

First the sad news: Ivor Bennett, a stalwart member of the club over the past ten years, died in March. Also Ralph Wornum, who was Treasurer of the South Wales Federation, has passed away. We had a visit from our friends in the Bridgend Society led by Nancy Wornum soon after the funeral.

The Convention was held in Port Talbot on 1 May. The venue was very attractive and the day was bright but there appeared to be fewer visitors than usual. Several members attended or produced displays for the competition. Award winners were your Secretary with silver for Czechoslovakia to 1919 and bronze for Finland Postal History, bronze for Margaret Harding for Perfins on Victoria and Vic Sheppard for Polar Flight and a diploma for John Gunn for BIOT. All this despite the oversize sheets on three entries! The location for next year's Convention is being discussed on 13 June in Port Talbot.

The club has been busy with visits and visitors over recent months. These seem to be very popular all round, as it gives us a chance to meet friends in other societies. Our Borders position means links with Bristol and Hereford, as well as the Welsh clubs. Since the November newsletter we have had visits from Cardiff, Bridgend and Nailsea. Several members went to Cardiff and for our recent trip to Hereford, there were no less than six Newport displays. Your Secretary has also been active, showing his Faroes material to the Barry and Patent Office clubs. More visits are promised for the new season.

As you know, the BPF has folded and a new organisation is being set up. The latest plans are for an Association of British Philatelic Societies, which would be more representative of the local clubs and specialist societies than the old BPF. Membership would be 50p for each club member and would be paid through the South Wales Federation. For that you would each get a membership card giving dealer discounts and lots of other benefits. It is worth reading Richard West's recent article in the "Stamp Magazine" on the subject.

Postscript on Ebbw Vale

As stated before, there was no regular special cancellation, although one was produced for 1 August. I am indebted to Roger Vaughan's article on "Jottings from Wales" for some more information. The Garden Festival opened on 4 May and closed on 4 October. There was a single circle and a single parcel cancellation "GARDEN FESTIVAL OF WALES/POST OFFICE" with no mention of Ebbw Vale! The office was a branch office of Newport. I have not seen copies myself but the postmarks would have been applied only to registered letters and parcels respectively.

The Library

Gwen Hussey is now in charge of the library. Here is a list of what's available:

Stanley Gibbons catalogues: A-J and K-Z for 1985, Part 1 for 1986, Elizabethan for 1981 & Part 3 (British Commonwealth) for 1990

Robson Lowe: "The Empire in Australasia" (vols 41-43), "The Encyclopaedia of British Empire Stamps to 1951" (vol 1 parts 1 and 2) & "North America" (not USA).

Swansea Philatelic Society: "Postal History of Swansea and District"
BPF Year Book 1992

Morley Bright Watermark Detector

Uvitec Minor Lamp

Recent Stamp Mail and GSM magazines

Some old books are available (at the time of writing this), with donations going to club funds. These are Stanley Gibbons Elizabethan 1968, Part 3 1967, Benelux 1979, France 1979, QE II specialised Vol 3 1971 and Commonwealth Stamp Catalogue 1962-3.

Members' Interests

It is a while since I last produced a list. With several new faces since then, it seems a good idea to provide an update. If you are not here or what is here is wrong, it's because you have not told me:

Robert Agg - European postcards (to 1945)

Roy Bentley - Libya, Gilbert and Ellice, British locals

Alan Blunt - Poland, Russia

Jess Brace - Swiss, Newport postcards, PHQ

Martyn Britton - Fiji, NZ, Newport, Australia, GB markings

Peter Coldrey - GB (early)

Glyn Evans - GB, CI, IOM, British locals

John Gunn - BIOT, Mauritius

Margaret Harding - Perfins, Fiscal overprints

Norman Hargreaves - Hungary, France, Czech/Slovak, Italy, Wildlife, Europa

Gwen Hussey - FRAMA, Ships, Birds, Flowers, Air labels, Germany, Meters

Neil Jones - NZ

Dennis Martin - Gibraltar, Japan

Elsie Myer - Newport postcards, Silks, Xmas, PHQ

Bill Osborn - Belgium, France, GB, Nigeria, Swiss, UN, GB&BC officials, Music

John Perry - Scandinavia, Indep. Baltics, Czech/Slovak, Rhodesias, RAF

Bernie Riff - Germany, Strasbourg

Fred Scott - De La Rue key-plates, GB, Malta, IOM

Vic Sheppard - Russia inc indep. states, Polar, transport

George Whitfield - Jamaica, Music

Ken Wilmott - Christmas Cocos & Norfolk Is., PNG, CI, Antarctica

Jottings

Stampex was good for looking but not for buying this year. Prices of cover in particular were very high. This carried through to the Port Talbot Convention. I don't know why but dealers see a cover and think it is valuable. Thank heavens for dealers like the Sumbler who realise that it is the dealers's interest to supply good material at reasonable prices!

The British Post Office is working on getting your money. After the £10 stamp (has anyone seen a genuine use for it?) comes the

commemorative cover combining the £10 stamp with the £5 crown (and I thought that a crown was worth 5/-!). They are not the only ones. The Scandinavians have generally been very restrained but over the past three or four years, they have deluged the market with "merchandise". Enough is enough - I have cancelled my new issue subscriptions. Enough of moaning! Material is still around. Last weekend I picked up a beautiful matched pair of covers with the 4 cent bi-sect of 1904 from the Danish West Indies from Reg Tovey's Chepstow Fair. These are regular fair with around ten dealers, six selling stamps. The Symes Fairs in Cardiff are well worth a visit as are Ann Scott's In Bristol (if you collect postcards).

Remember that there is a raffle at all meetings. Donations of prizes please to Margaret Harding. Excellent refreshments are provided at meetings when there are visitors. This is all due to the hard work of the ladies. Material is always needed for the circuit boxes. If you have blank books please fill them or return them. The next circuit starts in October.

John Perry
Hon Secretary