



Bird Stamp Society
Founded 1986

VIRTUAL Annual General Meeting

Held via WhatsApp Conferencing

Date: Friday, 21st October 2022

MINUTES

Attending via WhatsApp video:

Tony Statham – Chair
Mel West – General Secretary
Graham Horsman – Treasurer
Steve Strauss – Flight Editor
Gilly Christmas – Website Editor

Apologies:

Apologies were received from Steven Ardron (Membership Secretary) and Philip Cant (Packet Secretary) both of whom were unable to attend.

AGENDA ITEMS

ITEM 1 - Chair's Opening Statement

1a - As Chair, Tony Statham opened the meeting with a short report reflecting on the past year for the Society. He noted that the Bird Stamp Society had maintained its viability notwithstanding the external challenges that potentially impacted on members and our own finances, including the rising cost of living.

1b - He emphasised that whilst the AGM was again being held using electronic technology and that many members might not be able to participate, the Society nevertheless was open to hear members' views at any time and always welcomed their feedback and opinions.

1c - He thanked Committee members for their work in supporting the Society and welcomed the addition of two new members -

- Steve Strauss taking on the role of Flight Editor from Gilly Christmas, thereby enabling her to focus more fully on our website; and,
- Steven Ardron on taking over responsibility for Membership, allowing Graham Horsman to concentrate on our finances in the Treasurer's role.

A copy of the full text of the Chair's Annual Statement is attached as Appendix A below.

ITEM 2 - Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting

2a - The minutes of the AGM held on Wednesday, 3rd November 2021, also via WhatsApp video were noted and agreed as a true record.

2b - It was also noted that the main points arising from those minutes had been shared with all members in the December 2021 edition of Flight magazine, and that a full copy of the minutes were available to members on the Society's website. Future copies of AGM minutes would continue to be placed on the website.

ITEM 3 - Any Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

ITEM 4 - Election of Committee/Re-allocation of Committee Roles

4a - It was formally agreed that Steve Strauss would now take on the role of Flight Editor and it was noted that he had already been responsible for both the June and September editions.

4b - Stepping down as Flight editor, Gilly Christmas will now be able to more fully focus on the Society's website as Website Editor.

4c - It was also agreed that Steven Ardron would now officially become Membership Secretary after having worked closely with Graham Horsman during an interim/handover period whilst the annual subscriptions were collected.

4d - Graham Horsman will now take on the sole position of Treasurer for the Society.

4e - The Chair welcomed Steve and Steven to the Committee, and thanked Gilly and Graham for their dedication in their former roles and with supporting the handovers.

4f – To date, no other members have enquired about taking on a role within the Committee, although we would still encourage participation in whatever capacity. It was therefore agreed that Tony Statham would remain as Chair and Mel West as General Secretary.

ITEM 5 - End of Financial Year Accounts & financial report

5a - The end of year accounts for the financial year 2021/2022 were presented by our Treasurer, Graham Horsman, and agreed as a true record of our financial situation. There were no matters arising from the financial statement and the accounts were approved.

5b – As in previous years, it is noted that a full statement for this financial year had also been presented to members and published in the September edition of *Flight* magazine. We understand that there has been no feedback from members subsequent to publication. Additionally, a copy of the Financial Statement as at 14th October 2022 had been presented and are attached to the minutes as Appendix B.

5c – Graham advised that subsequent to producing the financial statement one further member had paid making the number outstanding as unpaid at the date of the meeting as six (3 hard copy recipients and 3 pdf's).

5d – It was confirmed that if members resign or have failed to renew, they would not thereafter be able to access the website and that if re-joining or restoring the subscription due after removal from the membership list would retain their original membership number, but, would need to re-register to access the website.

5e – Graham also noted that he has continued to encourage members not paying by Standing Order to make payments via Bank Transfer as this is more efficient.

