

# *The Basildon Stamp Collector*

Volume 1, Number 2

April 1996

## In This Issue:

### Five Myths and a Moral!

Len Stanway takes a controversial look at modern stamp issues.

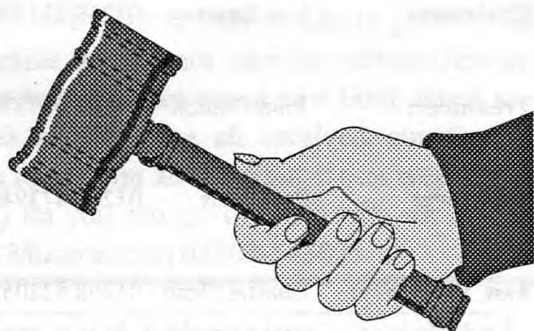
### StampEssex '96

Sudbury P.S. hosts this year's A.E.P.S. Spring stamp day.

### Puzzle Page

Test those little grey cells with our Pacific Islands Wordsearch.

# SPRING AUCTION



**Monday, 1 April**  
**Viewing from 7.15 pm**  
**Auction starts 8.00 pm**  
**Over 200 lots**



## Forthcoming Meetings

by Pat Harris

Our programme for the next quarter starts with the Spring Auction on 1st April followed on the 16th Mr. Jones' *Innocents Guide to The Packet*, a humorous look at things that go wrong. On 20th April we hold Spring Baspex at Laindon and would like to see more of you attending. We have no meeting on May Day, but on Saturday 18th David Church has a stamp fair at Laindon and would like to see you all there. On 4th June Len Stanway will give a display as *The Committee Entertains*. The current season comes to an end on the 18th June with the *Annual General Meeting*.

Watch out for our next season's programme which contains gold medal displays by fellows of the Royal Philatelic Society.

## Contacts

<b>Chairman:</b>	Len Stanway	01268 522305	<i>A.E.P.S &amp; A.B.P.S.</i>
<b>Treasurer:</b>	John Church	01268 543371	<i>Subscription enquiries.</i>
<b>Secretary:</b>	Pat Harris	01268 473946	<i>General enquiries.</i>
<b>Asst. Secretary:</b>	Charlie Mead	01268 522052	<i>Newsletter editor.</i>
<b>Packet Secretary:</b>	Peter Nye	01268 559058	<i>Exchange packet enquiries.</i>
<b>Librarian:</b>	Len Scharde	01268 542104	<i>Library requests.</i>

The committee are happy to deal with your questions and receive any suggestions for improving the Society.

## **From Your Secretary**

**by Pat Harris**

My notes in this issue must start on a sad note as Ken Angood passed away on 16th January. Ken who was a very active member of the Club was always ready to step in to help at stamp fairs and was very knowledgeable of the many and varied displays he gave. Ken will be sadly missed by his many friends.

As from 1st April 1 Peter Nye will resume the job of Packet Secretary and all returns for boxes issued after that date should be returned to him. Returns for boxes issued before that date should still be sent to me. A number of members still have not paid their subs, I should remind you that they are due after the AGM in June. If you are in doubt please give me a ring on 01268-473946 and I will let you know.

The insurance of our packet only covers fully paid up members and if your subs are still outstanding at the AGM you will have to be reluctantly removed from the circuit. We are still hoping that some members will make up books with your surplus stamps to go into the exchange packet as an incentive we will not take any commission or insurance from your returns and will give you a new book when we return yours. By now you should have all received our Spring Auction list. We would like to see you all there but if you would like to make a postal bid for any lot you can get in touch with me or our Auction Secretary, Michael Musgrave on 01268-543025.

## **Philatlic Museums and Libraries - update**

### **Royal Collection**

It was stated in our last issue that it was not known whether the Royal Collection was the personal property of Her Majesty or the Crown. I am now able to reveal that it is the personal property of the Queen. I am most grateful to the Keeper of the Royal Collection for putting the record straight.

## Modern Stamps - Five Myths and a Moral!

by Len Stanway

Many collectors regard modern stamp issues as not worth collecting. Such collectors tend to call such material "wallpaper" or use other similar derogatory terms. Why do they do that?

