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GUEST EDITORIAL

The inaugural issue of India Post Newsletter has been warmly received by one and all. It appears to have created a good deal of hope and enthusiasm among all. In face since its release, there has been a flutter of philatelic activities across the country. The dull period is over. A period of intense activity is emerging. Not only that, several Circle-level philately exhibitions have taken place during the last three months. We are also getting news about holding of regional level or district level philately exhibitions. Such a scale of activities was not witnessed earlier ever. We hope that this tempo of activities will be kept up all through the first year of the new millennium taking Indian philately to new heights of glory.

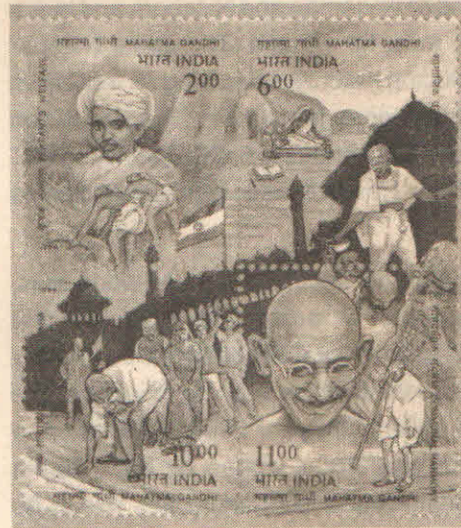
India Post took the pleasure of heralding the new millennium by releasing a stamp right at the moment the first ray of the sun touched the Mother Earth at the sleepy island of Katchel, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, on 01.01.2000. On that occasion, 5000 special packs of first day covers and mint stamp have been prepared and put on sale from Parliament Street Philately Bureau on 'First-cum-first serve' basis.

The best news for the moment is that we are organizing an international philately exhibition, called, 'Indepex-Asiana-2000', welcoming the new millennium and commemorating 50 years of our great Republic.

B.N. Som
Member (O)
India - Post

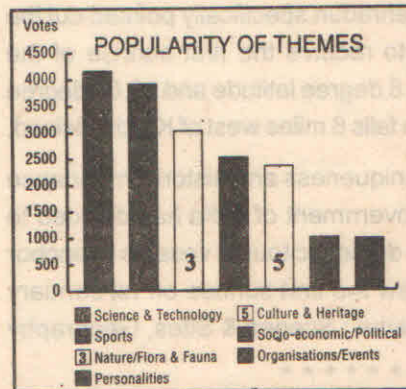
Stamp Popularity Poll

The most popular stamp of 1998



A 'Stamp Popularity Poll' was organised by the Department from 1st to 15th August, 1999 for selecting the most popular stamp issue during 1998. UPU has identified conducting opinion poll as an effective tool for popularizing

the hobby of philately as well as for gathering valuable feedback regarding designs, themes etc. of the stamps issued. The contest specially targeted the school children. The poll, therefore, covered all school students of India in the age group of 8 to 12. 21,905 students participated in



the contest. With the help of the poll, identified the most popular stamp (theme-wise). The popularity rating of the themes have been indicated in the box above.

Our Second Sunday Meetings were held regularly where 35 members attended with President Shri. Balakrishna Das presiding. Shri Mr. G. Madan Mohan Das, Spoke on "Exhibitions". New members introduced themselves. Talks by members with display, News/Views appreciated.

STAMP NEWS

FIRST SUNRISE OF THE MILLENNIUM GREETINGS 1.1.2000

01.01.99

300

2 million



Katchal- the sunrise island as it is called now-is a tiny island, belonging to the Nicobar group of islands, in the Bay of Bengal.

Katchal, is about 174 sq. kilometers in area and reaches a

height of 835 feet on the eastern side, which is composed of hills of calcareous sand stone formed in the sea during the tertiary period. It is on the way to Great Nicobar, the southern most island of Andaman and Nicobars and Indira point, the southern most tip of India. The entire Nicobar group of islands including Katchal is declared as tribal area and hence not normally open for tourists. The population of Katchal as per the 1991 census is 5,072. Of these 2491 are indigenous settlers. However estimated population as on date is 9000.

Katchal which was just another dot on the world atlas, has become the centre of attraction only during the first few months of 1999, as the Royal Greenwich Observatory revealed that it is this island which is going to witness the first sunrises of the Millennium year 2000. 'Millennium a Rough Guide to the year 2000' written by Nick Hanna published the relevant details supporting this news. As recorded, the universal day begins when it is mean midnight at the cross-hairs of the Airy transit circle in the Old Royal Observatory at Greenwich.

When Ist January 2000 starts at 00.00 hrs. GMT at Greenwich the first sunrises of that year will be shining down on Katchal Island. The Geological Survey of India has confirmed the reliability of the information and the Hydrographic Office, Dehradun specifically pointed out the place, which is going to receive the first sunrise of the millennium year. It is on 8 degree latitude and 93.09 degree longitude, a place which falls 8 miles west of Katchal Island.

Considering the uniqueness and historic importance of the occasion, the Government of India has decided to allow foreign as well as domestic tourist vessels to anchor in Katchal waters to view the first sunrise on Ist January 2000.

Theme : Scenes & Sites, Geography

From 1855 to 1926 Indian Stamp were printed in England by M/s. De La Rue & Co.

DEFENCE RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATION:

AGNI - II

01.01.2000

300

1 million



India's technological heritage dates back to the Indus Valley civilization.

The mastery over space technologies has revolutionized the forecasting and management of natural disasters and greatly

reinforced the nation's defence capabilities apart from changing the face of our telecommunications services. Through design and fabrication of a wide range of tactical missiles, combat aircraft, armor and radar systems our scientists have provided support crucial to the country's security, the armed forces.

In order to equip India with state-of-the-art Missile technology and to ensure self-reliance in the field, the Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) has been entrusted with the task of development of various Missile systems under its Integrated Guided Missiles Development programme. The programme has the partnership of academic institutions, R & D laboratories, industries and other Govt. departments.

Tactical Surface to Surface Missile, PRITHVI with range of 150 Km. for the Army and 250 Km. range for the Air Force have been successfully developed and flight tested. The AGNI-I re-entry Vehicle has also been developed and flight tested, Development of a quick reaction Surface to Air Missile TRISHUL with a range of 9 Km. and Medium Range Multi Target Surface to Air Missile System, AKASH with a range of 25 Km. and the Third Generation Top Attack, Fire & Forget Anti Tank Missile (ATM), NAG, with a range of 4 Km. have been developed and are in the final phase of evaluation before user trials.

