



West of
England
Thematic
Society

Newsletter No.62 December 2018

Society Officers

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IN THIS ISSUE – When did WETS begin, The Public Launch of WETS, Subsequent Early Meetings, WETS Members Interests, Some Early Members, Some inspirational Speakers, Awards to WETS and its Members, Our News Letters, Dates for Future Meetings, WETS 2018 AGM Minutes.

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, Rattery, Ashburton & Bampton attended the first meeting of WETS on the **9th February 1985** at 21 Geneva Court, Wonford Road, Exeter. The purposes of this discussion group was to exchange information and 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 had been fixed for Saturday **4th May 1985** at 2.00pm at 21 Geneva Court, Wonford Rd, Exeter.

Some known attendee's were Carol Wrightson, Mary & Norman Claydon, Leslie Marley, and other unknown persons at this time.

THE PUBLIC LAUNCH OF (WETS)

Took place on **15th November 1986** at the Masonic Hall Okehampton starting at 1.00 pm This meeting was advertised in the Autumn Edition of the Wessex Bulletin (No 19).

The report of the meeting appeared in the following Wessex Bulletin No.20 as follows :-

“THE WEST OF ENGLAND THEMATIC SOCIETY held an open meeting at Okehampton on November 15th. There was a smaller attendance than had been hoped – less than 20 people. Nevertheless, everyone enjoyed a slide show and talk. The slides were those used by Dr Morolli at his thematic seminar and the talk was interrupted – very ably – by Carol Turner, who also put on her display of a 32 sheet entry in the National Competition in October 1985 for which she gained a diploma. After the Tea Interval Trevor Frey gave a short display of some of his Masonic Material. The Society is now officially launched and we hope that our next meeting will attract many more thematic collectors. We know you exist out there. Speaking personally, I have met you at various club meetings and was assured by many of you that you would be coming to the Okehampton meeting – WHERE WERE YOU? We shall be arranging another meeting this Spring and all those who write to me will receive early notification of the date and place, Mary Claydon, Tiverton Road Bampton EX16 9LJ ..from whom this report comes.”

At this point a number of displays were shown that illustrated the kind of material being produced at both club and federation level at this period.

SUBSEQUENT EARLY MEETINGS

Following the Okehampton meeting the next meeting of WETS was hosted by Oliver Cumming (*Secretary of Wessex Federation*) at his home in Bovey Tracey. This was very much a discussion about the format we wished to adopt for future meetings. Initial thoughts were about moving meetings around with individual members hosting, having a subject for the meeting with discussions based upon what had been submitted, how it could be improved etc. At this time apart from Mary Claydon nobody had anything approaching a true thematic collection. Lesley Marley was at an early stage of her “Tale of Whales” and everyone else was looking for a suitable theme to develop. Thanks to Oliver this was very much an enabling meeting.

The next meeting was hosted by Peter & Alison Burden at their home in Ashburton where everyone brought something to display and following discussions about the displays and how

we wished to proceed and with a theme set for the next meeting we all agreed with support from Peter & Alison to meet once again at this venue with everyone contributing to the food and drink as well as bringing a display on the theme.

There were a couple of meetings for Lunch at a pub on the edge of Buckfastleigh but little was achieved at these meetings and we settled at Alison and Peter Burden's

This was the quarterly format for several years until the attendance at meetings got so large that we started to have twice yearly meetings at venues such as the Dartmoor Lodge (*normally with an invited speaker*), Buckfastleigh Town Hall and Exeter (*the venue used by the then Exeter Club*)

At this point displays were shown of some of the subjects tackled at these meetings and how they evolved as more knowledge was gained. It was interesting to note that progressively structure started to appear and it was possible to see how many of the subjects tackled could be expanded based upon the plan of attack used.

WETS members collecting interests include - 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.

Many of our early meetings with speakers were extended to include displays in the afternoon where the speaker would give a critique on the material shown. This was the way that many of us started to learn about thematics and how to produce our stories in a more professional manner. Some of these critiques were rather brutal especially those by Francesca Rapkin, we were at that time pretty poor (*in my case I had my revenge when I won the Francesca Rapkin Memorial Bowl for the same subject she had rubbished years previously.*)



Additional material was shown that took what had been done previously and brought the whole up to date with some of the items produced more recently.

Many of our WETS members have gone on to produce some excellent stories and displays that have done very well at local, federation and National level. Let's hope we can continue to do so.

Shown left are a few of the members at one of the early meetings – Leslie Hampton, Margaret and David Morrel, Jim Wigmore, Mary Claydon, Vicki Wigmore, Norman Claydon, David Herrity, Leslie Marley, Barry Hampton and Peter Burden.

Seen right is an example of attendance at one of our Speaker Days.



SOME EARLY MEMBERS

Carol Wrightson

Mary & Norman Claydon

David & Margaret Morrel

Lesley Marley

Trevor Frey

David Herrity

Richard Wiggins

John Hillsdon (Shown in the picture left with Leslie Marley, John donated the John Hillsdon Trophy.)

Lesley & Barry Hampton

Pearl Buxton

Jim & Vicki Wigmore

Oliver Cumming (Secretary of Wessex Federation)

Sue Burn

Adele Gunn

Alison & Peter Burden

Edith Rees

Pamela McDowel

Ken Ramsey

Tony Smith

Ron Sambell



The people shown highlighted above are all deceased.

