

TRAFFORD PHILATELIC SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER

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The TPS New Year kicked off in excellent fashion: Beryl Jones gave an entertaining and informative account of the 'History of Manchester' seen through a display of postal and other items from the earliest times of Roman Manchester up to the very recent triumphs of Manchester-based Nobel Prize winners. Although she sparked a discussion amongst a lively audience as to who could or could not claim 'Mancunian' status, everyone enjoyed her talk and the excellent range of material, all of which contributed to an understanding of her theme. And for those wanting to gain some understanding of what a thematic or social philatelic display might look like this was a doubly informative evening!

The second meeting of the year was the 'Thematic Evening'. As usual with these popular members' evenings, almost everyone present had something to show and displays included: 'Crash Mail from Bangkok'; 'Prisoner of War Letters' (from a lonely Australian who eventually managed to entice three young ladies into writing to him!); 'A Baltic Cruise'; 'Entertainment' and others. The trophy was awarded by the Vice-President to Ron Pickering for a display entitled 'Cracking the Code' which took us from the King James' Bible (celebrating its 400th Anniversary) to DNA, via the Ordnance Survey, Bletchley Park and the cracking of the German Enigma Code in WWII.

Off with her Head!

The latest controversy surrounding the Coalition's proposed sell-off of Royal Mail appears to be whether or not the Queen's head will remain on stamps issued by the new, privately-owned service. Whilst Vince Cable, the Business Secretary, seemed not to be worried, suggesting that any owner would be mad to drop such a well-known brand image(!), others were less sanguine, and now the latest news is that the Bill will include a clause requiring the presence of the Monarch's head on all future GB stamps, which will also continue to be issued subject to Royal approval. Great Britain is, of course, the only country permitted to issue stamps that do not bear the name of the country of issue, a provision that goes back the early days of the UPU, since several other countries (including for example nearby European countries such as Belgium and Spain) habitually omitted their name from their issues at that time, and it was rightly felt that there was a need for clarity in this aspect of postal services. Thus even today the image of the British monarch fulfils an important and necessary function in regard to the identification of GB stamps.



TPS website: [www. communicate.co.uk/traffordphilatelic](http://www.communicate.co.uk/traffordphilatelic)

THE LAST OF THE LINE: RMS ST HELENA

On June 18 1815, the British, aided by the Prussians, defeated Napoleon for the last time. The Prussians made it quite clear that they would execute Napoleon if he fell into their hands, and after abdication Napoleon asked the British to protect him. He surrendered to Captain Frederick Maitland on HMS Bellerophon, and was transported across the English Channel where the ship anchored off Brixham. He hoped that the British might treat him leniently, and perhaps allow him to live on a country estate in England. Britain was afraid that Napoleon would still act as a rallying point for the French and wanted desperately to avoid any more financially devastating wars in Europe. The decision was taken to send Napoleon into distant exile, and Admiral Lord Keith ordered the Bellerophon to transfer Napoleon to HMS Northumberland, which then sailed for the remote island of Saint Helena, in the South Atlantic.

Napoleon began his six-year stay on St Helena in 1815, coincidentally the year in which St Helena first set up a postal service (under William Brabazon as the first postmaster). My wife and I were then, to some extent, following in Napoleon's footsteps when we recently took passage from Cape Town to St Helena, although we did so in rather more comfort aboard the RMS St Helena. The RMS St Helena is unique: she is one of only two ocean-going vessels in the world still to carry the venerable title of Royal Mail Ship, held in the past by so many famous British passenger liners.

The Royal Mail Ship St Helena was built in 1989 specifically to supply the island of St Helena, a British Overseas Territory deep in the tropical South Atlantic. She is British registered, 6,767 gross tonnes and has berths for a maximum of 128 passengers plus 56 officers and crew.



RMS St Helena

In addition to carrying passengers in well-fed comfort, she is a lifeline for residents on her island namesake as she carries all the goods and supplies to St

Helena. From wind turbines to motor vehicles; sheep, goats, and Christmas turkeys to computers, white goods (and enormous quantities of cigarettes and alcohol!), everything has to be carried by ship to the island. This is part of the fascination. RMS St Helena is not just a passenger vessel; it's a working ship, linking the South Atlantic Overseas Territories of St Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha.

