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REFUGEE
CYPRUS

QUARTERLY

Guest Editorial.

INVESTING IN STAMPS

The idea of investing in stamps is an emotional subject; am I morally justified in pursuing a monetary policy vis-à-vis my collecting hobby which gives me happiness.

There is, however, little doubt that over the years, despite highs and lows in economy, the values of most of the stamps will increase steadily. As more and more people take up the hobby worldwide, the demand for stamp 'X' will gradually increase so does the supply inevitably diminish. Given that values increase what is wrong in taking advantage of it along with the enjoyment the hobby generates.

Logically, stamps are at their cheapest as new or recent issues. I hope to show you some pointers to pick out from the many new issues being produced those which have the best chances of helping you to finance your collection or make some money in the long run.

The two main ingredients required to make a cheap new issue into a scarce demi-classic are limited availability (supply) and popularity of the country (demand). Without both ingredients nothing can happen for a stamp can be as rare as you like, if no-one wishes to buy it, can have only limited value.

As to popularity, past trends are an almost foolproof guide to the future. The countries which are popular through thick and thin are those with a strong home market (by which I mean a strong market in United Kingdom for GB stamps, a strong market in the USA for USA stamps, a strong market in India for Indian stamps and so on). Most western countries qualify and so do the bigger commonwealth countries. To this list can be added other places without a strong market but with a good overseas following, in the way the stamps of Falklands have always been popular in the United Kingdom and so on. The choice of the potential countries to choose from is therefore very wide.

This notwithstanding, I strongly recommend that you select (say) half a dozen countries from the possibilities and familiarize yourself with them, for an inside knowledge of what is going on is one of the golden keys to the goose.

As to which issues to buy, the rule of thumb is to obtain what few others have. And with new issues currently being scorned left, right and centre, almost anything brought issued over the past year so is a good bet: no matter how much they may be decried as

unnecessary now, the collectors come along in 10 years time are not going to care too much about today's scandal. The issues will be catalogued, and future collectors will want them, and supplies will not be plentiful.

Having chosen your countries, you should then be looking for likely subjects to take away. First of all, clear the chaff; exclude the issues printed in large numbers with an aim to sell worldwide on issue. The supply side of our equation is satiated; all potential for future growth removed. Likewise, errors and varieties of printing are also poor candidates for our portfolio. They will have shot up in value dramatically in relation to their face value and whereas, they may not come down from those levels; we are looking for real and sustainable increases and not just price plateau at already dizzy heights.

Moreover, instead of blanket generalisations, look into facts. Look at the lessons of philatelic history which shows that whenever stamps have been in a financial doldrum, those stamps issued during that period have gotten to be good later. Those during a boom turn out to be comparative rubbish. Check out your favourite country and I let you will find that the issues of the late 60's (boom) are not generally speaking expensive, whereas those of the early '70s (depression) are, and those of the late '70s (boom) again are not.

Today is quite positively cyclonic. The portents are good and the winds most definitely are the wind of trade.

My faith is simply this. If we go with the tide you are almost certain to be buying at the wrong time and selling at the wrong time. A shrewd investor will invest when others are selling or when others are not buying. And where is the collector of tomorrow going to be able to get his supplies from? From you - if you have thought it through. (Courtesy: Stamp collecting, Sept 1983).

Monthly Second Sunday Meetings

With President
Mr. G. Balakrishna Das on the
Chair, 18- members attended the
meeting on 9-9-2012, Mr. D.H. Rao,
Past President, SIPA spoke on,
Maxim Cards on some well known
ships and Mr. Anil Reddy on some of
his recent acquisitions.

STAMP NEWS

LONDON 2012 OLYMPIC GAMES

25.07.2012 2 x 500, 2 x 2000 0.4 mill each

The London Olympics commencing on 27th July 2012 with the theme slogan 'Inspire a Generation' are a much awaited event for the sports enthusiasts across the globe. The slogan reflects one of London's key Olympic legacy pledges which is 'to inspire a generation of young people to take part in local volunteering, cultural, and physical activity.' It is only since 1988 that the host cities have adopted their own motto / slogan for the Olympic Games. The earlier official Olympic motto was "Citius, Altius, Fortius" - which means "Faster, Higher, Stronger".



London is the first city to have the privilege of hosting the modern Olympic games third time, having previously done so in 1908 and in 1948. At the London Games, around 10,500 athletes will compete across 26 sports with the epicenter of competition being Olympic Park. Located in Stratford, East London, Olympic park has seen 2.5 square kilometers of industrial wasteland transformed into a green space which will provide the community 'state of the art' sports venues as well as one of the largest urban parks created in Europe in over 150 years.

Wenlock has been chosen as the official Olympic mascot and Mandeville as the official Paralympics' mascot for London 2012. Wenlock is named after the village of Much Wenlock in Shropshire - which hosted a precursor to the modern Olympic Games in the 19th century. Mandeville is named after Stoke Mandeville, Buckinghamshire, UK, where the first Paralympic Games were held in 1948.

Theme : Sports, Games, Olympics, Volley Ball, Rowing, Sailing, Badminton.

50 YEARS OF CUSTOMS ACT, 1962

26.07.12 500 0.45 mill

The Central Board of Excise and Customs is celebrating 50 years of Customs Act in 2012. Historically, the concept of customs duty dates back to 3rd Century BC in Kautilya's Arthashastra. Later, in the British era, The Sea Customs Act, 1878, The Inland Bonded Warehouses Act, 1934 were introduced. After independence, The sea Customs Act, 1878 and The Land Customs Act, 1924 were



consolidated in 1962 to form the present day Customs Act. It was notified on 23rd January, 1963 and came into existence on 1st February, 1963.

Indian Customs has taken various initiatives to secure the global supply chain as well as enhance trade facilitation. These include the introduction of Self Assessment, On - site Post Clearance audit, Authorized Economic Operator Programme, Accredited Planned Programme and Customs Tariff Interactive Website.

Indian Customs administration is globally recognized for its robust Risk Management System, introduced in 2005 and its expertise in operating a valuation database.

The Customs department actively safeguards the economic frontiers of the country by detecting cases of commercial frauds and out - right smuggling at ports, airports, the land customs stations and inland container depots.

Theme : Economy, Indian Acts, Finance.

DURGA PRASAD CHAUDHARY

31.07.12 500 0.4 mill

Durga Prasad Chaudhary fondly known as "Kaptan Sahib" was a nationalist, a freedom fighter and a pioneer journalist. He was born on 18th December, 1906 in Neem - ka - Thana, Rajasthan.

As a young teenager, Durga Prasad Chaudhary was inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's Appeal to the youth.

When a camp of Congress Seva Dal was held at Hatundi, Ajmer, a few days before the Salt Satyagraha, Durga Prasad Chudhary was appointed as Captain of this Seva Dal, a position which he occupied till 1945. He took an active part in Civil Disobedience and Quit India movements. He was imprisoned several times between 1930 and 1947.



Durga Prasad Chaudhary started "Dainik Navajyoti", a weekly newspaper, on 2nd October, 1936 on the birth day of Mahatma Gandhi to write about the British Raj in India. During the Quit India movement in 1942, the paper was suspended due to the repressive policy of the British Government. It resumed publication in 1945 and became a daily newspaper in 1948. The paper has completed 75 years of its establishment in 2011.

All through his lifetime, he worked relentlessly towards his vision and ideals of a progressive and modern India. He breathed his last on 29th June 1992.

Theme : Personality, Freedom Fighter, Journalism.

