



# NEPAL & TIBET PHILATELIC STUDY CIRCLE



Newsletter No. 19

January 1980

Dear Friends,

The year 1980 promises to be an exciting year for us in many ways. Our group continues to grow and new members are reported in nearly every issue, including this one. We plan to issue a new directory with the March number and urge all members to report corrections, changes in address, etc., as soon as possible.

It is a pleasure for me to introduce our most recent new member---our very first Life Member---who is 91 years young!

Rev. Arthur Bruce Moss, Box 639, Walpole, NH 03608 USA

Rev. Moss, a retired Methodist minister, is well-known to the philatelic world, as he has been an active philatelist for many years, and has had a special interest in Tibet for more than 60 years. He was sent to India in late 1915 by his Mission Board to prepare a report on Methodist mission activities in that country. His technical residence was Darjeeling for the next two years, where he served as Acting Chaplain to British troops located in the area. He has a personal knowledge of some of the postal affairs relating to Tibet beyond anyone now living. I look forward to the opportunity to present some of that knowledge in future issues of the newsletter.

Plans are going forward for our next International Meeting, to be held in conjunction with LONDON-80. Colin Hepper reports that the dates for meetings of our group have been confirmed and are:

Thursday, 8 May 1980, 2:30-4:30 PM; Friday, 9 May 1980, 2:30-4:30 PM

The programme for the two days will be announced in the next newsletter, and we look forward to meeting many of you there. Please send your suggestions for any topics of discussion you would like to have included, as any matters relating to our organization, the nature and content of the newsletter, etc., will be open for discussion at this important gathering.

Lester A. Michel

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## NEW MEMBERS

D.H. Olsen, 957 NW 63rd, Seattle, Washington 98107 USA  
D.A. Ireland, 11 Berkeley Road, Shirley, Solihull, W. Midlands, ENGLAND  
P.H. Planken, Dr Schaepmanstraat 9, 2612 PJ Delft, HOLLAND  
H. Garratt - Adams, Kinnersley Castle, Kinnersley, Hereford, ENGLAND  
F.R. Stubens, 22 Brynston Rd, Islington, Ontario, M9B 3C6, CANADA

## ADDRESS CORRECTION

Surendra Lal Shrestha, GPO Box 72, 5/148 Ombahal, Kathmandu, NEPAL

OBITUARY: We regret to announce the death of member Albert Quast of Hamburg, West Germany.

## SOME RECENT NEPAL COUNTERFEITS

—Armand E. Singer

Dr. Wolfgang Hellrigl is currently at work on a monograph about the counterfeit stamps and covers of Tibet and Nepal, but there is no certainty at the moment when his exhaustive treatise will appear. Therefore, I venture to discuss some counterfeit stamps of Nepal that have crossed my desk in the last few months. These are dangerous items for the most part, and I think all Nepal collectors should be made aware of them.

The first one I encountered, about a year ago, was the eight-pice red Sri Pashupati stamp of the 1941 issue. Since the genuine stamp was already a somewhat blurred photographic reproduction of the 1935 original, the fact that the fake reproduction is a poor piece of work may not be obvious to the unwary buyer. The color is a little too bright, however, and the paper is very smooth white, unlike the original, and without gum.

At about the same time I came across the Legislative Assembly red commemorative of 1959, on and off cover, mint and used (the cancels seem genuine). This, like the others described in the present article, must be a photographic reproduction, since every detail, every imperfection, of the original is repeated (even the "double-sun" variety). The color is very good, but the ink is a bit duller and the printing slightly less sharp than the original. One of my contacts in Nepal has told me that this particular fake was made to cheat the government, and was reproduced in large quantities.

The third counterfeit item was offered by a California dealer as an admitted fake, for my reference collection of these horrors; it was first acquired by him at auction in England, where it was advertised and sold as genuine, seemingly in all honesty. It is a vertical strip of 8x2 stamps, the two far right vertical rows, from a sheet of the one-anna value of the 1886 issue, pale blue, setting No. 7 (according to the table in Haverbeck's *The Postage Stamps of Nepal*, p. 38), on genuine native Nepalese paper. Since then I have seen a whole sheet of the same setting, also counterfeit, in dark blue. In comparison with the genuine article, the paper, color, and drawing are almost indistinguishable. The only certain test is to examine the inscription at the top of the sheet. In the genuine, the letters depress the paper. In the fake they do not. In the absence of a piece showing the inscription, a genuine example of the stamp would be necessary. As with the stamps already described above, all the printing flaws of the originals are reproduced, though again, details are somewhat less sharp and clear.

The fourth and final example I wish to chronicle is a block of four, imperforate, from the 1958 blue airmail sheet.

The color of my block is slightly paler than the genuine, and some details, for instance the letter in the bird's mouth, are blurred. Otherwise, it is a perfect likeness.

