



# SIPA

## Bulletin

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BHANGY  
POSTMARKS 58

QUARTERLY

### Editorial.

Dear collectors and philatelists,

This is the end of the year issue and so we can share some interesting things with respect to the year ending and about the beginning of the year 2016.

As usual one can expect India Post to complete their quota of yearly issues with all vigour by flooding stamp issues in the month of December. So we can expect some interesting stamps along with some lesser known personalities also. Anyway our friendly philatelic bureau staff will rise up to this occasion of extra quantum of work due to the large number of issues in the last fortnight of the year.

With all the issues of 2015 we will be entering into the new year of 2016. SIPA wishes all its members, a prosperous and peaceful new Year 2016, prosperous in the sense of "Stamps acquiring and accumulating" also.

The thought of new year 2016 brings in the idea of New Year resolutions once again. Why not we make some new year resolutions again, with the interest of "Stamp Collecting". With these resolutions, let us bring 'Collecting' to a higher level than we are in 2015.

1. First and foremost, most of us need bringing an order to our collection and its preservation. All of us have lots of stamps and other philatelic material. Some may keep number of stamps in an envelope, some have them in plastic containers, and some may be in shoe boxes. Rather than collecting, keeping in order and preserving for the future is more essential to get the value of the material which we bought at some cost.

So we resolve that "I will keep my stamps in proper stock books and albums and at least once in a month make them breathe" by looking at them.

2. Without doubt, all of us got into the hobby, falling to our "Visual weakness", I mean attracted by the beauty of stamps. Once we get into the hobby, obviously we are on a 'spree' of buying whichever stamp attracted us and so go on accumulating. After some time, once we start looking back, one fine evening, we start to feel that a lot of unwanted,

and not easily resalable material lying with us which will deteriorate due to being 'kept in dark' without air and care.

Hence, we resolve that we (a) buy only material we really need for keeping and exhibiting, and b). make a want list before buying and buying material listed as 'want' only.

3. If anyone of us visit the Philatelic Bureau and sit there for an hour or so, we can see quite a number of people of different ages and attire coming and buying stamps and allied items with different ideas. If we conduct a survey with them, we may come to know that less than 1% of them only exhibitors. Why, them, even among our members how many of us have exhibited, or thought of exhibiting, or even kept the stamps with a pattern so as to enjoy once in a while. May be a few only.

So, let us resolve, to organize our collection into a pattern and also to plan and make an exhibit of some sorts-if not in competitive style – so that we can enjoy more with our collecting.

4. Our association has about 680 life members all over India and around 150 are in Chennai. We meet only once a month on the Second Sunday for an hour or so between 11:00 AM and 1:00 PM. Members attending regularly or once in a while know the number of members attending. To tell the truth, it is not encouraging at all. We know many are interested but not putting enough seriousness and involvement.

So, let us resolve that we will attend the monthly meetings regularly, share views and news on philately, know more from others who are doing some work on philately.

5. On Thinking about spreading the hobby, let us start from our own homes. In our land of 120 crores population, every home has some children in the ages between 10 to 16. Why not we catch one of them and spread the gospel of happiness through Stamp collecting.

So, we resolve to catch one of our own family members, introduce to them the hobby of stamp collecting, first with our own Indian stamps, may be



by opening a 'Philatelic deposit' account and slowly inculcating the nuances of philately, with their own ideas, style and speed.

6. In every area in Chennai and other towns, there are many schools close to our members. Obviously there are a few children in every school have heard about stamp collecting and doing it in their own way without any guidance. It is high time senior philatelists to wake up and do some spreading the gospel.

So we, senior philatelists will resolve to "make out a strategy to group the collecting children of a few schools around into a club properly and move ahead" in their philatelic activities, only in their possible leisure time without disturbing their studies and career.

With these resolutions in mind for the oncoming New Year 2016, let us play our game of happiness and enjoyment.

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## STAMP NEWS

### NABAKALEBARA 2015

17.07.2015                      500                      0.6mill

The term Nabakalebara is an ancient ritual associated with Lord Jagannath Temple of Puri when the idols of Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarshan are replaced by a new set of idols.



It is believed that a year which has two months (Adhikamasa) of Ashadha as per the Hindu Calendar is auspicious for conducting the ceremony. This usually occurs every twelve to nineteen years. The Deities are made from a special type of Neem wood known as Daru Bramha. Preparations for the ceremony start in the month of Chaitra. The last such ceremony took place in the year 1996. 2015 is the year when the ceremony will take place next.

No ordinary Neem tree can be used to make the deities. Certain well defined criteria must be satisfied by the tree before it is labeled a Daru Bramha fit for making the deities.

Puri geared up for Nabakalebara 2015 after the sacred trees were located and the trees are cut down after appropriate ritual observance. Starting at an auspicious hour with the fullest of secrecy, the logs are carved into deities within the Temple premises. On the midnight of Adhika Ashadha Krishna chaturdashi the Tattva Padartha is transferred from the old deities to the new deities. Bramha or tattva padartha is a super natural thing. After this, the new deities are worshiped and the old deities

buried in the sand, (Koili Baikuntha) inside the temple premises.

On the morning of the second day the new deities are seated on the altar, the "Ratna - Singasan". And on the third day the new deities emerge from the temple for the biggest Chariot Festival. The Nabakalebara draws millions of people from across the world to Puri, and is one of the biggest festivals in the country.

Theme : Religion, Hinduism, Festivals, Orissa

## SAMRAT ASHOK

24.08.15                      500                      0.50 mill

Ashoka the Great (304 B.C.E. - 232 B.C.E), also known as Aaoka, was the third ruler of the Maurya Empire who ruled from 273 B.C.E. to B.C.E. He was the grandson of Chandra Gupta Maurya and son of Bindusara. After a number of military conquests, Ashoka reigned over most of South Asia and beyond, from present day Afghanistan in the north to Bengal in the east, and as far south as Mysore. An early supporter of Buddhism, Ashoka established monuments marking several significant sites in the life of Shakyamuni Buddha, and according to Buddhist tradition was closely involved in the preservation and transmission of Buddhism.



King Ashoka has come to be regarded as one of the most exemplary rulers in world history. The British historian H.G. Wells has written: "Amidst the tens of thousands of names of monarchs that crowd the columns of history... the name of Asoka shines, and shines almost alone, as a star. "Although there were references in Buddhist literature to Ashoka, definitive historical records of his reign were lacking till the nineteenth century when there came to light a large number of edicts, in India, Nepal, Pakistan and Afghanistan. These edicts, inscribed on rocks and pillars, proclaim Ashoka's reforms and policies and promulgate his advice to his subjects. Ashoka was the first ruler who inscribed his messages to his subjects and officials on stone surfaces - natural rocks as well as polished pillars. He used the inscriptions to proclaim what he understood to be dharma.

Ashoka's edicts are to be found scattered in more than thirty places throughout India, Nepal, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Most of these edicts are written in Brahmi script. Ashoka's edicts, which comprise the earliest decipherable corpus of written documents from India, have survived throughout the centuries because they are written on rocks and stone pillars with capitals. These pillars in particular are testimony to the technological and artistic genius of ancient Indian civilization. Averaging between forty and fifty feet in height, and weighing up to fifty tones



each, the few capitals that survive are widely recognized as masterpieces of Indian art. Both the pillars and the capitals exhibit a remarkable mirror-like polish that has survived despite centuries of exposure to the elements. Some, like the Lumbini pillar, mark the Buddha's birthplace, while its inscriptions commemorate Ashoka's pilgrimage to that place. Others are to be found in or near important population centres so that their edicts could be read by as many people as possible.

