

# CHANNEL ISLANDS SPECIALISTS' SOCIETY

## 71<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

### Officer' Reports

#### 1. **Chairman's report** by David Winnie

Since the last AGM, (and very first) held via Zoom on the 5<sup>th</sup> December 2020, the months have continued to be dominated by Covid – 19 but, at long last, there are shoots of normality beginning to be seen everywhere and in the Philatelic World.

For us, this essentially began in July with the Society successfully running a stand at MIDPEX where a good selection of our books was sold. Also in July, we were able to hold our first “live” meeting at the Royal which was also very successful. Given that lockdown had only just ended, a remarkable number of members ventured up to London, no doubt with a certain amount of apprehension, but it was not long before this dissipated. An excellent room auction was followed by a high level of displays which clearly established what our members had been doing during the lockdown! Hopefully, going forward, these “live” events will continue, and we propose a full programme of events for 2022 to include the postponed long weekend in Market Harborough.

Your committee has continued to be fully functional during the lockdown period with two Executive meetings and one Full Committee meeting, each held via ZOOM. We have also held some ad hoc ZOOM meetings to discuss important issues that required immediate attention and I am pleased to confirm that, as these have been so successful, we are to continue to use ZOOM for all of our committee meetings going forward, thereby saving the Society travel costs and the Committee Members substantial travel time. The bonus of ZOOM is that the Society was able to hold its first Members Meeting by this medium at which our President, Gerald Marriner, and Auctioneer, Nick Stuart, provided the excellent Presentations. Members we do not usually see face to face, including some from as far away as New Zealand and USA, were able to attend, and from the very positive feedback we have received another ZOOM members meeting will feature in our programme of events in the future.

I am delighted to report that our new Treasurer, Bryan Elliston, has settled into his role and committee life extremely well. As you will hear from Bryan, our Accounts and Banking is now fully “Electronic”. This has made this aspect of the Society's operation much more efficient and effective.

Continuing with the electronic theme, I can also confirm that further enhancements to the “look” and “feel” of the Society's website has recently taken place which I am sure you, the members, will like. Importantly, the site is now mobile responsive as between 10% and 15% of our website visitors are using mobiles to view the site. Navigation around the site has been made easier with an “all – new” menu on each page helping to identify which part of the website you are on and there is consistent styling across the board. This is a valuable Society resource and I strongly recommend that those members who do not visit the site on a regular basis, check it out as it is even more user friendly now and, more importantly, very informative.

The work on the major project to make our excellent Journal “searchable” continues at pace with Phase 1 fully completed. Journals from 2004 onwards have been fully indexed and “keyworded” with plans in place to digitise Volumes 23 to 31. Nick Stuart has kindly agreed to undertake this at the Royal Philatelic Society where appropriate equipment is available for us to use. We aim to continue with this large undertaking in bitesize chunks and my thanks go to the whole Executive Committee for their on-going work with this process.

During the pandemic, our auctions have taken place without interruption and have proved extremely successful in terms of the number of bidders participating and the amount of revenue acquired by the Society from sales. In addition, this year we held our first Postcard only auction which proved very popular. Therefore, another is planned for early next year. My thanks go to Gerald and Nick for the enormous amount of work needed to provide this important Society service.

It goes without saying that 2021 has continued to be a challenging period for everyone and the Society. Therefore, it is especially important for me to thank all my fellow Committee members for their wholehearted support during these difficult times. There are signs that the worst is now behind us, but I feel it would be wrong for any of us to be complacent, so please continue to stay safe and healthy.

## **2. Secretary's report by Richard Flemming**

The Covid-19 pandemic cause many problems for the Society, chiefly with the Society not being able to hold face-to-face meetings until July of this year. The 2020 AGM, which was held via Zoom, was well received so the Executive Committee decided to try a Members Meeting via Zoom, with two members providing on Saturday, 10<sup>th</sup> April. Again, this was well received, with several members from overseas, who would normally not be able to attend such meetings, linking up, despite significant time differences for some. Comments received post meeting has encouraged the Committee to arrange for a further Zoom meeting, probably between the 2022 Members Weekend meeting and 2022 AGM. Several projects are ongoing which will bring benefits to the members, including updating the website and digitising all the back issues of Les Iles Normandes and I would like to thank David Winnie and Ed Martin in taking these projects forward. Bryan Ellison, our Treasurer, has also been busy streamlining the accounts side of things, no easy task, and again I would like to thank Bryan for his efforts.

