



# SIPA

# Bulletin

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1854-9 1/2 Arches  
35

July - Sept 2025

MADRAS DAY  
46

Quarterly

## Editorial

### 'POSTAL ART' PEN CANCELLATIONS

As everyone is aware, a "Cancellation" is done on the stamps affixed on a postal article such as Postal card, inland letter, envelope, speed post, registered letter, parcel-etc to prevent the stamp's illegal reuse.

Starting from the Maltese Cross of the Penny Black and the diamond of dots of the Scinde Dawk to the present day, special cancellations are revered by the philatelists so as to bring them as tools of postal history and records them in book after book. Such is the importance and reverence attached to them. A learned philatelist will always try to have the stamp alongwith the cancellation whenever he/she gets one intact. As such it is the responsibility and accountability of the concerned and the authorised staff. Thoughts of concern regarding the stamp collector should enter the mind of the deliverer whenever the necessity of delivering a mail with an uncanceled stamp arise.

In the present state of affairs, collecting stamps from mail at home as used to be told in youth classes and primers is not viable as commemorative stamps on postally delivered articles received at home are meagre. In this situation, on seeing one such mail being extended by the local postal staff will bring unbounded joy. However on closer look if the commemorative stamps are cancelled by pen, Ho....the joy will turn into irritation and anger only. The receiver / collector will definitely feel like kicking the ra\*\*\*\* if not knocking down. I express as I feel, sorry.

Let me repeat the feelings what was expressed in social media by a stamp collector when he came across such a situation.

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"This speedpost package was sent by myself couple of days back from Trivandrum GPO speedpost counter to one of our renowned member in Chennai. I took special care to affix stamps purchased from the P.B and ensured that the counter person does a proper postmark cancellation and not a stupid pen cancellation. However in spite of my precautions, the

receiver has received the package in this horrible and defaced condition. This pen cancellation over and above the standard postmark has been done deliberately by someone who cares two hoots for the sentiments and value of a travelled cover. If this cannot be termed as an act of "philatelic vandalism", I don't know what it can be called. No wonder despite our repeated requests, if someone from the department is purposely doing this kind of act, he/she must be mentally deranged. Very sad state of affairs in the postal department."

For anybody's complaint with respect to pen cancellation, obviously the reply will come stating that necessary and adequate instructions have been given to the heads of all circles, through a notice by ADG (Philately) on 30.10.2019. Yes, the circular addresses the issue perfectly and the instructions are result oriented if... followed strictly by all concerned. However to many collector's dismay occasionally the arrogance and tragedy is continuing as exemplified by some of the samples shown herewith which have occurred in 2025. This shows the effect of the circular all these years and the adherence to the instructions given in para 4 of the circular is not done strictly and no fear of any punishment is imbibed in the minds of the perpetrators.



Another receiver of a pen-cancelled mail spoke as blow "Words fail me at seeing this "philatelic vandalism". Can't really comprehend why anyone with little bit of grey matter in their synapses would do this atrocious thing. Really sad to see this. Might not be easy to find the responsible person"

**Suggested Probable Solutions are,**

1. A minimum knowledge of commemorative stamps and miniature sheets shall be given to the staff connected to the job of clearing and delivering mail. Lack of it may be one of the cause.
2. A little knowledgeable feeling about the passion attached to collecting by the stamp collectors may be imparted into the minds of the staff, as such staff are quite young, they will hold it long.
3. As envisioned in the circular test checks should be done as a monitoring exercise regularly at periodical intervals, at the least once a week.
4. As an inevitable solution, the delivery staff who happens to be forced to do the 'crime' shall be given with an equipment to put a proper cancellation at the time of delivery, if necessary. This action will not take much of time as such a situation will arise only very rarely.

- Editor



# HALF ANNA 9½ ARCHES THE FIRST POSTAGE STAMP OF BRITISH INDIA

Dr.Arun  
Life Member, SIPA

## A TOXIC BEAUTY

The court of directors of the East India Company in London wanted to implement postal reform in India to improve communication for official, commercial, and domestic purposes and for revenue generation. Stamps were to be affixed to letters as proof of prepayment for postal service by the sender. They specified that the postage stamps should be of original design, to be printed only in India, and to be used exclusively within India.

The Government of India approached Captain H.L. Thuillier, Deputy Surveyor General of India, to design and print stamps using the lithographic press at Calcutta which he was using to print topographical survey maps and charts.

Captain Thuillier employed an Indian artist and engraver Numerodeen to design the stamps and printer Mr.H.M. Smith to print the stamps using the lithographic press at the Surveyor General Office at Calcutta.

The stamp featured a profile of Queen Victoria with a country label (India) above and value label (Half Anna) below. The side panels showed 9 ½ arches and ornaments at top right and left corners.

The stamp was printed by lithography on imported white wove paper which had East India Company's Coat of Arms sheet watermark using English imported deep red Vermilion ink. 300 treble sheets with 120 impressions per sheet, 12 x 10 setting, were printed and dispatched by steamer to Bombay post office on 5<sup>th</sup> April 1854.

In the meantime, the imported English vermilion ink was exhausted and for continued printing similar ink was obtained from local sources. The Indian vermilion ink was dull red in colour and corrosive damage to the limestone occurred due to its Mercuric sulfide content.

Captain Thuillier telegraphed the Bombay postal office to destroy all 300 treble sheets on arrival. He subsequently redesigned and after several trials printed India's first postage stamps with amicable dyes.

In contrast to the 9 ½ arches half anna, the issued half anna stamp was printed in indigo ink with 8 arches in the side panel and the profile of Queen Victoria was larger and well defined with 96 stamps per sheet with 12 x 8 setting.



1854 Half Anna 9 ½ arches stamp, imperforate, un gummed, **SG1**, printed with English deep red vermilion ink on wove paper, right lower corner position with full corner ornaments and partial

inscription of April 1854 from plate 1.

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Collecting Penny Black, Indian  
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# POSTHORNS, BISHOP MARKS, MALTESE CROSS COVERS & MULREADY

- Mr. Abhijit De,  
Life Member, S.I.P.A.

