



West of
England
Thematic
Society

Newsletter No.29 May 2007

Society Officers

Chairman – Mary Claydon Tel 01398 331731 email mary.claydon@bopenworld.com

Secretary – Mary Claydon - details as above.

Treasurer – Richard Wheeler 01271 813940 richard.wheeler@telepuppets.com

News Co-ordinator - Tony Smith 26 Ashleigh Rd. Honiton Devon EX14 1TD Tel 01404 46358

Editor - Jim Wigmore 20 Gilpin Close Dawlish EX7 9SZ Tel 01626 864844

email JamesWigmore@aol.com

IN THIS ISSUE – Editorial Comments, Thematica, SWIPEX, Eurothema, WETS Packet, WETS AGM, Competition Rules, WETS News CD, The Metric Martyrs, A Theme within a Theme, Explorers Update, Your Snippets, The Railway Revolution.

EDITORIAL COMMENTS – Firstly I must apologise for the error in the last publication relating to the WETS DAY at Ashburton we published an incorrect date despite the fact the newsletter being circulated for comment around a number of individuals, we all failed to spot the obvious. There is quite a bit of Thematic activity coming up in the next few months and we will try and make sure you are all aware of the events.

THEMATICA – will be taking place at the Carisbrooke Hall in Seymour Street London from June 23-24. The venue is next door to the Victory Services Club just off Edgware Road close to Marble Arch Underground Station. Entrance is FREE and opening times are 10.30 am. to 5.30 pm. Saturday with an earlier closing of 5.00 pm on the Sunday. More details can be obtained from the BTA Web site at www.brit-thematic-assoc.com
We understand that WETS Member Leslie Marley will become the new BTA Chairman during this event.

SWIPEX – Don't forget to visit this event which will be held in the Peter Chalk Centre in Exeter University on Saturday 7th July from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm. There will be over 25 dealers and lots of philatelic displays including Thematic Entries. Refreshments will be available. Lots of FREE Parking, or if you do not drive the local bus service to the University passes the door. **If you are going to this event could you give up a small amount of your time in the morning session to do a bit of stewarding of the exhibits? If so please let us know as soon as possible.**

EUROTHEMA - From 22nd to 23rd November 2007 Europe's largest and most exciting thematic exhibition will be staged in London. It will be held in conjunction with the usual Thematica II at the Victory Services Club (VSC), Seymour Street, London. The event is being organised by the British Thematic Association. The exhibitions main feature will be the thematic entries from all seven



competing nations: Germany, France, Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg, Denmark and Great Britain. Each country will field between three and five exhibits and compete for the coveted Eurothema Trophy. In addition to these exhibits visitors will also have the opportunity to view the thematic exhibits entered into the British National and International competitions. These will be on display at the same location. The national exhibition, where the remaining classes are on display, Croydon 2007, will be running on Saturday as well as Eurothema. Why not visit both events?

There will be an extensive programme of social functions with the principle event being a champagne reception and Palmares ceremony which will be held on Saturday evening. The main awards and certificates will be presented at this prestigious event. It will be something that should not be missed!

The VSC is only a short walk from the main shopping areas of Oxford and Bond Street and other tourist attractions. Mark the date for this special event in your diary now! For more information, including booking forms for accommodation and Palmares, go to www.brit-thematic-assoc.com/eurothema

We understand that WETS member Richard Wheeler has been invited to submit part of the British Entry in this prestigious event, we wish the whole team well in their endeavours.

WETS Packet – We have been advised by our insurers that our packet has been incorrectly insured, it had been assumed the packet was passed by hand and not by post. The requested premium is now greater than the profit margin of the packet. The packet is currently covered up to March 2008 and the committee is currently reviewing the situation regarding the insurance levels and the future viability of the packet. This issue will be covered at the AGM. Your input to this debate is vital.

WETS AGM – will take place at Emmanuel Church Hall Western Road Exeter on Saturday 30th June 2007 starting at 2.00 pm. The Minutes of the previous AGM were published in Newsletter No. 27. We will need to include rule changes as follows – Rule 7 will need to be amended to remove the word "Auditor" which is no longer a legal term that can be used and replace it with the word "Examiner". **DO TRY AND ATTEND THIS EVENT** and see the Mystery Display.

