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Editorial

During my visit to Ahmedabad 'DAK BHARATI'-2004, our Dept. of Posts came out with the news of issuing commemorative stamps on the occasion of 150 years of India Post. On 4th October. Gujarat Philatelic Assn also planned to bring out a special cover on the occasion.

Lo! the stamps were not issued on the date published but Gujarat Philatelic Assn. held the function on that date issuing covers fixing some other commemorative stamps. Reasons best known to the dept., they postponed the issue of 150 years of India Post. Again the dept. missed a golden opportunity in not celebrating the occasion in a befitting manner by holding either an international or a national exhibition as was done for the centenary celebrations in 1954.

Further, a great demand for modern Indian philatelic materials is being felt. Investors and dealers have started hoarding Indian Philatelic materials, specially Miniature Sheets of Independent India.

Stamps and Miniature Sheets, which were printed in a very limited quantity, showed the path and / or became the leader to show, how the price of mint stamps could be raised to unthinkable levels. These episodes created an urge among collectors and dealers to collect Indian Postage Stamps. Old stamp stocks lying in the treasuries of post offices are being cleared by the dealers. My information says that all Miniature Sheets lying in Post Offices, through out India, has been sold out.

The distribution system of new Commemorative Stamps is creating a havoc. The Indian Security Press, Nasik Road, is despatching only 10% to 15% of demand of a Postal Circle, on the date of each issue. This short supply on the first day of issue of Mint Postage Stamp / Miniature Sheet is creating a scarcity right from the first day of issue in open market and the market price of such Philatelic materials is increasing by many folds.

If this practice of supplying of Philatelic materials in insufficient quantity, is not changed immediately, it will create a wrong impression among the collectors, who may abandon the hobby in future.

Actually, this irregular supply of Philatelic material is alone creating a demand, which is not really there. Result is that a true collector has to pay many times more than the face value of the stamps.

Therefore, we, the South India Philatelists' Association appeal to India Post, New Delhi and Indian Security Press, Nasik Road, to maintain a regular, normal and adequate supply of new issues of Postage Stamps and Miniature Sheets to all Philatelic Bureaux and Philatelic Counters.

If the supply of new issues is maintained as per requirement of Philatelic Bureaux and Counters, in our opinion, there will not be any hue or cry among philatelic fraternity.



Our Second Sunday Meetings were held at the CPMG's Conference Hall, Anna Road, HPO, Chennai - 600 002. (10.30 - 12.30 pm) regularly where around 40 members attended with President Shri Balakrishna Das presiding Mr. Madan Mohan Das spoke on "Special Covers & Cancellations" in December 2004.

STAMP NEWS

TENNETI VISWANATHAM

10.11.2004

500

0.6 Million

Tenneti Viswanatham was born on September 21, 1895 at Lakkavaram, Veeravalli Taluk, Visakhapatnam District. Having earned a Master's Degree in English Literature and a Bachelor's Degree in Law, he began practice in Madras in 1921 and gave it up in 1922. He had a stint as a Lecturer at the Gujarat Vidyapith during 1922-23. Responding to the clarion call of Mahatma Gandhi, he gave up his worldly pursuits, plunged into the Non-Cooperation Movement in 1922 and courted imprisonment for a total period of about 5 years between 1930 and 1946 for his participation in the Salt Satyagraha (1930), Individual Satyagraha (1940) and Quit India Movement (1942).



Starting his legislative career with his election to the Madras Legislative Assembly from Visakhapatnam in the first-ever elections held to the Legislatures in 1937, Viswanatham served the Madras Legislative Assembly as Leader of the Opposition in 1951, the Andhra Legislative Assembly as Minister for Finance, Law and Religious Endowments in 1953 after the separation of Andhra from the Madras Presidency and the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly as Leader of the Opposition 1962. He became a member of the Lok Sabha in 1967.

His resigning the chairmanship of the Visakhapatnam Municipality and the membership of the Madras Legislative Assembly in 1951 bear eloquent testimony to his unimpeachable integrity. An intellectual par excellence, Viswanatham's monumental and historic 18-volume report on Zamindari Abolition, which became the basis for modern land reforms, is a tribute to his prodigious industry, intellectual acumen and tenacity of purpose.

The secret of Viswanatham's success lay in the fact that he carried people along with him. He worked tirelessly for the development of Andhra Pradesh. The Krishna Barrage at Vijayawada, the Nagarjuna Sagar Project, Sri Venkateswara University at Tirupati, equitable distribution of Krishna and Godavari river waters and the first shore-based modern and sophisticated integrated steel plant at Visakhapatnam stand as monuments of his dedication to the all-round development of Andhra Pradesh.

As convenor of the J.P. Movement for Civil Liberties, the democrat in Viswanatham rebelled against the imposition of Emergency in 1975. He was arrested under the MISA and incarcerated for six months.

Viswanatham, on whom the Andhra University conferred the honoris causa of D.Litt., was a Vedic, Sanskrit and Telugu Scholar, spiritualist, literateur, linguist, author, poet and dramatist. He breathed his last peacefully in

Visakhapatnam around midnight on November 10, 1979 at the age of 84.

