



SIPA Bulletin

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SOUTH INDIA PHILATELISTS' ASSOCIATION

(Founded 1956)

(Affiliated to the Philatelic Congress of India)

MONTHLY MEETINGS : SEPTEMBER, 1991

30 Members were present. After the minutes of the last meeting was read and adopted, new members introduced themselves. President Mr. G. MADANMOHANDAS occupying the Chair, Shri VIKRAM RAGHAVAN, the young vibrant agile member read out the article from JULY-AUGUST, 91 issue of INDIA'S STAMP JOURNAL "WILL THESE PRICES HOLD GOOD"? Recently at Harmaers Auctions, The Mulready prepaid Envelope used on 1st May, 1840 5 days before it should have been used was sold at Stg. £35,200. Another cover bearing Penny Black prematurely used on 2nd May, 1840 instead of 6th May, 1840, the official First day of issue which was offered on 23rd March, 1991 (some experts expected that this rare cover may fetch a record price of half a million pounds) but to the surprise of all, the prematurely used penny Black cover broke all previous records, realising the fantatistic price of St. £1.35 million equivalent of 3/4 million Swiss Francs and Rs. 5.5 Crores approximately. As reported in the 'Philatelic Reporter' this surpasses the previous world record for a single stamp established in 1985 in Germany by the Baden 1851 9 Kr error of colour. We firmly believe that philately should not be given commercial twist for the simple reason that it is a hobby and a pleasant pastime. If the stamp trade is handled judiciously, there is big scope for this fascinating hobby to reach masses. Such vulgar show of wealth at times proves suicidal as it is rightly pointed out by the wise that "THOSE WHO SHOW THEMSELVES OFF DO NOT SHINE". We do not think that stray incidents will in any way help the cause of promoting this fascinating hobby.

Next our President gave from out of 150 geography quiz, some 15/20 Quiz questions as many our members present would have forgotten geography and was glad to note that the majority of members present did exceedingly well. Next Shri Vikram Raghavan gave 25 QUIZ Questions and our members acquitted themselves well. Our President then spoke on both the "NEGATIVE & POSITIVE ASPECTS OF STAMP COLLECTING". Our Vice-President Shri. D. H. Rao announced that next month The Rotary Club of Meenamakkam are sponsoring a three day programme from 5/8th October 91 for college and School students including drop outs on vocational career styled "ROTAFOCUS" and SIPA will be provided a STALL, there will be a SEMINAR on PHILATELY and requested members to come in large numbers along with their friends.

COLLECT INDIAN STAMPS

OCTOBER, 1991 MEETING

35 Members were present. Our Vice-President Shri. D. H. Rao occupying the Chair announced that the response to the ROTAFOCUS was more than to everyone's expectation. Many visited the SIPA & Madras Coins Society Stall. The Seminar on Philately was attended by more than 40 members. Shri K. C. Veeraraghavan our Senior veteran Philatelists regaled the audience by both display material and extempore talk which kept the audience spellbound, then our President Mr. G. MADANMOHANDAS talked on the finer aspects of PHILATELY and Shri. D. H. Rao rounded Seminar with his usual scholarly wit and requested members to take up Philately as a pastime. After the usual announcement of new issues, Mr. J. ROLANDS NELSON, an Engineer by profession and a Life Member of SIPA gave Display Talk on BRIDGES in 48 Album Pages. As he is himself an engineer, he gave step by step the various designs, names and also the viability right from the earliest times to the modern bridges with display. Though not complete in all aspects, his maiden attempt deserves all praise and all our members present were treated to a subject quite new in approach. All credit goes to Mr. J. Rolands Nelson. With a hot cup of tea, our President announced that the Tamilnadu Circle of Posts are going to conduct a WORKSHOP ON PHILATELY on 26-10-91 in the fourth floor of the PMG's Office, where in our SIPA Seniors will also take part.

We are fortunate to have amongst us Mr. MATHEW VARKE with his better half who inspite of failing health took the trouble of attending. He also brought out two Typed Titles : (1) PHILATELY FOR THE YOUNG 30 pages inclusive of 3 Colour plates (2) WORLD WIDE STAMP IDENTIFIER (2) (a) DICTIONARY.

