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EDITORIAL

INVESTMENT THRO' PHILATEY

This is an era of investments. In every print & visual medium we see and hear about savings and investments viz. in shares, mutual funds, real estate, gold etc. Of course no wonder, this also leads to think of investment in Stamps and other Philatelic material. In Europe and America it is already in vogue. The well known philatelic dealers and promoters M/s Stanley Gibbons has got a separate department for philatelic investment guaranteeing about 7% annually.

But in this context, the Indian scene is entirely different and difficult to predict. What is investment? spending money to make more money at a future date. If that is so, yes, it is possible to have investment in Indian stamps and allied materials. But at the same time, one has to be careful, prudent and selective in buying material for investment.

How prices of stamps go higher and higher? When there are more buyers (Collectors) and less material available in the market than the present only, prices go up.

Let us see what are the Indian stamps sought after by many collectors; Obviously stamps on attractive themes like dances, paintings, wild life, orchids etc and quite a few charismatic personalities like Mahatma Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, Mother Teresa, etc., Stamps like Water birds, Begum Akhtar, and R.K. Shukla which have become less in number due to quirk of fate or destiny also stands to gain in value as time goes by. The early post-Independence stamp sets of Anna series like Independence 3 stamps set, 1949 UPU set of four, 1950 Republic day issue of 4 values, 1951 Asian Games set, 1952 Indian saints and poets set of six stamps, 1953 Mount Everest set, Telegraphs set etc., also command respect towards investment buying.

Coming to the stationary side, One can invest on 1935 picture post cards (4 Nos) issued by India post of the British Era, Gandhi picture post cards, by India post and also early miniature sheets viz, Indepex '73, UPU 1974 and Indian Masks 1974.

Indian Philatelic items doesn't follow any set rules or law regarding their price variation. In that connection, the suggestions made here are only guidelines and not guarantees. But one can categorically say investing in Indian classics ie. lithographs of 1854 and of course 1948 Mahatma Gandhi 10Rs/- will yield good fruits.

A word of caution to one and all who like to buy with an eye on investment is that always avoid hurried or distressed selling but wait and sell, Be prudent in buying and be happy on selling.

Editor

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Our Second Sunday Meetings were held at the CPMG's Conference Hall, Anna Road, HPO, Chennai-600 002. (11:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.) regularly where about 30 members attended with president Shri Balakrishna Das presiding. Patron Madan Mohan Das spoke on "philately - a family hobby" in Feb 2006

PONGAL

13.1.06

500

0.8 mill

India is a land of festivals. Pongal, one of the most important festival of the Tamil people, is a thanksgiving ritual for a bountiful harvest.



This festival follows a solar calendar and is celebrated on the same days each year. The actual festivities of Pongal begin on 13th January and lasts for four days. The sun traverses from the Tropic of Cancer via the Equator from 14th January to 14th July, and this movement is termed as Uttarayan (summer solstice). The festival also marks the withdrawal of the North East Monsoon.

The first day of the Pongal festival is called Bhogi. The highlight of the day is the bonfire into which old items like rugs, mats, papers, cloths, etc., are consigned, marking the beginning of a new life.

The second day is 'Pongal', the most important day. Decorative motifs called 'Kolams' (Rangoli) are drawn on the floor by the women-folk, generally with rice flour. In the early morning, the family members gather outside their houses and cook sweet rice, known as 'Pongal', in clay pots. The overflowing pot is perceived as an auspicious sign of abundance and prosperity. The celebration of 'Maker Sankranti' in other parts of India coincides with Pongal.

The third day is dedicated to cattle and is called Mattu Pongal. The cattle are gaily decorated with beads, bells and flowers. The main attraction of this day is the bullfight (Jallikattu) in which young men participate.

Kaanum Pongal is the fourth and final day of the festival. After so many days of merrymaking, people take things easy on this day. The spirit of sharing with all, animals and human alike, is embodied in the rituals associated with Kaanum Pongal.

In essence, the festivities of Pongal mark a re-affirmation of traditional values revolving around family and sharing.

AV. MEIYAPPAN

22.1.06

500

0.6 mill



AV. Meiyappan, popularly known as "AVM", and the founder of AVM Studio, was born on 28.07.1907 at Karaikudi, a small town in Tamil Nadu. His father ran a provisions store in Karaikudi, named 'AV & Sons', and sale of gramophone records was

a part of its business. AVM joined his father's business as a teenager, but he soon foresaw a great future in entertainment business and decided to produce gramophone records. He promoted Saraswathi Stores, now in Chennai, and produced gramophone records. Later he ventured into technical collaboration with a German company, and the songs recorded in Madras were processed in Germany and marketed under the "Odeon" label.

AVM's love affair with the silver screen started with the advent of the talkies in the 1930s, Facinated by the medium, he ventured into his maiden production "Alli Arjuna" which was released in 1935. His first directorial venture was "Sabhapathy". While 'Harish Chandra' was the first Indian film to be dubbed from Kannada to Tamil, AVM introduced the play back system in the film 'Nanda Kumar', and post synchronization with "Sri Valli".

November 1945 saw the birth of the famous AVM studios in AVM's home town of Karaikudi. With its very first film, 'Naam Iruvar', and its patriotic and emotional songs by Mahakavi Bharathiar, AVM Studios became a household name. The Studio moved to its present premises at Chennai in 1948, and is now one of the biggest and most beautifully landscaped studios in South East Asia.

Since its inception AVM has produced films in various languages like Kannada, Telugu, Bengali, Hindi and Sinhala, besides Tamil, and has introduced many prominent artists like Shivaji Ganesan, Raj Kumar and Kamal Hasan, among others, to the Indian public.

Through the years AVM films have been very popular with the audience winning great public acclaim. Among the most noteworthy of AVM's films was "Hum Panchi EK Dal Ke", which won the first Gold Medal for the best Children's Film instituted in 1958, while the films 'Namm Oru Paru', 'Kuzhandaiyum Daivamum' and 'Ramu' got silver medals.

AVM also funded charitable institutions to provide education and health-care. His special concern for the Studio workers led him to set up a separate colony for them and also to extend insurance coverage to them for the first time. In 1952 AVM donated to the Government the rights to all Bharathiar songs and made it State property.

Shri AV. Meiyappan died on 12th August 1979, but his legacy lives on.

N.M.R. SUBBARAMAN

29.01.06

500

0.6 mill

A doyen of Gandhian philosophy and a great freedom fighter Shri N.M.R. Subbaraman was popularly known as 'Madurai Gandhi'.



He was born on 14th August 1905 at Madurai in Tamilnadu as the second son of Shri N.M. Rayalu Iyer. He was an ardent follower of Gandhiji. That is why in 1922, he refused to go to London for higher studies and joined the freedom struggle.

In 1923, he became a primary member of Madurai District Congress Committee, and was elected as the President in 1925. He was instrumental in selecting 27 youths from Madurai to participate in the Vedaranyam Salt March in 1930. In the same year, he participated in Toddy Shop picketing along with his wife and courted arrest. He took part in all Satyagraha Movements of Gandhiji.

He was elected Chairman of Madurai Municipality from 1935 to 1942. He also held positions as a member of then Madras Legislative Assembly before and after independence. He was elected for the Lok Sabha from Madurai Constituency in 1962.

He was deeply committed to the cause of emancipation of Harijans. Through Tamilnadu Harijan Sevak Sangh, a unit of all India. Harijan Sevak Sangh founded by Gandhiji, N.M.R. Subbaraman was instrumental in establishing a chain of Harijan Hostels.

Shri N.M.R. Subbaraman was the Secretary of Gandhi works Publications Committee, which brought out Gandhiji's works in Tamil in 17 volumes and many other unique publications. When Madurai University was established in Madurai, Shri N.M.R. Subbaraman was a Member of the First Senate of the University. He was instrumental in the introduction of a course on Gandhian Thoughts for the first time in the country. He was instrumental in establishing the first Gandhi Museum in the country at Madurai. He was also the Chairman of Gandhi Niketan Ashram at T. Kallupatti near Madurai.

He breathed his last on 25th January 1983 but his legacy lives on.

THIRD BATTALION THE SIKH REGIMENT

1.2.06 500 0.6 mill

The Battalion was raised at Lahore on 31 January 1856 as the Bengal Military Police Battalion by Captain Thomas Rattary. At the time of its raising, it had a mixed composition comprising eight Infantry Companies; 1000 strong, and a troop of 200 Cavalrymen. In 1864, it was designated as 45th Rattary's sikhs and become a full fledged Infantry Battalion and in 1885, it was given a pure SIKH status. The present designation dates back to 1947.



Immediately after raising it saw action in battle of Arrah in Behar (now Bihar). In 1860, the Battalion conducted operations against Kukies in Chittagong, Buttias in Sikkim and Khasis in Assam. During Afghan wars, it formed part of the Hazara Field Force and fought against the Arakzais and Khankhel. At the turn of the century, the battalion was in Waziristan, where it undertook the Chitral Relief in 1905 and fought the Mohamand operations in 1908. In World War-I, the battalion won a memorable action at HAI River in Mesopotamia on 1st February 1917. In World War II, the battalion was in action in Iraq, Syria and Iran.

The post independence history of the Battalion is no less illustrious. In 1948, the Battalion was in action in Iraq, Syria and Iran.

