



# SIPA Bulletin

For Private Circulation to Members only

Vol. 22 No. 5

September - October 2001

Bimonthly

## GUEST EDITORIAL

### NEED TO RESTRICT PERSONALITY STAMPS

(An interview by Mr. Vispi S. Dastur with Mr. R.K. Saiyed, Secretary, Department of Posts, Ministry of Communications in 1989)

**VSD:** Mr. Saiyed, could you tell us something about your career in the Department of Posts?

**R.K.S.:** I joined the Indian Postal service in 1955 and after 34 years of service risen to as Chairman Postal Services Board on 2 Feb 1989.

**VSD:** Many philatelists in India and abroad feel that the design and quality of Indian stamps require to be improved. Our readers would like to know what the Department is doing to improve the quality of Indian stamps?

**R.K.S.:** There is always room for improvement. However, I would like to point out that some of the stamps issued by us can favourably compare with the best in the world. The various aspects that go into the quality of a stamp viz. design, the paper, the pigments or the ink and the printing techniques are all engaging the attention of the Department. All these are being examined in consultation with the India Security Press which prints our stamps.

**VSD:** Why can't India have a proper annual programme for the issue of stamps during the year decided well in advance?

**R.K.S.:** The annual stamp issue programme is based on the recommendations of the Philatelic Advisory Committee. Generally every endeavour is made to issue it well in advance.

**VSD:** Why can't proper advance publicity in India and abroad be given to Indian stamps?

**R.K.S.:** Publicity for our stamps is done keeping in view the financial constraints and other relevant aspects. You will be happy to know that for the future, we are planning a more aggressive publicity policy.

**VSD:** There is a general feeling amongst philatelists in India and abroad that India issues too many stamps on personalities. Cannot the Department ensure that too many personality stamps are not issued?

**R.K.S.:** I agree with you that there is a need to restrict the number of personality stamps. This aspect will, therefore, be once again discussed at the meeting of our Philatelic Advisory Committee when it meets next.

**VSD:** Can we not make the personality stamps issued

more attractive by showing in the background something with which the personality was connected with as it was done in the case of the Coomaraswamy stamp?

**R.K.S.:** As pointed out by you in the past we have issued personality stamps including a depiction of the achievements in the background in addition to the portrait of the personality. However, this is possible only when the Department receives such material from the sponsors.

**VSD:** It is felt by many that high denomination stamps are killing the hobby, especially amongst juniors. Has the Department considered this aspect?

**R.K.S.:** I am afraid I do not agree that the Department is issuing high denomination stamps. In fact it will be noticed that the vast majority of our stamps are issued in the lower denominations which in fact is having an adverse impact on our philatelic revenues.

**VSD:** Why can't the Department like any prudent businessman, set apart a portion of its philatelic revenue for the promotion of philately?

**R.K.S.:** The aspect of improving our philatelic publicity is already engaging our attention. As far as setting apart a portion of the philatelic revenue is concerned, this requires to be considered in the context of the overall cost of our philatelic activity.

**VSD:** Some years back the Post Office had brought our beautiful greeting cards with the design of a stamp on the cover and the actual stamp of the same design inside the card. These were well appreciated in India and abroad. Can't the Department regularly bring out such greeting cards which will not only promote Indian stamps but also bring some revenue to the Department?

**R.K.S.:** Your suggestion for bringing out Greeting Cards with designs of stamps on the cover will be examined. However, it may be pointed out that with the large number of Greeting Cards of various attractive designs available in the market, these are likely to have only a limited sale.

**VSD:** Can't the Department support the few All-India Philatelic journals through the regular release of advertisements?

**R.K.S.:** The Department does occasionally release paid advertisements but the same are issued keeping in view the availability of funds for the purpose and the coverage which the advertisement will have.

It is really interesting that Mr. Dastur's feelings and ideas still persists with philatelic community.

**Editor.**

Our Second Sunday Meetings were held regularly where 30 members attended with President Shri. Balakrishna Das presiding. Mr. Madan Mohan Das spoke on "Entries for Nationals at Nashik" in August.



## STAMP NEWS

### PERSONALITY SERIES: THE SPIRIT OF NATIONALISM

#### SYAMA PRASAD MOOKERJEE, C. SANKARAN NAIR, U. KIANG NONGBAH AND KRISHNA NATH SARMAH

06.07.2001

400,400,400,400 0.4 million each



Syama Prasad Mookerjee (1901-1953) inherited a rich tradition of nationalism and fearlessness from his illustrious father, Sir Asutosh Mookerjee. A brilliant academic, he became the youngest Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University in 1934. He took interest in politics very early and was one among the leading lights of the Hindu Mahasabha. Though he became the Finance Minister of Bengal in 1941,

he resigned from the post in protest against the British policies. When the partition of India became inevitable, he was largely instrumental in retaining parts of Bengal and Punjab in the country. In independent India, he was part of the first National Government of 1947, but resigned from it in 1950 in disagreement with the policy towards Pakistan. In 1951 he organised a new political party, the *Bhartiya Jana Sangh*. He argued strongly for the complete integration of Jammu and Kashmir with India and was arrested while on a campaign in Srinagar in 1953. He died while in custody. He was a nationalist to the core and "Country comes first" was his watchword.

C. Sankaran Nair (1857-1934) hailed from an aristocratic family in north Kerala. Making a mark as an eminent lawyer early in his career, he went on to become a Judge of the High Court of Madras, in which capacity he was considered one of the ablest. The British Government recognised his abilities and conferred many distinctions and honours upon him, culminating in a nomination to the Viceroy's Council in 1919. Despite his admiration for the British democratic institutions, Sankaran Nair was an ardent nationalist who had the courage to speak out for his country. He was elected President of the Indian National Congress in 1897. His notes of dissent as a member of the Viceroy's council in 1919 created quite a sensation and when he resigned from the Council in the same year in protest against the British atrocities in Punjab, he received an unprecedented ovation. He was also an educationist, an author and a social reformer.

