

EGYPT STUDY CIRCLE.

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T H E Q U A R T E R L Y C I R C U L A R .

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May 1950. Whole Series, No. 33.

The Chairman's bereavement.

The sincere sympathy of all members of the Circle will go out to our Chairman, Dr. W. Byam on the passing of Mrs. Byam. Dr. Byam had come to London for the International Stamp Exhibition but, almost immediately, was recalled to Guernsey.

Mrs Byam had always taken a great interest in the Circle and its work and the older members will remember with affection how she often presided at tea during the early meetings of the Circle at Harley Street.

Circle Dinner.

On May 11th, 1950 a dinner was held by the Circle to welcome overseas members and friends who had come to London for the International Stamp Exhibition and, despite the sad circumstances which deprived us of the Chairman's presence, a happy evening was spent at The Rose Court Hotel, where a party of 25 sat down to dinner. The guests included - Ibrahim Chaftar Bey, Madam Chaftar, George A. Dimitriou, P. J. Drossos, J. C. Matossian, Gino Piperno, and P. W. Simonson. The chair was taken by J. H. E. Gilbert who, in the name of the Circle, welcomed the guests and warmly congratulated Chaftar Bey upon his election to the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists, an honour which all will feel he richly deserves. We think the Circle may now feel justifiably proud in that the names of three of its members - Dr. W. Byam, J. K. Sidebottom and Ibrahim Chaftar Bey - are now on the Roll.

New Edition of the Zeheri Catalogue, 1950.

This, the fifth edition has now reached this country and, already, will be in the hands of many members of the Circle. It has been revised by Ibrahim Chaftar Bey and collectors of Egypt will feel indebted to him for the truly magnificent volume he has produced.

EXCHANGE PACKET.

It has been decided to revive the Exchange packet.

Those members of the Egypt Study Circle, who wish to have their names put on the mailing list should advise Mr. E. F. Hurt, Yardley Gobion, Towcester, Northants.

The success of such a packet largely depends on sufficient material being available for sale and on rapid action by those on the packet list. This latter proviso entails notification of absence from home of members, so that unnecessary delays do not occur.

There will be no subscription for membership and circulation of the packet will be confined to E. S. C. Members.

Innovations suggested are the circulation with Packet of members' lists of specific wants and a "query dossier". Member's queries will thus be circulated and replies and comments made by others en route; a considerable advantage to those members who cannot attend the Study Circle meetings. Queries of particular interest and their solutions will be published later in "The Quarterly Circular".

The Rules are as follows;-

- (1) Material for sale must be mounted on sheets, approximately 8 X 4 ins. - the regular packet sheets, such as are obtainable from Harris Publications Ltd., 445 Strand, London. W.C. 2. being preferable
- (2) Stamps and Materials must be mounted on one side of the pages only.
- (3) Prices must be marked clearly in ink above the N.E. corner of each item
- (4) No stamp or item priced under 1/- shall be included.
- (5) Packets will be sent out at irregular intervals as sheets become available.
- (6) All sheets submitted must be accompanied by a stamped, addressed envelope suitable for their return after circulation.
- (7) A commission of 10% on sales will be charged, of which 5% will be allocated to the funds of the Egypt Study Circle.
- (8) The material included on sheets must be confined to Egypt and the Sudan, which, includes anything on net with the posts of these two countries, such as Stamps used abroad, material from foreign offices in these territories and so on.
- (9) The Packet Secretary reserves the right to comment on or withhold from circulation any damaged, repaired or apparently faked material sent for sale, if not described as such.

If the packet is to succeed the active co-operation of members, both in supplying sheets of material and maintaining a rapid circulation with commensurate purchases, will be essential.

W. Byam, (Chairman). 24-4-50.

AUSTRALIAN FORCES IN EGYPT - 1939-44.

By Harry S. Porter.

Prior to September 1940 the only Australians quartered in Egypt were individuals attached to other units or schools, and the few covers seen sent by Australians during this period passed through the British Military Post Offices. Date-stamps seen thereon are of the Type "E" and bear the indications B.P.O./E.602, and F.P.O./E.601, E.603, E.607 or E.608. I understand that about August 1940 a new Postal Unit arrived from the United Kingdom, furnished with the standard type of date stamps (see Type "D"), and that those of Type "E" were withdrawn and returned to Ordnance.

The position as regards Postal Rates was identical for the Australians as for other British troops in Egypt. For letters by surface mail postage was 10 m. for 20 grams with a surcharge for airmail of 50m. per 10 grams. It follows that the airmail postage was 40m. for 10 grams, 70m. for 20 grams, 110m. for 30 grams, etc.

