THE ASSOCIATION OF SUSSEX PHILATELIC SOCIETIES

Founded 1947 Affiliated to the Association of British Philatelic Societies

ASPS NEWS *January 2026*

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WELCOME TO *ASPS NEWS*: This is a new venture in communication with societies, it comes at the beginning of a new year, when meetings are restarting what I hope will be a successful year for all clubs and societies.
The Association has had a difficult time over recent years, but is trying hard to leave this behind. Consideration being given to a revised website, and the plan to hold an All Day meeting (see below) as a replacement spring event, are all signs of intent.

The President of the Association has written the following message:

This is the first edition of what ASPS hope will be a voice piece for clubs and ordinary members of Sussex philatelic societies.

Malcolm Green, from East Grinstead, has agreed to produce the new format of NEWS which will be sent electronically four times a year to all club secretaries and interested parties who are involved with stamps and postal history within Sussex.
The aim is to promote what's happening in your area regarding speakers and events. This will only be successful if you, the club secretaries and programme secretaries, let Malcolm know who is giving displays to your society. Sometimes clubs have special events and speakers which could be put out to a wider audience. By increasing visitor numbers it could bring in more financial income and create a new interest in a particular sphere of collecting.
Through the medium of a newsletter and the website the Association will be able to build bridges between clubs and members.
All this will take time, but along with the help of clubs and individuals we can succeed in making it a success. It's been a long time since ASPS News last appeared. Now is the time to put back the years and keep everyone informed of what's happening with our hobby in Sussex.
The newsletter will have space for news of meetings and items of general interest and local news sent in by clubs. The information will not only be of interest our members but to the wider readership. Please, as President, I ask you to support Malcolm in this venture: let's do away with old gripe we don't know what's happening in ASPS and Sussex. Now is the time for change so let's make it happen.

John Bushell (President, ASPS)

FROM THE EDITOR: John has said much of what I would have written, but let me emphasize that this is intended to be a two way mechanism. Inevitably this first issue will be dependent on limited information. I can only write what I know about, so my initial message to all societies is to let me know what is important to you. I can't include every club programme, though this may be possible in time, within a revised ASPS web site. However I will be pleased to include specific references. I would also like to hear about "Your Society", we may all glean ideas from such interaction.

CIRCULATION & FREQUENCY: *NEWS* will be issued four times a year.The intention is that *ASPS NEWS* will be emailed to the secretary of all affiliated clubs, for further distribution to all club members. In most cases this can be done easily by email, but can be printed out to take to club meetings and/or posted as necessary. The important point is that *NEWS* should be a communication medium for all. I am entirely sympathetic to those who do not use email, but acknowledge that this is an easy (and cost free) means of communication. Indeed my own computer skills are limited, which will be evident from my presentation of *NEWS*, though I hope to learn and improve as I go along.

UPCOMING EVENTS:
The **SPRING SYMPOSIUM, Organised by ASPS** is another new venture. You will have already received advance notice about this. This will be on Wednesday 10 June 2026 at the Birch Hotel Haywards Heath. Don't be put off by the grand title. This is in essence an all day club meeting with several speakers and displays from outside the Sussex circuit. Open to all ASPS affiliated club members, this cuts across the conflict which arises when there are presentations alongside an active stamp fair.
There will be a charge of £20, but this will include lunch/refreshments, with the overall costs subsidised by the Association.
This should be in your diaries already: final details and booking form are expected shortly.

MID SUSSEX PHILATELIC SOCIETY have their annual auction on 9 February at their usual meeting place in Lindfield. I'm sure the auction list will be sent out to Club Secretaries, and of course you are welcome to attend in person. I also note from their programme that on Wednesday 29 April **Bill Hedley** will be presenting **Communication in the Republic of Venice to 1797**, yes that date is right. This will undoubtedly include material that was displayed in the Court of Honour at last year's Europhilex exhibition in Birmingham … and you can see and hear Bill locally in Sussex.
EAST GRINSTEAD STAMP & POSTCARD CLUB only meets monthly in the afternoon during the winter months. The first meeting on 27 January has a display on **Central Europe.** The club reverts to twice monthly evening meetings from April with it's own auction on 28 April. With wide distribution of the list of lots, the club attracts bidders from outside the club, often to the benefit of vendors (and the club).

Having just written that I want to hear from other clubs, without prompting I have received this piece from the secretary of **ADUR STAMP CLUB:**
As one of the clubs that meets in the evenings, on the third Monday of the month, Adur occasionally faces challenges in attracting guest speakers, particularly during the winter months. To ensure our programme remains varied and enjoyable we offer a balanced mix of meeting formats throughout the year. Our calendar typically includes two auctions, five

members evenings typically based around 10 sheet displays, and four meetings featuring a nn invited speaker. This blend of activities provides plenty opportunities for members to share their collections, learn from others and enjoy a sociable evening. Members are being asked to bring up to 10 pages on 'Recent Acquisitions' to the January meeting, with the subject 'Family History in February (3 pages)..