Theme : Kings & Queens, Royalty, Personality, History.

## WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

02.09.15

500 x4

0.50mill each

Empowering women to participate fully in economic life across all sectors is essential to build stronger economies, achieve internationally agreed goals for development and sustainability and improve the quality of life for women,



men, families and communities. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) focuses on gender equality and women's empowerment not only in terms of human rights, but also because they are a pathway to achieving the millennium Development Goals and sustainable development.

The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles. Women, but also empowers the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women.

Even though the women's movement and a wide-spread network of non-Government organisations, which have strong grass-roots presence and deep insight into women's concerns, have contributed towards inspiring initiatives for the empowerment of women, concerns, have contributed towards inspiring initiatives for the empowerment of women, there still exists a wide gap between the goals enunciated in the Constitution, legislation, policies, plans, programmes, and related mechanisms on the one hand and the situational reality of the status of women in India, on the other.

Gender disparity manifests itself in various forms, the most obvious being the trend of continuously declining

female ratio in the population in the last few decades.

Women's equality in power sharing and active participation in decision making, including decision making in political process at all levels is required to be ensured for the achievement of the goals of empowerment.

Equal access to education for women and girls is another important issue where special measures to eliminate discrimination, universalize education, eradicate illiteracy, create a gender-sensitive educational system, increase enrolment and retention rates of girls and improve the quality of education to facilitate life-long learning as well as development of occupation / vocation / technical skills by women require to be emphasized.

A holistic approach to women's health which includes both nutrition and health services requires to be pursued where attention needs to be given to the needs of women and the girl at all stages of the life. The reduction of infant mortality and maternal mortality, which are sensitive indicators of human development, continues to be a priority concern.

Gender Sensitization in various forms is required to be taken up by all concerned. The Mass Media is to be sensitized and encouraged to develop codes of conduct, professional guidelines and other self-regulatory mechanisms to remove gender stereotypes and communicate social messages relating to women's equality and empowerment.

Theme : Women, culture, Elephant, cycle, Information Technology.

## 10<sup>th</sup> WORLD HINDI CONFERENCE (WHC)

10.09.15

500

0.51 mill

The tradition of the World Hindi conferences began with the first conference having been organized in Nagpur in 1975. Since then, these conferences have achieved a global profile and momentum of their own. The subsequent nine World Hindi Conferences were organized in different world cities, namely, twice in Port Louis (Mauritius), twice in India, Port of Spain (Trinidad and Tobago), London (UK), Paramaribo (Suriname), New York (USA) and Johannesburg (South Africa). These Conferences have always attracted a galaxy of renowned scholars and followers of Hindi.

The 10<sup>th</sup> World Hindi Conference (WHC) is being organized from 10 to 12 September 2015 in the city of Bhopal by the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India in partnership with the Government of Madhya Pradesh.

The theme for the first four such Conferences was Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam. The theme for the Fifth World Hindi Conference held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and



Tobago from 04-08 April, 1996 was Apravaasi Bharateeya Aur Hindi. The Sixth world Hindi Conference was held in London, U.K. from 14-18 September, 1999 on the theme Hindi Aur Bhavai Peerhee. The theme for the Seventh World Hindi Conference held in Paramaribo, Suriname from 06-09 June, 2003 was Vishwa Hindi: Nai Shatabdi Ki Chunoutiyan. The Eighth World Hindi conference was held in New York, America from 13-15 July, 2007 where the theme was Vishwa Manch Par Hindi. The theme for the Ninth World Hindi Conference was Bhasha Ki Asmita Aur Hindi Ka Vaishvik Sandarbh.

The main theme of the 10<sup>th</sup> Conference is "Hindi Jagat: Vistrar aum sambhavnai". The conference would also have academic sessions running in parallel on identified themes.

The venue of the Conference is "Lal Pahade Ground", Bhopal. The State Government of Madhya Pradesh is the local organizer for the Conference.

During the Conference, there will be evening cultural programmes organized by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India and Department of Culture, Government of Madhya Pradesh. A Kavi Sammelan will also be organized during the event. The cultural programmes and the Kavi Sammelan will be coordinated by the Indian council for Cultural relations.

In Keeping with the past practice, Hindi scholars from India and other countries would be honoured for their distinguished service in the field of Hindi.

Theme : Language, Literature, world, birds, peacock, Conferences.

## VALOUR & SACRIFICE - 1965 WAR

15.09.15                      3x500                      0.60mill

Honour, selfless service and the spirit of sacrifice are ingrained tenets of the Indian Armed Forces, preserved as part of their glorious tradition, enabling them to acquit themselves commendably both in war and peace. In the face of grave personal danger, the Indian Soldier, Sailor and Air Warrior has never hesitated in making the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty, a fact that has been evident throughout the history of our Nation, in the face of many challenges faced. One such example of valour of soldiers of Armed Forces was witnessed in 1965, wherein our Armed forces exhibited tremendous grit, determination and fortitude, living up to the faith reposed in them by the Indian Nation and its leaders.

Significant endeavours of the Indian Armed

Forces during the 1965 War were the capture of Hajipir, blunting of the Pakistani offensive in Chhamb - Jaurian, Battle of Asal Uttar, the Ichhogil Canal operations and the advance onto Lahore. The tank battles of 1965 take their place in annals of military history as the most intense ones used since World War II. On 10<sup>th</sup> September 1965, the Indian Armed Forces stuck a massive blow to the armada of Pakistani tanks when the offensive of Pakistan's 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Division was blunted at the Battle of Asal Uttar, in the Khemkaran Sector.

The sacrifices of the 1965 War are preserved in the collective bravery displayed by the Indian Armed Forces, possible largely because of the ardent support of the entire Nation. The valour of the soldiers has been recognised through the award of 16 Battle Honours and three Theatre Honours, two PVCs besides numerous MVCs, VrCs and Mentions - in - Despatches. The heroism of CQMH Abdul Hamid and Lt Col AB Tarapore, who were posthumously awarded the Param Vir Chakra will live on in the glorious history of our Nation.

The sacrifices of the India Armed Forces in 1965 is testimony to the credo that the Safety, Honour and Welfare of the country comes first, always, and every time, for the Indian Armed forces.

Stamps on the Army, Navy and Air Force, along with a First Day Cover and Brochure, to honour the valour and courage of the soldiers of Armed Forces of 1965 war. The Stamps depict the spirit and resoluteness of purpose displayed by the three wings of armed forces.

Theme : Armed forces, Wars, Free India.

## DR.B.R. AMBEDKAR AND CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

30.09.15                      500                      0.50 mill

The life of Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar, born on 14<sup>th</sup> April, 1891 in a Mahar family, was marked by struggles but he proved that every hurdle in life can be surmounted with talent and firm determination. The biggest barrier in his life was the caste system adopted by the Hindu society according to which the family he was born in which was considered 'untouchable'. After graduating from





Elphinstone College, Bombay in 1912, he did his higher studies at Columbia University, USA where he was awarded Ph.D. Later, he joined the London School of Economics and Political Science and obtained the degree of D.Sc. (Eco) and was eventually called to the Bar from Gray's Inn.