The post independence history of the Battalion is no less illustrious. In 1948, it fought the Razakars and restored peace in the erstwhile state of Hyderabad. During this action NK Hardayal Singh was awarded Ashoka Chakra Class II (Posthumously). In 1961, the battalion participated in Operation Vijay for liberation of Goa, and as the advance guard, were the first troops to enter Goa and it won the theatre honour 'Goa'. While serving in Mizoram and Nagaland from 1969 to 1971 and later from 1982 to 1984, the battalion captured a large number of insurgents and weapons. During the 1971 Indo-Pak war, the battalion was deployed in Arunachal Pradesh, established the TRUA Camp and trained

the erstwhile Muktibahini. The battalion took part in Operation Battle AXE in Mizoram from 82 to 84. The battalion participated in Operation Trident 87. It also participated in operation CURB in Tripura in 1988 as part of the Task Force Tripura, when Tripura National Volunteers laid down their arms and surrendered. The battalion has been actively employed in Operation Rakshak in Jammu & Kashmir during the period from 1989 to 1992, 1995, 1997 to 1998. The stupendous achievement was recognized with the Chief of the Army Staff Unit Citation. Subedar Surinder Singh was awarded with the Ashok Chakra (Posthumously) for his conspicuous gallantry.

The Battalion has earned nine Battle Honours, five Theatre Honours and one COAS Unit Citation for its bravery and heroism in various battles/operations since its raising.

PRESIDENT'S FLEET REVIEW, VISAKHAPATNAM

12.2.06 500, 500, 500, 500 0.4 mill each

A Naval Fleet Review is a long-standing tradition followed by navies all over the world. The idea of a Review was perhaps conceived as a show of naval might or an inspection of readiness for battle at sea. It still has the same connotation, but assembling of warships for peaceful purposes is now the norm in modern times. Later reviews were used as a demonstration for victories in battle or for other special occasions.



These reviews inspired the sailors to avow their allegiance to their country and preserve its sovereignty.

Post independence, traditionally, the President, as the Supreme Commander of the Indian Armed Forces reviews the Fleet once during his tenure. In this most formal of naval ceremonies, ships, submarines and aircrafts from all the Naval Commands, ships from the Indian Coast Guard and vessels from the merchant navy are ceremonially dressed up with families embarked, and anchored in lines at the precise spots allotted to them. After a 21 gun salute, the President embarks on the other side and reviews all the ships by cruising past them.

The present Fleet Review, which is the 9th review, is being held on the East Coast for the first time, all earlier being off Mumbai on the West Coast. The last was an International Fleet Review in 2001 in which, 97 warships and submarines including 24 foreign Navy ships and one submarine and fly past by 56 aircrafts, paid their mark of respect to the then President of India, Dr.K.R.Narayanan. For the present Review, all the ships, submarines and vessels will be anchored in the Bay of Bengal off Visakhapatnam harbour and will be reviewed by President APJ Abdul Kalam on 12 Feb 2006.

The stamps depict the multidimensional role of the Navy the air power by the aircraft carrier (INS Viraat) and fighter plane (Sea Harrier); the surface force through warships (Talwar and Brahmaputra class frigates) and anti-submarine Seaking Helicopter; supported by Sandhayak class Survey Vessel and an Off-shore Patrol Vessel Vighraha of the Indian Coast Guard along with a Dornier aircraft and the third dimension - underwater by submarines (Sindhughosh and Shishumar class).

TAMILVEL UMAMAHESWARAR

18.2.06

500

0.4 mill

Tamilvel Umamaheswarar was a great Tamil scholar, one of the best representatives of the cultural renaissance in literature. Umamaheswarar was known for his significant contributions to the Tamil language.



Born on 7th May 1883, Tamilvel Umamaheswarar advocated upgradation of Tamil language by incorporating certain elements of other languages. He did not support alterations in the letters of the script. His efforts resulted in the letters of the script. His efforts resulted in the founding of Karanthai Tamil Sangam. Great Tamil scholars like Gnaniyar Swamigal, Pandithamani U.V.S. Iyer, Raghava Iyengar etc. were some of the eminent voices who used the platform of the Tamil Sangam. He also worked for the development of Sanskrit.

He started the Oriental College in Karanthai Tamil Sangam, which is presently converted to the Arts College.

In the political arena, Umamaheswarar was a prominent leader of the Justice Party of Tanjavur. He was elected as President of Taluk Borad and remained in office for twelve years. Due to his efforts, 170 elementary schools were opened in his Taluk.

He opened boarding schools for all communities. He was also instrumental in reforming the rules and regulation of Thiruvaiyaru Sanskrit College, renamed as Raja's College.

Tamilvel Umamaheswarar was a proficient orator both in English and Tamil. His Presidential address in 1934 at Tirunelveli conference showed ample testimony to his depth and verve in literature, grammar and phonetics. His hints for coinages and neologisms in increasing vocabulary for science and technology were practical. He started and served as editor of a literary monthly 'Tamil Pozhil' in the year 1925, which is still in circulation.

The Government of Madras conferred on him the title of "Rao Bahadur" in 1935.

Tamilvel Umamaheswarar breathed his last during his journey to Ayodhya on 9th May 1941.

THIRUMURUGA KIRUBANANDA VARIYAR

18.2.06

500

0.4 mill

A legendary thinker and a scholar, who gave a new orientation to the story telling art and rejuvenated Bhakti Movement, bringing it to new heights, was Thirumuruga Kirubananda Variyar, popularly known as 'Variyar Swamigal'. He was born at Kangeyanallur in Tamilnadu on 25th August 1860. At the age of five, he started composing poems in Tamil and started giving discourse at the age of nine. Though he received no formal education, he showed his deep understanding of Saivaite literature. A disciple of Sri Eesana Sivacharya, he mastered the Tiruppugazh, a collection of poems on Lord Muruga. He also had in-depth knowledge of Tirukkural and other classics.

Quoting extensively from Tamil literature, he would hold his audience spellbound during his discourses.

Kirubananda Variyar had special interest in the teaching of Vallalar and founded the journal Tiruppugasha-mirtham. He was honoured with many titles for his selfless service to the society.

He gave a new direction to the Tamil Bhakti Movement and was revered by Saivites all over world. His musical discourses brought out the best philosophical truths in a lucid style, laced with interesting parables, short stories and personal anecdotes. He was known as a walking encyclopaedia of Saivite Sidhanta and was revered by his followers as another Nayannar of this age.

He passed away on 7th November 1993.



DR. U.V. SWAMINATHA IYER

18.2.06

500

0.4 mill



Dr. U.V. Swaminatha Iyer, popularly known as 'Tamizh Thattha' was a great Tamil scholar who made the most outstanding contribution to the enriching of the Tamil language.

Born on 19th February 1855, Swaminatha Iyer spent his days till 1871 in searching for master. His father was his first teacher but it was under the tutelage of Mahavidwan Meenakshisundaram Pillai when the foundation of his scholarship and genius were laid. Later, Swaminatha Iyer studied for some time under the Head of the Tiruvaavaduturai Mutt.

He Joined the Government College at Kumbakonam as Tamil Pandit in February 1880. His literary research also began in this year. In 1903, he came to the Presidency College, Madras on transfer from Kumbakonam and in 1919 he retired from service as a college teacher. He served for three years as Principal of Sri Meenakshi Tamil College at Chidambaram.

First he worked on Jeevaka Chintamani, a Jain classic. He made it intelligible to all. He also introduced a set of ten poems of the Sangam age known as Pathu Paattu and the other set of eight known as Ettuthokai, at the time, when no one knew anything about the classics of the Sangam age.

Another work that came out with his imprint was Manimekalai, a Buddhist classic. After the publication of Manimekalai, he published 'perunkathai', an epic of considerable literary merit. Various collections like Ainkuru Nooru, Pajjitruppattu and Paripaadal, and a large number of puranams and minor poems of various kinds, in addition to a paraphrase and commentary on the Sangam classic, 'Kurunthokoi'.

The Government of India conferred on him the distinction of Mahamahopadhyay in 1906 and the University of Madras, an honorary Doctorate in 1932.

Dr. Iyer's prose works include literacy criticism as well. He was also a poet and wrote hundreds of poems. Of these, a short work called 'Dandapani Viruttam' was printed.

He passed away on 28th April 1942 but his legacy lives on.

DEVANEYA PAVANAR

18.2.06

500

0.4 mill

In the annals of 20 century Tamil literature, the name of Devaneya Pavanar assumes prominence. He was born to Shri Gnanamuthu and Smt. Paripooranam at Perumputhur near Sankarankoil in Tamilnadu on 7th February 1902 and was named 'Devanesar' by his parents. He had his schooling from Ambur and C.M.S. High School, Palayamkottai.



He taught in a school at Syonmalai from 1919 to 1921. Recognizing his talents, Tamil Pandithar Masilamani issued a certificate to him as 'Devanesa Kavivanan' which was then reformed in Tamil as 'Pavanar'. In 1924, he was the only person who passed the Pandithar examination of Madurai Tamil Sangam. He also passed the examination of Vidwan (B.O.L.) in Madras University in 1928. In 1952 he earned his Master's Degree in Tamil and joined as a Tutor in Annamalai University for research on Dravidian languages. In 1974, he was appointed as the Director of Classical Tamil Etymological Dictionary.

Pavanar's mission was to bring out a comprehensive Tamil Etymological Dictionary that would cover the entire range of richness and antiquity of Tamil language, which he was able to compile.

