

## MINUTES OF THE 59<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE BWISC HELD AT 1:15 PM SATURDAY 27 APRIL 2013

### **1. Chairman's Welcome and Opening Remarks**

The meeting was opened by Peter Ford who welcomed the 39 members present, and thanked Grosvenor for their hospitality in allowing BWISC to hold our AGM on their premises. Nick Kerridge had looked after us extremely well.

**2. Apologies for Absence** Apologies were received from Kevin Darcy.

### **3. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising**

The minutes of the previous meeting on 28 April 2012, as published in Bulletin No. 233, June 2012, pages 18 to 22, were accepted by the attendees.

### **4. Report by the General Secretary (George Dunbar)**

I would like to pay tribute to my predecessor Peter Fernbank, and thank him for providing a model handover. He gave me detailed templates, and had already arranged many future events, including the Convention this year.

The Membership Secretary has kindly provided the following information. At the end of 2012, there were 324 members (UK 207, Europe 24, Rest of the World 93). Six members died, and 10 more gave up membership. There were 15 new members. Three of those joining in 2012 took the paperless subscription, which is now taken by 24 members.

The main event since last year's AGM was the Stampex meeting in September, at which five members gave displays. In November, the Chairman, President, James Podger and Nigel Chandler made a successful trip to represent the Circle at the IPhLA Philatelic Literature Exhibition in Mainz, Germany. More detail of these events was reported in the December and March issues of the Bulletin. We also propose to take a table at Midpex in July to promote the Study Circle, and look forward to the Convention in October.

### **5. Report by the Editor (Terry Harrison)**

Having taken on the challenge of becoming editor at the last AGM I found myself facing a steep learning curve but with the aid and assistance of Steve Jarvis, Charles Freeland and Peter Ford the year has sped past and I am now in the process of assembling my 4th edition. One thing that does tend to stand out is the worry of producing enough pages to maintain Steve's target of 40 pages. This has been achieved so far but by the merest margin and I would like to reiterate previous Editor's pleas for more articles whilst thanking all those who have submitted articles.

On the plus side we have seen some new contributors over the last year, and Charles has started a new item referencing articles of interest from other journals. It is intended that this will become a regular annual feature. I look forward to continuing to work with you in maintaining the high standard of the Study Circle's Bulletin, so keep sending the articles in!

### **6. Report by the Treasurer (Ray Stanton)**

Copies of the accounts were circulated to members present. The accounts for the year to the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2012 show a surplus of £2,254 which more than covers last year's deficit of £1699.

There are three main points to make regarding this surplus.

Firstly there have been no major publication costs in 2012 whilst sales from publications printed in previous years totalled £2,168 net of commissions paid. Since the year end we have published Peter Fernbank's KGV key plate book which has been partly paid for by a loan from Peter which will be repaid from sales made, in the same way as Michael Oliver's Leewards book was financed in 2011.

Secondly the income from the Study Circle auction, net of expenses paid, at £1,634 was substantially ahead of that achieved in 2011, and is a major contribution to our funds both for our expenses and for our active publication policy.

Finally we have again largely covered the costs of the quarterly bulletin and its despatch by the subscription and advertising income, which is the policy we have established in the past. As you are aware there was a substantial increase in postage costs midway through 2012 and as a result we needed to increase subscriptions for future years and also increase our advertising rates. We are confident therefore that our policy will be maintained in 2013.

As a result of the surplus, the Accumulated fund, has increased from £5,280 to £7,545 and this year we again have a small profit on the conversion of our US dollar funds. Due to the prevailing low interest rates we have had limited ability to earn any interest this year.

I would like to thank John Davis once again for being our auditor and for the advice and help he has given.

In response to a query from a member, the Treasurer clarified that the large debt owed to the Circle, shown in the accounts, is an accident of timing, with sums usually received just before year end having been received shortly after.

#### **7. Report by the Librarian (Ian Jakes)**

No books have been borrowed from the Library during the last year, and only nine books were loaned to three members during the previous year. I have provided two members with answers to their respective request for philatelic information on the Jamaica stamps concerning the 1968 Human Rights Issues, and the Bahamas Landfall Overprints. It is clear from the above that our non computer literate members are dwindling, and that the Library is now only being used to obtain information which cannot be found on the computer.

