



SIPA

Bulletin

For Private Circulation to Members only

Vol.27 No.3

British Guiana
One cent 38

May - June 2007

TIN CAN
MAIL 40

Bimonthly

GUEST EDITORIAL Stamps Bring Us Together

Mr. Bill Welch

First day of issue ceremonies for the new Stamp Collecting booklet reminded me that, like the Roman god Janus, stamp collectors have two faces-a private one and a public one. To derive the fullest enjoyment from our hobby, We should be able to wear both.

We wear our private face when we retreat to our albums, content to be alone with magnifier, tongs, and catalogue among our stamps and covers. We wear our public face at club meetings, stamps shows, seminars, and other gatherings, such as the first-day ceremonies at the American Philatelic Building on January 23.

However, some collectors allow themselves only one philatelic face. They are all yin, or all yang. On the one side are the so-called "lone wolf" or closet collectors, who spurn the social aspects of the hobby. On the other side, although in fewer numbers, are the "collectors" who are so consumed by the social aspects of the hobby that they somehow never get around to building a satisfying collection.

Is it shyness that keeps some collectors on the private side? Concerns about security? Do they worry that they don't know enough to rub shoulders with the "experts"? Do they think stamp club meetings resemble gathering of the Raccoon Lodge, complete with funny hats? We all have heard those and similar reasons advanced for staying "in the closet".

The best argument against such concerns is an event like the first-day ceremony for the Stamp Collecting booklet. I was struck by how many people - collectors, dealers, APS "official family" - braved the hazards of winter travel in Central Pennsylvania to take part in the event.

Certainly some of them came in search of first day covers, but most, I believe, were responding to the change to share in a day of philatelic fellowship.

Club meetings, seminars, stamp shows, study groups provide all - too - rare opportunities to visit with others who speak our special language, who share our love for philately, who treasure the encounters in part because they are so infrequent. Collectors who deny themselves these pleasures of their hobby should face the fact that they are missing half the fun.

Courtesy - American philatelist



CONTENTS

EDITORIAL.....	33
STAMP NEWS.....	34
MOST VALUABLE.....	38
TIN CAN ISLAND.....	40
WISDOM ON STAMPS	43
MAPPING INDIA	45
ADVERTISERS	47

Our Second Sunday Meetings were held at the CPMG's Conference Hall, Anna Road HPO, Chennai -600 002. (11.00am-01.00 pm) regularly where about 30 members attended with President Shri G Balakrishna Das presiding. Shri D.H.Rao spoke on "Maxim Cards" in April.

STAMP NEWS

WOMEN'S DAY 500, 500, 500, 500

08.03.07

0.4 mill each



8th March is observed as International Women's Day the World over. The International Women's Day signifies the fact that securing global peace and social progress and the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedom require the active participation, equality and development of women and to also acknowledge the contribution of women to the strengthening of international peace and security.

The status of women in India has been subject to many changes over the past years. Women in India now participate in all activities such as education, politics, media, art and culture, service sectors, science and technology etc. Our constitution is firmly grounded in the principles of liberty, fraternity, equality and non-discrimination are defined as justifiable fundamental rights. National Plans and policies have consistently reflected a vision of progress that is not narrowly confined to expanding incomes, but gives a central place to the achievement of human rights, freedoms and well-being for all.

The impact of the various developmental policies, plans and programmes implemented by the Government over the last few years has brought forth a perceptible improvement in the socio-economic status of women. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 is the first of its kind and gets into the private sphere of a household.

This year, the theme adopted for the International Women's Day by the Ministry of women and Child Development is 'Survival to success: Celebrate her life. The postage stamps being released on the occasion of International Women's Day portray woman in her role as the nurturer and preserver. They symbolize all the hopes, aspirations, skills, confidence and the yearning for emancipation, respect and rightful place in society. The flowers depict the natural blooming of hope and joy in every women's life. The swans resonate with many celebrations singing paeans to glory of womanhood.

Theme : Women, Mother, International Days.

RAJ NARAIN 500

0.4 mill

Raj Narain was a great freedom fighter and an eminent parliamentarian. He was born in 1971 in a village named Motikoat, Gangapur in Varanasi district of Uttar Pradesh. He was from the Royal family of Varanasi and directly related to Maharaja Balwant Singh, the King of Varanasi. After



completing his post graduation and LLB, he joined Socialist Party and held many party positions. He was very close to Dr. Ram Manohar Lohiya who described him as "a person who has heart of a Lion and practices of Gandhi".

He was the President of Student Congress during Quit India Movement in 1942. He led the movement in and around Varanasi district. He was so active in the freedom struggle that the British Government wanted to get hold of him and ordered a prize of Rs. 5000/- for getting him dead or alive. An active participant in the Quit India Movement and all the campaigns connected with the freedom struggle, he suffered imprisonment many times.

Shri Raj Narain had a long and distinguished political career. He was elected to the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly for two terms, from 1952 to 1962. He was the first 'Leader of Opposition' of Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly, after independence. He was a member of Rajya Sabha from 1966 to 1972 and again from 1974 to 1976. He was the Minister of Health in the Central Cabinet from 1977 to 1980. He was also a famous politician who as a candidate of Janata Party in 1977, defeated Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, in Lok Sabha election from Rae Bareilly constituency.

Shri Raj Narain was a man of masses. He strove hard for political freedom, economic justice, social equality and cultural advancement of the people.

He died on 31st December 1986.

Theme : Personality, Leaders, Freedom Fighters.

MEHBOOB KHAN

30.03.07

500

0.4 mill

A pioneering figure of the Indian motion picture industry, the late Mehboob Khan built up a formidable reputation as director and producer in course of a career spanning nearly three decades. Exploring subjects as varied and complex as religious crusades in 'Judgement of Allah', concepts of crime and punishment in 'Ek hi Raasta', the travails of an Indian peasant woman in 'Aurat', the tragic complications of a love triangle in 'Andaz' or a swashbuckling fantasy like 'Anan', His magnum opus was of course, the great 'Mother India'. Lavish and spectacular, many of his films were on a grand epic scale, starting with his very first directorial venture, the 'Judgement of Allah'.