His linguistic research, spanned for more than five decades, resulted into many masterpieces including 'Oppiyal Mozhi Nool' and 'Verchol Katturaigal' which was published regularly from 1964 to 1980 in the literary mothly 'Sentamil Selvi'.

His works include History of Tamils, History of Tamil literature, A Critical Survey of the Madras University Tamil Lexicon (in English), History of Sanskrit (Vadamoli), Commentary on Tirukkural in Tamil Tradition, etc.

He wrote more than 35 books, which provide an insight into the variety of facts and highlight the significant contribution made by literary stalwarts.

He was given the title 'Senthamil Selvar' by Tamilnadu Government in 1979.

He passed away on 15th January 1981 but his legacy lives on.

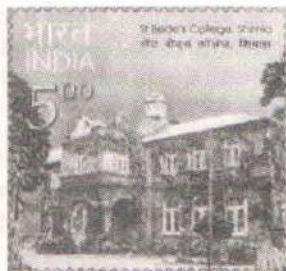
ST. BEDE'S COLLEGE

24.2.06

500

0.8 mill

St. Bede's College is a premier institution, educating women students for the last 100 years. The history of St. Bede's College can be traced from way back to 1842, when many convents of the Religious of the congregation of Jesus and Mary were opened in North India, in order to educate the children of Catholic British soldiers. When Mother St. Clare (Assistant General) came out to India on visitation in 1902, she realized that the best way to help India was to



establish a Catholic Training College for Teachers. After the necessary permissions were obtained the construction began, and the building was ready in 1903. Mother St. Clare returned to India with three sisters from England to start the Teachers Training Course. The first Principal was M.St. Gregory.

The College opened in 4th March 1904 with 15 students. Upto 1947, this College continued to function as a Teachers Training College. In 1954, graduate classes of the B.A. and B.Sc. were started. In 1970 the Himachal Pradesh University was established and this College was affiliated to it. The College kept expanding with new courses but the original Teachers Training Course still continues. St Bede's College has now a sprawling campus with six buildings and more than 1500 students with 200 resident students from all over the country and abroad.

The library that started with 200 books, has now more than 20000 titles and has been computerized.

The motto of St. Bede's College is 'Non Nobis Solum' that means 'Not for ourselves alone'.

GEMINI GANESAN

25.2.06

500

0.4 mill

Gemini Ganesan, the eternal romantic of the silver screen, a charmer, and an actor par excellence, was one of the most adored icons of the Indian film industry.



Gemini Ganesan who was named earlier Ramaswami Ganesan was born on 17th

November 1920 in Pudukottai of Tamilnadu. After initial studies at Ramakrishna Home, Chennai and Maharajah's College, Pudukottai, Ganesan graduated from Madras Christian College, Tambaram and started his career as a lecturer in this College. But soon he joined Gemini Studios as a Production Assistant.

His career as a film actor began with Tamil films Miss Malini (1947), Chakradari (1948) and Nava Jeevanam. Then he moved from Gemini Studios to join M/S Iyengar Company, although the prefix 'Gemini' continued. He then got the dual role in 'Manam Pola Mangalyam', which established him as a popular lead actor. This was followed by more hits including AVM's 'Penn', Kanavanai Kankanda Deivam, and Nagi Reddy's 'Missiamma', which gave him star status.

Gemini Ganesan acted in the lead role in over two hundred films in all the southern languages also including Hindi. His acting career touched enviable heights in films like 'Kalyana Parisu', Sumaithangi', 'Meenda Sorgam', 'Karpagam', 'Punnagai', 'Velli Vizha', etc. His last film was 'Avvai Shanmughi'. He even acted in a TV serial, Krishnadasi.

A stalwart of Tamil cinema, Gemini Ganesan was honoured with several awards and titles including the Padmashree.

In 1973, he led the first Indian cultural performing troops delegation to South Africa.

He passed away in Chennai on 22nd March 2005 but he still rules the hearts of his admirers and fans, as the "King of Romance" (Kadhal Mannan) and above all, as a nice and gentle human being.

DON BOSCO SALESIANS IN INDIA: 100 YEARS

27.2.06

500

0.8 mill

Religious Society of Don Bosco, called the Salesian Society was established in 1859 by Don Bosco, an Italian priest of the nineteenth century at Valdocco (Italy). In 1872 a similar Society for women, called the Salesian Sisters was formed to look after poor girls. Don Bosco organized his lay collaborators into a Salesian family.



The first group of Salesians came to India on 6th January, 1906 when they reached Bombay and from there they headed for Madras and then to their first real destination at Thanjavur to establish the first Salesian presence in India. The leader of that first group was Fr. George Tomatis. They took charge of the existing orphanage that comprised of just six boys.

In 1925, a novitiate was started at Shillong with European and Indian novices. Despite lack of means and personnel, the works progressed rapidly. Trusting Mary Help of Christians and Don Bosco, the Salesian opened new houses in various parts of India. In 1934, the Salesian province of India was divided into two provinces, The Province of North India under Fr. Vincenzo Scuderi and The Province of South India under Fr. Eligius Cinato. At present India and the South Asian region consists of nine provinces (Bangalore, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Dimpaur, Guwahati Chennai, New Delhi, and Tiruchy) and three vice provinces (Konkan, Myanmar and Sri Lanka). In this region there are nine Salesian bishops and 2,333 Salesians working in 372 presences. The lay association of the Salesian Cooperators is also flourishing in this region. The volunteers of Don Bosco (VDB'S) are consecrated lay people living the Salesian charism in the world.



YOUTH FORUM :-

KNOW THIS COUNTRY

MALTA: The George Cross Island

JOHN WOOLFORD, FRPSL

The story of the island of Malta is well revealed on its colourful stamps, and the thematic collector (I am not one) will have a wonderful time with them. In 1980 Robson Lowe, then still at 50 Pall Mall, published a book that had been prepared by the Malta Study Circle, called "Malta, The Postal History and Postage Stamps 1576-1960". This book is packed with information, much of it repeated from the excellent papers produced by the MSC.

The early postal history of Malta, beginning with a letter from 'Chevalier Coulon-bier, J de la Salle to Monsieur de Lisle, Councillor to the French King and his ambassador to the Turkish monarch at Constantinople' need not detain us long. You and I will never see, let alone own, such items. Those who are interested will find a list of letters that are known from the period of the Knights of St John in the book already mentioned.

Equal to the occasion

In 1798 Napoleon occupied Malta as part of his campaign to exclude Britain from the Mediterranean, and the rule of the Knights of St John of Jerusalem came to an end. Luckily for Britain, Sir Horatio Nelson, later Lord Nelson, was equal to the occasion,

and he not only destroyed the French fleet at the Battle of the Nile on 1 August 1798, but sent a British force ashore on Malta. In September 1800 the French garrison surrendered, and the British took over.

Under the British, the Post Office was reorganised, and the Curved Malta type of handstamps came into use. From about 1807 a handstamp with similar lettering but with the word 'PAID' at the top, was introduced. Covers with the curved hand-stamp are scarce and expensive, but are wonderful additions to any specialised collection.

From the 1830s various straight line cancellations, reading 'MALTA POST OFFICE', and then 'MALTA PAID', were introduced. In 1838 the first circular date stamp was introduced. In 1857 British stamps were provided, and they can be found on covers cancelled with a large 'M' in an oval of bars. The 'A25' postmark was used from February 1859, but the 'M' can be found again on covers dated 1861; and possibly it was used much later than that. See Chapter 7 of the Malta book.

Long lists of GB stamps used in Malta are given in the Stanley Gibbons Catalogue. They are all worth looking for with the Malta 'A25' postmark, and on cover many are rare.

An end to freedom!

From 1853 internal postage was free— happy days!—But in 1859 'progress' put an end to this piece of freedom. Messrs De La Rue were asked to produce a 14d. stamp for Malta, and the 'Ad. internal postal service was introduced on 1 December 1860. The 'Ad. stamp, in its colours of yellow and then green, makes a tremendous study on its own, and I quote the Malta Study Circle book: 'There were actually 29 yellow printings and one green printing (that being between the 28th and 30th).'

The catalogue of Malta produced by Emmanuel Said of Valletta, has a long list of these stamps, and the Stanley Gibbons Catalogue also lists the main shades. The Malta Study Circle book matches the shades to the printings in a masterly fashion, and also gives cross-references to the Said and Gibbons lists.

Quantities of the various printings are given, where known, and none seems to be rare. A few examples: 4th printing, SG 4 and Said 3, 27,600 stamps; 22nd printing, SG 12 and Said 5, 50,160.

The Malta administration was to have taken over the General Post Office at Valletta in July 1884, but the usual bureaucratic delays saw the take-over postponed until 1 January 1885. From 27 December 1884 a new set of stamps, (20 to 28), was on sale at Valletta, although they could not be used until 1 January 1885. A year later, a 5s. stamp (30) was added to the range. The Said Catalogue gives quantities, and it is worth noting that 60,000 of the 1s. were printed. That presumably refers to the first printing (28) and does not include the second printing of 1890 (29). The 5s. is much scarcer, as would be expected, with only 15,000 having been printed. This is a striking stamp, with the Maltese cross surrounding the head of Queen Victoria, as was requested by the Maltese authorities.

