

SSG and ESC Conference 2024

This annual event was once more held at Morley Hayes Hotel in Derbyshire from 19 to 21 April, ably organized by Richard Stock. There were about 20 attendees along with a few day trippers and spouses. Some had travelled considerable distances to be there, for instance Belgium, Denmark, Sweden and Canada!

The programme of events commenced mid Friday afternoon with member displays and “non speaking” standing displays. This well-trying format continued throughout the next two days. After dinner the Norton Collier Trophy competition was held and there were eight contestants with up to eight pages each.

Saturday morning started with a talk and discussion “Early mail and Historical Postal Research” led by Andy Neal. This was followed by a Forgery Update and members’ displays. In the afternoon we had “Sudan: the 1982 Pictorial Issue”, which turned out to be quite interesting.

Four members then provided their displays on early Sudan Airmails. This was outstanding, for each collector had items that the other three craved and we benefitted from such an informative and entertaining discussion.

One of the founder members of the SSG was Major Stagg and we viewed some of his still existing album pages, followed by a talk by his daughter. Her life with a regular soldier who travelled about the world was fascinating and made a suitable introduction to the after-dinner lecture by Dr Julie Anderson. This was eighty slides on “Archaeology and the Creation of Sudanese Identity”. I am reliably informed that that this was good, but by this time in the evening my powers of concentration had been subsumed under good food and fine wine.

Your scribe was on first thing Sunday morning with “The Harvard-Boston Expedition”. This told the story about the excavation work by Dr George Reisner, the American archaeologist who led the expedition to Egypt and the Sudan from 1905 until his death in Egypt in 1942. This of course was relative to members from both societies. Before the coffee break Richard Stock presented his display on the Shellal-Halfa TPOs. After the break came what we all had come for, the bourse and the auction.

This had been another delightful weekend, with lovely accommodation, good food and the conviviality would be hard to beat. It was a great pity that I was the only ESC member who attended, although support came from Laurence Kimpton on the Saturday. The ESC had asked for closer connections with the SSG, who had responded with the offer to open up their Weekend – and this was the result. The SSG take a dim view of this outcome, but nevertheless ESC members will be welcomed at next year’s event at Morley Hayes, 25-27 April 2025.

Richard Wheatley (ESC 168)