a sort of ‘Tales from the Stamp Room’ if you like. The saga of my non-functioning printer rolls on (as related last time). In fact ‘rolls on’ isn’t really the truth. The matter has well and truly come to a halt; prevarication has taken over – along with a myriad of other things to occupy this stamp collector. Consequently the Stamp Room continues to have no printing facilities, and it is beginning to affect other areas of Tysoe Towers. Christmas card address labels are having to be hand written (does anyone remember how to do that?) and household correspondence is either piling up or again being handwritten. I fear the time might be very close where a visit to the local stationery suppliers is needed, but perhaps hold off until the January Sales.

Collecting subjects also occupy the mind quite a lot these days. I am coming to the conclusion that I have too many subjects on the go at the same time. I am sure most of you will recognise this, and perhaps ruminate similarly. It is very difficult to combat this trend/habit/obsession/compulsion. There is therapy however; I find a visit to a stamp dealer helps no end!

A new purchase takes away any angst for a while, and writing up the material adds to the enjoyment. Meeting up with others at regular ‘self-help’ groups can be extremely therapeutic, but this usually ends up with more people becoming addicted. Brilliant!

Finally, many thanks to **Sergio Andrioli, Robin Jarman, David Gillespie, Chris Jackson, Lyel Swingler, Pauline Stroud, Alan Godfrey and Paul Veal** for their contributions to this edition of *Halcyon*.

Malcolm Allinson

PAUL HORTON

It is sad to report that Paul Horton has passed away. Paul was known to many members as Midland Philatelic Federation Conventions Officer, a role he undertook for many years and carried out with absolute thoroughness. His high standards have yet to be matched.

Outside the MPF he like all of us was simply a collector, enjoying our hobby with like-minded people; ready to give and receive knowledge; and not afraid to put forward a singular view if appropriate – I like that sort of confidence.

Paul had not been well for some time, and sadly he is yet another “old school” collector who will be greatly missed.

MDA

SOCIETY PROGRAMME

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

- January 5th Annual Society Competitions
- January 19th Visit by Worcester Philatelic and Postcard Society.
- January 31st Society visit to Hinckley & District Philatelic Society
- February 2nd Annual General Meeting and Members One sheet display
- February 16th Society Annual Dinner; Archers Restaurant – HoW College.
- March 2nd Members Show and Tell: Any subject.
- March 16th Auction Preview – Members only
- March 16th Annual Auction
- April 6th Members’ One board Displays: “Discovery”
- April 20th Postcard Evening.
- May 4th Guest Speaker: Bryan Hyner – The Hindenburg and The Zeppelins.
- May 18th Society Three sheet competition – “Letter A”
- June 1st Guest Speaker: Richard Wheatley - Netherlands East Indies
- June 15th Presidents Evening.

Meetings recommence on Thursday 7th September 2017

Other Philatelic Events for the Diary

The next regional and national events are listed together here. Please add these events to your diaries, and support them by attending where you can. Only patronage helps ensure these events continue.

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

20th – 21st January 2017
YORK STAMP & COIN FAIR
 York Racecourse
 YORK
 YO23 1EX

15th – 18th February 2017
SPRING STAMPEX
 BDC Islington
 LONDON
 N1 0QH

8th July 2017
MIDPEX
 Warwickshire Exhibition Centre
 LEAMINGTON SPA
 CV31 1XN

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

SOCIETY MEETING REPORTS

Thursday 16th June 2016

Chairman's Evening

Alan Godfrey produced a wonderful display by retracing the life of Sir George Hubert Wilkins, an Australian explorer of the Arctic and Antarctic, a naturalist, photographer, journalist and airman.



Sir George was born in 1888 in South Australia and died in 1958 in the United States. He was brought up on a sheep farm and by the time he was in his teens he had become quite a competent electrician. His chance for a change came along when a Tent Cinema Troupe came to the area. During their stay they experience electrical

problems, which were put right by George. Because of his competence in dealing with practical problems as well as showing competence with the electrical systems he was offered a job with the troupe which he accepted

During his travels with the troupe he saw the first planes and he immediately became fascinated and travelled to London where he had his first taste of flying. During the Balkans War (1912 - 1913) he worked as a war correspondent for a newspaper and nearly lost his life when he was accused of spying by the Turks.

When he returned to London he agreed to take part in a polar expedition. During the expedition he learned to live as an Eskimo in order to survive. He returned from the expedition in 1916 and immediately joined the Australian Flying Corps; eventually being appointed as an official war photographer in France. He received the Military Cross for rescuing wounded soldiers and a subsequent Bar for assuming command of a group of soldiers under attack and holding the line until support arrived.

At the end of the War he returned to London where he tried unsuccessfully to raise funds for an Antarctic Expedition. He eventually joined Shackleton's expedition (1921-1922), who had been more successful in funding a similar trip. During his stay in South America waiting for Shackleton he visited South Georgia where he photographed and catalogued the wildlife of the island. With Shackleton's death on that Expedition, Wilkins returned to England, where he was asked to travel to Russia to report on the famine ravaging the countryside. During his stay he met Lenin, just before the latter died.

When his assignment was finished he returned to Australia where he published a book in which he documented the treatment of the aborigines by the Government of the time. Needless to say the book was not well received and he left Australia.

In 1927 he attained funding for a new Polar Expedition this time using aeroplanes. He successfully traversed the Arctic in 1928, even though he did crash one of the planes, and was knighted for his efforts. During the celebrations he also met and married the Australian actress Suzanne Bennett.



Still a restless adventurer he purchased a World War 1 submarine and planned a trip around the world.



