

PHILATELIC QUARTERLY

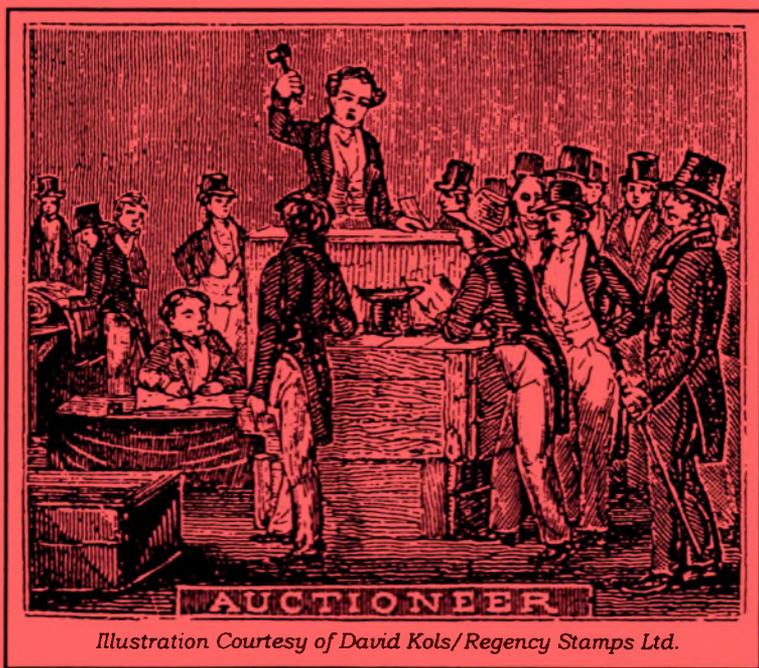


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GOING...GOING...GONE! (Pages 4-9)
FEATURE ARTICLE ON PHILATELIC AUCTIONS
By Herman "Pat" Herst, Jr.

WINTER 1998 - 1999

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE LUNDY COLLECTORS CLUB

LUNDY COLLECTORS CLUB PHILATELIC QUARTERLY

Volume 20, Number 4 (Whole No. 80)

Winter 1998 - 1999

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L.C.C. PHILATELIC QUARTERLY

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LUNDY COLLECTORS CLUB

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Membership in the Lundy Collectors Club (L.C.C.) is open to any person interested in the collecting and study of Lundy stamps, covers, and postal history. Dues of US\$12.50 per year (U.S.A., Canada, and foreign surface rates) or US\$20/GB£12.50 (overseas airmail) include a subscription to the *Lundy Collectors Club Philatelic Quarterly*. Membership in the United Kingdom Chapter of the Lundy Collectors Club is separate from the parent organization and includes a subscription to *The New Puffin Journal*, its thrice yearly publication, and thrice yearly L.C.C. U.K. Chapter auction catalogues. Dues of US\$20 per year (U.S.A., Canada, and foreign airmail rates) or GB£10 (U.K. and EEC surface rates) are payable to the L.C.C. U.K. Chapter, Stanley Newman, 93 Montpelier Road, Brighton, East Sussex, BN1 3BD, England.

Letter to the Editor

Praise for the Lundy G.P.O. Postmark Article

I am most impressed by your article on the G.P.O. postmarks. The analysis of the data is brilliant. I can find no fault with it and am pleased to discover that it is still possible to do original work on the subject of Lundy postal history.

—Barry Chinchin, Eastleigh, Hants, England (January 4, 1998)

Whew! Passing Barry's review and earning his praise made all my efforts worthwhile. Readers, there are still many untapped areas of Lundy postal history to explore, so get busy and keep those manuscripts coming! —RSC

News of Lundy

Christmas Holidays on Lundy

Carols round a driftwood fire and lights out at midnight hallmarked proceedings at one of Britain's most exclusive venue—Lundy Island. More than 40 visitors are spending a six-day break on the three-mile-long Island, which is 12 miles off the North Devon coast. They have been tempted by the guarantee of absolute immunity from the Christmas shopping rush and Boxing Day sales and all the extra traffic that clogs the roads as a result. Lundy has one tiny store, no roads, and only a single Land Rover and a couple of tractors to disturb its tranquillity.

Eleven full-time staff members who work for the Landmark Trust, which runs the Island on behalf of the National Trust, joined visitors yesterday for Christmas lunch at the only pub, the Marisco Tavern. And with no televisions in the self-catering cottages, Christmas had a distinctly old-fashioned air. "It's really what people come here for," said an Island

NEWS OF LUNDY (Continued)

spokesman. "The generator goes off at midnight, so it's a really good excuse for candlelit suppers." The Christmas refugees are due to come ashore on Monday when a capacity 130 new guests will be sailing out to the Island on board its supply ship, the *Oldenburg*, to spend New Years there.

Source: "Island Retreat from the Festive Hassle," by Chris Rundle, *Western Devon Press*, December 26, 1998.

Millennium Stays on Lundy Going to Highest Bidders

There are no clubs or discos and only one modest pub. There will be no street parties—because there are no streets—and there are unlikely to be any massive fireworks displays, either. But tiny Lundy Island is already proving one of the most sought-after places to see in the Millennium. Such is the demand for Millennium breaks on the three-mile long Bristol Channel Island that the limited accommodation could be let many times over. Now the Landmark Trust is auctioning it off, with space in self-catering units going to the highest bidders.

Lundy has always been a popular destination around Christmas and New Year as well as during the summer months. All 120 places in properties ranging from a converted medieval castle to a tastefully refurbished lighthouse will be occupied over this new year by people who prefer peace, quiet, and total seclusion to wild celebrations. But the lure of welcoming the 21st Century on Lundy is creating the biggest-ever demand the Landmark Trust has faced. It opened booking on half the properties in October, and all were snapped up within days. The rest will be offered in the spring. "Whoever offers the highest price over the normal rate gets the booking," said a Trust spokesman.

Source: "Island Hideaway for Millennium," by Chris Rundle, *Western Devon Press*, December 28, 1998.

Lundy Island Is the Perfect Place to Abandon Yourself to Your Wilder Side

There's only one place to eat; the shop is on the pricey side and tends to run out of things; there is nowhere to go—and you can't just go home when you've had enough. This is Lundy—and it's wonderful. The steep-sided granite slab off the North Devon coast has always been a hard place to tame. Through the ages, mainland man has used it for rabbit breeding, built a castle there to tackle Bristol Channel pirates, established a Victorian church (by the splendidly named Rev. Hudson Heaven), and turned it into an away-from-it-all holiday destination.

It's the latter activity that seems most likely to prevail. There are few places so close to home that offer a sense of pleasant isolation, defying the excesses of the late 20th Century and, one hopes, the worst of the next century. The shop, it soon becomes clear, never runs out of things you really need. And if there was only going to be one bar left in the world, what better than the Marisco Tavern, gently bustling with day-tripper walkers, divers, and Island workers. Its food and beer are a match for any pubs on the mainland, its views across the sea to Devon unbeatable. Best of all, you don't waste time deciding where to eat—this is it.

There's little to do on Lundy but wander, taking in the sights and sounds of this stepping stone into the Atlantic. You might be lucky enough to spot seals or puffins, or come across the chasm caused by an 18th Century earthquake. If the wildlife proves elusive, there are the Island's buildings: from the Radio Room to the Admiralty Lookout, from the Castle to the grand Georgian-style Millcombe House, each one has a history that reflects man's attempts to use Lundy for his own purposes. Children love it and are soon transported into a fantasyland of pirates, lighthouses, and shipwrecks. For holidaymakers who have exhausted all this, there is only one thing left: the secret of Lundy is to wind down to Island pace, watch the clouds roll by, and get away from it all.

Source: "Time on Your Hands, But What a Great Time," by Rob Campbell, *Western Daily Press*, February 20, 1999.

This issue of the *LCCPQ* has an entirely new look as it was prepared on an IBM-compatible computer using *Microsoft Word*. Readers are encouraged to send the Editor comments. —RSC

In Memoriam — Herman ("Pat") Herst, Jr. (1909-1999)

L.C.C. Honorary Life Member Herman Herst, Jr. succumbed at the age of 89 to his long battle with Parkinson's disease on January 31, 1999 at his home in Boca Raton, Florida. Herst, who was known by "Pat" because he was born on St. Patrick's Day in 1909, was stamp collecting's most recognized author. Over a 60-year period, Pat wrote 18 books about the hobby and produced thousands of columns for the major stamp periodicals and various newspapers in the United States. His best-known book, *Nassau Street: A Quarter Century of Stamp Dealing*, sold more than 100,000 copies, an achievement not eclipsed by any other book about stamp collecting. *Nassau Street* and several other of Pat's books are autobiographical, so some of his personal life and much of his professional life read like an open book, already well known to his readers. Herst's books popularized philately in easy-to-understand language, brought thousands of newcomers to the hobby, and delighted thousands more with actual stories of his life-long experiences in the stamp trade.

After graduating in 1931 from Reed College in Portland, Oregon, and earning a Master of Arts degree the following year from the University of Oregon, Herst worked briefly as a schoolteacher and newspaper reporter, but these careers were short-lived because of the Great Depression. Pat relocated to New York City in 1933 and for three years worked in the securities trade for a Wall Street brokerage firm. However, he became enamored with stamps and began as a part-time dealer while still working on Wall Street. Herst gave up his job in the securities trade in 1936 and opened a stamp business and offices on world-famous Nassau Street, the heart of New York City's philatelic trade. Pat's business prospered, and during 1937-38 he spent time in London, where he met and married Ingeborg Adam. They returned to Nassau Street in 1938 and spent the next eight years building up the business. In 1946, the Hersts departed New York City and set up both home and business in Shrub Oak, New York. Pat operated from this location until his "semi-retirement" to Boca Raton, Florida in 1973. His wife, Ingeborg, who suffered from paralysis, died in 1954. Herst met pharmacist Ida Busch of Mt. Kisco, New York in 1957, and the pair soon married.

