

Penny Post



August 2016

Woking
& District
Philatelic
Society

Committee Members 2016—2017:

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Editor 'Penny Post':	D Griffin
Competition Sec:	R L Trevelyan
Accounts Examiner:	Dr D A Stotter FRPSL
Committee Members:	N F Ledsome Mrs J Hawkins P Wheeler N Burnett
Curator Woking Postal History Collection:	M H Lockton FRPSL

Forward/ Editors Note:

I've finally managed to tear myself away from the never-ending news updates on 'Brexit' to write a quick introduction to this edition of the Penny Post. Clearly the events of the past few months have been utterly momentous and have even felt all-consuming at times. Certainly, I'd be surprised if many of us are feeling particularly at ease right now, whichever way we voted. In turbulent - & divisive - times such as these, it's easy to feel unsettled and adrift as we struggle to sort fact from fiction/opinion, trying to get a handle on what's going on and where things are heading. With all this sense of turmoil and upheaval, it might seem ridiculous to even mention our hobby of stamp collecting. However, it occurs to me that Working PS, more than ever before, might now serve a small but useful purpose. After all, coming together to discuss and experience something we are all passionate about in a spirit of fellowship and conviviality won't be a solution to any of our woes - but I hope it might perhaps take our minds off them for a while. You never know, the renegotiation of postal rates to far and near shores is likely to open up other areas of stamp collecting and an European Union and its stamps evening, like the one we had recently, will now be completely different.

Therefore I urge you all to come along to our Tuesday evening meetings, whether it be to display some of own lovingly collected items, to learn and admire material from others or to tell us about those new areas of collecting that the recent vote has inspired.

I have been working away in Poland for the first half of this year, but I have still made time for our hobby. Towards the end of this issue I have put together a short piece on the Polish Postal Workers and the part they played at the beginning of the second world war. A real David and Goliath tale. If I can do this then I'm sure you can too. I would welcome similar articles about your travels to include in future editions of the Penny Post. Remember this is your magazine and is only as good as the input I have from you, the members.

I hope you have a great autumn,

David Griffin, Editor of Penny Post.
(email: davidgprocesseng@yahoo.co.uk)

News of Recent Meetings:

Tuesday 19 January 2016

The Colour is Blue – Members

Ron Trevelyan was first up first and set the tone of the evening by stretching the subject to include stamps depicting 'Blues' singers. He also showed various blue stamps from the 1997 San Francisco Franklin souvenir sheet, a souvenir sheet and labels for the Festival of Britain, Churchill stamps, Rhodesian government propaganda letters, air letters & emergency mail service, embossed envelopes from the Chicago World Fair GB KGV with slogans, various blue covers and blue postmarks.

David Stotter followed showing Moroccan Postcard, a sheet of GB silver Jubilee stamps with overprints and also an example of the £1 on cover, examples of blue postmarks and lightened the evening with some humorous postcards from Morocco.

Paul Wheeler displayed blue stamps from Cyprus and Palestine. John Lea explained the UPU agreed colours and that blue stamps were postage leaving the country. He showed examples of these together with blue pools coupon envelopes, blue registered postcards from Chile, blue postal and air mail stationary and a rare 2d blue used on a Mulready cover.

David Griffin kicked off the second half showing catalogued shades and sub-shades of the GB KGV 2½d stamps.

David Springett displayed US, Canadian and British examples of blue stamps, unused and used on cover.

Jane Hawkins showed a Staley Gibbons Catalogue, not in the normal red colour but in blue and examples of meter marks in blue on covers and postcards. She so provided the highlight of the evening with a cover from Charles Darwin to her Grandfather which had four QV 2d blue stamps attached for postage.

Mick Coad completed the evening showing GB Victorian blue stamps and German and German Unified States stamps.

DG

Tuesday 2 February 2016

Postcards (Pictures or Postmarks) - Members

For various reasons attendance was a little down and the apologies list a little longer than usual. However, members who did make it to the meeting soon made up for the deficit and an extra display board was necessary to meet the demand.

