
* THE NEWSLETTER OF THE *
* EASTBOURNE AND SOUTH DOWNS * No 3
* PHILATELIC SOCIETY *

SUMMER 1981

SEATED AT THE TYPEWRITER

Here we are at the start of another season, and with this edition of the Society's newsletter you should be receiving the 1981/82 programme. From this you will see that Des Watson has again put together an interesting series of meetings for us. It is to be hoped that as many members as possible will turn up and support the speakers, both those visiting Eastbourne and those who have agreed to speak instead of being spoken to. There are regular opportunities to add to collections, and to display at the various Members' show evenings. And do remember the competitions.

But the highlight of the new season must be the visit of ASPS in October. Further information appears later.

Various other pieces are to be found in the pages which follow, including the announcements of two regular features. In one Jack Gee gives the background of his collecting interest, Hongkong. The other gives you the opportunity to win a prize. Bill Parker also has a few words about the packet.

Your editors attempt to provide a fair mix of material for you to read, but obviously we are limited largely by what we can persuade members to write. If you want a wider (and more frequent) coverage of matters philatelic you must turn to the journals of specialist societies or the generally available philatelic press.

There are seven publications about stamps which appear on the newsstands. The comments on them are purely my own views, but you may find them useful:

STAMP COLLECTING (30P) A weekly magazine which carries up-to-date information and a number of articles (including some serialised) on a wide range of subjects. It also gives news of societies and a diary of all society meetings in the country in the coming week.

STAMP AND POSTAL HISTORY NEWS (25p) This is the new fortnightly philatelic newspaper and replaces the BPF's magazine 'Philately'. It concentrates on up-to-the-minute philatelic news and rather more chatty articles than are found elsewhere. Some people like the approach, others hate it!

GIBBONS STAMP MONTHLY (70P) For most collectors the main attraction of this monthly magazine is the regular listing of new issues in catalogue format, but there are a selection of articles and news. Although apparently a house organ, the

magazine contains advertisements for other dealers.

PHILATELIC MAGAZINE (60p) This is probably the most 'serious' of the widely available magazines. (It is also very bad at appearing on time!)

STAMP MAGAZINE (65p) This is a monthly magazine with a good selection of article and regular features and a wide range of advertisements.

STAMPS (70p) This monthly's motto is 'The one with more to read' and this is certainly true of this monthly now in its second year. Some collectors believe that this magazine is far and away the best. There is a bias towards GB in its content, but it is full of interesting information and very many advertisements.

STAMP LOVER (60p) The quarterly magazine of the National Philatelic Society has recently been appearing on some news stands. It contains a few fairly authoritative articles

Happy reading!

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

I have been asked, as the President for the coming year, to write a few words in this newsletter.

To those who support our club every week, I would like to express my thanks; and I would like to see a little more support from those people that we only see occasionally.

We are hosts to the ASPS Autumn Convention in October of this year, and I hope you will all give your support on the day. The committee and I will also be glad of any help in the preparations. We will be calling for volunteers at a later date.

To conclude, may I wish you all a very happy and rewarding time in this hobby of ours.

Frank Derham

THE LIBRARY - PLEASE READ THIS

In the Eastbourne and South Downs Philatelic Society we are very fortunate in having a full library available to members every Tuesday. The procedure for borrowing books is simple and straightforward, but some members disregard it. As a result, the librarian is searching for two books:

Higgins & Gage Postal Stationery catalogue: British postal stationery, and

Stanley Gibbons GB specialised stamp catalogue volume 2 (Edward VII to George VI) 3rd edition.

If you have borrowed either of these volumes from our library, will you please return them as soon as possible, and inform Ron Carter or Des Watson.

FURTHER NOTES ON THE PACKET - W F PARKER

We are all aware how impossible it is to organise a common service for a group of people and arrange all details to the satisfaction of everyone. £13,500 of stamps were circulated between 1st May 1980 and 30th April 1981 in 28 separate packets to 117 people living between Seaford in the west, Hastings in the east and Uckfield in the north

The system adopted results from the experiences of a changing number of honorary officers and no doubt has many critics. Most adverse criticism comes from the two-thirds of the Packet membership who never attend our regular meetings. Improvements in the circulation system are continually welcomed and judging by the number of complaints of three packets arriving together with no time for proper examination, of stamps falling out of books, of unreadable prices, of old books being re-used, old exercise books, stamps stuck on both sides of the same sheet etc etc one would think we were a very mean bunch of amateurs.

