



SIPA Bulletin

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GUEST EDITORIAL

From the desk of the Editor-in-chief - INDIA POST

This is the third issue of our News Letter. With every issue, its popularity is growing. We are receiving letters of appreciation from our professional friends and even from unknown well-wishers. Its news contents, its presentation and its approach to the various issues are creating a new sense of pride and possession among our members. It is shaping up as a communication link between the philatelists and other interested groups. To carry on these gains further, we propose to increase the number of circulation copies so that it reaches more of our members. We would like to bring this out in Hindi too, to spread the message of philately far and wide.

We all feel happy that philately exhibitions are now being held not only at the national and regional levels but at the district level also. For the last few months, philately exhibitions have been held at some place or the other of the country almost every month. We hope that this tempo will develop further with more and more regions and districts joining the new movement. Our philatelists seem to have a very busy schedule at hand to meet the demands from all corners. We are sure that they will do their very best to encourage and sustain the spread of this movement far and beyond.

INDEPEX ASIANA - 2000 Secretariat is now fully geared up. We are told that all important committees have started their job with all seriousness. The formal launch of this exhibition has been done at Bangkok - 2000 International Philately Exhibition on 31st March 2000 in a grand manner by releasing a set of four stamps on the flora and fauna of the North East. It is a matter of great happiness that both FIAP and FIP have assured us of their best support. Let us all do our best to make INDEPEX ASIANA - 2000 a grand success.

(B.N. Som)

Member (O)

STAMP SHOWS TODAY AND TOMORROW

By Knud Mohr, President, FIP.

The first two FIP World Exhibitions in 1999, Australia '99 and IBRA '99 are over and both could claim a great success.

Australia 99 has approx, 70,000 visitors - taking into consideration that they asked an entrance fee and IBRA '99 reached the amazing number of 123,000 visitors.

I congratulate the organisers of these two exhibitions and express my thanks to them for their work they have done and for the open mind they showed in building-up these events. They really were showing that stamp exhibitions have a future!

In both of the shows it was understood that it is of great importance that we give priority to the idea of combining our hobby with other hobbies or events.

I was indeed very impressed when one day in the streets of Melbourne I saw the placard of the newspaper The Sun announcing "HAVE YOUR FACE ON A STAMP!"

The idea with the personalised stamp was a GREAT hit and a fine gimmick. Every morning I could observe the long queue of visitors wanting their face on a stamp!

Similarly in Nuremberg and it was apparent that the Public Relations done for that exhibition was the most effective ever applied for a stamp show. On TV, Radio and on posters you were informed about this magnificent event where you could go to admire and/or buy stamps. However, they introduced other activities not specifically related to stamps but attractive to the public. The train to exhibition centre was crowded with visitors every morning. I do hope that organisers of FIP exhibitions in the years to come, specially those in 2000 and 2001 will copy some of the ideas of either Australia 99 or IBRA '99.

We can rightly assume that the future exhibitions will be well visited and this will be an excellent publicity for our hobby.

(Courtesy : Flash June '99)

Our Second Sunday Meetings were held regularly where 30 members attended with President Shri. Balakrishna Das presiding. Shri Mr. G. Madan Mohan Das, Spoke. New members introduced themselves. Talks by members with display, News/Views invited.

STAMP NEWS:

DR. BURGULA RAMAKRISHNA RAO

13.03.2000

300

0.4 million



Dr. Burgula Ramakrishna Rao (1899 - 1967) was the first elected Chief Minister of erstwhile Hyderabad State and a leader of the Freedom Movement in the state.

He started his career as a lawyer in Hyderabad and made a name as a prominent constitutional lawyer who never hesitated to take up the cause of freedom fighters in the courts. Later, joining the National Movement. Dr. Rao led the historic struggle against the Nizam for the merger of Hyderabad with the Indian Union along with Swami Ramanand Thirtha and other leaders. He was one of the founder members of the Hyderabad State Congress. He presided over the third Andhra Mahasabha conference at Devarkonda in 1931 and was responsible for creating a great awakening among the people of Telangana for their rights.

Due to his prominent role in 'Quit India Movement' in 1942 and again for his participation in the Freedom Struggle in 1947, he was arrested by the Nizam. K.M. Munshi, the then Agent of India in Hyderabad state, spoke of his great contribution for the timely 'police action' by India against the Nizam who ultimately surrendered to the Indian Forces on 17th September, 1948. In the first General Elections in Hyderabad State in 1952, Dr. Rao was elected from Shadnagar constituency and later took over the reigns of the State as the Chief Minister. He took several significant steps for the welfare of the people, including the historic 'land reforms' in the state. The passage and implementation of the famous Hyderabad Tenancy and Agricultural Act of 1950, followed in 1954 by Hyderabad Tenancy and Agricultural Lands (Amendment) Act, was an important signpost in land reforms in the country. The historic Bhoodan Movement was launched by Acharya Vinoba Bhave in the state during his tenure, as Chief Minister.

He was a multilinguist, scholar and poet, and wrote several books and articles of which only some are published.

From 22nd November, 1956 to July 1960, Dr. Ramakrishna Rao was the Governor of Kerala and subsequently Governor of Uttar Pradesh till April 1962.

He was later elected to Rajya Sabha, which he served from 1962 to 1966. He passed away on the 14th September, 1967.

Theme : Personalities, Freedom Fighter.

POTTI SRIRAMULU

16.03.2000

300

0.4 million



Potti Sriramulu (1901 - 1952), deeply influenced by the philosophy and teachings of Mahatma Gandhi, joined the struggle for Independence, relinquishing all worldly ambitions. He offered Satyagraha on

several occasions and courted imprisonment during the Salt Satyagraha Movement in 1930 and the Individual Satyagraha Movement in 1940. Later he returned to his home province of Nellore and joined the Gandhi Ashram at Komaravolu in the Krishna district. He devoted himself heart and soul to the cause of the Harijan uplift and eradication of untouchability. He found that in Nellore, his home-town, the Harijans could not enter into temples. Therefore, he undertook a twenty-three days' fast with the blessings of Mahatma Gandhi, and as a result of the orthodox sections of the Hindu Community in Nellore yielded and permitted Harijans to enter into temples. He took up the cause of Harijan upliftment on later occasions also and offered a fast for twenty nine days to focus the attention of the Government of the composite Madras State on the issue. The fast was broken only after the Chief Minister assured that the State Government would do all that was possible towards the improvement of the condition of Harijans.

Sriramulu's sacrifice for the formation of Andhra State forms the last and most heroic part of his life. He was convinced about the need for formation of Andhra State out of the composite Madras State with which demand he undertook a fast beginning from 19 October 1952. On the fifty eighth day he breathed his last, laying down his life for a cause which was sacred to him. Within days after his passing away, the Central Government announced that a separate Andhra State would be formed out of the composite Madras State. Potti Sriramulu is remembered as the symbol of the aspirations of the people of Andhra, which led to the attainment of Independence, and Indian Nationhood.