CHILDREN'S DAY

14.11.2004

500

3 Million

Stamps depict facets of the world around us, in myriad hues. Obviously it becomes more interesting if designed by a child, for children come up with very interesting ideas and new insights about the world around them.



Each year the Department of Posts brings out a stamp on Children's Day, which is designed by a child. We all know the importance of Children's Day, which falls on 14th November, the birthday of Chacha Nehru. To select the stamp design, the Department organizes an All India Stamp Design Competition. This year's stamp is based on a painting made by S. Vindhya who won the first prize in the competition. The painting depicts 'My Village', but also conveys a message regarding education of the girl child, a very thoughtful idea.

The second prize has gone to Sudha Singh who depicted an ideal village with all facilities, like a school, an adult education centre, a bio-gas centre, a hospital and a post office etc. This painting has been adopted for the First Day Cover.

WALCHAND HIRACHAND

23.11.2004

500

0.7 Million

The life story of Walchand Hirachand unfolds the life of a man fearless, decisive, devoted, endowed with intelligence and intuition and a man out of the ordinary.



Born on 23 November, 1882 at Sholapur, Walchand as a young lad was not bereft of the Lord's teachings in Sanskrit and Hirachand made his son learn selected passages by heart with their meaning interpreted. Walchand obtained his education at the Government High School, Sholapur, St. Xavier's College, Dhobi Talao and Deccan College, Pune.

The early 20th Century was marked by the relentless efforts of stalwarts like Dadabhai Naoroji, Justice M.G. Ranade, G.V. Joshi and R.C. Dutt. The efforts of these patriots had a powerful effect on Walchand. He resolved to dedicate his life to remove the poverty and economic slavery of his country. From that day, his thoughts and actions had but one sole object, the industrialization of his country.

After dabbling unsuccessfully in jowar and thereafter, in cotton trade at Sholapur, Walchand realized through personal experience that getting into contract business was remunerative.

Despite opposition from his father and uncle, he went ahead on a partnership with Laxman Balwant Phatak (1874-1935) - formerly a railway clerk and earned the contract for the construction of the railway line known as the Barsi Light Railway which was a success. Thereafter, there was no looking back and Walchand went on establishing industry after industry and laid the foundation for the country's basic means of transportation.

Building bridges to connect people was next on his agenda and Walchand successfully completed the Bhorghat tunnel in Maharashtra, considered then to be beyond the capabilities of any Indian company. Over the years, Hindustan Construction Company (HCC) was formed which went on to build some of India's landmark construction projects. During one of his many trips abroad, Walchand met the president of an American aircraft company, which resulted in his resolve to manufacture planes in India. He established the Hindustan Aircraft Limited (HAL) much ahead of schedule and the first Harlow trainer plane manufactured by HAL took flight in July 1941. HAL was subsequently acquired by the Indian Government. Walchand made a mark in the fields of water and road transportation as well. His Scindia Steam Navigation Company had a fleet of 54 steamers. Similarly, Premier Automobiles Ltd., rolled out the first indigenously built trucks and cars in 1947.

He concentrated on sugarcane and established Ravalgaon Sugar Farm Limited. Employing superior sugar processing technology, he produced sugar that matched international standards. He also established many educational and business institutions, for instance, the Walchand College of Engineering at Sangli in Maharashtra, The India Merchant's Chambers, Maharashtra Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industries etc. Shri Walchand Hirachand passed away on 8 April, 1953 after leaving an indelible imprint on Indian industry and infrastructure.

DULA BHAYA KAG

25.11.2004 500 0.6 Million

A poet, nationalist, composer and singer of folk songs, Dula Bhaya Kag worked in the humble surroundings of his native village in Saurashtra. Born on 25th November, 1903 to Bhaya Kag and Dhanbai, Dula Bhaya Kag created a body of folk literature through his poems and songs.



Shouldering the responsibility of minding the cattle belonging to his family, Dula Bhaya Kag could only receive primary education upto Class five. But the time available to him as he tended the cattle was devoted to poetry. Inspired by the freedom fighters of his time and by such great personalities as Vinoba Bhave and Mahatma Gandhi, his poetry became the instrument for expressing his nationalistic feelings as well as his devotion to the Almighty. He donated his land to Vinoba Bhave's Bhudan Movement. He evinced interest in the prohibition activities after the formation of

Saurashtra State. He set up a "Pathshala", a school for Folk Literature in Junagarh along with Shri Ratubhai Adani. Devoted to the social upliftment and education of the Charan Community, Dula Bhaya Kag played a major role in establishing the "Charan Boarding House" in Bhavnagar and was also the President of the Charan Hitvardhak Sabha.

What really set Dula Bhaya Kag apart from his contemporaries was, however, his poetic excellence and effective recital. It was considered an experience to listen to the recital of Kavi Kag. He published "Kagvani" in eight volumes consisting of couplets, devotional songs, episodes from the Ramayana and Mahabharata and songs based on Gandhian philosophy and the Bhudan Movement. Often these are composed as "Garba", "Raas" and other forms of folk music. His other published works include Bhudanmala, Vinoba Bavani and Shamaldas Bavani. The All India Radio has recorded many of his poetic creations. The Government of India honoured him with the Padmashree Award in 1962. He passed away on 22.02.1977.

