

Hon Secretary's Report 2015

We meet on the second and fourth Thursdays in the month, between September and April. The vagaries of the calendar and public holidays meant that we held 14 meetings this year.

The 2014-5 programme opened on the 25th September with Doug Howkins substituting for our new President (Francis Podger) who had been called away on business. Doug gave a comprehensive review of *Latin America* that revealed how history and culture influenced the stamps of these countries and how the design of their stamps had evolved. Francis was able to give his Presidential display at the second meeting, *Singapore – Incoming Postal Stationery*, a fascinating collection of postal stationery from around the globe. The ingenuity of some senders amused us – deliberate under franking to receive taxation and thereby ensure delivery! This rearrangement of displays produced a welcome bonus since both meetings were followed by refreshments.

We welcomed three visitors whose individual displays filled a complete evening. James Podger presented *Africa and Adjoining Oceans*, an entertaining evening peppered with personal recollections as a ship's master (& philatelist) at Ascension Island. Colin Caskie showed the stamps of Jamaica from the first issue until independence which gave us the opportunity to see some beautiful engraved stamps. He did not ignore postal history, completing his display with railway stations and travelling post offices. Our third visitor was Iain Dyce who brought us *Letters from the Eastern Seas*, a fascinating collection of postal history on the development of postal services in this region together with a great variety of items of early mail (notably from the Malayan Peninsula).

Turning to our members: Alec Steele last displayed his *British South Africa Company and Early Rhodesia* in 1977! The display given this time was one to enthuse the specialist and generalist alike. His fine collection of varieties (colours and flaws) was supplemented with great items of postal history, such as mail from Bulawayo in 1896 when the town was besieged by the Matabele army. George Lewthwaite gave the last display of the year, *British Postal Stationery*. It was an excellent finale to a successful season. It was a treat to see his comprehensive collection of (GPO) postcards, letter cards, registered envelopes and early air-letters and to hear the history behind these.

At other meetings, displays on a diverse range of interesting subjects were given by members of two visiting societies (Lanarkshire and the Postcard Club of Tayside). We held four member's participation meetings, taking the form of "one and a half" competition nights and two and a half "displaying" nights (The Great War, Recent Acquisitions & "L"-Night). All were enthusiastically supported.

Attendance was marginally down this year. (Last year's data are in brackets). The average attendance was 16.8 (18.3) with the highest attendance being 21 on the 22nd January to see Alec Steele's *British South Africa Company and early Rhodesia* (23 on the 24th October for Stuart Gardiner's *Early Europe*). The lowest attendance was 14 on the 9th April for George Lewthwaite's *British Postal Stationery* which coincided unfortunately with spring holidays. (15 on the 23rd January for the *K Night*).

Our membership fell by two, resulted in a current membership of 37. We welcome back Colin Rochester. Fred Cochrane & Cameron Raynor who had been members for less than a year resigned. I regret having to inform the AGM of the death of David Torrie.

The morning meetings continue to be a success with numbers approaching double figures.

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As you see, the syllabus for 2015-6 is in production. We expect to hold 14 meetings with the normal mix of individual displays (by visitors & members), visiting societies and member's participation nights.

As was the case last year we will finish the 2014-5 season with our Society Dinner. This is to be held on the 7th May at The Invercarse Hotel. Once again we have to thank David Millar for making the arrangements. This social event is a very pleasant way to round off our year.

Charles Lloyd