In addition to his retail stamp business, Herst also ran a series of 195 public stamp auctions between 1940 and 1973. During that time he developed an impeccable reputation as a dealer and auctioneer and began devoting time to writing about stamps and the stamp-collecting hobby. His house-organ philatelic newsletter, *Herst's Outbursts*, was published from 1940 to 1973—its 140 issues widely distributed to collectors. Pat attributed the name of his publication to the fact that some of his critics in various stamp clubs and societies would react to some of his writings and ideas by saying, "That's just another one of Herst's outbursts." During his time in Shrub Oak, Herst found out that an 1862 Federal law permitted supplemental postal service of the "local post" variety, so he created his Shrub Oak Local Dog Post, with his children and German shepherd dog, Alfie, carrying the mail to the post office. He created his own 2¢ local stamp, which pictured Alfie. During his first few years in Florida, Pat created the Boca Raton Bicycle Post—replete with a 5¢ local stamp that was applied to mail taken by bike each day to the Boca Raton Post Office—all proceeds from which went to charity.

Over his long career, Herst received many honors, including the American Philatelic Society Luff award and signatory of the Roll of Distinguished American Philatelists, the Service to Philately award from the Collectors Club of New York, and the Merit award from the Society of Philatelic Americans. Pat was elected to the A.P.S. Writers Unit #30 Writers' Hall of Fame. William Penn College of Oskaloosa, Iowa acknowledged his prolific writing career by conferring him with an honorary doctorate in 1982.

Herst had a standard of answering every piece of incoming correspondence on the same day it was received, even when there would be upwards of 100 letters a day. Pat was able to maintain this pace until his Parkinson's disease took over several years ago. His longtime friend, Steven Rod, summed up Pat's philatelic contributions succinctly when he wrote, "The richness of Herst's 40 years 'in the business' was exceeded only by more than 20 years of a very active retirement promoting the hobby in every conceivable way." Simply stated, Pat was one of the most influential philatelic patrons of this century and his passing leaves a void in the philatelic world that will be difficult to fill. Herst was the consummate professional stamp dealer, an enthusiastic and energetic promoter of the hobby all over the world, and a dear friend to hundreds of his fellow stamp collectors.

Funeral services were held February 4 at Temple Beth El in Boca Raton. Herst is survived by his second wife, Ida Busch Herst; two children, Patricia Herst Held and Kenneth Herst, both of Virginia; and two stepchildren, Dr. Gary Busch of London and Gail C. Busch of Manhattan.

—Roger S. Cichorz

GOING...GOING...GONE!

By Herman Herst, Jr.

Editor's Note: Most readers probably are familiar with the concepts that guide today's competitive auctions, but are we aware of the other types of auctions that existed throughout history and how the auction we know today evolved? Author Herman ("Pat") Herst, Jr. surveys the subject and explains that British common law set the standard for the proper conduct of auctions to protect the fundamental right of a debtor to recover, through prescribed means, property seized from him to satisfy a debt. I judged this article, albeit not specific to Lundy philately, to be of sufficient interest to all stamp collectors to be worthy of inclusion in this journal. "Going...Going...Gone!" first appeared in the December 1987 issue of *The American Philatelist* and is reprinted here by kind permission of Editor Bill Welch. This article, typical of Herst's writings for its broad sweep of subject and integration of personal observations and comments, is presented here in memory of and as a tribute to the author, who passed away January 31, 1999 after his long battle with Parkinson's disease. —RSC



Herman "Pat" Herst, Jr.
1909-1999

* * * * *

The only light in the room was a flickering candle, so close to extinction that, several times over, it seemed to have burned itself out. Each time a tiny wisp of flame rekindled the wick, one of the small groups of men intently watching it would utter a number. Then another and another would speak up, stating always-higher numbers. Again, the flame seemed to disappear completely, only to come to life for yet another brief moment. The bidding resumed. Finally the flame died completely. The last man to mention a number before the candle went out congratulated himself. His was the winning bid. Another tiny bit of candle was brought out and lit, and the procedure began again with offers being made on a different item. Thus were sales at auction conducted many centuries ago. The maker of the last bid before the candle finally burned out was the successful bidder.

* * * * *

In parts of the Orient, small objects, including stamps and coins, are sold at auction by a different means. The item to be sold is placed in a basket and passed around a circle of bidders, each of whom is well supplied with small bits of paper and a pencil. Each bidder examines the item to be sold, writes his offer on a slip of paper, drops it in a tray, and passes the basket to the next person. If that individual wishes to bid, he does the same; if he does not, he simply passes the basket on without bidding. When the basket has completed the circle, the little bits of paper, each with a number and the initials or name of a bidder, are studied. The highest bid is called out, and the person who made it is announced as the buyer of the item being sold. Each bidder has had but one opportunity to bid, and his bid is, of course, the maximum amount he is willing to pay. This is the method often used by Japanese stamp clubs for club auctions.

* * * * *

The "Chinese auction" operates in a different fashion. Whether the method actually is used in China is beside the point. Many practices quite different from Western procedures are simply called "Chinese" because they are so different from what Westerners are accustomed to. In a Chinese auction, prospective bidders first examine the item being sold. The auctioneer then calls out a number somewhat in excess of the item's actual value. If silence greets his call, he drops the figure slightly. Every few seconds, another number is called, and as the "non-bid" approaches the value of the object, tension in the room increases. Prospective bidders know they will have only one opportunity, for once the "auctioneer" gives a figure that a single bidder is willing to pay, the lot is knocked down. There is no second bid. In a Chinese auction, opportunity knocks but once.

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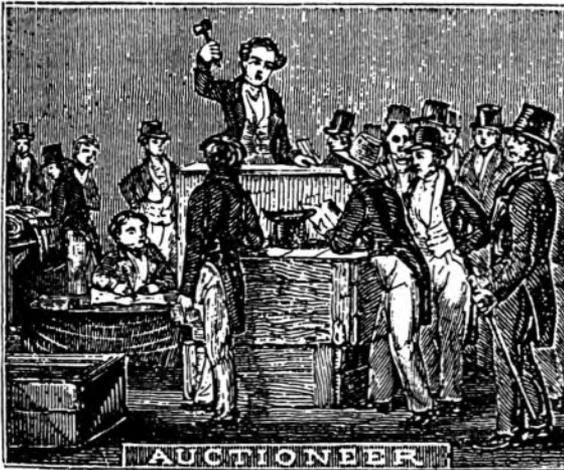
GOING...GOING...GONE! (Continued)

Of course, there is a fourth method of selling at auction, the one known to all of us in which the bidding is competitive. With this method, a bidder may bid as often as he wishes as long as there is an opposing bidder in the room. Once all competition is frightened away, the sole remaining bidder is declared the winner.

* * * * *

Common law, that body of law that is for the most part understood and unwritten in English-speaking civilizations, has a mass of rules pertaining to the sale of goods at auction. Ten centuries ago, when a poor peasant, who had little more than the clothes on his back and perhaps a few personal possessions, was unable to pay his debts or his taxes, his creditors had the right to seize any of his belongings that suited their fancy, including even his wife and children. There was literally nothing to protect him from those to whom he owed a debt but the conscience of his creditors, and, more often than not, that was nonexistent.

As common law developed, fundamental rights of the poor, the elderly, and the friendless became a concern of government. Some of these rights were formalized in the Magna Carta, that magnificent document forced on King John by his nobles in 1215. Others were not reduced to writing but developed as custom or tradition. Today, they form the very foundation of British law. Among the fundamental rights recognized in common law are the right to be tried by a jury of one's peers, the thesis that a "man's home is his castle" (which in effect forbids entry without just cause), and the right to recover, through prescribed means, property seized to satisfy a debt. It is by reason of this last right that auctions became associated with common law as a means of protecting a debtor by providing that he might compete with others for ownership of property seized from him to satisfy a debt. Today, an entire body of law surrounds sale by auction, much of it at variance with ordinary business law and much of it unwritten. Many hundreds of years after it was originally conceived, this law still governs, to a large extent, the conduct of an auction sale.



Initially, despite laws made to protect those who most needed protection, abuses continued. It was one thing to provide that all of a peasant's property was to be sold at auction. But if the auction was held in a secret place, knowledge of which was limited to but two or three people, it offered little protection to the unfortunate individual whose goods were being sold. So common law outlawed those auctions that were being held in the middle of a forest, in the dark of the moon, with only those in possession of the seized goods and perhaps a few friends being there to bid. Instead, it provided that an auction must be held in a place of public assembly, that it must be properly advertised, and that the unfortunate debtor whose goods were being sold must be given formal notice of where and when the sale would take place.

Public Stamp Auction

Illustration Courtesy of David Kols/Regency Stamps Ltd.

The law further stipulated that a red flag must be posted a prescribed distance from the venue of a sale. In many places in the United States, this little bit of British common law has become American "proper" law. A red flag visible to all within sighting distance must be posted at many country auctions, and I have seen such flags as well at many stamp

GOING...GOING...GONE! (Continued)

auctions where municipal or county or state law demanded them. But of what use is a red flag posted on a dark night, at the edge of a forest, or above a mountain cave? A red flag is useless if it cannot be seen, so common law further provided that auction sales must be held in daylight. Even today, an auction sale in New York, sponsored by an auctioneer with a New York City license, may be held only in daylight hours unless a special license is obtained. Such a license, good for only one night of sales, is available for a fee over and above the annual cost of an auctioneer's license. In addition, the seller must place an advertisement in a "newspaper and public record" that such and such an auctioneer is planning a night sale.

