



SIPA

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Liberation
of GOA 50

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MACHIN
Story 61

Quarterly

Editorial

PHILATELIC EXHIBITIONS

INTRODUCTION

'CHANGE' is the one only unchanged in the universe as everybody say. In Tamil language it is rhymingly stated as "Maatram Onnrea Maarathathu" (மாற்றம் ஒன்றே மாறாதது) Change is good as much as it is for the improvement of the basic cause. Because this change we talk now is generally due to innovation in ideas and technology.

But looking at the turn of events all through the completed year of 2025 (with an enjoyable issue of 42 stamps), and the first month of 2016, the total ambience is not all that enjoyable. Exhibitions at district level were many and state levels were also good in number. However, the visitors, collectors, philatelists, exhibitors. etc were not satisfied with the fare served.

(A) EXPECTATIONS

Once a state exhibition is announced (normally four to six months in advance) the philatelic community who are eagerly waiting for years, starts dreaming for good things about the fare which will be served.

Philatelic items which will give pleasure to the eyes of the connoisseur collectors from the exhibits and dealers, the additional collectables materials in the form of covers (special, carried etc) post cards, pictorial cancellations (special cancellations etc)

As such, the collector expects from India post authorities of a circle who have a well experienced army of a battallion strength who can be mobilised from all over the state, a well planned exhibition continuously monitored for three to four months and finally executed perfectly on the D-days of exhibition putting all their heart, mind and energy.

An inaugural function is expected with the release of an array of philatelic materials like

- 1) Special / carried covers.
- 2) Picture post Cards.
- 3) Booklets of stamps.
- 4) Pictorial Cancellations etc.
- 5) Catalogue of exhibits etc.

(B) HAPPENING :

With all the dreams and expectations let us look at the servings what the people get for whom lakhs and lakhs

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of tax payers money is spent thro' India Post with the Business Post brain trust's innovative ideas.

1) Delayed and missed events. Even the inauguration function was delayed at a state exhibition by more than two hours making the eagerly assembled audience to disburse and go away. Is individuals that too not connected with and not interested in philately are more wanted than people longing for happiness through philately?

2) Partial / cut to size as per organisers wish (middle level) programmes.

3) Error prone issues, Printed in a short time with improperly read proofs bringing in unexpected errors thus providing a comedy of errors.

4) Philatelically illiterate lower level postal staff. (eg) difference between M/s and sheetlet is not known to many. Because of this reason and inferiority complex they become unresponsive and at times arrogant in replying.

In one State exhibition because the cost of the released inaugural carried special cover was not fixed by the relevent authority on time, the eager collectors and the selling counter staff had wordy duels for about four hours (ie 11 am to 3 pm) totally spoiling the first day of the exhibition for the collectors.

5) Gala outing for totally uninterested students brought by the authorities to get record footfalls for reporting to the top and getting accolades.

In addition, these students are not allowed much time to spend in front of exhibits which need to be explained by philatelic volunteer guides.

C) JURY AND JUDGING

(to be continued)

D) AWARDS

-Editor

E) CARNIVAL - India Post.



A PHILATELIC TRIBUTE TO VISIONARIES OF GOA LIBERATION (19 DECEMBER, 1961)

Dr. M.R.Ramesh Kumar
*Former President,
Goa Phil. and Numis-Society
Life Member, S.I.P.A.*

The Goa liberation movement was a movement which was fought to end the Portuguese colonial rule in Goa, India. The movement built on the small scale revolts and uprisings of the 19th century, grew powerful during the period 1940-1961. The movement was conducted both inside and outside Goa, and was characterised by a range of tactics including non-violent demonstrations, revolutionary methods and diplomatic efforts. However, Portuguese control of its Indian colonies ended only when India invaded Goa in 1961 and incorporated the territories into the Indian Union.

Dr.Ram Manohar Lohia

Dr.Ram Manohar Lohia was born on 23 March 1910 in Akbarpur which eventually came to be Uttar Pradesh in North India. Born in a prosperous Vaishya family, he was raised by his father from the age of two, after his mother died. He studied in Bombay (now Mumbai), Varanasi, and Calcutta, finally ending up at the prestigious Frederick William University (today's Humboldt University) of Berlin, Germany. He was such an outstanding student that he received financial aid for studying National Economy as his major subject as a doctoral student from 1929 to 1933.

Dr Lohia, later on, became an activist for the Indian independence movement and a socialist political leader. Towards the end of the British Raj, he worked with the Congress Radio which was broadcasted secretly from various places in Bombay until 1942. Together with Dr Julião Menezes, he was instrumental in ensuring that Goa got her freedom from the dictator Salazar's regime.



released in 1977



Stamp released in 1977



Definitive stamp
released in 2015

Honoured with stamps Dr.Ram Manohar Lohia, was released on three different occasions (1977, 1997 and 2015).

Dr Julião Menezes

Though Dr Lohia wasn't a Goan, he fought for Goa's independence. But he wasn't the only one. Not much is heard or known about Dr Julião Menezes who was an important person of Goa in gaining freedom from the Portuguese.

Hailing from Assolna in South Goa, this son of the soil played a major part in Goa Liberation. He studied in Goa after which he went to Berlin in the 1920s and graduated in medicine. And Berlin was where he met Dr Lohia who was then the Secretary of the Union. It was a friendship that played a great part in Goa's freedom history.

When Dr Menezes returned to Goa, he worked with the Club de Assolna and tried spreading rationalist thinking and nationalist activities. But Goa was not ready for it, and he faced a lot of opposition. He then moved to Bombay in 1939 and founded the Gomantak Praja Mandal. Dr Menezes also started a bilingual weekly Gomantak (Konkani and English) in 1942.

Through it all, he and Dr Lohia stayed in contact and even invited Dr Lohia to his home in Assolna to rest after a medical examination he performed on the former. Accepting the invitation, Dr Lohia came to Goa in 1946. It was during this visit that the two sat and discussed Goa's situation and made plans to turn things around.

