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Guest Editorial

A few disgruntled philatelists have managed to turn institutional philately in India like a tamasha, without realising where their activities are leading to. Their numbers are small but then it takes a few to hijack a plane.

They began with a lovely online philatelic weekly magazine. This has degenerated to hate mail online. They have not even spared colossus of Indian philately the late Mr. D. N. Jatia. They scuttled the democratic process during the PCI meeting in Mumbai in August 2002 and have got the ballot boxes into court where it gathers dust in legal battle. Next to harass the PCI appointed Commissioner they got the exhibits taken to Philakorea 2002 seized by Customs in Chennai. Who were harassed? It was the exhibitors who were at their wits end trying to get their exhibits back, which included youth philatelists. They managed to get DoP to withdraw support to INPEX 2002. Thus the 10th National Stamp Show was held without absolutely any support by the DoP.

What will all this lead to? Is there no way out? Institutional philately has taken a beating. Time again for every philatelist to think.

Colonel J Dutta

STAMP NEWS

KUSUMAGRAJ

14.03.2003 500 0.4 Million

Kusumagraj (1912-1999), whose real name was Vishnu Vaman Shirwadkar, was one among the leading figures of modern Marathi literature. He also made notable contributions to cinema and theatre.

Hailing from Pune, Shirwadkar published his first collection of poems, Jeevan-Lahiri, at the young age of twenty-one. After passing his B. A. with Marathi and English as the subjects he worked for sometime in the film industry.



Writing the script for Sati Sulochana and playing an important role in it, the cinema experience enriched his creativity. He, however, turned to journalism soon after and worked in different newspapers like Prabhat, Sarathi, Dhanurdhari and Navayug.

The publishing of Vishakha, a collection of his poetry in 1942, was a turning point in his life. The publisher was V.S. Khandekar, a literary giant of Maharashtra. The book made an instant impact with the readers and was also the starting point of a long association between the two literatures. Kusumagraj's important works include the novel Vaishnav and the plays Doorche Dive and Natasamrat.

A gifted orator, Kusumagraj associated himself with many literary, academic and socio-political movements. Organisations like the Lokahitwadi Mandal and Sarvajani Vachanalay of Nashik were fortunate to receive his patronage. He was an active presence in many Sahitya Sammelans and also a supporter of the Samyukta Maharashtra movement in the late 1950s.

Many awards and honours were conferred on him. These included the Ram Ganesh Gadkari Puraskar, the Sangeet Natak Academi Award, the Jnanapith Award and the Padma Bhushan.

Theme : Personality, Literature, Poets.

Our Second Sunday Meetings were held at the CPMG's Conference Hall, Anna Road, HPO, Chennai - 600 002. (10.30 - 12.30 pm) regularly where around 30 members attended with President Shri Balakrishna Das presiding. Ex-President Mr. D. Hema Chandra Rao spoke on "Lighthouses of India" on April 2003.

SANT EKNATH

23.03.2003

500

0.4 Million

India has a long tradition of saints and mystics who made rich contributions to the spiritual and social life of the country. This tradition has been responsible not just for bringing the light of awakening into the everyday life of the common people through the path of religion, but also in reforming the society from various decadent practices that have afflicted it from time to time. The role played by the great mystic poets of Maharashtra in this regard is particularly significant. Sant Eknath is one of the 'Great Quartet' of Vithoba's Poets, which included Jnanadev, Namdeo and Tukaram besides himself.



Signs of genius were evident in Eknath even as a young boy. He is believed to have mastered the ancient scriptures by the time he was eight. It is said that he went through a mystical experience one day while in meditation, which made him travel a great distance on foot in the dead of night, to Janardhan Swamy of Devgad. Swamiji was quick to see the spiritual aura surrounding the boy and accepted him as a disciple. At

the behest of his Guru, Eknath undertook a pilgrimage to different holy places and finally returned to his native village, Paithan.

Eknath undertook composing of various texts on spiritual and ethical subjects. These included Eknathi Bhagwat and Bhavartha Ramayana. Like the other great mystics of Maharashtra there was a strong under current of social reform in his writings. He disregarded untouchability and opposed discrimination of all kinds. Despite being ostracised by the professional priests for questioning the orthodoxy, people from all creeds flocked to him for Bhajans and Kirtans. He taught the common people that even in the middle of everyday pressures of life one can attain closeness to God.

Eknath was a prolific poet who wrote in many genres. One among his important works is a carefully researched edition of the Jnaneshwari.

Eknath is believed to have attained oneness with God in the year 1598.

Theme : Personality, Saints, Poets.

FRANK ANTHONY

28.03.2003

500

0.4 Million

Frank Anthony (1908-1993) was one of the founding members of the constituent Assembly, a parliamentarian of long experience, an accomplished jurist, an educationist and a philanthropist.

Hailing from Jabalpur, he was brilliant as a student. After studying in the Nagpur University, he pursued higher studies in the United Kingdom and was called to the Bar from the Inner Temple. He started practice as a lawyer in Nagpur and soon became a legal luminary in the then Central Provinces.



Making his debut in the Central Legislative Assembly in 1942, he went on to have a long parliamentary career. He became a member of the Constituent Assembly in 1946 and the provisional Parliament in 1950. Starting from the first Lok Sabha in 1952, he was continuously a Nominated Member representing the Anglo-Indian community in that House, ex

cept for a brief period, till he passed away in 1993. Also, he remained a member of the National Defence Council from 1964 till his death and a member of the National Integration Council since its inception in 1961.

Frank Anthony was closely associated with several social, cultural and educational institutions in various capacities. School education was a passion with him and as the Chairman of the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations, he left a deep impression. He also set up three schools in Delhi, Calcutta and Bangalore respectively, which have been working very satisfactorily. He is remembered also for his committed work for the welfare and upliftment of the Anglo-Indian community.

Theme : Personality, Education.

KAKAJI MAHARAJ

30.03.2003

500

0.5 Million

Kakaji Maharaj (1918-1986), as P.P. Dadukaka is affectionately called, is revered by his followers as a spiritual master. He was an original thinker, philosopher and organizer par excellence who belonged to the Swaminarayan faith.



Hailing from Karamsad in Gujarat, his education was spread over Nadiad, Nairobi, Colombo and London. Though he started life as an entrepreneur and was successful in handling a large business house, devotional matters were always foremost in his mind. Having received Enlightenment in 1952, he spent the remaining part of his life in the service of God and Satsangies (devotees).

Kakaji Maharaj was one of the spiritual successors of Yogiji Maharaj, master of the Aksharapurushottam doctrine. One among the important contributions of Kakaji Maharaj was in the matter of Women's emancipation. He broke traditions to initiate a women's movement within the Swaminarayan faith, thus bringing them into the forefront of spiritual activity.

The spiritual path shown by Kakaji Maharaj included techniques to overcome Maya, transcend Prakriti (Inner crudeness), attune oneself with God, allow Brahmik energy to flow through oneself and tap the inexhaustible source of divine power to resolve everyday challenges. He wrote several books and articles on spirituality and tantra, the distinguishing feature of many of them having been his own personal experience. Reaching beyond rituals and metaphysical powers, he demystified spirituality for his followers. He left an enduring organisation in the form of Yogi Divine Society, which strives to train aspiring spiritual technicians and to awaken the divine consciousness in them. His lasting message was one of Suhrad Bhav-spiritual brotherhood.

Theme : Personality, Saints.

MEDICINAL PLANTS OF INDIA

7.04.2003

500, 500, 500, 500

0.75 Million

Mixed Sheettets

Underlying the medical culture of India - both folk traditions as well as codified knowledge systems - is a deep understanding of the medicinal value of plants.

It is estimated that about 80,000 species of plants are utilized by the different systems of Indian medicine. The indigenous knowledge about plants and plant products is rather detailed and sophisticated, and has evolved into a separate



shastra (branch of learning) itself, called Dravya Guna Shastra. Plants have been studied on the basis of clearly defined biological parameters like rasa (taste), vipaka (metabolic property), guna (quality), prabhava (biological effect) and virya (potency). The codified traditions have about 25,000 plant drug formulations that have emerged from such studies. In addition to this, over 50,000 formulations are believed to be existing in the

folk and tribal traditions. All these point to the deep passion for and exhaustive knowledge about medicinal plants that have existed in this land from time immemorial.