ARMED FORCES MEDICAL COLLEGE, PUNE

04.08.2012

500

0.32mill

Armed Forces Medical College (AFMC), Pune is a premier tri - services medical institution set up by the Ministry of Defence for capacity building of medical and nursing manpower of the Armed Forces.

The College, started on 1st May 1948, by an Act of Parliament, was initially only for postgraduate studies. The Undergraduate Wing of the College was subsequently established in 1962 and celebrates its Golden Jubilee on 4th August, 2012.



The College campus is spread over 181 acres with a mixture of ultramodern and heritage buildings, set amidst parks, play fields and tree lined cobbled pathways. Onmonees of the Ministry of External Affairs. Postgraduate training is currently being imparted to over three hundred and fifty Medical and Dental officers registered for thirty two different specialties. AFMC has remained contemporary and forward looking in its approach to medical learning and education and has incorporated many of the newer methodologies of content delivery in its academic schedule.

The College is also actively involved in research in the medical field. Funds are allotted by the Defence Research and Development Organization every year for collaborative research projects with various national and international organizations. The level of involvement of the undergraduate students in basic medical research is commendable. A large number of books, training manuals and research papers have been published by the faculty of this college.

The AFMC is committed to overall development of students. The students are encouraged to not only achieve academic excellence but also to explore and refine their capabilities and talent by participating in extracurricular activities.

Theme : Army, Institution, Medicine, Health.

HUSAIN AHMAD MADANI

29.08.2012

500

0.4 mill

Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani (1879 - 1957) who later earned the title of Shaikh - ul-Islam was born at Bangarmau (Uttar Pradesh). His father, Syed Habibullah, was a headmaster and Husain Ahmad was the third of his five sons.



Husain Ahmad's father sent him to join the seminary at Deoband in 1891 at the young age of twelve. The curriculum at Deoband included not only Arabic grammar, Arabic literature but also logic, philosophy, law, jurisprudence, prophetic traditions, Qur'an and theology.

In the year 1898, Habibullah decided to migrate to Mediwith family and spent the next few years of his life in Medina. In due course, Husain Ahmad was accorded the title of "Maulana", a recognition that he was a scholar of Islam. It is said that he was known as "Maulana Hindi" in Medina and reciprocally in India he was addressed as "Madani".

While in Medina, Husain Ahmad came in contact with Sheikhul Hind, Mehmooodul Hasan and became his close confidant. The two were arrested in Mecca in December 1916 and interned in Malta for alleged sedition and conspiracy against the British in India. Madani's release from Malta and arrival in Bombay in 1920 with his mentor marked a new era in the history of freedom struggle. In the Khilafat Conference held at Allahabad 1 June, 1920, Madani supported the idea of non - cooperation with the British. Husain Ahmad Madani also took an active part in the Civil Disobedience movement in 1932 and in Quit India Movement in 1942.

Husain Ahmad Madani was elected President of Jamiat Ulama - i - Hind at its Jaunpur session in 1940, a post he held until his death in 1957.

Theme : Personality, Freedom fighter.

MOTILAL NEHRU

25.09.2012

500

0.3 mill

One of the most eminent personalities of the Indian nationalist movement, Motilal Nehru (1861 - 1931) was a legal luminary, a noted parliamentarian and a journalist who upheld high ideals. He is also remembered as the father of Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister.



Though he hailed from an aristocratic family, Motilal had to go through testing times early in life. He lost his father three months before his birth, and was raised by his elder brothers. He took up Law as his career, Motilal Nehru emerged successful in the legal practice, and in course of time, he came to be counted among the leading lawyers in the country.

Motilal's incursions into politics started with attendance at the Allahabad session of the Congress in 1910. Motilal's commitment to the freedom movement and his leadership qualities were widely recognized, and he was elected to preside over the Amritsar Congress in 1919. He was the first among the front rank leaders to accept Mahatma Gandhi's concept of non - cooperation and cast his lot with the Mahatma. In 1920 he abandoned his practice at the Bar, accepted a frugal style of living and adopted khadi.

As Mahatma Gandhi's Salt Satyagraha unfolded and evolved into a mass movement of an unprecedented scale, an ageing Motilal Nehru, against the advice of his doctors, was once again in the political arena. He was

arrested and imprisoned, but his health gave way and he was released. Motilal had the satisfaction of having his son and Gandhiji beside him in his last days. He passed away on February 6, 1931.

Theme : Personality, freedom fighter,

THE STATUS OF BAHAWALPUR STAMPS

Wilson Wong, FRPSL

The former Indian Princely State of Bahawalpur has long been regarded as a rather "mysterious" subject in philately. Following the partition of British India and the creation of India and Pakistan as separate independent countries on 15 August 1947, it was briefly independent until its Muslim ruler decided to join Pakistan on 3 October of the same year.

Very little is known about the philatelic history of Bahawalpur, and research is hampered by the notorious lack of records and supporting material, as is the case with most former Indian States. It is generally known that Bahawalpur had issued revenue (Court Fee and Receipt) stamps since about 1880.

Postage stamps (first Official, then for ordinary civilian mails) for use within the state were issued from 1 January 1945 to 1949. They are now listed under Pakistan in the stamp catalogues, although some were issued when the state was still part of British India.

Yet the catalogue listings hardly reflect the true picture of Bahawalpur's philatelic history. This article aims to present information which is not generally known about the postage stamps of the state. A remarkable fact about Bahawalpur is that, unlike other Indian Native States, all its postage and nearly all revenue stamps were made by British printers, being De La Rue for postage and mainly Waterlow for revenues.

It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss in depth the fascinating field of postal history and post offices of the state. It is, however, fair to point out that it was basically part of the Indian postal system before the partition, and was later part of the Pakistan system.

A Brief History of The State

Although there had been settlement in the area since ancient times, the state of Bahawalpur was founded in 1746 by the Muslim ruler Amir Bahawal Khan Abbasi I, representative of a dynasty which claimed descent from the Prophet's uncle Abbas. It occupied a strip of land about 320 miles by 50 miles at its widest points. It was to the west of the Punjab, being surrounded by the states of Sind and Jesulmer to the south, Bikaner to the east and Ferozepore to the north.

The river Suttlej runs along the northwest border of the state, joining the river Panjnad at the southeast end,

and meets the river Indus before leaving the state. The Thar desert occupies a large area to the east. It is a place of some scenic beauty and spectacular Moslem architecture, but is not particularly accessible even though the Karachi-Multan-Lahore railway runs through it since 1878.

Bahawalpur had friendly ties with Britain since the early 1800's, with mutual treaties in 1833 and 1838 negotiated for "perpetual alliance and unity between the East India Company and the Amir Bahawal Khan II and his heirs". It functioned virtually as an independent state in British India and offered valuable assistance to the British on many occasions. The rulers adopted the Indian title of "Nawab" at one time but reverted to "Amir" or "Ameer" after the partition.

Many progressive reforms were made under the last ruler, H. H. the Amir Sir Sadiq Muhammed Khan Abbasi V (1904-1966), including the construction of schools and hospitals. On joining Pakistan, the state continued as an autonomous province with the Amir as its Constitutional Head, until administrative reforms of 1954 merged it into the Bahawalpur Division of the Punjab.

According to a 1993 travel guide on Pakistan, the ties between the British and the Abbasi family are so close that even to this day, one Abbasi prince is invited to stay with the Queen Mother every 2 years and one of the dearest wishes of the Abbasis is to host the Queen at their town of residence, Dera Nawab Sahib!

