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THE JOURNAL OF THE IRISH PHILATELIC SOCIETY

In this issue : Displays, Dobbs and Society Cup Competitions, Short Biographies (Norah Wright and Fr. John Brennan), Visit to Royal Philatelic Society, London, Desmond Scannell, an appreciation, Musical London Part 3.



Card with 30th Anniv of Carinthian Plebiscite set and special cancellation.

From the display of 6 September 2012.

Dear Member,

Herewith the third journal of 2012 again late. Since the last journal there has been no membership changes. The annual competitions (Dobbs and Society Cup) were well supported with a higher than expected number of entries in the Dobbs. In this issue we continue the series of short biographies and complete the series on Musical London. There is also an appreciation of the Late Des Scannell and a report on a visit to the Royal Philatelic Society London for the annual Royal Collection display.

DISPLAYS

The Balkan Peninsula

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5 July

This display was given by Tom Mc Carthy. Included in the display was Rumania Bulls Head vals, 1903 Opening of New Post Office, Bucharest issue, 1906 25th Anniv of the Kingdom, 1906 Jubilee Exhibition, Bucharest, 1919 Rumanian Post Office Constantinopel issues, German and Bulgarian Occupation of Rumania issues. Serbia 1890 King Alexander defin vals, 1903 Assassination of King Alexander issue, 1869-1879 Newspaper issues, Bosnia and Herzegovina 1906-12 Views defin vals, Occupation of Rumania, Austro-Hungarian Military Post, Turkish covers, South Bulgaria 1885 overprints, Bulgaria 1901 25th Anniv of Uprising Against the Turks, Allied Occupation Eastern Thrace overprints, Albania 1935 Royal Wedding issues.

Austria in the 1950s

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6 Sept

This display was given by Frank Mc Donald. It covered the period 1950-1959 but omitted the 1950-53 Air set, Postage Dues and definitive issues. Included in the display was the following : 1950 Balloon Flight cover Graz to Weiz, 1950 30th Anniv Carinthian Plebiscite set mint and used on card, 1952 card for Schonbrunn Menagerie Bicent, 1953 Christmas issue on cover with Christkindl cancel, 1954 Health Service Fund issue, 1955 10th Anniv of Re-Establishment of the Austrian Republic set, 1955 Balloon Flight cover with insert card Salzburg to Steyr, 1957 Sabena Airways flight cover Salzburg to Munich, 1959 Europa, 1959 International Hunting Congress, Vienna set, 1959 Stamp Day issue.

Dobbs and Society Cup Competitions

These competitions were held on Thursday 20 September and were very well supported particularly the Dobbs in terms of submitted entries. A total of 5 Dobbs entries - 2 Postal History, 2 Thematic and 1 Specialised were submitted while only 1 entry was submitted in the Society Cup Competition. The standard in the Dobbs Competition was ~~not~~ of a high standard. The jury for the competitions was Mr. Michael Murphy, Mr. Tom McCarthy and Dr. Des Norton. The following awards were made in The Dobbs Competition :

Postal History: F.E. Dixon Cup and Medal awarded to Frank Mc Donald for hsi entry "Austro-Hungarian Military Structure in World War 1".

Thematic: W.Kane Shield and Medal awarded to John Fitzsimons for his entry "The Red Cross".

Specialised : Stafford-Johnson Cup and Medal awarded Frank Mc Donald for his entry "Austrian Airmail Issues 1918-1953".

Pat Carey was awarded the John Mackey Cup and Medal for One Country European for his entry "End of Hyperinflation - Introduction of the Rentenmark".

The Dobbs Memorial Trophy and Medal was awarded to Frank Mc Donald for "Austrian Airmail Issues 1918-1953"

In the Society Cup Competition only 1 entry was submitted titled "Mussolini and the Classical World" which, the jury felt did not reach a sufficient standard for the award of the Society Cup. Instead the jury awarded the entrant Mr. Brian O'Connell a Society Medal.