That the sale should be held in a place of public assembly is a rather obvious and reasonable restriction. To hold a sale in a ladies' restroom might be a novelty, but, because it is not a place of public assembly, the authorities probably would not allow an auction sale to take place there. Similarly, common law dictates that no charge may be levied for admission to a sale, although this section of the law is frequently side stepped or simply broken. Many auctions, especially those run for charity, attempt to discourage the curious and those least likely to buy by charging a fee to enter the room—usually a nominal \$5 or \$10, which, of course, goes to the charity in question. Others, aware of the law, get around it a bit differently. Anyone in possession of the printed auction catalogue may gain admission by displaying the catalogue, but the catalogue can be obtained only through purchase.

At a stamp auction held in conjunction with a major stamp exhibition in Los Angeles not so long ago, a prospective bidder who wanted to examine the lots prior to the sale was forced to pay a \$3 admission to the bourse where the lots were on view. He objected to the practice in letters to the editors of a number of American stamp magazines. Instead, he should have filed a complaint with the municipal authorities in Los Angeles, for it is quite possible that he has a valid complaint against the auctioneer and the sponsors of the show. His complaint, he admits, was made solely on principle, for he claims to have spent more than \$3000 at the auction.

* * * * *

Auction law and business law vary in many ways, not the least important of which is the matter of title. If a customer buys a glass mirror at a department store and, through the store's negligence, the mirror is broken before it has been delivered, the buyer is released from his obligation to buy it, or he may demand a replacement. But if he buys an item at auction and the auctioneer carelessly drops it before delivery, the loss is the buyer's and not the auctioneer's, even if the item is completely ruined. True, this right is seldom maintained, but common law decrees that title to an item passes to the buyer at the drop of the hammer, even if the buyer has never so much as seen the item. Admittedly, this little bit of common law is not often emphasized. Nevertheless, it does exist, and it is printed in black and white in the terms of the sale of some of the larger, more prestigious fine arts auction houses.

No country in the world regulates stamp auctions more stringently than does the United Kingdom, which is not at all surprising when one recalls what a hopeless Pandora's box the world might have become without the steady vigilance of the British. Posted on the wall at every auction in Britain are warnings. Few perhaps read them, but almost all attending the sales understand them. These rules are intended to protect the owners of material being sold from various illegal acts that could serve to reduce the realizations they might expect from the sale of their property. The motives for posting these warnings are the same as those that lead to the display of a red flag and to the insistence on daytime sales.

* * * * *

The illegal operation most feared at an auction is called a "knockout" in Britain or, in the United States, a "ring." A ring is a group of potential bidders who have an understanding with each other that at the sale itself none will bid against another. The moment one member of a ring bids on a lot, all of the others remain silent. The results can be tragic for the owner. At the sale's conclusion, each member of the ring picks up his lots and pays for them. The group then retires to the office of one of their number or to a hotel

GOING...GOING...GONE! (Continued)

room. Among themselves, they then have a real auction, each one bidding to the level he would have done in the auction room had fair competition ensued. At this second auction, a lot that sold for \$12 the first time, because it had no competition from ring members, might sell for \$40 or more. Notes are made of the buyers of each lot and of the prices bid.

At the end, lots that at the first auction brought perhaps \$600 in aggregate will have been sold for, say, \$1800 at the second sale. Each bidder then picks up the lots he has succeeded in buying even though he may not even have bid on them during the first *bona fide* auction. For a lot on which he was willing to bid \$60 but which sold for \$20, he now pays into the kitty the \$20 at which the lot was sold. In this example, the auction house has been defrauded of sales of \$1200 and the owners of the material have suffered by a like amount.

To anyone with experience attending a sale, it is quite apparent when an auction ring is operating. The mere fact that at no time during the sale does one members bid against another is prime evidence. In Britain, an auctioneer who spots a ring in operation is obligated to make a complaint to the authorities. This had been done as recently as 1981 when a London ring was broken up and forbidden to try its tricks again. Punishment varies from a fine to the denial of the right to bid in any auction for a specified period of time. Unfortunately, after almost fifty years of conducting auction sales in New York, I do not know of a single instance when action was taken against a ring there. They operate openly, and they are most noticeable to the auctioneer crying the sale. In one instance when I noticed a ring operating, one of the ring members was the auctioneer himself! He was never again hired by that particular auction house for its sales.

* * * * *

In America, even more prevalent than the "knockout" is the "odds-evens" or "heads-tails" system. Only two bidders can use this system, but when the two are most likely to be competing for the same lots, it can cost the auction house and the owners of the lots a considerable sum. The two conspirators need not sit near each other and there need be no visible connivance between them. Before the sale, the two simply agree that as the sales progresses and bargains turn up they will alternate bidding. This is not a ring, for in this case each sale is final. But it does eliminate competitive bidding to the extent that these two prospective buyers will not bid against each other even though they are both interested in the same lot.

The *modus operandi* is simplicity itself. Bidder A bids on cheap even-numbered lots while Bidder B bids only on those lots with odd numbers. Of course, they both need to be alert. If Bidder A declines to bid on a cheap, even-numbered lot, there is no reason why Bidder B should not bid on it. A simple variation of "odds-evens" is "heads-tails." Each bidder, A or B, begins the day with a coin before him, one with heads up, the other with tails. When either one has bought a lot, he reverses his coin, thus reminding himself that his fellow conspirator's turn to bid has come. Either variation of this simple system is almost foolproof. Each sale is final. There is no "knockout" between A and B after the sale.

* * * * *

Other unscrupulous uses sometimes are made of auction procedures, especially in cases involving items seldom sold and on which a price level needs to be established. This can be done through an auction house, with the auction house entirely oblivious to the whole scheme. Say, for example, that a collector has recently found a sheet of stamps with a recognizable error on it and he wishes to sell one stamp at auction in order to determine what the actual market is. He consigns the stamp to an auction house, which accepts it, lists it, and puts on it what it considers a fair estimate of value, say \$30. However, the owner of the stamp believes the estimate is too modest. He would much rather see it bring \$75. This can be done easily.

All the owner of the stamp needs to do is ask two of his friends to bid on it, with one bid being perhaps \$70 and the other \$80. He asks a third friend to attend the sale, and when the lot opens at \$72, he carries the bidding upward with the auctioneer obliging until the highest book bid of \$80 is reached. At this point, the room bidder still has his hand upraised. He wins the lot for perhaps \$85. He accepts the lot and pays for it.

GOING...GOING...GONE! (Continued)

Now he returns the stamp to his friend, who reimburses him the \$93.50 that he has paid to the auctioneer. The auctioneer ultimately pays the owner the \$76.50 that he has coming—i.e., the realized price of \$85 less the ten-percent commission. Of course, the buyer will have paid the usual ten-percent premium, \$8.50, on his purchase, assuming that he was dealing with one of the auction houses that charges ten percent to both buyer and seller. The owner of the error for a mere \$17 has established the going price of his stamps at \$85, rather than at the \$30 the auctioneer originally considered them to be worth. That \$17 is a mighty sweet investment for the sheet's owner. Assuming that he owns 100 examples of the newly found error, this simple ruse has given him items on which the market is now established at \$8500 rather than the \$3000 predicted by the auction house's experienced judgment.

In view of the rather dark pictures I have painted here, let me get to the nitty-gritty of auction buying and selling. I have not made an attempt to determine the number of auction houses in the world. If I were to include in that number the tens of thousands of so-called "mail auctions," the number would be incredibly impressive. I prefer to define an auction house as one that prints a regular catalogue which it mails to a substantial mailing list, that holds sales at regular intervals, and that operates on the commission it earns from the sale of material belonging to the owners.

Incidentally, in my opinion, there is nothing unethical in an auction house putting its own material in a sale. If the house thinks it can do a better job of selling than its competitors, there is no reason why it should not avail itself of its own services. The rub comes when it treats its own material differently from the manner in which it treats the material of others. To sell a 5-shilling Sydney Harbor Bridge belonging to another owner at a bargain price while holding back one belonging to the house because the price is not high enough is decidedly unethical.

I think that the most reprehensible act in conducting auction sales is the duplication of lots at different prices. Reputable houses do not do this. It is easy to find out when this happens, and if you are certain it has, your course of action should be a simple one. You should confront the auctioneer with the deed, request that your name be removed from the mailing list, and share your findings with all who will listen—provided of course you are certain of your charges. Duplicating lots at different prices is a shameful act. It takes advantage of the honest, generous bidder, and it rewards the cheapskate. It works like this. Assume that lot 18 is a British Penny Black described as fine. The highest bid on it is \$80, but there are also bids of \$70, \$60, and \$50, and every bidder gets a lot. Perhaps the stamp sent out to the collector who bid \$50 is not so fine as the \$80 one. But each of the unsuccessful bidders, who all think they have lost out on the lot, finds instead that he has won a Penny Black.

There is a splendid defense against this sort of thing—a list of realized prices. Almost every auction house that values its reputation provides a list of the prices at which every lot was sold. Duplicate lots are impossible for an auction house that prints the prices realized at its sales. The collector who paid \$70 for the Penny Black is going to wonder why it is mentioned as having been sold for \$80. The one who paid \$80 for it will be shocked if he runs across a friend who bought the same lot for \$60. The list of prices at which each lot sold is a wonderful check on the auctioneer and a steady inducement to him to refrain from doing any unethical act.

Readers should not conclude that just because an auction house meets those criteria I spelled out above it is automatically deserving of their patronage while a smaller "mail auction" house is not. Almost every top auction house in business today started as a small mail auction. Back in 1933 when I ran my first auction sale, every lot in the sale belonged to me. That admission should not be at all surprising. After all, what owner of desirable material is going to consign it to an untried, unproved auction house without even an adequate mailing list? Before I graduated to operating an actual auction sale with a hired auctioneer and a crowd of active bidders, I conducted almost two dozen mail auctions from which I garnered enough experience—and followers and owners—to venture into the big world of holding major auctions.