I took possession from Peter Boulton of the BWISC Committee minutes from 27th July 1954 until 2007, and these are now lodged in the Library for safe custody.

In August 2012, a fortnight before his death, Bob Swarbrick donated more than one hundred items to the Library, details of which appeared in the March 2013 Bulletin. This donation was in addition to his donation detailed in my 2012 Librarian's Report to the AGM.

#### **8. Report by the Publications Officer (Peter Ford)**

We didn't publish anything at all last year; that's not to say that I have been slacking. Most of my time was spent working on Peter Fernbank's 'KING GEORGE V KEY PLATES OF THE IMPERIUM POSTAGE AND REVENUE DESIGN'. This book is the second edition of his work originally published by the West Africa Study Circle. It is much improved with many colour illustrations and has been expanded. At a cost of £44 for members, for a 515 page tome, it is great value.

We have some three books in prospect this year, Richard Maisel's Study Paper on the 1882 provisional issue of British Guiana, a study of the early Britannia issues of Barbados by Fitz Roett and the Airmails volume of the Jamaica Encyclopaedia. The Tobago book will possibly be published towards the end of the year or early next year. There are other books in the very early stages of preparation and I will inform the membership of progress on those in due course.

Sales this last year have been somewhat subdued with Michael Oliver's Leewards book and the Trinidad book doing particularly well. Mike Rego's Steamship Line volumes continue to sell well. We sold a total of just under £2,600 worth of books which, after David Druett's commission, netted the Study Circle £2,171. This figure was boosted by the attendance of four Committee members at a Philatelic Literature event in Mainz, Germany in early November. Charles Freeland, Nigel Chandler, James Podger and I attended this show and sold a good many of our books which Nigel had driven over from the UK. Also it gave us an opportunity to meet some of the German stamp dealers who were very accommodating and some literature dealers who have already ordered books from us.

If any member is considering writing a book, could I appeal to them to inform me before they pay out money to have it typeset. I have used a few different printers over the years and now know them sufficiently well to gauge exactly what is required to produce the best result from any publication. Please do not present me with a typeset book and ask me to publish it.

Lastly, we still need writers to submit Study Papers which I am very keen on. These can be a subject of very specialised interest and it doesn't cost us much to have them printed. For instance, Richard Maisel's booklet which has around 70 odd pages will cost less than £200 to have 50 copies printed. Also, we still need to have definitive handbooks on some colonies; St. Vincent, British Honduras and St. Lucia spring to mind. Some colonies have never had a book written and some others have not had one written for nearly 100 years! Come on let's have some more volunteers to write these books.

In response to a question from a member, it was confirmed that publications were indeed entered for awards at times. For example, the Trinidad book had won the Charles J. Peterson Literature

Grand Award and Gold Medal at NAPEX 2011. However there were costs involved and it was necessary to carefully assess each opportunity.

### **9. Report by the Chairman of the Committee (Peter Ford)**

This must be the ninth or tenth time I have stood up here and told the membership that we have enjoyed a successful year. 2012 was no exception. We held our AGM and Auction at Spink and what a successful auction that was. Simon Goldblatt and his auction team excelled themselves in the number and variety of excellent lots; the realisations at the end were just short of £25,000 and probably exceeded that figure if we take the sale of unsolds into account.

The necessary increase in subscriptions announced last year fortunately does not seem to have deterred many from renewing their membership. It would seem that, having kept the subscriptions as low as we had done for so many years, members were appreciative of the necessity to increase them. The Committee are always open to suggestions as to how we can reduce our outlay or indeed increase our income to improve our financial situation.

