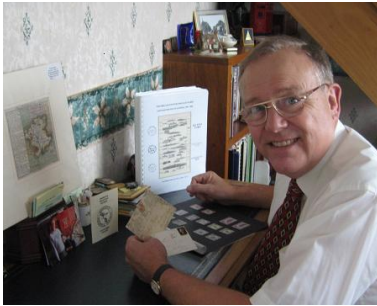




# Halcyon

The Newsletter of the Redditch Philatelic Society – Autumn 2009. ABPS Society Journal of the Year 2008.

## From the Chairman



There is just one meeting left in this first half of our season, This year Bob Harper and Alan Godfrey have volunteered (yes, really, no arm twisting !) for 'The Committee

Entertains' and I for one am looking forward to their displays. To find out the subjects you will have to come along on the evening.

Last time I wrote for *Halcyon* I wondered what we would get with 'Philatelic Elephants'. Well surprise, surprise, we got ELEPHANTS!! Mike Siverns gave a super display on all aspects of things Elephantine.

Four members made the trip to Philatex on Guy Fawkes day and I am pleased to say we all got there and back home again without any mishaps. The following week saw six members make the trip to Streetley to return the visit they made to us earlier in the year. A good night was had by all and the seventeen of their members present were very interested in our displays and appeared to all go home happy.

The Midland Federation Day at Hinckley was a small, but very well balanced, Fair with an excellent mix of dealers. The 16 sheet individual competitions once again went Redditch's way with two more class wins and also 'Best in Show' again. I am slightly uncomfortable with the 'Best in Show' classification; it smacks of dog shows and it is very difficult to draw comparisons across the various classifications of philately.

May I remind everyone that the meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> January 2010 will now be a club meeting at St Georges as the dinner has had to be moved to the following week. This has a plus for me in that we shall be back from our Australian holiday with our daughter and family the day before and so can attend the dinner. The chances of me falling asleep in my soup must be very high as we only land the day before after consecutive flights of about 24 hours. At least I shall have all of three days to prepare for the AGM.!!

**Chris Jackson**

## The President's Piece



My final duty of the year as your President, was at Evesham Golf Club. Along with Fred Prichard and our wives, we were guests of the Evesham Philatelic Society on the occasion of their 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. There were about 50 people present.

After an excellent dinner, a help yourself buffet with delightful puddings to follow, there was an introductory speech made by the Mayor of Evesham, Councillor Alan Booth. This was followed by a very interesting talk given by Colin Such of the Auctioneers Warwick and Warwick.

Colin stated that a penny black when it was introduced was equivalent to about a twentieth of the average weekly wage at the time. The talk progressed on to postcards and we were informed that the first Postcard was produced in Austria. So started the activity of Deltiology, or postcard collecting. We saw a famous Australian postcard, "Beer and Baccy", which had to be withdrawn because of the public reaction which objected to the possible increase of addiction (of both vices).

The first postcards had a blank back and so had to be put in envelopes which of course had the full letter postage rate applied. Various postcards of Evesham were shown and many of the audience were able to add more information about quite a lot of them.

Colin concluded by showing us some examples of postcards sold through recent Warwick and Warwick auctions. A botanic postcard realised £300 whilst a silk went for £1,000. One from Antarctica, written by Sir Ernest Henry Shackleton, reached a colossal £4,370. Cigarette cards are also popular and one of Rutherford's went for £2,000.

Altogether we all had a very enjoyable evening, which made me wonder what our Society should do on such an occasion.

Finally, I have just enough space to wish you all a Happy Christmas and Best Wishes for 2010

**Richard Nicol**

## Editorial

Seasonal greetings from your Editor and welcome to yet another stocking filler edition of *Halcyon* for you to digest over the Christmas holiday. I have been very satisfied with the number of responses to my plea back in September for yet more articles. We now have the makings of a number of serialisations for future newsletters. Mind you, if you haven't started that article please don't think it isn't now needed. On the contrary, it is more than needed still; I can never have enough material for future newsletters, so please don't stop. Why not use some of the Christmas break to have a go at a few words on your own specialist area of collecting.

As Editor, feedback is always welcomed on what you receive. Sadly, I do not get much. Whilst that might imply that what you get is very good, it might also indicate that you are fed up with it and don't actually read it. A recent measure of quality has been first and second places in the annual ABPS Society Journal of the Year competitions, but is this enough? It is your newsletter so please, as well as articles can I have feedback. A letters column, or even page, would be a step forward. What would you like to see if future newsletters?

Sat quietly at a recent Auction waiting for "my" Lot to come along, I took to reflecting upon how we all add to our collections. I tend to frequent Fairs and Auctions to pick up what I want. Whilst I meet many fellow members at Fairs, I tend not to at Auctions. Is this right? Am I in the minority going to Auctions and experiencing the "pleasure" of having my wallet emptied faster than a stick-up, because I just had to go that extra bid?

**Malcolm Allinson**

### SOCIETY PROGRAMME:

#### January to April 2010

January 4 <sup>th</sup>	Annual Society competitions.
January 21 <sup>st</sup>	Members Display - 3 sheets. (or 50p fine)
January 28 <sup>th</sup>	Annual Dinner – Spires Restaurant REDDITCH College.
February 1 <sup>st</sup>	Annual General Meeting.
February 18 <sup>th</sup>	Crimean War – David Hood
March 1 <sup>st</sup>	Visit from Worcester PS.
March 18 <sup>th</sup>	Auction Preview.
March 20 <sup>th</sup>	Annual Society Auction St Luke's Memorial Hall.
April 15 <sup>th</sup>	Open Album Evening.
April 21 <sup>st</sup>	Visit to Cheltenham PS.

