

MEDICAL PHILATELY

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This is a rapidly growing hobby of doctors in many countries. The British "Practitioner", the "Asian Medical Journal", and the JAMA have had regular features of "Medicine on Postage Stamps". One American EENT specialist has recently compiled and published a special album "Medicine on Stamps" with a capsule biography of the scientist depicted. It is based on his own forty-four album collection of over 16,000 medical stamps (*Stamp No. 1*). There is a Topical stamp collectors' organisation, whose motto is "Knowledge through stamp collecting", that advertises 10,000 members in 87 countries, with a 35 language translation service. It publishes a monthly mimeo-graphed newsletter "Scalpel and Tongs". Among the hundreds of "Topical subjects" which people collect in addition to the obvious birds, flowers or architecture, are such interests as hats, Rotary, maps, nudes, automobiles, cooking, Boy Scouts, coalmining, chess, dams, etc. The list is unlimited as collectors concentrate on stamps related to their daily work or interests.



Stamp No. 1

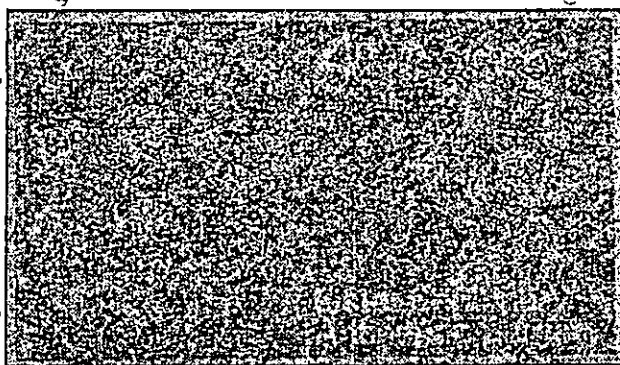
There is also a practical application. Inexpensively mounted and framed, stamps make an unusual and attractive waiting-room conversation piece.

The casual collector will readily find inexpensive items to start his collection. Nepal's two neighbours have both contributed. India, in 1964, honoured Dr. Waldemar Haffkine who developed the anti-plague and anti-cholera vaccines, and in 1968 issued an attractive commemorative

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to Madam Curie. Our northern neighbour, China, issued two commemoratives for Dr. Norman Bethune. A montreal thoracic surgeon, he volunteered in the Spanish Civil War and started the world's first blood bank there. He also became converted to Communism. Recently the Chinese library on New Road had an illustrated magazine issue entirely devoted to him and his association with Comrade Mao in the late thirties. He died of septicaemia from an operating room puncture wound in 1939. Nearby Russia has generously honoured Robert Koch and, among others, their great Crimean War military surgeon and educator, Pirogoff (of the ankle amputation), and Pavlov (of the conditioned reflex).

The father of pathology, Rudolf Virchow, was depicted several times on German stamps. His voluminous publications required a bibliography of 113 pages of book and article titles. He had an active interest in archeology (visited the site of Troy) and politics (politely declined a challenge to a duel from Bismarck) (*Stamp No. 2*). A harsh perfectionist in his own lab, he had a reputation as a generous examiner—for the unflattering reason that, "One more fool doctor won't make any difference."



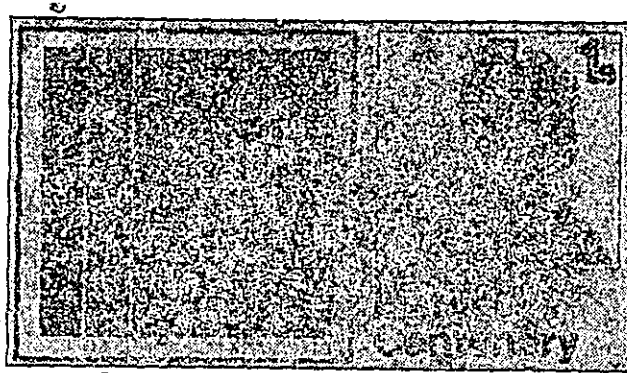
Stamp No. 2

Louis Pasteur appeared on a series of French stamps, a tribute to his revolutionising discovery of bacterial infection and development of anti-rabies vaccine. A chemist whom the medical profession is proud to adopt as one of its giants. What Virchow was to pathology, Ambroise Pare was to surgery. This 16 Century army surgeon introduced the ligature, popularised surgical knowledge of Vesalian anatomy, frequently performed the new routine "Controlled experiment" to evaluate, and usually discard, the folk-lore treatments of his day, improved artificial eyes made by a Parisian glass-blower. Despite his achievements he had the humility to conclude his case histories with his famous quote, "I dressed his wounds; God healed him."