MISS NORAH WRIGHT - A short biography by Héloïse Mitchell



Norah at an IPC dinner at the Clarence Hotel, Dublin in the early 1980s

Norah Kathleen Wright was born in Dunmanway, Co. Cork on 14 May 1910. She was an only child and her parents, Mr and Mrs William Wright, owned a pharmacy in the main street in Dunmanway, where Norah, after the completion of her schooling, worked as an assistant. She loved sports, especially tennis and badminton, and was still playing bowls at a very advanced age. A keen walker all her life, she had several cairn terriers over the years who shared this exercise with her.

When her mother died in 1941, Norah took on the care of her father and of her aunt who was living with them, while continuing to work in the pharmacy. In that year, she qualified in Home Nursing and later in First Aid. The family business was sold in the early 1950s after her father's death and Norah got employment with the Pigott family (of piano fame) in a holiday home they ran for their employees.

In the mid-1950s Norah moved to Dublin, where she held a number of posts as a lady's companion, starting in Booterstown where she remained until her employer died. She then moved to Dun Laoghaire, and later Dalkey, where she remained until the early 1970s. While in Dalkey she worked for Professor Stanford's wife (*Professor William Bedell Stanford was Regius Professor of Greek in TCD between 1940 and 1980 and Senator from 1951 to 1969*) and also for Norah McGuinness, the well known artist who lived in Killiney. At this time she did a "calligraphy" course in Dun Laoghaire VEC, feeling that this would enhance her displays and exhibits.

Her next move was to Glenageary, where she cared for an elderly lady who eventually went into a nursing home. About this time Norah inherited a bungalow in Springhill Park, Killiney from life-long friends, and for the very first time she had a home of her own.

Unlike most beginners, Norah, from when she was nine or ten, according to herself, collected the unusual for someone of that age – stamps on cover, postcards and the miscellaneous documents, now known as ephemera and Cinderellas, which most people would have consigned to the bin. Today's collectors are actively seeking this type of material as it is key in some modern exhibits and popular in displays, being so reflective of former times.

During her seventy-five years of collecting she amassed such a range of material that she could produce displays and exhibits of a surprisingly varied nature. Noted for her distinctive penmanship in the write-up of her collections, she was born too early to become part of the computer world and its endless research possibilities – for her it was the long hard slog.

Norah was a keen collector of Ships' Handstamps and cachets, especially those of ships that visited Ireland. In each case this involved a trip to the ship and a request to a crew member for their handstamp, if they had one. She was nearly always successful and consequently formed a very comprehensive collection of these markings.



Cachet of the Haakon VII, a Norwegian training ship that visited Dublin in February 1965 under the command of Captain AR Danielson

Perfins were always her first love and she did much study and research in this field, with assistance from members of the Security and Endorsement Society and the Perfin Society of GB. This resulted in the publication of the first catalogue of Irish Perfins.

Her most notable collections included:

- Handstruck Stamps of Ireland
- Irish Mileage Marks
- The Story of Ireland and her Troubles
- Irish Military Mail
- Paquebot Markings and Cachets
- Irish Varieties on Stamps
- Irish Postage Dues

- Ireland – the First Definitive Stamp Designs
- Perfins Worldwide, with particular emphasis on Ireland and Great Britain
- The United Nations
- Queen Victoria – Her Life and Times

I have established that Norah was a country member of the Irish Philatelic Society as early as 1944, but can find no record of when she first joined. She entered their annual competitions regularly, winning the coveted overall trophy (the Dobbs) in 1967, 1971, 1974 and 1988. She joined the Dublin Stamp Society in 1970, where she won the Mortimer Trophy in 1971, 1973 and 1976. She was a member of the Irish Philatelic Circle from its early days, having, I think, joined in 1961, and she particularly looked forward to the annual Conventions in London, Chester and Dublin. She was also a member of the Eire Philatelic Association, the FAI (Germany), the Perfin Society of GB and the British Thematic Association. President of the Irish Philatelic Society from 1979 to 1980, she served on its committee for many years, and also on that of the IPC.

Her displays in the very first STAMPA, which took place in 1972 and was non-competitive, included Irish postal history, forerunners, essays, proofs and some of her 1916 collection. She was honoured to be invited to show her 'Postal Troubles' in the Irish Philatelic Circle's display to the Royal Philatelic Society of London in 1979.