In many cases, it is because they regard today's number of issues as excessive and they "know" that the stamps concerned tend to be produced by the million. It is also assumed that there is nothing to study, because the catalogue listings are very straightforward. On the other hand, the "classics" have very complex listings and are considered rare, which some equate with valuable. But have they got their facts right?

**First myth:** *"In the classic era, everyone took a responsible approach to stamp issuing."* Nothing could be further from the truth. Collectors, almost from the start, complained about the cost of keeping their collections complete. Every new country which started issuing stamps was complained about as "getting in on the act". Local postmasters were forever being rebuked by their colonial masters for using local provisional stamps and surcharges to overcome short term problems, rather than waiting for definitive issues eventually to arrive from the mother country. Any excuse was used by collectors to deride new issues. Many of the so-called "local issues" ignored by the catalogue had as much postal validity as the Penny Black, which had no value outside the borders of the United Kingdom! It took nearly a century for the first issue of Brunei to gain catalogue status!

**Second myth:** *"Classic issues had so much more to study."* Why do the catalogues contain so much detail of early issues? The simple reason was that same early collectors who complained about the excessive number of new issues had time on their hands to look for differences between individual stamps. At the same time, dealers cashed in by listing every claimed variation so as to maximise their sales. Those of us who belong to specialist societies know that many

of the listings in the standard catalogues do not stand up to examination. Many years ago, at this club, we had a speaker on Australian states who showed a complete sheet of one value, proving that all the catalogued different shades were present on the one sheet and it was merely a question of production variation caused by the crude presses of the era (variations in pressure, inking, etc.). Why do the same collectors who spend hours trying to plate a Penny Black dismiss close study of flaws on modern issues as "flyspecking?"

**Third myth:** *"Modern issues are all produced in huge quantities."*

Not true. Some issues are undoubtedly produced in large volume, particularly British definitives. This has always been so. The Penny Black was produced by the million. However, many new issues are produced in penny numbers and can be very difficult to obtain. Definitives in most other countries have a short life, but, if their use is extended, the short life of an off-set lithographic printing plate means that there are usually lots of small printings, often with variations far more significant than many of those catalogued for earlier issues. They rarely get catalogue recognition through lack of study.

**Fourth myth:** *"There's nothing to study in modern issues."* It is not only collectors that assume that there is nothing to study, so the dealers tend to list only what the philatelic bureaux tell them. Often the bureaux themselves do not bother to check that the printers have produced what they were told to print or whether they changed things when they reprinted the issue. Many of the differences that collectors regard as totally different stamps go unremarked by the bureaux and do not get sent to customers. Watermark variations, perforation changes, colour changes, even overprints, are ignored. It is only when collectors start to find the variations that the catalogues take notice and the dealers frantically try to find the "new" stamps to sell at a huge profit!

**Fifth myth:** *"So all I need to do is to subscribe to a new issues service."* I wish it was that easy. The new issues services largely rely on the local bureaux or the Crown Agents to supply their needs, and



merely pass on to their customers whatever they are sent, usually without any study. Many readers will be aware that I write a specialist society journal new issues column. To provide material for description in that column, I not only have an account with the national bureau 10 000 miles away, but I also have accounts with three British dealers and contact with a collector in the country concerned who helps out with some of the more difficult problem issues. Between them, I believe that I receive about 90% of stamps issued and 50% of postal stationery.

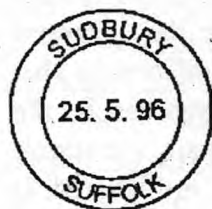
**So what's the moral?** Don't believe what the catalogue says. Check the watermarks, perforations, colours, designs, etc. If the catalogues are wrong, write and tell the editors. Don't tell the dealers until you have a few copies of difficult items in stock to sell later! Above all, never decry modern issues - after all, new technology means that we may not have their company for much longer.