GOING...GOING...GONE! (Continued)

Mail auctions certainly have their place in philately. The costs of running a sale today are incredible. Just to print and mail a catalogue can easily cost \$10,000 or more. To hire an auctioneer, rent a room, and pay competent help can run another \$5000 or more. To advertise a sale properly can add still more thousands of dollars. Obviously, any auction house selling, say, 3000 lots in a single sale can easily run up costs of \$20,000 before a single lot is sold. And I have not even mentioned license fees, insurance (a prohibitive item these days), travel, and entertainment expenses. Thus, if the cost of a sale averages but \$7 per lot, the lot itself must bring close to \$40 just for the auction house to break even. And few auction houses can live long on lots that earn only \$10 or so. Thus, mail auctions have their place, especially for those collectors whose philatelic needs are modest and who, much as they would like to, are unable to bid on the more expensive stamps found in the more important sales.

But the one thought I do want to leave with readers is this: be it a formal auction sale that bidders attend in person or a mail auction in which the only bidding is done by post, auctions are the recommended way for a collector to obtain needed items and to add to his or her collection. It is unfair to condemn mail auctions as being dishonest or unhelpful just as it is equally unfair to castigate formal auctions. Each form of buying has its advantages, and each is as honest and reputable as the individual or individuals running it.

* * * * *

No one knows the value of stamps sold at auction in one year. It must surely be in the high hundreds of millions of dollars. The prospective buyer has never seen most of these stamps. He bids on them simply on the basis of the description. In no field of endeavor that I can think of is the possibility of fraud greater. In my own case, before retiring from the auction field in 1973, I sold millions of dollars worth of stamps at auction over a 40-year period. But I have not met as many as two percent of the buyers personally. Many lived in other countries. I did not know their ages, the color of their skin, their religions, or even their marital status. It is a tribute to philatelists that in all those years having trusted tens of thousands of collectors whom I had not and never will meet, my total losses on bad credit were well under \$10,000. What other business can boast of a similar accomplishment?

But the street goes two ways. Many, many years ago while at a political gathering intended to advance the campaign of a gentleman running for the U.S. Senate, I was introduced to another gentleman who was "commissioner of licenses for the City of New York." I took advantage of the opportunity to tell him that I had just sent his office a substantial check to renew my auctioneer's license. "In what field?" he asked. "Postage stamps," I replied. His comment was pleasing to my ears. "We issue thousands of licenses for auctioneers," he said, "to Oriental rug salesmen, jewelry salesmen, firms that sell out bankrupt businesses, and anything else one can think of. Five days a week we hold hearings on complaints from the general public about these auctioneers, but I cannot think of a single complaint since I have been in office against a stamp auctioneer. If every other auctioneer conducted himself as honestly as you guys do, there would be no need at all for my office."

* * * * *

Postscript: Known as the stamp collecting hobby's most prolific writer, Pat Herst published his own philatelic newsletter — called Herst's Outbursts — from the early 1940s until 1973.



The 140 issues of Herst's Outbursts provided readers with a rich perspective of the hobby over the years. Herst attributed his choice of a name for the publication to the fact that sometimes his critics would react to his writings and ideas with the comment, "That's just another one of Herst's outbursts!" —RSC

Book Reviews By Roger S. Cichorz

ISLAND STUDIES — Fifty Years of the Lundy Field Society, edited by R. A. Irving, A. J. Schofield, and C. J. Webster, ISBN 0-9530532-0-2, published by The Lundy Field Society, printed and distributed by Lazarus Press, Bideford, Devon, England, 1997, 220 pages + 8 prepages + 40 color plates + Lundy map, numerous black-and-white illustrations and photographs, hardbound, 8½-inch by 6¾-inch format, £15.

Available from Lazarus Press, Unit 7 - Caddsdawn Business Park, Bideford, Devon, EX39 3DX, England, for £15 (£10 to L.F.S. members) plus £2.50 postage and packing.

The 50th Anniversary of the founding of the Lundy Field Society (L.F.S.) occurred during 1996. To celebrate this milestone, the editors proposed a book seeking to document and publicize the important work undertaken by the L.F.S. over that 50-year period. Their proposal was warmly endorsed, and this book is the result. *Island Studies* has no subject matter related to philately (other than the appearance of two drawings by John Dyke that were incorporated into two Lundy stamp designs), so if your interest in Lundy is solely in its stamps and postal history, skip purchasing this book. If your interest in Lundy includes aspects of its wildlife, marine biology, botany, geology, archaeology, and history, then you should find this book interesting and a worthwhile addition to your library.

Several general articles are included: John Schofield and Jennifer George present, as an introduction for the types of research documented in the book's specific and scientific treatises, some general thoughts on the significance of islands in a paper fittingly titled "Why Study Islands?," Charles Thomas gives an interesting presentation on "Lundy's Lost Name," Clive Harfield offers some new perspectives about Lundy's history, Chris Webster details the origins and first 50 years of the L.F.S. ("the first official history to appear in print"), Robert Irving and Paul Gilliland present a brief history on Lundy's Marine Nature Reserve, and Emma Parks offers her perspectives on the development of the position and multiple roles of the Lundy Warden. The other eleven entries are technical reports that deal with specific subjects ranging from the buildings on Lundy to marine biological research conducted at Lundy, but most are written in such a way that a layman can understand and enjoy them. Rounding out the contents of *Island Studies* are vitae of the authors, verbatim text of the constitution of the L.F.S., and an excellent topographical map of Lundy that also shows the location of major buildings, landmarks, and other points of interest.

The artistic aspects of this book are noteworthy: the cover design of The Old Light and cemetery is created by Peter Rothwell, there are 19 black-and-white illustrations by John Dyke interspersed throughout the text, and 40 color plates of excellent quality are located between pages 128 and 129. Unfortunately, the book's construction (rectangular with the spine on the short side) was dictated by the configuration of the color plates, and because of this, its binding may not hold up with use. However, despite this shortcoming, *Island Studies* is still an exceptional value for its relatively modest cost—a must for Lundyphiles!

THE ISLAND OF LUNDY, by A. F. Langham, ISBN 0-7509-0661-8, Alan Sutton Publishing Limited, Phoenix Mill, Stroud, Gloucestershire, England, 1994, x + 246 pages, profusely illustrated with 72 black-and-white line drawings and contemporary photographs, paperback (perfect binding with stiff card cover), 6½-inch by 9¾-inch format, £9.99.

Available from Alan Sutton Publishing Inc., 83 Washington St., Dover, New Hampshire 03820, U.S.A., for \$20 (postpaid to U.S. addresses).

This is the late Tony Langham's magnum opus, representing over 40 years of study and research about Lundy that grew from *Lundy, Bristol Channel*, the first book on Lundy that he and his ex-wife (Myrtle Ternstrom) published as a joint effort in 1959. That work, reshaped to conform to the "Islands Series" of the publisher David & Charles, was published as *Lundy* in 1970, with the Second Edition issued in 1984. The wealth of new information that has come to light since then and the many changes that have taken place on Lundy have necessitated a complete redrafting of the original manuscript. *The Island of Lundy* is not only the definitive reference book about Lundy, but is also a testimony for the love of the Island by its author. Tony, a longtime principal in the Lundy

BOOK REVIEWS (Continued)

Field Society, devoted the last two years of his life to completing this book while he was in the throes of advanced stages of an incurable leukemia. His dedication to this project was not only memorable but also possibly the prime motivation that kept him alive during that time. Tony's focus on the new research that forms the nucleus of this book was unwavering during that critical period, and his journey on earth, perhaps by divine intent, lasted just long enough for him to complete this work and see the book published.

The Island of Lundy is divided into 24 chapters about history, natural history, physical features, buildings, archaeology, geology, flora and fauna, and other topics germane to the Island. Lundy's history is given chronologically from the early post-glacial age to the present in the first eight chapters. Several chapters deal with specific Lundy topics such as its castle, lighthouses, shipwrecks, climate and cultivation, granite quarries, uniqueness. One chapter that may be of particular interest to LCCPQ readers contains information on Lundy's coinage, mail service, and stamps. A section of this chapter on the history of Lundy mail service is especially pertinent for its discussion of the establishment of the G.P.O. office on Lundy. The text of an April 15, 1886 briefing by the Secretary to the Post Office, Sir S. A. Blackwood, to the Postmaster General, which is reproduced on page 209, details the logistics and benefits of a weekly mail service proposal to and from Lundy. Fascinating stuff for the Lundy postal historian!

The book has three useful appendices: a list of population figures from 1242, the time of the de Mariscos, to the present (accurate since the first national census of 1851); a list of the owners, administrators, and tenants of Lundy from 1140 to the present; and synopses of the 12 companies associated either directly or indirectly with Lundy over the past century or so. Text footnotes are not included in the chapters but rather appear near the end of the book in a section titled "Notes" that is arranged numerically according to the chapters. These references provide valuable historical and contemporary records that are an essential start for anyone who wishes to further research any of the topics or specifics. A select bibliography of works devoted entirely or primarily to Lundy and an extensive alphabetical index complete this book. Most of the author's text is strictly factual, though he cautions in his preface that certain speculations about the history of the church, the Giants' Graves, Beacon Hill, and Madoc have been included — "these are all merely speculation and the future will prove them true or false. They have not been widely published before and deserve inclusion."