A characteristic of all four of these counterfeits is that they are imperforate. Obviously a photographic reproduction of perforated stamps would show dark shadow "holes" in the paper where the real holes would have occurred. However, it is possible to mask the original holes so as to eliminate them from the reproduction; in any case, imperforate originals are either the norm or available for all four of the examples I could have given here. Conversely, perforations could easily be added if desired.

Quite recently I talked with the owner of a large printing firm in Morgantown, who assured me that even relatively unsophisticated and inexpensive presses using modern photographic offset processes are quite capable of turning out very good reproductions in any single color (multiple-color presses get progressively more complicated as the number of colors is increased). He added with a smile that several of his employees could turn out work fine enough to fool all but experts, and noted that businessmen are actually worried about the possibility of faked stock certificates and the like. I also call to the reader's attention the article by Frank Van Riper on counterfeiting U.S. currency by a similar process, in the *Saturday Evening Post*, Oct. 1978, p. 42ff. Just this past month (Nov. 1979) I was offered sheets of the 1933 Tibet 2/3 tr. blue, also photographic reproductions, on native paper, and very dangerously close to the originals.

I cannot warn collectors strongly enough about the dangers of these reproductions, most of them quite able to deceive almost anyone, especially since the originals are not from clear, sharp, die-engraved clichés in the first place. They are even more dangerous than (or at least as bad as) the rash, a year or so ago, of blocks, tete-beche pairs, etc., of the one-half anna orange-vermilion 1903 stamp. These reproductions were apparently made from the original clichés, but it seems that only four different clichés were utilized to turn out whole sheets.

We certainly have not seen the last of these pests. Just a few months ago I heard that the 1959 Temple Renovation issue (the eight-pice and one-rupee values) was being offered in imperforate sheets and understood that these too are fake. I have not actually seen them to verify but suspect another misuse of the photographic method. Let us spread the word around. When buyers know the truth, counterfeiters will begin to lose their market and our hobby will be the sounder.

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### FAKED IMPERFORATE TRIANGLES

In response to the information on this item (Scott #280) reported by Douglas Hatch in the November Newsletter, member P. Gupta offers the following: "The four corner stamps in the sheet of the Triangular stamp of King Birendra, (Re. 1/- value) have wide margins. The breadth of these margins are slightly bigger compared to the

margins of other stamps. A number of unscrupulous dealers have removed the perforations closely by using a sharp blade and have offered these as genuine imperfs, both as single stamps—unused and used—as well as on covers. The covers are genuinely used with stamps from Nepal to India."

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### COLIN HEPPER WRITES

as coordinator of the Pashupati Issue Study Group that it appears few large blocks or sheets of the 1929 issue have survived. Members who have sheets or large blocks, either mint or used, are requested to report to him (or to the editor) any such items --- as a final report of this study group is in preparation and should be ready for presentation at the May meeting in London.

### C. TULSIYAN WRITES

that he has developed an interest in the "Camp Mail" of Nepal, about which he makes the following observations: "The Mail was not processed through regular post offices, but was carried privately, most probably by Military personnel." He cites evidence to support the belief that all covers bearing a single 2p stamp cancelled by the 'Ru Ju' seal are from the Maharajah's camps, not to them. He welcomes opinions from members and requests photocopies of such covers, promising to publish his findings in more detail.

### NEW POSTAL CARD VARIETY DISCOVERED

Frank Vignola reports a postally used example of a card which is not listed in Higgins & Gage. (It was previously reported in mint form by Vignola and P. Gupta.) The card is similar to H & G #16, except that the text appears as eight words. The card appears to have had normal usage, but at an unusually late date. It is cancelled with a Lalitpur postmark (Type (d) 'Hulak Adda' - p. 54 in "The Native Postmarks of Nepal" by Hellrigl & Hepper) with a date corresponding to 21 June 1949. The message on the back of the card also includes a corresponding date. Frank asks: "Why such late usage?" Any comments from our readers? It seems most unusual---especially for a rare item.

### CLIMBING EXPEDITIONS

Dr. W. C. Hellrigl reports the special Italian cancel used by the Italian Annapurna-Fang Expedition on one day only---12 August 1979. At the time he wrote (28 Sep. 1979) he had not seen a souvenir card or cover from the expedition.

On 5 November 1979, the editor received a souvenir card from the 1979 American Expedition to Annapurna I, with the printed indicia shown. The card was mailed from Nepal, apparently, although the cancellation is totally illegible. A violet hand-stamp appears, together with the signatures of all eight members of the climbing team. A newspaper report indicates that three members of the group--Harder, Cohick and Roberts---were killed when an avalanche buried their fourth camp at 21,300 feet. No further reports on the expedition have been received at this time (November 12).



