

**MINUTES OF THE 61ST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE BWISC
HELD AT 1:15PM SATURDAY 25TH APRIL 2015**

1. Chairman's Welcome and Opening Remarks

The meeting was opened by Peter Ford who welcomed the 32 BWISC members present. He thanked Grosvenor for their hospitality in allowing BWISC to hold our AGM on their premises. He invited each person to introduce themselves and their collecting interests.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Steve Jarvis, Kevin Darcy, David Druett, Dennis Mitton and Mike Rego.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes of the previous meeting on 26 April 2014, as published in Bulletin No. 241, June 2014, pages 9 to 13, were accepted by the attendees.

Richard Stupples asked what decision had been reached regarding the ABPS. Peter Ford said that we had renewed membership, giving them another chance, to support ABPS during a difficult period for them, but with membership kept under review.

4. Report by the General Secretary (George Dunbar)

Since the last AGM I have attended three regional stamp fairs (Worpex, Swinpex and Scotex) where BWISC took tables. These are generally cheap for us to attend, for example Swinpex asks specialist societies simply to donate a raffle prize. (I donated a bottle of Barbados rum, which seemed appropriate.) I suggest attending in alternate years. At each event, people including some existing members, come and chat, ask questions, or offer tidbits of news. Sometimes they buy a book or two. It is a good channel of communication. We should hold a meeting at one of these events. A BWISC meeting was organised at Autumn Stampex last year, and that has already been described in the Bulletin.

Last year I mentioned a series of articles due to appear in GSM, including the special issue celebrating our 60th Anniversary which appeared in April 2014. The most recent appeared in the January and February editions this year, and I understand that the final one is due to appear in the July issue. An article I wrote gently plugging the Circle in an Aussie-friendly way appeared in Stamp News Australasia in May 2014. The planned targeting of Europe has not yet borne fruit. If any member has an idea for a popular article on BWI that would appeal to a French, Spanish, or German-speaking audience, please contact me.

At London 2015 in May and at Midpex in July the Circle has taken tables, and at London we are sponsoring five frames. Arrangements for the Convention at Honiley in October have been made.

The membership secretary has kindly supplied the following figures:

Membership Stats as at end of 2014:					
	Members	UK	EUR	RoW	Paperless
End 2013	321	203	26	92	44
Joined 2014	15				
Deceased	2				
Lapsed/Resigned	30				
End 2014	304	193	20	91	48

Membership has fallen and the Committee was considering ways to prompt members who had not renewed to do so. The Circle could not set up direct debit arrangements. Peter Fernbank noted that it was possible for members to set up a standing order, as he had done.

5. Report by the Editor (Terry Harrison)

I am pleased to be able to report that 2014 has proved to be another successful year and that there has been a steady flow of articles from existing and new contributors, long may this continue. These contributions enhance the knowledge base of the Study Group and the authors are to be congratulated on their efforts. Even so, for the Bulletin to continue to be a success, articles are a necessity, so do please keep them coming in. On that note, for those of you who feel that your collecting interests are under-represented in the Bulletin why not take the opportunity of providing me with a short article describing a favourite item from your collection.

Once again my thanks are due to Steve Jarvis, Charles Freeland and Peter Ford for the work they do in ensuring that the high standard of the Bulletin is maintained by proof reading each edition and liaising with the printers.

6. Report by the Treasurer (Ray Stanton)

The accounts for the year to 31 December 2014 show a surplus of £3,369 which compares with a deficit of £1,051 in 2013.

There are three main reasons for the surplus achieved this year. Firstly Bulletin advertising has increased from £1,539 to £2,420. In the income statement these receipts are shown as reducing the Bulletin costs, which net this year are £136 compared to £895 in 2013.

Secondly there was once again a very substantial donation from the auction team, which was over a thousand pounds greater than last year due to the special 2014 anniversary auction.

Thirdly cost of publications in 2014 was fully met by sales whereas in 2013 there was a deficit. In addition the main donation received was a generous contribution from one of the main philatelic auctioneers towards our publication costs.

Overall therefore this was a very successful year financially for the Study Circle. Our 60th anniversary events were largely self-financing although there was a deficit on the dinner given that we did not ask overseas exhibitors to contribute. We are also receiving payment for the articles used in Gibbons Stamp Monthly although most of that will fall in 2015.