The Aga Khan Award for Architecture

Agra Fort 2004

28.11.2004 1500, 1500 0.8 Million each

The Aga Khan Award for Architecture was established in 1977 by the Aga Khan, the forty-ninth hereditary Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims, to enhance the understanding and appreciation of Islamic culture as expressed through architecture.

The Award has completed eight cycles of activity since 1977, and the Ninth Award Cycle covers the period from 2002 to 2004. Prizes totalling up to US\$ 500,000 - constituting the largest and most prestigious architectural award in the world-are presented every three years for projects selected by an independent Master Jury. The 2004 award ceremonies were slated for 27th and 28th November, 2004.

Situated in the heart of the city of Agra, on the west bank of the Yamuna river beside the gardens of the Taj Mahal, the majestic red sandstone Agra fort is an important Mughal monument of the 16th & 17th centuries, and was added to



UNESCO's World Heritage List in 1983. It is one of sixteen World Cultural Heritage sites maintained by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).

Akbar, the third Mughal emperor began the construction of Agra Fort in 1565. The Fort was ready by 1571, though additions continued to be made until the rule of Akbar's grandson Shah Jahan. During the time of Akbar, the fort mainly served military purpose, while during the time of Shah Jahan it served as a palace and court. The Agra Fort is considered as the precursor of the Red Fort at Delhi.

To commemorate the 2004 Aga Khan Award for Architecture, two postage stamps featuring Agra Fort are being issued. The set of stamps depict Khas Mahal, or Private Palace, built entirely of marble by Shah Jahan in 1637. It overlooks the Angoori Bagh. The enclosure has three riverside pavilions overlooking the Yamuna River, with a fountain opposite the central pavilion.

From here the Taj Mahal, erected by Shah Jahan for his deceased wife could be viewed and this is where Shah Jahan is said to have spent his last few years as the captive of his son Aurangzib. On the southern side of the fort is Amar Singh Gate, one of the two great entrances. This impressive outer gate was added by Shah Jahan and named after the Rajput Maharaja, Amar Singh Rathore.

BHAGAT PURAN SINGH

10.12.2004

500

0.45 Million

Bhagat Puran Singh was a self-regulated person who made service to humanity his routine task: He cared for the despairing, disabled and destitute with his own hands having no resources required for the purpose. He had no grants, no aids, no institutions to back him. His faith in God as well as in his fellow beings was unshakable. On the basis of this faith, he went ahead with his mission of building

'Pingalwara' which remains a living memorial of his life's work.

He was born on 4th June 1904 to Chibu Mal and Mehtab Kaur of village Rajewal in Ludhiana district of Punjab and named Ramji Das. He was renamed Puran Singh when he converted to Sikhism during the year 1923. His mother taught him to pick

up all harmful objects like thorns, pieces of broken glass, nails, other sharp objects, stones, bricks and such from the lanes and village tracks as they would injure passersby.

He started his education from Khanna in Punjab and joined Lahore's Khalsa High School. He performed "sewa" in Gurdwara Dera Sahib and Gurdwara Shahid Ganj of Lahore where, besides cleaning, cooking and serving food, he also tended to the aged, infirm and sick who came to the Gurdwaras for help. During this period he indulged his other great love libraries. His favourites were the Dayal Singh Library and Lala Lajpat Rai's Dwarka Dass Library. The works he read ranged from John Ruskin, Emerson, Tyson and

Thoreau to Mahatma Gandhi. Equally eclectic was the variety of journals he read, finding Gandhi's weekly, 'Young India', of particular interest.

In November 1934, he came upon a four year old boy abandoned near the main gate of Gurdwara Dera Sahib. This boy was dumb, mentally impaired and physically deformed and was suffering from dysentery. Puran Singh looked after him and named him Piara or the loved one. Puran Singh carried Piara on his back and this became symbolic of his carrying all the aged, the infirm, the disabled, the crippled and the sick on his shoulders. It was not easy since the helpless boy's hands and feet were lifeless, and he would constantly drool on Puran Singh.

In the countdown to India's partition in 1947, twenty men, women and children lived in Gurdwara Dera Sahib. Puran Singh laboured from early dawn to late night to keep them fed, bathed, clothed and medically treated.

On August 18, 1947, forty three year old Puran Singh, with Piara on his back, climbed on to a refugee - laden truck headed for safety to Amritsar. He carried Piara on his back wherever he went because there was no one to look after Piara. Puran Singh described him as a "Garland Around My Neck". Born in a region which prides itself on the military prowess of its men, Puran Singh's steadfastness and unflinching courage in adversities - though of a different order - were no less remarkable.

Bhagat Puran Singh established a home for destitute, called Pingalwara in Amritsar. On 6 March 1957, the All India Pingalwara Society was duly registered with the government. To some it means a 'home for the crippled', to others, a 'home for handicapped'. Bhagatji served God through his service to God's creatures and His creation.

Bhagat Puran Singh died on 5 August, 1992, but his magnificent spirit lives on in Pingalwara.