COMPETITION RULES – Wessex Federation is currently looking at competition rules to try and bring federation competitions more into line with National Rules. These rules will be circulated to the various clubs and societies in the federation for comment and then to be voted upon at a future federation committee meeting. **MAKE SURE YOUR CLUB DISCUSSES THESE RULES AND RESPONDS.**

WETS NEWS CD – We still have all the newsletters produced (Nos.9 -29) in colour on file, if members were sufficiently interested, we could put this information on CD (at a small cost) along with an index to all the articles. Let the editor know if you are interested in this idea. We would put in place an update policy.



THE METRIC MARTYRS

Are you one of those Society senior citizens who still have to double the number shown on the TV weather forecast then add 30 to know how warm it will be outside tomorrow? Or do you first think pounds and ounces or feet and inches for things we use in our everyday life.

Most of today's stamp collectors grew up in the days when milk was delivered in pints, petrol was sold by the gallon and Roger Bannister earned a place in history by becoming the first man to run a mile under four minutes. Imagine the back page headlines declaring he had crossed the finishing line at Oxford after "an unbelievable 1.60934 Kilometres effort".

At school we were taught a system of weights & measures and because it had existed for centuries we never asked why 16 oz made 1 lb or 36 ins were in one yard and 1,760 yds made that mile. Complicated? Yes, but we just learnt it parrot fashion.

The Imperial system was named for obvious reason so distant lands which carried portraits from Queen Victoria to King George VI on their stamps didn't query the system either, writes Tony Smith.

It is now over 25 years since politicians were preparing to take us down the metric road but you can still get a pint in a pub and buy your vegetables by the lb., providing the greengrocer remembers to include Kgs. on the label too. We're warned we will go totally metric by 2010. Will the post office help us understand?



When ex-colonies and the Commonwealth nations "went metric" in the 1970s many used stamps to help their people understand.

In 1970 a set from Kenya, Uganda & Tanzania (SO 288-91) compared

change-over differences such as weights between kg and lbs (oops, sorry, final '5' is not needed). A Ghana set of



1976(SO760-3) illustrated a pint and a Litre, scales for different weight, a tape measure for cloth and a thermometer comparing the temperature from ice to boiling kettle.

Singapore explained their change to metric in 1979 with a three-stamp issue (SO 343-5) including an example of a 10km roadside speed warning. How quickly will we get on that road? And do you know how fast that 10km is? Many other countries 'going metric' have tried to help the change via stamps



including 1962 Brazil (SO 1062) and 1975 Sweden (SO 843), while in 1973 Australia tried a light-hearted approach in a set (SO 532-5). The Imperial system grew from mediaeval tradition but in the 19th century industry and commerce needed clear definitions so the Imperial Standard Yard and Pound Act was settled by an Act of Parliament in 1855. France, with a complicated system of their own for centuries, prepared a metric system based on the distance from the North Pole to the Equator via Paris. Divide that distance by ten million and you have the basic measure the Metre. In 1791 they set it up and then, realising they needed a basic weight too, they opted for one Metre of flat bronze bar and named it a Kilogramme. That bar soon became platinum and the original still exists. Cubic measure and temperature were later included.

In 1804 France called a gathering of foreign governments to suggest a worldwide metric system. Several European countries liked the plan. Britain attended but didn't join in.

Charles de Talleyrand was at the heart of France's early effort and a 1951 French issue (50 1117) honoured him. In 1954 France (SO 1224) marked the 150th anniversary of the world's first full metric system.



(Never let it be said that WETS News does not deal with up to the minute topics. The European Commission announced they would allow us to continue using Imperial Measures after this article was written. We knew Tony Smith was a good press man, we didn't know he was this good. – Ed.)

A THEME WITHIN A THEME

I am just a big kid, I like Western Movies still, this souvenir sheet from the Maldives issued in 1993, depicts five Western stars who were Freemasons.

