



# SIPA Bulletin

For Private Circulation to Members only

Vol. 25 No. 5

Sept - Oct 2005

Bimonthly

Dear Members,

It gives me great pleasure in announcing that our Association is entering its Golden Jubilee year from Dec 30th, 2005.

It has been a long way from our humble beginning on 30th Dec. 1956 with 5 members at Broadway, Madras. Now the Association has grown to be a 625 life member strong.

We have conducted 11 exhibitions till 2001 (1959, 1961, 1962, 1964, 1969, 1972, 1981, 1985, 1989, 1995 & 2001) and most of our members have participated in the State, National, Asian & International exhibitions and won high awards. We have also conducted many workshops on philately for school children to inculcate the hobby. We bring to your attention that due to our concerted efforts, we have been given the Philatelic Exhibition hall, adjacent to the Philatelic Bureau for display of exhibits by our members since April 2003.

Some of our members have occupied high positions in FIP, FIAP, PCI, and many have acted as International Jury, National Jury, International Commissioners, and also been appointed as Philatelic Advisory Committee members of India Post.

In order to celebrate our Golden jubilee in a fitting manner, we request all members to raise to the occasion. Please give us your valuable suggestions for the celebrations of the Golden jubilee in a fitting manner. We have sent a proposal to the Department of Post to conduct a National Philatelic exhibition at Chennai coinciding with our Golden jubilee. As you may be aware, the cost of holding a National exhibition is enormous and it is imperative that every member should contribute his/her share in bringing sponsors, advertisers, philanthropists, donors, newspapers and media.

In view of the Golden Jubilee, it has been decided to bring out many Special Covers with Special Catchets depicting Culture, Heritage Buildings, Eminent Personalities, Places of Interest etc. for which stamps have not been issued. We request all members to send details of any of above items with a small write up and a sketch / photo to enable us to release Special Covers with Special Catchets.

SIPA Golden Jubilee Celebrations Committee will be formed in a few days, which will take care of all the minute details with regard to the celebrations throughout the year. This office will function at ABK AOTS Dosokai, Nelson Manickam Road, Aminjikarai, Chennai 600 029, the office of our Secretary.

We find that some of the SIPA Bulletins have been returned to us for want of correct address and other reasons. In order to keep a correct mailing list, we request you to send us your present address along with your Phone/ Mobile and Email address and also your area of interest in philately to be published in our Bulletin

and Golden Jubilee Souvenir.

Members who are interested in displaying their exhibits at our Saturday Exhibitions of every month, are requested to contact the Association immediately.

With regards,  
G. Balakrishna Das  
President



## Information.

### Special Slogan Cancellation.

#### MAIL ON A KILLER'S TRAIL

The world is never tired of the myths and realities surrounding the Yorkshire Ripper, the psychopathic serial killer of women. But few perhaps know how mail aided the sleuth in the killers' trail. After a long and unsuccessful hunt for the killer, the police finally hit upon the idea of putting in a slogan on all letters given out for delivery by the post office. The slogan was addressed to the receivers of the mail urging upon them to cooperate with the police in the hunt for the killer.

**THE POLICE NEED  
YOUR HELP TO CATCH  
THE RIPPER  
TELEPHONE BRADFORD 27441**

(Courtesy : Milepost, India Post)

Our Second Sunday Meetings were held at the CPMG's Conference Hall, Anna Road, HPO, Chennai-600 002. (11:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.) regularly where about 30 members attended with president Shri Balakrishna Das presiding. Patron Shri. Madan MohanDas spoke on 'Indian States', in Aug 2005.

## STAMP NEWS

### ABDUL QAIYUM ANSARI

01.07.2005

500

0.6 mill

Abdul Qaiyum Ansari was a distinguished patriot, an eminent leader and administrator, and a social reformer with a firm commitment to national integration, secularism and communal harmony.

Born at Dehri-on-Sone in Bihar on 1st July, 1905, he was the second son of M. Abdul Haq and Safia Begum. After studying at Sasaram and Dehri-on-Sone High Schools, he went on to attend Aligarh Muslim University, Calcutta University, and Allahabad University, though his education was interrupted due to involvement in the struggle for India's freedom. Arrested and imprisoned at the young age of 16 for taking part in the anti-British Non-Cooperation and Khilafat Movements, he remained closely associated with the Indian National Congress and took part in the students' agitation against the allwhite Simon Commission during its visit to Calcutta in 1928.



Abdul Qaiyum Ansari opposed the communal policies of the Muslim League. He, therefore, started the Momin Movement in 1937-38, to counteract the policies of the Muslim League. Under his leadership the All India Momin Conference supported the Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. In the general elections of 1946 held on the basis of separate electorates, his party won six seats in the Bihar Provincial Assembly against the Muslim League. He became the first Momin to become a Minister of Bihar. Later on, in consultation with his party, he signed the Congress pledge and dissolved the Momin Conference as a political body, and made it a social and economic organization. He was a Minister in the Bihar Cabinet for about seventeen years. He was the first Indian nationalist Muslim Leader who condemned the Pakistani aggression on Kashmir during October, 1947. He also founded the Indian Muslim Youth Kashmir Front in 1957 for liberation of Pakistani occupied areas of Kashmir. Subsequently, he also exhorted the Indian Muslims to support the Government of India in the anti-Indian uprising of the Razakars in Hyderabad during September, 1948. Abdul Qaiyum Ansari was an accomplished journalist, writer and poet, and editor of Urdu weekly "A1- Islah" (The Reform) and an Urdu monthly "Musawat" (Equality) in the pre independence days. Aman of the people, Abdul Qaiyum Ansari died in their service on 18th January, 1973, at village Amiawar of Bihar, while inspecting damages caused to the village due to the collapse of the Dehri-Arrah canal and organizing relief to its homeless people.

Theme : Personality, Freedom Struggle etc.,

### DHEERAN CHINNAMALAI

31.07.2005

500

0.6 mill

It was the time when the British were striving to expand their sovereignty in India by force or by enticing the smaller kings offering protection from other perceived aggressors. While many smaller rulers fell prey to this, some of them refused. One such

brave and patriotic heroes is Dheeran Chinnamalai who ruled a part of western Tamilnadu, called Kovaikone of Kongu Province, who sacrificed his life fighting against the foreign invaders during the late 18th and early 19th century Born to Shri Rathina Sarkarai and Smt. Periyatha, at Melapalayam in Erode District in Tamilnadu on 17th April 1756 and named "Theerthagiri" by his parents, he grew up as a warrior with deeply ingrained love for freedom. It is said that he assumed the title "Chinnamalai" when he prevented the out flow of tax from his area to Hyder Ali, the ruler of Mysore. When Tipu Sultan occupied the throne, he heard about the valour and bravery of Chinnamalai. Tipu sultan wanted to support him in fighting against the British.



Dheeran Chinnamalai, subsequently formed a band of 1000 brave - young Kongus which was called the Kongu Army. Dheeran Chinnamalai was instrumental in the victories at Chitheswaram, Mazhavalli and in the battle of Srirangapatnam. After the death of Tipu Sultan, he returned to Kongu Province and settled at Odanilai. He constructed a Fort and continued his struggle against the British and won the battles on the banks of the river Cauvery in the year 1801, at Odanilai in 1802 and at Arachalur in the year 1804. Dheeran Chinnamalai left his fort to avoid the cannon attack by the formidable enemy and engaged in Guerilla warfare while stationed at Karumalai in Palani region. But the desperate enemy managed to capture the brave warrior by deceit. His cook informed the enemy about his whereabouts and he was captured, and was hanged on 31st July 1805 at Sankagiri Dheeran Chinnamalai believed in harmonious relation among different communities and castes and treated them with equal respect. Dheeran Chinnamalai also participated in devotional activities as is evident from the shrines built by him in Arachalur, Anoor, Melapalayam and Sivanmalai. He was also instrumental in developing the Sirumalai Plantain variety in Palani Hills.

Them : Leaders, Warriors, Freedom Struggle

### STATE BANK OF INDIA

31.08.2005

1500

0.8 mill

The State Bank of India, the premier banking institution of the country, has an unparalleled history spanning two centuries. The Bank through its several incarnations has played a pioneering role in the development of Indian banking, commerce, finance and industry. It all began with the Bank of Calcutta on the 2nd June 1806, which was later rename as the Bank of Bengal in 1809, becoming the first of the Presidency Banks of Bombay and Madras were established in 1840 and 1843 respectively. They continued to issue currency notes till 1862, when this function was taken over by the Government. From 1866 they were given formal central bank status till the creation of the Reserve



Bank of India in 1935. Under the Imperial Bank of India Act, the three Presidency Banks were amalgamated in 1921 to form the State Bank of India. The State Bank of India began with a mandate for rapid expansion and within 5 years of its creation, it doubled its network with the opening of 416 new branches. Through 14 Local Head Offices and only 50 Zonal Offices, the system functions in a decentralized manner. Today with over 9000 branches, the State Bank of India has retained dominance over the Indian banking horizon. The Bank has been actively participating in the employment generation and poverty alleviation schemes sponsored by the Government such as Swarnjayanti Gram Swarnjayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojna, scheme for liberation and rehabilitation of scavengers etc.