On 11th April 1999, the DRDO has successfully flight tested AGNI-II with a range of 2000 Km. using solid propellant Rocket motors in both stages and rail mobile launcher system from its new launch complex in the Orissa coast. With this launch, the country has reached the point of operationalisation of AGNI-II as a weapon system. The two stage missile reached the point of impact in 11 minutes as scheduled. The test is a proof of our determination to strengthen defence capabilities and national security.

Theme : Defence, Armed Forces, Space.

50 YEARS OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA

Mahatma Gandhi : Father of the Nation

27.01.2000

300

1.4 million

"The Constituent Assembly which derived from the people.... all power and authority", held its first session in



December 1946 and the work of framing of the Constitution made rapid progress after India attained Independence. It was Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar the chairman of the Drafting Committee who played the major role in framing of the Constitution to the Constituent

Assembly on 26th November, 1949. It was adopted on that day after Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the President of the Constituent Assembly put it to vote."

The Constitution embodied the aspirations of the Indian people and the ideals they had cherished during the struggle for freedom. Besides being the fountain-head of all laws in the country and prescribing a Parliamentary form of Government, the Constitution was designed to be an instrument of India's social and economic emancipation. The Constitution came in force on 26th January, 1950 the day which since 1930 had been observed every year as Independence Day. Dr. Rajendra Prasad was sworn in as the first President in the midst of unforgettable scenes of enthusiasm and rejoicing.

The Department of Posts commemorated the Golden Jubilee of the Republic of India with issue of a special/commemorative stamp paying tribute to Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi. The stamp has been designed by eminent artist Shri Ranga, who has worked extensively on the theme of the life of Gandhiji, and portrayed very evocatively, various aspects of the life of the Mahatma and Gandhian thought. Since India attained Independence a large number of countries across the world, have honoured Mahatma Gandhi, through issue of commemorative postage stamps. A grateful and proud nation, on the 50th anniversary of the Republic of India, pays homage to the man, since his death universally acclaimed as the Father of the Nation through issue of this special commemorative stamp.

Theme : Gandhiji, Freedom Fighter, Independence

Since 1926 Indian Stamps were printed at the newly established printing press at Nasic.

50 YEARS OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA GALLANTRY AWARD WINNERS

28.01.2000

1500

0.4 million



The Indian Armed Forces, had an entirely different role to play, after India attained Independence. They now had the sacred purpose of defending the Motherland from aggression.

Immediately after independence, they were called upon to safeguard India's frontiers against the Pakistani invaders in Jammu and Kashmir. The jawans took up the challenge and performed remarkable deeds of valour, courage, endurance and self-sacrifice in repelling and defeating the invaders. In recognition of the supreme sacrifices made by the armed forces personnel, the Government of India instituted new Gallantry Awards for them, the highest being Param Vir Chakra.

Subedar and Honorary Captain Karam Singh PVC was conferred the 'Param Vir Chakra' for his exemplary acts of courage and endurance during the 1948 operations of the Indian Army in Jammu and Kashmir. Karam Singh (then Lance Naik) was commanding a section in Richhmar Gali which the enemy was trying to recapture through heavy artillery shelling. No bunker was left unscathed in the attack and the Lance Naik moved from bunker to bunker, giving succour to the wounded and urging the men to fight. The wounded Lance Naik immediately launched a counter attack with a few men and after a grim hand to hand fight evicted the enemy, thus neutralising the crucial advantage gained by them earlier and frustrating their efforts to recapture the strategic Tithwal. His fiercely proud spirit was largely responsible for the gallant stand at Tithwal.

Company Quartermaster Havildar Abdul Hamid PVC was posted in the 4th Battalion of the Grenadiers which was sent to the Khem Karan Sector when hostilities broke out between India and Pakistan in 1965. Commanding a recoilless gun detachment with his gun mounted on a jeep, he knocked out the leading enemy tank and then swiftly changing his position, he sent another enemy tank up in flames. But the enemy shelling and tank fire were so intense that he had to lay down his life in an uneven fight. Havildar Hamid's brave action inspired his comrades who put up a gallant fight and beat back the heavy tank assault by the enemy. He was posthumously awarded the 'Param Vir Chakra' in 1966.

Lance Naik Albert Ekka PVC was in the 14th Battalion of the Brigade of the guards during their attack on the enemy defence at Gangasagar on the Eastern Front during the war for the liberation of Bangladesh. The assaulting troops were subjected to intense shelling and heavy small arms fire from the highly fortified enemy position, but they charged on to the objective and were locked in bitter hand to hand combat. Lance Naik Ekka achieved glory in this combat by charging enemy bunkers with total disregard for his personal safety and silencing some of the most effective enemy machine guns, to his injuries later. For displaying the most conspicuous valour and determination in the best traditions of the armed forces, he was awarded the 'Param Vir Chakra' posthumously.

Flying Officer Nirmal Jit Singh Sekhon PVC is remembered for the determination and valour with which he, along with his colleagues, fought off successive waves of Pakistani air attacks in December 1971. On the 14th of December, when the enemy surprised our airfield defences and aggressively attacked, the flying officer successfully attempted a daring take-off on a runway under attack. Fully knowing the suicidal odds, he engaged the enemy in combat at tree-top level, six to one. Though he succeeded in shooting down two enemy air crafts, the sheer weight of numbers was beyond any mortal and his air craft finally crashed, killing him. He was posthumously awarded the 'Param Vir Chakra' in 1972.

Capt. (IN) Mahendra Nath Mulla MVC was in command of the anti submarine frigate INS Khukri which was on the hunter killer mission in the Arabian Sea in the 1971 war. In the night of 8/9 December about 40 miles off Diu, the ship was attacked by a salvo of three torpedoes fired by an enemy submarine and was fatally struck. The Captain of the ship was quick to realise the extent of damage and gave orders to abandon ship. With total disregard for his personal safety, he supervised the safe escape of his officers and men, gifting even his personal

safety gear to another sailor. The ship sank in a matter of five minutes, the tragedy accounting for the supreme sacrifice of Captain Mulla along with his officers and 176 sailors. For this supreme sacrifice he was awarded posthumously, the award of the 'Maha Vir-Chakra'.

