



SIPA Bulletin

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EDITORIAL

The INDEPEX - ASIANA - 2000 international stamp exhibition will be held at the Netaji Indoor Stadium, Calcutta during 7-12 December 2000, the last year of this century and millennium. This is the first time an international exhibition is being held in the historical city of Calcutta, the other cities of our country which hosted internationals being Delhi and Bangalore. Netaji Indoor Stadium is an appropriate venue which has held many international events and an important landmark of modern day Calcutta.

The exhibition aims to promote philately in the new communication atmosphere filled with e-mails, websites and internet and to spread stamp collecting among children, the leaders of the oncoming century. We are now preparing for the event to ensure that INDEPEX - ASIANA - 2000 will achieve these goals, under the able and enthusiastic leadership of Shri B.M. Som, Secretary, India Post. Shri. B.M. Som has been elected as the Chairman for the World Association for the development of Philately (WADP) at their annual general assembly on oct, 6, 2000 in Madrid. It is a great honour for our country. WADP is the global philatelic organisation representing Universal Postal Union (UPU). Let us strengthen the hands of Shri. Som, for the promotion of philately in our country by taking philately to the grassroots and spread philately among the younger generation. Let us assure Shri. Som that we will give utmost cooperation in this pleasurable and educative hobby in the years to come. We wish him all congratulations.

With the advancement of globalization, society will become more inter-related as exchange among nations and individuals flourishes in the 21st century. With this kind of social revolution taking place, people around the world will interact and develop friendships overcoming cultural differences. This is a significant and wonderful development.

India has the richest heritage in philately in the Asian region. It has the unique distinction of having issued stamps since 1854 and also the proud privilege of having hosted the first Asian International stamp exhibition in 1977.

Postal stamps capture the history, nature, arts and culture of a nation and have been described as "Little ambassadors" and "art masterpieces that require a minimum of space". Thus stamp collecting is loved in countries throughout the world as a culturally sophisticated hobby.

As a member of the organising committee, I warmly invite all philatelists and lovers of philately to visit INDEPEX - ASIANA 2000 which will be a significant gathering because cultural exchange will be achieved through philately. Moreover, I welcome all members of SIPA to participate in this exhibition.

Participating in stamp exhibition, not only help to make new friends and greet old friends but also enables to gain experience and promote philately.

Looking forward to seeing you at INDEPEX - ASIANA 2000.

G. Madan Mohan Das
EDITOR

IN MEMORIAM

We lost Mr. D.N. Jatia on 12th November 2000. Jatiaji is no more - No! Not at all!! lives in the hearts of thousands and thousands of stamp lovers and philatelists all over the world.

Mr. D.N. Jatia R.D.P.: F.R. P.S.L., was the Atlas of Indian Philately; He emphatically fixed India on the map of World Philately. His achievements in the realm of philately are many, many. To list a few: He was,

Founder President of Philatelic Congress of India (PCI) - 1975

Member - Philatelic Advisory Committee of India.

First Indian - International Jury at France - 1975

First Indian - to present paper at the Royal Philatelic Society and Collector's Club, New York.

First Indian - President of Inter-Asia Philatelic Federation (FIAP) 1981-87.

First Indian - to sign Roll of Distinguished Philatelists - 1983.

Only Indian - President of International Philatelic Federation (FIP) 1990 - 1998

Member - International Association of philatelic experts.

It is highly impossible to enumerate Jatiaji's contribution towards Indian philately. Boldly it can be said that nothing at the national and international level in Indian Philately is achieved without his positive approach and whole hearted effort. His sustained endeavour and determination only made possible all the international exhibitions held in India. He was the person, instrumental in bringing the gems of Indian classics from the collection of Her majesty to be shown in India - he being privileged to select the items to be displayed. Personally he was a friend, philosopher and guide to all philatelists and stamp collectors of India, without prejudice to his/her age, status, collecting level etc. by his humble manners and easy access.

As on date, we may not be able to assess what we have lost now, but truly we have lost the greatest pillar of Indian philately which time will speak in volumes.

May his soul rest in peace.

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

STAMP NEWS
CHILDREN'S DAY

14.11.2000

300

3 million



Universal Children's Day is an occasion to renew our commitment to the cause of children and re-dedicate ourselves to fulfilling their basic needs and rights. Children's day was first celebrated worldwide in October, 1953, under the sponsorship of

International Union for Child Welfare, Geneva. The idea of Universal Children's Day was mooted by late Shri V.K. Krishna Menon and adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1954. Ever since, 14 November is observed as Universal Children's Day. The Day also coincides with the birthday of India's first Prime Minister, late Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. The following words penned by him capture the spirit with which the country celebrates the Children's Day:

"I am particularly happy that the Children of India have made this day (14 November) their own. No greater honour could have been done to me and no greater joy can come to me than to feel that these buds and flowers in the garden of India have given their affection. May they all have opportunities of growth and development which are their right and due. My love and blessing to all of them."

In recent years, it has become customary to issue stamps on Children's Day depicting prize-winning entries from nationwide Stamp Design Competitions organised by the Department. These stamps, thus, also provide an insight into the minds of the younger generation, into issues which are of concern to them.

This year's stamp, based on a painting by Phuhar Uppal which won the top honour in the Junior Category, depicts a child hugging a friendly elephant and carries the title "My Best Friend". The elephant becomes a metaphor for nature in the painting and its benevolence, a symbol of the unlimited bounties that nature provides the human race. The tranquillity and harmony of man with nature needs to be maintained. At the same time, it also reiterates the need for all nations to join forces against the destruction of ecological balance. The First Day Cover carries a painting by Daya Maheswaran, another entry received in the Stamp Design Competition, which also carries an appeal for the protection of environment.

Theme : Children, Painting, Elephant.

MAHARAJA BIJLI PASI

16.11.2000

300

0.4 Million

The Gupta empire (fourth to sixth century A.D.) as well as the empire of Harsha (seventh century) had brought the entire northern India under strong, centralised rule for a long period.



among themselves, unprepared to meet the invasions of Mahmud of Ghazni and subsequently, Muhammad Ghuri.

Maharaja Bijli Pasi who is credited with the founding of Bijnor, now a small town near Lucknow, was an enlightened ruler who appears to have consolidated his position and established his reign over a large tract of land in this region. As recorded in the British Gazetteers of the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, he was a contemporary of Prithviraj Chauhan. He was an able leader of the "Pasis", a fiercely independent people indigenous to the locality. He constructed 12 forts which is an indication of the prosperity of his kingdom as well as the power he wielded. The important ones among his forts were Nathawan, Kali Paschim, Mati and Purwar-Purab. The prosperity of the kingdom, particularly the Nathawan fort, was among the reasons that prompted a Rajput conquest against him and the story goes that Alha and Udal, the Banaphar Captains of Raja Jayachand of Kanauj defeated Maharaja Bijli Pasi and captured the fort. The Maharaja is believed to have lost his life in the fierce battle. Some historians have placed the timing of this battle as 1194 A.D.

Theme : History, Kings & Queens.

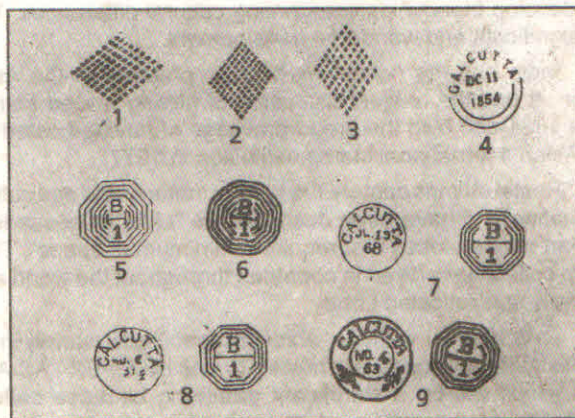
POSTAL HISTORY OF CALCUTTA

(1854 - 1947)

(Contd..)