The final display was "Aphrodite's Island" a thematic display that had been produced to introduce Cyprus and its philatelic material as part of a talk. More recently it had been extended and displayed at The Royal Philatelic Society London (RPSL), the Certificate from the RPSL was included in the display.

Examples of some of the Newsletters that had been produced over the years were also shown and it was explained that a full interactive directory by Subject, Title and Author, that had been produced as a part of an offer of having the all WETS Newsletters on a Memory Stick.

The Memory Stick was demonstrated to those present and they were amazed at the extent of the content and its value to Thematic collectors

SOME INSPIRATIONAL SPEAKERS

Francesca Rapkin	– 1938 Olympic Games
Colin Mount	– Pig in the Post
Christine Earle	– The Grey Goose Wing
Sheila Foster	– Roses Roses all the Way
Pat Grimwood-Taylor	- Very Social Philately
Jean Alexander	- Waterfalls of the World
Wendy Buckle	– Paper Printing & Thematic Rarities
Brian Asquith	– Faster than a Bullet, the story of Concorde
Leslie Marley	– A Whales Tale
Brian Sole	– Go by Cycle and On Yer Bike
David Griffiths	– Here be Dragons
John Hayward	- Manic Motorcyclists
Mark Humphrey	- The Story of Vanilla

AWARDS TO WETS and its MEMBERS

Mary Claydon - Rowland Hill Award for Society Work
Leslie Marley – International Gold Medal for “A Tale of Whales”
Richard Wheeler – International Gold Medal for “The Evolution of Puppetry”
David Rosevere – Received an Award in Paris
WETS were given an Award for “The Best Exhibit at Stampex Village Green”
Jim Wigmore – “The Francesca Rapkin Memorial Bowl” for a series of articles about “The Evolution of our Railways”
WETS received a Bronze Medal at Chester 2002 for its “News Letter”

The above was the subject of a presentation and display given to members at WETS Autumn Meeting on Saturday 3rd November at Buckfastleigh Town Hall this was followed by a superb Buffet Lunch. Following lunch an AGM was held see the minutes printed below. Members displayed followed on the subject of “Food & Drink”

OUR NEWS LETTERS

These are a source of significant information about thematics, our Newsletter Editor has produced an interactive Index that can be used in conjunction with the full index of all the news letters we have produced. All this information has been placed on a Memory Stick demonstrated to attendees of the Autumn 2018 meeting.

We will be looking to submit our Memory Stick into a future STAMPEX in the Publications section

You will by now realise **WETS** is a very dynamic organisation, with thematics being a growing aspect of our hobby, long may it continue to do so. We in **WETS** will continue to spread the message that thematics is fun and just like Stamps and Postal History, it really is proper philately.

To see just how dynamic, we have become you just need to look back at copies of our Newsletters. You will shortly be given the opportunity to obtain a copy of our memory stick.

DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Saturday 27th April 2019 at Buckfastleigh Town Hall when the Speaker will be Sue Burn on the subject of “Smthies Bus”, this will be followed by a Buffet Lunch and members displays on the subject of “Be Prepared”

Saturday 19th October 2019 at Buckfastleigh Town Hall, speaker yet to be defined, after lunch displays by members will be on the subject of “Junk Items”

WETS 2018 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held at Buckfastleigh Town Hall Buckfastleigh on Saturday 3rd November 2018

Apologies – Mary Claydon, David Roseveare, Lesley Marley, Ed Elsey, David Phillips.

Minutes of the previous AGM – Written minutes were distributed by mail (with Agenda and Meeting Order Form)

Matters arising – none raised.

Correspondence – Due to communication by Email there was no correspondence.

Chairman's Report – Due to the passing away of the Chairman there was no report.

Secretary's Report – The outgoing Secretary Sally Ellam did not give a report.

Treasurer's Report – The Treasurer reported another good year and distributed the audited accounts. He confirmed a profit of £41.60 and a closing balance of £1,094.58. The subs are to remain unchanged. Gary Green has been included as a signatory for cheques. He asked if the end of year could be moved from April 1st to June 1st because of getting the accounts audited for the AGM, this was approved. The accounts were accepted.

Newsletter Editors Report – The newsletter editor announced that all the newsletters to date will be available on a computer Memory Stick at a cost of £10 inc. postage. He reported that all newsletters with the exception of 1 to 8 are already collated into an interactive searchable listing and that Lesley Marley has 1 to 8 and will be sending them to him in the near future. As soon as these have been included and cross indexed the Memory Stick will be available for purchase and he will advise this to the membership. Also included will be 'The Story of WETS' as part of the next Newsletter.

Election of Offices –

Chairman – Gary Green; proposed Jim Wigmore, seconded Andrew Austen

Vice Chairman – Jim Wigmore; proposed Gary Green, seconded Carol Turner

Secretary – Gary Green; (Temporary)

Treasurer – Andrew Austen; proposed Carol Turner, seconded Sally Ellam

Newsletter Editor – Jim Wigmore; proposed Gary Green, seconded Andrew Austen

Auditor – Mervyn Kereswell; proposed Andrew Austen, seconded Gary Green

AOB – Carol Turner asked if anyone would take over the organization of the WETS Road Show. Jim Wigmore said he would take it over and requested colour copies of the items submitted at this meeting.

The theme for April Meeting is 'Be prepared' and October 'Junk items'.

Next AGM meeting – Saturday 19th October 2019. Meeting closed 11am.