Theme : Personalities, Freedom Fighter.

BASAWON SINHA

23.03.2000

300

0.4 million



Basawon Sinha (1909 - 1989) worked in the forefront of the freedom movement in Bihar and after India attained Independence, he continued to work for the emancipation and upliftment of weaker section of society.

Born in Jamalpur near Vaishali, he came under the influence of revolutionary organisations like the Hindustan Socialist Republican Army at an early age. His name figured in the major operations of the Revolutionary movement. He had to go underground after the Lahore conspiracy case, and was co-accused in the Bhusawal, Kakori, Teerhat and Deluaha cases. His contemporary revolutionaries included Yogendra Shukla, Chandrasekhar Azad and Kesav Chandra Chakravarty. He spent a total of more than 16 years behind bars, on different occasions and for different charges.

In 1936, he joined the Congress Socialist Party and started trade union work. He succeeded in organising workers in coal fields, sugar mills, mica-mines, railways of Bihar and cotton and jute mills. Later these unions affiliated to Hind Mazdoor Sabha. At the time of the Second World War, he was the first to be arrested in Bihar under the Defence of India Ordinance in 1940, and was released after 18 months. He was active in the Quit India Movement also, operating from underground. He mobilised support for the movement from Afghanistan and brought fire arms and ammunition from that country.

In Independent India he was one of the architects of the Socialist Party, after its break with the Congress. He also founded the Hind Mazdoor Sabha. He was the leader of the Opposition during 1952 - 62 in Bihar and later, in 1967, became the Minister for Labour, Planning and Industry. He was a prominent leader of the Janata Party and also a known sympathiser of the Nepali Congress Movement. He passed away on 7th April 1989.

Theme : Freedom Fighter, Trade Unions

Chamba, Faridkot, Jhird, Nabha, Patiala and Gwalior are called "Convention States" while referring to pre-independent India while others are known as "Native Feudatory States".

NATURAL HERITAGE OF MANIPUR AND TRIPURA, INDEPEX ASIANA - 2000

31.03.2000 300,300,300,1500 1 million each



Indepex - Asiana 2000 is the 14th Asian International Stamp Exhibition being organised by the Department of Posts, Government of India in co-operation with the Philatelic Congress of India and under the patronage of Federation of

Inter-Asia Philately (FIAP) and the recognition of Federation of International de Philatelie (FIP). It will be hosted at Netaji Indoor Stadium, Calcutta from 7th to 12th December, 2000. Indepex Asiana 2000 is the second Asian International Philatelic Exhibition, hosted by India. It holds a special place in international philately, as it commemorates 50 years of the Republic of India, and also the new millennium.

The logo of Indepex - Asiana 2000, designed by Shri Sankha Samanta encaptures the first sunrise at the dawn of the millennium, as witnessed at Katchal, an island in the Nicobar group of islands, India. The sun is seen as rising from the ocean waves. The nine rays emanating from the sun symbolises the 'navaras' or the nine moods described by Bharata, an ancient Indian aesthetician, in his writings of Natyashastra (200BC - 200AD). The drawing of the waves is in the form of an 'alpana' which is a decorative and ceremonial form of traditional folk art in West Bengal. The logo design may also be seen as a blossoming of flower, symbolising the joy of a new beginning, the exploration of the magical world of stamps.

Siroi Lily

Siroi Lily (*Lilium macklinae*), an Iris species, is a beautiful lily found only in the upper reaches of Sirohi hill ranges of Manipur. The plant grows in the Sirohi Kasom area of the hills on the windward side and eastern flank. It starts flowering with the advent of spring and continues to flower for about two months.

Sangai Deer

Sangai Deer (*Cervus eldi eldi*) or brow antlered deer is a sub-species of the deer available only in Manipur. The deer is distinctive for its peculiar bow shaped antler, unique body structure and its elegant movement, which is often described as dancing. At one time it was considered to have become extinct. Systematic efforts to conserve the species started from 1950 onwards and has succeeded in arresting the declining trend in the population of Sangais. Today the Keibul Lamjao National Park abounds with more than 150 Sangais, an appreciable progress from the 14 heads counted in 1974.

Wild Gauva

Wild Gauva (*Psidium guineense*) is a rare plant of India found only in Tripura. The fruit of wild gauva is edible but it is smaller in size than the gauva and sour in taste. The plant is of small bushy type but if protected attains the size of a small tree. Constant depletion due the firewood collection is endangering this plant, and special protection is now under consideration.

Slow Loris

Slow Loris (*Nycticebus coucang*) is a round-headed, round-eyed lemur found in Tripura and adjoining parts of North-East India. Three geographical races are known, in India. Very distinctive is a brown stripe, marking the middle line of its back and terminating on the crown; distinctive also are the brown circles round its lustrous, owl-like eyes. The Slow Loris is believed to spend the day in sleep waking at dusk to hunt for food.

A miniature sheet featuring the four stamps is also being brought out, which in addition to Indepex Asiana-2000, will also commemorate the 'Explore India in the Millennium Year' programme of the Ministry of Tourism. The First Day Cover portrays the venue, Netaji Indoor Stadium Calcutta and the logo of Indepex- Asiana 2000.

Theme : Animals, Flora & Fauna

ARYA SAMAJ 1875 - 2000

5.04.2000

300

4 million



The Arya Samaj was founded by Maharshi Dayananda Saraswati on April 7, 1875 in Bombay with ten fundamental principles of universal character to revive and propagate the Vedic way of life. As enshrined in these principles, the Arya Samaj

is a world movement. It exhorts all to accept truth and renounce untruth. Its prime object is to do good to the world, making people physically strong, spiritually enlightened and socially uplifted. It preaches love, justice and righteousness towards all without distinction of race, caste or creed. The goal of Arya Samaj is "Make This World Noble".

Swamy Dayananda was a great sage and a fearless reformer who sought, apart from restoring Hinduism to its original radiance and wisdom, also to propagate the spirit of nationalism in different parts of India. The essence of his teachings is contained in 'Satyarth Prakash' a monumental treatise, which forms the essence of the Arya Samaj philosophy. The teachings of the Vedas, summarised into 10 basic principles (i.e. the decretum), lie at the core of the Arya Samaj. With numerous institutions engaged in education, social service and spiritual activities, the Arya Samaj today gives hope and direction to thousands of people in different parts of the world, advocating 'Universal Brotherhood' and 'One Dharma', by adhering to the rules of:

The Arya Samaj has supported the spirit of 'Swadeshi' i.e. self-reliance of the economy as the primary strategy for driving away poverty. However, in continuation of the teachings of Swami Dayananda, the Samaj also lays emphasis on establishing economic and political links with other countries.