## PART 1

### I. INTRODUCTION

I had written about Penny Black and Penny Red stamps and related philatelic matters like printing processes and cancellations etc.in the last 2 SIPA Bulletins (Volume 37.No.1 and No. 2 of 2025). **However, there is a period before 1840** when the transportation and delivery of messages was an interesting process too, but were left out of the earlier articles as that dealt with the subjects related to, and around Penny Black and Penny Red only .Therefore some of the other points I came across during my research and while going through my philatelic collection, are discussed in this article, based on the many interesting additional information I have gathered .

This article basically discusses the transportation of messages during the 'pre-1840' period, the development of markings and cancellations to record payment and delivery during this pre-1840 period ,and some related developments there after, and finally the Mulready postal stationery that was envisaged about the time of the introduction of the Penny Black .Hence these form the total heading for this article . This article also continues its focus on Britain and European philately.

Concentration continues on British philately, with transportation systems like Postal mail by horse or mail coach .The Se-tenant stamp set here under , issued on 31<sup>st</sup> July 1984, honours the Bi-centenary of the first coach service between Bristol , the second largest city in Southern England ,along with neighbouring Bath, to the biggest City, London , and back. It shows the many challenges these coach services faced as the network expanded around Britain from 1784.



### II. POSTHORNS

As was the case in India from ancient, historical times, when extensive message delivery relay systems, using runners,pigeons, or horses, had been introduced during the rule of dynasties that occupied most of present day India, like that of Emperors Chandragupta Maurya ( of the Maurya Dynasty, which included Emperor Asoka), and Emperor Samudragupta (of the Gupta Dynasty), The Cholas and Pandyas of the southern peninsula and Sher Shah Suri ( who had temporarily ousted the Mughal Emperors from India, and is considered the founder of the modern Indian postal system, by some - during whose rule

the route which was used most extensively , running in between his capital , Sasaram , in present day Bihar, and Lahore , became known as Grand Trunk Road , in pre-independence India).

Similarly, in Britain and Europe too, the mail system developed due to the need of the Kings to stay in touch with even the most extreme parts of their Empire. In Europe extensive messenger service systems , started for the King, and extended to the civilians who could afford it, spread in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century .

In Britain , messenger services can be traced to the rule of King Charles I, who in 1635, in order to raise funds without depending on Parliament, threw open the Royal messenger system to the public. Messenger services were disrupted during the Civil War in Britain, but with the restoration of the Monarchy and enthronement of King Charles II, these messenger services were restored from 1660.

Messenger services at that time could be in a way compared to the Private Courier services of today, because the final payment to be made depended on the weight of the letter or message, and the distance to the destination.



*Caption: Some examples of folded letters, and wax sealing, which was how letters were sent before 1840. (downloaded from Pinterest.)*

The biggest difference in between now and then, is that then the charges were paid (by the receiver in the majority of the cases), the number of sheets being sent were more important than weight , and therefore two sheets meant double the charges , and three sheets meant triple the charges. Using an envelope was taken as an extra sheet and charged accordingly . This was the reason letters written on sheets which were then folded and sealed , rather than posted in envelopes , was the common process during that period ( that is perhaps the reason that in the recent past, Registered Letters used to be sealed with a wax seal.)

As the mail system was controlled and largely used by Royalty and his/her administration, it received priority over most other transports found on the roads. Horse borne mailmen and coaches were used for this purpose. In order to announce the arrival or departure of the mail rider or the mail coach in a town or village , a horn was used. The unique noise of this type of the wind instrument called horn, ensured that a horseman bearing post, or a mail carriage ,

was not stopped at check posts, and relatively narrow streets, which were quite commonplace, were cleared for their departure or arrival. This gave rise to the term “Posthorn”, which later came to be closely associated with postal services , as we will see in this article.

There were 2 types of Posthorns , the lighter one , which also were used as an instrument in an orchestra, came to be used by mail runners and horse borne mailmen , and a heavier version was used for coach borne mail. The horse borne posthorns were normally less than 32 inches in length, where as the coach Posthorns were upto 36 inches long.

### Posthorns on Stamps.



As Posthorns were widely and extensively used for centuries during the pre- 1840 period, they therefore came to be associated closely with postal services. Therefore many stamps issued after 1840 featured the Posthorn . The 2 British stamps shown here were issued to celebrate 300 years of British Postal Service , (taken from 1660 as the starting date, as from that year the service remained in continuous use in Britain ), shows the standard British postal horn used by mailmen, on each stamp. The third stamp, shows a horn which was the type used more extensively in Europe , and is on this West German stamp , issued to celebrate 100 years of the German Postal Museum. The horns in Europe were mainly coiled so as to





accommodate a longer wind pipe in a more compact space, and therefore produce a higher pitched bass sound, compared to the British horn.

The Scandinavian countries like Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland were the first to use posthorns on their stamp designs, before they started to use their coat of arms, among other symbols of their country on their stamps. Norway still uses the Posthorn design on their current stamps as can be seen on the stamps shared here. Norwegian Posthorn stamps can be traced to as early as 1871. Denmark's earliest stamps showed Posthorns; Sweden issued Posthorn designed stamps till at least the 1960s; and Finland used Posthorns as watermarks. Here above are stamps featuring Posthorns issued by Britain (from one of their Post and self adhesive stamp sets, on the subject of Postal Services), Germany, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and Belgium. The West Germany - Berlin stamp of 20 pfennig value, shows a Coachman of an early German postal service (after the services of the different principalities were unified by Prussia to form Reichpost), carrying a horse whip and a coach Posthorn.

Among the stamps are 4 West German ones shown here together. One of these 4, the one on the top left (of 100 pfennig value), shows a standard European postal service Posthorn being used by a postman on horse, which stamp was issued in 1990 - with text indicating German postal services had started from as early as 1490; another stamp (60 pfennig value) shows a Posthorn in use by a German mail horseman; and a third German stamp (of 80 pfennig value) shows the type of hand bell used by city and town postmen for local services. A fourth stamp among these 4, illustrates mail coaches being loaded with passengers and mail, with one of the coachmen sitting atop his coach and holding a Posthorn in his hand.

The last few stamps show stamps of Belgium, Sweden and Switzerland with Posthorn using horse borne mailman.

### Posthorn Represented on Various National Post Office Logos:



(Please note these stamps are not to scale, but variations in sizes have been shown, to depict their relative sizes/ ratios).

Posthorns continue to form the Postal logo for many Postal services even today, as shown in the philatelic examples shared here.)

