

# EDINBURGH PHILATELIC SOCIETY

## (82<sup>nd</sup> Season)

Newsletter No.98



April 2008

### A Cautionary Tale.

Sam Goldwyn once famously remarked that “a verbal contract isn’t worth the paper it’s written on”. It would appear that Royal Mail have taken this one stage further and decided that a written contract is not worth the paper it’s written on either.

Our President, Lord Denovan, was invited to display his Confederate States collection in Connecticut recently; being unable to go in person, he looked to Royal Mail to deliver the material securely and was directed to their “Airsure” service. This is described on the Royal Mail website as their “fastest international service, secure and reliable”. For the sum of £25, Royal Mail provided the packet with a tracking number applied by means of a barcode label so that it could be tracked throughout its journey, and offered insurance of up to £500. The collection is valued at considerably more than this, so the recipients in Connecticut agreed to provide a further £9000 insurance through Lloyds, on the understanding that it had a tracking number and could be tracked.

The exhibition was to take place on the March 15<sup>th</sup> and the material was posted on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, allowing plenty of time for delivery.

Unfortunately, the Musselburgh Sorting Office failed to scan the tracking label and the collection disappeared.

This failure to follow procedure invalidated the Lloyds insurance and meant that the packet was only covered by Royal Mail’s grossly insufficient £500. Anyone who has seen this material will recognise its historical value and realise that it is irreplaceable. I understand that Royal Mail offered to refund the £25; to me, this added insult to injury.

After three weeks lost somewhere in the system, the collection finally arrived at its destination on March 26<sup>th</sup>, much too late for the exhibition.

In the light of Lord Denovan’s experience, I would urge anyone intending to send valuable material overseas to consider their options very seriously if they wish to avoid undue worry.

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# Recent displays

## **December 4<sup>th</sup> – Facets of Railway Philately**

A pot-pourri of railway topics provided by Ian Hamilton began with the philatelic commemoration of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Stockton & Darlington Railway in 1975; there were stamps, meter marks and special handstamps from around the world. We were shown a fine selection of cinderellas such as poster stamps and patriotic labels and many postcards illustrating the Forth Bridge. Altogether a very fine display with something for everyone.

## **New Acquisitions – Members evening**

As is usual on these occasions, a great deal of material was on show. We had contributions from ten members covering a wide range of topics and saw displays of A Centenary of Scouting, RAF Christmas cards, Falkland Islands, Straits Settlements QV overprints, Germany WWII occupation issues, Letter boxes on stamps, Postal system anomalies, Foreign and Commonwealth, the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Falklands conflict and USA and others.

## **January 15<sup>th</sup> – The Committee entertains**

The committee provided us with a fine selection of material covering a range of topics. We saw Germania, Letter boxes on postcards, Classic Nudes, Airline publicity, Heroes and Heroines, Stamp exhibitions and Congresses, Two heroes of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and Britain's offshore islands, then Irene Catto introduced us to things that she likes. An evening to confound those who claim that "the Committee entertains" is an oxymoron.

## **January 29<sup>th</sup> – Postcards of Auld Reekie**

Margeorie Mekie gave us an enthralling tour of Edinburgh beginning with the Old Town and finishing at our meeting place. On the way we visited the New Town and saw buildings historical and commercial and some fascinating old forms of transport including the Stockbridge Bus and a fire engine, both horse-drawn. A wonderful trip around our own city, shedding new light on familiar places.

## **Letter "S" – Members evening**

The letter "S" was chosen from "St John's Church" but it is a very flexible letter as several of our contributors discovered. We saw a display of Penny Blacks entitled "Start of stamps", some French art stamps displaying artists whose names began with "S", a fine display of penguins from the Southern hemisphere and items showing the Queen Mary (Scotland's super ship).

Some members were less inventive, but no less entertaining, and gave us Sarawak, Sweden, Sudan, Spanish costumes, Sri Lankan postal stationery, South Shetland, Stamps from strips and Se tenants.