Norah was very eager to share the knowledge she had gained during her long years of collecting and displaying and had a great many philatelic correspondents. Her door was always open to visitors who were greeted with, "Come on in and I'll pop the kettle on". Her loyalty to her friends was one of her outstanding qualities, and once she made a friend it was for life.

In her last few years at home, I and a few of her other philatelic friends met in her house about once a fortnight to exchange news, discuss our various philatelic problems, such as difficult page layouts or text that just would not come right, and do some combined study and research. She thoroughly enjoyed these get-togethers which were a great benefit to all.

When she eventually had to go into a nursing home, her house in Killiney was sold and this saddened her greatly. Some of her very bulky collections also went under the hammer at the time, much to her regret as she had never disposed of anything except as a means of acquiring new material on an exchange basis or as a gift to fellow collectors.

Norah passed away peacefully on 27 January 1999 in St John's Home on the Merrion Road in Dublin 4.

AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- 1983 Signed the **Irish Roll of Distinguished Philatelists**
- 1984 Eire Philatelic Association **TE Field** award for her outstanding service to Irish philately
- 1996 Elected Honorary Life member of the IPC

BPE

- 1971 Silver - *Ireland and her Troubles 1853-1925*
- 1972 Silver
- 1975 Bronze

Stampex

- 1971 Silver - *Ireland and her Troubles*
- 1972 Bronze
- 1975 Bronze

Stampa

- 1973 Silver - *Ireland and her Troubles*
- 1973 Silver - *Paquebot Markings and Cachets*
- 1974 Vermeil - *Handstruck Stamps of Ireland*
- 1975 Bronze - *The Victorian Age*
- 1978 Bronze - *Perfins*
- 1979 Silver - *Irish Mileage Marks*
- 1980 Silver - *Military Mail*
- 1981 Silver and the Stamping Branch Trophy - *Ireland: The First Definitive Stamp Designs 1922*
- 1983 Bronze - *It's an Irish World*
- 1984 Gold, David Feldman Trophy and EPA medal - *Handstruck Stamps of Ireland*
- 1987 Vermeil - *Handstruck Stamps of Ireland*
- 1990 Vermeil and Charlie O'Neill Trophy - *Queen Victoria - Her Life and Times*

Internationals

- Ausipex 84 Silver-Bronze
- Stockholm 86 Silver-Bronze
- Praga 88 Silver Bronze - *Handstruck Stamps of Ireland*
- Philexfrance 89 Large Silver - *Handstamps and Cancellations of Ireland 1669-1899*
- New Zealand 1990 Vermeil
- Genoa 92 Bronze - *Queen Victoria - Her Life and Times*
- Finlandia 95 Silver - *Handstamps and Cancellations of Ireland 1669-1899*

PUBLICATIONS AND RESEARCH

Catalogue of the Perfins of Ireland

The Railway Perfins of Ireland. This comprehensive study brought much new information to light

Irish Censor Marks and Labels with the cooperation of other IPC members

VERY REVEREND CANON JOHN BRENNAN FRPSL (1915-2005)

A short biography by Héloïse Mitchell



Father Brennan on the Carmelite pilgrimage to Lisieux on 1 October 2003, just two years before he died

Father John Brennan was born on 30 October 1915 in Bawnmore, Johnstown, Co Kilkenny. The eldest of four, he had two brothers and a sister. He pursued his secondary education and seminary training in St Kieran's College - at that time St Kieran's had both a secondary school and a seminary co-located on the one campus; the seminary was closed in 1994. He was ordained on 11 June 1939 for the diocese of Ossory.

As there was then a surplus of priests in Ossory diocese, Father John was destined for a temporary assignment to the Australian mission in Sydney. The outbreak of World War II, however, put a swift end to his Australian dream. Instead of Sydney, he was assigned to the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle for a three-year term. He loved his term there and kept up contact with many of the parishioners in that diocese after he left. While there, it is said that he used to go on holiday in an old "banger" with other young priests, staying in presbyteries abroad for free!

After his return to Ossory, he served as curate in Lisdowney Parish for 13 years and Inistioge for 17 years. He was appointed Parish Priest of Conahy in 1972. In 1985 he became a member of the Diocesan Chapter with the title of Canon and was also transferred to Callan as Parish Priest. A deeply spiritual man, he cared sincerely about the welfare of his parishioners and of all those he knew, being admired and respected beyond the membership of his own Church, as his wide circle of friends testified.