NUPEE LAL 1904 - 1939

12.12.2004

500

0.8 Million

The Nupee Lal of 1939, or the Women's Agitation of 1939, is a defining moment in Manipur's recent history when thousands of Manipuri women raised their voices against the policies of the Imperial British in India and the Manipur State Darbar headed by the Maharaja of Manipur.

The seeds of the agitation were sown in November of 1938 when about 356 members of the public had petitioned the then Maharaja of Manipur, Sir Churachand Singh, to set up a Legislative Council and to nominate the Darbar members from among the members of the Council.

The continuing demands for popular reforms in state administration took a new turn the following year when the price of the rice in the state suddenly soared during the harvest season. The women's agitation was a direct action in protest against the policy and practice of the foreign traders.

The agitation was also a protest against the imperialist rule in Manipur as well as the regime of the



and abstract geometric motifs. Ustad Ahmed Lahori was the Chief Architect, Ismail Khan Afridi of Turkey was the domemaker, and Amanat Khan Shirazi was the calligrapher whose genius lives on through the enduring beauty they created.

SAHITYA AKADEMI

21.12.2004

500

0.8 Million

Sahitya Akademi is not only the premier institution in the country for literary dialogue, publication and promotion but also the only institution in the country that undertakes literary activities in twenty-four languages, including English. Set up in 1954 by the Government of India as an autonomous organization fully financed by the Government, Sahitya Akademi has ceaselessly endeavoured to promote good taste and healthy reading habits, to keep alive the intimate dialogue among the various linguistic and literary zones and groups contributing to the emotional integration of the nation through seminars, lectures, symposia, discussions, readings and performances. It has an elected President who chairs the various councils and committees and a Secretary as the Chief Executive. The governing and advisory bodies are freshly constituted every five years. The functioning of Sahitya Akademi is totally democratic and decentralized. It has a Head Office in Delhi and offices in Mumbai, Kolkata, Bangalore and Chennai.

Over 50 years of its dynamic existence, it has published more than 4300 books in 22 Indian languages. It publishes two bi-monthly journals - which carry translated literary pieces from different languages. It also publishes a half-yearly journal in Sanskrit, Samskrita Pratibha. Sahitya Akademi runs projects for the propagation of tribal-oral literature and translation.



The highest honour conferred by Sahitya Akademi on a writer is by electing him a Fellow. This honour is reserved for the "immortals of literature"

and limited to twenty-one at any given time.

Sahitya Akademi gives awards for creative/critical writing and Translation Prizes in each of the recognized languages every year and has given 850 awards since its inception for original books of outstanding merit and 302 Translation Prizes since 1989 for books of translation. Apart from these awards, the annual Bhasha Samman has also been instituted since 1996 which is given to scholars and writers for their contribution to languages not recognized by the Sahitya Akademi and to Classical and Medieval literature. So far 35 writers and scholars have been honoured with the Bhasha Samman.

Seminars on literary topics at regional, national and international levels as well as literary workshops are also organized to provide a platform to the writers of the different languages for interchange of ideas.

The Sahitya Akademi Library is one of the prominent multilingual Libraries in India and has a wide range of books

numbering over 1.27 lakhs in more than 25 Indian and foreign languages.

Under the Archives of Indian Literature Project Sahitya Akademi collects and preserves material connected with writers.

BHASKARA SETHUPATHY

27.12.2004

500

0.8 Million

The title 'Sethupathy', carried by the rulers of Ramanathapuram, means protectors and caretakers of the passage across the sea from Rameshwaram to Sri Lanka, built as per the legend, by Lord Rama, and of the Ramlinga Idol. They considered themselves not only the rulers of the State of Ramanathapuram, but also the caretakers of the holy temple in Rameshwaram.

It was in this illustrious dynasty that Bhaskara Sethupathy was born on 3rd November 1868, as the first son of the King Muthu Ramalinga Sethupathy II and Muthathal Naachiyar. He was educated in Madras through both Indian and English systems of education.



On the 3rd of April, 1889, he took over as the Head of the Ramanathapuram State. Bhaskara Sethupathy implemented welfare schemes for the common people and also patronized fine arts. He facilitated the entry of Harijans into the temples and stopped the custom of animal sacrifice in the Rajarajeshwari Temple. He donated more than 40 lakhs of rupees for religious, educational and public welfare schemes between 1890 to 1893.

King Bhaskara Sethupathy was instrumental in Swami Vivekananda attending the World Religion Conference held in Chicago (USA) in 1893. On 23rd January 1897, he arranged for a rousing reception for Swami Vivekananda upon his return from the World Religion Conference and also constructed a monument in the place where swamiji landed and inscribed the holy words 'Satyameva Jayate' on it in the year 1897. In appreciation of the services rendered by King Bhaskara Sethupathy, Swami Vivekananda conferred the title 'Raaja Rishi' (Ascetic King) on him. As an erudite Tamil scholar, he wrote some books in Tamil and also helped his cousin Pandithurai Thevar towards organizing the 'Fourth Tamil Sangam'.

The demise of Swami Vivekananda affected him deeply and he went to lead an ascetic life in the 'Mutt' on the banks of Tamirabarani in Kallidaikuruchi, where he spent his time in meditation.

Bhaskara Sethupathy breathed his last on the 27th of December, 1903.