We boarded the RMS in Cape Town, and set sail on the evening tide of 8th October. After sighting a few friendly dolphins, seals and cormorants we had few fellow travellers for the next five days!



Goodbye to Table Mountain!

St Helena lies 955 miles south of the Equator and over 1000 miles from the coast of West Africa: the voyage from Cape Town covers more than 1300 miles, and unfortunately we encountered a severe swell three days out of South Africa. I consider myself a good 'sailor', but required an anti-seasickness injection (in the bottom, but I didn't care by this stage!) to cope with the regular and extensive meals. The island measures about 10.5 by 6.5 miles: although discovered by the Portuguese navigator, Joao da Nova Castella in 1502 its strategic position meant that the British coveted it as a re-supply port for ships using the south-east Trade Winds to sail back from the Cape. The British colonized the island in 1659 – it had been uninhabited on discovery and remained that way for over 100 years – and granted rights to occupy and manage the island to the Honourable British East India Company. On the failure of the Company, an Act of Parliament passed the island to direct rule by the Crown in 1834.

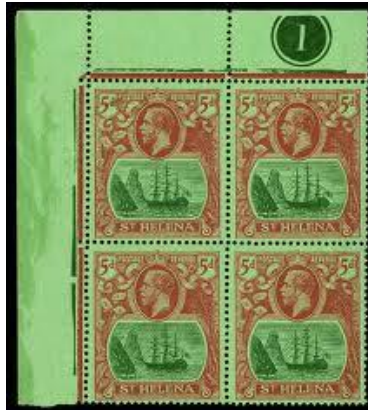
The first St Helena stamp, a 6d value printed in blue-green, was issued in 1856.



This basic design remained in use for over 50 years – the small volume of ordinary mail was accommodated by simply overprinting additional values onto new-colour printings of the original stamps.



Pictorial issues followed from the early 20th Century, perhaps the best-known those designed by then-postmaster Thomas Bruce. He is reputed to have jotted down the design 'on the back of an envelope', but it has proven to be a classic of its type.



The first commemorative stamps were issued in 1934, to celebrate 100 years of British rule. Since that time the Crown Agents have pursued a moderately conservative policy of commemoratives and special issues, with a definitive issue every five years. Philatelic items represent the third most significant source of overseas income for the island: the Philatelic Bureau is based at the Post Office in Jamestown.



There is almost no internal postal service. There is no delivery to private addresses, and only a very limited 'box' system. Five boxes are found in various locations across the Island : shown

The Jamestown postmark is most often seen on items being sent to the UK via the RMS. Items posted on board receive a special cancellation, and are then off loaded to the island to be re-cancelled before returning to the ship.



Those in the know arrange for their post to travel via Ascension (**with onward trans-mission via airmail**): the trip via South Africa is considerably less reliable or secure.

After 8 days on the island, the RMS returned from Ascension and we re-embarked for Cape Town. No seasickness this time, and we berthed exactly on time 5 days later. Certainly a unique experience, and one which may not be available for very much longer. The RMS makes a loss of £6000 per day, and these losses must be covered by the UK taxpayer. An airport development has been given the go-ahead by the Con-Lib coalition: if this £300,000,000 project takes place the island will lose a great deal of its special character.

Ron Pickering



IMPORTANT REMINDER

Annual Auction

The Annual Auction is due to take **19 April**, and although that date appears a long way ahead, lists of auction lots are needed rather earlier, if we are to produce lists that can be circulated amongst members and other local societies in advance of the event.

Lists should be sent to Ted Jackson (preferably by email: ted_jackson42@yahoo.co.uk), or duplicate hard copy lists should be handed in at a meeting for onward transmission, so that Ted can produce a master list and assign lot numbers. All vendors will receive back a copy of their list with the appropriate lot numbers. Lots should be brought to Park House on the night of the auction no later than 7.00pm.

The Auction aims to be both a 'fun night', but also a night when the society makes a bit of income, so please send in some interesting lots, come along and enjoy yourselves (and hopefully spend a bit of money!).