The stamps featuring in this set are on Guggulu (*Commiphora wightii*), Brahmi (*Bacopa monnieri*), Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*) and Amla (*Embolia officinallis*).

Guggulu is an armed shrub or small tree found in the arid and semi-arid zones of India, particularly Rajasthan. The oleo gum resin from its stem constitutes an important therapeutic agent used in the treatment of various categories of ailments like neurological conditions, leprosy, skin diseases, heart ailments, cerebro-vascular diseases and hypertension. Brahmi is a herb that spreads on ground, having fleshy stems and leaves. It is found in moist or wet places in all parts of India. Brahmi is useful for treating the diseases of the brain and to improve memory power. Brahmi formulations are prescribed in rheumatism, mental disorders, constipation and bronchitis. It is also a diuretic. Ashwagandha is a small or medium sized shrub found in the drier parts of India. It is a nervine tonic, anabolic and aphrodisiac. It is used also to treat general weakness and rheumatism. Amla is a medium sized deciduous tree found throughout India. It yields a globose pale yellow fruit known for its varied medicinal properties. It is regarded as an astringent, digestive, carminative, laxative, antipyretic and tonic. It is prescribed in colics, jaundice, hemorrhages, flatulence and many other disorders.

Theme : Plants Medicinal plants, Medicine health.

BADE GHULAM ALI KHAN

An unquestioned genius, Bade Ghulam Ali Khan (1902-1968) was one of the greatest vocalists of the 20th century. He left an indelible imprint on Indian music, particularly the Patiala gharana.

Bade Ghulam Ali Khan received his initial musical training in the family itself, his father Ali Baksh Khan of Kasur, now in Pakistan, having been a reputed Dilruba player and his uncle, Kale Khan, an illustrious musician of the Patiala gharana. Though he made his debut in 1939 at the All India Music Conference held in Calcutta, his first public concert in Bombay three-four years later proved to be the big break in his career. He literally took the country by storm and went ahead to endear himself to music lovers in different corners of the sub-continent. In 1958, he shifted from Lahore to settle in Bombay.

Though essentially an exponent of khayal 'gayaki', he also sang bhajans and thumris with equal perfection. Thus he created the Surmandal which was integral to his music.

Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan composed over a hun-

dred khayals and thumris. He also composed their music and popularized them by singing them in various conferences, as well as by recording them. A complete mastery over the sargams was yet another aspect of his rare genius.

Khan Sahib was a man at peace with himself. He was warm, witty and wise, and those who had the privilege of knowing him could never forget his wonderful smile.

Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan was elected Fellow of Sangeet Natak Academy and was honoured by the President of India with the title of 'Padma Bhushan'. Vishwa Bharati University conferred the title of 'Doctor of Literature' on him.

The stamp portrays Khan Sahib in concert, with Surmandal in hand. The design of the First Day Cover with a picture of Kamran's baradari brings back memories of the days when he used to do riyaz on the banks of river Raavi.

Theme : Personality, Music, Musicians.



The Great India Find

Kamol Banerjee.

Stamp-collecting has been my hobby since my school days. I cannot now recall how I first embarked upon it; most boys collect postage stamps at one time or another, and as they grow older and acquire other interests, many of them abandon the hobby. My enthusiasm, however, survived my school-days; it is in any case, of little importance now, but I do recall that it was in my tenth year and, so far as quantity and colour were concerned, I led most of my school fellows! Stamps were a source of entertainment to me and whenever I was in trouble with my teacher or my parents, they were a solace too.

I made a mistake which I believe almost all beginners make-there was no set purpose behind my collection. I collected whatsoever I could lay my hands on. The result was that my collection grew haphazardly; it was a jumble of kings, queens, animals, ships, flowers, celebrities, sports and a formidable array of pictorials, which could hardly justify the title of stamp-collection. Such is, however, the way of the beginner in this hobby and every stamp collector has passed through the phase at one time or another.

But as my collection grew in this confused manner, my mind began to mature. I began to realize the educative value of stamps; I began to perceive that stamps had money in them, and that to get money out of this piece of paper, required an organised collection built up to certain standards. It was then that I started to study my stamps. What a herculean task that was! There is no ready-made guide; such information as is available is incomplete and, therefore, unsatisfactory. I turned by wholehearted attention, therefore, to the study of my own country's stamps. The trouble was that I had not the means to acquire good specimens. There was only one way, and that was to start a diligent hunt for them.

How true it is that the Goddess of Laxmi is an elusive deity-the harder you seek her, the more elusive she is. I gave up hope of lighting upon a wonderful find of rare stamps, and continued drearily in my dull and prosaic walk of life.

Berhampore is my home town in Murshidabad District of West Bengal. Murshidabad was the last capital of Subah Bengal, and there it was that the rise of Christian Power in

India had its origin. More; it was the graveyard of the Moguls, for, it was at the battle-field of Plassey near that old city, in the year 1757, that Col. Robert Clive, with a handful of British soldiers, routed Nawab Siraj-ud-dowlah and established the British Raj in India. During the Subahdary many families of Zamindars settled in this district. Some of the decedents of those Zamindars, with their historical antecedents and traditions, still thrive in the Murshidabad District. And one such old family is the House of Cossimbazar.

HALF ANNA DIE I, "B" STONE



42-91, a fine block of fourteen.

idea of the importance of the estate and its records. Amongst the latter was correspondence with the then Government, the various noble houses of the time, private institutions and scores of other individuals, offices, relatives, friends, and admirers. Its record room was therefore a store-house of precious Indian postage stamps, kept intact on original covers, and carefully preserved during the passage of time. It was indeed the very abode of the Goddess of Laxmi, and it was there that I was led, one day in July 1951, by a sheer stroke of good fortune.

I visited my grocer's shop one evening to purchase a packet of sugar. Having made my purchase, I was chatting to him when suddenly I noticed the packet in my hand. It was a big brown envelope with a pair of India 1854, half anna, and a strip of six of One Anna, postally used. I could hear my own heart-beats and I had to make a supreme effort to control my emotion. It would never do to show immediate interest or to ask pertinent questions; this would have aroused suspicion. "You seem to be using up your old correspondence or your family's records", I joked; "just look at this shabby envelope you have used as a packet!" "My family's records?" He replied. "We have none. That envelope, as a matter of fact, is one from two bags of old papers that I purchased this very afternoon from a vendor".

"How interesting! What did you pay?"

"Two rupees, but I doubt if I made a good bargain. I had some difficulty, for example, in finding a suitable envelope to hold your one pound sugar!"

The Cossimbazar family is renowned throughout India for munificence and philanthropy. The Cossimbazar Raj was inaugurated by Diwan Krishna Kunta Nundy, a favourite of Lord Warren Hastings, one of the builders of the Indian Empire for the British. Dewan Kunta obtained the title of Maharaja Bahadur. After his death his son, Raja Krishna Nath Roy Bahadur, succeeded to the 'gadi'. He committed suicide and his wife, Maharani Swarnamoyee became the owner of the vast Cossimbazar Raj property. Maharani Swarnamoyee, in recognition of her great charities, was made a member of the Imperial Order of the Crown of India by the British Government, and was one of the first Indian ladies to hold that coveted distinction. She ruled Cossimbazar Raj from 1844 to 1897, and after her death her nephew, Maharaja Sir Manindra Chandra, became the proprietor of the Cossimbazar Estate.

The reader will, I trust, pardon this incursion into the historical background of the Cossimbazar Estate; it is relevant only in that it conveys some

"That is probably because, in the old days, the envelopes they used were of very small size. Why not let me have them? I am a journalist, you know, and possibly I may find a subject for an article amongst these old records. I'll give you Rs. 20 - for the the two bags". There

and then the deal was settled. I learnt from the grocer that cartloads of old papers and records had been removed from the record room of the Cossimbazar Estate and sold to some upcountry men who, it was believed, were arranging to despatch them to a paper mill in Calcutta for conversion into pulp. That day was 22nd of July 1951.