The First prepared series of Postage Stamps -1933



Fig. 1 1933 Prepared for use, but not issued.

The last Amir of Bahawalpur was a keen philatelist. On his death in 1966, his collection, all British Commonwealth and nearly all mint stamps, was auctioned by Stanley Gibbons in 1969. It contained many rarities of all



Fig. 2 1 Anna Commemorative Stamp. The largest known multiple, showing Plate No. 3 and Imperial.

Reigns from Queen Victoria to early Queen Elizabeth II issues.

When he assumed full ruling powers in 1924, Bahawalpur had only Court Fee and Receipt stamps for revenue uses. An agreement was made with the Indian Government in 1870 for Official mails to be carried free within the state, together with a yearly allocation of Indian Service stamps for Official mails out of the state. In return the state was required to pay a substantial annual fee to the Indian Imperial Post Office. The Imperial Post also established post offices within the state and all civilian mails, whether internal or external, had to use Indian stamps.



Fig. 3 Large Black "Official" Overprints.

The Amir was very keen to issue his own stamps for internal use, as was the case with some of the other Native States. He negotiated with the Indian Government in the early 1930s to take over the postal system of the state from the Imperial Post.

In anticipation of reaching an agreement, he contacted the printer De La Rue in London to prepare a series of stamps. Essays of 12 beautiful pictorial designs intended for definitive stamps, mostly based on actual photographs of scenes in the state, were made in June 1932. Six of the designs were accepted by the Amir, of which die proofs were prepared and approved on 29 October 1932. The stamps, printed in sheets of 100 (10x10) on white unwatermarked paper and perforated 14, were ready by February 1933 (Figure 1). All have black centres and coloured frames.



In addition, a splendid 1 Anna stamp commemorating the Centenary of Alliance with Britain (1833-1933) was also prepared (Figure 2). This was printed in the same format as the 6 definitive stamps, but in black on green coloured paper. Both this 1 Anna and the same value from the definitive set were also overprinted with a large black Native Script pronounced "Sarkari", meaning "Official" (Figure 3). They were obviously intended for use on official mails.

All these were done before any agreement was reached! The Amir was ultimately disappointed, because the Indian Government rejected his proposal. The Imperial Post was probably making good profit in running the postal system in the state and did not want to give it up.

Stuck with the stock of stamps already printed, the Amir authorized their use for revenue purposes. However, very few were used as such. Ample stocks of Court Fee and Receipt stamps were available at that time and there was no need for additional revenue stamps.

The author had seen a few Court Fee (Figure 4) and Receipt usages for the 1 Anna Commemorative. He had heard of revenue usages of the 6 pictorials, but had never seen them. The 2 Official overprints should not have been used as revenues in any case.

These 9 stamps were prepared for postal use, but were not issued as such. All are now difficult to find, particularly the pictorial 2 Annas, 4 Annas and the 1 Anna Commemorative overprinted "Official", which almost never turned up. At the time of writing, only the Commemorative 1 Anna and its Official overprint were listed by the current (1991) Commonwealth King George VI catalogue (C.W. 1 and 0,1). However, all are much sought after by collectors of this exotic land, and by collectors of King George V and King George VI issues.



Fig. 5 The only known cover, bearing the 1933 1 Anna Commemorative Stamp posted from Deh-Rawal on 14 August 1933 to Sadiq Garh, arriving same day.

It is interesting to note that, with the exception of the 1 Anna Commemorative "Official" overprint, apparently all the unissued stamps are known postally used or with postal cancellations. Some of them are quite authentic, whereas some are questionable. Examples are, however, extremely rare and there are no records to show how these came about, as their postal use was not authorized.

As illustration, there was a 1 Anna Commemorative used on the reverse of a cover (addressed in native script) from the desert town of Deh-Rawal on 14 August 1933 to Sadiq-Garh, with same day arrival c.d.s. (Figure 5). There is only one known used example of the 1 Anna pictorial "Official" overprint,



Fig. 6 The only known used copy of the 1933 1 Anna with "Sarkari" overprint Deh-Rawal on 22 February 1933.

cancelled by Deh-Rawal c.d.s. of 22 February 1933 in Violet (Figure 6), which is unusual as nearly all c.d.s. of post offices in Bahawalpur are in black. These 2 items appear to be quite genuine. Whether these and others were delivered to post offices and leaked out for use before they were ordered to be withdrawn, or whether the Amir secretly allowed them to be used internally for a short period remains an unanswered question.

With limited revenue usage for the 1933 unissued series, considerable quantities of stamps were left in stock for many years. When permission was finally given to issue state stamps for internal Official mails in 1945, residual stocks of the pictorial 1 Anna, 8 Annas, 1 Rupee and 2 Rupees were overprinted/surcharged as Official postage stamps. The others, however, were most likely to have been destroyed.

The First issue of Official Postage Stamps - 1 January 1945

Despite his initial disappointment in 1933, the Amir apparently never gave up the idea to issue state stamps. He had De La Rue prepare further essays during 1934-1935, and even "Star and Crescent" watermark for future Bahawalpur stamps.

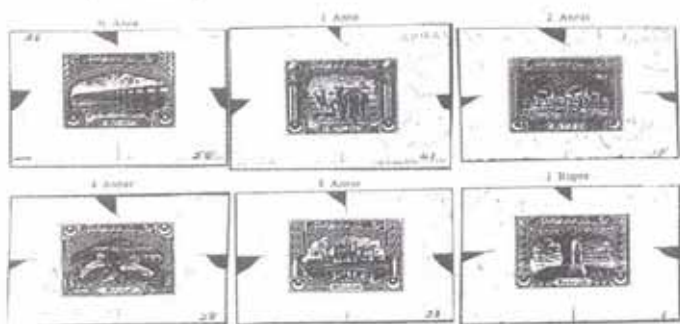


Fig. 7

In 1944 he was close to reaching an agreement with the Indian Government for the issue of State stamps. In typical fashion, he got De La Rue to make die proofs of 6 designs in anticipation of a successful outcome. The 2 Annas, 4 Annas, 8 Annas and 1 Rupee were the same as those prepared in 1933, although the 2 Annas was now in Black and Violet instead of the former Black and Bright Purple. The 1933, 2 Rupees, formerly in Black and Blue, became the ½2 Anna and was now in Black and Green. The 1 Anna, in Black and Carmine, was a new design prepared in 1934. All were printed on white "Star and Crescent" watermarked paper (Figure 7 above)

From the numbering of the die proofs in Figure 7 and those on 1 or 2 other sets seen by the author, it is reasonable to assume about 10 proofs of each value were made. At least 1 set received a trial "Sarkari" (Official) overprint in red.

The basic stamps, perforated 14 and in sheets of 100 (10x10), were printed some time in 1944. All have slightly brownish gum. However, permission was given for the issue of Official stamps for use within the state only. All civilian mails and Official mails out of the State had to be franked with Indian stamps as before. Therefore, the

stamps had to be overprinted with "Sarkari" in red as Official stamps. The 6 values were issued on 1 January 1945, and was celebrated by a handsome Official First Day Cover (Figure 8), which must be one of the scarcest Commemorative F.D.C. of the King George VI period.



Fig. 8

A total of 900 sheets (90,000 stamps) of each value were made. These stamps were not issued without the "Sarkari" overprint but a few used copies of the unoverprinted 1 Anna are known (Figure 9). This major error came from a sheet issued in the town of Rahimyar Khan in southern Bahawalpur. It is a very rare stamp, and the few examples seen by the author mostly have some slight imperfections.