U Kiang Nongbah (1862) (date of birth not recorded) was a great freedom fighter of the Jaintia hills of Meghalaya, who lived and fought his epic struggle against the British during the first War of Independence (1857) and after. He was quick to realise that a disciplined fighting force was necessary to counter

the mighty military machine of the British. Opportunity came his way when he was elected leader of a group of headmen and he went on to lead the war of liberation of Jaintia against the British. Kiang Nongbah and his men launched a guerilla war against the British forces, humiliating their superiority in arms and trained men through ambushes. Kiang was badly injured in one of the bloodiest battles. He was captured by the British while he was recuperating and later hanged on the 30th of December, 1862.

Krishna Nath Sarma (1887-1947) was a renowned nationalist and social reformer from Assam. After graduating in Science and law, he had started legal practice in 1917. However, heeding to the call of Mahatma Gandhi he joined the freedom struggle, renouncing a flourishing practice and a promising career. As one among the founders of the Congress in Assam and the national level, he concentrated on the constructive work and never aspired for any position. The opening of his private ancestral temple to the Harijans was an epoch making event. He also had to suffer imprisonment at the hands of the colonial rulers, but made the most of his incarceration by giving expression to his literary talents by translating books like the "Ramacharit Manasa" and "Gita" into Assamese.

*Theme: Personalities, Patriots, Freedom Fighters.*

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### CHANDRAGUPTA MAURYA

21.07.2001

400

3 million



Though historians often credit the Nandas of Magadha for being the first empire builders of India, it was with Chandragupta Maurya, the young adventurer who unseated the Nandas in 321 B.C. that the imperial idea found a definite expression.

A strategic geographical position as well as an abundance of natural resources had already created favourable conditions for the emergence of an empire with Magadha as its nucleus. By virtue of its location, Magadha had control over the lower plain of the Ganga. The forests provided timber for building activities and the presence of local iron ore deposits enabled the manufacture of implements and weapons. The land was fertile, yielding rich harvests. Land taxes became a substantial source of revenue for the treasury, in turn making it possible to raise the mighty army with which the Mauryan kings overran the whole of India.

Indika, the memoirs of Megasthenes, the Greek Ambassador to the Court of Chandragupta Maurya and *Arthashastra* the compendious work of Chanakya are the main sources from which we can learn and infer about the life and times of Chandragupta Maurya. It is believed that Chandragupta hailed from a humble background. He did not have the military might to match the Nandas, yet managed to acquire the throne and keep it, making use of the strategies of Chanakya, his chief advisor. Chandragupta expanded the empire steadily and leaving Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and parts of north-eastern India, the Mauryas ruled over the whole of the subcontinent.



Chandragupta Maurya was a far-sighted ruler. He established a well organised administrative system and gave it a sound financial base.

Chandragupta's reign lasted for about 25 years. According to Jain tradition, he adopted Jainism, having been influenced by the saint Bhadrabahu. He is believed to have abdicated the throne in favour of his son Bindusara and pursued a spiritual life thereafter.

Owing to his remarkable military successes and insight into state craft, Chandragupta Maurya stands out as one among the most colourful personalities of Indian history.

*Theme : History, Rulers, Personality*

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## CORALS OF INDIA

02.08.2001      400, 400, 1500, 4500    3 million each



Coral reefs are among the greatest splendours of nature. They are the biggest structures built by living organisms. The extent of biodiversity supported by the coral reef is matched by no other ecosystem except the tropical rain forest.

Interestingly, the vast reefs are built by tiny coral animals, often so small that they are invisible to the naked eye. What is commonly referred to as coral is actually the skeleton of the coral animal, which is also called a polyp. Polyps generally multiply by the process of budding, whereby a portion of the parent pinches off to form a daughter polyp. All the daughter polyps along with their skeletons form a colony. Every coral colony begins as a minute skeleton of one single polyp, and keeps on growing by adding more and more individuals. The shapes, sizes and textures of the coral colonies vary enormously. There are at least 800 corals species, each one producing a distinct colony-rounded, flat, massive, leaf-like, brain-like and so on.

The coral reef ecosystem is a diverse collection of species that co-exist in remarkable symbiosis. Sponges, sea anemones, worms, sea urchins, shrimps, crabs, octopuses, squids, clams, turtles, sea snakes and different types of fishes live in the reefs, adding to their colour and splendour.

About 250 species of corals are known to exist in Indian reefs, a majority of them in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The other areas with well-grown coral reefs are the Gulf of Mannar, Gulf of Kacchh and Lakshadweep. Coral reefs provide livelihood to coastal communities by way of food and ornamental fishes, shells, algae and tourism. Coral reef organisms are also huge reservoirs of bioactive molecules of potential pharmaceutical value. There is an urgent need to spread awareness about the economic and ecological importance of corals so that any further damage to this important ecosystem can be prevented.

The corals which figure on the stamp are *Acropora digitifera*, *Fungia horrida*, *Montipora acutuberculata* and *Acropora formosa*. The first one is a digitate coral having finger-like projections arising from the colony base. *Fungia horrida*, commonly called the mushroom coral, is a single polyp and unlike other corals, is capable of limited movement. *Montipora acutuberculata* or the velvet coral grows in the form of whorls. *Acropora formosa*, also known as the staghorn coral, resembles antlers and is among the most beautiful organisms in the reefs.

*Theme : Nature, Corals, Environment.*

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## DWARAKA PRASAD MISHRA

5.08.2001      400      0.4 million



march towards progress.

Dwaraka Prasad Mishra (1901-1988), former Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, joined the national movement at a young age heeding the call of Mahatma Gandhi. He was prominent in the erstwhile Central Provinces in organising the political struggle against the colonial rulers. He was in the forefront of the national movement from 1920 onwards and came into close association with Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and other national leaders. He exposed the exploitative practices of the British as well as their policy of 'Divide and Rule'. He was jailed for a number of years for his role in the freedom struggle.

In post-independence India, he was a prominent figure in the national political scene. His tenure as the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh saw the all round development of the state. He stood for industrialization and for India becoming self-sufficient economically. He was a practitioner of truth and fairness in political life. He had the moral courage to stand up against the disease of defections which was the scourge of Indian political life in the 1960's and 70's, unmindful of the threat of his own political career being jeopardised.



