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West of
England
Thematic
Society

Newsletter No.51 August 2013

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

WETS Autumn Meeting & AGM at THEMATIX2013 Friday 25th October 2013 at Dartmoor Lodge.

Don't forget to get your entries for the John Hilsdon Trophy and PIP Trophy on the go. We look forward to seeing you all at this event.

2014 WETS Roadshow Federation Clubs are already making bookings for this show. We will be looking at the entries in the 2013 Federation Competitions as well as the 2013 Hilsdon Trophy and 2013 PIP Trophy in order to select a really super set of exhibits. **Now is the time to start putting your entries together.**



IN THE NEWS the “*Western Morning News*” and “*The Herald*” in Plymouth to be exact was Plymouth Club & WETS member Trevor Frey. The articles related to his philatelic exhibition in Stoke Library in Plymouth for two weeks. Trevor's display was totally thematic on his subject of “Freemasonry” and was given a massive feature in both papers. It is good to see both the press and local libraries taking an interest in such topics as philately where stories are involved, lets hope it encourages people to take up the hobby and join local clubs. Trevor is pictured left surrounded by his display.

Philately at local level must be catching as WETS member Richard Wheeler has been approached by the local Museum in Barnstaple to display his “Evolution of Puppets” and to give a series of talks based on his display.

The question has to be is “Do you have a good story to tell, and are you willing to get it featured in the same way as Trevor and Richard”. We need to raise the awareness of our hobby and get collectors back into the clubs.

WETS Member Leslie Marley was also in the news recently as she won a Gold Medal in Australia with her “Whales”, we believe this is the first time a GB Competitor has done so.

WHEN DID THE WEST OF ENGLAND THEMATIC SOCIETY (WETS) BEGIN

First mention of WETS is in the WESSEX BULLETIN No15, the report read as follows:-

THE WEST OF ENGLAND THEMATIC SOCIETY (WETS) -, Members from as far afield as St. Austell, Truro, Battery, Ashburton & Bampton attended the first meeting of WETS on the 9th February at 21 Geneva Court, Exeter. The purposes of this discussion group was to exchange information, to encourage and improve thematics in the south-west. Carol Wrightson's little sitting room was buzzing with lively & enthusiastic talk & ideas - even if it was bursting at the seams! The next date has been fixed for Saturday 4th May 1985 at 2.00pm at 21 Geneva Court, Wonford Rd, Exeter.

This means that in 2015 we will be in our 30th Year

WE WOULD LIKE YOUR IDEAS FOR HOW WE CELEBRATE THIS EVENT.



PAPER, PRINTING & THEMATIC RARITIES

were the subjects of talks given to the members of the West of England Thematic Society (WETS) at their Annual WETS Day at the Dartmoor Lodge Ashburton on Saturday 13th April 2013. Mary Claydon Chairman of WETS introduced the President of the British Thematic Association (BTA) Wendy Buckle who gave a display and talk on the subject of **Paper & Paper Making**. Wendy's display covered the period from the first writing materials, through the initial materials produced by the Chinese that could be written upon with ink type substances, through to Papyrus, Velum and Parchment and finally to the kinds of paper we would recognise today. The methodology of handmade sheets of paper were shown through to continuous reels of paper making were all covered, this included the means by which watermarks were inserted into the paper. Finally the paper

manufacturing companies were shown along with many of the uses of paper through the ages. As we would expect from such a senior member of the BTA, the subject was well researched with some rare and difficult to obtain material and very well presented.

During an interval between Wendy's two displays, one of our own members Richard Wheeler gave a display of 10 sheets of **Rare Thematic Material** he was shortly going to show at a local meeting of the Royal Philatelic Society London (RPSL) he felt that this would clearly show RPSL there was more to philately than Postal History and Routes and Rates. Will he succeed, we wait with baited breath to find out.



The second display and talk by Wendy Buckle was on the subject of **Printing**. It started with wood block printing by the Chinese to the start of early type face, through to metal type and hot type setting as used by newspapers. Wendy was able to show how the use of a standard set of type faces would lead to universal spelling of words and the generation of books readily available to the masses. Printing machinery was also covered starting with the early printing presses that could only print a single sheet of paper at a time through to the modern rotary presses of today that could make use of the continuous rolls of paper now available. All this led to specialist printers and publishing companies in addition to the newspaper industry.

Despite some atrocious weather all had a very interesting day. A vote of thanks to the speakers was given by Jim Wigmore WETS Vice Chairman.

THE QUESTION IS WHAT CAN WE DELIVER FOR THE 2014 WETS DAY – WATCH THIS SPACE.