The error is now listed by Stanley Gibbons Part I Catalogue (S.G. 02a) and priced at £550 for used in 1996, which is somewhat undervalued. It will also be listed in a substantially revised edition of the Commonwealth King George VI catalogue due to appear some time in 1997. The author has yet to see an example in auction. Mint examples have not been recorded.

Another major error is the 8 Annas imperforate between stamp and right sheet margin (Figure 10). In theory 10 examples should exist but so far only 1 mint copy has come to light. It is listed by the current (1991) Commonwealth catalogue (C.W.06b) but not by Stanley Gibbons, in accordance with their policy of not including such errors in Part 1.



Fig. 9 - Overprint "Official" Omitted.

Fig. 11 "Broken Tail" Variety.

Fig. 10 Imperforate between stamp and margin.

A variety of the overprint exists on row 6: stamp No.3 of the 1 Anna, 2 Annas, 4 Annas and 8 Annas. This is a large break in the lefthand native character (Figure 11) and the resulting overprint is said to pronounce "Sarkark" instead of "Sarkari". These varieties are rather scarce.

Those of the 2 Annas and 8 Annas are listed by the Commonwealth Catalogue (C.W. 04a and 06b). The other two will presumably be listed in the new edition.

The status of the 6 Official stamps was clearly reflected in a letter dated 8 February 1945 from the Prime Minister of Bahawalpur to the Financial Minister of Jaipur (Figure 12). The latter state is another Indian Princely State which had issued its own stamps for internal general use since 1904, but unlike Bahawalpur, they were all made by Indian printers.

Very few covers exist intact with these Official stamps, and in fact with all subsequent state stamps, on them. The Amir apparently issued an order for all used stamps to be removed from the envelopes at destination. These were then returned to post offices and collected for sale to dealers abroad, the proceeds of which probably provided the Amir with funds to build up his own collection!

Nevertheless a very few covers slipped through the system and survived. One such cover was dated 28 September 1947 (Figure 13), at which time Bahawalpur was neither part of India or Pakistan, but was an independent state.



Fig. 13 Official cover postpaid for James posted by the Prime Minister's Office of Bahawalpur City on 28 September 1947 to Bahimyar Khan.

There was a second printing of the 1/2 Anna and 1 Anna, in slightly different shades and clear white gum instead of previous slightly brownish gum. The date and numbers printed are unknown, but they are scarcer than the corresponding first printings. The author has yet to see any used examples of these.

Subsequent Issues

Bahawalpur continued to issue Official postage stamps during 1945 to 1946. During its brief period of independence from 15 August - 2 October 1947, provisional stamps were prepared. On joining Pakistan on 3 October 1947, it began to issue ordinary postage stamps for general use within the state from 1 December 1947.

All these issues are given a fairly straight forward listing in stamp catalogues, to which the reader can consult. Here only a few interesting points not normally mentioned in catalogues will be presented.

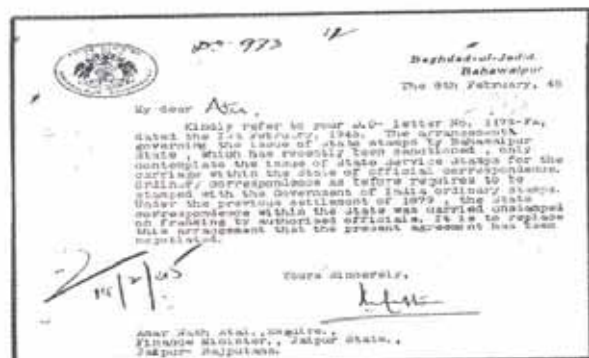


Fig. 12

The 1945 Officials

According to correspondence with the Private Secretary to the Amir, there was a shortage of low value Official stamps soon after the first issue. A total of a few hundred sheets of residual stocks of the 8 Annas, 1 Rupee and 2 Rupees from the 1933 unissued series was overprinted "Official" ("Sarkari") and surcharged with 1/2 Anna, 1/2 Anna and 1 1/2 Annas respectively. Both overprint and surcharge were done in black. These were said to be issued on 1 March 1945 in some urgency. Stanley Gibbons listed them as being issued between March and June 1945 (S.G. 011-013) where as Commonwealth simply stated March 1945 (C.W. 09-011).

The Secretary also stated that 100 sheets (10,000 stamps) of the 1933 unissued 1 Anna were overprinted "Sarkari" in red, and were issued on 10 March 1945. Gibbons (S.G. 07) and Commonwealth (C.W. 08) both agreed to this date. Variations in the colour of the overprint exist, with some appearing in carmine or deep red.

The 1 1/2 Annas on 1 Rupee is known with centre doubled. So far only one used example is recorded.

The 1947 "Star and Crescent" Provisionals

This issue consisted of 17 Indian King George VI stamps from 3 Pies to 10 Rupees overprinted with a Star and Crescent on top and a one line Persian Script "The God Given Kingdom of Bahawalpur" below. The word "INDIA" on the stamps were blocked out by a bar. These were done in either black or red.

It is listed by Gibbons (S.G. 1-17) and Commonwealth (C.W. 2-18). There has long been some controversy about this issue, particularly since no used copies have ever been found. However, there is little doubt that they were authorized by the Bahawalpur Government. The existence of an Official document helps to clear up many of the questions. This document is in Persian script and has been translated as follows:

The most interesting thing is the date of 23 September 1947. It is more than likely that the "Star and Crescent" overprints were made after this date, and it is reasonable to assume they would be ready around end September. Since Bahawalpur acceded to Pakistan on 3 October 1947, these provisionals, if indeed they had already been delivered to some post offices inside the state, would have to be withdrawn on that day. This means they were in use legally for about 2 days only, which would explain the non-existence of used copies.

There had been some suggestion that the "State" referred to in the document was Pakistan and the authorization was for "PAKISTAN" overprints. However, this cannot be correct as Bahawalpur was not yet part of Pakistan at this time.

It must be remembered that there was much confusion around this time. Bahawalpur had Official stamps for government mails but no stamps for civilian mails. Indian stamps left in stock could not be used as

Bahawalpur was an independent country from 15 August 1947. It was entirely reasonable to produce a provisional issue for emergency use predicate of a more permanent set of stamps.

In fact, the confusion lasted well beyond 3 October 1947, not only in Bahawalpur but in most parts of Pakistan as well. The Pakistan Government initially overprinted Indian stamps with "PAKISTAN" at Nasik for temporary use, but the quantities were too small to supply the many post offices around the country. This led to some interesting essays and emergency "PAKISTAN" overprints / hand stamps made in Bahawalpur in late 1947/early 1948, consideration of which are beyond the scope of this article.

It is not known where the "Star and Crescent" provisionals were made. Perhaps the overprinting was done at Bahawalpur's Administrative Capital, Baghdad-du-Jadid (This is not the State Capital, which is Bahawalpur City) and were only intended for the post office there.

Gibbons quoted the date of issue as 15 August 1947, the day when the State became independent, whereas Commonwealth simply stated "August 1947". However, in view of the date of the document shown above, both are likely to be wrong.

Wing field of London was the only stamp dealer which had stocks of these stamps shortly after the state joined Pakistan. It quoted that the quantities available were 480 copies each of values up to 1 Repee and 60 each of the 2, 5 and 10 Rupees. These were probably supplied to him by the Amir or some State officials. The Amir was, of course, well known to many dealers in England. These stamps had all been dispersed long ago, and the 3 high values are now very rare. It is likely that only around 30 copies of each have survived.