5f – It was agreed, that despite the rising costs of publishing *Flight* and which have now exceeded the new subscription rate, we do not intend to increase subscriptions again for the foreseeable future as adequate funds held can absorb these increases.

5g – Notwithstanding the issue of maintaining subscriptions at current levels despite rising production and postage costs for *Flight*, it was agreed that new members joining the Society should be encouraged to take the option of the pdf version. It was noted that whilst an annual subscription rate for pdf at £5 remained highly competitive and a bargain, ultimately the choice of format and payment level should remain with the member.

5h - Graham confirmed that the proportions for members receiving hard copy compared to pdf following the recent intake of new members was now close to 50:50.

ITEM 6 - Membership Secretary Report

6a – The Annual Report on membership from Steven Ardron, set out the current position on membership for the Society. An extensive and comprehensive document, it reviewed membership prior to the end of the financial year and is intended to inform future planning.

6b – Committee noted the following key findings from the report:

- That the Society remains predominantly UK-based (82% of membership);
- That the age of the majority of members is 60+;
- That, unsurprisingly given the current membership base, about 66% of members leaving the Society are from the UK, but that worryingly, about a third are from overseas;
- The report advised that there appeared to be no single determinant for why members had left the Society; However,
- The report noted that a significant number of members were lost within the first three years of joining.

6c – In response, Committee acknowledged that one of the constraints on overseas members was that they were unable to participate in some aspects of the Society, for example, the Packet scheme. It was also noted that a number of overseas members had been active participants when the auction service had been available, had expressed their regret at its cessation and that some had subsequently not renewed their membership.

6d – Due to the time-limited constraints of the media for the meeting, Committee were unable to discuss these important and wide-ranging findings further. However, Steven has suggested that further discussion beyond the AGM would assist the Society in deciding on measures that could support the longer-term existence of the Society. To this end, the report has flagged up three issues for future consideration:-

- How can membership be expanded – both in the UK and abroad?
- How can the Society encourage younger people to join?
- In what ways can the Society engage more with new members to better understand their collecting interests and help them to remain members?

6d – Committee thanked Steven for his detailed report, and it was agreed that the issues raised will be discussed further and addressed in more detail by the end of the year.

ITEM 7 – Flight Magazine Editor's Report

7a - Steve Strauss presented a report that provided some background and chronology on taking on the role of Flight editor from Gilly, and then detailed some of the new content that had featured in the June and September editions.

7b – Steve advised that the December issue was now in preparation and noted some of the content currently gathered for inclusion.

7c – It was noted that there had been some small fall in the number of members using the packet scheme (also see Packet Secretary's Report), and it was agreed that there should be a piece in

December Flight advising members about the advantages of the packet, how it operated and encouraging more members to use it. Graham has provided photographs of a packet booklet with an example of its contents. Steve has agreed to draft this.

7d – There was support for a series of articles on the early years of the Society, and it was noted that one member had already prepared a draft. Steve confirmed that there remained space in December Flight for its inclusion if a draft was available, but that if not yet finalised could be placed in the March edition.

7e – In view of the extensive annual reports provided by Committee members - the main points of which are summarised in the minutes but will be available in full on the website - it was agreed that only the Chair's and General Secretary's quarterly "Notes" would be required for the December issue of Flight.

ITEM 8 – Website Editor's Report

8a – Gilly Christmas presented a report on the current position with the Society's website. The report includes some statistics on current usage, some issues arising and proposals for the future development of the website.

8b – Gilly advised that usage remains generally low, and that usage in September had been 11% lower than the previous month. However, on the plus side, those who are accessing the website are staying on it longer. She noted that 44% of users found the site through a general search. The other main current usage features highlighted were:-

- The top five countries visiting the site are: UK, USA, Germany, Russia and China;
- She noted however that the number of visits from countries are skewed by scammers and that the average number of scammers visiting the site is 250 per day with the principal culprits being from the United States, China, Turkey, France and Germany;
- All the "open to the public" pages feature as the top eleven visited. The top "members only" pages are the Forum (12th) and Flight back-issues (13th).