Theme : Armed Forces, Emblems & Medals.

ENDANGERED SPECIES : TURTLES

29.01.2000

300 each

1 million



Reptiles were the first vertebrates to occupy the dry land successfully. They are believed to have originated during the Upper Carboniferous period (3000 to 260 million years ago), and descended from amphibians. The name 'reptile' comes from the Latin word, reptilis, meaning 'crawling'. Although most reptiles live on land, there are some adapted to aquatic life, like the turtles, which too breed on land. There are four major group of reptiles: the turtles, the crocodiles, the lizards and the snakes. Exploitation of reptile skin has made many of these rare and endangered.

Turtles belong to the reptilian order "Chelonea", which included the marine and fresh-water turtles, fresh water tortoises or terrapins and the land tortoises. Stamps on two endangered species of turtles, viz. the Olive Ridley and the Batagur Baska have been issued.

Olive Ridley turtle is one of the common sea turtles in the Indian subcontinent found in the Gulf of Kutch, coastal waters of Kerala, Tamilnadu, Orissa and Andaman islands. It is protected under Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife Protection Act 1972 as coastal pollution and development projects on sea coasts have had an adverse effect on the species. Olive Ridelys are the smallest of all sea turtles. These nest along the entire length of Orissa coastline wherever there exists a suitable sandy sea beach, but the largest aggregation occurs at three sites viz. Ekakulanasi rookery of Gahirmatha coast and rookeries at Devi and Rushikulya river mouths. The adult is olive brown above and yellowish below. The species is distinguished by the presence of five or more coastal shields on carapace.

Olive Ridelys are omnivorous or predominantly carnivorous feeding on fish, crabs, crustaceans, molluscs, jelly fishes, etc. The species is capable of foraging at great depths, (up 150 metres or more) in tropical neritic waters and undertake long journeys in search of suitable feeding and breeding grounds.

The Batagur is a moderately large web footed, aquatic species of terrapin. The species is found in fresh, brackish or even salt waters. It prefers to nest in a colony on large sand banks with slopes and also on riverine islands. Adequate protection measures are necessary for conservation of the species. Batagur was formerly abundant at the mouth of Hooghly where they were captured in large numbers. It has recently been rediscovered in Sundarbans during March 1998 when some eggs were located. The species was again successfully bred, and in view of the protection being accorded to the habitat by Project Tiger authorities of Sundarbans, it is hoped that the terrapin will establish itself in its erstwhile habitat - the Hooghly-Hatla estuaries.

Theme : Reptiles, Animals, Water mammals.

PERSONALITIES : SOCIO-POLITICAL (BIRTH CENTENARIES)

**BALWANTRAI MEHTA, DR.
HAREKRUSHNA MAHTAB, ARUN KUMAR
CHANDA**

17.02.2000
300, 300, 300
0.4 million
each



Balwantrai Mehta (1899-1965), former Chief Minister of Gujarat was a valiant freedom



fighter, social worker and a pioneer of the concept of Panchayat Raj. In 1927 joined the Servants of the People Society founded by Lala Lajpatrai, with missionary zeal. Later he became the President of this society. Under the inspiration of Late Shri. A.V. Thakkar popularly

known as Thakkar Bapa, Shri Mehta founded The Harijan Ashram at Bhavnagar, devoting himself actively to this

cause. He was a 'soldier' in the famous satyagraha of Bardoli. Shri Mehta's greatest contribution was in the sphere of States' Peoples' fight for self-rule. Shri Mehta was elected to the Constituent Assembly in 1947. He was also elected as an M.P. in the general elections of 1952 and 1957 from Gohilwad. He was also the Secretary of the Congress Parliamentary Party and the Chairman of the Estimates Committee. The name of Shri Balwantrai Mehta was conspicuously linked with democratic decentralisation. The revolutionary programme known as Panchayat Raj, being implemented in the country is based on the recommendations of Balwantrai Mehta Committee.

Dr. Harekrushna Mahtab (1899-1987), former Chief Minister of Orissa, took active part in the struggle for freedom and courted imprisonment on a number of occasions including the Quit India Movement when he was detained in Ahmednagar Fort along with Pandit Nehru, Sardar Patel, J.B. Kripalani and others. A practical statesman and a born leader of men. Mahtab has carved out for himself a name which will live in Orissa's history. More than ten years ago he conceived a future for Orissa for which he had the good fortune to realise in his own lifetime. He convinced the Cabinet Mission for total amalgamation of the Princely States with the Indian Union and carried it through after independence, being a pillar of strength for Sardar Patel. His journalistic and writing skills were also well-known, having been associated with publications like Prajatantra, Jhankar and the Eastern Times and having 23 books in English and Oriya to his credit.

Arun Kumar Chanda (1899-1947), born at Silchar on 17.2.1899 played a major role in the National Movement attracting the masses into the struggle for freedom. He was instrumental in the founding of the Guru Charan College of Silchar in 1935, for which he became the Honorary Principal. He was also involved in trade union activities and gave leadership to the Postal and Railway Mail Service Union, both at the district and national levels. He was elected the first President of the Provincial Trade Union Congress. He was elected to the Assam Legislative Assembly in 1937 as well to the Indian Legislative Assembly in 1945. He was also an accomplished writer, formulating public opinion through the Bengali Weekly Saptak. Theme : Social Workers, Freedom Fighters.

After Independence, issues of the first anniversary of Independence (15th Aug. 48 - Mahatma Gandhi Profile) alone printed outside India at Courvoisier, Switzerland.

26.02.2000

300

0.7 million



The Patna Medical College is one of the oldest training centres of physicians and surgeons in eastern India. Its predecessor, the 'Patna School of Medicine' was

opened on 23rd June 1874 with the intension of imparting medical training to junior surgeons in Bihar, eastern U.P. and other neighbouring areas. In August 1874, the medical school was renamed Temple School of Medicine after the Lt. Governor of Bengal at the time, Sir Richard Temple.

The medical college was finally opened on 25th July 1925 with just 30 students and Dr. H.R. Dutton I.M.S. as its first Principal.

