THE ASSOCIATION OF SUSSEX PHILATELIC SOCIETIES

Founded 1947 Affiliated to the Association of British Philatelic Societies

ASPS NEWS *July 2026*

Compiled and edited by Malcolm Green meridian35@btinternet.com



Awaiting the start of the afternoon session

ASPS SYMPOSIUM: 10 JUNE 2026

The Association is to be congratulated for arranging the first such meeting for affiliate societies. Some 25 members of Sussex clubs gathered at the Birch Hotel, Haywards Heath for a day of listening, learning and talking.
The programme and distinguished speakers had long been known, and the title 'Symposium' had been chosen to reflect that the meeting was intended to engage participants, and not be a one way presentation of philatelic displays as becomes the regular club meeting. Arriving in time for coffee ahead of the meeting, the convivial nature of the day was established, as club members greeted each other.

After welcoming everybody, ASPS President, John Bushell, introduced the first speaker..

Birthe King gave this presentation, *Social & Historical aspects in Open Philately.*
Open Philately broadens the range of exhibiting, allowing collectors to include items from other fields to support and develop philatelic material. There are guidelines for entering this type of entry into competition, which must have at least 50% philatelic material. Birthe proceeded to illustrate the concept by showing several philatelic items, not unsurprisingly relating to Denmark, and explained how the story and relationship between each item could be established from research, and supporting documents.

David Beech was next, giving a talk to introduce the concept of '*Context Philately',* encouraging the collector to broaden the scope of a collection by setting it in a wider context, to give a better

understanding of the philatelic material. David supported this by citing five examples which showed how this approach could be used (see reference below). In brief, David was describing what many collectors already do, but by recognising this and giving it a name he was giving credence to this way of developing a collection. It was thought that less than 1% of collectors participated in competitive philately but the rules of competition would prevent a 'context display' from scoring high marks, and he emphasised that a collection is what the owner wants it to be and collectors should be encouraged to follow this path. David posed several questions, and several strands emerged in discussion, particularly what local societies did. It was suggested that societies were too introspective. They could do more to attract a broader interest and should be presenting stamp collecting in a different way, to non –philatelic groups, via exhibitions and the media. It was also suggested that presenting philately to a broader audience should be considered from the top, through the national organisations (RSPL, ABPS, NPS) and the regional and county associations, and definitely should be considered at local society level.. It was pointed out that delivering a display (or talk) does not always come naturally, and guidance could be offered. This talk was well placed on the programme, as discussion continued over the lunch break.

Resuming at 2.15pm, the afternoon began with The ***Award of Merit from the Association of British Philatelic Societies*** *to Mike Slamo, and a presentation to Grace Davies from* ***ASPS .***
See below for further details.

The meeting continued with the presentation from **Chris King:**
He began by showing a single pre stamp cover with various markings and asking (and answering) the questions 'Hvad, Hvornar, Hvor, hvordan og hvorfor' ('What Why Where When and How'). This not only continued the theme of the day, but also underlay Chris' display which he introduced, and we were then able to view.

The display, *Anglo-Danish postal history from 1800 – 1875*, had been awarded a Large Gold Medal at the recent Boston International Exhibition. It showed different routes between England and Denmark and how postage rates changed over the period. Each cover was fully written up, illustrating the route taken and how postal costs changed as communications improved, culminating in the universal rates of postage introduced by the establishment of the General Postal Union (later UPU).

To close the meeting Richard Nowak gave a vote of thanks to all the speakers on behalf of ASPS, and a special mention to Jim Etherington who had organised the day.

With thanks to two other delegates for their observations on this report

- The reference to David Beech's paper, mentioned in the report*, is repeated here:*
  www.rpsl.org.uki/Portals/0/RPSL/Beech

The ASPS committee is yet to meet to deliberate on the event, which will no doubt be reflected in the minutes of their meeting, distributed to Clubs and Societies in due course. It should be remembered that these things don't just happen, but take a lot of work to put together and organise. The brunt of this was borne by Jim Etherington.
There were several points from the discussion which could be picked up in subsequent issues of *NEWS*

PRESENTATION TO FORMER ASPS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

ASPS President, John Bushell, began the afternoon proceedings with the announcement that Mike Slamo was to be presented with the ABPS Award *of Merit,* and much to the surprise of the recipient, a special award from the ASPS Committee to Grace Davies.
John introduced each award:

MIKE SLAMO: *Over the years ASPS had nominated several people to APBS for the Award of Merit which recognised contribution to organised philately at a local level. We now have another recipient of this national award. Mike Slamo has served ASPS as treasurer for 29 years, and also been a judge for competitions. He has been a long standing contributor to organised philately for club and federation. Mike started at Shoreham Philatelic Society and lately Adur Stamp Club in 1986. He became their treasure about 1989 and held that position up to 2025. That is give or take nearly 40 years of service.*
He then called upon Nigel Gooch from ABPS to present Mike with his framed certificate.