As a result of the surplus the Accumulated Fund has increased to £9,852. This year we have a small loss on the conversion of our US dollar funds and 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.

7. Report by the Librarian (Ian Jakes)

Seven books and one stamp auction catalogue have been borrowed from the library by three members during the last year. This is an improvement upon the previous year when three books were borrowed from the library by one member.

I photocopied, over a period of three rainy afternoons, the "Chronological Postmark History of the Post Towns of Jamaica" written by Bob Topaz over a period of a decade in the British Caribbean Philatelic Journal for the benefit and permanent retention of one member. Now that I am aware of the size of the task, and as we now have duplicate copies of all BCP Journals, thanks to Bob Swarbrick's kind donation, any future request by members for this information will result in journals being posted to members for them to make their own photocopies.

I have researched the library for information relating to events in World War 2 in Jamaica for the benefit of another member, who has now obtained his own copies of relevant books.

I have researched the library for information relating to King George V St. Kitts stamp issues for the benefit of another member.

8. Report by the Publications Officer (Peter Ford)

Again I have to report a good year for the BWISC publications empire. Early in the year we published the Tobago book; this was done in much the same format as the Trinidad but of course in a much slimmer volume. It is my intention to eventually follow this with a book on the combined colony of Trinidad and Tobago from 1913 onwards. Ian Jakes' Trinidad Red Cross Labels was next to be published and finally last year we published a definitive book on Nevis by Federico Borromeo and Charles Freeland.

Even by surpassing the sales for 2013, 2014 sales were very good. The top performer was the Tobago book with some 50 sales. We had a small problem with this book initially with the binding falling apart. However our printers were as good as their word and had all unsold books rebound in quick time. Those who complained about the binding had their copies replaced. Peter Fernbank's volume on the Universal Keyplates sold 26 copies with Fitz Roett's Barbados next with 24 sales. Ian Jakes Red Cross booklet sold 20 copies with the Jamaica Airmails selling 13 and Maisel's BG Provisional booklet 10. All in all we sold a total of 217 books and, after commission, received just under £4,000.

So far in 2015 we have published a book on Cayman Islands Postcards and a book on the QEII postmarks of the BWI by David Horry is at the printers as I speak. The Jamaica Military mails will be published shortly and later in the year, we plan to publish a definitive handbook on the stamps of Antigua. Later still we hope to publish a book on the Bahamas.

Hopefully some more budding authors will come out of the woodwork and we can continue our active publications programme.

The heavy burden of postage these days is a cross we all have to bear; however, this can, in part, be alleviated if you order books you want before the London 2015 show and they can be delivered to you there post free. Please contact me with any orders.

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

2014 was the Diamond Jubilee of the Study Circle and your Committee had been planning for it over three years. All this planning came to a climax in November at the Royal Philatelic Society when we had a display of some classic West Indies material from all over the world. In trying to describe it, one runs out of superlatives; suffice to say, it was a most successful celebration followed by a superb dinner. Thanks must go to Charles Freeland, who enticed members from far and wide to participate, to Peter Fernbank who did much of the donkey work in organising the display, and finally to John Keegan, who showed us that Royal Navy sailors do appreciate good food. Earlier in the year we had a very successful special auction showcasing 60 starred items. Thanks here must go to Simon Goldblatt and his team for the hard work they, as always, put into its success.

In all other respects, it was a successful year for the Study Circle; our finances are in good health showing a surplus, as our Treasurer has already shown. The Bulletin, under Terry Harrison's guidance, goes from strength to strength and our publications programme is ongoing.

Before finishing, I have to make one appreciation, that is for our out-going President, Charles Freeland. In his short tenure, he has been active in helping the Circle to improve by his suggestions and organisational abilities. You may not realise this, but Charles is only the fourth President the BWISC has had in 60 years of its existence. Having decided to change President every two or three years this figure will increase as we make sure we tap the talents of the membership. Charles will continue to give the Committee the benefits of his advice and experience in the future. The Committee invited Graham Booth to stand for the position of President and we hope that you will agree with us by voting for him in a few minutes.

I have to also thank my Committee for their dedication and hard work over the past momentous year for the Study Circle.

10. Re-Election of the Chairman of the Committee

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

11. Election of the President and Re-Election of the Vice-Presidents

Graham Booth, Proposed by Peter Ford, Seconded by James Podger, was elected unanimously for three years (to April 2018).