Planning the Civil Disobedience Movement

While recuperating at Dr Menezes's home, the two men made plans to start the civil disobedience movement in Goa. They started with going against the ban on public meetings imposed by the Portuguese regime. When people sharing the same sentiments came to know Dr Lohia was in Goa, Menezes's home was visited non-stop by people.

In what was possibly the first public meeting, on June 15th, 1946, both gentlemen addressed a crowd in Panjim. Carried by this success, and thanks to them that 18th June became to be known as Goa Revolution Day. Yet, there is still no mention of Dr Julião Menezes today even though it can be said that the freedom movement began at his residence in Assolna.

Local Resistance to Portuguese Rule

Resistance to Portuguese rule in Goa in the 20th century was pioneered by Tristão de Bragança Cunha, a French-educated Goan engineer who founded the Goa Congress Committee in Portuguese India in 1928. Cunha released a booklet called 'Four hundred years of Foreign Rule', and a pamphlet, 'Denationalisation of Goa', intended to sensitise Goans to the oppression of Portuguese rule. On 12 October 1938, Cunha with other members of the Goa Congress Committee met Subhash Chandra Bose, the President of the Indian National Congress, and on his advice, opened a Branch Office of the Goa Congress Committee at 21, Dalal Street, Bombay. The Goa Congress was also affiliated to the Indian National Congress and Cunha was selected as its first President.

In June 1946, Ram Manohar Lohia, an Indian

Socialist leader, entered Goa on a visit to his friend, Julião Menezes, the nationalist leader. Cunha and other leaders were also with him. Ram Manohar Lohia advocated the use of non-violent Gandhian techniques to oppose the government. On 18 June 1946, the Portuguese government disrupted a protest against the suspension of civil liberties in Panaji (then spelt 'Panjim') organised by Lohia, Cunha and others including Purushottam Kakodkar and Laxmikant Bhembre in defiance of a ban on public gatherings, and arrested them.

Tristão de Bragança Cunha (2 April 1891 – 26 September 1958), was a prominent Indian nationalist and anti-colonial activist from Goa (then part of Portuguese India). He is popularly known as the "Father of Goan nationalism", and was the organiser of the first movement to end Portuguese rule in Goa.

Cunha was born on 2 April 1891 in the village Chandor in Goa. He completed his school education in Panjim and then went to Pondicherry to French College for his B.A. and then to Paris. There he studied at the Sorbonne University and obtained a degree in electrical engineering. In Paris, Cunha entered the circle of Romain Rolland and helped to publicise the Indian independence movement generally, and the case of Portuguese India in particular.

Cunha returned to Goa in 1926 and he set up the Goa Congress Committee in 1928 to organise the Goan intelligensia against Portuguese colonial rule. Pressured by Portuguese authorities, Cunha transferred operations to Bombay.

In 1946, Cunha could not be contacted. T.B. Cunha came to know about the "unrest" in Margao and came to the city. Ram Manohar Lohia had addressed what was arguably the first and largest mass gathering yet. Cunha was arrested by the Portuguese authorities. He was kept in dark damp cell at Fort Aguada. He was the first civilian to be tried by a military tribunal. He was court martialled and sentenced to eight years imprisonment. He was deported to the Peniche prison in Portugal.

After his release from Portugal in 1954, Cunha returned to Bombay. Cunha formed and headed the Goa Action Committee, to help co-ordinate the numerous Goan organisations that had emerged by this time. He published a newspaper called "Free Goa".

He died on 26 September 1958, Loknayak Jaiprakash Narayan was one of the pallbearers. The Government of India issued a postage stamp in his honour on 26th Sept. 1998.



Revolutionary Groups

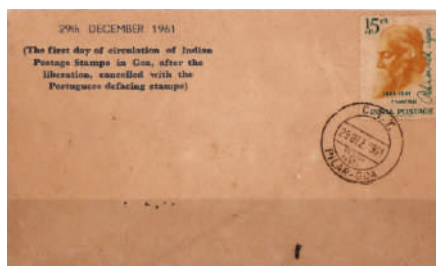
Azad Gomantak Dal, a revolutionary group, vowed to fight the Portuguese using direct action strategies. Azad Gomantak Dal was founded by Vishwanath Lawande, Narayan Hari Naik, Dattatraya Deshpande, Prabhakar Sinari who along with their other friends carried out series of attacks on Portuguese police stations and banks. Narayan

Naik and Dattatraya Deshpande suffered about 14 years of imprisonment in prisons in Portugal and Angola, however they were released after annexation of Goa. Vishwanath Lawande and Prabhakar Sinari managed to escape the prisons and continued their armed struggle against the Portuguese rule. They freed part of Goa called "Dadra and Nagar Haveli" through military action. the leader of the military organisation Vishwanath Lawande declared himself as Governor of Dadra and Nagar Haveli. However, in response to the group's revolutionary tactics, the Portuguese increased their military presence to quell the insurgency.

The Goa Liberation Army, founded by Shivajirao Desai, an Indian army officer in the 1950s, attempted to utilise revolutionary tactics and direct action strategies to challenge Portuguese colonialism. They played a pivotal role in defending the bridges at the time of Indian invasion.

Mr. Mohan Ranade

During Goa's liberation movement, Ranade was active in attacking police stations at Betim, Banastarim and other outposts. He was arrested by Portuguese police in 1955 and was imprisoned at the Fort of Caxias near Lisbon in Portugal. He was released from prison in January 1969, after the liberation of Goa in 1961, having served 14 years. Mohan Ranade was awarded Padmashri in 2001 and Sangli Bhushan in 2006. He received the Goa Puraskar in 1986 for social work. He has authored books on the Goa liberation movement.



The last day of Circulation of Portuguese India Postage stamps in Goa, the first stamps were issued way back in 1871. The cancellation shows the Pilar place cancellation on 28 December, 1961.