A surgeon-philatelist would orientate his collection around stamps of Para and Edinburgh's Joseph Lister, whose combined contributions made major surgery possible by providing the tools against the two great hazards of haemorrhage and infection. From the New World, the reputation of the Mayo Clinic is international. In addition to the surgical procedures pioneered by the brothers, their major contribution has been the excellence of their standard of care, investigation,

and training. A green 1964 U. S. stamp, on the 25th anniversary of their deaths, with a medallion of the two brothers, is almost worthy of inclusion in a surgeon's collection if only for their apt answer to when they would operate for peptic ulcer— "After it has been cured medically ten times."

Anaesthesiologists have not been neglected. The control of pain was first achieved by the American, Crawford Long, in 1842 when he removed a small-neck tumor with ether. Before the discovery of inhalation anaesthesia, two patients out of every three undergoing operations died; after the discovery, only one in three died. Interestingly, with our current concern for the "drug-culture" of the modern generation, Long's discovery was a product of the popular "ether frolics" of his time (*Stamp No. 3*). Is it possible that the next century may honour Timothy O'Leary and Michael Hollingshead (is he still in Kathmandu ?) for their pioneer work on LSD ?



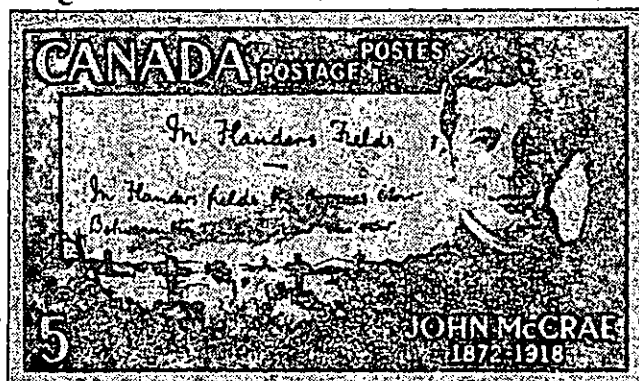
Stamp No. 3

Many internists have been honoured. Osler is the subject of a future article. Laennec is best remembered for the inspiration that transformed the chance observation of seeing children tapping messages the length of a long beam of wood into the modern indispensable stethoscope.

As with medicine itself, one can be a generalist or a specialist. One article on Dermato-syphilately began with a Spanish stamp of Columbus who was credited (probably incorrectly) with the introduction of syphilis into the West, and expanded the subject to include stamps of twenty-five individuals who have contributed to our knowledge of this disease. A similar article on leprosy honoured 15 doctors who had made significant contributions in that field, along with leproserium views, and stamps which have depicted the pathological deformities (*Stamp No. 4*).

In 1963 many countries issued stamps honouring a non-medical man who contributed greatly to the relief of suffering humanity. Henri Dunant, appalled at the needless suffering he witnessed at the battle of Solferino when 40,000 men were killed or wounded, was able, single-handed, to organise four years later, in 1863, an international meeting whereby 14 countries

pledged to recognise the battlefield neutrality of the wounded, medical aid, and hospitals. The International Red Cross was born, and as a tribute to Dunant, its emblem was the Swiss flag—with the colours reversed.



Stamp No. 4

The recognition of doctors who have earned their fame in non-medical fields requires additional sleuthing. Russia has honoured Chekhov, her master story-teller. A series depicting Canada's Prime ministers included Sir Charles Tupper who was also the founding President of the Canadian Medical Association. The broader one's interests, the more examples will be found in politics and the arts where doctors have frequently excelled. Predictably some new revolutionary government will soon cash on the current popularity of the Argentine born, revolutionary martyr, Che Guevara.

Para-medical persons will find their interests well-represented. Nurses have been honoured by numerous countries. Florence Nightingale is the best-known, and has appeared on stamps of Australia, Belgium, China, Costa Rica, Dominica, Germany and Turkey.