Retiring President Charles Freeland, joking that there was really "no work to do", thanked Graham for taking this on. Charles thanked the Committee for supporting him well. The willingness of members to step up and work for the Circle was a sign of its strength. The succession planning of the Circle, which he identified as an important function of any organisation, was in place and will be kept in place. Charles had met several of his objectives as President. First, to expand the number of contributors to the Bulletin. Second, financial strength had been maintained. Third, he thanked Peter Fernbank, John Keegan, as well as Ray Stanton and Peter Ford for their effort and support in coordinating thirty-three exhibitors to deliver a magnificent display at the RPSL in November. Charles thanked everyone, including many in the room and others abroad, who helped us easily smash the record attendance at the RPSL. Their President had said to him since that this large attendance had been useful ammunition in a planning application!

Charles had served as President for four years, staying on an extra year to see through 60th Anniversary events. However, he emphasised his view that three should be the normal cycle.

He had one regret, not enough members were exhibiting competitively, noting that there would be only one BWI exhibit in the May show. This was a challenge he would pass to Graham Booth.

Graham Booth thanked members for their support in electing him, and apologised that he might not have the encyclopaedic breadth of knowledge of BWI philately of Charles Freeland. Nevertheless, he hoped that he would bring something valuable from knowledge and experience outside the Circle.

Simon Goldblatt, Vice-President; Steve Jarvis, Vice-President, were re-elected.

12. Re-Election of Officers

The existing Officers and Committee Members were re-elected.

13. Election of the Auditor

John Davis was re-elected, with the thanks of members.

14. Other Business

Michael Medlicott said that as someone who does bugger-all for the Circle, he would like to offer a sincere thank-you to all those who do. (Charles Freeland reminded us that Michael serves on the Collett Award subcommittee among many other contributions.)

All business having been covered, the Chairman closed the meeting.

BRITISH WEST INDIES STUDY CIRCLE			
INCOME STATEMENT : YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2014			
	£'s	<u>2014</u>	<u>2013</u>
INCOME :			
Subscriptions		4,291	4,509
Publications - Sales less commissions		3,605	4,922
Articles for publication		189	-
Auction donation (net of costs)		2,586	1,540
Other donations		510	2
Interest received		4	-
TOTAL INCOME		<u>11,185</u>	<u>10,973</u>
EXPENDITURE :			
Bulletin - Costs less advertising receipts	136		895
Distribution and editorial expenses	<u>2,750</u>	2,886	<u>2,710</u>
Publications : Printing costs		3,545	6,912
60th Anniv dinner - net deficit (Convention in 2013)		565	518
Other room hire & meeting costs		298	164
ABPS affiliation fee		223	-
Collett scroll costs		-	284
Flyers & leaflets		-	175
Officers administration - Stationery, postage, telephone etc		69	161
Bank charges		92	92
Exhibition entry fees		25	-
Website		113	113
		<u>7,816</u>	<u>12,024</u>
SURPLUS (DEFICIT) INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE	£'s	<u>3,369</u>	£'s <u>(1,051)</u>
BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31st DECEMBER 2014			
ACCUMULATED FUND :			
Balance at 1st January 2014		6,503	7,545
Add : Surplus (Deficit) for the year		3,369	(1,051)
Exchange conversion profit (loss)		(20)	9
	£'s	<u>9,852</u>	£'s <u>6,503</u>
REPRESENTED BY :			
Cash at banks		7,580	7,521
Cash in hand		-	996
Debtors - amounts due to us		6,627	3,193
Prepaid expenses		200	-
		<u>14,407</u>	<u>11,710</u>
Less : Subscriptions received in advance	(3,027)		(3,055)
Loan	(1,300)		(1,300)
Other creditors - Amounts due by us	<u>(228)</u>	(4,555)	<u>(852)</u> (5,207)
	£'s	<u>9,852</u>	£'s <u>6,503</u>
AUDITORS REPORT			
I hereby certify that the income statement for the year ended 31st December 2014 is in accordance with the books, vouchers and explanations given to me; and that the Balance Sheet at the 31st December 2014 shows the financial state of the British West Indies Study Circle as at that date.			
J G M Davis FCA	<i>John Davis 27th January 2015</i>		