This article presented only a few of the many interesting aspects of Bahawalpur philately. It should be mentioned that the state issued stamps for internal civilian mails from 1 December 1947 to 10 October 1949. There are many interesting features even in these later stamps, but they will not be considered here. They continued to be used up to 1953, after which the state was merged into the Punjab province and only Pakistan stamps were used for both internal and external mails.

AN ISSUE IS BORN MAURITIUS, 1965

Long before last October, when the new Mauritius definitive stamps were first intended to be issued, our interest was aroused by the prospect of another issue of "Bird" stamps perhaps comparable to Don Eckelberry's colourful aviary for British Honduras in 1962. Which artist, we wondered, would be selected this time? It transpired that the Crown Agents had asked one of our leading bird artists, D. M. Reid-Henry, to tackle the job of depicting ten living and five extinct birds of the Pleasant Island of Mauritius. We are grateful to the Crown Agents for

permitting us to reproduce selected items of the original artwork, also to the artist for his splendid co-operation in showing us the precious scraps of paper (one, which intrigued us, being inscribed "Bronco") comprising his "roughs".



The Artist's Brief

The Mauritian authorities provided watercolour drawings and complementary colour transparencies made from stuffed birds which, however, required the artist to investigate further the correct posture and plumage colouring of the selected birds. By examining the skin specimens of the extant birds at the British Museum (Natural History), Reid-Henry evolved accurate pictures of them in their true colours. The extinct birds were a greater problem, the artist having to rely on the available reference works, history and lore and, in one or two instances, drawings of skeletal remains.

Layout was another problem. When the artist was confronted with Anthony Buckley's portrait of the Queen which is strongly highlighted on the face outline, it became necessary to give much darker background colour than appears in the British Honduras issue (the Mauritius authorities had asked that the colours of backgrounds should be similar in one to those in that issue. The difficulty facing the artist was that the use of the suggested portrait was not possible if the background colour was to be light in tone, unless the portrait could be isolated from the background by enclosing it in a medallion.



Mr. Reid-Henry's brushwork, exemplified by the finished drawing for the bird on the 10 c. shown above, is delicate in the extreme and perfect when viewed through a magnifier - although he works without the aid of a lens.

Neither would it have been possible to outline the head of the Queen in black if that portrait was used. So

colourful darker backgrounds were painted. However, the authorities in Mauritius stuck to their request for light backgrounds without the use of a medallion for the Royal portrait, and so it came 'about that the originally determined photograph was discarded, and that by Dorothy Wilding, the familiar-three-quarter face portrait, was substituted with a black outline. The separate, individual Crown was also abandoned.

A preliminary idea for the lettering



The artist was also unlucky with his lettering. His original artwork for the 5 rupees stamp, the Red Rail, shows the bold cased style he conceived for the series, the capital "M" of "MAURITIUS" substantially filling the upper left corner and the subsequent letters gradually decreasing in a gentle curve, with similar bold lettering for the figures of value. But this was not to be. Again the use of the light background colours required by the Mauritius Stamp Committee made the white cased lettering difficult for the printers, Harrison and Sons. Fresh lettering, in a plain, sans-serif style was substituted to simplify the problem and to meet the wishes of the Committee.

The Birds of Mauritius

The White - eyes, Grey (2 c.), Mala - cirops borbonicus, and Olive (4 a), *Zosterops curvirostris*, are birds of the trees and bushes. Their name comes from the tiny white feathers which form a ring around each eye, and their food consists of insects, nectar and fruit. The Grey is easily recognised by its prominent white rump, but although it is technically a "white-eye" it has no white "ring"; the Olive is a rare bird on the Island, confined to the forests. The Fodies (genus *Foudia*) are weavers and there are many species. One shown is the common, yellow-breasted Rodrigues Fody (3 a), *Foudia flavicans*, in coy posture; another is the Mauritius Fody (10 c), *Foudia rubra*, about the size of a bunting with a shorter tail and longer wings. The male is red and beautiful, the female dull and unattractive ("life is so difficult for us girls"). Fodies, which are confined to the islands of the Indian Ocean, build globular nests and these, like the bishops and whydahs and others in the group, may be suspended in trees or built in long grass.



An impression of the Paradise Flycatcher on the 3 c.



The Paradise Flycatcher (5 c), *Tchitrea bournonnensis* (not the long-tailed *Terpsiphone* version), is sadly diminishing in numbers in Mauritius. They are found in densely foliated trees such as camphor, guava or

mango and are pleasant songsters. As the name suggests, insects are snatched in the air. Psittacinae includes the typical parrots, parakeets (or smaller parrots), macaws, amazons and even lovebirds; the species shown on the 15c., *Psittacula echo*, is the Mauritius Ring-necked Parakeet, yellow and green with a black collar and red and light blue feathers on the nape. The Cuckoo-shrike (20 c.) *Coquus typicus*, strictly neither cuckoo nor shrike, is one of the "caterpillar-birds". These are not so plentiful now in Mauritius, where they are found mainly in the south-west corner. In former days they were at the beck and call of the fowler, hence the French name - Merle Cuisinier.



First rough idea of the Parakeet and the completed 15 c. stamp



Reid-Henry must have painted the Kestrel (25 a), *Falco punctatus*, with some considerable pleasure and firsthand knowledge, tinged perhaps with a little sorrow. For *F. punctatus*, which inhabits Rodrigues, an island 350 miles east of Mauritius, has now been reduced to less than ten pairs and is the rarest of all falcons. It has rust-coloured plumage with white underparts. The Pink Pigeon (35 c), *Nesoenas mayeri*, is another rare bird: the few that are left are tame and confiding. The artist was warned that the characteristic pink hue fades rapidly in preservation. The Mascarene Bul-bul (50 c), *Microscelis* (or *Hypsipetes*) *borbonica*, is a comparatively rare type of bulbul with a dark crest, and overall pale grey-brown and white in colour.

Incidentally, the Mascarene Islands are the collective name for Mauritius, Rodrigues and Reunion in the Indian Ocean.

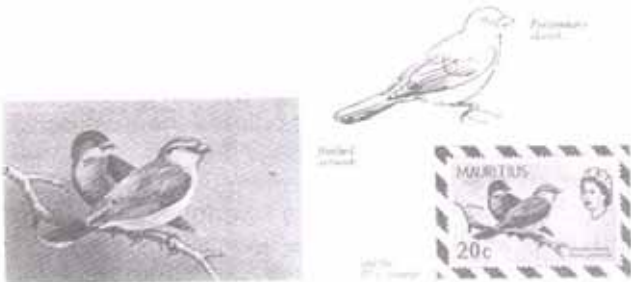
Birds of the Past

The picture of the beautiful but extinct Dutch Pigeon (60 c), *Alec-troenas nitidissima*, was derived by Reid-Henry from his own drawing in *Extinct and Vanishing Birds of the World*, published in America. It was first recorded by Sonnerat in 1780 as Pigeon Hollandais because the triple colours on the body reminded him of Holland's national flag. This pigeon,, which became extinct by about 1830, had a peculiar arrangement of white feathers around the neck and head.