In 1927, Dr. Ambedkar led the Mahad March at the Chowdar Tank at Colaba, near Bombay, to give the untouchables the right to draw water from a public tank. This marked the beginning of his crusade against the practice of discrimination in the society. The temple entry movement launched by Dr. Ambedkar in 1930 at Kalaram temple, Nasik is another landmark in his struggle for human rights and social justice.

DR. Ambedkar attended all the three Round Table Conferences in London and each time, forcefully projected his views in the interest of the 'untouchables'.

Dr. Ambedkar, organized the Independent Labour Party, participated in the provincial elections, and was elected to the Bombay Legislative Assembly.

In 1947, when India became independent, the first Prime Minister Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, invited Dr. Ambedkar, who had been elected as a Member of constituent Assembly from Bengal, to join his Cabinet as a Law Minister. However, Dr. Ambedkar had differences of opinion with the Government over the Hindu code Bill, which led to his resignation as Law Minister.

On August 29<sup>th</sup> 1947 Dr. Ambedkar was appointed the Chairman of the Drafting Committee that was constituted by Constituent Assembly to draft a Constitution for Independent India.

In 1948, Dr. Ambedkar completed the draft of the Constitution and presented in the Constituent Assembly. In November 1949, this draft was adopted with very few amendments and came into force on January 26, 1950 marking the beginning of a new era in the history of India. Speaking after the completion of his work, Ambedkar said: "I feel the Constitution is workable; it is flexible and it is strong enough to hold the country together both in peace time and in war time".

On October 14, 1956 Baba Saheb Ambedkar embraced Buddhism along with many of his followers. The same year he completed his last writing 'Buddha and His Dharma'. On 6th December, 1956, Baba Saheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar attained 'Mahaparinirvan'.

In 1990, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the chief architect of our Constitution, was bestowed with Bharat Ratna.

Theme : leader, Personality, Constitution of India.

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## CHRISTMAS ON STAMPS - 1967

IN this season of the year, with its long winter evenings, stamp collecting probably enjoys its greatest popularity. As Christmas approaches, it seems logical to turn to the special stamps issued to mark the greatest of Christian festivals and every year sees more and more of them released. This year five countries whose stamps are handled by the Crown Agents are issuing stamps for Christmas.

The first of these was a set of three released by Malta on the 7th October. Designed by Chevalier Cremona and photo gravure printed by De La Rue, these stamps presented an unusual appearance on account of their trapezoid shape a format which seems to have been confined hither to stamps of Monaco honouring Dr. Schweitzer and Jules Verne. An added novelty is the way in which the three denominations, 1d, 8d and 1/4, have been printed se-tenant so that together they compose a single picture of angels watching over the Holy Family. In addition to sheets printed in this way each denomination is available separately in sheets.

St. Lucia issued two Christmas stamps on the 16th October, the first Christmas stamps to appear from this island. In denominations of 4c and 25c, they were designed and photogravure printed by Harrison and Sons on C.A. Block paper. These handsome stamps depict in full colour Raphael's masterpiece, the Ansidei Madonna, which hangs in the National Gallery in London. This remarkable painting was executed by Raphael in 1506-7 and was painted for the Ansidei family of Perugia as an altar-piece in the church of St. Florenzo. The Virgin is depicted with the Holy Infant and the young St. John the Baptist. This painting was acquired by the National Gallery in 1884.

Another country issuing Christmas stamps for the first time is Gibraltar whose 2d and 6d denominations were released on the 1st November. The stamps were designed and photogravure printed by Harrison and Sons and depicted the Holy Family and a stylised representation of a stained-glass window respectively. On the 6<sup>th</sup> November Guyana put on sale two Christmas stamps, designed by Victor Whiteley and printed by Harrison and Sons Ltd. The common design of the 5c and 25c featured Millie the bi-lingual (English and French) parrot which stole the show on the Guyana stand at "Expo 67" in Montreal. Malawi released four stamps, in denominations of 4d, 9d, (continued in page 55)



# A RED LETTER DAY FOR CHENNAI POST

From the time we had postal runners, to *jutkas* that delivered mails within the city, to the postal services now — Chennai Post has come a long way. On World Post Day, today, scholar D Hemchandra Rao looks back at the history of the postal services in what was then Madras



Famous faces from Tamil Nadu on stamps



D Hemchandra Rao

It was governor Harrison, who in 1712, started the Company Postal Service in Madras to carry mails to Calcutta as they wanted to communicate with the officers in Fort William — it comprised postal runners (a sort of relay service, where runners would carry a letter till a point and hand it over to the next one) carrying only their mails. These runners were often locals, employed by the East India Company. By 1736 a better system came into existence and they started carrying private letters on the payment of postage, which then depended on the distance. It was only later that the Company introduced uniform postage rates dependent on weight alone. These developments in the postal system led to governor Sir Archibald Campbell establishing the first Madras Post Office with fixed postal charges — the Madras GPO.

“It started functioning from 1786 and it was inside the Fort then. Later as the services expanded, it moved to the old bank building in inside the Fort which is now the Fort Museum. In 1856, the GPO moved out of the Fort to the Garden House, Broadway near Kothawal Chavadi market. Meanwhile, several receiving offices were also opened — like in Vepery and Royapettah — in 1834; the receiving offices in Mount Road and Triplicane started in 1845. By 1853, telegraph system was introduced in Madras, and made available to the public in 1855. In 1871, the railways came to Madras, and by 1874, nine more post offices were opened in the city. With this, internal mail services (locally, within the city) were also started, with the mails being carried by horsecarts, or *jutkas*, as they were called. By 1874, the construction of the new GPO started. This GPO building, built by British architect Robert Chisholm, has Indo-Saracenic architecture. The beauty of this building is its triangular caps, often seen on buildings in Kerala as it is a rainy place and these caps help water to slide down easily. But here, Chisholm had done it only to enhance the architecture.

To share an interesting anecdote, the building of Philatelic Bureau in Anna Salai housed Madras' first the-

## STAMPED: CHENNAIITES



Philatelic Bureau

“Philatelists can start a deposit account and whenever new stamps are released, they are sent to them by post. This also provides philatelists a chance to meet and discuss the latest happenings. Added to this, the Bureau also hosts special exhibitions depending what is happening in the city. For instance, during Margazhi, we put up an exhibition featuring stamps with all the musicians. In 2005, we issued a stamp on MS Subbulakshmi and last year, another one on DK Pattammal.”

— Postmaster general Merwin Alexander

atre, the Electric Theatre. But it didn't run too long. There were plans to demolish it, but owing to strong protests, it was decided to retain it. Later, it became the Philatelic Bureau.

— As told to Ashish.Joseph1@timesgroup.com



(continued from page 53)

and 3/-, on the 21<sup>st</sup> November. The design, by Jennifer Toombs, showed Mary and Joseph bending to the baby Jesus in the crib. A miniature sheet incorporating one of each denomination was also issued.

Several other Commonwealth countries are issuing Christmas stamps this year. The United Kingdom, after dabbling last year with children's art, is drawing on the more traditional source of classical painting for the three designs used. The 4d denomination, which was released on the 18<sup>th</sup> October, featured Murillo's "Madonna and Child Jesus", which hangs in the Rijks museum, Amsterdam. A further two stamps, in denominations of 3d and 1/6, were released on the 27<sup>th</sup> November and depicted respectively "The Adoration of the Shepherds", ascribed to the school of Seville and Louis Le Nam's "Adoration of the Shepherds".

Canada issued two stamps on the 11<sup>th</sup> October recess-printed by the Canadian Bank Note Co. of Ottawa. The design, based on an idea by the British American Bank Note Co., showed three carol-singers, with a Christmas tree and the tower of the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa in the background.