How I dashed to Cossimbazar in search of the upcountry men, how ultimately I traced their whereabouts and how I managed to persuade them to sell their wares to me would take too long to describe. Let it suffice that I obtained thirty-six bags, each weighing a Bengal Maund of 82 lbs. at a

ONE ANNA DIE I, "A" STONE



17-44, another fine block of sixteen.

rate of Rs. 20/- per bag. I believed the party concerned paid originally Rs. 7/- per bag! Alas, more than four times that quantity had already been despatched to Calcutta; it was a sore blow to think that priceless treasure must have been reduced to worthless pulp.

I returned home late that night with a cartload of sacks containing what might well turn out to be a treasure trove! I was so excited that I hardly dared to open them. I tried to sleep but I could not, and yet I dared not open the bags. I was certain, and not yet certain, that here was my dream come true.

It took me four months to sort out my great INDIA find. And what a stupendous find it was! Blocks and blocks of Indian Lithographs--half, one, and two annas, all on original covers; hundreds of singles and pairs; thousands of Early East India, singles, strips and blocks with their patterns of early postal cancellations--and all on original envelopes with full postal history imprinted on them. How cruelly crushed and mangled were a few covers and how bedraggled and creased they looked. On the whole, however, thanks to the methodical filing practised by the Estate management, the state of preservation of the bulk of the documents was excellent.

ONE ANNA DIE I, "A" STONE



77-96, a wonderful block of twelve

S. S. BASAN

PART I

Having completed my task, I counted my lithographed stamps-the total reached more than 2500, and there was an additional lot of about 500, which were torn or otherwise damaged by human agency or the ravages of time.

I was absolutely amazed. What must be the value of my wonderful find? No catalogue could compute it. I decided to contact a stamp-dealer in Bombay and I sent him a few covers as a "ballon d'essai". He offered me a fair sum and suggested that the whole collection was likely to be very valuable. Thereafter, I invited my friend, Mr. D. C. Dutt of Calcutta to come and inspect my purchase.

Dutt came, saw, and was wonderstruck. He selected a few covers and suggested that he auction them in Calcutta where there were many specialists of India 1854. To this I agreed. And so the sensational Calcutta auction of 1951 was advertised. Before the auction sale, a certain foreigner offered to purchase the entire lot by private treaty. My friend, however, was loth to cancel such a widely advertised auction sale, and this ultimately took place on the 30th and 31st of December 1951. I was present to witness the exciting scene.

On January 1, 1952, a front page report was published in the Statesman of Calcutta under the caption "Valuable Stamps Redeemed from Waste Paper". The report, inter alia, stated: "At what was perhaps one of the most interesting stamp auctions ever held in Calcutta, a collection of over 600 India 1854 stamps in 128 lots came under the hammer and were sold for over Rs. 20,000/-". A Bombay stamp-deler published a graphic account of my find; Mr. Kung's comment in the Bombay Chronicle made equally interesting reading.

I met the Maharaj of Cossimbazar after the auction; he informed me that he had ordered the wholesale destruction of those old records, but was pleased to learn that there was money in old stamps.

I tried thereafter to learn more about the Indian Lithographs, but lacked expert tuition on that complicated subject. Later it came to light that some of the One Anna 'A' Stone, sold at the auction as ordinary stamps of that nomenclature, turned out to be the far more valuable 'Substituted Transfers', and I learnt that a noted philatelist of Bombay had acquired, quite by chance, a fair number of those stamps.

It was indeed thrilling to read the subsequent accounts of my Substituted Transfers, and how dilligently they were studied by Indian specialists, who were thus able to advance the dormant history of that fascinating subject. I noted with great satisfaction that the Bombay philatelist who acquired quite a large quantity of my India 1854 has since been recipient of certain coveted awards in International Stamp Exhibitions.

My East India covers were sold to various parties and the same Bombay philatelist won a gold medal with his "Cancellation" collection, which, he admitted, was exclusively due to his acquisitions from my stock.

This stupendous find made an everlasting impression on my mind; it will always remain as a most memorable event in my life. Heaven known what other similar valuable stores may be lying hidden somewhere in the vast continent of India. I feel-and with conviction - that many more old stamps will be reclaimed from oblivion in times to come.

(Courtesy : Philatelic Journal of India 1957).



India was mainly an agrarian country. Never tried seriously to explore the sea except few kings of the Southern India who sent people to Sumatra, Java, Indonesia, Vietnam, Laos etc., through sea. Like European countries, it never tried to explore the other seas in order to find new countries for trade purposes. India was rich in all spheres and never felt shortages. European navigators, explorers were sent by their kings to explore other countries including India. Once the globe was almost discovered except the southern continent, Antarctica, the explorers diverted their energies to explore it and by the year 1940, most of the continent was geographically explored. The adventure was over. Many European countries after WW II started sending expeditions to Antarctica for scientific studies. Indians also got interested in scientific studies and went as scientists to other advanced countries scientific stations as Guest Scientists. Late Indira Gandhi, our Prime Minister is responsible for sending scientific expeditions to Antarctica.

We can say that Indian story starts with Lt. H. R. Bowers, a British Officer of the Royal Indian Navy during the reign of England in India, who was chosen to accompany Captain Robert Falcon Scott in his 1911-12 ill fated expedition to Antarctica. He was also one of the five members who reached the South Pole on January 17, 1912 and later on died while returning back, along with other members.

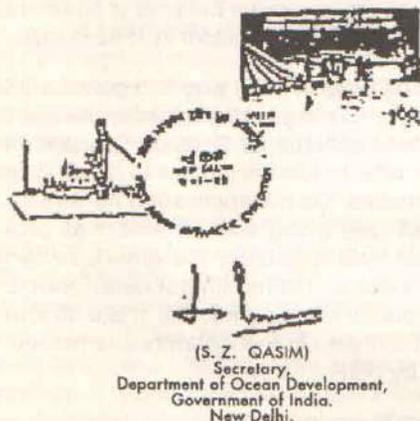
Indians who went individually to Antartica after they got independence in 1947, and before the government started sending expeditions are :-

1. Lt. Ram Charan, a meteorologist of the Indian Navy was the first to set foot on Antarctica in December 1960 as a member of the Australian Naval Expedition to South Pole. Very little is known of his studies there. Though he could survive the cold of southern region, he died of a scooter accident in 1962 in India.
2. Next is Dr. Giriraj Singh Sirohi, who had gone to US on a scholarship. During his scholarship he read an advertisement of National Science Foundation regarding their offer to send scientists to South Pole for scientific studies. On his application he was selected and was sent along with an American professor to South Pole. Unluckily the American had to be brought back as his health got deteriorated. Dr. Sirohi completed his experiments. It is a honour for Indian that a region in the Antarctica is named "Sirohi Point" by NSF.
3. H. R. Vora went there in 1963.
4. Dr. Paramjit Singh Sehra went to Antarctica, Australian station in Enderby Land in 1971 for scientific studies.
5. Next person to go for a pleasure trip was Mehr Moos, an "Air India" air hostess in 1971.
6. Dr. V. K. Dhargalkar, Biologist of National Institute of Oceanography, Goa, went and conducted some experiemnts on seaweeds of the Vestfold Hills, Davis station, Antarctica in 1984. This was after India started sending official expeditions.

FIRST INDIAN EXPEDITION

This expedition was headed by Dr. S. Z. Qasim, who was the head of National Institute of Oceanography, Dona Paula, Goa before becoming secretary of Department of Environment and later on Department of Ocean Development set up in July 1981. This expedition consisted of 21 members. It's main job was to explore geological and geophysical secrets and also to understand the effects of Antarctica ice pack on the weather of India. India being a country heavily dependant on its annual rainfall for food production, it could learn a deeper understanding of how the Antarctic factor influences the monsoons.