THE WRIGHT STUFF



Orville Wright



Wilbur Wright

The Wright Brothers created aviation history with their powered flight of December 1903-former US Airforce Lieut. Col. William L. Farrar looks at how they achieved this milestone

December 17, 2003 will mark the anniversary of one of the most significant events in history. 100 years earlier, near an obscure hamlet in North Carolina, USA, the Wright Brothers made the first flight of a heavier-than-air craft, using a powered engine. They did this four times on that historic day - and the longest flight lasted 59 seconds.

As young adults Wilbur (born in 1867) and Orville (born in 1871) started a newspaper in Dayton, which operated for a few months until competition from the established press drove them out of business. They bought two new 'safety bicycles' in 1892, which started their involvement in that business. These were a radical change from the style at the time, which had wheels of different size, and they were becoming wildly popular. They abandoned their print shop, and went into the bicycle building business, manufacturing the 'Wright Special', that sold for \$18.

In 1896 they first started reading about gliding experiments done by a German, Otto Lilienthal, and their interest in aviation was aroused. They began to devour any written documents on flying, and during the slow winter months of their business, experimented with this, building and flying model kites. They also spent many hours watching birds fly, recording observations of their balance and turning abilities. The buzzard was their favourite, for it could turn and shift its body readily as winds and vertical air currents affected it. The wing-warping scheme, later used on their aircraft, was devised from these observations.

Gliding experiments

Experiments in gliding started in the late 19th century, using models that had originally been designed as kites. In 1891 Herr Lilienthal, using his third model, successfully flew one, as the first known in history. Octave Chanute, was a US civil engineer, who was famous for building bridges and the Chicago stockyard. He began to design gliders in the 1890s. By 1896 he was ready to have models flown but he never flew any himself. He chose the sand dunes area of Southern Lake Michigan, where the winds were generally consistent. These were largely successful, and Chanute later became acquainted with the Wrights, and provided them with much knowledge.

The US Weather Bureau advised the Wrights that an area where the winds blew consistently from one direction was a barrier island off the coast of North Carolina where Kitty Hawk



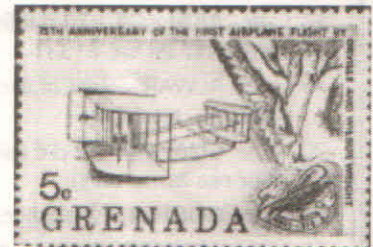
USA 31c airmail se-tenant pair of the Wright Brothers issued for the 75th anniversary of the first powered flight ABOVE : 1979 se-tenant pair showing aviation pioneer Octave Chanute.



USA 20c Parcel Post stamp issued in 1913. This was the first USA stamp to show an aeroplane and it shows the first aeroplane ever bought by the US Army, but it didn't carry mail as the stamp's legend claims; USA 2c value issued for the International Civil Aeronautics Conference close to the 25th anniversary of the Wright Brothers flight; 1953 50th anniversary of powered flight USA 6c red featuring the Wright Flyer and a Boeing 377 Stratocruiser.



45c value of Samuel Langley who is remembered by Langley Air Force Base in Virginia - the world's first military base dedicated to flying as a primary mission; Antigua 2c value from 1978 showing the launch system and the engine of the Wright Flyer; Grenada 5c value; Anguilla 5c issue featuring the motorised Wright Flyer I



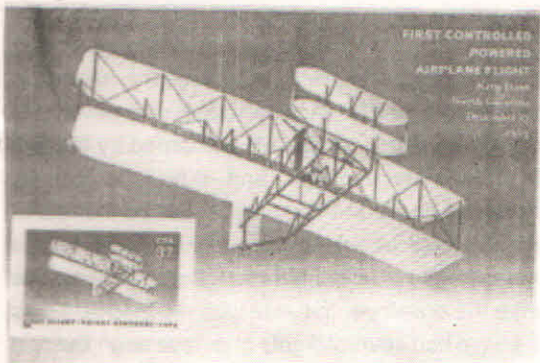
was located. They went there in September 1900. They assembled their first glider, (actually a large kite - wing span about 17 feet), and flew it a few times. During one of the flights, it crashed and they considered giving up. But they reassembled it and, after a few more flights, decided to try it with a man on board. This was successful, and it was then that they made a decision to leave the elevator in front, and to have the pilot in a prone position.



St. Vincent and the Grenadines \$1 value showing an artist's rendition of the only photograph taken of the historic 1903 flight.

Return to Kitty Hawk

They returned to Kitty Hawk in July 1901, with more equipment, and with parts for a larger and redesigned glider. They were ready for a glider launching within a few weeks but these first flights weren't successful - the glider tended to pitch up. The Wrights began to have doubts that the data compiled by Lilienthal and Chanute for much of their design criteria was correct, so they decided to do their own research. They built their own Wind Tunnel and experimented using various wing designs. With new wing designs, they returned to Kitty Hawk in 1902 for another season. Now they had a permanent building which served as both living quarters and workshop.

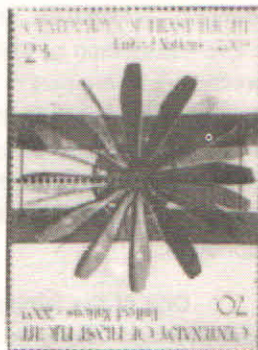


The top half of the 2003 USA pane but the image is merely an artist's interpretation of the historic flight.