The service postage was paid with special stamps (known as "Army Seals" in military parlance), those current in 1940 being the 3m. green and 10 m. carmine, with head of King Farouk, listed in Gibbons Catalogue as Nos. A3 and A4.

The 3 m. denomination was designed to pay a special rate for Christmas cards. This concession was still in force in 1940 and I have seen examples of the 3 m. cancelled with an Australian Army date-stamp, but only with dates in late October. In my experience, these are scarce.

The date-stamps used by the Australian Postal Units can be classed under two categories, those used by Field Post Offices, attached to Formations, which were mobile, and those Post Offices which came under the Lines of Communication (L of C) and were located at a given place until moved to another.

To meet the threat to Egypt, occasioned by the entry of Italy into the war on 10/6/40, the transfer of the Australian 6th Division from Palestine was begun in September 1940. The date-stamps given to this Division and the first known date of their use on Egyptian soil is as follows :-

<u>FORMATION.</u>	<u>LETTERING OF DATE-STAMP.</u>	<u>FIRST DATE SEEN.</u>
16th Brigade.	1st Bge H.Q.P.O.—M.1-	11.9.40.
17th Brigade.	2nd Bde H.Q.P.O.—M.2-	21.9.40.
19th Brigade.	3rd Bde H.Q.P.O.—W.3-	29.11.40.
6th Division H.Q.	Div. H.Q.P.O. —D.M.1-	3.10.40.
6th Division Supply H.Q.	Div. Supply H.Q.P.O.—S.P.1-	3.12.40.

Typical date-stamps are shown under Types "A" and "B" and they were originally brought with the troops from Australia.

It is possible that slightly earlier dates may be found than those given. To my knowledge only M.1. and S.P.1. had been in previous use in Palestine. M.1. was not used there after April 1940 but S.P.1. is found occasionally obliterating Palestine stamps as late as October 1940.

As a result of the success of the offensive launched against the Italians on December 7th 1940, the 6th Australian Division advanced into Libya and took a prominent part in the capture of Bardia (Jan. 6th), Tobruk (Jan. 22nd.), Derna (Jan. 30th) and Benghazi (Feb.7th. 1941) . On what date the Postal Unit crossed the Egypt-Libya frontier I have been unable to determine, but it must had been early in January. It follows therefore that the Egyptian Army Seals cancelled with the above date-stamps with dates after early January can be classed under "Egypt used abroad".

Although not immediately apparent, the Libyan campaign had an effect on the service postal rate. Egypt was the only active service theatre where troops did not enjoy free postage on surface mail. Once outside Egyptian territory, surface mail became free and, as the airmail was made up of 10 m. postage plus 30 m. surcharge, this reduced the airmail to 30 m. on a single weight letter. From the end of January airmail letters from the 6th Australian Division have three 10m. Stamps instead of the previous four.

From February 8th 1941 the Australian troops in Libya were ordered to use Australian stamps to pay air postage (the rate was 9d per $\frac{1}{2}$ oz), so the period of use of the Army Seals in Libya was short. Australian troops in Egypt continued to use Army Seals until April 24th 1941 when the use of their own stamps by troops forming part of the Allied Forces was sanctioned, so the Army Seals disappear.

In February 1941 it was decided that the 9th Australian Division would relieve the 6th and the later be withdrawn to Egypt, to await transport to Greece. The relief took place during March and the units of the 6th Aus. Div, left for Greece after spending a short period in Transit Camps in Egypt. It follows that it is possible that covers with the date-stamps of the 6th. Aus. Div., may be proved to emanate from Egypt during this second short period. The only examples I have found show M.2. (24.3.41 on Australian stamps) and W.3. (19.3.41 with English stamps). Please do not ask me why Australian and English stamps were used (contrary to the statements I have made above). But the position re stamps was chaotic at that time! I have reason to know that the vast majority of letters posted by the 6th Div. at that time received L of C date-stamps.

The original L of C office in Egypt was a Sub-base P.O. opened at

Cairo in September 1940, although the earliest date-stamp seen is 3.10.40. As happened in the case of a number of Australian Army Post Offices in the Middle East, this office used blue ink at first. The date-stamp read "Army P.O." at the top and "A.M.l." at foot. As the importance of this Australian Base Post Office (A.B.P.O.) increased, one date-stamp was found inadequate and, in the early part of 1941, resource was had to borrowing some of the date-stamps of Type " E " previously mentioned. The two numbered E.607 and E.608 were used at A.B.P.O., chiefly for registered letters and parcels, and I only know E.697 used on ordinary correspondence for a few days in March and E.68 similarly in April.