Michael Lockton was mindful of the present fuss about statues and proceeded to show a large selection of postcards showing statues of General Sir Redvers Buller VC and the general's involvement in the Boer War and other theatres of war. Hence many statues were raised in his honour. His involvement with Winston Churchill added interest to the display.

Jane Hawkins had a collection of Egyptian postcards some of which were associated with WW1. She also showed a number of postcards connected with Brookwood Cemetery which had been given to her by a member of the Brookwood Cemetery Society.

Mick Coad explained his interest in short wave radios through which he had accumulated a number of cards sent by short wave radio stations overseas. These included the Voice of America, Radio Korea, the Armed Forces Network and from countries like Australia, Cuba, the Netherlands, Russia (Moscow), Sweden and St. Helena.

Ron Trevelyan's contribution reflected his collecting interests related to exhibiting with the British Empire Exhibition 1924/25 Tuck 'Oilette' postcards and Paris 1889 (construction of the Eiffel Tower) and Brussels 1897 postcards. Rhodesia featured with early Christmas cards of the Victoria Falls and paintings and advertising cards from the British Industries Fair were also shown. Idyllic scenes from A.R. Quinton appeared but there was sad ending with cards showing the devastation in Lynmouth in 1952 when many lives were lost.

David Stotter concentrated on Casablanca, an area which he hopes will give rise to a book in due course. Half of his display was pictorial, whilst the other half provided the postmark interest. Much of the mail sent from Casablanca was sent to unusual destinations.

David Springett had a selection of postcards with US postmarks.

David Cairns had a selection which demonstrated his interest in cricket laced with humour. He chose some elite cricket personalities like WG Grace and Hobbs and Sutcliffe coming out to bat.

John Lea rationed himself to a small input because of the lack of space. He did show some colour postcards of a monastery in Turkey with very difficult access which had experienced.

The President John Lea thanked members for their contributions which had led to a very interesting evening.

RLT

Tuesday 16 February 2016

Recent Acquisitions – Members

Any question marks about the meaning of 'recent' were swept aside by the displays brought along by nine members which were remarkable for their quality and diversity.

Jane Hawkins chose some recent slogan postmarks she had received in the mail, plus some Egyptian postcards. Michael Lockton brought various items from the early days of the postal system which included the Irish Mail in 1825 and a number of postal regulations which affected the postal rate and other aspects. Malcolm Bentley displayed a verse from Rudyard Kipling's 'Road to Mandalay' with a superb Mandalay postmark to accompany it. He also showed West Indies high value stamps with various postmarks from villages in the Leewards Islands. Tony Grove put up 4 Egyptian stamps which were significant as these were the first commemoratives issued by the country.

Ron Trevelyan stretched the 'recent' to the discovery he had made of various GB postal history items from the Victorian and Edwardian eras in his collection which had become buried. He was now able to put together a selection of these. David Springett had a mixture on display which included early GB duplex postmarks and the unusual feature of perfin on early QV stamps. David Stotter included mail from the Morocco Agencies in Tangier and a collection of postcards from German Prisoners of War on Morocco. It was a revelation to

him that it was possible to trace individual prisoners through the offices of the Red Cross.

David Cairns showed a good selection of GB stamps (many high values). Apart from some Mulready envelopes, he had a good representation of the stamps of KE VII, the Wembley Exhibition, the first GB commemoratives, mint and used and a £1 PUC stamp. John Lea brought a number of curiosities from different areas. A Fiji postcard received that morning allowed it to be well qualified for the title of the evening. Other items were an envelope sent by a British soldier who survived the Quetta earthquake and a letter seized by French forces in 1941 which was hidden in a warehouse until 1948. Some Swiss Juventute labels with back face values added to the unusual mixture.

The President John Lea thanked members for their contributions. The Society really excelled itself in bringing along such an interesting mixture of material.

RLT

1 March 2016 Society Annual Lunch

16 members and their families enjoyed a three course lunch at the Tante Marie Restaurant in Woking.