In April 1899 Malta became part of the Imperial Postage network, and as a result there was a great demand for 1d. stamps. By 1902 there was such a shortage that it was decided to surcharge the 2 ½d with the words 'ONE PENNY' (36/37).

A strange story

6000 panes of 120 stamps, or 720,000 stamps altogether, were surcharged. The stamps were put on sale on 4 July 1902, and the whole lot was sold out within two weeks. A well-known collector, Mr J C North, tried to buy some full sheets at the GPO in

Valletta, and was told there were none. He complained to the powers-that-be and a committee of enquiry was set up. He showed the committee a block of six stamps that showed the error of surcharge reading 'ONE PNNEY', and a strange story unfolded.

It was revealed that this error occurred on the second stamp of row 9 on the sheet, and that it was probably produced on the instructions of the Postmaster-General. This resourceful official then took a whole lot of the blocks of six from the panes to sell for his own profit. Further, he marked unsurcharged stamps with a red tick at the top left-hand corner. This proceeding must have left him more than a little cross-eyed but it was supposed to have been done to prevent anyone forging the surcharge on 'ordinary' sheets. However, I quote the MSC-book again: 'The tick has been forged in different shades of red, also in the right-hand (instead of the left-hand) top corner of the stamp.'

The result of this escapade was that the Postmaster-General had to resign. Probably today he would be given a decoration. At any rate, collectors can be grateful to him for creating an interesting variety, and one that has an interesting story attached to it.

Renowned pictorials

Before the issue of the Edward VII stamps, Malta had already issued the first of its renowned pictorials, beginning with the 4d. Gozo Fishing Boat, 5d. Galley, 2s.6d. figure of Malta, and the 10s. Shipwreck of St Paul designs that came out on 4 February 1899. The 4d. brown, showing a view of the Harbour of Valletta, followed on 4 January 1901. They are attractive stamps, and the quantities are given in the Said Catalogue as 572,640 of the 120,000 of the 4d., 119,040 of the 5d. and 60,000 of each of the 2s.6d. and 10s. The 10s. Shipwreck of St Paul design, printed in blue-black, is one of the most impressive high values issued in any country of the British Empire, and it was used in various forms for many years. The comparatively high printing figure for such a high value stamp (in 1899 10s. was a lot of money) shows that Malta's stamps were becoming extremely popular, and were already enjoying large philatelic sales. This trend was to continue, and in future would lead to many eyebrows being raised.

In 1903 and 1904 a short set of stamps with the head of Edward VII was issued (38/44), and then between 1904 and 1914 a long set, that included various stamps with the head of Edward VII, was issued (45/63). The Edwardian stamps in this latter set are easily distinguished as they have the Multiple Crown CA watermark. The top value Edward VII stamp was 5s. (63) and the MSC book tells us there were four printings of 66 sheets altogether, which gives a total of 15,840 stamps.

The King George V stamps (69/88) were introduced as their Edwardian predecessors ran out. The 2s. and 5s. were in the colonial key-plate design that was shared by various colonies, including Nyasaland and Leeward Islands. It is an ornate design that was criticised by John Easton, but it has worn surprisingly well—Leeward Islands even used it for stamps of the present reign. The plate numbers on these stamps appear in the side margins opposite the four corner stamps, but they are at right-angles to the designs.

We have difficulty with the sheet format of the 2s. and 5s. stamps. The MSC book states roundly, 'The 2s and 5s values were printed in sheets of 60, divided into two panes of 30 (five rows of six stamps).' The Said Catalogue says the stamps up to and including the 1s. were in two panes of 60, making a full sheet of 120 stamps of each value. However, for the 2s. and 5s. it just says the sheets were of 60 stamps, and in brackets appears the legend (12x5).

A puzzle

Stanley Gibbons tells us the broken crown and scroll is on the 12th stamp (i.e. the last stamp) of row 2 on the Leeward Islands keyplates and we must assume that the position on Malta sheets is the same. The MSC book tells us it is on row 2 no 6. Does that mean it appears on the last stamp of the second row on each pane, or twice on a full sheet? This has always puzzled me, and it is more than time that the confusion over panes versus full sheets was cleared up.

In 1919 the magic design of the landing of St Paul was used again for a 10s. stamp, SG 96. These stamps, watermarked Multiple Crown CA are very scarce, as only 1530 are supposed to have been printed. The Malta authorities told the Philatelic Magazine in December 1921 that a small stock of 10s. stamps on Crown CA paper was issued by mistake. All the stamps were sold quickly, and since then stamps on Crown CC paper had been available—presumably this was the 1899 10s. (35). SG 35 was inscribed 'Malta Postage' across the top, while the 1919 stamp, SG 96, was inscribed Malta across the top, with the words Postage and Revenue at the sides. The re-issued SG 35 was expected to last until September 1922, 'when the new CA stamps which have arrived will be issued.'

However, the Script CA stamp (104) was put on sale in January 1922, and by that time the Self-Government overprints (10V 20) had been on sale for a week. The un-overprinted 10s. stamp continued to be used until 9 March, when it, too, appeared with the Self-Government overprint. The number of overprinted 1s. stamps (121) was 12,690. The overprinted SG 35, which became SG 105, is much scarcer, with only 7860 having been overprinted.

A somewhat strident figure

Let us move on from these confusing issues to the slightly less confusing 'Melita' stamps of 1922-26. The reason for this issue was that in 1921 Malta had been granted internal self-government—hence the overprints—and it was believed that in 1922 a new set of stamps should show the self-governing status of the island, new designs were prepared, showing a somewhat strident figure of Malta marching out of the sea, holding a rudder in her right hand, and generally looking like one of those characters you would not like to meet on a dark night unless she was on your side. This uncompromising character was on all the 'pence' values. On the values from 1s. to 10s. two chastely embracing figures were shown, one representing Britain, and the other Malta. These stamps were all typo-graphed; but a top value £1 stamp, recess printed, showed the Amazonic figure of Malta again. Just to add interest, and to get more money from collectors, there were two versions of the £1 stamp, with sideways watermark (139) and with upright watermark (140). The Said Catalogue says there were 6000 of the sideways watermark stamp, and 4000 of the upright version. The MSC book so often quoted here, does not give any figures, contenting itself with saying that (predictably) the £1 stamp was rarely found postally used. It is an oddly attractive stamp—whatever the watermark—and fine used (probably cancelled by favour) are not easy to find. Apparently there were two printings of each variety, but I defy anyone to tell the difference. Readers are referred to: the MSC book for the details.

In 1926 this issue was overprinted 'POSTAGE', and these overprints were put on sale on 1 April. A few of the £1 were overprinted, but they were destroyed as there were so few of them that it was feared they would attract the attention of speculators. As the entire issue was somewhat speculative, we may be forgiven for dismissing this scruple as mere bureaucratic balderdash. It was stated at the time that there were 8000 of the 2s., 8000 of the 2s.6d., 16,000 of the 5s., and 24,000 of the 10s.,

but later the accuracy of these figures was denied. The Said Catalogue quotes them without comment.

Warning of forgeries

Two sheets of the 3d. with inverted overprint are thought to have existed, making 320 stamps in all. A Colonel MacKean, apparently resident in Malta, bought some of these stamps, and posted one to himself in 1929—affixed to a registered envelope. The post office clerk at Notabile accepted the letter, but then phoned the Postmaster-General about it. The PMG authorised the delivery of the envelope, but a tiresome Court of Enquiry was set up to investigate the matter. As is the way with such official enquiries, nothing much came of it, except that the authorities warned of forgeries, and indeed the variety has been forged. Surprise, surprise. The Malta Study Circle devoted much attention to the problem of the forgeries, and their book has much valuable information about them. The variety should be purchased only with a certificate.

The overprints were only a temporary issue, and on 6 April 1926 new Xd., 4d. and 4!4d. stamps bearing the head of King George V and the arms of Malta and Is., Is.6d., 2s., 2s.6d., and 3s. pictorials, inscribed 'Postage', were issued. They were followed in the next few months by other stamps up to the top value, 10s. (issued 9 February 1927). In 1928 it was decided to overprint these stamps with the legend 'Postage and Revenue' as separate revenue stamps were no longer required. The date of issue was 1 October 1928. Then, as if this wasn't enough, on 20 October 1930 the same designs were reissued, inscribed 'Postage and Revenue'. At least now the full gamut of inscriptions and overprints had been run, this nonsense came to an end. These pictorials are fine looking stamps, and it was just a pity they should have been given a bad name by their sheer quantity.

Pride of place

In May 1935 Malta had an excuse to issue yet more stamps, but this time on a worthy occasion, the silver jubilee of King George V. For a long time there was a doubt about numbers issued, but Bridger & Kay some years ago gave figures that seem to have been accepted ever since. I hope tiresome investigators will not alter them, but they are: 2½d. 95,690; 2½d. 52,890; 6d. 43,360 and Is. 32,780. The usual Bradbury, Wilkinson varieties are known on these stamps; see the SG Catalogue for details and pride of place goes to the extra flagstaff, an example of which is illustrated.

First day covers of the 1935 Jubilee set are always desirable. The George VI definitives were for many years thought to have been issued on 15 February 1938 probably because a postal notice about them was dated then but it has been established they were on sale from 17 February. First day covers, often of the Selfridges type, are scarce, but worth having.