Committee agreed that the statistics provided were useful could assist in the future development of the website.

8c – Gilly highlighted the low usage of the Members Only area, noted that we were not presently able to explain this. It was agreed that there needs to be further incentives for members to use the Members Only areas as this is presently used so infrequently. It was felt that this might be something that could be explored further through a questionnaire to members. (Also see item 8h).

8d – Other future activities identified in the report included the following:-

- That the library may need re-thinking/re-designing to attract higher usage;
- That as the currently most popular page, more blogs were needed;
- That the home page needs further work to make it more attractive;
- That we need to consider developing a Junior Section as proposed by Steven Ardron;

8e – Members Collecting interests: This issue was raised. Steven has already agreed to create space for this information in the membership database that is being developed. Whilst the discussion was not conclusive, it was felt that we should go back to those members already on the list and ask if any changes are needed and whether the member will continue to provide their consent to the sharing of their personal data. It was suggested that the only information that might be required from members would be: name/country of residence/email address/a brief listing of collecting interests. However, it was agreed that further thought and discussion outside of the AGM would be needed by Committee before our approach could be finalised and that we would continue this process in the following weeks.

8f – Junior Page: It was agreed that this should be taken forward in some form and that as a first step, Gilly would create a page for younger people. A draft page with cartoon bird stamps has been provided as an example for possible inclusion.

8g – Back Copies of Flight Magazine: Gilly advised that the process of loading further back copies of Flight have now been resumed following receipt of the second batch of copies from a member. She emphasised that this was a time-consuming activity for, as well as scanning, earlier editions of Flight contained members details (as was then standard practice) and this information is now being removed prior to scanning and loading onto the website. When completed, the website will hold a full set of editions from current back to edition No.1.

8h – Other proposals: The following proposals were agreed to be taken forward:-

- Have a member's questionnaire on website usage;
- Have a Bourse page on the Member's Only area;
- Consider a "News" section on the "Member's Only" area.

8i - Committee thanked Gilly for her update on the website and the matters it has raised for its future development. It was agreed that those issues will be discussed further outside the AGM and addressed in more detail by the end of the year.

ITEM 9 - Packet Secretary's report

9a - Whilst unable to attend, a report on the Packet sales had been prepared and presented to Committee by Philip Cant. The main statistics arising from his reports are as follows:-

- The Society continues to operate six packet circuits with currently 47 participating members, although it was noted that this number of members is shortly to be reduced. Philip stressed however, that the fall in packet participation was in line with the experience of other philatelic societies and that in comparison, the Bird Stamp Society is not faring badly.
- Post-COVID lockdowns, the circuits are now operating normally and regularly.
- For the last twelve month period, sales totalled £7,464 and which, after deductions for vendors, insurance and postage costs, etc, contributed £470 net to the Society's finances.
- Unsigned spaces in packet books totalled £17, which, whilst proportionally low, is still unacceptably high.

9b – The report advised that an innovation to the packet scheme this year had been the introduction of the “Big Packet,” which allowed items normally too large to include in books such as sheets and covers being brought in. Whilst member’s response to the Big Packet have been mixed, the number of items sold has been encouraging and it is therefore intended to continue with this arrangement.

9c – The report indicated that some participating members had not been completing the remittance forms with each packet as required and that the requirements printed on each form should be checked and adhered to.

9d – Committee thanked Philip for his report and briefly discussed any barriers to participation and how numbers taking part in the packet scheme might be increased. It was noted for example, that it was unfortunate that overseas members were unable to engage with the scheme, although no solutions were forthcoming. However, it was agreed that a piece promoting the benefits of the packet scheme would be placed in the December issue of Flight.

ITEM 10 – Additional Matters

There were no further matters raised for discussion and the Chair thanked Committee for their input and reports.