The Bank has been the convener of State Level Bankers' Committee in eleven states and two union territories and is the lead bank in 190 districts, mostly in hilly and backward areas. State Bank of India is the only Indian bank, to be among the top ten banks in the world. The State Bank of India and its predecessors have always effectively combined their commercial status, competing successfully in the market and earning consistent profit throughout their existence. State Bank of India can truly represent the Indian economy in the global markets. Its activities not only touch everyone in India, but also lend strength to Indian economy on a global platform.

Theme : Economy, Finance, Banking.

Members apologise; the following commemorative was missed in the previous issue.

### NARAYAN MEGHAJI LOKHANDE

3.5.2005 500 0.6 mill

A socially committed person who toiled ceaselessly to ameliorate the grievances of the industrial labour and downtrodden people was Shri Narayan Meghaji Lokhande. The facilities and amenities, which are enjoyed by the workers today, are all because of his sacrifice, devotion and hard work.



Shri Narayan Meghaji Lokhande was born in Thane in 1848. Due to financial constraints, he was forced to work after completing his matriculation from Thane. He started his career in Railways and Postal Department before finally joining the Mandavi Textile Mill as a Store Keeper. Life was very tough in the mills in those days.

He campaigned for ensuring basic rights to the workers by visiting various mills and united them for fight against all forms of exploitation. His tireless efforts resulted into the establishment of the first labour union, 'Mill Hands Association' in 1884. A Factory Labour Commission was established in 1890 and Narayan Meghaji Lokhande was appointed in this Commission under the Chairmanship of Mr. Leth Bridge. Due to his efforts the Factory Act of 1891 came into force from January 1892.

Shri Narayan Meghaji Lokhande was a follower of Jyotirao Phule, the founder of 'Satyashodhak Samaj' in 1873.

In fact, the ideals of social justice, equality of men and women

and eradication of casteism always remained dear to him.

As a Chief Editor of 'Deenbandhu' he continued his campaign on the issues dear to him. During the communal riots in Bombay in 1893, he exhorted the people to restore communal harmony and peace. He also urged through the newspaper to maintain peace and amity. The British Government honoured him by conferring the title of 'Rao Bahadur' for his outstanding efforts.

In 1896, the epidemic of plague had created havoc in Bombay and its suburbs. Shri Narayan Meghaji Lokhande started Maratha Hospital at Byculla to provide medical aid to the poor and underprivileged. However, he got affected by plague and succumbed to it on 9th February 1897 at age of 49.

Shri Narayan Meghaji Lokhande was a dedicated social worker who left a lasting imprint on the Indian industrial labour scenario through his selfless and tireless work. He is rightly known as the Father of Indian Labour Movement.

Theme : Leaders, Labour Movement, Editors.



## Research

### THE PENNY STARS OF GB.

#### JONATHAN SPOONER

The title 'Penny Stars' is a convenient heading for an extraordinary group of not less than 14 basic stamps issued in Britain between 1854 and 1862. It was a period during which virtually every aspect of the 1d. value was scrutinised in an effort to improve upon both its quality and aesthetic appeal.

Sandwiched between the traditionally popular 1841 and 1864 Penny Reds, it is the recesses. As a result, it is sometimes possible to feel the ink which is raised from easy to disregard the wealth of collecting opportunities which the Penny Stars group has to offer. A collection of Penny Stars can be as simple or as complex as you and armed with a little knowledge, a great deal of pleasure can be derived from the large quantities of material which exist today, much of it modestly priced.

#### Origins of the design

The design of the 1840



fig. 2

Penny Black was extremely successful, combining as it did the influence of modern stylistic trends with functionality. The elements of intricate and precise detailing in the background of the stamp were achieved by engine-turned engraving. William Wyon's City Medal of 1837 provided the basis for the portrait of the young Queen Victoria. The head, value tablet and the word 'postage' were all engraved by hand. Perkins Bacon chose to print the Penny Black using the line-engraved or intaglio method. Once the printing plate had been engraved the entire surface would be covered by ink. It would then be wiped away to leave ink in the recessed (engraved) areas of the plate.



fig. 4

Damped paper would then be placed on the plate and forced down by a roller so as to pick up the ink in the recesses. As a result it is sometimes possible to feel the ink which is raised from the surface of the paper. This method of printing was used by Perkins Bacon to print low value stamps, including the 1d. value, throughout the term of their printing contract, which lasted from 1840 to 1879.



fig. 3

In 1841 the colour of the 1d. value was changed from black to red-brown which was deemed necessary to prevent widespread cleaning and fraudulent reuse. Apart from this major alteration, few changes were made until the introduction of the first Penny Star issue in February 1854.

### The Archer experiments

In the late 1840s Henry Archer, an Irish businessman based in London, brought the advantages of having an easy method of separating stamps to the attention of the government. As a result of his own plans, Archer began a series of government-backed experiments using sheets of the contemporary imperforate 1d. stamp, using two different rouletting machines, neither of which were a success. A handful of examples, rouletted approximately 1848, have survived.

Archer's third machine was the first to perforate rather than roulette the stamps. This machine proved unsatisfactory at first but it was eventually approved, following a series of modifications. Perforated stamps resulting from these trials were used by the public, mainly in the west of England.

All stamps perforated during Archer's trials can be distinguished from the later officially perforated issues. Any perforated 1d. stamp used on a cover dated before 27 January 1854 (Fig 1) originates from a trial; most likely one conducted by Archer (although a very small number originate from the government's own trials). On 27 January official perforating commenced, although the earliest recorded cover bearing this issue is dated 24 February 1854.

In the absence of a dated cover or piece, Archer trial perforations can be identified by studying the corner letters.. Archer was provided with imperforate stamps printed from plates 92 to 101 and possibly 90 and 91, on which to conduct his trials. The corner letters in all these plates are recognisable as 'alphabet I'. All officially perforated Penny Stars, on the other hand, have corner letters which come from alphabets II, III and IV. Both corner letters and the alphabets are described in more detail later in this article.

### Official perforations

Following the success of Archer's modified third machine, his patents were purchased by the government in June 1853. Two perforating machines for postage stamps were constructed by David Napier & Sons and began work in 1854 with gauge 16 punch sets. It was soon apparent that sheets perforated 16 were prone to splitting and in January 1855 the first Penny Star with gauge 14 perforations was issued. Up to the summer of 1855

both gauges were used concurrently, after which the gauge 16 punch sets were kept in reserve. In fact, the gauge 16 punch set was only to be used once more to perforate a 'provisional' issue in 1857. In 1858 a further machine was manufactured to increase productivity.

Given that the perforation of stamps was a new invention, badly centred examples are common, whilst those with excellent centring can be difficult to find, especially amongst earlier issues. Some spectacular 'mis-perfs' exist, where, for example, the stamp is effectively cut in two by a row of perforations running through the middle of the design. These are usually sold at a premium, dependent on the extent of the perforation shift (Fig 2), but there comes a point when the difference between a 'mis-perf' and a badly centred example becomes somewhat subjective!

### Corner letters

The corner lettering on Penny Star issues was intended to be a form of protection against the production of forgeries. Each sheet was made up of 240 individually lettered impressions. The system of lettering used indicates the position within the sheet of any given stamp. The left-hand letter indicates the row from which the stamp came whilst the right-hand letter indicates its position in that row. The rows were lettered consecutively from 'A' to 'T' and the positions from 'A' to 'U'.

Any Penny Star lettered 'A-A' originated from the top left-hand corner of the sheet. To its right would have been the stamp lettered 'A-B' and below it the stamp lettered 'B-A' (Fig 3). As a consequence, any single stamp with impossible lettering such as 'Z-Z' could be confirmed as a forgery. Similarly forged sheets and multiples with corner lettering of a different layout such as 'A-A' followed by 'A-A' could also be identified.

On its own, the inclusion of corner lettering was undoubtedly a rudimentary deterrent. An 'improved' version of the lettering system did not prevent the infamous and successful 'Stock Exchange' forgery of the 1s. green in 1872. Indeed, these forgeries were only discovered 26 years after their production, even though some of the stamps had impossible lettering. Perhaps these corner letters were an overly fussy security feature but their inclusion is of immense value to any collector wanting to identify the printing plate of origin.