Scientists were selected from Geological Survey of India, National Institute of Oceanography, the Indian Institute of Magnetism and Meteorological Department. All the members were around 30 years except the leader who was around 50 years old. The team sailed on December 6, 1981 from Panaji, Goa. A Japanese ice breaker most probably "Fuji", helped "POLAR CIRCLE" on which the expedition sailed, to navigate through the ice to the base site. The base is located at a point (70° 05 S, 12° 00E) on about a line direct from India to Antarctica, reached on 9th January 1982 at 12.30 A.M. Earlier while sailing to Antarctica, the team had a stoppage at Port Louis, Mauritius. It set up temporary tents and remained there for ten days. They christened that place as Dakshin Gangotri (Southern Gangotri). Gangotri is the place in Himalayas in India from where the Ganges river (which is considered sacred in India) emerges. The members paid a courtesy call to the nearby Soviet station, Novolazarevskaya. There is hardly any covers available to collectors of the expedition. Only the letters written by the expedition members posted either at Goa, Port Louis, Mauritius can be considered as expedition covers. The "POLAR CIRCLE" ship captain is said to have issued few covers to the members at Port Louis out of roughly 100 covers with ship's name printed on it on front and numbered on the back. The others, he had either posted or sold to the collectors. It is really difficult to get these covers. If someone finds other covers, more chances are that these are fake.

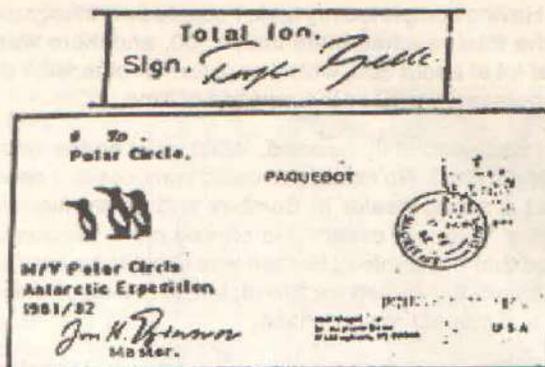


A FDC stamp with issued to commemorate the landing of first Indian Expedition, after a year and autographed by Dr. S. Z. Qasim, leader of the expedition who was Secretary of Department of Ocean Development.

The first Indian Antarctic Expedition (1981-82) cover, Paquebot cancelled en route home at Port Louis, Mauritius, 11 February 1982 and it clearly shows "POLAR CIRCLE", A Norwegian vessel engaged for the expedition. This cover has numerical annotation on the reverse and clearly shows that 100 were issued and are autographed by Captain (Master) of the ship.

SECOND INDIAN EXPEDITION

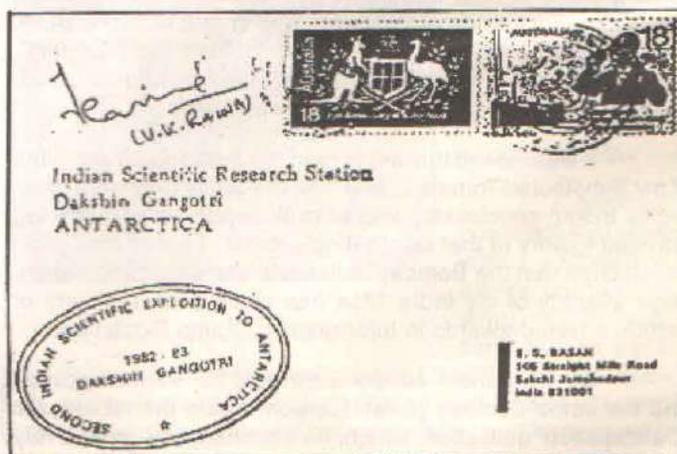
Leader Dr. V. K. Raina, 46 years old, was Director of Geological Survey of India. This team had 11 scientists, 3 doc-



Courtesy : Dr. HAL VOGEL

tors, 5 helicopter pilots. Team members were selected from 12 government departments such as National Physical Laboratory, National Geophysical Research Institute, National Institute of Oceanography, Indian Meteorological Department etc. Two prefabricated structures were erected for staying for conducting experiments. This team did exploration work to assess mineral and oil potentials along with upper atmosphere studies. It also tried to assess the theory of Gondwanaland Super Continent, that once India and Antarctica were joined together. The team also collected data from the Meteorological station set up by the first expedition. Supplies were dropped from an Argentinian Hercules C 130 aircraft jointly flown by Indian and Argentinian pilots as the plane could not land on the airstrip prepared by this expedition. US Coast guard "POLAR STAR" paid them a courtesy call.

The team had sailed in "POLAR CIRCLE" from Mormugao port, Goa, had a stoppage at Port Louis, Mauritius like the first expedition. While returning also the the expedition had a halt at Port Louis. Covers are also rare. Only few collectors had the knowledge regarding the expedition. Covers were taken along to Antarctica? Few of the covers are found post marked at Port Louis, Mauritius. Indian collectors covers were posted from Lucknow, the home town of the leader in UP province after his coming back from Antarctica.



These have oval rubber stamp cachet of Second Indian Scientific Expedition Antarctica in violet colour ink. Another is a three line rubber stamp cachet, also, in violet ink as "Indian Scientific Research Station,

Dakshin Gangotri,
Antarctica"

Many of the covers are autographed by the leader. There are also some covers seen with the autographs of the whole team of 28 members.



Courtesy : Rolf Helbig

A cover of Second Indian Antarctic Expedition (1982-83), which is autographed by the team members. The postmark on the stamps is not very clear but some of the covers which I had received have postmark of Lucknow and posted after arrival of the expedition on 17-5-83, by the leader, Dr. V. K. Raina.

THIRD INDIAN EXPEDITION

The 82 members expedition headed by Dr. H. K. Gupta of "Centre for Earth Science Studies", Trivandrum, sailed on 3rd December 1983 in "FINNPOLARIS", commanded by Capt. Lasse Kulji. This expedition had two lady scientists for the first time. Dr. Aditi Pant, a marine biologist of National Institute of Oceanography and Dr. Sudipta Sengupta, Geologist of Jadavpur University were amongst the 15 scientists selected for the scientific studies. They conducted experiments in meteorology, geology, geophysics, oceanography, glaciology and microbiology. Dr. S. G. Prabhu Matondkar was also included who had been with the earlier two expeditions.

The permanent two storey research station named "DAKSHIN GANGOTRI" was set up in record time of 29 days by Army team and handed over to Lt. Col. S. S. Sharma, leader of the first winter over team, on 24th February 1984.

Dr. Sudipta Sengupta, geologist of Jadavpur University with other geologist mapped Schirmacher Hills later on christened as Dakshin Gangotri Hills. The mineralised zones of the mountains showed the occurrence of copper, zinc, and lead and also have a similarity to mountains of Singhbhum district of Bihar state of India. (Jamshedpur city where I am staying is in this district).

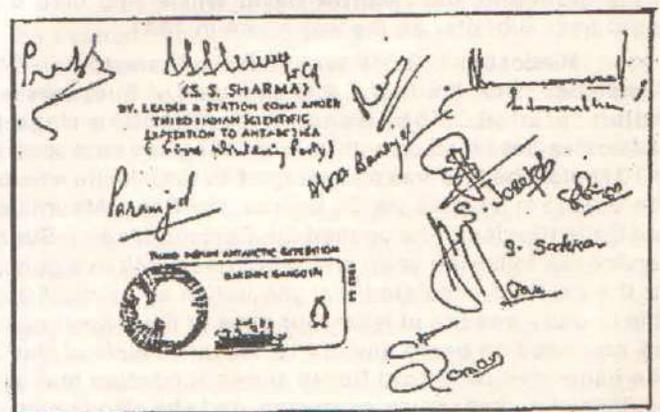
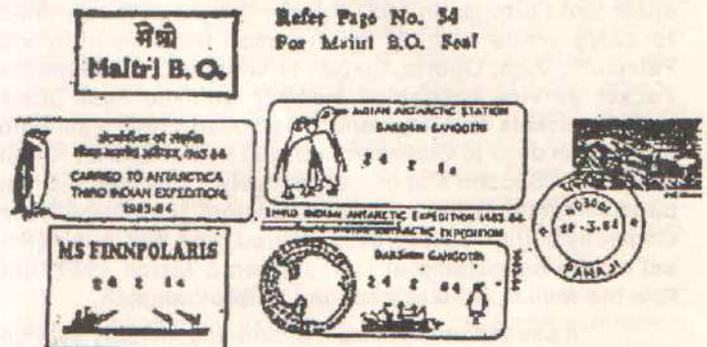
The first satellite communication terminal was installed at the base camp. On the third day of arrival of the expedition, an Indian Air Force helicopter, MI-8 crashed within 100 metres from the ship FINNPOLARIS into the icy sea water and sank but all the three pilots broke open the glass and climbed out. One member had to be saved by mouth resuscitation.

