



The Afghan Bulletin

No. 1 September 2016



Contents

An Update on the First Picture Postcards	1
1907: The 2 abasi in Orange-red.....	3
1958: 40th Independence Day, Imperf.....	3
Late Use of the 1ere Branche Kaboul Censor.....	4
An Early Philatelic Fundraiser	5
1974: UPU Issue—A Newly Discovered Proof?	6

An Update on the First Picture Postcards

A pictorial series of postcards was issued in 1913 but surprisingly little is known about them. In the *1901-1933*¹ book it says—

Each card cost 1 sanar and for postage a special 2 paisa postcard stamp was needed in addition. In monetary terms that meant that to use one of these pictorial cards cost 2.4 shahi as against 1 shahi for an ordinary postcard. It is perhaps hardly surprising that they were little used and are now amongst the rarest of Afghan philatelic items. The number of cards in the series is not certain: so far five designs have been either seen or reported. The latest usage recorded is 1918. The paper used is very soft and all examples seen are creased to some degree.

Patterson² had listed four designs and speculated that there was a fifth, design unknown. In the *1901-1933* book the missing description for the fifth design was added so that the list became—

- a. The Rosa Mosque, Mazar-i-Sharif
- b. Palace Gardens, Jalalabad
- c. The Royal Military Band
- d. Amir Habibullah amid Glaciers (vertical)
- e. Gathering at Eid Celebration

Mystery of the missing design solved: end of story, I thought. Far from it! Along came news of a sixth design which had actually been included in the 2006 Feldman sale of the Adam Perkel collection, but which had not been illustrated in the catalogue and so passed unnoticed at the time—

- f. Army Gymnastics Squad

But that wasn't the end of the story either. In an online auction around 2012/2013 another design appeared – a century after the cards were issued. I haven't been able to translate the descriptive text beneath the picture yet so for now I will leave it as—

- g. Emir Habibullah and Escort

¹ *Afghanistan 1901-1933*, Jack, 2011 at p.60.

² *Afghanistan: Its Twentieth Century Postal Issues*, Patterson, 1964, p.135.

So there are at least seven designs. Seems like a funny number . . . maybe there are other designs still to be discovered.

Note.— The Royal Military Band card is the “commonest”. So far I have recorded two examples of that one, but only one each of the others! All are used except for the latest discovery.



The Army Gymnastics Squad
(Thanks to Adam Perkel for the above illustration)



Amir Habibullah with Escort

1907: The 2 Abasi in Orange-red

Another mystery. The 2 abasi orange-red illustrated in the centre below turned up in an old-time mixed lot of Afghan material. Both stamp and postmark seem genuine and it doesn't appear to be a colour changeling – so what is it? I've added an image of an Abdur Rahman circular as the colour is similar – but it was in use almost 20 years earlier.



Normal



??



1880

Best guess so far: A colour trial which was used, either by accident or design.

The postmark appears to be Kabul, 13 Jamedi I 1326 (= 13th June 1908). That was the month the perforated stamps of this issue appeared – probably just a coincidence.

1958 40th Independence Day, Imperf

Most of the 1950s issues from the 1951 Pashtunistan Day set onwards can quite easily be found imperf. Not so the 40th Independence Day set which isn't recorded imperf. Illustrated below are imperf blocks of four which recently came to light. They look to me like proofs from the Vienna Staatsdruckerei who printed this issue.



Late Use of the 1 ERE BRANCHE Kaboul Censor

The 'BRANCHE CENSOR' markings were used in the mid-1930s, introduced initially in response to the post-assassination crisis in 1933. They are known for 1 ERE BRANCHE, 2 EME BRANCHE, 3 EME BRANCHE and 4 EME BRANCHE.

The 1 ERE BRANCHE censor marking re-appears in early 1960 for reasons unknown but possibly connected to Afghan claims to Pashtunistan (basically, the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan). The following three examples are all on mail addressed to Pakistan. Unlike the 1930's usage, the date is inserted by handstamp.

