

We have introduced a new format that showcases the works of many Jaipur artists and professionals we think should be brought to the attention of our readers. We start with the works of Nihal Mathur and his unique stamp presentations. He tells the Story of Flight by arranging his stamps in historically sequential order to tell the tale. There are in all 38 presentations that takes the reader from the beginning made by the early pioneers and ends with modern aircrafts today.

-Editor



Concept and Design by Nihal Mathur
Computer Graphics by Bharat Kumawat



Nihal Mathur, Filmmaker, Writer

It was perhaps his infatuation with imagery in his DNA that turned Nihal's attention towards stamps in his early years. It was natural that as a young man he took to photography and when the first chance came, he turned to films. It all began with a researcher's assignment with the BBC's 'Great Little Railways of the World' that filmed the journey between Jodhpur and Jaipur on the Marudhar Express. That opened the door for other BBC documentaries. One project led to another and Nihal had the opportunity to work for National Geographic, Discovery and other channels from the US, Europe and Australia. He got recommended to work as production assistant on Paul Scott's quartet 'The Jewel in the Crown'. It was a 13 episode British television serial about the final days of the British Raj in India. Nihal says that it was sheer providence that David Lean picked him as his assistant for sequences shot in Delhi for 'A Passage to India'. Nihal learnt the craft of film making while on the job with some of the best cinematic storytellers. That wealth of experience he brought to film when he produced and directed institutional videos especially for the NGO sector. Seva Mandir and Vidya Bhawan, two premier institutions founded by Dr. Mohan Sinha Mehta in Udaipur gave him a free hand to make celebratory films on the occasion of their Silver & Golden Jubilees respectively. According to him, these films have been most satisfying works for Nihal because they have endured time to stay relevant and are still used to convey the spirit of the institutions.

Early Aircrafts 1903 - 1914



It was almost as if the Wright Brother's invention had fired the world's imagination for building airplanes. Every country, however big and small, wanted to build an airplane and thereby enhance its image as a 'modern' country and a member of an elitist club of nations. Besides France, Germany, Britain and America, smaller countries like Denmark, Norway, Romania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Turkey and even far away Japan, all wanted an aircraft of their own and experimented with all kinds of aircraft techniques. One of the fundamental developments in aircraft design was that the position of the propellers. It was changed from behind the aircraft to the front nose. Ailerons were introduced as a primary flight control system. Most pioneer era aircrafts were constructed from wood and fabric. The cloth was reinforced by various means to produce a taut surface that could withstand pressure of the wind. Metal parts slowly appeared to replace some key wooden joints and then in 1915, the German aircraft designer Hugo Junkers built the world's first full metal aircraft the Junker J-1. Meanwhile Traian Vuia, a Romanian engineer added a fully wheeled undercarriage in 1906. A whole range of inventions and innovations kept improving the performance of the aircrafts that became faster and more versatile. It was natural that fierce competition between the pioneers would lead to setting records of speed and altitude etc. In 1909 publisher of the New York Herald instituted the Gordon Bennett Trophy for the fastest aircraft. In 1912 a French financier awarded the Schneider Trophy to the winner of a race between seaplanes and flying boats. In 1911 a Curtiss airplane demonstrated that it was possible for an aircraft to take off and land from the deck of a warship in America. This was the precursor to the development of aircraft carriers. It is indeed a task to list the many different types of aircrafts that the early pioneers built but special mention must be made of the first float plane made by Fabre, a Frenchman who made his Hydroplane that could take off and land from water in 1910. This truly revolutionized air travel across oceans in the years to come.