North Polar Expeditionary submarine "Nautilus"

Along with finance from Lincoln Ellsworth the Nautilus Expedition of 1930-31 took shape. However various disasters and sets backs meant the project got no further than Svalbard – only a month after leaving Bergen.



In 1936 he started a new venture making film adverts for a range of products one of which was Camel cigarettes. Sometime later in 1941 he was offered the post of cold weather specialist in the United States Army, a post he then held until his death. In the USA he was highly regarded and when he died his ashes were taken to the North Pole by submarine and scattered there, as were those of his wife when she died in 1975.

This was a very interesting life explored with excellent narrative by Alan together with a wealth of supporting documentation covers and photographs.

Further reading of works by Sir Hubert Wilkins:

Flying the Arctic 1928

Undiscovered Australia 1928

Under the North Pole 1931

Thoughts through Space 1942

Our thanks to Alan for a very entertaining and fascinating evening.

Sergio Andrioli

Thursday 18th August 2016
Society visit to Worcester Philatelic and Postcard Society

It seemed strange going on a Society visit before our own first meeting of the new season but it was either an August date or one in February. Having experienced attempting to get to Worcester before in mid-winter, we decided that a summertime trip might be more acceptable. We took our usual format of four speakers and a Master of Ceremonies in the person of Bob Harper.

As it was August and Worcester's first meeting of their season, their attendance did suffer slightly but an attentive audience greeted our first speaker Pete Elms. With spaces for 64 sheets and the usual 15/20 minutes to speak about the subject, it was obviously not possible to cover every sheet in detail. Pete gave his always entertaining talk on his GB errors and varieties. As he said the material on display should have all been consigned to the waste bin by the checkers before it left the printers. However without these mistakes he would not have been able to amass such an excellent collection.

Pete was followed by Chris Jackson showing Worcester how interesting was Redditch's postal history. He was particularly keen to point out a recent acquisition of a strip of 2d blues. He had been looking for a long while for this stamp cancelled in Redditch and then 3 had come along in the form of this strip. He did not enlighten the audience on the cost of the cover but it required a sit down when it came to writing the cheque.

After a break to enable Worcester to look at the material of the first two speakers and for a welcome cup of tea, I started the second half of the evening with the French (Aeropostale and Air France) part of my Chilean airmail collection between 1928 and 1940. To conclude the evening our Chairman Alan Godfrey showed the trams, buses and trains which used their own parcel labels and stamps. There was a good coverage of material relating to Midland Red, of which even I as a Southerner have some memory. The parcel service was used extensively until the coming of one man bus operation, as there was then no conductor to deliver and collect the parcels from the various shops etc.

Worcester members were appreciative of our efforts and the speakers received their certificates to prove to their wives that they really had been to a stamp meeting and not the pub.

Robin Jarman

Thursday 1st September 2016
Mini Auction

Our usual season curtain raiser encourages members to have a rummage through long forgotten stamp drawers and cupboards and bring along material for other members bring along brought. Tonight has been

no exception with some very good and unusual items on offer. Spirited bidding – whipped up to a frenzy by the Auctioneer – meant many members went home out of pocket and the new owners of some choice items.

Malcolm Allinson

Thursday 15th September 2016
Guest Speaker: Keith Downing
'Tramways'

Tonight, Keith Downing headed into Redditch from the general direction of Matlock and to where Members were gathered waiting to begin the Tramways learning experience. However this was not to be, at least not until after our Chairman had provided a resume of forthcoming events.

Keith then took to the floor and announced that the display we were about to witness was to become even more tram-like when he had the opportunity to mount a number of items which he had recently acquired.

The beginning of Tramways were horse-drawn rail systems with, as was deduced from the name, the trucks being horse-drawn. Trucks they were, all of the earliest systems being freight only, and oriented towards the mining and iron industries. (Definitions; *Tramways* run on rails and are unsignalled; *Railways* run on rails on signal-controlled systems. *Trolleybuses*- run on roads (not trolleys??). These definitions were destined to become a little blurred at the edges during the talk!

The early Tramways mostly developed into Railways, still mostly not passenger-carrying. The first Tramway to carry passengers was claimed to be in New York, these were largely known as 'Streetcars'. An American businessman, sent to manage the UK office of the family shipping company, introduced trams into Liverpool. A letter sent by him is in Keith's collection. A collaborative American company set up a Horse-drawn Tram construction company in Birkenhead. These were exported all over the world, and were responsible for the first tramways in a large number of countries. A number of these featured in Keith's postal stationery collection.

The Isle of Man still has horse trams, sadly predicted to finish in the next two years.



Examples were shown on stamps. Horse Trams are expensive to run, typically requiring nine horses to keep a single tram running. This number can double in hilly terrain. Human-powered trams existed in Australia, using convict labour, and in Africa using cheap native labour.

The next development was cable cars, which proved well suited to very hilly areas; those in San Francisco are famously still operating. A cable car is a Tram pulled by a moving cable running in a channel between the tracks. They suffer from high maintenance costs.

Trams became popular in Hong Kong, many examples were shown on stamps and on covers.

Keith illustrated some examples of development 'dead ends', including trams powered by compressed air, clockwork, and coal gas engines, and in Paris, battery operated. Steam then came to the fore and for a period was considered the best. The next move in power supply was displayed at the 1879 Berlin exhibition by Werner von Siemens - electricity. However it took some time for this to become a practical proposition, mainly because electricity at track level was dangerous. With the development of overhead wire systems and the Pantograph, electric trams became viable. As an aside, a Belgian living in Toronto developed the overhead trolleywheel, hence the name 'Trolleybus'.