He was a serious collector in School, gave this up to his brother when he entered college and again took up the hobby after his retirement from service in 1976 realising the vast scope of the subject, historical artistic and educative value of the fascinating hobby and how pleasureable a hobby is stamp collecting is. He become a Member of the Association. We welcome him to our midst and wish him many more years.

FOR STAMP LITERATURE USE SIPA LIBRARY

The views contained in the articles published are the author's own and not necessarily those of the Association

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SIPA MEETINGS

SECOND SUNDAY of every month - Regular meeting at the Philatelic Bureau, Anne Road Post Office, Madras 600 002.
THIRD SUNDAY of every month - Auction meeting at our Library Hall at 6, Nannian Street, Madras 3. (Timing: 10-45 a.m. to 1 p.m.)
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SOME THOUGHTS ON STAMP FINANCE

By JACK L. GRUMBRIDGE

OWING to the reprehensible antics of the speculators it is fashionable at the moment to frown on the collector who pays much attention to the economics of stamp collecting. There is a tacit assumption that the true amateur should regard his hobby solely as such, spend as much as he reasonably can afford on it and be pleasantly surprised if, on selling, he is offered even a fraction of the purchase price of the collection.

True, the journals are full of financial advice, but it is of the kind that encourages the speculator proper and disregards the honest-to-goodness stamp enthusiast. Representative collectors' organisations and responsible philatelists in condemning (and rightly) pure speculation, have tended to go a little too far and adopt a somewhat unreal viewpoint, divorced in many respects from the legitimate practice of many serious collectors and the common outlook of most collecting interests. There is some truth in the statement recently noticed in one of the French papers, that within every collector slumbers the speculator.

The dyed-in-the-wood speculator is a pest, and one certainly prefers to think of stamps being collected for their own sake. The writer would go further, and discourage "investment" collecting, which is usually little more than a polite name for speculation on a wider scale. Nevertheless, it is merely common sense to make the reservation that, since stamps are goods that command a buying price and a selling price, a certain amount of financial wisdom should be exercised.

The difficulty is that the average collector has to buy his own experience, and very often dearly at that, since disinterested and consistent advice by those who have learned their lesson is conspicuously lacking in philatelic literature.

The collector of small means, unfortunately, is often the one most severely penalised in this way. A Ferrari, indiscriminate as he was, can perhaps show a profit because his money is in material that is always in demand individually. The general collector, on the other hand, who accumulates a mass of stamps up to about five shillings catalogue, will find on selling that the unrelated sets, dotted about among every country in the world, will only sell for the value of a few of the better items. These must be a much smaller proportion of the total than in such collections as the Hind, Michael Stephens, etc.

Condition is another factor which weighs more hardly on the small collector. Stamps which are fairly common in superb condition are almost unsaleable to the initiated in any other state. Valuable stamps will, on the other hand, show a definite range of prices according to the nature of the defect. Anyone who realises the importance of condition only after some years of collecting will probably have gathered many specimens, which were accepted at the time because the price was low which in hindsight would have become (economically) so much

more valuable. The collector, that is the stamp enthusiast of modern times, is one who thinks of it rather an ill-used person.

There can be little doubt that he is the mainstay of the hobby, without whom most of the shops and journals would close down. Yet rarity and value have been given so much prominence that a disproportionate amount of attention has been showered on plutocracy in stamps. There seems to be a bias in many ways in favour of rarities and their owners, when to stamp collectors in general it is the commoner issues that are old and tried friends, whilst their valuable prototypes are more in the nature of distant and annoyingly superior acquaintances.

No doubt the fact that there is big money in stamps has caused the hobby to grow, but that is no reason for not making clear to the average "new entrant" that making a fortune out of stamps is the exception, not the rule, and that certain definite factors exist which must be taken into account if the money spent is not to be wasted in part or in whole.

Perhaps the first lesson that the beginner should learn is that rarities and all they imply have their disadvantages. Quite apart from forgeries and fakes and various other manifestations of original sin, the high prices paid for varieties have undoubtedly led to the creation of an amazing range of printers' errors, running the whole gamut of conceivable and inconceivable compositorial stupidity.

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However, no one can do much about this now, except to be circumspect in one's choice, and to refuse to pay fancy prices for pieces that have an artificial taint to them. This applies as much to first day covers and such things as to errors and varieties, particularly overprints.

