

**MINUTES OF THE 64<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE BWISC  
HELD AT 1:15PM SATURDAY 28 APRIL 2018**

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

Graham Booth, chairing the AGM for the first time, said that he had never expected to be in this position in BWISC. He announced, to applause, that Simon Goldblatt, who would be running one of the largest BWISC auctions ever immediately after the AGM, will have celebrated his 90th birthday by the time of the next AGM in 2019.

**2. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Kevin Darcy, Mary Gleadall, Michael Hamilton, Keith Hanman, and John Riggall.

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

The minutes of the previous meeting on 22 April 2017, as published in Bulletin No. 253, June 2017, pages 34 to 37, were accepted by the attendees.

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

The Circle had a table at Midpex in July 2017, as planned. We met new friends and old. The October Convention at The Abbey Hotel, Redditch allowed us to enjoy exceptional philatelic material in pleasant surroundings, although some arrangements were not perfect.

The Membership Secretary has kindly provided the following table.

Membership Stats as at end of 2017:

	Members	UK	EUR	RoW
End 2016	340 (83)	208 (43)	25 (5)	107 (35)
Joined 2017	13	10		3
Rejoined	4	3		1
Deceased	3	1	1	1
Lapsed/Resigned	15	13		2
End 2017	339 (85)	207 (44)	24 (5)	108 (36)

Figures in brackets are for paperless membership. Membership has been relatively stable.

The next events will be our tables at Worpex and Swinpex, and a meeting at Autumn Stampex.

Richard Stupples asked about the time of the Autumn Stampex meeting, and the Secretary answered that the planned time was 1–3pm on the Saturday of Stampex, but that this could not be confirmed as specialist society meeting room bookings had not yet been allocated by the PTS.

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

It was a pleasure to receive so much new material as a result of my tongue-in-cheek note in the September 2017 Bulletin and this now means that the immediate future of the Bulletin is relatively secure. But please do not stop sending material. It may take some time for your article to appear in print as the intention is to publish a spread of articles from across the Caribbean in each Bulletin and the restrictions will always be space and variety.

I am pleased to report that David Watson has stepped forward to help with proof reading so strengthening the team but do note that there is always room for anyone else who would like to help

out. Peter Ford and Steve Jarvis have, as always, helped maintain the Bulletin's high standard by proof reading each edition and liaising with the printers.

Steve Jarvis commented that the standard of articles in the most recent edition was brilliant. The Chairman thanked Terry, noting that the Bulletin is a pillar of the society, important in maintaining its high standards.

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

The accounts for the year to the 31 December 2017 show a surplus of £356 which is similar to that achieved in 2016.

Subscriptions and advertising income once again covered the Bulletin costs including distribution, by a substantial margin, the costs incurred being substantially reduced by the arrangement with the new printer and distributor. The donation from the auction team, net of expenses, was slightly less than last year but we did receive another donation from a source who wished to remain anonymous of £250.

Sales of publications were nearly £600 more than last year, but as usual the total was exceeded by the amount spent on the production of new books. However, it is likely that the amount spent on new books in the next year or so will fall back. Nevertheless, although written off in the accounts, the book stocks that are held are expected to produce a steady stream of future income.

Other expenses in 2017 were in total similar to 2016, the only difference being the £400 deficit in running the convention at Redditch.

As a result of the surplus the Accumulated fund has increased to £14,022. This year we have only a small gain on the conversion of our US dollar funds, given that sterling has held its own against the dollar, but once again, due to the prevailing low interest rates, we have had limited ability to earn any interest.

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)**

Three library books, two on Bermuda philately and one on Leeward Islands 1897 sexagenary overprints, have been lent to two members during the last year. Two other members made requests to borrow philatelic books published recently by BWISC. Both members were one country specialists. When I pointed out the cost to them of outward and return postage and of a borrowing time limit both members decided that it was more economical for them to purchase their own copies of the books from Pennymead.

One member was provided with a Library list.

One American member required philatelic information which was in The British Library. I put this member in touch with a London member with research skills.