While he enjoyed remarkable health throughout his life, he did develop a tendency to fainting attacks, which appear to have occurred only occasionally, often at the worst possible moment. During his tenure as Parish Priest in Conahy he oversaw the building of a new church in Jenkinstown, which was formally opened by the Bishop on St Patrick's Day in 1983. That day was to be his moment of glory, the culmination of his work and dreams, but there was disappointment. An important guest was to stay

with him in his house and so he emptied all the clutter out of the spare room into his own bedroom where it would be out of sight. On the morning of the opening, Father John had one of his fainting attacks, and when he regained consciousness he found himself in his own bed, surrounded by junk of all kinds, with his Bishop and doctor standing in the middle of all the disorder. His mortification was complete.

Despite a very busy schedule, Father John was an ardent collector. It is unclear when he first started collecting, though it appears that this dated from a very early age. He was interested in all the postage stamps of Ireland and their varieties but soon turned his attention to Irish Postal History, especially Bishop Marks, which brought about his long friendship with Fred Dixon, Bill Kane and many other philatelists.

He formed collections of the H & K Packet; Irish Air Mail Acceptances; forerunners and political labels; Atkinson's sketches and drawings for various Irish Stamps (1931 RDS, 1932 Eucharistic Congress and 1939 US Constitution); and the artwork for the Aikenhead issue. Father John also had a collection of Christmas cards, hand painted by his friend the Irish artist Tony O'Malley which he treasured.

His interest in high value overprints came about after a relative left him a hefty legacy, which Dr Stafford Johnson and Fred Dixon advised him to invest in high value Irish stamps. He took their advice and went on to become the foremost collector of his generation of the high value Irish overprints.

Father John was the first person to exhibit high value overprints at an international, and he went on to enter many competitions. When preparing his stamps for exhibition he enlisted the help of Michael O'Leary of Graiguenamanagh, a gifted scriptwriter.

His very comprehensive knowledge of all aspects of their printing varieties led to his extensive research on the ways of identifying these and on the re-entries to be found on them. One of his discoveries was on the Bradbury Wilkinson 2/6d (Plate 2A, Row 7 / Stamp 1) which is known as the **Brennan** re-entry. This has extensive doubling of all vertical lines of the shield (especially of the upper section) and of Britannia's helmet. There is also doubling on the outer north-east frame line from the top and down towards the level of the shield.

Before announcing this discovery, he searched for it on other British Commonwealth high values and his findings were published in Feldman's *Handbook of*

ish Philately (1968). He was the main contributor to the sections on the high value overprints in this publication.

Father Brennan was a customer and a friend of the London stamp-dealer Charles Nissen. Following Father John's discovery of the Brennan re-entry, he collaborated with Charles Nissen in the discovery and publication of the re-entry known as the Nissen-Brennan re-entry.

While working in Newcastle, Father John used to visit London, staying in Dulwich and on one such visit he bought a key item for his overprint collection – the lower half-sheets of the 1935 re-engraved high values with the flat accent variety on row 9 / Stamp 2. He had wanted to buy the BL blocks of four as he had very little money but was told by the Strand Stamp dealer that he had to buy the half-sheets – but at 10% under face! These half-sheets remain unique.

The Irish Philatelic Study Group (IPSG), of which Father John was a founder member having joined the embryonic group as early as the mid-fifties, was affiliated to Congress. At the 1962 Congress held in Worthing, they gave a display of Study Group material, under the name of the Group. This display was divided into three sections representing the three member areas. As reported in the September 1962 Journal published by the IPSG, the Irish Areas section "consisted of a brilliant display by Father John of the high value overprints". The other two sections were presented by Brian de Burca and TE Field, both of whom lived in Great Britain.

Father John had long cherished the hope that his collections would form a significant part of the projected Irish Postal Museum but this was not to be and his material was auctioned in Geneva by David Feldman.