The beginner who wishes his initiation to be as painless as possible would be well advised to join a society. They are springing up to-day even in the most remote places, and the contact membership gives with older and more experienced collectors, and the chance of seeing other people's methods and hearing their opinions is well worth the money spent; also, preparation of a display from one's own collection is the best way the writer knows to open one's eyes to the true merit of what is possessed. This is looking at society membership from the purely financial point of view. Actually, it will be a poor spirit who, after a short time, will not put off anything rather than miss a meeting, simply because they are enjoyable.

Talking of societies leads one to a rather irrelevant, but sore, point. It was stated above that in many ways the collector without a long purse is not so well catered for as he might be. The awards and honours that organised philately bestows are another example of this. The wealthy can acquire complete gold medal collections and go on winning with them. The man who does some good philatelic research on a common issue and writes it up himself is unlikely to find any field where tangible recognition is given for this kind of activity.

What makes the whole thing more reprehensible is that the awards to the valuable collections may often be financed from the profits of some wretched miniature sheet foisted on the "small" collectors.

Local societies, however, are rarely tainted with this brush. Where they do hold competitions for cups or medals the rules are usually so drawn as to exclude mere value and encourage interest. The organisers of philatelic exhibitions might take this to heart.

The most difficult problem facing the beginner is pricing. Few can understand that the trade catalogue of one firm should form the basis of the majority of transactions, particularly when given a "general rule" that market price can be taken as one-third or one-half of catalogue price.

This can have unfortunate results. A relative beginner known to the writer, who is very sensibly indulging in a little mild specialisation already, refused at 2/6d. a superb used block of six of an Edwardian stamp catalogued 6d. a copy, because he pays 3d. each at most for singles. Yet he admitted he had never seen a block of any sort before, though singles were exceedingly common.

Someone will have to face up to this catalogue problem one day. With new issues flowing into the lists as fast as they are, the simplified type of general catalogue will be almost forced upon us by necessity; conversely, the individual will be bound more and more to limit his interest and become a specialist, however little he wishes to be a research-minded philatelist as well. Group collecting will be the order of the day, and the simplified catalogue will not suffice. Who then is going to see about the publication of sectional price lists, for it is unlikely that "simplified specialisation" will satisfy everybody, and there must be some basis of value for major differences ignored by the "simplified."

An example of what is required is the specialised French catalogue of Messrs. Yvert, where the relative value of blocks and pairs (amongst other detail) is indicated.

The writer always advises beginners to collect in groups, and endeavours to guide them as to which are the steadiest and most saleable, although he cannot claim great experience or authority for his views, and would like to be able to refer new collectors to some well written advice on stamp economics by better qualified philatelists. As an example, it is suggested that if design collecting appeals, it should be followed with as little expenditure as possible—that is, only put the money into it which one is willing to sink with very little hope of the result being marketable. This may be incorrect, but it is the opinion formed after a certain amount of hard thinking.

It is by no means expected that all will agree with the views expressed above. But a philatelic periodical can only serve its readers if it does ventilate these questions, so often ignored in the endeavour to boost the latest craze and divert more and more money into the advertisers' pockets without giving the collector any advice as to what is good or bad, and how he may enjoy his stamps without wasting his money.

'Collectors' views on pricing, condition, first day covers, miniature sheets, etc., together with informed opinions from experienced philatelists on financial pitfalls to be avoided, are a crying need with so many new collectors coming forward every year. If they are not wisely advised, but simply treated as so many more lambs coming in to the slaughter, their experiences are likely to be unhappy to say the least, and stamp collecting will soon lose its new recruits.

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NATIVE HOMES ON STAMPS

By A. E. GOULD, L.L.A.

WHILE collecting material for my recent book on *Native Races in the Stamp Album*¹ I was surprised to find how many native homes are depicted on stamps. Naturally a full description of such stamps was outside the scope of so small a book, but they are well worth careful study, for they give us an insight into the ingenuity, thought and planning required even in the production of very primitive dwellings.