Seven members have requested me to search the BWISC library for information which cannot be found

on the internet. The subjects were:—

- (a) Bahamas postal rates
- (b) Jamaica red cross labels
- (c) Tobago fiscals
- (d) British Honduras geography and history
- (e) A copy of an article from The American Philatelist

- (f) Information contained in 1928 Jamaica colonial report
- (g) Imperial Direct Line ships and sailings
- (h) 1854 Jamaica laureated head design
- (i) A copy of an article from British Caribbean Philatelic Journal
- (j) Trinidad and Tobago post 1936 philately

Positive replies were sent in all cases.

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

2017 saw us publish no less than three books. Firstly, in collaboration with the Royal Philatelic Society, we published a book on Bahamas. This was a book which had the input of several Bahamas collectors, and was expertly edited by Peter Fernbank, to whom must go the most credit for what is a fine publication. Negotiations with the Royal did not run smoothly as they had a stock method of publishing books using Pardys, a printer in Hampshire who not only stored their books but distributed them as well.

Obviously this wouldn't have suited us too well and so we suggested using our usual printer, Sarsen. In the end it was agreed to use Sarsen whose price for printing the 250 copies agreed upon was half that of Pardys. Each society had 125 books to sell and sales income would be divided equally.

The next book was one on St. Vincent, jointly authored by Charles Freeland, Roy Bond and Russell Boylan. Due to the high price of producing hardbacked books these days, it was decided to have it printed in softback. Roy Bond came up with the idea that we could send some copies of the softbound book to a bookbinders and have them hardbound. I decided that this was an experiment worth trying.

We sent 50 copies to be rebound in hardback. It turned out to be a good idea as when we have a book printed hardbacked, usually we have to order 200 or more; normally, we would be lucky to sell half that number. This system of sending the softbacks to be rebound would save us having large stocks of books and having a large sum of money tied up with the unsold copies. The resulting price of the hardbacked books comes to more than usual, but it is worthwhile for the reasons stated before.

Lastly we published the Temporary Registered Ovals of Jamaica and Trinidad by David Horry. This has been published in softback and is selling well.

We have lost our US distributor, Ed Barrow, who has emigrated. We are very grateful to Ed for taking on this task over the last few years. At the suggestion of John Seidl, President of the BCPSEG, we have now decided to use the American Philatelic Society as our distributor in the US. The main advantage of this is that they have an enormous membership and therefore our books will attain the widest possible publicity. Also, using Lightning Source our print-on-demand printer, we can have books printed in the US saving postage costs for everybody. Sales in the US in the three months to January netted just over US\$500. I am sure this will be a valuable addition to our sales effort.

Gross sales last year were just under £5,160 and after commission £4,350. The St. Vincent was the star of the show with some 31 copies of the hardback sold and 15 of the softback. Horry's Ovals book was next with 23 copies sold. The Bahamas, Antigua and Horry's QEII postmarks books all sold 16 copies.

The future does not look so bright however. We have lost our most prolific author, Charles Freeland. I doubt he will ever be replaced. Few collectors could combine his expert knowledge and superb writing skills; he will be greatly missed by all. There are a few books on the backburner at the moment.

One on Grenada being written by Tim Pearce, one on Trinidad & Tobago being written jointly by

myself,

Ed Barrow and David Druett and finally one on Boer War Prisoner of War Mail to and from Bermuda by David Cordon. However these may not be published for a few years yet.

It would be beneficial if we could have some smaller books on the lines of the Study Papers and Classic Collections published over the next couple of years. If any member has an idea to write something, please contact me directly; we are open to any suggestions.

## **9. Report by the President & Chairman of the Committee (Graham Booth)**

I was parachuted into this role at short notice, and found myself at the Convention both running the Convention and giving one of the principal displays – I will avoid combining those ever again! It was a successful convention, but we would not return to the Abbey Hotel unless they guaranteed a bigger room for dealers and standing displays, and this room was close to the room for formal displays.

To reduce the likelihood that the Circle will again find itself struggling with succession planning at short notice, I have proposed that we be specific about the period of office of the Chairman. The Circle has survived for 60 years without a written constitution, and it would be pointless to create one now.

However, if you agree with the proposal, we will record this as governing the future operation of the Circle.

1. The roles of President and Vice-President are honorary and continue for life, or until a holder chooses to no longer have the title.
2. The Circle is run by the Chairman as Chief Executive along with the executive committee.
3. The Chairman will be elected for a term of three years and would not normally serve for more than two terms.

The Committee will therefore know when a change is coming up and plan accordingly.