The advantage, in many countries, of classifying a system as a Tramway and not a Railway was that Tramways were subject to many fewer regulations. The French developed their own definitions: If greater than 60% of the tracks ran alongside a road it was a tramway. If less, it was a railway! A unique tramway, 150 miles long, existed in the Australian outback. Because of the infrequent service no signalling was required.

Even though the UK was a very early tram builder, the country lagged behind in Tramway installations. Leeds was the first UK city to move from horses to electricity, but this required permissive legislation. Key reasons for continuing backwardness were the First World War and subsequent recession.

Unusual developments worldwide at this time included sleeping compartments on longer-distance trams, the carriage of posts and parcels, 'watercarts' to pressure-wash the track channels, and in Melbourne and in Amsterdam, restaurant tramcars. Advertising became common, and was particularly effective since the trams were very brightly lit using the electricity supplied to them, running in generally poorly lit streets. Power for Trams was initially from local authority generating stations.

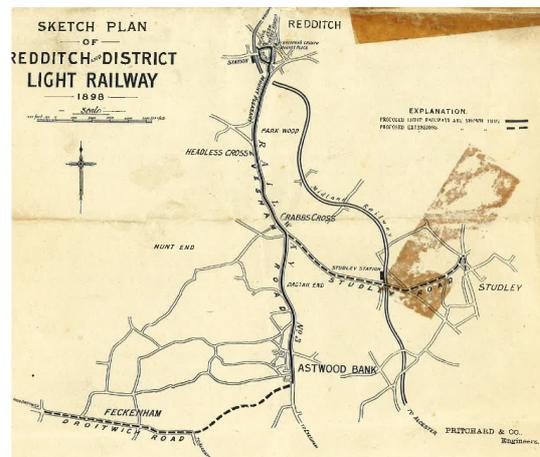
Some tramcar 'crash mail' was shown, from Holland, as was 'road/tram safety promotional material from the USSR. We were also shown examples of Dutch and German Tramway Workers' Union postmarks, and material from the 1946 Vienna specialist Tramway

Philatelic Exhibition. Stamps and covers depicting Trams were shown from a wide variety of countries, and there are an amazingly large number of Tramway Bridges on stamps, also a number of toy trams.

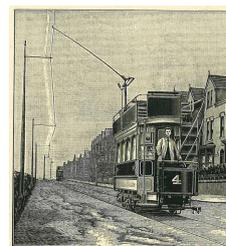
Some Tramcars, including in the UK, had mailboxes attached, for the use of which a supplement was payable. Thirteen U.S. cities had tramway mail systems; a number of dedicated postmarks from these were shown.

Summing up, our Chairman claimed almost convincingly that he was too young to remember Trams in Birmingham. He thanked Keith for travelling from Matlock and giving us such a fine and varied display. Keith's remuneration was a prized Redditch Philatelic Society Certificate.

David Gillespie



Members may be interested to know that a Tramway was proposed from Redditch to Astwood Bank (above), a prospectus for which resides in your Editors collection.



As yet nothing else is known of this (failed?) proposal.

Thursday 6th October 2016
Guest Speaker: Steve Harrison
'Registered Mail'

Steve Harrison made a return visit this evening with a superb display of Registered Mail. He explained that he did not want to do the normal display starting at the introduction in 1841 but would divert along the various byways that come from the basis of such mail.

He started in 1881 when a compensation scheme was introduced. The Post Office found that there were 4.2 million registered envelopes in stock, so bought sticky labels to be stuck onto the back of envelopes until stocks had been reduced. Steve covered the various

increases in compensation which eventually reached £120 for an extra 1/2d insurance above the cost of posting.

In 1878 the large blue R in an oval was introduced, however, the U.K. did not conform to the U.P.U regulations as foreign registered mail did not have a unique identifier to enable items to be tracked. In February 1907 the U.K. finally conformed and had four different labels designed, Main Office; sub office (printed number); sub office (no number) and an anonymous label which the office of posting was to stamp with their counter handstamp with the date slugs removed. The first printing had the R on the right hand side; later printings were corrected with the R on the left hand side. Steve showed examples from 7 of the 10 months in 1907 together with a variety of cancellations for Horticultural shows, special events, Field Post Offices etc.

Steve showed a variety of early Registered Letter Certificates of Posting including a whole page from the Evesham Post Office counter book on 17th June 1895.

The display covered the use of diagonal blue crosses for items not to be put through mechanical apparatus due to fragility. The High Value Packet (H.V.P.) system for sending cash through the post and returning notes which were to be destroyed. Steve also covered the Great Train Robbery of 1963 and the conspiracy theories surrounding the event. Compulsory Registration of letters containing coin and Overseas Insured Mail were two more aspects of the display together with the 'A.R.' system for Acknowledgement of Receipt used with international mail, later 'A.D.' Acknowledgement of Delivery.

Cash on Delivery, Army, Navy and Air Force registered mail were all comprehensively covered. A label described by a dealer as Ministry Of Defence due to the letters M.O.D. on the label turned out to be Money Order Department! The final frames covered registered mail from Butlins and Pontins holiday camps and the numerous ways the Inland Revenue breached the Registered Mail regulations but just carried on regardless despite Post Office objections.

Chris Jackson

**Thursday 20th October 2016
Visit by Hinckley Philatelic Society**

The evening started as usual with several members descending on the room as soon as it was unlocked and within a few minutes had transformed it with tables, chairs, display boards set up and the kitchen prepared for half time refreshments. Members arrived in a steady flow until by 5 minutes to 8pm when the Chairman was seen to be getting agitated at the non-arrival of our visiting speakers. With no mobile phone contact available it was now unlikely that Hinckley would turn up, and a display was urgently needed for the entertainment of the members present.