1. The standard Europa design for the 1973 stamps, shows a stylized Posthorn, as one can see on this West German Europa stamp set. (Individual stamp designs based on a common theme but different illustrations by each member for Europa stamps, were issued only later on. Therefore this was the standard design for 1973 for all Europa stamps.)
2. Presently, German postmarks uses the Posthorn as their Logo in their cancellations, as seen here.
3. This M.S. and stamp shows the evolution of the the Portuguese Post office Logo (CTT Post), which has evolved into a horseman blowing a posthorn.
4. The next is a Souvenir Sheet issued by Czech Republic, showing their Logo which features a Posthorn. This S.S. was issued to celebrate the most beautiful stamp

“in the world for the year 2023” which was arrived at after a survey by Czech Post and a Philatelic Society. The artwork of the said stamp shows their famous actress Libuse Safrankova. This design was part of a set of 2 stamps showing their famous actresses and actors, issued in 2023.

5. The next is a stamp set on the topic of Food issued by Slovakia, depicting their post office posthorn Logo both on the stamps and marginal tab.

6. The 6<sup>th</sup> stamp shows one issued by Estonia, using their Posthorn Logo in the marginal tab.

7. The next shows a set of stamps issued by Iceland where their Post Office Logo is a stylized posthorn.

8. The 8<sup>th</sup> philatelic material shared here is the reverse of an postal envelope used for either Certified or Registered posts, showing the official Logo of Belarus Post, featuring a Posthorn.

9. Lastly, these 2 stamps from Italy use post horns for stamps issued for postal events.

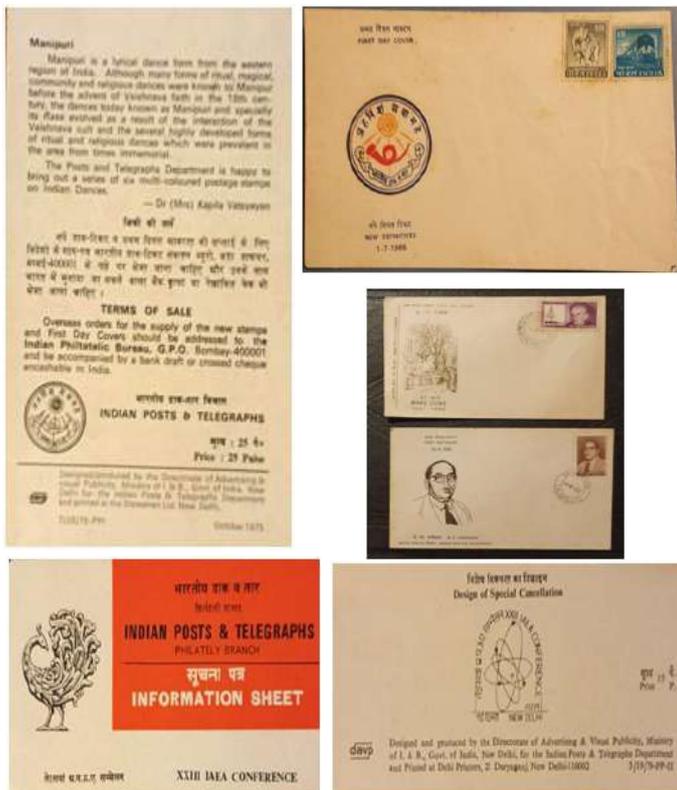
Please note that since this FDC was purchased at the small town of Ajmer, Rajasthan, it has no special cancellation. (I find that during that period, when date of issue was printed on the FDC, only metro cities made and used FDC cancellations with the name of the subject on the cancellation, and smaller towns, if felt necessary, used a normal date stamp with name of Post Office- I share 2 examples- The FDC of 14/04/1966 on Dr. Ambedkar which has a Calcutta FDC postmark bearing his name, and the FDC dated 6/11/1986, honouring Nobel Laureate Marie Curie, with a postmark bearing only the date and name of place of cancellation - Ajmer).

The Indian Logo with a Posthorn lasted till about the beginning of December 1979, after which it was substituted with the newer, stylized Peacock Logo. The newer stylized Peacock Logo is depicted in this example, at the head of the XXIII IAEA Conference commemorative stamp Information Brochure Sheet, for which the cancellation design at the end of the Brochure gives a date of 4<sup>th</sup> Dec. 1979. (The newest India Post Logos we see currently, were developed after these 2 Services were separated, with the Telegraph Dept ultimately becoming part of B.S.N.L., before it was closed down.)

(To be Continued)

**Author**

Mr. Abhijit De, a Life Member of SIPA has been a stamp collector from the age of eight, but became a Philatelist only after retirement after 37 years of Service in 2 different companies, including the Fortune 500, Public Sector Petroleum Company, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd. After 2012 he has done research beyond stamps, to include studying FDCs and Cachets, Information Pamphlets, stamp designing and printing techniques.



Caption : I find from my collection of old Indian FDCs and Information Brochures, that the first Indian Post & Telegraph Logo after Independence had a Posthorn as, for example, shown on this Brochure issued for the 6 stamp Indian Dances set of 20<sup>th</sup> October 1975, and as the definitive stamp FDC shown here dated 1/7/1966 from the 4<sup>th</sup> Definitive set shows, for the 2 stamps first issued on that date. Unlike the post Independence 1<sup>st</sup> Definitive stamps of this series, which stamps were largely issued on the same date, in the 4<sup>th</sup> Definitive series, each definitive stamp was first issued in lots of 2 to 3 and therefore on different dates. There after they were reprinted as per demand.

\* \* \* \* \*



# STAMPING IDENTITY GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS THROUGH PHILATELY

Edited by  
**Senthilkumar Chandrasekaran**

Being a very supportive and active member at head quarters, SIPA takes pride in giving a wide introduction to his coffee table book on the current and lively subject - Editor.

In a world growing increasingly conscious of cultural heritage and authenticity, the concept of Geographical Indications (GI) tags has emerged as a powerful tool to protect and promote products tied to specific regions. While often discussed in the context of law, trade or agriculture, GI tags have found an unexpected but vibrant ally in philately.

As miniature ambassadors of culture and history, postage stamps and other philatelic memorabilia have long celebrated the richness of regional identities, making them a natural canvas for honouring GI-tagged products. For philatelists, this intersection of law, culture and design offers a compelling new avenue of exploration.