Please support your Society and take part in all of these meetings. Please note that an extra meeting is included this year on 21<sup>st</sup> January, but because of Easter falling at the beginning of April, **there will be no meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> April.**

## SEEN OUT AND ABOUT.

From time to time we have pointed out members being spotted in all sorts of locations, mainly from colleagues noticing photographs in philatelic magazines. It seems our members are still cropping up. Bob Harper, featured in the last edition of *Halcyon* as his alter ego Rowland Hill, has now been spotted in the pages of Stamp Lover, the magazine of the National Philatelic Society. Has anyone seen Bob/Rowland in any other Society publication and just as important, has any other member been spotted anywhere? Physical proof to your Editor please.

*We always try and ensure that contributions to Halcyon are acknowledged. So, many thanks for this edition to:- **Chris Jackson, Richard Nicol, Lyel Swingler, Ralph Richardson, Norman Wiley, Bob Harper, Fred Pritchard and David Gillespie.***

## ANNUAL DINNER

It isn't often that we have to move a meeting. In past years it has only been when our Thursday meeting falls on Maundy Thursday and we cannot have the Hall. However this year when I went to book the College restaurant for our Annual Dinner on Thursday 21st January, I was surprised to find that the College had already fixed that date for their 'Burns Night' themed evening and they would not accept a block booking. (Burns Night of course is the 25<sup>th</sup> January)

In a flash of genius I attempted to swap the Thursday meetings in January and February but this fell foul of the College half term closure – foiled again! There appeared to be three choices, cancel the meeting; move the dinner to another venue or move the date of the dinner. A check with committee members found that by a substantial majority the vote was for moving the date of the dinner. After further discussion with the College a booking was made for the following Thursday the 28<sup>th</sup> January 2010.

This left us with the 21<sup>st</sup> January, our normal meeting night. At the recent committee meeting there was unanimous agreement to hold a meeting at St Georges on that evening and that the title would be a "Three sheet display or Pay 50p" members evening. (Your Treasurer is busy devising ways of acquiring any 50p that might become due, so please disappoint him and turn up with a display!)

Another oddity to the programme this year is that our Monday meeting in April falls on Easter Monday and it had previously been agreed in committee not to hold a meeting that night.

**Chris Jackson**

## MEETING REPORTS

**Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2009**

### **Mini Auction.**

The usual season starter, a mini Auction, once again provided members with the opportunity to dispose, acquire or both. Many did so and bidding around the room proved that none of us can resist a bargain. Everyone left the evening with empty pockets but with plenty of writing up and research now required.

**Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2009**

### **Visit from Cheltenham PS**

*David Gillespie's aversion to any philatelic material beyond the actual stamp is well known, so we welcome his gradual conversion to the wider discipline with his report on tonight's meeting which as we will read, contained not just stamps but much more.*

David Williams and Willy Stephens were introduced by our Chairman and identified as current and past Chairmen of the Cheltenham society. Norman Higson, known to many of us, had been due to attend but had been taken ill, and we passed on our wishes for a speedy recovery.

David opened with a display of and discourses on ENVELOPES. Affixed, on this occasion, to the envelopes were postage due labels (not stamps!) on both GB domestic mail and mail incoming from overseas.

Illustrating what a pedantic lot the Post Office could be, examples within David's collection included; a postcard with name and address followed by the words 'him who sees all', surcharged ½d because of this message written in the address space; a postcard from Brighton two-tenths of an inch longer than specification therefore surcharged ½d over ½d rate. Apparently this regulation was strictly enforced because of the large quantity of cards posted in Brighton and the standardised sorting trays there only just fitting the maximum size. An earlier form of stealth tax? Both of the above examples were surcharged using handstamps rather than adhesive labels.

An example of an 1887 telegram was shown, with 6½d postage due (a considerable sum at the time) because the telegram had been re-directed.

David outlined how rates had changed over the years. From 1971 a surcharge of double the original deficiency was applied, and from 1983 there was a 'postage due' rate plus a fixed administration fee.

Postage dues commenced in 1914. An early form of 'money spinner' was associated with the lower postage rate for printed paper. To obtain this rate mail needed to be posted before a specified time of day. After this time it was charged, via postage due, at the full letter rate.

As time passed ever better ways of levying postage due were devised. Novelty cards were regarded by the Post Office as letters, but this fact was not universally known. An example was shown of a card depicting a cat with wobbly eyes. It was surcharged.

In the 1930's the cheapest form of mail was restricted to 5 words. Again many users were not aware of this and if 6 or more words were spotted then the rate was doubled. In 1950 silk stockings were readily available in Malta, but not in the UK. The Post Office was aware that these were frequently purchased by servicemen and posted home. So they would open all suitably sized envelopes and impose purchase tax of 6/-, using specially prepared rubber stamps! However if the contents had been declared and the item sent Registered, then no charge was made.

A number of anomalies existed on mail incoming to the UK. Mail from Tristan da Cunha, before stamps were available there, was only charged at the normal postage rate. At Christmas 1937, surcharges on mail from the colonies were waived as a 'goodwill gesture'.

A ½d rate of surcharge (using a postage due label) remained after the ending of the ½d post. This was for use when only a small surcharge was due on appropriate incoming mail stamped in foreign currencies.

A number of European countries issued stamps with a fixed lifespan. Often a visitor to those countries would not be aware of this and it was common for incoming mail, particularly from Britons abroad, to arrive with obsolete stamps. This mail was surcharged in the country of origin and the deficiency collected in the UK via a postage due label.

A further source of philatelic interest was incoming mail from Rhodesia during the 'illegal independence' period. At this time Rhodesian stamps were not regarded as valid, and all mail was surcharged.

From around 1981 the Post Office began to move away from postage due labels and move towards handstamps. However if the recipient demanded a receipt for the 'due' fee then one was issued, as a separate document, bearing the appropriate postage due labels. January 28th 2000 was the last day of use of postage due labels. Various ideas were trialled as replacements. Yellow labels were settled upon, showing the deficiency plus a collection fee ('handling fee').

