

YORKSHIRE PHILATELIC ASSOCIATION

Guidance for Organising & Hosting YPA Conventions

Following the 2015 YPA Convention the three hosting societies produced a Discussion Paper which included the recommendation that a Guidance Note be produced to assist future hosting societies in organising such an event. The following notes are the result.

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***Keith Burton**, 2015 Convention Publicity Officer, Harrogate PS*

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1. No two YPA Conventions are the same and these notes are intended only as guidance to assist future Convention Organisers. First, a word about fixing the date. It is usual to have the Convention on a Saturday in June. Remember that the Morley Stamp Fair is on the last Saturday of the month so avoid that if possible as it will be a rival attraction and some potential dealers for the Convention may be booked for Morley. Check also for any other stamp fairs to be held on a Saturday in June that may be a rival attraction.

2. Apart from the date there are three important things you need to start with:

VENUE, FINANCE and a TEAM of HELPERS

Venue

3. The success of the Convention depends largely on the venue. It needs to have good access by road and public transport, and all the facilities needed to provide visitors with a pleasant experience:

- a. Good parking (preferably free) and access for disabled people;
- b. A large hall to accommodate about 25 dealers, and an exhibition of about 50 standing frames with circulation space (this can be in a separate room if necessary);
- c. Toilet and refreshment facilities (ideally refreshments should be provided on site, but if not it should be close to the venue and clearly signed. Warn dealers in advance if refreshments are not on site as they may wish to take their own refreshments if none are immediately available);
- d. A room to accommodate about 50 people in theatre style for the YPA AGM and award ceremonies;
- e. The venue will need sufficient tables and chairs on site to provide for these activities.

4. Church halls and community centres can sometimes provide all that is needed. Schools are another potential avenue to explore. Hotels can be expensive to hire.

Finance

5. It is important to consider the financial implications of the event right at the beginning of the planning process. Hosting societies will not want to make a loss on the event and with careful financial planning should be able to make a profit for their society/societies funds. Prepare a Financial Plan showing estimated income and expenditure. For smaller societies it makes sense to band together with one or more neighbouring societies in hosting the Convention. This not only spreads the workload but provides additional financial backup. There will be a need for some preliminary expenditure before any income starts to roll in and the hosting society/societies should be aware of this. This will probably include a deposit for the hire of the venue, and the cost of printing publicity flyers some months before the event.
6. It is a good idea to seek sponsorship for the event from one of the larger commercial philatelic organisations. They are usually prepared to give sponsorship money in exchange for acknowledgement in any publicity material produced.
7. If available the accounts of past Conventions can be a useful starting point in indicating likely areas of expenditure and income, and a person needs to be appointed as Treasurer for the event whose task is to keep track of expenditure and income and ensure that proper financial control is maintained.
8. The main income will come from the sale of table space to dealers. Note that Mike Lewis may be available to assist with the recruitment of dealers for future Conventions as an independent consultant. If you employ him you should establish at the outset his terms for taking on the task.
9. Consider other sources of income, for example a raffle or the production and sale of a souvenir sheet.

The Team of Helpers

10. Start off with a core team consisting of:

Chairman. He makes sure that things happen

Secretary. Liaison with venue and general trouble-shooting

Treasurer. Financial control

Publicity Officer: Responsible for the brochure and publicity matters in general, not forgetting to provide the YPA Webmaster with details for the YPA Website

An Officer to recruit and collect payments by dealers attending the event and organise the layout and allocation of the tables

Later you will need to recruit helpers to act as stewards and provide security (especially for the times before and after opening when the dealers need somebody to watch their material as they unload and set up or take down their stands), and to collect, erect, take down and return the frames for the exhibition. A large capacity vehicle and some helpers will be needed for the collection and return of the frames. Erecting the frames will need a person in charge experienced in the way the

components of the frames are put together. If you plan to have a society table at the entrance to provide publicity and sell raffle tickets etc, you will also need to find volunteers to man it.

ORGANISING and MANAGING the EVENT

11. It is important at the outset to create a timetable setting out tasks to be completed and deadlines for completing the tasks. Prepare the timetable right at the start of the organising process allowing some flexibility with deadlines, (but not telling the contributors this) since there will always be somebody who is late delivering something that is needed by the due date. Make sure that all contributors know the deadlines they must meet and give a gentle reminder as the deadlines approach. You will need an overall timetable and individual members of the organising team will have their personal timetables with deadlines for achieving their various tasks with critical dates highlighted, which need to be fed into the main timetable.

Publicity and Advertising

12. The host societies are responsible for all the advertising, especially about the presence of dealers at the Convention. The intention is to get as many stamp collectors into the Fair and at the same time use it as an opportunity to recruit new members for your society. The dealers pay for the event and there is a balance between the cost of the venue and the number of dealers required to attend to finance it.

13. Don't be too ambitious in setting table prices. The table costs have to be reasonable to attract the dealers. Note also the following which should not be overlooked:

- a. Allow for the printing of A5 flyers which can be sent out to all the attending dealers so they can advertise the fair to their clients. Also the flyers can be distributed at local stamp fairs.
- b. Appoint a member to take on the advertising role. Most of the stamp magazines has an events page for which entries are free but they must all be contacted individually to get the event into their diaries. Check on their deadline dates for inclusion of fair details and send them details in the format they require for their magazine. Flyers should be available at local fairs one or two months before the Convention date.
- c. Contact the local newspaper and ensure the stamp fair is publicised in their 'what's on' section.
- d. Better still try and get an article on the Fair and Convention in the paper the week before.
- e. Allow for a paid advert in a magazine.
- f. Notify the ABPS by mail with date, place and opening hours (email: secretary@abps.org.uk). The ABPS is planning the development of a 'what's on' Section on their website. And don't forget to keep the

Webmaster of the YPA website informed of all details. There is a dedicated page on the site for the YPA Convention.