Two East German scientists from the nearby German station Georg Forster paid a visit to their camp. The covers from this expedition have the following post marks and cachets:

- Round post mark of Panaji. Goa dated 29.3.84, the day expedition came back.
- Some letters were posted at Port Louis, Mauritius, while going to and from Antarctica.
- Rubber stamp in violet colour cachet with wordings "Indian Antarctic Station, Dakshin Gangotri" 24.2.84.

Third Indian Antarctic Expedition 1983-84. The cachet is a box type and it has two penguins at the left side.

- Another cachet box type in violet colour, a penguin, a ship and wordings Third Indian Scientific Expedition, Dakshin Gangotri. 1983-84".
- Another cachet impressed in post office with black ink at Panaji in English and Hindi. "Carried to Antarctica. Third Indian Expedition. 1983-84.
- Ship box type cachet in blue ink. M S FINNPOLARIS 24.2.84 with a design of ship.
- Autographs of leader (H.K. Gupta), lady scientists Ms. Aditi Pant and Dr. Sudipta Sengupta.
- Also with "Posted on ship".



There are covers with the autographs of the whole team of the first winter-over team to be continued.

(Courtesy : Jambex 1991 Souvenir.)



150 Years of the P & O

BARBARA LAST

The world famous Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Company that celebrated its 150th anniversary in the year 1977 developed from the 1822 shipping partnership of Wilcox and Anderson who operated small sailing vessels between Britain and the Iberian Peninsula. During the rebellions in Portugal and Spain in the 1830s the partners supported the Royalists, and chartered Captain Bourne's small steamships to run guns and troops. After the collapse of the revolts both Royal Houses encouraged the company to inaugurate a regular steamer service to the Peninsula.

Captain Bourne joined the partners, and the newly titled Peninsular Steam Navigation Co. ran regularly to the Peninsula, flying the quartered flag of the royal colours of Spain and Portugal. In 1837 the company won the contract to carry mails weekly by steamer from London via Falmouth, Vigo, Oporto, Lisbon to Gibraltar, this Gibraltar Packet Service connected monthly with the Post Office sailing packets to Alexandria. The voyage from Falmouth took seven days to Gibraltar, and cost £16 or £10 for "Chief Cabin" or "Second Cabin" respectively. The tiny 206 ton paddlesteamer William Fawcett, (Comoro 1984 SG542) the Company's first vessel was chartered, and this is the vessel on the handstamp at Falmouth on 3 March 1837, before the home port was changed to Southampton.

A second mail contract provided a monthly service from the U.K. to Alexandria, one of the terms being that the route should extend to India within two years. The Company reformed and was incorporated by Royal Charter on 1 December 1840 as the Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co., immediately becoming known as the P & O Line. The brand new 1,787 ton wooden paddle steamer United States, chartered and later bought by the P & O, was renamed Oriental in honour of the addition to the Company name. She opened the direct London - Alexandria service, and arrived at the latter during a full-scale war between Egypt and the Ottoman Empire. Although a naval force of the Great Powers was bombarding Alexandria Captain Engled negotiated a safe passage for this passengers and mail. Oriental was later lengthened and used on the Suez-Calcutta service. She can be seen on Turner's *Burial at Sea* (GB 1975 SG971) which the artist painted as a tribute to his old friend and rival Sir David Wilkie who died on board near Gibraltar on the way home in 1841.

Hindustan I, 2,018 tons, left Southampton on 14 September 1842, the first P & O ship east of Suez for the Indian station. The wooden barquentine-rigged paddlesteamer relied on both sails and engines for a speed of 10 knots. The fare was on average £40 to Calcutta where she arrived in 91 days via St. Helena, the Cape, Mauritius and Galle (Ceylon). She opened the Calcutta-Madras-Suez service the following year, and was armed with five guns, for the contract stipulated that the Indian ships must 'be able to carry and fire at least four guns of the largest calibre now used on board any of I IM steam vessels of war'. The handsome NPM card No. 40 shows Hindostan leaving Southampton on her maiden voyage, and she also appears on several stamps (Mauritius 1976 SG823). She carried troops to India in 1846, to the Crimea 1856, and to China 1860. Two years later she was stripped of her engines to be a storeship in Calcutta, where on 5 October 1864 she sank in the cyclone which drove nearly 200 vessels ashore.

The P & O was also responsible for conveying passengers over the exhausting desert crossing between Al-

exandria and Suez. arriving at the port passengers disembarked and boarded large 'trackboats' hauled by horses, or at a later date by steam tugs, along the Mahmoudich Canal. They then transferred to small river steamers for the voyage up the Nile to Cairo, where they clambered on to mule-drawn waggons for the 84 miles across open desert to Suez, to join the steamer waiting there. The Overland route of 250 miles officially took 78 hours including overnight stops at Cairo and mid-desert rest houses. The company did much to improve conditions by building resthouses, water installations, and farms for fresh produce, but the Overland desert crossing always remained tedious and uncomfortable.

Mails and light-weight cargoes of high value were sent direct from Alexandria to Suez on camels and donkeys, taking about 64 hours and arriving long before the passengers and baggage. Although the East India Co. was accused of being inefficient and expensive, it took a few fee-paying passengers, and insisted on clinging on to the monthly mail contract from Suez to Bombay. Mail from Bombay to Calcutta was despatched across country by native dawk runners who took on average eleven days, plus three extra days during the monsoons. In the early days P & O passengers sometimes found that the steamship had already sailed with the mail, leaving them stranded for a month at Suez. On one occasion when no steamer waited at Suez, the East India Co, lost an entire shipload of mail by sending it down the Red Sea by Arab dhow, never to be seen again! When the P & O became properly established in the east, the ships of both companies were held for 24 hours after arrival at the Red Sea port.

The P & O finally became responsible for all India mails, taking over the Suez - Bombay service of the East India Co. The public at this time had the choice of two routes for both travelling and mail in Europe. There was the direct all-sea route from Britain to Alexandria, or the more expensive and quicker route via Marseilles, travelling by coach through France, and embarking at Marseilles for Alexandria. Later Brindisi was used. The Haddington, 1,847 ton iron paddler was built in 1846 for the Suez-Calcutta run, and was converted to sail eight years later as a supply vessel for P & O base stores in the East. The company operate faster iron-hulled ships, but the Post Office considered that wooden vessels were safer, until Royal Mail Line's Amazon was destroyed by fire on 2 June 1853 with the loss of 115 lives and all the mail. Fire was a constant threat. Smoking was only allowed on deck, and except at certain key points, candles were extinguished at 10pm.

The P & O had to expand the mail service eastwards, transshipping the China mails at Galle on the monthly Suez to Calcutta route. In 1843 Southampton became the terminal U.K. port. Lady Mary Wood had been delivered for service in the Mediterranean the previous year. She was tiny, only 533 tons, but she was fast with a speed of 12 knots, and could carry 200 tons of cargo and 110 passengers. She left England on 21 June 1845 to pioneer the new Ceylon-Singapore-Hong Kong service, reaching Singapore in 41 days. On the return voyage she carried 4,757 packets proving that the new branch route was viable. When a revolt occurred in Ceylon three years later she sailed to Madras for troops to put down the rebellion, thus becoming the first troopship propelled by steam. She also inaugurated an experimental Hong Kong-Shanghai service in 1850, but this soon became impossible as the local sailing ship interests in Shanghai conspired to fix exorbitant Custom dues to thwart the steamers that threatened their livelihood.