Finally David displayed a number of examples of envelopes bearing inscrutable surcharge values and asked, pleaded even, if anyone present could explain the reasons behind these rates of surcharge.

Willy Stephens display was of Swiss airmail. He produced a copy of the 'schweizerisches luftpost-handbuch' which demonstrably contained every



conceivable detail of all early Swiss airmail flights that anyone could possibly want to know, and many where it did not appear conceivable that anyone ever would. Details included name of pilot, number of ordinary and registered letters carried, point of origin of flight, destination, etc. etc.

Some mail originating at Berne was displayed showing a provisional cancel, due to the fact that the airport had not yet been officially opened.

A number of wartime censored airmail letters were shown, as were some immediately pre-war and early wartime Swiss - UK airmail, directed via Paris, which had been hidden for the duration of the war in Paris post office cellars, and delivered when the war had ended.

The Swiss Red Cross offices dealt with prisoners' and hospital mail which was censored and labelled with the examiner's serial number. All wartime mail for the UK went into Germany, where it was censored; then to Lisbon, the USA, on to the Bahamas, then Iceland, and eventually to the UK.

Examples of a postcard and a letter were shown with a strip where a chemical had been applied to see if invisible ink had been used.

A first day cover was shown which appeared to carry stamps commemorating the 1944 Olympic Games (which didn't happen) but which were in fact commemorating the jubilee of the Games revival.

Other items shown included rocket mail, the first Geneva – New York flight (which happened to be diverted to Washington), and the first helicopter mail flight, which flew in a circle around Geneva!

Our chairman thanked our visitors for bringing along two wonderful displays and giving us a thoroughly enjoyable evening.

**David Gillespie**

### **Monday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2009**

**Visiting Speaker: John Mayne**  
**Togo: German Occupation 1884-1914**

We have to thank Barry Smith for tonight's visiting speaker. He met John at a stamp fair and gave his details to our Programme Secretary, Alan Godfrey, who secured him for this talk. We were not disappointed with Barry's choice.

The display was a splendid example of how to show a country. Togo is in Western Africa, bordering the Bight of Benin, between Benin and Ghana. **Gustav Nachtigal** was a German explorer in Central Africa, and raised the German flag on Togo in July 1854. Thus Togoland was added to the German colonial empire. In an 1884 treaty signed at Togoville, Germany declared a protectorate over a stretch of territory along the coast and gradually extended its control inland and it became Germany's only self-supporting colony.

There were no Post Offices in Togo until 1<sup>st</sup> March 1888 when one was established in Lome. Yet by 1894 some 7,000 mail items a year were recorded. We saw a 1901 postcard of the Post Office. Overseas mail from Togo went to Hamburg before it received a cancellation. To get mail to visiting ships the mail was taken out to the ship in barrels as there were very little in the way of harbour facilities and ships tended to "lie off" rather than risk the onshore currents and swells. Deliveries took some time as there were only 6 boats to Bordeaux or Marseilles each year. When cancels were eventually applied in Togo the first was a box strike followed by a circular cancel at Klein-Popo (now Anecho). Lome was also given a circular cancel. The first postal stationery was privately printed and had a picture of Landeshauptmann Köhler, effectively the Governor.

To assist trade, a pier was built to allow ships to dock, but this was destroyed by a tsunami and so barrel delivery was resumed. A selection of the many cancels used was displayed including some 24 "village" cancels, some of which have only two known examples.

In what is known as the "Yacht period", stamps were



issued showing a picture of the Kaiser's yacht. The Great War saw the end of German occupation on 26<sup>th</sup> August 1914 when the British forced a surrender. The German ship *Henny Woermann* was the last ship to leave, having to go to Pernambuco in Brazil for "neutrality", the Brazilians eventually seized the ship for themselves in 1917.

John was lucky to have collected most of his material before even the Germans showed a collecting interest in this country. So we were treated to a wonderful display of rare and in some cases unique material.

**Richard Nicol**

*During his display, John recommended a book called **The Scramble for Africa** by John Pakenham, which gives an authoritative account of European empire building in Africa during the late 1800's; a tome I have now started to work my way through. Ed.*

### **Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2009**

**Visiting Speaker: Mike Silverns**  
**Philatelic Elephants**

I warmed to our speaker tonight very quickly. Perhaps it was because he came from Radcliffe-on-Trent, near where I used to live. Perhaps it was because he lived in the same village as my Maths teacher who failed to teach me O level Maths. Perhaps it was the subject of the magnificent display. Tonight's display, on Elephants, was truly mammoth - everything on stamps to do with the noble beasts.

How did Mike start on elephants? Well, as he said himself, he "got diverted", and we can all recognise our own starts in that response. Mike confines his elephant collecting strictly to stamps, as he could so easily be "diverted further" into all of the ephemera surrounding the subject. **Jumbo** postmarks and similar associations therefore were not appropriate tonight.

Elephants come in two varieties, African and Indian. The older, Indian elephant species, is smaller than its African cousin, yet has the Latin name *Elephas Maximus*. Most of us know the other main difference between the two being the size of their ears.

It was a surprise to find that the earliest philatelic elephant appeared on our own Mulready wrapper/letter sheet in 1840 as an allegorical representation of India, as part of the British Empire.

Elephant stamps have been produced by near enough every sub-Saharan country with the possible exception of South Africa. I think this might imply that they roam wild and free over this vast continent, for the elephant with big ears (African) is notoriously difficult to train for any job. The Indian elephant, however, has been used by man for many centuries. Thus India and all of the countries of South East Asia have elephants on stamps, most performing heavy tasks. In most of Asia too, elephants have a god like status and are thus widely used in religious festivals and processions. We saw all of these uses of the elephant depicted throughout the display.

This was a very attractive and well presented display. It was clear also that Mike enjoyed giving his talk to us and we were equally pleased with what we saw and heard(!).