### The alphabets

By examining the shape and size of corner lettering it is possible to identify four distinct groups or alphabets. Alphabet I is found on all 1d. values issued between 1840 and 1851, including those which were used for Henry Archer's perforation trials. From February 1852 alphabet II lettering was used before it was succeeded by the use of alphabet III midway through 1855.

Letters from these three alphabets were inserted on the plates by hand punch but, as an experiment, the corner letters on plates 50 and 51 issued in 1861 were engraved by hand. This experiment resulted in the fourth identifiable alphabet, although the use of hand-punch lettering was resumed from plate 52 onwards. Reserve plates R15 and R16, first registered

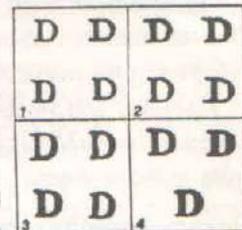


fig. 4

in 1855, had alphabet II corner lettering, although they were not put to press until 1862, during the alphabet III period.

The key to identifying the four alphabets is being able to recognise the general characteristics of each. Individual letters can vary in shape but those of a particular alphabet are usually of a similar size. Representative examples of the letter 'D' from the hand punched alphabets are illustrated (Fig 4). Alphabet I letters are generally small, whilst those from alphabet II are larger and thicker. Alphabet III letters are usually taller but thinner than those from alphabet II. The hand engraved alphabet IV letters are larger in size and often distinctive, although no two are exactly alike.

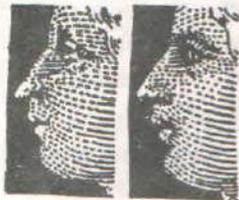


fig. 5

### Recognising the two dies

The first two Penny Star issues were produced using Die 1, which had been used for the Penny Black and all imperforate Penny Reds. Die 1 was retouched and the result is known to collectors as Die 2, which originally appeared in February 1855. It was used throughout the remaining life-span of the Penny Star issues.

In most cases positive identification is not difficult; obvious differences between the two are found in the profile of Queen Victoria. Die 1 heads appear 'flatter' and are less well defined, whilst the nose and chin in particular are angular. Die 2 heads appear more rounded and the eyes, lips and nostrils are more defined and fully formed (Fig 5).

The profile of Queen Victoria will be less well defined from either die if the plate used to print the stamp was in a worn state. Conversely, stamps originating from a plate newly put to press may show more pronounced features, especially if the shade of ink was deeper or brighter. It may be useful to compare such examples with stamps which you know to be either Die 1 or 2 to aid identification. For example all rose-red Penny Star issues on white paper are Die 2.

### Paper and gum

The handmade paper, which varied a great deal in thickness, was supplied to Perkins Bacon in deckle-edged sheets by Stacey Wise of Rush Mills. Although not listed in the Stanley Gibbons Great Britain Specialised Stamp Catalogue Volume 1 Queen Victoria (referred to simply as the 'Specialised Catalogue'



throughout the rest of the article), some stamps were printed on paper with a thickness comparable to that of cartridge paper. Stamps printed on thinner paper can also be found.

The gum was applied by Perkins Bacon after they had printed the sheets. It was made with potato starch, although it apparently varied in taste and effectiveness. After 1855 gelatine was added to the gum mixture.

### Watermarks

Two watermarks exist on the Penny Star issues; the Small

Crown and the Large Crown. The Small Crown watermark is found on issues up to mid-1855 and, because the watermark bits were shaped by hand, can vary a little in shape and size (Fig 6). It was replaced by the Large Crown watermark which is consistent in shape and size because each watermark bit was stamped out of brass sheets (Fig 7). The first Penny Star with the Large Crown watermark appeared in May 1855.

Around March 1861 the original Large Crown watermark was modified, a change which can be identified by the deletion of the two small vertical lines beneath the lower arches (Fig 8). The Type II Large Crown watermark is also slightly larger in size. Some plates are known printed on paper with either watermark. The issues to which this applies are listed as C10, C12 and C13 in the Specialised Catalogue.

Two important watermark 'errors' are also worth mentioning. To enable a whole sheet of stamps to be watermarked at one time, the watermark bits, one for each sheet position, were sewn on to a wire mesh tray. At some point during, use two of the Type I Large Crown watermark bits were replaced by distinctive handmade versions. Consequently these two 'errors' only occur on stamps with particular corner lettering. The usual positions are stamps lettered 'MA' and 'TA' (Figs 9 and 10) but if the sheet was reversed during printing the affected positions are 'ML' and 'TL'. Inverted examples of either error are decidedly scarce and can only occur on stamps lettered 'HL' and 'AL', unless the sheet was also reversed, in which case 'HA' and 'AA' are the two affected stamps.

Plate 42, originally put to press on 23 June 1856, is the first known to occur with a watermark error, but it is not known precisely when either original watermark bit was replaced. Not every subsequent plate has been recorded with the watermark errors but the current information is possibly incomplete and the chance

fig. 6-10. Water Marks



of finding a hitherto unrecorded stamp remains.

Logically, the watermark errors should not occur in sheets watermarked with the Type II Large Crown—if the Type I version was being replaced, why keep the two error bits? However, the error is listed in the Specialised Catalogue under various Penny Star issues, although I have not personally seen a multiple with either error adjoining a stamp with the Type II Large Crown watermark. Perhaps GSM readers will have some additional information on the subject?

### Inks and shades

Perkins Bacon strived to print the Penny Star issues using ink that was of a consistent colour, whilst satisfying other technical requirements, especially the prevention of forgery or reuse of the stamps. At first, they used red-brown inks of the type used to print the imperforate Penny Red. Several distinctive shades are known such as orange-red and brown-rose. The practice of adding prussiate of potash to make the ink fugitive resulted in the bluing of the paper to a greater or lesser extent.

Some earlier issues can be found with particularly deep bluing and these are listed in the Specialised Catalogue.

During a transitional period, which occurred between approximately October 1856 and September 1857, the printers first eliminated the bluing of the paper and then worked on producing a consistent shade of colour for the stamps. The first Penny Star printed in a rose-red colour on white paper was issued in March 1857. By September 1857 the printers had achieved their ideal and the Penny Stars issued thereafter were much more consistent in colour. A number of specialised shades printed on partially blued or toned paper are known; further information on these issues is provided later in this article. It is believed that the elimination of bluing was ultimately achieved by the removal or neutralisation of the prussiate of potash in the printing inks.

When purchasing shades, especially in the case of expensive variants, some care should be taken. Good examples from any Penny Star issue, be it from a worn plate, a pale shade, or otherwise, will have retained a fresh appearance. The effects of sunlight or the use of chemicals to 'improve' the appearance of Penny Stars are usually easy to identify. Stamps which look tired, perhaps with a blotchy appearance or lack of definition, should be viewed with suspicion.

One of the most common alterations in the colour of Penny Stars is caused by a chemical reaction as a result of pollution. Oxidation occurs when constituents in the ink react with sulphur dioxide in the air. This gas is produced by burning fossil fuels and from smelting processes, both of which were vital to Victorian society. Sulphur dioxide was present locally in excessive amounts and due to the amount of industrial activity and dense populations, many oxidised stamps originate from larger cities and towns. The affected areas of the stamp become darkened over the years often resulting in a blotchy appearance or in extreme examples, transforming the shade. The 'plum' shade once listed in the Specialised Catalogue under C3/4 is now known to be from printings in deep red-brown on very blue paper which subsequently became oxidised.

### The Red-Brown on blued paper issues

The first Penny Star issue, C1, was basically a perforated version of the preceding im-perforate penny Red. It had a comparatively long life span and was still in use more than a year after it was first introduced in February 1854. The combination of the Die 1 head and gauge 16 perforations make this an easily identifiable issue. Its gauge 14 perforation counterpart, C2, the only other Penny Star issue to feature the Die 1 head, is much less plentiful.

The next four issues, C3 to C6, were all introduced during the first



half of 1855. Of the four, C5 is the most difficult to find, but neither C3 or C4 are especially common. C6 is something of a forgotten stamp since it is only listed in the Specialised Catalogue. The only way to differentiate it from C8 is by the alphabet II corner lettering and as a result many are sold as C8 or SG 29/33. They are, however, less common than C8.

The scarcest of all Penny Star issues is C7 which is a so called 'abnormal' issue. It was printed on a few remaining sheets of paper with the Small Crown watermark and only differs from C3 by virtue of the alphabet III corner lettering. With a high catalogue value (currently £325 in used condition), many examples have been positively identified, although there are probably still a few unidentified ones on offer at minimal prices. Since it can only be identified by a comparatively minor design detail, care should be taken when purchasing examples of C7.

The last issue in this group is C8, which is available in large quantities. Of all the red-brown issues, C8 probably displays the greatest range of shades, of which plum and deep claret are especially scarce. C8 had a life span of over 18 months and more than 20 plates were used over its period of printing; as a result there are a large number of varieties affecting stamps from this issue.

