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\* AN A-to-Z OF INDIAN PHILATELY \*  
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by B. T. CHEVERTON.

✓ PART 22 - THE LETTER 'V'.

If our subject was Ancient History or Mythology, the letter 'V' would suit very nicely. Varuna was a Vedic Deity as written about in the Vedas, while Vishnu was worshipped by the Vaishnavas ... and one could go on! Better still, go down South, where many Post Offices must need name boards as long as that for a certain celebrated Railway Station in Wales. There is Vadakkupupalaiyam and Virapandiyanpattanam, which are excellent space fillers, while Subramaniyapuram - the P.O. Guide tells us - was also known as Kurukuchalai for short!

Having spotted this alternative, I realised that many Post Offices (c.1903) were listed under two names. No great surprise that Vizagapatam could be Vizag, and one can recognise Van Bachran in Wambhachran, or Vayitri for Vythery, but Vishainkota conjures up no image of Bissekkak. I was also discovering that Bareilly City Railway Station was the Artillery Bazar Post Office, and Bithur was Marwar Junction.

By 1903, the little Queen Empress had given her name to the Offices at Victoriaganj in Lucknow, Victoria Terminus (no deliveries!). Victoria Gardens (Bombay), Victoria School (Poona), Victoria Lancers (Bhopal), Victoria Road (Tavoy) and Victoria Point (Mergui) which was the furthest South I reached in Burma and remembered because of the pearls that were found by diving or by digging in parts once covered by the sea.

Mention of Burma has reminded me that under 'J' I made reference to the Jubilee Lines. Ted Bishop (of Burma) has sent me a S.G. Article of October 1938 which gives the reason for introduction:

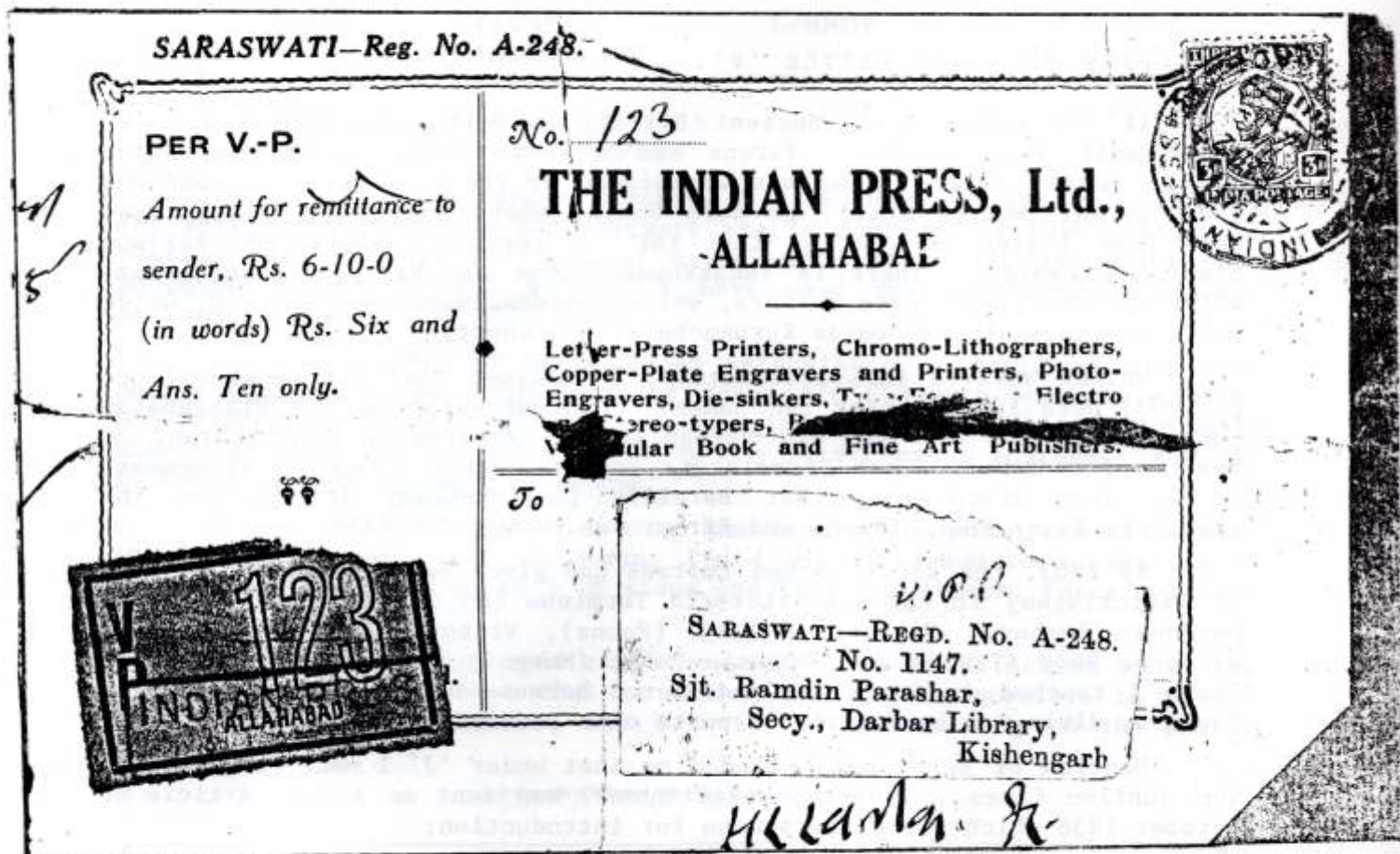
"In 1887 a new feature was introduced on the (G.B.) printing plates in the form of a rule of the same height as the printing surface of the plate itself, but surrounding it at a little distance. The purpose of this rule was to protect the edges of the plate from wear incurred during printing, such as that occasioned by the impact of the inking rollers when they have to 'lift' on to the printing surface. The visible evidence of its existence on the printed sheet is a line printed in the same colour of the stamp which falls in the margin. It was called a 'Jubilee' line as the innovation took place at the period of the general (G.B.) issue of 1887 which the public regarded, owing to the coincidence of date, as a series commemorative of Queen Victoria's Jubilee."

