



West of
England
Thematic
Society

Newsletter No.20 October 2004

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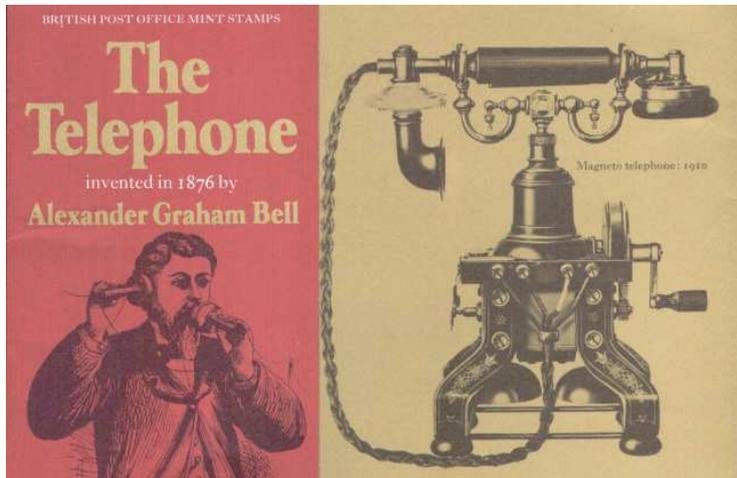
IN THIS ISSUE - Give us a Bell, Fire & Destruction, The date of our next meeting, China - Lighthouses on Phonocards, A Moving Experience, Your Newsletter Needs You, Snippets, Dates for your Diary, WETS Roadshow.

GIVE US A BELL

By Tony Smith

Alexander Graham Bell, the man who made it possible to talk to friends across town or to relatives on the other side of the world, must stand alongside any of the great Britons who made an impact on the world with their ideas and inventions.

He invented the telephone and deserves a thematic collection of his own. But if you want a 'genuine' portrait of him for a display you must look beyond the stamps of his homeland. In 1976 the Royal Mail marked the centenary of the launching of his system with a four-stamp issue. But where was Bell! We had modern users of the phone -- a housewife, a policeman, a nurse and a businessman. All very commendable. But if you want to show Bell himself via a GB issue you have to display a FDC or a Presentation Pack. Why?

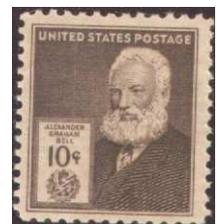
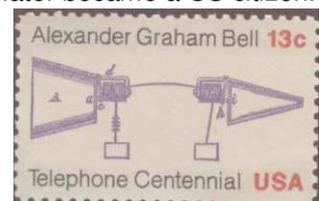


It is known exactly how he looked when he launched the new era of world-wide communication in 1876. The United States had shown the bearded inventor on a 1940 stamp and many other nations included a portrait of Bell in their 1976 centenary issues.

Perhaps he was snubbed by the Royal Mail because though born in Edinburgh in 1847 and educated at the city's university he emigrated to America in 1870 and later became a US citizen. While a professor at Boston University Bell began working on the idea of using electricity to transmit sound via cable and the result of his

effort -- the world's first telephone - is pictured on a 1976 US stamp.

In 1876 Bell picked up the strange-looking device and spoke into it: "Mister Watson, come here. I want you." Watson came from a room elsewhere in the building and by the time Bell died in 1922 a large part of the world was "on the phone. American businessmen quickly saw the value of telephones and the system was then taken to Europe. Becoming rich from the Bell Telephone Company and his patent, the Scot didn't forget his roots. In Britain to sell the system to businessmen he was invited to meet Queen Victoria at Osborne House on the Isle of Wight and helped her to speak to

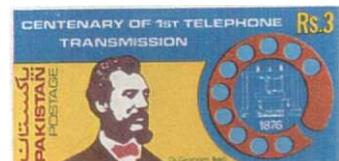


Buckingham Palace. Such long distance calls became part of the communication revolution as more and more tall wooden poles with looping cables were seen on roadsides across Europe.

'Phone Exchange' became a part of the English language as the increase in the use of telephones meant connection between major cities was needed.

Links between Britain and Europe were needed too and in 1891 a submarine cable took the first call from England to France. By the turn of the century cables were taking calls under even the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans.

The Post Office had launched a Government-backed public phone service in 1881 but most of the general public still had to be won over. Special postage cancels extolled the value of the phone.