### Transitional issues

As already mentioned, a transitional period began when Perkins Bacon made their first attempts at eliminating the bluing of the paper in October 1856. This was whilst C8 was in production and examples in a variety of shades which display only partially blued paper with toned patches mark the first phase of these attempts.

Success was achieved in a printing released in November 1856, listed as C8a. It was printed in the familiar red-brown but it was to be the only time this shade of ink was used for printings on paper which remained white. This stamp is quite scarce and should ideally be purchased with a recognised certificate which confirms that it is a genuine white paper issue.

From January until March 1857 another Penny Star issue, C9, was printed on yellowish to cream toned paper free of any bluing. Four shades are listed of which the orange-brown and red-orange are fairly easily identified. To identify the pale red and rose shades, similar to those used for some printings of C10, more reliance needs to be placed on the paper characteristics. Apart from the toning, paper used for C9 printings is usually rough and often thicker than normal.

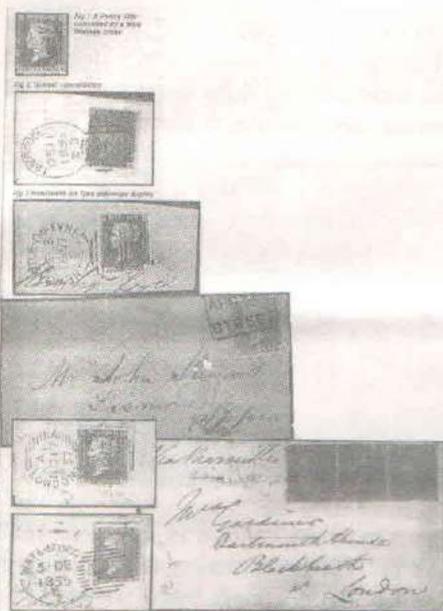
The table below lists all the basic Penny Star issues and their catalogue numbers. The Specialised Catalogue numbers are given first and, if applicable, the Stanley Gibbons Concise catalogue number is also shown. The different combinations of Die, perforation, watermark, alphabet and paper type are also identified, together with the date of issue (or earliest known date of use).

A fire at the Whitefriars premises of Perkins Bacon on 11/12 March 1857 is thought to have contributed to the appearance of some stamps in a browner shade than normal. This was a result of printing emergency supplies of the 1d. value at temporary premises in the Strand. The haste in which they were produced caused the difference in shade and the orange-brown shade of C9 has been positively attributed to these emergency printings.

	SG Spec		Concise	Perf	Watermark	Alphabet	Paper
Date of issue	No	Die	No	16	Small Crown	II	Blued
24 February 1854	C1	17-18	1	14	Small Crown	II	Blued
January 1855	C2	22	1	14	Small Crown	II	Blued
27 February 1855	C3	24-25	2	16	Small Crown	II	Blued
22 February 1855	C4	21	2	16	Small Crown	II	Blued
15 May 1855	C5	26	2	14	Large Crown 1	II	Blued
June 1855	C6	-	2	14	Large Crown 1	II	Blued
August 1855	C7	-	2	14	Small Crown	III	Blued
18 August 1855	C8	29-33	2	14	Large Crown 1	III	Blued
November 1856	C8a	37	2	14	Large Crown 1	III	White
January 1857	C9	-	2	14	Large Crown 1	III	Toned#
March 1857	C10	38-41	2	14	Large Crown 1 or 2	III	White
26 December 1857	C11	38-41	2	16	Large Crown 1	III	White
? 1861	C12	42	2	14	Large Crown 1 or 2	IV	White
? 1862	C13	-	2	14	Large Crown 1 or 2	II	White

# Example of C9 are completely free of bluing and are usually found on yellowish or cream toned paper.

### The rose-red on white paper issues



The colour of the stamps in this group may have become more consistent, but issue C10 (38/41) in particular offers collectors an ideal area in which to specialise. This is due in part to the quantities of C10 which have survived but also because it had the longest life of any Penny Star; it was after all the ideal towards which the printers had worked. As a result over 30 plates were used over its period of printing and, although none are

highly distinctive, a variety of shades are known to exist. Perhaps the most obvious and difficult to find is the bright rose-red shade of the first printings made between March and April 1857.

A large number of varieties can be found; plate flaws, Large



Crown watermark errors and even distinctive groups of alphabet III lettering. Examples on cover are readily available and a wide variety of postmarks can be found, many at modest prices.

Of the other rose-red on white paper issues, C11 is probably the scarcest but is easily identified with its gauge 16 perforations. It is known as a 'provisional' issue because the gauge 16 pin set was brought out of its reserve status and used for one last short period of time. Examples of C12 and C13 require the corner

letters to be identified as alphabet IV and alphabet II respectively. These two issues are sometimes sold as C10 or 38/41 which are more common. C13 was printed using reserve plates R15 and R16 in 1862 as a result of delays in the production of the Penny Red with plate numbers. It was originally intended that this new issue would be made available in 1858 alongside the 2d. blue with plate numbers. In fact, the delays in production were such that it was not issued until 1864. Reserve plate R17 which was also brought into use for the same reason has alphabet III corner lettering and is listed under C10 in the *Specialised Catalogue*.

### Mint Penny Stars

Used material may be plentiful but the same cannot be said for mint. Even mint examples of C10 are relatively scarce in fine condition, although Penny Stars from this issue offer the most affordable route for collectors of mint stamps. Given the short life span of some Penny Star issues it is not surprising that they are catalogued at high prices. C11 (36) is currently quoted in the *Concise* catalogue at £1250, whilst C5 (26) is at £700, in each case for the most common variant.

Condition is just as vital for a mint Penny Star as it is for a used example in terms of its value. Fine, lightly hinged, well centred stamps are always worth hunting down and are the exception rather than the rule. Care should be taken to check that the stamp has not been altered either on the face or gum side. Accepted certificates of expertisation are always welcome. Stamps that would not meet the catalogue's description of 'fine', such as unused (little or no gum) examples, can be found priced at a fraction of the catalogue value.

### Plating

The publication of plating guides as a result of specialist research by W R D Wiggins, G C Tonna, Dr K W Statham, R Brown and H W Fisher and others has made the task of plating Penny Stars much more popular. In common with the preceding imperforate issue, Penny Stars do not have the plate number incorporated into die design. Identification is reliant on the characteristics unique to each individual stamp.

Two groups of plates were used to print Penny Star issues. C1 and C2 were printed using plates 155 to 204 and reserve plates R1 to R6. The Penny Star issues from C3 on were printed using a new group of plates numbered from 1 to 68 and R15 to

R17. The use of these plates corresponded with the introduction of Die 2.

Constant varieties, double letters and reentries exist in reasonable numbers, they make the positive plating of the stamps concerned much easier. Constant varieties can take the form of misplaced letters, scratches and other blemishes in the design.

Double letters occur when the punch used to impress the corner letters on to the plate was struck twice or moved slightly as it was being punched. Another common reason for a letter being struck twice was to correct a misplaced or defective impression.

Re-entries show a doubling of part of the design (except the corner letters) and occurred when an impression had been entered on to a plate twice. The term commonly covers the re-entering of an impression before (a fresh entry) or after (a re-entry) the plate had been put to press.

The importance of corner letters in particular cannot be overstated and, to quote the *Specialised Catalogue*, 'it is certain that the task (of plating) would never have been 'attempted' without their presence. The positioning of lettering within the corner squares features in most specialist plating guides. Some guides also detail other characteristics unique to a given stamp or plate.

Although the task of plating calls for a keen eye and a strong magnifying glass, the distinctive corner letters and other individual characteristics make the task a lot less daunting than it might seem at first.

### Postmarks

During the life of the Penny Star issues other aspects of the postal service were being improved. Of particular interest to collectors was the development of postmarks, many of which were designed to increase the efficiency of everyone who handled the mail from post room sorter through to the delivery officer. A huge range of postmarks exist, a few of which are illustrated, including a blue Maltese cross! This area has been comprehensively studied and there are a number of books on the subject.

One of the most recognisable postmarks is the 'spoon' cancel which was issued to a number of towns and cities in England, Ireland and Wales between December 1853 and 1870. These spoon-shaped cancels combined a date stamp with the designated numeral for the place of origin. The illustrated example from Liverpool (*Fig 2*) is the most familiar shape for a spoon cancel but there are some unique designs of which the Reading 'biscuit' and the Rugby 'boot' are the most prominent.

Fine examples are collectable, whether on neat rectangular piece or on cover, although the latter will command a higher price.