### NEW G.P.O. CANCEL

Bishnu Lal Shrestha reports that the Kathmandu GPO was recently supplied with a new cancellation device to replace the badly worn one which has been in use for several years now. The first day of use of the new postmark is reported as 18 November, 1979. The postmark exists, however, on an expedition card (Schwabische Mt. Everest Expedition) with an all number date band reading "25-9-79". We believe this to be backdated to favor.





*Her Majesty Queen Aishwarya receiving a bouquet from the president and executive members of the Nepal Philatelic Society during the opening ceremony of the exhibition. Mr. Bishnu Lal Shresta, holding another bouquet, is standing at the far right.*

## EXHIBITIONS

Bishnu Lal Shresta, Life Member #2 of the Nepal Philatelic Society, sends more information concerning the philatelic exhibition held in Kathmandu in August 1979.

Kathmandu, August 20: Her Majesty Queen Aishwarya inaugurated the Philatelic (Children on Stamps) Dolls and Paintings Exhibition organized by the Nepal Children's Organization in connection with the International Year of the Child at the City Hall this afternoon. Her Majesty also viewed with interest the items on display at the Exhibition.

Earlier Her Majesty was presented with an IYC badge by the Chairman of the IYC Committee of Nepal, Her Royal Highness Princess Sharada. On the occasion, Her Majesty was also presented with an IYC stamp album by Foreign & Communication Minister Mr. K.B. Shahi.

About 1600 stamps on children from 126 countries besides dolls and paintings are displayed in the week long exhibition.

In a welcome speech, Home Panchayat Minister, Mr. Jog Mehar Shrestha, said that it was the duty of all to contribute to the development of the world. He pointed out that the Exhibition not only provided a glimpse of the growing awareness among and development of children all over the globe but was also indicative of their better and brighter future.

Also speaking on the occasion, Assistant Communication Minister and the President of the Nepal Philatelic Society, Mr. Omkar Prasad Gauchan noted the worldwide popularity of stamp collecting and the wealth of knowledge collectors gain. He suggested that postal stamp clubs be formed in educational institutions to promote knowledge of the world.

During the Exhibition, the Society arranged to distribute a packet of stamps to each child visiting the Exhibition. 29,000 stamps and 100 small stamp albums were donated by the local philatelists for distribution. To mark this occasion, a special cancellation was provided by the Postal Services Department of His Majesty's Government of Nepal, at the request of the Nepal Philatelic Society. Only 1,000 covers were cancelled.

Kathmandu, August 20: Earlier this morning, at 11:45 A.M., in a separate function held at the G.P.O. Building here, Her Royal Highness Princess Sharada Shah affixed a cancellation of the First Day of Issue on a Re. 1 stamp commemorating the International Year of the Child. The stamp depicts the children standing below the NCO flag & IYC emblem.

At the editor's request, Mr. P. Gupta has reported that, in the International Philatelic Exhibition held in Sofia in June, 1979, he was awarded a LARGE GOLD, with a special prize, for his Nepal exhibit. News of this exhibition and the awards granted appeared in most of the international philatelic journals, but we are pleased to bring more specific details of Mr. Gupta's honors than we were able to report in the September, 1979, Newsletter.

Frank Vignola reports that two of our members won awards at CALPEX-79 in October: Fred de Ridder won a GOLD for his "Tibet" exhibit, and Al Zulueta won two awards—a GOLD for his "Nepal, Classic Period" and a SILVER for his "Nepal, Sri Pashupati Period" exhibits.

Frank Vignola's article on Khassa, Kuti and Kerong, titled "A Tale of Three Cities" won a VERMEIL at the APS National Literature Competition. Furthermore, THE CHINA CLIPPER featured the article in a recent issue of the well-known bimonthly journal. The cover of the issue showed the outstanding Kuti cover in the Vignola collection.

## A MEETING IN FRANCE

During the weekend of 14-16 Sept. 1979, Dr. Wolfgang Hellrigl and Colin Hepper visited our President, Dr. Pierre Couvreur, at his home in France. The activities of the Circle were discussed at some length and it was decided that it would be appropriate if we could produce a combined catalogue of Nepal and Tibet, which was cross-referenced to the other major catalogues. So another project has been started and will eventually be published in English, French and German.

Other projects that are well on the way to being completed are the studies of 1) The Classic Issues, and 2) The Pashupati Issues. Both of the studies will be in an advanced state for members to see at the meeting in London in May, 1980.

We do find it a little disappointing that there has been almost no participation from our Tibet members as far as contributions to the Newsletter go. So we appeal to our Tibet members once again to take a more active part in our Study Circle.

## COLLECTIONS TO BE SOLD

Dr. Couvreur announces that his duplicates of India Feudatory Native States will be sold by Stanley Gibbons in April/May 1980 and his Tibet by Robson Lowe in Basle on 18/19 March 1980.