A fairly straightforward set of simple rules exist for the operation of the system by even our older and more experienced philatelists ignore them.

Stamps must be reasonably mounted on standard club books, size 8" x 5" (which are available with pages for 4p each, covers only at 2p each). The selling prices should be clearly marked in ink over each stamp or item. The total number of stamps and the total value of each page must be entered and a summary of the pages and the total prices for the book given.

When stamps are removed the space must be signed and any unsigned space notified to the previous member on the list and the discrepancy made good. Details of purchases must be entered upon the front cover and the total of items and purchases entered on a cash statement and returned to the Packet Secretary. The cash statement should contain the signature of the next person receiving the packet.

Many signatures are most difficult to decipher and 90% of the cash statements are incorrectly filled in. The majority of errors occur in omitting the ISSUE No; the Secretary is expected to know which packet is referred to. The second major error is the omission of the NAME of the person submitting the statement. The number of arithmetical errors are astounding and this seems to apply equally to accountants, school teachers and bank managers! And in 99% of the cases the totals are always short!

Although members complain about the method of presentation and send me samples of the hinges which have fallen off, it is the method of circulation which causes most annoyance and produces the most correspondence.

One of my first complainants when I took over this job asked why it was necessary that he should always have to take the packet from Eastbourne Old Town to Bexhill-on-Sea, and it was obvious

that revisions were necessary.

A number of new systems were evolved by plotting addresses on a map and following a continuous route between the nearest points. This arrangement produced considerable gaps between, say, Langney and Cooden in the east, East Dean and Seaford in the west and between Polegate, Hailsham, Heathfield and Uckfield in the north. It was obvious that these gaps had to be linked by members with cars who regularly attended our meetings where packets could be exchanged.

Having linked the areas in this way it was necessary to find a system whereby the rotation could be advanced in such a way that members received first choice in rotation. This was completely impracticable, so it was decided to divide Society members into nine separate areas of approximately 13 people and at least for the areas to receive the stamps in rotation. This enabled the linking of areas together by having the first and last member of each group as a regular attender who could effect the packet changeover and at the same time give each group nine different positions in the rotation of the packet.

We then tried to reverse the direction of the packet within each group in order to give 18 variants in the rotation of receipt, but letters then began arriving pointing out that Mr X who had a car was now unable to bring the packet which had to be taken to him on shank's pony. One irate member even wrote to the secretary to say that whilst her doctor did not mind her carrying the box down the hill she should not attempt to carry it up.

We now have a system of three major routes each controlled by a checker and each route has three different groups so that we have nine different starting points for each packet in rotation. The packets take approximately nine months to circulate, so that one packet should arrive every 12-13 days. If three packets arrive together, somebody along the line has delayed the sequence. Unfortunately, if you are number 7 in your group of 13, number 6 will always see the packet before you unless you can make some convenient local arrangement with your checker to change the local system.

For your general information the routes are as follows:

- A1 A2 A3 - members living west of Upperton Road (checker Mr D McCullough)
- B1 B2 B3 - members living between Upperton Road and the Eastbourne to London railway line (checker Mr L Mower)
- C1 C2 C3 - members living east of the Eastbourne to London railway line (checker Mr M Farrant, who is gradually handing over the job to Mrs M Wharton)

Only this week I have received a letter complaining about

three packets arriving at once and explaining the 'facts' about the horrible circulation system, but the 'facts' are only those which the member imagines and his method of correcting them would cause more chaos than that new existing.

(Note from the editor: Bill Parker and his band of helpers deserve the support of all of us in what is, as anyone who has run a packet will admit, a task which attracts more complaints than praise. I recently received five packets very close together, three of them on the same day, and I did a little checking of the length of time taken. They had been seen by 33 people in 58 days, 45 in 96, 51 in 112, 66 in 135 and 84 in 195. This means on average the packets have been held by members for between 1.8 and 2.3 days each. This demonstrates that even when members pass on packets fairly steadily, they still catch each other up!)