Mr TE Field was President of the Irish Philatelic Study Group from its inception through the change of name to that of the Irish Philatelic Circle and up to his sudden death in January 1965. Father John was elected as the second President of the Circle and held that honoured position until 1968. After his election to this office Father John wrote "I have been informed recently that the Irish Philatelic Circle has elected me as its new President; this has come about due to the passing away of Thomas E. Field, our late President. I am fully conscious of the honour bestowed on me by the Circle, and I am very grateful for it."

Father John maintained his membership of the IPC right up until his death. He joined both the Irish Philatelic Society and the Dublin Stamp Society about 1961 and also continued as a member of both those societies to the very end. While a curate in

Inistioge Parish, he was a founder member and President of the South Eastern Philatelic Society which met in Enniscorthy on a regular basis. His appointment to Conahy in 1972 brought about his resignation.

After Stampa introduced a schools competition in 1975, he started a stamp club at St Brigid's secondary school in Callan, tutoring the pupils and encouraging them to enter Stampa; he continued to mentor them for as long as he was able. The college first won the Windsor Motors Challenge Cup in 1987, retaining it until 1994 and was awarded the coveted Young Philatelist of the Year trophy on several occasions. Apart from a brief lapse, the Club continued until the demise of the Young Philatelist of the Year competition in 2008. Father Brennan was very proud of the school's achievements and of the fact that Brigid Teehan, a past pupil, designed the 1987 Love Stamp, 'Postman on a Bicycle'.



Etaoin Holohan, Canon Brennan, Joann O'Shea and Clodagh Holohan c1990

Father Brennan and Clodagh Holohan, the Art teacher and later Deirdre Kane, brought a coach-load of pupils to Stampa every year where they were delighted with the range of material available from the dealers for future entries. He was also involved with St Munchin's College in Limerick where he advised students with the mounting and presentation of their stamps and acted as a judge at their annual stamp exhibition/ competition. He frequently displayed various thematic subjects to both colleges.

Another great passion of his was local history, in which field he was considered an expert. A member of the Callan Heritage Society and of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society, he was a regular contributor to their journals. He was largely responsible for the publication of the *Coolagh - History and Heritage*, a history of Coolagh Church and the surrounding area, writing many of the articles in this 213-page publication. Just as he fostered stamp collecting in young people, so he organised local history competitions in both primary and secondary schools, guiding the students in the presentation of their projects and judging their entries.

He was a noted sportsman in his younger days, with a keen interest in hurling. He played on the St

Kieran's College senior team as corner forward, probably in 1932 and regularly attended the All-Ireland Finals in Croke Park until a year before his death. A keen golfer, he was President of Callan Golf Club and an Honorary Member from 1999.

As if all these hobbies were not enough, it appears he had a very good singing voice and a great interest in music and drama, setting up a drama society in Inistioge where he himself produced and directed the plays. His favourite song was "Keep Right on to the End of the Road", a motto he certainly followed in life. Inspired by the connection between Thomas Moore and the local area of Jenkinstown, he helped to organise Thomas Moore week-ends in Kilkenny and he promoted the annual Thomas Moore Competition for the Kilkenny schools.



Mr Brendan McGuinness (far right), managing director of Grants of Ireland Ltd admires The Stamping Branch Trophy presented to Very Rev John Brennan by Mr Terry Leyden TD, Minister of State at the Dept. of Posts and Telegraphs.

After retiring in 1991, Father Brennan remained in Callan, enjoying the wonderful care and attention of his housekeeper, Bridie Bergin. Originally employed for one month, she was to stay for 21 years, also helping him with church affairs and activities. Now that he had shed the duties and responsibilities of a parish, he was able to devote more time to his hobbies and introduce some of his friends to the places of local interest and beauty which meant so much to him.

As well as being a very cultured person, Father John was a very sociable, genial, affable and friendly man who had a very large circle of friends, all of whom he visited and corresponded with on a regular basis. In the foreword to *Coolagh – History and Heritage* his Bishop wrote "Some people, like him, get even better with age." How true! In an appreciation, written just after his death, Patrick Williams wrote "His innate modesty sometimes obscured the sheer goodness of a man of great personal warmth and charm. A considerate and helpful correspondent, he was always ready to help others. It was a privilege to have known him, to have learned so much from him, and to have enjoyed his friendship over the years."