**Ralph Richardson**

### **Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2009** **Displays by two members.**

Tonight's displays were in the capable hands of Bill Grinnell and David Gillespie, and we were treated to two very different subjects, Early British Airmails from Bill and a selection of Commonwealth countries from David.

Bill commenced the evening with a surprise to many of us in showing Airmail stamps produced by a railway company! The Great Western Railway sponsored a regular airmail service between Cardiff and Plymouth, not an easy direct route on land due to the Bristol Channel, and we saw a 1935 cover from one of those regular flights. There followed a variety of flown covers from different companies and destinations. Island Airways served the Scottish islands and Cardiff and Liverpool dated 1934; a north Eastern cover from Leeds to London in 1938; a Highlands cover from Aberdeen to London. There were several items from the 1950's by British

European Airways to the Scilly Isles and the Channel Islands. A souvenir cover of June 1961 marked the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the first airmail, from Hendon to Windsor in 1911. We also saw a cover commemorating a non-stop helicopter flight in May 1970 from John o' Grouts to Lands End.

Westward Airways ran a shuttle service between Gatwick and Heathrow and we saw one of those covers from July 1969, together with BEA covers from the era of the 1971 Postal Strike. Many other services were noted, quite a few over distances so short one would think them uneconomical. Bill's display surprised many of us in revealing that there were so many small independent Airmail companies around during the period that he covered.

David took us beyond our shores and showed us many pages from his commonwealth collection. He began with Aden. A coaling station on the Arabian Sea, Aden was a British Colony of some strategic importance from the late Victorian period onwards. Although its first Post Office opened in 1839, no stamps were issued until 1854. Overprinted Indian stamps were used until 1937 when De La Rue supplied Aden's own stamps. Waterlow took over stamp production in 1939. The Indian currency continued in use until 1951 when cents and shillings were introduced. Overprints of the Indian values with cents were shown. David touched on his early method of writing up, revealing that he used a stencil, painstakingly forming each letter. Whatever the time taken to do this was worth it for neatness.

We moved across the globe to the ever popular Falkland Islands, and particularly the Falkland island Dependencies (all 17 of them). We were shown the 1946 issues of the "map" stamps, with many of the varieties including the thick and thin meridian lines which varies in position on different stamps. The stamps were withdrawn in 1963, but covers exist with much later postmarks; presumably philatelic.

David's third port of call was Hong Kong, a country ceded to Great Britain in January 1841. Its first stamps were issued in 1862. Early examples shown were from the 1891 Jubilee of the colony, and we were informed that the 2c value was only on sale for three days. Forgeries were shown of George V stamps which were so good it was difficult to identify their faults. The easiest indicator is the perforations but even then they could only be discerned with difficulty. These forgeries are still being found today.

There were great difficulties with many stamp issues during the war. Due to German bombing of the De La Rue works. The one and two dollar stamps were thus temporarily printed by William Lea & Co.

Bill's display was something new for us all, and David gave us a well informed and interesting display from what he said himself were just some of his album pages.

**Norman Wiley**

## Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2009 Single sheet competition.

There were 27 entries for our One Sheet competition night this year. As usual some members put in more than one entry but only their top scoring entry counted towards the results. With every person present scoring their preferred top ten there was the usual diversity of opinion. No less than twelve of the entries received a first place from at least one member.

Lyel was the runaway winner with his super entry on *Charles Lindbergh and the F.A.M. flights*. Joint second were Alan (Godfrey) and Robin with entries on the *Madam Joseph Forgeries of the Falklands* and the *Chilean 2d Blue* respectively.

Fourth was Malcolm with his 7<sup>th</sup> May 1840 (2<sup>nd</sup> day) Mulready, closely followed by Pete with a super Birmingham 75 duplex on cover. Alan (Bradley) took the final championship point with a South West Africa airmail from Windhoek.

Each of the points scorers gave a short (some a bit longer than others! [*Oh dear. Ed.*]) talk about their entry which explained some of the finer points which may have been missed by the viewers, and several members went home to check the cancellation dates on their Falklands material. All in all a good evening which once again showed the depth of member's collections.

**Chris Jackson**

### Philatelic Events for the Diary

The next few national and regional 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.

**15<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> January 2010**  
**YORK Stamp Show**  
York Racecourse

**24<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> February 2010**  
**STAMPEX**  
British Design Centre **LONDON**

**25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> February 2010**  
**PHILATEX**  
Horticultural Halls **WESTMINSTER**

*and to kick off the LONDON 2010 celebrations*

**24<sup>th</sup> April 2010**  
Midland Philatelic Federation  
Spring Convention  
Arden School, Knowle, **SOLIHULL**

If there is an event that you know of that isn't listed here and should be .....

## MIDLAND FEDERATION COMPETITIONS

This autumn's Midland Federation Convention was held on 10<sup>th</sup> October, in conjunction with the Hinckley Society's annual Stamp Fair. Five Redditch members made the journey east to pick up a number of philatelic bargains from the dealers and also have a good day out. Whilst the Fair itself was relatively small in size, Hinckley had put on a good variety of dealers to tempt everyone, and for me it was a very enjoyable visit.

In the Midland Federation individual 16 sheet competitions, we only entered two classes, but with great success. Chris Jackson gained first place in the Postal History class with a superb entry entitled *Bromsgrove Undated Circles*. A score of 84 produced a Silver Gilt Award for Chris, frustratingly only one mark short of Gold but this was (almost) compensated for with the accolade of Best in Show. (*I'm sure that given the comments on this accolade in the previous newsletter and in our Chairman's introduction, some changes will be forthcoming. Ed.*)



*Chris Jackson being presented with the Postal History Trophy by Councillor Keith Nichols, the Mayor of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough, together with Joe David, the Hinckley Town Crier.*

Our second entry was from Alan Godfrey, who's *Angel Delight* – the story of a single issue of stamps, Christmas 1998 – won the Social Philately Class. A score of 76 also gained Alan a Silver award in what is to many of us a totally new category of exhibiting. The entry included almost everything relating to that issue of stamps; publicity material, Christmas cards, aircard, aerogramme, PHQ cards, first day covers, point of sale advertising material and the stamps themselves. Also shown was an extremely scarce strip of 4 of the 20p value, two of the stamps being completely imperforate; one of only 24 pairs known!