Over the years the college grew into an institution of great repute with its alumni making a mark nationally and internationally. Three eminent professors of this college namely, Dr. Dhukhan Ram, Dr. M.A. Pai and Dr. B. Mukhopdya were conferred the Padmabhushan Award in recognition. The list of Padma Shree includes Dr. L.S.N. Prasad, Dr. S.P. Ram and Dr. C.P. Thakur. The Alumni's contribution to defence has also been significant. General Moitra has had the distinction of being the first Indian in the medical corps to rise to the rank of a General. Another Alumni, General Chatterjee, was the first Indian to become the Director General of Armed Forces Medical Corps.

One of the earliest radiotherapy unit in India was established in this institution and records show patients are coming from Burma, Nepal, and Afghanistan. This college also has the rare distinction of having started some of the earliest post graduate courses in the country, in the subjects of Medicine, Surgery, Paediatrics, Orthopaedics, Plastic Surgery and Anesthesia. It's Department of Surgery has been recognised as one of the five national centres for research on carcinoma gall bladder.

Despite many constraints, Patna Medical College Hospital with 1700 free beds is truly a beacon of light for the poor and indigent population of this part of the country. With 500 undergraduate 500 postgraduate students and over 300 teachers, the college continues to be centre of repute.

Theme : Medicine, Education, Institutions.

Kings, Princes and Presidents are numbered among world leaders who, in their day, were stamp collectors but the final seal of approval, an invitation to sign the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists, has only ever been extended to one of them. He was, of course, King George V.

It was as HRH the Duke of York that the future King became the President of the Philatelic Society, London in 1896, a philatelic responsibility to which he responded by taking an active interest in the society's affairs. Matters of state prevented regular attendance at the meetings but, as President, he kept in touch with the society through its secretary, John A Tilleard, who became a firm friend of the Duke. Tilleard was Honorary Secretary of the Philatelic Society, London, from 1894 to 1913, a period which embraced the Duke's presidency from 1896 to 1910. In the latter year, Tilleard was formally appointed 'Philatelist to His Majesty' when King George V succeeded his father, King Edward VII.

The successor to Tilleard was Edward Denny Bacon who was given the more formal title of 'Curator of The King's Philatelic Collection'. Bacon was then serving the great collector, Henry Duveen, as curator but Duveen agreed to release him for royal service.

King George and his new curator became very close. Their philatelic preferences coincided in many ways, not the least being a shared dislike of used stamps of which there are comparatively few in the Royal collection. Both the King and Bacon felt that cancellations defaced stamps and thus spoil the designs. The postal history significance of cancellations had yet to be appreciated by either of them! Bacon, in due course, received the M.V.O. (1917), C.V.O. (1922) and became, in 1932, the first man to be knighted for philatelic services. A further link between these two great philatelists came about when both signed the Roll of distinguished Philatelists in 1921, the year the Roll was inaugurated.

Above all, King George was an active collector who kept an eye on the stamp market and instruct his agents shrewdly whenever suitable items became available at auction or through private treaty purchases. As early as 1904 he had acquired both the 1d and 2d 'Post Office' stamps of Mauritius, the very lightly used on cover (an exception to the 'unused' rule, but pardonable in view of the stamp's rarity) and the finest unused 2d example in existence. For the latter, the King paid 1,450, at the time world record for any single stamp.

Earlier still, in 1890, when, as Prince George Wales, he commanded H.M.S. Thrush on a routine voyage to

North America and the West Indies, he kept a weather-eye open for additions to the collection but even he could not have anticipated becoming the owner of the first-ever (although actually never issued) Royal Visit stamps. This was when Thrush called at Trinidad and seven then-current stamps, envelopes, wrappers and postcards were surcharged '9d' - a postal rate which applied to nothing in particular, so far as is known - and were presented to the Prince to mark the occasion of his visit. Being unissued to the public, the stamps remain uncatalogued by Stanley Gibbons this day but a set is still in the Royal collection as the souvenir of the visit to Trinidad.

Although the future King George V at first collected on a world-wide basis, an early decision was taken on to concentrate on the issues of great Britain and the British Empire. The few exceptions are limited to a number of presentations containing some foreign issues, notably the Russian stamps which were included in a miscellaneous contributed by fellow members of the Philatelic Society, London on the occasion of the Prince's marriage in 1893. In that same year the society held an exhibition of West Indian stamps at headquarters (then in Arundel Street, Strand) and for the first time a selection of stamps from Bermuda, British Guiana, Trinidad and the Turks Islands was loaned from the Royal Collection. When the society celebrated its Silver Jubilee in 1894 another exhibition was forthcoming, this time including Wuorttemberg, Brazil and Italy, the only foreign issues ever displayed - but some had been part of the previous year's wedding gift!

The Royal collector's technical abilities as a philatelist were readily placed at the disposal of 'his' society, as he came to regard it on becoming its President in 1896. On a visit to his mother's homeland, Denmark in 1898, he took time to make enquiries on the spot and thus solve a problem concerning the printing of the 2 rigsbank skilling stamp which had been bothering a fellow member for a long time.

When Edward Bacon became the chairman of the Royal P.S. Expert committee the King encouraged him to take the 'patients' to Buckingham Palace for comparison with verified items in the Royal collection. He was fascinated by this aspect of the Society's services to its members and the practise of sending problem pieces to the Palace persists to this day.

Another major exhibition, this time competitive, was organised by the society in 1906 and for the first (and last) time the then Prince of Wales submitted entries in competition. For his fine Mauritius (a particular favourite of the exhibitor) he received a silver medal, as he also did for Hong Kong; and for his entry of British essays, a bronze medal. As President, the Royal exhibitor donated a gold and a silver medal to be awarded to the most deserving entries in the Ladies' Section of the exhibition, an innovation

which does not appear to have been repeated at any exhibition since then.

Any lingering doubts concerning the philatelic ability of the President were dispelled in March 1904 when he took the chair at a meeting of the Philatelic Society, London, and read a technical paper, of which he was the sole author, on the early King Edward VII stamps of Great Britain. The paper was based on personal research at Somerset House and was planned, as he said at the time, to provide information and dates that could be relied upon as authentic and, therefore, reliable guides to any other students furthering the same line of research in the future. There wrote the true philatelist.

It was in November 1906 that King Edward VII, doubtless persuaded by his enthusiastic philatelic son, granted Royal status to what then became the Royal Philatelic Society, London, a privilege which gave the society impetus and established the hobby as a serious intellectual pursuit.

After his accession to the throne in May 1910, King George V sought relaxation with his stamps and, public duties permitting, he spent three afternoons a week in the Stamp Room at Buckingham Palace in the company of his much-admired Edward Bacon.

