

Company Number: 3326534

Association of British Philatelic Societies

Annual General Meeting
Friday 28th July 2017 at 12.15
Jury's Inn Cardiff

Present: Chairman: John Baron

Directors: John Davies, Nigel Gooch, Neil Ritchie

Representatives from 74 Affiliated Societies as listed in Appendix A.

- 1) The Chairman welcomed the member representatives to the AGM
- 2) Apologies for Absence: Alan Godfrey, Bill Hedley, Birthe King, Christopher King.
- 3) Minutes of the 2016 AGM were noted and accepted – available on the website www.abps.org.uk/Home/AGM/
- 4) Matters Arising - None
- 5) Adoption of the Accounts for 2016 - The accounts were adopted having been signed off by the Directors at the Executive meeting of 8th February 2017 and submitted to Companies House; proposed West London (Chris Oliver), seconded Cambridge (Rufus Barnes) – nem con. Available on the website www.abps.org.uk/Home/Accounts/
- 6) Executive Chairman's Report on 2016 presented by the Chairman, John Baron – see Appendix B. The report was received with applause.
- 7) Awards: Yvonne Wheatley presented her report – see Appendix C1. In particular she noted the death of the Awards Committee long-serving member John West CBE RDP and the appointment of John Baron as replacement.
- 8) Resignation of Directors: Chris King RDP and John Baron resigned as Directors. Graham Winters, Rufus Barnes, Bill Hedley and Barry Stagg were appointed as Directors of ABPS
Chris King resigned as Director of ABPS Exhibitions. Bill Hedley was appointed as a Director of ABPS Exhibitions.
Stephen Harrison was appointed as a Director of Philatelic Congress of Great Britain Ltd. Directors proposed by Iran PSC (Nigel Gooch),
Seconded by Rhodesia SC (Colin Hoffmann)
Graham Winters was Appointed as Chairman of ABPS
Proposed by Newport (John Perry); Seconded by Cambridge (Rufus Barnes – At this point Graham Winters assumed the Chair.
- 9) Report from General Secretary was received - see Appendix C2. Neil stressed the new Website facility for affiliated societies which is at present being developed and the National Speakers list for which he requires more speakers with their themes. He suggested that non-affiliates could be offered the chance of affiliation rather than paying expenses if speakers were so minded.

- 10) Membership report was received from Barry Stagg- see Appendix C3. He pointed out the steady decline in membership of both local and specialist societies. Burma(Myanmar)PSC (Rufus Barnes) pointed out that Specialist Societies have many overseas members who are not counted in the ABPS affiliation statistics and that perhaps a change to the format of the membership form to reflect this might be appropriate. Barry agreed to consider this.
- 11) Company Secretary and Treasurer's Report: The financial situation continued precarious as the year had been one of breaking even rather than making progress. To continue with an affiliation fee of £1.25 per member would not allow for any growth and some increase and/or new sources of income would need to be considered. Falkirk & District PS (Alan Watson) asked about the ABPS financial support for London 2020. Nigel responded that without that support from the National Body London 2020 could not go ahead and that this had been factored in. Without more finance further events eg London 2025 could not be tenable.
- 12) Chair of International Affairs Report – is available in Bulletin 3/17
- 13) Congress : 2018 will now be held at Jury's Inn, Gateshead from 26th to 29th July as the previous arrangements at Redworth Hall Hotel, near Durham and other hotels in the area had proved impossibly difficult. Questions were asked re contact with local societies and/or Association. It was stressed that earlier contact is essential if local collectors are to be involved in organising, supporting or involvement with Congress.
 - 2019 Congress will be held at Stockholmia
 - 2020 Linking Congress to London 2020 is being actively investigated though it will alter the format in some ways
 - 2021 The Centenary of the RDP so Congress will return to Harrogate
- 14) Date of next AGM 27th July 2018 Jurys Inn, Gateshead Quays

The Chairman closed the meeting.