In May 1854 the first 'sideways' Duplex cancel was issued. It combined the date-stamp and numeral but the two elements were not linked as they were in most spoon cancels. Designs vary but in all cases one portion is sideways in relation to the other. The development of the cancel is easy to see. Earlier examples often incorporated a double-circle datestamp of the type which had been in use since around 1829 and combined it with a numeral. Many of the later versions utilised a single circle

or arc datestamp and, apart from the sideways element, were similar to the standard duplex which was in general use by 1860.

Scottish local postmarks were issued to a number of sub- and local post offices, originally for use as backstamps. From October 1854 these offices were permitted to use their postmarks to cancel stamps. Scottish local postmarks come in a variety of forms including circular, framed and unframed and simply indicate the name of the office concerned. The common feature of all is that they are undated. Scottish local postmarks emanate from rural and urban offices; the illustrated example was struck at the Argyle Street office in Glasgow

England's involvement in the Crimean war (1854-56) saw the introduction of two postmarks used for cancelling mail sent from the Crimea. Both were similar to the 1844 English numeral type but with either a crown flanked by two stars or a star flanked by two 'O's (often referred to as the 'OXO' postmark) in place of the central digits. They are both sought-after, even on single stamps, although the crown version, which was used in the first half of the war, is scarcer. 3d. was the standard postage rate for mail sent from the Crimea to Britain and consequently fine, complete strikes of either postmark can be found on strips.

Machine cancellations were introduced in 1857, their positive impact on the efficient handling of mail resulting in widespread use within a year. Earlier examples are quite distinctive; one of Pearson Hill's experimental cancellations is illustrated (*fig 6*),



while the Charles Rideout machine cancels in use from 1858 had vertical bars with a T or '2' in the centre identifying which of his two machines had struck the postmark.

Postmarks struck in colours other than black are known and can provide some striking colour combinations with the stamps (*Fig 11*). Although some were struck in error, many postmarks were struck in another colour on purpose. The Burton-on-Trent spoon cancel for example was normally struck in green until the beginning of March 1857, after which it was struck in black. Blue and green were generally the popular alternatives to black, although other colours such as brown and purple exist. Experiments with different colours had virtually ceased by mid-1857, so these postmarks are normally found cancelling red-brown on blued paper Penny Star issues.

### Penny Stars on cover

The majority of Penny Stars were used to pre-pay the inland letter rate for items weighing 4oz or less. It is not uncommon to find pairs on cover which pre-paid an inland letter weighing up to 10z. Larger multiples are reasonably scarce on cover because the preceding weight steps were measured in whole ounces

at two pence per ounce. As a consequence it is very unusual to find 1d. and 2d. values on the same cover to pre-pay inland postage rates. Penny Stars were sometimes used to denote payment of a so-called 'late fee' which was charged on items of mail which had been handed in at specified locations after the last ordinary collection of the day. Late fees, usually of 1d. or 2d., were paid in addition to the normal postage rate for either inland or overseas mail. Often the payment of a late fee was indicated by a handstamp (usually in red) such as a boxed 'L', or in manuscript. Covers without such marks can still be identified because the total postage paid is one or two pence more than the applicable letter rate. Late fees were popular because late mail would still be processed on the same day; in the case of overseas mail, for example, it could ensure a letter was forwarded in time to catch a particular steamship sailing.

### Used abroad

Many Victorian stamps were legitimately used abroad, including various Penny Star issues. Following the issue of the Penny Black in 1840, the General Post Office initially rejected suggestions from dependent territories for their own stamp issues. In 1842 the first standardised crowned-circle 'Paid' hand stamps were issued to dependent territories and to other British post offices abroad. Their use was designed to provide a uniform method of denoting pre-payment as well as negating the need for individual stamp issues.

The latter argument was not to stand the test of time and by 1854 a number of dependent territories had their own stamp issues. Many crowned-circle handstamps however continued to be used to denote pre-payment into the 1860s and as a consequence the use of British stamps abroad before this period was somewhat sporadic. Dependent territories which used Penny Star issues included Gibraltar, Jamaica and Malta. Several British post offices abroad are also known to have used Penny Star and the subsequent 'plate number' issues. Details can be found in the Stanley Gibbons *Commonwealth and British Empire Catalogue*.

### Protective overprints

To protect against the petty pilfering of stamps which were commonly used to pay small accounts and subsequently redeemed for cash at post office counters, a number of firms overprinted their stamps. Although the use of overprints (and underprints) was most prevalent after the issue of the 1864 Penny Red, overprinting was first adopted by the Oxford Union Society in 1858 on Penny Star issues. Their overprint, whilst unofficial, was permitted by the Post Office and consisted of the letters 'O.U.S.' between two wavy lines reading upwards or downwards, the latter of which is the scarcer. This red overprint can be found printed double on the upwards version.

The only other firm known to have overprinted Penny Stars were Holloway's, producers of pills and ointments, whose premises were located at 244 Strand, London. Their overprint simply read 'HOLLOWAY/244' and was applied upright to the stamps from about 1860-64, reportedly using a wooden handstamp. This overprint remains unpriced in the *Specialised Catalogue*.

### Further information

By virtue of its scope, the Stanley Gibbons *Specialised*

*Catalogue* is highly recommended because it is probably the most logical listing of the Penny Star issues. In addition to background information, there is also an extensive bibliography of general and specialist works listed under a variety of subject headings, including postmarks. Details of specialist philatelic societies and periodicals which sometimes contain articles of relevance to the subject of Penny Star issues are also provided.

### References

R Danzig & D Goldsmith, *The Cancellations of the 1841 Penny Red*, (Philatelic Imprint, 1991)

The Spoon Study Group, *Spoon Cancels 1853-1870*, Richard Arundel Ltd, 1992)

Stanley Gibbons, *Commonwealth & British Empire Stamps 1840-1952*, 2003 edition

Stanley Gibbons, *Great Britain Specialised Stamp Catalogue*, Volume 1 Queen Victoria, 12th edition, 2001

Dr J T Whitney (ed C G Peachey and V B Crookes), *Collect British Postmarks*, 7th edition, (British Postmark Society)

W R D Wiggins and G C Tonna, *The Plating of Alphabet III Plates 22 to 68 and R17, together with Alphabet IV (plates 50 and 51) and Alphabet II (plates R15 and R16)*, 5 vols, 1973-74

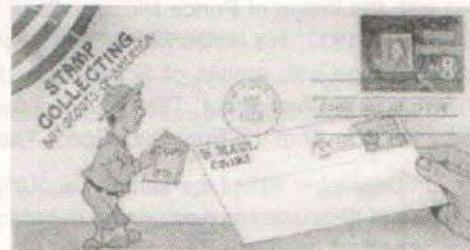
(Courtesy : Gibbons Stamp monthly, 2003)



## HISTORY OF SCOUT STAMP COLLECTING

P. Sreedhar, Member SIPA.

Stamp collecting, in general, is a worthwhile and formative educational means. It requires organization, observation, and precision for patient research work. It gives a geographical knowledge of the countries where the stamps are issued, knowledge of their monetary system, understanding of words belonging to other languages, of different customs, and the histories of different countries starting with their adoption of the stamp up to the present time. For all these reasons, stamp collecting and particularly Scout postage stamps can be profitably used as a didactic instrument.



We do not know if Baden-Powell, in his writings, advised boys to collect stamps as he recommended dramatic art among the training means in his method. What is sure is that at the time of BP the Scout theme was just starting and that he did not have time to witness its diffusion. In our opinion, one should have in each Scout section at least one collection of Scout stamps. This would not only have a didactic goal, but would serve to remind youngsters of the diffusion of the Movement throughout the world. Moreover, it would show youngsters the importance Scouting has acquired in the official life of states, to the point that government have authorized the issuing of denominations representative of the country, as with coins. But, in order to have a more ample diffusion, they print special series of commemorative stamps of Scout manifestations and in honour of Scouting, and authorize, moreover, special postal cancellations to commemorate special Scout activities.

The history of Scout stamp collecting started with the "forerunner" stamps: the issuing of three denominations in April 1900, with rudimentary means, during the Anglo-Boer war. It was during this war that Baden-Powell, thanks to his gift of observation and his qualities of organization, received his first Scout intuition by using boys in the activities of informants.

As you know, the history of Scouting began in 1908, and in a very short time the Movement took shape and spread throughout the world.

The real history of Scout stamp collecting started on the 7<sup>th</sup> of November 1918 in Czechoslovakia with the printing of two postage stamps of 10 and 20 haleru for the service rendered by Scouts to the post offices during the war of liberation of the country. These are the two denominations on which a mention of the Scout Organization appears for the first time.



We then had to wait more than three years to see an other Scout stamps. In February of 1920, Siam (now Thailand) printed a few stamps out of an ordinary precedent series with an extra tax for the "Scout funds" that is to say for the benefit of the Scout Organization. In December of 1920, a second series with printing similar to the first, gathered still more funds for Siamese Scouting.

