



West of
England
Thematic
Society

Newsletter No.23 August 2005

Society Officers

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IT'S MAGIC

by **Richard Wheeler**

In March this year, the Post Office issued a set of stamps commemorating the 100th anniversary of The Magic Circle. The issue uses a variety of ingenious printing techniques so that each stamp can perform a simple 'trick'. Two are heat sensitive, two show optical illusions and one can be scratched to reveal either 'heads' or 'tails'. I have a particular interest in that I have performed magic for over 60 years and a professional for over 55 years playing theatres, night clubs and venues the length and breadth of the country. I am honoured to be counted amongst the members of the Inner Magic Circle under my stage name of John Dudley. Naturally I have an interest in magic stamps as well as my puppet display – although not as many!

There are not many stamps world wide depicting magicians, but quite a number using the word 'magic'.

The Magic Circle was founded in 1905 when Music Hall enjoyed a great popularity and famous magicians headlined shows. David Devant (1868-1941) was the most popular performer of his day and became the first President of The Magic Circle. In 1967, Czechoslovakia issued the first stamp depicting a Magician, whilst in 1971, France issued a stamp commemorating the 100th anniversary of the death of Jean Robert-Houdin,



acknowledged as the father of modern magic. In 1976, Jersey and the USA authorised cachets relating to the 50th anniversary of the death of Harry Houdini, the renowned escapologist whilst in 2002, the USA issued a stamp of Houdini, which celebrated the 100th anniversary of "The Society of American Magicians" for which he was the first President.

Monaco, issues more stamps featuring magic than any other country. For many years Monaco has staged Festivals of Magic and stamps have been issued in 1989, 1994, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999 and 2004.



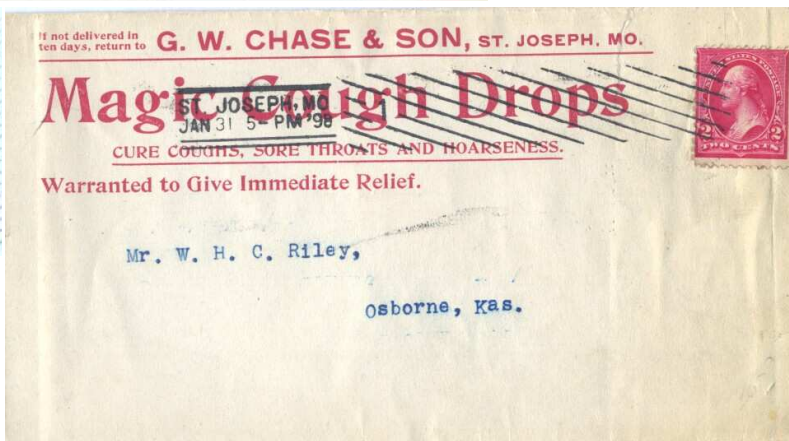
In 1985, the UK issued a series of Pantomime characters including a Fairy and a Genie, whilst later in 1996, there was an issue 'Children's Television series' which featured Harry Corbett with a magic wand in his top pocket and Sooty in a top hat. Later in 1998, Tommy Cooper was the first British magician to be recognised in the 'Heroes of Comedy' series.



Other countries to issue magic stamps include Dominica and Guyana (with pictures of David Copperfield), Finland, Grenada, Nevis, St. Vincent and Australia. Mongolia have issued a Fantasia set with Mickey Mouse. Brazil and Iraq

have both featured a flying carpet, whilst Israel issued a stamp to commemorate the 20th anniversary of Operation 'Magic Carpet'.

On the subject of lateral thinking with Israel, Austria has an issue with Mozart who composed The Magic Flute,



Australia has a Magic Rainforest set and numerous other countries have worked in the word Magic. My favourite reference of all is the 1898 USA cover advertising Magic Cough Drops. I guess those who took them will have been cured by now!

WETS MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

- At "Thematica" held in Seymour Street London on 25-26th June 2005 member Carol Turner won the BTA Trophy for her entry "Malaria & Man", well done and congratulations. Lesley Marley one of our founder members has now been appointed as Vice Chairman of BTA, congratulations from all your friends in WETS. It is always a great delight to see members of WETS hitting the national headlines helping to spread the message that Thematics is proper Stamp Collecting, keep up the good work.

WETS do well at SWIPEX in the Thematic Class - member Richard Wheeler was awarded Gold for his entry "Puppets on Parade", Gillian Gray was awarded a Silver Gilt, David Rosevere was awarded Silver for his entry "From Grandeur to Gravure", member Tony Smith also got Silver with his entry "Anchors Aweigh".

Royal Stamp of Approval was the headline used by the Dawlish Gazette in its report of the thematic display of "The Ruling Families of Europe" given by our Chairman Mary Claydon to the Dawlish Stamp Club on June 8th 2005.