Born in Billimora in Gujarat, Mehboob Khan ran away from home to pursue his dreams in the film studios of Bombay. He started his career as a bit player with the Imperial Film Company, hidden inside a wooden vat for a scene in Alibaba and Forty Thieves (1927). A man of humble beginning and little formal education, the very first film directed by him, produced by Sagar Movietone, catapulted him to success. 'Manmohan', 'Watan', 'We

Three', 'The only Way' and 'Ek hi Raasta', under the same banner, consolidated his position as one of the leading directors of the day. Sagar Movietone gave way to National Studios under whose banner he made some remarkably significant films like 'Aurat', 'Bahen' and 'Roti'. 'Roti' was a blistering attack on capitalism and the lust for money, while 'Aurat' (1940) was the story of a resolute young woman who starts life full of hopes and dreams but ends up old and careworn, surviving flood, famine, starvation, and a wayward son whom she shoots to protect the honour of the village.

Moving on up his own production unit, Mehboob Productions, his first film was 'Najma'. Anmol Ghadi (1946) created a stir because of its casting coup, starring three singing stars together, namely Surendra, Noorjehan and Suraiya, along with a great musical track by Naushad. His next masterpiece was 'Andaz' which dazzled with its glamour and gloss and high drama. The lavishly spectacular 'Anan', his first film in colour, even had a release in London.

Mehboob Khan's crowning glory came with 'Mother India', a remake of 'Aurat' and the ultimate tribute to Indian womanhood. So tremendous was its success that the film has become a reference point, whose influence continues to be seen in Hindi movie even today. 'Mother India' also became the first Indian film to be nominated for an Oscar, in the Best Foreign Film category, losing out by a solitary vote at the 1958 Academy Awards.

Mehboob Khan combined a rare creative imagination and cinematic sensibility with a talent for casting. Among those who attained stardom with him were Nargis, Dilip Kumar, Raj Kapoor, Sheikh Muktar, Surendra, Yakub, Suraiya, Nadira, Raj Kumar, Rajendra Kumar and Sunil Dutt, a veritable 'Who's Who' of Bombay film stars. Mehboob Khan passed away on 28th May 1964, but continues to live on in the memory of cinema lovers through his extraordinary body of work.

Theme : Pioneers, Cinema, Entertainment

Dr. R.M. ALAGAPPA CHETTIAR

06.04.07

500

0.4 mill

"Great men have humble beginnings". Thus began the life and times of RM. Alagappa Chettiar, who was born on April 6th 1909, in Kottaiyur, Sivaganga district. His primary education was at the SMS Vidyasala in

Karaikudi, and he went on to obtain his M.A. in Literature from the Presidency College in Madras.

At the age of 21, Chettiar became the first Indian trainee at the Chartered Bank in London. Soon thereafter he qualified for the Bar at Middle Temple, England and became a 'Bar-at-law'. Adventurous in nature, he was awarded a pilot's certificate at Croydon, England. The British Government acknowledged his stellar record as a business entrepreneur when he was knighted in 1945 at the age of 37.

He launched his career by pioneering in textiles. His empire consisted of rubber plantations in Malaya, tin mines in Burma, textiles Mills in Kerala, Insurance companies in Calcutta, hotels in Bombay, theatres in Madras, a flourishing stock broking company and a private airline.

In 1947, following India's independence, he answered the call of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to industrialists to help educate India. He spontaneously offered to start a College of Technology in Madras. With able guidance and inspiration from Dr. A. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar, the then Vice Chancellor of Madras University, the Alagappa College of Technology was established and affiliated to the University of Madras, offering undergraduate programs in Chemical Engineering, Textile Engineering and Leather Technology. His subsequent generous donations led to the establishment of a string of educational institutions, all of which formed the basis for the establishment of the Alagappa University in 1985 by the Government of Tamil Nadu.

Apart from founding a galaxy of educational institutions, Dr. Chettiar gave generous donations to Annamalai University for establishing an Engineering College. The reputed Ramanujam Institute of Mathematical Sciences, in memory of the mathematical genius Ramanujam, in Chennai was the brain child of Dr. Alagappa Chettiar.

Dr. Chettiar, at the instance of Mahatma Gandhi also founded the "Thakkar Baba Vidyalaya" which was inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi himself.

RM. Alagappa Chettiar was conferred the



distinction of Padma Bushan by the President of India on January 26th 1956. Within a span of two decades, he demonstrated his versatility as a successful business tycoon and an intrepid academician with a vision to change the mere scrub jungle of Karaikudi to an educational Mecca. When he passed away prematurely at the age of 48, Dr. Alagappa Chettiar had redefined philanthropy and contributed more to the betterment of education in Tamil Nadu than any other person of eminence had done until then.

At the tender age of 48, he succumbed to his illness and passed away on April 5th, 1957, but his legacy lives on.

Theme : Personality, Education.



MOST VALUABLE

HISTORY OF THE WORLD'S COSTLIEST STAMP

JAMES MACKAY

More than a quarter of a century has elapsed since I saw the British Guiana one cent black on magenta, but I remember it as vividly as if it were only yesterday. In a long line of pilgrims I shuffled slowly past a glass showcase, roped off and under the unflinching gaze of burly security guards, at the Royal Festival Hall in London.

This was undoubtedly the highlight of the Stanley Gibbons' Catalogue Centenary Exhibition of 1965. The late Mick Michael, Chairman of the company, was a superb showman at the best of times, a larger than life character, but in securing this famous rarity for the exhibition he really surpassed himself.

As we shuffled forward in line like so many penitents performing the haj, the level of anticipation rose perceptibly. Even now, after this remove in time, I can recall the frisson of excitement at seeing this stamp. Little more than a square inch of paper, rubbed, corners clipped and rather heavily postmarked, it was and still is the most valuable object on Earth in proportion to its size and weight.

Years later I heard a rumour that the genuine article had only been on show on the first day of the exhibition, and that in subsequent days it was replaced by an exact replica. Whether that is true I know not; all I can say is that the atmosphere was positively electric. Even the sharpest eye could not have told whether the stamp was genuine or not. The point was that we truly believed it was, and our faith was rewarded by the sense of moral uplift we experienced.

For the only time in my life I began to understand what it must have felt like to be a medieval pilgrim visiting a shrine containing the relics of some saint.



*The Most Valuable Stamp in the World
BRITISH GUIANA 1856 one cent black
on magenta*

Such is the power and the charisma of the British Guiana one cent black on magenta of 1856, the world's most valuable stamp. It is one, as often stated, the world's rarest stamp (as described in a footnote in the red. Gibbons catalogue, for example). It is no rarer than any other stamp which is unique and there is a surprising number which qualify for that overworked epithet; in fact I can think of three stamps which are actually rarer in that only half of them are in existence.