Ashok Bayanwala

PART II



With the introduction of postage stamps, the phase of Indian cancellations commenced. The first cancellations is generally known as a diamond of dots as the dots are arranged so as to form a diamond of varying sizes. However, in the Postal

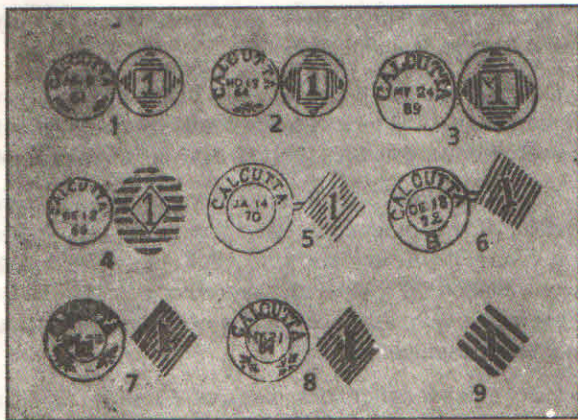
Manual of 1854, it is officially described as a "Lozenge shaped stamp" Figure 1 has 9 x 9 dots, fig. 2 has 10 x 10 dots and fig. 3 has 8 x 9 dots. The first one is common.

Fig. 4 is in reduced size. Its diameter is 27mm. This is very scarce and unrecorded for Calcutta. My only example is dated December 1854.

Fig 5 was exclusively used in Bengal from March 1855. "B" stands for Bengal and "I" stands for Calcutta. The postmark has 4 complete octagons and 3 incomplete ones. Scarce variety is 4 complete octagons and 2 incomplete ones. My examples are dated 15-1-1856. Fig 6 has 3 complete and 3 incomplete octagons within a circle. Hardly any example survived. My example is dated 12-08-1871.

Fig 7,8 & 9 are duplex of B/I and are very scarce. It has 3 complete octagons and one incomplete one. All the three examples are different.

The first three obliterators are "All India Duplex" type, where obliterators are enclosed in a circle and date stamp with P.O. name at top and some times fleurons at foot (several sub types). It was introduced in 1861 and remained in use till 1873.



The Fig.4 is an example of local Calcutta Cancellation. It is an oval formed heavy lines, parallel to the short axis framing a small diamond showing a "1". The dimensions are 25 x 21 mm. This is in duplex form, the left duplex showing that this is a Calcutta Cancellation. Examples are extremely rare.

From Fig. 5 to Fig. 8 are from Bengal Barred Duplex, introduced in 1862 and remained in use till 1873. The example shown here are all different.

The figure 9 is a square of five very heavy bars framing a thick "1" diagonally across the square. The side of the square is 17 mm. This is a single obliterators, found only on foreign mail in the years 1872 and 1873.

The first figure is from Second "All India Duplex" obliterators with single circle date stamp with name across centre. Here Bengal Circle was allotted the Letter "C" denoting its headquarter Calcutta. So "C" stands for Bengal Circle and "I" stands for Calcutta. Variation is found in this obliterators, which are in distance between "C" and dash (-). Another variety is also found - Full stop (.) after Calcutta. The second and third fig. are obliterators which are not combined with date stamp. The third fig. is the variety of the second and is very scarce. These are found used from 1873 to 1884.

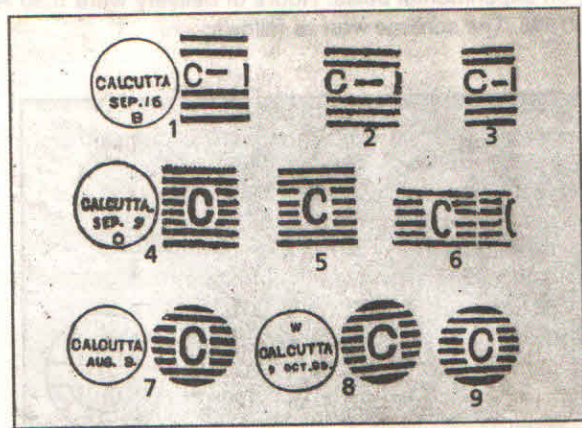
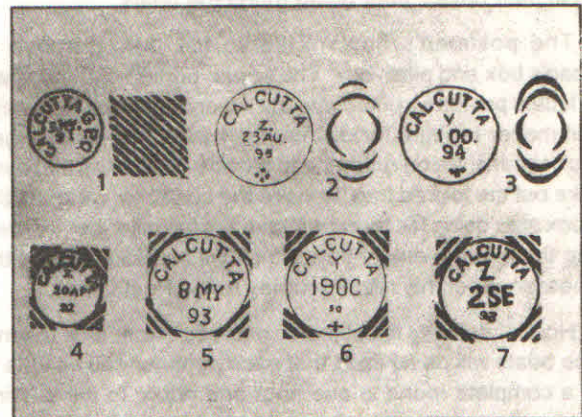


Fig 4,5 and 6 are obliterators with circle letter, a simplified type of the above without office number (1879-1880). The fourth fig. is a duplex and fig. 5 is simplex from Calcutta. The fig. 6 has six lines only instead of 8 lines. It is a roller cancellation and is found mainly on foreign going mail. The sixth fig. is very scarce.

In 1880, the square obliterators was replaced by round obliterators with circle letter. The seventh and eighth fig. are duplex and remained in use till 1885. The ninth fig. is simplex and remained in use till 1910, in remote post offices.

The first figure is duplex experimental P.O. cancellation, only used from Calcutta GPO. It is found used from 5th May 1891 to 11th May 1891. It is a mysterious obliterators found used only for a week. It is extremely scarce.

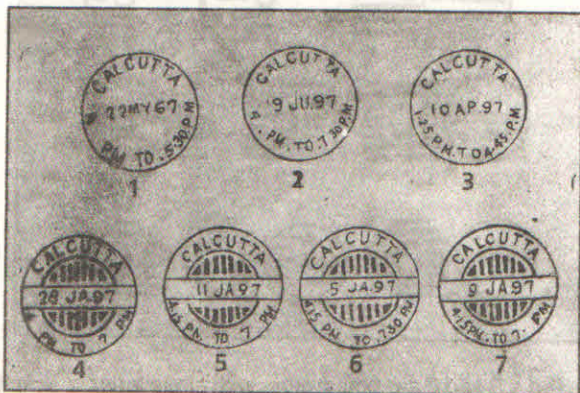


The second (size 25 x 16 mm) and third fig. (size 28 x 14mm) are Crescent Duplex cancellations. Though it was known as experimental type, it appears that this cancellation is an "All India" type because it lasted for 7 years (1892 - 1899) and appeared from more than 60 post offices, throughout India. Calcutta had two different such cancellations.

Squared Circle Cancellation is a combination of date stamp and obliterators formed by adding, outside a single circle, several bars at a tangent tapering to squared corners. It was introduced during November 1883. Calcutta has two different sizes of this post mark. The first size is 21 x 21 mm (fig. 4) and the second is 27 x 27 mm. Fig. 5 the bigger obliterators has 3 different sizes and settings of letterings, which are shown above.

Cancellations and / or postmarks were used in Calcutta for Continuous Delivery Scheme, which was introduced in January

1897, on experimental basis. The scheme was as follows:-



A postman's box will be placed at the most convenient point of each beat which will be the starting point. The postmen will be served every hour by boy-messengers who will convey a locked bag for each postman, the office retaining one key of the bag and the postman the other. The boy - messengers will have one key of the postman's box and the postman will have duplicate key. The bags will bear the same number as the boxes, and the boy - messenger will travel over fixed circuits and on their outward trip, i.e. from the Post Office to the beats, will place the full bags in the respective postmen's boxes. The time at which the boy-messenger are due to reach the different boxes will correspond with the time at which the postmen are due to return to their boxes, after going round the beats.

The postmen's box will serve the dual purpose of postman's box and pillar-box. The upper portion of the box will be for letters posted by public and the lower portion for the receipt of mail matter brought for distribution by the boy-messenger. Each postman then on returning to his box after doing his round will take out the locked bag, remove the contents, clear out the pillar box after doing his round will take out the pillar-box articles, placing them in the empty bag, which will be picked up by the boy-messenger on his return journey to the Post Office.

Hour of delivery is subject to alteration from time to time, and the beats will be so fixed that each postman will be able to make a complete round in one hour and return to the starting point.

Some of the advantages claimed for this scheme over the present system are as follows:

- Several additional deliveries will be made daily.
- Several additional letter boxes will be cleared hourly.
- The time lost by postmen going to and from their beats and waiting at the post office will be saved.
- Sorting work, being more evenly distributed throughout the day, will be better. It will be done more carefully.

The scheme was also introduced in Howrah and Darjeeling before it was withdrawn in October 1897. There are two different sizes in single circle post marks and three different settings are found in double circle postmarks.

Like most of other town post marks of India, Calcutta also had tiny single circle post marks. These are found with either

Calcutta or Calcutta GPO, with date, month and year. Fig. 1 and 7 are such post marks, which were introduced in late 1880s.