E.606 is said to have been in use by the Australian Port Postal Detachment at Suez in March and in July 1941, but I am still looking for an example.

E.608 had been removed from A.B.P.O. Cairo by May 1941 as it was then listed to be at Aust F.P.O.42 at the 2nd Aust. General Hospital at Kantara on the Canal/ I have yet to find a cover with it used at that time in Egypt, but the date-stamp was evidently prized by the Postal Orderly of the Hospital as he brought it back with the unit to Australia and they used it when stationed in Northern Queensland in 1942.

To continue the history of the A.B.P.O., in Egypt, on July 8th 1941 it was issued with four new date-stamps recently arrived from Australia. These were Type "K" and the lettering was "Aust Base P.O." at top and Nos 1, 2, 3 or 4 at foot. No 1 was customarily in use in the latter months of 1941 and No 4 is met with from December 1941 onwards. No 2 went back to Australia in early 1942. It is possible that Nos 2 and 3 were used in Egypt at A.B.P.O., but examples have yet to be found. On October 30th 1941 A.B.P.O. was moved from Cairo to Tel-Elkobi (generally known as "TEK"). An ordinary F.P.O. continued to operate at Cairo and I think that date-stamp no 16 (Type "L") was the one used there.

Other L of C Post Offices were opened in Egypt as the situation required. One at the Atlantic Hotel, Alexandria, was functioning as early as the first week in 1941. This office used a standard English Field Post Office date-stamp no 443 of Type "D". Date-stamps nos 443 to 445 were originally issued to Australian Troops in England in August 1940 and were brought with them to the Middle East.

Another date-stamp which appears with Egyptian Army Seals at the beginning of January 1941 is "P.2." (Type A-inscription at top "2nd Bde H.Q.P.O."). This can almost certainly be ascribed to an office opening at Sollum, to which mails were sent by sea during the advance into Libya. This office was moved to Tobruk about the end of January and continued to function there during the siege, although still classed as a L of C Post Office. Only examples of this date-stamp with dates in January 1941 can be considered as coming from Egypt.

Another L of C Post Office was located for a time at a staging camp named Kikngi Maryut, a few miles west of Alexandria. During the time of its

occupancy by Australian troops, in the first half of 1941, several changes of date-stamp took place. The 18th Australian Brigade landed in Egypt from the United Kingdom early in 1941 and was issued with date-stamp E.605 as early as 6.2.41. On March 16th it was replaced by a new type of date-stamp, this being one of a " Skeleton " type lent to the Australian Forces by the Palestinian Post Office. Two varieties of this type are shown under Fig. F and G. but, as the loose type fits into slots, spacing and distribution of the lettering varied from time to time. On some of these date-stamps the date is in one line and on others in two, this, of course, remaining constant for the same date-stamp. The lettering was AUS F.P.O. and they were numbered from 31 to 38 and 31 was the one issued to the 18th Brigade, and is the only one I know cancelling Egyptian stamps.

When the 18th Brigade was hurriedly moved by sea to reinforce the garrison at Tobruk, it took date-stamp no 31 with it, thus leaving Ikingi Camp without one. To meet this situation, date-stamp no 444 9 Type D) was given Ikingi, it having been recently returned from Libya. It will be seen that the fortunes of the F.P.O. of 18th Bde (No 31) and of Ikingi Camp (No 19) were interwoven and difficult to distinguish.

It had been the intention that 7th Aust. Div. from Palestine should follow the 6th Aust. Div. to Greece via Alexandria and accordingly the 25th Bde. thereof arrived in Egypt in the middle of April and so their date-stamp P.3 (Type A with top lettering " 3rd Bde H.Q.P.O.) appears cancelling Egyptian stamps. In view of the Greek situation and Rommel's advance in Libya, part of the 7th Aust. Div. was diverted to Mersa Matrud area. To serve the troops in that area NO. 39 F.P.O. was opened and used with the same number previously at Alexandria. On August 1st date-stamp A.M.1. (Withdrawn from A.B.P.O., Cairo) replaced the 443B and remained in use there until F.P.O. 39 was closed, about October 1941, owing to withdrawal of the last Australian troops from the area.

Almost contemporaneously with the authority to use Australian stamps (together with those of other Allied Forces such as United Kingdom, New Zealand, South Africa, etc.) a new type of date-stamp appears of Type H. From the point of view of the Egyptian specialist or of the "used abroad" fan, this is much more satisfactory as the word "Egypt" appears on the date-stamp, as also the words " Postage prepaid". It is therefore not a question of taking another's word for it, but it is self-evident. The intention seems to have been that this type should supercede all others, but, if so, the rule was often honoured in the breach. Particulars of the date-stamps of this type issued to the Australians will be found in the appendix where place and date of usage is also given.

