
 * AN A-to-Z OF INDIAN PHILATELY *

by B. T. CHEVERTON.

PART 21 - THE LETTER 'U'

In 1974, India and Pakistan commemorated the Centenary of the Universal Postal Union with special stamps (and Miniature Sheets). This Organisation, which dates from the Berne Conference of 1874, was known originally as the General Post Union. In 1875, when the Treaty was signed, membership was restricted to Sovereign States, although Britain sought special dispensation for India. Six classifications of membership were established, based on population and the volume of international mail. India became a First Class member on July 1st. 1876 and remained so ever since. Nepal, it may be noted, once had the distinction of being the only Country not in membership.

For India, a hundred years ago, there was a need also for internal collaboration. A Convention was entered into with Patiala and other Punjab States in the 1880s and this was followed by an important agreement with Mysore. Then, in 1892, a policy of 'Postal Unity' was declared which led in 1894 to the amalgamation of the Kashmir State Post, with Nandgaon and Bamra following in the same year. Some States, notably Jaipur, Cochin and Travancore, operated efficient internal Postal Systems and declined offers of unity with the Imperial Postal System, while Hyderabad had made it clear from the onset that the Nizam's Government would not amalgamate, whatever other States might decide. This led, ultimately, to the rather bizarre military take-over of the Hyderabad Post Office, as has been noted earlier. By the 1920s, 635 of the 652 Native States had integrated their Postal Systems with that of the Imperial Post.

Early attempts at the creation of a Unified Postal System were in the days of the East India Company, and their emblem had been incorporated into the design of the 1852 Sind Dawk stamps. And yet, the proper name for this remarkable organisation was the 'United Company'. It had been formed in 1708 by the amalgamation of the (then) East India Company and the English Company Trading in the East Indies.

The spelling of Indian place names is likely to remain of interest for some time yet, with reversions from Simla to Shimla, Poona to Pune and Nasik to Nasick (or whatever). However, just as there has been some interchange with the letters K and Q, as example in the spelling of Kandahar or Qandahar, so we have had Umballa for Ambala, Umritsar for Amritsar and Ulwar for Alwar. It all makes for interest, and particularly worth looking out for are covers, as for example Ulwar in 1899 in the transitional periods of name change.

L.C.J. Brown has beaten me to it on the subject of U.S. Army Post Offices in India during World War 2. However, we can add Number 918 to listing of Offices, it having been reported as Calcutta 918C, Madras 918M and Rangoon 918M. Also, whereas the covers so far illustrated have Censor cachets, I have four (as below) without Censor or any other marking beside the basic FPO date stamp. So, why sometimes with and sometimes without Censor cachets?

- 883 - Karachi to Washington D.C. April 11 1944;
- 886 - Karachi to Washington D.C. March 16 1944;
 (both on War Department Official envelopes)
- 465 - Calcutta to New Jersey January 10 1944;
- 689 - Ledo to New York July 12 1944.

It will occur to some members that 'U' is for 'Uglies', a name often given to the stamps of Jammu & Kashmir. It is, of course, a matter of taste and we will all doubtless have our lists. What is reasonably certain, however, is that some stamp issues have been neglected by philatelists because they are apparently uninteresting.

Although 'U' is clearly unremarkable as a reference letter, the Post Office has from time to time needed to define its policy with respect to both 'Unpaid' and 'Unclaimed' mail. An extract from the 1903 Postal Guide concerning the latter may be of interest:

31. Unclaimed articles include all articles which cannot be delivered because the person to whom they are addressed cannot be found, or because the addresses are so illegible or imperfect that the place of destination cannot be ascertained.

32. Unclaimed articles which cannot be delivered because the person to whom they are addressed cannot be found are ordinarily kept for three weeks, either in the post office to which they are addressed or at the head office in the jurisdiction of which the office of destination is situated.

33. (1) Unclaimed letters are at the end of three weeks forwarded direct to the Dead Letter Office, where further endeavours are made to find the addressee. If the addressee cannot be found, those articles which bear the name of the sender on the cover are returned to the office at which they were posted for delivery to the sender. Those which do not bear the name of the sender on the cover are opened, in order that the name and address of the sender may be ascertained; if the necessary information is found, they are returned to the senders; if it cannot be found they are disposed of in the Dead Letter Office after being detained for the period prescribed.