14. The success of the Stamp Fair is judged by the dealers and the attendance numbers are all important and this is a factor in the dealers booking a table space at the next YPA Stamp Fair. If the attendance was poor at the last fair they may be reluctant to book a table at the next one especially in attracting the dealers from afar who have to factor in accommodation etc. into their costs. Consider sending publicity material to societies outside the YPA area and the NEPA and North West Federations.

The Brochure

15. The Convention Brochure is an additional vehicle for publicising the Convention and giving information about it both in advance and on the day. How elaborately it is produced depends upon the hosting society/societies. There are certain things that visitors to the event will need to know and the brochure is a handy means of informing them about the opening times, the programme for the day, the contact details for all YPA Societies (and especially the organising society), the Exhibition, dealers attending and much more. Sometimes an article is included adding some permanent value to the Brochure, Liaise early in the process with the YPA and find out what they want included in the Brochure and who will provide it. Don't forget to give acknowledgement in the brochure for any sponsors or organisations that have provided help and support for the event.

16. A firm timetable is needed for the production of the Brochure and one person should be in overall charge of its production. That person needs to have a clear idea of when the Brochure needs to be ready and how many copies will be needed. He/she will need to liaise with the printers to ensure that final copy goes for printing in good time to meet the date for which they are required for distribution. Key dates will be:

- * Final Date for Agreement of design and content;
- * Final date for all copy – advertisements and visitor information with proof reading by somebody not involved in producing it;
- * Final date to get to printers to meet the required date for final copies;
- * Date of YPA Management Committee meeting prior to Convention (this meeting provides an opportunity to hand society representatives copies of the Brochure to distribute to their members). This meeting is usually at the Morley Stamp Fair on the last Saturday of March or April.

Set your dates and stick to them making it clear to all contributors, including prospective advertisers, that material not received by the due date may be too late to include. Advertisements will help to defray the cost, but seek these early to ensure that copy is obtained in time.

Planning the Layout of the Convention

17. It is important to get the layout of the building in advance; the size and shape of the rooms being used and any features such as a stage or fire doors (make sure

these are not obstructed). Draw a plan to scale and this will allow you to fit in all the dealers' tables allowing also for adequate circulation space (some visitors will be in wheelchairs). The exhibition will need good lighting. If different rooms are being used for the dealer's stands and the exhibition make sure they are well signed-posted.

18. Mark the names of the dealers on the plan and have copies available for visitors on the day of the Convention so that they can easily locate their favourite dealers. At the beginning of the Convention the dealers will need time to set up their stands. Label each stand with the dealer's name so that he/she will know which is the correct table to use.

19. The sizes of the rooms being used will vary according to the venue but as a guide the rooms used at Pudsey Civic Hall are:

Ballroom (suitable as main hall for dealers) ... floor area 420m²
Owlcotes Bar (suitable as restaurant area) ... floor area 105m²
Fulneck Room (suitable as room for YPA AGM) ... floor area 90m²
Woodhall Room (suitable for mounting the exhibition) ... floor area 115m²

What Else?

20. Contacts who might be able to help;

Recruitment of dealers:

Mike Lewis
Tel: 01904 701464
Email: mikeval9b@yahoo.co.uk

Printer for brochure and flyers:

Leodis Print (Martin Brown)
52 Belle Vue Avenue, Scholes, Leeds LS15 4AE
Tel: 07791 530962
Email: martin@leodisprint.com
Website: www.leodisprint.com

For general help and guidance the YPA officers are always willing to help, as are societies that have recently hosted a Convention.

21. Think about the Programme for the day. A draft Programme may look something like this:

8am	Dealers arrive and set up, Exhibition frames erected and exhibits mounted
10am	Dealers' stands and Exhibition open to the public, refreshments available
2pm	YPA AGM followed by awards and the signing of the Roll of Distinguished Yorkshire Philatelists if any have been Nominated
3.30pm	Raffle drawn
4pm	Convention closes, exhibition dismantled

22. The AGM and award ceremonies are the responsibility of the YPA. All that the hosting society/societies have to do is provide suitable accommodation. This should be a room or area to accommodate about 50 people in theatre style with a top table and a side table for displaying trophies.

23. The YPA Competition Secretary will arrange delivery of the YPA Competition entries to be displayed in the frames for the exhibition. Normally this will be about half the display space leaving spare frame space for the hosting society/societies to put on a display as well, and this should be thought about and the display(s) finalised in good time for the event.

24. The dealers and some of the organising committee will probably be at the event all day. Refreshments should be provided, essentially hot and cold drinks and sandwiches and if possible hot snacks. Many venues will have their own catering arrangements. If your venue does not have any caterers there may be a local firm who can come in and provide refreshments.

25. Once the Convention is over there are still things to be done. Finalise the accounts and consider what went right during the event and what went wrong. Provide a report to the YPA Management Committee highlighting any matters that you feel need to be brought to the attention of future hosting societies.

And Finally

26. We repeat that these are just guidance notes to help future hosting societies. We don't claim these notes cover everything and if you feel there is an omission or a better way of expressing the guidance please let John Edwards know (Tel: 01977 793566 or email; ponte38@msn.com).

April 2016
*(Amended November 2016 with
thanks to those societies who
provided comments on the original
version of the Guidance)*