Their new design had a larger forward elevator (which controlled the pitch, ie up-and-down), and warpable wings. This wasn't entirely successful - one flight involved a disastrous crash with Wilbur at the controls. The brothers discussed the problem until one had an idea of adding a controllable vertical rudder. This solved the side-slipping problem.

They returned to Dayton convinced they could make a powered flight the next year. Their bicycle shop mechanic machined the parts, and built an engine in six weeks. It weighed 140lbs, and delivered 12 horse-power. The brothers worked for weeks on propeller design and eventually settled on a design using meticulous measurements. Two were produced - they would be mounted to counter-rotate, thus preventing the problem of pulling to one side. Also, they were mounted in the rear, so their turbulence wouldn't affect the airframe's stability. By now the Wrights had solved all of the problems which had prevented prior inventors from flying. They were ready to go, and confidently returned to Kitty Hawk in September 1903.

At this time another aviation pioneer was close to achieving powered flight. Dr. Samuel Langley, the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institute in Washington DC, had decided that his design was ready in the fall of 1903. It was



United Nations 2003 se-tenant pair with spinning propeller.

called the Aerodrome, and used a small steam engine for its power. Two attempts were made to fly this, launching it by using a crude catapult from a houseboat moored in a river near Washington. Both failed - the machine went straight down into the water. After the second, on December 8, 1903 Dr. Langley abandoned his efforts.



CELEBRATING THE CENTENARY

The year 2003 has seen an explosion of philatelic issues from around the world to mark the centenary of the first manned powered flight. Unsurprisingly the issues that led the way were produced by the USA which issued a large pane featuring the flight at Kitty Hawk, whilst the United Nations' New York office issued a se-tenant pair which concentrated on the propeller of the famous Wright Flyer. Other territories who have marked the centenary with a variety of philatelic issues include Jersey, Guernsey, Ireland, the Marshall Islands, Gibraltar and Montserrat. Many have issued stamps with connections to their country or have issued sheets of stamps featuring aeroplane advances through the years since 1903.

After a crash on December 14 the Wrights' machine was repaired, and they were ready on December 17. The weather started badly that day, but improved by mid-morning. A few men from a local life-saving station wandered over to watch. Orville started the engine, and after a few minutes of listening to it run, released a restraining wire, and started down the launch tract. The plane went into the air, proceeding about 120 feet, for 12 seconds. After landing, the Brothers congratulated each other, unemotionally, and set up the plane for another flight. They flew three more times that day - the last for 852 feet in 59 seconds. One photo was taken by an observer. The next day the plane was dismantled for good.

Mixed news reports

News reports of their feat were mixed. Their hometown paper had enthusiastic reports; other larger newspapers had garbled and incorrect information. The Wrights ultimately built six aeroplanes - one was sold to the US Army, thus becoming the first military aeroplane in history. Eventually they won many honours, though Wilbur didn't see many; he died of typhoid in 1912. Orville lived until 1948 but a few years after their famous flight, he became embroiled in patent fights with subsequent aviation developers.

Orville, embittered by the legal battles, sent the original Flyer to London, where it sat in a museum until being returned to



Montserrat 2003 Wright Brothers miniature sheet

the USA in 1948. It's now in the Smithsonian Institute. For the philatelic world, there are no records of any mail carried on their aeroplanes. One US collector is known to have an airmail cover autographed by Orville Wright in 1938. However, their accomplishment is now remembered by many stamp issues, and hundreds of souvenir covers.



70th Anniversary of FIRST FLIGHT OVER MOUNT EVEREST

As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the climbing of Mount Everest, Peter Jennings FRPSK, FRGS looks back at an earlier expedition

Celebrations have been held in London and Nepal to mark the 50th anniversary of Edmund Hillary's and Tenzing Norgay's (better known as Sherpa Tenzing) Everest triumph on 29 May 1953. Aero philatelists also had another important date in their diaries.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the Houston Mount Everest Expedition. On Monday, 3 April 1933, two single-engine, open-cockpit biplanes set out from Purnea in Northern India to make the first trigonometrical mapping survey of Everest. The first perilous flight over Mount Everest was made by Sqn Ldr Lord Clydesdale with Col Stewart Blacker as observer in the Houston-Westland PV-3 G-ACAZ, and Flt Lt D F McIntyre with S R Bonnett, a photographer from Gaumont British Corporation, in the Westland Wallace, PV-6 G-ACBR.

The King of Nepal sanctioned two attempts; The Times, which sent a photographer and journalist to record the flight, sponsored the expedition. Lady Houston donated 15,000, the

British Government gave a Westland aircraft and the Maharajah of Darbhanga offered his bungalow at Purnea for the expedition's headquarters.

Vital footage

Air Commodore P F M Fellowes, leader of the Houston Expedition, flew the first of two survey flights over Everest on 8 April 1933. The Aero Club of India arranged for 87 covers to be carried on the flight, paying one guinea for each in aid of RAF charities. These covers bear a special label and a cachet applied at Purnea later the same day. Film footage shot during the expedition was to prove vital to Sir Edmund Hillary's epic ascent of the mountain 20 years later.