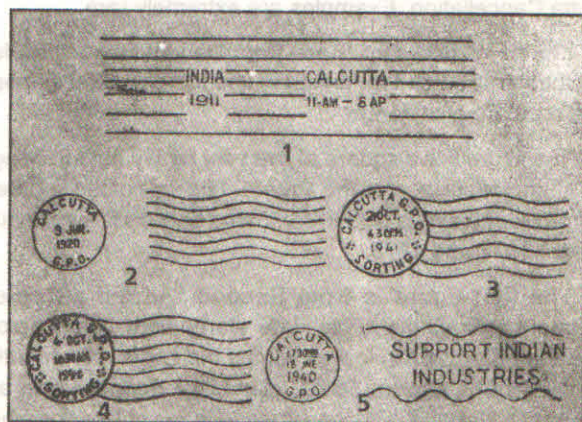
By early 1880s, the size of single circle postmark was increased. Fig.2 & 3 are of medium size and fig. 4, 5 & 6 are a bit bigger. They all are different.

By late 1890s time slug was introduced in the postmarks. Fig.8 and 9 show time slug in it.

Double-circle combined with date show, on a bar across centre segments of inner circle filled with vertical obliterating lines, was introduced in 1894. Fig. 10 & 11 are such examples.

Fig. 12 is a double circle cancellation with two concentric obliterating arcs in outer circle, with hour, date and year in 3 lines in centre. It was introduced in 1906. Fig. 13 is a double circle cancellation with date and hour, on bar across centre and inner segments with vertical bars and one heavy arc in outer circle. It was introduced in 1910.

Mechanised cancellors, popularly known as "Krag" machine obliterator, was introduced in India from 1910, to expedite handling of mail. Fig. 1 is a continuous impression of straight parallel lines, broken to include, office name, date, year and time. It remained in use till 1915. Examples are scarce. Mine is dated 8-4-1911.

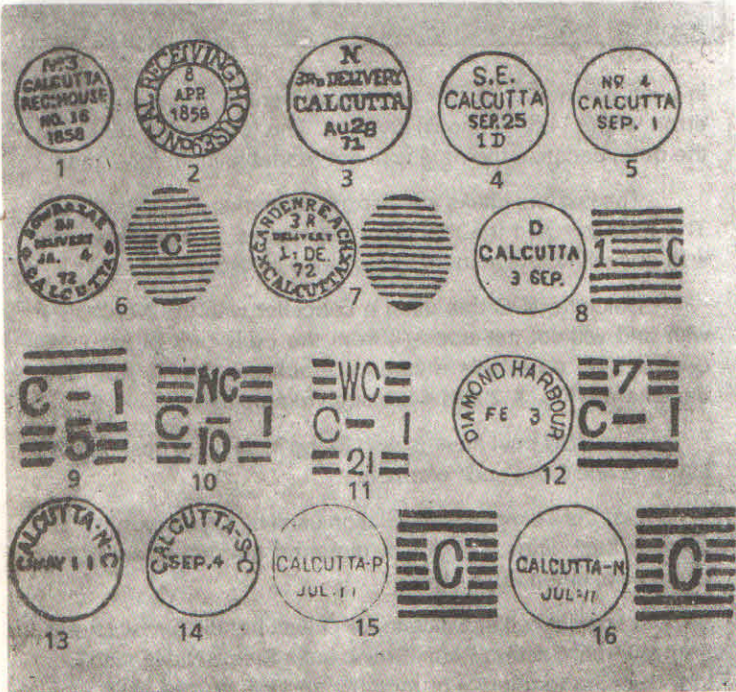


Second machine cancellation is a duplex with a single circle date stamp and wavy lines, about 12 mm away, was introduced after world war 1. Probably, this was supplied by Universal from U.K. Fig. 2 is dated 9-6-1920.

Fig. 3 (21-10-1941) is a single circle obliterator, combined with date, time and year and with 7 wavy lines, was introduced in 1940. It is popularly known as Comet type. It has a word "L" above date which denotes letter mail. Fig. 4 (4-10-1941) is similar to fig. 3. but "L" above date is missing.

Fig. 5 is also a machine cancellation but used for various slogans. This type of post marks are found both hand stamp and machine cancelled. The impression of the post mark can only reveal whether it is a hand stamped or mechanised.

In adhesive era, the Receiving Houses were reorganised and renumbered. Fig. 1 & 2 are circular in shape (single or double) with date and year. They are not used for cancelling stamps. They are usually found struck on the back side of mail, either in red or black ink.



After upgrading the Receiving Houses into Branch Offices the first post mark- fig. 3 in single circle appeared in 1867. It was withdrawn by 1872. It reads "Code Letter / Delivery / Calcutta / Date / Year." It is found in black, red and blue ink.

Fig. 6 is a duplex cancellation which reads name of post office / ... / delivery / date / year / Calcutta in the left circle duplex and code letter in right oval duplex. It is found in blue and black ink from 1871. The word "Delivery" in fig.3 6 and 7 denote despatch to Calcutta GPO. Fig. 7 does not have code letter in right duplex, because Garden Reach P.O. was a late addition in urban P.O.

Fig. 4 was introduced in 1873, in which the word "delivery" was omitted and "D" for despatch was inserted below the date.

Fig. 8 was introduced in 1873. It is a duplex cancellation. The circle distinguishing letter is missing because the word Calcutta is in left hand duplex. The known examples are:

1-C, 1-EC, 1-NC, 1-NW, 1-SC and 1-SW.

Fig. 9 was introduced in 1874. It had circle distinguishing letter and a number below it. Thus the postmark reads C-1/5. It

disbursing office No.1 (Calcutta). Though the postmark is recorded as duplex, all my examples are simplex. The following examples are in my collection:-

C-1/5, C-1/7, C-1/9, C/1-10, C/1-11 and C/1-14.

Fig. 10 and 11 replaced fig.9 which have P.O. code letter in it. All my examples are of 1878, which are as follows:-

NW/C-1/9, NC-C-1/10, SW/C-1/11, SC/C-1/15 and WC/C-1/21.

Fig.12 is an off shoot of fig.9, used for suburban areas of Calcutta. Code for P.O. is on top, instead of bottom. The post mark would read as 7/C-1, which was for Diamond Harbour. My example is dated 3-2-1882.

Fig.14 is found used from 1879. It is found in duplex. In left duplex-Calcutta and code letters / date and in right duplex "C" is in rectangular bars. Code numbers are omitted from the cancellation. Dashes are observed between Calcutta and each alphabetic code. My examples show N-W, N-C, E-C and S-C.

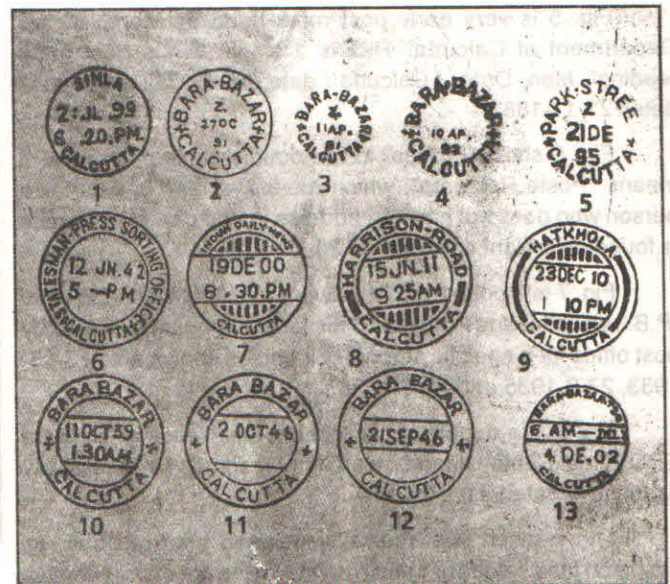
Fig. 13 are in simplex and just like fig. 14 but dashes are replaced by full stop (.). My examples show N.E., N.W and N.C.

Fig. 15 and Fig. 16 are new find for Calcutta Urban Post Offices postmarks. It is in Duplex format. The left duplex reads Calcutta - Code letter of P.O. in a straight line in middle & date and right duplex show circle letter "C" in rectangular bars. My examples "Calcutta-P" daed 11-7-1881 and Calcutta - N dated 1-7-1881.

Fig. 5 is found in simplex and duplex format. The urban post offices were reorganised in 1880. The code letters were dropped and code numbers were allotted to urban post offices. I have got the following examples in my collection : No. 3, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 14 in duplex format and No. 1, 4, 13, 14 and 15 in simplex format.

