



SIPA

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QUARTERLY

Guest Editorial

Topical Collector will Never face Boredom

Why do we all collect topically? And why are topical collections to be found in the closets of so many of this country's senior collectors, exhibitors, men and women often referred to as "serious philatelists"?

The answer is that no collector is completely (or invariably) serious.

We turn to stamp collecting as a refuge from the genuinely serious business of pursuing a career, raising a family, or just getting through the night.

One of the many appeals of topical collecting is that it offers advantages even to those whose traditional collections have developed to a point where additional acquisitions are infrequent or painfully costly.

A whimsical topical collection allows the collector, no matter what his level of commitment, to satisfy the acquisitive urge frequently and economically.

Unlike the conventional one - country collection, where the preprinted album pages start at stamp No.1 and lurch forward into the most recent supplement, a topical stamp collection is as broad or as narrow as the collector wills it to be.

"The recipe for boredom," Voltaire said, "is completeness." This is a destiny that the topical collector will never face.

To begin with, you select the subject. For many collectors, the subject is an expression of their other professional or hobby interests.

The genesis of my cucumbers - on - stamps collection is a hobby interest in gardening. Cucumbers are something I've never been able to grow successfully, so I decided to cultivate a garden in stamp form. A flimsy justification, to be sure. But who says a new collection requires justification?

Those whose interest in stamps is exclusive have a wonderful topic available to them: stamps on stamps. If you collect covers on stamps, for the record, the earliest U.S. stamp to depict a cover is the Hale & Co, local stamp of 1844 (Scott 75L5).

The rest of the topical collection is up to you as well including what you include and exclude, how you organize, arrange and mount your collection, and (of course) what you pay for items you add to it.

If you want to show a coconut palm, for example, you can choose to illustrate it with several full sets or stamps, go after a rare and valuable £5 bicolor, or just settle for the ½- penny low value.

That's why topical collecting appeals to so many people. It's a wonderfully open ended approach to stamp collecting. If you don't already know this, you should give it a try.

On the whole, it can be definitely told that topical or thematic collector will have some thing to go on and on and will never face boredom.

(Courtesy : American Philatelist, 1980).

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information

The first penny post between England and America was in operation in 1698. Bags of letters were hung in popular London coffeehouses by shipmasters, who then conveyed the letters at the rate of one penny for a single and two pence for a double.

Monthly Second Sunday Meetings

With President
Mr. Balakrishna Das on the Chair,
19 members attended the meeting on
08.04.2012, Mr. B. Mahesh, Member,
SIPA spoke on "Perforations in
stamps"

STAMP NEWS

PURAN CHANDRA GUPTA

02.01.12

500

0.3 mill

Puran Chandra Gupta (1912 – 1986), founder editor of the Dainik Jagran media group, was one of the pioneers of Hindi journalism. He was born at Kalpi, in Uttar Pradesh and was educated at Kalpi, Kanpur and Varanasi.

Realized that journalism was his calling, in 1940, started publishing a weekly newspaper called 'Swatantra' from Kanpur. Mahatma Gandhi's Civil Disobedience Movement inspired Puran Chand Gupta to think about a daily newspaper, and he started publishing Jagran from Jhansi in 1942.



Puran Chandra Gupta was aware of the progressive role of newspapers in a nascent democracy, and ensured that Dainik Jagran fulfilled this role. He was uncompromising. He was elected Chairman of the Audit Bureau of Circulation in 1974 - 75 and of PTI in 1975. He remained an executive member of the Indian Newspaper Society for 15 years and also served as its Deputy President.

Dainik Jagran is today one of the world's most widely read newspapers and a living tribute to Puran Chandra Gupta's ideals and his grasp of the common man's aspirations.

Theme : Personality, Journalism, News.

BHAI JAGTA JI

15.01.12

500

0.4 mill

Bhai Jagta Ji was one of the most influential saints of the Sewa Panthi order, a unique humanitarian institution which was in many ways a forerunner of the Red Cross Society. The order was started by Bhai Kanhaiya, a devout Sikh in the service of Guru Gobind Singh. Bhai Jagta was the successor to Bhai Bhalla Ram and fifth in the line of Bhai Kanhaiya.



Bhai Jagta was a native of Maghiana in the district of Jhang, presently in Pakistan. Like many other noble souls of his time, he came from humble beginnings. He along with his elder brother Bhai Channa approached Bhai Bhalla Ram, a revered saint of the time. They moved to Noorpur where a Dharamsala was being set up, and sought spiritual asylum under him.

Bhai Jagta's untiring commitment and purity of heart won the noble saint's confidence, and he was admitted into the Sewa Panthi fold. He was eventually anointed as successor to Bhai Bhalla Ram.

After the Partition in 1947, the Tikana Noorpur Thal was re-established at Goniana Mandi in Bhatinda district of Punjab and is aptly known as Tikana Bhai Jagta Sahib. It is today the main centre of the Sewa Panthi Mission, and is often described as a light house of selfless, worker.

Theme : Sages & Saints, Sikism, Social Service.

SHYAM NARAYAN SINGH

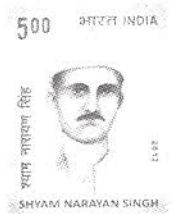
24.01.12

500

0.3 mill

Shyam Narayan Singh (1901 - 1968) was a courageous freedom fighter and long served legislator from Bihar. He is also remembered for his association with Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru, and other senior leaders of his era.

The freedom movement had inspired Shyam Narayan Singh at a young age. He was targeted by the authorities, and starting with a nine - month prison term in 1937, he came into confrontation with the foreign rulers on many occasions. There was a shoot at sight order on him during the 1942 agitation.



Singh grasped the significance of electoral politics early, and was a member of the legislature for many years, starting from 1937. He was the last person in the agitation of 1947 in Patna to speak against the British rule at the Secretariat, which was followed by police firing. Seven young men died in the firing. One of Patna's most recognised memorial or "Shaheed Smarak", has been built at this spot.

Singh was also remembered for the incident of saving around 6,000 lives belonging to the minority community during the 1946 communal riots.

Theme : Personality, Freedom Fighter, Parliamentarians.

INDIA INTERNATIONAL CENTRE

09.02.12

500

0.4 mill

The coming together of a few men and women with a vision for India's future, led to the founding of the India International Centre (IIC), a premier non - government organization in the capital, in the nineteen sixties. The purpose of the Centre as stated in its charter is, 'to promote understanding and amity between the different communities of the world'. The IIC is recognized for its creative influence on the cultural and intellectual life of the country.



The facilities at the Centre include an Art Gallery, a hostel, conference rooms and catering facilities. The centre brings about well known people from across the globe for its library, open to research scholars, publications including its journal 'The IIC Quarterly', which are valued for their high intellectual content.

Theme : Internatinals, Delhi, Institution.

EMPLOYEES' STATE INSURANCE CORPORATION

24.02.12 500 0.45 mill

Employees' State Insurance Scheme of India, Popularly known as the ESI scheme, is a multidimensional social security system tailored to provide socio – economic protection to the worker population and their dependants covered under the scheme, came into existence through the Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948.

From a modest beginning of 25000 insured persons, ESIC now covers 1.43 crore families of workers and provides social security to 5.55 crore beneficiaries. Besides full medical care for self and dependants, admissible from the day one of insurable employment, the insured persons are also entitled for a number of cash benefits in items of physical distress due to sickness, temporary or permanent disablement, unemployment, industrial accidents etc.



Starting from 21 dispensaries, the penetration of ESIC infrastructure has increased commendably over the years to 1486 dispensaries / AYUSH Units and 145 ESI Hospitals in the whole country.