Dwaraka Prasad Mishra was a journalist of repute, having edited the Hindi journals Lokmat, Sharda and Saarthi and used them masterfully to put across his views and messages to the masses. His epic poem, Krishnayan, was highly acclaimed by the critics. In this book, his dream of a happy and free India in which the highest welfare of the people is served has been portrayed.

Theme : Personality, Patriot, Freedom Fighter.

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## CHAUDHARY BRAHM PARKASH

11.08.2001

400

0.4 million



Chaudhary Brahm Prakash (1918-1993), former Chief Minister of Delhi, was a leader known for his selfless public service, social commitment and organisational abilities.

Hailing from the village Shakarpur in Delhi, he started his public life with the local Congress Committee in 1936, at a time when the freedom struggle was moving

towards its crescendo. He was assigned an important role in Mahatma Gandhi's Individual Satyagraha Movement of 1940. He was imprisoned many times by the colonial rulers. During the 'Quit India' movement of 1942, he was one among the leaders of the 'under ground' activities in Delhi.

In the post-independence period, he was a leading light in the political arena of Delhi and served as the Minister in charge of Planning and Development as well as the Chief Minister. He also served as a member of India's delegation to the United Nations in 1966. His stints in the Parliament during 1957-71 and 1977-79 saw him winning accolades as an able parliamentarian. He also made noteworthy contributions as the Union Cabinet Minister for Food, Agriculture, Irrigation and Cooperatives.

Rural development and empowerment of the weaker and depressed sections of the society were causes close to Chaudhary Brahm Parkash's heart. He started organising village and agriculture cooperatives as early as 1945. Strengthening the cooperative movement remained a life-long pre-occupation for him. He was also a proponent of the Panchayati Raj institutions. He organised the National Union of Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Minorities in 1977 to work for the welfare of these weaker sections.

Theme : Personality, Revolutionary, Freedom Fighter.

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## AUGUST KRANTI : BALLIA

19.08.2001

400

0.4 million

The August Kranti (August Revolution) which took place in Ballia in Uttar Pradesh is one among the most inspiring chapters of the Quit India Movement of 1942.

The Indian National Congress at its Bombay session

(August 1942) passed the famous Quit India Movement of 1942.

The Indian National Congress at its Bombay session (August 1942) passed the famous Quit India resolution, calling for a mass struggle under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. "Do or Die" was the mantra which Gandhiji gave the people of India. However, even before the Congress could start the movement, the British administrative machinery came down swiftly and heavily. All the major leaders were arrested and the Congress itself was declared illegal. Popular revolts broke out across the length and breadth of the country, with the battle cry of "British, Quit India".

A prominent feature of the Quit India Revolt was the chain of 'National Governments', which came to be established in many parts of the country, though most of them could survive only for a few weeks.

In Ballia District of U.P. the revolt started with protest demonstrations of the students. The arrest of a few girls and at-random firing by the police in the market sent a wave of indignation into the hearts of the people. The resultant anger and excitement led to spontaneous acts of protest like removal of rails, cutting of telegraph wires and burning of railway and police stations in the rural areas. In less than a week the local people raided the police stations, treasuries and other government offices of the District and occupied them. The authorities surrendered immediately and the national flag was hoisted over these buildings.

Having occupied the whole District and disrupted the colonial administrative machinery, the onus of setting up a parallel 'government' fell upon the leaders of the revolt. They undertook the task in a most responsible and efficient manner and a National Government was set up in Ballia on the 19th of August. Chittu Pandey, a charismatic leader described as the "Tiger of Ballia" by Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose, headed the Government.

Unfortunately, the new Government could not last for more than a few days, in the face of the severe repression unleashed by the British rulers. Though the movement was finally suppressed, it did succeed in demonstrating the depth and fervour of the nationalist feelings. It provided beyond any doubt that the days of colonialism were numbered in India.

Theme : Freedom Struggle, History.

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## UNDERSTANDING OVERPRINTS

Juan J. Parodiz

Many collectors look askance at overprints, like something annoying which is philatelically acceptable only for the sake of completion. No comprehensive collection of a topic can be made without including some of these stamps because of their importance. A thematic collection should include all philatelic elements including appropriate overprints. In fact overprints is a collecting subject in its own right, and so in the ATA Code of Collecting Interests is listed as #714. There are a few overprints that were made only for propaganda, but the majority of them fill real postal needs.

In the past collectors were suspicious of overprints



because forgeries are common. It is easier to counterfeit an overprint than to reproduce a design. In the 19th century, forgers even produced their own "varieties" with inscriptions upside-downs. Early faked overprints were made as surcharges, small changes in denominations, because the intention of the forger was less to deceive the collector of rarities.

Since the most common method of over-printing is typography, (surface printing or letter-press) the irregularity of the letter-setting caused many variations in position, orthographical errors, inversions, or change of the letter size in successive printings. Sometimes an overprint was applied to the wrong stamp in the wrong color. The variations that can be found in overprints are numerous.

Some overprints obliterate the design so badly that recognition of the design is difficult. In such case it is convenient to mount next to it the original for comparison "before and after".

Postal historians cannot ignore overprints because those stamps may reveal not only monetary changes but origin of the distribution and dates.

Some overprints are known to be applied not to the face but to the back of the stamps, as the Nicaragua (Scott 279-286) revenues surcharged for regular postage. Control numbers on back were common on stamps of Spain and early Greek issues, as well as graphite lines on the first Queen Elizabeth stamps of Great Britain. These can be called, more properly, "underprints".

Specimens as in many United States from 1851 to 1904, as well as Muestra in Spanish or Saggio in Italian, are "samples" overprinted previous to the circulation of the issue. Examples of commemorative overprints are those of the United States Molly Pittcher (Scott 644) and Hawaii (Scott 647-648) on stamps of 1922.