By 1883, the numerical code was also abolished and the name of the post office was introduced in post marks.

By 1883, numerical and alphabetical codes were removed from Urban Post Office postal marks. The name of the concerned



postmark is given in the postmarks. Fig. 1 and 2 are such post marks in single circle. Fig. 3, 4 and 5 are same as Fig. 1 & 2 but without circle. These postmarks are very scarce.

Fig. 6 is double circle postmark without dividing lines. Fig. 7 is also double circle cancellor with date, hour and bars across centre and segments of inner circle filled with vertical obliterating lines.

Fig. 8 & 9 are double circle obliterator, combined with date stamp, hour and two small pieces of arc in outer circle.

Fig. 10, 11 and 12 are double circle post marks. Fig. 10 has date and time. Fig. 11 has only date but hour is missing though space for hour is there. Fig. 12 has only date and no space for hour. Fig. 11 and 12 are scarce.

Fig. 13 shows Barabazar T.S.O./Time/Date/Calcutta. Here T.S.O. means Town Sub Office. It is scarce.

Double circle post mark with the words "DESP" in the lower half of the circle, with or without time slug. Fig. 1 was used as cancellor on 1-7-1939 and fig. 2 was used as transit mark on 8-7-1939 (time slug is missing) on a letter coming from Fiji for Quilon.

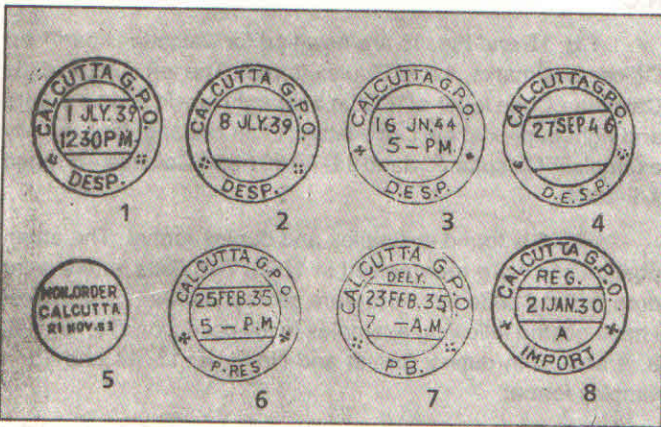


Fig. 3 and 4 are similar to Fig. 1 and 2 respectively, but surprisingly a fullstop (.) is found after each alphabet. My examples are dated 16-6-1944 and 27-9-1946.

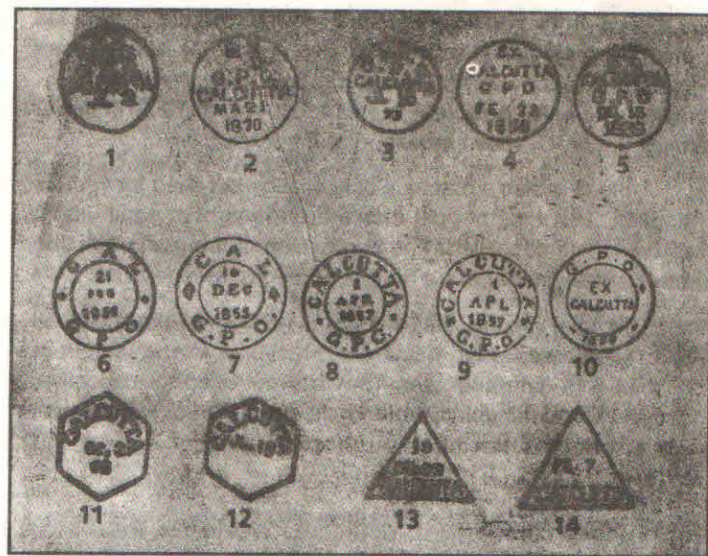
Fig. 5 is very early post mark used by Money Order Department of Calcutta. This is a single Circle post mark reading "Mon. Order / Calcutta / date & year. My example is dated 21-11-1883.

Fig. 6 shows "P.Res" in the double circle post mark. It means "Poste Restante", which means, a mail is kept for a person who does not have an address in that city. My example is found on a flight cover dated 25-2-1935.

Fig. 7 is a double circle delivery post mark with the word 'P.B.' which means Post Box. This facility is being provided by post office for a specific amount. Examples known are of 3-11-1933, 23-2-1935 and 21-6-1938.

Fig. 8 is a double circle receipt mark reading "Calcutta GPO / Reg. / Date / Import". Here import stands for receipt. My example is dated 21-1-1930.

The first ten post marks were used prior to 1854, as despatch marks and / or transit marks. There are many varieties



in such postmarks. A few are shown here. The second is an error, where '1st' is shown inverted. The tenth does not show the date, because the date was not readable in the post mark.

The last four marks are also transit marks, used after 1854. The hexagon and the triangular postmarks, shown here, are with and without year in them, because of "No Year Era".

Calcutta GPO has used a cancellor with the word DBN with and without full stops (.) from the early part of the 20th century. Till date, this mysterious abbreviation is not fully deciphered. Fig. 1, 2 and 4 are such examples.

This DBN post mark is also found in delivery post marks. Fig. 3, 5 and 6 are such examples.

Fig. 7 is a simplex cancellation used by experimental P.O. with 10 thick lines, forming a diamond shaped square. My example is dated 28-2-1883.

A special cell at Calcutta GPO was handling mail to and from different Eastern Ports. British India Steam Navigation Co. Ltd. (running fortnightly or monthly service, as the case may be), used to ply steamers in between Calcutta and other ports, viz. Chittagong, Akyab, Rangoon, Penang and Singapore.

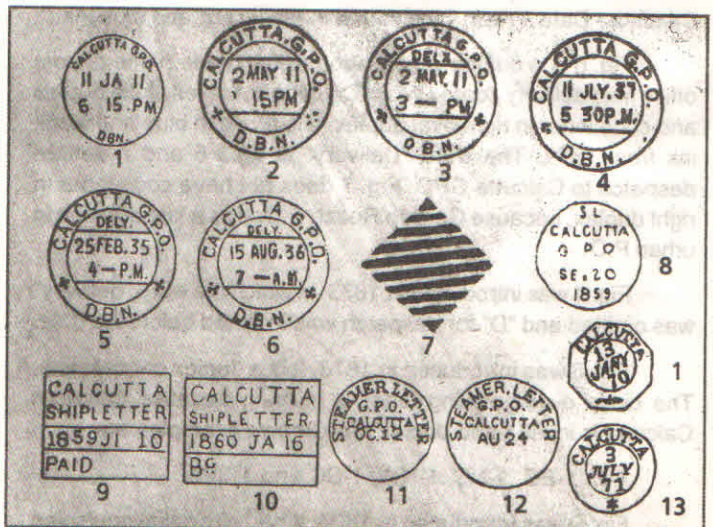


Fig. 8 was introduced in 1859 showing "S.L./Calcutta / GPO / Date / Year". The words "S.L." stands for Steamer Letter. My examples are dated 20-9-1859, 27-7-1864 and 26-11-1864.

Fig. 9 reads "Calcutta / ship letters / year , date / Paid" which was introduced in 1858.

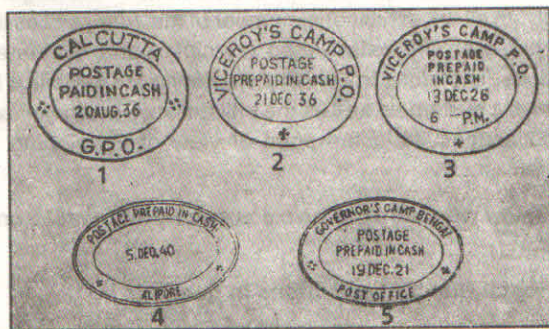
Fig. 10 is same as fig. 9 but post marks show "Bg." (Bearing) instead of "Paid".

Similar to fig. 11 but with year, below date, is found used from 1869 till no year started in 1873. They are found in red ink, which reads "Steamer / GPOI / Calcutta / date / Year". My examples are dated 4-6-1867, 8-7-1869 and 3-9-1870. They could not be shown here because examples are not clear.

Fig. 11 and Fig. 12 are found in "No Year Era" in black ink only. Fig. 11 is serified and Fig. 12 is sanserified. One more variation is found in the year 1886 which reads "Ship letter" instead of "steamer Letter". My example is dated 8-7-1886.