Appendices

A: Member Societies and Federations represented at the meeting

Alba Stamp Group	Hinckley & District Philatelic Society
Australian Philately (British S of)	Hull and District Philatelic Society
Ayrshire Philatelic Society	Indian Ocean Study Circle
Banbury Philatelic Society	Iran Philatelic Study Circle
Barry Philatelic & Postcard Society	King George VI Collectors' Society
Bearsden & District PS	Kingston Upon Thames & Dist. PS
Belgian Philatelic Study Circle	Lanarkshire Philatelic Society
Bradford & District Philatelic Society	Leeds Philatelic Society
British Thematic Association	New Zealand Society of GB
British West Indies Study Circle	Newcastle Upon Tyne PS
Burma (Myanmar) P Study Circle	Newport & Gwent Philatelic Society
Caledonian Philatelic Society	Old Eastwood Stamp Club
Cambridge Philatelic Society	Pacific Islands Study Circle
Canadian Philatelic Society of GB	Polar Postal History Society of GB
Ceylon Study Circle of Great Britain	Portuguese Philatelic Society
Channel Islands Specialists Society	Postal Historians (Society of)
Cheltenham Philatelic Society	Postal Order Society
Cinderella Stamp Club	Rhodesian Study Circle
Croydon Philatelic Society	Royal Philatelic Society of London
Cyprus Study Circle	Royal Sutton Coldfield PS
Czechoslovak PS of Great Britain	Royal Tunbridge Wells PS
East Africa Study Circle	Sarawak Specialists' Society
Edinburgh Philatelic Society	Scandinavia Philatelic Society
Egypt Study Circle	Scottish Philatelic Society
Falkirk & District Philatelic Society	Scottish Postal History Society
Falkland Islands Philatelic SG	Sheffield Philatelic Society
Faroe Islands Study Circle	Solihull Philatelic Society
Ferndown & West Moors PS	South African Collectors' Society
Forces Postal History Society	Strathclyde Postcard Club
GB Overprints Society	Sudan Study Group
Germany & Colonies PS	Thatcham & District PS
Gibraltar Study Circle	Wakefield Philatelic Society
Glasgow Philatelic Society	Wallington & Carshalton SC
Glasgow Thematic Society	Welsh Postal History Society
Great Britain Philatelic Society	West Africa Study Circle
Harrogate Philatelic Society	West London Philatelic Society
Haverfordwest Stamp & P/c Club	
Hellenic PS of GB	

B: CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO 30TH JUNE 2017

In this final report for the AGM as chairman I realise that I am going to miss some of the responsibilities that I have undertaken. After 8 years in office I is time for a new approach to our wonderful hobby and I am pleased that Graham has agreed to assume the role of chairman. He will be assisted in other key appointments in Rufus Barnes as vice Chairman, Neil Ritchie as secretary and Barry Stagg as membership. These are three key roles and I am confident that they will assist in new directions where necessary. Rufus and Neil have written their thoughts and these are included in the AGM report booklet. Rufus will undertake a review of the relationships between the Federation and ABPS Executive and will require support in his challenges. Please give these individuals and all the Executive your full support.

During my eight years 5 individuals have remained on the Executive and I am grateful to Nigel Gooch as treasurer, John Davies PR and Youth, Gerald for his work on Congress, Alan Godfrey on membership and recently on Communication, and Dane Garrod for his commitment to the specialist societies. Chris King has been a key member during my term of office and he takes up a new role shortly and I thank him for his contribution.

I have received tremendous support from Societies, Federations, and individual members and I look forward to meeting all of them at events and being "off duty".

Two weeks ago, I attended my last external event when I was amongst a number of guests invited to see the new Postal Museum and to travel on the Mail Rail train visiting the stations where the mail was collected. A unique experience and I can only recommend it to all philatelists as a good day out. The research facility is on the first floor and will be an asset to those who are looking to add knowledge to their collection

It is important to me that two non-philatelists have made the emotional journey to Cardiff to be present when I received the congress medal. Thank you, Lynda and Brenda, for coming for this weekend. Your respective husbands have had a considerable influence on my journey with ABPS.

My grateful thanks to all who have made my life in the Chair such a wonderful experience, to those who attend Congress, and I look forward to Newcastle next year.

To one and all thank you.

John Baron

C:

1) Awards:- Yvonne Wheatley

The Awards Committee is sad to record the passing of one of its long serving members, Professor John West CBE, RDP. The vacancy has been filled by John Baron.

The other Committee Members are Nigel Gooch, John Jackson, Pat Rothnie, MBE, Brian Sole and Frank Soutar.

The Committee spent some time considering the Guidelines for the awards which were in need of clarification in some respects and secondly it was felt that the requirement for nominees to demonstrate outstanding voluntary service at local, regional and specialist level would prevent some people being put forward although they had given outstanding service in one or two of the disciplines. The high standard required to achieve an award was not reduced by the amendments

With the revised Guidelines in place it was hoped this would encourage more applications. In the event there was one nomination for the Award of Merit. An exception was made to consider a nomination for a collector who had passed away during the year and the late Dennis Firth received the Award.

The Committee was depleted by one member when it came to consider the award of the Congress Medal for 2017 and it was the absent member, John Baron who is the worthy winner this year.

The Awards Committee has taken over the responsibility of selecting suitable applicants which the ABPS can put forward for a FEPA Medal for exceptional service to organised philately or exceptional philatelic study and research and for a Certificate for exceptional service for outstanding activities for the promotion of philately. Unfortunately our candidate was not successful this time. The Committee will be happy to receive suggestions from societies and federations of people and societies suitable for selection.