## STAMP ESSEX '96

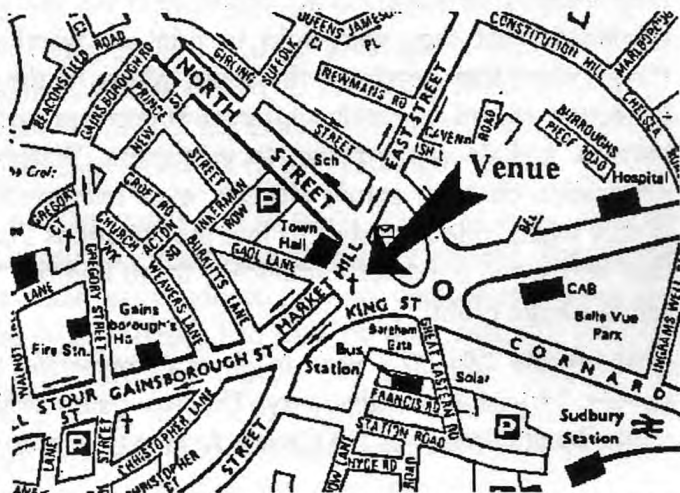
Saturday, 25 May, 1996

10.00 am to 4.00 pm

St Peter's, Market Hill, Sudbury, Suffolk

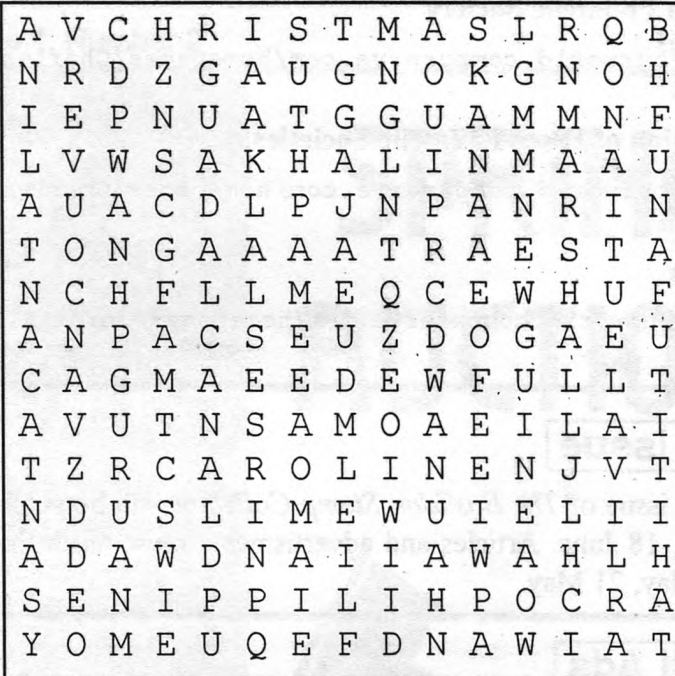


- Dealers
- Displays
- Competitions
- Specialist Societies
- Refreshments



# PUZZLE PAGE

## Pacific Islands Wordsearch



Aleutian

Caroline

Christmas

Diomedes

Fiji

Funafuti

Galapagos

Guadalcanal

Guam

Hawaiian

Hong Kong

Marquesas

Marshall

Nauru

New Caledonia

New Guinea

New Zealand

Philippines

Quemoy

Sakhalin

Samoa

Santa Catalina

Tahiti

Taiwan

Tasmania

Tonga

Vancouver

## Internet Information

For up to date information set your Web browser to the following pages:

### Basildon Philatelic Society

[http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/Charles\\_Mead/bps.htm](http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/Charles_Mead/bps.htm)

### Association of Essex Philatelic Societies

[http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/Charles\\_Mead/aeps.htm](http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/Charles_Mead/aeps.htm)

### Stampex

<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/dereky/stampex-.htm>

## Next Issue

The July issue of *The Basildon Stamp Collector* will be published on Tuesday, 18 June. Articles and advertisements must reach the Editor by Tuesday, 21 May.

## Small Ads

All members of Basildon Philatelic Society are entitled to three free small ads each year. Each advertisement may be up to 50 words and will be accepted subject to space being available.

### WANTED:

Australia: Navigators 7/6d. SG357 used. New Zealand: 1972 Health stamps M/S used. Contact Pat Harris.

### WANTED for Plate Reconstruction:

G.B. 1870 ½d. rose-red plate 5 fine used, letterings CE/EC, XH/HX, DI/ID, XI/IX, CK/KC, WK/KW, XO/OX, VP/PV. Contact Charlie Mead.