In 1933 the Maltese constitution had been suspended because of some political argument, but the great services rendered by Malta during World War II, when the island withstood a fierce bombardment by the Axis forces, led to the restoration of the constitution in 1947. The chance was taken to overprint the 1938 definitives with the legend 'Self-Government 1947', although the stamps were not put on sale with the overprint until 25 November 1948. This was obviously a good way of getting rid

of the large quantities of George VI stamps but, even so, there was no shortage before the issue of the Queen Elizabeth definitives in 1956.

Varieties of the George VI sets are listed by Gibbons, including the joined 'NT' of Government on the 'Ad. (235a) and the 5s. (247a). Years ago I was delighted to find tills variety on an f.c.c., but I have never yet found the Semaphore variety on the overprinted stamp. If you are offered a joined NT' variety, look for any marginal markings, as the variety occurs on the last stamp of the 4th horizontal row. Often the stamp will show traces of the printer's guide mark on its top right perfs.

Pride of place in the King George VI commemoratives goes to the Silver Wedding £1, despite its obvious weakness as a speculative issue. 44,990 were sold, according to the MSC's invaluable book, of which only 18,008 were sold locally. That means used stamps are quite scarce as, presumably, they would have come out of the locally sold stamps. A similar story, with much higher figures, emerges from the UPU commemoratives of 10 October 1949; as, of the 232,633 of the Is. sold, 176,693 were sold on the island. That figure is quoted from the MSC Book, but Said gives quantities sold of the Is. as 286,796. George VI stamps, and earlier Elizabethans, were mostly printed by recess and were all the better for it. Many details of the designs of the first Queen Elizabeth definitives, issued at various dates from 1956, are given in the late lamented Elizabethan Catalogue, and also in the Said Catalogue. They are most attractive stamps, and plate blocks of the high values are not often found. The 2s.6d., 5s., 10s. and f 1, printed by Waterlow, were all from Plate 1, although the 2s.6d. is also known from Plate 2. Quantities were fairly high, with 380,838 of the 5s., 199,143 of the 10s., and 198,139 of the £1.

Arresting symbolism

We now enter the era of the many colourful stamps designed by E V Cremona, noted for their florid hues and arresting symbolism that always seems so much more to the point than similar attempts at symbolism by other designers. Notable among his efforts are the various George Cross issues, which had their forerunner in the 1956 3d. definitive, illustrating the King's scroll, awarding the George Cross to the island, a scroll which was presented by Viscount Gort (the Governor) on 13 September 1942 to the Chief Justice at a ceremony in Palace Square, Valletta.

One of the best known of the Cremona sets was that of 9 February 1960, or the 1900th anniversary of St Paul's shipwreck. There were only 150,000 full sets sold, and that might have frightened some of the would-be speculators when the even better 1965 set for the 400th anniversary of the Great Siege was issued. Probably some people thought the quantities would be much larger, and yet there were only 140,000 full sets.

Remember that these photogravure stamps have cylinder numbers in each colour, which makes collecting them nearly as complicated as collecting modern GB. Malta continues to issue stamps too many, some would say but it is hard to find a country with more interesting designs.

(Courtesy. Stanley Gibbons Monthly, 1999)



ROB BEESON

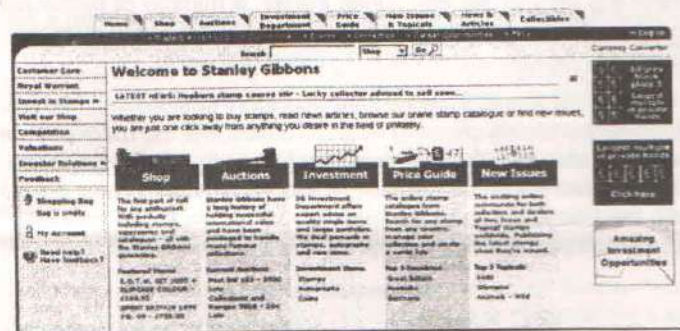
Taking the first step— purchasing a PC

There can be little doubt that the popularity of home computers coupled with the advent of the Internet have changed the nature of stamp collecting in recent years. The world has become a far smaller place and it is now incredibly easy to communicate with other collectors from around the globe.

This guide has been compiled to provide stamp collectors with the information required to take advantage of the power of computing in order to enhance their enjoyment of the hobby.

There are obviously different levels of computer to meet different standards of performance demanded by users. For the average person who wishes to use a PC to surf the Internet and other basic functions, nothing too extravagant is required. Those at the lower end of the price spectrum should be powerful enough for most needs.

In terms of additional components, a printer and scanner are highly useful pieces of equipment. It can be a strain on the eyes to read large amounts of text from a screen and so users often prefer to print out information. Scanners meanwhile are essential if users are going to use their PCs to sell stamps over the Internet.



Many PC vendors run promotions consistently throughout the year and so it is quite possible that they might offer a printer or scanner for free as part of a deal.

Step 2—Getting online

In order to get the most out of your PC and access the Internet, it is necessary to connect it to a telephone line by signing up with an Internet Service Provider (ISP). There are a number of ISPs operating within the market and as with PCs, competition among them is intensifying which is proving to be beneficial for the customer. A broadband connection is now barely more expensive than the far slower dial-up connection.

Once an ISP has been selected, a simple installation process needs to be undertaken. Depending on which ISP a user chooses, an additional modem may need to be purchased and installed. On completion, users can surf the Internet, gaining access to a wealth of information and opening a whole world of possibilities. Users can also set up an email address which will enable communication over the Internet. ISPs generally provide their customers with an email address when they sign up.

One aspect of being online that can be a cause for concern is viruses. These are usually sent via email by malicious time-wasters just wishing to cause disruption for other users. New PCs however tend to come installed with anti-virus software

which should offer adequate protection for users whilst they are online. Because new viruses are constantly being created, the software updates itself with regular downloads. As a result, many companies charge a yearly subscription fee for this service, but it is well worth signing up to for peace of mind alone.

Buying online

People who are new to computers and the Internet are often put off from buying online because of the horror stories they hear or see in the media about fraudulent activity. In actual fact, only a very tiny percentage of transactions end in disaster and paying with a credit card online is no more risky than doing so over the telephone or in a shop.

Many stamp dealers have websites from which visitors can buy material directly, they vary in quality but the best ones offer detailed descriptions and images of the products they offer. Those which offer secure payment options such as www.stanleygibbons.com will usually state this clearly on their website, if it is not clearly shown then my advice would be not to buy direct, but use the post instead.

Searching and buying on eBay

Unless you have been living in a cave on Mars for the last couple of years you can't fail to have heard about eBay (www.ebay.co.uk), the auction website where anybody can buy or sell just-about-anything. Stamps are the third largest category on the website and there are literally hundreds of thousands of stamps for sale at any one time. Users can find items on the website by browsing through the many categories or by typing in specific search terms, such as 'Concorde First Day Cover'.

The world's 'largest virtual marketplace' has been around for nearly ten years now and continues to grow at an astonishing rate, with around £45 million worth of goods sold each day. The whole concept of eBay revolves around trust, with buyers and sellers rating each other after the completion of every transaction. Each user has a profile where these ratings are shown, meaning buyers can see how reliable a seller is before making a purchase.

Items are offered for sale in two ways on eBay, either as auction items or as Buy It Now items. With online auctions, the principle is fairly straightforward, the person who submits the highest bid wins, unless the seller of the item has set a reserve which the winning bid fails to meet.

Auctions can last for different periods of time and revolve around a proxy bidding system which means users submit an initial maximum bid during the auction. That amount can then be revised before the end of the auction should other users make higher bids. The advantage of this method is that buyers aren't required to continually place bids each time another user does, the system does this automatically until your maximum is reached. The winning amount is then essentially one increment above what the second highest bidder is willing to pay.

In contrast, Buy It Now items are, as the name suggests, items which can be purchased outright on a first come-first served basis for a set price.

Before bidding on or buying an item it is vitally important that buyers check the sellers' feedback in order to make sure that they are reliable. This will tell buyers how many satisfied or dissatisfied customers the seller has served and also give details about the nature of any complaints received.

Winning bidders or buyers are legally bound to complete the transaction once the auction has ended and so it is very important that buyers fully read item descriptions to make sure they know exactly what they are buying.

Paying for items

When an item has been won at auction or bought using Buy It Now, the buyer needs to pay the seller. A variety of payment options are available, such as sending a cheque or postal order, but one of the most popular methods is PayPal, eBay's own online payment system. Users simply sign up with a credit or debit card and are then able to transfer funds easily and immediately for free to each other's accounts.

Once the seller has received the funds, the emphasis is on them to send the item in good time whilst the buyer should rate the transaction after receiving the goods.

Categories

The items listed on eBay are divided into categories and then sub-categories in order to make the website easiest to browse. It is therefore vital that when listing items, sellers place them in the correct categories.

The stamp categories

The stamp category is divided into hundreds of sub-categories, for example Great Britain is divided by reigns and then further sub-categories to make it easier for buyers to find what they're looking for.

Item Title & Description

One of the most important aspects of listing items on eBay is writing accurate and detailed titles and descriptions. The information contained within the title is the main way in which buyers find items, either through using the search facility or whilst browsing listings.

When selling stamps there are some key details which should appear in the title:

- The date, face value and colour of the stamp
- Its catalogue number
- Its catalogue value
- Condition

Additional information such as plate numbers and corner letters should also be included if applicable. Sellers are restricted to using 55 characters in the title so it can be difficult to include all the necessary information. A good example is shown below: 'QV 2d blue pi. 15 (F-C) - SG 45 - fine used Cat £25'.