Stamps from all parts of Africa will contribute to a "native-homes" collection, and show a remarkable diversity of huts. The low values of the 1930 issue for Tchad depict the characteristic huts of this district. It will be noticed that the walls and roof are made in one which is quite suitable for such a rainless district where overhanging eaves to protect the house from rain would be superfluous. The dwellings themselves are chiefly made of wattle and daub. Stakes are driven into the ground and branches wattled in and out for walls, the hollows being daubed over with mud. These Tchad villages are not built to last. They may be here to-day and gone to-morrow. If the water supply fails or the chief dies the inhabitants betake themselves and their belongings to a new site.

In contrast to these conical houses we find that in the rainy parts of Africa the native homes have overhanging eaves to protect the walls. Such huts may be seen on some of the stamps of the Belgian Congo. The houses on the 15 fr. Air stamp seem to be of the type which may be made of poles laced together on the ground and then set upon mud walls. More often the huts are built around a centre pole like those on the 15 cent stamp of the 1931 issue for the Belgian Congo.

Turning to the stamps of Swaziland we find another type of African hut below the word "Postage." This is a beehive-shaped dwelling lightly built of bamboos and grass. Its construction is very simple. The native first makes a framework of flexible branches or saplings bent over to form a series of half-hoops with the ends

pushed firmly in the ground. Starting with a small hoop the size is gradually increased to the middle of the hut and then decreased till the framework is finished. The hoops are interlaced with withies to hold them in position and thatched with grass or leaves. The doorway is a low arch barely three feet high through which the occupants crawl on hands and knees. Similar huts built by the Kaffirs are to be seen on South Africa's 4d. stamp, and on South West Africa's five shilling stamp. These huts are frequently moved to suit changes of grazing land.

On some of the stamps of Liberia more substantial-looking huts are shown. On the 5 dollar stamp of 1923 we see houses with thick roofs that hang down over a kind of verandah. These huge overhanging eaves give shelter from the midday heat, and the roofs, especially the conical one, are purposely made very steep to throw off rain.

Some of these native thatched roofs leak terribly after a dry season, but when rained upon for several days they thicken sufficiently to be waterproof until the next drought.

The stamps of Brunei show the extraordinary homes built by the natives in the river. These houses are built over the river on slender piles of Nibong palm which resists the action of the water for several years. The piles are sunk at ebb-tide and covered with a platform of planks on which the houses are built. The 1907 stamps give a close-up view of one of these huts, while the issue of 1924 shows the whole town.

While in this part of the world we turn to the 12½ cent stamp of the Dutch Indies issued in 1930. Here we see a Menangkabo Compound with the chief's house in the centre. These homes look something like arks on stilts. A Menangkabo legend that Noah landed on Mt. Marapi in Sumatra may have inspired this style of architecture. The houses have no front doors. To enter, one has to walk under the house between the rows of pillars until about half-way through, then ladder-like steps will be found leading up into a large room. The spaces under the floor are used as corrals by night and as work rooms by day. In the gables of the houses there are often intricately-woven

¹ London: Stanley Gibbons, Ltd. 1s. nett, post-age 2d.





designs of bamboo, and many of the houses are adorned with carving painted black and red.

A few of the native homes of America can be seen on stamps. The Jamaican 1d. stamps of 1919 and 1921 show an Arawak woman with part of her home behind her. The Arawaks and Caribs live in wall-less houses. Their huts are merely roofs of broad leaves on three rows of poles, the centre row being higher than the outer ones so that the roof slopes. There are no walls, the only protection from the weather consists of grass mats which are hung at the sides of the house as needed.

Many of the natives of Mexico and Peru live in stone buildings, as some of the new stamps of Mexico show. These stone dwellings are linked with the early culture of this part of America, for here only was architecture developed in masonry though neither country had any knowledge of the arch, but their buildings were massive and height was gained by platforms and mounds.

New Zealand's 1935 issue gives us a wonderful picture of a village meeting house or whare built by the Maoris. The stamp clearly shows the beautifully carved pillars. The carving is elaborate and chiefly shows the faces and figures of the old Maori gods and heroes. In such whares as this the chief and his headmen met in council to settle village affairs. The Maori pah or village clustered round the whare. The pah was actually a fortified village.