The first day of circulation of Indian postage stamps in Goa after liberation, cancelled with the Portuguese cancellation (defacing stamp) with Pilar place cancellation on 29 December, 1961.

The last of the coins of the Republica Portuguesa (A 10 centavos coin) of 1961. The reverse side is also shown in their photograph, with the marking Estado da India along with the year of release of the coin, 1961.



First Day cover released Ram Manohar Loka in 1977



FDC released in 1977

During the GOAPEX held in Panjim, Goa from 18-20, December, 1986 three different cancellations were released on 18, 19 and 20 December. The cover which was released on the occasion of the silver jubilee of Goa's Liberation depicts, a burning torch, a broken chain against a tricolour signifying the freedom from the colonial rule of Portugal.



A special cover released on 19 December, 1985 as part of year long celebration (19 December, 1985 – 18 December, 1986) showing the religious symbols and the communal harmony in Goa, with the LOGO of Silver Jubilee as cancellation.



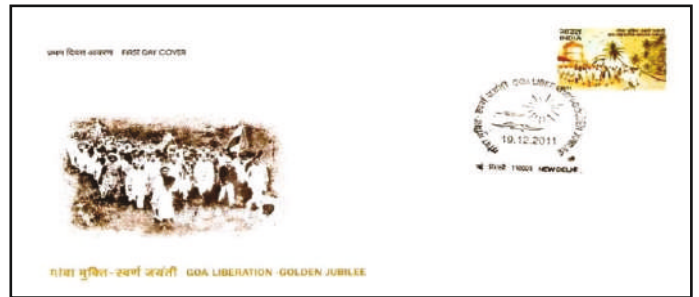
19 DEC. 1986

depicts the Martyrs Memorial at Patradevi, Panaji.

The cancellation depicts the T B Cunha Memorial at Azad Maidan, Panaji



20 DEC. 1986



First Day cover released on 19 December, 2011 on the occasion of Golden Jubilee Celebration of Goa Liberation Day by the Department of Posts, Govt of India.

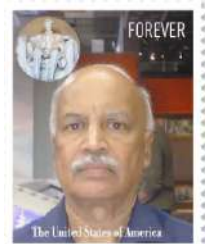


A stamp, a brochure and a First Day Cover were released at the Ravindra Bhawan, Madgaon, on the 17th August, 2025 on the birth centenary of late Shri Laxmi Das Borkar, who was a multifaceted personality, besides a great freedom for Higher Goa's Liberation Movement along with Dr Ram Manohar Lohia. He was a writer, journalist, and a great Institution builder too. He had won several awards too.

As former President of Goa Philately and Numismatics Society, pervently requests that more commemorative stamps and special covers need to be released by the Department of Posts, Govt. of India to honour the great freedom fighters of Goa, and various landmark events and places associated with the freedom struggle. Unfortunately, no stamp or even a special cover has been issued in the name of Dr.Julião Menezes, Viswanath Lawande, Prabhakar Sinari etc.

Author :

Chief Scientist (Retd) National Institute of Oceanography, Dona Paula, Goa. A really super active ambassador for philately far . Lifetime awardee of SIPA in 2026.



* * * * *

PHILA-INFO. 4.

Indian Post Office in Pakistan

By B. J. Kumar

In the 1971 war with Pakistan, the big thrust in the Barmer area gave India effective control right up to Umarkot and Naya Chor, 45 Kms. inside Sind.

At the time war ended, Indian troops were occupying a position only 1.5 Kms. from the town. Another thrust was launched some 150 Kms. to the south of Rann of Kutch area. The major gain here was the elimination of bulge into India territory at the centre of which stood the subdivisional town of Nagar Parkar. Thus India gained an area of 375 Sq. Kms. Now the Indian column edged northward to join with the forces launched from the Barmer border at Chachro, about midway between the two thrusts. Chachro town is 73 Kms. from Gadra Road, a town on the Barmer border from which the Naya Chor thrust was launched. Its peace time population was 10,000 of which only 4,000 remained behind.

To serve the area round about Chachro, a Sub-Post Office was opened on the afternoon of 11th January 1972 in the office of the Head Master of Government Primary School, Chachro as the original building of Post Office was destroyed in the war by fire and it was now used as mess by Fourth Madras Regiment. In the beginning the letters etc. were cancelled with "EXPTL. P.O. J-519" date stamp which was replaced with "Chachro P.O." date stamp on 28th June 1972. Pin Code No. 344503 was also allotted to this P.O. when it was introduced in the other towns of India. Only four defacing seals were provided to this office; viz., Date stamp, Seal stamp, Name stamp and Due stamp. Registered letters were also accepted by this post office. On the average 250 to 300 letters were received daily at Chachro for delivery. There also existed Army Post Office (F.P.O. 1632) and A.P.O. was responsible for carrying Dak between Indian and Chachro.

Chachro P.O. was not only delivering Dak at Chachro but it was also delivering Dak in the villages round about Chachro; viz., Bapardya, Dhokla, Khivsar, Rajora, Amad Katarch, etc.

Chachro P.O. was closed on 15th December, 1972 when the Indian forces were withdrawn from occupied territory of Pakistan. It is the only Indian Civil Post Office opened on the soil of any foreign territory since India attained Freedom in 1947.

* * * * *

POSTAL HISTORY

PIGEONS TO DRONES

An Insight into Carried Covers of Independent India

Senthilkumar Chandrasekaran,
Life Member SIPA

PART 1

PIGEON POST, HARKARA DAK, BELL POST, DAK HORSE & DAK ELEPHANTS

Carried covers tell stories—stories of journeys, celebrations and the imaginative ways a nation chooses to remember its past. In the decades after Independence, India embraced this tradition with remarkable creativity, sending commemorative mail across land, water, and sky.

Some covers travelled by familiar modes of transport, while others were carried in novel, even whimsical ways designed to capture the public's curiosity. At times, the postal system retraced its own footsteps, reviving historic methods such as those once used in the country's earliest mail routes.