The first Christmas stamp appeared almost seventy years ago and came into this category almost by chance. The Canadian postal authorities reduced their Imperial postage rate from three to two cents in December 1898 and to mark the occasion a commemorative stamp, designed by the Postmaster General, Sir William Mulock, was released. It depicted a map of the world with the British Empire picked out in red and bore the stirring legend "We hold a vaster Empire than has been", a quotation from the Song of Empire which Sir Lewis Morris composed in honour of the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1887. The story is told that the issue was originally planned for the 9<sup>th</sup> November, the birthday of the Prince of Wales. It is said that when a postal official informed Queen Victoria that the stamp would also mark the Prince's birthday she asked jealously, "Which Prince?" To which the official tactfully replied, "Why, Madam the Prince of Peace of course." And so "Xmas 1898" came to be inscribed on the stamp. Be that as it may, Imperial Penny Postage was, in fact, introduced on Christmas Day 1898 and the stamp was actually released on the 7<sup>th</sup> December. It was a remarkable stamp in that it was produced in three



colours involving two printing processes. The black was recess-printed while the red and blue were typographed. The Empire was coloured in bright red and somewhat more was thus shaded than should have been at the time, for the whole of southern Africa was shown in that colour, though another four years were to elapse before this became a fact.

Apart from this one occasion, no Commonwealth country issued stamps for use on mail over the Christmas period until 1957 when Australia produced two stamps symbolic of the Spirit of Christmas. The great star in the East was prominent in the design which also included a child at prayer, based on Sir Joshua Reynolds' painting of the Child Samuel in the National Gallery. Australia's Christmas stamps have continued to emphasise the religious aspect of this great festival. In 1958 the Nativity and in 1959 the approach of the Magi to Bethlehem, were depicted. The 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the English translation of the Bible, authorised by King James I in 1611, was alluded to in the Christmas stamps issued by Australia in 1960 and 1961. The former stamp depicted an open Bible with the illuminated text from St. Luke's Gospel "Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy". The following year a 5d stamp depicting a richly ornamented Book of Hours, was issued. It bore the text "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace..." In the latter year Australia's dependency, Norfolk Island, began issuing a Christmas stamp in the same design and Australia also produced a Christmas air letter sheet.

In 1962 a Madonna and Child, based on a sixteenth century Spanish woodcarving, was the subject of the Christmas stamp, while the 1963 issue showed the Star of the Nativity with the caption PEACE ON EARTH, GOODWILL TO MEN. The 1964 design departed from the strictly Biblical theme to depict a little girl gazing in wonder at a Nativity Scene. Last year's 4c stamp, designed by L. Sterling featured the Adoration of the Shepherds, based on a medieval engraving. Norfolk Island followed the designs of Australia up to last year when a distinctive stamp featuring the Star of Peace was released.

New Zealand followed Australia in 1960 when her first Christmas stamp appeared. It depicting the rather sombre "Adoration of the Shepherds" after Rembrandt, which hangs in the National Gallery. The scene is painted in hues of deepest brown, relief being provided only by the reddish glow from the lantern held by one of the shepherds. In the printing process the red colour was inadvertently omitted from a few of these stamps and



the "Black Christmas", as the error was promptly dubbed by Philatelists, is now listed by Gibbons at £225. The following year, by contrast; the "Adoration of the Magi" by Albrecht Durer was used. This painting which graces the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, was reproduced in all its dazzling colours in photogravure by Harrison and Sons.

Not perhaps so relevant to Christmas as such was New Zealand's choice for the stamp of 1962. This depicted Sassoferrata's "Madonna in Prayer", another of the treasures in the National Gallery. In 1963 Titian's "Holy Family", also in the National Gallery, was depicted. Murillo's "Two Trinities" (National Gallery) and "The Virgin and Child" by Maratta were reproduced on the Christmas stamps of 1965 and 1966.

New Zealand broke with the tradition for depicting religious paintings in 1964, in order to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the very first Christmas celebrated in that country- At the beginning of the nineteenth century few white men - or pakeha as the Maoris contemptuously called them - had visited that country and following the cannibalistic murder of the passengers and crew of the sailing ship Boyd in 1809 even fewer were willing to make effort.

One man, however, was determined to cross the Tasman Sea from Australia to the islands more than a thousand miles away to the south-east. The Reverend Samuel Marsden had befriended Ruatara, a young Maori sailor on board a ship bound from England to Australia, and using him as a Guide and interpreter, hoped to visit New Zealand. The New South Wales authorities tried to deter him and no skipper would agree to put his ship near the cannibal islands, after the Boyd incident Eventually Marsden bought a ship, the Active, and with his companions and their families, and a number of horses and cattle, set sail for New Zealand on the 19th November, 1814. On the 16<sup>th</sup> December they sighted the northern tip of the North Island. Three days later they anchored in Whangaroa Harbour, scene of the Boyd massacre, but by force of personality Marsden compelled the Maoris there to come to amicable terms. On the morning of the 22nd December they arrived at the Bay of Islands and anchored off Rangihoua, the village of Ruatara, who was a chief in his own territory- Ruatara was keen that Marsden should hold a service on his first Sunday in New Zealand and preparations were speedily put in hand for the first Christmas Day New Zealand had known. About half an acre of open ground was enclosed for an open air church. The pulpit, reading-desk and seats for the Europeans were made of parts of canoes, and Marsden was greatly

impressed and heartened by the spontaneous action of the young Maori chief.

On Christmas morning everyone, except the captain and one seaman, went ashore, as Marsden himself recorded in his journal, "To publish the glad tidings of the Gospel for the first time." The tribesmen, headed by Ruatara, gathered in the church enclosure for the service which began with the noble strains of the "Old Hundredth". Then Marsden proclaimed the Christian message, "Behold I bring you glad tidings of great joy." When the service in English was completed Ruatara explained its meaning to the Maoris. And so, in Marsden's own words, 'in the above manner the Gospel has been introduced into New Zealand, and I fervently pray that the glory of it may never depart from its inhabitants till time shall be no more.' At Oihi, in the Bay of Islands, stands the Marsden Cross commemorating this moving occasion which has been compared to the landing of St. Augustine at the Isle of Thanet, in time to celebrate Christmas among the heathen Angles in 597 A.D.

An artist's impression of the scene was reconstructed by L. C. Mitchell, based on contemporary accounts and Marsden's diaries, and was depicted on the 2½d stamp issued by New Zealand on the 12<sup>th</sup> October, 1964. A fortnight previously New Zealand's postal rates were increased, but rather than spoil the design of such a fine stamp by obliterating the figure of value and surcharging a new one, the New Zealand postal authorities permitted unsealed Christmas cards posted to addresses within the country, to be franked at the old rate "as a gesture of goodwill". This goodwill was even extended to philatelists, for first day covers were also allowed without postage due being levied from the recipients.

In 1964 three other Commonwealth countries began issuing Christmas stamps. For one of them, Canada, this was in a sense nothing new, although the stamp of 1898 had not been intended primarily for use on Christmas mail. Canada released two stamps on the 14th October depicting a typical Canadian family looking up at the Nativity Star. The Nativity Star above the globe also featured prominently in the set of four stamps released by Malawi. Malta issued 2d, 4d and 8d stamps, designed by Chevalier Cremona, featuring the Nativity.