MEMBERS THEMATIC COLLECTING INTERESTS

- we thought you may appreciate an update on our members collecting interests - ANCIENT GREECE, ANTARTICA, AVIATION, BIRDS, BUTTERFLIES, CACTUS, CHARLES KINGSFORD SMITH, CHRISTMAS, CONCORD, CAPTAIN COOK, CUNARD AND P & O SHIPS, CATS, CINEMA AND TV, CHINA, CIRCUS, DIAMONDS, DARTMOOR, DRAKE, DOGS, DISNEY, EAST AFRICA, ENGRAVINGS BY CZESLAW SLANIA, ENDANGERED SPECIES, EXPLORERS, FUNGI, FLOWERS, FOOD AND DRINK, FAMOUS PEOPLE, FLORA AND FAUNA, FIRE SERVICES, FOLK LORE, FRENCH ENGRAVERS, FAMOUS WOMEN, GREETINGS TELEGRAMS, GEOLOGY, GOLF, GIRL GUIDES, HISTORY OF PARLIAMENT, HORSES, LETTER BOXES, LIGHTHOUSES, LUNAR NEW YEAR, LITERATURE, MASONIC, MINERALS, MUSIC, MARINE LIFE, NATIONAL PARKS, NAMED WOMEN ON STAMPS, NATURAL HISTORY, ORCHIDS, OWLS, PERFINs, POLICE, PAINTINGS AND ARTISTS, PIRATES, PUFFINS, PUPPETS, QUEENS PORTRAIT, RAILWAYS, ROUTE BETWEEN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND, RULING FAMILIES OF EUROPE, ROYALTY, REPTILES AND AMPHIBIA, RELIGION, SAFETY AT SEA, SEA AND LAND SHELLS, SPORTS, SPANISH HISTORY, SUBMARINES, SOCIAL HISTORY, SWITZERLAND AS A THEME, SCOUTS, TEXTILES, TEDDY BEARS, THEATRE ARTS, UK POSTAL HISTORY, UMBRELLAS, VICTORIANS, WWF, WW2 HOME FRONT, WHALES, WARSHIPS, YACHTS, YACHTING, YACHTSMEN, ZODIAC. If you have material that may address any of the above interests, contact the newsletter editor who will put you in touch with the member concerned.

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the West of England Thematic Society held at Emmanuel Church Exeter on Saturday July 16th 2005.

Present

Mary Claydon (*Chairman and Secretary*), Richard Wheeler (*Treasurer*), Jim Wigmore (*Newsletter Editor*)
Tony Smith (*Deputy Newsletter Editor*), Edith Rees, Vicki Wigmore, Pearl Buxton, Gillian Gray, David Herrity
Trevor Fray, Norman Claydon.

1. **Apologies** - Anne Moorshead, Carol Turner, Pam McDowell, Doreen Pope. Ken Ramsey, Maurice Buxton, David Roseveare and Andrew Austen.
2. **Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting.** The Minutes were read by the Chairman and approved - proposed Tony Smith seconded Jim Wigmore.
3. **Matters arising from the last minutes.** The subscription agreed at the last AGM. had not yet been implemented as the Treasurer had not seen sight of the minutes for the 2004 AGM and had thus overlooked it.
4. **Adoption of rules for the Society (previously circulated).** These were unanimously approved proposed Edith Rees seconded Vicki Wigmore.
5. **Chairman's Report.** As the Chairman is also Secretary these two reports cover both - The Chairman thanked everyone who does so much work for the Society - Jim and Tony for the Newsletter Richard (Treasurer and Membership Secretary) and the Packet Secretary Anne. Wets has had a successful year though attendance could have been greater at the Annual WETS Day - Brian Sole gave us a super display and much helpful information. We are looking forward to the BTA Roadshow on September 24th. The Committee have agreed to provide a display at The Village Green at Stampex on Wednesday 22nd to Sunday 26th February 2006. If any member is planning to visit Stampex would they be willing to man the information table for part of one of the days. Jim has kindly agreed to take the exhibits up and Richard has agreed to bring them back. We have also booked a stand and 2 chairs at Torquay 2006 24th/25th November. We need volunteers to man this for an hour or so at a time over the two days. **The Committee are not going to man this on their own.**

I know we would all offer our congratulations to WETS members who have recently received awards: - Carol Turner winner of the B.T.A. cup at Thematica - and at SWIPEX Richard Wheeler got a Gold, Gillian Gray a Silver Gilt and David Roseveare and Tony Smith a Silver.

Pat Grimwood-Taylor has agreed to show her Social History at our WETS Day next year - April 29th.