GI Tagged Agricultural Products of India

GI Tagged Handlooms of India

GI Tagged Handlooms of India

## What is a GI Tag?

A Geographical Indication (GI) is a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation due to that origin. Examples include Darjeeling Tea from India, Champagne from the Champagne region of France. GI tags not only protect producers from imitation but also help preserve traditional methods and sustain rural economies.



Darjeeling Tea



Champagne

## GI Tags on Indian Stamps : A Cultural Tapestry

India, with its diverse heritage, has 697 GI-tagged products registered as on 31 March 2025 (658 products from India and 39 products from Outside India). India Post released a special series of stamps and special covers celebrating several of these unique items, offering philatelists a rich cultural thread to follow.

All over India, a variety of such materials are available to explore these treasures of heritage. Among these several treasures few from Tamil Nadu are showcased here to demonstrate rich artistic and cultural legacy of these treasures.



Thanjavur Pith Work



Thanjavur Doll



Kannayakumari Clove



## Kanchipuram Silk Sarees

known for their durability, vibrant colours, and intricate zari work have long symbolized Tamil craftsmanship. India post released a beautiful special cover on Kanchipuram Silk with

a sample and cancellation depicting the weaver with handloom.

## Madurai Malli (Jasmine)

- this fragrant flower, cherished in Tamil rituals and festivals, earned GI recognition for its unique scent and shelf life. India Post released a special cover showcasing the different varieties of Madurai Malli with a wonderful cancellation



## Thanjavur Paintings

– These iconic gold-leaf paintings, often featuring deities, reflect a regal artistic tradition. India Post released a beautiful stamp showcasing the ornate style of this GI-protected art form.



## Thirubuvanam Silk Saree

– a traditional wedding saree of pure silk and gold electro-plated silver zari thread with motifs are testimony to the diverse saree varieties from Tamil nadu. Apart from Special cover, two Meghdoot post cards were issued to promote this medium weight Saree.



## Palani Panchamirtham

– A sacred temple offering made from a unique blend of fruits and jaggery, this is among the few GI-tagged temple prasadam in India. India post has released a special cover on this food item with

an excellent cancellation depicting the package on which it is sold.

**East India Leather** are products made out from raw hides and skins, which are vegetable tanned by using an age-old process. India Post released a special cover highlighting the glossy finish of this Leather with an excellent cancellation.



These philatelic materials not only showcase the visual richness of Tamil Nadu's heritage but also spread awareness about the legal and cultural significance of GI tags.

### Why GI Matters in Philately



NachiyarkoilKuthuvilakku (Lamp)

Philatelic materials are more than just tools of postage—they are tiny windows into the soul of a nation. GI-themed philatelic memorabilia celebrate not only the product but also the

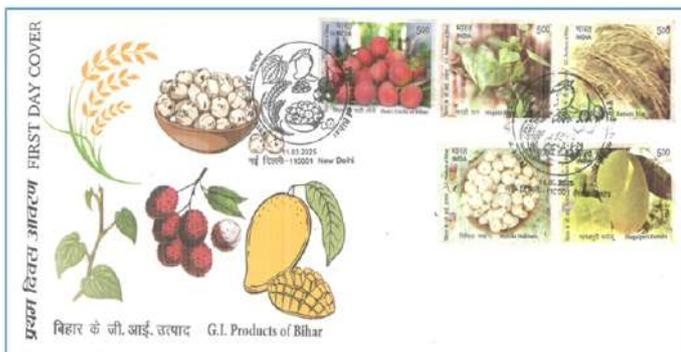
people and traditions behind them. By collecting and preserving these items, philatelists play a role in documenting cultural continuity.

GI-related philatelic products are especially meaningful: they embody the region's commitment to preserving traditional arts, crafts and produce in the face of globalization. Moreover, GI-themed philatelic memorabilia are often limited editions or part of special commemorative issues, making them both aesthetic and valuable additions to a collection.

### Tips for Collectors :

If you're interested in building a GI-themed collection, here are a few pointers :

- Track official releases by India Post, for instance, there had been a recent issue on set of five stamps highlighting the GI Tagged Agricultural products from Bihar.



- Look for thematic overlaps—many GI products fall under categories like textiles, food, crafts, paintings, toys or agriculture.

- Start with a thematic area or a state and then move forward to collect across states or regions—build a “GI Trail of India” through these items
- Pair stamps with history—enrich your collection with research on each GI's origin and significance.

### Conclusion :

In the world of philately, every stamp tells a story. When it comes to GI-tagged products, that story is one of heritage, pride and identity. As custodians of culture, philatelists are uniquely positioned to preserve and celebrate these narratives, one memorabilia at a time.

So the next time you examine a colourful piece of any philatelic item, look closely—it might carry not just ink and paper, but a legacy which had seen centuries in the making.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR :



#### Senthilkumar Chandrasekaran

is a Chemical Engineer and currently employed as GM – Engineering at VA Tech Wabag Ltd. GI Tag is one of his themes of collection. He has authored a book titled “Guardians of Heritage: Exploring the world of GI Tag Products of India” published in May 2025. The

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July monthly meeting with special guest Mr.Parvesh Gupta



Gala Combine of Philatelists with immediate past President. Mr.G.Amarchand

## DEDICATEDLY DESIGNED POSTAGE STAMPS ON POSTCROSSING THEME

*Ms. Mouli Priya,  
University of Madras*

**POSTCROSSING** is a fascinating global movement that brings people together through simple efforts but having the beautiful art of sending and receiving postcards. Founded in 2005 by the Portuguese computer programmer Paulo Magalhães, Postcrossing aims to connect individuals from different countries of the world, fostering friendship, understanding and cultural exchange.

The beauty of Postcrossing lies in its ability to explore geographical and cultural beauty. Participants send and receive postcards featuring images of their hometowns, landmarks, customs, and personal interests. Each postcard is a snapshot of a different part of the world, making the experience a delightful journey of discovery.

As technology continues to dominate communication, Postcrossing serves as a nostalgic reminder of the enduring charm of handwritten messages and tangible postcards. It celebrates the art of snail mail and the joy of connecting with unmet friends across the globe.