The meal was enhanced by a welcoming glass of sparkling

wine generously provided by President John Lea.

Terry Rippingale, a long time member, maintained his ever present attendance at these lunches, despite his long journey up from the Southampton area.

The Society benefitted from the excellent guidance of the Restaurant Manager Marco, who helped with two earlier successful Society lunches when he was manager at the Trevi Italian Restaurant in West Byfleet.

RLT

Tuesday 15 March 2016

Gavin Fryer RDP FRPSL: GB K.G.VI Empire Airmail Scheme 1937 & High Values on Mail 1939- 40

Gavin's display was divided into two distinct periods and demonstrated what a profound effect the outbreak of war had on airmail services.

After some proving flights Imperial Airways introduced the Empire Airmail Scheme in 1937 with the use of flying boats. The operation was divided into 3 stages - first to countries in Africa and subsequently to India, the Far East and even to the Pacific so that most of the Empire was covered. It was necessary for some subsidiary services to be set up as feeders to the main destinations. Prior to the Empire Airmail Scheme the airmail rate was 6d for a letter, but under the Scheme the rate became 1 1/2d per half ounce for a letter and 1d for a postcard. Gavin displayed some 200 sheets of mail sent to many of the Empire destinations under the Scheme. In 1938 some attractive labels were issued to advertise the Scheme. However, in 1939 at the outbreak of war the whole Scheme stopped dead. Some covers bearing multiples of the 1937 Coronation stamp were included in the first half.

An interesting side effect of the 1 1/2d rate which used the 1 1/2d brown stamp was a depletion of the stocks of the brown dye used to issue the stamps. This affected other issues like the 2/6d brown definitive stamp which was later re-issued using a green dye.

Gavin's second part showed how the whole complexion of airmail

changed with liberal surcharges being applied to overseas mail going around the world. As the war progressed it became more and more difficult for safe routes to be maintained, eg when the Mediterranean was closed the 'Horseshoe Route' was established from Durban to Cairo or Cairo to Sydney. Even this only lasted 18 months when Japan entered the war. Gavin showed 200 more sheets of mail bearing very large airmail rates, in some instances working out at 5/- per half ounce. One very large envelope had stamps to the value of £12-5-0 made up mainly of 5/- definitive stamps, perhaps the most which had ever been used on a single piece of mail. These high airmail rates could have been applied to deter all but the most important mail from being sent along perilous routes to various parts of the world.

Michael Lockton proposed a Vote of Thanks on behalf of the members referring to Gavin's display as a fascinating one. He noted that the use of flying boats could be compared with the stage coach and involved many tricky operations. This was borne out by the high quantity of crash mail from these operations. It was also interesting to note that no blue airmail etiquettes were applied during the Empire Airmail Scheme, but they were subsequently.

Gavin brought a wealth of material up from Dorset which provided a fascinating insight into this important period of airmail development leading up to and into the initial period of the War.

RLT

Tuesday 5 April 2016

Members: Cinderellas/Revenues

Attendance was affected by Easter and the school holidays which started later. Also President John Lea had almost lost his voice through a bad cough and sent his apologies. Of the eight who did make the meeting despite traffic problems, five had material to display.

Jane Hawkins found some relevant items among her collection of Egypt. These ranged from Express and Revenue stamps to Postage Dues and the special seals issued for the benefit of British forces. One label was issued by the Salt Department.

David Springett showed labels connected with two expositions in the USA, ie the Chicago Century of Progress event in 1933 and the National Stamp Show.

Michael Lockton found a selection of covers with 'enquiry labels' which had been affixed by the Post Office. These were asking for return of the envelope so that they could carry out enquiries. There were also 'free' labels used on parcels in WWI and later, as well as a 'found damaged' label.

Malcolm Bentley (on behalf of John Lea) displayed exposition labels in mint condition from the Paris Exposition of 1900. There were also local Indonesian stamps and labels issued by St. Kilda and Herm Island. He also had attractive labels to celebrate the Coronation of King George VI.

