

# Nelson Philatelic Society (Inc)

**2017 May - Issue 396**

**JOIN THE  
NELSON STAMP  
CLUB**




**Open Day : Saturday May 6th, 10am-3pm.**

**Next Meeting : Sunday 14th May 1.45pm**

Earlier time allows members and visitors time to review the Sales Table, Set up Displays, etc, before the official meeting

## Meeting Dates

May 6th	Sat	10am	Open Day
May 14th	Sun	2pm	Postal History ( Kelvin)
Jun 11th	Sun	2pm	AGM
Jul 9th	Sun	2pm	Paula Hucklesby "Children's Literature"
Aug 13	Sun	2pm	Possible Blenheim Dealer
Sept 12th	Tue	7.30	Technical Night. TBA
Oct 10th	Tue	7.30	8 page competition
Oct 14th	Sat	10am	Open Day
Nov 14th	Tue	7.30	Robert Perrin
Dec 12th	Tue	TBA	End of year dinner ( Restaurant )

**Starts at 2.00 pm.**

## This Issue

1. Meeting Dates
2. Interesting Stamp Stories
3. Mike Petzold's Crossword
4. March Meeting Minutes

### A Penny For Your Mischievous Thoughts

According to legend, Sir Rowland Hill got the idea for the Penny Postage program one day while watching a barmaid tearfully plead with a mailman. Unable to afford the shilling demanded for postage, she begged simply to hold the letter sent by her beloved brother. Hill then watched as the girl scanned the envelope intensely, as if trying to read its contents mentally. Touched, Hill coughed up a shilling and gave her the letter. The girl stopped crying, but instead of being grateful, she became nervous. After the postman left, she confessed that the letter was blank. Her brother's message was contained in secret marks made on the envelope. Apparently, the two had devised a system whereby they could send each other messages through the post for free.

## The Stamp That Moved the Panama Canal

In 1902, the U.S. Congress was about to pass legislation to link the Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea with a canal across—that's right—Nicaragua. That is, until engineer Philippe Bunau-Varilla (and a certain stamp) got involved.

In the 1880s, Bunau-Varilla worked for a French company that had attempted to construct a similar canal across Panama. But engineering difficulties, financial mismanagement, and deadly yellow fever epidemics eventually bankrupted the company and prevented it from completing the project. Still believing Panama (then part of Colombia) presented the best route for such a canal (and still wanting a government contract to construct it), Bunau-Varilla lobbied Congress to switch its plans, claiming Nicaragua's terrain was too unwieldy. Then, in the spring of 1902, nature worked in his favor. Mt. Momotombo, a volcano in Nicaragua, erupted.



Knowing the incident would sway the American canal vote, Nicaraguan officials immediately began denying reports of the eruption, and Bunau-Varilla was left struggling for a way to counter the Nicaraguan cover-up. Fortunately, he remembered once seeing a Nicaraguan postage stamp featuring Mt. Momotombo, conveniently depicted with smoke rising from the top. After rummaging through stamp shops in Washington, he found the one he was looking for and promptly purchased 90 copies. In a matter of days, all 45 U.S. senators had received the Mt. Momotombo stamp, complete with Bunau-Varilla's caption, "An official witness to volcanic activity in Nicaragua." This menacing volcano, they were told, would threaten the canal route. Sure enough, when the Senate voted on June

19, 1902, the Panama route won. Bunau-Varilla ran a sophisticated lobbying campaign to change public opinion and Congressional votes, but he couldn't have sealed the deal without the help of those Nicaraguan stamps.

## The Stamp That Went Underground

During the early 20th century, the postal delivery system met its biggest challenge since mailman-hating dogs: street traffic. In large cities across Europe and America, mail delivery wagons had to maneuver through swarms of horse-drawn carriages, streetcars, and pedestrians—all of which severely slowed

down the postal system. Eventually, post office officials figured that if the mail couldn't get through city traffic, they would try going under it. Thus emerged pneumatic mail tubes, a kind of subway system for letters. In major metropolises such as Paris, Rome, Vienna, Berlin, and New York, mail tubes were constructed underground to link major post offices. Compressed air propelled containers of mail through steel tubes at speeds up to 30 mph, increasing the postal service's delivery pace by leaps and bounds. In most cases, people still used regular stamps for pneumatic mail. Italy, however, printed special pneumatic stamps between 1933 and 1966. Such subterranean mail tubes operated until as

recently as the 1980s, but as cities grew and post offices moved around, rerouting the underground mail networks proved too difficult. The tubes were abandoned in most cities, though Prague still has a few pneumatic tubes in use



## The Stamps that Stick Without a Lick

Getting stamps to stick hasn't always been a simple task. Most stamps made after 1840 came with an adhesive gum on the back. But the gum—made from various plant products such as cornstarch, sweet potatoes, gum Arabic, and sugar wasn't always of the highest quality, meaning stamps often fell off letters. The U.S. Postal Service tried various gum formulas to remedy the situation, including special "summer gum" that was resistant to humidity, and "winter gum" that resisted cracking in cold, dry winter air.



Finally, in the 1960s, the South Pacific island kingdom of Tonga broke the mold when it printed a series of self-adhesive stamps. Not only did they not require licking, they came in odd shapes—the most famous of which was this 1969 stamp (below) shaped like a banana. These unusual stamps were a big hit and, for a time, became a significant source of revenue for the country. Collectors went crazy for them. In fact, they became so popular that one dealer ordered more copies of a particular stamp than had been printed. Most countries followed Tonga's lead, and today, the die-cut, peel-and-stick stamps are the most common type of stamps in the United States.