I will end by quoting Deirdre Kane, Art teacher in St

Brigid's, who wrote of him, "How do you measure kindness, commitment and honest endeavour. Father Brennan was a learned man, a man of humility and grace and a friend to all. He was passionate about collecting stamps, but even more passionate about sharing his knowledge, his resources and his time to show children another world – a world of countries and kingdoms, art and literature, space exploration and travel. That was his gift to the girls at St Brigid's."

Father John Brennan died unexpectedly in Dublin on 11 October 2005, while undergoing stent surgery in St Vincent's Hospital.

AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

1977 Winner of the Dobbs Memorial Trophy
1979 Exhibited at the IPC display in the Royal in London, of which he was a member.

1980 Judge at Stampa
1981 Winner of the Dobbs Memorial Trophy
1982 Signed the Irish Roll of Distinguished Philatelists

1985 Judge at Stampa

BPE

1969 Silver-Gilt - *High Value Overprints 1922*

Stampex

1972 Bronze
1975 Bronze
1976 Silver - *Ireland 1922 High Value Overprints*

Stampa

1974 Silver - *Irish Bishop Marks*
1975 Silver-Gilt - *Irish Overprint Constant Varieties*
1976 Silver-Bronze - *Irish Stamp Designs by George Atkinson R.H.A.*
1977 Bronze - *Irish Postal History*
1981 Silver - *Irish Acceptances for the first Air Mails*
1982 Gold, David Feldman Trophy and Stamping Branch Trophy - *Irish High Value Overprints*
1989 Gold and David Feldman Trophy - *The 1922 Irish High Value Overprints with their Varieties*

Internationals

1970 Philypia Silver
1980 London Silver - *Stamps of Ireland with Varieties – the 1922 High Value Overprints*
1986 Stockholm Silver - *Seahorse Overprints 1922-1935*
1989 Philexfrance Large Silver - *High Value Overprints*
1992 Granada Large Silver - *Irish High Value Overprints 1922-35*

The author wishes to thank Father Michael Noonan, Patrick Williams, Sister Assumpta of the Convent of Mercy in Callan and Deirdre Kane of St Brigid's College for their help with this article.

During the week of 10 to 16 Sept I was in the UK and whilst there was fortunate to be able to attend the 1pm meeting of the Royal Philatelic Society, London on Thurs 13th. This was the first meeting of the new season, and is open only to Fellows and Members as part of the Royal Collection was as usual shown.

This year a Pacific Selection was shown being mostly to 1935 from the "red albums" used during the reign of George V as well as 12 frames of King George VI material. The territories covered were Fiji, Samoa, Cook Islands, British Solomon Islands, New Hebrides, Gilbert & Ellice Islands and Pitcairn Island. A total of 107 Fellows and members attended the meeting.

Among the items shown from Fiji were the Fiji Express stamps, the original 1870 printings on quadrille paper and the 1871 printing on batonne paper with reconstruction sheets. The 1872 stamps overprinted in Sydney with a sheet reconstruction of the One Penny/2 Cents. 'V R' overprints were also shown as was an 1874 circular from the Chief Secretary's Office to the Colonial Secretary, Tasmania regarding the ceding of Fiji to Great Britain and outlining the postal arrangements. Artwork and proofs for the King George VI issue of 1938-1956 was shown led off by the initial artwork showing King Edward VIII.

Items from Samoa included some of the extensive holding in the collection of Samoa Express stamps including complete sheets. German control of the Western Islands was shown with the standard German stamps overprinted "Samoa" to 50pf and the "Yacht" type stamps to 5m with a number of varieties including double overprints along with the inverted 2 1/2d on 20pf and 1s on 1M.

Material from the Cook Islands included the 1899 "One/half/penny" overprint on the 1d and inverted overprint. The 1935 Silver Jubilee issue was also shown with 1d value in a block of 4 with the narrow 'K' in 'King', 2 1/2d value in a block of 4 with narrow 'E' in "George", 6d value also in block of 4 with narrow 'N' in 'King' and a cover addressed to George V with this variety shown.

