

ABERDEEN PHILATELIC SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER January 2019

Forthcoming meetings: As usual we begin the year with the annual alphabet night on 17th January, with everyone invited to participate if they wish. This year it is letter 'H', so we can surely expect to see some Hong Kong, Honduras or Hungary, but who can produce some Heligoland, Holstein or Herm and if not 'H' by country then perhaps by subject such as hotel stamps, hand-struck, Hill (Rowland), hair line or even a hinge? Anything from one to ten sheets is welcome and nothing is ever rejected, however obscure the connection with the letter H, indeed the more obscure the connection, the better.

The Society Postal Auction (number 33) will be held on Friday March 15th 2019.

The host society at the Association of Scottish Philatelic Societies' annual **Congress at the Dewars Centre in Perth** on 12th and 13th April 2019 will be the Largs and District Stamp Club who will provide the Host Society display which always include a great variety of collecting interests, often presented in novel ways. There will be an additional attraction this year in that the competitive frames will be much extended. The twice yearly ABPS UK-wide national exhibition which has been held in York in recent years (as well as at STAMPEX in London) will come to Scotland this year and will be a part of our annual Congress. This will be the first time a full national exhibition has been held in Scotland since 2012 and is expected to fill at least 120 frames with entries from all over the UK. However, our own Scottish ASPS national exhibition will also go ahead as usual, so that two competitive exhibitions will be on display at two different levels. Furthermore, exhibitors may have their exhibit entered into both the ABPS national exhibition and the ASPS exhibition. Now is the time to start thinking about an entry into one or other (or both) competitions.

The entry form for our regular ASPS exhibition is on the ASPS website, available for downloading and if you have not exhibited previously, then this is probably the competition to go for. First time entries are free and a one-frame (16 page) entry is welcome as a starter but equally, an entry of 32, 48, 64 or 80 sheets will match the frame sizes. The number of frames which can be taken up by entrants into the ASPS exhibition has recently been increased from four to five, making it a better match with the ABPS exhibition which entrants may anticipate as normal progression. The Rules and Advice to Exhibitors is also on the ASPS website at www.scottishphilately.co.uk and is helpful reading, particularly for first time entrants. The various classes are Traditional non-GB pre-1900, Traditional non-GB post 1900, Traditional GB, Aerophilately, Thematic, Social Philately, Postal History, Scottish Postal History, Literature, Cinderella and Postcards. The classes in the ABPS exhibition are much the same but also include an Ephemera class which can result in some very novel subjects, e.g. an entry of toilet paper entitled 'Getting to the Bottom of Things'! Other ephemera exhibits have included Valentine Cards, Book Tokens and Playing Cards. The ABPS exhibition also includes an Open Class which allows the exhibitor to include a wide range of non-philatelic material although philatelic material must amount to at least 50% of the exhibit. The social class in the ASPS exhibition is very similar and was an earlier form of the open class. Another novel feature of the ABPS exhibition is that it is now open to non-competitive entries which can be wholly philatelic or made up of non-traditional material.

The deadline for the receipt of entry forms for the ASPS exhibition is 4th March and exhibits must be in the hands of the competition secretary by 18th March, as judging will take place on 24th March. Entry into the ABPS exhibition is by completing the application form on the ABPS website by 28th February and judging will take place in the frames at Congress. The fee for entry into the ASPS competition will be waived for exhibits entered into both competitions. Entry forms for the ASPS annual open competition, a one-frame competition judged by visitors to Congress without any rules as to content, and not to be confused with the more formal ABPS open class, is also available on the ASPS website.

Acquisition by the Library: *The Serrane Guide – Stamp Forgeries of the World* by Fernand Serrane, p390. This massive volume was originally published in 1927, in French. It was translated into English and republished in 1998 by the American Philatelic Society with an introduction by Varro E Tyler who reviews the philatelic literature on forgeries. This was the last of the comprehensive reference works on forgeries after Earée's *Album Weeds* but it is much better, incorporating later forgeries and with more illustrations. Borrow the volume from the library and check it out for the forgeries of your favourite country.

Forthcoming Fairs for your diary. *16 February, 2019* (Saturday) 10am-3pm, Montrose stamp and postcard fair, Hillside Village Hall, Dubton Road, Hillside DD10 9HB. Again we will have coin specialists and a charity tea and coffee area. *9 March, 2019* (Saturday), the Grampian Postcard Club Fair, 10am-4pm, Garioch Heritage Centre, Loco Works Road (off Harlow Road), Inverurie AB51 4FY. I am organising this fair again with Grampian Postcard Club, at a fine new venue with excellent cafe. The lower gallery will be full of dealer tables. The fair will coincide with Inverurie market day. *27 April, 2019* (Saturday) Grampian Stamp and Postcard Fair, 10.30am-3.30pm, Aberdeen, Queen's Cross Parish Church Halls, Albyn Place AB10 1YN. The inexpensive but professional cafe is an excellent addition to this event. Incidentally, have you looked at Chad Neighbor's blog? It can be found by googling Chad Neighbor Philately.

Have I Got Some Old News for You? The curious story of the way in which one of the greatest rarities of Finnish philately came to light was recently told. In 1928, a man took what he thought were a dozen worthless old envelopes into a numismatic shop in Helsinki run by a coin dealer by the name of Mattson who offered him 600 marks for them. The deal was agreed but Mattson soon decided not to go through with the deal. These items were not his field of expertise and he did not know if he would be able to make a profit on them. However, he did say to the vendor that he would offer them to a more knowledgeable friend, a stamp dealer by the name of Axel Trap-Holm who noticed that there was one exceedingly rare item among them, a 20 kopek black postal stationery envelop of 1850. He decided that he could not afford to buy it at anything like its probable market value but he offered it to Agathon Fabergé who had recently arrived in Helsinki from Russia. Fabergé was aware of its rarity and agreed a purchase price of 50,000 marks. Trap-Holm took this great sum of money to the vendor who calmly handed Trap-Holm 500 marks for his trouble, with nothing for Mattson. Both of the dealers could have made an enormous profit by exploiting the vendor's ignorance of the market, but by acting more honestly were rewarded with little or nothing. As a footnote to the story, the item in question came on to the market two years ago, when it sold for 50,000 euros plus 25% commission. It is one of only two known examples. The other is in the Finnish postal museum so it is the only example in private hands.

Do you have a favourite story about the provenance of some oddity, speciality or rarity in your collecting area? If so, let me have it for the next newsletter, please.



Any member who does not have access to email and would like to receive newsletters through the post or collected at a Society meeting, please advise the Secretary.