The result was that yours truly dashed home to collect

a display. Fortunately I was well through preparing a 256 sheet display of Worcester City for a talk I was due to give in a few weeks' time at Worcester P.S. So the evening became an impromptu display of Worcester City postal history.

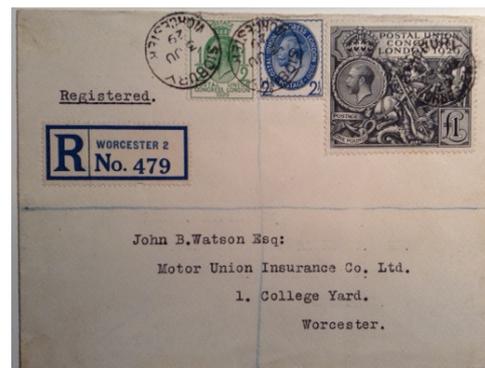
The display started with a Van den Keere map of the county and a 1567 warrant from the court of Queen Elizabeth the first for the delivery of 3 letters into Worcestershire, Staffordshire and Shropshire to what we would now call the Lord Lieutenant of each county and continued with letters from the civil war and the commonwealth period. Various items were explained particularly the letters with initials of Thomas Gardiner the Controller of the Posts in 1670 and Joseph Higgins the Postmaster at Worcester in 1750.

Straight line, two line and horseshoe handstamps were shown together with a complete set of all the mileage marks. The introduction of Uniform Postage in 1839 included a handstruck 4 of Worcester and the issue of stamps and letter sheets in May 1840 was addressed with no less than three Mulready covers and four Penny Black covers including one with three stamps.



Turned cover (re-used), first with two 1d Black stamps and then a third for its reuse

The display continued after the coffee break with a full set of the numeral cancellations, missent mail, foreign items and the city office undated circles. Official mail included items from Worcester jail and fraudulent use of an I.R. OFFICIAL stamp on general mail. The Penny posts to Malvern and Malvern Wells were followed with the receiving office handstamps of the Worcester Penny Post. Items from the Three Counties Showgrounds before the permanent site at Malvern was established were followed by a final board including items from the Sidbury sub office including a U.P.U. £1 value used on cover (below).



The talk was totally "off the cuff" as there was no time to prepare and several important items went unmentioned. However I can only hope that the members enjoyed the evening.

Chris Jackson

Thursday 3rd November 2016 **Single sheet**

Tonight's results from the combined scores of the members present were: 1st Malcolm Allinson; 2nd Pete Elms; 3rd Alan Godfrey.

Thursday 17th November 2016 **Guest Speaker: Dave Mountfort –** **FIGAS & Falklands External Airmails**

Our speaker divided his talk into two discrete halves: the Falkland Islands Government Air Service (FIGAS) and the external airmails into and out of the islands.

The need for a local air service was identified before WWII, but it was not until 1948 that the Governor, Miles Clifford, arranged for the purchase of two Auster aircraft (formerly owned by the Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey). These aircraft were based in Port Stanley and operated on grass air strips. Unfortunately, these air strips were often too wet to use and so two years later floats were fitted to the aircraft and two Norseman planes were added to the fleet. Over time the aircraft were replaced, first by DHC-2 Beavers and in 1979 by Britten-Norman BN-2 Islanders (built on the Isle of Wight). These were land-based and cheaper to operate than the float planes.



FIGAS Islander BN-2 VP-FBR (and Magellan Penguin)

Unfortunately, the whole fleet was destroyed during the Argentine invasion in 1982. After the war two new Islanders were purchased, and today six aircraft are flown: two fishery patrol vessels, one for medical evacuation and three for commercial charter, tourist flights and freight. Dave showed examples of many of the cachets and envelopes used by FIGAS and special labels issued for freight use.

In the late 1960s hovercraft were brought to the islands for use by the military, but these were also used to supplement the mail deliveries by FIGAS to Fox Bay and Darwin. Dave's material included many examples of hovercraft covers from 1967 to 1972,

when the hovercraft were withdrawn owing to the high cost of operation and maintenance.

Dave explained that the distance of the Islands from the UK (8,000 miles) and from Argentina (300 miles) and the lack of a suitable landing field, delayed the introduction of an external air service. From 1944 the Falklands issued airmail rates for mail was carried by sea to Stanley and then on to Montevideo by air. The first direct flight into the Islands was by a Shorts Sunderland chartered by the Falklands Island Company in 1952. The opening of a temporary airstrip at Hookers' Point meant that regular services from Argentina, using Fokker F27 and F28 aircraft, could commence. Stanley Airport was opened on 1st May 1979 at Cape Pembroke by Sir Vivian Fuchs, but the length of the runway meant large inter-continental aircraft were still unable to land in the Islands. After the Argentinian invasion of 1982, the British Government made plans to build a new airport and Mount Pleasant International Airport opened in 1985, which allowed wide-bodied aircraft to fly to the islands. The RAF now flies from Brize Norton in the UK (via Ascension) and LAN Chile operates scheduled flights from Santiago (via Punta Arenas) to Mount Pleasant.

Dave Mountfort provided a comprehensive display of material and spoke fluently on the history of communications by air in the Falkland Islands, which was much appreciated by all the members present.