With a staff of 7000 medical professionals, 35000 para - medical professionals and other employees, ESIC is determined to expand the coverage of its social security net.

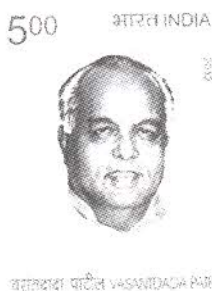
Theme : Insurance, Health, Employees.

VASANTDADA PATIL

01.03.12 500 0.4 mill

Vasantdada Patil was born on 13th November 1917 in the village Padmale near Sangli, Maharashtra. Vasantdada's parents died in the year 1918 during the plague epidemic. He was raised by his grandmother.

Vasantdada joined the freedom struggle in 1942 by actively participating in the Quit India movement. After independence, he



was elected to Maharashtra Assembly in 1952 from Sangli Constituency. In 1972, he was made Irrigation Minister in the Maharashtra Government. Vasantdada was elected as Chief Minister of Maharashtra Four times between 1977 and 1985. He was also appointed as Governor of the State of Rajasthan from 1985 to 1987. Vasantdada Patil was honoured with the Padma Bhushan in 1967.

Vasantdada Patil founded several medical, engineering and polytechnic institutes in Maharashtra which facilitated in enhancing educational opportunities for rural students.

Theme : Personality, Leader, Freedom Fighter, Chief Ministers, Educationalist.

SHYAMA CHARAN SHUKLA

09.03.12 500 0.3 mill

Shyama Charan Shukla (1925 - 2007) was born and received his early education at Raipur (Chhattisgarh). He graduated in technology from Banaras Hindu University and completed his law degree from Nagpur University. Shyama Charan Shukla got inspired by the freedom movement and participated in the Quit India Movement of 1942. He was elected Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) for the first time in 1957 from the dual constituency of Brindranavarh - Rajim and subsequently in 1962, 1967, 1972, 1990, 1993 and 1998 from Rajim constituency. He was appointed the State Irrigation Minister in 1967 and Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh thrice from 1969 to 1972 and later from 1975 to 1977 and 1989 to 1990.



Shyama Charan Shukla is remembered for his contribution towards irrigation, agriculture, tribal welfare, urban planning and development as well as environmental conservation, Professional education, and panchayat Raj.

Shyama Charan Shukla's public life spanning over five decades was made by simplicity, ethical conduct, integrity and discipline.

Theme : Personality, Leader, Freedom Fighter, Chief Ministers.

100 YEARS OF CIVIL AVIATION

14.03.2012 500 x 3, 2000 0.4 mill each

Civil Aviation started in India when the French pilot Monseigneur Piguot undertook the first commercial flight covering a distance of about 10 Kms from Allahabad to Naini on February 18, 1911 for carrying mail.

The first domestic air route between Karachi and Delhi was opened in December 1912 by the Indian State Air Services in collaboration with the UK based Imperial Airways. Aviation industry gathered momentum in 1932

when J.R.D. Tata founded Tata Airlines which later became Air India. In order to strengthen the base of aviation industry, Government of India established a joint sector company, Air India International, in collaboration with Air India in early 1948. The nine other existing airline companies were also nationalised under the Air Corporations Act, 1953.



The aviation industry in India is one of the fastest growing in the world. It has undergone a major transformation in the past two decades in terms of modernised terminal buildings, sophisticated aircrafts, equipments and a number of airlines options for the customers.

Theme : Aviation, Transportation, Aircrafts.

HISTORY

ORIGIN AND BIRTH OF "UPU" Universal Postal Union

'The one World Principle : Letters for Everyone

WHILE ambitious statesmen were bandying the Post about in Europe, different factors were shaping its fate on the other side of the Atlantic. A new country, nearly as big as the whole European mainland, was being opened up. Fabulous wealth rewarded the pioneer who was tough in body and spirit. There was plenty to occupy for the ruler and ruled within their own country. The inter-government scramble for power meant little to American political leaders and did not distort their outlook.

On August 4, 1862, a note left Washington addressed to a number of postal administrations. It was signed by Montgomery Blair, president Lincoln's Postmaster General, and countersigned by Seward, his Secretary of State. Although August, 1862, was not a promising period in the civil war, the form and content of the note bore no sign of such worries.

After briefly referring to the chaos in cross-boundary postal services, Blair's note asked the receiving States to send representatives to a conference where the problem could be thrashed out. As a first contribution to the discussion, Blair gave a list of detailed questions that needed solving and followed them up with two important suggestions. The first was that some kind of joint agreement regulating the mail exchanges should be made. "It is evident," he wrote, "that an international arrangement established on a common basis . . . is of the utmost importance." His other suggestion was that postal experts rather than diplomats should be sent to the conference. "A

conference," he wrote, "between representatives, capable men, delegated by the various postal administrations" was preferable to "the usual but slower method of diplomacy." He may have felt that this was putting it a little too diplomatically, for he made his intention still clearer in a second note a few months later: "This department therefore proposes that the various delegates, one from each of the postal departments should meet in Paris the following May" (The French Government had in the meantime offered the conference hospitality).

The Paris Conference opened on May 11, 1863. It soon became evident that Foreign Offices had taken charge. Of the 15 States represented, 7 sent delegates from the Foreign and Consular Service but not from their postal administrations. The United States delegates, however, were Kasson, Assistant Postmaster General, and his aide, Mohle.

As for arriving at an "international arrangement", Blair himself had added the following caution: "The powers of these representatives, I presume, will be limited to discussing and recommending" measures for adoption by their respective administrations". But the delegates, with their Foreign Offices behind them, were not prepared to go even that far. M. Vandal, the French delegate chosen as President of the Conference, declared in his opening speech that the delegates were not there "to discuss practical measures" but only "certain general principles, certain speculative doctrines." Any resolutions they passed, he added, "will not commit anyone; they will reserve for future interests and for governments the most absolute independence." M. Vandal received the support of his colleagues in speech after speech.

The verbatim report of the proceedings makes dignified reading. There is not a word breathing criticism of any government or of the way in which they had been conducting their postal relations. There is no hint of an admission of political rivalries. Everyone is polite, appreciative, even flattering everyone else. Only at rare intervals does the glint of the knife appear for a moment through the floral tributes.

Discussion soon centred on two main questions: reducing and simplifying rates between States, and Transit Mail. A sub-commission was set up to study the first question. Its German member proposed that they should adopt the solution already practised in the Austro-German Postal Union: a single international rate prepaid by stamps, each State keeping the fees for the stamps it sold and delivering mail from the others free. The majority of the sub-commission thought his proposal went too far. The Post, the French delegate declared, is service to be paid according to what it gives, and France with her big distances and well-developed service should receive higher fees than a small State like Luxemburg. Pagni, the Italian delegate, opposed this view. With exquisite courtesy, through which, however, the glint of steel plainly showed, he pointed out that postal services in France had been organized so as to yield profit at the ordinary internal fees. There was no need to charge foreigners more. As for distance, he added, it had been proved that distance makes no difference to costs. Rowland Hill's work had evidently not been lost on Signor Pagni.

It seems to have been lost, however, on the British delegate, who ironically enough was Frederic Hill, brother of Sir Rowland. He proved a staunch defender of something close to the fiscal principle. Each part of the Post, he said, must pay for itself; it was therefore necessary to collect an extra fee on letters from abroad that were to be delivered in rural districts; furthermore, forwarding letters was a new service and entitled to an additional fee. The majority, however, felt that no extra charges should be made. But in regard to free delivery of each other's letters, they adopted the French standpoint and passed the following vague resolution: "The Conference expresses the wish that accounting should be simplified".