Overprints were used to provide stamps to countries when they did not yet have their own. The first stamps in Paraguay were issued in 1870, but in 1868 during the occupation of the Fort Humaita by forces of the Triple Alliance (Argentina - Brazil - Uruguay), Argentine stamps of 1867 (Scott 20, 21, 23) were valid for postage in Paraguay, with a diamond postmark formed by 15 parallel lines and the letter "H" in the center: such postmark was equivalent to an overprinted "Occupation Stamp."

One early overprint to indicate change of value, "5c" over "13c" was that of Hawaii of 1853 (Scott 7). In 1854 the first overprint to indicate value in letters was on a stamp of Mauritius (Scott 12) written by hand. First change of country name was for Straits Settlements on India stamps of 1867. First to indicate the kind of use was Natal 1869 inscribed "Postage", and the Luxemburg officials of 1875. In 1855 Spain printed new values for Cuba and Puerto Rico "Y1/2" over "2 reales" (the value was 2-1/2 since the letter Y in Spanish stands for "and"). The first airmail was overprinted "Experimento Posta Aerea, Maggio 1917" on Italian special delivery stamps "Espresso" of 1903.

Some items exist, as those of 1938 Denmark (Scott 262) commemorating the 10th Philatelic Exhibition in that country with numeral types overprinted on alternate stamps "D.F.U., FRIM-UDST 1938" so a pair of stamps are needed in the collection.

Manuals and philatelic guides devote very little space to inform about overprints. Most definitions are found briefly in glossaries, stressing mainly their character of surcharges. For other aspects the collector must walk his fingers over thousands of catalogue pages to discover the great variation in categories that can be found in overprints.

For the purpose of studying them, I separated the overprints first into four major Classes: Surcharges, Changes in country name, Category of mail and Special Overprints. Each of these classes are divided into several Subclasses and Infraclasses as follows:

#### Class A: Surcharges



A-1 Change in denomination of currency. The example shown here is a stamp of South Georgia (Falkland Islands Dependencies) with an overprint for change of currency.



A-2 Changes caused by inflation. In 1923, Germany produces an abundance of stamps with overprinted values ranging from 8,000 marks to many million marks. Here is one such example.

A-3 Change to foreign currency. Stamps of Italy were surcharged for the occupation of Trieste, while Australian stamps were surcharged for offices in the Turkish Empire.

#### Class-B: Changes in Country Status



B-1 Change in Country Name. Stamps the U.S.A., for the Philippines were overprinted in 1935 when the Philippines became Commonwealth of the Philippines.



Stamps of Belgian Congo were overprinted CONGO in 1960 when the

Congo Democratic Republic became an independent republic.

Stamps of New Zealand were overprinted NIUE after Niue was annexed to New Zealand in 1901.







B-2 Change in Type of Government. After Malta became an independent nation within the British Commonwealth, their stamps were overprinted Self-Government 1947.



B-3 Occupations and Mandates. The British overprinted Transjordan stamps Palestine in Jerusalem in 1920.



B-5 Offices Abroad. Romanian post offices in the Turkish Empire used Romanian stamps overprinted Posta Romania/Constantinople.

**Class C: Changes in Mail Usage**

C-1 Change to Airmail. These were often used on both definitives and commemoratives. For example, Colombia overprinted their stamps as early as 1932 with Correo Aereo, or as shown here, Aereo.



Panama overprinted their 1942 airmail stamps with Aereo B/0.05/1947.

C-2 Postage Due. Bavaria



overprinted their 1876 regular issues with Vom Empfänger Zahibar to

turn them into postage due stamps.



C-3 Official overprints. Numerous countries overprinted their stamps with the word Official, such as the fancy inscription on this Luxembourg stamp.

Sometimes the official overprints are not easy to identify. For example, this India stamp overprinted O.H.M.S. is an abbreviation for On His/Her Majesty Service used on stamps of the British Empire.



Bavaria used an E for Eisenbahn," and Canada used a G for Government to identify officials. Argentina officials are various overprinted M.A. for Ministry of Agriculture" or M.I. for Ministry of Interior.

C-4 Commemorative Overprints. Nicaragua added to their Rotary International commemorative an overprint for a 1956 national exposition.



C-5 Pictorial Overprints. When Japanese occupation of Korea ended after World War II, stamps were overprinted with the

Korean logo and surcharged with a new value.

C-6 Precancels. This Belgium stamp carries a precancel reading Belgique / 1937 / Belgie. Some of these issues were also overprinted and surcharged + 10FR by the Association Belgie Americaine for the dedication of the Bastogne Memorial on July 16, 1950.



C-7 Semi-postals. This Hungarian stamp is overprinted converting it as a semi-postal for widows and orphans of World War 1.

**Class D: Special Overprints**

D-1 Universal Postal Union. Stamps of a number of countries are overprinted U.P.U. for the Universal Postal Union.



D - 2

Plebiscites. German stamps were overprinted Plebiscite Olsytyn Allenstein for use of the district of East Prussia following World War 1.



part of Poland.

D-3 Publicity Overprints. This 1949 Panama stamp is overprinted





Lucha Contra el Cancer to promote the fight against cancer.

Aden overprinted their 1942 stamps Victory Issue/8th June 1946 to publicize the victory of the Allies in World War II.



It is these publicity overprints which topical collectors will find of most interest for their thematic collections. Many combinations of overprints, surcharges, and precancels exist, so the collector needs to study the catalogs and philatelic literature carefully.

(Courtesy : Topical time, 1998)

## PALEOLITHIC ART

Hamish Anderson

In any study of the prehistoric ages it is important to accurately define in terms of time exactly what we mean by prehistory. Some determine the beginning of recorded history with Julius Caesar and the Gallic Wars. Thus this would express prehistory as before 51 BC as far as western Europe is concerned. Paleolithic Art falls into a tiny section (about 30,000 years) at the end of 3,000,000 years of prehistory starting with the beginnings of the Old Stone Age.

Why man began to paint and carve and the reasons for the subjects chosen are conjecture. Implements and hand tools had appeared and improved. There was a presence of religion and prayers of some sort were made to ease man's lot in simply existing. This meant hunting, fishing, and reproduction. Often this was done by representations as is often found in cave art (painted and/or incised) which is plentiful in western Europe. As in Africa and Australia, art was placed in less protected areas but time and weather have conspired to destroy such art.