Tony Statham
Chair

Mel West
General Secretary

APPENDIX A

Chairs' Annual Statement - 2022

I believe our society has held steady in the past twelve months despite the ongoing adverse conditions of COVID still lurking in many countries, the Russian/Ukrainian conflict, numerous political upheavals around the world and the developing inflationary threats of many aspects of day to day life. This last perhaps may impact on members' ability to purchase stamps, but might be offset by the value of existing material improving.

It has proved adequate for us to hold the AGM once again on a "virtual" basis, although the committee is aware that some of our older members may lack the technology to attend the meeting as such. We are always open to hear members' views at any time of year and history has shown that few people attended the AGM in person when this was the case in most of the past few years.

If inflationary pressures are having an impact on one's collecting ambitions, members should be grateful that it appears that far fewer bird stamps are again being printed for a third year running, giving everyone an opportunity to play catch-up on the issues that matter to the majority of our collectors.

It gives me great pleasure to once again thank the stalwart members of the committee for their enduring devotion in keeping the society "on the straight and narrow" and I am delighted that, as announced in earlier issues of our quarterly magazine *Flight* in the past year, we welcome the input of two new members of the committee with Steve Strauss taking on the editorial role from Gilly Christmas, allowing her to focus her efforts on the website, and Steven Ardron taking over the responsibilities of Membership Secretary from Graham Horsman so that he can focus on the role of Treasurer.

Tony Statham
Chair

APPENDIX B

Financial Statement as at 14th October 2022

As at the above date the following figures are shown in the accounts:

Current Account (Note 1)	£35.83	
Deposit Account	£19973.40	£20009.23
Amount yet to be credited	£4.46	
Packet (Note 2)	£3748.59	
Donations	£67.17	
Paypal/Bank Fees	£1.62	£65.55

Note 1 – There are no outstanding cheques to be presented so the bank statement matches our accounts.

Note 2 - During every FY there will always be a balance on the Packet account which represents the amount due to vendors. However, this is the Gross Figure and the amount physically paid out will be reduced by the amount of commission & insurance vendors pay. The balance is further reduced by expenditure incurred by Philip for postage, envelopes, etc.

Note 3 – At the above date there are still 7 x members who have yet to renew their subs (3 x hard copy) (4 x .PDF) so there is a potential for a further £80 to be received. It is my belief that, at best, two members may yet decide to pay. The good news is that the number of members who may/will be removed for failure to renew will be the lowest for some years. I have £4.46 to pay into the account for a member who renewed by Paypal and there is a member from Belgium who wishes to join but as yet has not paid (for whatever reason there seem to be great difficulty transferring money to the UK from Belgium).

Note 4 – Our printers have informed us that their energy costs have gone up six-fold but this was before the Government subsidy scheme kicked in. The projected January increase in energy costs is not known nor are the subsidies paid to companies. Clearly this will affect the amount of subsidy we will have to make to offset the ‘underpayment’ for those who pay the hard copy subscription rates as the rate per copy we have to pay is on the up and the subscription may no longer (marginally) cover the printing & postage costs. September Flight always has more pages than the other three issues so the invoice was bound to be higher. Yet, compared to other printers, we get an exceptional service at cheaper rates than most companies could offer. I am not in favour of either increasing subs or reducing the Flight content just to reduce printing costs – it is what it is!!

I am fearful that if we were to announce yet another increase in hard copy rate subscriptions then some members, all of whom face cost of living increases, may leave the Society. There is a reluctance for those on hard copy to switch to .pdf. It is my belief that all new members should only be offered the .pdf rate unless they do not have access to the internet. In time, those on the hard copy rate will decrease and eventually reach zero. We have sufficient funds to cover the net ‘underpayment’ which is going to be minimal, if at all, given the situation with our vibrant packet and cumulative .pdf subscriptions (£300).

Note 5 – Philip has reported that members participating in the packet schemes he runs are on the decrease but at the same time we seem to be more than holding our own. Philip did not specify how many members we have had drop off the circuit nor how many new members have joined.