Sellers can be as detailed as they like in their description, there are no restrictions on length. It is best to expand on the title and include as much detail as possible about the condition of the stamp. It pays to be honest as buyers have an opportunity to leave 'negative feedback' if they feel they have been deceived. This can greatly damage future sales as prospective buyers are easily put off by unreliable sellers.

Pictures

A picture paints a thousand words and is vitally important when trying to sell an item, especially online. A scanner is a vital piece of equipment for any collector wishing to sell stamps on the Internet. Users can simply place a stock card of stamps they wish to sell on to the scanner and then once scanned in, edit the image using the accompanying software package.

Ideally, a high resolution scan should be taken of any stamps to be listed. The larger the scan, the more detail can be obtained by potential buyers about aspects of the stamp's condition. For the more technically-minded, most images on the Internet are set at a resolution of 72 d.p.i. (dots per inch). When scanning stamps, a larger resolution of around 300 is more desirable as it produces a larger, more detailed image which gives a truer impression of the stamp's condition.

Pricing

One of (the advantages of listing items in the auction format on eBay is that the market is left to decide the price. Many sellers prefer to list their items with a low starting price; 99p is a popular choice as it entices bidders at an early stage and eBay's listing fee is only 15p for items starting at 99p or less. Once people become engaged in a bidding war, human nature dictates that they become determined to win, often paying 'over the odds' for an item rather than lose out all together.

If the Buy It Now option is selected, the seller really needs to know the value of what they're selling, or at least what they are willing to accept for it. An understanding of the market and the 'going rate' for similar items on eBay is required if sellers are going to use this option.

Payment & Postage

Sellers need to declare the payment methods they are willing to accept as well as postage costs and where they are willing to send the item to. As mentioned earlier, a number of traditional payment methods such as cheque or postal order are available, but many people prefer the immediacy of PayPal.

Because stamps are so light and easy to ship, most sellers provide worldwide shipping. Logic dictates that the more people who are able to bid on an item, the higher the realisation price. Buyers take into consideration postage costs when they bid so it's best to keep them as reasonable as possible and offer combined postage if the same person buys more than one item.

After the sale

Once payment has been received, the item should be packaged appropriately and dispatched soon after, with positive feedback left for the buyer. The buyer will then do the same depending upon how happy he is with purchase. Leaving feedback is not compulsory but it is important as the whole concept of eBay revolves around trust, and rating buyers or sellers is the truest way in which users can create a safe trading environment.



SAINTS AND ANGELS TOM WILSON

A shelf filled with books could hardly do justice to the nurses of this world. Here is simply a superficial preface to a theme attractive to the collector interested in medical and social history.

A nurse, in her distinctive head-dress, is a motif used by many stamp designers, and they appear on hundreds of issues from a good number of postal authorities. Among the stamps of Great Britain alone, three examples can be cited, Florence Nightingale visiting a soldier's bedside on the 9d value of the Anniversaries set of 1970 (SG820); a nursing officer of 1921 on the 3p of the 1971 British Anniversaries (SG887) and a District Nurse on the telephone centennial set of 1976, (SG999) The St John's Ambulance nurses are featured on the 5p from the

Guernsey centenary set, 1977 (SG157). The St John's Ambulance stamps are almost unique in that they portray male nurses in attendance.

Hippocrates, circa 400 BC, laid down the principles of sound nursing and, with the growth of Christianity, a considerable body of good women devoted themselves to succouring the sick. A nursing collection might include Visiting the Sick from a set of Delia Robbia paintings on Vatican City, 1960, 301 (SG330). At the time of the Crusades, 1070 AD, a famous military nursing order was founded by the Blessed Gerard. The Knights Hospitaliers of Saint John of Jerusalem, whose headquarters today are in Rome. One of their celebrated knights was Nicolas Cotoner. His portrait, *Tending the Sick*, by M. Pr t appears on a 2d stamp of Malta, 1964 (SG318).

Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, 1207 to 1231 A.D., is portrayed



on a number of stamps. These include a semi-postal of Austria, 1936, 24+6s, St Elizabeth feeding the sick (SG796) and West Germany 1961, 7pf (SG1262). A set of four stamps from Hungary, 1932, (SG531-534) would be an elegant addition to your collection. The daughter of King Andrea II, she was devoted to her husband Ludwig, Landgrave of Thuringia. A cheerful, sympathetic, fun-loving girl, she ordered hospitals to be built and gave much of her time and energy to caring for lepers. She died at Marburg in the hospital she herself had founded.

The patron saint of nurses is Catherine of Siena, born Catherine Benincasa in 1347. St Catherine is depicted on a set of six stamps of Italy, 1948 (SG698/701) and the quincentenary of her canonisation is celebrated on a pair of 1962 (SG1074/5). A mint specimen of the 100 airmail stamp of 1948 is valuable. The 2d stamp of Malta, 1967 (SG385) depicts her statue by Melchior Gafa, a 17th-century Maltese artist. Vatican City 1962 (SG379/381) displays her portrait by an artist known as Il Sodoma.

From the age of 19, she spent her time nursing the sick in the hospital at La Scala where she bathed lepers and dressed their sores. In 1372 the plague came to Siena and many of its citizens fled the city. Catherine stayed at the hospital day and night, and she persuaded others, by her courageous example, to stay and nurse the sick and dying. In 1380 she died of a paralytic stroke and she was canonised in 1461.

Chiara Scifi, 1194 to 1253, was born of a good family in Assisi, and she was able to convince Saint Francis that she genuinely desired a religious life. As St Clare she became the first nun of the Franciscan Order and she founded the nursing order called The Poor Clares. She was canonised in 1255. The Grey Friars of her patron, St Francis, founded monasteries where lepers received care. Her portrait after Giotto on Vatican City, 1953 (SG 192/3) is highly priced; and Saint Francis, after Delia Robbia, on Italy, 1926 (SG196) is well worth acquiring, especially a fine used specimen.

In the 15th century Nicolas Rolin, Chancellor to the Dukes of Burgundy, together with his wife Dame Guisone de Salins,



Florence Nightingale, featured on issues the world over.

founded the Hospital Hotel Dieu de Beaune, to care for the suffering. The records show that Dame Guisone spent much time in nursing duties at the hospital. Portraits of the couple, from a painting by A. van der Weyden in the chapel of the refuge, appear on a 4f French stamp of 1943 (SG787) and of the Hospital on a 5f pictorial of France, 1938 (SG700). These stamps are not particularly rare and should be easy to acquire.

In the year 1625, Antony le Gras died in Paris after a lingering illness through which his wife of twelve years, Luisa de Marillac (1591-1666), nursed him zealously. Later in 1633, Saint Vincent de Paul and Mme le Gras together with four nuns set up an organisation for nursing the poor which they called The Sisters of Charity. They soon took over most of the patient care in the Hotel de Dieu hospital in Paris. It was said that St Luisa was always ready when needed and that she brought with her an air of hope, joy and peace. She was canonised in 1934. SS Luisa and Vincent de Paul are commemorated on stamps of Colombia 1960 (SG1048), Costa Rica 1960 (SG594/8), Nicaragua 1963 (SG1478/80), Vatican City (set, SG337/9) and many others.

No nurse has enjoyed greater celebrity than Miss Florence Nightingale, who was born to English parents in Florence in 1820. She travelled widely and received a good education in languages, art, literature and science. To the horror of family and friends, this strong-willed young woman at the age of 31 entered the Institute of Protestant Deaconesses at Kaiserswerth, Germany. She studied nursing both there and in Paris. Florence then took up a post as superintendent of a hospital for gentlewomen in London. Her portrait appears on a stamp of Great Britain, 1971, already mentioned, as well as Australia 1955, Germany (SG1151) mis-spelled 'Florentine', 1955, Belgium 1939, China-Taiwan 1964 (SG506), South Africa (lamp — 1964) while Turkey in 1954 and 1958 issued two sets of 3 semi-postals in aid of the Nightingale Foundation, to mention just a few. The German stamp has a catalogue price of around £25. When Miss Nightingale learned about the plight of wounded British soldiers in the Crimea she organised 38 volunteer female nurses, and headed for the makeshift military hospital at Scutari on the Bosphorus. They found the former Turkish barrack building filthy, infected and inadequate. It was devoid of kitchens, plumbing, sanitation, heating, and without utensils, clothing, soap, water, towels, beds and bedding. Nearly half the casualties that were admitted died from infection and neglect. The building is depicted on a Red Cross semi-postal from Turkey, 1954, 50k.

The story of how Florence Nightingale and her ladies transformed Scutari into an efficient hospital is too well known to be repeated here. With adequate care, diet, and sanitation, she reduced the death rate to two per cent. She was the founder of modern methods of nursing. The wounded of every war since then owe a great deal to the quality of treatment and hygiene which she established in military hospitals. In recognition of her achievement, a public fund of £150,000 was raised to establish the Nightingale School of Nurses at St Thomas's Hospital in London. Her training courses became the model for nursing methods all over Europe and America.