The entries were judged by John Jackson, a well respected national judge and known to many of us over the years as a regular adjudicator of Midland Federation competitions.

Finally, with two entries and two first places today; two firsts and a second from the Spring event at Stafford; and a brace of 'Best in Show' from the two events, just think what we could do next year with an entry in each category.

**Malcolm Allinson**



**Stop Press**

The usual format of the MPF events is for the inter-Society competitions to be held in the Spring, and the individual competitions to be held in the Autumn. We have just heard that for 2010 the situation will reverse. So **now** is definitely the time to put the finishing touches to your 16 sheet entry. These competitions will be held at Solihull in April.

**The Blists Hill Post Office**

With so many Post Offices closing nowadays, it is refreshing to hear of one actually opening. Blists Hill, at the Ironbridge Gorge Museum has just opened its "new" Post Office. The building is part of Canal Street, a new development at the Museum.

Canal Street was carefully constructed earlier this year, with some buildings being moved brick by brick from original locations, others recreated using the Ironbridge Gorge Community Archive. Each has been fitted out to show a selection of trades, industries and professions from the Victorian era.



The replica Blists Hill Post Office at the Ironbridge gorge Museum.

Many of the buildings are manned by staff in period costume, helping visitors to interpret the contents of each one, and also to demonstrate the various activities.

The British Postal Museum and Archive have launched their *Museum of the Post Office in the Community* which is located in the upstairs rooms of the building. The exhibit is split into four different sections, each exploring a different theme around the Post Office in the Community.

For more information on this excellent project, the BPMA website [www.postaheritage.org.uk](http://www.postaheritage.org.uk) is worth a look. Better still; why not make a visit yourself to Blists Hill.

**Malcolm Allinson**

**LONDON 2010 FESTIVAL OF STAMPS.**

As this major International event gets ever closer, it is probably time to start focussing our minds on what will be on offer. Unlike previous Internationals in this country that were single events (Earls Court in 2000 and Alexandra Palace in 1990 being the most recent), this time the celebrations will be spread over a number of venues, activities and organisers. Just a quick glance at the London 2010 website ([www.london2010.org.uk](http://www.london2010.org.uk)) shows the extent of the philatelic related activities on offer. Even the most specialist collector will struggle to avoid something in their sphere. This writer has yet to decide whether to move to London for the whole summer, just to take in everything that is going on!

What will be exciting and also more convenient, is the many long term events that are being staged around the country. There are far too many to list here, but from the latest information from the organising committee, if we were to visit all the events taking place, there would not be much time left for anything else.

One event that we must not miss is the centre piece of the year, the International Stamp Fair in May. As you will all know by now, the Society will be organising a coach trip to this event on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> May. The date has been chosen to avoid the inevitable crush on both the first and last days (Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 15<sup>th</sup>). Please put this date in your diaries and look out for more information at future meetings.

**MDA**

**NETHERLANDS & COLONIES AIRMAIL****Part One: The Beginning 1919-1920**

Two ex-Netherlands Army Air Corps Lt's Albert Plesman & L Hofstee saw the possibilities of the 'technological spin off.' in aviation created by the 'Great War'. With the help of banker/balloonist Eddy Fuld and retired General Snijders, they began raising funds and organising an aviation exhibition in the Netherlands.

ELTA (*Erste Luchtvaart Tentoonstelling Amsterdam*) First Aviation Exhibition Amsterdam opened its doors on 1st August 1919 and was a great success. English, French and Italian aircraft gave flying displays and joy rides were available for members of the public. The more adventurous burgers of Amsterdam thought this was wonderful a reaction not lost on a visiting countryman Anthony Fokker who was to provide most of the early aircraft for KLM.

In the same period the KNVvL (*Koninklijke Vereniging voor Luchtvaart*) Royal Association for Aviation was formed to pursue the possibility of an airline service between the Netherlands and England. Albert Plesman because of his successful

involvement with ELTA was made administrator and later Director of the project.

On 12<sup>th</sup> September Queen Wilhelmina who had visited and enjoyed ELTA bestowed the title *Koninklijk* (Royal) on the new company. Thus the *Koninklijke Luchtvaart Maatschappij voor Nederland en Koloniën* (Royal Aviation Company for Netherlands and Colonies) was named. KLM.

On 17<sup>th</sup> May 1920 a chartered DH16 from Aircraft & Travel Ltd flown by Englishman Jerry Shaw landed at Schiphol. He had with him two English journalists, a load of newspapers and a letter from the Lord Mayor of London for the *Burgemeester van Amsterdam*. On the return journey on the 18<sup>th</sup> May there was one extra Dutch passenger with a letter from the Burgemeester to the Lord Mayor plus Dutch newspapers for the Dutch Cub in Sackville St W1 thus inaugurating the first commercial flight between the Netherlands and England.

The route for this flight was south along the Dutch and Belgian coasts, and then across the channel to Dover. The altitude of the flights was so low, large boards were positioned on posts on the ground as a navigation aid pointing the way to London.