Papuan stamps show us some interesting native homes. The 2/6 stamp of 1932 shows a typical Papuan house built on cut poles with roof of palm thatch. In front of most Papuan houses is a platform where the people live for the greater part of the day, when not out fishing or working. The 1 stamp depicts a delta house of the type built in or near the water. They are erected on rough piles and are frequently entered by means of a ladder or notched pole. The tree houses on the 1 1/2 stamp were not actual homes, but were only used

as refuges in times of strife with neighbouring tribes. Supplies of stones were kept ready stored in the refuge, so that when its occupants had gone aloft they had only to pull the ladder up after them and were then in a position to withstand a siege while raining the store of missiles on the foe.

We must not omit the interesting portable dwellings seen on some of the stamps of North Mongolia. They are well suited to the needs of the wandering Mongols. When moving to new grazing grounds the yurts are dismantled and packed on the backs of yaks or oxen. Their construction is simple. Upon a framework of wooden poles large pieces of heavy felt are stretched and another is hung over the doorway. A circular frame at the top permits a hole to be left in the felt sheathing, through which the smoke of the yak dung fire within may escape. The inside of the yurt is frequently carpeted and hung with embroidered cloths, making a comfortable home highly adaptable to the severe climate of the steppes. The women make the felt with which the yurt is made by spreading clean fluffed yak's wool on matting moistened and rolled into a cylinder. The whole is hitched to a yak and dragged up and down the valley for miles. The cylinders are then opened, the wool and matting separated, and the wool again rolled by the women until the felt is of the desired thickness. So much for the ingenuity of man—or woman. The Mongolian tent seen on the 4 k. stamp of N. Mongolia's 1927 issue is made of skins stretched on wooden poles, though the poles are often hard to obtain in this treeless region.

This short article is by no means exhaustive, for it has only been possible to deal with a few of the "World's Homes" shown on stamps, but it may serve to show how interesting a subject-collection of "homes" may be if the useful information for "writing-up" can be found, and demonstrates how man must have some kind of shelter and builds with whatever Nature gives him.



KEEP THE EXCITEMENT IN COLLECTING

by BILL OLCHESKI

Most beginning collectors start with great excitement and enthusiasm. They collect every stamp they can get their hands on and eagerly look forward to filling album pages. How long their enthusiasm lasts may depend on the age of the collector, the size of the stamp budget, the time available to devote to the hobby and the availability of stamps to add to the collection.

Something as simple as too much help can be the death of enthusiasm for any project, including stamp collecting. I remember one 9-year-old girl whose dad decided it was time for her to become a collector. He insisted on buying her a fancy album, some expensive mounts, and a selection of mint stamps. He then proceeded to mount the stamps in her album making sure she watched, without touching, as he got the stamps in the proper place. He gave her everything - everything, that is, except a chance to enjoy collecting in her own way and at her own pace. I'm sure you can guess how long her enthusiasm for collecting lasted.

Adults forget that children have short attention spans. It is wise to limit the time allotted to each collecting session. This leaves the youngsters looking forward to the next session instead of tiring of the project.

Budget limitations can cause an ebbing of enthusiasm for collectors of all ages. The first album spaces fill easily as you find a place for almost every stamp you pick up. Soon the day comes when the empty spaces are fewer and the cost of filling them is on the high side.

Sometimes the source of new items for the collection dries up. A friend who was bringing home clippings from the office mail changes jobs and the flow stops. Relatives who regularly pick up new issues for the new collector suddenly lose interest and the stamp gifts stop.

Some collectors find their interests change after a short time in the hobby. Maybe they have a source of stamps from a certain foreign country. When that source is lost, the interest in stamps from that area also may fade.

As the beginning collectors, particularly youngsters, grow a bit older, they find many activities competing for their available funds and time. The money budgeted for stamps is reduced while outside activities cut into the time available to work on the collection.

I have listed a number of reasons why the initial enthusiasm for stamp collecting fades. I hope this won't lead you to believe that the interest cannot be renewed. Such a conclusion would be far from the truth.

Having offered the negatives about retaining enthusiasm, let me now suggest a few positive approaches.

The advanced collector might find excitement in going back to the basics. How long has it been since you soaked a stamp off an envelope, checked a watermark, or measured a perforation? How long has it been since you helped a beginner master those steps?

Perhaps it's time for you to check out different ways of acquiring stamps. Have you tried approvals, want lists, or auctions? Have you checked banks or businesses in your area that might be willing to let you have their discarded envelopes?