Not surprisingly, King George V was given opportunities to acquire many unique items, especially stamp-sized, hand-painted designs prepared for many Georgian period engraved colonial issues, these miniature gems of art being necessary to guide the engravers who prepared the master dies from which the printing plates were subsequently laid down. Earlier examples included the historic purchase from Perkins Bacon of original artwork by Henry Corbould for the first Ceylon issue, for the Chalon Head colonial stamps and the New South Wales 5s. 'Coin' stamp. To this valuable acquisition was added the Corbould watercolour for the Britannia stamps of Mauritius, Barbados and Trinidad, this letter being by private purchase when this unrecognised philatelic gem failed to reach the reserve placed on its in a Chancery Lane book auction.

There can be little doubt, however, that one of the few covers in the collection must have had a special place in the King's heart. On 5 May 1910, an unknown friend at the Post Office attached one of the new 2d Tyrian Plum King Edward stamps to an envelope addressed, "To His Royal Highness, The Prince of Wales, K.G., etc., Marlborough House, S.W." It was delivered on the morning of 6 May. The death of King Edward during that day meant that the 2d Tyrian Plum was never issued to the public and the Royal Collection thus includes the only used specimen in existence. On that day too the philatelist who owned this unique stamp became king.

Courtesy : British Philatelic Bulletin

EARLY CANCELLATIONS

By Robson Lowe.

CHAPTER I

Introductory

In April, 1919, the Philatelic Society of India published my first account of Early Indian Cancellations. This was 33 years ago.

The appearance of the Handbook in 1919 marked the first stage in the study of Indian cancellations. The inquiry continued, and new helpers came forward, in particular, Colonel Martin, R.E., and the late Colonel W.W. Lean. It is gratifying that the main outlines as set forth in the Handbook have required very little correction. But there have of course been many important discoveries. An important and necessary revision of Types [8] and [9] took place in 1923. The Central Provinces Series were made clear in 1929. Railway cancellations have been worked out in detail - a very extensive subject, and form the principal feature of this revision. Large additions have been made to the town numbers identified. Indeed, our knowledge has increased in every direction.

The original Handbook has been unobtainable for many years. Its revision is long overdue. It is proposed to adhere as far as possible to the scheme of the 1919 Handbook. The considered desirable to have a rearrangement. Where obliterations are of the duplex character, these are reproduced in full. Minor varieties will not be shown. Where they exist, they will be described with care to enable collectors to identify them with facility. Lists of town numbers will also be removed to an Appendix.

It is unnecessary to reproduce those passages in the opening pages of the Handbook in which reasons were adduced in support of the collection and study of postmarks. Postal history is now firmly established as a branch of philately. There is now a vast literature describing the cancellations and hand-stamps of most countries. Postal history auctions are of regular occurrence, the remarkable prices are realized for rarities. In India, it is a matter for congratulation that the study of cancellations now appeals to a wide circle.

Handstruck postage stamps of India are not included, these are dealt with in the main part of the Encyclopaedia (pages 137 to 149)

At this stage, I should like to repeat my great obligation to the late Dr. K.D. Cooper, on whose suggestion I undertook to investigate Indian cancellations, and who supplied me with a large part of the necessary material. I recall with gratitude the assistance of Messrs. Griffith, Gilbert Lodge, Punthakey, Gordon Jones, Godinho and Stoney. As this volume will supersede the old Handbook, it is fitting that the contributions of these gentlemen should

be again placed on record. I am also indebted to Colonel A.E. Stewart for a minute scrutiny of the manuscript and the illustrations.

The following note on postal arrangements down to 1854 is based on Sir Geoffrey Clark's "Indian Post Office".

The origin of the post office lies in the necessity of Government Communications. In 1766, Lord Clive introduced a system under which landholders were required to supply postal runners, receiving in return, suitable remission of rent. This service was only for Government correspondence. But Government servants were allowed to avail themselves of it. In 1774, Warren Hastings improved and elaborated the service. He appointed a Postmaster General, and he made the system available for private letters at rates varying with distances. The lowest rate was 2 annas per tola for 100 miles. Private posts, however, ran everywhere, and competed successfully with the Government Post Office.

Act XXII of 1837 marked a further development, Government assuming the exclusive right to carry letters in the territories of the East India Company. But, in spite of this, private posts continued to function until 1854, competing at lower rates than those prescribed by Government.

Letters over 12 tolas in weight were to be sent by bhanga dawka, that is, by parcels post.

Handstamps were presumably introduced soon after 1774 in connection with the realization of postage on private letters. The earliest example is the town stamp of Culpie, 1776.

Shipmasters were to deliver postal articles to, and receive them from, post offices and to be paid one anna per letter.

Postage rates were fixed according to distance.

Various persons were privileged to send all letters and packets post free.

In 1854, following a commission of enquiry, Act XVII of 1854 was passed, which established the Indian Post Office in practically its present form. A Director General was appointed for India in addition to Postmasters General in each Circle. The most striking feature of the new organization was the reduction of postage rates to 1/2 anna per 1/4 tola for any distance, while bhanga rates were also lowered. Privileged free postage was abolished. Double postage was chargeable on "bearing" letters. Registration was fixed at 4 annas, but was paid in cash until 1866. Service letters were under frank, the Departments concerned being charged. In 1866, however, it was found much more convenient to provide Service Stamps.

A Postal Manual was compiled in 1854 from which very useful information is obtainable. From this we learn the original instructions regarding cancellations and hand-struck stamps and some details of the postal arrangements.

Rule XXXIX runs as follows:-

"All postage stamps on letters, papers or parcels must be carefully obliterated with the stamp furnished for that object; and the black composition supplied for the purpose must be used in all cases."

"All letters, etc., whether paid, stamped, or liable to postage are to be marked with the appropriate stamp bearing the name of the office of despatch, and when slide stamps showing the day of the month, and year, are not provided, the said date must be in writing across the middle of the face of the stamp."

"When postage is fully paid, the letter should be stamped in the despatch office with the paid red dated stamp on the back."

"When postage is unpaid, the black dated stamp should be applied in the despatch office to the front or direction side."

"On the receipt of mails, letters, must be marked with the dated stamps."

The 1858 Manual provides that:-

"Redirected letters should be stamped with a black impression on the back of the letter, an oval stamp being used."