12-5-20	G-EAGY	2nd 50ms	5,000	Test	Had on one mag
16-5-20		15ms	2,000	Day-ride	OK
17-5-20	Aircob G-EALU	2 Pass 50ms	130ms	Croydon to Amsterdam	Opening of new service Very bad weather OK
18-5	G-EALU	3 Pass 26ms	250ft	Amsterdam to Croydon	Very bad weather OK
23-5-20	Aircob G-EALU	2 Pass		Croydon	

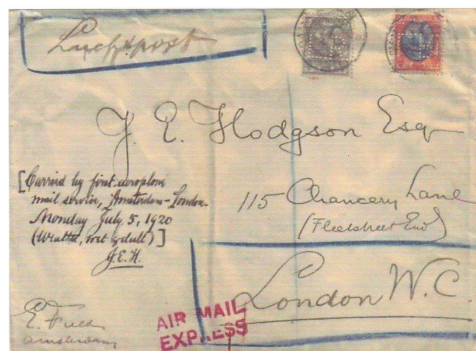
Extract from Log Book of Jerry Shaw.

The first airmail service between The Netherlands & England was on 5<sup>th</sup> July 1920. Another English pilot Bert Hinchcliffe in a hired aircraft, an Airco 9, left Schiphol with 300 letters on board. The weather was atrocious and he flew between 20 & 30 metres en-route to Vlissingen and the Belgian coast to Ostend. Using his compass he then flew low level towards Dover. He passed over the airfield at Lympe and because of the bad weather he received a signal to land. In normal circumstances he would have landed but he felt the mail had priority.

The fog became worse as he followed the railway line towards Croydon. He flew so low that he was tree hopping and flying between hills. It soon became too dangerous so he went off course and tried to find a safer route using his map.

It soon became unsafe to carry on and he eventually found a good flat field to land on. With the aircraft's engine slowly ticking over he waited for the mist to clear. Two farmers approached offering advice on the best way out, avoiding hills and trees. A clearance came and the intrepid aviator took off and soon found the railway tracks again. A few miles from Croydon he became very low on fuel having been airborne for 4½ hours. He finally made a landing at the emergency landing ground at

Penshurst and obtained a taxi to take him to the West Central District Post Office where he arrived at 22.30 just in time for the last delivery.



Item from the first Airmail flight from Amsterdam to London, 5<sup>th</sup> July 1920. Initialed by Hinchcliffe "JEH"

The first mail from London to Amsterdam was delivered on 8<sup>th</sup> July 1920. The pilot Capt Capps flew a converted HP-400 night bomber G-EASZ with an open passenger cabin. The flight took 3½ hours and carried 500 letters almost twice as many as the flight out. The Dutch could not believe their luck when a director of the English Aviation Co declared that his company were more interested in transporting passengers than mail as it was easier to convince people to fly than senders of mail to use airmail. KLM soon set up a twice weekly service carrying the mail between Amsterdam, Rotterdam and London

KLM or Royal Dutch Airline Service Co Ltd as it was translated in its early days, purchased 2 DH9's & 2 Fokker 11's a 4 person passenger machine. They also carried on chartering aircraft and in September 1920 a link between Amsterdam, Bremen and Hamburg was set up using *Deutsche Luft-Reederei* aircraft and crews. This service gave an opening to Hamburg, Warnemunde, Malmo and Copenhagen.

Because the aircraft used at the time were not weatherproofed and could not operate in the harsh winters, all services were shut down on 31<sup>st</sup> October 1920.

**Lyel Swingler**

## FROM THE STAMP ROOM The Autumn Diary of a collector.

The autumn season has descended with a bit of a vengeance (and early if the falling leaves and cooler temperatures are an indicator). Holiday duties have been successfully fulfilled so it's time to dust off the albums and get down to serious ~~hoarding~~ collecting without too many (good) weather related interruptions.

### 7<sup>th</sup> September

Just managed to distribute the Society newsletter this morning. For those members with internet, it should get to them before our first meeting tonight – although from experience, it has been known for an e-mail to take over 24 hours to travel from one side of my office to the other.



**18<sup>th</sup> September**

Just time to fit in the autumn visit to STAMPEX. Plenty of material to view in the excellent competition entries; plus plenty to buy from all of the stands. Thus many dealers' pension funds were contributed to.

**20<sup>th</sup> September**

New bookcases filling up so fast now that comments regarding extra ones have been met with negative responses. The spectre of using the floor again as a horizontal filing system looms.

**26<sup>th</sup> September**

An unexpected trip to Hay-on-Wye, book town of some fame, proved VERY successful, with books galore (philatelic one's included) now adorning the remaining empty shelves of the bookcases, and as a bonus there has been the purchase of some more 18<sup>th</sup> century maps of Worcestershire. Wall space is now as rare as an empty bookshelf.

**1<sup>st</sup> October.**

With dark nights on the increase, full time evening occupation of the stamp room is becoming more common. Drawers previously stuffed with goodies are being emptied and written up sheets being produced.

**End of October**

On holiday "up north", but sadly no Fairs to visit. However, finding a second hand bookshop lifts the spirits. Even further joy arose as no less than two philatelic books were located and quickly purchased; a) before they were spotted by someone else; b) before the shop owner could change the price, which was about 10% of the current prices being asked by that well known interweb bookseller. Sadly, this price differential was relayed to Jackie, who with her Bank Manager's financial acumen, immediately calculated that tonight's meal would therefore be free!

**1<sup>st</sup> November**

Thought turns to putting together an entry for the next Midland Federation competitions in April. A quick glance through piles of material concludes that it could be possible so more time in the stamp room will need to be negotiated for.

**15<sup>th</sup> November**

Have noticed lately the amount of mail that goes unfranked. No wonder that Royal Mail is panicking about "loss of revenue". Instead of spending vast amounts on new techniques (and thus new issues of stamps – is there a sub-plot there?) to prevent us peeling off stamps and re-using them, why don't they just frank them properly? They already have the machinery!! By all accounts, peeling off unused stamps is still possible, even those with the new-fangled slits in them. A number of (non philatelic) colleagues have reported 100% success in this activity, which incidentally is not illegal.