Have you attended a club meeting, participated in a club auction, or joined a swap session? If you have done all of these things and still get bored, turn to your friendly stamp dealer - in the neighbourhood or in the mail box. Ask him or her to prepare an assortment for you at about three cents a stamp. Take the box to your next meeting and renew the joy of discovery that mixtures often bring.

Another way to bring enjoyment back into the hobby is to get a "fun collection" to go along with your more serious approach to the hobby. Topicals offer a great avenue for beginning such collections. The mixture boxes provide a cheap source of stamps, and the subjects are limited only by your imagination. I am long past the point where I can make inexpensive additions to my U.S. collection. When I want to have fun with stamps now, I turn to stamps on stamps, scouts on stamps, and Kennedy on stamps.

I also have a nice collection of Australia. I got interested in that area when a collector found one of my books in a library in Australia and sent me a question about a U.S. stamp. We began to correspond and soon were sending each other stamps from our countries. I figured Australia would be an easy country to collect since the inscriptions are in English and many of the stamps carry issue dates. It wasn't until later that I discovered that there are as many varieties of the kangaroo stamps as there are kangaroos in Australia.

I figured that stamps on stamps would be a good topic for me since I write about stamps and enjoy collecting them. I also figured that there wouldn't be too many stamps on that subject. Then I found out how many nations had issued stamps on stamps saluting the Universal Postal Union. Developing "fun collections" has filled what little spare time I had left. Now I can search for stamps to add to my collections without going broke in the process.

Another great way to add new excitement to the hobby is to share your collecting with a friend. A visit to a veterans' hospital or a nursing home will quickly put you in touch with a current or former stamp collector. Such persons would appreciate greatly a little of your time and a chance to discuss collecting with you.

If you are an adult collector, do you share your hobby with your spouse? My wife went many years before she would look at a stamp with more than passing interest. One day I brought 800 pounds of U.S. mixture into our basement and threatened to put the overflow in one of our empty bedrooms. This would never do. Now we listen to tapes instead of watching television and use the time to sort out the mixture. Much to her amazement and my delight, she discovered what I have known right along

— that stamp collecting is great fun. We have many pounds to sort before we finish, but we do it at our leisure and enjoy the shared time with each other.

Have you lost the zest for collecting? It is not really lost, just misplaced. Try some of the approaches I have suggested and you may find the fun was there all the time, just waiting to be rediscovered.

PHILORAMA

APPEX - 91

The 7th Andhra Pradesh (State Level) Philatelic Exhibition APPEX-91 was held at B.M. Science Centre, Hyderabad from 13th to 15th September 1991. In the Competitive Section of the exhibition, there were four exhibits in the Championship class 122 frames from 34 exhibitors in the Senior Class, and 81 frames from 65 exhibitors in the Junior Class, including one school exhibit. The Board of Jury comprised Shri. C.P. Thomas, Chief PMG (Chairman) and Members: Shri A.V. Rao, PMG, Col. L.G. Shenoi, Mr. Madan Mohan Das, and Shri. Sunder Bahirwani (Apprentice). Mr. A. M. Mollah conducted a Seminar on Fiscals and Mr. Singhee a Seminar on Postal Stationery.

The exhibit of "Philatelic Terms" from Mr. Valmick K. Desai was adjudged as the best in the Championship Class. PMG's Rolling Shield was awarded to Mr. Mohd. Sabiullah for his collection of Switzerland which was also awarded a Vermeil medal. The Osmania University Rolling Trophy for the best Indian States exhibit went to Mr. B.K. Nagpal for his exhibit on Hyderabad Postal Markings, which was also awarded a Silver Medal. The exhibit on "Birds of Prey" submitted by Mr. Humayun Tahar received a Vermeil Medal. Other recipients of Silver Medal in the Senior Section were Mr. D.S. Pereira (Hyderabad Statestamps), Mr. Devender Kumar Jain (Bangladesh stamps and stationery), Mr. Sardar Harban Singh (Great Britain), Mr. P. Radhakrishna (Italy), Mrs. Padmaja Rangachari (Music), Mr. S.C. Jain (Agriculture), Mr. K.C.V. Raghavan (World wild life), Mr. Siraj A. Tahar (Birds) and Mr. V.V. Reddy (Communications). Miss V. Srilata (My Zoo), Master B. Shyam Sunder (Birds), Miss P. Usha (Birds) and Master V. Anil Reddy (Birds) were the recipients of Silver Medal in the Junior Section.