It is also something of a mystery to me that, of all the world's unique stamps, the British Guiana one cent should have been invested with so much mystique and ballyhoo. The fact remains, though, that it has; and those superlatives world's rarest or world's most valuable have stuck with it ever since it came up at public auction for the first time 70 years ago. For the first time something as humble as a used postage stamp was big news. The newspapers vied with each other in seeking sensational headlines to describe the extraordinary auction which took place in the Hotel Drouot in Paris on April 5, 1922.

Although this unique stamp was the piece de resistance in the series of Ferrary sales held in 1921-5, bidding was strangely slow at first, as the cream of the world's dealers, millionaire collectors and the rich and famous gathered in one crowded room. Gradually the bids gathered momentum : £100,000 francs, £150,000 francs, £200,000 francs. At the level a hush fell across the room. The agent of King George V, among other bidders, dropped out. After a slight lull, bidding continued between the dealer Hugo Griebert and the Alsatian tobacco magnate Maurice Burrus, who bid in person.

At £300,000 francs the bidding stopped. Incredibly, there was some doubt as to which of the bidders had been successful. In such rare instances the auctioneer should have re-offered the lot and it might well have fetched a much larger sum; but Maurice Burrus had enough. With a slight smile he courteously gave way, leaving Griebert in undisputed possession. The sum realized, plus French government sales tax of 17 ½ per cent, at the then exchange rate of 48 francs to the pound sterling, represented a total of £7,343. At the Ferrari sale the previous October, Burrus had paid the equivalent of £2,172 for the pair of 1d and 2d Mauritius 'Post Office' stamps which had originally been on an envelope found by Madame Borchard of Bordeaux in 1864. That was a world record price for a single lot at auction, but it was handsomely eclipsed by the sum realized by the British Guiana one cent.

The record stood for 13 years; ironically it was broken in 1935 when the same stamp came up at a Hamer Rooke sale in London. On that occasion Percy Loines Pemberton bid £7,500 but as this failed to reach the reserve of £10,000 put on the stamp by the vendor it was bought in. Five years later, however, a sum adjacent to that figure (£40,000) was paid in a private treaty sale which was kept so secret at the time that neither then, nor for very many years thereafter, was the name of the purchaser made known.

The aura surrounding the British Guiana one cent, therefore, was a combination of sensational prices when it made fleeting appearances in the saleroom, and mystery surrounding its reticent owners.

The stamps of British Guiana (now Guyana) were usually lithographed in London by Waterlow and sons but long distances and poor communications forced the postal authorities in Georgetown to fall back on their own resources on a number of occasions, as late as 1882, when the London printings temporarily ran out. One of these occasions occurred early in 1856, when the Postmaster had recourse to Joseph Baum and William Dallas, printers and publishers of the Official Gazette, who were instructed to produce 4 cent stamps following the design of the Waterlow lithographs as far as possible.

In fact Waterlow's first issue for the colony, in January 1852, had been a rather crude affair, with the colonial heraldic device, a sailing ship set in a shield, in an upright format with BRITISH and GUIANA at the sides, the value at the top and the motto DAMUS PATIMUS QUE

VICISSIM across the foot. Incidentally this motto, a quotation from Horace, contained a spelling error. Instead of signifying 'We give and we seek in turn', the motto now signified 'We give and we suffer'!

The stamps were typeset and letterpress printed on a Columbia press which has been preserved to this day. This layout of the sheet is not known, but so far as the 4c stamps are concerned, four distinct types differing in minor details are recorded.

In the Baum and Dallas provisional issue a horizontal format was adopted. A rectangle of printer's rule contained a ship motif, one of the standard 'cuts' used in the heading of shipping advertisements in the newspaper, with the motto in upper and lower case lettering 'Damus Petimus' across the top and 'Que Vicissim' below the ship. Outside the frame were four lines of text in small capitals: BRITISH and GUIANA at the top and bottom respectively, and POSTAGE and the value in words at the sides.

The stamps were printed in black ink on glazed, surface coloured paper. Magenta was used for a printing of 4c stamps in February 1856, followed by rosecarmine (September) and blue (October). There was also a printing on deep blue paper coloured right through, in August. These printings were small and the resultant stamps are major rarities by any standard, the blue stamps being much rarer than the magenta or rose examples. Because of their crude appearance it was decided that each stamp should be initialed by one or other of four postal officials before being sold over the post office counter, as a guarantee of genuineness.

For some inexplicable reason, 1c stamps were apparently produced along with the initial printing. Even more surprisingly, they were printed on the very same colour of paper as was used for the 4c. In the absence of documentation authorizing the issue this curious fact has given rise to some extraordinary speculation over the years. One theory is that Baum and Dallas accidentally included a one cent in a sheet of four cent stamps, but that hardly merits serious consideration for it was not merely a case of inserting numeral by mistake, but a deliberate line of text.

The other theory, which is less well known, suggests that the celebrated one cent stamp is a fake. It is said that Burrus had the opportunity not only to examine the stamp prior to the sale, but also to have it checked by philatelic experts. Burrus is alleged to have spotted some disturbance on the surface of the paper on the right hand side, and evidence of over painting in the same magenta

colour. He therefore concluded that someone had gone to immense trouble to alter FOUR CENTS to ONE CENT.

Otto Hornung, who subscribes to this theory, draws attention to the fact that the letters N and E in ONE are different from those in CENT. However, it should be noted that marked differences occur in the letters G, S and T in other words, suggesting that Baum and Dallas did not possess uniform fonts of lettering and used whatever came to hand, I am very skeptical regarding the notion that the stamp was faked. Otto, however, considers that Burrus (having discovered that Griebert had an unlimited 'buy' bid from an American client) merely bid him up to the magic £300,000 francs.

The solitary specimen of the one cent stamp was initialed by E.D. Wight and bore the datestamp of April 4, 1856. It was discovered in 1873 by L. Vernon Vaughan, a 12 year old who had only then taken up stamp collecting and who had been gone through some old family correspondence in the search for stamps. Hornung casts further doubts on the authenticity of the stamp by pointing out that 1c represented the newspaper rate at that time, and that newspaper wrappers would have been discarded. Vaughan, however, stated in his memoirs that he took the stamp off an envelope. This is perfectly possible, for 1c in fact represented the printed matter rate, and it is quite likely that the envelope contained a circular.

