

# Newport & Gwent Philately

May 1999 - Number 21

## • Recent meetings

One season has just finished and another is about to start. Since number 20, we have visited Barry and Cardiff societies and been hosts to Bridgend and Barry.

One interesting evening was *the ten worst stamps ever*. Although not unanimous, British Christmas stamps, in particular the 1966 set, attracted a fair amount of criticism. Indeed, British stamp designs were fairly heavily criticised. If the millennium series had not been so new then I am sure that it would have secured all ten places.

The letter box evening was advertised in the *Letter Box Study Group* newsletter but failed to attract any of its members. That meant that the evening was only of Newport members' material. Martyn Britton shown a nice range of Fiji and Newport as usual.

*So you want to be a philatelist ?* certainly got people talking. Is there any difference between a philatelist and a stamp collector ? Opinions were divided. Gwen even went so far as to consult a range of dictionaries and encyclopaedia for the answer. The word *philately* was proposed by a Monsieur Herpin on 15 November 1864 as « the pursuit of collecting, arranging and studying stamps ». Within a year, the word had come into universal use to describe the hobby of stamp collecting. Variants were spawned : philatelic, philatetical, philatelically, philatelim, philatelist. Even the word *philatelomaniac*, one for whom stamp collecting has become a mania (surely no-one in the Newport club ?) is in the dictionary.

So is there any difference ? Certainly philately in the original meaning covers more than merely stamp collecting. But, none other than Encyclopaedia Britannica refers to philately also as stamp collecting, the hobby of collecting and studying postage stamps. Even if we were not any clearer, we all had an interesting evening.

This year we had an excellent turnout of 12 entries for the competition night. We invited two judges from Cardiff PS (Shirley Baker and John Peters). Winners were : Neil Jones' Dunedin Exhibition (general class) ; Alistair McKinnon's A Holiday in South Africa (Thematics) ; John Perry's SAS flights in the Arctic (postal history) and Dennis Martin's 19th century numeral cancels (GB). The prize for the best overall eight sheet entry was Ron Hardacre's Belgian airmails.

Two entries were sent to the Convention : John Perry's SAS gained first prize in the aerophilatelic class and a bronze medal. Dennis Martin's Gibraltar gained a silver. Also Diane Cannard gained a bronze with her owls but this was submitted from the Cardiff society. John Perry was chairman of the judges for the convention (except for the aero class, in which he was entered).

## Millennium

The year 2000 (or Y2K) is fast approaching as you will see from your new programme. What does the new millennium hold in store. Most important is *The Stamp Show 2000*. Hopefully this will be something special, as was the 1990 event at Alexandra Palace. This time it is at Earls Court, from 22 to 28 May 2000.

Hopefully the horrible millennium stamps will be behind us by then and we can start looking forward to more meaningful designs and topics. One interesting piece of news : only the Queen and family are allowed to be depicted on stamps. That is, unless you are dead. But one of the latest stamps showing the late Freddie Mercury (of Queen fame) also shows one other band member (Roger Taylor - still living) in the background.

Nice to know that some stamp collectors spotted this error.

Dennis Martin is arranging a *Millennium* dinner for club members on 16 February 2000. Please make a note in your diaries. More details later.

## Stamp fairs

Cardiff hosts the Autumn Day from 10 am till 4.30 pm on 2 October 1999. The stamp fair celebrates their centenary. It's at the Heath Citizens Centre, Heath Park, Cardiff. A club table will be available for Newport members to sell

material. Please make every effort to support this event. Entrance is only 30p.

Robert Neil runs fairs in Cardiff and in South West England. Forthcoming Cardiff fairs are : 17 July, 18 September and 20 November 1999. All are at the SU Building in Senghewnydd Road.

Harmers are holding a three-day event at Claridges (London) from 29 to 31 July displaying « Rare Stamps of the World ». Admission is by purchase of a handbook for £10.

Stampex dates are 22 to 26 September 1999 and 1 to 5 March 2000. Both events are at the Design Centre in Islington (London).

The 1999 Bristol Convention is again a two-day affair (14 to 15 August) at Portishead. The South Wales Convention is once again in Port Talbot next year, on the earlier date of 15 April .

## ABPS

Newport is still a member of the "Association of British Philatelic Societies ". All paid up members of our club should now have an ABPS membership card for 1999. Ask your secretary if you have not got one. The ABPS newsletter is available from our librarian (Gwen Hussey). If you take the exchange box, you will sometimes see a copy there. Current and back copies are always available at club meetings - just ask! Remember that you can also get discounts from some dealers and suppliers.

I have been scouring the latest ABPS News for updated discount offers but have not found any new ones. I'll keep looking.

## Exchange box

First some facts. Box 37 was valued at £724.85 and sold 28.7%. Box 38 was valued at £877.20. Sales were 37.2% to other clubs and further sales are expected from Newport members. Box 39, valued at £800.97, has just started the circuit.

Alistair McKinnon has made a special plea. Books should comply with the rules : specifically, the price should be above the stamp. Also it would help if members supplying books entered a total for each page and for the book as a whole. This makes Alistair's life easier.

## Other items

On 1 April 1999 (a suitable day), postcodes in Newport, Cardiff, Liverpool and Newcastle were changed. It was not until the end of April that a letter came through my door telling me of my new postal address. So I assume that those of you who have been affected will also know. My own address has also changed from Newport to Caldicot, perhaps reflecting the separation of Monmouthshire and Newport. My address was :

Undy/Magor

Newport

Gwent

NP6 3EW

and is now :

Undy

Caldicot

Monmouthshire [or Gwent, if you prefer it]

NP26 3EW

I assume that postmarks and counter stamps will be changing (eventually).

The new Welsh Assembly stamps came out on 8 June (with Scottish stamps issued on the same day). The designs are quite attractive but the colours are very dense and they are difficult to see.

As a collector of anything engraved by Czeslaw Slania, I was pleased to hear that the Royal Mail had asked the master to engrave some new definitive stamps. These are the new Queen's head values of £1.50, £2, £3 and £5. Trying to get them in Newport proved impossible as Royal Mail is sending out only *castle* stamps until the stocks are used up. On a trip to London I popped in to the Trafalgar Square post office. What a disappointment ! No philatelic counter in the centre of the stamp world - changed days indeed. There is a *post shop*, so not to be defeated I inquired there. Sure enough they had them. Well almost ! I managed to get an undamaged copy of the £1.50. They also had one torn copy of the £5 value. I left that one behind.

The Post Office has an Internet site. You would think that this would give details of new issues. It does, but only the commemorative stamps. This typifies the lack of understanding of *Royal Mail* and describes well the *merchandising* to which we are all subjected every day in all walks of life.

Back on the subject of Slania, he has also engraved the recess-printed stamp in the second *Stamp Show 2000* publicity booklet. The price is a bit steep at £7.64, but the booklet illustrates very well the different stamp printing processes. The first booklet, with new *Wildings*, is also worth collecting, if you are interested in the stamp printing process.

We get quite a lot of publicity in the stamp magazines. Indeed in ABPS News for April 1999 there is a write-up of recent meetings, with Roy Bentley's email address. I should have mentioned it a lot earlier but I only saw it a couple of weeks ago. The March 1997 issue of the British Philatelic Bulletin had an insert for the club's 50<sup>th</sup>.