BIPEX - 91

Bipex-91 was held from 20-9-91 to 23-9-91 at United P & T Recreation Club, Hardinge Road, Patna. It was inaugurated by Shri Mohd. Shafi Qureshi, His Excellency, the Governor of Bihar at 11 A.M. on 20-9-91. A reenactment of Royal Postal Service in the reign of Sher Shah Suri was performed by bringing Sher Shah Suri Special Mail by Bihar Military Police attired in the uniform of those days and was presented to His Excellency Governor of Bihar. The bag was opened and the special cover was released. Another cover was released—designated as Maurya Diwas Cover by His Excellency. The cancellation has the motif of Punch Marked Maurya coins. This followed by the release of Exhibition souvenir. Professor R.S. Sharma (Professor Emeritus of Ancient India History) gave a talk on "Some Reflections on Maurya Age" which was much informative. Later on Governor read his

address and praised Post Department for holding such a fine exhibition.

Quiz competition was held by Mr. N.K. Agrawal and his son for school and college students. This was very interesting and liked by all. Many students participated. Prize distribution function was held in the evening. Chief Minister of Bihar, Sri. Laloo Prasad Yadav gave away the five Vermeil Medals to S/S Pradip Kumar Agrawal, Dr. R. S. Gandhi, N. K. Agrawal (2 medals) and S. S. Basan. The guest had little time at his disposal hence after giving away Vermeil Medals, he left and the rest were awarded by the CPMG, Mr. T. E. Raman and Mr. Dilip Shah (GL. Secretary PCI) who was also one of the member of Jury. The other members of jury were Mr. T. E. Raman (CPMG), Mr. B. D. Tekriwal (PMG, North), Mr. Yogesh Kumar, and Dr. D. J. Banerjea (Apprentice).

JPS MEMBERS WHO WON IN BIPEX-9 PRIZES

1. S. S. Basan - Thematics - The Quest for Antarctica Vermeil
 2. Sd. Hafizuddin- Aerophilately - Baloon Post Large Silver
 3. Md. Hafeez - Thematics - Ships (Ancient Times to Modern Age)
 4. Jamshedpur Philatelic Society Literature - (Philatelic Bulletin) Silver Bronze
- S. S. Basan was also awarded Pradip Jain Trophy
Sd. Hafizuddin and Md. Hafeez were specially felicitated by the JURY.

Kutch Hobby Circle, Bombay who are celebrating their DEC-ADE of their existence are organising an Exhibition on Stamps-Coins named EIPSPLEX - STAMCO - 91 in December 91 jointly with Empire of India Philatelic Society who are celebrating their GOLDEN JUBILEE. They also are updating their Library. They appeal to readers to DONATE - magazines, Catalogues - Books - Journals - Seminar Papers - Exhibition Souvenirs - Xerox Copy of Prize Winning Exhibits. New and / or old for their Library Project which will be well preserved and open to members.

They have also some Duplicate/Spare magazines, Journals which can be exchanged if the want list supplied to them on the Society/Association letterhead and can be given to individual members on payment of nominal charge. Please write to Shri Suketu Jhavari, Joint Secretary, Kutch Hobby Circle, 381, Dr. D.N. Road, 18, Ismail Building, 3rd Floor, Opp. Flora Fountain, Bombay - 400 023 for further particulars.

BREACHES THE RULES

"I want to send these trousers by book post to my son," said an old lady, handing over a parcel. "I'm sorry, madam," said the assistant, "but I am afraid you must send this by parcel post." "Why," muttered the old lady, "I was told that anything open at both ends could be sent by book post."

SHOULD YOU JOIN A STAMP CLUB ?

by BILL OLCHESKI

One of the lessons in my Penn State correspondence course for beginners requires the students to visit a stamp club and report their impressions of the meeting.

The responses range from an enthusiastic "I had a great time" to disappointment with the meeting and a vow never to go again.