The Arya Samaj considered the caste system, untouchability, child marriages and unequal status of women as inhuman, and drawing strength from the Vedas, fought a social battle successfully against them. The role played by the Samaj in the national awakening of the late 19th and early 20th century was of great significance.

Today the Arya Samaj organization is active all over the world. The stamp design portrays the work done by the Arya Samaj, spreading the light of knowledge and truth, and carries the Sanskrit invocation "From the darkness lead us to the light". It also commemorates Maharshi Dayananda Saraswati, the founder. The first day cover portrays the goal of the organization, "Let us make the whole world noble".

Theme : Spiritual Movement, Hinduism

The first adhesive stamp of Hyderabad were issued in 1869.

INDIGENOUS BREEDS OF CATTLE

25.04.2000 300,300,300,1500 0.8 million each



India is known as one of the sites of the earliest domestication of livestock. The world's most significant cattle diversity is also found here. Various distinct breeds of cattle have evolved since time immemorial and are reared for several purposes like milk, draught, social status and religious rituals. Some of the breeds were developed for more than one purpose. All the indigenous breeds have certain common characteristics: they are hardy, resistant to disease, and can withstand harsh ecological conditions. The exact population figures of these Indian cattle breeds is not known since the livestock censuses are being conducted species-wise rather than breed-wise. However, about 26 breeds have been identified as distinctly Indian, though there may be other localised breeds yet to be described. Some of the breeds have been subjected to genetic erosion and decline in their population, because of changing agricultural scenario, increased mechanised farming, shrinking areas under grazing lands and indiscriminate use of imported breeds for cross-breeding in the country.

Arid zones seem to facilitate the development of breeds. The varieties in dry areas have developed well and thrived, like the Gir cattle in Gujarat and the Kangayam breed in Tamilnadu's Pèriyar district. On the other hand, the breeds in heavy-rain fall areas are small in size and poor in breed qualities. The Dangi breed from the Dang hills of Gujarat is one such example. The breeds from hot areas develop dewlaps that help them dissipate body heat better.

This set of four stamps focuses attention towards conservation and utilization of the domesticated animal diversity of India, which is a precious heritage we cannot afford to lose. Out of the four breeds of cattle depicted, two (Gir and Kankrej) are common to Western India and

the other two (Kangayam and Hallikar) are from South India. Originally from the Gir forests in Gujarat, the Gir is medium sized with typically curved horns and long, pendulous ears and is the most popular dairy breed of India. Kankrej from Northern Gujarat is a powerful draught animal and a good milker with lyre-shaped horns. Kangayam is a moderate sized, powerful draught animal breed with a prominent hump and is found in the arid tracts of Tamilnadu. The Hallikar belongs to Karnataka and is a compact bodied draught breed with a narrow bulging forehead and a pair of sweeping, concave horns.

Theme : Animals, Flora & Fauna

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PHILATELIC IMPORTANCE: PROBLEM AND SOLUTIONS

by Gary Watson

In the February 1998 issue of *The Asia Pacific Exhibitor* Daryl Fuller ventured into murky waters when he tackled, the Vexed Question of Importance. Vexed indeed: philatelic importance has been the subject of much comment over the past decade or more. But more than vexed, it is a vexing question, one that "irritates by slight or petty annoyance", as *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* would have it.

Spurred by Daryl's comments I ploughed back through the past five years of our journal to review what had been published on the subject in this most appropriate of forums.

In Vol. 7 No. 3 an experienced judge - Ray Kelly - makes the statement: "Importance [is] a subject which has attracted much discussion and less understanding than all other aspects of exhibiting". He then cites the FIP regulations, which are singularly unhelpful.

The very next issue brought us not one but two extraordinary statements from Michael Blake who is also an experienced judge. Firstly; "It is difficult to separate treatment from importance, the two go hand-in-hand, and under the heading of treatment we must also include completeness". Secondly; "[Treatment and Importance] are the [criteria] most misunderstood by both judges and exhibitors"!

What is wrong here? Surely I am not the only one who is bothered by these pronouncements.

Reams of paper and copious amounts of time have been devoted by our regulatory bodies to drafting, interpreting and then defending regulations that don't make sense. If judges struggle to get a handle on what "importance" is all about, what chance does the novice exhibitor have?

If nobody can offer a meaningful definition of or workable formula for "philatelic importance" - and to my knowledge nobody has - then wouldn't we all be better advised to focus on removing the problem rather than pretending that there isn't one?

The impassioned defenders of "philatelic importance" bring to mind those philosophers who devote their entire existence to pondering the meaning of life, when all anybody else wants to do is get on with living.

When one looks at all the judging criteria, the question must be asked by all: "What is importance doing here in the first place?!"

It becomes a question of relevance. Few would disagree that knowledge, rarity, condition, presentation and the rest have their place in judging. Similarly, few struggle to understand what is required under these various headings. However, in what sense is "importance", philatelic or otherwise, relevant to the creation of an exhibit?

Philatelic exhibiting is an exercise in striving for and ultimately attaining excellence. The individual exhibitor can to a large extent plot his course towards high achievement by considering how best to comply with the judging criteria of treatment, presentation, the thematic "Plan" etc. In the simplest terms, he endeavours to do his best. Shortcomings in one or more areas which result in a lowly result can be addressed next time around, hopefully resulting in the commensurate rewards.

He or she can do this because each of the judging criteria, with (as shall be demonstrated) the exception of "importance", has an objective base.

This is not to say that there is no subjective element in assessing, for instance, the presentation or treatment of an exhibit. Subjectivity is the silent enemy of many an exhibitor. Most of us struggle to be objective about our own displays. This is why virtually every competitor will benefit from the objective input of qualified observers.

However, rarity, condition, treatment and all the others have as their foundation objective elements that provide a valuable basis for comparison and assessment free of the bias of personal preference.

It is here that the validity of the judging criteria is properly tested. For jurors to perform their task in a proper manner they must suspend their own subjective agenda and apply an arms-length objective approach to judging. This is made possible by having reference to other exhibits, to being able to access the immediate exhibit against an established or accepted standard.

Self-assessment by the exhibitor, or evaluation by a jury will always be enhanced by the asking of questions like the following:

"Is the presentation as good as it could be?"

"In what way can the treatment of the subject be improved?"

"How does the condition of the material measure up against other similar exhibits?"

"Is the apparent rarity of the material an illusion?"

In this way exhibits of similar, or even unrelated, material can be assessed one against the other. Even the newcomer to exhibiting can participate in discussing why Exhibit "A" is superior to Exhibit "B".