EASTBOURNE FOR THE AUTUMN CONVENTION

The Autumn Convention of the Association of Sussex Philatelic Societies will be staged by the Eastbourne and South Downs Philatelic Society on Saturday October 24th 1981 at the St John's Ambulance Brigade Headquarters in Bourne Street. In addition, the Society will be mounting an exhibition by their members and several dealers will be in attendance; doors open at 11 a.m.

There is free car parking space and street parking adjacent to the Headquarters, and a multi-storey car park some 10 minutes walk away. The No. 2 Town bus service operates from the Railway Station to the end of Bourne Street.

The programme for the convention will be as follows:

- 1.30 p.m. Arrival of delegates, visitors and friends, and viewing of the entries for the Eastbourne and Classic Cup competitions.
 - 2.30 p.m. Official welcome by Mr F W C Derham, President of the Eastbourne and South Downs Philatelic Society, and Miss Anne Whitehead, President of ASPS.
Official opening by Councillor Mr C W Aldous, Mayor of Eastbourne.
- Talks and displays by members of the New Zealand Philatelic Society of Great Britain.
- 2.45 p.m. Chalon Heads - Mr S Cross-Rudkin.
 - 3.30 p.m. First pictorials of 1898-1907 - Mr M S Burberry
 - 4.15 p.m. Announcement of the results of the Eastbourne and Classic Cup competitions, followed by an interval for refreshments to be served.
 - 5.00 p.m. 34th Annual General Meeting of the Association of Sussex Philatelic Societies
 - 5.30 p.m. Close of the Convention.

COMPETITION

How much do you know of all the different areas of philately? Here is a way to find out.

All you have to do is answer the ten questions below. There are no trick questions, and each question can be answered briefly. Write the answers on a postcard (not necessarily a picture postcard!) and return it to John Griffin not later than 31st October 1981. There is a prize of a stockbook for the first all-correct postcard out of the bag on 1st November, or the best one if there is no all-correct entry.

1. Name one country which issued stamps denominated in rappen.
2. Which country used turtles (or tortoises) for a watermark?
3. On how many separate issues (not stamps) have flags of foreign countries appeared on stamps of Great Britain?
4. What name was given by philatelists to the issues of New Zealand with advertisements printed on the reverse?
5. For what is Donald McGill remembered?
6. Vatican City regularly issues stamps inscribed 'Sede Vacante'. In what circumstances?
7. By what name do philatelists know Anna Fuhring?
8. On a stamp of which European country does the famous philatelist Philippe de Ferrary appear?
9. For what area were stamps of Cape of Good Hope overprinted G?
10. Which European country had trouble telling its Schubert from its Schumann?

WHY HONG KONG - E F (Jack) GEE

For the first twenty years my collecting habits had been identical with many others without my realising it, having progressed from all and everything through several pruning stages to three Commonwealth countries plus Great Britain. Then on an unforgettable night in May 1941 a message from Hitler in the form of a 1,000 lb land-mine caused my collection to disintegrate into the night air already filled with acrid smoke, flares, ack-ack shells, barrage balloons, Heinkels, Junkers, night-fighters and bad language. I would not have minded so much if the collection had contained a few 'Hitler Heads'! The loss was mitigated to some extent by more important things to think of a do in those days, but with the benefit of hindsight it served a purpose not apparent to me then. For quite a while afterwards I was not able to give the necessary time to starting and formulating a fresh collection based on what lessons I had learned in the previous twenty years although I accumulated mini-collections of numerous groupings and never discarded anything philatelic that came my way.