Transit mail was then discussed. This time it was the Italian delegate who made the most radical proposal. He considered that transit mail should be carried free of charge. If we cannot put this measure through immediately, he added, we can at least resolve that transit fees should in the meantime correspond to the actual cost of the transit. The United States delegate said that in his opinion "the public of foreign countries should be treated like that of the country of transit".

The Swiss delegate was for a compromise. Free transit, he admitted, "would beyond doubt be the most favourable to the interests of the public"; but "one cannot but recognize that the postal receipts (from transit) are a source of revenue for the great majority of States". The Conference majority gave as its opinion that transit fees on letters should be not more than half the ordinary internal fee, and rates for ocean transit not more than what the transit Administration charged its own citizens by the same vessels.

On June 6, the Conference broke up. Its findings are summed up in 34 "opinions" or "wishes". They include simplification of weights and measures, adoption of the metric system and greater uniformity in rates. The other chief wishes we have already seen.

These results certainly seem meagre compared with the hopes that Blair's note had raised. The governments had committed themselves to nothing, not even to considering the recommendations of the Conference. Its conclusions were cautious; they said nothing about Blair's central proposal, an "international arrangement". It looked as though his effort, which could not be ignored, had been gracefully turned aside.

But in fact it had not. The Paris Conference roused interest among the letter-writing public, who had sent petitions and suggestions to the delegates during the meetings. The Conference resolutions received publicity. It was pointed out that many of the proposals were successfully applied in the Austro-German Union, and could just as well be applied over wider areas. Governments did in fact include some of them in postal treaties made after the Conference. But more important than this, the debates in Paris had given birth to a new idea: that inter-State postal exchanges should not be a mere tool for political ends or for increasing the revenue of one State at the expense of another, but a means of improving a common postal service. This sounds like just plain common sense, and common sense it is; but it was new and revolutionary for aill that.

In 1865 the International Telegraph Union was founded, bringing order into telegraph services crossing frontiers. The telegraph was a recent invention, not burdened with historical barnacles like the Post. Nevertheless, the parallel was close enough to point the way to the needed postal reform. The man who finally brought that reform to earth was none other than Heinrich Stephan, loyal servant of the Prussian "Blood and Iron" Chancellor.

Stephan was not at the Paris Conference, and for years after he was busy absorbing the posts of the territories Bismarck brought under Prussia. But he had evidently had time to do some thinking about wider postal reform as well. In 1868 he published an article in the official Prussian postal journal, outlining a world postal union and urging that it should be formed.

It is not surprising that this skilled administrator and organizer should have translated his vision into a practical plan, nor that his plan was so sound that it remains the basis of the great organization we have to-day. What does at first seem surprising is that just he should have had this kind of a vision. He had, after all, made his career as a devoted servant of Prussian nationalism and political ambitions. Yet now he was fired by the idea of an organization that was to lift the world's postal services out of the reach of nationalists and politicians. Human beings are complex creatures.



Stephan's article roused interest far and wide. He obtained permission from his chiefs to sound the reactions of other governments, but then political rivalries once more swept away all possibility of peaceful planning. With Austria reduced to a weak state, Bismarck regarded the French Government under Napoleon III as the chief remaining hindrance to his plans. In 1870 the Franco-Prussian war broke out, actually launched by Napoleon, but engineered by Bismarck. With the Prussian victory in 1871, the Chancellor realized his aim: the German Empire came into being, swollen by the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine, and now the dominant power on the European mainland. The prostrate French Government soon afterwards signed a postal treaty favourable to the victor.

The Imperial German Government thereupon gave Stephan leave to press his plan once more, and indeed backed it themselves. Why did they do this? It is difficult to believe that the Kaiser and Bismarck had become one-world enthusiasts. Did they see here a means of gaining prestige as the prime movers in something they realized would echo round the world? Did they think the political dividends of so popular an act would outweigh the loss of the Post as a political tool? The German Post was more dependent on transit service from others than they on it; did sensible transit arrangements seem overwhelmingly important? Did they realize that giving up the Post as a fiscal weapon would more than pay for itself in increased business prosperity? In short, was this enlightened self-interest? If so, let us doff our hats to them, for such enlightenment is rare indeed in the history of nationalist

statesmanship. Whatever the explanation, the fact remains: we owe the launching of the most important world-wide civil service to one of the most ruthless nationalist governments of the last century.

The Imperial German Government asked the Swiss to give hospitality to a new postal conference and to issue invitations to other States to take part. The Swiss agreed.

The Conference opened in Berne on September 15, 1874. Twenty-two States had accepted the invitation. Some delegates were veterans from the Paris meeting, their beards longer and greyer now, as photographs show. But the 11 years had brought other changes, too. Representatives of postal administrations this time dominated; they led 19 of the 22 delegations. And they were now gathered about a definite project, not mere "speculative doctrines". The chief Swiss delegate was elected President and declared in his opening speech: "The business before us is to do the same for the Post as was done for the Telegraph ten years ago."

When the delegates presented their credentials, it appeared that 13 had powers to negotiate and sign a treaty, subject, of course, to later ratification by their governments. The remaining eight had no such powers and the United States delegate had not arrived. The "powerless" ones included the British, French and Italians as well as the American when he did arrive. It thus looked as if four of the biggest powers had not yet accepted the idea of committing themselves. The Conference passed a resolution urging all who lacked full powers to cable home for them. That the American delegate's double lapse was due to inefficiency somewhere down the line rather than lack of good intent became clear when he told the Conference that he was sure he would obtain the necessary powers, and a few days later was as good as his word.

At the opening meeting, the Turkish delegate somewhat ruffled the waters. He made a speech pleading for the help of the Conference in getting rid of the post offices "certain foreign States" had set up in Turkey. He thought that this highhanded use of his country's territory was not in keeping with the ideals behind the Conference. But the President and delegates from the "certain" States hastened to explain to him that the question was not of general interest and must in any case be settled by "direct" negotiations. No-one supported him and the question was dropped.

The Conference now settled down to Stephan's plan. His staff had gathered postal statistics, which they distributed to the delegates, thus greatly speeding the work. Stephan's clear head and conciliatory manner were invaluable all through the meetings. He was always ready with the answer but equally ready to listen to the opinions of others and to discuss their points. In the end the Conference adopted his plan in all essentials but one. One important addition was also made.

The essentials were the following. All the member governments were to sign the same treaty, which bound them in a postal union and gave them all equal rights and

duties. Disputes between them were to be settled by arbitration. There was to be a single rate for foreign mail over the whole area of the Union, subject to a margin for the different money values. The rate was only 2½d. or its equivalent for a letter weighing 15 grams or ounce. No member might make further charges not authorized by the Union. The fee should be prepaid by stamps in the country where it was posted. Each State should keep the fees from the stamps it sold but must deliver letters from the other States free. For sea passages up to 300 miles an additional fee might be charged not exceeding half the original fee.

Stephan had proposed, like Signor Pagni in Paris, that each member should convey transit mail for the others free of charge. The French and certain other delegates vigorously opposed this. The final resolution was a compromise. Members bound themselves to accept transit mail and give it at least as good service as their own letters. Letter writers were no longer to pay an additional fee for this, but member administrations were to pay each other for transit, the payment being based on weight and distance. The lowest rate was to be 2 francs per kilogram for short distances (about 1 d. per pound) and the highest 6£ francs per kilogram (about 3s. 2d. per pound).