Florence Nightingale's American contemporary was Clarissa (Clara) Harlowe Barton, 1821 to 1912. Clara Barton has been honoured on a 3c stamp of USA, 1948 (SG963). Paraguay, 1963, 50c bearing her portrait is evidently non-postal and it is not listed. During the civil war she was called The Angel of the Battlefield and her exploits attracted the attention of the nation. It was due to Clara Barton's work that 12,000 graves of Federal soldiers were located at Andersonville, Georgia, after hostilities had ceased. In 1881, she persuaded the American government to ratify the Geneva Convention of 1864 and in 1882 she founded the American Red Cross and remained its first president until 1905 when ill health forced her to retire.

She was always delicate and tubercular; yet her indomitable spirit compelled her to take part in arduous relief expeditions. She was present in the yellow fever outbreak in Florida in 1887; the floods at Johnstown, Pennsylvania in 1889; and the Galveston floods in 1900. In 1891 and 1896 she organised famine relief in Russia and Armenia, and she led nursing teams under fire in the Cuban-American war against Spain.



A martyr to medical research was Clara Louise Maass. Born in New Jersey in 1876, she graduated from Newark Training School in 1895. She is commemorated on stamps from Cuba, 1951 (SG559) and USA, 1976 (SG1676). She volunteered to work in the yellow fever camps in Cuba in 1897, and then in Manila, in the Philippines. In 1901, Clara Maass returned to Cuba to join an inoculation centre for experimentation on yellow fever. She volunteered to be bitten by an infected mosquito, and was the only American to succumb during the Cuban tests. A similar martyr to her profession during the influenza epidemic of 1918, was the dedicated nurse Victoria Bru Sanchez, born 1876 in Managua, Cuba, and celebrated on Cuba, 1957 (SG820).

Another head appears beside that of Florence Nightingale on a pair from Costa Rica in 1945: that of Edith Louisa Cavell. Daughter of the Reverend John Cavell, an Anglican rector, she was born December 4, 1865 at Swardston, Norfolk, and she entered the London Hospital, Whitechapel, as a probationer in 1895. In 1907 she was appointed as the first matron at the Berkendael Surgical Institute in Brussels. At the outbreak of war in 1914, the Institute became a Red Cross hospital. She tended both German and Allied wounded, and refused to leave the city when Brussels fell, preferring to remain at her post and carry on her work of mercy.

The German command occupying Brussels arrested Nurse Cavell on August 5, 1915, and charged her with assisting British, Canadian and French soldiers to cross the frontier. She was



executed by firing squad on October 12, 1915, in spite of the efforts of Brand Whitlock, the American Ambassador, to obtain mitigation of the sentence. The Edith Cavell School of Nursing is honoured on a 30c stamp from Belgium, 1957 (SG1617). Mount Edith Cavell in the Canadian Rockies is dedicated to her memory and is shown on a \$1 stamp of 1930 (Canada, SG297).

It is not often that we can learn anything about the models artists use for stamp designs. The 1961 4c Nursing stamp of USA is an exception. The artist Alfred Charles Parker said he chose Mrs Susan Bernstein for his model 'so as to have a basis for the construction of the figure. I did not make a portrait of Mrs Bernstein.' The stamp portrays a comely young woman and we are left to wonder why Mrs Bernstein's portrait was not considered acceptable!

In 1958 Mr J. A. Donald, head of the postal department in Ottawa, Canada, "tomised the public brighter and more interesting stamps 'with emotional appeal'. The head of a nurse in uniform cap and collar was required for the 5c Public Health and Nursing stamp of that year, to be designed by Hank Leclair and Gerald Trotter (SG 506). To the disgust of the nursing staff at Ottawa General Hospital, the pretty young lady depicted on the stamp is not a nurse, but Miss Florence Sullivan, then a 21 year old secretary. She was spotted by a Health Department employee on a bus as they were going home from work one evening. 'The stamp', it was claimed, 'will remind Canadians of the devoted women in public and private nursing, and in the nursing services of our armed forces, whose dedicated lives have contributed so greatly to the welfare of our nation.'

Mile Gervais was a nurse who cared for wounded soldiers at the hospital of Mont des Oiseaux during the First World War. She was chosen by artist Andre Spitz as the archetypal French Nurse for the French Red Cross issue of 1939 (SG634).

The centenary of the death of Mother Mary Aikenhead (1787-1858) is honoured with her portrait on two Irish stamps of 1958 (SG174/5). The Angel of Siberia, Elsa Brandstrom (1888 to 1948), daughter of Sweden's Ambassador to Russia, has been similarly honoured on a German stamp of 1951 (SG1071).

The first nursing school in South America was named in honour of Ana Justina Ferreira (1814 to 1880). The wife of a naval officer, Ana Justina served as an army nurse in the war against Paraguay. Her portrait is on a 6c stamp of Brazil, 1967 (SG1166). Amalie Sieveking founded the German Women's Organisation for Nursing the Sick Poor in 1852. During one of the cholera epidemics in Hamburg, Amalie served as a volunteer nurse. Her portrait appears on a 7pf+3pf charity stamp from

West Germany in 1955 (SG1148). Mention should be made of the Swiss doctor Anna Heer who, in 1901, opened a training school for nurses in Zurich.

This brief introduction will only serve to skim the surface of a theme both instructive and humanist. No reference has been made to first day covers, special cancellations, slogans and meter marks (eg, the Macmillan Nurses who care for cancer sufferers) and other sorts of postal stationery. But it is still clear that the field is wide open for the thematic collector who specialises in nurses and nursing.

(Courtesy. Stamp Magazine, 1994)



FLIGHTLESS BIRDS ON STAMPS

P. J. LANSPEARY.

Birds that cannot fly have always been of special interest to ornithologists. At one time some believed that flightless birds had never been able to fly but it is now accepted that they all had flying ancestors and lost the power of flight through natural evolutionary processes. Many species that have become extinct had first lost the use of their wings. Notable amongst these are the Great Auk, Dodo and Moa.

Clumsy on land, Great Auks were an easy prey for hunters. They were good for eating and by the end of the 18th century had become rare. By this time they (and their eggs) were in great demand by collectors, so hastening their demise. The last live sighting was on the island of Eldey, off the coast of Iceland, when in 1844, a pair of birds was clubbed to death. The Great Auk can be seen on a 13c. stamp of Cuba (SG 2170) and a 6c. stamp of St Pierre et Miquelon (531), both issued 1974. A Great Auk was also shown on a local carriage label from St Kilda (one of a local issue for the National Trust for Scotland), which was appropriate, as that island; off the northwest coast of Scotland, was one of their principal breeding grounds.

'AS DEAD AS A DODO'

Dodos lived in the Mascarene Islands in the Indian Ocean. They were large pigeons who had lost the power of flight and evolved into fat, turkey-sized birds that were easy prey for European travellers as a source of valuable fresh meat. Rather less than 100 years of exposure to European culture were sufficient for the phrase 'as dead as a Dodo' to be meaningful. The last one probably died around 1700. A.D.

Endemic to Mauritius, live birds were brought back to Europe where they were painted by various artists, notably Roelandt Savery about in 1626. The designs on Cuba 2146, Laos 1377 and Mauritius 328, the 1r. value in the 1965 definitive set and one of many representations of the Dodo on the stamps of Mauritius, are all based on Savery's portrait.

From skeletal remains, at least 20 species of Moas have

been identified. They were large ostrich-like birds once lived in New Zealand. Both birds and eggs

were a valuable source of food to the Polynesians who started invading New Zealand about 1000 years ago. Before Europeans arrived in New Zealand late in the 18th century, Moas had been driven to extinction and there is little doubt that slaughter by man was the cause of their demise.

Moas have been featured on stamps from Afghanistan, Cuba, Laos, Micronesia, New Zealand and St Vincent. A \$1.80 brought out by New Zealand in 1996 (2033) showed a giant Moa—this was also embodied in a miniature sheet of the same value.

The fate of those long lost birds suggests that a flightless existence is a precarious one. Further evidence for this is the tiny proportion of the total number of bird species now living that are flightless—only 41 out of 9200—and 18 of these are Penguins. A few of these are thriving, notably the Penguins, but others are struggling to survive. Some compensate for their lack of flight by exceptional ability at running or swimming, and a few escape notice by being secretive or nocturnal, or both.

TOO BIG TO FLY

One of the best known flightless birds is the Ostrich. Familiar inhabitants of zoos worldwide, they are native to the African continent. Over many centuries they probably grew too big for flight and running became a more efficient way of getting around. With a top speed of 40 m.p.h. they can usually outrun predators such as lions. Popular with postal authorities, they have appeared on stamps from over 40 countries. A male running can be seen on Niger Republic 736, a 50f. stamp issued in 1978. For three issues—Cameroun 326, Mauritania 637 and four values in the Spanish Sahara set of 1943 (72, etc)—the Ostrich was thought to be a suitable subject for airmail stamps!

Close relatives of the Ostrich are the Rheas of South America. They too are fast runners with an amazing ability to change direction at high speed. There are two very similar races: the Greater Rhea and Lesser Rhea.

A good portrait of a Greater Rhea appears on a 20 p. Uruguay stamp of 1970 (1415—another airmail issue) and a Lesser Rhea can be seen on Argentina 2277, a 4000a. stamp issued in 1991. A World Wildlife issue of four values by Uruguay in 1993 (2139/42) shows a pair of Greater Rheas at a nest with eggs and a head portrait. Greater Rheas can also be seen on issues from Brazil and Paraguay and Lesser Rheas appear on issues from Brazil, Chile, Grenada, Peru and Vietnam.