Finally, Ron Trevelyan demonstrated his interest in exhibitions by displaying the labels used in a number of British and Foreign Trade Fairs and British and Foreign full scale Exhibitions. He included one or two examples of Victorian Revenue stamps plus some KGV consular stamps.

Despite the small attendance the meeting enjoyed the displays which were a good representation of 'Back of the Book' material.

RLT

Tuesday 19 April 2016

Brian Sole FRPSL: Go By Cycle

Members expected a display by a top thematic collector to be well ordered, methodical and well presented and they were not disappointed. Brian ticked all the boxes in making the evening a most enjoyable one.

His first display of material was a plea for thematic collecting. The rules were not as bad as some might make out and he showed how material could gradually be accumulated.

On cycling he outlined the history which began with the use of a walking machine which later acquired a crank and pedals. The famous Penny Farthing cycle was illustrated and shown next to a

postal stationery card embossed with a penny farthing stamp. He then traced the evolution of the bicycle to the 'boneshaker' and the design of bicycles for greater leisure, especially children who experienced greater independence from riding a bicycle. Even Queen Victoria was influenced by these developments when she ordered two tricycles. Various cycling organisations were set up.

The second part concentrated on the various uses of the bicycle. Brian brought a number of reference books on cycling which he laid out for inspection. Mail was delivered by bicycle, but required a special licence. In the world of sport there were cycle races, time trials, world championships and the Olympic Games. There was much material to back up all these events. The Tour de France was represented by a large card with a map of France with stamps for each place enroute and appropriate postmarks.

In war the Mafeking postal delivery service by cycle was a prime example and Brian displayed a copy of the Mafeking newspaper 'Mafeking Mail' dated 9 April 1900. Mounted troops on bicycles was a feature in both WWI and WWII. He had examples of special mail delivered by cycle and authorised local posts. Subsequently the design of bicycles gradually changed with regard to the frame and the wheels. Brian rejoiced in the more relaxed attitude towards the use of postcards for display purposes and included some good examples which conveyed his theme. One postcard showed a man doing acrobatics on a bicycle!

Michael Lockton proposed a Vote of Thanks on behalf of members and acknowledged that Brian was a leading thematic collector in the country and noted that much lateral thinking was required in this kind of collecting. The items on the Boer War were particularly interesting.

Members clearly enjoyed the evening and Brian subsequently e-mailed to say he appreciated the warm welcome he had received.

RLT

WOKING AND DISTRICT PHILATELIC SOCIETY

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General meeting was held at Christ Church Centre, Woking on Tuesday 17 May 2016 with the President John Lea and eight other members present.

1. Apologies for absence were received from David Griffin and David Stotter.
2. The minutes of the 2015 AGM (previously circulated in the June 2015 issue of 'Penny Post') were agreed as a true record and signed by the President.
3. Matters Arising. There were no matters arising.
4. REPORTS. The following reports were made by Officers of the Society:

President John Lea thanked all the members for helping to keep the Society going, especially when unexpected situations arose like when our caretaker at the Church retired. This meant that the Society would have to fill the gap. This presented no difficulty when two members immediately filled the breach and have continued to perform their fire warden duties ever since. He also thanked the members who showed their support by regular attendance at meetings.

Secretary Ron Trevelyan hoped that the past season had provided a variety of topics through the visiting speakers or members' evenings. Our meetings had received pretty good support - an average of eleven per meeting - taking into account our total membership of 36. With a dozen or so country members and those who are mainly content to enjoy the Exchange Packet, our meeting attendance represented about a third of the membership. The members' evenings sometimes presented unusual topics, but this did not deter members from putting on excellent displays and showed how versatile they were. Our Annual Lunch at the Tante Marie Restaurant was an enjoyable affair which attracted 16 members and their guests. Terry Rippingale still journeyed from afar to enjoy the company of old friends. The Skylight room had been fully booked for the Society from September to December 2016 and provisionally so from January to June 2017 until the room rate was known.