DOWN THE TUBE – The Metropolitan Railway (known as the Met) was the first Underground Railway in the world it opened on 10th January 1863. It ran from Paddington to link Euston, Kings Cross and terminated at Farringdon Street. The line was built to accommodate both Standard and Broad Gauge tracks beneath local roads using the "cut-and-cover" method between Paddington and King's Cross and in tunnel and cuttings beside Farringdon Road from King's Cross to Smithfield, near the City.

The Metropolitan Railway was a passenger and goods railway, when the line opened to the public, it was powered by steam locomotives designed to consume their exhaust steam with gas-lit wooden carriages, all supplied by the Great Western Railway (GWR). The miniature sheet of Cuba gives a very good impression of how these first

underground trains would have appeared.

Other railway companies looked to make use of the tunnels for both freight and their own services, this very quickly led to a dispute between the Met and the GWR who gave one weeks notice of their intent to withdraw their locomotives and rolling stock as of the 9th August 1863.

Archibald Sturrock the Chief Locomotive Engineer of the Great Northern Railway (GNR) and an ex-GWR employee stepped into the breach (*the GNR was planning its own underground service to Moorgate and already had some suitable locomotives*) supplying both locomotives and coaches for the service which continued uninterrupted as a result.

The small tank engines supplied by the GNR being so suitable for the task and the design formed the basis of the first locomotives built for the Met.

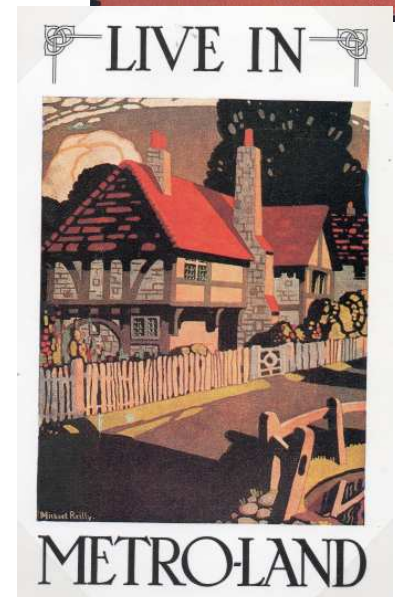
The railway was extended from both ends in conjunction with the District Railway reaching Hammersmith in 1864, Richmond in 1877 and completing the Inner Circle in 1884. It also extended northwards in its own right from Baker Street.



The Northwards extension became the Met's most important route out into the Middlesex countryside, where it stimulated development of new suburbs. Harrow was reached in 1880, the line eventually extended as far as Verney Junction in Buckinghamshire, more than 50 miles from Baker Street and the centre of London. Despite the line to Verney Junction being built the Met never actually ran trains there, it was part of an abortive scheme to link the Met to the Great Central with a view to running through trains via a Channel Tunnel to Paris.

Electric traction was introduced in 1905 and by 1907 electric multiple units operated most of the services, though electrification of outlying sections did not occur until decades later. The Met line to Rickmansworth and beyond was operated using steam locomotives and coaches, steam gave way to Electric Locomotives as far as Rickmansworth with steam beyond into the 1960's.

Unlike other railway companies in the London area, the Met developed land for housing, and after WW1 promoted housing estates near the railway using the "Metroland" brand. John Betjeman provided the commentary for a short feature film



about "Metroland", he also wrote a poem called The Metropolitan Railway which featured the Baker Street Tea Room another Met venture to encourage travel by Met trains.

The introduction of electric power for trains plus the means of deep tunneling led to the introduction of the deep tube lines starting with the South London Line in 1890 using the tunnel built by Brunel under

the Thames, this set the size of trains much smaller than standard size. The Central London Railway, the Piccadilly & West Brompton, along with many others soon followed.

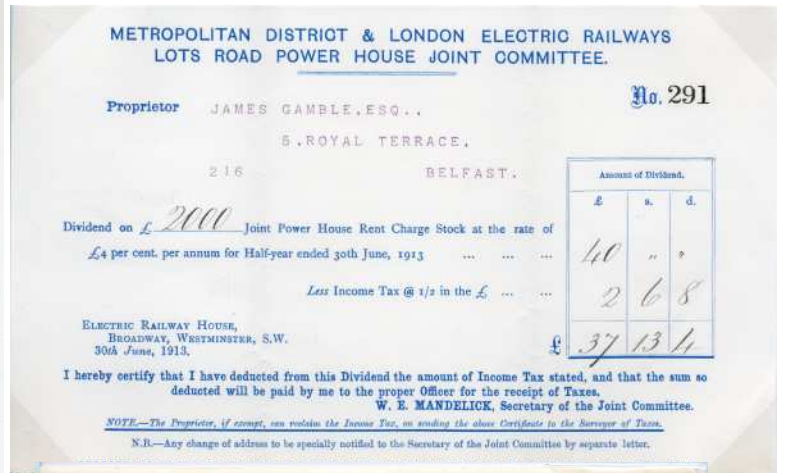
On 1 July 1933, the Metropolitan Railway was amalgamated with the underground railways of the Underground Electric Railways Company of London and the capital's tramway and bus operators to form the London Passenger Transport Board.