From first flight covers to bold experiments in mail carriage, each piece reflects a moment when innovation met tradition, and when the act of carrying a letter became a story in itself.

Through this article the author tries to capture few of these wonderful covers issued during the course of time. Though all effort has been made by the author to include as much as possible covers, this cannot be construed as an exhaustive and complete list. The covers are also not organised in chronological order. due to convenience of expression by modes of carriage.

1 MODES OF MAIL CARRIAGE

1.1 Pigeon Post

Trained Pigeons are made to fly to predefined destinations with letters in little missives tied to their feet. For centuries, pigeon post formed an ingenious and reliable communication network across the Indian subcontinent.

From the Mauryan and Mughal courts to princely states and frontier outposts, trained homing pigeons carried royal commands, military intelligence, and civilian messages with remarkable speed. Even during the colonial era, select regions maintained active pigeon services for strategic communication.

After Independence, this legacy has been commemorated through a handful of pigeon-carried special covers, issued mainly during philatelic exhibitions and heritage events. These modern releases—conducted under controlled flights with trained homing pigeons—serve as symbolic tributes to India's earliest aerial messengers.

During COINPEX-2012 held on 12th December 2012 at Pune, 500 missives were carried by Pigeons to Deccan Gymkhana Post Office. These missives were serially numbered and then sold inside a special cover with same unique serial number with special embroidery on the cover.



Along with this cover a leaflet was issued which capture the various releases of Pigeongrams in India compiled by senior philatelist Mr. Pratisad Neurgaonkar, a life member of SIPA. Predominantly images used in this article for Pigeongrams are sourced from this leaflet and few from the personal collection of Mr. Parvesh Gupta and the author.



HOPE



LEOPEX 1981

Image Source – Leaflet issued with COINPEX Pigeongram

During APPEX 1984, missives were again carried from exhibition venue to Hyderabad Jubilee Post Office on 27th October 1984.

During JALPEX 1984, Varanasi 200 missives were carried by Pigeons from Head Office to City Post Office on 9th April 1984



Hyderabad 1987



JALPEX 1984

During INPEX-93, Calcutta 500 missives were carried by Pigeons from S.S.M.V Sarvojaya to Tengra Post Office on 27th December 1993.

During ORPEX-89, on 3rd November 1989, missives were carried by Pigeons from Barabati Stadium to Cuttack GPO.



APPEX 1984



ORPEX 1989

Image Source – Leaflet issued with COINPEX Pigeongram

On 27th February 1987, missives were carried by Pigeons from the exhibition venue to Hyderabad Jubilee Post Office and was organised by Hyderabad Philatelic & Hobbies Society.

On 17th August 1997, missives were carried by Pigeon from Cuttack to Bhubaneshwar and back during an event organised by Orissa Philatelic Association, Cuttack.



INPEX 1993



Pigeongram 1997

Image Source – Leaflet issued with COINPEX Pigeongram

During JALPEX-96 — a philatelic exhibition held in Varanasi, a special Harkara Dak (mail runner) carried cover was issued to commemorate traditional mail-runner heritage. This cover was prepared in limited numbers only.



Image Source from Internet



Missive



Leaflet issued with the COINPEX cover

First Pigeongram after Independence was carried from Birla Industrial and Technological Museum to Surendra Banerjee Road in Calcutta (now Kolkata) on 16th March 1963. Only 15 missives were carried by the Pigeons.

The second Pigeongram was issued during Aeropex 1974 at Calcutta. 124 missives were carried from Raj Bhawan to Amherst Street Post Office on 6th December 1974.



Birla Industrial museum 1963



Aeropex 1974

Image Source – Leaflet issued with COINPEX Pigeongram

During APPEX 1975, missives were carried by Pigeons from Exhibition Venue to Hyderabad Jubilee Post Office on 11th January 1975.

Again during APPEX 1977, missives were carried by Pigeons from Exhibition Venue to Hyderabad Jubilee Post Office on 14th January 1977



APPEX 1975



APPEX 1977

Image Source – Leaflet issued with COINPEX Pigeongram

On 14th February 1981, 250 missives were by carried by Pigeons from ITF Pavilion to Amherst Street Post Office, Calcutta and the event was organised by HOPE (Lions Club).

On 6th April 1981, 250 missives were carried by Pigeons from Great Eastern Hotel to Sarat Bose Road, Calcutta as part of LEOPEX-81

During APPEX-99, Hyderabad on 12th February 1999, missives were carried by Pigeons from Exhibition venue to Hyderabad Jubilee Post Office.

During Millennium Exhibition on Numismatic and Antique by Connoisseurs, Calcutta, missives were carried by Pigeons from exhibition venue to Tangra Post Office on 10th January 2000.



APPEX 1999



Pigeongram 2000

Image Source – Leaflet issued with COINPEX Pigeongram

During INPEX 2003, Bhubaneswar 250 missives were carried by Pigeons from OUAT Conference Hall to Cuttack Post Office on 2nd March 2003



INPEX 2003 Pigeongram

During JAMPEX 2005, Jamshedpur, 30 pigeons carried 100 missives from Tulsi Bhawan to Kadma Post Office on 6th December 2005. As part of 144th Anniversary of Cuttack Club Limited, missives were carried by the

Pigeons on 2nd April 2009.



JAMPEX 2005



Pigeongram 2009

Image Source – Leaflet issued with COINPEX Pigeongram

On 14th April 2018 Odisha Police, in association with the Bhubaneswar chapter of Indian National Trust for Arts and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), flew 50 pigeons at OUAT Grounds to deliver missives of heritage conservation to Cuttack, 25km away and they reached in an hour.



Pigeongram INTACH 2018



Missive

Similarly missives from Dhursti Daan and L.V.Prasad Eye Institute, Bhubaneswar were also flown out on the same day by Belgian Homer Pigeons.