For the pharmacist, a soft-cover handbook, "Drugs and Pharmacy on Stamps" identifies over a thousand stamps according to an American hospital formulary system.

The above list is far from exhaustive. Countries have generously recognised the contributions of our colleagues of the past. We can benefit from being mindful of the debt we owe these men and women. Pioneers like Robert Koch and Konrad Roentgen, of Germany, bacteriologists like Shiga, Calmette and Guérin, medical missionaries like Schweitzer, Grenfell and Livingstone, Billroth, Hansen, Landsteiner, Maimonides, Semmelweis, Vesalius, and Lister. The list is endless, international and knows no political boundaries.

SIR WILLIAM OSLER COMMEMORATIVE STAMP

Issued on the 50th anniversary of his death. "The System of Medicine" is the English title of a seven volume medical encyclopaedia which he edited. The design includes the serpent entwined staff of Aesculepius.

He graduated from McGill University, Montreal, and by age 25 was a full professor there. He excelled there as a teacher and an inspirer of young men, with a career which included Johns Hopkins Medical School, the University of Pennsylvania, and eventually, Oxford University (1904-19). Created a baronet in 1911. One of his best known writings was "Principles and Practice of Medicine". Sixteen editions have been published with translations into French, German, Spanish and Chinese.

The Dec. 22, 1969 issue of the JAMA (210; No. 12) was a "William Osler Commemorative Issue". In the introductory article it reads "...at his death he was unquestionably the most loved and perhaps also one of the most influential physicians in history ..Osler was not a great man in scientific medicine. His discoveries are minor- he admitted that himself. He is, however, deservedly remembered and honoured. For, he had the ineffable ability to inspire others to perform far beyond their supposed capacity. Even more, he had remarkable skill or good luck in selecting those he chose to inspire. He was seldom let down. Further, he was a classic example of the good man, in the best sense of that description. Osler honestly could not help but see the best in people; his friendships were numerous, deep, sincere. In that overworked word of to-day, he had charisma- charisma of a most remarkable kind, for it carries over to the present, still influencing some of us who never knew him, nor even knew his disciples."

He himself described bibliography as his recreation. His extensive library was bequeathed to McGill. A few of his comments are self-revealing: "Books have been my delight these thirty years, and from them I have received incalculable benefits. To study the phenomena of disease without books is to sail an uncharted sea, but to study books without patients is not to go to sea at all.

For the general practitioner a well-used library is one of the few correctives of premature senility which is so apt to overtake him. It is astonishing with how little reading a doctor can practice medicine, but it is not astonishing how badly he may do it.

Show me the books he loves and I shall know the man far better than through his mortal friends.

His aphorisms retain timely as these examples show;
The abdomen extends from the neck to the knee.
It is the duty of the consultant to do a rectal examination.

The master word in medicine is work: the stupid man among you it will make bright, the bright brilliant, and the brilliant student steady.

Never believe what a patient may tell you to the detriment of another physician— even though you fear it may be true.

To this last of which, may we all subscribe.

ANTISEPTIC SURGERY

STAMPS DESIGNS ILLUSTRATE LISTER'S DISCOVERY

Joseph Lister's discovery of antiseptic surgery is featured on the 4d and 1s 0d special stamps issued September 1st 1965 to mark the centenary of the introduction of the technique which revolutionised surgery.

The 4d stamp, designed by Peter Gauld, is in three colours— grey, blue and brown. It illustrates the carbolic spray used by Lister when he introduced his antiseptic technique.

The 1s 0d stamp, designed by Frank Ariss, is also printed in three colours, blue, purple and black. The design incorporates a portrait of Lister and a hexagon with the letters OH— the whole representing the chemical symbol for carbolic acid [Phenol— $C_6H_5(OH)$], the fluid used by Lister. Both these elements are placed within a third, the white square. This represents a square of lint and the black outer border overlapping the white square a sheet of lead or thin block tin. The whole is a symbolic representation of Lister's initial experiments.