Although standards tended to be European, it must be remembered that each region developed at its own pace. What may be regarded as New Stone Age (or Neolithic around 2,000 BC) in Europe could be today in New Guinea. Therefore we must be careful in our judgements and let each area stand on its own.

Paleolithic art in Europe lasted from about 40,000 to 8,000 BC. Incising (petroglyphs), drawing (petrographs), painting, and carving or sculpting continued beyond that time through the Stone, Bronze, and

occurrence. Here we are concerned with the development of Cave Art and Art Mobilier (small carvings that could be personally carried about) during the period known as the last Ice Age.

### Cave Painting

Cave painting is the most common and best preserved form of paleolithic art. In ranges from primitive finger and hand markings to skillfully executed three dimensional paintings.

Most hand images date from about 40,000 to 30,000 BC. They were created by blowing a powder (frequently red ochre) over the outstretched hand held against a rock face. The reason for this practice is not known. An example from the end of the period in E1 Castillo Cave, Santander, is shown on Spain (Scott 1453).

Line drawings followed during the next 10,000 years; they were often created by a series of 'blots' making a dotted line. These dots were created by blowing powder through a hollow tube and, although more often than not black, they are also seen in both yellow and red. The deer-like animals in Covalanas Cave, Santander, shown on Spain (Scott 1455) show this but one must study the stamp under



magnification to see it clearly. The sureness and confidence of line was accompanied by the beginnings of shading and modeling. During this period, there were parallel developments in Art Mobilier of which best known are the 'Venuses' found from the Pyrenees to the Urals. One of the best known is that found in Brassempouy in southwest France in



1894. This is a finely modeled head in mammoth ivory less than 1.5 inches in length which has been dated to ca. 23,000 BC. A beautiful representation is seen on France (Scott 1465).

Shading and modeling techniques of bone, mane, and muscle (in black) was clearly demonstrated by 18,000 BC. An excellent example of this period is to be seen on France (Scott 1642). This shows a superb rendering of bison in the 'Salon Noir' of Niaux Grotto. Perhaps the difficulty of reaching this site near Andorra-many of the paintings are a mile inside the cave-has resulted in the cave not attracting the attention of many of the other caves.

Towards the end of the Ice Age (10,000 BC), figures appeared filled with black and red color, often with a brown outline or filling. Human forms, seldom seen before this time, appear with increasing frequency. Examples of this period are Spain



Iron Ages, but declined in both importance and





(Scott 1451) depicting an ornament and Spain (Scott 1884) from the Arana Cave which is said to be a woman gathering honey.

The following millennium saw figures

becoming more realistic and colorful; the bison from the ceiling of Altamira (Spain, Scott 1452) is a particularly fine example.



The golden age of Cave Art discovery was undoubtedly the 50 years spanning the 19th and 20th centuries. The great complex of galleries spread all over southwest France and northern Spain mainly came to light during this period. Pre-eminent at this time was a priest called Henri Brueil (France, Scott B500) many of whose ideas have in recent times been modified in the light of modern thinking. His 'cave art' career and passion began in 1900 when he was invited at the age of 23 to trace the engravings at a site in the French Dordogne, called La Mouthe. This led to an unparalleled career in the field of pre-history. His vast records over the following sixty years are regarded as fundamental to the scientific study of Paleolithic Art. His career extended not only over Europe but into the more recent discoveries in Africa. Said to be obstinate and resistant to criticism of his ideas, he is nonetheless the giant to whom we owe so much in the field.



Prehistoric art did not capture the public imagination until the discovery of Lascaux in 1940 by four

schoolboys chasing their dog. This gallery was a revelation in its realistic portrayals and use of symbolism. So popular did this site become that by 1960 more than 2,000 people a day were queuing to see the Hall of Bulls. This so badly affected the caves to preserve them. It was thought that exhaled breath had done the



damage and today only small select parties have the opportunity to view the treasures. But we can all get a sight of the roof of the Hall of Bulls on France (Scott 1204). Much argument developed over dating this site but consensus now places it towards the end of the Ice Age (10,000 to 8,000 BC).

The passing of the Ice Age led to man leading a less nomadic existence and the herds of reindeer, bison, and mammoth were replaced by more easily tamed animals. Man, the ever-moving hunter, became the static hunter-fishing tackle appeared; and the bow entered the arena. This was reflected in the subject matter in the continued cave art on a much subdued scale. The beginning of this period (8,000 to 3,000 BC) is called Mesolithic and marks the increase in humans appearing as art subjects. Towards the end of the Mesolithic and into the Neolithic Age, groups of hunters as well as the bow and arrow appear frequently (see Spain Scott 1449, 1454, 1457, and 1458).

The neolithic or New Stone Age (3,000 to 2,000 BC) led to the virtual demise of cave painting in Europe. There is a great body of African work which helps fill this gap but much of it is thought by scholars to be of more recent origin (in some cases mid-nineteenth century). Although, cave painting disappeared from the scene,



there was a late flowering of rock carving in Scandinavia during the Bronze Age (2,000 to 500 BC) which is illustrated on Norway (Scott 420 et al) and Sweden (Scott 468 et al).

Generally, while we find Cave Art in Europe deep within caves, elsewhere it is frequently found in an open, though protected spot. Often we use a subtle change in terminology to Rock Art. Many places had no Ice Age but had equally harsh variations in climate (the Sahara was once green), and this is reflected in the changes in subject and style we see over the centuries.

Wherever in the world this art is to be found the same themes of fishing, hunting, and reproduction occur followed by movement towards a farming community.

The names by which we identify various cultures come from southwest France (for example, Aurignac, Perigord, and La Solutre) because of the early discoveries made there. The Franco-Cantabrian area reigns supreme in the study of Paleolithic Art. There is, however, a wide area of work following



the same cultural pattern scattered from Andalusia through the lower Rhone valley to Sicily. Generally of poorer quality, it is difficult to date.