Photographs taken during the event

During Koyalanj Stamp Utsav, Dhanbad missives were carried to Head Post Office on 11th January 2017 by pigeons.

During BIPEX 2024, Patna missives were carried by Pigeons from Head Office to City Post Office on 28th November 2024/



Koyalanj Stamp Utsav



Bipex 2018

Image Source – Mr. Parvesh Gupta's collection

As they are limited in number, pigeon-carried covers from the post-1947 period remain prized by collectors for their blend of living tradition, postal history, and the enduring romance of avian communication.

1.2 Harkara (Mail Runner)

The Harkara (Mail runner) was one of the earliest and most iconic elements of India's communication network. Trusted for speed and endurance, these barefoot messengers carried mailbags across vast distances—through forests, plains, and rugged terrain—often running day and night to maintain schedules. Their relay-based system enabled surprisingly rapid transmission long before mechanized transport, forming the backbone of the pre-modern postal service.

The earliest post-Independence harkara reenactments emerged in regional philatelic exhibitions where cultural themes were given pride of place. Organizers often sought to recreate the rhythm of ancient communication by arranging a short ceremonial run—usually between the exhibition venue and a nearby post office or within the grounds themselves. Special covers were prepared for the occasion, carried by a costumed "harkara," and then officially cancelled to document the event.

A special mail runner carried cover was issued for INDOREPEX '78, held at the Indore Museum Hall from 12–14 November 1978, under the auspices of the Indore Philatelic Society. The cover was carried by a special runner from Indore Head Office to the exhibition venue, symbolically recreating pre-modern mail conveyance. Each cover is serially numbered and a total of 500 covers were Issued on 13th November 1978.



During BIPEX'79, the Bihar State Philatelic Exhibition held at Jamshedpur on 8 February 1979, a special mail runner cover was issued depicting a traditional method. The cover was carried by a special mail runner from Jamshedpur Head Post Office to the BIPEX '79 exhibition stage, as

certified by an inscription and official signature. Each cover is serially numbered.



A special carried cover featuring the Dak Runner was issued in Ahmedabad during Dak Bharati Philatelic Exhibition on 1st October 2004, to commemorate 150

years of India Post. 500 nos of covers addressed to Chief Post Master, Ahmedabad GPO were carried by Harkara were issued at a price of INR 50. Another set of 500 covers addressed to Post Master, Navrangpura HO were also issued.



On 14th October 2004, a special cover was carried by Postal Runner during CALPHILEX 2004 philatelic exhibition at Calicut.



On 18th November 2004 during DECPEX 2004, Philatelic exhibition a special cover was carried by Harkara from the exhibition venue to New Delhi HPO. Each cover is serially numbered and in

total 100 covers were issued at INR 100.

During Republic Day Parade on 26th January 2005, a special cover was carried by Harkara from the Republic Day Parade Tableau to the New Delhi HPO. There were two variants to this issue and 250 covers of each variant were issued.



Image Source from Internet



Image Source from Internet

On 7th December 2005, as part of JAMPEX 2005, a special cover was carried by Postal Runner from Jamshedpur Philatelic Bureau to JAMPEX Exhibition Venue, Bistupur, Jamshedpur. In total 100 covers were issued.

On 30th March 2007, during STAMP FEST 2007, a special cover was carried by Postal Runner from Ranchi GPO to Town Hall, Ranchi. Each cover is serially numbered and in total 200 covers were issued



Image Source from Internet

On 10 February 2005 during JP PEX 2005 philatelic exhibition, a special cover was carried by Harkara from the exhibition venue at Jaipur. In total 300 number covers were issued.



Ahmedabad Version



On 29th October 2009 as part of STAMPEX Pune 2009, a special cover was carried by Mail Runner from the show venue to Deccan Gymkhana Post Office. Few covers with a Silver medallion affixed in it were also issued.



Normal Version (Silver Medallion)

On 13th January 2012, during MAHAPEX 2012, a state level philatelic exhibition organised by Maharashtra Postal circle, a special cover was carried by Dak Runner from Ganeshkhind Post Office (411 007) to exhibition venue at Balewadi, Pune (411 045). Few covers with a Silver Replica of Mahatma Gandhi 1948 Rs10 Stamp were also issued at a very cheap price of INR 750. To facilitate a few and create confusion Each cover is serially numbered and 500 covers were issued.



Cover with Silver Replica of Mahatma Gandhi Rs.10 Stamp

During PUNPEX 2016, the third state level philatelic exhibition of Punjab State conducted between 6th – 9th February 2016 at Chandigarh, a harkara carried special cover was issued on 6th February 2016. Covers were carried by foot by a postal runner dressed in traditional Dak Harkara uniform from the exhibition venue to Chandigarh GPO. Each cover is serially numbered and in total 500 covers were issued.

MADRAS AIR TAXI SERVICE-1934

A year after J. R. D. Tata started the Tata Sons first air service between Karachi & Madras, a new company came into being at Madras. This was the Madras Air Taxi Service, which had ambitious plans for a regular mail & passenger service between principal towns in South India and to elsewhere in India. Accordingly, they chartered one Fox Moth aircraft and opened a bi-weekly experimental air service between Madras & Calcutta via Vijayawada (Bezwada), Vishakhapatnam (Vizagapatam) & Puri on 10th February 1934.

Unfortunately, the service, like many others at that toddling stage of Commercial Aviation, did not succeed, and the company wound up on 31st March 1934. But, the Air Taxi Service was the first to connect South with the Eastern India by air and no doubt a landmark in the history of aviation as well as aerophilately.

The company did not produce any special souvenir covers nor any special postmark or cachet. Only a few collector's mail as well as some from leading stamp dealers of the time were carried between different stages.

There were some printed covers flown with printed words "FIRST FLIGHT MADRAS-CALCUTTA" and again some with a single-line purple cachet reading "1st FLIGHT MADRAS AIR TAXI SERVICE". But these were all unofficial and most of the mail had no cachet at all.