LIMITED OPPORTUNITY

The Ostrich's counterpart in Australia is the Emu, the National Bird of that country. Not so tall as an Ostrich, the Emu has a stooping posture and their different profiles can be seen on Kenya 460 a 5s. issued in 1988 to mark Expo '88 and the Australian Bicentenary. Opportunities to see the Ostrich and Emu side by side in real life are strictly limited.

Emus have appeared regularly on Australian stamps—the neat and upright pose on the 1942 5½ (208) is idealised—more lifelike are the two birds shown on the \$ 1.35 of 1994 (1371),



which also includes a head portrait. They have rather a bedraggled aspect and this is well shown on Cuba 1559d, one of a 1967 set illustrating birds in Havana Zoo. In 1888, when the states were still autonomous, New South Wales brought out a 2d. showing an Emu (254). The first appearance on national stamps was in 1913, on one of the first Australian issues to mark the formation of the Commonwealth in 1901. The design is the head of King George V, and the Emu stands to the right like a supporter in a Coat of Arms (17).

The fourth and last of the ostrich-like birds is the Cassowary of New Guinea and Northern Australia. There are three races; Double-wattled Cassowary, One-wattled and Dwarf. Cassowaries are forest dwellers, unlike their flightless cousins who roam the open spaces. The prominent growth of horn on top of the head serves as a protection when they are dashing through thick jungle.

A 10c. stamp of Papua New Guinea issued in 1974 (271), shows a head of the Double-wattled variety. The two wattles, which are bright red, can be seen hanging from the front of the neck. The name 'Murak' inscribed on the stamp is more commonly used for the Dwarf Cassowary. A One-wattled Cassowary can be seen on West Irian 32, a 75s. stamp of 1968, and a Dwarf appears on the 24c. definitive of North Borneo issued in 1909 and on subsequent issues until 1922 (176). Papua New Guinea brought out two values in 1990 to commemorate New Zealand 1990, the International Stamp Exhibition in Auckland. The stamps are inscribed 'New Zealand 1840-1990'; the 20t. featured a Dwarf Cassowary and Great Spotted Kiwi and the 35t. a Double-wattled Cassowary and a Brown Kiwi (622/3).

EXTREMELY SHY

The Kiwi is the familiar symbol of New Zealand but, because they are nocturnal and extremely shy, very few have seen one in the wild. About the size of a domestic hen their peculiar pear shape is due to the wasting away of wing muscles and hair-like feathers that hang down. There are three species of Kiwi—Little-spotted, Great-spotted and Brown. The commonest is the Brown Kiwi with four geographical forms, two in North Island, one in South Island and one on Stewart Island. Both spotted types occur only on South Island.

On most of the stamps the type is not specified but a miniature sheet issued by Cuba in 1990 to commemorate Expo New Zealand '90 shows a North Island form of the Brown Kiwi. Not surprisingly the Kiwi is well represented in New Zealand stamps. The first appearance was in 1898, with a 6d. showing a Brown Kiwi (254). A more life-like portrait of a Brown Kiwi, by the well known bird artist Pauline Morse, appeared on a 40c. issued in 1988 (1463).

A fine portrait of a Little Spotted Kiwi by Janet Marshall,

another well-known New Zealand bird artist, can be seen on the 1989 \$10 definitive issue (1297). In 1988 the first of a series of \$1 values appeared showing the Brown Kiwi in a circular motif (1490). Five of these in different colours are shown on a miniature sheet issued to mark World Stamp Expo 2000, California (MS2342).

Some species lost the use of their wings because they lived on islands where flight was unnecessary to obtain food and there were no predators. Also on islands where high winds prevail, loss of flight may be an advantage because of the risk of being blown out to sea if airborne. Unfortunately, when man arrived for the first time they were easy prey to the cats and rats from his ships. Typical of these are some Rails living on remote islands that died out completely.

The flightless Inaccessible Island Rail appeared on four 10p stamps from Tristan da Cunha in 1981, showing a nest, eggs and chicks (315/8). A 1987 issue from Tristan included a 50p showing the flightless Gough Island Coot and a 35p with a different portrait of the Inaccessible Island Rail (424/5).

MUCH EXCITEMENT

Another flightless Rail is the Takahe of New Zealand, which for 50 years was thought to have been extinct. But in 1948, amid much excitement in ornithological circles, a few pairs were discovered in a remote valley in the Murchison Mountains of South Island. There are three appearances on New Zealand stamps—1956, 8d. (754), 1971, 5c. (an heraldic design showing Takahas as Supporters in the Inver-cargill Coat of Arms) (954) and 1987, \$5 (1296). The 1987 design by Janet Marshall is, as might be expected, the most realistic. A pair of stamps marking Expo New Zealand '90, both 5c. values, were issued by Nicaragua in 1990 featuring the Takahe and Little Spotted Kiwi respectively (3071/2).

The Kakapo is the only flightless member of the parrot family. Unlike nearly all parrots, which are noisy, diurnal and arboreal, Kakapos are silent, nocturnal and terrestrial. They are one of the endemic New Zealand species most threatened with extinction and their preservation has a high priority with the Wildlife Services.

Portraits can be seen on stamps from Benin, Gambia, North Korea, the Maldive Islands, Mongolia, New Zealand and Nicaragua. The design on New Zealand 30c. of 1986 (1288) is another excellent one by Janet Marshall. The stamps from the other countries were issued either for the New Zealand 1990 exhibition or in sets featuring endangered birds.

Rather like a small Heron, the Kagu is confined to the Pacific island of New Caledonia. Their inability to fly has made them easy prey for introduced predators such as cats and dogs and, although protected, they are in danger of dying out. As the-national bird, it has been chosen for numerous issues by New Caledonia. Many of these are stylised but a set of four brought out in 1998 showed realistic portraits (1150/3). A miniature sheet value 150f. was issued in 1990 depicting a Kagu and a Brown Kiwi, this also commemorated New Zealand 1990 (MS889).



Ostrich and Emu

Emu

FLIGHTLESS DUCK

Most ducks are strong fliers so it is surprising to find a flightless variety—the Falkland Islands Flightless Steamer Duck. Common throughout the Falklands, their lack of flight is compensated for by strong swimming and diving. Whenever they wish to move quickly to escape from danger or chase away an intruder they 'steam' rapidly on the surface, making a great deal of spray with the combined action of rapid wing beats and hard paddling with their large feet.

There are four stamp appearances; two on Falklands issues and one each from Argentina and the Grenada Grenadines. The 65p value in the 1999 Falklands 'Waterfowl' set (853) shows a male in the foreground with its heavy build, Argentina (2386), a 75c. value issued in 1994 depicts a good portrait of a pair while on Grenadines of Grenada (3296), issued in 2001, it is described as a 'Streamer Duck'.

HANDSOME PENGUINS

Penguins make up the largest and most successful group of flightless birds. They are better adapted to an aquatic life than any other bird family. Using their stiff flippers like wings they can swim fast enough to catch fish and escape predators, mainly Leopard Seals. They are all but impervious to cold and wet with stiff, close packed feathers and a thick layer of blubber. Penguins are most abundant in the forbidding seas between Cape Horn, the Cape of Good Hope, Australia, New Zealand and the Antarctic ice pack.



17 of the 18 species have appeared on stamps, mostly from countries where they occur wild or from those scientific research stations in the Antarctic. The only one not to have appeared on stamps is the White-flipped Penguin of New Zealand.

There is no me that birds on stamps must have connections with the country of issue, and some excellent penguin stamps have come from countries having nothing to do with the Antarctic region. Penguins from the Persian Gulf seem incongruous but, with one exception, the designs in the 1972 Umm Al Qiwain set are acceptable even though the stamps themselves are consigned to the catalogue appendix by Stanley Gibbons. The exception is the 50d. showing Emperor chicks standing by tussocks of grass. This is a howler as nothing green grows in the vicinity of Emperor colonies.

An early penguin issue from the Falkland Islands—the 2s.6d. definitive of 1938 (160)—is a typical example of the handsome, recess printed monochrome stamp brought out before World War II. Little effect is lost by the lack of colour as the Gentoo Penguin is wholly black and white. A good portrait of a penguin swimming can be seen on South Georgia 170, the 1987 10p definitive. The artist has drawn a Chinstrap (or Bearded) Penguin in pursuit of a fish and has succeeded in giving the impression of a bird turning at speed.

Half the 18 species of penguins live in the waters around New Zealand and in 2001 that country issued a set of six values illustrating different species that breed on the mainland or outlying islands.

The most abundant of all Penguins are the Adelies—some of their breeding colonies may contain half a million birds. They and the Emperors are the only ones to breed solely on the south polar continent. Both these species are featured on two values issued by the Australian Antarctic Territory in 2001 (130/1).



Penguins are one of the favourite birds of stamp issuing authorities. Some 60 countries have brought out Penguin issues of some kind, and the number of stamps is nearing 400.

No doubt their popularity is clue to their comic appearance with the Charlie Chaplin waddle. But they are amongst the hardiest creatures on earth, marvellously adapted to life in the world's coldest and windiest region. It is difficult to see how the power of flight would make their existence any easier or more pleasant. But for most of the flightless birds life is threatened, especially if they live on small islands.

(Courtesy : Gibbons Stamp Monthly, 2005)



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