Beyond the joy of receiving colorful postcards in the mail, Postcrossing has helped to build creativity in this global network as it provides a unique opportunity for exploring the globe.

Enthusiastic Postcrossers, passionate about both postcard exchanges and stamps, have seamlessly merged these two creative pursuits. They have showcased their ingenuity by designing stamps that celebrate the essence of postcrossing. Numerous countries worldwide have taken the initiative to issue postage stamps dedicated to postcrossing theme. This not only serves to educate but also to commemorate and promote the art of postcrossing among people globally.

### STAMPS ISSUED IN 2022-23.

In ESTONIA, the renowned designer Triin Heimann has demonstrated her artistic works by creating a captivating postal stamp in Postcrossing theme. The stamp was released on October 1, 2022. The day holds special significance as it is celebrated globally as World Postcard Day. Triin Heimann's design follows the theme of the year 2022, which revolves around the concept of "World Peace." In the 153<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of World Postcard Day. The thoughtful integration of this thematic element adds a layer of significance to the stamp, turning it into a powerful symbol of positivity and connection. The stamp has an denomination of Euro 1.90. Along with the stamp, a cancellation and first day cover were also released which acted as a pack of happiness for the postcrossers. Triin



Heimann's dual role as both a designer and a popular artist have been instrumental in creating many series of stamps released in Estonia. Including lunar New year series.

Thus, Triin Heimann's postal theme for Postcrossing, set to release on World Postcard Day with the overarching theme of "World Peace" for 2022, represents a harmonious blend of art, as a designer with a notable presence in the philatelic



community, Heimann continues to leave an indelible mark with her contributions to stamp design in Estonia and beyond.

On 7<sup>th</sup> October 2022, The Ministry of Finance, DEUTSCHE POST have released a stamp on the postcrossing theme which delighted the postcrossers. The designer of the stamp was Greta Gröttrup. Along with the stamp two cancellations were also issued by Deutsche post.

This colorful art piece attracted the postcrossers around the globe. The stamp focusses the art of writing, sending and receiving postcards. The B-post have printed 100,000 stamps with face value of €1.40. Using the lithographic process. The stamp was released on October 7 to commemorate the two big days together – World Postcard Day and World Post Day.

The creation of this Postcrossing stamp owes its existence to the collective efforts of the Postcrossing community, with special acknowledgment to the unwavering dedication of



Ralf who started this initiative in 2015. Through his consistent efforts of suggesting the postcrossers in Germany to write postcards to the Finance Ministry. After years of writing postcards, they have Finally got their stamp in 2022. Unfortunately, Ralf the commencer of the effort is no more. Nevertheless, his efforts now endure through the countless postcards adorned with this beautiful stamp.

In the September issue of PhilatéLux, the esteemed philatelic magazine from Post Luxembourg, announced a new stamp in the postcrossing theme designed by designer Stina Fisch. The **Belgium post** released the stamp on September 13 which features the illustrations of three postcards being written and stamped which alternatively narrates the process the writing and sending postcards to the people. Along with the stamp a cancellation was also

received which acted as booster for the postcrossers.

Thus, in the year 2022-2023, these three stamps were released in the postcrossing theme. These three issues bring the total number of Postcrossing themed stamps issued by 21 different postal entities to 64.

**Partial list of stamps** issued from 2011 to 2025 on postcrossing.

1. PostNL	October 2011	16. An Post (Ireland)	October 2017
2. Posti (Finland)	September 2013	17. Magyar Posta (Hungary)	February 2018
3. Belposhta (Belarus)	January 2014	18. Moldova Post	June 2018
4. Russia Post	January 2015	19. Åland Post	June 2019
5. Slovenia Post	May 2015	20. Brazil Post	July 2020
6. Czech Post	September 2015	21. Guernsey Post	June 2021
7. Ukrposhta (Ukraine)	October 2015	22. Belpochta	June 2021
8. PostNL	March 2016	23. Austria Post	July 2021
9. Austria Post	May 2016	24. Post Luxembourg	September 2022
10. Polish Post	July 2016	25. Deutsche Post	October 2022
11. Guernsey Post	July 2016	26. NZ Post New Zealand	August 2024
12. Belpochta	January 2017	27. Polish Post	October 2024
13. Romfilatelia (Romania)	February 2017	28. Belgian post	June 2025
14. Indonesia Post	July 2017	29. PostNL	July 2025
15. Swiss Post	September 2017		

## 20TH ANNIVERSARY



To commemorate the 20th anniversary of Postcrossing, PostNL issued a stamp sheet by Dutch designer Sandra Smulders, of Gouda, on July 14, 2025. Sandra, who is famous for her philosophical approach to philatelic art, has loaded this design with powerful symbolism to honor Postcrossing's spirit of unity, imagination, and worldwide friendship. The red, white, and blue zigzagging of the sheet acknowledges the Dutch

national flag and offers a visual reminder of the busy crisscrossing of postcards around the world. While Sandra Smulders herself has not yet joined Postcrossing, she looked back to early memories of exchanging letters with pen friends, giving her work a warm nostalgia and personal touch. She sees the passage of her stamp art around the globe as a privilege and an exciting progression toward a more international design career. For Sandra and all Postcrossing fans, this "20 Years of Postcrossing" stamp sheet is not merely a collector's piece but a colourful celebration of the magic of human connection—recording, in colour, form, and symbol, the potential of a humble postcard to unite individuals in our age of digits.

To mark 20 years of uniting the world on postcards, Postcrossing has restored one of its most dearly loved historical artifacts: PT-1, the first postcard posted under the project. The postcard, originally sent by Paulo to Ana in 2005, contains a stunning picture of three towering lighthouses under an open blue sky. PT-1 represented the start of Postcrossing's journey and has been an ever-lasting symbol for the project.



To commemorate the 20th anniversary, the Postcrossing team set about the task of reviving PT-1 by locating the original photographer, obtaining licensing, and reproducing the card correctly with the front photo in its original form. The neback has now added the anniversary mark with a celebratory 20th-anniversary logo and an exclusive message. To complement the limited-edition launch, every PT-1 bundle comes with a sheet of cinderella stamps—these are decorative, non-postal stickers specifically for the occasion. They both feature Postcrossing's instantly recognizable red "P" and a sunny yellow "20,". Each anniversary set includes 20 PT-1 lighthouse postcards, a single sheet of 20 P20 cinderella stamps, and a custom paper band to enclose the set. This anniversary pack is extra special as it is the first physical product conceived and constructed by the Postcrossing community from scratch to completion. The print run is on purpose minimal with only one pack sold per user and with potential re-issue in the future depending on demand. With PT-1 once more circumnavigating the globe, this anniversary edition is a colorful, physical representation of where Postcrossing started and the incredible journey the community has undertaken since then. Through this commemorative set, Postcrossing celebrates its history.