Alan Godfrey

Thursday 1st December 2016 **Guest Speaker: Lawrence Kimpton** **'Imperial Airways'**

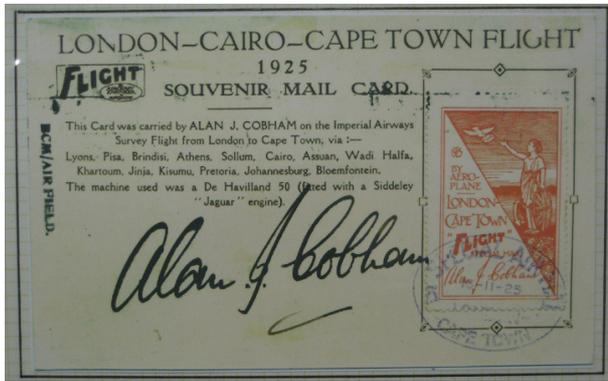
Lawrence's display this evening told the story of Imperial Airways in a number of discrete parts which I have retained for this report.

The Early Years

The first cover of the display was the Inauguration of the regular London to Paris Air Mail service in November 1919. A regular international air mail service began with the departure of Air Transport & Travel DH 4a Hounslow to Paris. The postage rate was 2½d plus a very expensive 2/6d air fee. In 1920 several airlines were used to carry mail on the London to Paris route. On 18th February Instone Air Line & Passenger Service started a service from Hounslow to Paris. In 1921 British Air Services ceased due to competition from subsidised foreign airlines. Mail from London to Paris was then flown only by the French airline CIE. des Messageries Aeriennes.

Cobham's Survey Flight to India 1924 – 1925.

Some impressive covers of this epic journey were shown of the survey flight which departed London on 10th Nov 1924 with Alan Cobham, Arthur Elliot and Sir Sefton Brancher (Director of Civil Aviation) on board. The aircraft a DH 50 G-EBFD flew to Burma and returned on 17th May 1925 a total of 18000 miles.



Formation of Imperial Airways 1924

On 31st March 1924 Imperial Airways (IA) was formed from the merger of Handley Page Transport, Instone Airlines, Daimler Airway and British Air Navigation Co. Ltd. The aim of the merger was made by the British government to develop British air transport on a commercial and economic basis. Until 1927 the services of IA were limited to the routes operating since 1924 by the companies which formed IA namely Southampton to Guernsey, Croydon – Paris – Zurich, Croydon – Brussels – Cologne and London to Amsterdam.

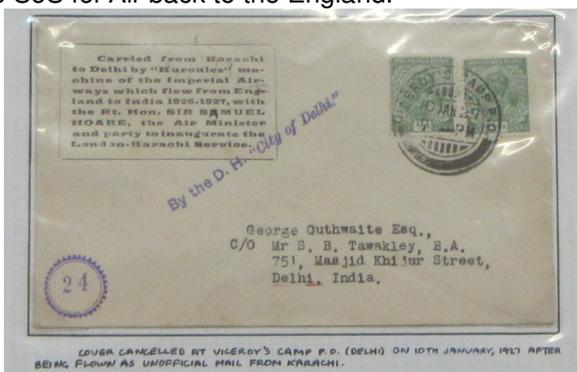
Imperial Airways Survey Flight 1926 – 1927

On 26th December 1926 IA DH66 Hercules G-EBMX left Croydon on a survey flight with the Secretary of State for Air as a passenger.



Hercules G-EBMX at Gaza

The aircraft arrived in Delhi on 8th Jan 1927 and was named 'City of Delhi'. The return flight left Delhi on 1st Feb and arrived on Cairo where the 'City of Delhi' was to be based for the Cairo – Basra service. Unofficial mail was carried between Karachi and Delhi and on the return flight from Delhi. Lawrence displayed several covers of these flights plus a cover taken by the SoS for Air back to the England.

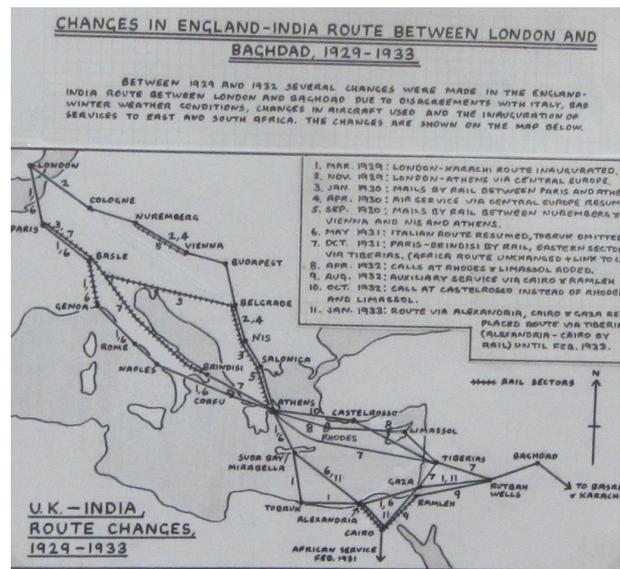


Cover flown on "City of Delhi" 10 January 1927 from Karachi to Delhi

The Eastern Route

Regular services on the Cairo – Baghdad route began on 12th Jan 1927 using the DH66 aircraft, replacing the previous RAF desert air mail service. Following 2 years of negotiations with the Persian authorities regarding overflights a London to Karachi route was started on 30th March 1929. This journey took 7 days and consisted of a flight from London to Basle, a train to Genoa, a Short S.8 Calcutta flying boat to Alexandria, a train to Cairo and finally a DH66 flight to Karachi.

This route was extended to Delhi on 29th Dec 1929. The route across Europe and the Mediterranean changed many times but usually involved a train journey.