The addition to Stephan's plan was that an International Bureau was set up to keep members in touch between conferences and do statistical work as well as preparing for the conferences themselves. The Conference decided to place this bureau under the guidance of one of the member postal administrations. Stephan, who had accepted this addition as desirable, proposed the Belgian administration as the guiding authority, the Belgians having suggested creation of a bureau. Others proposed the Swiss. There was first a tie vote, but on a second ballot there was a majority for the Swiss. The Bureau made its home in Berne.

The Conference adjourned on November 11, 1874. All the delegates signed the treaty except the French, who had all along fought a rearguard action for sovereignty and now said that their government could not commit itself without first consulting Parliament. In 1875, however, the French Government signed, and by January 1, 1876, the members had ratified the treaty and the world organization formally started functioning.

Heinrich Stephan had reason to be pleased with his work. When the Berne Conference adjourned, the delegates gave him a rousing tribute. His modest reply pointed out that the true creator of the new organization was the spirit of the times, in which many had a part. In introducing the treaty to the German Parliament, he declared: "the loftier significance of the Bill before you, if you will allow it such, is that it points to the possibility of common institutions in the international field". But in a speech at Cologne, replying to further tributes, Stephan let his other voice be heard: "The principal thanks... belongs above all to the glorious Restorer of the unity of the nation and to the might of the German Reich. Only on the broad basis of the Reich and the firm foundation of its prestige, could a building like the World Postal Union be erected".

Stephan attended further meetings of the Union,

where he was hailed as its revered founder and continued to contribute to its development. At home honours were showered upon him. In 1885 the Emperor ennobled him.

Like Sir Rowland Hill, Heinrich von Stephan gained his position by keenness, vision and painstaking toil. Like Hill, too, his last years in office were in some measure embittered by dissensions. His employees had the hardihood to form a union and lay their views before him in its name. This, the fundamentally kind but patriarchal old bureaucrat, himself an organizer of the highest rank, regarded as insubordination, not to say treason. Stephan also had, as we have seen, rough passages in Parliament over letter secrecy. He put loyalty to his political chiefs first, before loyalty to the public and even loyalty to his beloved postal organization.

Heinrich von Stephan died in 1897. The best tributes to him are the things that he created and left rendering service after he had gone. He was a vigorous and productive writer and his postal history is a classic. He founded and built up the world's finest postal museum. The whole German postal system is a living tribute to him. But his greatest monument is the world-wide organization that has put the Post at the service of mankind.

Taste of World Government

The world postal organization was at last a fact. According to the Berne treaty, its member States formed "a single postal territory". In 1876 the total population of that territory was 350 millions. Four years later it had more than doubled and by 1891 it was nearly 1,000 millions. To-day, in spite of wars and blocs, the UPU serves all mankind, some 2,200 million souls. (1900).

A full UPU Congress meets at not more than five-year intervals and draws up a new treaty bringing postal regulations up to date. After being ratified by the member governments, the treaty replaces its predecessors and is binding on all concerned.



Each member government has one vote in the Congress. Decisions are taken by a simple majority, but every effort is made to meet the views of the minority and reach general agreement. If some members cannot accept or carry out the majority decision in some matter, they are free to announce this and are then generally allowed to remain outside of that particular part of the new agreement. It is usually found that their difficulties have vanished after a year or two. But most decisions are in fact unanimous. As a Swiss observer says: "In the UPU voices are weighed rather than counted."

Although each member has only one vote, it may send several delegates to the meetings. The leader of the delegation is generally the chief of his postal administration and the other members are postal officers with an adviser or two from Foreign Office or Treasury. It is therefore largely

technicians who conduct the debates and arrive at the decisions. Cabinets have, to be sure, the final say. But it is difficult for them not to accept what experts of the whole world agree is desirable, and it is also difficult for them to give their own experts instructions to put politics before postal service during the debates.

Special conferences meet between the Congresses to deal with particular problems. Various smaller commissions also gather to make studies from time to time, and recently a permanent Executive and Liaison Commission has been appointed to be a connecting link between the full assemblies. All these bodies are composed of delegates from member administrations and although they have no power to make decisions, they do draw up proposals for decisions to be taken by the Congress. But there is one body that neither makes decisions nor proposals and yet plays a vitally important role. This is the International Bureau.

The International Bureau is the civil service of the World Post. Its home is a modest villa in a quiet street in Berne and it has a staff of less than twenty. As these lines are written a new home is being built for it, but even this is a modest affair and the Bureau does not expect a big increase in its personnel.

The Bureau is under the final direction of the Swiss Government, which appoints its chiefs, examines its accounts, and for the rest wisely gives it a free hand. The Bureau does a vast amount of work. It takes care of the accounting between member administrations and acts as a clearing house for their payments to each other. It does all the detailed technical preparation for the Congresses and conferences and runs the secretarial services during them. It receives proposals from members and passes them on, gathers regular statistical information from all parts of the organization and distributes it, publishes a monthly magazine and an annual series of world postal statistics. And it provides expert services when members ask for them. One important service is giving opinions when disputes arise. The careful and just verdict of the Bureau have settled many a controversial point. The International Bureau is in short one of those institutions that function so well that we never hear of them.



Let us see what two friends with a letter have gained through the UPU. In the previous chapter we saw how troublesome conditions were before 1874. The Berne treaty righted the worst of these troubles at a stroke. Rates came tumbling down, complications in calculating fees vanished. Before the treaty there were some 1,200 different rates for mail between the States joining in the Union. There is now a single rate for all surface mail. Transit fees have not been abolished but they have been greatly simplified and letter writers no longer pay them. Before 1874 there were heavy extra charges for ocean carriage, with complications in calculating them. These fees, too, letter writers have ceased to pay, and between Nations they remain merely as part of general transit charges.

There has as yet been no general agreement on air rates. A difficulty here is that most Nations subsidize their air lines for military reasons. In some countries, among them the United States, the subsidy is not paid outright but in the form of large payments to the air companies for carrying mail. When a government paying such disguised subsidies recoups itself by charging other countries heavily for transit air mail, it is in fact making them contribute to its defence forces. This is a joke that seems funnier to one party than to the other. In spite of these difficulties, air rates are growing less heavy and more uniform. Over most of Europe, as we have seen, there is no extra charge for air transport of letters, and the Scandinavians send 5-gram letters by their own air lines across the Atlantic for the ordinary surface fee.

Registered and special delivery letters, international reply coupons and postcards have been added to the world service. Money orders, parcel post, business samples, newspapers and other printed matter also flow smoothly across boundaries because of the UPU.

The growth of world mail services is illustrated by the number of letters members of the UPU report that they have sent abroad. In 1875 the total number was 144 millions, in 1913 it was 2,439 millions. The First World War now broke out, and in 1920, the first year of peace, the number was only 1,326 millions. In 1930 it reached its highest value, 3,256 millions or more than one for every man, woman and child in the world. It went down during the slump and had climbed to 2,726 by 1938. The Second World War now intervened. In 1946 the figure was only 1,227 millions. Since then it has risen again but not to anything like the figure for 1930. The fault does not lie with the UPU.

Members of the UPU are theoretically free to do as they like in their internal arrangements, but are not so free in practice. It is, for instance, scarcely possible for governments to make their citizens accept internal letter rates that are higher than the foreign rate, which is decided by the UPU Congress. Members giving poor or insecure domestic service are likely to face criticism in the UPU because that service also affects letters from abroad; indeed, certain standards are called for by the treaties. Membership in the UPU has thus tended to force the pace in States with backward postal service and keep it up to the mark in the rest.