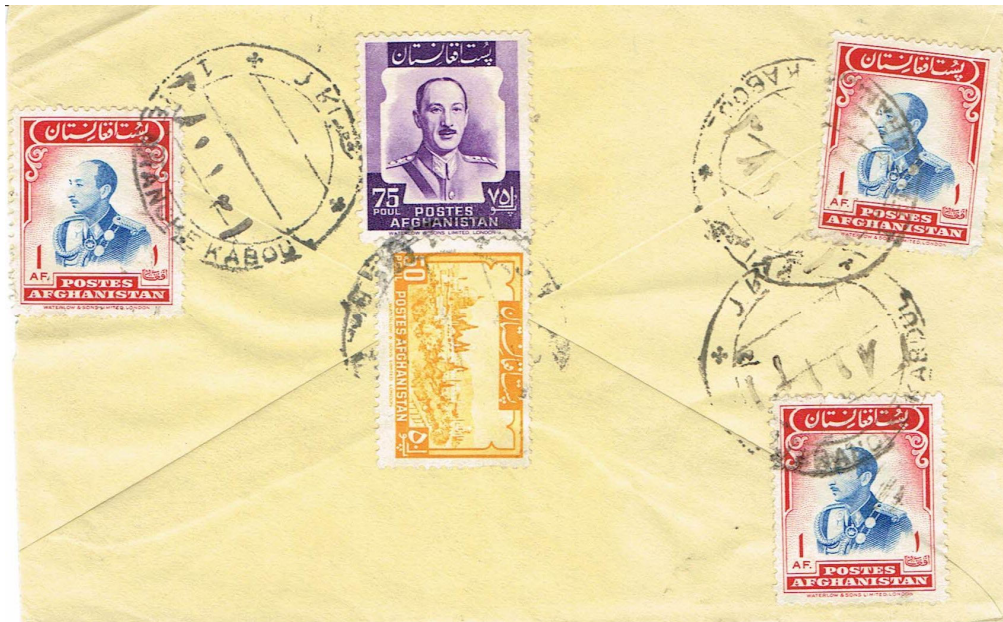
Kabul 38/10/19 = 10th January 1960, to Peshawar.



Kabul 38/11/21 = 1st February 1960, to Peshawar.



Kabul 38/11/29 = 19th February 1960, to Peshawar.



Incidentally, whilst Patterson³ rates the 3 EME BRANCHE the hardest to find of the original 1930s usage, I find the 2 EME BRANCHE to be rather scarcer.

An Early Philatelic Fundraiser

Illustrated on the next page is an example of an early attempt to prise money from the wallets of stamp collectors in aid of a good cause – in this case to raise funds for the building of a church in the city of Peshawar, then in the North West Frontier Province of India.

Dated 1st June 1882 it is a sheet bearing six used examples of “Cabul” stamps from “The Reign of the Late Ameer Sher Ali Khan”. Even at that early date those behind the fund-raising exercise thought it necessary to stress that the stamps were genuine. It is also noteworthy that Peshawar is described as being in Afghanistan rather than India!

As far as I have been able to ascertain the Memorial Mission Church – the building of which the proceeds from the sale of these sheets were intended to go towards – did get built and still stands, although I believe it is now called All Saints Church. It was opened in December 1883 and was/is quite unusual in that although cruciform in shape it was built in the Islamic style with a dome and minarets.



The stamps themselves are shahi and sanar values from the Third Post Office and Skeleton Post Office issues of Afghanistan, dated 95 (i.e., 1295 or 1878) in bluish-







³ *Afghanistan: Its Twentieth Century Postal Issues*, Patterson, 1964, p.172.

grey, dark grey, yellow-brown and violet. These were the last issues of Sher Ali and the last of the Lion stamps.

CABUL STAMPS

OF THE REIGN OF THE LATE

Ameeer Sher Ali Khan.

Shah	Sana	Sana
		
Shah	Shah	Sana
		

These stamps (which are genuine) are sold in
behalf of the

Memorial Mission Church

now being erected in the city of Peshawar,
Afghanistan.

PESHAWAR :
1st June, 1882.

W. Ball, Printer, Lahore.

1974: The UPU Issue—A Newly Discovered Proof?

The Centenary of the UPU was commemorated by Afghanistan with a single 7 Afghani stamp in green and gold. An example in rose-red and gold has now surfaced. Presumably a proof in an unaccepted colour.



© Robert Jack 2016