The entry of Japan into the war resulted in the majority of the Australian forces in the Middle East being withdrawn early in 1942 and only the 9th Aust. Division remained in Syria. In Egypt only certain Depot troops remained until the 9th Division was hurriedly transferred to the El Alemain area in Egypt in July 1942. The Division remained there until withdrawn to Palestine after the battle of Alemain. The date-stamps used were Nos 33 to 37 of the "skeleton" types F and G. No. 38 should also be found, but I have no proof of its use. With dates from July to November these date-stamps must have been affixed in Egypt, afterwards they were in use in Palestine until the Division left for Australia early in 1943. This meant the disappearance of the Australian Forces from the Middle East and

A.B.P.O. in Egypt closed in January 1943.

Only one other Aust. F.P.O. in Egypt remains to be mentioned. No 2 Aust. Convalescent Depot was at Sidi Bish, near Alexandria, in 1941. F.P.O. 46 was located there and used date-stamp A.P.1. (type B with top inscription " Army P.O. "). The range of dates seen is September to December 1941.

A factor which must be remembered is that from January 1942 onwards the airmail route between Egypt and Australia was interrupted. Postage by surface mail was free and no airmail existed so the reason for the use of stamps was confined to Registration and Parcels. Stamps found with the appropriate cancellation and dates in 1942 to prove use in Egypt are extremely scarce.

During the period dealt with above and also subsequently, there were a considerable number of Australians serving with the R.A.F. units in Egypt, but no special organisation existed to deal with their mails.

The foregoing information has been extracted from a series of articles which I wrote in the Australian Stamp monthly between October 1946 and September 1947 which covered the Postal History of the A.I.F. in the Middle East. In some cases information subsequently acquired has been incorporated in these notes.

A P P E N D I X.

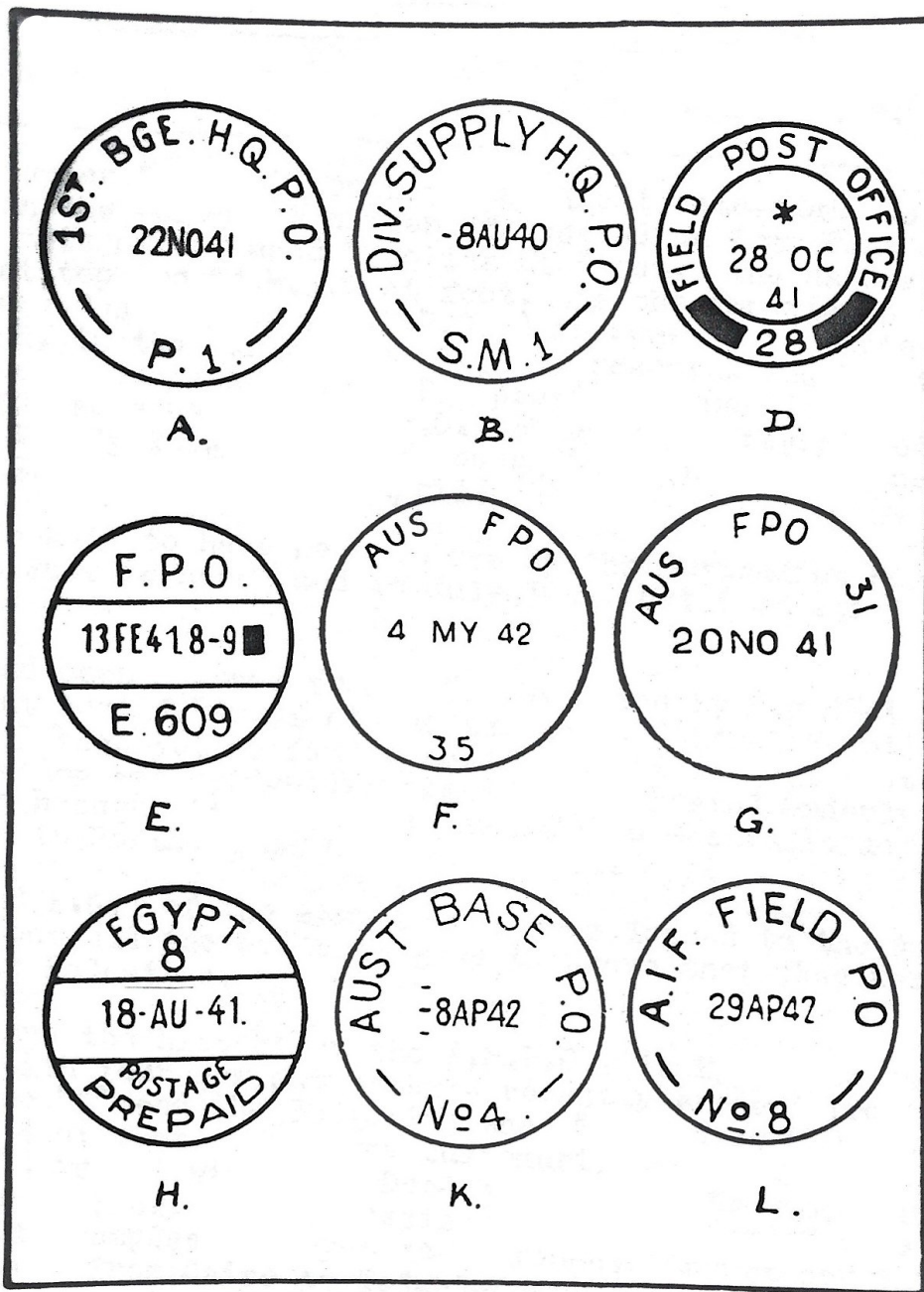
DATE-STAMP.	TYPE.	LOCATION OF UNIT.	FROM.	TO.
M. 1.	A.	6th Aus Div. 16th Bde.	11.9.40.	early Jan /41
M. 2.	A.	do 17th Bde.	21.9.40.	do
W. 3.	A.	do 19th Bde.	29.11.40.	do
D.M. 1.	B.	do H.Q.	3.10.40.	do
S.P. 1.	B.	do Supply H.Q.	3.12.40.	do
P. 2.	A.	F.P.O. 20. Sollum.	9.1.41.	late Jan /41.
P. 3.	A.	7th Aus Div. 25th Bde,	15.4.41.	May /41.
A.P. 1.	B.	F.P.O. 46. Sisi Bish.	Sept/41.	Dec. 1941.
A.M. 1.	B.	A.B.P.O. Cairo,	16.9.40.	8.7.41.
		F.P.O. 39. Mersa Matrud.	1.8.41.	Oct. 1941.
E. 605.	E.	7th Aus Div. 18th Bde,	Feb 41.	April 1941.
E. 606.	E.	F.P.O. 47. Suez.	Feb 41.	?