The railway opened as far as the Nile, and in 1858 the completed Alexandria - Suez railway made the desert crossing more comfortable. Now that the Galle-Singapore route was open clamour from Australia forced the Government to provide a postal service. The P & O was contracted to open a bi-monthly mail service between Sydney and Singapore to connect with the Hong Kong-Galle steamers. The newly built, iron, screw-driven Chusan I left Southampton on 15 May 1852 for Sydney, where she arrived via the Cape on 3 August. As she had been intended for the Hong Kong-Shanghai feeder service she was heavily armed, and was also equipped with steam hoses to repel pirates - a very necessary precaution in the eastern waters where in 1849 the P & O ss Canton had towed the becalmed HM Sloop Columbine into action against a group of pirate junks that were escaping with the aid of their long, powerful sweeps.

Chusan left Sydney on 31 August 1852 to pioneer the new mail route via Melbourne, Batavia to Singapore. The P & O library has a delightful photograph combining this small 8 knot, 699-ton barque under sail, looking minute alongside 24,215-ton Chusan III of 1950 (Singapore 1955 SG49). The latter ship, broken up in 1973, had the distinction of being the first major ship to be fitted with stabilisers which damp down the 40° roll of a ship to 4° in heavy seas, and the last P & O passenger mailship to India when this service ceased after nearly 130 years. The new route from Suez was in three stages: Suez-Galle by the Calcutta steamer, Galle-Singapore by Bombay to Hong Kong steamer, and Singapore-Sydney by Chusan and her consort, soon to be replaced by larger ships.

Coaling was a major headache. It was shipped from Britain to the Company's Australian and eastern depots by about 170 sailing vessels on constant charter. But the Australian gold rush caused such a surge in emigration that it was almost impossible to find suitable sailing ships, and the coal shortage became acute with soaring prices. Vessels were also requisitioned at this time as troopships for the Crimean War. The new service had to be suspended with much ill feeling in Australia. A new route to Sydney via Aden and Mauritius was tried in 1859, but so much coal had to be carried for the long passage across the Indian Ocean, that some passenger baggage, and even coal, had to be stowed on deck.

Malta I opened this service which lasted a year. Built as a paddlesteamer for the China route, Malta had been lengthened and converted to a barquerigged screw steamer. In 1869 she was transferred to the Galle-Sydney run which had started nine years earlier. By this accelerated service Australian mail and passengers were transhipped at Galle and went direct to Melbourne and Sydney via King George's Sound, 5,053 miles taking on average 23 days.

When the Suez Canal was officially opened on 17 November 1869, the procession of 68 vessels of all nationalities included P & O's Delta for the leisurely three-day journey. The Canal caused great hardship to the Company as all the expensive Overland equipment in Egypt was no longer needed, and vessels built either for the East or West of Suez traffic were wrongly designed for heavier cargoes making the through-Canal passage. Until 1888, the Post Office also insisted that the mails should be landed at Alexandria, transported by rail to Suez, and reloaded on to the same vessel that had already passed through the Canal.

The home terminal was changed to London, with passengers boarding at Tilbury, the mail still being collected and delivered at Southampton by pick-up calls. In Ceylon,

Galle was abandoned in favour of the new and better equipped port of Colombo.

The four famous jubilee class sisters were built in 1887 for the Australian service to commemorate the twin golden jubilees of the Queen's accession to the throne and the founding of the P & O. The 6,525-ton Britannia is seen on (Chad 1984 SG752), and she and Victoria were chartered as troopships in 1894, so successfully that the old Naval troopers were sold, and specific merchantmen of the P & O, Bibby and British India Lines were specially designed for this purpose. The 5,294-ton Peninsular of 1888 (GB 1974 SG954), which served on the Australian, Far East, and Aden-Bombay shuttles routes, is shown with the Southampton Packet Letter handstamp. She was supposed to be haunted by footsteps walking the hurricane deck, and was investigated by the Bombay Psychical Society.

Once the mail was allowed to be shipped through the Canal, Suez was dropped and teams of postal sorters who had previously worked on board P & O vessels on the Suez-Bombay leg, now processed mail between Aden and Bombay, using various Sea Post Office handstamps. Marine sorters also boarded P & O ships at Singapore so that no time would be lost from the turn-round at Hong Kong. These ships connected at Ceylon with mailships to Calcutta, Suez, Australia, and even with other mail lines to the Cape. The P & O east of Suez mail network was vast, and Sea Post Offices only ceased with the outbreak of WWI.

The very high humidity combined with the blazing sun was almost unbearable in the Red Sea and sometimes ships steamed back wards in order to push the faintest breeze into the living accommodation. The coolest cabins were away from the sun ie outward-bound on the port side, and homeward-bound on the starboard. Consequently on order for cabins stipulated 'port-out, starboard home', and the acronym POSH entered the English language.

By the mid 1880s, the Australian route was more important than the Indian. Vessels were moer luxurious, but still did not cater for third or steerage class passengers. I have always enjoyed Mrs Dulcimer writing to "My dearest Laura" in 1863, likening a P & O shipwreck to a picnic, "If you are ever shipwrecked, do contrive to get the catastrophe conducted by the Peninsular & Oriental Company. I believe other companies drown you sometimes, and drowning is a very prosaic arrangement fit only for seafaring people and second class passengers".

The major rival was the Orient Line, prominent in the Australian passenger/emigrant trade, and the two companies worked alternate weekly sailings from London to Sydney. Emigration was in full swing, and Tom Rogers' painting Going South (Australia \$10 SG567a) illustrates a deck scene in 1885 on the Orient liner Lusitania that must have been familiar on many ships.

Men of the isolated Cable & Wireless Station in the Cocos (Keeling) Islands received mail only three times a year. In 1909 Captain W L Brown of P & O's Morea diverted slightly from his normal route, and slowing down, dropped a barrel overboard, marked with a flag, containing mail, fresh meat, books etc. Alerted by Morea's radio signal, the island canoes (jukongs) retrieved the barrel. The habit spread to other P & O and Orient ships. The Cocos marked the 75th anniversary of this service with a set of stamps, and ss Morea in the correct livery of black funnels and red waterline is shown on SG113. Gibbon's catalogue names here as Omar which was a German vessel taken over by Orient Line as war reparations and renamed in 1921 for her first Australian voyage. The miniature sheet accompanying this set shows many P & O and Orient ships con-

nected with the barrel mail, and both Morea and Omar are depicted, the latter in her correct livery of Orient buff funnels and green waterline, but her dates in Orient service incorrectly given as 1897-1935 instead of 1921/24.

The first modern-style cruises were introduced in 1904 for first class passengers only with Thomas Cook organising the shore excursions. Over the years requirements changed, and in the thirties cruises were made from U K ports in the "Off-peak" northern summer season when passenger trade dropped off. An Indian stamp (SG862) illustrates foreign mail arriving at Ballard Pier, Bombay, in 1927. Another Indian stamp (SG256) showed Strathnaver I as part of the long George VI set of 1937. She was a fine looking 22,270-ton turbo-electric vessel built in 1931 for the Australia run, and was reclassified as tourist class only after World War II. In this pre-war period ships were mainly routed via Bombay. Occasional calls at Tangier were introduced 1933, becoming so popular that this stop became a regular feature of the Australia mail service, and an air-mail service from Paris caught the Indian and Australian mailships at Marseilles.

The amalgamation with the British India Line in 1914 was the first of very many mergers or take-overs that made the P & O Group the largest shipping concern in the world. Each company retained its separate identity and individual management, and continued to use its own livery and flag. The Razmaz of 1925 was transferred from P & O to the subsidiary Union Steamship Co. of New Zealand, and is seen under her new name Monowai (Cook Is. SG111).