Canada's 1965 Christmas stamps, in denominations of 3c and 5c, showed hands bearing the gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh which the Three Wise Men brought to the Babe in a manger. Both denominations





FDC with 3C, 5C Stamps - Canada

were "tagged" - overprinted with phosphor bands for use in electronic sorting of mail, and the 3c was also sold in blocks of 25 with the outer edge imperforate, in plastic packages sold at \$1.50. Last year's two stamps depicted "Hands in Prayer" by Albrecht Durer, and, as in previous years, were available with phosphor lines and in the \$1.50 plastic package.

Malawi did not issue Christmas stamps in 1965: but last year produced a set of four, in denominations of 4d, 9d, 1/6 and 3/-, showing the Nativity Star above the little town of Bethlehem. Malta's set of three issued in 1965 featured the Three Kings, while last year the Child in a manger was the subject of the Christmas series. Both sets were designed by Chevalier Cremona and photogravure printed by De La Rue.

Great Britain's first Christmas souvenirs appeared in 1965 and consisted of two special air letter sheets. The imprinted 6d stamps portrayed the Queen and stylised snow-flakes. Michael Goaman designed the reverse of one of the sheets, depicting the adoration of the shepherds, and a vignette showing an angel, to the left of the address panel on the front. Messrs. Negus and Sharland designed the vignette of a Christmas tree and snow-flake which appeared on the front of the other sheet. The reverse bore a colourful pattern of ice crystals and snow-flakes. These aerogrammes were sold for 10d, though paying only 6d postage. The following year the aerogramme postal rate had been raised to 9d but the solitary sheet issued in November, 1966 remained at the old price. It depicted a somewhat whimsical design on the reverse, showing Santa Claus flying in and out of a clump of Christmas trees, no doubt possessed of the Christmas spirit. The imprinted stamp bore the silhouette profile of Her Majesty and featured a Christmas rose (Helleborus Niger). The sheets issued in the previous year had not borne any inscription, but this sheet was inscribed NOEL 1966.

Britain's first adhesive Christmas stamps were released on the 1st November, 1966 and consisted of 3d and 1/6 denominations, prepaying the inland Christmas card and overseas airmail rates respectively. A design competition was held for children under sixteen years of age. Almost 5,000 entries were received and eventually the prizes of £20 each were awarded to two six-year olds whose designs were used for the stamps. The 3d stamp, depicting one of the Three Kings of the Orient, was designed by Tasveer Shemza of St. John's Church of England Primary School, Stafford. The 1/6 stamp was the work of James Berry of Bromley Road Infants School, Beckenham, Kent One of the runners-up was nine-year-old Ann Belshaw, of St. Joseph's Girls School, Leigh, Lances, who was awarded £10 for her design showing Santa Claus going down a chimney. This design was used for the vignette on the souvenir First Day Cover. In addition to the usual First Day hand-stamps, a special postmark, was used at the village of Bethlehem, near Llandeilo in South Wales.

This year two souvenir air letter sheets were released on the 1st. November, priced at 10d, which includes 9d postage. Clive Abbott, who was responsible for last year's Santa Claus design, produced the air letter sheet depicting the partridge in a pear tree. The design on the other form shows the three wise men offering their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to the infant Jesus, with the Star of Bethlehem shining above. This aerogramme was designed by Eric Fraser. Both aerogrammes bear a printed stamp featuring Christmas candles, designed by Sylvia and Michael Goaman.

For the first time Australia is using two different designs this year On the 18<sup>th</sup> October a 5c stamp designed by Max Ripper was released and took as its motif a Christmas Bell flower, with a background of Gothic arches. The 25c was issued on the 27th November and was designed by Miss Erica Gilchrist. The design presents a geometric arrangement of three religious symbols - the Cross, the Star of David and the Chinese symbol Yin Yang representing the spiritual meaning of Christianity and the universal brotherhood of man. Australia's dependency, Norfolk Island, is featuring a Christmas candle and a scroll inscribed with the simple prayer composed by the Bounty mutineer, John Adams, on its 5c stamp issued on the 16th October.

The Cook Islands began issuing special Christmas stamps in 1966 and produced a series of six depicting religious paintings. The 1d showed the "Adoration of the Wise Men" by Fra Angelico, the 2d



featured Memling's "Nativity" (which also appeared on the 5c Christmas stamp released last year by the United States), and the 4d showed the "Adoration of the Wise Men" by Velazquez. The 10d and 1/6 stamps depicted the "Adoration of the Wise Men" by Hieronymus Bosch and the "Adoration of the Shepherds" by J. de Ribera respectively.

(Courtesy: Crown Agents Stamps Bulletin, 1967).

## BANGHY POSTMARKS

J. M. Dhor

THE Banghy or Banggy deriving its name from a flexible pole suspended at each end with a bundle and carried by the dak runner balanced across his shoulders containing packages for transmission appears to have been in vogue as early as 1778 between Banaras and Calcutta. Similar carriage of parcels must have been in vogue even in South India during that period but no record example has so far been traced. The Banghy parcel post appears to have been utilized mostly for the transmission of official records; it was latter extended for the use of the public on payment of varying rates, depending on the distance of the destination.

Banghy Strikes applied to post office receipts both in red and black, representing paid and unpaid strikes are pieces of historical interest to the student of the postal history of India.

The late Mr. Renouf stated that Banghy Dawk was in force in 1854 but I have seen one tender of Banghy dawk issued by P.M.G., Calcutta, Mr. G. Alexander in the Calcutta Gazette of 11 April 1838 from "Calcutta to Banaras" of 411 miles:

Tender for Mail contract:	Miles
Calcutta to Hoogly	26
Hooghly to Baurdwan	44
Burdman to Sheerghattee	216
Sheerghatte to Banaras	125
	<b>411 miles</b>

Distance from Calcutta to Banaras is 411 miles. Intermediate places where 1/4 of an hour will be allowed for separating the mails.

Barrackpore, Hoogly, Baurdman, Dunwa and Sheerghattee. Each load to consist of 10 seers.

The number of loads daily, upwards from Calcutta, ordinarily required is as below.

From Calcutta to Dunwa	9 loads
Dunwa to Sheerghattee	8 loads
Sheerghattee to Banaras	7 loads
Banaras to Moughlsarai	4 loads
Moughlsarai to Dunwa	5 loads
Dunwa to Calcutta	6 loads.

The mail will be despatched from General Post office daily at 8 P. M. Those from Banaras immediately on the arrival at that station of the downward mails from Cawnpore. Tenders to specify whether the mails are intended to be conveyed by horses or by wheeled carriages or by men. If by either of the two former, unless under peculiar circumstances, no Tender will be accepted which is for a rate of travelling less than 6 miles per hour or by men not less than 5 miles per hour will be accepted. Tenders also for Banaras to Cawnpore (Bangies upwards & downwards), Cawnpore to Meerut, Koorjah to Delhi, Calcutta to Nagpur, Calcutta to Rungpur, Madras route, Bhaugulpur Road, Gya to Patna & Banaras to Goruckpore etc.

Mr. Renouf states that Banghy Dawk was continued certainly until at least 1871, but I have found a Banghy acknowledgement card printed on 17-5-1912 in Marathi language by Govt. mentioning the name Banghy on card. Written at lower side "please write on this A.D. whether this is letter post card or packet or Banghy." It is assumed that Banghy continued upto 1912. This A. D. was despatched from Bombay to Pirawa (Tonk State) on 8 August, 1921.