Enquires continue to roll in from members of the public, which I try to respond to by return of email. If I've struggled to find an answer, I have usually been able to contact one of the members to provide an answer.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow committee members, and you the members of the Society, for your continued support and hope that we can soon continue "business as usual" once the Covid-19 pandemic has passed, or is it something we will have to live with for the foreseeable future.

## **3. Treasurer's report by Bryan Elliston**

A standing point of business for the AGM is to seek approval for the previous year's accounts – that is, those for the year ending 31 December 2020. These accounts, being an Income and Expenditure Account and Statement of bank accounts comprising the Society's available cash reserves, have been approved by the Executive Committee.

As approved at the last AGM, an independent review of the accounts and supporting records has been undertaken and the reviewer has stated that they consider that the accounts, as presented, show a fair presentation of the financial results for the year.

The Society is in very good financial health. Cash reserves at the end of 2020 were £28,930.

An excess of income over expenditure of £3,728, compared with £217 in 2019, results mainly from a £3,000 reduction in expenditure – of which a £2,300 reduction in meeting and special event costs and a reduction in bank charges of £1,000 are the major contributors.

Total income of £7,486 comprises £4,582 of subscriptions and £2,283 from strong performances in auctions and packets. Book sales provided a profit overall, after covering full initial print costs of the Pioneer Aviation books and the associated postage costs of all sales.

Total expenditure of £3,758 included £1,270 for the Journal (2020: £1,152) and £443 for Committee expenses (2020: £847). Total website costs were £1,472, of which £618 related to

ongoing maintenance (2020: £445), which might be expected to arise at a rate of £400-600 per annum in future.

During 2020, the Society's banking arrangements gained the advantages of online banking services. The Society remains with Lloyds Bank and its bank account number remains the same but being online enables more efficient management of the Society's accounts.

The Society can now make payments by bank transfer, which are both quick and secure, and amounts received by bank transfer from Members and others get sent directly, quickly, and securely from the payee to the Society without the need to write and mail a cheque.

Whilst the Society will continue to accept payments by cheque or PayPal, electronic payment by bank transfer is encouraged for two reasons: firstly, it avoids the use of PayPal, which can result in a high percentage fee being payable by the Society or Member; and secondly, electronic payment is cheaper and more efficient for the Member than payment by cheque.

#### **4. Membership Secretary's report by Mark Bailey**

When I look at our membership data, on 6th October 2020, the Society had 245 members, and on the 26th August 2021, the Society had 241 members on its books. We have 13 members who joined (or re-joined) the Society since 6th October 2020. Thus, the slight reduction in membership during the year has been due to some people having sadly died, and a number of people who have chosen not to renew their subscriptions.

#### **5. Auction Secretary's report by Nick Stuart**

Since the last AGM, three postal auctions and one room auction have been held.

The CISS 2020 autumn auction had sales of £12,825 generated from 730 Lots which covered a wide range of material from Early Postal History, The Occupation of the Channel Islands including stamps, Red Cross, Feldpost, Internee and POW mail; The Liberation of the Islands; post 1945 Postal History and stamps; stamps of the smaller islands and a wide range of postcards including a large run of Sark LLs.

##### **The highlights were:**

A 1907 postcard with a very rare Conway St. Jersey sub-post office datestamp went for £160.

An unusual and rare bisect cover dated 18 FEB 1941 (after the use of Bisects has been banned) had a 1d 324 surcharge handstamp applied and the bisected stamp was not cancelled. This sold for £260.

POW material from the Channel Islands is rare, so a cover from the Mueller correspondence, sent from POW Camp 801 in Guernsey to Germany, fetched £160.

There was a large postcard section in the sale. The LL cards maintained their popularity with many cards selling well above their reserves.

##### **The CISS Postcard Auction February 2021**

This was the first time that a postcard only sale had been run due to the large number of cards being made available from members and member's estates. A very wide range of cards covering Aviation, Cows, Churches, Hotels, Militia, Novelty subjects, Potatoes, Railways, Shops, Motor Transport, Shipping and wrecks, as well as LL and Allix cards and a huge range of Jersey Views, attracted a large number of bidders generating sales of £5,285.

Such was the variety of cards on offer that most sold at or just above their reserves. As usual there were some surprising exceptions. and these were the LL and Allix cards.