Not surprisingly the facilities offered by India's Post Offices have varied a great deal. Head Offices in the cities deal with telegrams, money orders, insurance and other things as have been mentioned in these Notes, while at the other end of the scale there have been Offices, as example Valoothoor, that made 'no deliveries', and others like Elysium in Simla that were 'Seasonal Offices' only.

→ A facility not yet touched upon is the 'Value Payable' system, commenced in 1887 after being pioneered in Germany in 1874. It was a 'Cash on Delivery' service, although the name adopted in India was 'Value Payable Parcel Service', which stuck and gave rise to the 'VPP' labels of many colours and sizes which can make up an interesting album page .... as with the 'Express', 'Registration' and other labels and cachets that we know loosely as Instructional marks.

The V.P.P. Service was well suited to India and was extensively used by Mail Order Houses and by their customers in up-country and mofussal areas. The system grew to include registered letters in 1882 and un-registered book packets in 1885, this latter causing a great increase in

the volume of Post Office traffic. Booksellers and Newspaper Houses used their own private (VPP) labels and, although only quasi-official, they are attractive and evocative of a by-gone period of India's Social History.



There was some early abuse of the system when unregistered packets were posted in large numbers to persons who had not ordered them. There were difficulties also when the system was extended to cover goods consigned by rail, but eventually all was sorted out and by the turn of the century the VPP system of modern times had arrived. In the year 1907-8, six million articles were handled by the Post Office, and this was worth about three million pounds to the shopkeepers of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras.

The Guide of 1903 has 4 pages and 21 clauses devoted to the VPP service, as, for example, clauses 130 and 136:

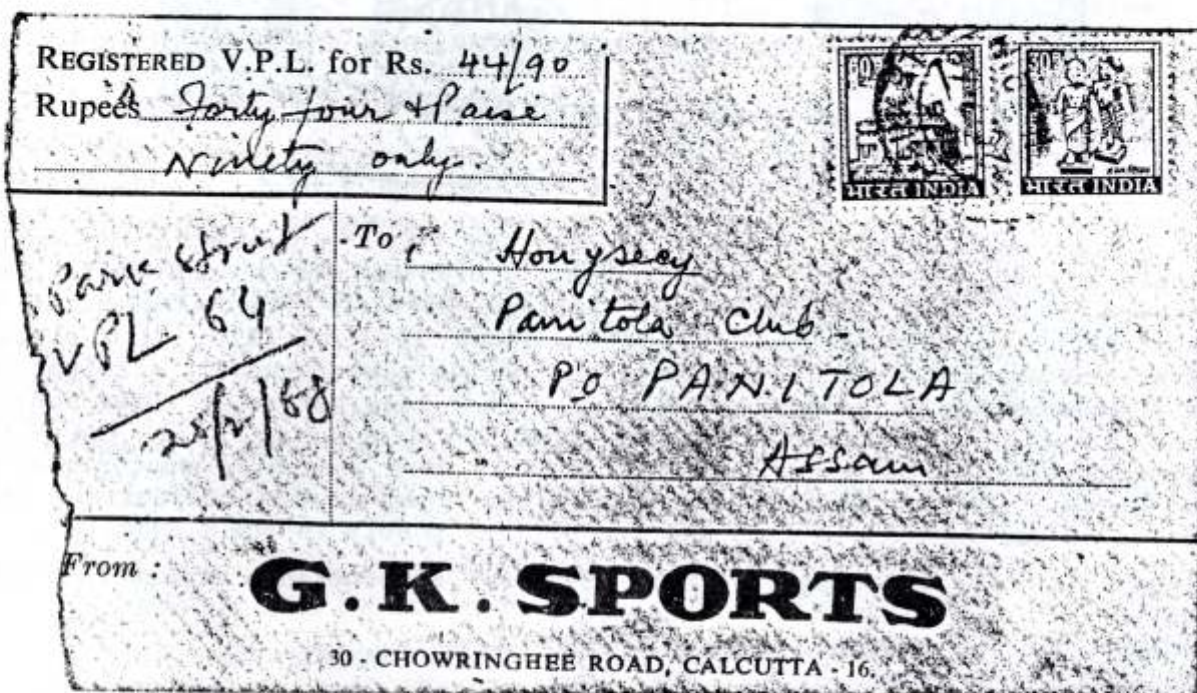
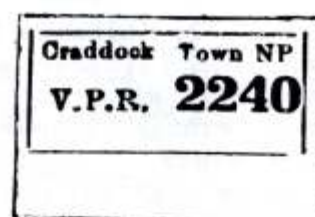
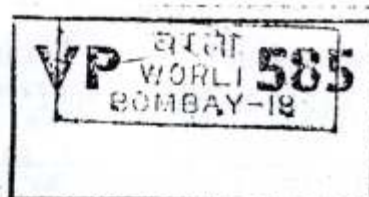
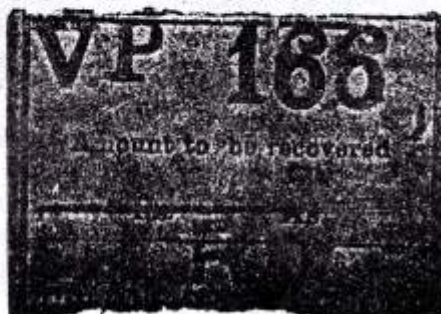
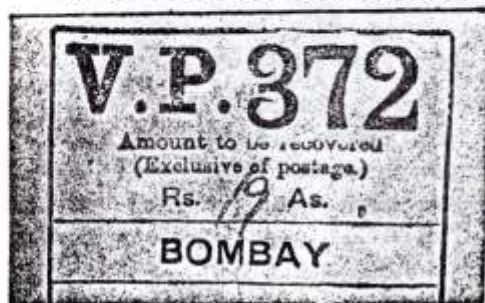
"The Value Payable system is designed to meet the requirements of persons who wish to pay for articles sent to them at the time of receipt of the articles or of the bills or railway receipts relating to them, and also to meet the requirements of traders and others who wish to recover, through the agency of the Post Office, the value of articles supplied to them."

"Two different forms are prescribed to be filled up by the senders of value-payable articles ... Both kinds of forms can be obtained gratis at the post office, and they can also be obtained stitched in books of 50 forms each, at a cost of two annas each, by firms and others who post many value-payable articles."

The fee for recovery not exceeding Rs.5 was 1 anna, with 2 annas up to Rs.10, and 4 annas for recovery not exceeding Rs.25. It is easy to see why the system was so popular. Only very few Post Offices did not offer a V.P.P. service. I had to look through almost four hundred 'V' offices to find Veltur and Venikothia.

Early labels (1 to 3) were black on red, at first with provision for

the amount to be collected. The size was reduced and then, later, the colour changed to black on green and then to black on white. In the 1960s there was a return to red (red on white) and then came 'VPR', with the 'R' presumably for 'Receipt'. A simulated label is sometimes found imprinted by the Business House, presumably under authority. Hopefully we have a member who will now oblige with something more complete and authoritative on this subject.



I see from an examination of the 132 Jaipur State Post Office Acquittance Rolls for May 1941 (P.O. Form No.12) that the staffing varied from one, as at Achrol where the Post Master had a salary of 6 rupees, to the Head Office with a staff of 75. In Jaipur, the Head Post Master's salary was 80 rupees, while the eighteen postmen received from 8 to 15 rupees and had sub-designations of 'V' Postmen, 'R' Postmen and 'C' Postmen. There were also Mail Runners (Rs.10), a Shroff (Rs.12), a Jaldhari (Rs.7½) and a (Rs.8). The lowest paid Peon received just Rs.4½.