Note 6 - Packet Insurance paid for this FY is £79.14. We have already recovered £31.85 & Commission deducted was £82.13 – Gross amount was £1026.66; net amount paid £912.68. We will easily cover our insurance costs and having reduced commission and given vendors free postage. Philip and I have agreed that we should make no changes to the current rates.

Note 7 – Bank Interest received has risen sharply from an average of 17p per month to 82p per month (thus far).

Note 8 – Known miscellaneous Expenditure – Website Fees £4.80 per month & BTA Renewal £20 pa

Graham Horsman
Treasurer

APPENDIX C

Membership Secretary's Report

Object

This document sets out the position on the membership of the Society as at 31 July 2022. It looks back at the 2021-22 membership year and to reflect on what the membership records tell us, to help inform future decision making.

Basis of this Report

The content of this report is based on the data and analysis that is set out in the enclosed Annexes.¹ These are:

- Annex A - description of the membership records, which I have provided as part of demonstrating that I understand the data protection responsibilities. Annex A also includes information on the anonymised spreadsheet used to carry out data analysis;
- Annex B – information on the geographical distribution of members;
- Annex C – information on the age profile of the membership;
- Annex D – geographical distribution of leavers;
- Annex E - summary of the reasons that members have left the Society; and
- Annex F - duration of leavers' membership.

It should be noted that we only have limited historical information on which to base any data analysis. This is largely since Graham Horsman assumed joint responsibility for Treasurer and Membership Secretary and started to collect and record additional data for analytical purposes.

Important Findings for Discussion

The key points from the data analysis are that:

- The membership is predominantly UK based, with 119 from 145 individual members;
- The majority of members are likely to be in the age range of 60 years plus;
- Two-thirds of leavers are from the UK, with a third from overseas;
- There is no single overriding reason from members leaving, with a variety of explanations provided; but,
- From the limited data we have, we lose a significant number in year one, or years two and three.

The data prompts questions about:

- Why some members decide to leave after just one year; and what we can do to establish the reasons why;
- How we can expand the membership both in the UK, but perhaps more importantly, in overseas countries;
- How we can encourage younger people to join the Society; and
- How we can engage with new members in the first year to ensure that they do not lose interest in remaining with the Society.

¹ Given their extensiveness, the Annexes with tables of data will be included in full with the website edition of this report

Perhaps a separate debate, outside of the formal AGM, is required to decide on the measures we might take to preserve the longer term existence of the Society. But it is perhaps helpful to flag up these questions as a starting point.

Subject to the views of the Committee and the AGM, I will continue to update the data analysis tables for each year that I remain Membership Secretary, with the aim of providing analysis that also shows trends.

The Membership Records

In the membership records, we currently hold the personal information of individuals who left as far back as 2014/15. I am proposing that we should delete the personal information for all leavers once 18 months since their departure passes. Under data protection legislation, we should not be retaining data beyond the date that it is required.

At the same time, I suggest that we can retain the anonymised data relating to all leavers for statistical and analytical purposes.

Security, continuity and training

I thought that I should record here that I am aware of the sensitivity of the personal information that is entrusted to me. I have recorded on a separate document the security precautions that I have taken to safeguard the membership data and I have communicated this to the Secretary, Mel West.

In addition, I have undertaken short (online) data protection training and will continue to refresh this training each year.

On business continuity, I have also communicated with Mel West about the measures taken to ensure handover of the membership records should anything happen to me.

Steven Ardron
Membership Secretary

APPENDIX D

Flight Magazine Editor's Report

Preamble

It did take me a few weeks to fully appreciate that Flight is a club magazine and not a scientific publication. There were one or two rough patches as I helped Gilly put the March 2022 issue together. But the rest, as they say, is history. Although I was technically only her Assistant Editor for the June 2022 issue, Gilly gave me, pretty much, a free hand putting it together (but helped me whenever I needed help or advice, for which I will be forever grateful). Then I flew solo for the September issue.

