



West of
England
Thematic
Society

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IN THIS ISSUE – WETS News by eMail, Social Philately – The Way Ahead? The Francesca Rapkin Memorial Bowl comes to the South West, What do Dragons, Seahorses & Aphrodite have in Common, A Novelty, Dates for Your Diary.

WETS NEWS by email – HAVE YOU MADE THE CHANGE YET? If you have a computer and can receive email then taking WETS News this way means you will get it quicker without any reduction in quality and it will significantly reduce our postage bill. **SO PLEASE HELP. Just email your name and email address to the editor**, details above. **Those who receive WETS News this way are delighted with the end result.**



SOCIAL PHILATELY – THE WAY AHEAD?

Our speaker at this years WETS Day was President of the British Thematic Association John Hayward who brought some very interesting displays showing the extent to which non-philatelic items can be used in Social Philately as opposed to pure Thematics. Many themes do not fit happily into a pure thematic collection, we have commented many times on this issue. Social Philately breaks the bounds and allows us to display such items as advertising literature, letters, even such things as coins and shells etc. For a personal collection or display there are no rules, however if you decide to compete you will need to obey the rules and insert the relevant percentage of philatelic material as well as

ensuring that non-philatelic material will fit inside the display frames being used. *Our pictures above and right show both John and some of the attendees.*

We were also delighted to see WETS member Leslie Marley who had made the journey from Southampton to support John in the afternoon session with a display of Social Philately about Whales and the by products of Whaling.



“What our Chairman had to say” -

Those of our members who attended our WETS Day, would, I am sure, agree with me that it was an extremely interesting set of displays and talks given by John Hayward, President of the British Thematic Association with some support from Leslie Marley. You will have read in the last Newsletter that I myself am extremely interested in

this way of displaying, or exhibiting, our collections, it offers more scope in telling the story I feel. Both John & Leslie gave us all fresh ideas on what could be incorporated, and believe me these are very varied. All in all it was a very successful and interesting display and the whole day was much enjoyed by those who attended. The rest of you don't know what you miss by not coming to these extremely interesting days.

Thanks should be given to our Secretary Gary Green for making the arrangements for the day with the Dartmoor Lodge and to all who contributed to, or took part in the raffle on the day.

(I hope that all who attended will be able to put together a Social Philately display of a minimum of 16 sheets for a post AGM members display session – more on this matter later in the newsletter. – Ed)



The Francesca Rapkin Memorial Bowl comes to the South West.

Jim Wigmore - Vice Chairman of the West of England Thematic Society (WETS), Secretary of Dawlish Stamp Club and Webmaster of the British Thematic Association (BTA) has been given this award by BTA for a series of articles in Themescene judged to be the best published in 2009 under the title "Evolution of Railways". **Jim is shown being presented with the trophy by John Hayward President of BTA** during the recent WETS Day at Ashburton. Members may recall that some of this material was previously published in WETS News.



WHAT DO DRAGONS, SEAHORSES & APHRODITE HAVE IN COMMON?

By Gillian Gray - If you did not immediately guess, the answer involves lateral thinking. How lateral are you in your approach to thematics? Anyone fortunate to have seen David Griffith's brilliant if not torturous "Here be Dragons" thematic display will have realised that it catapulted the discipline light years into the future compared with the colourful easy on the eye pretty pictures stage. Have a second look at your collection; do you possess any material which with only a little imagination might be thematically laterally linked?

How about for example the Great Britain King George V, so called



"Seahorses" high values, where could that lead us thematically? Hopefully we would all agree you do not have to be a brain of Britain to link Britannia in her chariot being pulled through the sea by horses, with those delightful little creatures we have all seen in aquariums. But did you know that the chariot of the "Seahorse" stamps is in fact a stylised scallop shell.



The illustrated 1934 re-engraved half crown "Seahorse" value which is very affordable even on cover is paying the correct rate to Argentina. It may look fairly mundane but is there an interesting story behind its route or transportation. It left England at 8 pm on 21st September 1937, arriving at Stuttgart on 23rd September. Lufthansa plane "Fritz von Roeth" carried it to Las Palmas and thence to Bathurst in the Gambia arriving 24th September. The seaplane "Mistral" flew it across the Atlantic to the extent of its range somewhere off the Brazilian coast. A German speedboat met the seaplane, refuelled it for its return flight before carrying the cover to land from where it was on flown to Buenos Aires arriving on 26 September 1937.