Happily I am able to add one more example of Bangy handstruck paid mark which has not previously been recorded. This is (fig. 2) Octagonal paid mark of Bombay 45 x 40 mm. (Mr. B. C. Luhadia auction catalogue of 15 July 1981 lot No. 6) The exact date of the mark is not clear, nor mentioned in the catalogue. Now Bombay has octagonal postmarks for paid and unpaid, paid in red colour, unpaid in black colour.

Late Mr. Renouf illustrated examples of the Bombay Banghy "Paid and Unpaid" stamps; few examples of these have since come up at auction sales.

We find a recorded example of the strike appearing in Bombay, Madras & Calcutta apparently adopted by virtue of the provision of Section IV of Post Office Regulation 1826 and illustration type 37 and 37 a, for paid and unpaid in VOL. I of the Encyclopedia by Mr. Robson Lowe while the strikes applied at Bombay, Madras



and Calcutta the paid one being a Heptagon of a diameter about 55 mm (Fig. 1 Fig. 4 & Fig. 8). The unpaid strike of Bombay is an octagon of 44 mm in Black (Fig. 3) and the Madras strike (Fig. 5 a & Fig. 5 b) is a square with rounded corners in black of the diameter of 55 mm. The peculiarity at the Madras strike for both paid & unpaid has yet another rectangular strike in black with straight corners containing the letters M.P.O. (Fig. 7) in the upper half divided by a line with the lower half mentioning the date, month and year of despatch. The upper half of the rectangle measuring 12 mm by 22 mm, the lower half measuring 10 mm by 22 mm. The words "M.P.O." apparently means "Madras Post Office."

Mr. D. Hammond Giles recorded new paid heptagon postmarks of Calcutta (Fig. 8) and round postmarks of Calcutta (Fig. 9) on cloth wrapper photostat supplied by Mr. S. C. Sukhani in the Oct.-Dec. 1982 issue of India Post.

The Banghy Dawk was working throughout India and in the July 1968 issue of India Post Mr. H.T.Y. Eaton recorded a third type of Banghy stamp of Calcutta (not recorded by Mr. D. Hammond Giles in his new 1989 Handstruck Catalogue of India). From the way he wrote his note the exact date of the mark is not clear, though it appears to be 1867; an illustration is reproduced (Fig. 10).

Calcutta 1865 Banghy strike applied to a post office receipt in blue and black with words paid and also blue and black strike with words Bearing. The blue paid strike of Calcutta is rectangular. The strike contains the letters "G.P.O.B.D." (Fig. 11) measuring 9 mm by 13 mm. The upper half has the words, 'G.P.O.' meaning 'General Post Office' and lower half B.D. means "Banghy Dawk." This parcel receipt for 198 Tolas was used in 1865. (Used from 1863-1870 as mentioned by Mr. D. Hammond Giles in his new Catalogue 1989).

All Banghy or Banggy Postmarks of Bombay and Madras are not mentioned by Mr. D. Hammond Giles in his new Catalogue the Handstruck Postage Stamps of India 1989 Published by M/s. Christie's Robson Lowe (London) but he recorded one more new example of Banghy hand struck.

Post mark of Poonah which have not previously been recorded. This is (Fig. 12) the octagonal Bearing mark. The date mentioned in his Catalogue is 1968.

Mr. S. C. Sukhani stated (minutes of P. C. I. Bangalore meeting of 10th July, 1983) that in the exhibits the marking on the parcel & receipt were different whereas

he had been under the belief that they would be the same. He added that he has a wrapper of a parcel with Banghy marking with 1 anna stamp and marked "post paid" with the result that he was not aware whether these are genuine Banghy post or only named by the Postal Departments. He felt that efforts should be made to study the Banghy system in greater detail.

In P.C.I. Meeting at Bangalore on 10th July, 1983 Col. Shenoj stated that Railway Travelling postal services started from 1864 and markings of postal departments are the earlier ones, between 1855 & 1864. As regards Banghy most of the post offices like Hyderabad gave these markings in 1855 in Banghy receipts.

Mr. Y. R. Shah said in this meeting that the origin of the Banghy marking was when Dak runners carried the mail on a light pliable pole with the bundle suspended at either end balanced across the shoulders; with the passage of time the parcels were carried by Bullock cart or on horse back, trains, steamers, buses etc., and eventually the authorities bade goodbye to Banghy Dawk runners. The use of the Banghy markings was quietly discontinued.

The Banghy post was availed of chiefly for heavier letters and packets and for transmission of official records both inland or overseas, the charges levied for such transmission varying for distance and weight superscribed on the strike. The system continued even after the introduction of granting the acknowledgement for registration in respect of important communication and values.

The find of the Banghy strike in Poonah, Bombay, Madras and Calcutta on a receipt is sure to evince greater interest for research to the students of early Indian postal history.

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**TATA SONS FIRST FLIGHT -1932**  
 ( Pioneering Airlines )  
 N. Kishore Agrawal, Patna.

(Continued from July - Sep 2015 Issue)

**RETURN FLIGHTS**

1. Madras Bellary : The Special circular cancellation of 17th October 1932 was used as canceller. A special cachet of 17th October, 1932 was also put separately. Time not mentioned. Bellary Dely, 18th October, 32 at 5.45 P. M. on back.



2. Madras - Bombay : The special circular postmark used as canceller as above. A cachet applied on the back. The Airmail label was also cancelled in red colour. Bombay G. P. O. Dep. 18 Oct. 32; 12.30 P. M. on back.
3. Madras - Ahmedabad : Special circular postmark used as canceller as above and a cachet at back. On some covers two strikes of 1th & 18th cachets are also found. Ahmedabad dely. 19th October, 32 at 7.30 A. M.
4. Madras-Karachi: The special circular postmark used as canceller as above and a cachet of 17th Oct. 32 on the back. Karachi Dely. 18 oct. 32 : 10A M.
5. Bellary - Bombay ; The covers were cancelled at Bellary with ordinary postmark of 18th October, 1932. Time : 5.30 P.M. In some cases two strikes are found. A cachet of 18th oct. 1932 applied separately, in black. 'Airmail label on covers are also found cancelled with red ink. Bombay G. P. O. Dep. 18 oct. 32 ; 12.30 P. M. on the back.
6. Bellary - Ahmedabad : The covers were cancelled with ordinary postmark as above. A special cachet applied separately on front as well as on the back. Ahmedabad dely 19 oct. 32 : 7.30 P. M.
7. Bellary-Karachi : Covers cancelled with usual postmark of Bellary as above. A cachet used separately. Karachi Dely. 19 oct. 32 : 10A. M.
8. Bombay - Ahmedabad : Covers have Bombay cancellation of 17th oct. 32 with time 6 P. M. Two strikes are also found. A cachet of 18th oct. 32 was used as canceller on Airmail labels. The some cachets are also applied on back. Ahmedabad Dely 19 oct. 32 Time : 7.30A.M.
9. Bombay - Karachi : Covers cancelled with ordinary postmark of 17th oct. 32 as above. A cachet of 18th oct. 32 used on covers separately. Karachi Dely 18 Oct. 32 : 10A. M.
10. Ahmedabad - Karachi : Covers were cancelled at Ahmedabad with ordinary postmark of 18th oct. 32 : 12.30 P.M. A cachet applied separately. Karachi Dely 19 oct. 32 : 10A. M.