Both stamps have the Dorothy Wilding portrait of the Queen, with the legend, "Lister Centenary Antiseptic Surgery"

THE ARTISTS

Peter Gauld F.S.I.A. was born at Coalville, Leicestershire, in 1925. He was trained at the Leicester College of Art as a painter and graphic designer. Before the war he worked at Leicester Museum and Art Gallery. From 1951 to 1962 he was Art Editor for the Unilever Information Division. Between 1963–65 he was Art Director for the Curwen Press. He is now working as a freelance designer. A previous success was the 1961 2½d Post Office Savings Bank Centenary stamp.

Frank Ariss A.R.C.A. was born in Birmingham in 1937. He attended Birmingham College of Art where he obtained a National Diploma of Design. He was at the Royal College of Art, London, 1957–60, in the graphic design department, where he obtained a 1st Hons. A.R.C.A. In 1960 he was awarded a European Travelling Scholarship. In 1961 he became Art Director of the Woudhuysen Design Group; in 1962 a Company Director of the Group. He formed his own Design Group in 1964. Appointed visiting lecturer, Norwich School of Art in the same year, and in 1965 became Visiting Head of Graphics in Diploma studies at the same school. This is the first time he has designed a British postage stamp.

Lister published the first of his articles on the Antiseptic Principle of the Practice of Surgery in 1867. The revolutionary significance of his discovery is emphasized by figures from the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. Of 13,173 amputations of all types, including digits, done in French hospitals, there were 10,006 deaths. On the Prussian side, Von Nussbaum had 100% mortality 34 consecutive through-the-knee amputations. (CMAJ 102; 251).

In contrast, Lister's first modest series of 13 cases of compound fracture could be tabulated:

Deaths	...	...	...	...	2
Hospital gangrene	...	...	...	...	2
(Amputation and recovery 1)					
(recovery without amputation 1)					
Uncomplicated recovery	...	...	...	...	9

Lister adopted carbolic acid as his antiseptic, at first a very thick impure form, following the successful use of German creosote by the Scottish town of Carlisle for its sewage ! His ideas were overshadowed for several recent decades by the emphasis on asepsis. He himself did not favour this approach and wrote "...asepsis in this imperfect world is not to be trusted. Human carelessness and fallibility are common and it is safer to have an antiseptic." It is interesting that his principles are being revived with the renewed interest in topical antibiotics and chemotherapeutic agents to reduce the inevitable wound contamination that occurs at surgery. Folwer, in the Lancet, writes "It is now evident that we must use the weapon of attack (antiseptis) to supplement our main defence (asepsis)" (1:387, 1963).

John McCrae : Pathologist, Poet, Soldier, a Man among Men, 1872-1918 is the title of an article by Dr. D. M. Angevine in the Nov. 1969 Arch. Pathology. It was prompted by the issue, the previous fall, of a commemorative stamp by the Canadian Government.

Dr. McCrae, a gold medalist on graduation from Toronto, rose to Professor of Pathology and Clinical Medicine of McGill University. At the start of World War I he was completing the revision of Adami's classic textbook of pathology.

A fellow medical officer recalls that McCrae was continuously writing poetry and discarding pieces of paper. One discarded piece McCrae was persuaded to submit for publication. It was first politely rejected by the Spectator (or Listener ?), but then fortunately published by Punch. The poem has two versions, with the first line ending in either "blow" or "gtow". McCrae died of pneumonia after a brief five day illness in 1918.

In Flander Fields

In Flanders Fields the poppies grow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below

We are dead. Short days ago
 We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
 Loved, and were loved, and now we lie
 In Flanders Fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
 To you from failing hands we throw
 The Torch: be yours to hold it high !
 If ye break faith with us who die
 We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
 In Flanders Fields.

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1. *Am. Coll. of Surgeons Bull.* Vol. 55, No. 3.
2. E. S. Clarke; *Rudolf Virchow (1821-1901)*; *Hospital Medicine II*, p. 208-9, Nov. 1967.
3. A. Young; *The Men Who Made Surgery*; *Hillman Pocket Book*, New York, 1961, p. 112.
4. S. M. Bluefarb; *Dermatosyphilately (p. 27-32) and Leprosy (p. 57-61)*; *Medical Stamps*, pub. Amer. Topical Ass., 3306 North 50th St., Milwaukee, Wis., 53216, USA.

Recently published :

Medicine and Stamps : Am. Med. Ass. Order Dept., 535 N. Dearbon St., Chicago 60610 (US\$4).



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