The stamps was rather dirty, rubbed and faded, and its corners had been cut across, so that it presented an octagonal appearance instead of being cut square. Fortunately Master Vaughan was not too discriminating and decided to keep the grubby specimen until such time as a better one turned up.

Not long afterwards, however, he received some attractive foreign stamps on approval from a British dealer. As his modest pocket money would not run to the sum demanded Vernon decided to sell some Guianese stamps, and approached N.R. McKinnon, a prominent local philatelist. Vernon decided to let the 1c stamp go, optimistic that a better copy would eventually turn up. McKinnon, on the other hand, was reluctant to purchase it on account of its poor condition. On hearing the reason why the lad needed some cash, he relented and offered him six shillings, adding with Scottish canniness that he hoped the boy appreciated that he was taking an awful risk in paying so much for it.

In 1878 McKinnon gave up philately and sent his collection to a Glasgow friend, Wylie Hill, for disposal. Hill

offered five stamps from the collection to Edward Loines Pemberton for £110 but 'Pem' was apparently ill at the time and failed to close the deal. Hill then offered the collection to Thomas Ridpath, a Liverpool dealer. Ridpath was having cash flow problems, but was bailed out by one of his customers, James Botteley of Birmingham. With the borrowed money Ridpath went to Glasgow and bought the entire McKinnon collection for £120.

In the meantime Pemberton belatedly sent a cheque for £110 for the selection but was too late. We may appreciate Pemberton's chagrin at being pipped at the post. Later he was to tell Judge Philbrick that the collection had contained a 'One cent red, 1856!!! As genuine as anything ever was'. Interestingly, Pemberton's catalogue, *The Stamps Collector's Handbook*, did not list this stamp in its editions of 1874 and 1878. He, incidentally, was the father of the disappointed bidder in the 1935 auction.

Botteley, naturally, got first pick of the collection, though Ridpath expressly excluded the 1c stamp, arguing reasonably enough that it would fetch far more in Paris than he could dare ask Botteley. The latter was not interested in such a tawdry specimen anyway.

The customer Ridpath had in mind was Philipp la Renotiere, Count von Ferrary, a wealthy but eccentric collector who lived in Paris. The sum paid by Ferrary is now known for certain, but the price of 50 has been suggested. The stamp disappeared into the Ferrary collection, not to see the light of day again for more than four decades. Its existence was well known, and it was listed (though not priced) in catalogues from Moens (1882) onwards. 'Once in Ferrary's collection' wrote the late Maurice Williams in 1940, 'the stamp became almost a legend', but I have checked through early philatelic literature and have found remarkably little reference to it.

The best evidence in support of the stamp's legendary status occurs in the *Stamp Collector* by E.D. Bacon (1898). In a passage discussing recent increases in the market value of Guianese stamps. Bacon commented: 'we may mention in passing that one of these stamps is probably the most valuable piece of paper of its size in existence; we refer to the one cent of the provisional issue of 1856. Only a single specimen is known, and that is in the collection of Herr P. Von Ferrary of Paris, who obtained it many years ago for what would at present be considered a ridiculously low price; what sum it would now fetch it is, of course, quite impossible to surmise'.

Ferrary, scion of an ancient Italian noble family, was resident in France but had acquired German nationality.

On the outbreak of the First World War he prudently withdrew to Lausanne in neutral Switzerland where he died in 1917. Unfortunately his will stipulated that his incomparable collection was to be given to the Reichspost Museum in Berlin for permanent display. The French authorities consequently confiscated it as the property of the enemy and between June 1921 and November 1925 was put up for auction in a series of 14 sales, realizing over £400,000, which was treated a part of the German war reparations.

The client on whose behalf Griebert purchased the stamp in 1922 was the American millionaire Arthur Hind. Assuming that Hind gave Griebert commission on the sale price, he paid well in excess of £7,500 for the privilege of owning such a famous stamp. At 5 per cent per annum, then a good average on investments, it has been reckoned that mere possession of the stamp cost Hind more than a pound a day. He made it available for display at several of the great international exhibitions of the 20s and early 30s and basked in the celebrity possession of such a famous stamp conferred on him.

In 1928, however, he was contacted by a man who had acquired a second copy at Georgetown, British Guiana, some years earlier. The man drove to the Hind residence Utica and allegedly offered to buy the millionaire's copy. Hind countered by doubling the sum and offering to purchase the second example instead. A bargain was struck and the visitor returned to Hind's home the following evening to pick up the cash. Hind offered him a cigar and, lighting his own, coolly put the match to the second and inferior copy. 'There's only one magenta One Cent Guiana', he said.

This account appeared anonymously in August Dietz's *Stamp and Cover Collector's Review* in October 1938. There was no way of verifying its claims, as Hind had died five years earlier. In this will Hind directed that his collection be sold for the benefit of his estate, but his widow asserted that he had given her the stamp. The situation was complicated by the fact that the stamp had disappeared in the interim. A lawsuit between the widow and the executors of the estate resulted in a verdict in favour of Mrs. Hind. Meanwhile, the stamp itself was eventually discovered inside a registered envelope in which it had been returned from a European philatelic exhibition. Hind had tossed it carelessly into the safe and forgot to return the stamp to its customary space in the stamp album.

Mrs. Hind had now remarried and, as Mrs. Scala,

instructed Harmer Rooke of London to sell the stamp. On October £30, 1935 it came under the hammer, but was bought in at £7,500. Five years later Frederick T. Small, an Australian living in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, purchased the stamp for \$40,000.

In 1970, 30 years later, the stamp was put up for auction and fetched \$280,000. Although this was a record sum for a single stamp it was rather disappointing in some respects. The Weill brothers of New Orleans, who had purchased the 'Post Office' Mauritius cover bearing two 1d stamps the previous year for \$380,000, dropped out of the bidding, contrary to expectation. Although the record for a single item was broken only a year later, when an Alexandria 'Blue Boy' on cover was sold for \$1 million, the price for the 1c black and magenta is still the record for a single stamp. Given the depreciation of money in the intervening 22 years, however, it is debatable whether the record still stands.

Of course, the stamp's position as the world's most valuable is unassailed, and there is no doubt that were it to come on the market today it would fetch a very large sum indeed. It was purchased by Irving Weinberg of Pennsylvania, acting for a syndicate of eight investors in the hope that their outlay would double within ten years. It remains to be seen whether their hunch was right.