Mr. J. R. D. Tata has flown The de Havilland Leopard Moth from Karachi to Bombay via Ahmedabad on

15th October, 1982 to re-enact his original flight of 50 years ago which marked the start of scheduled airmail service in the country. This year of 1982 is the Golden Jubilee Year of the Tata Sons Flight. The Leopard Moth is almost identical to the Havilland Puss Moth which Mr. J. R. D. Tata had used in 1932. The same aircraft was also used by him 20 years ago to fly from Karachi to Bombay on the 30th anniversary of that event.

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## THE WORLD'S FIRST OFFICIAL AEROPLANE MAIL FLIGHT

N. C. Baldwin

It is curious that a country which has been among the slowest to assimilate the advance of the mechanised age should have had the honour of despatching the first official aeroplane mail. This distinction was due to the initiative of Commander (later Sir) Walter Windham. Always an adventurer, Windham had sailed round the world four times before he was twenty years of age. In 1897 he was mentioned in Government despatches for connecting the wrecked troopship Warren Hastings to the shore with rope, which enabled 1,200 troops to be landed. He founded the "Aeroplane Club" in 1908 and was a King's Messenger from 1901 to 1909.

In 1910 he received a request from the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh Government to take some aeroplanes for educational purposes to Allahabad, where preparations were being made for an exhibition to be held the following year. Although he was then operating a motor business he had sufficient confidence in the future of aviation to sell his business and book his passage to India, taking with him two aviators and eight aeroplanes, one of which was awarded a gold medal at the Exhibition. One of the contacts he made on reaching Allahabad was the Rev. W. E. S. Holland, Founder and Warden of the Oxford and Cambridge Hostel and Chaplain of Holy Trinity Church. A new hostel was being built and the Warden made an appeal to Commander Winham to help in the raising of funds. Although he was not a philatelist, the idea of an aerial post occurred to him, probably because with the personnel and equipment at his disposal he had the means within his power of carrying this through without being too dependent on others. The Postmaster General of the United Provinces and the Director General of the Indian Post Office granted the necessary permission, and a special postmark was authorised. The die for this was cut at the Postal Workshops at Aligarh by order of the



Government of India from a design submitted by Commander Windham.

It was agreed that the air mail should be operated from the parade ground within the Exhibition to a post office across the Jumna river at Aligarh, a distance of six miles. The Post Office did not charge an extra fee beyond the ordinary rate of postage for air transit but they sanctioned a charge of six annas on each card or letter carried, which was given without deduction as a donation to the hostel. To simplify organisation, the public were instructed through the Press to send mail already prepared and stamped direct to the Acting Postmaster, the Chaplain, Holy Trinity Church, Allahabad, with a British Postal Order for 6d. or its equivalent, six annas. The total of the surcharges received was sufficient to defray the cost of an extension to the hostel for Indian students.

H. Pequet, one of the two aviators who came to India with Windham, was chosen to pilot the Sommer aircraft, and the flight was made on February 18th, 1911. The start was watched by the Governor, Sir John Hewett, and the Government Staff, while it was estimated that over a million natives, assembled for the Festival of Hartel, were present. Pequet landed at Naini thirteen minutes after the take-off and returned immediately to the Exhibition grounds, both journeys being accomplished in half an hour. The special postmark was applied in magenta, but a few pieces exist with the postmark in black, and it appears that these were privileged mails despatched by or on behalf of officials. Pieces bearing the postmark in both colours are not unknown. The postmark die was officially destroyed in the Post Office on February 19th. Some covers have been seen with a forged postmark, the ink being almost dark purple in shade and the diameter of the cancellation being about one and a half millimetres larger. The Allahabad postmark has also been forged, the date of the month not being correctly placed above "11" in "1911". The destination postmark is always too faint to decipher.

The total mail was said to have consisted of about 6,500 letters and cards, the majority of which were ordinary covers despatched by members of the public, but in addition to the pieces bearing the special postmark in black, already mentioned, the following items are of special interest:

(1) Forty large cards (160 x 120 mm.) depicting the aviator in his aircraft and autographed "H. Pequet". Although "some of the" cards may have been cut down, there appear to have been at least

two different sizes in use, the smaller measuring 152 x 114 mm. The same block was used on both sizes. Two different printed inscriptions appear above the illustration indiscriminately on both sizes, one reading as shown, (FIRST "AERIAL POST", ALLAHABAD, FEBRUARY, 18, 1911) and the other: "FIRST 'AERIAL POST' FEBRUARY 18, 11". Owing to their size, few cards have been found in fine condition.

- (2) Twenty postcards with impressed quarter-anna stamp, (121 X 74 mm). These were usually unaddressed but bear the special postmark and Allahabad postmark and are autographed on message side "H. Pequet".
- (3) Some unaddressed covers with impressed stamps were struck with the special postmark and were presented to the employees of the exhibition.
- (4) Pieces bearing autographs of Commander W. Windham and/or the Rev. W. E. S. Holland.
- (5) Various pictorial cards usually depicting the exhibition building or organising officials.
- (6) Nine hundred and thirty-one pieces of registered mail: (a) the majority were posted at the main Allahabad Post Office and bear a numbered registration label, most of which was blank below being stamped in black with a rectangular registration cachet; (b) registered mail posted at the Exhibition Post Office, stamped in black with registration cachet the registration number being pen or pencil inscribed.
- (7) Philatelic franking is not uncommon and series of covers exist, each with a single or pair of varying denominations of Queen Victoria and Edward VII issues, occasionally up to the 5R. denomination.
- (8) The Organising Committee of the exhibition used the air mail to send greetings to most of the European monarchs and officials in different parts of the world.
- (9) The Rev. W. E. S. Holland presented to Commander Windham and the two aviators special scrolls written in English, Urdu and Hindustani, thanking them for their efforts on



behalf of the Indian students. The design was surmounted by a collection of high value Indian stamps placed in a semi-circle, with the special postmark in the centre.

In this book "Waves, Wheels, Wings", Sir Windham bewails the fact that both M. Pequet's and his own scrolls were stolen. When the writer met Sir Walter in 1933 he had not recovered his scroll, nor had he any other philatelic souvenirs of this historic event - only news cuttings and personal letters of congratulation.

(From "The Aero Field", Sutton, Coldfield, England with full acknowledgment and grateful thanks to the author and the publishers.)

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## ALLAHABAD & THE AFTERMATH

### 'Aerophilatelist'

Any postal history buff will know it. The first airmail in the world was flown on 18 February 1911 between Allahabad and Naini (both in Uttar Pradesh). Thus UP sneaked into the annals of postal history. The epoch making event, though well known, bears repetition.

The history was made one bright windy morning in 1903 when Orville Wright (one of the 2 Wright brothers, both slightly mad and deeply obsessed with flying) took off against the wind in his less-than-reassuring contraption from the Kill Devil Hills in North Carolina and flew it for 12 seconds! The date was 17 December 1903 and the time 10.35 a.m. A new era in human history had dawned. But the potential of these ungainly machines (which stayed up in air by apparent devil-power!) was slow to be appreciated. The decade that followed the miracle at, mid-morning in North Carolina saw quite a few crazy people (or magnificent men, depending upon how you looked at it) cavorting in these flying machines for fun. A new breed of barn-storming aviators took the world by storm by their aerobatics. Our country also had its own share of this intrepid breed belonging to various nationalities, barn-storming around the country, giving joy-rides to squealing yokels or frightening the cattle with aerobatics over open fields. It was during this era that the United Provinces Industrial & Agricultural Fair was organised at Allahabad in February 1911. Two aviators, Keith Devis, an Englishman, and Henri Pequet, a Frenchman, were invited by the Fair organizers to give joy-rides as added attraction, besides Such scintillating displays as cattle-feed and hurricane lanterns, to pull in more gate-money.