The Island of Lundy is invaluable as an encyclopedic reference work about Lundy, but it also provides the reader with a perspective for everything that contributes to Lundy's uniqueness. In this review I have presented the book's genesis and contents, but this information does not capture its overall flavor nor does justice to the text. Perhaps the best reviewer to do this is Gwyneth White, Lundyphile extraordinaire and longtime student of Lundy's recorded and natural histories, who wrote the following enthusiastic endorsement of *The Island of Lundy* shortly after its publication (personal correspondence to the LCCPQ Editor dated September 15, 1994):

Tony's book is really a must and bears scarcely any relation to the 1970 version he and Myrtle brought out, good though it was, but this has another quarter of a century's acquired knowledge worked into it, is far more exhaustive, and because he is in love with his subject, finds ever more to marvel at and pass on to we who share his enthusiasm! For instance, his research into the shipwrecks for which that lump of granite has been responsible is staggering in the numbers, which seem to have been magnetized into and onto it in the past century alone. There must be a massive tonnage of coal and old iron, to say nothing of rotting timber, littering the seabed in Lundy's immediate vicinity, so that I wonder at the clarity of the water and abundance of marine life in its environs. I begin to question if the three lighthouses have had any deterrent effect at all?!

It is amazing how much has been written by so many about Lundy over the centuries and how unerringly Tony has researched and tracked it all down! I have by no means finished it but am reading the chapters in the order in which the subjects interest me, which may sound a bit chaotic, but it is all falling into place, and I shall be sorry when I find there is no more to be dug out. He has really put heart and mind into this book. I have only one fault to find, and it is the one for which I criticized them over the first volume. In describing the coastline, he is still describing the magnificent west coast north-to-south, when to appreciate it at its best, it must be walked south-to-north for the strata to be seen in their full grandeur!

BOOK REVIEWS (Continued)

THE GIANTS GRAVES: A Nineteenth-Century Discovery of Human Remains on the Island of Lundy, by Keith S. Gardner and Myrtle Ternstrom, ISBN 0309-7994, offprint of a paper published in *Reports of Transactions of the Devonshire Association for the Advancement of Science*, Volume 129, pages 51-77, December 1997, 27 pages of 6 3/8-inch by 8 1/2-inch format, stapled, 8 black-and-white illustrations (drawings + photos).

Available from Myrtle Ternstrom, Whistling Down, Sandy Lane Road, Cheltenham, GL53 9DE, England, for £2.50 (+ £1 postage to the U.S.).

By way of an introduction to the "Giants' Graves" on Lundy, let me point out that Tony Langham devoted several pages to the discussion of this subject in *The Island of Lundy* because he felt the information had not been widely published before 1994 and deserved inclusion. Langham indicated in the book's Preface that his text on Giants' Graves was "merely speculation (that) the future will prove true or false." He wrote:

At the time of their initial discovery in 1856, the Giants' Graves on Lundy caused great excitement and speculation. W. H. Heaven, then owner, was convinced they were Viking, but detailed work by K. S. Gardner and others since 1960 has shown this site to be no more than a late medieval cemetery. ... An associated discovery of some glass beads has been used to date the burials, although the earliest reports suggested that the beads were not actually in the graves. The Bristol Museum, where the beads are now held, dates them to the ninth century A.D.

Langham's reference to the future proving the text true or false has now arrived! The authors of this paper effectively revisited the historical records and physical evidence related to the Giants' graves. They suggest that the evidence, at least circumstantially, again points to the earlier interpretation voiced by W. H. Heaven and others that the burials were executed in the Viking fashion, an interpretation subsequently dismissed as romantic Victorianism. One of the authors (Gardner) is an expert archaeologist who extensively has examined the several cemetery sites of antiquity on Lundy and is regarded as the renowned expert on the Giants' Graves, so this paper (which suggests the Giants' Graves "may well have been a ninth-century burial place") should create quite a stir and cause archeologists and scientists everyone to take notice.

Even though I already gave away the punch line to the authors' story, I do not want to spoil their plot, so the details (which include the beads) of how the authors went about their investigations and presented evidence to support their conclusions remain for the reader. This is a report of a scientific investigation, albeit on a rather esoteric and narrow subject, thus perhaps not of interest to the layman, but it is certainly absorbing reading for anyone with an interest in Lundy history and archaeology. As an analytical chemist who is accustomed to conducting laboratory investigations (fieldwork), performing literature searches, and writing critical reviews of the scientific literature (I have been told, something that carries over into my philatelic writings), I found this report fascinating and intriguing as the authors unfolded all the evidence and developed their conclusions. The notes and references to unpublished sources and the bibliography are of about equal length, and the two take up almost three full pages, so if you are inquisitive about everything there is to know about the Giants' Graves, this paper is essential reading.

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LUNDY ISLAND — A Monograph, by John Roberts Chanter, ISBN 0-9521413-4-5, published by Westwell Publishing, Appledore, Devon, England, printed and distributed by Lazarus Press, Bideford, Devon, England, 1997, xvi + 197 pages + Lundy map, 31 black-and-white illustrations, hardbound, 5-inch by 7 1/4-inch format, £15.

Available from Lazarus Press, Unit 7 – Caddsdow Business Park, Bideford, Devon, EX39 3DX, England, for £15 plus £2 postage and packing.

The complete title of this book is *Lundy Island: A Monograph, Descriptive and Historical; With Notices of its Distinguishing Features in Natural History*. Chanter's *A History of Lundy Island* was originally published in the *Transactions of the Devonshire Association* for 1871, published as a monograph in 1877, and then reprinted in 1887 with a new preface giving some additional information. Chanter's *Lundy Island* is generally regarded as the first

BOOK REVIEWS (Continued)

comprehensive work on the description, history, and natural history of the Island. Chanter acknowledged his debt to S. Steinman's pioneer work on Lundy's early history (1836), and to the descriptions and field notes given by Gosse (1853) to which he added his own historical research. The edition by Westwell Publishing is a faithful (verbatim) reprinting of Chanter's 1887 monograph and its Preface (which was termed the "Prefatory Notice and Postscripts").

To lend historical perspective to this edition is a two-page introduction to J. R. Chanter written by Myrtle Ternstrom and 30 marvelous drawings of Lundy scenes by the talented artist Peter Rothwell. Rothwell's illustrations are intended to represent Island features as they would have appeared in the late 19th Century, which prompted this disclaimer: "This of course necessitated a degree of speculation. However, every effort has been made to support the theories with thorough research." The excellent drawings alone are worth the purchase price of this book! Chanter's *Lundy Island* is small in size but (to repeat a timeworn cliché) not in stature! The book has a blue cloth cover with gold-leaf lettering and trim that gives it a delightful old-time feel and look, similar to the books produced earlier this century. I imagine this was the publisher's intent — to give this book the overall "flavor" of the original monograph.

Chanter's *Lundy Island* is not for everyone. The monograph is devoid of subject matter related to philately, so, once again, if your sole interest in Lundy is its stamps and postal history, skip purchasing this book. If your interest in Lundy includes any of the following topics (listed right from the contents of the book's chapters), then you should find this book interesting and a worthwhile addition to your library: descriptive (physical) features, climate and configuration, antiquities, history, cultivation and production, population, geology, natural history, and botany and marine products. For those interested in how little or how much Lundy has changed over the past 125 years, the text of this book will be revealing. I am amazed at how all the subsequent authoritative books written about Lundy (including the two most recent ones, Lois Lamplough's *Lundy - Island Without Equal* and the late Tony Langham's *The Island of Lundy*) utilize the Chanter monograph as their basis. Astonishingly, John Chanter was said to have never visited Lundy! Chanter's remarkable monograph has all the distinguishing characteristics of original field work and a firsthand account, but all of his research apparently was based on careful scrutiny of available literature and information provided by the Reverend Hudson Heaven, then-owner of Lundy. This is not a drawback, but rather a testimony to his enthusiasm for Lundy, which resounds throughout the monograph's text.

HANDBOOK OF THEMATIC PHILATELY, by W. E. J. van den Bold, English Edition, ISBN 9963 579 70 1, published by James Bendon Ltd., Limassol, Cyprus, 1994, 10 prepages + 215 pages, numerous black-and-white and color illustrations and photographs, including 10 pages of color plates, hardbound, 6¼-inch by 9¼-inch format, £22.50.

Available from James Bendon Ltd., P.O. Box 6484, 3307 Limassol, Cyprus, for £22.50 (\$40 to the U.S.) postpaid, credit card orders accepted. Also available in the U.S.A. for \$44 postpaid from Phil Bansner, P.O. Box 2529, West Lawn, Pennsylvania 19606.

Pim van den Bold's *Handbook of Thematic Philately* was published originally as a Dutch language edition in 1990 and was subsequently translated to English and published by James Bendon Ltd. for the British Thematic Association in 1994. The author, who is a jury member in the Netherlands and the winner of gold medals and a Prix d'Honneur in the Thematic Class at national and international exhibitions, is exceptionally qualified to write a definitive reference manual on thematic philately. He explains and interprets two publications from the International Federation of Philately (FIP), *Special Regulations for the Evaluation of Thematic Exhibits at FIP Exhibitions* and *Guidelines to the Regulations for the Evaluation of Thematic Exhibits*, which are reproduced as two of the three appendices that appear after the main text of the *Handbook of Thematic Philately*. Clearly, the text is intended to show what is necessary to gain a high-level international award in thematic philately as it explains the approach taken by juries in judging and scoring exhibits while acknowledging that to some extent subjectivity is involved.