One doesn't have to be Albert Einstein or Jean Paul Sartre to get one's head around what is required, and how it can be achieved. It's really quite a simple exercise, one that should be made all the easier by informed comment from those of experience.

The reader may point to instances where objective criteria have seemingly not been properly applied and thus relativity between exhibits has been lost, sometimes quite shamefully. This undoubtedly and unfortunately does occur but we (at least hopefully) can be confident that the error of one panel will not be perpetuated by those in the future. When such an error in the judging of an exhibit occurs this should not compromise the objective standards.

In any event, none of this has any bearing on "importance". If it did, there would be no more debate about the subject than there is about any of the other judging criteria. The problem, and the difference, is that "importance" is a wholly subjective notion. It has no objective base. What is "important" varies, sometimes wildly, from one person to another. "Importance" is also rather like situational ethics: it fluctuates depending on the audience or the circumstances at hand.

Let's look at this non-philatelically. You may believe that your Saturday tennis match is very important. Your spouse may think it is a waste of time. Your children may not even know you play tennis. Who is right? You're playing for the Club Championship so, of course, you are; your wife resents the tennis club, so she knows she is; your kids have seen you on court but, whatever you were doing, they don't think it was playing tennis.

Try foisting your enthusiasm for tennis on the rest of your family and see what happens!

So, back to the hobby, How "important" is what you collect and exhibit? Very, you say, You collect Penny Reds, and "everybody" - at least the magnifying glass and UV brigade - knows how important that is! Then there's Fred who exhibits GB Line Engraved, and some oracle has given that 10 out of 10 for importance, which sticks in your craw. Where does the postal mechanisation expert's display rate? She thinks it's right up there with the introduction of the first adhesive stamps, and many will

agree. But woe betide your friend who displays the Machin issues of the Channel Islands, because "everybody" knows how unimportant they are!

Perhaps the penny is now starting to drop. "Importance" is irrelevant to the creation of an interesting, appealing, or otherwise successful exhibit. It is an illusion; an artifice; a good old fashioned furphy! It has no rightful place in judging criteria at any level because, for being wholly subjective, it is wholly illegitimate.

Vol 6 No 4 of our journal includes Guidelines for judging a Postal History Exhibit. Section 5.1 is entitled "TREATMENT AND PHILATELIC IMPORTANCE". This is the same or very similar FIP regime which has been imposed upon all exhibitors. It would be quite humorous if it weren't so serious. The sub-sections relevant to this discussion are thus:

5.1.1. A total of 30 points can be given for treatment and philatelic importance. Upto 10 points should be related to the relative philatelic importance and up to 20 points to the development, completeness and correctness of the material shown.

5.1.2. When evaluating the treatment and importance of the exhibit, judges will look at the general development of the subject, the completeness of the material shown in relation to the scope of the exhibit and the relative philatelic significance of the subject shown, as well as the difficulty in duplicating the exhibit.

Exhibitors should ensure that their exhibit is cohesive and avoid combining largely unrelated subjects; such exhibits are likely to lose marks under the treatment and importance criterion.

5.1.3. The importance of an exhibit will be gauged in relation to the general postal history of the country, area or subject shown, and to philately in general. It will usually be easier to adequately treat and provide completeness to unimportant subjects than to important ones in the space available.

So, let's review things from the very beginning. Just what is the logical thread that links "treatment" with "philatelic importance"? Quite simply, there isn't one. Why are these odd bedfellows then paired in this way? That is a good question to which there is perhaps no sensible answer. But, quite simply, they shouldn't be.

As we have seen, "importance" is a subjective notion. "Treatment", on the other hand, is open to objective assessment. Treatment is all about how one puts together an exhibit; is there a consistent story; how has it been developed; is the material shown appropriate; in what way could the exhibit be strengthened?

"Importance", conversely, is clearly about why one chooses the subject for the exhibit. It is irrelevant to how

one should exhibit. As such, it reeks of elitism, and anti-intellectual elitism at that.

Another of our senior judges, Derek Pocock, cast his line into the water in Vol 10 No 3. "If importance means what it says", opined Derek, "logically there must be some perceived pecking order to the subjects shown." He then invites readers to participate in an exercise to rate 40 subjects in order of importance. He might as well have listed 400 or 1000 entries. One hopes that the whole thing was a tongue-in-cheek assault on "philatelic importance".

But Derek also serves up this gem: "Apart from national prejudice... there should be some agreed concept of a priority of A versus B...."

What, one must enquire, does "prejudice", national or otherwise, have to do with the proper judging of exhibits? The answer, hopefully the only answer, is that it is wholly inappropriate for judges to bring their personal bias into the exhibition. We all have our pet dislikes, and our favourite subjects, but those fruits of prejudice should be left at home when one is entrusted with the responsibility of standing in judgement over the efforts of other people.

Some might suggest that Dr. Pocock's choice of expression was merely an unfortunate slip. This is hardly credible. The fact is that he was simply recognising the effect of Regulation 5.1.3. cited above. If ever there was an invitation for judges to exercise their prejudices, this is it: "The Importance of an exhibit will be gauged in relation to the general postal history of the country, area or subject shown, and to philately in general"! Cole Porter said it well: anything goes.

Derek Pocock was right in nothing that for "importance" to have any validity at all there must be a "pecking order". But who determines this? And where is it to be found? The FIP regulations imply that such a "List of Pomposity" actually exists. Roger Bower in Vol 6 No 3 writes: ".... there is a supposed 'priority' listing for certain countries, for certain fields, which gives more importance to one over another".

I am a National judge and as such might be expected to have sighted any such list. I haven't, and neither has Roger Bower, but that is not the point. Roger continues "If there is such a listing... (it) should be generally available to collectors, so they can make a considered selection of what to show when exhibiting". This is the point. If some subjects are considered by judges to be more "important" than others, this will improperly influence both existing and would-be exhibitors to consider displaying from the most favoured few countries or subjects.

There is a popular notion, almost a convention, that the "importance" of an exhibit will be in part determined by the country in which the material is shown. One may well expect that a collection of The Classic Issues of Greece

would do better in a Balkan exhibition than in South America. However, the reason for any pronounced disparity in awards should only be a difference in knowledge or appreciation on the part of the particular judges, rather than any entrenched bias for local material, or against foreign exhibits.

Unfortunately, the reality is that a great many judges acknowledge that regional bias is a major factor in assessing the "importance" of an exhibit. You can thus expect to increase your marks for "importance" by exhibiting only in those countries where you might expect your material to be more popular.

Talk to many judges and they will assure you that this happens all over the world, as if that somehow makes it proper, or acceptable. To this observer, it seems there is a strong element of impropriety here.