The South Coast Group of THE BRITISH AIR MAIL SOCIETY is holding an all day meeting on Saturday 7 March, at West Blatchington Windmill, Holmes Avenue, Hove BN3 7LE. Josh Sporr, well known within Sussex philatelic circles, is leading the presentations. The flyer says lunch provided, but Josh does need to know who is attending. Contact him: joshspoor54@gmail.com

For location and dates of society meetings and contact details the information can be found in the **ASPS Directory**.
MAKE SURE YOUR CLUB DETAILS ARE UP TO DATE: Society secretaries should have received a request from the ASPS Secretary to update their information for the 2026 Directory.
Similarly Societies will have received a request from the ASPS Treasurer for the Affiliation Fee for 2025-2026. If you haven't responded yet, do so now. Prompt response greatly assists administration.

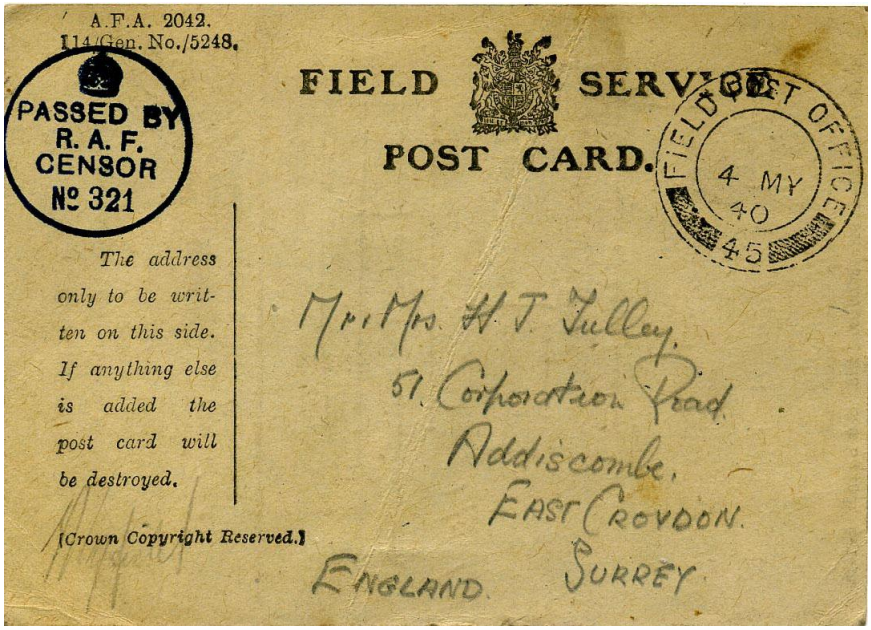
ZOOM MEETINGS: The ability to hold a "meeting" remotely is a beneficial aspect of this technological age, and gained prominence during the covid shutdowns when clubs could not meet. It offered an opportunity for displays to be presented to club members (and others) in the comfort of their own homes. This remains so, but should not be a substitute for the regular club meeting, although many clubs do include zoom presentations in their programme. I am not aware of any Sussex society which offers this option, and I would be pleased to hear the views of societies on this topic The East Grinstead club has connections with Dawlish Philatelic Society , and can access their monthly zoom meeting, usually from club members, but at least one has been from the USA.
In particular the **SOUTH EAST ENGLAND ON LINE PHILATELIC SOCIETY (SEEOPS)** was established in 2021 to arrange a programme of regular on-line meetings, and there are now two meetings per month. SEEOPS is a conventional society: there is an annual subscription, and anyone join, and get access to the schedule of presentations. From their 2025 programme the mix is much as any society would arrange… varied and interesting. The 2026 programme is not yet available at the time of writing. For further information go to www.seeops.org.

Slightly different, but another source of on-line displays is the **MUSEUM OF PHILATELY.** This gives access to a (increasing) number of presentations from the owners of national and international collections. Go to www.museumofphilately.com to see for yourself. I particularly enjoyed looking at the display of material from the 1890, 50th Anniversary of the Penny Black from John Davies [but then British Philatelic Exhibitions is one of my interests].

Whilst by its nature ASPS NEWS will be aim to be just that, there will be room for the occasional philatelic item, and I can include one this time, sent to me by Jim Etherington. Most societies will have had a presentation from Jim I'm sure, and will therefore know of his

World War II collections. Indeed articles by Jim were published in *Gibbons Stamp Monthly* in 2025.

A NEW DISCOVERY AFTER 85 YEARS: Jim Etherington writes:
While the RAF was in France at the beginning of World War II the mail from pilots and ground crew was censored in each unit by an officer appointed to undertake the task. After reading the contents of the message he would apply a circular censor mark (listed in published references as Type R1) used only by the RAF. These, like the censor marks used their military counterparts, were numbered and those used in France at this time are listed in the definitive reference Censorship in the Royal Air Force 1918-1956 (2nd edition), published privately in 2015 by Nic Colley and Ian Muchell, both members of the Forces Postal History Society.



I have been over recent years seeking a few missing numbers listed, searching the dealers' boxes and regularly checking on eBay. A few months ago I came across the item illustrated here on eBay. I dutifully checked those numbers recorded by Colley and Muchall and discovered the number I had found, "No 321", wasn't included. Having purchased the item at a very reasonable price, I sent a scan to Nic Colley who, to my delight, confirmed I had discovered a previously unrecorded number.

Even after 85 years something new can still be discovered.

AND FINALLY: I look forward to hearing from secretaries and society members with news and information for future issues of NEWS. Please contact me at any time. I anticipate sending out subsequent issues in April, July and October.

Any views and opinions expressed are those of the writer, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the ASPS Committee