BOOK REVIEWS (Continued)

Does the book have anything to offer us if we are not interested in exhibiting our thematic collections? Pim van den Bold takes great care to point out that collectors are not forced to follow the FIP Regulations and Guidelines. In fact, the primary strength of the book is showing the approach to and the development of a theme in a collection. The main text is divided into 12 chapters, only one of which, the last, is devoted to exhibiting. The author demonstrates the flow of changes and developments of thematic collecting over the past two decades and how the application of important principals would enable any thematic collection to gain depth. The 12 chapters are titled "Introduction" (7 pages), "From Pretty Picture Philately to Thematic Philately" (9 pages), "The Modern Thematic Collection" (8 pages), "The Theme" (4 pages), "The Title" (9 pages), "The Plan" (32 pages), "The Development" (68 pages), "The Size" (2 pages), "Philatelic Knowledge" (21 pages), "Rarity" (4 pages), "Presentation" (15 pages), and "Exhibiting" (15 pages). They explain the entire process of thematic collecting and serve as a useful reference even if and when the FIP regulations and guidelines change, as they seem to be doing with increasing regularity. The author intended the book to be picked up and consulted rather than read straight through, and though his organization permits this objective, some of the chapters are so brief and others so engrossing that I tended to read them straight through. Nevertheless, when I have questions about the treatment of thematic material and need to consult an authoritative reference on the subject, this book is the first I turn to for that purpose.

The nine-page Appendix C (titled "Thematic/Topical Literature") that rounds out this book is an overview of the importance of a bibliography in unlocking the wealth of knowledge that has been published on thematic or topical philately. It is based on three articles by George Griffenhagen, Giancarlo Morolli, and Ernst Schlunegger, which were published from 1984 to 1990 in *Philatelic Literature Review*, the quarterly journal of the American Philatelic Research Library. However, Ian M. Paton, an eminent thematic collector and exhibitor from England who reviewed this book for the British philatelic press, cautions us that the Bibliography cited at the end of Appendix C needs to be used with care when dealing with books about thematic/topical collecting in general. Paton recommends that these books be ignored if they were published prior to 1990 since they may be positively misleading because of the way the Thematic Class was structured in earlier years. Paton suggests the best way to clear up any misunderstandings is to read and digest Chapter 2 ("From Pretty Picture Philately to Thematic Philately"). Likewise, the two other appendices relating to the FIP Regulations and Guidelines also need to be read with care by serious international exhibitors since these have undergone some minor changes since 1997. However, for most of us collectors who are not exhibiting internationally, the appendices are still authoritative. I regard Pim van den Bold's *Handbook of Thematic Philately* to be the current definitive reference manual on thematic philately and an essential acquisition for anyone who collects stamps by topic or structures their collections thematically.

ADVENTURES IN TOPICAL STAMP COLLECTING, Second Edition, *ATA Handbook #133*, by George Griffenhagen and Jerome Husak, ISBN 0-939991-30-1, published by American Topical Association, Tucson, Arizona 85728, U.S.A., 1997, 96 pages, numerous black-and-white and color illustrations and photographs, paperback (perfect binding with stiff card cover), 6-inch by 9-inch format, \$22.

Available from American Topical Association, P.O. Box 65749, Tucson, Arizona 85728, U.S.A., for \$22 postpaid (\$20 postpaid for ATA members).

Topical and thematic collecting and exhibiting have undergone dramatic changes, an extensive evolution, since the First Edition of *Adventures in Topical Stamp Collecting* was published by the American Topical Association in 1981; consequently, the Second Edition is a totally new product despite retaining the title of the original handbook. Throughout this book and this review the words "topical" and "thematic" are used interchangeably as the distinction between the two once-separate approaches to collecting has largely faded in recent years with the advent of story-telling development as the prime consideration and criterion for topical collecting. The authors, two of the best-known topical collectors in the United States, are aware that more than a dozen handbooks on thematic philately have been published since 1981, so why was one more added to the list? The answer lies in the fact that many of these handbooks are largely devoted to thematic exhibiting even

BOOK REVIEWS (Continued)

though 95 percent of all topical collectors will never exhibit their collections. *Adventures in Topical Stamp Collecting* is primarily designed for those who want to create a topical collection for their personal pleasure. It succeeds as an essential guide for beginners as well as the more advanced topical collectors.

The Second Edition of *Adventures in Topical Stamp Collecting* thoroughly explains that topical collecting no longer consists only of accumulating stamps, covers, and collateral material related to a single topic, and it emphasizes the various philatelic elements that are available to enhance any topical collection. According to the A.T.A. publicity release, this book features the most comprehensive illustrated review of philatelic elements to be found in any publication on stamp collecting and shows how to arrange these elements for maximum benefit. The authors state, however, that the scope of any topical collection is entirely up to the collector and that he or she can collect and classify philatelic material in any way that provides him or her maximum pleasure.

The text has a definite "American" bias as little is written about FIP thematic regulations and guidelines, compared to, say, Pim van den Bold's *Handbook of Thematic Philately*. However, in the Philatelic Elements section, the authors define appropriate material for a thematic exhibit in national as well as international philatelic exhibitions as material that has been issued for the purpose of transmitting mail or other postal communications — so readers can not claim to be left out in the dark about the "rules" and accepted standards. In addition to postage stamps and postal stationery, this material includes other items (such as artist's proofs, essays, specimens, and color trials) officially produced by a postal administration leading up to the actual stamp or postal stationery issue. On the flip side, some material that is restricted in developing thematic exhibits includes telephone cards (even if issued by postal administrations), cinderella items [with exceptions of vignettes that are produced by postal administrations for specific postal service such as labels for airmail and registered mail, or labels that give postal privileges such as military or prisoner mail], covers with imprinted cachets, and revenue stamps.

After extensive coverage of the philatelic elements with profuse illustrations in color, the authors give helpful information on the write-up and presentation of topical collections, and despite the fact they did not write this book for exhibitors, they include a 16-page chapter devoted to exhibiting. This section is enhanced by reduced illustrations of 26 pages from noteworthy, award-winning exhibits, which amounts to sort of a "show-and-tell" story of what some people are doing correctly. The book continues with a wonderful history of topical/thematic philately ("How Did It All Begin?") that includes sections on the first topical societies and thematic exhibitions. The book finishes with a useful bibliographic listing of thematic literature on specific topics, ranging from worldwide thematic handbooks, periodicals of national thematic societies, and thematic periodicals arranged alphabetically by topic.

The Second Edition is written in plain, unencumbered language that makes the basics of topical/thematic philately accessible to all collectors in a straightforward entertaining manner. The book is well designed and printed on coated stock paper. The layout is well executed, and the type, with liberal use of italics, boldface, and all capitals for variation and emphasis, provides an eye-pleasing style and clarity. Highly recommended to all!

Consider Membership in the American Topical Association

Topical/thematic stamp collecting offers all the joy and adventure of general worldwide collecting within workable limits of a favorite subject. The American Topical Association (ATA) is the best source of information, fellowship, and inspiration in the topical field. Organized in September 1949 by a handful of optimistic collectors, ATA is now the largest philatelic society devoted to a specific phase of stamp collecting. Every issue of ATA's wonderful 98-page bimonthly journal, *Topical Time*, is chock full with the most amazing and detailed complexity of topical information, feature articles, checklists, and questions and answers. ATA annual membership dues are only \$20 for U.S. residents or \$25 for non-U.S. residents and include a subscription to *Topical Time*. The *LCCPQ* Editor has membership applications available and will send you one on request and be happy to answer any questions about the ATA and membership benefits, or write ATA, P.O. 65749, Tucson, Arizona 85728, U.S.A. for further information and an application.

Lundy at Auction by Roger S. Cichorz

Puffin Stamps Fifth Postal Bid Sale (September 9, 1998)

The fifth Lundy auction conducted by Michael H. Bale (L.C.C. member #161) under the name "Puffin Stamps" (P.O. Box 1, Ilfracombe, Devon, EX34 9BR, England; telephone 01271-862857, fax 01271-867161) was primarily a postal history sale as just over half of the offerings (280 of 552 lots, or 50.7%) were covers. The other lots consisted primarily of bogus and fantasy material, unused postcards, L.C.C. souvenirs, paper ephemera, and philatelic and nonphilatelic literature. Other than five lots of Sark and Alderney Commodore Shipping labels, there were no stamp lots offered in this sale. The 552 lots in this sale had a total estimate of £13,493, and 317 lots (57.4%) sold, realizing £7710.55 against a cumulative estimate of £6716.50. Sold lots comprised 49.8% of the total estimate (indicating some of the more expensive material did not sell), but they realized a respectable 114.8 percent of their cumulative estimate. A summary of this auction by lot categories is given in Table 1. For purposes of monetary conversion, GB£1.00 = US\$1.67 on the date of the auction's close.