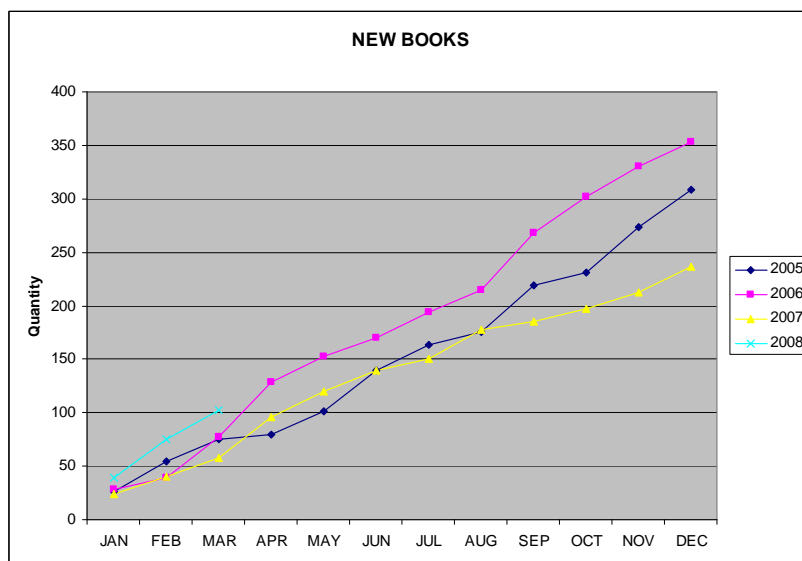
## **February 26<sup>th</sup> – New Zealand Health Stamps**

Aileen Davis of the Kirkcaldy Philatelic Society provided a fascinating display of New Zealand Health stamps, beginning with the original issue in 1929 and going right through to 2007, including the 1996 "Teddy Bear" issue. There was also a large selection of illustrated covers from the health camps supported by the stamps. An interesting look at the story behind stamp issues that most of us would recognise.

## Newsletter Spring 2008 ~ Exchange Packet

We are into the new year with the highest number of new books arriving since I took over as Packet Secretary. Today at the mid point of March we are two boxes (with 20 books) better off than at the end of March last year. Four boxes have been broken up in the last month with some positive feed back from the vendors, “although it takes some time to receive payment the returns are good”. Purchases are approximately 35% of book values. You may have seen several books recently “sold out” before they reached you.

One former member, Tom Brown, has rejoined the Society and packet circuit since the last newsletter was issued. One packet member, Sid Morgan, has left the packet.



Several email enquiries have come to me as a result of our website, well done Richard. First one was someone wishing to join the Society and receive the packet. When he sent me his address I had to explain he was welcome to join but would not be able to receive the packet as we were a “pass round” society this would entail driving to Morecambe to pass a packet on every other week (I’ll go if I get the mileage allowance).

The second enquiry was a few days ago ~ *“I have recently moved home and found a stamp collection my son had started when he was young. I have a friend in Canada who is a stamp collector, but he collects only stamps from Tonga and he suggested, as my son does not want the collection, to ask if any of your younger members would like the stamps. If you think someone may be interested in the collection, please give me an address where I can send it. Regards Patricia Beeley”* I suggested we could use it at our open day as a prize or simply share the stamps with all the youngsters attending. Hopefully it will arrive at Robert Murray’s soon. You will have to come to the Open Day in September to see the donation.

Regards

Bob Catto, Exchange Packet Secretary [bob.catto@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:bob.catto@blueyonder.co.uk)

## **ASPS Congress – Dewar’s Centre, Perth**

**Friday 18<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2008  
10am – 5pm**

This year the event is hosted by Ayrshire Philatelic Society.

There will be 40+ dealers in stamps, postcards and postal history at the event on the Saturday.

National & Junior competitions  
Invited displays – Junior workshops  
Society meetings.

More details available from [www.scottishphilately.co.uk](http://www.scottishphilately.co.uk)

### **Annual General Meeting**

The society’s AGM is being held at St John’s Church Hall on Tuesday April 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7.30pm. If you have any concerns about how your society is being run, or any suggestions for improvement, please come along.

### **Wildlife Stamp Event**

This event was held at Edinburgh Zoo on Saturday and Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> February. It consisted of an exhibition and some crafts and activities for children with lots of wildlife stamps. A stamp trail took visitors to animals from different parts of the world to find out the word for stamp in many different languages. One thoroughly excited child searching through stamps to complete her wildlife stamp page was heard to announce “I’ve found the best stamp in the whole wide world!” The event was supported by the Association of Scottish Philatelic Societies.