(2) Unclaimed articles which cannot be delivered on account of the addresses being illegible or incomplete are transferred to the Dead Letter Office for disposal.

And, finally, some notes on 'Unpaid Mail' ... a subject that deserves a Section in our 'Handbook'. So, who will do the necessary?

The Postage Due system exists to permit delivery of underpaid items. The charge for the service is partly punitive, to help ensure that correct postage stamps are visually affixed. Before the arrival of the postage 'labels' we now call 'stamps', letters could be sent either 'paid' or 'bearing'. There were advantages with both arrangements, and people in India thought that Bearing items had a better chance of delivery since the Post Office had a greater incentive. This was never true from the Revenue point of view but be that as it may, dishonest people soon discovered that a communication could be made by sending letters 'unpaid', the recipient being sufficiently informed when receiving a demand for payment which would be refused.

The Post Office had decided to adopt the British practice, which was that any postage due would be double that of the unpaid portion. Handstamps were provided, as in Great Britain, to indicate insufficiently paid items, although it is not surprising that there were types peculiar to the different Postal Circles. Unlike G.B., however, special adhesive stamps were never used, except in Portuguese India.

Some items inevitably escape payment in the post and in earlier times we find unpaid covers which carry despatch, transit and delivery marks without any postage due markings but these were usually sent Bearing, with full knowledge that payment should be collected on delivery. After free franking was phased out (1866 to 1873) it became mandatory for all correspondence to carry postage stamps. Mail that did not comply was marked to show a deficiency.

Most interesting, although outside the scope of these notes, are the various manuscript endorsements before the handstamps became available or their use was properly understood. The early British handstamps

indicated MORE TO PAY, DEFICIENT BY....., DEFICIENT POSTAGE etc., usually with the additional word FINE with the amount due being entered in manuscript. The first 'due' mark in India was the word INSUFFICIENT (Type 1).

INSUFFICIENT

1 a

FOREIGN POSTAGE DUE
RUPES ANNAS

3 a

BOMBAY
BE: 1 A.

2 e

NABHA STATE
POSTAGE DUE
ONE ANNA

9

2AS

3 e

BOMBAY
+ 1 JY 07 +
UNPAID

10

IAS
MOLTAN
AUG 13
63

4 a

REWARI
24 FEB 40
UNPAID

11

DELHI
MAR: 3
POSTAGE DUE
1 ANNA

5 a

MERUT SUDDER BAHAN
DUE
ONE ANNA

12 f

ANNA | **DUE**

6 b

S.P.O.
NOT PAID

Saurashtra

BOMBAY
SHIP LETTER
POSTAGE DUE 1 ANNA

7 a

UNPAID
SORTING

c 1885

INSUFFICIENT Type 1.

This was generally in black and boxed, at first with serif lettering and followed by sans serif, with or without a frame. The lettering and frame size varies and the mark was probably used only by Disbursing Offices, 1860 to 1873.

1a. serif letters in frame	52 x 9 mm. Trichinopoly	1862
	43 x 9 mm. Agra	1873
1b. serif letters, no frame	in red	1860
1c. block letters in frame	32/33 x 6/7 mm. Agra, Amritsar, Mooltan	1863/70
1d. block letters, no frame	37 mm. Belgaum	1873
1e. ditto but blue	32 mm. Kirkee	1861

'BEARING' Type 2.

These are really several different 'types', although I lump together

marks including the word 'Bearing' or an abbreviation. All known to me are boxed and show office of despatch and were used together with the usual c.d.s. I have only seen Calcutta and Bombay, but would expect to find Madras, the inference being that this family were used only by Circle Headquarter Offices.

2a.	CAL G P O	Bg 1 ANNA	blue and black	1864-1867
2b.	"	Bg 2 ANS	blue	1872
2c.	BOMBAY	Bg 1 AS	black	1868
2d.	"	Bg 2 AS	black	1868
2e.	"	Bg 1 A	black	1868-1871
2f.	"	Bearg 1 A	black	1872
2g.	"	Bearg 1 AS with date	(3 lines)	1863-1867
2h.	"	Bearing 1 A with date	(larger box)	1873

(a to f in 2 lines, serif letters; g and h in 3 lines, BOMBAY in block letters)

'1 ANNA' Type 3.