"Dead as the Dodo" is the saying which originated from that most famous of extinct birds, the Mauritius Dodo (1 r.), *Raphus cucullatus*, which has appeared on previous issues of Mauritius, stamps. The picture source was Savery's oil painting of the Dodo, given to the British Museum (Natural History) by George Edwards, and reproduced in the *Illustrated London News* of October 23rd, 1948. For many years its existence was doubted because of its grotesque appearance and the failure to find a living specimen. Since 1507 when Mascarenhas, the Portuguese, discovered Mauritius, the bird was constantly being killed and devoured by passing mariners until, about

1680, it became ignominiously extinct. : The dodo was closely related to the pigeon. Hachisuka's book, *The Dodo and Kindred Birds* (Witherby), published in 1953, makes interesting reading.

The Rodrigues Solitaire (2 r. 50), *Pezophaps solitaria*, was a "bird as large as a swan with light grey feathers, blackened at the tips. Like the Dodo, the Solitaire was flightless but less heavily built, and while the Dodo had a clumsy shape, large head and heavy, hooked bill, the Solitaire had a smaller head, longer neck and legs, and a slender bill. It, too, suffered the penalty of being edible, becoming extinct at some point in the eighteenth century. There are some complete skeletons of both the Dodo and the Rodrigues Solitaire in existence, while there are also a few bones, distributed amongst the Port Louis and other museums of Mauritius, enough to "go into the pocket of a shooting coat".



The Mauritius Red Rail (5 r.), *Aphanapteryx bphasia*, had a bill twice as long as its cranium and it had a yellowish eye. It was a flightless rail of overall red hue, and it was caught and killed for eating by the fowlers of Mauritius, disappearing entirely towards the end of the seventeenth century. The last of the ill-fated five, the Broad-billed Parrot (10 r.), *Lophop - sittacus mauritianus*, was last seen on Mauritius in 1638, before the Dodo became extinct. Its overall plumage colour was slate-blue, and the feathers near the upper mandible being elongated and slightly bent, formed a distinct crest. It had short wings and was probably flightless. Like all big parrots, it made excellent eating.

The picture references of the above birds (other than the Dodo) -were Hachisuka's book, plate XII, Rodrigues Solitaire; and Lord Rothschild's volume *Extinct Birds*, published in 1907, for the other three: plate 22, Dutch pigeon; plate 29, Red Rail; and plate 7, Gronvold's painting from the only known skeletal remains of the beak of the Broad-billed Parrot.

(Courtesy : Gibbons Stamp monthly, 1965).

THE REFUGEE STAMPS OF CYPRUS Wilfrid T.F. Castle

Stamp collectors are indebted to the philatelic press almost as much for the numerous small items of information as for the exhaustive coverage of philatelic and postal history subjects in lengthy specialist articles. One such time appeared in *STAMP COLLECTING* on 14th

August, 1980 (p.617) when "Curzon" of "Empire Echoes" made reference to a window envelope bearing the private user registration label of the Cyprus Popular Bank at Larnaca. This cover, franked by a metermark, carried an obligatory Refugee Fund tax stamp of 10 mils cancelled by the dated portion of the meter frank.



Little, if anything, has been written about these tax stamps. Their obligatory use on all regular correspondence within and from the Cyprus Republic has an interesting history, and just because they do not themselves pay any part of the postal charges, they should not be neglected. They are as much apart of true philately as their neighbours on the envelope and the cancellations, labels and cachets which also may be present. In fact they are of historical importance as marking a critical, though somewhat tragic, era in the island's fortunes. No collection of modern Cyprus could be considered complete without examples of the obligatory Refugee Fund tax stamps.

Authorisation

Stamp catalogues are perfectly in order when listing the Refugee Fund Stamps as "postage stamps" though they do not in themselves cover the cost of carrying letters. A letter - with certain exceptions - cannot be carried without one, and in law they cover an "additional postage rate".

The official information, conveyed in a letter from the Ministry of Communications and Works, Department of Postal Services, is as follows:

"The affixing of Refugee Stamps (10 mils) on every postal item posted in Cyprus (with the exception of the postage-free items) was introduced in 1974 for the purpose of raising funds for the 200,000 refugees who had been displaced as a result of the Turkish invasion that took place in July of the same year.

"The use of Refugee Stamps is governed by The Post Office Law (Additional Postage Rate) 1974 Decree. This is Decision No. 13.487 dated 12.9.1974 of the Council of Ministers."

Nineteen days after the Decision of the Council, the first stamps appeared, so one can be quite certain that the law became operative from the appearance of the issue. Considering the sad and desperate plight of the

Republic at the time the Department of Postal Services is to be congratulated on bringing the stamps out so quickly.

The First Issue

This is the overprinted and surcharged provisional issue (S.G. 430) released 1st October, 1974, pending the preparation of a definitive design with a refugee theme.

The basic stamp chosen was the brown 5 mils value of the then current definitive issue (S.G. 359), issued 22nd February, 1971. This stamp shows a carving on pine boards tinted with watercolour. It belongs to the mountain village church of Saint John the Baptist, Platanistasa, Nicosia District. The carving is typical of a favourite Cypriot theme: a mounted Saint George slays a dragon of cow-like features and pig-like body who obligingly presents an open mouth to the warrior saint's insecurely held spear. In the background two yokels raise their arms in astonishment. This naïf work is 1 not ancient or mediaeval. It dates from 1890.

In overprinted, the "5m" value in the lower right-hand corner was run through by a fine rule, with above it the new value of 10m. In the centre of the stamps came the words in two lines:

Refugee Fund

Repeated in Greek and Turkish, each likewise in two lines.

The basic stamps all have inverted watermark.



A first day cover showing refugees and lettered in English and Greek appeared. These were not the days for philatelic fun, so the covers have propaganda value. Nonetheless my example bears the "PHILATELIC SECTION / CYPRUS" double-circle date-stamp of the G.P.O. Nicosia, timed and dated "8a.m./IOC/74". As these obligatory Refugee Fund tax stamps did not pay the postage, a current postage stamp is alongside, in this instance the 10 mils Europa for an open letter addressed to Larnaca.

Contemporary commercial covers sometimes have a poignant historic interest. A window cover bearing the new Refugee stamp and Cyprus Radio Corporation metermark is defaced with crosses and marked "Gone

Away" and "Left" and one is constrained to wonder "why did they leave?" and "where did they go to?" Perhaps to one of the Refugee Camps? Another cover with 1974 Christmas stamps bears a cachet in red in three lines applied to mail for destinations abroad:

REMEMBER THE REFUGEES OF CYPRUS They have the right to go home PENSEZ AUX REFUGÉES DE CHYPRE

Many other cachets, some of private origin, can be found alongside these provisional Refugee Fund stamps.

One of the disadvantages of this issue is that the basic stamp is a darkish shade and the overprint does not show up strikingly.

SPECIMEN overprints were made in red serifed capitals sloping downwards transversely from upper left to lower right.

By the end of 1974 the definitive issue of 1971 was under considerable pressure. There already had been a minor "stamp famine" of certain values in the summer of 1973, owing to the rise in the inland letter rate from 15 mils to 20 mils. This resulted in a run on the 20 mils denomination, and as supplies shrank, the prodigal use of 10 mils stamps in pairs and their disappearance from counter sales. Surcharging of the 15 mils value to 20 mils followed in September, 1973. Now with the Refugee overprints a new pressure was applied and the 5 mils stamps began to run out. The second-printing of this basic-stamp did not appear until 9th February, 1976. The watermark is upright. But none of these were overprinted as meanwhile a new Refugee stamp had been issued for just over a year,

Late use of the overprinted stamps in private stocks is noted, however.

This was a purpose-designed issue, 2nd December, 1974, and listed in Gibbons as S.G. 435.