Mike (left) with his certificate

GRACE DAVIES: John Bushell said ASPS *would like to show its appreciation to a retired committee member who took on a role and made it into a highly organised and nationally recognised part of collecting stamps and postal history. I am, of course, talking about Grace Davies, who with the help of others started organising meetings with the intention of assisting collectors to show their material at local, county, and national level, and promoting competition between clubs, federations and at*

national exhibitions. This started in 2011.
I am sure there are people in this room who have benefitted from Grace's expertise, and won medals and certificates which has enhanced their collecting and broadened the knowledge of those who viewed their displays.

He asked Birthe King to make the presentation to Grace on behalf of ASPS in recognition of her long service and contribution to Sussex philately



Birthe King (left) with Grace Davies

- Before moving on to news from Societies, congratulations should be offered to Sussex member Peter Cockburn FRPSL, who was also awarded a Large Gold Medal at the recent Boston International.
- The ASPS Executive Committee has been working hard this year, not least on the meeting reported here, but 'behind the scenes' on redeveloping the ASPS website, and of course the well established Stamp & Postcard Fair at Ardingly.
- In connection with this, ASPS Secretary, Jim Etherington, has been in touch with all affiliated societies to invite a one frame display from each society to be displayed at the Fair.

He writes: *Since the demise of the annual ASPS competitions, the only displays on view at our Stamp & Postcard Fair at Ardingly have been the British Thematic Association's competition entries. This was raised at an ASPS Committee meeting, and it was agreed to invite societies to ask if one of their members would like to mount a 16 page display. Invitations went out to clubs at the beginning of*

May, and five have already responded positively There is still time to let the secretry know, by the end of August , if your society would like to participate. Remember this is not a competition, there are no rules to comply with, so the display may be totally of the member's choosing.

SOCIETY MATTERS: It is the time of year when most societies take a break over the summer period and those that follow the "academic" year may have had a recent AGM. Please send me information about your future programme etc., so that I can include some details from your club in *NEWS* from time to time.

After the last issue I heard from **Chichester & District Philatelic Society**, who sent a report on their competition evening. The list of entries was both large and impressive. I cannot include all the details, but a list of topics will give a strong indication of the depth of members interests:
Significant Reforms & Developments in the UK up to 1840, Handstamps to Adhesive Postage Stamps 1840-1859, Postmarks on the Penny Red, Pre-Decimal Machins, Danish West Indies 1856-1917, Tanganyika Maritime Mail, King Edward VIII, and some thematic entries: *Parrots, Albert Descaris (engraver 1901-1987), The Lords Taverners .* Clearly a successful evening, which must have kept the judges busy. Chichester also submitted a report to Gibbons Stamp Monthly, which was printed on their Society page.
Sussex Postal History Society held their AGM in May, with the following post holders elected: Andy Gould (Chairman & Librarian/Archivist), Norman Sansom (Vice Chairman & Webmaster), David Start (Treasurer & Membership Secretary), Eric White (Secretary &B Programme Secretary), Philip Kaye (Journal Editor).
The Society meets bi-monthly, with the next meeting on 8 July, when Derek Leathers will give a display on Sussex Postcards. Further information can be found on their recently launched website: https://sussexpostalhistory.wixsite.com/sphs
Royal Tunbridge Wells Philatelic Society continue meeting, but with only one meeting each in July & August, and I note that their autumn Programme includes visits from Chris King (23 September) and David Beech (11 November) . Details from their website.
East Grinstead Stamp and Postcard Club resume on 8 September with their autumn Auction. Two recent members evenings, one on postcards and one on stamps were extremely successful, thanks to wider pariticipation.

WAR & PHILATELY. Outside of the county**, The Forces Postal History Societ**y has its annual Stamp & Postal History Fair on 8 August at Banstead Community Hall, with displays as well as dealer tables.

AND FINALLY... and definitely not least, **The South of England Stamp & Postcard Fair** organised by **ASPS and** held in the Norfolk Pavilion at Ardingly Showground is coming up on 10 October. Fliers have just been sent out to all the Sussex clubs. It is important that clubs think beyond themselves and place them locally (libraries, community centres etc) to attract the attention of the general public.
Kevin Dillistone, the Fair organiser, would also like donations for a Bid Board, and the Tombola. Contact him at dilllyboy4744@gmail.com

The next issue of *NEWS* will be at the beginning of October, just before the Ardingly Fair, and the ASPS AGM.
information may be sent to the editor at any time, at the email address on the first page. Items are gleaned from various sources, and may not reflect the view of ASPS.