**The highlights were:**

Unused LLs printed in the blue colour made for The Guernsey Press; LL 62, St Peter Port Constitution Steps and LL 116) sold for £40 & £60 respectively.

Allix Cards: No. 94 St Helier Parish Church B&W used went for £26; No. 107 St. Mary's Church B&W unused at £34; No. 129 Trinity Church B&W unused sold for £48

Jersey LLs with a glossy sepia finish sold for 4 to 5 times their reserves: (No. 20 St. Helier. The arrival of the Granville Boat went for £48; No. 45 St. Helier. Rock of Elizabeth Castle £22; No. 100 Corbiere Lighthouse £23; No. 179 The Big Grotto sold for £34.

Sark LLs attracted some ferocious bidding, all unused with green backs: No.55 Young Girl £85; No. 57 In the Field £110; No. 58 Harvest Times £55: No. 61 Young Sark Girls £170

**CISS Spring Auction 2021**

This general auction, with over 750 Lots, covered early Postal History, Occupation (Postal History, stamps, Red Cross messages, Feldpost, Internee and POW Mail), Jethou, Herm as well as modern Postal History and stamps and a wide range of postcards. The reserves were from £2 to £260 and attracted over 80 bidders who generated the highest level of sales to date of £13,528.

**The highlights were:**

An 1864 entire to France from Jersey with QV 1d reds with several cachets including an ILES C GRANVILLE datestamp which sold for £100

A 1906 postcard from France to Jersey with the French stamp cancelled with a fine JERSEY / FRANCE / MB datestamp and a Jersey PAQUEBOT handstamp went for £70.

As usual the Occupation material attracted a large number of bids with virtually all Lots being sold.

A Guernsey postcard dated February 1945 with a 2d bisect and 1d Arms (use of bisects were invalidated in 1941) was delivered with no surcharge being applied raised £55

All the occupation stamps from both islands sold well with the star Lot being a complete sheet of the Guernsey 2½d Arms from the 4th printing going for £325

Some unusual Feldpost covers were on offer: A military cover from Alderney to Vienna sold for £150 and a

1944 Feldpost cover sent from Jersey to Clifford Queree, who was a prisoner in Frankfurt, was hotly contested and sold for £220.

A rare German POW cover dated February 1946 sent by a German soldier in Guernsey to Germany had a single circle Camp 801 cachet was sold for £200.

The large range of covers with sub-post office datestamps was popular with the bidders. The highlight of this section was a 1958 FDC of the 3d Regional stamp which was sent to Canada. It has the very scarce Pleinmont Road datestamp and a registered label 0055. It sold for £275.

Another wide range of postcards including LLs and Allix cards were featured along with specific themes such as Shipping. A selection of blue printed Jersey LLs which are rarely offered in the auctions attracted many bidders.

No. 137 The Devil's Hole and No. 140 The Devil's Hole both sold for £190 each

The full lists of the prices realised for each auction can be found in the member's section of the CISS website under Auction Archive along with the descriptions and images.

The autumn 2021 auction will have a range of rare Red Cross material, early postal history and a good range of Occupation items and some modern material especially stamps and yearbooks plus some postcards. There will be something for all members.

In early 2022 we will hold another postcard only auction which will feature a huge range of cards, some at bargain prices!

### **Packet Secretary's report by John Triggs**

Packet circuit report for 2020-21 year. The packet circuit year runs from 1st September to 31st August 2021.

This year's packets have not been very good due to Covid-19 pandemic and not enough decent material coming forth to send out in the circuit boxes.

Twelve boxes have been sent out for the period and all now received back. Total sales for 2020-21 was £2,252-95p.

I am in the process now of preparing vendors letters and cheques, packet insurance and accounts for the society's auditors.

### **Press and Publicity Officer's report by Steve Wells**

#### **ADVERTISING**

##### **Costs**

The Committee agreed to placing a full-page colour advertisement in *The Airpost Journal* December issue of the American Air Mail Society to support promotion of the *Pioneer Aviation in the Channel Islands* two-volume book by Roger Harris, which was published by the society. The advertisement was designed by the author.

##### **Billings**

Our journal advertising rates were increased in 2019 to £22 for a half page, £35 for a full page and £50 for the outside back cover. A new position of the inside back cover was introduced at £40.

Grosvenor Auctions continued to take the premium rate outside back cover position, which David Gurney originally negotiated in 2015.