Coinciding with the Christmas stamps of 1974, the new tax stamp was destined to be a familiar feature of all correspondence within and from Cyprus for just over two years and to run into two printings, both by Aspioti - Elka of Athens.

The rather ill-balanced design was meant to be poignant rather than inspiring. Greek South Cyprus was in a very chastened mood and here is an old peasant woman and child in sombre black against a grey background. Once more the lettering is in the three languages and incorporates the year 1974.

The forthcoming issue was announced by the Department of Posts at the same time as the 1974 Christmas issue:

"This Administration will also (in addition to the Christmas stamps) issue on the 2nd December, 1974, anew 10 mils special stamp for refugees. Design: An old woman in tears clasping her grand her arms. Size of stamp: 25 x 29.3 mm in sheets of 100 stamps."

The sheets bore control numbers in tin top right-hand selvedge, 1-72000 WIIM, would provide seven million two hundred thousand individual stamps intended to be used one to each item of correspondence. For the residual territory under the Republic's active administration this seems a phenomenal number. Yet by the autumn of the following year supplies were running low.

The first-day cover 1 have for this issue, is, like its predecessor, addressed to Larnaca and the stamps are cancelled with the universal Christmas Bells special postmark "2-12-1974". Although an open envelope at the inland rate of 10 mils, this type of cover was clearly intended for Europe in general. There is a sad picture of refugee children, lettering in Greek, and English and in English and French: "La tragedie des enfants refugies." Perhaps other similar propaganda envelopes are on record for first-day use. There are several for everyday use.

SPECIMEN overprints are in red serified capitals sloping downwards transversely from upper left to lower right.

The Second Issue, Second Printing

Though not separately listed, sheets numbered 72001 onwards belong to a second printing issued 10th November, '75, despite the date on the design remaining unaltered as "1974". Indeed it is just about impossible to distinguish stamps of the two printings. If anything the grey background tends to be a colder, purer grey.

Upright watermarks are more common than with the first printing.

This time first-day covers were not specially prepared, but the Cyprus Philatelic Society of Nicosia did arrange for some of their own general-purpose first-day covers to be used with the Philatelic Section double - circle date - stamp at the G.P.O Nicosia.

The second printing provides us with a minor variety observable with the naked eye : the "white nick", This is a small rectangular white indentation in the upper part of the "O" in the value. The variety does not occur on every sheet. It will be found on the right - hand top corner stamp, R1, 10.

No specimen overprint, as this was not a separate issue.

The Third Issue

An entirely new stamp in a new design was issued 10th January, 1977 (S.G. 481). It was attractive despite the pathos of its theme. In black with a plain white background, the subject is officially described as "Cyprus 74". It is a reproduction of a fine wood engraving by the famous Greek stamp artist, A Tassos.

Lithographed by Aspioti - Elka, the majority of stamps have inverted watermark. Examples with upright watermark seem in a proportion of 1/2%.

The design in a rectangular frame of very fine lines shows a child seated in front of coil of barbed wire. The date 1977 appears in the upper left - hand corner. The wire does not, of course, signify confinement, but the division of the island barring an immediate return home for the pensive little refugee. Six years after the first refugee stamps were brought into use, this is still the situation, and this third issue remains current at about 4 million used.

The Cyprus Philatelic Society produced a first-day cover depicting two refugee peasants. The double - circle date stamps reads simply NICOSIA / CYPRUS. My example, sent by air to Scotland bears the stamps paying the Registered Air Mail postage on the back of the cover with both the Philatelic Section double - circle date - stamp and the Nicosia Branch Office 1 oval registration date - stamp.

SPECIMEN overprints are in red serified capitals sloping upwards transversely from lower left to upper right.

Refugee Camps

Before examining the cancellations to be found on all these tax stamps it is relevant to mention that their use was universal, though on certain official mail not obligatory. The literature and order forms that philatelists receive from the Department of Posts normally do not carry these stamps. But they are found on mail emanating from the fourteen Refugee Camps which have been provided with Postal Agencies and small standard type "Rural Postal Service" cancellations. One or two of these settlements are described as "permanent housing developments". Refugees themselves use the tax stamps.

Cancellations

All cancellations in normal use in the Cyprus Republic are to be seen on the Refugee Fund stamps, but when affixed to commemorative or first-day covers the tax stamp usually is cancelled by an ordinary office date-stamp and not by the special cachet or cancellation used on the other adhesives.



Quite often, covers come to hand from Rural Postal Agencies bearing several strikes of the appropriate cancellation on the stamps paying the postage and even on the cover itself - but none at all on the Refugee tax stamp.

From the very nature of the stamps as a 10 mils tax on each item of correspondence, multiples would not normally be found. "Philatelic" use seems to be non-existent. These modest little stamps have escaped that

kind of attention! I have a pair used to seal a commercial envelope flap where a rule has been drawn through the stamps in black ink. There is no law against over-generosity to a good cause, but multiples with town date-stamp cancels must be unusual. More common are post-office cancellations struck on unofficial and private charity stickers placed alongside Refugee tax stamps on the fronts of covers!



This happens most frequently at Christmas and New Year owing to pressure of work in the offices and does not imply the same degree of authorisation for the stickers as for the "additional postage rate" - to use the official term - covered by the obligatory tax stamps.

Use with Franking Machines

As "Curzon" seemed surprised to note in "Empire Echoes" (STAMP COLLECTING, 14th August, 1980, p.617) that a window envelope, the postage on which had been paid by means of a meter frank, "none the less bore an adhesive obligatory tax, a 10m. (S.G. 481) in favour of the Refugee Fund," this being cancelled by the town date-section of the meter mark, I must emphasise that the use of meter franks did not excuse the tax. Indeed such usage was very common in the larger towns.

The summer of 1980 was to see a change in this practice. On 5th June all holders of franking machines were sent a circular from the Department of Postal Services which read as follows:

T.Y. 60/76 MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND WORKS, DEPARTMENT OF POSTAL SERVICES, NICOSIA. JUNE 5, 1980

To all holders of franking machines Gentlemen,

1. I am writing to inform you that our Department has tried to simplify the work required by holders of franking machines, especially in connection with the 10 mils Refugee stamp. Therefore as from 1st July, 1980 it has been decided to operate a new method of collecting this revenue. 2. As from the above-mentioned date the holders of postage Meter Franking Machines should not put on their correspondence the 10 mils Refugee stamp.
2. This fee of 10 mils should be included in the calculation of the postage required for each envelope. For example, if for an inland letter (Cyprus) the rate would be 40 mils plus the 10 mils Refugee stamp, the franking machine impression should be set for a single sum of 50 mils in total, and not as previously 40 mils franking machine

impression plus a 10 mils adhesive Refugee Fund stamps. Similarly the same rule applies for a letter abroad. If the postal rate would be 125 mils in stamps plus one 10 mils Refugee stamp, the meter mark should be simply of one amount of 135 mils.

3. This method is compulsory for all holders of Postage Meter Franking Machines. Any stocks of the 10 mils adhesive stamps rendered surplus because of the new system may be returned to any District Post Office for exchange, either in normal postage stamps or in cash.
4. I should be very much obliged if you following exposure to UV light is as pronounced as on the 12p stamps above.

A natty line in printed sealing tape used By the Post Office at Dover for re-sealing packages which have been opened, presumably for Customs inspection.



Special Handstamps

There were several handstamps associated or coinciding with the Christmas stamps Issue on 19th November.