## The Stamp with All the Right Intentions, and All the Wrong Music

In 1956, East Germany decided to honor the death of native composer Robert Schumann by featuring him on a stamp. The design included a commemorative portrait of the artist against the backdrop of one of his musical scores. All well and good, except the musical manuscript they used was that of fellow composer Franz Schubert. Close, but no cigar. The stamps were recalled and replaced with ones showing music



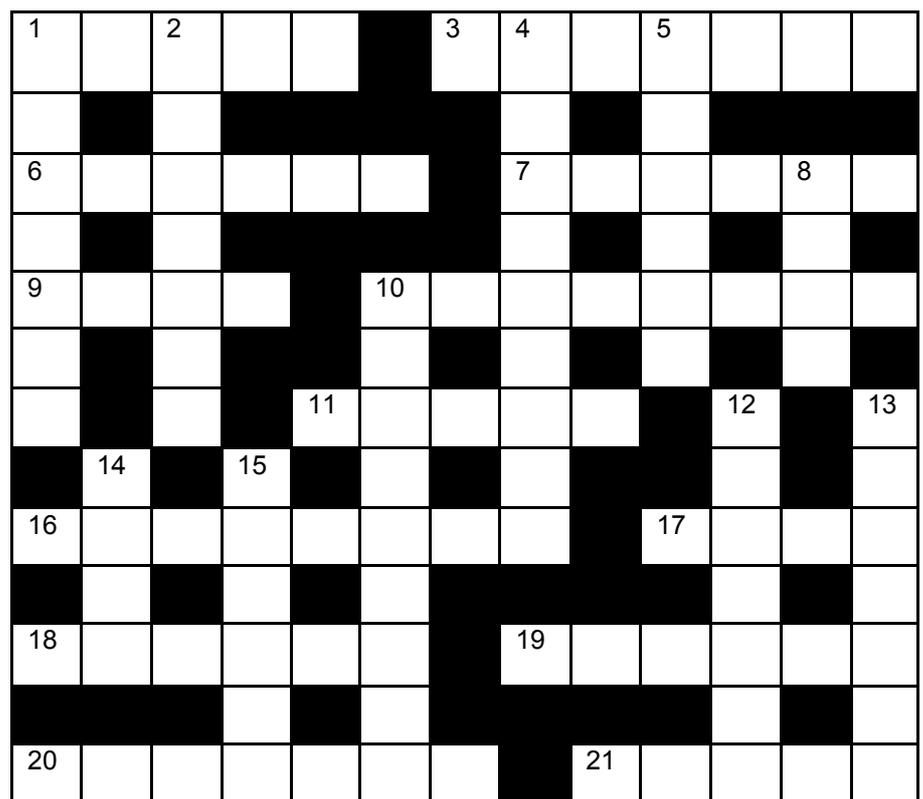
### ACROSS

- 1, 7. venue (5,6)
3. I'm set up, for a boost
6. capital of Armenia
7. see 1 across
- 9, 17, 21. early issue (4,4,5)
10. example
11. rubbish
16. long distance (Greek)
17. see 9
18. overseas delivery
19. new stamps?
20. ex French colony
21. see 9

### DOWN

1. Cowboy hat
2. late
4. N. I. town
5. racial
8. unlock
10. marinara or Bolognese?
12. part of your 17
13. betrayal
14. of the Isle of Man
15. F.D.C. date (3,3)

### Mike Petzold's Crossword (Contact Mike for Answers)



# April Meeting Minutes 2017

Minutes of the April Meeting of the Nelson Philatelic Society held in the Woodstock Room of the Stoke Primary School on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2017 at 2 pm.

**Welcome:** President Robert welcomed 15 members and 1 guest (Gail) to this our first Sunday meeting for 2017.

**Mitchener Cup:** Following our usual practice of "Stamps first", the 6 entries on the subject "Unusual" were introduced:

**Weldon ,** postcards with "Mystery" cancels  
**John D.** Hobbit stamps with personalised "self"  
**Robert** Tongan shapes  
**Mike P.** Cyrillac  
**Sue** Tongan shapes  
**Len** Lundy Island

After the show of hands voting, the winner was declared to be **Weldon**.

**Items of Interest:** There were several items displayed and spoken to.

**Minutes:** Having been circulated, taken as read and confirmed. Allan/Barry, Agreed

**Matters arising:** Nil.

**Correspondence:**

**Outward:** Condolence card sent to John Dawson on recent loss of wife.

**Inward:** Various catalogues and brochures.. (mostly out of date)

E mails: ref changing office bearers details at: Federation; NZ Post clubs and societies;  
From M.Manhire re gift collection 1<sup>st</sup> Day covers.

"That outward correspondence be approved and inward received" ... Allan/ Ann, Agreed

**Actions:** Nil

**General business:** 1. Allan reminded members that with winter not far off, it was a good time to be filling circuit books.

2. Next "Open Day" **Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> May**

3. WHO HAS THE 8 PAGE TROPHY ... **We need it returned please!!!**

**New Members:** None

There being no further business, Robert advised that the "Letter/subject of the Month" for the meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> May, would be the letter "D" and that our programme would be the annual input from the Postal History Society

**PLEASE NOTE DURING THESE AUTUMN/WINTER MONTHS OUR MEETINGS ARE 2<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY of the month at 2.00PM. (Sales Table from 1.45PM)**

The meeting was declared closed at 2.40pm and the programme continued with the introduction of the 6 entries for the 4 page competition

**Len :** World Wars 1 and 2 occupation covers

**Sue:** Cuban Economy

**Kelvin:** NZ Emerging Years

**Robert:** Natal

**Mike P:** Changing speed of mail Days.. 213;61;55;31. NZ to UK

**Evelyn:** Game Bird Licence stamps and sheets.

**After voting the winner was declared to be Robert** with Len, Kelvin and Mike all close 2<sup>nd</sup> equal

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Free to Full Members

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