Dr. D.J. Banerjea

Postal notice was issued well ahead, so a few items of mail were carried from overseas.

The following are a break-up of different stages and postmarks :

Madras—Calcutta : Covers are mostly cancelled at Madras G. P. O. bearing date 9 Feb. 1934 & Calcutta G. P. O. Dely. of 11 Feb.

Madras—Bezwada : Madras cancellation same as above and Bezwada Dely. 10 Feb. No Mail was carried from Madras to Vizagapatam or Puri.

Bezwada—Calcutta: Bezwada cancellation of 9 Feb 1934 and Calcutta G. P. O. slogan Dely. 11 Feb. 'TELEPHONE MAKES LIFE EASIER'.

Vizag.—Calcutta : Vizag postmark of 9 Feb. 1934 and Calcutta G.P.O. slogan Dely. as above but with date 10 Feb.

Puri—Calcutta : These covers either Puri or Cuttack postmarks and Calcutta G. P. O. Dely. of 13 Feb.

The Return flight left Calcutta on 11th February 1934.

Calcutta—Puri : Covers bear Calcutta G.P.O. Post mark of 10 Feb. & Puri Dely. of next day.

Calcutta—Vizag : Calcutta and Vizag postmarks same as above.

Calcutta—Bezwada: Calcutta Postmark same but Bezwada Dely. 12 Feb.

Calcutta—Madras : Calcutta postmark same & Madras G.P.O. Dely. 12th Feb.

(Courtesy : Dr.D.J.Banerjea)



* * * * *

NILGIRI MOUNTAIN RAILWAY (NMR)

B. Ravikumar
Life Member, SIPA



The British, first conceived the idea of a mountain railway to the Nilgiri Hills in 1854, seeking a cooler retreat from the plains. However, the challenging terrain and complex engineering requirements meant that actual construction did not begin until 1891.

Before the railway, reaching hill stations In India like Ooty was arduous, often requiring horseback or a palanquin through rough terrain. This made mail transport slow, costly, and unpredictable.



Figure 1: Bullock carts on the Nilgiri Ghat Road

The first bridle path was constructed from Sirumugai, near Mettupalayam, and led to Dimhatti. This continued to be the chief route to the hills from the Coimbatore side until the first Coonoor 'ghat' road was completed in 1832.

In the 1870s, **Lieutenant Colonel GV Law**, a member of the **Madras Sappers and Miners regiment**, undertook the massive task of transforming the modest track in Coonoor, which was previously used for cartloads, tongas, and people on horseback, into something motorable. The present 'ghat' road was completed in 1871.



Figure 2: Madras Sappers stamp

Plan for the NMR

Originally planned by Lord Dalhousie (Governor-General of India from 1848 to 1856) while stayed in the Nilgiris in 1854-55 for rest and recuperation. He suggested

one strategic line from Madras to the western coast with a branch to the foot of the Nilgiris.



Lord Wenlock

The first sod was cut by Lord Wenlock, the then Governor of the Madras Presidency, and the stone for the NMR was laid on August 3, 1891. After delays and disputes over finance and management, the NMR work began in 1896.



Figure 4: NMR track on the Nilgiri mountains

The railway faced numerous hurdles, particularly in navigating the steep gradients of the Nilgiris. This led to the adoption of the unique ABT rack-and-pinion system, which provides the necessary

grip for the locomotives on the incline.

Work on the Mettupalayam–Coonoor line started in 1891. The Governor of Madras officially opened the Mettupalayam-Coonoor station on Aug 11, 1899, and on Jan 1, 1903, the line was taken over by the Indian Government.



Figure 5: Coonoor Station

It was due to the perseverance and engineering acumen of the then Superintendent Engineer of Nilgiris, J.L.L. Morant, that the rail link was extended from the

foothills to Coonoor, and later to Ootacamund in 1908, in a feat of rare engineering skill that completed the whole 46-kilometer route.



Figure 6: NMR at Fernhill Station

In September 1908, the rail line was extended to Fernhill.

By 15 October 1908, it was extended to Ootacamund.

X-class coal-fired steam locomotives from Switzerland were used on the station



Figure 7: NMR at Ootacamund Station

between Mettupalayam and Coonoor. These are compound locomotives having four cylinders instead of the conventional two. The main cylinders use high-pressure



Figure 8: NMR Locomotive

steam to drive the wheels of the loco, whereas the small cylinders use low-pressure steam to drive the rack system.

The youngest X-class loco is over 50 years old, and the oldest is over 80. These steam locomotives were maintained at the Coonoor loco shed and at the Mettupalayam shed. Since 2011, oil-fired, indigenously built locomotives have been used.

ABT Rack-and-Pinion System



Figure 9: ABT Rack-and-Pinion System

The track beyond Kallar is steep all the way up to Coonoor. This had necessitated the adoption of the Swiss Rack and pinion System for railways over

a 20 km distance from Kallar to Coonoor.

Special rack bars are provided centrally between the track rails on special chairs. These bars are laid on the slope of the line itself and form a ladder up which the engine climbs and pushes the train.



Figure 10: Rack bars between the track rails of NMR

Engineering Marvel

With around 250 bridges and 16 tunnels, the Nilgiri Mountain Railway is a unique and the steepest in Asia.



Figure 11: NMR passing out of a tunnel in Lovedale

It is the most authentic and original rack-and-adhesion railway in the world.

The maximum permissible speed between Mettupalayam-Kallar and Coonoor-Ootacamund is 30 KMPH, and the maximum speed between Kallar-Coonoor is 13 KMPH.

NMR's role in Postal Services

The establishment of post offices in the Nilgiri Hills, particularly in major towns like Ooty and Coonoor, predates the full completion of the NMR in 1908. These hill stations were already established British settlements, and postal services were a necessity for the colonial administration and residents.