In April 1931 an experimental London-Australia air mail flight took place; the mail was transferred at Timor Dutch East Indies due to the crash of the 'City of Cairo' and took 26 days in total to reach Sydney. For the passenger flight leaving London on 1 October 1932, the Eastern route was switched from the Persian to the Arabian side of the Persian Gulf. On 29 May 1933 an England to Australia survey flight took off, operated by Imperial Airways AW Atlanta G-ABTL *Astraea*. Major H G Brackley, Imperial Airways' Air Superintendent, was in charge of the flight. *Astraea* flew Croydon- Paris -Lyons-Rome-Brindisi-Athens-Alexandria-Cairo where it followed the established route to Karachi. The onward route went via Jodphur – Calcutta – Akyab – Rangoon – Bangkok - Alor Star - Singapore - Palembang - Batavia - Sourabaya – Koepang - Bathurst Island – Darwin - Newcastle Waters – Cloncurry- Long Reach - Roma – Toowoomba and Brisbane, eventually reaching Sydney on 23 June. The flight continued to Canberra (26 June) and arrived in Melbourne on 29 June.

There followed a rapid eastern extension. The first London to Calcutta service departed on 1 July 1933, the first London to Rangoon service on 23 September 1933, the first London to Singapore service on 9 December 1933, and the first London to Brisbane service on 8 December 1934, with Qantas responsible for the Singapore to Brisbane sector. The 1934 start

was for mail only; passenger flights to Brisbane began the following April. The first London to Hong Kong passengers departed London on 14 March 1936 following the establishment of a branch from Penang to Hong Kong.

The African Route

The second half of the display shown by Lawrence was the IA routes to Africa. In Feb 1931 a weekly service started between London and Mwanza on Lake Victoria in Tanganyika as part of the route to Cape Town which was extended in December 1931 for Christmas mail

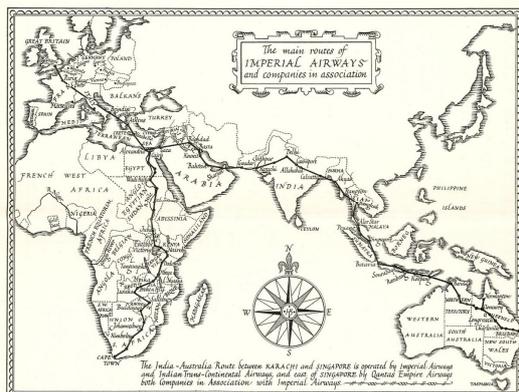


.In January 1932 a mail only service started and in April one for passengers. The trip took 10 days from London to Cape Town. In 1936 the trans- African route was opened by IA between Khartoum an Kano in Nigeria and Lagos in October 1936.



Short Empire Flying Boats

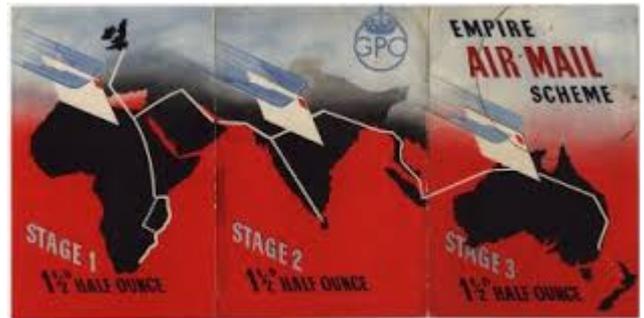
In 1937 with the use of Short flying boats IA could fly from Southampton to routes to the Empire. The journey to the Cape was via Marseilles – Rome – Brindisi – Athens – Alexandria – Khartoum – Port Bell – Kisumu – and onwards by land based planes via Nairobi to Cape Town.



By March 1939 three short flying boats a week left Southampton for Australia reaching Sydney in 10 days. Three more left South Africa taking 6 days to reach Durban.

Air Mail.

In 1934 the government negotiated with IA to establish an Empire Mail Service. The air mail service started in July 1937 eventually delivering anywhere for 1½d per oz. To help promote the use of the Air Mail Service IA joined forces with Pan American in providing a round the world service,



The evening ended with various items such as Mayo/Mercury sea planes and trans-Atlantic flights.

Lyel Swingler

COMING OUT

Once again David Gillespie has taken a unique view of our wonderful hobby, and produced the following article. Your Editor can only think that David's spell check worked overtime on this!! David writes:-

You may have suspected this for some time....well now I'm coming out.....I'm a **PLONCER!**

Yes, I'm one of those **Philatelists** who **Like One New Collection Extremely Regularly**. Why don't you become a **PLONCER** too?

It's not too difficult. It's fun. It broadens your collecting strategy. It can give you a warm feeling of achievement. It needn't lead you into abuse of substances (*other than perhaps PVA or Gum Arabic. Ed.*). It can protect you from TV soaps. Sitting at home **PLONCING** you are far less likely to be run over by motorists and cyclists; and it need not be expensive!

As encouragement (or possibly discouragement?), I have set out to chronicle, from conception to implementation, the forming of a **STAMP** collection of Persia, from the first issue of 1868, through to the end of 1952.

Why 1952?, I suspect those of you, (if any), who haven't yet fallen asleep are asking - well, it seems to me that after that date Persia, later to become Iran of course, fell into the bad habit of so many other countries, and started issuing stamps way beyond the numbers justified by postal requirements. Also the

appearance of their stamps, to my eye, became very much less interesting.

