

# THE WILLIAM PARMENTER BEQUEST

Glenn H Morgan, Honorary Librarian, NPSL

It was with great sorrow that the society learnt in November that William (Bill) Parmenter had died that month at the age of seventy following a terrible stroke last July.

Bill was often to be seen at NPS meetings and was a regular attendee at the PCGB Congress and I would invariably travel home with him as we lived on the same train route. On a couple of occasions he had mentioned to me that he had arranged in his Will for his philatelic library to pass to the NPS upon his death. I had thanked him and assumed that we were talking about a couple of boxes of material, so nothing had quite prepared me for the letter from his brother Ian, acting in the role of his executor, advising me that almost 2000 items of philatelic literature was coming our way!

Specialising in all aspects of Latin and South American philately, Bill's library strongly reflected this. It also contained non-philatelic books relating to the history of his chosen field, all of which we were also given in this generous bequest. The quality and scope of the material was especially pleasing, with many items being either specially bound or enclosed within a custom-made protective slip-case.

A couple of years prior to his death Bill and I had agreed that anything that was surplus to requirements would be sold and the proceeds used to further the aims of NPSL. This will result in members being able to purchase some fascinating works in due course via the NPS auctions and/or literature sales lists. The NPS library has benefited greatly in areas where it was especially weak, such as Venezuela and El Salvador, indeed previously we had no holdings of these two countries. Other philatelic categories have been strengthened, such as our handbooks, auction catalogues and more general works of literature, for example stamp printing and production.

So who was Bill, the person? Outwardly perhaps he appeared to be a retiring and private individual, although he very much enjoyed a good laugh and was in reality a sociable chap – possibly the result of having been born in a public house in his local High Street! His hair probably helped define him visually in later years, for it was pure white and unusually long.

He played soccer at a high level at his various RAF camps, after he had signed-up for an RAF career as a boy entrant at 15. He would think nothing of cycling 100 miles in a single day in his youth, so clearly he was once extremely fit. Sadly, at 21 he had an accident that saw him cycle into the back of a vehicle and suffer facial injuries. He did not cycle again.

He left the RAF aged 22, had a few short-term jobs and finally settled-down in a career as a draughtsman working initially for Marconi and then for British Telecommunications for the next 25/30 years. He was never destined to marry, but clearly *was* destined to be a 'Brentwood man' through-and-through. He was baptised and confirmed in the town, attended Sunday School and Boys Brigade there, went to the local C of E schools, lived in the neighbourhood, joined local clubs and societies and eventually died and was buried with his parents in the local cemetery.

A bookplate will be placed in all literature retained by NPSL and also within the new books purchased from sales proceeds to permanently record Bill's generosity and to act as a lasting memorial to a kind individual and a good friend of the National Philatelic Society who is sadly missed.

### **YOUR DEATH, OR PREPARING FOR THE INEVITABLE!**

Bill had the foresight many years ago to think about what should happen to his philatelic library after his death. However, he was an exception, as most collectors fail to make any provisions for their philatelic literature, leaving it to the executor to decide upon its disposal. In practice, the family member, trust company or solicitor frequently has no idea about philately or who to contact within the hobby.

Sadly, when a loved one dies it is often necessary to quickly clear the family home. It is a stressful period and often people want to just take the easy way out by hiring a skip to dispose of "all those old useless books and magazines" that are cluttering up the home and that mean nothing to them. Think of the loving care that you have taken to acquire the works of reference that have given you so much pleasure and which have helped you to write-up your collection, or perhaps allowed you to make fortuitous purchases down the years. They deserve a better ending than a landfill site.

There is an uncomplicated way to ensure that this sad fate does not happen to your library, however small or large it is, and that is to have the material recorded in your Last Will and Testament, with the beneficiary being your favourite philatelic library. The exact legal wording to be used in your Will must be agreed with your Solicitor first, but the text below is typical of what they may choose to use and demonstrates how simple it is to protect you against the wasteful destruction of your literature.

*"I GIVE AND BEQUEATH absolutely and free of Inheritance Tax to the NATIONAL PHILATELIC SOCIETY currently of 107 Charterhouse Street, London EC1M 6PT all the philatelic literature of which I die possessed and I declare that the receipt of the Secretary or other proper Officer of the said Society at the time that the same shall be handed over by my Trustees shall be a good discharge to my Trustees."*

It is hoped that like Bill and other NPS members, you will consider the National Philatelic Society's Library to be the ideal repository for your works of literature after your death.

(990 words)