Our billings for 2020 in respect of journal advertising were £590 compared with £773 for 2019, a decrease in line with my expectations last year. Peter Mollett opted to reduce his advertising to one full-page position per journal rather than having both a commercial and a personal advertisement. Phil Dunn took a single position in the March 2020 issue. There were no auction house inserts booked.

I expect our advertising billings for 2021 to be much the same as 2020.

#### **MARKETING**

***Summer of Stamps Virtual Festival*** We participated in the *Summer of Stamps Virtual Festival* which took place from 9<sup>th</sup> July to 18<sup>th</sup> August on the [allaboutstamps.co.uk](http://allaboutstamps.co.uk) website as a Featured Society. The minimum price was £50. This initiative was organised by Matt Hill, Associate Publisher of *Stamp Collecting* magazine. Richard Flemming provided our content.

## **PRESS**

### **Press Releases**

I issued four press releases in 2020 covering the December 2019 Meeting; the Competitions Meeting; Auction NS12; and Publication of *Pioneer Aviation in the Channel Islands*. The releases were sent to *Gibbons Stamp Monthly*, *Stamp*, *Stamp Collecting*, *ABPS News*, *Linn's*, *Guernsey Press*, *Jersey Evening Post*; the Germany & Colonies Philatelic Society and the Germany Philatelic Society U.S.A.'s Third Reich Study Group (T.R.S.G.). The press release about the book was also sent to Michael L. Goodman – Editor of *Stamp Lover* – at the National Philatelic Society (N.P.S.), Mike Jackson – Editor of *The GB Journal* – at the Great Britain Philatelic Society (G.B.P.S.), Nick Halewood, Editor of *Geosix*, the journal of the King George VI Collectors Society and the B.B.C.'s *Channel Island News*.

Rachel Bellerby of *Stamp Collecting*, Keith Burton (Editor) of *ABPS News*, Mark Wingham at *Picture Postcard Monthly*; Rex Dixon (Editor) of *Germania* and Chris Kolker (Editor) of the T.R.S.G. *Bulletin* acknowledged receipt of the general press releases.

The *Jersey Evening Post* used the Competitions release in a full-page report on 4<sup>th</sup> March and *Stamp Collecting* used the Auction release in their June issue.

A copy of the Competitions press release was sent to Dr. Gilly Carr, Project Lead/Website Owner of the Frank Falla Archive website: this resulted in us being given permission to add this excellent resource to the Links page on our website.

A series of modified press releases were issued 26<sup>th</sup> October – 30<sup>th</sup> December regarding publication of *Pioneer Aviation in the Channel Islands*. These were sent to the British Air Mail Society (B.A.M.S.); Canadian Aerophilatelic Society; Internationaler Aero-Philatelisten Club; *Flight International*; *Airliner World*; *Aeroplane Monthly*; *FlyPast*; Jersey Aero Club; Guernsey Aero Club; the Dutch Aviation Society; Guernsey Post; Jersey Post; Alderney Flying Club; Forschungsgemeinschaft Großbritannien (FgGB); *Philatelie*; *The Gaspé Spec*; and *SBZ* [Swiss Stamp Journal].

Receipt was confirmed by B.A.M.S., Chris Hargreaves (Editor) of the *The Canadian Aerophilatelist*; Chris Clifford, (Editor) of *FlyPast*; Eveline Hawkin of Jersey Aero Club; Rachel Mackenzie of Jersey Post; David Chiswell of Alderney Flying Club; Theo Bauer of FgGB; Udo Angerstein of *Philatelie*; Diane Skinner of *The Gaspé Spec*; and Hans Schwarz of *SBZ*.

The *Jersey Evening Post* used the release as a Feature Article in their 29<sup>th</sup> October issue, an A4 flyer produced by Roger was used in *Air Mail News* [B.A.M.S.] November issue in the form of an advertisement (at no cost to the C.I.S.S.) and *The Canadian Aerophilatelist* included the press release in their December issue.

### **Book Review Copy Requests**

Several respondents asked about the availability of review copies. A paper copy was sent to Chris Clifford of *FlyPast* as this publication has a circulation of 26,000+. I investigated the possibility of producing digital review copies with Roger who explored this further and confirmed he could produce watermarked digital copies of the draft. These were sent to Matthew Toomey (G.B.P.S.) and David Rennie (*Gibbons Stamp Monthly* and *Philatelic Experter*). One was also offered to Brian Livingston (N.P.S. and King George VI Collectors Society) but not taken up.

Richard Flemming

Secretary