

West of
England
Thematic
Society

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Society Officers

Chairman – Gary Green

Secretary – TBA

Treasurer – Andrew Austen 01271 329762 mail andrewausten68@gmail.com

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

email JamesWigmore@talktalk.net

IN THIS ISSUE – WETS by email, Dates for your Diary, A Note from your Chairman, Our Future, AGMs, ZOOM meetings, Jim Wigmore – A Point of View, Our Memory Stick, WETS website.

WETS NEWS by email – If you are not yet a recipient give your name and email address to the Editor. Increases in postal charges, mean it is important to circulate as much information as possible by this means. Look at our website www.wessexpf.org.uk for examples of the quality. Download time is very fast. **DON'T FORGET TO SAVE WHAT YOU GET.** It is suggested you create a file called WETS News to put them in.

Dates for your Diary – We are looking to have a meeting on October 30th. Watch this space for details.

A Note from your Chairman -"It's been such a long time since we have been able to meet for our usual bi-annual get together and of course we have also missed having our 2020 AGM. I do hope you have all been staying safe in these difficult times due to the corona-virus pandemic and that you have been busy sorting your collections throughout the lock-down, as I have been. We are hoping to arrange some Zoom meetings for the members and whoever else wishes to attend over the coming months and are also hoping to be able to hold a meeting at Buckfastleigh in October which will include our 2021 AGM. In the mean time I hope you will all take care and remember 'Hands, Face and Space'. "

Our Future – Having suffered along with most philatelic societies during the Covid Pandemic we are looking to shake ourselves off and get started again. It is to be hoped that members have been working on their collections, most collectors seem to have been doing this and we all look forward to seeing the results of their endeavours.

We have been looking with a great deal of interest at what has been happening around philately in general. Many clubs have simply become moribund waiting for normality to resume. However some clubs and societies have taken some very bold steps and managed to hold meetings using ZOOM. One of our Wessex Federation Clubs, Dawlish has been very successful in this and managed to generate some very large attendances to its meetings. We have noted a number of WETS members attending along with people from as far away as America. This has been due to some very imaginative presentations many of which have used elements of thematics to tell the story. Give the degree of difficulty of having WETS meetings and the amount of travel involved for many of our members plus that of obtaining speakers who are prepared to make the journey to our meetings, we have decided to introduce more regular meetings using ZOOM and just have a single large meeting at a suitable venue that would include our AGM.

The variety of displays that will be given at these small ZOOM meetings will provide a lot of material for our newsletter and we hope may well attract more members to WETS. With this in mind we will allow attendance to our ZOOM meetings to all. People will need to become members to obtain copies of our newsletters and to be able to attend other WETS events plus the AGM.

AGMs – As our Chairman has already pointed out we have been unable to hold AGMs, your committee has been in discussion and one of its decisions was to give all current members a year's free subscription for 2021.

ZOOM meetings – The proposed structure of our ZOOM meetings will be 40 minutes per session, consisting of two presentations of 15 mins with a 5-minute period for questions after each presentation. If we start to get very large attendances, we may need to book double sessions. Anyone can attend providing they have requested a link to join the meeting.

To join a meeting, you will need to have internet access, most Laptop computers have built in cameras and will work without any additions. Desktop computers may need to be fitted with a camera (very cheap and simple to fit) some people choose to attend the meetings without a camera fitted, they can see and hear what is shown but cannot otherwise take part.

The only addition required is the ZOOM client software which is offered FREE when you use the meeting link. This software is simple and quick to instal, once you have done so, you will be amazed at the clarity of the displays.

Some Displays already able to be shown are as follows:-

British Owls

Legacy of the 20th Century

Early Steam Locomotives.

Mail & Rail

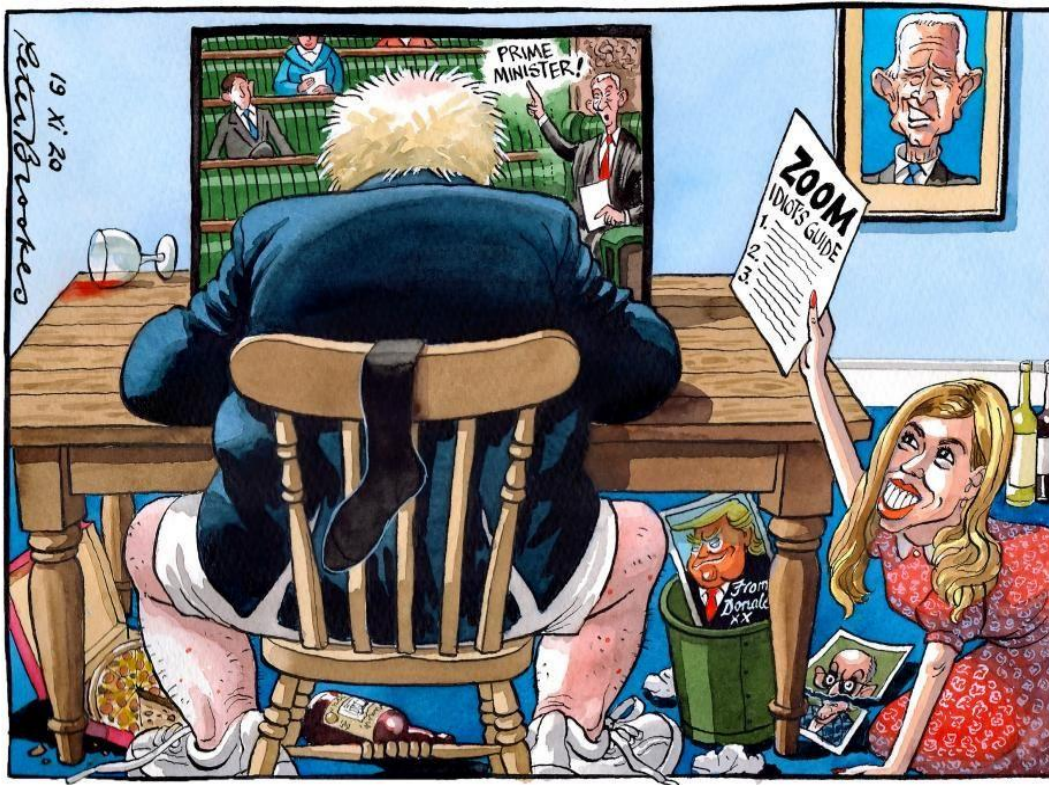
Please let us know of any displays you can add.