(Coutesy : Stamps Magazine, 1992)



TIN CAN ISLAND NIUA FO'OU

Wilmon Menard

The resettlement of one of the last remaining paradises in the far South Pacific has pleased incalculable stamp collectors.

The island is Niua Fo'ou, more popularly known as "Tin Can Island", in the northern part of the Tongan Group, once ruled by the late beloved Queen Salote, and now since her death, by her heir Prince Tungi.

Various government services on the island of Niua Fo'ou, or "Tin Can Island" which were abandoned in 1946 by its Polynesian Tongan islanders because of severe volcanic eruptions were re-established at the end of 1961, including the famous post office. And the first drop-off and pick-up of mail at Niua fo'ou was made in January 1962. Since then, every three weeks, a regular mail schedule for postage dispatch to the United States, Europe and elsewhere has been maintained. Prince Tungi, at one time, was considering striking off a special stamp-issue for Niua Fo'ou, and it is hoped with increasing interest in Tin Can Island and the lessening dangers there of volcanic action



that the idea will be revived.

Niua Fo'ou, located midway between Fiji and Samoa, owing to its small size and insignificant commercial potentialities, cannot be found on a standard map of the Pacific: it is merely indicated by a pin-prick dot on navigation charts.

But, up to twenty years ago, Niua Fo'ou was famous as "the collector's paradise island", because of the primitive means by which mail was picked up and delivered to the island. Formerly, it was swum by a white mail-man and his Tongan postal assistants through shark-infested waters to the steamers off-shore.

The former 1,300 inhabitants, following a violent volcanic eruption in September of 1946, which destroyed the islanders' villages and plantations, were removed from the smouldering, trembling island and resettled 400 miles to the south on Tongatabu, the central island of the Tongan Group where the late Queen Salote lived in her palace (she was born in Niua Fo'ou), and also on Eua Island farther to the south.

The natives of Niua Fo'ou were sad and restless exiles from their island home, and despite the predictions



that a final eruption could blow the island sky-high, destroying it completely, they always yearned to return.

Hardships, isolation, catastrophes, could not make them forget that their honoured ancestors were buried on Niuva Fo'ou, albeit now under many layers of solid lava. Such ties, to these Tongan natives, take precedence over personal safety.

So when the eruption of 1946 subsided, a party of native workers ventured back to Niuva Fo'ou to prepare copra from the coconut palms which had not been destroyed by the earth tremors and holocaust; by 1955 fifty men were regularly visiting the ravaged island on this mission.



Islanders with cans of mail for passing ships

September of 1958 over 200 former Niuva Fo'ouans had returned to their devastated island to rebuild permanent villages, their devotion to their nativity overcoming the terrifying conjecture of living on the rim of a treacherous volcano that could explode and spread fiery death in a matter of seconds. In this year of 1966, at last count, more than a thousand Tongans have returned to Niuva Fo'ou.

One of the first Tongans to step foot on Niuva Fo'ou in the first vanguard exclaimed happily: "It is so good to be back! This is the island of our ancestors! Their spirit would wander forlornly on the night-winds if they thought we had deserted them forever". And what about the history of nine big eruptions over the past century which have claimed so many lives and destroyed periodically their villages? "That is for Fate to decide. We told our good Queen Salote in Tongatabu that we would come back at our own risk".

The charred villages have been slowly restored; life is returning to normal, and singing is heard in the groves

and along the rocky beaches. And, important to the outside world, of which these natives have only a remote conception despite the global demand for their interesting covers, the aquatic mail service will be revived again.



Lowering a can of mail overboard after the postal service was resumed in 1962. (Photo. Matson Lines.)

Although Niuva Fo'ou is the ancestral island of Queen Salote, its background of history is negligible. It was thought to have been discovered by the Dutch explorer Schouten in 1616, who named it Isle of Good Hope. Its next sighting was on the morning of August 3rd, 1791, by the British frigate Pandora under command of Captain Edwards, who was returning to England with sixteen of the mutineers of H.M.S. Bounty, whom he had captured on Tahiti's beaches. He sailed the Pandora slowly around the volcanic cone's 25-mile circumference, endeavouring to find a suitable cover for anchorage. Rising sheer from the blue Pacific in strange isolation, its shape suggesting an ornate hat, the island presented only an ominous aspect. The entire coastline was ringed by a high white ruff of surf where the angry seas smashed against ledges and sheer basalt cliffs. And from numerous craters sulphurous smoke spiraled.

Captain Edwards nervously gave the order to head away from the forbidding shores. But he did make his report of Niuva Fo'ou to the Admiralty. However, as his log indicated that there was a deceptive heavy set of the currents and treacherous shoals, holding also the threat of volcanic disturbances, his Niuva Fo'ou landfall was considered of no importance, and promptly forgotten. Niuva Fo'ou next received notice, in October of 1930, when American and New Zealand astronomers landed on the tiny island with telescopes and cameras to photograph the

total eclipse of the sun.

Niua Fo'ou Island is about 3½ miles long by 3 wide, merely a precipitous circlet of land surrounding a lake 2¾ miles in diameter. The islanders are a thrifty, agricultural race of Polynesians, but with a great capacity for humour, singing, dancing and sitting around the kavabowl and philosophizing. In appearance they are attractive, resembling the Maoris of New Zealand and the Samoans. They are tall, superbly formed, with handsome, regular features, dark liquid eyes, golden brown complexions, and gentle, friendly dispositions. And most of the women are beauties. There is practically no disease, crime, poverty or discord on Niua Fo'ou.

How the island's aquatic mail service was first started is interesting. The coastline of Niua Fo'ou is so sheer and rocky, with a dangerous surf running most of the year, that only during brief intervals can small crafts anchor off the island for any length of time. Although in the past ships up to eight-hundred tons have been known to load copra at the copra shute at Agaha, it was not a common practice and the feat extremely hazardous. So many outrigger canoes were lost going out through the breakers to collect mail and small supplies from the passing steamers, or damaged while attempting a landing back at Agaha, that it was only at certain times of the year that the transit could be made safely.