6. **Treasurer's Report.**
The Treasurer presented the Income and Expenditure Account for the past year pointing out that our income had gone down by some £30 and our expenditure had increased due to heavy speaker expenses incurred at the Annual Day 2004 also two years ABPS subs were paid in the one year also two years room hire for the Church hall. The packet account showed a successful result. It was proposed by the Treasurer and seconded by David Herrity that the subscriptions should be £4. Agreed unanimously. It was proposed by Jim Wigmore, seconded by Pearl Buxton that the accounts be accepted - carried unanimously.
7. **Newsletter Editor's Report.**
Jim Wigmore said despite appeals to members for articles for the Newsletter it still depended on him, Tony Smith and Richard Wheeler for the contents. He thanked Tony for the work he does for the Newsletter. The Chairman proposed a vote of thanks to Jim and Tony seconded by Edith Rees and carried unanimously.
8. **Packet Secretary's Report.**
In the absence of the Packet Secretary the Chairman read her report. 'During the twelve months since July 2004 eight packets have completed the circuit and two more at present on their way. Value of items included in these 10 packets amounts to £2501.52 an average of £250. per packet. Out of our total membership 10 people contributed material to the packet including two who pay a membership subscription in order to contribute but do not themselves receive the packet. The circulation at present contains 16 names. The Packet Secretary would be delighted to receive more contributions from the membership, especially of less run-of-the-mill material. She would also welcome any additions to the circulation list. On a more positive note it is pleasing to be able to report that adherence to the Rules has, on the whole, been exemplary and the Secretary can now

be pretty certain where a packet is at any time. It is a pity that there has been an increase in postal charges; and it seems bizarre that if the packet is just over the 2nd class limit it is cheaper to send it by 1st class letter post than by parcel post. Apologies for not being able to present this report in person. Best wishes to all members for the coming year. Report accepted unanimously proposed Edith Rees seconded Tony Smith.

9. **Election of Officers.**

No proposals had been received and the Chairman pointed out that she was doing the job of the Secretary and would like to see someone take over this post at the next AGM. It was proposed Edith Rees seconded David Herry that the officers be re-elected en bloc. Richard Wheeler stated that the Auditor was willing to continue in that capacity and a vote of thanks to the Auditor was proposed by the Chairman and seconded by Jim Wigmore.

10. **Any other business.**

Tony Smith suggested a list of members' interests could be circulated and Richard Wheeler stated he had all the details and would provide a list, subject to the Data Protection Act.



THE BTA ROADSHOW

Following representation by WETS the British Thematic Association will be bringing their Roadshow to the South West on 24th September 2005. The venue will be the Dartmoor Lodge Hotel, Ashburton and will be open to all WETS Members, BTA Members and any other collectors who may be interested. The programme details are as follows:-

10.30 - 11.30 - Members Displays

11.30 - 13.00 - Speaker - Colin Mount "Pig in the Post"

13.00 - 14.00 - Lunch

14.00 - 16.00 - Workshop (with break for Tea).

There is no charge for attending, delegates will be required to pay for their lunch or make their own arrangements. The format of the Workshop will be advised to all delegates prior to the day.

All interested members should advise Mary Claydon as soon as possible please, we do need to advise attendee's in advance, see the head of the newsletter for Mary's details.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

12th November 2005 - WETS Meeting at Buckfastleigh start 2.00 p.m. We need members to bring along all the material they showed for Letters ABC to be included in the 2006 Roadshow plus any other material promised. The theme for this meeting will be letters D,E and F, lets see if you can produce the same degree of interest as the last meeting, or perhaps you can better it?

22nd-26th February 2006 - STAMPEX at the Village Green, Design Centre Islington - This is devoted to Thematics featuring the British Thematic Association and its members and associated societies.

WETS will be featured by means of a display and we will be shown as a participation society in the handbook. **This will be the first time that WETS has gained National recognition as a society.**

We need your support for our stand, so if you intend to visit STAMPEX please giving us an hour or so of your time to help out. **FROM A SOCIETY POINT OF VIEW THIS IS REALLY IMPORTANT**

WETS Roadshow - The 2006 starts its travels in January 2006.

MAKE SURE YOUR SOCIETY IS ONE OF ITS STOPPING POINTS.

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR - Members Tony Smith, Trevor Fray and Edith Rees have all submitted material for the next news letter. Why haven't you? To keep up the standard we have set for our newsletter we need a constant supply of new material. You all have thematic collections and most of your thoughts and ideas will be of interest to others, they may even stimulate others to add information the their collections.

You never know you might even get some material for your collection, it has been known to happen. Remember however, we are a colour newsletter and we do require your words to be illustrated. All material loaned is handled with care, copied and returned promptly. **GO ON - GIVE IT A TRY**

NOTE THE NEW ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE NUMBER - SEE PAGE 1 HEADER