In the light of all this, how could anybody, or any group of people, purport to create a listing of philatelic subjects ranked in order of importance? Perhaps we could have the European Order of Merit weighted in favour of Great Britain, the German States and so on; the Asian Order of Merit strongly biased towards Hong Kong, Japan and India; the Australasian Order of Merit that gives due prominence to our Colonial past; etc.

Of course, this is absurdity taken to the highest levels. Nobody could possibly expect such a fluid system to work. Yet, the reality is that even in the absence of such formal stratification, this is exactly how our most eminent judges would have us believe "philatelic importance" should be imposed upon exhibiting.

If the staunch defenders of the "importance" criteria wish to take issue with these comments, they are hereby challenged to produce a single all embracing, world-wide listing of every conceivable philatelic subject ranked in order of "importance" and assigned a static score out of 10, with halfpoints permitted. Brave volunteers are required for this task.

Should it prove impractical to produce such a listing - and I believe that to be the only possible outcome - then, ipso facto, the "importance" test must fail. It must then be discarded. But, I digress. Let us turn our attention back to the pages of our journal.

Michael Blake in Vol 10 No 2 tells us that persisting to exhibit unimportant material will in time make it important! "More and more Pacific area collectors are exhibiting material from their own countries successfully and becoming FIP judges. By their action the importance of the subjects they exhibit increases."

Really? Is this supposed to be informed comment for the enlightenment of the masses? Not that it matters if "importance" is thrown out, as it should be. But otherwise

this must give great comfort to the stubborn exhibitor of Lundy Island!

Where, it must be asked, would this leave us with our FIP Order of Philatelic Importance? Let us assume for a fleeting moment that the "importance" of, say, Astrophilately will be enhanced with the passage of time. Currently it must be at the bottom of the scale - is that 1 point out of 10, or zero? - but as judges see more and more contrived souvenirs of spacewalks and the like, and as "astrophilatelists" become accredited judges - (I know this is idiotic, but bear with me) - by Michael Blake's reasoning Astrophilately will move up the scale of "importance".

How far will it move? Any activity at all will upset the delicate balance of the internationally approved and applied Order. What if numerous fields of exhibiting require similar re-grading? The impact on the Order could be profound. And as certain things move up the ladder, does it follow that other subjects - which are not currently being exhibited, and which boast no judges - will decline in "importance"?

Will otherwise intelligent people devote their energies, in all seriousness, to debating such puerile matters? Surely there are numerous issues that are far more deserving of attention than the establishment and maintenance of a fatally flawed "pecking order" for exhibits.

But while we are at this point, one should not forget that "philatelic importance" does not even stand alone in the FIP framework. For at least part of its own importance it relies on an uneasy partnership with "treatment".

Also in his article in Vol 10 No 2, Michael Blake leads us back to this issue of the FIP linking "treatment" and "importance". The reader will surely enjoy this ".... most classes until fairly recently allocated 10 points to treatment and 20 to importance. Most classes have now reversed this to 20 points for treatment and 10 for importance?! This is like saying "You can't mate a cat with a dog, so we'll try mating a dog with a cat".

As if this were not asinine enough, the article continues: "... [the FIP Commission for Traditional Philately] were not in favour of increasing the points for treatment, but preferred to combine treatment with importance and to expand the definition to include additional aspects of the exhibit". This sounds a bit like mixing oil with water, and then adding anything else that was lying on the kitchen bench.

But wait. Like the old K-Tel advertisements, there's even more. As noted above, the Postal History regulations impose a points division between "treatment" and "importance", thereby at least keeping the cat and the dog at a reasonable if not respectable distance. But here, we are told: "So the Traditional Class has 30 points for 'Treatment and Importance'. This should not be interpreted

as meaning 20 points for treatment and 10 for importance as in other classes. However, it also does not mean that treatment should be limited to a maximum of 10 points."

In my view this is gobbledygook. The layman who believes philatelists are quite mad has a point. Of course, the blame for such added thinking needs to be thrown back at the FIP. Read again Reg. 5.1.2.

The judges are now evaluating "treatment and importance", for which a division of points has been previously given. Again logic has been suspended, and credibility along with it. Now the objective and the subjective are forced back together-rather like holding together the opposing poles of two magnets and fighting the electromagnetic forces - and judges must assess four at least partly-unrelated factors (one of which looks suspiciously as if it belongs in the "Rarity" section) under the combined criterion.

Then there follows a gratuitous throw-away footnote which the IFP would do well to throw away. One is told that exhibitors who "avoid combining largely unrelated subjects... are likely to lose marks under the treatment and importance criterion"!

Some people complain that the Laws of Cricket are highly technical. That may be so, but at least they are grammatically sound and readily enough understood by the reasonably intelligent reader, and "flannelled fool" alike. The same cannot be said for the Regulations of the FIP.

Perhaps the problem is that, like the camel, they are the product of a committee, or a number of committees. An these are clearly not committees of people skilled in language or legislative drafting, but rather committees of stamp collectors from diverse backgrounds.

Would you hire a hairdresser to prepare your taxation return? A baker to repair your roof? A chiropractor to service your car? Of course not.

Yet, as exhibitors, we have been prepared to accept that a group of non-experts, albeit acknowledged philatelic luminaries, are the appropriate people to draw up the regulations which govern the organised aspects of our hobby? Frankly, this is outrageous.

I hesitate to say this, but the proper people to entrust with the task of framing our exhibiting legislation - and that's what it is, the law of exhibiting - are lawyers. Not just any lawyers, not the corporate guys nor the criminal lawyers, but rather the backroom boys who know a placitum from a sub-section, and who would no more split an infinitive than step from a moving train.

Were the FIP to have submitted all their proposed regulations to the legal draftsmen, I have no doubt that the subjective, conceptual monster that is "philatelic importance" would have died with one swipe of a thick blue pencil.

Daryl Fuller - Vol 11 No 1 - could then have been spared the need to resort to cerebral gymnastics to conjure up an extra point for his own exhibit's "importance".

And the rest of us would be spared such attempts

as this at advanced genetic engineering: "... importance, treatment and presentation are linked. Unusual and innovative treatments and presentation will have an impact on importance." The implications of this extraordinary assertion are positively frightening.

The original problem was derived from introducing a subjective element into the judging criteria. The ongoing problem is that commentators are engaged in futile to force a very square peg into a very round hole.

Joe Exhibitor is certain to get a sore head just trying to understand the issues. Billy the Judge, who pretends that the issues are simply resolved by accepting the official FIP line, risks developing a big head for believing he is the font of all knowledge. Neither head problem is desirable, or necessary. Our exhibiting rules need to be clear, concise, and uncontroversial. Judge and exhibitor alike need to know where they stand, and that they are standing on an even playing field.