Those which have come to my attention are as follows:

"Commonwealth Christmas Stamps Exhibition at the NPC Warwick"; "The Regent Street Association wish you a very happy Christmas Regent Street London W1"; "Merry Christmas Hollybush Led-bury Herefordshire"; "Christmas Carols Ivybridge Devon"; "Leicestershire Fire [Service Annual Charity Appeal Leicester"; "England v Switzerland World Cup Wembley".

N.B. The exhibition at the National Philatelic Centre, Warwick goes on until 19th December. A variable datestamp will be fused during the period.

Concorde collectors will be interested to learn of a special handstamp on 16TH November, "Air France First Concorde Flight Stansted Airport".

Other handstamps which have been announced are:

"Post Office Philatelic Counter opened 8 December 1980 Hull"; "Robert Burns 222nd birth anniversary Dumfries 25 Jan 1981"; "Newarke Houses Museum St. Valentine's Day Card Exhibition Leicester 6 February 1981".

Unless otherwise stated, items for reposting should bear 1½p in excess of the normal postage and should be sent to the head Post-Master of the town where the special posting box is located or the relevant District Post - piaster in London. The outer cover must be endorsed "Special Handstamp" and must state the exact wording of the handstamp Inquired. On the first day of issue of new Stamps, items not clearly endorsed will receive the first day of issue hand cancellation. The outer cover must bear normal postage and only those items bearing a postmark on or before the date of the special handstamp will be eligible for the cancellation.

Whilst on the subject of handstamps I want to draw your attention to the A.G.M. of the British Postmark Society at 2pm on Saturday 6th December in the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. If the excellent quarterly bulletin of the society is anything to go by it seems well worth joining. If the possibility interests you, why not write to the secretary, Tim Richards. The Bay Horse Inn, Tybstall, Richmond, North Yorks DL10 7QS.

Souvenir Covers

11th November I can now illustrate the commemorative cover issued by the Post Office to mark the 150th anniversary of the first carriage of mail by rail. This cover has been carried on the special TPO as signified by the cachet tied to the 55p Rocket 150 Railway Letter Service label.

8th December To commemorate the opening of the Philatelic Counter, Jameson St. BO, Hull, the Hull Post Office Sports Club is sponsoring a special cover, and handstamp depicting a modern distant water trawler and the words "Post Office Philatelic Counter opened 8 December 1980 Hull".

The Sports Club will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of its formation in March 1981. Covers are available from J. Martin, Hull Post Office Sports Club, 60 Lowgate, Hull HU 1AA, to whom remittances made out to the Club should be sent.

Definitive News

As from the close of trading on Friday 2 J ST November the lip definitive and the lip 'Country' definitives were withdrawn from general sale. They will however remain available from Philatelic Counters and the Philatelic Bureau in Edinburgh until supplies are exhausted.

A new definitive on Phosphor Coated Paper will be available from Philatelic Sales Counters and the Philatelic Bureau from 10th December. It will be available from ordinary post offices as stocks are renewed.

(Courtesy : Stamp Collecting, 1980)

STAMPS AND THE CHRISTMAS STORY

Douglas Armstrong

THE lovely legend of the birth of the Founder of the Christian Faith has inspired artists and sculptors throughout the year's. Almost all of the Old Masters produced their own particular version of the Nativity, together with many of their more recent disciples. In modern times quite

a number of these religious masterpieces have been reproduced in miniature upon a variety of postage stamps associated with the outstanding festival of the Christian year. The majority, as might be expected, come from predominantly Catholic countries, though by no means all.



Philatelically, the Christmas Story starts with the figure of Mary, the Mother, which graces the first 4d. stamp of the Virgin Islands. It is believed to be based on a painting of the "Assumption" by the Flemish artist, Denis Calvaert (1540-1619).

But for the forerunners of a long series of Nativity stamps the collectors must turn to Hungary, whence came, in 1943, a trio of Christmas stamps in designs adapted from bas-reliefs by the eminent sculptor Gyula Toth. Their subjects show, respectively, "Shepherds and Herald Angels" (4 fils), "The Nativity" (20 fils), and the "Adoration of the Magi" (30 fils).



Spanish School

Not for another 12 years, however, did the output of stamps commemorating the First Christmas really get under way. That was in 1955, when Spain introduced the precursor of a series of stamps presenting the "Holy Family" after the works of famous Spanish artists, as follow: El Greco (1955), Goya 1959), Velasquez (1960), Jose Gines (1961), Pedro de Mena (1962), Berruguete (1963). Most of the originals may be seen in either the Prado Gallery or in the National Art Museum, Madrid. Also on view in the Prado is Murillo's "Adoration of the Shepherds", which is included in the "Rosary" set of 1962 (80c).



Yet another Spanish version of the Nativity is that by Gonzalo Vasquez, shown on the Christmas stamps of Colombia

Masters, Old and New

At Christmastide, 1960, New Zealand entered the field with a reproduction in full colour of Rembrandt's interpretation of the "Adoration of the Shepherds" from the National Gallery, London. This was followed by the "Adoration of the Magi", after Albrecht Durer (Uffizi Gallery, Florence), in the next year, and in 1963 the Titian group of the "Holy Family" (the National. Gallery).



From the Vatican post office came, in 1959, a set of three Nativity stamps in a design taken from Raphael's painting of "Christ adored depicting "The Nativity" after Gerard von Honthorst, nicknamed "delle Notti" by reason of his penchant for nocturnes (Uffizi Gallery, Florence).

More recent issues of Vatican Christmas stamps represent the Nativity as seen through other eyes. A Chinese impression illustrated on those of 1961 was painted on a silk panel for Cardinal Celso Constantini by the artist Ch'en Suan-tu in Peking in 1929. He was baptised into the Catholic Church under the name of Luke. The Black Nativity introduced into the 1962 issue is the work of the Ethiopian artist Topno, whilst an African terracotta statuette seen on that of 1963 is attributed to Andreas Bukuru, of the School of Fine Arts, Kiheta, Burundi.

Whether Leonardo da Vinci's "Virgin of the Rocks" qualifies as a Nativity picture is, perhaps, a moot point. The subject is right, hut the setting is wrong. One of the two known versions, i.e. that in the Louvre Gallery, Paris, adorns a 60 lire Italian commemorative stamp of 1952. No doubt exists, however, to exclude the miniature presentment of Montegna's "Holy Family", from the Dresden Art Gallery (East Germany, 1957).



Incorporated in the design of a Christmas stamp issued in Australia in 1961 is a monkish illuminator's idea of the birth of Christ, taken from a 15th century " Book of the Hours ", formerly in the Wharnccliffe Collection.

The identity of the artists responsible for the designs of two Australian Christmas stamps, one of the Nativity (1958), and the other "The Approach of the Magi" (1959), has not been disclosed, although they are understood to be on the staff of the Commonwealth Stamp Printing Branch, at Melbourne.

A surrealist impression of the Nativity by the Maltese artist Chev. E. Cremona is the subject of the first

Christmas stamp, just issued, from the George Cross Island.

(Courtesy : Stamp Collecting, 1964)

A PHILATELIC CAROL

On the first days of Issue
The bureau sent to me
Twelve Westminster Abbeys,
Eleven Robbie Burns,
Ten country Views,
Nine Battle of Hastings,
Eight Battle of Britains,
Seven United Nations,
Six post office towers
Five /Technologies,
Four British Birds,
Three World Cups,
Two England winners
And a Christmas F.D.C.

Spike Edmonds.

Reprinted form "Courier", the G.P.O staff newspaper. Mr. Edmonds is in the Public Relations Department.

(Courtesy : Stamp Collecting, 23 Dec. 1981).

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