The Small Grants Committee, consisting of Christine Earle, Alan Moorcroft and Richard West had one application to consider which resulted in a grant being made.

As Chairman of both Committees I would like to thank the Committee members for their dedication to their duties.

2) General Secretary's Report for the AGM 2017

Since the last AGM the following items have been discussed and considered by the ABPS Committee and where appropriate decisions have been made and initiatives commenced.

1 ABPS Committee changes – A number of changes have occurred in the membership of the Committee, we have said goodbye to a couple of long serving members who have stood down after giving outstanding service to the hobby, these are Christopher Oliver and John Walden. New members include Graham Winters who will be taking over from John Baron as the Chair of the ABPS, Rufus Barnes Vice Chair, Barry Stagg Membership Secretary and George Henshilwood as Database Manager. I welcome all the new members and hope that they enjoy their tenure and I am certain will make a large contribution in the promotion of Philately.

2 Roles and Responsibilities of the ABPS Committee – with the introduction of new members to the Committee a review of the Roles and

Responsibilities was undertaken whilst some members changed roles and others took on new responsibilities.

3 ABPS Website - The ongoing changes required to the ABPS website are proceeding with a review on what and how the website operates content is being developed to be incorporated in the new website. This has its challenges and is taking longer than first envisaged but this should be complete in the coming year.

4 ABPS Membership - An up to date membership position will be presented at the AGM as the late payment of subscriptions by some Societies continues to distort the figures.

5 GB Congress – the sub-committee responsible for the organising of the Congress has been meeting regularly and working hard on securing venues and arranging Congress content.

6 ABPS News - 4 issues have been issued, with an increased number of pages when necessary at no significant extra cost. More societies have sent in reports and anniversary articles. Around 40 societies now provide regular or occasional reports per issue.

7 The Future of Organised Philately - Our new Chair has taken on the task of reviewing the way in which the ABPS is organised and how it achieves aims and objectives. He will be reporting on this in the coming year. This year's GB Congress will also be including a seminar on the Future of the ABPS and I hope many people come along and join in the debate.

8 Philatelic Training – This is an ongoing and fundamental tenet of the ABPS, seminars are being organised and cost effective methods of providing training are under consideration and review. There is always a need for more input from the membership and anyone willing to help in this venture would be welcome.

9 Stamps in the Attic – this initiative instigated by the ABPS was trialled at the Spring Stampex by the Philatelic Traders Society (PTS). This resulted in members of the public bringing to the show collections they wished to dispose of. The format followed the style of the Antiques Roadshow. This could be copied at Federation events and Local stamp fairs - contact the General Secretary for more details.

10 Revision of the Terms and Conditions and a Privacy Policy – the existing ABPS Terms and Conditions required updating and this process is continuing. A Privacy Policy has not been in place and this has been written in order to assure the membership on how the data held by the ABPS will be used.

11 Free Website for affiliated Societies – the ABPS Committee is proposing to provide all affiliated Philatelic Societies, who ask for one, with a free website. This is currently being trialled for rolling out in the Autumn.

12 National Speaker List – this is being revamped, brought up to date and will be available as an Internet based knowledge resource that can be used by syllabus secretaries to discover good speakers who live locally or

nationally. The National list does not mean that all the speakers are willing to travel nationally, some do, but most restrict themselves to particular geographical areas. This will be especially useful for Societies that are located on the borders of Federations as they will be able to access speakers from surrounding areas and not just within their local Federation. You don't have to be a member of an affiliated Society to be on the National Speaker List so encourage as many people as possible to join.

13 Federations and Local Societies – our Vice Chair, Rufus Barnes, a passionate believer in local Societies and Federations is attempting to visit as many Federations and Local Societies as he can in order to spread the word on what the ABPS can do and wants to do with your support. If he cannot visit then ask any member of the Committee if they would like to attend a meeting or present a display and of course spread the word. Please read his attached commentary. (Appendix D)

14 National and International affairs – turbulent times in the International Philatelic scene but closer to home the organising of Stampex and other national events continues unabated along with competitions and seminars to produce good quality Federation Judges and Speakers.

15 Youth Philately – Stamp Active is alive and well but it is looking for an enthusiastic individual willing to promote and drive forward this very important aspect of Philately. If you think you have the skills or know someone who has the drive to make a contribution please contact John Davies.

16 Awards and Small Grants Committee – Yvonne Wheatley and her committee are seeking nominations from Societies who wish to honour persons for outstanding service to the wider Philatelic Community. They also consider applications for small grants that fund projects that work towards promoting the hobby. Guidelines can be downloaded from the ABPS website to see if a person or project qualifies.