TABLE 1. Summary of Puffin Stamps Fifth Lundy Sale (September 9, 1998).

| Category | Lots Offered | | Lots Sold | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------|-------------------|------------|-------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|
| | No. | Estimates | No. | % | Estimates | Realizations | %R:E* |
| first day covers | 83 | £ 1893.50 | 60 | 72.3 | £ 1294.50 | £ 1636.00 | 126.4 |
| pre-locals covers | 10 | 2037.00 | 6 | 60.0 | 1370.00 | 1189.00 | 86.8 |
| 1929-39 covers | 13 | 302.00 | 11 | 84.6 | 262.00 | 363.00 | 138.5 |
| ACAS/LACAL covers | 26 | 1738.00 | 17 | 65.4 | 594.00 | 731.00 | 123.1 |
| 1940-49 covers | 19 | 952.00 | 10 | 52.6 | 412.00 | 456.00 | 110.7 |
| 1950-59 covers | 32 | 464.00 | 17 | 53.1 | 296.50 | 349.00 | 117.7 |
| 1960-69 covers | 16 | 990.50 | 7 | 43.8 | 76.50 | 133.50 | 174.5 |
| 1970-79 covers | 36 | 324.00 | 21 | 58.3 | 236.50 | 307.50 | 130.0 |
| 1980-89 covers | 16 | 700.50 | 14 | 87.5 | 679.50 | 691.50 | 101.8 |
| 1990-97 covers | 22 | 526.00 | 15 | 68.2 | 56.50 | 70.80 | 125.3 |
| cover collections | 7 | 227.00 | 6 | 85.7 | 182.00 | 207.00 | 113.7 |
| cover lots | 280 | £ 10154.50 | 184 | 65.7 | £ 5460.00 | £ 6134.30 | 112.3 |
| bogus/fantasy | 124 | 1318.00 | 58 | 46.8 | 340.50 | 413.75 | 121.5 |
| miscellaneous | 20 | 119.50 | 7 | 35.0 | 44.00 | 47.00 | 106.8 |
| postcards (unused) | 8 | 41.50 | 7 | 87.5 | 34.50 | 38.00 | 110.1 |
| L.C.C. souvenirs | 33 | 208.50 | 16 | 48.5 | 68.50 | 75.00 | 109.5 |
| ephemera | 46 | 536.00 | 26 | 56.5 | 324.00 | 434.50 | 134.1 |
| philatelic literature | 13 | 419.50 | 5 | 38.5 | 111.50 | 183.00 | 164.1 |
| nonphilatelic literature | 23 | 478.00 | 11 | 47.8 | 231.50 | 269.00 | 116.2 |
| Commodore locals | 5 | 217.00 | 3 | 60.0 | 92.00 | 118.00 | 128.2 |
| noncover lots | 272 | £ 3338.50 | 133 | 48.9 | £ 1255.50 | £ 1576.25 | 125.5 |
| total (all lots) | 552 | £ 13493.00 | 317 | 57.4 | £ 6716.50 | £ 7710.55 | 114.8 |

*%R:E is the ratio of realizations to estimates for the sold lots.

This auction contained 24 lots estimated at £100 or greater, but they fared poorly when compared to the sale as a whole. Half of these 24 lots sold, realizing £2515 against a cumulative estimate of £2440, for a ratio of realizations to estimates of only 103.1%. Only two of these lots were highly contested and realized £540 against estimates of £310. If the 24 pricey lots are excluded from the auction summary, the other 305 lots that sold totaled 57.7% of the adjusted lot total (literally, no change from the 57.4% figure for the auction as a whole). However, these 305 lots represented a cumulative estimate of £4276 (66.7% of the adjusted total sale estimate of £6413) and sold for £5195.55, or a remarkable 21.5% above their cumulative estimate.

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What do these statistics mean? Simply put, the more expensive of the lots estimated at under £100 were the most highly sought-after items in the sale and their performance far outweighed the rest of the material (both the priciest material and the cheaper lots). This observation will be borne out and demonstrated in the ensuing text. But, before I embark on that journey, I would like to review most of the high-priced cover lots since these represent some rare, seldom-seen, and highly desirable examples of Lundy postal history.

For starters, the priciest cover in this sale was described as: "One of the earliest and rarest Lundy postal history items—an entire letter post-marked Bristol, September 9, 1837 with manuscript message inside reading "off Lundy"—i.e., written by R. D. Griffiths who was en route on a ship to America and sent the letter back to Bristol by ship's pilot, placed in the post, and charged 1d on delivery. (*See bracketed erratum note below.) A great rarity." This cover and its contents, which were discussed and illustrated in the Spring 1993 *LCCPQ* (pages 10-11), were estimated at £1000 but fetched only £810. Is this £810 realization the all-time record for a Lundy cover sold at auction?! [**Erratum*: This appears a good time to make a correction about the lot description of the 1837 letter. I take the blame in the original analysis of the cover markings for misleading Michael by indicating the manuscript "1" represented a 1d charge. This cover was posted almost three years before the uniform penny post was established in Britain in May 1840, so most likely that "1" represented a **one-shilling** payment, the standard pilot's charge at that time for a ship's letter. I was reminded of my mistake when I read the descriptions of some British ship mail covers at a recent show held in Denver.]

A real photo postcard ("The Slipway"), otherwise unused but with a strike of the extremely rare oval "LUNDY ISLAND COASTGUARD" cachet on the message side, went unsold against an optimistic £500 estimate, despite being the first time that this cachet was offered at auction. The aforementioned two highly contested lots that sold for £540 against estimates of £310 were both first day covers. An outward April 1, 1936 FDC with a complete set of the ACAS "large map" stamps (according to the lot description in the catalogue, one of only ten that were prepared) fetched a whopping £375 against an estimate of £200, a surprisingly modest estimate considering the current £250 catalogue evaluation and the fact that the last "large map" set FDC auctioned by Michael sold for £220 back in 1993. An inward Pitman-prepared October 31, 1938 FDC for the LACAL "5-line" overprint stamp (PS #18) sold for £165, or 50% above its estimate of £110. Three other FDCs were estimated above £100, but the only one of the three to sell was a C.T.O. 1953 Coronation FDC with the four "wrong color" overprint varieties; it fetched £135 against an estimate of £125—again a modest estimate when one considers another of these covers sold for £135 in Puffin Stamps' third auction held in February 1997.

None of the three ACAS/LACAL flown covers estimated at £100 or greater sold. One of two 1940s covers estimated at £100 or greater sold: a 1941 railway cover addressed to John E. Moss on Lundy realized £165 against a £150 estimate. The only 1950s cover estimated at £100 or greater was a novelty item of sorts. Described as "1951 flying birds unaddressed cover on which the complete set of stamps have had the centers cut out from a different value and then pasted onto the center of each stamp therefore producing different colors (i.e., ½p black and pink, 5p blue and orange, etc.), postmarked Lundy June 9, 1951 and signed by John Dyke—probably a unique cover and very colorful but not in accordance with Island P.O. procedures," this unusual item fetched £105 against a £100 estimate. The only 1960s cover that was estimated at £100 or greater was a 1969 "APPEAL" acknowledgment card, which failed to sell against an optimistic estimate of £850 (and apparently inflated catalogue value of £1000).

Five 1980s "cover" lots estimated at £100 or greater were trial and proof covers, cachets, and cancellations related to the 1985 "balloon flight" issue; these five lots sold as a combined lot ("one unique collection") for £640 against a £635 cumulative estimate. The sixth 1980s "cover" lot estimated at £100 or greater was a unique range of essay and proof material (some 30 different covers) in connection with the production of the FDCs and cachets for the 1989 60th Anniversary overprint issue; estimated at £450, this lot went unsold. For the record, there were no 1970s or 1990s cover lots estimated at £100 or greater, and the remaining four lots estimated at £100 or greater were not cover lots (i.e., one lot consisted of bogus material, two were literature lots, and one was a lot of

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Commodore Sark locals). Only one of these four lots sold—a first (1975) edition of F. W. Gade's *My Life on Lundy*, which fetched its estimate of £120.

Most of the rest of the FDC offerings sold at right about their estimates. Two exceptions were a 1943 "IX Anniversary"-overprinted Tighearna sheet on an outward March 22, 1943 FDC addressed to "The Philatelic Bureau of Lundy, 33 Montagu St., Kettering, Northants" (noted "unusual thus"), which fetched £85 against an estimate of £45, and a standard outward January 31, 1957 FDC for the "puffin" definitive set, which realized £66 against an estimate of £37. An unaddressed C.T.O. FDC for the four 1953 Coronation "reversed" color overprints sold for £135 against an estimate of £125, but a similar Coronation C.T.O. FDC fetched £165 in Puffin Stamps' February 1997 auction.

Among the early postal history lots, there were six postcards with G.P.O. "LUNDY ISLAND" thimble postmarks, the most I can ever recall being offered in one auction. Four of the six were sold, one at and three within £10 of their respective estimates, and as a group they realized £345 against a cumulative estimate of £340. The best performer among these was a "Knight Templar Rock" photo postcard franked with a G.B. KGV 1d definitive with two August 1, 1925 (late period) thimbles, one on and the other alongside the stamp. This remarkable item fetched £100 against a £90 estimate.

Among the 1929 to 1939 items, a Lundy ½p definitive stamp on a large piece tied by a red strike of the "puffin and rock" datestamp of January 31, 1930 realized a whopping £40 against a modest £16 estimate. By contrast, a similar piece with the datestamp struck in black realized £15 against a £14 estimate. An outward cover to a philatelist in Oxford, addressed in Felix Gade's handwriting, bearing a bisected 1p definitive tied by a November 13, 1937 "puffin and rock" type Ba datestamp, sold for a whopping £130 against a £70 estimate. No doubt this cover is "philatelic" and Gade did this as a favor for a friend as there was no shortage of the ½p definitives then.

The best performers among the 1930s flown covers were three showing "use" of ACAS "large map" stamps having denominations other than ½d. An inward April 27, 1936 cover bearing a 3d (in addition to a ½d) "large map" fetched £70 against a £40 estimate, a January 13, 1941 Captain Smye-prepared inward cover bearing a (by this time) superfluous 6d "large map" and the customary "AIR SERVICE...SUSPENDED" cachet realized £95 against its £65 estimate, and another Smye creation (a wartime folded "Civil Defense" leaflet bearing superfluous ½d and 1d "large map" stamps and an "AIR SERVICE...SUSPENDED" cachet) sold for £70 against a £40 estimate. By contrast, a Smye-prepared wartime propaganda leaflet without any superfluous LACAL airmail stamps and the "AIR SERVICE...SUSPENDED" cachet only realized £33 against an estimate of £30. Three of four covers with ACAS "tramticket" frankings sold, realizing £203 against a cumulative estimate of £190; however, the exhibition-quality showpiece item—a large piece of parcel wrapping franked with four 3d tram-tickets from roll 4 all tied by a rare type Ca straight-line cancellation of September 9, 1936—failed to sell against its optimistic £550 estimate.