This type was normally abbreviated to '1 AN' and enclosed in a rectangular box. Because the handstamps were made locally the different sizes scarcely deserve separate listing.

3a.	1 AN box has rounded corners.	14 x 9 mm.	1868-69
	(Seen for Ajmere, Jeypore and Agra. Also Soojangurh 15 x 10 mm.)		
3b.	1 AN box has square corners.	14 x 9 mm.	Saharampore
	(Also 12 x 8 Bussuoh 1873, 10 x 8 Agra 1870-71, 9 x 6 Shahporah and Tonk)		
3c.	1 AS square box	12 x 12 mm.	Ferozepore
3d.	1 AS rounded box.	12 x 11 mm.	Delhi
	(in c and d there are dots below AS)		
3e.	2 AS rounded box	13 x 12 mm.	Ghazeepoor
3f.	1 A square corners.	15 x 14 mm.	Meerut etc.
3g.	1 ANNA rounded oblong.	26 x 8 mm.	Pallee etc.
3h.	2 ANNAS rounded oblong.	29 x 9 mm.	Nawalgurh

(a to f have serif letters; g and h block letters)

EARLY CIRCULAR Type 4.

This is a composite, combining date stamp with Postage Due. It appears to have had wide although short use. The examples listed are substantially different, so that we can presume local manufacture. All lettering is serif.

4a.	1 AS with butterflies	Ajmere	1865
4b.	1 AN " "	Allygurh	1865
4c.	1 AS interrupted circle	Murdan	1865
4d.	1 AS name in straight line	Mooltan and Muree	1863/1866

LATER CIRCULAR Type 5.

After a lapse of several years the composite type reappeared, but with block lettering. Use appears restricted to Disbursing Offices (and perhaps, Circle HQ only?). The Z Y X 'sorting' plugs were sometimes inserted.

5a.	1 ANNA	Bombay, Delhi	1884
5b.	" (with fleurons)	Ajmere	1887
5c.	" serif 1	Bombay	1884-9
5d.	" name in straight line	Delhi	
5e.	" no year, D at bottom	Calcutta	
	(also seen with 'Calcutta GPO' in 1910)		
5f.	ONE ANNA (larger lettering)	Bombay	1900

MISCELLANEOUS CIRCULAR Type 6.

Doubtless there are very many, but I note:-

UNPAID (Oval). Type 10.

From about 1900 an additional UNPAID oval mark was struck in green at the arrival office. It was complementary to Type 9 and later to Type 12. Sufficient here to say that the oval varied from 17 to 24 mm. in length and the mark was sometimes in other coloured inks, as example, black, scarlet, purple and brown. By about 1911, the oval had been replaced by a hexagon (Type 11).

UNPAID (Hexagon). Type 11.

This has been seen in green (Ferozepore), perhaps in error, but black was usual from introduction in about 1907. This type has remained in use, together with Type 12, until the present time.

TOMBSTONE Type 12.

This long-lived type first appeared in about 1906. Basically the Office name is contained between two half circles, while the amount due is shown across the bottom. At first, the dimension across the base was about 17 mm. but the mark has increased in size to accommodate large Office names and for reasons of clarity.

The amount due was usually included in the stamp, although small offices used an all-purpose blank value type. The value is sometimes seen as a fraction, although this is unusual. Recent marks are usually in two languages, again requiring larger size, and this type has been used widely in association with RMS, Experimental and Camp Post Offices.

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|---------------------------------|--|
| 12a. ONE ANNA | earliest seen 1906, standard until c.1930. |
| 12b. AS | seen from 1909, more commonly from 1930. |
| 12c. TWO ANNAS | seen from 1924, but not much used. |
| 12d. $\frac{1}{2}$ ANNA | Ambala 1909, Sambhar 1909, etc. |
| 12e. $2\frac{1}{2}$ ANNAS | covered $1\frac{1}{4}$ As Postage rate, but little used. |
| 12f. 'Horseshoe' type, | legs extended below base of Due tablet. |
| 12g. As (f) but with AS as (b), | example Peshawar Dist. HQ. |
- (This example is the largest seen, being 22 mm. high and 27 mm. wide).

The States had their own variants, but no room to describe them here. Saurashtra and Jaipur are particularly interesting.