Material from the British Solomon Islands included the 1907 issue showing proofs of each value and the issued stamps. Imperf between between pairs for the 2d, 2 1/2d, 6d values also featured. X The 1914 George V High values were shown as well as the Silver Jubilee stamps and cover to the King. The 1939 King George VI material included the artwork and colour proofs of both Waterlow and De La Rue.

Material from New Hebrides included the Australasian New Hebrides Company stamps in two values issued in 1897. The 1908 issue included an example of the 1d in pair, one without overprint. A 1920 example of the 1d overprint inverted on 5d value featured. Artwork for the 1938 issue was shown. Colour trials and issued stamps in both English and French versions were included in the display. The 1938 postage due stamps in both English and French versions also featured.

The Gilbert & Ellice Islands material shown included the first stamps for the Protectorate being Fiji stamps overprinted Gilbert & Ellice/Protectorate. Also shown was a technically unofficial overprint in 1916 on the 2 1/2d tree stamp and 1d George V stamp to meet a local need on Funafuti. The George VI material shown included the full range of material for the 1939 issue, artwork, proofs and issued stamps.

The display concluded with Pitcairn Island which, included the artwork, proofs and colour proofs for the 1940 George VI definitive issue.

At 5pm out of respect for Her Majesty attendees congregated in the large library for the formal part of the meeting. Normally frames are pushed back to the sides of the meeting room for this. The formal business included the reading for approval of the letter of thanks to Her Majesty for the display which, is addressed to the Privy Purse. Following this we enjoyed the usual wine and nibbles served by the House staff. The day was most enjoyable and the display was breathtaking and spectacular.

Desmond Scannell (1943 – 2012)

Des was born in Dublin on 16 November 1943 and educated at Blackrock College. He excelled in English, Maths and French and graduated from UCD with degrees in Economics and in Maths and Science.

He spoke French, Portuguese and other continental languages and was keen to practise these at every opportunity, quite often by telephone. He had a passion for travel and always tried to speak to people abroad in their own language, usually doing a refresher course at home before leaving.

His father, Joseph Scannell, was Secretary of the Department of Posts & Telegraphs for many years, and a keen stamp collector. Both his parents were excellent bridge players and passed this skill on to Des and his brothers, Paul and David. His father was a founder member of the Elm Park Bridge Club, and one of Des's proudest achievements was winning his father's annual trophy 12 times.

Des never fully made the 21st century in that he had no mobile phone and no television. He preferred to spend his time doing stamps, playing bridge and taking photographs. He had talked of getting one of his brothers to give him a crash computer course so that he could buy and sell stamps on eBay.

His main collecting interests were Ireland, British Commonwealth, especially the Pitcairn Islands, Papua New Guinea and Turks and Caicos. A member of the Portuguese Philatelic Society, he and Carmel attended the 50th AGM in Lisbon in April of this year. On his return he told me that he intended to study and mount his classic stamps of Portugal of which, thanks to his father, he had quite an accumulation. Though he was not keen on entering competitions, Des was always willing to display to the society and quick to praise other people's displays. He won the IPS Novice Trophy in 2007. I think this was the only society competition he had ever entered.

Many of you will remember his chocolate box of 'stamp goodies' on offer at IPS meetings, upgraded to a large biscuit tin in more recent times. He was never short of stamps and covers to sell, having inherited his father's collections and because he probably bought as much, if not more, than he sold!

Des was appointed Vice President of the Irish Philatelic Society at the last AGM but, sadly, died suddenly on 24 May, exactly two weeks after chairing his first meeting.

May he rest in peace.

Héloise Mitchell

Mendelssohn manipulated the levers of influence through London-based friends such as pianist Ignaz Moscheles and a stream of performing emissaries, who included the remarkable violinists Ferdinand David and Joseph Joachim. He steered public taste towards classically sanitized performances of Beethoven and Schumann and away from the wilder shores of Liszt and romanticism. A generation of British composers, from William Sterndale Bennett to Arthur Sullivan, were schooled in Mendelssohn's Leipzig.