All this construction of Underground Railways in and around London made significant improvements to travel for people both living in or outside the Capital.

On the 10th January 2013 the British Post Office issued six stamps featured to commemorate the opening of the Underground and tell its story, shown left.

The question is "DO THEY TELL THE STORY WELL".

There are of course many more items that collectors interested in the Underground can find, such as Railway Letter stamps from all the independent railways that formed the Underground plus London Transport. Share Certificates and Payment Remittances can also be found for the individual railway companies and the Power Generation Plant at Lotts Road.



Today there are other Underground Railways in other cities both in this country and around the world, many like the London Underground are featured on stamps and no doubt on other philatelic material. **IT COULD MAKE A VERY INTERESTING STORY.**

MOURNING - Patriotism, politics, pride and prejudice, even philately came into the for or against arguments as Lady Margaret Thatcher was given a State Funeral earlier this year when many claimed it "came in a time of national austerity". But my main interest was whether there would be GB "mourning" stamps.

I felt sure the Falklands would remember the Iron Lady who sent British forces to the South Atlantic to defeat Argentina in 1982.

At least if Great Britain did follow the Falklands, catalogues would call such stamps "Commemoratives" rather than "mourning" writes Tony Smith. Another Prime Minister, Sir Winston Churchill, was remembered with two stamps, in black, dark brown and grey, following his death in 1965. Those who agreed with the issues said they honoured his steadfast leadership during World War II.

I found nobody who had disputed the five stamp Commemorative set of 1998 for Princess Diana. Black-framed stamps showed three superb portraits then her charity work and royal visits were featured. Her Highness visited many Commonwealth and third world nations before and after her marriage to Prince Charles who also issued stamps following her death after a car accident in 1997.

The black border on GB issues re-appeared in 2002, with four stamps marking the death of Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother. She had stood alongside her husband King George VI during the Second World War then supported her daughter, Queen Elizabeth II, for 50 years. Stamps regularly marked her birthdays, the last for her 100th in 2000.



But "mourning" issues go back to the end of the 19th century and since regarded "special stamps in mourning for heads of states and other important people". For such idea they mainly appear within a year of the person's death. The first is considered in 1888 for Emperor William I of Germany and his son, Frederick, died the following year and both carried portrait images with black borders, hence the "mourning" idea.



The United States government issued its first in September 1923 for President Warren Harding. He had died in office

the same year. His original definitive was in brown but the "memorial" issue was in black.

However, in June 1866, months after President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated, and a "tribute" to his anti-slavery memory appeared what many consider the USA's first such issue.



Looking to Mourning Stamps in philatelic magazines you will probably find Vladimir Lenin looking out at you on Russian stamps and many other communist countries. The original Marxist revolutionary died in 1924 but if you want to see him on stamps around the world his embalmed body is on show in a mausoleum in Moscow's Red Square. The USA issued "mourning" stamps for several Presidents including Woodrow Wilson (1925), Franklin Roosevelt (1945) Dwight D. Eisenhower (1969) and John F. Kennedy (1964). The assassinated President Kennedy was remembered by many other nations, including a 1965 "mourning" issue by Nicaragua

with a grey portrait and black border. Sixty-three years before Princess Diana's death, Queen Astrid of Belgium died in a motor accident. A portrait issue with a black border also carried a charity surcharge.

Mahatma Gandhi, who had fought peacefully to free India from Britain's rule of India, was another man who was assassinated but was later honoured by many post-colonial lands who honour him with stamps. On January 30 1948 he was shot calling for unity between Hindu and Moslem groups. Like the man, he was marked with four simple portrait stamps "Commemorating the First Anniversary of Independence" rather than "mourning". However he was featured on many stamps later. "Mourning" stamps may seem a strange area on which to build a collection but research into the men and women and bring their life to the fore via philately. One can find many tales to be told.