**MDA**

*More diary snippets next time to see how things fare in the stamp room over Christmas and New Year.*

**THE NEW SECURITY MACHINS**

*Noticing comments at various meetings (and reported in Autumn Diary of a Collector above. Ed.) regarding the peeling off of the new Machin stamps, Bob Harper has penned a detailed article on them.*

Royal Mail are failing to cancel a high proportion of adhesive stamps and this has encouraged unscrupulous folks to peel/soak these so called 'Skips' and, heaven forefend, use them again. Most of us law abiding folks would not dream of stealing 39 pence from Royal Mail, would we, but a glance at eBay shows that certain sellers were selling 'Skips' in bulk. Whilst not actually saying so, it is more than likely that they would be reused thus depriving Royal Mail of much needed revenue.

To most of us the answer is obvious. Make sure the stamps are cancelled! Surprisingly, Royal Mail could not guarantee this so they came up with another solution. They would make it difficult to remove the stamps.

The first attempt was noticed on the self adhesive 2008 Christmas stamps. In these the soluble layer within the stamps' gum had been removed and used stamps were very difficult to remove from paper, a problem for folks like me who collect commercially used specimens. Then new Machins were announced, and issued on the 16<sup>th</sup> February 2009. These have a number of features which I list below:

(1) "ROYAL MAIL" in a wavy line pattern is printed over the surface outside of the Queens head, using iridescent ink.



*This example is taken from a Faststamp to illustrate the pattern. On a normal Machin it is possible to see by holding the stamp at an angle to the light.*

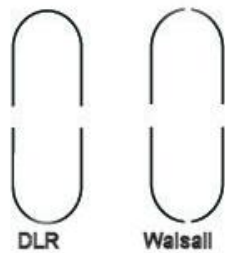
(2) The soluble layer in the gum has been removed making used copies difficult to remove from paper. It has been reported that a product called Stamplift will, with care, remove these stamps without damage. I can confirm that this is correct. It does not however remove the gum from the stamp and if you wish to mount it in an album the only two solutions I know of are: a) stick it on a piece of backing paper or plastic which somewhat defeats the object in removing it in the first place; b) sprinkle French Chalk on it (maybe ordinary chalk will do the job too).

I have also read that ordinary household white spirit will remove the stamp, again complete with gum and again without damage to the stamp. The report stated that the envelope should have the white spirit

applied to the envelope rather than the stamp and only a few seconds later the stamp is removable. I have not tested this! Can any reader let our Editor know if other successful methods have been tried?

(3) Security slits are introduced to cause damage should a used stamp be removed from paper.

There are two main types of slits: Both types are 9mm x 3mm and are applied in the two lower quarters of the stamp. The 1st is as used by De La Rue Security Print who produces Counter & Business sheets. The 2nd is as used by Walsall Security Printers who produce booklets. These latter have a gap at the top and bottom of each cut.



Comparison of DLR and Walsall security slits

Inevitably the slits will change over time. Already De La Rue Security Print have printed Jumbo Stamp Rolls (10,000 stamps in each) of 1st class Gold or 2<sup>nd</sup> class blue stamps. These were issued on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2009 and the slit is as the 1<sup>st</sup> type but with a tiny nick at top and bottom rather than a gap.

Finally, whilst not really an aid to security, Royal Mail have introduced a 'hidden letter' within the wavy line pattern of the words 'ROYAL MAIL' printed over the stamp in wavy lines. The reason given is that from time to time a stamp may cause technical problems; it may have a weak phosphor signal of low fluorescence. The so called hidden letter will enable them to identify the source of the stamp and through that, the printer. To see this feature, take a Machin with security features and look at it at an angle to the light – just above the square ornament in the Queens tiara you will see the letter. The illustrations below should help.



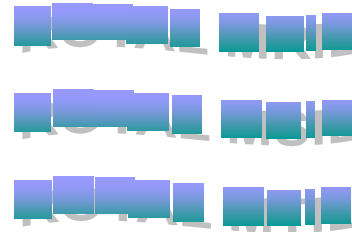
is unaltered and comes from stamps issued in Post Office counter sheets.



The two versions of letter 'B' The first is on stamps from **B**usiness sheets of standard letter rate stamps and the second is from **B**usiness sheets of Large Letter rate stamps.



The letter 'C' is from **C**ustom booklets such as those containing 4 Machins plus 2 special issues e.g. London bus and telephone kiosk whilst the letter 'F' is from standard booklets of **f**our stamps.



Finally 'R' is from stamps issued in **R**olls (Coils); 'S' is from standard booklets of **s**ix and 'T' is from standard booklets of **t**welve stamps.

These features are, so far, only found on self adhesive stamps but Machin collectors are on the lookout for other innovations and if found, I will report them to you in a future *Halcyon*.

**Bob Harper**

*I guess it has been tried before, but has anyone got anything out of an anagram of "ROYAL MAIL" ? From the above article, it would (almost) be justified to use any other letter you wish as one substitute – akin to a blank in Scrabble! Yet another party game for your Christmas celebrations perhaps, and best answers in the next Halcyon. Ed.*

## MALTA AND IT'S POSTAL SYSTEM UNDER BRITISH RULE. (Part 2)

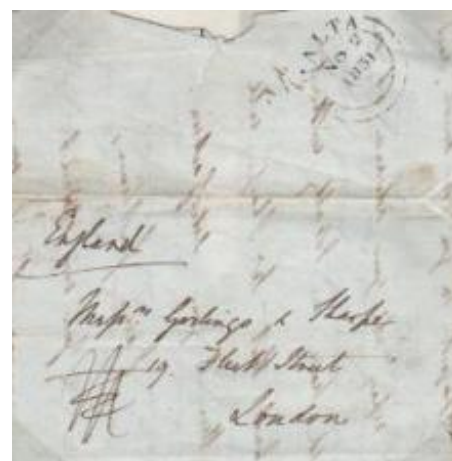
In the first part I ended up showing straight line marks showing "Malta Post Office", which carried on in use until 1848. However a Double Circle with "MALTA" in the outer ring was used from 1838 and has continued to be used in various forms from that date on.