The British absolutely used the NMR for postal delivery in the early 1900s. The introduction of NMR significantly enhanced postal services at existing locations, potentially

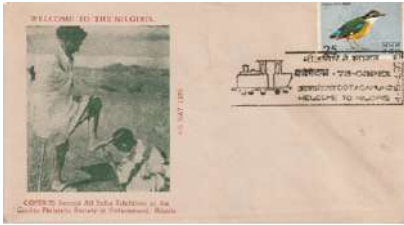


Figure 12: Special Cover with Special Pictorial Cancellation of NMR Train

leading to their expansion, and likely facilitated the establishment of smaller post offices or mail delivery points at various stations along the line.



Figure 13: KGV British India Postcard cancelled at Coonoor R.S. post office

The railway was a transformative innovation for the region's postal service. Before its introduction, mail delivery to and from the Nilgiri hill stations was slow and unreliable.

The NMR provided a fast, efficient, and consistent link.

- Ooty (Udhagamandalam):** The first post office in Ooty was opened as early as **1826**. While its initial location shifted, the service was well-established long before the NMR reached Ooty in 1908. The railway primarily improved the efficiency of mail transport to and from this already existing postal hub.



- Coonoor:** Coonoor also had an established post office before the railway's completion to Ooty. The initial segment of the NMR from Mettupalayam to Coonoor opened in **1899**. This made Coonoor a crucial transit point for mail going further up the hills.
- Mettupalayam:** Mettupalayam's importance as a railhead for the plains route, and subsequently for the NMR, meant it would have had a post office in operation well before 1900. It served as the crucial point of exchange for mail from the broader Indian network to the Nilgiris.

Small post offices or postal agencies were established at or near the railway stations along the route to facilitate direct

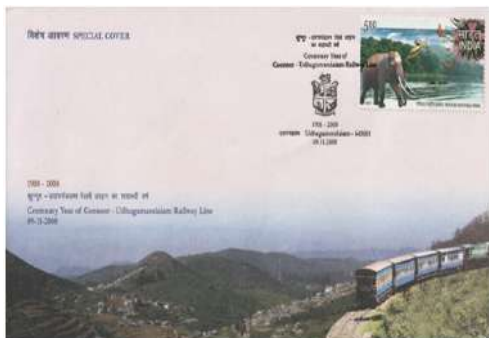


Figure 14: Coonoor-Ootacamund Railway Centenary Special Cover (2008)

mail handling. The railway's main impact on postal services was optimizing mail routes, reducing transit times, and increasing reliability for all post offices along its path. Railway stations became key mail exchange points, and existing post offices in these towns became more efficient and connected.

The use of the NMR for regular postal delivery ceased as India's transportation infrastructure evolved, with the rise of road networks and faster vehicular transport. Today, the Nilgiri Mountain Railway is primarily a heritage and tourist train, and its modern role does not include mail delivery.



Figure 15: Postal cover carried on the NMR (10.08.2019)



Figure 16: NMR picture postcard from India Post

Author :

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



Mountain Railways - FDC 16th April 1993

* * * * *

MACHIN STORY

S.K.Lakshmanan
Joint Secretary, SIPA

Introduction:

The demise of King George VI on 6 February 1952 necessitated the issue of new Definitive Stamps by Royal Mail bearing the effigy of Queen Elizabeth II.

Royal Mail adopted the photograph of Dorothy Wilding (Fig.1) for the first definitive stamps issue of the new reign, a series now widely referred to as the "Wilding" definitives (Fig.2).



Fig.1
Image courtesy Internet



Fig.2

In use between 6 February 1952 and 4 June 1967, these issues were produced with three distinct watermark types: Tudor Crown, St Edward's Crown, and Multiple Crown.

In practice, the Wilding definitives were not widely favoured by the British public, largely due to their ornate design for everyday use.

On 5 June 1967, Royal Mail introduced a new definitive design featuring Queen Elizabeth II, derived from a photographic portrait of a plaster cast (Fig.3) by Arnold Machin; these are known as the "**MACHIN**". definitives.

Image of the
Original Sculpture



Fig.3
Image Courtesy internet

Pre-Decimal Issues:

The first Machin definitive were released in the pre-decimal currency system Pound, Shilling and Pence on 5 June 1967 in three denominations: 4d Olive-Brown/Sepia, 1s Olive-Brown and 1s 9d Brown/Blue, marking the first use of abi-coloured Machin design. The 4d olive-brown/sepia, colour was personally selected by Queen Elizabeth II, deliberately recalls the iconic "**Penny Black**" (Fig.4).



Fig.4

The photogravure printing of these stamps by Harrison and Sons marked the start of a definitive series that became the longest-running in philatelic history.

Arnold Machin at Harrison and Sons printing facility where the first Machins were printed examines the first sheets of stamps off the press (Fig.5).



Fig.5

Subsequent issues (Fig.6) expanded the range of denominations to cover differing postal rates and usages.



Fig.6

Decimal Issues:

A new set of 12 stamps (Fig.7) were introduced on 15 February 1971 to reflect the decimal currency system of Pounds and Pence

These stamps were issued for use across England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and Isle of Man (for a short period), with the Queen's portrait dominating the entire stamp design.

Subsequent issues (Fig.8) expanded the range of denominations to cover differing postal rates and usages.



Fig.7



Fig. 8

Country (Regional) Issues:

These stamps were issued for specific Countries (Regions), namely Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man for a short period. The Queen's head was reduced in size to accommodate the respective national emblems (Fig.9). Only selected key denominations were issued in this format.



Scotland
The Heraldic Lion



Wales
The Heraldic Dragon



Northern Ireland
A Six Pointed Star with the Right Hand of Ulster surmounted by St. Edwards Crown



Fig.9

Isle of Man

The Three Legs of Man Encircled by Celtic Chain.

After the Channel Islands postal administration became independent, the issue of Isle of Man stamps was stopped and their use was discontinued from 5 July 1975 (Fig. 10).



Fig. 10

Non-Value Indicators:

These stamps bear no denomination; instead, they indicate the postal service for which they are valid. They remain usable indefinitely, regardless of any changes in postal rates. They were first issued on 22 August 1989 (Fig. 11).