The first issuing of postage stamps featuring a Scout occurred in Hungary where, to honor the already renowned Scout Movement, on the 27<sup>th</sup> of April 1925, a postage stamp worth 1000 Korana was issued. We can see a Scout blowing a trumpet in the foreground and, in the background, an encampment.

Six years elapsed before we see yet other stamps with a Scout theme. Rumania issued, on the 8<sup>th</sup> of July 1931, a series of five denominations, three with vignettes of Scout activities and two with the image of Prince Nicolas, Chief Scout of Rumania. On July 8<sup>th</sup> 1932, this series was followed by another consisting of six stamps with scenes of Scout life and with the image of King Carol II, Chief Scout. The eleven denominations carry an extra tax in favor of the Rumanian Scout Association.

On December 21<sup>st</sup> of the same year, 1932, in Liechtenstein, a series of three stamps was printed in order to collect funds on the behalf of children. The denominations of 30 and 10 r. represent Prince Francis I, Chief Scout, whose image is backed by two Scouts with a flag.

In 1933, Scout stamp collecting began to affirm itself and the issuings of stamps commemorating Scout activities or manifestations follow one another in ever increasing numbers. The second world-wide conflict caused a stop in issuings of all kinds from 1938 to 1945. With the return to normality, the Scout theme came to life once again and enriched itself more and more through new issuings and new countries of issue; it is through increasingly numerous series that countries hold to officially recognize the insertion of Scouting into the social life of the nation and its educational value for youth.

Unfortunately, even on the Scout theme, there are some issuings that have only a lucrative goal coming from commercial agencies in the name and on behalf of their countries; in some cases, there is not even a single Scout in the country and the

postal requirements do not justify such abundant issuings of stamps. The most important catalogues of stamp collecting houses, for reasons of respectability, do not classify these series, or else mention them in a very general way.

Since the XII World Jamboree of 1967, in Idaho (United States), Scout stamp collecting became considerably enriched with commemorative issuings of national or World Jamborees, of Rover Moots, of anniversaries celebrating the foundation of Scouting or of Guiding in various countries, of periodical lectures, - whether world-wide or local - concerning Scouting and Guiding.

The progressive diffusion of the Scout theme has encouraged collectors to get together and to publish reports on the supply and demand of stamps. The field of activities then extended itself to include cancellations, official and unofficial "First Day" envelopes, and all that concerns the postal service.



## HISTORY AND BACK GROUND OF AUSTRALIA'S 1956 OLYMPIC GAMES STAMPS

RICHARD BRECKON

The stamps issued for the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games included Australia's first multicoloured, photogravure productions, as well as a number of interesting complications.

Early in 1954 the Australian Post Office was asked by the Melbourne Olympic Games Organising Committee to issue a stamp publicising the Games in advance around the world. The suggestion was immediately adopted and it was decided to release a 2s. stamp in December 1954, when its usage on Christmas mail to overseas destinations would give wide coverage. Two shillings was Australia's basic airmail postage to Europe, North America and much of the rest of the world.



At the Organising Committee's suggestion, the Olympic publicity stamp design was based on the official publicity poster for the Melbourne Olympic Games. The poster was designed by Richard Beck, an English industrial designer who had emigrated to Australia and lived in Melbourne. Beck won a competition to design the poster and was awarded 120 guineas (£126). His entry featured an invitation card bearing the Olympic rings and Melbourne's coat of arms. The Organising Committee arranged for 35,000 posters to be distributed world-wide.

The first versions of the Olympic Publicity stamp design prepared by the Note Printing Branch incorporate the poster's main features in a 'commemorative size' (24mmx37.5mm) stamp in vertical format. Later, the question of copyright in the poster was raised and it was thought prudent to consult Richard Beck about the stamp. He liked the overall design, but wished to

see typography and other details improved.

Beck was commissioned to prepare a new version of the Olympic publicity stamp, having earlier designed the 1953 Tasmanian Stamp Centenary issue. (This marked point where private artists became increasingly involved in stamp designs, whereas previously Note Printing Branch artists had been almost exclusively responsible.)

In August 1954 the Stamp Advisory Committee accepted Beck's revised Olympic design ('a more finished' effort than the earlier version) and it was approved by the Postmaster General. A curious aspect is the inclusion of 'POSTAGE' on the stamp at the insistence of the Post Office Director General, even though the word had been dropped from commemorative stamp designs since 1947. At the artist's request, the 2s. Olympic stamp was deep blue corresponding with the poster's background colour.

#### **Not everyone was happy**

The stamp was issued on 1 December 1954. Based on the month's normal requirements of 1.7 million stamps, the print run of the 2s. Olympic stamp was fixed at 2 million. Even so, supplies began to run out within a week of its issue. The Post Office took the unusual step (for a commemorative stamp) of authorising die urgent reprinting in mid-December of 1.8 million Olympic stamps, which brought the total quantity to 3,804,320 stamps. This was evidence of the stamp's popularity, although not everyone was happy about the issue.

Australia was the first Olympic host country to issue advance publicity stamps and to some this precedent was not welcome. GSM (December 1954) featured an article by Stanley Gibbons' Managing Director, F S Wall, questioning the need for the Olympic publicity stamp and inviting readers to comment. In a letter to the Australian Post Office, Wall noted that he had received 'a fair amount' of correspondence and 'almost without exception they (i.e. GSM readers) would prefer not to see actual stamps to provide advance publicity so much beforehand.'

The Olympic Games Organising Committee thought the stamp had been a wonderful success and they urged a reissue in December 1955. The Post Office had anticipated this when planning the 1954 stamp and instructed the Note Printing Branch to retain the printing plates. The matter could not be decided without consulting Postmaster General H L Anthony. He had recently told Parliament that the frequency of commemorative stamps was too high and in future they would be curtailed. Nevertheless, the Olympic publicity stamp's reissue was approved by the Postmaster General on 29 September 1955.

In a new colour of greenish-blue, the 2s. stamp was issued on 30 November 1955 for one month's sale. To ensure adequate supplies were available, the print run was increased to 3,936,000 stamps. The official publicity stated that 'last year's stamp attracted considerable attention abroad and the reissue of the stamp would assist further overseas interest in Australia and the Olympic Games next year.'

#### **The 1956 commemoratives**

When the Post Office began planning commemorative stamps for issue at the time of the 1956 Olympic Games, it envisaged three values to be recess-printed in the Note Printing

Branch: 3½d. Olympic rings, torch and Southern Cross constellation—basic letter postage within Australia and to British Commonwealth countries 7½d. Aerial view of the main Olympic Stadium (Melbourne Cricket Ground)—basic surface letter postage to foreign countries 2s. A reissue of the Olympic publicity design, possibly with modifications—basic airmail postage to most overseas countries.

This choice of stamp values and subjects was announced publicly in April 1955. At the same time, it was anticipated that private artists might wish to contribute ideas for the Olympic stamps and, without organising a formal competition, the Post Office announced that designs forwarded by the end of July 1955 would be considered by the Stamp Advisory Committee. None of the designs submitted were chosen or had influence over the adopted stamp designs.

Notwithstanding the publicised plan to issue three Olympic stamps, the Stamp Advisory Committee subsequently made extensive changes—new subjects were chosen, se-tenant 3½d. stamps would be issued, a commemorative stamp booklet was planned, a 1s. stamp was added to the set (basic airmail postage to nearer Asian countries), a commemorative aerogramme would be issued and, most significantly, the 1s. and 2s. stamps would be printed overseas by the photogravure process. By October 1955 the proposed make-up of the Olympic Games stamp issue had been fixed as:

2x3½d. se-tenant obverse and reverse of the Olympic medallion to be awarded to all participants in the Games. The 3½d. stamps would be 'medium size' (23.4mmx 28.5mm) to facilitate their arrangement in stamp booklet panes of six;

7½d. Olympic rings, torch and Southern Cross constellation. The Main Stadium was thought to be better for depiction on the aerogramme;

1s. View of Collins Street, Melbourne;

2s. View of Melbourne from across the Yarra River. As the 2s. and 1s. stamps featured views it was thought best if these were printed photogravure.

It had always been the Post Office's intention not to feature specific sports, but rather emphasise Melbourne as the host city and Olympic symbolism on the stamps.

#### **Rejection**

A submission to the Postmaster General seeking approval to the revised plan was accepted, except that the Minister rejected the 3½d. medallion designs as being 'crowded'. Instead, a single 3½d. design was prepared that featured Melbourne's coat of arms on a white background. At this stage development of the Olympic stamps divided—one path involved the normal recess production by the Note Printing Branch and the other involved an unfamiliar course of photogravure production by two overseas printers.