The loss of our longstanding Church caretaker had caused problems leading to the necessity of providing for ourselves. However, the prompt agreement by David Griffin and David Cairns to train as fire wardens and the offer by Mick Coad to be a keyholder quickly saved the situation. These members were to be congratulated. Some societies ceased not through the lack of membership, but because no-one was prepared to fulfill duties. Woking Society was not currently in that category.

Treasurer Malcolm Bentley presented the 2015/2016 Accounts. He considered that the Society had a successful year financially because the donations figure had been a positive one (£279.45). The deficit of £40.71 was not a worrying one. However, his projection for 2016/17 had to be realistic. The income from subscriptions would probably be lower because so many members had paid in advance and a continuation of

donations at the same level could not be taken for granted. The cash situation at 31 March 2016 was £4320.01. (2015 £4110.72) .

The positive cash flow in the Packet Account was exceptional and due to a delay in accounting.

Woking & District Philatelic Society

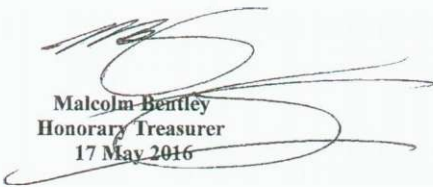
Expenditure and Income for the period 01.04.15 to 31.03.2016

	2014/2015	Estimate 2015/2016	Actual 2015/2016	Estimate 2016/2017
Income				
Bank Interest	0.95	1.00	0.96	1.00
Subscriptions	320.00	300.00	300.00	250.00
Raffle/"Contributions"	269.50	250.00	246.00	250.00
Packet Proceeds	(25.52)	50.00	152.93	(50.00)
Donations	323.40	150.00	279.45	150.00
Miscellaneous	0.00	25.00	22.50	25.00
Total Income	888.33	776.00	1,001.84	626.00
Expenditure				
Meeting Room hire	672.00	750.00	756.00	750.00
Insurance	55.20	60.00	57.90	60.00
Affiliation fees	58.50	60.00	56.25	60.00
Prizes/Cups	4.80	20.00	10.20	20.00
G Expenses	149.24	100.00	68.39	100.00
Penny Post	0.00	50.00	0.00	50.00
Miscellaneous	16.83	75.00	93.81	75.00
Total Expenditure	956.57	1,115.00	1,042.55	1,115.00
Surplus/(Deficit)	(68.24)	(339.00)	(40.71)	(489.00)
Packet Account				
Bank balance at 31.03.2015			711.72	
Bank balance at 31.03.2016			864.65	
Positive cash flow			152.93	

Balances at end of period	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015
Treasurer's account	1,556.92	1,449.00	1,255.36
Packet account	737.24	711.72	864.65
Interest-bearing account	2,200.00	2,200.00	2,200.00
Cheque 000490 pending 000491	(40.00) (25.20)		
Totals	4,428.96	4,360.72	4,320.01 (40.71)

Breakdown of Membership Subscriptions received (300.00)

28 @	10.00	280.00
1 @	5.00	5.00
1 @	15.00	15.00


Malcolm Bentley
Honorary Treasurer
17 May 2016

Examined and approved.
J.A. Statter
12 May 2016

Notes

1 The Balance Sheet

Assets

Woking Postal History Collection	£ 4,000.00
Balance of Treasurer's Account	1,255.36
Balance of Savings Account	2,200.00
Balance of Packet Account	864.65
Trophies	50.00
Total Assets	8,370.01

The Balance Sheet (Cont.)

Liabilities

Outstanding cheques drawn on Packet Account
Payments due to owners on books in circulation

Total Liabilities

250.00 (estimate)

- 2 Cash situation as at 31st March 2016 £ 4,320.01 (2015 £ 4,110.72)
- 3 We appear to have had a successful year financially, due mainly again to a positive donations figure. There is an exceptional outcome in the Packet account where delays in accounting both this year and last will soon be played out.
- 4 My projection for 2016/17 has to be more circumspect. I'm counting on a lower subscription income as so many members have already paid a number of years in advance. Nor can we count on a continuation of unstable donations. I have assumed the church will maintain present rent levels (low inflation, major savings through our involvement in care-taking).

