

The Royal Philatelic Society London

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PRESS RELEASE

A distinguished display to the Royal

'A distinguished display of quite exceptional quality' was how Peter Cockburn, Honorary Secretary of The Royal Philatelic Society London, described the material shown to the Society on 31 March. Giving the display was Christopher Hitchen, his subject being 'The post in Paris from the *ancien régime* to the revolution'.

Dividing his material into three sections – La Grande Post (General Post); La Petite Post (Local post); Special offices – Christopher astounded his audience with his superb material, described in a detailed yet fascinating presentation.

He explained that a post office existed in the capital from 1576. However, what particularly surprised many in the audience was to learn that prior to the revolution the currency used was pounds, shillings and pence (with 12 deniers being 1 sol, and 20 sols being 1 livre), while weight was in pounds and ounces, with 16 ounces to the pound.

Among the changes brought by the revolution, which ended in 1799, was that France was divided into 83 departments, and postage was calculated from the department where a letter was posted to the department for which it was destined, with distances measured as the crow flies. In addition, weight progressions replaced the number of sheets for heavier letters.

Those wishing to visit The Royal Philatelic Society London at 41 Devonshire Place, London W1G 6JY, or be a guest at one of its meetings, are asked to contact the Administrative Office (020 7486 1044).



Frank Walton, President of The Royal Philatelic Society London (left) discusses a point with Christopher Hitchen.

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