Among the important philatelic documents from the Houston Mount Everest Expedition is the following letter written by Frank Rosher, a member of the expedition, from Raj Darbhanga, Purnea, and dated 1 April 1933. The letter reads: 'My dearie. After waiting some days for favourable weather the forecast tonight indicates that conditions early tomorrow may just permit a successful flight over Mt Everest -so the attempt is to be made as soon as possible after the crack of dawn-a very limited number of letters including this will be carried by the first pilot Lord Clydesdale in his machine - and if he is successful the Director General of Posts and Telegraphs has consented to the stamps on the letter being overprinted with the words "Houston Mt Everest Flight" - so should this letter reach you - be careful to preserve the envelope. In haste with much love. Yours ever Frank. P.S. I have had several flights and have seen Everest in the distance when up at 10,500 ft.'

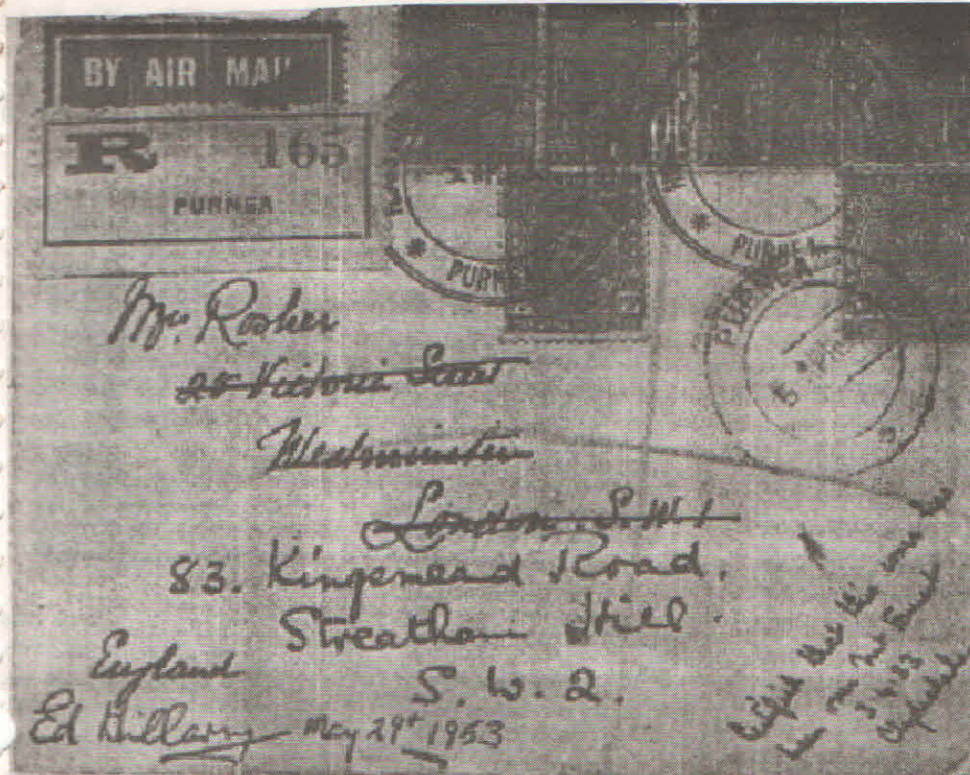
The letter was sent by registered airmail from Purnea and addressed to Mrs Rosher, at 25 Victoria Street, Westminster, London SW1, England and was redirected to 83 Kingsmead Road, Streatham Hill, SW2. This envelope, one of only 25 carried on the flight, bears the inscription: 'Certified that this cover has been over Mt Everest 3.4.33' and signed 'Clydesdale'.

The six India George V stamps, with a combined value of 11a. 6p., were cancelled with a special handstamp: 'HOUSTON MOUNT EVEREST FLIGHT, PURNEA, 5 APR 35.' This particular cover has also been signed. 'Ed Hillary May 29th 1953', and is unique.

Celebrations

Meanwhile, celebrations took place in London and Kathmandu in Nepal on 29 May to mark the 50th Anniversary of the Everest triumph by Hillary and Tenzing. These two intrepid mountaineers were part of the British Everest Expedition, 1953, led by Colonel John Hunt, that made history when they became the first men ever to reach the summit of Mount Everest, at 29,035ft the world's highest mountain. The news of their achievement reached London on 1 June, the eve of The Queen's Coronation.

One of the famous pictures of Hillary and Tenzing on Mount Everest is shown on the 1st class Royal Mail stamp issued on 29 April as part of a set entitled 'Extreme Endeavours'. During the past 50 years Everest has been depicted on the stamps of several countries including two 'Conquest of Everest' stamps



issued by India, 2a. and 14a., on 2 October 1953. Nepal issued stamps showing Mount Everest in 1960, 1970, 1971, and 1982. In 1978 two stamps, depicting the South-West Face and south Face were issued to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the first ascent in 1953. Tristan de Cunha included a stamp depicting Everest in a set of six 'Guinness World Records', issued on 10 January this year.