**BELGIUM** released beautiful series of Postcrossing-themed stamps to commemorate both the art form of sending mail and the feeling of connection that exists in the Postcrossing community.



The cherry on top of this issue is a specially designed sheet of stamps that beautifully replicates

the look of an old postcard. The sheet is full of lively, playful paintings that detail all phases of the Postcrossing process, from writing warm messages and sending cards to the thrill of receiving postcards from the distance. According to Belgium's multicultural linguistic character, the stamp sheet includes both Dutch and French, Belgium's main national languages. The thoughtful bilingual approach is similarly used in the first-day cancellation mark, thus allowing collectors and ordinary users to appreciate the release in their preferred language.

Adding an extra layer of richness to the experience, post has released a special First Day Sheet to coincide with the stamp issue. The front is dominated by the colorful stamp mini-sheet, while the back contains background information about Postcrossing and the inspiration behind this commemorative item. Designed to capture the retro look of an airmail postcard, the presentation sheet lends a vintage feel, rendering it a treasured memento among enthusiasts and philatelists. Their release was also honored with a lively Postcrossing meetup in Brussels. Veerle, aka veke250 among Postcrossers, was one of the first to see the stamps at the Skalafila pre-sale event, providing fellow Postcrossers with a sneak peek of the lively and dynamic designs.

**POLAND** released a charming new series of Postcrossing-themed stamps, created by well-known artist Agata Tobolczyk. The release was celebrated by a unique



convention in the central post office of Warsaw, where postcrossers from nations such as Poland, Italy, Iran, France, Germany, Lithuania, Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine had gathered to mail postcards

bearing the new stamps, relishing the joy of this historic launch. The issue features two eye-catching designs: one of a soaring postcard that captures the dynamism of flight and global exchange that is at the heart of Postcrossing, and the other of a bright red Polish mailbox, representing the hospitality of local relationships and daily postal existence. Agata Tobolczyk, a stamp designer since 2009 and veteran of designs for many different countries, infused her own stamp art vision into this small scale. While not an active Postcrosser herself, Agata enjoys the significance of this slower, more personal communication, commenting, "There's something so meaningful about this slower form of communication, and I love how Postcrossing brings people together in such a simple, joyful way." In addition to the stamps, a First Day Sheet and commemorative postmarks were also issued, adding to the attractiveness of the issue for collectors and postcard collectors. These charming stamps are now circulating worldwide, spreading smiles, stories, and the enduring spirit of connection that Postcrossing has championed for over two decades.'

**NEW ZEALAND** Post contributed to the world's celebration of Postcrossing with a new stamp issue that puts the spotlight on one of the country's most beloved creatures: the kiwi. The flightless, nocturnal kiwi, which is indigenous to Aotearoa? the Māori name for New Zealand, is immediately recognizable through its hair-like plumage, strong legs, and cute character. Reflecting this unique heritage, the 2024 Postcrossing stamp, created by artist Sumin Ha, presents an imaginative and whimsically heartwarming image: a kiwi, gently buoyed by a cluster of colorful balloons, glides over a nighttime city skyline with postcards strapped securely to its back. This creative scene not only celebrates the kiwi's legendary status but also embodies the playfulness and spirit of worldwide connection at the heart of Postcrossing.



Printed in Napier by Brebner Print via lithography, the stamp is complemented by an overgloss coating that has been applied specially to the kiwi, that adds an additional charm to the already charismatic design. A maxicard complements the stamp, reproducing the same atmospheric nighttime city scene, including the stamp mounted and a themed cancellation mark on the reverse, making it extremely attractive to collectors. The official release date of this delightful stamp was August 7, and from then on, New Zealand Postcrossers are free to mail postcards everywhere with this playful kiwi design. This stunningly crafted stamp is

definitely set to be a favourite among Postcrossing fans and philatelists worldwide; as the smiling kiwi flies away (with a bit of assistance from balloons), postcards featuring its image will deliver smiles and capture the light-hearted essence of cross-border friendships that Postcrossing embodies.

Images of a few stamps listed in the partial list.



**Author :**

Ph.D. Research Scholar on Stamps and other philatelic materials. Start-up-entrepreneur of 'Postally' brand picture post cards.



# MALTESE CROSS CANCELLATION

**B. Ravikumar**  
Life Member, SIPA

## What is Maltese Cross?

During a monthly SIPA meeting some six years ago, a senior philatelist asked me this question, which I could not answer at that time. Although I was familiar with Malta's philately and postal history. I was not well versed with the history of the Maltese Cross.

A few months ago, our Bulletin Editor inquired about Malta's connection to the Maltese Cross and why the associates of Sir. Rowland Hill selected Maltese Cross design for the Penny Black cancellation. That conversation prompted me to do a little research and pen down the burrowed information for the benefit of our members who are not much familiar with Maltese cross Cancellation.

## Origin and History of the Maltese Cross

The Maltese Cross, a unique emblem, is composed of four 'V'-shaped or arrowhead-like concave quadrilaterals that converge at a right-angled centre point, with two tips extending outward in a symmetrical fashion. This distinctive design evolved from earlier eight-pointed crosses, a fact that adds an intriguing layer to its history and symbolism.

The Maltese Cross is most famously associated with the Knights Hospitaller, also known as the Order of St. John, who later evolved into the Sovereign Military Order of Malta (SMOM). They adopted this cross as their symbol.

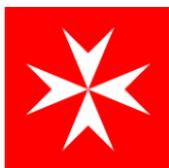


Figure 1: Maltese Cross (Wikipedia)

The Knights established their base on Malta in 1530, ruling for nearly three centuries. This extended presence led to the symbol being called the "Maltese Cross."

In the enlarged stamp shown in Figure 2, you can see the Maltese Cross symbol on the attire of the Grand Master and other knights.