At the end of my Report last year, I appealed for members to volunteer for duties on the Committee, citing the length of time some of us have been serving. I mentioned that we needed a new Editor and a new Secretary urgently. I was very pleased to discover that, before the end of the meeting, we had two volunteers for the editor position. Terry Harrison by dint of being the first to step forward became our Editor and what a fantastic job he has done. It was always going to be difficult to fill this position after Steve Jarvis, but Terry has done brilliantly. It was not too long before we had someone willing to take over the Secretary's job and George Dunbar was that someone. I would like to thank them both for coming forward so quickly. I must take this opportunity to thank the outgoing officers; firstly, Steve Jarvis who has been Editor of our Bulletin for so many years and who has brought it on to be what it is today, an award-winning periodical which is the envy of many other specialist societies. Thank you, Steve. The Secretary's job had been filled as a temporary measure by Peter Fernbank and I must thank him too for all the work he put in. You will be glad to know that both these gentlemen will remain on the Committee and we can take advantage of their wise counsel. We have had one resignation from the Committee this year, that of Michael Hamilton. I had to go back through the Bulletin archive to find out exactly when Michael first joined the Committee as he seems to have always been on it. He has been on the Committee since 1983, for some 30 years! I think we all owe Michael a big vote of thanks for his commitment to the Study Circle over this long period.

We are all, I am sure, looking forward to our Convention in October and I urge all of our members to try to attend, even if only for one day. It is something you will enjoy and no doubt you will want to repeat the experience. Before that, at our Secretary's instigation, some of us will be attending the MIDPEX show on the 6<sup>th</sup> of July at the Warwickshire Exhibition Centre. We are going to have a table there and hopefully we will gain some new members and also we will be trying to sell our publications. Obviously, the more of our members who are there the better it will be.

Next year we celebrate our 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary; it doesn't seem that long since the 50<sup>th</sup> and what a success that was. Anyway, we are envisaging a special auction and also we are arranging a display on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> November at the Royal Philatelic Society London where we will hopefully have displays of every colony in our area of interest. Details of both of these events will appear in the Bulletin. I would strongly advise attendance the event at the Royal as it will give members, who are not already members of the Royal, the opportunity to visit the premises of what is arguably the premier national philatelic society in the world.

Again as usual, I want to thank all the members of the Committee for their support during the last year and would urge other members of the Circle seriously to consider volunteering to join the Committee.

### **10. Re-Election of the Chairman of the Committee**

Peter Ford was re-elected unanimously as Chairman of the Committee.

### **11. Re-Election of Officers**

The existing Officers and Committee Members were re-elected. The Chairman proposed the election of John Keegan as an additional Committee Member, and this was approved.

### **12. Election of the Auditor**

John Davis had agreed to continue as Auditor, and was re-elected, with the gratitude of members.

### **13. Other Business**

#### *ABPS Membership*

The Chairman explained that the Committee had questioned the value of ABPS membership. It costs about £240 a year, with little evidence of direct benefit to the Circle. Because membership charges are levied on member societies as a fee per UK resident member, many members of the Circle will in practice pay several times over. A poll of those present confirmed that almost all are members of local societies and many are members of other specialist societies. The Chairman had written to the ABPS proposing that a flat fee of £100 for specialist societies would be fairer, and had accepted their request to send someone to answer our questions today. However, no representative had appeared.

There was an extensive and considered discussion with many members contributing views and suggestions. It was felt that ABPS lacked transparency, and its functions were obscure to many. Feedback and communication from them were not good. In return for our fees, we should expect better representation in decision making, including representation at their AGM. They should do a better job of promoting specialist societies through, for example, their website. On the other hand, there was concern that we should not precipitate difficulty for ABPS without a clearer understanding of their contribution to philately at the national level. Their work promoting philately with young people was praised. They also support national and international events. It was acknowledged that they are working as volunteers.

The Chairman proposed that he would write to ABPS urging, in strong terms, greater transparency, and better communication of what they achieve for specialist societies such as ours. He would make clear the Circle's concerns, and that we would seriously consider leaving ABPS if they were not met. The proposal was approved unanimously.

#### *RPSL request for help*

Steve Jarvis asked members with knowledge of the Virgin Islands or Grenada to please volunteer to assist the RPSL project to describe images of De La Rue proofs. Volunteers could contact him.

The Chairman closed the meeting.