In 1859 there were four Postal Circles with Sadr (head) and subordinate offices as follows:-

	Sadr. Offices.	Subordinate Offices.	Total
1. Bengal and Lower Provinces, Assam, Lower Burma, Singapore, Penang, etc.	85	91	176
2. Madras with parts of Hyderabad (Deccan), Mysore, Travancore, etc.	33	97	130
3. Bombay, with Sind, parts of Hyderabad (Deccan) and parts of the Central Provinces, etc..	21	68	89
4. The Northern Circle, comprising the North-west Province, the Punjab, with adjoining parts of Rajputana and the Central Provinces	62	189	251

The detailed list of these offices is given in Appendix B. A statement showing the changes in Postal Circles from 1854 to date is printed as Appendix A.

Generally, Imperial Post Offices were located at the headquarters of districts. In some of the larger towns, there were also "Receiving Offices." Throughout India, the Imperial Post Office was supplemented by the District Post, primarily for the conveyance of police, revenue, or other official communications, but also available for private correspondence. District Posts will be dealt with in detail in Chapter X.

The subject of this inquiry is primarily cancellations, and it generally stops at 1884, after which date the cancellation almost always records the place of origin. An exception has to be made with the Railway Postal Service. Railway stamps began as sorting and transit marks. But in a short time these were applied as cancellations. Accordingly, with the Railway Postal Service is necessary to deal with sorting and transit stamps as well as with cancellations (see Chapter XV et. seq.)

This chapter will conclude with an account of the obliterations of the famous Sind Dawks introduced by Sir Bartle Frere, then Commissioner of Sind in 1851. I am indebted for my information and examples to the late Mr. Punthkey of Karachi, who handled more of these stamps than anyone else. The nine cancellations found on Sind dawks are reproduced in later pages. The cancellations may be described as follows:-

Stamps on which seen

- [A]. A diamond of 49 dots in seven rows of seven, the corner dots being larger than the rest. Diagonals are 22 and 19mm. White, blue
- [B]. A diamond of 64 dots in eight rows of eight. Diagonals are 19 and 17mm. Nine rows by eight have also been seen. White, blue, red
- [C]. A round dotted cancellation. White
- [D]. A diamond of 51 dots in seven rows, the first and last rows being of eight dots, and the rest of seven dots. Diagonals are 22 and 19 mm. White
- [E]. Large star. White
- [F]. Smaller star. White.
- [G]. Seven parallel lines forming a diamond. Diagonals, 24 and 18mm. White
- [H]. A diamond of 81 dots in nine rows of nine. Diagonals 26 and 20mm. White, blue
- [I]. A diamond of eleven parallel lines with the number 96 inset. Diagonals 26 and 20mm. White, blue

Of these, A, C and G are scarce, and D is very scarce.

Types [G] and [H] are cancellations adopted in India after 1st October, 1854, and Type [I] is the Bombay Circle Type [4] cancellation showing the Hyderabad number 96. The appearance of these cancellations on Sind Dawks proves that the order for the destruction of Sind Dawks by 1st October, 1854, was not fully carried out. Or, perhaps private holders of these stamps are responsible for their appearance and use after that date. Mr. Punthakey's observations of dates on letters established independently that copies were used as late as 1856.

There are thus six true Sind Dawk cancellations. It is curious that the red stamp only appears with one cancellation, and the blue with only two. The distribution of the various obliterations has not been worked out.

The Sind Dawk has been freely forged, but forgeries are not difficult to detect. One forgery appeared in 1892 with a forged cancellation of eleven lines framing a "1". The cancellation "SD" is also a forgery.

The Sind instructions for defacing stamps were as follows: "The Kardar will rub a little ink on the rough face of the brass, then place it firmly on the stamp to be scored and give the wooden handle a slight turn, which will so deface the stamp as to render it impossible to be again used." Fortunately, these ruthless orders were generally disregarded.

Courtesy : Encyclopedia of British empire Postage stamps

JUNIOR COLUMN

How It All Began

By Richard West

It was a Saturday afternoon, I remember, I cannot satisfy the passion as to the state of the weather at the time, nor indeed can I recall the time of year. But it was nearly fifty years ago, while shopping with my sister, who was apparently anxious to find a way to keep her younger brother quiet.

Higginbothams provided the answer, with a packet of stamps, a few stamp hinges and a 'Blue Lagoon' stamp album. So it was my sister who was mainly to blame, although I must admit that a spark of interest in stamp collecting had been kindled by our next door neighbour who owned a collection of British stamps which greatly impressed me.

That neighbour's collection in fact contained such items as the 1953 Coronation in blocks of four - I often dreamt that the owner might split the blocks to present me with a set!

My visits to Higginbothams were quite frequent in those days: packets of stamps and inexpensive accessories were fast selling lines. Recently, in discussion with the manager of the Higginbothams, he recalled that when the stores stocked such items, he would need to re-order packets of stamps two or three times a week.

It is a great pity that the stamp packet seems to have disappeared. It offered such a wonderful introduction to the hobby. While it is true that the labour cost of assembling packets has increased considerably, perhaps too much fear is placed on customer resistance if the price seems too high.

Many moan that young people are today lured by videos and computer games, but these are hardly cheap. Attractively packaged packets of stamps could still sell well, if marketed with careful thought.

The days are probably gone of 200 French Colonials or 1,000 Whole World, but 'thematic' packets might sell. Price should not deter.

That first stamp album costed Rs.10/-, and was the familiar junior type, printed on both sides of the paper, with neat squares for each stamp, too much space attributed to some countries, too little to others, and with certain stamps illustrated at the top of each page.

I still remember two of these illustrations; the Ascension 1956 1 ½d value and the 1956 British Solomon Islands 1 ½d. These looked so attractive to me that I felt I wanted to add them to my album as real stamps.

The former proved no problem. The range of packets at Higginbothams included those from Frank Godden; these frequently contained five different ½d stamps from commonwealth countries priced at Rs.6/- or the ½d, 1d and 1½d values from each of three Commonwealth countries, selling for Rs.2/- . One of the Rs.2/- packets provided me with the Ascension 1½d - and ½d and 1d values.

The British Solomon Islands was more difficult. Fortunately I knew some other stamp shops, into whose windows I frequently gazed, but not venturing further.