Help can be given to prepare your displays

Please let Jim Wigmore know (email address jameswigmore@talktalk.net) if you would be prepared to take part in our ZOOM meetings and to receive the link to enable you to attend.

First ZOOM meeting will be 7.00 pm 11th May 2021

Content will be – British Owls and Another Display



HELP WILL BE PROVIDED TO GET YOU GOING IF NEEDED

The following is a copy of a response that will appear in ABPS News and is highly relevant to the current situation.

Jim Wigmore – A Point of View - As President of Wessex Philatelic Federation, I read the letter by Dave Cleaver (*in a recent ABPS News*) with a degree of interest. I consider the current period as one of opportunity, our clubs in many cases have become moribund and have just stood still waiting for the lockdown to finish and then continue where they left off.

A few clubs have seen the present period as one where it is time to review how they function and look at ways in which they can still function during lockdown and at the same time try to become more appealing to the public at large in their area of operating.

We have seen an upsurge of meetings using ZOOM and some interesting displays as a result. Some of these displays have been saved complete with the dialog so they could be offered to other clubs in the future.

These ZOOM meetings have significantly altered the manner in which philatelic displays are constructed and delivered. It has been realised that displays need to be constructed in a different format, often using such tools as PowerPoint and bring in other material as well as philatelic material to tell the story. Without realising it many are using themes and thematics to tell our story. Our stories in this format could well interest the public at large and the use of technology may well bring in some of the younger members of society.

Dawlish Stamp Club (DSC) are one of the clubs in Wessex Federation that have started down this road with a degree of success. We advertise our meetings through a helpful local press, through personal contact and our local Federation. The numbers of people logging in to our ZOOM meetings are slowly rising, with attendees from around our local federation clubs and in some cases quite long distances away.

We have guest speakers from outside the club and we restrict presentation to around 20-25 mins/presentation followed by a discussion period. It has been hard work getting some of our own members online to our ZOOM meetings, but once they have attended, they are hooked. Typical comments have been "*The displays are so clear, much better than using display frames*".

We have already been asked by our local Rotary Club to give one of our displays at one of their ZOOM meetings.

When we return to normality, we will not be going back to using display frames. Displays will be put together as per our ZOOM meetings on a computer and passed through a projector onto a large screen. We had started to do this prior to lockdown, we have now learnt so much we are confident we can do some really splendid displays for our membership in the future, we may even continue our ZOOM meetings once a month as well as our room meetings.

DSC through a bit of imagination and drive has transformed itself and is attracting interest locally. We have used the current period of lockdown to become technically aware and adept reaching out into our local community with some very interesting stories that are starting to gain interest.

It is equally important to write imaginative and creative reports for the local press if you want to gain their support, keep reports to about 200 words max, they can always find space for such reports.

Don't forget to send similar reports to ABPS News other clubs may well be interested in what you achieve.

DSC also has its own website and it puts its presentations on its website to show what is being done and shows what will be shown at the next ZOOM meeting.

I would like to see other clubs in our Federation doing something similar and we wish success to the other clubs around the country who have used this period to do similar things, because this is where the future of philately lies, so grasp the future with both hands and good luck to you all.

Those in our hobby who are technically aware have a difficult task ahead in teaching some of our members who are stuck in the past the benefits of using technology and the joy this can bring. You may be pleasantly surprised how many will join in once they are shown and assisted into the use of technology to write up their collections and display what they enjoy.

OUR MEMORY STICK – Contains every News Letter we have produced and has a complete index that can be searched by Article, Subject or Author. To obtain a FREE copy send a Memory Stick to Jim Wigmore address above ensure you package it securely and provide a return address and a Large Letter stamp for the return postage.

WETS WEBSITE – We are currently looking to create our own website that we have total control over rather than the limitations of the Wessex website and reliance of passing information to the Wessex webmaster. The link to Wessex will be maintained. This way we can show more of what we are about.