The Chairman put the proposal to the AGM for discussion, noting that BWISC is one of the more successful societies, in large part due to the work of volunteer members, the Committee, and their professionalism.

In response to a request from Stephen King, it was noted that the role of Chairman could of course be held by a woman or a man, and this would be reflected in the wording used. Richard Stupples suggested that a situation could arise where there was a shortage of candidates to take on the role, and the Chairman emphasised the qualification 'not normally' which allowed for further extension in exceptional circumstances.

On a show of hands, the proposal was carried unanimously.

The Committee had agreed to establish as a norm a two-year cycle of committee and member meetings. There would be a Convention every two years, and in a year when we do not have a convention there would be a members meeting at Autumn Stampex. These meetings would provide an opportunity for all members to display their material. Immediately prior to these autumn meetings there would be a committee meeting, in addition to the spring meeting before the AGM. The Committee also planned that the 2020 AGM should take place during the week of the London 2020 international exhibition (2– 9 May; Simon Goldblatt suggested that the Sunday was probably the most suitable day).

## **10. Election of Officers**

Graham Booth had been elected Chairman for one year at the 2017 AGM. In light of the decision made under Item 9, he offered himself for election for the balance of a three-year term, that is until the 2020 AGM. Proposed Simon Goldblatt, seconded by Richard Stupples, carried unanimously.

The Chairman then put forward the names of the office holding members of the committee for election.

George Dunbar, Hon. Secretary. Proposed Graham Booth, seconded by Simon Richards, carried unanimously.

Terry Harrison, Hon. Editor, whose role is key since the Bulletin is the principle platform through which the Circle maintained its reputation. Proposed Peter Fernbank, seconded by James Podger, carried unanimously.

Ray Stanton, Treasurer. Proposed Roy Bond, seconded by Peter Ford, carried unanimously.

Ian Jakes, Librarian. Proposed Bill Gibb, seconded by Nigel Chandler, carried unanimously.

Peter Ford, Publications Officer. Proposed James Podger, seconded by Michael Medicott, carried unanimously.

The other Committee members are Nigel Chandler, Peter Fernbank, Simon Goldblatt, John Jordan, James Podger, Geoff Richards, and Simon Richards.

The Chairman asked also for a volunteer to take on the role of Advertising Manager, which would involve identifying and securing new advertisers. Although no-one stepped forward immediately, the Chairman asked members, also including those not present, to consider whether they could do it. This would be an interesting way for someone to become involved with the Circle and would be likely to lead to doing other things on the Committee if they wished. If any member could volunteer, please do contact the Chairman.

## **11. Election of the Auditor**

John Davis was re-elected as auditor. Proposed Simon Richards, seconded by Peter Fernbank, carried unanimously.

## **12. Other Business**

(i & ii) The Chairman introduced the two other items listed on the Agenda by emphasising that although the Committee had been aware of and able to reflect on these proposals since the Convention, this morning's committee meeting had been their first opportunity to formally discuss them. Following that discussion, part

(ii) relating to a name change is withdrawn at this stage, to allow further time for consideration. The British West Indies Study Circle brand is important and appeals strongly to existing members. Whether it appeals strongly to all potential new members is not clear, and Graham had made this proposal based on his own experience. He was brought up in the 1930s, and when first travelling to India had been shocked to discover that the events he knew as the Indian Mutiny were there called the First Indian War of Independence. It is this type of difference in perspective that may prove a hindrance to recruiting citizens of the Caribbean to membership of the Circle with our current name, which can be interpreted as alluding to the colonial period. This had led him to look at our membership list, where he found we had only ten members living in the Caribbean, nearly all of whom appeared to be expats. This absence of appeal to indigenous residents is a concern. If the name does suggest a hangover from colonialism to people of the Caribbean islands, it would serve the interests of the Circle to change it. However, there are also strong arguments against changing the name, and perhaps we should not change it. The proposal is withdrawn for the moment, but meanwhile the Chairman wanted all members to be aware of the discussion and of the reasons being considered.

Moving to the proposal to change the first aim of the Circle, the Chairman noted again that this wording had been circulated in advance to all members on the Agenda which was circulated with

the March Bulletin, so that they had a chance to consider it before the AGM. The Committee, having discussed the proposal in the morning, had agreed to recommend the wording with some small changes. The revised wording was read out:

The principal objective of the Circle should be 'To promote interest in and the study of the stamps and postal history of all the islands that comprise the West Indies. In addition, it should include Bermuda, The Guyanas and Belize (British Honduras) and the interaction with applicable countries on the littoral of the Caribbean Sea.'