It was a rare event when a passenger was landed at Niua Fo'ou, and then it was usually a trader or missionary returning from a vacation or business trip to Tongatabu. And the landing was always very tricky and dangerous. The steamer just moved dead slow in the offing; and a surf-boat, manned by husky Tongans, put out from the rocks at Agaha to collect the human cargo. But frequently the long boar was tossed high on the combers and crashed on rocky fangs of the cove, whereupon the battered, terrified passenger, more drowned than alive, was tossed up on a ledge, where the natives retrieved him, most times minus his cherished luxury purchases.

The credit of inaugurating the "Tin Can Mail Service" belongs to Charles Stewart Ramsay, a Briton, who was appointed some years ago to the Niua Fo'ou trading post of Morris Hedstrom Company. Ramsay, or "Lamisi" as the natives called him, was an avid reader and letter writer, and he quickly realized that the receipt and despatch of mail and reading matter at Niua Fo'ou presented almost insurmountable obstacles.

Then, a chance observation solved the dilemma. In his own words: "One day I was watching some natives making their way down to the rocks with their buoyant swimming poles of fau (hibiscus) wood to go fishing. A

heavy swell was running, and I wondered how they would get into the water. After a few minutes of watching the waves as they roared in, the natives suddenly seized their poles, threw them into the backwash, and immediately followed. I lost sight of the men in the surging white foam,

When his head broke the surface, Captain Davey of the Tofua foghorned down: "Not bad, my boy!" Then, with the showman's instinct, added: "You'd better do that every time and we'll soon get ourselves talked about! And remember, even if you send some one out in a boat, you'll have to swim out, or I'll be called a liar by all the passengers aboard! G'bye!"

Ramsay, a slight man, and considered at this time only a fair swimmer, gained the reputation over the next few years as being the greatest white swimmer in the South Seas and one of the bravest. His route to and from Niua Fo'ou to the Tofua was through waters in which the fins of tenifa, or man-eating sharks, made ominous cut-waters. And, heading out to the waiting steamer, to misjudge by so much as a second or bare inch a plunge off the rocks at Agaha landing between a crashing comber and the strong ebbing, and to time a return with the tins of mail, meant instant death by collision with razor-sharp shoals and drowning.

Now and again it was too stormy for Ramsay and his native postal assistants to brave the strong cross-currents, and the steamers were forced to drop over the mail tins, in the hope that they would float ashore. Frequently, the strong westerly currents carried the containers to Fiji's beaches, and even beyond to the shores of the New Hebrides islands.

But Ramsay braved the roughest seas for his prized letters and reading matter. And it was handled in this manner: the outward mail from Niua Fo'ou was made up ashore into several parcels, wrapped in oiled waterproof paper, and tied to the ends of sticks about three feet in length. Two or three Tongans, depending on the amount of mail on hand, accompanied Ramsay out to the steamers each with a stick topped by its parcel of mail and their bodies supported by six-to-seven-foot-long fau poles, which were very buoyant and easily carried the weight of a recumbent body. These parcels were placed in the buckets reeled down from the deck of the steamer, and the 40-lb. biscuit tins, containing the inwards mail and literature, which the ship's carpenter had previously sealed, were then lowered or tossed overboard to the swimming mailmen..

And so, because of this unique mail service, Niua Fo'ou was dubbed "Tin Can Island".

This distinctive postal run was only interrupted briefly in 1931, when a native fisherman was seized by a monstrous killer shark, and again during World War II. At the end of the war it was resumed, ending when the island was evacuated in 1946.

But, getting back to Ramsay, the original mail-swimmer of "Tin Can Island", he did have his brushes with near death. Once, attempting to make a salvage claim on a four masted trading schooner by the name of Mary B which had been abandoned by skipper and crew in threat of a storm, Ramsay and his native companion almost lost their lives in the storm-swept ocean off Niua Fo'ou. And, later, he suffered the indignity of being slugged unconscious by the outraged captain who resented his salvage design on the vessel. Another time he swam out at night to meet the Tofua, through tremendous waves, only to arrive too late, suffering the chagrin of seeing the lights of the steamer disappearing in the swirling darkness. This time Ramsay's strength failed him, and he struggled desperately against the undertow. It was a whim of providence that he was carried by a sudden counter-current close to the Agaha-landing, where the natives dragged his inert body through the boiling breakers.

Then, there was the terrifying dark night when the Tofua's skipper, thinking that Ramsay and his native assistant Biutau were well clear of the hull, signaled the engine-room to get underway. The vessel swung abruptly around, and Biutau, caught in the ship's turbulent wake and about to be mangled by the whirling propellers, shouted to Ramsay: Lamisi, tokoni mai-teumate! Ramsay, help me, or I shall die!"

Ramsay described the following harrowing experience:

"Biutau was helpless to save himself, and Heaven only knows what I thought I could do to save him; but, finding aside my swimming pole, I instinctively struck out for him with all speed. I yelled with all the strength of my lungs: 'Ahoy, the bridge! For God's sake, stop the engines!'"

"When I reached Biutau, the stern was almost upon us. In spite of our frenzied efforts to escape, it swept, like a juggernaut, inexorably nearer. Then, in a panic of fear, we felt the drag of the propellers and foresaw ourselves being sucked to an awful death, gashed and ripped by the trashing blades.

"Let the tin go! I gasped to Biutau, as we fought the deadly undertow. The mail-tin, released from our hands, was pulled past our shoulders to the propellers and sucked down out of sight.

"Then, there came one of the grandest sounds that has ever reached my ears, the engine room telegraph signaling stop! Only a second saved us. As the impetus of the steamer carried her over-hanging stern like a roof

above our heads, the blades of the now motionless propellers actually bumped us in the dark!" It was only by a miracle that the Chief Officer of the Tofua, about to signal Full Speed Ahead! which would have spelled a horrible mutilated death to the two swimmers, heard Ramsay's faint cries!

Perhaps the adventures of Ramsay and his native postal helpers will add additional interest and importance to the Niua Fo'ou covers which some collectors already have in their albums, no doubt cancelled and brought out by Ramsay and his Tongan swimmers to the Tofua through storm-lashed, shark-swarming seas. (Courtesy: Globes stamp monthly, 1986)

◆◆◆◆◆

WISDOM ON STAMPS

Collecting Buddhistic motives
Mr. Soren Hauge, Denmark

The teaching of Gautama Buddha has deeply influenced the East and during the last centuries it has gained a significant influence also in the Western hemisphere. Today the message of Compassion and Wisdom is a world factor and this part of the precious Indian heritage has become an important facet of the emerging global community. This reality is gradually reflected in the microcosm of stamps with Buddhistic themes and motives. Collecting this special area can therefore become a treasure hunt and a way of discovering the many faceted splendour of Buddhism.

