

ITALIAN PRIVATE LOCAL SERVICES

by Gianfranco Pastormerio

When looking for pieces, suitable for my collection, of the private posts operating in Italy during the final period of the Second World War, I have found very little; today it is almost impossible to find any new material. Also, I have been able to find only a little of what I was looking for to add to my Italian Kingdom albums - for the period 1944-45. However, last spring I discovered a very rare item - perhaps a hitherto unknown piece. It consists of a colour proof of stamps printed on behalf of the S.E.I.S. - *Società Espressi Italia Settentrionale* (North Italy Express Company).

The S.E.I.S. carried out the delivery of mail in the Veneto, Lombardy and Emilia until June 1945 when the regular postal services were restored after the end of the Second World War. The mail was generally delivered by cyclists. The amount paid by the sender for this service was the normal postage (1 Lira for regular mail and 2.50 Lire for registered mail) plus an added fee. The mail received a rectangular stamp with the legend *S.E.I.S. / [the city] / Trasporti Rapidi Corrispondeza* (Fast Delivery Mail) and the added fee which rose from 10 to 30 Lire- This was a considerable amount of money for the time.



Fig 1

At the end of June 1945 it was decided to produce five different coloured stamps, perforated and on gummed paper, depicting a cyclist and the face value. First, however, an imperforate proof was printed in yellow and blue on gummed paper (Fig 1). It shows the cyclist against a background of mountain tops and trees.

The stamps were never put into service because, as mentioned before, a regular mail service was restored at the end of June 1945 and all private delivery authorisations were cancelled. The Italian Postal History catalogue, *Unificato 2000*, list the set of five, mint never hinged, at US\$1,000.

In the course of researching issues made by private services, some stamps have been found which refer to the *Collegamento Postale / Frontiera Italo-Svizzera / Zenna-Luino (Posta Centrale)* and which are known as the D.I.S.P.A. set. The area in question is located at the foot of the mountains around Lake Maggiore, where the Italian-Swiss border runs near the Lombard city of Luino. We are not sure that a postal service was ever provided.

Editors Note. This is an extract from an article "LOCALS OF THE WORLD", that appeared in the January issue of "The Cinderella Philatelist". We have printed a previous article by Gianfranco it appeared in BS29 (November 1999) on page 21, it was titled "PRIVATE POSTAL SERVICES IN ITALY DURING 1945"

Readers are also reminded that we previously printed an article on this subject by G. J. Oettle in BS20A (Spring 1996) and BS20B (Summer 1996).