Let's look at stamp clubs, what they offer, and the reasons why you might want to join one or more.

Most stamp clubs are a loosely knit group of collectors bent on pursuing their own interests. The group may be looking for new members, or it may be content with the core members who have been around for years. Some clubs will have formal meetings with guest speakers and auctions, others may meet to swap stamps without any formal program.

Shop around before you select a club to visit. If you are in a metropolitan area, you may have the choice of a number of clubs. If you don't know what clubs are in your area, call the library or a local stamp dealer. If your newspaper carries a locally written stamp column, you can call the writer for club information.

Find out about the interests and practices of the club in advance and decide if you would be comfortable with the group. A club that is primarily a study group dealing with postal history will have vastly different meetings than a club which caters to many interests.

Next check the time and location of the meetings. If you have your own transportation, you don't have to worry much about where the meetings are held. If you are hesitant to visit certain areas of town after dark, you may want to pass on meetings in those areas. In my stamp work I have taught courses to senior citizens, primarily people who shunned meetings that kept them out after dark. They met in the afternoon at a local church. If you are free to attend meetings in the daytime, this might be an ideal kind of club for you to check out.

You need to approach that first meeting with an open mind—be receptive to new ideas or approaches to collecting. If you have a friend who is a member of the club, have him or her introduce you to the club officers and tell them this is your first visit.

Look around for members doing something in which you are interested or about which you would like to learn. This could include everything from the use of a perforation gauge to items to consider in selecting mounts. In most cases you will be welcome to join the group and ask questions. If the meeting includes an auction, look over the offerings and decide if you want to bid.

Above all, mingle. Don't be shy. When I was eleven, I decided to visit a meeting of the local Boy Scout troop. I came into the meeting room, found an empty chair near the back of the room, and sat down. No one said anything to me, nor did I say anything to them. When the meeting was over I walked out—never to return.

Here are a few pointers to help you enjoy your first club meeting so that you leave with a desire to return. Meet as many

people as you can. Seek out the beginners who probably feel as lost as you and who would be happy to share their excitement and interests with you.

Notice the type of albums different collectors are using and ask them why they selected that particular album. If you notice some collectors negotiating a deal to swap stamps, give them privacy until the deal is completed.

When the meeting includes a speaker, it is common courtesy to put aside your collection and listen to the talk. It may not be of special interest to you at the time, but it could give you future collecting ideas.

Joining a club adds much to the enjoyment of our hobby. Sharing common stamp interests can lead to lifetime friendships.

Up until now I have been talking about clubs of general collectors. Many metropolitan areas also have specialized clubs. I attended the meetings of the International Society of Japanese Philately in the Washington area for years. I went, not so much because of a special interest in Japanese stamps, but because I enjoyed the collectors I would meet at the monthly meetings. Once a year the group would meet at a Japanese restaurant, and we would sit on the floor and eat a typical Japanese meal. To this day I don't know what it was we ate, but I have pleasant memories of the people with whom I ate.

A word of caution. Most speciality groups take their collecting very seriously. The speakers at the meetings may be specialists who discuss in detail some secret marking on the Hungarian Antarctic inverts. At such meetings sit back, listen, and learn.

My late partner, Bill Waugh, was a specialist in the railroad cancels of France. I listened to his talks and looked at the cancel exhibits he prepared. While I never did take up collecting them, I learned how to detect the cancels when I found them in a mixture. I could even come up with three or four sentences about them in casual conversation.

You may find that none of the clubs meets your needs or that there are no clubs in your area. This gives you a great opportunity to start a club of your own. At the least you will get a chance to find other collectors in the area. Begin with your library or community center. Find out if it has a meeting room the stamp club could use.

Put notices on the bulletin boards in the library, the local supermarket, or any other place people gather. Make the note simple. Try something like: "Interested in stamp collecting? Come explore the possibilities of forming a local club. We will have a 'get acquainted' meeting at the library on Tuesday the fourth at 8 p.m. For more details call me at 406-0000."

If you prefer to remain a "loner", you might want to consider joining one of the national organizations, either a general group like the APS or any of the hundreds of specialized study groups around the country. These groups often have publications that report the latest news about stamps or other postal items of special interest, give tips on how to collect such items, and carry offers from dealers specializing in material of interest to the group.