Facets of the Jewel

Tracing the Buddhistic influences in different countries via stamps can be a rewarding shortcut to



China, 1982, Scott 1816-1819 - Buddhist images from the Great Channel

experiencing the many colored rainbow of Dharma. There are many different angles to explore in this thematic area: The teaching of Buddha, his life, struggle and path to illumination, famous Buddhistic events, scholars and colleges, Buddhistic lore and symbolism, the beauty and depth of wise compassion, celebrations, temples and famous landscape scenes of Buddhistic significance - it is all there, reflected in the microcosm of stamps. In the following we will select a few examples

The Splendour of Wesak

One could say that in certain parts of the world the Wesak Festival for the East is what Easter is for the West. The yearly Wesak celebrations held during the Taurus Full Moon, often in the month of May, commemorates the birth, life and death of Gautama Buddha who according to Buddhist tradition was born and died on the 8th of May during the Full Moon. In Tibet pilgrims visit the remote Wesak Valley where the legend says that Buddha reveals his glory every year during the Full Moon of Taurus and blesses Humanity. In several Eastern countries these events are celebrated in colorful ways and countries like Thailand and Sri Lanka have reflected this in yearly series of issued stamps, usually four, together with illustrative Souvenir Sheets. Here legends, historical events and Buddhist lore are beautifully portrayed and these series constitute an important aspect of a thematic Buddha



Sri Lanka, 1993, Scott no. 1070a: Souvenir Sheet - Wesak series

collection, discovering the rich heritage of the cultures of Dharma. Here one can see the Souvenir Sheet from Sri Lanka in 1993, showing a monk inscribing the sacred texts. The four stamps depicts stories from famous verses from the Dhammapada.

Theosophy and Buddhistic Revival on Sri Lanka

The well known American theosophist and Buddhist, Colonel Henry Steel Olcott (1832-1907), had a significant impact on the history of Buddhism on Sri Lanka (Ceylon), and to a certain extent on Buddhism in the last century. Together with other Theosophists Olcott fought for the revival of Buddhism, especially on Sri Lanka where aggressive Christianity seriously threatened the survival of Buddhistic heritage and practice. When he first visited the island in 1880 there were only four Buddhist schools left compared to 805 Christian schools. Together with several other Theosophists, including the Russian co-founder of Theosophy, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, Olcott officially became a Buddhist and took Pansil, repeating the Pali words of the Panchala Sila after the Buddhist Priest, kneeling in front of a great statue of Lord Buddha in front of a great crowd at a temple in Galle. This was the beginning of a new era for many Sinhalese people, regaining their

confidence in the unique value and dignity of Buddhism. Olcott lectured to great crowds, inspired to the founding of several Buddhist schools and wrote a Buddhist Catechism that became a great success with more than forty printings and translations into over twenty different



languages. Olcott became the "White Buddhist" who helped Ceylon to reclaim its Buddhist heritage and culture. The Sinhalese were eventually given back their religious freedoms and rights and by the turn of the nineteenth century there were over two hundred Buddhist schools and colleges on the island now known as Sri Lanka.

On December 8th in 1967 the government honored Olcott by issuing a special postage stamp to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of his death and earlier the same year a great statue was unveiled in Columbo by his Excellency the Governor General of Ceylon. Another stamp showing Olcott was issued in 1980, and his work for The World Buddhist Flag, recognized by all Buddhist traditions - a symbol of faith and peace used throughout the world to represent the Buddhist faith - also bore fruit on stamps. The Flag was first used on Wesak Day, 28 April in 1885. The first centenary of the Buddhist Flag was celebrated in Sri Lanka by issuing a special commemorative postal stamp and declaring a special public holiday for the first time by the government in 1885 as a result of the agitations led by Olcott. Olcott is considered the actual inventor of the Flag and he is also said to have redesigned the Flag in its present shape. He suggested that the size should be as that of a national flag, and this was unanimously approved by the superior monks and the Buddhist committee on Sri Lanka. The colors are said to have been emanating from Buddha's aura during his enlightenment. They are sapphire blue, golden yellow, crimson, white and scarlet, plus a mixture of all of them.

Bamiyan eccoes from Afghanistan

Buddhism has flourished in many countries and has gained respect in the Western hemisphere during the last century. But on the other hand there has been severe attacks on Buddhist cultures in Tibet and also Afghanistan. The destruction of the Gigantic Bamiyan Buddha statues in Afghanistan by the Talibans was covered in detail by the world media, and we were once again reminded of how

astronomy and artillery rose. In the period between 1400 - 1700 AD development occurred in telescope design and construction, measurement of magnetic declination, time, standardization of units of measurement and determination of longitude and surveying instruments. Maps were an integral part of the colonization of the 'new world'. Not only were they necessary for navigation but also the act of measuring, naming and mapping endorsed the conquest of the colonizers. Fact was - what could be mapped could be ruled. From 1700 AD onwards, the new age of geodesy began. We had differential calculus, logarithms, analytic geometry, sextants, 'chronometer, spirit level, theodolites and many other new products for map making.

Mapping India accurately

A plan was conceived to survey the subcontinent of Hindoostan, ascending the 78th meridian. The enormous peninsula was to be surveyed on the 'most precise and correct mathematical principles' of 50 year - old Brigade - Major William Lambton, an officer in His Majesty's 33rd Regiment. The venture had the full support of East India Company who saw the Indian subcontinent as highly desirable territory. For Lambton, however, this was a great space for geodetic investigation.



The Great Theodolite 1802-1866, used by Lambton and then by Everest to take observations at almost all the stations on the meridional arc; Tower station at Kanyakumari - tower stations were built as triangulation points for observations in plain areas by Everest; 24" astronomical instruments - made in 1830, circle redivided in India on Everest's design.

Lambton, a mild-mannered man of extraordinary scientific passion was a self-taught astronomer, geographer and mathematician, who shared the 19th century obsession of figuring out the earth. His imagination was fired by similar investigations in Lapland and Peru. The survey plan was to explore the territories of Tipu Sultan in Mysore, the Nizam of Hyderabad in the Deccan, the Maratha confederacy of the Peshwa, Holkar, Scindia, Bhonsle and Gaekwad stretching from the Deccan to Delhi, the Nawab of Awadh. In its agenda, it is more like a military campaign. However, Lambton, who had proved his soldierly qualities in the last

battle of Seringapatam, was interested in nothing except his scientific dream.