By avoiding politics, the Union has in fact made a political contribution. Postal treaties and postal disputes used to be a source of friction. They are that no longer. The treaties come openly into being at the Congresses. They give equal rights to the weak and the strong. They are no longer counters for political bargaining nor do they enter into the system of alliances. Disputes between members are also taken out of the hands of the diplomats. The commonest disputes concern interpretations of rights and duties under the treaties and apportioning damages when mails are injured or lost. The disputing parties most frequently agree to ask the Bureau for its judgement and follow its recommendations. When they do not do this, the treaties oblige them to accept arbitration and abide by its

verdict. This, too, has occurred. In consequence, postal disputes no longer embitter international relations and are of so little headline interest that most of us do not know that they arise.

Are then postal services untouched by the political troubles that bedevil mankind? Not wholly. Two unsolved political problems of long standing are a part of the postal picture; and the present "cold war" has shown its ugly features in the UPU Congress.

By far the oldest of the political problems is violation of letter secrecy. The UPU treaties nowhere plainly lay down that letters crossing boundaries must be inviolate. Members no doubt realize that such a clause would not always be honoured. It is, as we have seen, foreign mail that particularly interests Black Cabinets and their later offshoots. The treaties do lay down that transit mail shall have liberty of passage, and spying might well be regarded as interference with this liberty. But although such interference probably occurs, members have avoided bringing up the question. As we know, governments use special couriers for their own despatches, which shows plainly enough how they regard each other's integrity.

The other vexed political problem is that of colonies and other non-self-governing territories. The colonial governments have ever since the founding of the UPU claimed separate membership and voting rights for their colonial postal administrations. Other governments have objected, since they say that these administrations are not independent and giving them votes merely means giving more votes to the government that controls them. The difference of opinion remains unsolved, but in practice there has been a compromise: groups of colonial territories are given a joint vote. Thus, for example, the United States island dependencies have together one vote, so do the Spanish colonies. As a result of this compromise, the UPU has more voting members than there are independent Nations in the world.

The chief "cold war" dispute has also concerned membership and votes. When the UPU was founded, new members could join simply by announcing their will to do so, agreeing to pay their share of the costs, and signing the treaties. But this was changed in the Congress held at Paris in 1947. An administration can now only be admitted by a two-thirds vote of all the members. Since in fact the whole world is in the UPU, this change may seem purely theoretical. But the question is in practice not what territory or people shall be admitted, but which administration shall speak for them. Thus the three Baltic States (or former States) applied for recognition as members but were refused. The majority voting against them argued that their peoples already do belong to the UPU, but that they are not independent and their administration is in fact that of the Soviet Union.

Similar conflicts have arisen in regard to China and certain other States. No delegates denied that China member of the UPU, but the majority voted to recognize the Nationalist (Formosa) Government as representing the Chinese and not the (Communist) Peking Government.

Since the Nationalists in fact administer postal services only on Formosa, a strict application of this decision would cut off postal links with the 500,000,000 Chinese on the mainland. However, letters continue to flow between China and the rest of the world through the Chinese Peking administration on the one hand and UPU administrations on the other. The effect of the Congress decision in practice is merely that Nationalist delegates sit in the Congress and sign treaties that regulate postal exchanges with a territory they do not administer.

There is no denying that the UPU has here landed in a peculiar situation. But it may be that this peculiarity points to something of importance for mankind. A political decision has been made barring a certain government, but a service continues to the people under its rule and continues perforce through co-operation with that very government. Regimes come and go, people remain. When the assembled governments of the United Nations in 1945 resolved that the Franco regime was unacceptable for membership and that other governments should break relations with it, the UPU machinery continued to function for the Spanish people.

Does not this mean that there are relations between peoples that go deeper than the relations between those that for the moment rule them, whether they be dictators or parliamentary - Cabinets? The UPU seems to be following the view that human beings in all Nations should be able to have personal contacts with each other even when official relations are bad or wholly broken. Surely this is both humane and sensible. In our shrunken world, there are many in every country who have dear ones in other countries, friends they love whatever the regimes under which they or their friends find themselves. Simple humanity demands that those who love each other should be allowed the solace of written exchanges when they are parted. And common sense tells us that such contacts are more likely to bring peoples together and their government to reason than walls of silence which only the shrill voice of a hateful propaganda can penetrate.

Nearly seven hundred years ago, a king of France guaranteed the safety of students from Flanders although he was at war with the ruler of that territory. The governments of present-day nations are less tolerant. To them the political battle is everything. But perhaps the quiet technicians of the UPU are a better guide to statesmanship?

The UPU Congress met within a year of the armistice that brought the First World War to an end. In a report on the proceedings made by a German delegate to his Parliament, we find the following words:

"The universal postal treaties have stood the test of fifty years, free of political clauses and free of clauses that bear on armed might. They have proved so effective and so irreplaceable in relations between peoples that they must now be regarded as an integral part of human civilization. It is because of these qualities that they have survived the War."

Since these words were spoken, the Universal Postal Union has survived a second and still more devastating war. And through it the world of to-day, unhappily divided by politically drawn frontiers bristling with guns, still remains a single postal territory.

(Courtesy : From Pillar to Post, Laurin Zilliaeus, 1956)

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INDE FRANCISE INDIA USED IN PONDICHERY

V.N.S. Rau

Spirit of adventure persuaded many Foreign aspirants to discover new territories and later establish their Governments there. In India Dutch, French, British and Portuguese established first their trading centres in parts of India and later on their Governments.

In Great Britain a private body of merchants whose aim was to carry on trade in India formed the EAST INDIA COMPANY who felt the need for a sheltered Harbour and after their attempt at Surat in 1609 and at Masulipatinam in 1611, their agent FRANCIS DAY at Pulicat (Palaverkadu) approached the Governor of the reigning Sovereign of the Vijayanagar Empire for a grant of a piece of land on lease near Mylapore in Madras Pattinam and Damarla Venkata known as the Lord of the Carnatic. The grant of a piece of land by way of lease situated between Cooum River and Egmore river for establishing a factory, was accorded on the 22nd August 1639 and later on was renewed in 1642 with the adjacent portion known as Chennapattinam for improving the 'Fort St. George' built by the East India Company.

By reason of this grant and later by force of events that followed this piece of property progressively became the British Capital in the South of India and in 1787 the Postal services began to function under the control of the British Indian Postal Administration.

Similarly French East India Company was formed in 1664 and their trading facilities were established at Chandranagore on the Hoogly, Mahe on the Malabar Coast and Masulipattinam, on the East Coast of India. In 1674 the Sultan of Bijapur sold to the French East India Company a village and the purchase was made by Mons. Francois Martin.

The French claimed ownership in some lands known as Loge's in India situated at Surat, Balasore, Cassembazar, Patna, Dacca, Masulipattinam and Calicut and these possessions unlike the other places held by the French had no post office but were solely dependant for postal services on the British Indian Post Offices established therein. It was in 1863 modern Pondicherry came into existence as a capital with an area of about 128 sq. miles, of the French possessions in India.

Indian Princes and Chieftens vied with each other and tried to gain supremacy with the help of the French and the British settlers. With the result the French settlement at

Pondicherry fell into the hands of the British from the leadership of Dupleiux and the British under Robert Clive had the upper hand between 1761-63, 1778-83, 1793-1809. Finally the British handed over to the French the territory of Pondicherry and other settlements like Karacal, Mahe, Yanam and Chandranagore.



The French Post Office at Pondicherry the capital of the French possession functioned from 1787 with 8 other post offices established between 1799-1904, Karacal another settlement with 7 post offices established between 1875 and 1905, Chandranagore with 3 post offices established between 1891 and 1909, Mahe and Yanam had a Sub Office established in 1876.