Dials, invented by an American George Strowger, appeared on phones



around 1906 and the look of telephones changed. 'Special' numbers began to appear on the phone service.... the speaking clock came in 1936 and the '999' emergency line for police, fire and ambulance came a year later.

Surprisingly, by the time Bell died in 1922 the main way for 90 per cent of the population to use a phone was going into a familiar red box in their street and putting 2p into cash container. By the time of Bell's centenary, however, 24 families in every 100 homes had their own phone. Today the figure is around 90 per cent, though satellites and other systems have pushed the Bell's epic original invention into history. Younger people probably don't even know why they tell a "Give me a bell when you want me to come". Like Watson in 1876!



FIRE & DESTRUCTION

By Ken Ramsey

The villages of Lidice and Lezaky just Northwest of Prague in Czechoslovakia (now the Czech Republic), was before World War II just a sleepy mining settlement of the Kiando coal basin and had a population of about 450.

On June 10th 1942 the villages were destroyed by the German Military Occupation Forces in retaliation for the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich, deputy leader



of the S.S. by the Czech underground fighters.

On June 9th, five days after Heydrich died of bomb injuries, the S.S. rounded up all the inhabitants. The 172 men were shot the next day. The women, except those who were shot trying to flee, were transported to Ravensbruck concentration camp, where 49 died (7 by gas) and 3 "disappeared". The 90 children were screened and found "racially pure" and were dispersed throughout Germany. No one escaped, even the 19 miners who were missed on the first round, were executed later in Prague.



When the massacre and deportation were completed, the S.S. razed the villages to the ground, dynamited what was left standing, and levelled the debris.

In 1947 a new village of Lidice was designated near by. A museum, with a monument and a rose garden, marks the site of the original village. Since 1947 the horrendous deaths and destruction have been remembered every five years by the special issue of postage stamps.



(The whole issue of mans inhumanity to his fellow man opens up lots of scope to the Thematic Collector. This item by Ken could of course be included not only in a story of destruction by Fire, but in anything to do with the Third Reich, or the Czech Struggle for Freedom for instance - Ed.)

THE DATE OF OUR NEXT MEETING - 13th November 2004 at

Buckfastleigh Town Hall start at 2.00 p.m.

We draw attention to members attending this meeting that you are required to bring along an 8 sheet display with a title commencing with either A, B or C. This is WETS returning to its roots and actually producing something and discussing it at meetings. Everyone learns something through this process, we have a lot of fun and more importantly we produce material for our collections and the WETS road show.

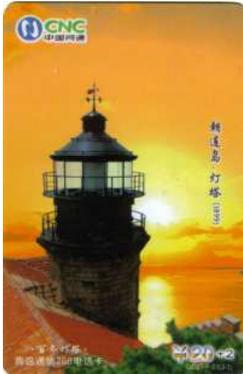


So what can you dream up, the Army, Australia, Bagpipes? Have a go and above all have some fun.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING WHAT YOU PRODUCE

2003 CHINA: LIGHTHOUSES ON PHONECARDS

The three Lighthouses, illustrated on these phonecards, are in *Qingdao Gang* (*Gang* = *Bay*), about 700 km North of *Shanghai*. There is a major port in the bay, a large naval base, and extensive fishing areas. The latter being famous for the giant prawns caught there.



CHAO LIAN DAO LIGHTHOUSE # F3814

Location: **35° 54' N x 120° 53' E**
 Light: 80 M elevation. 24 Nm range.
 1 White flash every 10 seconds (fl 1).
 Built: 1899, on the summit of *Chao Lian Dao*, as a white, eight sided masonry tower, 13 M high.

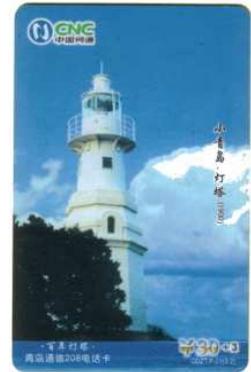


TUAN DAO LIGHTHOUSE #F3824

Location: **36° 3' N x 120° 17' E**
 Light: 24 M elevation, 24 Nm range.
 Occulting: White, Red and Green light, every 5 seconds.
 Built: 1899, as a white, eight sided brick tower, with three black bands, 15 M high.