Four years later I found myself deposited in Hong Kong under orders to help get things going again after the Japanese Occupation. This proved to be the turning point in my philatelic life. On the four days air journey out (broken by an enforced two weeks stay in Calcutta due to 'plane shortages') I abandoned my attempt to learn Chinese in preference to planning a philatelic blitz on Hong Kong stamps as I already possessed one stamp of that colony. This decision was strengthened at Dum Dum Airport, Calcutta, where I was off-loaded from the Hong Kong plane three times in two weeks to make room for bulging mail bags even though I was listed Priority A. This further impressed on my mind the importance of philately. However when I eventually reached Hong Kong the overall situation did not impress me one little bit as a serious hunting ground for philatelic treasures - no shops open other than a few native rice stores and tea-houses. Living accommodation (Western-style) was almost non-existent but there was a tremendous spirit of freedom with a desire to get at setting things aright and moreover the GPO was open. My first abode was a French monastery which happily was almost intact, my room was a monk's cell about 12ft by 8 ft.

Naturally at first all efforts had to be directed towards getting the colony back on its feet and it was amazing how quickly this was accomplished. However I always kept philately in my sights and made quite a few contacts with other addicts. One of my many duties during that first rehabilitation period was immigration from whence I obtained numerous high value stamps - alas almost entirely fiscals, but acceptable - from outdated passports and travel documents, also a reasonable amount of foreign mail from aliens wanting admission to the colony and overseas replies to queries raised on prospective migrants. I well remember that covering a few letters from Jamaica I obtained a full set of seven, 1½d to 10/-, of the 1945 New Constitution set; I am still convinced that there was a stamp collector at the other end. I also acquired some very nice "Returned Undelivered" covers from various parts of the world with wonderful reasons endorsed thereon. Eventually, in much less than a year after re-occupation, several collectors including myself got together and revived the Hong Kong Philatelic Society. One very outstanding point that surprised me was the almost complete absence of Hong Kong collections and collectors actually in the Colony. I still nurtured the idea of forming a Hong Kong collection and in the absence of material to acquire I set about finding out all I could concerning Hong Kong stamps and very soon I had another surprise - the vast extent of the philatelic field Hong Kong stamps covered other than a straight listing of the stamps issued. This factor increased my interest providing almost limitless avenues, highways and by-ways a collector could explore and collect.

Along with the exceptionally quick economic recovery and rehabilitation there appeared amongst the ever-increasing number of shops re-opening some which sold stamps as a sideline to the major line of goods. The shops were all Chinese none of which

had English-speaking staff or owners, but stamps pervaded all obstacles, including languages. Even though these dealers could not speak English they knew Gibbons backwards and steadfastly kept to the price therein, the only saving grace being that their copies were usually about six years old. It was quite fun searching around all the native shops, usually stuffed to the ceiling with wartime looted property, trying to find caches of stamps because their owner rarely knew what he had himself. Shop hours were easy for the customer too, generally around 7 a.m. to midnight. However it was extremely rare to find Hong Kong material and the dealers had the simple oriental answer as to why - all stamps sold at post offices went out of the colony, internal correspondence had always been messenger delivered. The revived Philatelic Society had instituted auctions and indeed this was the only business carried on at meetings; very occasionally an item of Hong Kong would appear and there would be a furious battle for possession between two of us; for a long time we were the only two members interested in Hong Kong material and although great friends neither of us was willing to give way. This society was an English speaking one and the local collectors had their own society where the business was conducted in Chinese; I attended their meetings and quickly learned how to bid in Chinese at their auctions, even obtaining the odd item occasionally. After about a year collections of Hong Kong made their appearance and were available for purchase but for some unknown reason they were never broken up but always sold as a collection. The standard was never very high but I did obtain some small collections which contained items I wanted always having in mind that the unwanted material could be disposed of quite easily or retained for sideline collections. Most of these collections were generally advertised in the local papers and I always had the Chinese office staff on the look-out for me for those advertised in the Chinese papers. Shortly after the re-occupation the leading pre-war dealer, a Portugese, died and his entire dealers' stock was available for purchase from his solicitors. I was fortunate enough to acquire his personal exhibition collection of Hong Kong which was housed on jet leaves and garishly illustrated in colour with dragons and pagodas unlimited. This acquisition formed the first solid basis to my Hong Kong collection with something good on which to build. Now I was really hooked on Hong Kong with no turning back, I had only a few gaps up to the end of Edward VII but with little chance in Hong Kong of filling them. Unfortunately the only answer was to chase material on the London, New York and Sydney markets with their prices already escalating for the more desirable items. However I persevered and what few items I did manage to procure have proved more than worthwhile since.