The Flight Issues

June 2022 issue

This came in at 32 pages. The cover page theme for the summer issue was Birds of Sun & Summer (the cover page and other pages were decorated with bird stamps of birds with 'Sun' or 'Summer' as a part of their English common name). In addition to Committee Reports, page-4 editorials, and a page-26 item from Gilly about a possible questionnaire, there were contributions from Tony (1), Mel (2), Tino Mischler (1), Steven A. (5), and Steve S. (4). There were also four pages of Roger Chapman's New Listings and one page of New Species on Stamps.

September 2022 issue

This came in at 40 pages. The cover page theme for the fall issue was Bird Migration & Leaf-peeping. In addition to Committee Reports, page-4 editorials, and a Closed Albums in memoriam for Leon Remington, there were contributions from Mel (2, including a page with the final Specific Conditions for the BSS Bourse and the first three Bourse ads), Graham U'ren (1), Tino Mischler (2), KB (1), Steven A. (4), and Steve S. (3). There were also three pages of Postbag (three Letters to the Editor, including a 'What do I collect - and how?' letter from Tino M.). There were four pages (combined) of Roger Chapman's New Listings and New Species on Stamps. There was also a new feature, a Corrections and Notes Added in Proof page on the inside back cover. I plan to use this page in future issues for little tid-bits in addition to corrections.

December 2022 issue

This edition is currently being prepared. The cover page theme is, "When snow falls, Nature listens." (The cover page and other pages will be decorated with bird stamps of birds with 'Snow' as a part of their English common name). A draft of the cover page and the inside frontcover page are included at the end of this report. I already have a Letter to the Editor from DB and a draft Bourse ad from Dr. R. I expect to get Tino Mischler's Riddle #4 soon, and he has also contributed an article with the tentative title 'How Many Bird Species Will There Ever Be on Stamps?' that I am in the process of editing. I already have several articles from Steven A., one of which is already prepared (two pages) and two more are being prepared (probably six-to-eight pages). Part 2 of my 'Bird Migration on Stamps' update of Philip Lanspeary's 2000 article has already been prepared (six pages). There may be a contribution from KB. If I include estimates for AGM Reports, New Listings/New Species, and the other usual pages that go into every issue, a very early draft of the December issue is now approximately 30–32 pages long. The queries arising for the next edition of Flight can be summarised:

- Will any other Committee member be sending a contribution for the December issue before the middle of November?
- Will another Committee member or two send a Bourse ad to encourage other members to send Bourse ads?

- Is there a recent passing that we are aware of that could be written up as a Closed Albums item?

The December issue can be 36 or even 40 pages long, so there is still lots of room for more.

Additional Information

A Letter from Douglas Buchanan will be included in the December issue. It would be nice to encourage Letters from other members commenting on an article and/or adding some additional information to an article. Or, even telling us about what they collect, and how. However, Gilly had been encouraging readers of Flight to write letters for the past few years, and I don't expect my 'cutesy' encouragement will be any more successful.

If space permits, I would also like to devote a page or part of a page in each future issue of Flight to a '20 Years Ago Today' feature, using an item from a 20-year-old issue of Flight.

APPENDIX E

Website Editor's Report

1. A Few Statistics

Usage remains fairly low, so for example in September there were 239 unique users (down 11% from August). 44% of those users found the BSS site through a general search, 42% accessed the site directly, and the rest via other means (e.g. forwarding through another site). Encouragingly, users are staying on the site for longer periods (this is called session duration), which is up 29% from August.

Top 10 visits by country: UK; USA; Germany; Russian Federation; China; India; Canada; Australia; Belgium and Poland. However, these results are skewed slightly by 'visits' categorized as 'Failed Login Attempts', i.e. scammers, of which we have on average 250 a day. Top culprits are from: USA; China; Turkey; France and Germany.