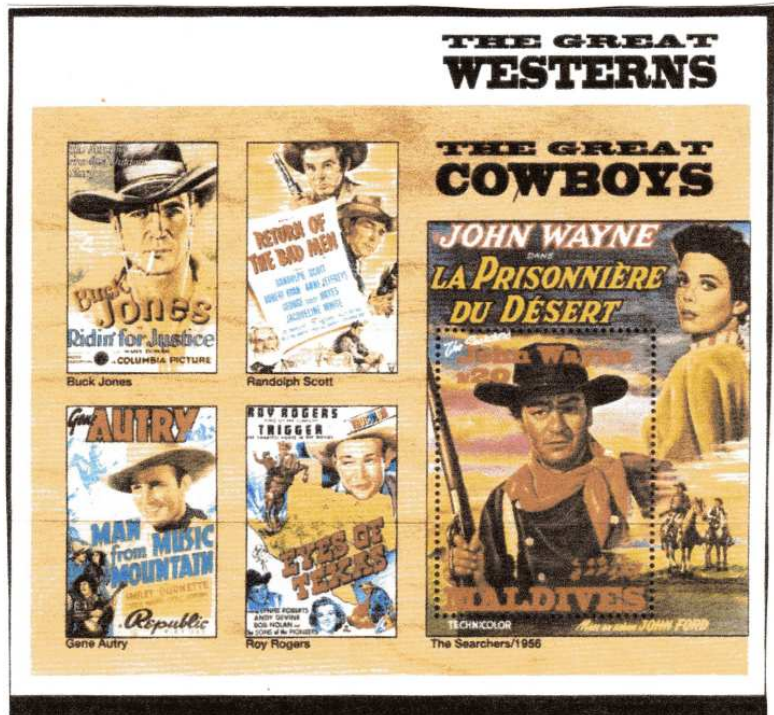
Buck Jones 1889-1942, was a member of Henry S Orm Lodge No.485, Los Angeles, California. Gene Autry 1907-1988, initiated in 1929, was a member of Catosa lodge No.355, Catosa, Oklahoma.

Roy Rogers 1912-1998, initiated in 1946, was a member of Hollywood Lodge No.355, California.

John Wayne 1907-1979, initiated in 1970, was a member of Lodge Marion Mc Daniel, No.56, Tucson, Arizona.

Randolph Scott 1898-1988, initiated in 1920, in Phalanx Lodge No.31, Charlotte, North Carolina. He was a mason for 68 years, beaten only by Gene Autry who clocked up 69.

(Any members of WETS who picked up on the theme of The Movies published in several of our earlier newsletters may like to consider the above for inclusion. – Ed)



EXPLORERS UPDATE – from our intrepid explorer Tony Smith.

RUGBY, the around the-world oval ball game, was 'invented' by William Webb Ellis at his public school in 1823. A few years earlier the son of a Yorkshire farm labourer, James Cook, had become recognised as Britain's supreme navigator. But they were men from very different early lives.



So why does a rugby stamp appear in one of my Captain Cook album?

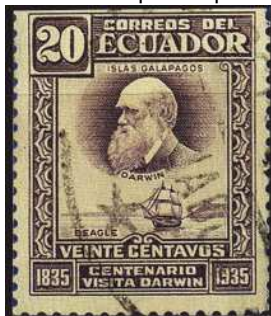
The answer! When I read books and magazines I'm usually quick to spot an odd connection with an explorer. Recently in a sports quiz, I read "Australia and England have played for the rugby union Cook Cup since 1997". A letter to Twickenham brought a reply which confirmed the cup "was named after Captain James Cook, representing a strong English-Australian connection".

A photo of the Royal Doulton crystal trophy was enclosed so now William Webb Ellis has a place in my Cook collection too. Naturally, I had to use the stamps from England's 2003



Cook Cup

World Championship triumph over Australia to complete the story.



Wanting to build-up my section on Charles Darwin and HMS Beagle (I had finally tracked down a set of the 1936 Ecuador set marking his visit to the Galapagos Islands) I also found this advert in the National Geographic Magazine.

Following in Darwin's footsteps sounds like a good idea but it must cost several hundred

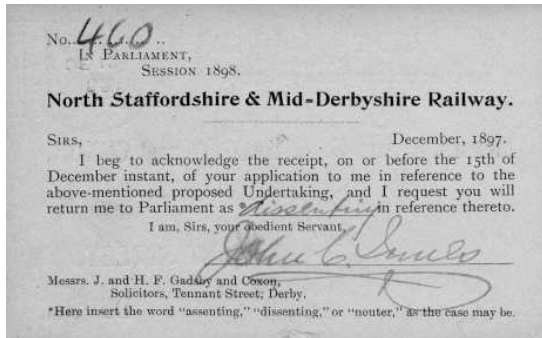
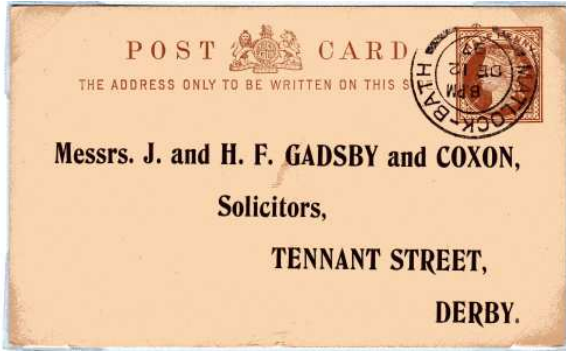
British £10 notes which carry the great naturalist's portrait and a view of Beagle even smaller than Sir Francis Chichester's Gipsy Moth IV on the GB 1967 issue.