The Asiatic Steam Navigation Co. was founded in 1878. It was a British company based on Calcutta under Turner Morrison & Co. Originally for trading in the Bay of Bengal. It extended and developed a network of services to Bombay and East Africa, and eastwards to Burma, Malaya and Java carrying teak and wood, rice, coal, sugar and general cargoes. It was typical of the smaller firms that were, in effect, swallowed by P & O, firstly by being associated with the Nourse Line, which in turn in 1917 merged with British India Line, already part of P & O. Eventually, after British India Line acquired a controlling interest in the thirties, P & O took over the remaining Asiatic shares in 1961, and the handful of vessels were transferred to the P & O fleet. The last three Asiatic ships, Kohinur, Nurjehan and Nurmahal, were given "Strath" names later and integrated into the general cargo division.

Meanwhile, the Asiatic continued to be run on the lines of a family business with Turners acting as managing agents. The ships with their traditional names and own company colours were mainly about 5,000 - 7,000 tons specifically built for the shallow coastal trade. They had British officers and lascar crews. Five men of my father's family served the Asiatic as Masters and officers for over fifty years. They survived two world wars with vessels torpedoed, bombed and mined. After the war, Indian independence and rising nationalism restricted the coastwise trade to Indian-owned tonnage. New cargoes and markets had to be found, and traditional routes replaced by voyages to China and the Pacific.

The first true cargo vessel had entered the P & O service in 1896, and this side of the company's activities expanded to become the world's biggest and most versatile group of merchant shipping. For the 60th anniversary of the postal service in 1969 Dubai's stamps included British India Line's Bamora of 1914, a cargo ship of 3,285 tons, and Chandpara of 1949, more than twice her size (SG277 and SG281). British India Line's Sirdhana of 1947 (SG279) worked the Bombay-Karachi-Persian Gulf route carrying

cargoes and crammed with pilgrims.

A horrifying number of ships were lost by P & O during World War II. The Asiatic itself lost eight vessels. My father's brand new Havildar, in convoy out of Liverpool, was mined and nearly sunk in the Irish Sea in 1940. But patched up, and an inch shorter, she served the Asiatic until sold in 1960. Merchant ships were requisitioned, and plied seas far from their normal routes. Passenger liners acted as troopships, or were converted as armed merchant cruisers. P & O's Stratlmaver in the Red Sea acted as a training ship for the invasion of Italy. British India Line's 9,182-ton liner Neuralia of 1912 (Gibraltar SG212) was mined and sunk in 1945 when approaching Taranto as a troop-carrier to pick up German POWs.

The 16,697-ton HMS Rawalpindi, (1925) which had been on the P & O's Indian and Far East routes, was now on convoy duty as an armed merchant cruiser. Her armament of eight 6-inch guns was reasonably adequate for normal use, but totally useless against the might of the two 32,000-ton battlecruisers Scharnhorst and Gneisenau which were sighted on 23 November 1939 looking for rich pickings off Iceland. Captain E C Kennedy RN ordered his convoy to scatter. Placing himself between his flock and the approaching wolves, he deliberately engaged the enemy. Almost immediately mortally damaged, pulverised and on fire, Rawalpindi continued the action for 40 minutes before breaking in two and sinking, with the loss of 265 men and her captain. There were 11 survivors. Her self-sacrifice allowed her convoy to escape safely, and 35 years later she was commemorated by a cover and special handstamp in the first of the naval series (RN17).

After the war a huge ship-building programme was put in hand. Classes were abolished on liners, and P & O developed into one of the largest cruise operators in the world. The company had in 1919 acquired a substantial holding in the London-based Orient Steam Navigation Co. which had been prominent in the Australian passenger emigrant trade since 1877. When the famous Sydney Harbour Bridge was opened, the line of merchantmen that sailed under it as part of the official ceremony was led by Orient's Orford (Australia SG141). She was lost when bombed at Marseilles during the German invasion of France.

The last of the true Orient liners was the 27,632-ton Oronsay (Fiji SG599). Built in 1951 she sailed the extended Pacific route from Australia to Los Angeles, before being transferred to P & O in 1964. From 1958 Orient & Pacific Lines (ie P & O-Orient) developed a network of services across the Pacific. Himalaya III (Solomons SG275) inaugurated the transpacific route from Sydney to San Francisco via Auckland, Suva, Honolulu and Vancouver in March 1958. On her third voyage in February the following year she returned from Vancouver via Japan, Hong Kong and Singapore, opening up a second transpacific route.

There were no rigid mail contracts after the war, although company vessels continued to carry surface mail if and when required. The Chusan III (Singapore SG49) was the last P & O mailship to India in 1970. P & O had been primarily concerned with mails for over 130 years, and had made an enormous and major contribution to the expansion of commerce world-wide. From August 1971 the Bulk Shipping Division took in all the general cargo vessels of the group under one management, and the separate trading companies ceased to exist.

Radical changes owing to containerisation and intercontinental air transport phased out scheduled passenger liner services, and the Group was reformed in 1960

into the P & O-Orient Linse (Passenger Services Ltd) with joint services and common management, developing a triangle of routes from Australia to North America and the Far East. As the emigrant trade decreased, tourist sailings round the world introduced additional calls at Miami and Caribbean islands. Orontes (Cocos SG30) went to the breakers, and Himalaya, Arcadia, Iberia (Hong Kong SG247) were extensively refitted, tourist class only, as ocean cruising developed as a leisure market. The 41,915-ton Oriana entered service in 1960, and is seen on her regular Pacific route at Suva (Fiji SG363) and Point Cruz, Honiara (Solomons SG541).

The flagship Canberra, 45,733-tons, the largest liner to be built for the Australian trade, joined the Group in 1961, her passengers paying £5 per day as compared with £52 per day some 25 years later. Scrapping was considered in 1973, but she was reprieved, and a further £6 million refit last year extends her life for another 10 years. Canberra is illustrated on about seven stamps from Gibraltar to the Caribbean and Pacific. But she is probably best known for her Falkland interlude as "The Great White Whale", off-loading troops in San Carlos Water. The best depiction of this valiant vessel came from the Falklands in 1983 when they picked Canberra for their first anniversary commemorative set (SG349), together with another P & O ship, the North Sea roll on/roll off ferry Norland, to represent the huge variety of merchantmen that did duty with the Task Force. Some special first day covers using the mixed pane of stamps from the P & O £5 book will be carried on Canberra from Bangkok to Southampton on the homeward half of her 1987 world cruise.

One of British India Line's most famous ships was the Uganda of 1952, which was employed for school educational cruises in Europe and the Mediterranean. When the Falkland crisis blew up in 1982, the school children on board were flown home, and the vessel was requisitioned for the Task Force as a hospital ship. She repatriated P O Ws, and finished as a trooper ferrying personnel between Ascension and the Falkland Islands until April 1985.

In 1966, Orient Line as a name came to an end when "Orient" was dropped from the Company title, and P & O fully integrated the fleets: Oriana, the last ship with an Orient name, although owned by P & O and wearing their livery, was sold to Japan in 1986. Uganda went to the breakers that same year leaving Canberra as the only British-based cruise vessel.

Upon the acquisition of Princess Cruises Inc. Spirit of London was in 1974 renamed Sun Princess and operated along the west coast of North America from Alaska to Mexico according to the season. She was joined by Sea Princess (ex Kungsholm of 1966, shown on Barbados SG753) purchased in 1978 from the Swedish-America Line. The latest vessel of the "Princess" fleet, the 44,348-ton Royal Princess, was named by the Princess of Wales at Southampton on 15 November 1984, and is based on San Francisco. Fares from £2,000 to £4,000 for a 16-day fly-cruise include air fare from London and overnight hotel accommodation. The Princess Cruises concentrate on the American market and operate fly-cruises from Britain or the States. This year, Pacific Princess makes the first attempt of the U S-based Princess Cruises to break into the U K market. Her arrival at Tilbury in May will see the return of P & O to the Thames. A perusal of the fleet list today will find the P & O passenger fleet, apart from passenger/freight ferries, reduced to Canberra and the Princesses.