#### Africa

There was an easy and established connection between North Africa and Europe which the retreat of the ice sheet and the subsequent increase in the height of the water level destroyed. But it had existed long enough for African Rock Art to display striking similarities with Europe. Africa is a treasure house of Stone Age Art which tends to be older and nearer to Paleolithic times in the north and generally more recent in the south.



The glorious finds at Taasil-N-Ajjer (Algeria, Scott 367) are dated to 6,000 BC, while the wonderful Wadi Mathendous (Libya,

Scott 715) is 8,000 BC. Both could be contemporary with later European Cave Art.

South of the Sahara the discoveries in Chad (Scott J26, C39) are also of considerable antiquity, as is Mauritania (Scott 216). The south of Africa (SW Africa, Scott 250) and (Lesotho, Scott 62) is rich in rock art but not as old as previously thought although dating of the pigments used in Tanzania has pushed the envelope of time further back. Final assessments have still to be made.

On the other hand, Swaziland (Scott 285), has some spectacular work with Paleolithic characteristics which is dated around 1700-1850. Such variations are perhaps not surprising as the study of Paleolithic Art is hardly an exact science. A case in point was the discovery of the art of Rouffinac in France. In 1956 a serious row erupted as the Abbe Breuil had certified these to no less than the French Institute while his opponents declared they had not existed before 1948 and had then been manufactured a few at a time until 'discovered'. The argument bubbles on.

#### Australasia

Australia also displays a north-south divide. Some work in the north is tentatively dated 35,000 BC, though it is generally 6,000 BC. One of the great problems is that up to 100 years ago the aborigines regularly repainted their heritage. In the north the painting is naturalistic but is more geometric in the south and southeast (Australia, Scott 933). Also, in the south we



find the style (known as X-ray) where the internal structure and organs are depicted.

New Zealand (Scott 777) was not colonized by the Maoris until the migration from Polynesia about 750 AD; thus their painting cannot be older than that date. In Polynesia itself we



have many records such as French Polynesia (Scott 461) but almost all are within our millennium.

#### The Americas

This area is rich in our subject from the Arctic to the Antarctic but has not been given much philatelic recognition. The Mayas and Aztecs have been philatelically recognized, but the great body of fascinating work in, for example, Utah and Baja California has not yet attracted the attention of the post. A notable exception is Brazil. The sheet issued for BRAPEX VI in 1985 (Scott 2000a) contains three stamps showing cave paintings with all the characteristics of the late Stone Age.

There are many stamps depicting this subject; space permits only a tasting. There are also many pictorial cancels from which a collection could be built quite independently of stamps. Wall decoration has been taken to a fine art in the Middle and Far East. The frescoes of the Pyramids, the temples of India, and the cave art of Korea and Japan have all been philatelically celebrated. They reward your attention but take care; it's habit-forming.

(Courtesy: Topical Time, 1998)

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### A Window to the World

## The Indian Postal System

by BRINDA GILL

From early beginnings in the thirteenth century to a system that reaches even remote villages in our times, the system of sending written communications across long distances has encompassed a whole series of developments. Although it is now being rapidly displaced by the telephone and by e-mail, the postal system has had a fascinating history. Brinda Gill examines the growth of our postal system, which continues to link people across our vast and varied land.

The first recorded reference to a communications system is dated to the rule of Alauddin Khilji's reign (AD 1296) When horse and foot runners carried mail across fixed distances. The Afghan ruler Sher Shah Suri (AD 1541-45) is credited with having cemented the foundations of a postal system by establishing the two-thousand-mile Grand Trunk Road was dotted with serais where horses could be quickly exchanged to keep mail flowing smoothly.

With the arrival of the British, and the subsequent establishment of the East India Company, a postal system was initiated in the late seventeenth century to facilitate





correspondence between their establishments in Madras, Bombay and Calcutta. Under Governor General Warren Hastings (1774-1785), postal services were extended to the public, a move that gradually laid the foundations of a uniform postal system itself. Initially the cost of delivering letters was calculated according to its



weight and distance a letter had to travel at a cost of 2 annas for 100 miles. A letter was either pre-paid or paid for by the addressee; being hand stamped "post paid" if it was paid for, else it was stamped "post unpaid" or "bearing". But it was soon observed that letters that were to be paid for by the addressee were often unaccepted, which led to loss of postal revenue and this led to the initiation of postal reforms.

After 1854 all the postal services in areas under the British were merged and a uniform postal rate was introduced. Letters were prepaid, based only on their weight, and thus irrespective of the distance travelled by a letter, there was a uniform postage rate throughout the country. This move led to the introduction of postal stamps and a variety of prepaid stationery to facilitate different forms of postal communications. Sir Battle Frere, the Commissioner of Sind, had introduced paper stamps, the Science Dawks in 1852, which were the first postage stamps issued in Asia. This was followed, two years later, by the issue of the first all-India stamp of half an anna denomination, followed by the issue of stamps in higher denominations. Added to the postage stamps issued by the British India Government, were a variety of stamps issued by rulers of princely states in India such as Jaipur Hyderabad, Travancore, Cochin, Patiala and



Gwalior, to name a few. During the second half of the nineteenth century, stamped envelopes (1856), letter sheets (1857), registered envelopes (1866), postcards (1879) and reply paid postcards (1884) were the different postal stationery articles that were issued.

Communications were further facilitated and developed with advances in transportation. The commencement of a weekly steamer service between Bombay and England in 1865 and the development of the railways hastened communications, even as bullock carts were used between Delhi and Allahabad to carry mail from 1846-1904. The development of aviation in the early decades of the 20th century led to efforts at delivering mail by air. In 1911, a small bi-plane conveyed 6500 letters and postcards from Allahabad to Naini, making India the first country to send mail by air-a step which smoothened and expedited postal communications. This mail was postmarked with the words "First Aerial Flight", and later, in 1929, a special set of airmail stamps, the first of a commonwealth country, were issued.