Top 10 pages visited: Home Page; Blog; Books & Catalogues; Join Us; Flight Issues; Knowledge Base; Bird Species and Families; Website Updates; Bird Photos and Associated Stamps; What We Do i.e. ALL on the PUBLIC SITE. The top Member Only visited page is the Forum (12th) and Flight Back Issues and Bird Listings (14th).

2. Issues

a) Are the statistics above useful in determining the future direction of the website? The BSS Library, for example is the 28th most popular page, the Member Gallery containing all Steve's photos is 35th. Considering that the 'Bird Photos and Associated Stamps' is one of the top 10 viewed pages on the public site, should we be loading all of Steve's photos there?

b) I have mentioned the BSS Library ... due for a rethink/redesign, but I'm not sure in what format?

c) Clearly, I need to load more Blogs, as that is the most popular page.

d) Home Page ... needs tarting up somehow ... again, not sure how.

e) Junior Section on public site – proposed by Steven Ardron. He did create a series of articles some time ago, called 'Cartoon Birds' which I could load. I have attached an example article. Thoughts?

f) Need to find ways of convincing the membership to use the Members Area HOW? This area is viewed very infrequently, by very few members. Why is this? Could be that I need to add more new material / different material on a more regular basis? If I did that, would it be used more ... who knows? Is our membership non-IT / non website user orientated?

g) Membership Collecting Interests ... should this be on the website (with members permission)?

h) Back Issues ...I have now loaded 1990-1994 (member addresses removed). Post-1994 back issues all have addresses showing – Steve Christmas in the process of removing these, and I will have to reload all amended issues.

i) What articles to go just on website / just in Flight / on website and in Flight? Steve S and I to discuss.

3. Proposals

a) Improve the Library.

- b) Improve Home Page.
- c) Have a 'News' section on the Members Only site ... more on member info, new members, new articles loaded in members area, stamp shows, etc.
- d) Have a Bourse page on the Members site.
- e) Member Questionnaire on website usage.
- f) Load remaining Back Issues by end of month, and take time in reloading all amended issues!

Gilly Christmas
Website Editor

APPENDIX F

Packet Secretary's Report

We continue to operate the 6 circuits that we had this time last year. There are currently 47 members, but several of these are about to be deleted. This reduction is unfortunate, but these reductions in numbers are being experienced right throughout the hobby. The BSS isn't faring too badly!

Most interruptions have now ceased and the packets have recommenced going out regularly. The packet contributed almost £470 to club funds, after expenses, in the last 12 months. Sales were £7464 which gave the society a commission income of £503. Insurance income was £185. Expenses were £217, most of which, once again, was postage, either on packets going out, or on returns to vendors. Unsigned spaces in books amounted to £17 this year. Obviously that is £16.99 too much, but given the level of "traffic", it's not a great percentage.

This year saw an innovation – the first "big" packet. This packet comprises items too large for ordinary club books. Mostly this means stamp sheets of various types or larger covers. I also had a bag of bird stamps mostly on paper, so I included that. The items in it were for sale at 10p a time, regardless.

The big packet received a very mixed reception, which was to be expected, I think. In overall terms the percentage sold has been good so far (still 2 circuits to go), so the experiment will be repeated in the near future. At this stage all the material, apart from the 10p bag, comprised Paula Cant Stamps material, but members are, of course, very welcome to submit any "big" items they would like to sell. The bag of stamps was a donation. A quick glance suggested that most of the items in it were inexpensive, so it went out at 10p a time, regardless. This, too, was well received.

Packet members are invited to read the remittance form and fill it in properly!! For example, where it says Your Name, that's where you put your name!! I am steadily getting familiar with your handwriting, and the name on the cheque usually gives the game away, taking away the guesswork!

There have been no changes to the way the packet operates, over the last 12 months.

It's been a much better year. Let us hope this continues.

Philip Cant
Packet Secretary