One day I plucked up courage, entered a tiny shop and asked if the particular Solomons stamp was in stock. The lady behind the counter, Mrs. Natarajan was most helpful. She could not supply the particular stamp singly, but what about the British Solomons Islands

1937 Coronation 1d value? I made my purchase in the knowledge that I would now be able to add a stamp to the page headed British Solomon Islands.

Local stamp shops were a great inspiration to collect, mainly thanks to the window displays, but also due to owners who were prepared to talk about stamps. Sadly many of these shops have now disappeared: a general stock seems rare; a wide knowledge of stamps is uncommon; and a willingness just to chat about stamps almost non-existent.

The changes are not really for the better as far as the future of the hobby is concerned. If potential collectors, of whatever age, are not brought face to face with the prospect of the hobby, how will it continue?

Provided the shop was not full of customers, Mrs. Natarajan would always be prepared to talk about stamps, even if on occasions it did not result in a purchase.

In those days a quarter of a century ago everything seemed less frenetic. When a new stamp appeared, it caused little panic but much interest. The start of my collecting coincided with the issue of the Jubilee Jamboree set - there had been no new British commemoratives for four years. I was able to afford the 2 ½ and 4d quite easily, but had to save up for the 1s 3d.

The 1958 Commonwealth Games set was, I recall, featured quite prominently in the comic 'Eagle'. I doubt if today's new issues receive such coverage, simply because they appear so frequently.

Another landmark in my collecting career was the acquisition of my first 1 stamp. Not a stamp that cost me 1, but the 1 definitive showing Windsor Castle. There was a page of these acceptably fine used to me, in the window of my Stamp Shop priced 10/- each. I had drooled over these from the first time I had looked into the shop window, and eventually I bought a copy - it seemed a great deal of money to spend on just one stamp.

It was 1958 that I bought my first stamp publication - After while I decided to check if any other magazines were published about the hobby. As a result I added to my list of purchases.

It is claimed that young people are not collecting stamps today because there are so many conflicting interests. In the late 50s and early 60s there were just as many interests. Music, sports, cinema were all popular. Today stamps do not seem to make the same

impact, where in fact they should be making a greater impact.

Colourful stamps are seen far more often as letters today compared with twenty odd years ago, but the inspiration to collect is lacking. If the days the stamp packet freely available and the local, friendly stamp shop could return, many more youngsters might follow the same path as me. As well, perhaps not.

I was soon weaned off Higginbothams but the local stamp shops held a magnetic attraction for me during my early collecting days. Mind you, even in those days, the treatment meted out varied considerably: from the cold shoulder to the exceedingly helpful. I did once encounter the 'grocer' approach to stamps - if your favourite brand of tea is out of stock, presumably an alternative brand will suffice, so if the stamp you want is not available, any other 'pretty' stamp will do. However, a clear indication that I knew the stamp I wanted, and that an alternative would not suffice, prevented this attitude re-occurring.

I did once find that telling a dealer that a stamp he was about to sell was 'wrong' caused a great deal of upset. It was the Southern Africa decimal surcharges of 1961 with their many types: I had the audacity to 'question' a stamp I was offered. The dealer obviously felt I was precocious, and the atmosphere created made me loath to visit that shop again.

Being friendly with the staff at my local sub-post office (part of a newsagent's shop) also greatly helped with my early collecting (indeed, can do no harm even today). Living close to the newsagents was a collector-cum-gardener-cum-odd-job man who displayed an almost child-like naivety about stamps. His father, with an Uncle Remus appearance, was wealthy, so the son was indulged as far as his interests were concerned. The problem was, he could not separate them.

Visiting him at home one would often find him pottering in the garden. He would immediately come in, scorn such formalities as washing his hands, and proceed to show off his latest purchases by mounting them in his collection. Oh, he would use tweezers, and would carefully affix the stamp hinge by a generous daub of this tongue, but then would position the stamp firmly in place on the album page with a grubby finger. There for us all to enjoy was a perfect stamp with a clear finger print in the centre.

However, he did introduce me to my local philatelic society, which in those days had a very thriving junior section. Almost 40 years on, I am still a member of that society: indeed for many years I have been its President, and also its Secretary. It is perhaps surprising that of those

in the junior section of the society at that time, many have since been professionally involved with the hobby.

My involvement with the local philatelics spurred me to start a stamp club at my bank, never been one for swapping. Not that I minded thought of adding to my collection - it was prospect of having to part with some of my treat that appalled me.

With the support of a sympathetic teacher school society was able to meet on a regular mainly for swapping sessions. In those days its there was far more encouragement gives out-of-school activities.

By coincidence, an organisation called the Philatelic Collecting Promotion Council was established. Thanks to the generous support of dealers and the enthusiastic efforts of a few Council was able to offer a range services idea a school stamp club. I can remember a company which was open to all young collectors (answer some simple questions), small displays available loan (which included advice on arranging writing up), film strips, wallcharts, and more exhibition, which could visit a school for a day.

Such a travelling exhibition still exists, but it relies on volunteers for its transportation, while school themselves are not as enthusiastic about interruptions to the regular school day.

It is a pity that more cannot be done to previous stamps before potential collectors. I am suggesting for one moment that in those days, boys in as school were clamouring to join these club-far from it. But the fact was they were be made aware, perhaps subconsciously, of stamps the interest they provide. There was an even grade response from the teachers, many of which confessed to a passion for stamp collecting.

I fully realise that the Post Office perform an invaluable task in its relationship with school and produces some superb wallcharts. But necessity these relate to modern stamps advantage of the activities of the Stamp Collecting Promotion Council was that it embraced the hot as a whole. The Council still exists, but needs no financial support than it currently enjoy to provide the services so badly needed.

Came the time to leave Madras for Bombay the need to fill a holiday job. While the just members of my local philatelic society participates in the main meetings, they also held their own so evenings. At one such gathering I met someone who had worked for Stanley Gibbons. He told me of a stamp wholesaler in the centre of Bombay who might be able to use some of the extra help during the summer. I was introduced to the world of a professional.

Courtesy : British Philatelic Bulletin

THE SEA-SORTING POST OFFICES OF INDIA

A particularly interesting development in the Indian Postal organization is that of the sea-sorting post offices is briefly outlined in the paragraphs which follow. "The Post Office of India and Its Story," by Sir Geoffrey Clarke.