Production of the 3½d. and 7½d. recess stamps should have been straightforward, but for different reasons the stamp dies originally engraved for both values had to be abandoned and new dies engraved. The 3½d. stamp die was engraved at an early stage because the lead-time needed to manufacture the stamp booklet was lengthy. The booklet would accommodate

12, 3½d.

After the die had been finished, it was noticed that the Olympic rings were in the wrong sequence stamps arranged in two panes of six. The booklet printing plate featured 216 stamp impressions grouped in 36 panes of six. The Olympic booklet was to be the first commemorative type since the 1927 Canberra Parliament House booklet and would feature trilingual inscriptions (English, French and Spanish) to describe postal rates. It was not to be.

### Abandoned

In August 1956 the Federal government imposed increases in postal rates and basic letter postage rose from 3½d. to 4d. The increases took effect on 1 October and the 3½d. Olympic stamp became obsolete for letter postage. The change to a 4d. value was effected in late August by re-engraving the impression taken from the transfer roller (the cylinder used to transfer the die to the master plate). It was a common practice to accommodate two impressions of the die on the transfer roller and therefore the engraving of '4d.' had to be done twice. This explains the variation in the '4' in each vertical pair throughout the sheet. (The base of the '4' is weaker on one stamp compared to the other.) The postal rate increase made it impossible to manufacture a 4d. stamp booklet in the available time and the proposed Olympic booklet had to be abandoned.

Production of the booklet reached the stage where 18 million 3½d. stamps (enough for 1.5 million booklets) as well as other components had been printed, but no actual booklets were collated. All this material was destroyed, except for two 216-on booklet sheets and matching quantities of covers and inserts, which were transferred to Post Office archives (40 examples of the unissued 3½d. Olympic stamp were sold in the 1987 Australia Post archival sale). Interestingly, the Post Office briefly considered issuing the 3½d. Olympic booklet sheets as normal sheets in 1956, since 3½d. now served for printed matter postage. However, this was decided against because publicity already released specified 4d., 7½d., 1s. and 2s. values in the Olympic set, and also the quantity of 3½d. stamps would have been inadequate for their expected use. The designer of the 4d. stamp was Peter Morris and its engraver, Frank Manley.

Engraving the 7½d. stamp die, which was not affected by the 1956 postal rates increase, also involved an unfortunate setback. After the die had been finished, it was noticed that the Olympic rings were in the wrong sequence. The five rings overlap or underlap each other in a particular sequence, but a reverse sequence was shown on the stamp die and it had to be re-engraved. Frank Manley was the designer and engraver of the 7½d. stamp.

In other respects, production of the two recess stamps proceeded normally. The stamps were in sheets of 120 (4d.) and 80 (7½d.) and without marginal inscriptions, in colours of carmine (4d.) and blue (7½d.). The issue date of the stamps was 31 October 1956, two weeks later than originally planned, but they remained on sale throughout the Olympic Games (22 November-8 December). The 4d. print run was 119,309,880 stamps—triple the normal quantity for a base rate commemorative. This was done to ensure supplies were sufficient for five weeks, during which time there was increased demand for 4d. stamps. (A 4d. Queen's head definitive was not

issued until March 1957 and, in the interim, production of the 4d. Koala stamp was escalated.) The 7½d. stamp's print figure was 4,602,000.

### 'The best in the world'

Production of the 1s. and 2s. photogravure stamps followed a very different course, because the Post Office had never produced stamps by this process or dealt with overseas stamp printers. Following the Postmaster General's approval in November 1955 to issue the photogravure stamps, immediate steps were taken to arrange this. A senior Post Office official, who happened to be travelling in Europe, approached the two firms selected for the task—Harrison and Sons (1s.) and Courvoisier SA (2s.). Harrisons were chosen for their role in British stamp production and because they were far better equipped than any other British firm'. Courvoisier enjoyed an acknowledged status as 'the best in the world for photogravure stamps'. The use of two firms was thought useful for comparison purposes and for maintaining a competitive edge.

### Colour and contrast

Specifications provided to both firms required



'commemorative size' (37.5mm x 24mm) stamps in horizontal format in 80-on sheets; with delivery of 7.5 million stamps of each value required by 10 September 1956. No artwork was supplied because each firm was asked to create a design using a 35mm colour transparency of the scene to be depicted. (They were taken by Post Office photographer M Murphy.) Numbered stamp proofs had to be submitted by each printer before authorisation could be given to proceed with printing. The Post Office noted that 'Brilliance of colour is desirable, in view of the strong sunlight in Australia, and contrast is considered of importance.' The liaison with Harrisons was facilitated by the Australian Post Office representative, Australia House, London, (R V McKay) and at Courvoisier by the Swiss PTT, which usually acted on behalf of other postal administrations using that firm to print stamps.

Work at the two printers began with the preparation of original drawings by staff artists, based on the transparency images and incorporating the specified wording. Harrisons had to make considerable changes to their photograph to get a suitable image for reproduction. The next step, involving stamp-size proofs, necessarily meant etching plates for each colour used in the stamp artwork. Three or four colours had been suggested and both firms opted to produce stamps in four colours.

In early March 1956 Courvoisier submitted three 2s. proofs in different colour combinations. Their stamp size (38.5mm x 24mm) was better suited to the firm's machinery. The etching



was considered satisfactory by the Post Office, but additional proofs were requested in which the blue colour was more subdued. Five such proofs were forwarded in late April, also in different colour combinations, and with the inscription at top in coloured or white lettering. One proof comprising light blue, yellow, greyish violet and rose, and coloured lettering was selected. By mid-May Courvoisier had the go-ahead to proceed to full production.

Harrison's 1s. proofs involved a few difficulties. The first submission received in mid-April 1956, comprised four proofs with different coloured borders. They were rejected because the design showed too much regularity in the trees (a 'hedgelike effect') and insufficient detail in the outline of buildings. This led Post Office artist L Coles to prepare a model sketch to demonstrate the required changes from which Harrison's artists prepared a new design. By mid-July, revised proofs submitted were considered 'a vast improvement over earlier efforts'. One of the proofs in brown, blue, green and yellow was approved subject to minor modifications. The 1s. stamp size (38mmx25mm) also differed to specifications because of production requirements.



### Suez crisis

Courvoisier had more lead-time than Harrisons, but neither met the delivery date. Courvoisier completed production of their stamp by the end of July and then arranged for despatch by the *Grootekerk*, departing Genoa on 22 August. The looming Suez Crisis put the *Grootekerk's* passage through the Suez Canal in doubt until news was received on 1 September that the ship had passed Suez. Harrisons used the P&O liners *Stratheden* and *Himalaya*, dividing the consignment into one million stamps in the first dispatch and the balance in the second. By early October the full supply (7,500,000 of each stamp) was in Melbourne, where it was reported that all sheets were received in good condition. Fortunately, the 1s. and 2s. values were not affected by the postal rates increases.

Both Harrisons and Courvoisier requested permission to incorporate their imprints in the bottom margin of each stamp, and although the Post Office had misgivings, this was agreed as long as the lettering was not intrusive. Courvoisier also featured their imprint in large lettering, spanning six stamps, in the top and bottom sheet margins. The 2s. sheet featured a serial sheet number in the right margin. The 1s. sheet carried no marginal inscriptions.

Each printer was asked to supply 15 imperforate proofs separately mounted on cards. These were for presentation together with die proofs of the recess stamps. Between 1945 and 1964, the Post Office presented die proofs of every new stamp to the Queen, Governor General, Postmaster General, Director General and Deputy Director General of the Post Office and to the three or four private members of the Stamp Advisory Committee. The 1s. and 2s. Olympic stamps are presumably imperforate examples taken from printed sheets.

The appearance of bright, multicoloured stamps had a considerable effect on collectors. The Post Office was pleased to report philatelic sales of the Olympic stamps estimated to have exceeded £50,000. It is also of interest that the Yarra River scene on the 2s. stamp was reproduced on the front cover of the souvenir program for the Olympic Games opening ceremony.

### The aerogramme

On 12 November one further postal item was issued for the Olympic Games, this being the 10d. aerogramme. It was Australia's first commemorative type and was inspired by Britain's aerogramme for the Coronation. The Olympic aerogramme featured the Main Stadium and commemorative inscriptions at left with Melbourne's coat of arms in the stamp indicia. The production was by letterpress in red on blue paper and without the usual variegated border. The print run was 4,377,789 aerogrammes, which was sufficient for two and a half months sale. The issue date coincided with the Olympic Philatelic Exhibition organised by local stamp clubs and the first of its kind in an Olympic host city. Also 379 Olympic aerogrammes were overprinted 'SPECIMEN' for UPU distribution (distribution of postal stationery to UPU countries ceased in about 1962).