XIAOQING DAO LIGHTHOUSE # F3826

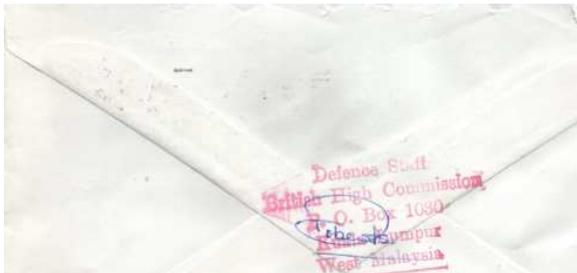
Location: **36° 3' N x 120° 19' E**
 Light: 28 M elevation, 24 Nm range.
 1 Red flash every 6`5 seconds, (fl 0`5).
 Built: 1900, as a white, eight sided masonry tower, 12 M high.



Cards reduced in size
 Full size: 85 x 54 mm

We apologise to our China Correspondent for not displaying the full identification of the material featured in the last issue. Here are some other items thematic collectors may find useful for their displays.

A MOVING EXPERIENCE



From time to time we all move home and when we do we employ the services of a removal company. However if you are in the Armed Forces, the Police, or perhaps the Diplomatic Service, imagine the nightmare when you are advised you have been posted. Such moves are a logistical exercise requiring some very special skills and know how, involving lots of different organisations, all of which need to be co-ordinated. Nightingales Removals and Storage Ltd. are just what you need, no matter where you want to go to or from in the world

they will organise the job and make the arrangements.

The cover shown on the previous page has been sent in the Diplomatic Bag from the British Embassy in West Malaysia and posted in London SW1 to Nightingales perhaps with a request to arrange the move home. We can find similar covers posted at British Field Post Offices. They correspond in turn with lots of other organisations, such as the Lord Chancellors Department, the Inland Revenue, the Shore Porters Society, and other Removal Companies.

Such an organisation must be a great help to those service families who need to move on a regular basis. I feel sure that this subject could form the basis of



quite a good thematic display that took in the jobs and job descriptions of the people who are moved around by government and the exotic locations or otherwise they find themselves posted too. If any WETS member wishes to take up the challenge of writing such a story and illustrating it with this and other material in the hands of the Editor - they can have the material providing they cover the cost of postage or collect it at a meeting. A GOOD 8 SHEET ENTRY FOR THE ROADSHOW PERHAPS?

YOUR NEWSLETTER NEEDS YOU - at the present time your newsletter reflects the views of the editor and the deputy newsletter editor. It is supposed to be the WETS newsletter reflecting your views and ideas. With this in mind and the move back to our roots of actually producing something on a theme for meetings, please consider an article for the newsletter around the theme you put together. Your article does not need to be long, it does however need to be illustrated, any material loaned will be returned promptly in the condition it was supplied in.

We have been promised an article about how thematics are tackled in Europe. **WHAT CAN YOU OFFER**

SNIPPET - Mary Claydon has passed on the details of a thematic dealer in Belgium who runs auctions and sends out illustrated lists, the details are - Francis Dochez Terkamerenpad 3, B1800 Vilvoorde, Belgium. For those of you with computing facilities email to dochez.francis@pandora.be or look at their web site at <http://users.pandora.be/brafilia>. **IF YOU HAVE A SNIPPET WORTH PASSING ON LET US KNOW.**

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY - OUR NEXT MEETING 13th November 2004 at Buckfastleigh Town Hall starting at 2.00 pm. See the details above.

BTA THEMATIC DAY - We have heard that this may be taking place at the Dartmoor Lodge Hotel, Ashburton on the 24th September 2005. We have no more details at this stage, but we will bring you full details as soon as they are released.

WETS ROADSHOW - The current Roadshow will make its final appearances at Taw and Torridge on 28th October and at Plymouth on the 4th November. If you have not seen the show which is well worth the effort, these are your last chances to do so. We are now looking to provision the show for the 2006 season. WETS will be returning to its roots by setting its members the task of producing material for its meetings against set criteria. This will serve two purposes, that of actually having a bit of fun producing a thematic display and providing material for the next Roadshow.

You never know, you just might start a whole new thematic collection from this process, it has happened before. Our first attempt at this process is the meeting on 13th November 2004. We all look forward to seeing what you produce and joining in the discussions that will follow. **THIS IS FUN - DO MAKE THE EFFORT.**