While widely recognized as the Maltese Cross, its design evolved from earlier eight-pointed crosses. Some scholars suggest its origins could date back to 11th-century coins from Amalfi, Italy.



Figure 2: GrandMaster of the Knights entering Mdina, Malta in 1530 (MSC)



Figure 3: Tari coin of Roger II, King of Sicily (1130-1154) from Amalfi (coinarchives.com)

## Symbolism and Meaning

- **Protection and Courage:** The Maltese Cross is commonly regarded as a symbol of safeguard, honour, and bravery. Its origin lies in the Knights Hospitaller's initial mission to care for the sick and injured pilgrims, as well as their subsequent military role in defending the Holy Land.

- **Eight Points:** The eight points of the cross are commonly understood in different ways, such as:

- **Eight Beatitudes:** Representing the eight blessings described in the Gospel of Matthew.(Bible)

- **Eight Virtues:**Representing the eight virtues or aspirations of knights, including loyalty, piety, honesty, courage, honour, disdain for death, solidarity with the poor and sick, and respect for the Church.

- **Eight Groupings:** These correspond to the eight national clusters of the Knights of the Order, which include Auvergne, Provence, France, Aragon, Castille and Portugal, Italy, Germany, and the British Isles.

## Significant role in Postal History

The Maltese Cross is also highly significant in global postal history as it was the first universal cancellation mark used on a postage stamp.

The Penny Black, the world's first adhesive postage stamp, was launched in the UK in May 1840. To avoid reuse, a cancellation method was required. The Maltese Cross was employed to cancel the Penny Black and Two penny Blue stamps. These handstamps were issued to postmasters across England, Ireland, and Wales.



Figure 4: A Penny Black with a red Maltese Cross cancel (iStock)

Initially, Maltese Cross cancellations were struck in red ink. However, a problem arose: black stamps could be easily cleaned and reused, especially if the red ink was not heavily applied.

To prevent fraud, the colour of the Penny Black stamp was changed to red

(Penny Red) in February 1841, and the Maltese Cross cancellation was made with black ink, making it harder to clean.

While initial Maltese Cross cancellations followed a standard London pattern, variations emerged as local post offices replaced worn handstamps with new ones. These design differences help philatelists identify the post office, with some regions, such as Scotland, having their unique types.



Figure 5: A Penny Red with a black Maltese Cross cancel

The Maltese Cross was a short-lived primary cancellation, replaced in Great Britain by numeral cancels around 1844 that showed the post office. Nonetheless, its significance as the first canceller for the world's first postage stamps remains undeniable.

## A Misnomer

In “The Maltese Cross Cancellations - First Supplement” by R.C. Alcock and F.C. Holland, published in 1960, the authors indicate that “Maltese Cross” is an incorrect name for the first canceller. They write, “Mr. Chaplin ingeniously suggested in the March 1936, 'Philatelic Adviser' that the official cancellation to obliterate

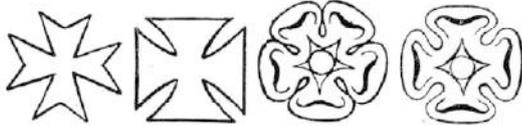


Figure 6: Maltese Cross, Croix Patée, Tudor Rose (five petals & four petals) from the supplement

the first adhesive postage stamps was a composite form of the Maltese Cross, Croix Patée and the Tudor Rose (with four instead of the usual five petals).”



Figure 7 : Former West Germany



Figure 8: Germany



Figure 9: New Zealand



Figure 10: El Salvador



Figure 11: United Kingdom



Figure 12: New Jersey

## In Modern Times

While primarily associated with Great Britain, the Maltese Cross or similar eight-pointed designs have appeared on stamps or symbols in other countries with ties to the Order of Malta or its symbolism.

The Order of Malta also issues stamps featuring the Maltese Cross.

It is Malta's national symbol, embedded in its culture and heritage. It is found on the stamps, civil ensign, naval jack, presidential standard, and Maltese euro coins.



Figure 13: First series of SMOM stamps issued in 1966 (Wikipedia)



Figure 15: Malta stamp from a set issued in 1970 for the European Art Exhibition

powerful symbol with a rich history, linked to the Knights Hospitaller, Malta, and ideals of courage, service, and protection. It played a key role in early postal history as the mark that turned a stamp into



Figure 14: Malta stamp from a set issued in 1966

The Maltese Cross also features in the branding of various entities, including Malta Post, KM Malta Airlines, the Malta Tourism Authority, the Malta Philatelic Society, and many more.

The Maltese Cross is a



Figure 16: Air Malta stamp from the set issued in 1984



Figure 17: Malta Philatelic Society stamp and first day cancel

a non-reusable proof of postage. Its simple design became iconic in stamp collecting and the evolution of global communication.

References :

- *The Maltese Cross Cancellations - First Supplement* by R.C. Alcock and F.C. Holland, published in 1960.

**Author :**

An IT professional who works as a Senior Information Developer at Appian Corporation in Chennai is a 'MALTA Specialist' and also collects philatelic materials on Madras and Nilgiris religiously. He has exhibited up to Nationals with high awards.

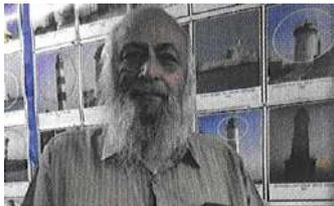


# 22.08.1639 MADRAS DAY

**Rolands Nelson**  
President, SIPA

Archeological history pundits have unearthed the fact that a sliver of land where fort St. George stands today on the beach of the erstwhile Madrasapatnam or Chennapatnam was bought by the East India Company on the 22nd August 1639 as the first area on which the city of Madras was established. As such these pundits have named 22nd August 1639 as the birthdate of madras.

With my confused recollection I can say that little some twenty years ago a group of enthusiastic environmentalists, with the name of "Heritage lovers of Madras" headed by the historical chronicler of Madras Mr.Muthiah, noted author of 'Madras discovered' and 'Madras Rediscovered' started celebrating the birthday of Madras in a small way with talks and exhibitions. I can recollect one such exposure event was spread out as exhibition on the vast expanse floor of Rajaji Hall situated at the centre of Madras. by Mr. D.Hemachandra Rao, Mr. Winston and others putting up stamps, coins, books, documents, antiques etc. linked to Madras in some form or other. For quite a few years this team of 'Heritage lovers of Madras' were celebrating the birthday of Madras spreading the awareness of the heritage of Madras to one and all in a smooth and enjoyable way. In course of time, the celebration of Madras Day became celebration of Madras week and now the whole of month of August it self from day one, the birthday of Madras of being celebrated with many innovative activities like heritage walks, memorial lectures, but with commercial tag attached to them always.