The best performer among the 1940s items was a 1941 cover addressed to John Moss at the Lundy Hotel and bearing at the lower left two London Passenger British Railway 2d parcel labels tied by two handstamps from the Chesham Parcels Office. Two G.B. ½d definitives at the top right are cancelled by pen after the London machine postmark missed the stamps to the left, and the Lundy "1929-1939"-overprint 1d stamp applied underneath the G.B. stamps is not postmarked. Despite these features (or perhaps because of them), this unusual cover sold for £165 against its £150 estimate, which I thought was too high. What I consider to be a better example of wartime postal history—a 1943 registered outward cover sent to Sweden by C. F. Waghorn, the principal keeper of the South Lighthouse, and franked with ten different Lundy stamps including several wartime overprints, which took almost two months to be transported to Swansea where a registration label was applied—sold for £72 against an estimate of £60.

The best performer among the 1950s items was an April 9, 1951 outward flown G.P.O. printed registered envelope sent by Felix Gade to Ilfracombe, which sold for £60 against a £40 estimate. This cover has a Braunton registry label on front and on the back a strike of the rare four-line cachet "c/o DEVON AIR TRAVEL, WRAFTON GATE, CHIVENOR AERODROME, N. DEVON" in black and a postmarked Lundy "BY AIR"-overprint 1p

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stamp. The best performer among the 1960s items was the original October 22, 1969 invoice from Atlantic Coast Studios to J. Sanders Ltd. in Southampton for 520 Lundy overprinted stamps (i.e., PS #161A, the red "error" provisional). This interesting ancillary postal history item realized £55 against an estimate of £22.

The best performer among the 1970s items was an outward "Marisco Castle" real photo postcard to Ilfracombe franked with a dramatic freak Lundy 1972 1p on 9p blue surcharge provisional stamp in which "the overprint is moved strongly to the right leaving the value panes of the stamp totally exposed and one blue blob only in the center of the word 'PUFFIN'." This unusual June 1972 cover was estimated at £65 and sold for £85. A rare April 1973 postcard airmailed to the U.S.A., having a British 3p stamp with an albino impressed puffin, a Lundy Trinity House 1p stamp tied by a green "LUNDY PHILATELIC SERVICE" cachet, and a British "BY AIR MAIL" label with two embossed puffins (ex-Ulrich) fetched £40 against a modest estimate of £30.

None of the 32 single cover lots from the 1980 to 1997 period was estimated above £15, and none of the 24 lots that sold realized greater than £15, with the average lot from this grouping selling for just over £5. The best performer among the 1980s items was an outward December 1982 cover with a type DS-3 "DELAYED BY STORM" cachet that realized £12 against an estimate of £8. The best performer among the 1990s items was an outward May 20, 1989 cover with early use of the 3p on 10p "Bureau" surcharge stamp tied to the back by a Lundy Philatelic Bureau cancellation; it sold for £15 against an estimate of £8.50. Bulk cover lots and collections fared well, with six of seven selling at 13.7% above their cumulative estimate. The best performer was a lot of approximately 40 commercial covers, which realized £45 against an estimate of £30. Unused postcards fared well as seven of the eight lots sold right around their estimates. The most expensive postcard lot consisted of an unused Twiss Bros. No. 17 "H.M.S. Montagu Ashore at Lundy Island" that sold for its £10 estimate.

As usual, the bogus and fantasy material fared poorer than the cover lots and the auction as a whole in terms of the percentage of lots sold (46.8%) and the percentage of total estimate the sold lots represented (25.8%); however, these sold lots realized 21.5% above their cumulative estimate, a figure that exceeded that of the auction as a whole (14.8%). There were no rarities offered, but several lots of scarcer material performed admirably. These lots (with £ estimates followed by £ realizations given in parentheses after brief lot descriptions) included: 1962 "anti-malaria" set of six stamps with bogus red "SPECIMEN" overprints (£9/£15), 1962 "anti-malaria" stamp set with inverted bogus "D.D.T." overprints (£9/£15), 20p label based on the 1974 definitive type but showing an ancient murrelet (£5/£10), three color trials of 20p ancient murrelet label (£12/£18), black proof of 20p ancient murrelet label (£6/£11), 2p and 4½p definitives with bogus "Rat Island Dependency" overprints (£15/£18), and a similar lot with the "Rat Island Dependency" overprints done in a slightly heavier typeface (£15/£19).

The most expensive lot that sold in the bogus category was a clever British Colonies omnibus type stamp for Charles and Diana's 1981 wedding with "LUNDY" and 20p appearing at the bottom; it realized its £21 estimate. What I considered to be the best two items in the bogus category — the 1955 Millenary ½p and 6p stamps with "Honoring/ (Rotary International cog wheel logo)/1905-1995" overprints in black and silver, respectively, and signed "Kessler" on the back — failed to attract any bids against their respective estimates of £23 and £24. There is an interesting story regarding these stamps that deserves repeating here as newer Lundy collectors who do not have access to earlier issues of the LCCPQ might not be familiar with the saga. During the 1950s, F. W. Kessler was an airmail stamp dealer who offered these supposedly bogus "Rotary" overprinted stamps as genuine Lundy issues. A Kessler May 21, 1956 invoice for a set of three of these stamps ("Rotary" overprints on the two airmails and a surface issue) indicated that because of technical difficulties with the overprinting process they were produced in small quantities (only 50 stamps each overprinted) but, nevertheless, "will be catalogued in the forthcoming airmail catalogue of the world."

By 1980 when I first began researching these stamps, Kessler was dead, but his widow, whom I was able to contact, defended her late husband as a "legitimate and honorable stamp dealer" and denied he had been responsible for producing the Lundy Rotary

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overprints. After she examined the 1956 invoice for the Lundy set, Mrs. Kessler explained that the airmail catalogue referred to on the invoice was the *Sanabria Air Mail Catalogue* and that Kessler had obtained the stamps from "an Englishman (who had purchased the Sanabria firm) and wanted to establish his son in business." It turns out that the person she referred to was none other than Antoine Medawar, then philatelic agent for Martin Coles Harman. If Mrs. Kessler's explanation about the origin of these stamps is true, then they should be elevated from "bogus overprint" status to "prepared but unissued" status (i.e., an **essay overprint**) since Medawar originated them and had the authority to produce essays and submit them to Harman for approval! [Note: Additional information is given about the Lundy "Honoring/Rotary International" overprinted Millenary stamps in the following *LCCPQ* issues: Fall 1980 (pages 4-5), Spring 1981 (pages 8-9), and Fall 1981 (pages 4-5).]

The miscellaneous category in Table 1 encompasses Christmas, letterbox, and postal-rate-change material. Only about one third of these lots sold, and most of the individual lots realized right around their estimates. The most expensive lot in this category that sold consisted of four examples in various colors of "Merry Xmas '88" labels produced by Jon Aitchison; it realized £10 against an estimate of £12. About half of the L.C.C. souvenir lots sold, with most of the individual lots realizing right around their estimates as well. The best performing lot was a mint corner block of four of George Fabian's "Fabian's Phantom Post" 10-cent labels, which fetched £9 against an estimate of £6.

There were several exceptional paper ephemera lots offered in this auction, and bidders recognition of these is indicated by the observation that the three lots with the highest estimates sold for well above their respective estimates and all the lots that sold realized a hefty 34.1% over their cumulative estimate. The three best ephemera lots that sold all had ancillary postal history or philatelic significance. They consisted of two pages showing a range of Lundy and LACAL postmarks on piece from 1929 into 1962 (which realized £100 against an estimate of £75), an original 1969 Lundy sales brochure from when the Island was offered for sale by the Harmans (which sold for £47 against an estimate of £35), and a typed letter from LACAL dated July 28, 1937, stating that proofs are for sale at 10/- each but that the stamps without margin inscriptions (*PS #18e*) are not on sale to the public (which sold for £55 against an estimate of £30).

Despite the fact that only five of the 13 lots sold, philatelic literature led all categories as the realizations of the lots that sold exceeded their cumulative estimate by a whopping 64.1%. Star performers in this category (with £ estimates followed by £ realizations given in parentheses after brief lot descriptions) included: a short run of nine C.I.L.A. Lundy auction catalogues without price realizations (£10/£17), Barry N. D. Chinchin's *A Catalogue of Lundy Stamps* (original 1969 edition) (£60/£90), F. R. Downing's *The Lundy Locals* (original 1956 edition) (£20/£38), and three different editions of Gerald Rosen's *A Priced Catalogue of British Local Stamps* offered as a single lot (£15/£32).

Almost 50% percent of lots offered in the nonphilatelic literature category sold, and their realizations exceeded their cumulative estimate by 16.2%. These sold lots included the previously mentioned first edition of Felix Gade's *My Life on Lundy* that fetched its £120 estimate, but the star performer was a copy of a 1990 48-page book by Roy Dennis titled *Puffins*, which realized £20, or double its £10 estimate. The second most expensive nonphilatelic lot (runner-up to Gade's *My Life on Lundy*) was a folder packed with odds and ends having to do with Lundy history, including original repair bills for the Lundy Gannet, Landmark Trust paperwork and newsletters, a map, a guide, correspondence, etc.—a "treasure trove of Lundy history" according to the lot description. This lot fetched £44 against its £35 estimate. Three of the five lots of Commodore Shipping labels sold above their estimates, which were based on discounted catalogue values. In actuality, three of four lots sold since one lot consisted of Sark "Kennedy" overprint items that were broken down from blocks of four to singles and sold as an alternate "a"-numbered lot because no bids were received on the blocks.

In conclusion, this auction offered an abundance of seldom-offered, esoteric, interesting, and unusual postal history and paper ephemera items. It is always a pleasure for me to peruse Puffin Stamps' "postal history" auction catalogues, and I hope Michael will continue to alternate these sales with the Puffin Stamps' "stamp" auctions.

LUNDY

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