

ABERDEEN PHILATELIC SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER: January 2007

Sitting down to type just after Christmas and with 2007 imminent, it occurs to me that we are now only three years short of our **centennial celebrations**. In that context, I can report that two new suggestions have been floated to commemorate our centennial year. Firstly, the Society might consider offering to give a display to the Royal Philatelic Society London at its rooms in 41 Devonshire Place. The Royal is the oldest philatelic society in the UK and at the end of last year mounted a centenary exhibition to commemorate the granting of the prefix "Royal". The Caledonian PS gave a centenary display to the RPSL last year, so there are precedents to the suggestion which would help to maintain the profile of philately in Scotland.

The second suggestion is a little more mind-blowing and was put to your Editor quite out of the blue at the October delegates' meeting of the Association of Scottish Philatelic Societies in Perth. Would the Aberdeen PS like to host the Philatelic Congress of GB in 2010? This is a residential event in which the programme is largely predetermined, consisting of several invited talks or "papers", the ceremony of the signing of the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists and a formal dinner. It would, of course, be singularly appropriate if that ceremony was to be held in Aberdeen in our centenary year, in so far as one of our founder members, P.J. Anderson, was the first of the thirty-eight signatories to sign the newly instituted roll in 1921, the first signatory, that is, after King George V. So far, there is absolutely no commitment on the part of Aberdeen PS. I undertook to do no more than to report the suggestion and I do so through the Newsletter to ensure as wide circulation as possible. I presume that the Committee will come to a decision on behalf of the Society and would be aided by the views of the wider membership. Even if the suggestion is approved by our Society, it is far from certain that it will happen. It would probably be the basis for a proposal to be submitted to ABPS through ASPSP.

Not unrelated to that tentative suggestion, is the outstanding question of what form any local celebration of our centennial might take. It would be a shame if we do not have a public exhibition in Aberdeen, as well as at Congress, but volunteers are still needed to seek out and cost a venue with appropriate secure display facilities, as well as organising any social events which might be held at that time. A public exhibition in an Aberdeen gallery might, perhaps, be timed to coincide with the Philatelic Congress, if it were to come to Aberdeen.

Looking even further forward, I can report that ASPSP has offered to host the **National Exhibition** at its **2009** Congress in Perth. This is the exhibition which lost its regular venue at Autumn STAMPEX and has become somewhat footloose, albeit attached every second year to the biennial ABPS exhibition (remember GLASGOW 2000?). The Association has also offered to host the 2012 ABPS biennial exhibition. If this offer is accepted, it is likely to be held in Perth.

Looking much less further forward, the **2007 ASPSP annual Congress** will take place at the Dewars Centre, Perth, on 20th and 21st April. On Friday 20th, the exhibits will be on display in the afternoon and the Tom Rielly Memorial display and talk will be delivered by Roy Erskine, who is particularly interested in social philately and will be presenting a display about Wilsons of Bannockburn, the tartan manufacturer. After the talk, there will be a reception hosted by the Provost of Perth, Bob Scott, who has taken a particular interest in our annual Congress, followed by the annual dinner and awards ceremony (watch this space just in case there is anyone from Aberdeen among the awards) when the guest speaker will be the historian, Professor Christopher Watley of the University of Dundee, an authority on the Treaty of Union of 1707 which is the theme of the commemorative cover and cancellation. The trade will be present throughout Saturday 21st. Congress this year is hosted by the Perth PS which, in advance of Congress, has published a hard-bound lavishly illustrated 96-page book entitled "The Postal History of Perth 1900-2000" by Norman Watson.

A large proportion of the displays at Congress will be those of the members of the host society, but there will also be the competitive entries in the National Exhibition and I am hopeful that there will be one or two entries from Aberdeen. A one-frame open competition will be on display, as it was for the first time last year. Entry forms for both the National and the open competitions must be submitted by 1st February so there is still time to enter. The closing dates for the receipt of entries are much later.

Special rates have been negotiated with the Ramada Jarvis Hotel in Perth for Congress. See the Newsletter Editor if interested.

The new book on the postal history of Perth was published in time for SCOTEX, the annual trade fair, which removed from the SECC in Glasgow to Perth last October. There was some concern expressed prior to the event that it would not be as successful as it was in its previous location but the change seems to have been generally well received, although its future as a two-day event may not be entirely assured. The estimated attendance on the first day was 1000, much the same as in Glasgow in recent years. The extra space available in Perth made it a much more comfortable venue than the cramped conditions of the event in the SECC.

On 21st October last, the inaugural meeting of **The Scottish Philatelists' Club** was held in Perth, after the conclusion of the first day of SCOTEX. The Club was formed for purely social reasons and the first meeting consisted of a dinner at the Dewars Centre, attended by some seventy members and spouses (or should I say partners?). I expect the event will be repeated next year, judging by the great good humour of the inauguration.

The Society's **web site** is now up and running. If you have access to the internet, do visit it at www.aberdeenphilatelic.org.uk. In case you haven't heard, the Society's very successful **postal auction** is about to come under new management. The current Auction Secretary, having done a great job over the last few years is about to hand over to one of our lady members who anticipates that the next auction will be held in March, so that she will be looking for material by the end of January. In the meantime, email enquiries to auc@aberdeenphilatelic.org.uk. We are grateful to her for taking on this important facility for the membership.

On 14 December, members attending the meeting of the Society stood in silence, in memory of Mr J J Waterman, Past-President and Fellow, who passed away on the previous day.

When George Milne, the last surviving founder member of our Society died in 1957, he still filled the post of Curator of the Forgery Collection. He was appointed to a post entitled **Expert and Forgery Curator** in 1915 and in that capacity, he did more than maintain the forgery collection. Members were invited to submit stamps to him for examination and "his opinion will be given as to the genuineness or otherwise of the specimens submitted". In the early 1920s, he was expertising some forty stamps each year. Does any member possess any written statements of opinion or any certificates signed by George Milne? The Society archive would be greatly enhanced by an original certificate or even a copy.

The eleventh **Residential Philatelic Weekend** will be held in the Queen's Hotel, Dundee, on 26-28 October 2007, with a package deal negotiated with the hotel. Further details from the Secretary to the Organising Committee, Ken Norris, Tel: 01698 425120.

We sometimes worry about the imminent demise of philately, because of the difficulty of attracting young people to the hobby in the face of counter attractions such as computer games. Nothing new about that, it seems. In 1925, the Society decided that it was not worth the effort of encouraging Junior collectors meantime, in view of the attractions of wireless.

It is sometimes said that we don't really own our stamp collections. We are merely temporary custodians of our treasures until they are eventually passed on to other custodians and we therefore have a duty to conserve them for posterity. Regardless of such philanthropic considerations, it makes good economic sense to ensure that stamps and covers do not deteriorate whilst in our possession. The Curator of the Philatelic Collections at the British Library, David Beech, recently compiled an excellent concise 4-page paper on the various aspects of conservation in philately including environment, light, paper, gum, plastics, physical issues and treatments. His paper has appeared in the philatelic press but in case you haven't seen it and feel in need of advice, it was reprinted in ABPS News 13, 1, Feb 2006, which the Society receives.

The Society welcomes a new member from the Aberdeen area who collects KGVI empire stamps. We wish him a long and enjoyable association with the Society.

The Treasurer asks those members who have yet to pay their subscriptions, and in some cases for last session as well, to do so as soon as possible.