Wagner returned to London once more in 1877 aiming to recoup losses from the Beyrouth 'Ring' at eight mass concerts in the Royal Albert Hall. Over the years Liszt had helped make him respectable and the conductor Edward Jannreuther formed a London Wagner Society to advance his cult, particularly among a growing colony of German mercantile immigrants. "Lohengrin" was the first of his operas to reach Covent Garden and "Tannhäuser" was something of a hit, when sung in Italian.

Wagner's physical presence in 1877 served to rally support. The novelist George Eliot and poet William Morris were much impressed. Edward Burne-Jones painted a famous portrait; Queen Victoria summoned him to Windsor. The younger generation was infatuated with Wagner, and a 20-year old critic called George Bernard Shaw wasted no time to extol him at Brahms's expense. London staged its first "Ring" cycle in 1882, before any other capital city except Munich, Vienna and Berlin. A second "Ring" under Gustav Mahler's direction was staged in 1892.

Puccini and Verdi were hugely popular at the dawn of the 20th century, as were Greig and Tchaikovsky. Sibelius emerged as the symphonist to simulate. Yet the strongest undercurrent in the rebirth of English Music was an "entente Cordiale" with France. Ever since the Franco-Prussian War chased Napoleon III and Charles Gounod to London as refugees, a musical bond had formed between the neighbours as an antidote to German Power. Saint-Saëns wrote the most durable of his symphonies for London, and Gabriel Faure arrived with charming incidental music for Maurice Maeterlinck's symbolist play, "Pelleas et Melisande". Debussy, forced to retreat from a Parisian love-tangle crossed the Channel to compose "La Mer".

Let us now look at the other 19th and 20th century composers who visited London, where they stayed and what, if, anything is known about them during their visit or visits.

Bela Bartok, the Hungarian composer made his mark with two recitals in 1924 at the Aeolian Hall, Bond Street now long since demolished. He usually stayed in the South Kensington home (7 Sydney Place) of Duncan Wilson, His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Factories, and his wife, Freda, repaying their hospitality with piano lessons.

Leonard Bernstein ("West Side Story") stayed at the Savoy Hotel in the Strand.



Claude-Achille Debussy stayed at the Hotel Cecil in the Strand in 1902 and 1903. On two subsequent visits he lived at 46 Grosvenor Street, W1, now the Japanese Embassy.

Antonin Dvorak stayed at 12 Hinde Street, Manchester Square, W1, the home of Oscar Beringer. He also stayed at the Langham Hotel at the foot of Portland Place. He conducted in the Royal Albert Hall in Kensington.



George Gershwin. In 1924 the year of "Rhapsody in Blue" he spent three months at 10 Berkeley Street, W1, working on a new show "Primrose" in which one number is entitled "Berkeley Street and Kew".

Percy Grainger, the Australian composer stayed at 16 Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, SW 3 in 1902 where he composed a well known song "An English Country Garden".

Leos Janacek stayed at the Langham Hotel from 29 April to 8 May 1926.

Gustav Mahler stayed at Keyser's Royal Hotel, 69 Torrington Sq. Bloomsbury, Wx, WC 1 and 22 Torrington Place, WC1, nearby (both demolished) on his only visit, when he conducted the 1892 "Ring" cycle at Covent Garden.



Maurice Ravel stayed at 14 Holland Park, W11, with the singer Louise Alvar-Harding on visits between 1922 and 1932. In 1909 he lodged at 13 Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, SW3 with his pupil Ralph Vaughan Williams.

Camille Saint-Saëns stayed at 49 George Street, W1, when he gave the world premiere of his organ symphony in May 1886 at the Royal Albert Hall. Sir Henry Wood was his host in 1902 at 4 Elsworthy Road, Hampstead, NW3.

Jean Sibelius ("Finlandia") stayed twice at the Langham Hotel.

Igor Stravinsky stayed at the Savoy, the Dorchester and the Ritz Hotels.

Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky stayed in 1889 and 1893 at the Dieudonne Hotel (later, the Eccentric Club) on Ryder Street. His ballet "Swan Lake" was danced for the first time in Western Europe at the Alhambra Music Hall (now the Odeon) Leicester Square.

Richard Wagner lived at the King's Arms, Old Compton Street, Soho in 1839, at 22 Portland Terrace, Regent's Park in 1855 and at 12 Orme Square, Bayswater in 1877. None of his residences survives.