YOUR SNIPPETS – are always wanted for the newsletter. Also required are complete articles complete with illustrations, unless this happens, I will fill the next newsletter with material already supplied by Trevor Fray on various aspects of the Freemasons.

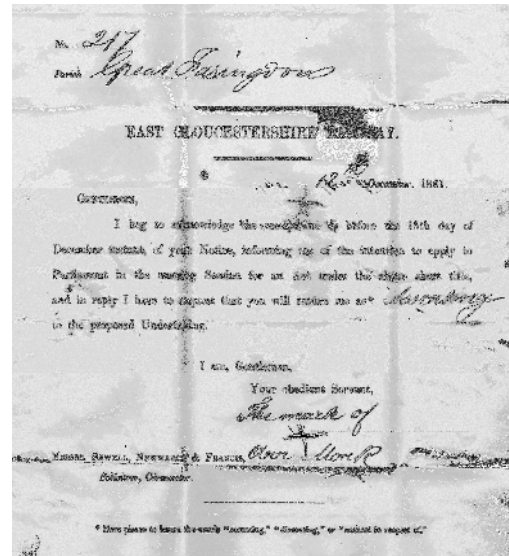
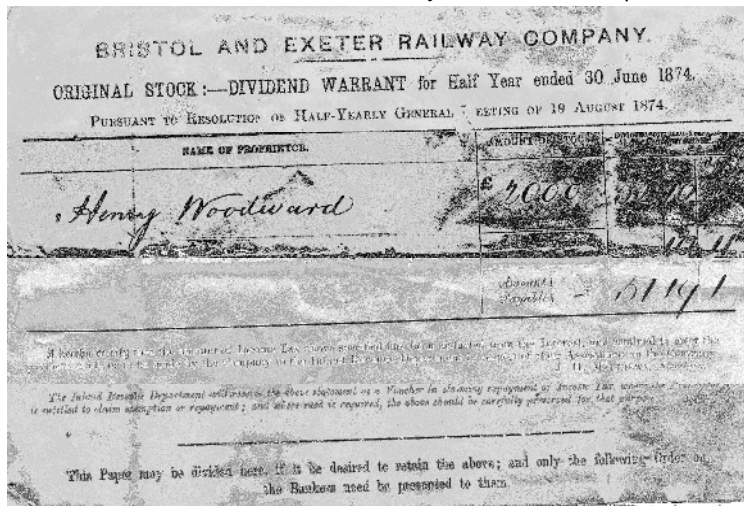
THE RAILWAY REVOLUTION – following on from the last newsletter, states Jim Wigmore, when we looked

at Locomotive Development, let's look at how the railways themselves came into being. Then, just as now it was not possible just to decide to build a railway and go ploughing through the countryside at will. It was necessary to obtain public support, rights of way across the land and financial backing, plus an Act of Parliament was necessary before a start could be made. Shown here are examples of the means by which public support was polled, not all persons assented, there were dissenters as can be seen left.

Those assenting, such as that shown below, were fortunately very much in the majority, and examples of such material can be found providing you look in the right places.



The House of Commons actually set up a special committee to review and either sanction or reject the various proposals for new railways. During the first 10 to 20 years of railway development this committee was kept very busy. People such as George Hudson the railway king from York were not adverse to using bribery to speed their bills through. Not all the railways given approval were able to be built as financial backers did not always deliver on the promises of



funding. Those that did invest, especially in the larger railway ventures in the UK or abroad, did get quite a good return on their investments as

can be seen above, in this case just over 5% per annum, a very healthy return, better returns in the early years have also been seen. Examples of such payments from UK and Overseas investments in the Railway Revolution can be found, they show why Great Britain was such a dynamic force in the Victorian era. All the above material has travelled through the postal system and examples can be found of mail going through the postal system without stamps well into the 1870s despite the introduction of adhesive stamps in 1840, many examples of POSTAGE PAID hand cancels can be found all adding to the interest for the Thematic collector and Postal Historian alike.

Good hunting in the dealers boxes at the various shows and exhibitions, do tell us about your finds and include a copy, we do like pictures for the WETS Newsletter. **REMEMBER A BIT OF LATERAL THINKING WORKS WONDERS.**