One individual I came to know very well was a pre-war resident who as a neutral escaped incarceration by the Japanese. He was more of a slick business man than a stamp collector and had acquired a terrific quantity of Hong Kong material during the war by purchasing, at give-away prices, collections when the

owners found cash for food extremely difficult to come by. Although he had considerable stocks he only released small quantities on the market periodically in order not to depress prices. This man, I found, had an Achilles heel in that he was an inveterate gambler and occasionally went on a week-end gambling spree to the Macau casinos. When, if I knew he was about to depart, I could sometimes reverse his wartime practice on himself and thus gain real bargains in exchange for a little extra gambling capital. On one such occasion I obtained from him precious high value mint blocks of Edward VII and George V material at a very attractive price with a surprise free gift thrown in of a unique item now the only known copy and worth many times more than the original material bought. I was also able to obtain from this person some very interesting philatelic information of happenings during the Japanese Occupation where he had personal experience of almost everything that occurred.

As the years progressed I naturally kept abreast of the modern material issued and was always on the look-out for better class material to replace my original items. Thus I accumulated a considerable quantity of duplicate material, mainly used, which was intended to be incorporated into collectable groups of those highways and by-ways which had originally attracted me to collecting Hong Kong. By the early fifties I had principally concerned myself with gathering together straight mint and used issues plus the major varieties but as my wants began to look almost unattainable I then started to build up in the sideline areas. I had been recording everything I found out about Hong Kong stamps and as the Hong Kong Study Circle had just been founded in London in 1951 there began to be available a large reservoir of information from world-wide members. Thus I started grouping subsidiary collections of Hong Kong material and although this facet had originally been one of the magnets to me for collecting Hong Kong I was amazed at the number of different sub-headings that could accommodate one stamp.

The major grouping naturally became the Treaty Ports which required 16 geographical headings for all stamps issued up to 1922 and used outside Hong Kong where the stamps had been made available either at the British Consulate or a British Post Office. Added to this list was a further dozen overseas places where postal agencies functioned using Hong Kong stamps. It can be seen that in the 60 years that Hong Kong stamps were used in the 28 Treaty Ports and Postal Agencies a moderate collection of them will outnumber a straight used collection of stamps used in Hong Kong over the same period even though not every issued stamp was available to all Treaty Ports. When all the different types of Treaty Port cancellations (Shanghai used 28 different types) are gathered in, the difference is even greater. This does not include the large number of native Chinese cancellations found on Hong Kong stamps which were officially authorised. In fact the collection of Treaty Ports cancellations of Hong Kong stamps is far more fascinating than straight Hong Kong cancellations.

With Hong Kong always one of the busiest transit points in the world and doing a considerable commercial trade there are several other groupings, generally headed under Sea Posts, which can each themselves form a reasonable collection. These are Paquebots, P & O Mail Boat Markings, Marine Sorters, River Boat Cancellations, French Mail Boat cancellations, German Sea Posts, Austrian, Dutch, Italian and Russian Ship Markings. Each of these groups can provide upwards of a few hundred examples on stamps and covers, from the Victorian, Edwardian and George V eras. Coming to more modern times the same reason gives rise to a very large variety of First Flight Airmail covers officially listed in excess of 200 at present.

The Second World War provided another period for collectable groups. Censor Markings provide a huge field of material, Prisoner of War Mail similarly together with the Japanese Occupation period, whilst a quite reasonable mini-collection can be made covering the many different Hong Kong stamps peculiarly identifiable due to wartime exigencies of stamp printing. An adjunct to World War II are the Forces Post Office cancellations numbering in excess of 100 covering the large number of F.P.Os stationed in Hong Kong during the post-war period; even now there are at least 6 F.P.Os in existence there.