Why Persia? you ask (if you still haven't fallen into a coma)...well, I have (humble but half-reasonable) collections of early-ish stamps from a wide variety of countries, many largely acquired from the erstwhile (I used to think that meant desirable, until I looked it up in the dictionary) much lamented Aston Stamp Auctions. The brothers Pearce, who organized these auctions, had a remarkable ability of acquiring for sale very respectable one-country collections (amongst many other items) which if not hotly contested would sell for extremely competitive prices.

There must be other auctions out there which offer similarly good value for money, unfortunately I haven't found them.

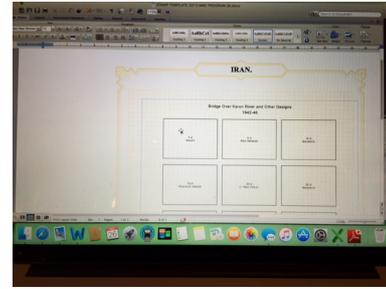
Anyway, Persia was one of those countries, and when the Persia file reached the top of the pile, it was an easy decision to 'write up' and expand it, largely because I found the mysteriously Oriental and unusual nature of the stamp designs very appealing.

So, faced with a pile of album pages, stock cards and approval book sheets, how to move forward?

An acquaintance from another Midlands club gave me a copy of his computer programme of pre-printed pages compiled by William Steiner, based in the United States. This is a remarkable programme (program?) comprising quite detailed album pages (boxed spaces and concise write-ups) for every stamp-issuing country worldwide, from first issues up to and beyond the year 2000. This is more than enough for me, since I rarely collect beyond about 1960. I haven't tried to calculate how many pages are involved, but it must be tens of thousands. Presumably put together by a team of people. Far too ambitious, I imagine, for one person. But remarkably all conforming very closely to the same page format and rules regarding how much detail to include-shades, perfs, watermarks, reprints etc. etc.

The pages, if printed straight from the programme, comprise rectangles for the stamps (or triangles, diamonds etc. as appropriate), with written descriptions. However, black print onto a plain background didn't match the rest of my collections. I wanted the pages to print onto quadrille album pages, with the ability to add my own country headings. This proved difficult, as the computer didn't know where pre-printed quadrilles were, in order to achieve sufficiently precise registration of the overlay.

Stepson to the rescue; he devised a quadrille album page programme and superimposed the Steiner programme. Result - a conventional-looking album page with the write-up done for me! It had previously taken me up to half an hour per page to do my own computerised layout and write-up; it now took me no more than about thirty seconds, including printing. I ordered a good quantity of cream coloured fairly substantial plain paper, and I was in business.



A typical page on the computer screen,



The same sheet coming off the printer.

I like to mount my stamps, both mint and used, using black Hawids. *(It was at this point your Editor started having palpitations!)* I find Hawids much more useful than the type with seals top and bottom with hinged clear material slit through the middle, since I can lay in a stock of bulk strips, in my case 41mm high, and cut them to size to suit almost any of the bewildering variety of stamp sizes issued *(right)*. Why black? I know the clear version have a following among some members, but I find that the black ones show up the perforations or margins better, the downside being that they draw attention to any perf. defects, or cut borders.

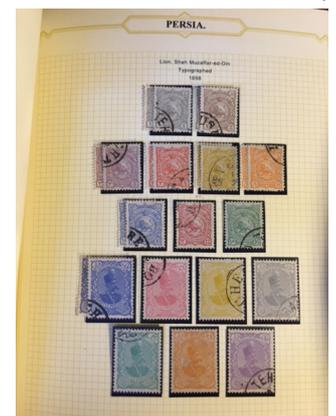


Once trimmed, the Hawids are readily mounted onto the page *(left)* and the collection begins to take shape.

An example page is shown *(below)*. The mounting of the collection is unfinished as these words are written,

but as I learn more of the stamps of Persia, I begin to doubt the wisdom of choosing this particular country despite the (to me) attractiveness of the stamps.

The regular sets are comparatively easy to find, and many were well represented in the Aston Auction collections, however there are a daunting number of overprints, some done locally and



very crude, with many of them in Arabic and therefore inscrutable to me. They are also difficult to find on the auction sites. Well, I guess I like a challenge (I keep telling myself!)

I hope this article may inspire others to start a new country collection, if I can convert but one 'envelopeeer' to stamps I shall feel that my missionary efforts have borne fruit.

I guess most club members are rather like me in that the remaining gaps in their established collections are becoming more and more difficult and expensive to fill, can I persuade you that a quite respectable new-country collection can be put together, often for no more than the cost of a penny black in good condition! (Disclaimer; this comment is aimed at no member in particular!)

Do what you know is right- become a **PLONCER!**

(Terms and conditions apply. No responsibility can be accepted by the author or publisher for loss or damage incurred by or to any follower of the above advertisement. Acts of God are outside of the control of most of the people associated with this article. Exceptions to these terms are not possible, even to members of the Fire Brigade. Spontaneous (or premeditated) combustion is expressly excluded from club premises. Please read the small print. E & O E.)

David Gillespie

FIRST IMPRESSIONS



Hi everyone! My name is Pauline Stroud, a new member to the Society. Throughout my life I have often thought that I would like to collect something... but what? Teddy bears would take up too much room. Thimbles, perhaps, or spoons? No, these ideas did not appeal and Toby jugs I thought were frankly rather ugly.

What I wanted was something that a) did not take up too much room b) would not prove too expensive c) did not take up too much time d) other people would also find interesting. Stamps, I decided, met all of these requirements! Poor, deluded fool that I was....However, I did realise that many other people do indeed find stamps interesting.