French type post marks are found used at Sea Sorting office at Calcutta. These French type post marks supposed to have 4 letters in month but 3 letter words are also found. This type is found on both outgoing and incoming mail. Fig. 13 and Fig. 14 are of such type. Fig. 14 is found with different fleurons. My examples are dated 12-5-1866, 12-5-1866, 15-4-1869, 23-6-1870 & 3-7-1871.

In view of the trade activities increasing by the turn of the century, the correspondence had considerably increased, therefore a service known as "Prepaid Postage" was introduced in the year 1889, for those customers who had bulk mail to be posted. At first violet ink was used to distinguish such mail. By 1900, a special cachet showing the words "Postage Paid in Cash" was introduced. Afterwards it changed to "Postage



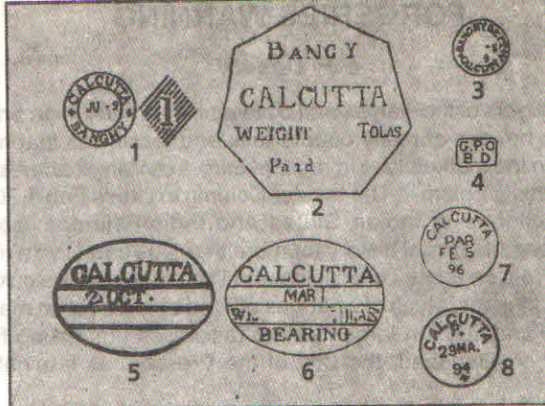
Prepaid in Cash". Examples reproduced at right are from Calcutta and are all different.

The Banghywallahs were employed as early as 1781 to convey heavy official mail, only by the post office. By 1809 the Banghy Post and / or Parcel Post had become a subsidiary service of the Postal system, carrying bulky letter, packets and parcels at lesser rate than those of bulky mail.

Fig. 5 and Fig. 6, two different post marks (not complete) are found used on Parcel Post.

They were used in 1830's. I have two parcel covers in my collection which show the above fig. 5 and fig. 6.

The word "Banghy" in post marks appeared in 1854. The fig. 1 appeared sometimes in the year 1862. Fig. 2 appeared in



1854 and fig. 3 appeared in 1865. Fig. 4 appeared from 1863 to 1870. Fig. 7 and Fig. 8 are of 1890s when "Banghy" word was dropped and 'P' "Par" for Parcel was adopted.

Fig. 1, 2 and 3 are different cancellors of Calcutta Exhibition P.O. It is second special cancellation of India. The exhibition was devoted to Art & Craft Industries of India. It lasted from 4-12-1883 to 10-3-1884. It is found without (fig. 1) and with (fig.2) year in simplex type and with year (fig. 3) in duplex type. All the three are extremely rare. No other examples on entire are known to exist.



The Government Bullock Train (1864) was a carrying agency under the management of the Post Office, for the conveyance of goods along the Grand Trunk Road between Calcutta and Peshawar. Calcutta GPO had a separate counter for such bullock mail and a distinctive hand stamp (fig. 4) was used. It reads "Calcutta General / Bullock Train / Post Office" and is dated January 1882.

Calcutta is perhaps the only place, where one finds a very special circular post mark (fig.5) "Sorted at Calcutta" followed by date and year. My examples are dated 5-10-1859, 15-10-1859 and 28-4-1860.

Two different post marks (fig. 6 and 7) with words "Night Sorting - Calcutta" are found, applied by sorting office at Calcutta functioning after office hours. Fig. 6 is dated 26-12-1897 and fig. 7 is dated 17-12-1888.

The Express letters were sent on a horse back from Calcutta to Diamond Harbour and by boat to Kedgree to catch the outgoing ship. This is the only post mark of its kind used for Express Service (fig. 8) by Calcutta GPO which reads "Express Letter / GPO / Calcutta / date / year". My examples are dated 05-10/1867, 24-12-1867 and 3-11-1868.

(to be continued)

E.F. Deschl

Buyers of the stamps and covers of India and Indian States need to beware of many counterfeits and facsimiles that have come on the marketplace in recent years. Les Winick addressed part of this problem in The Insider Column in Linn's Feb. 7, 2000. As a collector of Indian States and Indian stamps, postal stationery and postal history for more than 40 years, I've written extensively on these collectibles and I've examined the current crop of offerings. Much of what was offered on the auction market in 1999 and 2000 in large lots are facsimiles emanating from the city of Allahabad, the City of the Presses, as it might be called.

Sheets of stamps described as reprints (impressions from the original plates, blocks or stones used to print the original stamps) turn out to be nothing but crude facsimiles, and unused envelopes with so-called stately seals or crests are nothing more than printings from Allahabad in the mid-1990s. So-called aerogram "Specimen" overprints really are private productions not issued by the India post office. Most likely they are the production of a dealer. Many hundreds of folded letters on the market are genuine court documents known as Chieftain Seals. These are sold by the courts in India as waste paper. A lot of 50 small covers said to bear Poonch Scott 8 was a total fabrication, for each was almost identical. The stamps were forgeries, the cancels were fraudulent and every cover was made of an identical bright pink paper with an identical knife (the distinct cuts of the top, bottom and side flaps). None had been through the mail. A similar group of covers said to bear Jind Scott 5 was the same animal - complete modern fabrications - as were full sheets of early stamps of Nepal. Tibet covers that are total fabrications also are being offered as genuine.

I examined a large lot of 10 paisa Gandhi postal cards that were genuine, but their SPECIMEN overprints were a private fabrication. The 400 cards were not from one production run, as they most likely would be if genuine, but they were from at least 20 runs and included paper variations, different colours of stock and different card sizes. For any specimen item such as this, a quantity of 400 is simply excessive. Some small sheets of stamps (8 to 15 stamps per sheet) are offered that are nothing but fakes - Bundi Scott 9, Bhopal Scott 22, and Cochin Scott 33 - all crude facsimiles in sheets of the wrong sizes that were produced in the 1990s in Allahabad. Bundi 9 was lithographed in sheets of 100, and Bhopal 22 was issued in sheets of 32. The Cochin government never sold Cochin 33 in small sheets. Knowing whom the seller of these facsimiles is, I have informed him of their true nature.

How is it that I know about the Allahabad facsimiles? It's simply because I have got to know the printer. First let me state that it is not illegal or even unlawful to print facsimiles of devalued stamps. In the United States, a Massachusetts stamp dealer sold facsimiles of Confederate States of America stamps in a 13-item set. They were sold as facsimiles and were so marketed for more than 40 years. Now, the Allahabad printer also sold his product as facsimiles. He never represented them to be originals or reprints. When I showed examples of the bad material to collector Joe Maedows, who had an extensive reference collection, he said that he had never seen such crude reproductions. Members of India Study Circle in London contacted the Allahabad printer and explained their concerns. The printer concurred, and he no longer produces facsimiles. His stock on hand was sold to a dealer in Calcutta and another dealer in Bombay.

(Courtesy - India Post 2000)

CENGIZ ARSMAN

Historical Background

As known, until the beginning of 1970, the stamp collections were expressed almost a complete status. That is, the essays - stamps - blocks - errors and cancels - covers were used together and instead of separating the collections according to the time sections, all periods were shown starting from the stampless period until the last classical periods. However, after this type of general collections, development of study collections started.

This type of works finally resulted in turning the collections related to stamps, into collections of deep research collections. And, in these collections, essays, stamps and various studies and errors on these were shown.

In the meantime, a very important development was to start the research of the history of post. Such studies have widely expanded the horizons of philately, and it was possible to study the development and research of post from the point of view of history, which is a science.

The most important characteristic of the postal history is its capacity to research several subjects historically at different dimensions. A city's postal history or carrying of post by train in a specific country has developed rapidly after 1970 and the philatelic material related to it was rapidly sought for and has gained value.

Practice and Application

However, as known, the postal history exhibit in the exhibitions has been connected to principles as all other philatelic branches. FIP (Federation International de Philatelie) has set forth these principles as dominant of the organized philately. In all the exhibitions, number of the Juries act as judge complying with the established principles and evaluate the collections. Therefore, the philatelists joining the exhibition have to know this system as well as the philatelists who do not exhibit their collections, from the point of view of developing their collection.

Below we shall try to give a summary information on this subject.

A). Postal History Collections in general.

Postal History exhibits contain material carried by, and related to, official, local or private mails. Such exhibits generally emphasize routes, rates, markings, usages and other postage aspects, services, functions and activities related to the history of the development of Postal services.

Postmark exhibits have classifications and/or studies of postal markings related to official, local or private mails on covers and other postal items.