The President thanked the Treasurer for his work on the accounts where not a penny went astray. Our survival depended on maintaining our finances at the present level and by not allowing our balances to be nibbled away. It was important to remember that we were living for the present.

The Accounts were examined and agreed by the Accounts Examiner David Stotter. Acceptance of the Treasurer's Report and Accounts was proposed by Michael Lockton and seconded by Tony Grove.

Packet Organisers Tony Grove said that 7 new packets were put into circulation in 2015 which was down from the long term yearly average of 9. This was due to less material being supplied. There were 8 contributors in 2015 and, of these, 4 provided 85% of the total. Packet circulation remained at 14. In 2016 2 packets had been circulated and little material awaited circulation. It was to be hoped that sales were sufficiently rewarding for providers to continue. One significant supplier was seriously considering whether to continue. The Exchange Packet future was uncertain with other societies facing problems. Camberley Stamp Club Exchange Packet had ceased and Guildford Society only continued because the secretary had taken on additional work. The Exchange Packet needed material to sell and members to buy.

Neville Ledsome presented the Packet Accounts noting that sales were £150 lower in 2015/16. The percentage of sales by value of material circulated in eight packets declined during 2015/16 and was 7% compared with 8% in 2014/15 and 10% in 2013/14. The bank balance was £865, but £170 was with owners who had not presented their cheques to the bank. At 31 March 2016 the true balance was £704 compared with £470 in the previous year. Acceptance of the Packet Accounts was proposed by Jane Hawkins and seconded by Michael Lockton.

The President thanked the Packet Organisers for all their work. He hoped that more members would purchase material to keep the Packet operating. It should be remembered that 10% of sales was paid into Society funds.

THE PACKET ACCOUNTS 2015/2016
Account for the year ending 31 March 2016

		2012/13 £	2013/14 £
INCOME			
Sale of Stamps		1040.86	887.98
Donation		-	14.45
Hire of Church Hall		<u>40.00</u>	<u>-</u>
		1080.86	902.43
EXPENDITURE			
Payment to book owners	cheque	1032.20	890.98
	By stamp	13.00	-
Return of books		5.21	9.29
Photocopying		8.80	-
Stationary		3.99	-
Hire of church hall		40.00	-
Donation		<u>-</u>	<u>14.45</u>
		1090.33	914.72

During the year ending 31 March 2014 eight packets completed their circuits.
 The percentages sales by value from these packets were as follows:

	%		%
2014/09	8	2015/01	8
2015/02	7	2015/03	7
2015/04	7	2015/05	5
2015/06	6	2015/07	10

Of material circulated in these eight packets amounting to £14,273, 7% by value (£1004.36) was sold. This compares with 8% in 2014/15 and 10% in 2013/14.

Reconciliation with Bank Account

IN	£
<u>Bank Account</u>	
Paid in	887.73
<u>Actuals</u>	
Paid in	887.73
OUT	
<u>Bank Account</u>	
Paid out	905.43
Donation	<u>14.45</u>
	919.88

(Continued)

Actuals

Paid out	890.98
Donation	14.45
Paid from petty cash	<u>9.29</u>
	914.72

Bank Account

	£
Balance at 31.03.16	864.65

Actuals

Less	
Cheques with owners, but not yet presented to bank	-170.63
Plus	
Petty Cash	+9.86
Balance at 31.03.16	703.88
(Balance at 31.03.15)	471.18)

Neville Ledsome
May 2016

Penny Post Editor In the absence of David Griffin abroad on business Ron Trevelyan said that an edition of Penny Post was in preparation, providing that David Griffin's work commitments would allow.

Competition Secretary Ron Trevelyan reported on the Single Sheet Competition which was held in November 2015. The winner was Michael Lockton and the runners up were Neville Ledsome (2nd) and Mick Coad (3rd). Further details were given the December 2015 edition of 'Penny Post'.