Not exactly "Here be Dragons" but what more could the thematic collector wish for, aeroplanes, seaplanes, speedboats and for the more ambitious flight schedules and even pre-war German expansionist policy, and all linked laterally to the humble scallop shell.

Without taxing our brains too much can we take the scallop shell a stage further by linking it thematically with for example the "Legend of Aphrodite". Peering through the mists of time, Assyrian and Phoenician mythology

suggests that the Greek Aphrodite known to the Romans as Venus was not actually European but Asiatic. Later Greek poets have the Goddess of love and beauty rising from the ocean foam in a scallop shell near Cyprus, a legend depicted on pottery dating from 370BC. Edging still further laterally the masterpiece of Venus being transported to land in a scallop shell was even captured on canvas by the "Old Master" Sandro Botticelli. What were the colours that Botticelli painted with



made from? We know that certain dyes of the period were obtained from sea shells, could that be another avenue to explore?

Don't just say "Ah yes, but my nearest dealer has not got the material that I want". Look more closely at what you already have. Study the catalogue, stamp magazine or even the computer. Is there a watermark, cancellation, slogan, meter mark, printing or design method that you could use to add interest and above all, fun to your collection. You never know you might prepare a display, enter a competition or pleasantly surprise your bulletin editor with a few interesting lines.



A NOVELTY? – by Jim Wigmore

"Novelty" was one of three locomotives to compete in the Rainhill Trials in 1829 as part of the attempt by the Liverpool & Manchester Railway to prove that a steam locomotive was capable of working its trains. "Novelty" was entered jointly by John Ericsson and John Braithwaite it failed on the

second day with a broken pipe and seal to the boiler that could not be repaired in time to allow the locomotive to complete the trials. The relationship between Braithwaite and Ericsson was probably forged because Ericsson the locomotives actual designer was Swedish and it may have been felt the locomotive should be sponsored by someone British. By all accounts the engineering of the locomotive was superb with its design being based upon road locomotives then being developed. It would be many years before a vertical boiler would again be used in a railway application and then only for light duties in railcars and small shunting locomotives by companies such as Sentinel. A recent acquisition shown above is the commemorative cancel issued by Ericsson's home country commemorating his achievements. There are very few philatelic references to "Novelty" and most that are known have been produced to fleece the collector, so this item which links the locomotive to the designer and his home town is quite rare. And yes at the trials "Novelty" was indeed a novelty for both its superb engineering and its speed. The Rainhill Trials were of course ultimately won by "Rocket" entered by Stevenson, it being the only locomotive to complete all the tasks set out by the Directors of the Liverpool & Manchester Railway. This act was the start of the Railway Revolution. As for Ericsson, he emigrated to America and built warships for Abraham Lincoln, he died in 1898.

Dates for your Diary

June 26th WETS Annual General Meeting at Emmanuel Church Hall, Western Road (off Okehampton Street), Exeter. The minutes of the previous AGM were published in Newsletter 36 of September 2009.

The meeting starts at 2.00 pm. the Agenda for the meeting will be.

- 1 – Apologies for Absence.
- 2 - Minutes of the Previous Meeting.
- 3 - Matters arising from the Previous Minutes.
- 4 – Chairman's Report.
- 5 – Secretaries Report.
- 6 – Treasurers Report.
- 7 – Newsletter Editors Report.
- 8 – Publicity Officers Report.
- 9 – Election of Officers.
- 10 – Any Other Business (*The secretary should be advised of any items prior to 18th June 2009*)

After the AGM - we are asking members to show a few sheets, 8 or 16 from their own collections and give a short talk on them. Please make every effort to attend.

A PLEA FROM OUR CHAIRMAN - *Please make an effort to attend, we want your ideas, and information as to the way in which you feel WETS should develop. Every club or association has to develop as it progresses in order to interest its members. Come and put your point of view.*

October 23rd WETS Autumn Meeting at Buckfastleigh, the meeting starts at 2.00 pm. Bring your entries for the **WETS Trophy** the winner will be awarded our new trophy in memory of John Hilsdon. Entries may be on any subject but must consist of 16 sheets. All entries may be brought to the meeting or submitted via a committee member.

Please make the effort to attend – Your voice matters.