This issue of airmail envelopes facilitated the conveyance of mail by air to foreign countries in 1930. With the outbreak of the Second World War, as airmail volume increased air letters were issued in 1945. An unusual form of communication during the period was the air graph. It was a type of air letter sheet, on which a letter was written on a pre-printed form, and it was photographed and carried to its destination as part of a roll of film. At its destination, the films were processed and small prints



made and delivered in a specially designed envelope by the normal mail service!

Apart from the regular postal stationery, there was also a variety that was for use by the armed forces, on Her Majesty's Service/On His Majesty's Service; and on India Government Service.

International co-operation in handling mail for distribution in a country or for transit was greatly facilitated by the Universal Postal Union in 1875, which was formulated by representatives from countries across the world. Guidelines were prescribed for international postal charges with reference to postal stationery and weight of the item posted. India became a member of the



UPU in 1878, a move that promoted communication between India and other nations, as well as forged economic, social, and cultural links between nations. Interestingly, Indian postage stamps were used in distant regions beyond our geographical boundaries in many British-controlled regions from countries in



East Africa and the Persian Gulf states, to settlements in South-east Asia, until the establishment of their individual postal systems.

After independence in 1947, postal services and telecommunications have been managed by the government Posts and Telegraphs Department and have reached remote areas of the country. From 24,000 post offices in the country in 1947-48, today there are over 1,53,000 post offices, of which 89% are in the rural areas. These developments include a few interesting firsts such as the establishment of the Hikim branch post office in Lahaul and Spiti, Himachal Pradesh, at a height of 15,000 feet, making it the post office at the highest altitude in the world. In October 1977 a mobile post office on camel back was commissioned to serve inaccessible desert areas near Bikaner, and was later converted into a stationary post office! Post offices in major cities have incorporated a range of specialised services to facilitate communications such as speed post, automatic mail processing facilities and VSAT network for transferring money, thus providing a firm backbone for the expansion of industry and commerce. Further, the countrywide network of post offices has provided the government with many points of contact for implementing administrative programmes. And apart from facilitating communications, postal stationery has effectively been used to convey important social messages on issues such as family planning, and drug abuse.

The postal system has also served to convey an image of India to the outside world on a range of subjects, delighting the stamp-collector and the recipient of letters in different parts of the world. International goodwill has been strengthened by joint issues such as a set of two stamps on Mahatma Gandhi, issued simultaneously by India and South Africa on 2nd October 1995 to mark his 125th birth anniversary. In the post-independence period, there have been regular issues of definitive, commemorative stamps, souvenir or miniature sheets, thematic stamps, First Day Covers. These stamps cover a wide range of themes including Indian art, crafts, architecture, national leaders, important personalities, historical events, sports, national history, science, industry, organisations, and the armed forces. They effectively communicate information about India to the world and reiterate the saying that stamps are the window to a country.

*(Courtesy : Nameste, Welcome Group, 2001)*

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## INDIA'S FIRST STAMP-DEALER!

### JAL COOPER

In June 1940, I had purchased the collection and remainder lot of late Mr. B.C.T. of Bombay and had come across many interesting items of historical interest from the philatelic point of view. To enumerate a few, there was an interesting letter of Col. R.K.J. Brown, giving a few particulars of his very valuable collection of India 1854 stamps to a prospective buyer, viz, his famous "inverted head", two blocks of ten stamps each of the four annas narrow-setting etc. But above all the letter contains a scathing remark for a leading philatelist of Calcutta! What price this Calcutta philatelist will give today to acquire this letter!! Then there is a letter on a flashy letter-head of our Mr. M.L. Tannan who in the early hectic days was not only a very hard-working philatelist as he is still today but a Watch Dealer as well! Even in those days his speciality appears to be stamps of India and Native States and even today he carries one of the finest stock of Indian States in this country. The subscription to his Monthly Wholesale Price List was 1/6d per year and his charges of supplying Indian New Issues varied from 5 to 7% only. But the

best of the lot in the find were five original approval sheets containing India 1854 stamps belonging to a firm of Messrs. N.D. Bottlivalla and Co., which were sold to late Mr. B.C.T. The prices marked were simply staggering even for those days! The approval sheets were dated 1887 and the prices of perfect superb used four annas "CUT-SQUARE" copies were only eight to twelve annas each! I had up-to date not believed these prices and had taken them to be some mistakes. But the truth is now out, thanks to a youngster Viraf N. Dodhi who happens to be the grandson of India's First Stampdealer.

A few days back, this mere school-boy, walked into my office with a neatly tied bundle under his arm-pit and wished to see me. The interview was the most interesting one of my philatelic career. He showed me some approval sheets mounted with a large number of early Hong Kong stamps and what I was interested in was not the stamps but in the name and address of the stamp-dealer printed on the sheets! You must have guessed it by now. The dealer was no other than Mr. N. D. Bottlivalla!! Did the youngster know him? You bet he did know because he happened to be his grandson! What a stroke of luck for me! Very soon the enthusiastic youngster began to give quick replies to my volley of queries and within two hours brought for me a Wholesale Price List of his grandfather's firm published in 1893. There must be previous issues of this firm's price list, as it clearly stated, "All previous quotations are cancelled." It was issued by the firm at 6d. or 12c. (U.S.A.) post free from the firm's offices at 488, Abdool Rehman Street; Bombay. The firm also had its agent in Chicago, U.S.A. in the person of Mr. Ewald Nocht, whereas Mr. Bottlivalla himself was a shareholder of the American Philatelic Association holding a share certificate No. 1131 dated 25th October 1895. I wonder if any dividends are due to him and if so will the fellows over the seas arrange to pay them to his legal heirs!