The French Postal Administration began to function from 1787 when the 'British India' counterpart stationed in the French territory carried on their Postal Services under the supervision of the Post Master General at Fort St George. The French Post Office appear to have established district post offices at Tanjore which was under the Rajah of Tanjore who held sway and the District Post Office ceased to function after 1859. Chandranagore as already stated was under the Bengal circle having been permitted to function simultaneously with the French counterpart including the sub office held by the French.

The French Post Offices were more concerned with the receipt and despatch of mails from and to France and Colonies. Other postal transactions like Money Orders and Savings Bank work were being conducted invariably by the post offices established by the British functioning in India within the Madras Postal Circle under

the Post Master General at Madras under whom all the French possessions were situated within the territory in South India excepting Chandranagore which was under the Post Master General, Bengal circle.

Prior to the release of the stamps for French India in November 1892 four types of stamps were issued in France commencing with the motif of the Eagle between 1859-65 and later the other three types two of which was laureated at the other empire with the words empire France in 1871 and 72 and the figure of Ceres big and small between 1871-76 with the words on top reading Republic Francisie. This was followed by yet another depiction of Ceres the words in larger type and finally followed by the peace and commerce variety between 1878-80 and all the above varieties are found imperforate and reprints of the above have also-been made of them in 1887. The shades differing in which there was no gum before the release of the stamps for use in French India in 1892 (perforated varieties) of the commerce issues (14x11½) and current between 1881 and 1886 with the words colonies posts with numerals.

The first issue stamps in French India was released in November 1892 with allegoric type known as Tablet types with colour changes. Later in respect of the other values surcharges were made in Dec. 1903 on five of the issues. This was again followed by another issue with the pictorial stamp design of "Brahma" and the "Temple" during 1914-22 and a surcharge of red-cross on the issue of Brahma type. During 1950-60 again 1923-29 surcharges of the Brahma Type were made in a new currency and in the surcharges double prints are also found.

Till its merger with the Indian Union as aforesaid the regular issue of French India issued in 1929 besides surcharges and new currency spate of issues came into existence prominent of them being the regular issue of 1924-29 being over printed heralding the free France movement (FRANCE LIBRE) with surcharge diagonally and in also two lines horizontally and in a very large Torment in the Souvenir sheets Diagonally besides normal inverted double and reverse surcharges are also found as was the case of the regular issues. The type of surcharges with Lorraine cross with the additional words 'FRANCE LIBRE' after the words France Libre.



Another interesting issue which had a short life and over printed on all the earlier issues of French India issued in the year 1929 had the words "FRANCE TOUJOURS" and "LORRAINE CROSS" in a circle mostly in red examples are found with the Lorraine cross being surcharged in reverse and also sideways. These stamps came very much later by way of second printing while the first printing was issued in February 1941.

The colours used in the matter of surcharges on the French stamps usually red or blue of different density. Sometimes the letters owing to the fluid conditions of the

ink were blurred. The later over prints mostly in Red Carmine and Vermillion at the stamp issues containing the cross of Lorraine, invariably was in fast red colour and larger over prints of the souvenir sheets were in ultramarine.

Other interesting issues in 1942 are the "Flower of Lotus" (Free French issues) and the "Divinity series" and commemoratives to mark important events on stamps such as international colonial exhibition in Paris, New York World Fair and others like the issue to make the 150th Anniversary of the French Revolution, Centenary of the Military Medal, Colonial welfare fund, Eboue, 10th Anniversary of the Liberation and the joining with the Universal Postal Union and others to mark the charitable usages and the Airmails some of which were printed abroad and which were in circulation also.

It is also interesting to note that an attempt was made for conveyance of mail by air between France and India and an inaugural flight took place between Paris and Pondicherry as back as on 10.1. 1930 and 4.2. 1930 which however did not materialise on the return trip. There are also interesting examples of letters which was conveyed during the times of war. While censorship was existing and this again is an additional feature for study of French Indian philately.



French India issued postage due stamps from its inception as also fiscal stamps like those modelled on the British issues not to speak of stationery items such as those prevailing in India with the French design printed and embossed and surcharge for use in the French territories and for transmission of mail to the other French possession in India and the colonies abroad.

Another interesting feature was the issue of modern proofs of French area including the colonies and French India. These modern proofs were made from the original Dies since 1956 made by hand press from the unhardened die on high grade thick paper. Trial colour plate proofs also appear to have been made about 1960. Colour plate proofs and die proofs also seen to exist not to speak of Deluxe sheets and compound Deluxe sheets since 1949 as also gummed and un-gummed imperforate and perforate sheets between 1949-59, consisting of those like between, vertical, horizontal and marginal copy, blank pairs and singles.

French India is no exception to have errors on stamps and special issues including imperforate, gutter pairs, deluxe sheets were also in existence. A study of

parallel issues circulating in Pondicherry both by the French and British Administration in India from the Pre - stamp period is a fascinating one. Interesting examples of hand stamps containing the words "Pondicherry Post paid" and Pondicherry "Post not paid" in oval and in rectangular design and strikes of an All India series of "Aid and Bearing" and cancellations over lithographs of India, East India the All India series and the stamps subsequently followed containing the Portrait of British Monarch upto George VI and after India attained independence and during the post independence period till Pondicherry administered by the French merge with the Indian Union are available for research. The further study of the various types of cancellation as was obtaining in the Indian Union were in Pondicherry situated in one of the circles of the British Administration namely the Madras Circle which had several head and branch post offices functioning will be worthwhile. The other types of cancellation as was prevalent in India consisted of a cancellation and the numeral 111 in two designs one within a circle and the other forming a Rhomboid with a characteristic words "C" consisting of 64 Rhombi. The duplex type of India from 1863 onwards having the words M-6, M-19, M-20 thereby meaning Madras Circle duplex and squared circle and other types.

There had however been an alround dissatisfaction of the inhabitants of the French Possessions of discrimination and unreasonable attitude of the rulers. The constant efforts of Sri. Ansari Dorai and Sri Purushothama Reddiar of the French India National Congress ; the Socialist group with stalwarts like Muthukumarappa 'Reddiar, Mons, Godubert of Pondicherry who represented as a deputy in the French Parliament at Paris (later known as E.G. Muthu Pillai) and Sri Muthu Mayor of Pondicherry. The inhabitants of French possession in India opted unanimously for the merger with the Indian union. The Defacto merger could be possible by the efforts of Mons. Mendes (France) and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru (India) and came into effect at 6.45 a.m. on 1.11.1954 with the signing of the Instrument of Transfer of power by Mons. Pierre Landy on behalf of France and Sri Kewal Singh for India. The tri colour flag was hoisted replacing the French flag thus ending the French rule in India.



Postal Administration of French India had however a very interesting existence during their reign along with the Indian Postal Administration as aforesaid with their own stamp issues and functioning simultaneously without any combination cover is an unique example of co-existence and international understanding.

(Courtesy : Signet, 1986)

FOUR KINGS ERA SAW PHILATELIC INNOVATIONS

David Alderfer and Larry Rosenblum

During the 172-year history of British stamps, six different monarchs have ruled Great Britain. This is important to collectors because Great Britain is the only country that is allowed by the Universal Postal Union to use a portrait of its monarch, rather than the country name, to identify its stamps.

Two queens have reigned for 121 of those years.

Queen Victoria was already on the throne when the first British stamp, the famous Penny Black, was issued in 1840. She ruled until her death in 1901.

The current monarch, Queen Elizabeth II, ascended the throne in 1952 upon the death of her father, King George VI, and has served for the last four decades.

During the 51 years between Victoria and Elizabeth II, four men served as British sovereign. They are collectively known to philatelists as the six kings.