The remarkably simple key to solving the conundrums raised by the issue of "philatelic importance" is found in the arcane field of management theory. One needs only to "look outside the box." If all involved in the debate would step back from the issue, tilt their heads ever so slightly and realise that a black ball has snuck in among all the red balls, the FIP could then simply extract the nonsense that is "philatelic importance" and consign it to the garbage bin of the industry.

Regardless of how points were then assigned to each of the judging criteria, we are exhibitors - and judges - would enjoy a far more valid assessment regime. By discarding and forgetting all about "philatelic importance" all of us will be winners.

(Courtesy : The Asian Philatelic Exhibitor)

EARLY CANCELLATIONS

(Continued from Jan - Feb. 2000)

THE FIRST OBLITERATION

On the introduction of adhesive postage stamps for the prepayment of postage in India, on 1st October, 1854, the obliterator Type [1] was issued to all offices. This was described as a "lozenge-shaped stamp." It may also be called a diamond of dots, the lines of dots running parallel to the sides. There are generally nine rows of nine dots. But there are many variations. The following have been recorded: seven by seven, eight by eight, eight by nine, eight by ten, nine by ten, nine by twelve, ten by ten, ten by eleven, eleven by eleven, and eleven by twelve. The commonest dimensions are 25 by 20mm., taking the long and short diagonals. The short diagonal is fairly constant at 19 or 20mm. As regards the long diagonal, length of 24, 28, 30 and 32mm. have been seen.

The dots vary in size and also in shape. They may be found diamond shaped, round, hollow, large and very small.

Some of the Sind Dawk cancellations may have suggested this type. A somewhat similar cancellation was prescribed for the first issue of France.

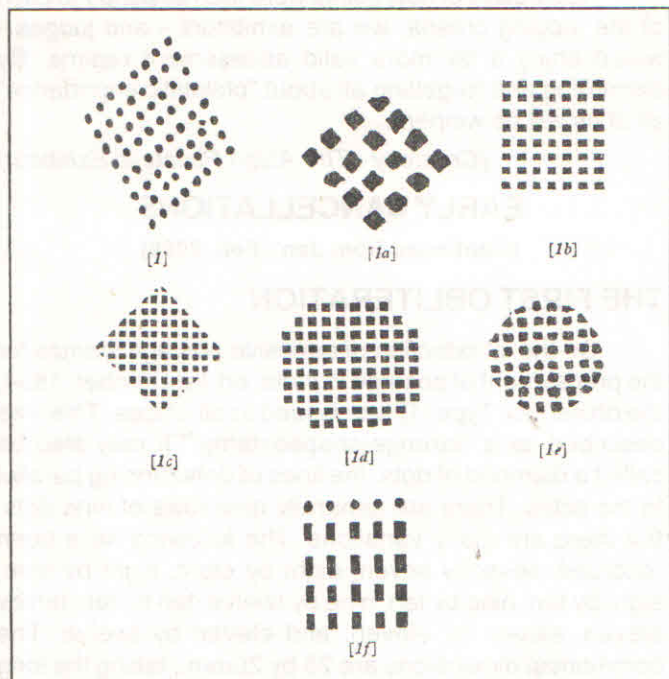
Early dates of use :

Some stamps were offered for sale in the Madras Presidency on 15th September, 1854, and in Calcutta on 24th September. A few half anna blues were also sold by mistake at Tonghoo, Burma, on about the 14th August. But the Post Office Act, XVII of 1854, and the rules thereunder which provided that postage labels were to be used in place of cash payment for the prepayment of postage, only came into force on the 1st October, 1854. Accordingly, there is no instance of use before this date. The only known cover bearing this date is one from Murree to England now in the collection of Mr. D.C. Gray. The writer said that he had waited for the first day of the new system, and that it meant a reduction in the postage to Bombay from fifteen annas to half an anna. Covers dated 2nd October are very scarce, and October covers are rare.

The diamond of dots was generally superseded in 1856 by obliterators showing town numbers. Late examples on the 1856 and 1865 issues were used for a special purpose and will be discussed in Chapter VII.

Examples of Type [1], ordinarily in black, may also be found in violet, red, green, blue and brown, their rarity being approximately in the order shown.

I now proceed to some varieties of Type [1]. These are all to be found on the 1854 issue. All are rare.



Type [1a] is almost a square of four rows of four heavy dots, the sides measuring 14mm.

Type [1b] shows eight rows of eight dots, forming a square, side, 13mm.

Type [1c] is a lozenge with the dots parallel to the diagonals. The diagonals are 18 and 16mm.

Type [1d] is an irregular octagon built up as follows—a square of eight rows of eight dots, with six dots along each side. Four of the sides of the octagon are much shorter than the others. This appears on an entire from Berhampore, Bengal, dated 29th May 1855. It has also been seen from Midnapore with date 24th May, 1855.

Practically nothing is known about these subtypes (a) to (d), beyond the fact that they exist and are extremely rare. This indicates a very limited currency as regards both place and time.

Type [1e] is a circle of dots, diameter 15mm. The build-up may be described as follows. There are six parallel rows of six dots, flanked on each side by four dots. Of these four dots, the first and fourth are shaped to follow the curve of the circumference. Many dots are almost rectangular. This description is from a specimen in my collection.

Type [1e1] is another circle of dots, the dots being diamond shaped.

Special attention was directed to the circle of dots by its appearance on a cover with a Singapore despatch mark, dated December, 1854. I cannot say if this was type [1e] or [1e1]. The usual cancellation on early Singapore covers is the normal diamond of dots. Mr. Wood, in his "Straits Settlements, Postage Stamps" considers it possible that this letter originated in the Philippines, and states that this cancellation is found on Philippine Islands stamps in 1854. It was a common practice at that time for British firms stationed in the East Indies to frank their letters with Indian stamps and have them posted at Singapore. In this connection two important items have recently appeared at auction. A Batavia cover of 1855 with rather round dots and a Labuan cover of 1864 with diamond-shaped dots. Both covers of course bear Indian stamps. This cancellation is scarce, even on stamp (see page 432). However, whether this cancellation is related to the Philippines or Singapore, it is of great interest and rarity.

It may be added that the Sind Dawk cancellation [C] is also a circle of dots, rather like Type [1e].

Type [1f] is a diamond formed by five rows of five short dashes or dots, the dots being confined, however, to the upper row. The diagonals are 17 and 13 mm. This is on a letter from Lord Dalhousie dated August, 1855. It seems to have been despatched from the Viceroy's camp. This may be classed as a cancellation used by the Viceroy's camp post office.

Type [2] is another diamond-shaped cancellation, but formed by parallel bars, the bars being parallel to the longer sides. There are normally nine bars, but seven, eight, ten, eleven and twelve are also found, although these are scarce.