The Mason Cup/Annual Competition was held at the Addlestone Surrey Federation Stamp Fair in July 2015; details were also given in the December 2015 issue of 'Penny Post'. Michael Lockton, Ron Trevelyan and David Stotter represented the Society and achieved third place out of seven. David Stotter earned the distinction of winning the Federation Trophy for the highest marks in the Postal History section.

It was the intention to include another Single Sheet Competition in the forthcoming programme and hopefully Woking would be able to compete in the Surrey Federation event in October.

5. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The President read out the following names who were nominated to form the incoming Committee. All had declared willingness to serve or had raised no objection:

President:	John Lea FRPSL
Vice-President:	Dr D.A. Stotter FRPSL
Secretary:	R.L.Trevelyan
Asst. Secretary:	J.Lea FRPSL
Treasurer	M.Bentley FRPSL
Packet Organiser:	A.R.Grove
Penny Post Editor:	D.Griffin
Accounts Examiner	Dr D. A. Stotter FRPSL

Committee Members: N. F. Ledsome
Mrs J. Hawkins
P. Wheeler
N. Burnett

Curator: Woking Postal History Collection : M.H. Lockton FRPSL

The nominations were accepted en bloc after being proposed by Michael Lockton and seconded by David Cairns.

Michael Lockton agreed to continue as Curator of the Woking Postal History Collection.

6. PROGRAMME FOR 2015/16

Ron Trevelyan said that this was near to reaching completion with the aim of achieving a balance between speakers and members' evenings. So far two speakers had been booked from outside the Society and two more from within. In addition two societies, Petersfield and Camberley, had agreed to visit Woking. The members' evenings would include some regular topics, as well as some new ideas put forward by members.

7. Any Other Business

The President presented the Ian Bain trophy jointly to David Griffin and David Cairns for their valuable assistance in acting as Fire Wardens at the Church throughout the season.

Tony Grove raised a matter that was discussed at the recent Committee meeting. It was a suggestion that the Committee should be simplified to make it more manageable. The President acknowledged that the proposal had its merits, but it could result in quite a number of changes. The Society seemed to manage quite well without too many Committee meetings and it was best not to proceed with the idea.

The President thanked everyone for their attendance at the AGM.

The meeting closed at 9.30 pm

Ron Trevelyan
Hon Secretary May 2016

Tuesday 7 June 2016

The European Union and its Stamps—Members

The approaching Referendum may have something to do with it, but members were more reluctant than usual to support the topic of the evening. This was a coincidence because the programme was drawn up more than a year ago!

However, five members provided viewing for most of the evening. Michael Lockton displayed examples of London Late Fee Mail between 1858 and 1875. There was an option to pay cash on mail to foreign countries or the British Colonies. He exhibited mail to overseas destinations including Naples, Hong Kong, St. Petersburg, Lisbon, Paris, Cairo plus many others. All the mail has a manuscript indication of the amount in cash which had to be prepaid.

Ron Trevelyan chose examples from eight EU countries to show the range of stamps used to advertise major Exhibitions or Trade Fairs. In the case of Greece many issues celebrated antiquity or Greek mythology with an eye on the tourist market.

Mick Coad devised a potted history of German stamp issues which ranged from early issues for the separate German States through the period of extreme inflation to WW II, reunification and beyond.

David Springett concentrated on the Europa stamps of a number of countries including an omnibus addition.

John Lea showed Channel Island issues, including the period of German occupation.

RT.

The Gdansk Post Office

During one of my recent trips to Poland I visited the Gdansk Post Office. This is now a postal museum with one room



dedicated to Polish postal history and a second dedicated to the exploits during the start of the second world war. This has a real David versus Goliath and the story is very important to the Polish people.

Gdansk Post Office today

Danzig (as it was called then) has always been a very strategic ship building and port area due to the natural deep water inlets, abundant source of local materials and access to other Baltic areas. It, together with other nearby towns was given free city status after the first world war under the Treaty of Versailles. This stated that the region was to remain separated from post WWI Germany and from the newly independent nation of Poland Republic. The free city was put under League of Nations protection and put into a binding customs union with Poland.