Queen Victoria's eldest son became King Edward VII. He ruled until his death in 1910. He was succeeded by his only living son, King George V, who was a well-known stamp collector.

King Edward VIII followed his father to the throne in 1936, but chose to abdicate later that year to marry a commoner. His brother succeeded him to the throne as King George VI.

The 51 years of the Four Kings era were a turbulent period, including two World Wars and the Great Depression. Stamps evolved considerably over that time, moving from the classical to the modern era.

Two innovations occurred in the reign of Edward VII. The British Post Office began to look for more convenient ways of selling stamps, and introduced two new formats: coils and booklets.

Though there were initial trials as early as the 1880s, the first regular use of coin-operated stamp vending machines in Britain took place in 1906. By 1909, there were 13 machines installed in various locations in the country.

Figure 1 shows a 1-penny stamp that paid postage for an inland letter weighing up 4 ounces. Vending machines were initially loaded with horizontal strips of the 1d stamps torn from sheets, connected by the selvage at every 12th stamp. A knife cut each stamp as it was presented to the purchaser. After a year, vertical strips were used instead, and the knife was eliminated from the machine. The customer was presented with part of the stamp, which he had to pull to detach from the roll.



Fig 1

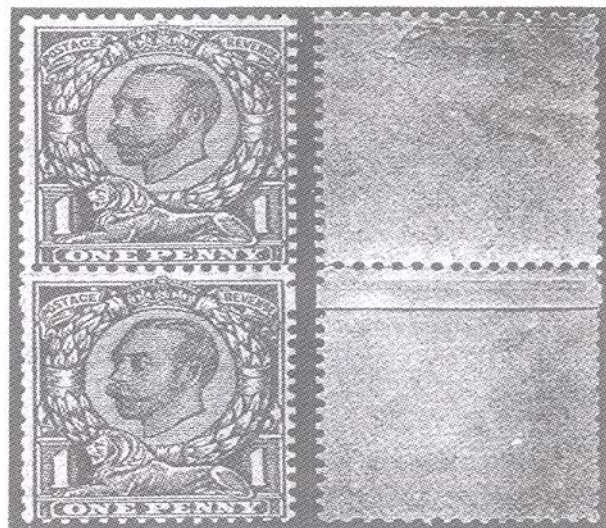


Figure 2. The join on the back of this pair of 1d stamps shows that they were produced in sheet format, cut from sheets into vertical strips, joined by affixing the end stamp of one strip to the selvage of the next, then issued as coils.

Because the stamps were torn from sheets, it is difficult today to identify machine-vended stamps with accuracy. The best way is to find a coil joint pair such as the one shown in Figure 2.

A coil joint pair consists of two stamps, one from each of two strips, that have been joined by affixing the selvage of one stamp to the back of the adjacent stamp.

Also in 1906, the BPO issued its first postage stamp booklet. It consisted of four panes of six 1d stamps, interleaved with plain greaseproof paper. The booklet had cardboard covers, with the front cover in a striking deep red. The booklet was held together with two staples.

The first booklet sold for 21- plus 54d. The half-penny above face value covered the production cost, but was very annoying to the public.

As a result, a few months later the price was reduced to an even 2/-, but the value of the stamps in the booklet was cut by a half-penny.

The new booklet had 18 1d stamps and five 2d stamps. The empty spot in the 1/2d pane was filled with a St. Andrew's Cross - a label showing a simple "X" with thick lines and round edges.

Booklets are convenient for postal clerks to sell, and give patrons a place to keep their stamps. Booklets similar to those of the Edwardian era remained in use until the 1970s, when they were placed with less costly styles.

Innovations in the reign of King George V had to do with the stamps themselves rather than the formats in which they were issued.

Britain's first commemoratives, or "special issues" as the British call them, were issued in 1924 to honor the British empire Exhibition.

Figure 3 shows the 1d stamps (Scott 185). A 1½d stamp of the same design also was issued (186).



Fig 3

The show was held at Wembley near London, and these stamps are commonly referred to as "Wembley's."

The exhibition lasted for two years, and the commemoratives were reissued in 1925, with that date in place of 1924 (203 – 04).

For the King George V high values, the BPO returned to the use of recess printing or engraving in 1913, after 43 years of surface-printed stamps.

The design for those high values, created by Sir Bertram Mackennal, is stunning. Britannia, carrying a shield decorated with a fancy St. Andrew's Cross, is driving a chariot drawn through the sea by three horses, symbolic of Britain's naval might.

These stamps are commonly referred to as the Seahorses. A used 2/6p value is shown in Figure 4.



Fig 4

The Seahorses were retained throughout the reign of King George V. There were several printings, which make the stamps especially interesting to collectors.

The third innovation during the George V era was the-introduction of photogravure as the method of printing low-value stamps. Harrison and Sons pioneered this process and introduced it in Great Britain in 1934.

In photogravure, a photograph is used as the basis of the design, replacing the many manual steps required to produce an image in other printing processes.

Photogravure allowed the stamps to be printed at higher speed and lower cost than the letterpress or typographic method used before. In addition, use of photography shortened the time from design to production.

Harrison and Sons, took a straightforward route and simply retained the existing designs for many of the new stamps. The two versions of the 2d stamp contrast markedly in Figure 5.



Fig 5

When King George V died in January 1936, and was succeeded by King Edward VIII, the use of photogravure allowed Harrison to produce new stamps in a relatively short time. Four new photogravure Edward VIII stamps were issued in September of that year (230-33).

The design of these definitive was a radical departure from the past. Gone was the elaborate ornamentation of earlier issues, and verbiage was limited to a single word.

Figure 6 shows the 1½D value - a simple profile of the king, the denomination, "POSTAGE" and a crown.



Fig 6

The abdication of Edward VIII in December 1936 brought these simplified designs to an abrupt end.

However, the concept was revived some 30 years later in the form of the even simpler Machin designs for definitive stamps picturing Queen Elizabeth II. The

The reign of King George VI encompassed World War II and the lengthy post war recovery period. There were no significant innovations, though the evolution of British stamps continued.

In 1949, for the first time British commemoratives recognized Britain's place as a member of the world community. The Olympic Games and the 75th anniversary of the Universal Postal Union were each honoured with a set of four stamps (271 - 74, 276 - 79). The 2½d Olympic stamp is shown in figure 7.



Fig 7

The innovations that took place over the reign of the four kings brought British stamps into the modern era. Booklets, coils, commemoratives and photogravure printing have proven their value over the years, and remain part of the current British postal program.

(Courtesy : Linn's Stamp News, 1992).

INDIAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE "A" Notes on the Campaign in France. 1914 - 15

Major T.L.C Tomkins

The first of the Indian Expeditionary Forces to leave India at the start of the-First World War was that designated as Force "A". This comprised two Divisions the 3rd (Lahore) Division which was composed of the Ferozepore Brigade, the Jullunder Brigade and the Sirhind Brigade; and the 7th (Meerut) Division, which included the Dehra Dun Brigade, the Garhwal Brigade and the Bareilly Brigade. These two divisions formed the Indian Corps.

In addition there was the Indian Cavalry Corps, composed of the 1st Indian Cavalry Division (Sialkot, Ambala and Lucknow Cavalry Brigades); the 2nd Indian

Cavalry Division (Mhow, Meerut and Secunderabad Cavalry Brigades), with the appropriate Indian Brigade Royal Horse Artillery Batteries, and various units of Sappers and Miners, etc. There were also the Jodhpur Lancers who acted as Cavalry Corps Troops.