The Chairman noted that in great measure this simply reflected patterns of collecting and research that already existed within the Circle. In postal history, examples such as the operations of the RMSP via

St. Thomas, or the Pacific Steam Navigation Company and RMSP using the Panama Canal, illustrate the interconnectedness of activity in the region. This does not mean any new emphasis on, for instance, the classic stamps of Venezuela, the emphasis is on areas of interaction. He invited comments.

Michael Medlicott asked why interaction beyond the Caribbean littoral, such as with the USA, had not been specified. Simon Greenwood queried whether the extensions should be made part of the primary objective or listed as secondary objectives. He was also concerned about potential overlap with the interests of other specialist societies. Richard Stupples wondered also about overlap with the BCPSG. Nigel Chandler, citing three major publications, observed that European philatelists had often very different perspectives on Caribbean postal history.

It was noted that although there was topical overlap with other societies, the quality of BWISC's output was often better, none had the strong overview of the Circle, and of course joint membership with, for instance, BCPSG is common. A recent Collett Award had been for work that extensively considered Venezuela, and was justifiably relevant to the Circle because it addressed transactions with Trinidad.

There was not a clear consensus on the details of the proposed change, and the meeting accepted a proposal from Simon Goldblatt, seconded by Joan Schuller, that the Committee should work in accordance with the spirit of the changed definition of scope, whilst the actual wording is refined. This will be put to the AGM in 2019. This proposal was welcomed and carried by a large majority (with a few abstentions).

(iii) John Jones raised a question about the provision of advice to executors of members' wills. Simon Goldblatt replied that families can (and do) ask for advice from the auction team. The team gives neutral advice. It is willing to handle material in Circle auctions if it feels it can assist, but can otherwise suggest alternatives.

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

**BRITISH WEST INDIES STUDY CIRCLE**  
**INCOME STATEMENT : YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2017**

	£'s	<u>2017</u>		<u>2016</u>
<b>INCOME :</b>				
Subscriptions		4,624		4,510
Publications - Sales less commissions		4,362		3,782
Auction donation (net of costs)		1,495		1,704
Other donations		250		-
Interest received		2		7
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>		<u><u>10,733</u></u>		<u><u>10,003</u></u>
<b>EXPENDITURE :</b>				
Bulletin - Printing & distribution costs	4,899		5,238	
Less : Advertising	<u>(1,611)</u>	3,288	<u>(2,156)</u>	3,082
Publications : Preparation, Printing & Distribution costs		5,866		5,599
Convention costs net of recovery		404		-
Other room hire & meeting costs		250		248
ABPS affiliation fee		260		250
Officers administration - Stationery, postage, telephone etc		100		71
Bank charges		17		102
Exhibition entry fees		-		150
Website		192		111
		<u><u>10,377</u></u>		<u><u>9,613</u></u>
<b>SURPLUS INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE</b>	£'s	<u><u>356</u></u>		£'s <u><u>390</u></u>

**BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31st DECEMBER 2017**

<b>ACCUMULATED FUND :</b>				
Balance at 1st January 2017		13,650		13,052
Add : Surplus for the year		356		390
Exchange conversion profit		16		208
	£'s	<u><u>14,022</u></u>		£'s <u><u>13,650</u></u>
<b>REPRESENTED BY :</b>				
Cash at banks		12,560		12,668
Debtors - amounts due to us		6,272		5,594
Prepaid expenses		-		700
		<u>18,832</u>		<u>18,962</u>
Less : Subscriptions received in advance	(2,704)		(2,851)	
Other creditors - Amounts due by us	<u>(2,106)</u>	(4,810)	<u>(2,461)</u>	(5,312)
	£'s	<u><u>14,022</u></u>		£'s <u><u>13,650</u></u>

**AUDITORS REPORT**

I hereby certify that the income statement for the year ended 31st December 2017 is in accordance with the books, vouchers and explanations given to me; and that the Balance Sheet at the 31st December 2017 shows the financial state of the British West Indies Study Circle as at that date.

J G M Davis FCA

*John Davis 19th March 2018*