Maps are power

The British Army was still smarting under a defeat with Tipu Sultan, misled by a map that had shrunk the land and changed the topography. Maps thus merit great attention, especially as the geographical knowledge of the Indian princely states was not for sharing. To the dismay of the powers, the widely acclaimed Map of Hindoostan by James Rennell was revealed to have gross errors, with all principal places 'considerably out of position', and 'an error of no less a quantity than 40 miles in the breadth of the Peninsula'. Slowly, the Survey shaped their journey in a great arc from the sands of Marina Beach to the towering Himalayas, taking half a century to reach its goal. The flag-off was the measurement of the baseline at Madras. The Survey began by determining the length of a degree between two latitudes and two longitudes - measuring north - south and east - west. Triangle by triangle, a mathematical mesh covered the entire subcontinent. This was to become the base for all other surveys, which could then be accurately extended in any direction and to any distance.

The Theodolite

The theodolite, a new instrument, was shipped to India at a time when England and France were competing for territory in the East and the ship carrying it was captured by a French frigate but released, 'in the interest of science'. The Great Thodolite is a giant, weighing half a tonne. When Lambton took delivery of the equipment at Pondicherry he needed more than 12 coolies to port it. Then the theodolite suffered two accidents. The first accident was a fall as it broke its holding rope while being hoisted to the top of the Brihadeswara temple, Tanjore. Lambton restored it to its original accuracy. The second was a sudden storm that sent the tent crashing down on the instrument. In its 28th year, George Everest a worthy successor of Lambton, found 'the delicate screws of the levels are all more or less out of order from continual use,' and it was badly in need of rest and repair. The grand old instrument was sent for renovation to the workshop in Calcutta and put back on the field for principal triangulation for another three decades.

The surveyors were passionate about their instruments as these are ported from height to height. The instrument was to be maintained in mint condition, despite rocky journeys, by palanquin, bullock cart, camel or elephant back. By 1832, Everest started carrying the workshop with him, consisting of the 'artist' Mohsin Hussain (a watch maker from a jeweller's shop in Madras), the carpenter Ram Dheen and a blacksmith. Everest modified and improved theodolites continuously. He made a 14 inch theodolite based on his design, a stable and easy to handle instrument, ideal for revenue surveys. He also got an 18 inch theodolite manufactured from London, in addition to the one Mohsin Hussain made, almost wholly with local material.

Surveying by the clear light of night

Observing a torch lit at a distant station, from a specially constructed 20-foot high stone tower, Everest was delighted to find that the atmospheric properties of the night are better for vision. The atmosphere is much clearer and, what's more, light is visible over greater distances, enabling the sighting of longer angles. From here onwards, Everest preferred the night to day. Taking advantage of the night air, the Survey began to work in the healthier dry season. This meant eight months in the field as opposed to the earlier four - and, a greater chance of survival from malaria.

The Perils

The surveyors led their men into unknown dangers. They crossed swollen rivers, took risks in infested forests, battled with fever - far away from medical help. They travelled with armed guards to keep at bay hostile, sword-yielding bandits. Deadly encounters took place with tigers, cheetahs, bears, hyenas, snakes and scorpions. In choking dust and broiling heat, they were often short of food and water. Life ran out for many - yet, the Survey marched on!

After reaching the vicinity of Agra, Everest fell quite ill and left for England at the end of 1825. The next five years in England he studied instruments, purchased the most up to - date apparatus, analyzed methods used and interacted with leading scientists. On his return to India in 1830, he put all his plans into operation, taking the Great Arc survey to the highest standards of accuracy.

To new heights survey

Everest returned to take office as Surveyor General and Superintendent of the Great Trigonometrical Survey. While at England Everest managed to persuade the Government to continue extending its support to the survey. At Calcutta, Everest established the necessary infrastructure to improve operations of the Great Arc. This included the hiring of good technical support and setting up a workshop. Moving back to where he left off in 1830, to continue from Sironj, he started working with better instruments.

Once the primary work was completed, secondary triangulations were carried out following rigid adherence to standards. By 1811, Everest's grid was complete, and Lambton's Great Arc had been measured, from Cape Comorin to Banog in the Himalayas. George Everest sailed off to England, passing on the office of Surveyor General to his trusted assistant Andrew Waugh.

Mesh extended : Under Andrew Waugh, a new phase began, which carried through William Lambton's grand plan of a mesh extendable in any direction and to any distance - the mapping of the high altitude peaks. From Dehradun an east - west series of triangle - survey began along the Nepalese border. 79 Himalayan peaks were

observed and a roman numeral identified each. In 1856, four years after the observations, it was announced that Peak XV was the highest mountain in the world, and will be known as Mount Everest, in honour of the earlier Surveyor General.

More mountains were to follow. The Karakorum range was explored by enthusiastic surveyor-mountaineers, the peaks of K1 and K2 were observed from the surrounding glaciers. The Hindu Kush range of Kashmir was scaled and triangulated and the world mountaineering record was broken when the height of 6,800 m was climbed in the course of duty. Among the most significant discoveries were the sources of the Ganga and the Brahmaputra.

End note

By 1875 a merging of strengths took place and the three wings of the Survey, the Great Trigonometrical Survey, Revenue Surveys and Topographical Surveys were joined to form the Survey of India. From then to now - precision has been the keynote of the huge organization with newer and better techniques replacing the old ones. Today in the age of digital information the Survey is not far behind. But that is another story.

(Courtesy : Geography and you, 2005).



SKY IN OUR LIMIT PARSI AMARCHAND

Sundar Nivas, No.160, Baracah Road,
Secretariat Colony, Kellys, Chennai - 600 010.

Off : 2538890, 25381370

Fax : 044 - 25367741

Tel. R : 26481007

We buy at Higher Prices
India Pre-stamp covers, 1854 classics, Early Indian
Cancellations,
Essays & Proofs Mint & used Indian
Commemoratives Great Britain, British Colonies,
France & West Germany & Other Collections and
accumulations.

We sell : Prestamp Covers, Pre Independence Mint
& Used Stamps. First days Covers
Rexin bound Quality Stock Books, Imported
Tweezers, Magnifiers & Hinges