Dates for the Diary

Feb 1	'Malta' by Alan Green (South Manchester PS)
Feb 15*	Members' Evening: 'The Letter Q' – minimum 1 sheet
Feb 23-26	STAMPEX (BDC, Islington, London)
Feb 24-26	PHILATEX (Royal Horticultural Halls, Greycoat Street, London)
March 1	'Less than an hour' – KUT by Ron Pickering; French Colonies by Neil Power
March 6	Stamp Fair (Cresta Court Hotel, Altrincham)
March 13	Stamp Fair (Bowden Hotel, Langham Road, Altrincham)
March 15	Members' Evening: 'North of the Tropic of Cancer'
March 20	Stamp Fair (Cresta Court Hotel, Altrincham)
April 5	'Pitcairn Islands' by Peter Kirk (Macclesfield and Prestbury PS)
April 10	Stamp Fair (Cresta Court Hotel, Altrincham)
April 19	SOCIETY AUCTION
May 1	Stamp Fair (Cresta Court Hotel, Altrincham)
May 3	Annual General Meeting and COMPETITION EVENING
May 8	Stamp Fair (Bowden Hotel, Langham Road, Altrincham)
May 10	Annual Dinner (Venue to be arranged)
May 15	Stamp Fair (Cresta Court Hotel, Altrincham)
May 17	Summer Quiz Night (Quizperson – Maureen Pedley)
July 15/16	YORK Summer Stamp Fair (Race Course, York)

*** LAST DATE FOR SUBMISSION OF AUCTION LISTS!!!**

Society Competitions

There are three Society competitions which will be held after the conclusion of the AGM on May 3. Thematic entries are normally excluded from these competitions since the Society's Thematic Trophy is awarded at the end of the annual Thematic Evening, as reported elsewhere in this Newsletter.

In order for there to be a competition, there must be a minimum of **TWO** entries in any single competition. No verbal description is required for any competition, although, in keeping with the informality of the event, entrants sometimes say a few words about their entries, *after* judging has taken place.

The **Maxwell Trophy** is the intermediate-level competition and is intended for those who perhaps have either not entered a competition before, or who have only done so occasionally. Previous winners of the Armour Cup are not normally allowed to offer entries for this competition. Entrants should prepare a maximum of **SIX** sheets (including an introductory sheet if required) on any topic or subject of their choosing.

The **Armour Cup** is the senior competition and entrants are asked to prepare a maximum of **NINE** sheets (including an introductory sheet if required) on a topic or subject of their choosing. Previous winning entries are not allowed to be re-entered, either in whole or in part, but previously unsuccessful entries are allowed, whether revised or not. Winners of the Armour Cup may go forward to enter the NW Federation Rose Bowl Competition.

The **President's Cup** is our newest competition for 'Social Philately'. Entrants are asked to prepare a maximum of **NINE** sheets (including an introductory sheet if required) on a topic or subject of their choosing. Previous winning entries are not allowed to be re-entered, either in whole or in part, but previously unsuccessful entries are allowed, whether revised or not.

'Social Philately' is a relatively new class of competition and aims to allow a greater variety of material to be part of a display. Where non-philatelic material should be kept to an absolute minimum in our other competitions, here up to approximately two-thirds of the display may be of a non-philatelic nature, providing of course that there is a strong philatelic thread to the display. Photos, programmes, cards, newspaper cuttings, tickets etc. may all be used in putting together the display in order to illustrate the background or broader social context against or in which postal developments are taking place. (For further information see the *TPS Newsletter* of October 2009.)

Previous Newsletters have offered advice on preparing entries for our various competitions, so now it is up to members to take heed and start the business of putting together an entry. This is not something that can be done at the last minute, the night before the competition itself, so a bit of forward planning is required and that means beginning now! Remember too that this is all meant to be very informal – there are no outside judges and all that the evening is intended for, is to allow each one of us to do what we like best to do: show off our prized collections!!! So please everyone, have a go and let's make sure the next competition evening is something to remember.

Questions from the last Society Quiz for those who didn't make it:

1. In which year was the Gibbons 'Simplified Catalogue' first issued?
2. What is 'deltiology'?
3. When did Greece first issue stamps?
4. When did stamps of the reign of Queen Victoria cease to be postally valid?
5. What is the current 60p GB stamp commonly used for?

Answers in the next edition, but meanwhile, don't forget to bulk buy your postage stamps before the price rise in April. First Class mail is going up by 5p!