Fig.11

Issue Formats:

Sheets:This method involves printing stamps in rows and columns in panes of 25, 50, 100, 150, or 240, each with white selvedge on all four sides. The selvedge carries information such as the printer's imprint, cylinder number, printing date, and the total value of the sheet (Fig.12).



Fig. 12

Coil:In this method, stamps are printed in roll format, either horizontally or vertically, and may consist of single or multiple denominations(Fig.13).



Fig.13

Stitched Booklets:In this type, several panes of stamps and advertisement labels are bound into sturdy, printed covers by stitching. These are referred to as stitched booklets, predominantly in vertical format (Fig. 14).



Fig.14

Folded Booklets:The descriptive name arises from a pane of stamps secured by its selvedge to a single cover sheet, folded centrally. Such booklets are distributed through post office counters and automatic vending machines throughout the country, mainly in horizontal format (Fig.15).



Fig.15

Window Booklets:This type of booklet include a single pane of stamps and generally had a red cover with a small plastic window, enabling customers to see a stamp inside. The costly window feature was later discontinued in favour of a printed representation of a stamp, though the term "Window Booklet" has endured (Fig. 16).



Fig.16

Security Booklets : Featuring a single pane of stamps and a sheet-style facsimile printed on the front cover, these booklets have stamps perforated on all sides, with distinctive elongated elliptical perforations along the vertical edges. Introduced as a security enhancement and issued in red and yellow covers, they are commonly called "Security Booklets." (Fig.17)



Fig.17

Author :

S.K.Lakshmanan

Joint Secretary, SIPA. His philatelic interests include Pre- and Post-Independence India, Great Britain, and Butterflies, with a particular specialization in the Machin series. Won many Medals in State and National Level Exhibitions.



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

4. **Sale :** Censored covers I & II ww. and unit censor. more than 12nos. Can be made into a 5 frame exhibit.



EXPERIMENTAL POST OFFICE NO.687

Unusual Post Office at DHANUSHKODI

Dr. P.S.DIXIT, FRPSL
Life Member, S.I.P.A.

Recently, I went to Rameshwaram and decided to visit Dhanushkodi and to locate the experimental Post Office No.687.

This was my second visit to Rameshwaram and Dhanushkodi. During my 2013 December visit to Dhanushkodi, there was a single lane 20 km.

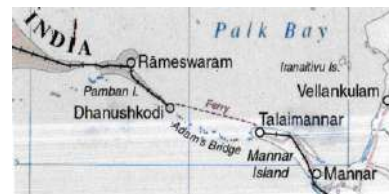


Fig.1: A map showing the location of Dhanushkodi Island

road connecting Rameshwaram - Dhanushkodi. Old ruined railway tracks could be seen besides the road. This is shown in a photograph taken by me along with pre-1964 railroad photograph in an insert. In fact, Dhanushkodi even today is a ghost town. A photograph of the ruins of Dhanushkodi railway station and a glimpse of ruined township are shown in Photographs no.2 and 3.



During this visit to Rameshwaram and Dhanushkodi. I found that there was good effort made by the State government to develop the area. A two lane road now connects Rameshwaram and Dhanushkodi. Road is extended up to the tip of the lands end. Ruined railway tracks were cleared. Tourists are plenty. Fisherman have established thatched shops displaying and selling seashells and other products made locally. There are no solid buildings and no communication towers. Dhanushkodi is today more or less a ghost town.

I could not locate the Experimental Post Office No.687. There are no signboard indicating the location of the Post Office. Hence I decided to visit the local Panchayat School to find out the location of the Post Office. Two school boys were assigned to take me to the Post Office. In fact, one of the boy's sister was the postal clerk In-charge of the Post Office. The Post Office is located about 200 metres off the road among the sand dunes. This is a thatched hut with two partitions : One for the Post Office operation and the other, a rest room for the postal clerk. This is shown in the photograph with the postal clerk standing in the front of the Post Office..



I had a long discussion with the postal clerk, of course in Tamil. Her name was Miss S.Sardnia. This Post Office was opened to the Public on 2nd February 2017. The Post Office was equipped with stamps sheets of various denominations, Post Cards, envelopes and revenue stamps. About 120 postal articles per week are collected for the onward transmission to Rameshwaram, Head Post Office for sorting. There were no other hand stamps, except Experimental Post Office No.687 obliterator. I did not find a post box outside the hut or on the road. I decided to post one Registered Letter to Nadiad from Dhanushkodi Experimental Post Office No.687. It was sent to Rameshwaram H.O.for the Registration and the onward transmission to NADIAD on 21 October, 2017.

This is an amazing Post Office of Tamil Nadu State. There are a plenty of experimental post Offices in India, but how many of them are comparable to Dhanushkodi experimental Post Office and will be of interest to the modern postal historians of India.



Status of the Expte.P.O. in 2025



OBITUARY

Mr. WINSTON ANAND HENRY
(18.07.1969 – 27.03.2026)



With deep sorrow SIPA wishes to in for the demise of WINSTON on 27th March 2026 after a brief illness.

As known to many of SIPA members he was a gentleman to the core. Soft spoken, laughing most of the time and helpful to one and all.

Born in Nigeria he had his school education in Nigeria and college studies at Madras Christian college and is well travelled to many countries.

Coming to his hobbies, it is said that he is a collector of anything and everything from pins to boats, and mainly stamps and coins. His philately collection of "Tranways of the World" is superb.

More than collecting, he worked towards propagation of philately through Exhibitions and special covers celebrations of "Madras Day" in the early inaugural years of 2005 onwards by exhibitions at city colleges like Madras Christian college, Stella Maris etc will speak volumes of his work. Moreover for the release of special covers for "Madras day" during 2006–2010 the efforts he put with Mr. D.H. Rao was enormous as known to his friends. May his soul Rest in peace.



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