Seeing these pilots engaged in the innocuous pastime of giving joy-rides, Captain Wyndham (later Commander Sir Walter Wyndham) thought of using them for a worthy cause, that of raising funds for the Oxford & Cambridge Hostel at Allahabad. He thought of carrying souvenir mail. It was Ms persuasive charm that made the Postal Olympus (Sir Geoffrey Clarke, I.C.S., Postmaster General of the United Provinces) relent and permit carriage of mail and also provide a special official postmark on all mail. This factor that the mail carried was impressed with the official postmark made the flight historic. Earlier, in August 1908 mail was actually flown by heavier-than-air machine from Paris to Saint Nazaire (France). In August 1910 mail was flown from Lytham Hall to Squires Gate in Blackpool (England). But on both these occasions the carriage of mail was 'unofficial' as they did, they not receive sanction of their postal administrations.

Out of 4 barn-stormers (Davis, Pequet, Tyall and Jullerot) present at the Fairgrounds, Pequet was chosen for the flight. He took off around 5.30 p.m. with 2 mail bags from the polo ground adjacent to the Exhibition and after a 13 minute flight landed near the Central Jail, Naini and handed over the mailbags to the staff of Naini Post Office for disposal. Before the sun set on that mellow windy day at the confluence of Ganga and Yamuna, postal history was made. James Mackay (Guinness Book of Stamps), the noted authority on Indian Aerophilately, Dr. D.J. Banerjee (SIGNET, Vol. 8 No. 4) and J.R.D. Tata (16th British Commonwealth Lecture, London, November 1960) have identified the aircraft as Humber Sommer biplane. SIGNET (Vol 9 No. 1) and G. B. Pai (INDIA-80 Souvenir) identified it as De Havilland. On the testimony of the pioneer Indian aviator, J.R.D. Tata, one could assume that SIGNET and Pai are mistaken about the identity of the aircraft.

There appears to be more confusion about the name of the aviator. Mackay (Guinness Book of Stamps) says he is 'L Pecquet'. J. R. D. Tata (in his address to the Royal Aeronautics Society, London in November 1960) calls him 'Henri Piquet'. SIGNET (Vol 9 No. 1) says that he was 'Henry Piquet'. Encyclopaedia Britannica apparently refuses- to recognize the goings-on in the land of Gunga Din, may be because it, was not reported in The Times, London! For it the earth-shaking event was the Coronation mail flight from Hendon to Windsor Castle, which was 4 months after the Allahabad -Naini flight. The name was 'Henri Piequet' as the autograph on the souvenir cards carried in the flight testifies. Be that as it may, the fellow



was a Frenchman and he did fly in his wood-and-canvas contraption with 2 mail bags (were they blue drill airmail bags?) containing about 6500 pieces of world's first official airmail post. The rest is history.

G.B. Pai (INDIA-80 Souvenir) gives the credit for the Allahabad-Naini flight to Sir Geoffrey Clarke. But Clarke has made no mention of it in his book, 'The Post Office of India and Its Story' (published in 1920). In the Preface, he writes that he wanted to close the story with the amalgamation of the Post Office and the Telegraph Department in 1913 but the First World War intervened and the publication was delayed. As a result he had "to revise several chapters and felt compelled to write one upon the wonderful work done by the Indian Post Office in the Great War". So he had ample time for reflection and he did not consider the flight important enough to be enshrined in his book for posterity.

J. R. D. Tata (Journal of the Royal Aeronautical Society, January 1961) says that the flight was organised by "the same Captain Wyndham, who was responsible for the subsequent coronation mail flight ..." Tata calls Wyndham "the real founder of the air mail". D.J. Banerjea (SIGNET, Vol 8 No. 4) also gives the credit to Wyndham. The weight of evidence is in favour of Wyndham. Clarke was incidental.

Fifty years later, in 1961 Indian Administration commemorated the occasion by issuing 3 stamps and one FDC, re-enacting the flight, and carrying a certain number of special covers in the commemorative flight. These special covers bear all the 3 stamps (total value : Rs 1.20), special first day cancellation of Allahabad, a circular cachet (in magenta) mentioning "Allahabad-Naini Jubilee Flight", and NO ADDRESS. They bear the Delivery date-stamp of Naini Post Office. In 1986, the 75th anniversary of the occasion was celebrated by the Administration by issuing 2 stamps and a FDC, organising a commemorative flight and flying 6500 FDCs. These FDCs bear both the stamps (total value: Rs 3.50), (special first day cancellation of Allahabad, another special cancellation, a specially designed delivery date stamp; of Naini Post Office on the back and again NO ADDRESS. Here, a word about the second special cancellation on the obverse of the numbered FDCs flown in the Platinum Jubilee Flight. It does not appear to be a cancellation but a cachet mark as the name of the post office is not mentioned though "Allahabad-Naini" appear at the bottom. It is not a flight cachet mark" as it only says 'Platinum Jubilee 1911-1986'. The purpose of this mark is not clear. It does not appear to have any philatelic value.

On both the occasions (1961 and 1986) the covers flown were without any address although they were backstamped by Naini Post Office. This indicates that the unaddressed covers were delivered. In 1961 a special cover, distinctive in appearance from the FDC, was flown. In 1986 no Special cover was issued and the FDC was flown. On both the occasions, the postage stamps affixed on the covers flown were in excess of the extant postage rate for inland airmail.

SIGNET (Vol 9 No. 1) reports that the Indian Administration approached J. R. D. Tata to re-enact the Allahabad-Naini flight to commemorate its 75th anniversary. There appears to be some confusion in the ranks of the Administration. Tata took off in a Puss Moth aircraft October dawn in 1932 from Karachi airport to inaugurate the scheduled carriage of mail by air. He had nothing to do with the 1911 flight, when he was a child of 7! It is not at all surprising that he refused, more so after his 1982 experience. On 15 October 1982 Tata re-enacted the Karachi-Ahmedabad-Bombay flight to commemorate its 50th anniversary. He also carried philatelic mail on this occasion. Pakistan Post Office provided a special cancellation at Karachi GPO for this purpose. Indian Post Office did not consider it worth while to get special covers designed for this historic re-enactment. The FDCs were used (but by a stroke of luck they were addressed to Presidency Postmaster, Bombay). There was no special cachet mark to indicate that they were flown in a Special flight. Thus the whole exercise lost its philatelic significance and value.

In 1961 and 1986, arrangements were made to re-enact the 1911 flight. In 1961 a 2-seater Piper Cub fixed-wing single propeller aircraft of the Hind Flying Club of Allahabad was used for the purpose. It was piloted by Capt V. K. Verma. In 1986, the machine used was a Chetak helicopter of the Indian Air Force piloted by Squadron Leader V. K. Arora and Pilot Officer Jatinder Singh. Let us see what J. R. D. Tata did to re-enact his 1932 Karachi-Ahmedabad-Bombay flight on its 50th anniversary. He used a Leopard Moth aircraft of same vintage and virtually identical with the Puss Moth aircraft he had flown in 1932. Such a re-enactment has sense. Re-enacting a flight, made originally in a fixed-wing propeller aircraft, in a rotor-wing machine (helicopter) is like re-enacting the conquest of Everest by climbing to the top of Sanchar Bhawan.

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