### Postal arrangements

As well as issuing stamps, the Post Office faced the immense task of organising postal and telecommunications facilities for the Olympic Games. The facilities were provided at the various competition venues, the main Olympic Village at Heidelberg (a Melbourne suburb) and at the Olympic Hostel at Ballarat. 15 Olympic temporary post offices were established at which 52 different pictorial postmarkers were used. Philatelic mail order facilities were provided, allowing collectors to obtain postmark impressions. Today these covers are plentiful enough but the facilities did not provide for registration, and examples of registered covers from Olympic post offices are elusive. It was left to individual collect to visit venues to make their own arrangements and few did so. Also scarce is commercial mail handled at Olympic post offices. The focus of collectors' endeavours in 1956 involved securing attractive philatelic covers, not mundane varieties presented by normal mail.

More than half of the 616,000 Olympic postal articles were processed at the Olympic Village, Heidelberg. This post office was located outside the Village's main entrance and was



accessible to the public. For most of its two months of operation, the post office was open 14 hours a day, Monday to Saturday. The second Olympic Village post office was in the migrant hostel at Ballarat, established for rowing and canoeing events on Lake Wendouree.

The focus of Olympic activity was the Main Stadium where athletic events and the opening and closing ceremonies were held. A post office operated in the grounds outside the stadium to allow the public access. At Olympic Park, the venue for swimming, soccer, hockey and cycling, a post office was located in the outside grounds. Another post office at nearby Richmond Park supported Olympic Park and although Richmond Park was only a 'stamp selling kiosk' it did a considerable amount of business. Other post offices were provided at the Exhibition Building, Carlton (wrestling, weight-lifting and basketball) and St Kilda Town Hall (fencing). Post offices were established for the media's use inside the Main Stadium and at Olympic Park, and consequently these offices were only accessible to ticket-holders.

The majority of Olympic post offices operated for the full duration of the Games, and the others operated at times linked to their associated events. For most events of limited duration, mobile post offices were provided. They were of a caravan type with a serving window, teleprinters and public telephone cabinets. Two mobile post offices were specially built for the Games. Mobile Post Office No 1 operated at pentathlon, shooting and cycling venues and No 2 at yachting. Both mobile offices were present at the opening and closing ceremonies to give assistance to the fixed post offices.

An Olympic post office operated at Melbourne Airport at irregular hours that coincided with the arrival and departure of aircraft. It was planned to operate a post office at Port Melbourne's Station Pier to provide similar facilities for ship arrivals and departures, but it was not possible to arrange this. To keep faith with collectors who had ordered Olympic postmarks, the Station Pier postmark was used by the Philatelic Bureau in Melbourne.

(Courtesy : Gibbion's Stamp monthly, 2003)



## BALLOON POST

G.S. Farid

The history of man's dream to fly like birds is immemorial. In Greek mythology, Hermes was the winged messenger of gods, Daedalus. When imprisoned by the Creton king, Minos, he made wings of feathers, joined together by wax for himself and for his son, Icarus. They escaped to Sicily. Icarus flew so high that the sun melted the wax and he fell into the sea and drowned while the father landed safely.

Since ancient times, scientists of all ages turned their mind and inventions towards a device by which man could fly. The first attempt appears to have been directed to fly in the manner of birds, the idea of machine was later suggested by



an Italian poet, scientist and engineer, Leonardo da Vinci. Successful flight into the sky became possible with the invention of "lighter than air" balloon. Hot air is lighter than cooler air, so that the bag filled with hot air rises upward. The problem was to promote a constant supply of hot air to keep the balloon afloat in the air.

Many unsuccessful attempts, devices and inventions were made. It was only in 1731 that a Russian scientist, Krykutni made the first trial by balloon. But Joseph Montgolfier was credited to the invention of balloon on 5th June 1783. He was the first to conceive the idea of harnessing smoke by confining it in a bag. The first live passengers, a sheep, a fowl and a duck were lifted on September, 19, 1783 at Versailles and rose to the height of 15,000 feet and descended after eight minutes at a distance two miles away.

A Frenchman, Jean Pilatre de Rozier a native of Metz, Lorraine, solved the problem of a regular supply of hot air by hanging a brasier of fire at a distance below the neck of the balloon thus ensuring a constant fire and a steady supply of hot air. He was the first human being to make an ascent in the sky in a balloon. On November 21, 1783, De Rozier and the Marguis d' Arlandes rose up the sky from Paris and passed right over the city being in the air for 25 minutes, landed at about five miles away from the place of ascent. A stamp was issued in France in 1935 to commemorate the 150th year of death of Rozier.

During the Civil war in America balloons were used to some extent by the Union. Armies for observation and during the siege of Paris and Metz in the Franco Prussian War, 1870-71, many messages were flown out from the city by balloons. On September 23, 1870, the balloon, 'Neptune' was released from Paris with letters. Throughout the siege of Paris, 69 mail carrying flights were made and many thousand covers and cards were flown. These are the first official balloon service in the world.

In this age of jets and rockets, Balloon Post is obsolete now and kept alive by the philatelists only. It is popular in America and Germany as adjuncts to exhibition, fete or allied to some famous events.

In India, balloon flights were made as early as 1877 by Joseph Lynn at Bombay and in 1889 by Percival Spencer at Calcutta. On January 14, 1941, Indian Airmail Society of Calcutta released two balloons on observation flights to ascertain the weight lifting capacity with some messages, flown from Curzon Garden, Calcutta. The first balloon dropped its messages at Ellen brough Course and the other at Ladies Golf Course Pavilion. The special missive show a small red rubber stamped impression of a balloon with the inscription, "Carried by Balloon on Observation "Flight" in two lines, also pasted over printed the test number and a message for the finder. There was also pasted over the missive the war Race Result. All the missive were addressed to the Honorary Secretary, Indian Airmail Society, Calcutta, duly cancelled and posted to the destination in the ordinary course.

In connection with the welfare of the orphans, the first Pestalozzi Children's village was established in India, which particularly aimed at their education, food and shelter, The

Government of Mysore donated 100 acres of fertile land near Bangalore and special Balloon Flight was arranged for the philatelists to raise funds for the cause. Special cover and cards were flown, depicting a balloon flight over the village and inscribed, "First Balloon Flight Cover, Bangalore, 14.11.1963". Special cancellation was also applied by the Postal Department along with the Children's Day cancellation. It was suggested to the founders of the Pestalozz Children's Village to make this a regular feature in Bangalore on the 14th November of every year.

The Aero Club of India organised a balloon flight in New Delhi on November, 21, 1970 to commemorate the centenary of the balloon mail during the Franco Prussian War in 1870. The Balloon flight took off from Race Course Ground and landed at Safdar Jung Airport. The Postal Department arranged a special despatch of philatelic mail through the Balloon Flight on November, 21 1970. A special slogan post mark was allotted to the Philatelic Bureau, Parliament Street, New Delhi, which reads, 'Balloon mail Centenary, 1870 - 1970'.

In 1897 at Leipzig and Munich, balloon flights were made by the 'Aug Polich' and special card and cachet were used.

At Manchester in August, 1903, a balloon flight was organised in connection with a fete in aid of the National Lifeboat Institution. At the occasion special cards were flown bearing a design of a balloon above a rocky coast. yet another flight was sponsored by the Daily Graphic and cards were flown from England to Sweden, in 1907.

An American newspaper magnate, James Gordon Benett,

inaugurated the Gordon Benett International Balloon Race in 1906. Some of the competitors carried a souvenir mail along with them. This race became a regular feature. In 1936 the winning balloon, 'belgica' carried a small mail Warsaw to Archangel and is initailed by the aeronaut, E. Demuyter.

On 23rd February, 1964 a balloon post was organised by a K.L.M. Official, the Phillips Company and the Hague, Balloon Club in aid of the President of Pakistan's Relief Fund. The balloon 'Utrecht' was launched in Karachi with its aeronaut, J.Boesman, descended at Landhi. The interesting part of it was that it evoked such a tremendous excitement that it was chased by about a thousand souvenir hunters who thronged upon the balloon damaging the basket and the instruments even parts of the balloon cloth were torn into pieces and carried as souvenir. A small number of about 168 covers were saved from destruction by the timely interference of the police force. It was the first Pakistan balloon flight. Another flight was sponsored by the above organisation, piloted by Mrs Nini Boesman from Lahore on 8th March, 1964. The balloon 'Oxygenium' took off during the famous Lahore Horse Show and was inaugurated by the Minister of Health. It landed near Indian border after a flight of two hours.

In may 1958, a Balloon flight was made in South West Africa during the Agricultural Show in Otjiwarongo. Pictorial cards bearing the map of South West Africa with the initial of the aeronaut.

Many countries have sponsored balloon flights and issued also postage stamps, the entire list in this small treatise is not possible.

(Courtesy : Tanapex Souvenir, 1973)