On the other hand, the cargo division has increased to cover practically every type of merchant ship

except ice-breakers - refrigerator ships, powder and liquid bulk carriers, ferries, hovercraft, and containers. As a founder and now owner of Overseas Containers Ltd., P & O pioneered the bigger revolution in ship-handling that ever hit the merchant navy, where even the basic she design was totally altered.

In the mid-seventies the Group deliberate diversified, and operate a wide range of services not only in the British Isles but in the USA and Australia. They commenced a door-to-door road haulage business with seven roll on/roll off freight ferries and a large fleet of articulated lorries that cross the sea and delivered cargoes to their destinations in Britain and Europe (Ferry-master Ltd and Pandoro Ltd. The housebuilding/construction group Boys was acquired in 1974, and among other projects Bovis built the new Lloyds building opened by the Queen on 13 November 1984. Investments were also made in catering services to industrial/commercial concerns like schools and hospitals, and in services of the offshore oil and gas industries.

In 1985 a merger took place with the industrial services and property group, the Sterling Guarantee Trust, thus acquiring offices, shops and commercial properties including shopping centres and the East Court and Olympia exhibition halls in London. The P & O Group is now a broadly based shipping and services group of subsidiary and associated companies. The internationally respected P & O name has been retained. No longer only a shipping company of the quartered Spanish and Portuguese colour of the P & O flag now fly as a symbol over offices, buildings and ships of about 200 diversified companies operating in over forty countries round the world - which would be a great source of amazement to the original founders!

(Courtesy : British Philately Magazine 1980)



A History of Hansen's Disease **Medical Mystery of Leprosy** *Dorothy Oaks*

For 2,000 years, mankind has waged a battle against leprosy. Documented in the Bible and known by the Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans, leprosy spread throughout Europe in the Middle Ages. The Bible records that Lazarus was raised from the dead by Jesus. Lazarus suffered from leprosy, and he became the Patron Saint of Lepers. St. John cites the healing of Lazarus and ten other lepers. An Italian stamp (Scott 1351) depicts St. Francis washing the feet of lepers based on a 13th century painting.

No effective medical treatment was known at the time, and the isolation of lepers was proclaimed by law as early as 583 AD in Lyon, France. Therefore, churches took the responsibility for caring for the victims of the disease. As early as 560 AD, Gregorie de Tours (538-594) established a 500-bed hospital for lepers, called "Lazaretto," or "lazarhouses" named after the Biblical Lazarus. A French stamp (Scott 389) commemorated Gregorie on the 1400th anniversary of his birth.

The Knights of Malta (Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem) took an active role in caring for lepers during and following the Crusades, and they established many hospitals. The red Maltese Cross became an international symbol of this important religious order (France, Scott 797).

Spanish bishop Jose de Anchieta (1534-1579) went to Brazil as a missionary in 1553 where he founded

the first hospital for lepers (Brazil, Scott 394-397, 509; Spain, Scott 509). Father Bento Dias Pacheco (1819-1911) subsequently took over a leprosarium in Brazil where he spent his life caring for lepers (Brazil, Scott RA4).

In January 1865, Hawaiian King Kamehameha V proclaimed that all known lepers should be isolated on the island of Molokai. One hundred and forty-two lepers were dropped off ship at Molokai in October 1866, and many drowned trying to get ashore. The first settlement was Kalawao where lepers sheltered in volcanic pits with only minimal food supplies. In 1864, Belgian missionary Joseph Damien (1840-1889) moved to Hawaii, and subsequently became bishop of Honolulu. Learning of the leper colony, he volunteered to serve as bishop of Molokai where he built houses for the leper colony, and enlarged their church. Damien treated the lepers as human beings, and organized singing groups and a band (Belgium, Scott 605, 1330, 1552, B417).

Norwegian physician Gerhard Henrik Armauer Hansen (1841-1912) became director of the Bergen leprosarium where he sought to identify the cause of leprosy. He succeeded in 1871, and two years later he reported that the pathogenic agent was *Bacillus leprae*. However, this was not acknowledged until 1879, and is today known as *Mycobacterium leprae*. Leprosy is also called Hansen's disease in honor of this Norwegian physician who is depicted on stamps of Belgium (Scott 567) and Norway (Scott 602-603) as well as on stamps of a number of other countries.

Other pioneers in the conquest of leprosy include French physician Emile Francois Marchoux (1862-1943) who founded the Marchoux Leprosy Research Institute in Senegal (Mali, Scott 520-521); Belgian missionary Frans Hemerijckx (1902-1969) who established a leper colony in the Belgian Congo and was subsequently sent by King Leopold III in 1954 to India where he built a center for the treatment of leprosy (Belgium, Scott B926); and French journalist Raoul Follereau (1903-1977) who raised over four million dollars to build a leprosarium in Adzope, Ivory Coast (France, Scott 2028; Ivory Coast, Scott 543). Patrick Twomey (1892-1963) became known as the "Leper Man," and was responsible for the Leper Man Appeal in the southwest Pacific and New Zealand which is still in effect today.

Seeking a Cure

The only known effective drug for the treatment of leprosy until the 20th century came from several species of the *Hynocarpus* tree. Chaulmoogra oil, extracted from the seeds, had been used by the natives of India for centuries. But it wasn't until 1853 that the western world introduced this folk cure into medical practice. In 1904, the Wellcome Research Laboratories in London isolated the fatty acid constituents and produced a refined chaulmoogra oil that reduced the toxic side effects. (Egypt, Scott 231-233, Fiji, Scott 289).

In an effort to cultivate the leprosy bacillus, scientists discovered that they could infect the armadillo to create leprosy tumors resembling the leprosy tumors found in humans. This encouraged researchers to continue their search for a leprosy vaccine. (Colombia, Scott C358).

Known as the "Miracle of Carville," the drug sulfone (Promin) which had been introduced in 1951 for the treatment of tuberculosis, was discovered at the Carville, Louisiana, U.S. Public Health Service leprosarium to provide a revolutionary and dramatic treatment for leprosy patients. Today, the most effective treatment of leprosy

consists of the use of multi-drug therapy using ofloxacin, minocycline, and clarithromycin, which some patients must take for the rest of their lives.

Even though the bacillus was identified, the method of transmission is still unknown; hence the mystery surrounding how leprosy is acquired.

The First International Congress of Leprosy was held in Cairo, Egypt, in March 1938 (Egypt, Scott 231-233); followed by the second congress in Havana, Cuba, in April 1948 (Cuba, Scott 414). The eighth congress was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1963 (Brazil, Scott 966); the 11th congress met in Mexico City in 1978 (Mexico, Scott C586, commemorating Rafael Lucio); and the 12th congress convened in New Delhi, India, in 1984 (India, Scott 1051).

The World Health Organization commenced helping the cause of leprosy soon after WHO was founded in 1948, establishing "World Leprosy Day" which has been philatelically recognized by Belgium in 1964 (Scott 568), Italy in 1979 (Scott 1351), and Gabon in 1985 (Scott 575) among others.

Among notable leaders who have provided assistance of leprosy programs is Mahatma Gandhi who spent part of each day working with the lepers in India; it was his dream of a leprosy-free world. Well known of her founding of the Missionaries of Charity is Mother Teresa, and Princess Diana reached out to touch afflicted patients to erase the stigma surrounding the disease. All of these, and many others, worked hard on a global scale to raise people's awareness of the plight of those afflicted with leprosy, including those who are cured but disabled.

Some years ago, the World Health Organization expressed the hope to eradicate leprosy by the year 2000. But today, there are still more than five million people worldwide afflicted with *Mycobacterium leprae*, mainly in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the islands of the Pacific Ocean. Man must continue to wage his battle against this disease.

Dorothy Oaks is a retired health information manager, and currently works at an art gallery. She resides at 12018 S.E. 13th Street, Vancouver, WA 98683-6212.

(Courtesy : Topical Time, 2000)



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