Poland was given full rights to develop and maintain transportation, communications, and port facilities in the city. The Free City was created in order to give Poland access to a well-sized seaport. While the city's population was in the majority German, it had a significant Polish minority as well. The German population deeply resented being separated from Germany, and subjected the Polish minority to discrimination and ethnically based harassment. This was especially true after the Nazi Party gained political control in Germany in 1935.

In 1933 the City's government had been taken over by the local Nazi Party which suppressed the democratic opposition. Due to anti-Semitic persecution and oppression, many Jews fled, but the indigenous Poles remained.

The Free City of Danzig had two post offices: one municipal and one Polish run. The Polish post office was considered an extraterritorial property of Poland, meaning it was exempt from local law in much the same way embassies or UN buildings are. As such, it became a sort of Polish headquarters within the Free City. As the situation between Poland and Germany worsened, the Polish military made the rather paltry effort of securing the post office by sending reserves to the post in April, 1939 to organize and train a security unit composed of official post office employees and civilian volunteers. In mid-August, as hostilities were beginning to seem imminent, more 'employees' were sent from surrounding areas, bringing the staff of the Polish post office to somewhere near 100 people.



The Polish Post Office in Gdansk as it was upon its opening in 1925.

Early morning on September 1, 1939, with 57 people in the building, the advancing German army cut the power from the building and after shelling the local Garrison, they began their assault on the Polish post office in Danzig. Armed with a small cache of mostly pistols, some machine guns and hand-grenades, the Polish defenders were able to repel the first German attack of the front of the building (though the Germans did enter the front door of the building briefly). Later in the morning the Germans were reinforced with artillery, but despite the extra firepower, the second German attack - through a wall in the side of the building - was also repulsed.

In the afternoon the Germans called a ceasefire, demanding a Polish surrender. As the Polish post office employees - refusing surrender - holed up inside the building, the Germans received additional reinforcements. They dug a trench under the building and planted an explosive device which when detonated collapsed the side wall of the building allowing the Germans to capture the entire building except for the basement. Later in the evening, with the Poles holed up in the basement refusing surrender the Germans brought automatic pumps, oil tanks and flamethrowers into the building and proceeded to flood the basement with burning petrol. Many Poles burned to death before the rest evacuated the basement. The first two Poles to exit the building - waving



white flags - were shot. The rest of the Polish defenders were allowed to surrender. All 38 survivors were put on trial, denied a defence lawyer and sentenced to death. They were executed by firing squad on October 5th.

Today, the story of the heroes of the Polish post office is often told as a means of demonizing the specialized SS troops who carried out an attack against harmless civilians, and has been mythologized to almost biblical proportions. The defenders of the Polish post office of Danzig who 'held off the might of the Nazi War Machine' are remembered with a monument commemorating their sacrifice in what is now Gdansk.



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Philatelic Related Internet Sites

In this issue I have included only one internet site as it is the starting point for so much information:

www.globalphilateliclibrary.org

It includes most of the famous philatelic library built up by the 26th Earl of Crawford (1847-1913) which comprises more than a million pages (representing around 95% of the worlds published philatelic knowledge at the time it was amassed) and the collection has been digitised in a project headed by British Library staff and volunteers from the Royal Philatelic Society London.

Programme for Second Half of Year 2016

September 6

The letter Q - R - Members

September 14 - 17

Autumn STAMPEX, Islington, London

September 20

Visit of Petersfield PS

October 4

Brian Sedgley - Egypt

October 18

Fauna of the World - Members

October 29

Surrey Federation Stamp Fair - Claygate

Host: Kingston and District PS

November 1

12 Sheets of your Choice Members

PLUS The Single Sheet Competition

November 5

Society Table at West Surrey Family History Fair,

Woking Leisure Centre

November 15

Small Islands of the World - Members

December 6

Ron Trevelyan - The Crystal Palace

December 13 (NOT December 20)

Christmas Social

(No further meetings until 17th January 2017)

Visitors are always welcome!