



London 2020 Newsletter No. 17: 4 April 2020

Exhibition now 19 to 26 February 2022

Planning the Recovery

The last few weeks have been spent putting the next level of detail on the plans for a postponed exhibition in London. The original exhibition planned for 2-9 May 2020 was very well supported and was looking to be a vibrant week with philatelic friends from over 70 countries coming together to share their philatelic enthusiasm.

The financial aspects of the exhibition were very well controlled, with the show looking to be a modest financial success. It was always planned to target a break-even situation. With the show only a few weeks away, almost all the income had been collected – and almost all the expenses already paid. The largest single invoice was for the hire of the exhibition hall, and this had been settled in full as per the contracted terms.

Commercial negotiations have now been successfully entered into for the replacement show with the majority of those parties who we had arrangements with. The two largest expenses were the venue, the Business Design Centre (BDC), and the DoubleTree Hotel group.

The contract with the BDC allowed us to re-schedule the event with no cost penalty, or to forfeit the substantial fee. Had we forfeited, then quite simply the organisers would have gone bankrupt as it could not have refunded the booth holders or the exhibitors. So the only choice was to re-schedule; but it was not easy to find a new date. The BDC is normally booked up several years in advance, and an international stamp exhibition requires all the floor space for a 12-day period. There were simply not gaps in the bookings until 2023. But the British Dealer's association, the Philatelic Traders Society (PTS), came to our rescue and offered to give up their booking for any of the future Stampex events to allow a rescheduled London International event to take place. But those of you are familiar with Stampex, will understand that it only occupies half of the venue for half the number of days needed. Of the next few Stampexes, only one had gaps in other contracted bookings around it. Hence we were left with a stark choice between accepting the revised dates of 19-26 February 2022, or forfeiting the cost of the exhibition hall booking and going bankrupt. It didn't take long to accept the new dates!

Another major challenge was the hotel bookings. Here the terms and conditions of the contracts were not ideal for surviving cancellations due to a pandemic. But the management at the DoubleTree Hotel were most helpful, and they agreed to roll over the substantial deposit paid until the new dates.

We are now at the point where we have a confirmed International Stamp Exhibition planned for February 2022, but life is never that straightforward!

I have been discussing in great detail the problems of postponing the exhibition with the London 2020 FIP Consultant, Bernard Jimenez. I am delighted to say that the Fédération Internationale de Philatélie (FIP) have shown tremendous pragmatism, and I am very hopeful now that a way forward has been established. Essentially, the London 2020 Literature Class will be completed later this year, and all the remaining classes will be carried forward to London 2022.

I am also delighted to be able to share with you that Bill Hedley, the President of the Federation of European Philatelic Associations (FEPA), has also endorsed the revised dates.

In the next few days, I will be writing to all booth holders and National Commissioners explaining to them in more detail the financial implications of the revised show. I do hope that everyone will understand that what took 4½ years to put together cannot be re-done in great detail in two weeks!

Finally, I would like to invite those readers who are artistically talented to come up with a revised logo for the new show. If anyone has any ideas, please send them to me at the email address below.



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