Type [2] The bars run ordinarily from right to left. This test is made by observing from left to right, occur with all except the seven bars. The reversed lines obliterations are scarce.

Normal diagonals measure 26 to 27 mm. and 19 or 20 mm. The diagonals of the seven and eight barred diamonds measure 24 and 18mm. An example with nine lines and diagonals 29 and 25mm., is almost a square, and comes from Lingasagoor.

Locality and Period :

The large majority of the specimens seen come from Bombay, the earliest date being 30th October, 1854. Bombay dates are continuous up to June, 1856, and a straggler is dated March, 1858. But, besides Bombay, examples in small numbers have been reported from the following towns. Ahmadnagar, Jaulnah, Jullundur, Surat, Broach, Poona, Bangalore, Aurangabad, Hyderabad (Sind), Mominabad and Lingasagoor.

To these must be added an example on a letter from "before Lucknow" with the relieving force and dated 15th March, 1858. The relieving force obviously had a field post office with a Type [2] obliterator. Incidentally, a letter from the same source dated 8th March, 1857, shows a Type [1] obliterator!

The cancellation with seven bars appears on a letter from Sind (the town is not mentioned), with the date, December, 1855, but here again, it can be found from Aurangabad.

The presence of the seven barred cancellation on Sind Dawks cannot be held to establish that it was originally a Sind Dawk cancellation, for the Sind Dawk stamps concerned may be among those used after 1st October, 1854.

Object of Type (2):

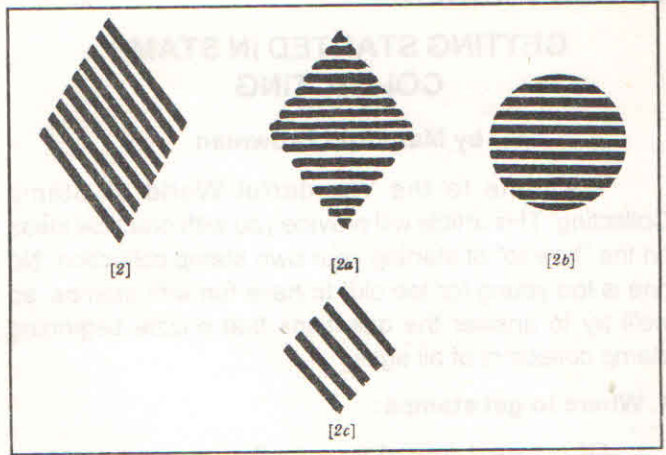
This is a very baffling cancellation. All offices in India were supplied with Type [1], and it is not apparent what purpose was served with Type [2]. In Bombay town, it practically superseded Type [1]. It appears from several towns in the Bombay Circle, and what is surprising, from two or three in other Circles. Suggested explanations are, receiving houses, experimental offices, or district post offices. But there is no evidence. And none of these theories accounts for practically general use in Bombay.

The use of cancellations resembling Type [2] in the late sixties and early seventies will be dealt with in Chapter VII.

There are the following varieties of a cancellation formed with parallel bars, as seen on the 1854 issue.

Type [2a] is a diamond of bars, the bars being parallel to the short diagonal. This has been seen on a letter from Poona. The diagonals are about 26 and 20mm., but these measurements are approximate as the complete figure is not on the stamp at my disposal.

Type [2b] is a circle or near circle of parallel bars, diameter 18 to 20 mm. It is found on a number of Madras

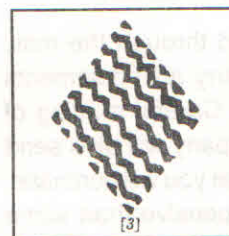


Circle entires which also bear the backstamp "Talook Tappal, Tanjore," and the names of various towns. As "Talook Tappal" is "District Post", we have the first appearance of a district post cancellation. Dates recorded from the Tanjore District on the 1854 issue are from March, 1855, to October, 1856. This cancellation will be dealt with more fully in Chapter X on District Posts.

Type [2c] is a diamond of five short lines, parallel to the longer side. The diagonals are approximately 16 and 14mm. This is on a letter from Lord Dalhousie, dated June, 1855, and apparently from camp in Southern India. So, we have here another Viceregal camp office mark in addition to Type [1f]. It is a surprise to find two different obliterations in use at practically the same time in the Viceroy's camp office. However, there is the fact! Lord Dalhousie spent the summer of 1855 on tour in Southern India. I have another cover from him dated April, 1855, with the Ootacamund obliterator.

Type [2d] is a diamond of bars, the lines being parallel to the long diagonal. The dimensions are 24 and 19mm. I have only seen one example on a letter from Roorkee of 1856. The figure resembles Type [5], with no space provided for a number.

Type [3] is a diamond composed of parallel zig-zag bars. Triangular dots are introduced along the outer lines to make the sides even. The diagonals measure about 26 and 20 mm.



Type [3] It appears that only two copies have been found, one of these being the original example shown by the late Mr. Punthakey and was included in Mr. Desai's collection. The second copy is in my collection. The fact that it has been seen standing rarity in Indian cancellations.

[Courtesy : The Encyclopadia of British Postage Stamps]

GETTING STARTED IN STAMP COLLECTING

by Mary Ann Browman

Welcome to the Wonderful World of Stamp Collecting! This article will provide you with practical ideas on the "how to" of starting your own stamp collection. No one is too young (or too old) to have fun with stamps, so we'll try to answer the questions that puzzle beginning stamp collectors of all ages.

1. Where to get stamps:

Of greatest importance to the beginning stamp collector is finding a source of collectible postage stamps at little or no cost. Saving used stamps is a good idea for the beginner. Used stamps are available and can provide an inexpensive way to begin your collection. They can also provide a learning experience in the "how to" of proper care and handling of stamps.

Obtaining stamps for your own collection can be as close as your own mailbox. Begin by saving whatever stamps come on your own or your family's mail. Other people you know, such as friends, neighbours, relatives, and even your own teachers may be willing to save stamps for you. If you know an adult stamp collector, tell him or her of your new interest in stamps. Most stamp collectors enjoy sharing their hobby with others, and many adult collectors will probably give you stamps for your collection.

Business mail may be another good source for stamps particularly if the company does a lot of correspondence with foreign countries. Almost everyone knows someone who works for a company receiving large volumes of mail. You can usually obtain the used stamps by just asking that they be saved for you.

To get your collection started, you might also wish to investigate purchasing packets of stamps from a variety, hobby, or stamp store. Unless you have a use for duplicate stamps, you may want to look for the words "all different" on the stamp packet. Mixtures, although less expensive, contain many duplicates. But duplicate stamps can be used for trading with your friends. Many stamp stores have large assortments of stamps at a penny or two each which can be fun to look through and add to your collection.