Mr. W. Renouf has described the interesting postal markings in use gives an excellant account of sea-sorting Post Offices.

Contracts agreed between the Peninsular and Orient Company and the P.M.G. in 1859 arranged for two post office clerks to be embarked in the Alexandria-Marseilles P. and O. Their duty was to sort the U.K. mail routed via Marseilles by the time the ship reached Malta.

Here the clerks transhipped to the Alexandria-Sonthampton P. and O. and sorted the mail for immediate transmission on arrival at Southampton.

It was suggested that on the eastward trip to Alexandria that these clerks should be employed in sorting the Indian mail for which the Indian Government would bear a share of the cost.

India disagreed to this on the grounds that the clerks would be unable to sort correctly for Indian stations owing to many places of the same name.

A fresh contract was drawn up with the P. and O. Company in 1868, whereby provision was made for a sorting office and free passage for sorters in vessels east of Suez.

Taking advantage of this the Government of India authorized an experimental sea-sorting establishment consisting of six teams, each of which had two sorters and two packers.

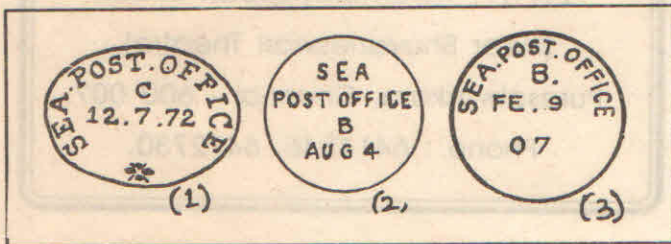
By 1870 the system was working admirably as may be gathered from the fact that not long after its introduction Bombay delivery-ticket holders received their mail within ten minutes after it had been landed, and vastly improved times of despatch of the mail trains resulted.

The Indian sea-sorting office on the westward run sorted the U.K. mail, but the London G.P.O. did not reciprocate but gave further proof othe benefit of the system by withdrawing their own postal sorting clerks and placing the master of the ship in charge of the mail from Alexandria westwards. In 1873, the teams were increased to five men in each and with the volume of mail increasing yearly between 10 and 12 per cent, by 1908 the number per team had grown to 29. It became obvious with the necessarily limited ship-office accomodation that other methods were necessary for by 1908, about 40 per cent

of the mail was unsorted on account both of congestion and difficulty in adequate supervision. It was decided accordingly that suitable accommodation should be provided when building the new Bombay G.P.O. and that the sea-sorting offices should gradually lapse. Actually the 1914-18 Great War brought matters to a head and irregular sailings and the impossibility of providing the necessary accommodation forced the issue. The last mail to the U.K. was sorted in the ship sailing 15th August, 1914, and the last mail to be sorted in a ship arrived at Bombay on 27th August, 1914, where the mail were then sorted by 150 specially trained sorters in the space of about three hours.

On the Atlantic crossing between New York and Europe sorting on a modified scale was in vogue up to 1914 but in no case was it carried out on a scale was comparable to the Indian organization.

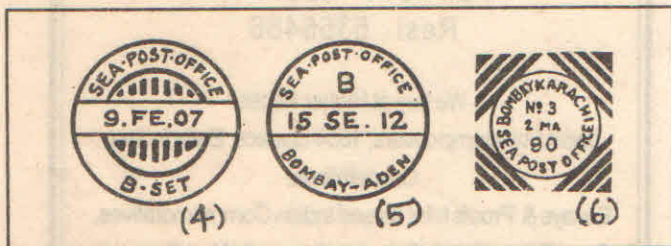
Courtesy : Encyclopedia of British Empire Postage Stamps, 1951.



Type [1] is an oval showing "Sea Post Office". This specimen is dated 1872.

Type [2] is a circle with "Sea Post Office" across the circle. Specimens appear from 1873 onwards into the 80's - and even much later.

Type [3] is a circle with "Sea Post Office" along the circumference. Dates seen are between 1896 and 1907.



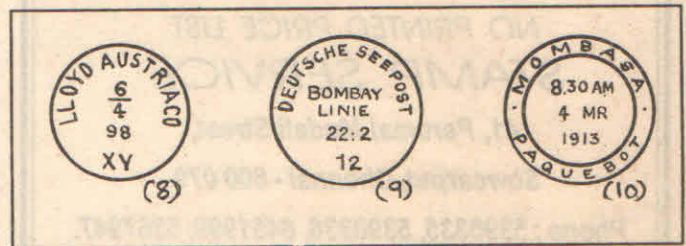
Type [4] shows a double circle and other difference. A date seen is 1907 when Types [3] and [4] appear on the same entire. (It appears that different types were in use concurrently [4].

Type [5] is a Single circle, showing "Bombay-Aden". The date seen is 1912. I am not certain, but I think the sea sorting ceased some time after this date.

An interesting example of Type [2] seen in 1919, is on a postcard posted on the mail steamer "nearing Suez" from the Red Sea - I do not think that the sorting party referred to above went beyond Aden. So this is probably a stamp supplied to the Purser for use on letters posted on the steamer. In this connection, another entire to England from Bombay of 1877 shows a Suez cancellation dated "Dec 30", followed by Type [2] dated "4 Jan".

Type [6] is a small circle used between Karachi and Bombay. Its shows "Bombay" "Karachi" and "Sea Post Office". The date seen is 1890.

Type [7] is a much larger circle, with the same inscription. The date seen is 1917.



Type [8] shows "Lloyd Austriaco" in a circle for Austrian Lloyd - the date is 1898.

Type [9] is a circle with the words "Deutsche Seepost Bombay Line", seen in 1912. A similar cancellation shows "Deutsche See Post -Ost-Line".

Type [10] is a double circle showing 'Mombasa Paquebot'. The date seen is 1913. A similar cancellation is for "Dar-es-Salam Paquebot", probably of about the same date.

(Courtesy : Encyclopedia of British empire Postage Stamps)

MOST POPULAR THEME OF 1997:

Can you guess what is the most popular theme for collectors in 1997? According to the members of the American Topical Association (ATA), our feathered friends - BIRDS came up tops, beating the previous year's champion of trains. Birds came in second to the iron horse in 199. This time around, trains and ships tied for the second place. The rest of the field of popular themes to the tenth spot are as follows: Cats, Animals and Light Houses (a tie), Flowers, Aviation, Dogs, Butterflies and Musicians (a tie), Art.