The idea of collecting stamps began to grow and I kept it at the back of my mind for several months. Paul Veal, who goes to the same church as me, mentioned that he was a keen member of Redditch Philatelic Society and I toyed with the idea of going along one evening. Then I overheard John Coombes from the Mercian Military History Society, which also meets at St Luke's Memorial Hall discussing his collection of stamps with another member and saying that there may come a day when stamps are no longer used. There was, I told John a stamp club in Redditch

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and showed him the notice on the board. He was interested and declared his intention of joining, so I decided that this was a good a time as any to go along and see for myself. We both received a warm welcome (thank you everyone) and we have both decided to stay.

Two things dawned on me very soon: firstly that members took their collecting very seriously indeed, secondly that philately is very wide subject and that many of the members had very varied interests. I have always been interested in history but soon understood that I would HAVE to narrow it down a little and perhaps decide on a particular interest myself, otherwise I was likely to lose my way and end up with a huge, unwieldy, meaningless muddle. The problem was where to start. I love sailing ships and steam ships so that seems a good a place as any...perhaps followed by stamps from WW1, stamps portraying birds of the world, famous paintings or writers....I think I'm hooked...

Pauline Stroud

Many thanks to Pauline for her first thoughts on the Society. One thing though – the word 'serious' rarely features in meetings (I hope!) Ed.

THEN AND NOW: STANLEY GIBBONS CATALOGUE VALUES

On holiday a little while ago I spotted a 1949 Stanley Gibbons catalogue - "PART 1 - BRITISH EMPIRE - SECTION A - 1840-1936" bound in red cloth. It reminded me of my first SG catalogue but I had one with USA as well – did they have a Simplified then? I thought it would be interesting to compare the catalogue values of a sample of some well-known GB issues (35) with recent catalogues. It is no surprise that the huge price inflation demonstrates why a lot of us have more gaps amongst our older stamps than we'd like. I was surprised that the catalogue numbers hadn't changed at all although the colour descriptions sometimes had, e.g. SG126 - rose (1949), red (2012). I noticed that the 2012 colour warning about soaked stamps of the unified issue (1883-84) is identical to 1949.

What do the 1949 costs mean? According to official inflation figures a pound in 1949 would be worth £32.80 today. Average house price £1,802, new car £590, average wage £317 pa - £6.09 per week. I remember the cinema prices in Esher were 1/9, 2/3 and 3/6 in the circle, egg and chips in a cheap café in Chertsey (early 1950s) 1/3. Internet answers: petrol 1/- a gallon, 20 cigarettes from 1/-.

The 1949 columns in the table add up to £704 re the unused and £147 re the used stamps. The 2012 columns add up to £294,143 re the unused and £25,178 re the used stamps. The inflation factors are staggering: unused 418, used 171.

This means the unused have inflated 13 times the official inflation rate and the used 5 times the official rate in the period.

Paul Veal

AN ENVELOPE

I am sure that nearly all of you will have started your philatelic career by becoming a traditional stamp collector and many of you will have continued to maintain your interest in this branch of our hobby. However some of you will also have strayed into postal history, which involves the stamps or other marks still being attached to their original envelopes.



Take the envelope shown here with just two common stamps adorning its front. Nicely cancelled they could have graced my collection of used Chilean stamps but by still being attached to their envelope what can they tell us? The cover is an airmail envelope from the Condor airline, which was a Brazilian airline with strong connections to Germany and ran Deutsche Lufthansa (DLH) routes in parts of South America. The cover would have been despatched from Santiago on 19th August 1936 and is correctly costed at \$10.30, although to be absolutely in line with postal regulations the airmail surcharge should have been shown in airmail stamps with \$1.80 as the surface rate in ordinary postage stamps.

Condor took the cover over the Andes to Buenos Aires and then up the east coast of South America to Recife in northern Brasil. At this stage the mail would normally have been loaded on to one of DLH's seaplanes for the crossing of the South Atlantic via a catapult ship to Bathurst in The Gambia. However this time the arrival of the mail in Recife coincided with the imminent departure of the airship LZ127, Graf Zeppelin, returning to Germany from its 8th voyage to South America of 1936. Therefore the letters were transferred to the airship, which left Recife on 21st August and arrived over Lisbon on 23rd, where it dropped the mail. From here to Frankfurt it travelled by fast DLH passenger transport aircraft.

All this from a single envelope and although the nicely cancelled stamps would look good in my collection, the story would have been lost, which would have been a disappointment. Surely there is a place for all the many sectors of philately in our hobby but whatever you collect enjoy it.

Robin Jarman

IN THE PINK

Following the War of the Pacific (1879-81), Chile occupied large parts of southern Peru. They were supposed to hand back territory but this process took many years and in 1924 Tacna was still in Chilean hands (not Peruvian again until 1929).

A little known flight took place in 1924 from Tacna to Santiago and a strange airmail etiquette was produced to attach to letters carried on this flight. It was printed on pink paper and perforated 11½ in blocks of 4. (right). However two vignettes were printed on one side diagonally opposite each other and two on the corresponding blank spaces on the reverse on the sheet. I have recently been lucky enough to acquire a half sheet as shown below. The only letter I have ever seen with the label attached is one reproduced in my catalogue but even if I did find one, I am sure that it would be well out of my price range.



According to the information that came with the piece, the flight started on 25th February 1924 from Tacna and consisted of a group of five aircraft under the leadership of General Contreras Sotomayor. The route (shown right) was via Antofagasta and Valparaiso but the planes did not reach Santiago until 14th March. My catalogue describes it as the third military postal flight. I have not been able to discover what type of aircraft were used as details of the adventure are very hard to find.



Robin Jarman

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.