The first year after the war 8 Branch Post Offices had been opened, all of which had functioned pre-war; since then the increase in postal business has been so phenomenal that the number of Branch P.O.s is now in excess of 100, each post office using anything up to 30 different cancellations in their life span so far. Thus a formidable collection of Branch P.O. cancellations can be made particularly if different types are included. In the life-time of the GPO over 100 different types of cancellation handstamps have been used and together with the dozen or more machine cancellers this group becomes never-ending. Added to all these are approximately 40 temporary P.O.s that have been opened and specific handstamps used. All this does not include parcel post cancellations and as each Branch P.O. has at least one of its own when they are added to the GPO list of around 50 different ones used since parcel post originated in 1878, still another group collection could be formed.

The modern aspect of postage meters opens up a further section covering the use of 6 different makes of machines of which the most commonly used type has currently reached No. 6229. Allied to these could be slogans of which there are countless used on both franking machines and cancelling machines. The main difficulty is housing them all. Postage Paid and Official Paid handstamps and machines ranging to the modern licenced Business Replies and Permit posts abound in their hundreds for mounting into collections - all are postal history.

Anglo-French Accountancy Markings, Forwarding Agents Cachets, and Firm's Security Markings, each with their own attractions, cover sufficient material to form collectable groups by themselves.

All these items are apart from the basic attraction of the Hong Kong stamps themselves. The original design in all its classical simplicity has been the subject of praise amongst stamp designers of all times and has been described as De La Rue's masterpiece, lasting through five reigns and over 100 years. Even when changed to the Annigoni portrait of Queen Elizabeth II they drew praise the world over. The considerable number of printings of all reigns enlarges the scope of mint collections producing its fair share of shades, errors and plate flaws. Commemorative issues have not been too prolific and have generally portrayed local themes, their values always being kept to a genuine commonly used postal rate. Postal Stationery was never issued excessively and although none is produced today all that has been issued is very desirable.

So far I have made no reference to the pre-adhesive period; this lasted for 20 years and during that time many desirable items, now classified as postal history, were produced, some very rare whilst others not so rare but in common with all other similar items these days this tends to be the most expensive group of Hong Kong material. There was sufficient variety of postal markings used during this period to make an extremely attractive philatelic group which oozes history from the first item to the last.

To date I have accomplished my first collecting objective of acquiring every Hong Kong adhesive stamp issued in both mint and used condition. This has not been as difficult nor as expensive as I had originally imagined, but I have been aided by some of that extraordinary luck for which we all pray. I am still going ahead with most of the groups I have mentioned because I enjoy the chase and have had so much pleasure from my little bits of coloured paper so far that I cannot see myself carrying on without this wonderful antidote to all these present day aggravations.

A NEW SERVICE

Following the discussions at the AGM in June, the auctioneers are extending their services:

- a) Copies of the auction lists will be posted to members who leave with the auctioneers a stamped addressed envelope for each auction. Lists will be posted about the viewing day. This should help members who cannot attend for viewing and those who live some way away. Book bids are always acceptable (the appropriate auctioneer is given on the list) but all sales must be governed by CAVEAT EMPTOR.
- b) The auctioneers will provide a Private Treaty service for members with expensive material to sell. Further details are available from Dennis O'Neill.

***** REMEMBER 24th OCTOBER *****

STOP PRESS

We have been requested by St. John Ambulance Brigade to change our Meeting night from Tuesday to Thursday, as they require the whole building on Tuesday's.

This raises two alternatives:

Firstly, we change, bearing in mind that by changing certain members may be unable to attend regularly due to other commitments and interests.

Secondly, we look for alternative premises which are available on a Tuesday, once more bearing in mind, the shortage of suitable premises which are suitable and available, those that are do not appear to have the same facilities, and moreover will be at a greater cost per meeting. The committee have replied pointing the snags in the first option, WHAT ARE THE MEMBERS VIEWS ON THIS MATTER?

Let your committee know, by word of mouth, or in writing.

ASPS CONVENTION.

As we hope to mount an Exhibition of Members' material, any VOLUNTEERS?, Volunteers may enlist to provide either 8 or 16 sheets, which will fill 2 or 4 frames.

No rewards, they do not give "Kings Shilling" these days, or is it the "Queens Fivepence".