Generally Postal History collections are divided into two as described below:

- a. Postal History Collections.
- b. Postmark collections.

The postal history collections include entires, covers and letters; stamps and other postal documents that generally have passed through the post.

These collections explain the work and development of one or some postal services. This explanation cover the development of the organized post services from its beginning until today as whole or at specific periods.

For instance, it is possible to explain the development of the postal services between two or more regions or countries or continents; In one country itself the development of the postal services in one region or in one geographical location; the study of a special type of postal service in one area, one country or in countries of a region in the world or its worldwide development.

B) Subject of Collections of Postal History

a. Postal History can be described as HISTORY OF THE POSTAL SERVICES briefly as it has been a research of history of the postal services.

Thus,

1. It can be studied as the postal services of a period. (Such as, the postal services before stamps).
2. The postal services can be studied taking into consideration the way the post is carried. (Train post, sea post, etc.)
3. The postal services can be studied geographically. (For instance, Ankara or France, as study of geographical units).

These system can be used by mixing them together. For instance, it is possible to study the sea post during the period of Napoleon 1.

b. The postal cancellation collections carry out research and separation on the postal cancellations. As mentioned above, it is a part of the postal history collections. However, the postal history collections can be of a type of collection as mentioned not only under (a) or only (b) above, it can also be collections composed of their union, that is postal history and postal cancellations combined collections.

Perhaps this combination presents a possibility to make a better study, and thereby a more beautiful collection can be materialized.

If necessary, to give examples it is possible to make postal history collections of following types:

1. Pre-adhesive postal services.
2. The development of local, regional, national or international postal services.
3. Postal rates.
4. Routes for transportation of mails,
5. Postal markings (marcophily) as described above.
6. Military mail, field post, siege mail, POW, civil and military internee camp mail.
7. All type of travelling post offices.
8. Disaster mail.
9. Disinfected mail.
10. Censored mail.
11. Postage due mail.

12. Automation of the mails.

13. Forwarding agents markings.

14. Official mail, Free Frank mail.

15. Maritime mail and / or inland waterways mail.

16. Railway mail.

Of course, other subjects can be collected and exhibited within the general definition of Postal History.

C). System of the collection of the Postal History.

The system of the postal history collections and the look of the jury at the collections, can be explained as such:

a. Presentation of collection.

Although this subject has been indicated as if it receives a very small point according to the FIP principles (5 points on 100 points), if the exhibition of the collection is considered as an exhibition art. It will be thought that the presentation manner will effect the jury's points greatly if not directly. Therefore, it is clear that this subject has to be taken into consideration by the collector, surely.

b. Collection's Introduction Plan.

As true of every collection, every postal history collection has to have an aim. And, this aim must be indicated in the plan which introduces the collection. In addition, the ways to reach the aim, documents and information sources must be explained. This statement must be written in one of the FIP official languages. If this plan is not sufficient to explain subject exhibit or forgotten by the exhibitor, it means treatment is not good enough.

C. Another factor that has to be considered by the jury is well-processing and treatment of the subject.

The jury looks at the general development of the subject, that the shown material is in full compliance with the collection's main idea and philatelic characteristic, and whether or not the collection can be done once again easily. Putting of irrelevant material into the collection creates loss of points. This section receives 20 points on 100 points.

D) Philatelic Importance of the Collection of Postal History.

Another factor taken in hand by the jury is the selection of the subject. Collection receives points within its place in the general philately. This point's value is 10 points on 100 points. For instance, in general a capital city postal history is more important than a small town's postal history. For example, a study done on the local post rates of a country is less important than the postal tariffs between two neighbouring countries of the same period.

The sections under (C-b/c) and (D) above are considered in the same group in the pointing system. It means both can get 30 points maximum.

E) Knowledge and Research on the Subject of a Postal History collection.

General and Philatelic knowledge and personal study and research are the most important sections according to us. Because for its understanding by the jury, the collector has to prove his ability on frames.

This section receives 35 points on 100 points due to its importance. General and philatelic explanation, personal knowledge and research, however, can be understood as a result of the creative work and especially new research on specific subject to the collection. However, if the collector has already collected knowledge one same subject which was researched earlier and used in the collection should not be penalized.

F) Condition (Quality) and Rarity of the Exhibited Material of a Postal History Collection.

Certainly in a collection there will be material that is rare, less rare or not rare. For participation in an exhibition, exhibitor must select material from the collection, without spoiling the system of the collection. The selection and placement are very important. Rare material and high quality will bring points to the collector.

Philatelic rarity never means the high price of the material. This should never be forgotten. In the pointing 20 points are given to rarity on 100 points. The quality of the shown material, that is its cleanliness, and other factors such as having a readable cancellation will receive 10 points on 100 points. However, it is not possible to generalize the quality, the principle is to be considered as the best found philatelic quality. In addition, there are such collections that study the air and sea accidents and naturally in these it is not possible to find a general quality, on the contrary the quality is lower than normal.

Summary of the FIP rules in pointing system to Postal History as described above.

- | | |
|---|----|
| 1. Treatment (20) and philatelic importance (10) | 30 |
| 2. Philatelic and related knowledge, Personal study and Research. | 35 |
| 3. Condition (10) and Rarity (20) | 30 |
| 4. Presentation | 5 |

Conclusion:

The above-indicated factors are very important certainly to make a postal history collection. However, these are only general principles. They assist only to make the collection; for performance of a good collection, it is necessary to be a good philatelist. A collection that is not made by a good philatelist will be without spirit and does not give anything to the viewers at the exhibition.

To be a good philatelist is related to the time and experience factor. However, more than this, it is possible to be a good philatelist from birth.

We wish all the collectors to produce good collections.

OBITUARY

The display frames at the Philatelic Bureau, Chennai which were used for the promotion of philately, by donning the collections 'one and all' have disappeared from the room. Hail the promotion of philately!

The country's only postal museum displaying postal equipment and priceless documents of yester years, is gathering dust.

Set up in 1979 on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of Indian postal system and centenary of Indian postcard, the museum is fast "losing" its possessions as neglect, dirt and insects take their toll.

No scientific method has been adopted to preserve the exhibits, many of which were donated by unknown individuals from several corners of the country.

A specimen signature of Rabindranath Tagore, who had a post office savings bank account in Shantiniketan, is a prized document on display, but the paper bearing the signature has turned yellow and no effort has been made to arrest decay.

The condition of the 33 postal maps, displayed on boards, is equally bad. The torn and tattered maps of Bengal presidency date back to 1000, showing mail routes, railway lines, roads, post offices and even street letter boxes.

The museum also has a postal insurance policy paper issued by the nobel laureate physicist, C.V. Raman, during his tenure as the Assistant Accounts General of the Calcutta Postal Accounts Department.

A document bearing the signature of Rai Bahadur Dinabandhu Mitra of 'Nildarpan' fame, who was once the inspector of the Beharampur postal division, is also facing the same fate as that of Tagore.

People from all corners of the country donated old postcards and envelopes dating back to 1900.

All postal equipment on show is coated with layers of dust. The imposing brass scale and coin cutting machine were in use at the GPO till 1912.

In those days, if any defective coin was received at the post office, it was first cut with the help of the coin cutting machine ensuring its withdrawal from circulation and then returned to the owner.

The original red colour of three cast iron letter boxes imported from England during the reign of Queen Victoria, has faded.

In the telephone corner, there are 13 quaint models, used in Indian post offices from 1900 to 1945. In the telegraph corner, there is a semaphore equipment, which was used to relay messages between Calcutta and Sagar islands before the advent of the telegraph.

Apart from the weapons carried by the 'runners', there are swords a plenty as well as helmets, used by post office guards.

There are a few ornamental swords as well, which were worn by high officials. Post office workers had also been to war to man camp post offices for British troops. Many of them were killed in the battle-fields and the Army medals awarded to them are also on display.

The museum also has a philatelic library which contains blow ups of stamp including the first Indian postage stamp carrying a portrait of Queen Victoria issued in 1854.

When asked to comment on the dismal condition of the museum, Mr. Bhola Chakrabarty, Deputy Director (I) (Administration) of the Postal Department, said the department was fully aware of the situation.

To preserve the exhibits properly, the Indian Museum and Victoria Memorial were approached, but their response was "lukewarm", he regretted.

The building which houses the museum is a 'heritage building' and this had also come in the way of any attempt to renovate the structure, he said.