Naturally, with all these troops, the Indian Field Post Office was well represented, and the personnel and equipment for setting up the necessary Base and Field Post Offices sailed with the main force from Bombay on August 24th, with Lt.-Col. H. H. Pilkington as Director, Postal Services.

At Suez, where the Force arrived on September 9th, the 9th (Sirhind) Brigade was temporarily detached from the Lahore Division, to strengthen the defences of the Canal until Forces " E " and " F " could arrive. (It arrived in France in December 1914.)

The Force reached Marseilles without incident on September 26th, and a Base Post Office was set up in the town itself, which took over from a British Field Post Office that had serviced the Indian troops for a short time after their arrival.

The main body of the Indian troops were accommodated outside the town in four camps, and at each of these, Field Post Offices, were opened.

In early October, the Base Post Office was moved nearer the Front, and was first of all located at Orleans; this served three Field Post Offices, and in addition, there were still sufficient troops at Marseilles to need two Field PO's remaining there.

Base Post Office moved again in the middle of November, this time to Rouen. For many - reasons, this town proved unsuitable for use as a Postal base, the main factor being the delay in receiving mails from the U.K. for distribution to the troops and the extra time spent, in forwarding it to the front line, where the Indian Corps had relieved the 2nd British Corps.

Against strenuous opposition from the British military authorities, Lt.-Col. Pilkington at last obtained permission from the Quartermaster-General, who at that time was General Sir William Robertson, to move his Base Office nearer to, and on a more direct route to the troops; for this purpose, the town of Boulogne was chosen and the Base Post Office was set up there in December 1914.

The result of this move was that all mail was delivered to the troops at the Front within twenty-four hours after leaving London, and this greatly contributed to the high morale of the Indian troops thereafter.

The system employed by the Indian Post Office for routing the mails was as follows: Base Post Office, as I have said was at Boulogne. From here the mails, after the first sorting, were dispatched to the terminus of the Railway Supply Train. This train had on board a travelling post office, jointly staffed by British and Indian personnel - they used, as a matter of interest, two cancellers as shown in Fig.5, marked at the foot; " T.I. 1 and T.I. 2 " - these were

both British type cancellers of the normal Field Post Office type with double circles of 26-16 mm. diameters, double killer arcs at sides, and the date in two lines with abbreviated year.

This travelling post office sorted the mails into those for the various brigades, and dropped them off at the nearest railhead to that brigade. From there the mails were taken by M/T to the brigade refilling points, where personnel from each Field Post Office collected his mails daily, at the same time taking to the point all outgoing mail for the return process to deal with.

All this, of course, meant that each brigade (or its equivalent) would have to have its own Field Post Office which would move with the brigade, and this was finally arranged, despite a certain amount of opposition from some of the Generals concerned (probably they were worried about the possible increase in transport).

At first, only normal letter mail was dealt with, but as the organisation proceeded to function more smoothly, newspapers were included, and these were sent forward the day of publication by special arrangement with the publishers, and in January 1915, registered mail was also being dealt with in all the Field Post Offices; a little later on Postal Orders were also added to the work of the Post Offices (British ones of course), and Indian Postal Orders were indented for, and arrived later.

One would think that the Field Post Offices would be situated in a relatively quiet spot so that the work of the mails could proceed as efficiently as possible, but this was usually far from being the case. In many instances, Field Post Offices came under heavy fire, especially round Poperinghe, Ypres and Bailleul, and there were frequent casualties. In spite of this the service carried on as usual, and indeed improved, as in May that year the Director laid on a service of Motors to take the mail from Base at Boulogne to H.Q. of both the Indian Corps and Indian Cavalry Corps, with the result that mail was being received at the Front only ten hours after dispatch from London - a service that would be pretty good to get these days at home!

The Indian Corps was engaged in heavy fighting for much of the year, but by the autumn, they were gradually withdrawn from the front line, and it soon became obvious that they would not be in France for the second winter of the war. This was decided on for two reasons; one was that, being used to a warm climate, the winter in France, in the cold and mud of the trenches, had played its part in reducing the effective strength of the Force almost as much as the efforts of the enemy.

The second reason was that the war in the Middle East was taking on a new importance, and to take advantage of our initiative in Mesopotamia, all the available troops that could operate in desert conditions were needed; hence the decision to transfer most of the Indian troops in France to that theatre.

One Division had already left by October, and by the end of the year nearly all the Indian troops had left for

the Middle East, all the Infantry, that is, as the Indian Cavalry Corps remained in France for the time being.

With regard to the cancellations employed by the Indian Post Office, the types shown in Figs. 1, 2 and 3 were all in use at the Base Post Office at one time or another. Fig. 1 was of 30-20 mm. diameters with BASE OFFICE round the top between the circles, the letter A over the date belt, and the date in one line. This was very similar to the Base cancellers in use in East Africa and Mesopotamia but those had their Force letters ("B" and "D") after the words BASE OFFICE.

Fig. 2 was of 32 mm. diameter, and was an adaptation of the normal Field Post Office canceller (as Fig. 6), but with BASE OFFICE at the top, and the letter D at the foot.

Fig. 3 was another double-circle type of 32-22 mm. diameters with BASE OFFICE at top, "F" at the foot, and killer arcs at the sides.

There was also in use a single-circle type as Fig. 4. This was of 25 mm. diameter with BASE OFFICE round the top and the letter "D" under it, the date being in one line across the middle. This has been seen on registered mail.

Raynor¹ reports a somewhat similar type with two bars below the words BASE OFFICE enclosing the word - "DELY", the blank space in front of the word being presumably for the insertion of the number of the delivery, but I am unable to illustrate this type as I have not seen it.

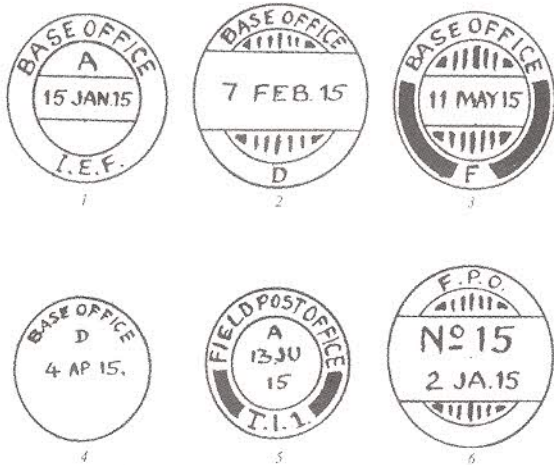


Fig. 5, the Travelling Post Office, has already been dealt with. Fig. 6 is, of course, the normal Indian Field Post Office type in use whenever the L.P.O. functioned. I append a list of all those I have seen which I have reason to believe from other evidence, were in use in France. Where they all were, or to which formations they were attached, has not always been possible to ascertain. Those that I am pretty sure about are mentioned. It is possible that later students may come up with further answers, as the study of Postal History never finishes, and there is never 'the Last Word'.

Type 6. Field Post Office

No.	3	Railhead 2nd Indian Cavalry Division.
	7	

8	
9	Lahore Division.
10	Brigade P.O., sometime at Bewry.
11	Brigade P.O.
12	
13	
14	
15	
16	Bareilly Brigade. Went to Alexandria in 1916.
17	
18	
19	In Buones in 1914-15.
20	Marseilles.
36	Sirhind Brigade, sometime in Gorfe and La Conteur.
37	Infantry Railhead P. 6., Lilliers.
38	
39	Boulogne. 2nd Indian Cavalry Division.
40	
41	
42	Railhead 1st Indian Cavalry Division. Albert

(Courtesy: Gibbons Stamp Monthly, 1965).

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