One of the visitors meeting the Rainbow Lorikeets and sharing their colouring!  
(The stamp is SG 807)

## GB stamps: 2008 issues

Royal Mail appear to be presenting us with their usual mixture of the good, the bad and the ugly this year as far as stamp design is concerned. I am well aware that beauty is in the eye of the beholder but some of this year's issues must be quite difficult for anyone to like.

### The Good.

There are several candidates in this section. "Mayday – Rescue at sea", issued on 13<sup>th</sup> March to commemorate the centenary of the adoption of the Morse code SOS signal as an international distress call, beautifully illustrates the work of the rescue services. "Houses of Lancaster and York" issued on February 28<sup>th</sup> depicts some of the Kings from these Royal Houses. The stamps are faithful representations of well known portraits of the individual monarchs. More such stamps are planned, and we can only hope that eventually we may see "Scottish Monarchs".

"Working dogs" due to be issued on 13<sup>th</sup> May is intended to celebrate the centenary of the first trained police dogs which were used to patrol Hull docks in 1908. They are simple, uncluttered stamps. Much the same can be said of "Insects" issued on 15<sup>th</sup> April.

"British Cathedrals" is to be issued on May 13<sup>th</sup> and shows some splendid examples of interior architecture.

### The Bad.

Some of these issues, including the "Houses of Lancaster and York", have extras associated with them. Extras such as miniature sheets and Prestige booklets we have come to expect, but the James Bond issue also has something called a "miniature press sheet". This contains no fewer than twelve miniature sheets and costs £53.75! Quite apart from the cost, how is a collector supposed to store a sheet as large as that?

### The Ugly.

I include under this heading the James Bond issue of 8<sup>th</sup> January. These stamps feature the covers of James Bond books, some of which were apparently designed by Ian Fleming himself. Perhaps so, but do such designs make good stamps? They were originally drawn for a much larger format and to my untutored eye look cluttered.

We are to be treated to an issue celebrating "classic" Hammer and Carry On films in the next few months. As far as I can tell, these designs are based on the posters used to advertise these films; by their very nature, posters have to be large and may contain much information. Simply miniaturising such posters to the size of a stamp makes the stamp look untidy and perhaps even garish.

Stamp designers would perhaps be wise to remember KISS. Keep It Simple, Stupid!

# OUR OPEN DAY

**St John's Hall, Saturday, 6 September 2008, 14.00 – 16.30**

Having had a successful Open Day in 2006, the Committee has decided that we should repeat the event this year, following much the same pattern as two years ago. The aim is to encourage interested members of the public to come and see what stamp collecting is all about and perhaps develop their interest further. At the same time we want to give an opportunity to those of our own members who do not normally attend the Tuesday evening meetings, to come and meet their colleagues. Collectors from other societies in the Edinburgh area will also be welcome.

The central part of our afternoon will be a display of material illustrating various aspects of stamp collecting. This will be shown in two halves, from 14.00 to 15.00 and from 15.30 to 16.30, and each half will consist of four displays, totalling eight in all. The aspects we plan to show are UK Stamps (both modern and older), Foreign Stamps, Thematic Stamps, Postmarks, Aerophilately and Postcards. We will also run a series of stalls where visitors can buy stamps, ask questions, find out about albums and other tools of the hobby, get an introduction to stamp collecting and its educational advantages, and have a free cup of tea.

The Committee is going to need your assistance to run this event, and to make it a success. We need people to help set up the hall for our visitors, starting at 13.00 on the Saturday, and also to help take it down at 16.30. We need people to act as stewards and guides during the time it is open to the public, and to help at the various stalls.

As well as helping on the day we need you to spread the word before hand about the event, and persuade people to come along. We will have posters to distribute to organisations and places where likely visitors might be found. Obviously we want to encourage youngsters to take part, but we are also targeting the over fifties.

The sub-committee who are organising the Open Day are Bob and Irene Catto and Bill Robertson. If you can offer specialist help prior to the day, for example photocopying, car transport (especially for the disabled), distributing posters, contact with the media, please get in touch with any members of the Committee – Bill Robertson, on 0131 445 1405, will usually be available.

The next issue of EPS News will come out at the beginning of August, with the latest information – just to get you all psyched-up, ready for the Open Day.

Bob, Irene and Bill