(-PTI, Rep. from The Hindustan Times,
New Delhi January 31, 1997)

SPECIAL CANCELLATIONS / SPECIAL COVERS ISSUED

Jan - June 2000

- 23.01.00 Centenary of Parish of Our Lady of Lourdes Shrine, Perambur, Chennai Chennai
- 27.01.00 Golden Jubilee celebration of National Headquarters of Bharat Scouts & Guides, Chennai Camp Chennai
- 07.02.00 Inauguration of Ramakrishna Math Chennai
- 11.02.00 Golden Jubilee of the Institute of Indian Foundrymen, Coimbatore Coimbatore
- 18.02.00 Centenary of Chennai Centre, Trinity College of Music, London Chennai
- 21.02.00 50 Yrs. of the British Council Libraries Chennai
- 04.05.00 142nd Lawrence School Founder's Day Celebration & Golden Jubilee of India Republic Lovedale
- 19.04.00 Silver Jubilee of Kola Saraswathi Vaishnav Sr. Sec. School, Chennai. Chennai
- 21.04.00 Inauguration of new building of Smt. Maharani Bai Jamuna Doss Vaishnav Hr. Sec. School, Chennai Chennai
- 24.04.00 Birth Centenary of S/Shri. Jamuna Doss & Amarchand Doss Chennai
- 27.05.00 Millennium celebration & Inauguration of Website on Acharya Tirumalai Nambi Chennai
24. & Rotopex 2000 Philately
- 25.06.00 Exhibition at Pondicherry Pondicherry
- 29.06.00 50 Yrs. of the Institute of Chartered Accounts of India Chennai

**Wish you all
A MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND
A HAPPY NEW YEAR.**

THE POST THROUGH THE AGES

INDIA

- 1854 Post Office Act XVII introduced
- 1859 Calcutta-Port Blair mail steamer introduced
- 1868 Sea PO between Bombay and Port Said launched
- 1876 India joins the Universal Post Union
- 1879 Postcards introduced
- 1994 Tuticorin-Colombo daily steam mail service starts
- 1897 Certificate of Posting & Express Delivery Introduced
- 1911 21 February, First Airmail Service starts
- 1920 Karachi-Bombay regular Airmail Service starts
- 1932 Business reply cards and envelopes introduced
- 1935 Indian Postal Order introduced
- 1942 Army Postal Service Directorate established.
- 1949 All-up Scheme introduced
- 1968 Number of post offices reaches 1,00,000
- 1972 15 August Postal Index Number introduced.
- 1975 Quick Mail Service introduced.
- 1986 August Speedpost introduced.
- 1994 Express Parcel Service starts VSAT money order introduced.
- 2000 Media Post introduced.

AUSTRALIAN "FIRSTS" IN PHILATELY

by Geoff Kellow

Australia's isolation from the centres of Western influence in scientific thought and social reform that flourished in the mid-nineteenth century was probably just the environment needed to provide the impetus for innovation in postal services. The posted letter was an essential link, both socially and commercial, to the rest of the world, and public demand for cheaper and better postal services was a frequent cry.

Australia was the terminus for many of the longest contract postal routes ever undertaken. Understandably, the maintenance of a regular postal communication between the United Kingdom and Australia was difficult in the extreme, and in the early days of steam shipping when the vessels were less reliable a number of shipping companies, some formed specifically for the purpose of gaining the U.K. to Australia contract, "went under", sometimes literally! The European wars often caused disruptions, and when many vessels were removed from the mail route to serve in the Crimean War, several sailing ship companies filled the breach. These ships established what must be the only regular round-the-world postal route - the clippers left Liverpool and travelled via Cape of Good Hope to Australia, then returned via Cape Horn - a route designed to take advantage of the prevailing winds.

But we are already ahead of ourselves. The story of British postal reform of the late 1830s which culminated in the issue of the world's first postage stamp, the "Penny Black" in May 1840, is wellknown. Arguments continue, but there is no question of the importance of the role Rowland Hill played, at first as a private advocate for postal reform, and later as a Treasury official, in creating the postage stamp. It is remarkable that the New South Wales lettersheet of 1838, issued in response to the publications of Rowland Hill, is not more universally recognised for its unique position, as the world's first prepaid "Stamp", issued some eighteen months before the "Penny Black".

The lettersheets were the idea of the New South Wales Postmaster-General, James Raymond. He must have seen one of Rowland Hill's pamphlets on Post Office Reform, probably the 1837 edition in which the questions of the means by which prepayment of postage could be achieved. Raymond conceived the idea of using a prepaid lettersheet within the Sydney Town Post. This service had been established in 1831 at a special 2d rate. Raymond's concept, agreed by the Governor, was that the lettersheets would result in a general increase in the number of letters posted. A further incentive would be that the letter-sheets would be offered at a discount off the normal rate, at 1d each or 1/3d per dozen. All this was very much along the lines of Rowland Hill's philosophy of postal reform.

The lettersheets were simple in design, being plain, unprinted sheets of paper bearing a colourless embossed seal showing the Royal Arms, engraved especially for the purpose by William Wilson. The lettersheets were issued on 3 November 1838, and continued in use right up to the introduction of adhesive stamps on 1 January 1850. The experiment was a failure, the lettersheets proving unpopular with the public despite further reductions in price to 1/- per dozen in 1841. Their restriction to use within the Sydney Town Post was probably their downfall, as at this time most mail for delivery within the city was probably carried by hand, by servants or employees and bypassed the post.

Examples of these lettersheets are sought after and are scarce, although they cannot be considered in the "rare" category. Hill favoured as the vehicle for prepaid postage, and certainly not the world's first adhesive stamp. The only other serious claimant are the "Cavallini" of Sardinia, first issued in 1818. These were lettersheets with an embossed device which prepaid a paper tax and passed free through the post; however, the tax had to be paid whether a letter was posted or not, and postal historians generally do not consider the "Cavallini" to be prepaid stationery.

The first postage stamps issued in Australia were the "Sydney Views" of New South Wales on 1 January 1850. The "Half-Lengths" of Victoria followed a few days later. The only British Colonies to have preceded these issues were Mauritius in 1847 (the famous "Post Office" stamps), and Bermuda in 1848. The Victorian stamps were in some ways a curious issue. The Port Phillip District was then still part of New South Wales, but Separation was pending and it was felt preferable that a separate issue of postage stamps be made. However "Victoria", although a name popular with the inhabitants, was not the official name of the region - it was officially the Port Phillip District. "Victoria" only became the official name for the Colony upon Separation on 1 July 1851. Thus for eighteen months, stamps were on issue bearing the name of a Colony that did not exist! It is not recorded if the use of "Victoria" on the stamps was a sign of independent action by the Melbourne authorities, or had been authorised from Sydney.

With the introduction of postage stamps, another of the problems of Australia's geographic isolation became apparent. While it was preferable that stamps be procured from the great security printers resident in London, an adequate system of ordering to ensure adequate supplies was difficult. The first issues of New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania were all locally printed, and at various times all the Australian Colonies pursued this course. Victoria was very much the leader in this

regard. It is unique amongst British Colonies in having practically all its postage stamps designed, engraved and printed locally. There are only two exceptions, the 1d and 6d Queen-on-Throne stamps of 1856-58m (engraved and printed by Perkins, Bacon & Co. in London) and the 2d stamp of 1870 (engraved and plate manufactured by De La Rue & Co. but printed in Melbourne). Some of Victoria's early efforts were crude, but eventually the Government Printing Office where stamp printing became centralised became very proficient at producing stamps. Along the way, Victoria created several "records".

- the world's first special purpose stamps. In 1854 special stamps were issued to prepay the late fee (6d) and registration fee (1/-) on letters. These were also amongst the world's first bicoloured stamps. New South Wales followed suit with a registration stamp in 1856.

- postage due stamps introduced on 1 January 1890 were the first to be issued by a British Empire country.

- the 100 stamp issued in 1879 for Stamp duty purposes became authorised for postage between 1884 and 1901. Although in practice its use for this purpose was virtually impossible, this represents, in real terms the highest face value postage stamp ever issued.

- on the negative side, the portrait of Queen Victoria which appeared on the 1d green Stamp Duty adhesive of 1879 (the so-called "Widow's Weeds" portrait) is widely considered to be the ugliest representation of the monarch to ever appear on a stamp. The public outcry was such that the design lasted only seven months before replacement.