High date slug



Date slug in centre



Entire to London Nov. 2nd 1851 showing high date slug



Entire to Alexandria Dec. 28th 1843 showing date slug in centre of ring

There then followed a "MALTA PAID" hand stamp, which is recorded in the GPO proof books on the 11th December 1841.



There are two variations of this postmark; where the down stroke of the "L" in Malta passes to the left hand side and one to the right hand side of the "A" in "Paid".

Usual Left Hand side.



Cover to Alexandria Feb. 15th 1848 Manuscript 5 in Red (under 1oz.)

Scarce Right Hand side.



Cover to Fort William March 4th 1857 Manuscript 9 in red (packet rate 8d + 1d inland)

Finally we arrive at the small circular date stamp as below, which we are all familiar with; this first appeared back stamping arrival mail. Two strikes have been recorded in the GPO proof book dated March 1858. Letter codes "A" "C" and O were used.



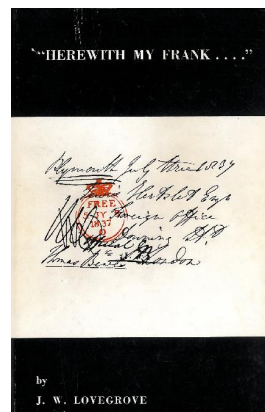
Cover from Constantinople showing the Levant Line vessel "Borysthene" two ring cancel dated 1st November 1860 and a Malta single ring hand stamp (code A) for November 7th 1860.

In the next article I will show some of the disinfected mail and the use of GB stamps for overseas mail.

**Fred Pritchard.**

## BOOK REVIEWS

**"Herewith My Frank....." by J W Lovegrove**



Most of you know that I collect Parliamentary Free Franks, those strange items of GB Postal History which suggest that members of parliament had as many privileges then as they seem to today. Such activities still had to be accounted for and paid for in the form of higher postal charges for everyone else.

The bible for Free Frank collectors is J W Lovegrove's "Herewith My Frank".



It was privately published in the 1970's and is virtually unattainable new, but not too difficult to find a second hand copy. It contains a history of the franking system from the 1650's to 1840. Every Free Stamp - there are over 100 - is illustrated, dated and sometimes the clerk who used the stamp is named together with his salary! The Edinburgh and Dublin free stamps are included. There are several articles including those who could use the system - many more than mere MP's you will not be surprised to learn. The rarity of each stamp is recorded, though one feels that the period since publication may have affected this list. It remains refreshing to discover a Very Rare item - less than 100 copies known - and I have yet to find a rarity 'Z' cover - only 1 known. One day I might.

There is also a very detailed, well illustrated article about the notorious 'O' code free stamps. In the late 1970's only a limited number of these were known and they mystified all of the experts, including Lovegrove. Now that I have several of these, I am interested in this very fine piece of research.

Lovegrove found a variety of common factors in the 'O' code Free's. He thought they were limited to a number of fairly influential families. They sent letters with the 'O' stamp to one another. They appeared to live near the sea. One front had Official written on it by a postal clerk, as it was assumed that the sender or the recipients had some governmental importance. Yet the 'O' Code is not mentioned in Post Office archives.

Lovegrove might well be pleased to learn that his mystery has today probably been resolved. The discovery of many more 'O' fronts, their association with aristocratic ladies such as the Countess of Lichfield and Mary Hamlyn Williams, and the highly desirable way the stamp was used to best effect on the front, has convinced most collectors that these items were cancelled to order. How and by whom is not yet clear.

I have read Lovegrove many times, chiefly because his use of double negatives, conditional and concessive clauses and long sentences makes him difficult to read at first go, or even third! But it's worth the effort. Would I take this book to that famous desert island? Probably not, but I could not organise my collection without it.

RHR

### **The British Postage Stamp of the Nineteenth Century. Robson Lowe**

ISBN 978 0950001807

First Ed. - 1968; Second Ed. -1979.



Published by The National Postal Museum

In 1965 Reginald M Phillips of Brighton, an entrepreneur and stamp collector of some renown, made the generous offer of his stamp collection to the nation. This book is based on that collection; which ultimately formed the nucleus of the embryonic National Postal Museum.

The story begins with details of Mr Phillips' generous donation to the nation of his collection, which can only be defined as priceless, and also £50,000 (nigh on £¾m at today's values!) towards the setting up of a National Postal Museum to house it.

The Collection is unparalleled, chronicling many of the important changes to the postal system in the 19th century. Charting the development of the 1839 Postal reforms, from design to different experiments with production, and from the iconic Penny Black to the 'Jubilee' issue of 1887, it contains rare examples of original stamps, experiments with paper and ink and documents on postal history. It also contains the world's very first, first day cover - that of the Penny Black. It also includes many of the 1839 Treasury Essays for pre-paid postage, Rowland Hill letters, and unique proofs and studies of stamps such as the Twopence Blue and the Penny Red. The extent of the collection is astounding, as is the completeness and quality in many areas of unique material. As pointed out elsewhere, the collection is now accessible "on-line", but there are of course many of us not connected.

This book is an excellent observation of the Phillips collection and goes into great detail discussing the many magnificent items. The pages are overflowing with photographs and those in colour are simply beautiful. For the collector of Victorian stamps this book should be at least on a wish list, if not already on the bookshelf.

MDA

***A Happy Christmas and Best Wishes for the New Year to you all.***

*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 Monday or third Thursday of the month (September to June) at St. George's Hall in Redditch; you will be most welcome. Visitors are also welcome to any of our meetings.*

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