**Mr.Hemachandra Rao**

As mentioned earlier one memorable activity done year after year from 2007 to 2016 (with a three year break due to his wife's ailment) continuously by philatelist and past present of SIPA, Mr. DHRao who was one of main architect of the "Heritage lovers of Madras" Group, was the issue of special covers on 22nd of August in commemoration of Madras Day.

This article is being published as a tribute to that noble soul in recognition of his innovative philatelic activities, mainly issue of special covers of 'Madras Day'. Issuing seven special covers in a period of ten years on the same subject is no less of an effort which no single philatelist has done. Each one of the cover is a gem by itself. The thoughtful designs, each having deep rooted attachments to Madras give a thrilling enjoyment to the viewer. The minute details shown in the sketches themselves a tribute to the designer.

Being fully instrumental for one special cover as a CEO itself is no small endeavour. It includes mainly finding a sponsor for the high cost involved, bringing innovative ideas for the drawings, and details, designing the catchet and meaningful cancellation, selecting the material of the cover, and the required photos, editing the final front and back of the whole cover, getting the approval from the Chief, Chennai circle, India Post - which by itself is a Himalayan

task - and to top it all organising an appropriate release function.

Images of covers of Mr.D.H.Rao,



Two special points about Rao's covers which need to be mentioned here are as below.

First and foremost, the front and back spaces are maximum covered with information, drawings and photos making the cover collector to admire and appreciate the creator.

Second one interesting aspect noted on combined study of the cancellations shown on the covers is Mr.Rao's fascination on diamond shaped cancellation, rather than the common circular one. An artistic eye and mind of Rao is exposed in this.

Hats off to Late. **Mr.D.H.Rao.**



## OBITUARY

**Prof. Dr.VRA. Saathappan**

With profound grief, SIPA learnt about the sad and untimely demise of Dr.Vra.Sathappan. A professor in Civil Engineering and principal in few colleges, having infinite passion for philately.

Dr.Vra.Sathappan was a life member of the SIPA, other philatelic associations and won many awards. His exhibit on "UN First Flag Series 1980-89" secured him a "Vermeil" in Coverpex 2020, Chennai. With his interest and mastery over philately he has penned several articles published in magazines and souvenirs. Whichever topic he had chosen, he delved deep into the subject and produced thought-provoking articles that can be preserved for posterity. He was the originator of philately clubs in the Adhi Parasakthi group of institutions at Melmaruvathur and nearby.



SIPA expresses its deep condolences to the family of the bereaved. May his soul RIP.



## MEMBERS ADVERTISEMENTS.(Free)

1. Surplus stamps etc. etc. available. To fill in gaps and to start a collection. SIPA members may Contact 9790852951 (MT. Karunakaran)

2. **Sale** : Middle level 2/3 frame exhibits on Ships, Olympics, Russia, Papua New Guinea, Pollution, Roses etc. Can be expanded well in line to medals. Contact 9940681750.

3. **Sale** : Hundreds of stamps and covers on birds, ships, Trains, bicycles etc. Can be made into award winning exhibits. Contact. Ms.Caroline, 9710412073



## YOUTH CORNER MY BAPTISM IN PHILATELY

**Ambika B Iyer**  
Chennai

I was a kid when I first learnt about stamps and started collecting stamps from letters received at my home in Mumbai.

My grandfather used to collect stamps throughout his life and he taught me how to hinge a stamp and make your own album in around 2002. He also encouraged me by giving some stamps occasionally. Talks with him was always elevated when we discussed stamps.

Three years after he passed away and I moved out of Mumbai in 2008, my collecting came to a halt for 9 years. I shifted to Chennai in 2016 and started my collection again. Whenever I mentioned about stamps as my hobby, people around would be surprised "do we really get stamps now also?" This thought somehow affected me and my hobby never grew until my mother saw an advertisement in newspaper about a Philatelic workshop and motivated me to attend.

I met Mr Rolands Nelson when I attended his workshop in April 2025 for beginners and realized Philately never stops growing. Two days I spend learning the basics. He asked me to open PDA and attend SIPA meetings held on second Sundays of every month.

I started attending SIPA meetings. I met many new people having varied interest and lot of experience in Philately like Mr. Mahesh P, Mr. Sritharan, Mr. Bhaskar, Mr. Lakshmanan and Mr. R Senthil. During one such discussion, I came to know of an one frame exhibition organized by Karnataka Philatelic Society (KPS) and got a sudden kick to participate in it and registered for my debut.

I lingered over to find the topic and wanted an innovative theme and ended with "Women in Freedom Struggle" which was not much exploited. Knowing that I had limited time and material, I started the preparation with guidance of Nelson sir, I spend days correcting my plan and exhibit. I was able to get some good material online which helped me to enlarge my collection. I took extra time and effort and sat at nights to complete and my mother said you will become crazy like this seeing all philatelic and exhibit materials around me even in bed when I slept.

I was on 'cloud 9' and beyond when I learned that I had secured the third place in my debut exhibition and congratulatory messages poured from family, friends and colleagues.

My Philatelic journey so far has been truly incredible and I'm excited to continue with greater zeal than today.

**Author :**

Senior Consultant DA/AI  
AstraZeneca India Pvt Ltd.





**SIPA@70**  
**Platinum Jubilee Celebration**  
**All India Exhibition**

**2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> January 2026**  
**Dharmaprakash Kalyana Mandapam**  
**10, Raja Annamalai Road, Purasawalkam, Chennai 84.**

Date to Remember :

- 1. Last date for receipt of Entry forms .. 01-12-2025
- 2. Last date for payment of Entry Fees .. 15-12-2025
- 3. Last date for submission of Exhibits .. 27-12-2025

Contact for Booth & Stall

**Mr. G. Amarchand : 98401 56410**  
**Mr. Dilip Sabu : 9282226186**

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