The Australian Colonies were responsible for several other significant "firsts". In 1840, Great Britain had intended that mail from Government Departments be franked by a special "Official" stamp, and the Penny Black with "V R" in the upper corners was printed for the purpose. The plan was never put into operation, however, and the "V R" Penny black became an unissued stamp. It was left to South Australia to become the first country to issue special stamps for Government Departments. This was in 1868, when overprints for specific Departments were made on current stamps. These were in use for only six years, before replacement by a generic "O.S." overprint, but in that time no less than 54 different Departmental overprints had been used.

The New South Wales "Centennial" issue of 1888 has strong claims to be being the world's first commemorative issue. There are earlier candidates, but their claims are not strong as none of them bears a commemorative inscription. There was an 1887 stamp issued for a shooting competition by a Frankfurt-am-Main local post, but the New South Wales set remains the first government commemorative issue. The fact that most values of the set remained on issue as definitive stamps, many up to 1913, does not detract from the commemorative nature of the original issue.

The Centennial issue has a further claim to fame. It also includes the world's first government postage stamp to bear the portrait of a living person other than a monarch, other royalty, or a head of state. This was the 20/- denomination, which includes a portrait of Lord Carrington, the New South Wales Governor-General.

New South Wales was again to the fore in 1897. In that

year it had the honour, a very unusual one in the eyes of most collectors at the time, of issuing the world's first charity stamps. These had been inspired by an issue of Charity labels printed by De La Rue in Great Britain in aid of the Prince of Wales Hospital Fund. New South Wales mimicked the large size of these labels, issuing two stamps in aid of Consumptive Homes. The postal value of these stamps was 1d and 2d, but they were sold for 1/- and 2/6d respectively. The high value was an extraordinary stamp lithographed in six colours, and perhaps the world's first true multicoloured stamp. The two stamps were issued in June 1897.



Victoria followed the New South Wales example quickly in October with a similar issue for the Diamond Jubilee Hospital Fund. Condemnation from the stamp collecting community was almost

universal, and Stanley Gibbons refused to catalogue the stamps for many years. These first two issues were, however, a success, as collectors, despite being vociferous in their disapproval of what they saw as unfair fleecing by the authorities, saw the investment potential of the issue. But when Victoria and Queensland each followed with two more stamps for the Boer War Patriotic Fund in 1900 enough was enough and sales of these stamps were poor. Although charity issues were to become a common enough occurrence in future, the distaste left by these first issues remained for many years, and the Universal Postal Union passed a resolution banning the use of charity stamps on international mails.

Federation should have brought an end to the issues of the Australian Colonies, but as we all know it did not. It was twelve years before the uniform Kangaroo stamps were issued in 1913. This unusual situation was the result more of legislative necessity in maintaining the revenue of each State separately, than of any difficulty in securing a suitable design, although that also turned out to be a laborious process in which everyone had an opinion, and numerous changes of Government and

Postmasters-General played a part.

Today, a separate issue of postage stamps for any new political entity seems to be a matter of some priority, an outward sign to the world of new-found independence. The hiatus between Federation and a Commonwealth stamp issue may be unique in its longevity. A situation similar to that in which



Australia found itself in 1901 was experienced by South Africa in 1910. The amalgamation of the Cape Colony, Natal, Transvaal and Orange Free State to form the Union of South Africa took place on 31 May 1910. The first Union stamp was issued on 4 November 1910 - notably a 2d stamp for the international mails. It took until 1 September 1913 for the full definitive issue to appear, a gestation period of three and a half years, well short of Australia's twelve years. Those modifications to postal procedure which could be made in spite of the restricting legislation were implemented progressively. One remarkable outcome of this was that Australia issued postage due stamps years before it issued postage stamps. The first issues of postage dues for the Commonwealth in the modified New South Wales design were made in 1902. These were for use in all States except Victoria, which continued to use its own postage due stamps. However, in 1909 the Victorian design was adapted for Commonwealth-wide use.

FRANK AND FEARLESS IN THE SKY

Peter Jennings on some early and unusual methods of postal delivery

Every first air mail has a story behind it, and there is a special thrill about collecting envelopes and postcards flown across dangerous and uncharted terrain by intrepid pioneer flyers in a variety of machines.

The first public air mail did not go by aeroplane, but by manned balloon during the siege of Paris in 1870. Ballon-Montes, though unsteerable, were the only way to escape the Prussians. Amazingly, the majority of more than 60 flights between September 1870 and January 1871 successfully crossed enemy lines, carrying thousands of missives.



Pigeon post came before delivery by aircraft. This cover comes from New Zealand, 1904

On the other side of the world, during February 1897, Fricker's Great Barrier Pigeongram Agency opened for business in New Zealand. As a result of urgent demands by the Great Barrier Island community for a speedier means of communication with Auckland in the North Island, Mr. Joseph Smales, a mining promoter, negotiated with Mr. Walter Fricker of Auckland, for the establishment of a regular pigeon post service to operate from Okupu.

Two years later, a rival company called the Great Barrier Pigeongram Agency was formed, and a special flimsy Pigeon Mail form produced.

After 1904, the population of the Great Barrier Island dwindled considerably because of mines closing down, and four years later a cable was laid from Great Barrier Island to the

...no longer a need for the

Meanwhile, in Great Britain during 1907, the public had an opportunity to buy and send souvenir post cards in the balloon Mammoth, sponsored by The Daily Graphic newspaper, to break the world's record in long-distance ballooning.

Manned by three aeronauts, including the proprietor of the balloon, Mr. J.L. Tannar, Mammoth lifted off from Crystal Palace, London, on October 12. Later most of the cards were thrown out when the balloon crash-landed about 100 miles north of Gothenburg in Sweden. A number of cards were subsequently posted back to England by Mr. A.V. Mickov, a local teacher. Like the pigeon post, these cards are now very valuable.

Three years later, the first air mail flight in Great Britain took place at Blackpool on August 17, 1910, when special cards purchased by the public were carried in an aeroplane piloted by Mr. C. Grahame-White. Due to bad weather, the flight, organised by The Empire Illustrated, covered a distance of only seven miles.

The cards were subsequently taken to London and posted in the ordinary way.

The world's first official airmail flight was made in India the following year in connection with the United Provinces Industrial and Agricultural Exhibition, held at Allahabad.

The mail of about 6,500 letters and cards was flown on February 18, 1911 by the French aviator H. Pequet from the exhibition grounds to Naini Junction five miles away. A special circular postmark in bright magenta was applied to the stamps.

Mail by air increased in popularity, but the addition of a special air mail fee on letters and cards made this form of transport prohibitively expensive for many people. In the autumn of 1923, in order to reduce the cost and time of sending a letter from Iraq to London, Mr. Douglas Gumbley, the Guernsey-born Inspector General of Posts and Telegraphs in Iraq, initiated a successful Overland Desert Mail service between Baghdad, Damascus and Haifa.

He used the Nairn Desert Mail Service run by two New Zealand brothers, Norman and Gerald Nairn. Letters and cards had to be inscribed Overland Mail, and later special red Overland Mail labels were produced.

Gumbley wanted to start an air mail service in Iraq without surcharge. Though thwarted, he did succeed in reducing the high cost of sending a letter by the developing air services passing through Baghdad and Basra.

He designed and had printed an Air Mail Letter Card of special size and weight, which was issued by Iraq on July 15, 1933, and registered at Stationers' Hall, London, under his own copyright.

This Air Mail Letter Card, the forerunner of the air letter form and today's aerogram, was successfully adopted for use by British Forces during the Second World War.

The first connecting service on the new Imperial Airways service from Cairo to Basra left London 70 years ago on January 6, 1927, a vital stage on the Empire route down the Persian Gulf to British India and beyond.

At the time, Great Britain held the mandate to administer Iraq, and postage on a letter was 3d per ounce to Iraq, and 6d per ounce to India.

Imperial Airways (formed in 1924) had taken over the operation of the Desert Air Mail Service, Cairo to Baghdad, from the Royal Air Force the previous month.

Through the years, mail has been sent by many means. Apollo XI lunar astronauts, Neil Armstrong, Michael Collins and Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin, each carried an envelope or two during their historic Moon landing on July 21, 1969.

One of these covers is expected to fetch more than \$ 10,000 at auction in Germany on February 8, 1997.

One of the most quaint ways of sending mail was adopted by Tonga in the Pacific. The island of Niuafu'ou had no harbour, and mail for the islanders used to be floated ashore in tin cans and picked up by swimmers who would come out one or two miles.

In later years, canoes replaced the swimmers after one was attacked by a shark. Tonga Tin Can Mail is now, like all the various flights and means of sending mail, much sought after by stamp collectors.

(Reprinted from The TIMES (London), 7 January 1997)

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