Stamps may also be purchased through the mail. Many newspapers and magazines carry advertisements offering free or inexpensive stamps. Careful reading of the ad will usually show that the company will also send out stamps on approval, which they hope you will purchase. Approval services are often more expensive than some other way of obtaining stamps, but they allow you the opportunity to select stamps, you want without leaving home. Care must be taken to read the follow the approval

company's sale conditions, paying for those you keep and returning the others promptly. (Don't send cash through the mail - use a check or money order.)

After you have collected for a while, you may want to begin a collection of mint (unused) stamps. Current issues of stamp from your own country can be purchased at your local post office. Older issues and other countries' stamps can usually be obtained from stamp stores or by mail order.

II. What to Collect:

Many beginners collect any and all stamps they can get their hands on. This is a good way to start. Through the collecting of a wide variety of stamps comes the basic knowledge necessary for the enjoyment of philately (stamp collecting).

Some collectors start as worldwide collectors remain that way. They attempt to find as many stamps from as many different countries as they can. The general worldwide collector is always on the lookout for new stamps and enjoys the thrill of the hunt.

Many collectors are country collectors.. that is, they collect stamps of certain countries or just one country. For example, many stamp collectors find stamps of the country they were born and / or lived in the easiest to obtain.

Another very popular way to collect stamps is by topic or theme, such as space, animals, sports, etc. Collecting by stamp subject can be very challenging and rewarding. You must watch very carefully! Stamps related to your subject may come from every corner of the earth and the subject may be only a small part of the stamp design.

Collecting first day covers (FDCs) is gaining in popularity. A "cover" is a stamp collecting term for an envelope with stamps and a cancellation for a new stamp design on the day that it is first issued. Covers with a cachet (ka-shay) are the most desirable. A cachet is an illustration and/or explanation usually printed, drawn, or painted on the left side of the envelope that in some way (either through design or deters) has a special significance to the stamp being issued.

Collecting postmarks is a never-ending search. Postmark collecting has many fans. You might want to begin by trying to collect postmarks from each state or from foreign countries. Others try to find as many different postmarks as they can from their own city, country, or state. For fun, try to find one postmark for each day of the year. For a challenge, try to find a postmark from the day you were born.

Postmark collecting is just one aspect of a larger collecting field known as postal history. Whether you collect modern meter stamps or early stampless covers from the 18th and 19th century, you are learning about postal history.

There are many other interesting and specialized areas in stamp collecting too numerous to mention here.

Be assured that there is no right or wrong this to collect. Collect what brings you enjoyment and pleasure. Chances are that someday you will probably find someone else who is collecting the same thing you do!

III. Soaking Stamps from Paper

Assuming you have either found or been given stamps on an envelope, your next job will be to remove the stamps from the paper. Do not try to peel the stamp from the envelope. You will tear it or damage the paper.

However, before deciding whether to remove the stamp, you should examine the covers (envelopes) carefully. Very old stamps may be worth more if left on the cover. Covers with interesting cancels, handstamps, postal markings, or unusual stamp combinations should be left as covers - their stamps should not be removed as they help to tell an interesting postal history story. If in doubt as to whether to save the entire cover, ask a knowledgeable collector. Also, stamps from first day covers should not be removed.

To take stamps off an envelope, start by cutting neatly around the stamp. Do not cut so close as to trim off any perforations - the little "teeth" around the edge of the stamp.

It is best to sort your stamps before soaking them. Separate stamps that are on colored envelopes or have a colored cancel. These stamps should be soaked one at a time in cold water so that if the color should run, it will not spoil any other stamps.

The most common way to remove stamps from paper is to soak them in a dish of warm, not hot, water. Allow the stamp to float free from the paper. After the stamp has separated from the paper, very gently rub over the back of the stamps with your fingertip to remove any remaining gum.

To dry the stamps, spread them face down on black and white newspaper or white absorbent paper. After the stamps have dried, they can be picked up and pressed flat between the pages or beneath a heavy book.

Care should be given in selecting the stamps for your collection. Torn, dirty, heavily cancelled, and damaged stamps should be replaced when possible with better examples.

IV. Organizing Your Collection

The cheapest way to store your stamps until you have decided what to do with them is to put them in clean envelopes sorted by country. Although white paper envelopes can be used, stamp collectors prefer the glassine envelope so that the stamps can be seen. They are available in many sizes that stamp stores or by mail order.

Other stamp collectors prefer to use stock pages or stock books for stamp storage. Stock pages are made up of a series of pockets in which to keep the stamps. There are many kinds of stock pages and stock books. A trip to your local stamp store should help you determine which

type would best meet your needs. If there is no local stamp store, there are many dealers who sell supplies by mail. They advertise in many of the stamp magazines and newspapers.

At some point, the collector will probably wish to organize his or her collection on album pages. Stamp albums may have either printed or blank pages.

Album pages can be made by the beginning collector. It allows flexibility. In its simplest form, it can just be a piece of loose-leaf paper with a hand printed title. Stamps may be affixed to these pages.

Printed album pages contain illustrations of the stamps from one or more countries. Beginners often find it helpful to have a printed album to help in organizing the stamps they have. An inexpensive paperback album with printed pages may be fine for the beginner. If the enthusiasm for stamp collecting continues to grow, a better album can always be purchased. As albums vary greatly in size, quality, and price, a trip to your favorite stamp dealer should aid you in making a decision.

Better albums, although more expensive, have several advantages. They are made more complete. Since they are loose-leaf, this allows you to add yearly supplements to keep the album up-to-date. Blank pages may be added to the album to include material such as covers, special cancels, etc. which may not be illustrated within the album.

Collectors of topical stamps usually make up their own album pages as printed pages are generally not available.

Stamp albums are available for purchase at some variety and hobby stores, from stamp stores, at stamp shows, or by mail order.

Once an album has been acquired, the proper way of affixing the stamps to the album or loose-leaf page must be learned. NEVER tape or glue a stamp into the album space. For used or inexpensive stamps, the best method is to "hinge" the stamp. Stamp hinges, made with special peelable gum that will not harm stamps, are the most inexpensive and economical way to attach stamps to a page. Follow the directions that come with the package and always be sure that not too much moisture is used so only the hinge, not the back of the stamp, sticks to the album page.

The preferred method for putting mint stamps and higher priced used stamps into an album is by using a stamp mount. Stamp mounts cost only a few cents each, come in many sizes, and afford more protection for the stamp as well as preserving the gum on the stamp's back. Your local stamp dealer or an experienced collector can guide you in making a wise decision in choosing the right sizes and the proper mounts for your collection.

(to be continued)

(Courtesy : Junior Philatelists of America)