New Zealand, Hillary's native country, honoured him on its stamps in March 1994 and November 1999. Powerful images of Hillary and Tenzing Norgay are included on two eye-catching '50th Anniversary, Conquest of Everest' stamps (40c.), and a special souvenir sheet of ten se-tenant stamps (five of each design joined together), issued on 29 May.

Celebrations have been held in London and Nepal to mark the 50th anniversary of Edmund Hillary's and Tenzing Norgay's (better known as Sherpa Tenzing) Everest triumph on 29 May 1953. Aero Philatelists also had another important date in their diaries.



MAHATMA GANDHI IN PHILATELY

Shri. G. Ram Mohan

Part III, First Phase in South Africa

Mahatma Gandhi returned home from England in 1891 as a qualified barrister. He set up practice as a lawyer, first in Bombay High Court and then in his hometown of Rajkot, but could not make much headway due to his young age and inexperience. Then good fortune came his way in the form of an

offer of a year's contract appointment, to assist as legal adviser to an Indian businessman in South Africa. He accepted the offer, and reached South Africa in May 1893.

South Africa at that time was ruled by a small but powerful minority of European settlers. These were adventurers who had come mainly from Britain and Holland, attracted by the fertility of the land and its vast untapped mineral wealth. They subdued the native Africans by the use of the superior firepower of their guns, grabbed the Africans' lands, and finally established themselves as rulers. They ruled the country practicing the

worst forms of racial discrimination against the non-white races, consisting of the majority native Africans and the Indian migrants. The Indians were shown no respect as befitting a people hailing from an ancient civilization, and were referred to in derogatory terms as 'coolie' and 'sammy'.

Gandhiji had his first major confrontation with such racial prejudice when he made his first train journey in that country shortly after his arrival. He was to meet his senior lawyer in the town of Pretoria and bought a first class train ticket to go there from Durban. But his white co-passenger objected to having to travel in the company of a 'coolie'. Gandhiji was asked to vacate his berth and move to a third class compartment. When he refused, he was abused, beaten and finally thrown out of the train at a station called Pietermaritzberg. Gandhiji was forced to spend the night at the station as he had nowhere to go. It is believed



MAHATMA GANDHI (1869 - 1948)



that the thoughts that raced through his mind as he sat shivering in the cold waiting room at Pietermaritzberg station that night laid the foundation for his subsequent development to become a Mahatma, a world leader who fought for the release from oppression and virtual slavery of all oppressed groups of people, be they Indians under British colonial rule or Harijans in caste-ridden Indian Society.



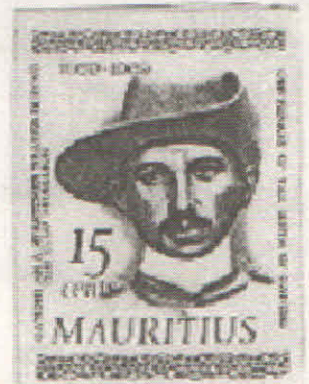
The Significance of Pietermeritzberg railway station in the history of the emanipation of the world's oppressed peoples is reflected in philately. On 2nd October 1995 the Postal Departments of India and South Africa co-operated to produce a set of single colour se-tenant stamps of the same design but in different colours. - the Indian stamps in maroon and

the South African stamps in dark grey. The design shows Gandhiji in two different phases of his life - one as a prosperous attorney in South Africa in Western Style attire, and the other as the World famous Mahatma in simple khadi cloth. The Indian cancellation of the stamps shows a line drawing of Pietermaritzberg Railway Station building. At the same time, the South African Post Office brought out a maximum card showing the same station building in brilliant colour. In addition, the South Africans also issued a miniature sheet with a picture of Gandhiji's statue that has been erected in a central place in Pietermaritzberg station.

Following the incident on the train Gandhiji soon saw for himself the way Indians were suffering humiliations in white-ruled South Africa. He decided to stay on in that country and fight for justice for the Indian community. He also started practicing as an attorney in that country and was soon very successful in the profession.

At that time Gandhiji strongly believed that Indians would get justice and fair treatment in South Africa only by identifying themselves as loyal citizens of the British Empire and fighting for equal rights as British citizens. In 1899 war broke out between the two groups of European settlers in South Africa - the British and the Dutch (who were called Boers). With his faith in the British Empire, Gandhiji wanted that the Indians should help the

British in their war, which came to be known as Boer War. So he formed a 1100 members strong Ambulance Corps with local Indian volunteers. Their service as first-aid and stretcher-bearers won great praise. He formed a similar Corps, helping the British when they fought the Zulu rebellion in 1906.



Gandhiji as a sergeant in the Ambulance Corps has been depicted in philately. In 1969 Mauritius issued a set of six commemorative stamps in different denominations to mark the centenary of Gandhiji's birth. (Gandhiji had an association with Mauritius in that he spent about 20 days in the island on his way back to India from South Africa in November 1901). The stamps show different pictures of the Mahatma, depicting different periods of his life. Two of them pertain to the first phase of his stay in South Africa. The 15 Cents stamp shows him in the uniform of the Ambulance Corps during the Zulu rebellion, while the Re. 1 shows him with a turban. A miniature sheet containing all the six stamps is a fine item to collect.



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