17 Exhibition Frames – this has been at the fore of the exhibition team to replace the elderly display frames with lighter, easier to handle and secure frames. A design has been agreed and funding applied for. If you or someone you know would like to be involved in the ABPS Committee please contact the General Secretary and discuss how you could become a part of the team.

If you have any comments or suggestions about any of the subjects mentioned above please contact me.

Neil Ritchie

General Secretary ABPS

secretary@abps.org.uk June 2017

3) Membership:- Barry Stagg

At the time of writing a total of 176 Local Societies have affiliated to the ABPS this year with a further 10 still to do so. This compares to 193 Local Societies that affiliated last year. Most

Societies that left the ABPS have done so because they have closed or cannot find enough people to run the club.

The trend is clearly to a shrinking membership as we are getting older and fewer people are coming into the hobby. Worryingly, 13 Local Societies have less than 10 members. This does not bode well for the future of many Local Societies.

A total of 60 Specialist Societies have affiliated to the ABPS this year with a further five still to do so. This compares to 64 Societies that affiliated in 2016. Although the number of Specialist Societies remains stable the UK membership of these Societies has fallen by nearly 1000 members in five years.

On a personal note may I ask all Secretaries to ensure that the ABPS has their correct email and mail address. A significant number of emails are 'returned' after every mailing suggesting our records are inaccurate.

Class	2016 No of Societies Affiliated	2017 No of Societies Affiliated	2016 Number of individuals	2017 Number of individuals	2017 Number still to affiliate this year (individuals in brackets).
Friends			49	37	17 (17)
Patrons			8	7	1 (1)
Specialist Societies	64	55	7446	6226	10 (1096)
Local Societies	191	172	6045	5650	16 (357)
National Societies	2	1	1348	908	1 (440)
Total	257	228	14 896	12 828	45 (911)

In summary, there are 45 Friends/Patrons or Societies still to affiliate (see last column); however, 228 Societies and 44 Friends/Patrons have already affiliated. This represents a total of 12,828 individuals (column 4).

If we add those individuals who have affiliated to those who have yet to do so we get 14,739. This figure compares well to last year's total of 14,896 (about a 1% reduction). Last year had 257 societies (column 1) and this year we have 228 already affiliated (column 2) with 27 still to go (giving a possible total of 255 societies).

Caution. The remaining 27 societies still to affiliate may not do so (with a corresponding reduction in societies and individual members).

D: The state of organised philately in the UK

I write this as a very new boy at ABPS. I became a member of the ABPS Council in the autumn of 2016 following what was deemed as my success in chairing the

Philatelic Congress in Cambridge earlier that year.

As a member of ABPS Council I quickly found myself as Vice-Chairman with responsibility for liaising with regional federations and local societies – quite a challenge, as I quickly discovered. It is clear to me that I have joined ABPS at a time of flux for organised philately in the UK. Regrettably a number of local

societies have closed down but, that rather gloomy picture is in stark contrast to the picture I see elsewhere. Some regional federations and some local, and some specialist, societies are thriving.

Organised philately, however, is no different to virtually every other voluntary organisation in the UK; it is finding it difficult to get people willing to run societies.

People want to get the benefit of societies, but they are unwilling to commit the time to help run them. We need to get more people involved in helping to run societies and federations. Ideally we need to get more younger people involved.

My challenge, and the challenge faced by all involved with ABPS, is to show that

ABPS is a worthwhile organisation which local societies should be members of.

People need to see us as relevant and adding value to organised philately. This

shouldn't be a challenge, but I'm sorry to say that it is. Already I have encountered

claims from some local societies that they have never seen an ABPS face and they don't really know what we do.

I hope that over the next year or so either I, or another ABPS senior officer, will get to a committee meeting of every Federation in the country. Regional Federations have local societies in membership, some of whom are not themselves members of ABPS. I hope that my colleagues and I will be able to meet representatives from all local societies via these federation meetings and show them the value of ABPS membership. Organised philately will be stronger if we can show that its national voice, ABPS, is indeed speaking for more UK philatelists.

If ABPS's challenge is to recruit more local societies into membership, the challenge for local societies is to recruit more philatelists to join them. ABPS's new Chairman designate is already working to try to make organised stamp collecting more attractive to more people. ABPS wants to work with local societies to deliver this important goal.

The joy of philately is that it can be something that one does in the privacy of one's home, or it can be a shared hobby where pleasure is enhanced through membership of a local and/or specialist society. There are thousands of collectors 'out there' whom we in organised philately know nothing about. If we can get even a small percentage of these 'secret' collectors to get involved with organised philately then we should be able to move forward from strength to strength.

Rufus Barnes