The price-list is a revelation in itself. Amongst some hundreds of interesting offers, the following are a few outstanding:- 1854 four annas "Cut Square" at six shillings per 12; Service 2as. S.G. 516 at 30/- and 4 as. and 8as. S.G. 517 and 518 at 50/- each! Ceylon 1d. blue imperforate at 6/- per 100 and "Other Pence issues at 3/6d. per dozen and upwards!" Wait at a minute, these are not all! Ceylon 1/9d. is offered at 10/- each superb used, and cut-to-shape octagonals at 12/- per dozen! So that's how the repaired copies come now!! The surcharged issues were sold at 3/- per 100 assorted and Rs. 1.12 cents at century. Let us remember that they can conquer who believe they can. We are happy to learn from our interview with Mr. A.M. Mukhi, an eminent stamp dealer, a member of the Philatelic Advisory Committee and our Governing Council that he does not foresee a bleak future for the hobby. Friends, let us have hope and confidence in the future of the hobby and let each one of us - the Government, the P.C.I. the all India Societies like the EIPS, the local societies, the schools and colleges, the stamp journals, the dealers and each and every collector do his best to ensure not only the survival of the hobby but also its growth as growth is the only evidence of life. Let us remember that where there is no faith in the future, there is no power in the past or present. So let us, on the auspicious occasion, pledge ourselves to the growth of the Society and the greater good of the hobby we all love so much; let us remember that small deeds done are better than great deeds just planned and each and every one of us in our own small way do what we can to ensure the survival and growth of the hobby and the Society.

The life of this or any other Society is in its members. We request each of you to think of a way in which you can help our Society to growth and then act on it, whether it be by giving of



time or funds or finding new members, or giving or obtaining advertisements and sponsorships. Programmes, people and positive thinking will move us to new heights. We look forward to your being a part of it.

Let us not rest on past laurels. In the words of Adlai Stevenson "We dare not just look back to great yesterdays. We must look forward to great tomorrows." We of the EIPS and India's stamp journal look to the future with optimism and pledge ourselves to greater service in the survival and growth of the hobby.

Let the Past Enrich the future!

May the "Gold" turn to "Diamond" and more!

-Vispi S. Dastur.

(Courtesy : India Stamp Journal)

## A TOPICAL COLLECTION IS NEVER COMPLETED

Virginia E. Jones

You have gathered the stamps for your topical collection. You have read all of the available articles on the best way to mount and present your philatelic material. You have a rough draft run, and it looked good. Now you mount the stamps and feel reassured any exhibition judge casting an eye on your display would approve of it. You like your own handwork, and occasionally take out your albums just do admire the stamps as you arranged them. They still look as though no improvement could be made.

But then one day suddenly it occurs to you that perhaps you could find a better arrangement for page 6. You race for your typewriter, collect the necessary supplies, and go to work. Upon completion of this project, you look over the entire collection again and are pleased with it.

Having placed the album back on the shelf, you pick up the weekly stamp paper to see what's new. Would n't you know? Country X has just issued a set of stamps that must be included in your topical collection. You hurriedly order these stamps and hope they will arrive soon.

The new issue arrives in record time. You spend a few minutes looking over your collection to decide on placement of the new arrivals. The more you think about it, the more creative you become. You glow over the ideas your mind suggests, and ask yourself, wouldn't it better to change page 10 to page 6? Then page 6, 7, 8 & 9 must be rearranged, renumbered, and a new page added. You are satisfied you are on the right track, and even though it involves work it is worth while for the sake of a prize winning collection you and the judges can admire. So you start to work. The job is finally completed. There's nothing more to be done. Now everything is all set!

It was ..... until you attend a local stamp show. Rummaging through a dealer's box of old letters and postcards, you discover two specimens you must have. Many writers, you recall, have pointed out that postal stationery enhances a topical collection.

Back home, down come the albums from the shelf. You thumb through the pages where would that letter and postcard fit best? It looks as though they belong on page 6. So you start to work on page 6 without giving sufficient thought, in your excitement over your new acquisitions, to the total effect when the page 15 completed you realize it does not look right. The continuity this once polished collection had is lost. It would have been better to leave page 6 as it was, and to have placed the postal stationery on page 7. Then page 7 will become page 8, and so on. Consequently more rearranging and renumbering of the pages.

Once more the collection has an organized appearance and its continuity preserved. "This is it" and tell yourself. "At last it is really complete!"

It is not true for a topical collection is never complete. Too many new issues are coming from various countries continuously for that. And besides, even if these countries never issued another set of stamps that would fit into your topical collection, you will be motivated to rearrange some pages from time to time just because an enterprising collector knows there is bound to be a better way and yet again a better way. A complete topical collection? NEVER!

(Courtesy - STAMPS, USA, 1992)

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## POSTAL STATIONERY AND THEMATIC COLLECTING

Nestor Ferre

By Postal Stationery we understand a base (of paper or card) on which the Post Office authorities have had printed a stamp or an indication of franked value, and to which are added on occasion pictures or text. The imprint fulfils the function of a postage stamp and the base is used to send messages or to achieve some specific postal purpose.

This postal stationery takes different forms of presentation, such as postcards, envelopes, lettercards, postal notes, newspaper wrappers, certificates of posting, aerogrammes, Post Office Boxes subscriptions, telegrams with imprinted stamps, international reply coupons, etc. The inclusion of this material in thematic collections is very highly rated and forms an undoubted part of them.

The points to be kept in mind for their selection are based on the study of the imprinted stamp and of the illustration and/or text. According to the theme of our collection, a certain item of postal stationery can be included if (a) the imprinted stamp has a design which fits in with it, or (b) the illustration is related to it, or (c) there is present some text or advertising material which goes with it.

If a given postal stationery item brings together these three aforementioned possibilities, then so much the better; and if besides it bears a matching cancellation and the item has passed genuinely through the post, we find ourselves facing the best situation for its use.

There has been much discussion as to whether, for a given theme, the picture on a stationery item would be suitable even if the imprinted stamp were not - as is the case, for example, with some postal stationery from Czechoslovakia on which the imprinted stamp shows the portrait of ex-President Benes and the picture shows various sporting activities of the Sokol organisation. It was argued that the important point was the imprinted stamp and that as a result the item concerned could only form part of a collection on statesmen or the like and not one on sports.

We arrive finally at the conclusion that the Post Office issued the stationery and therefore we are dealing with an official postal item, and it is agreed that all the printed elements which combine to make it up (stamp, illustration and text) have equal thematic validity. It is thus that we nowadays rate, in thematic collections, these items as a function of their imprinted stamp and/or illustration and/or text.