DATE-STAMP.	TYPE.	LOCATION OF UNIT.	FROM.	TO.
E. 607.	E.	A. B. P. O. Cairo.	Feb /41.	8. 7. 41.
E. 608.	E.	do	Feb /41.	April 41.
		F. P. O. 42. Kantara.	May /41.	Jan. 42.
443.	D.	F. P. O. 18. Alexandria.	Jan. 41.	April 41.
		F. P. P. 39. Mersa Matrud.	May 41.	Oct. 41.
444.	D.	F. P. O. 19. Ikingi Maryut.	Apr. 41.	June 41.
Aus F. P. O. 31.	FG.	7th Aus Div. 18th Bde.	Apr. 41.	Apr. 41.
do 33.	FG.	9th Aus Div. 20th Bde.	July 42.	Nov. 42.
do 34.	FG.	do Supply HQ.	do	do
do 35.	FG.	do 24th Bde.	do	do
do 36.	FG.	do 26th Bde.	do	do
do 37.	FG.	do H. Q.	do	do
Base P. O. No 1.	K.	A. B. P. O. Cairo.	8. 7. 41.	Jan. 1943.
do 2.	K.	do	do	Jan 42.
do 3.	K.	do Cairo or Tek	do	?
do 4.	K.	do	do	Jan 43.
A. I. F. F. P. O. 16.	L.	F. P. O. Cairo.	1. 11. 41.	Jan 42.
Egypt Prepaid				
No 5.	H.	?	March 41.	End of 41?
7.	H.	Base Depot Tek.	do	do
8.	H.	A. B. P. O. Cairo then Tek.	do	do
41.	H.	F. P. O. 19. Ikingi Maryut.	do	do
58.	H.	?	do	do
61.	H.	F. P. O. Alexandria.	do	do

A number of the above date-stamps were used outside Egypt at periods other than as given above.

H. S. Porter.

THE POSTAL MARKINGS OF THE AUSTRALIAN FORCES IN EGYPT.



THE HISTORY OF THE FOREIGN POST OFFICES IN EGYPT.

THE POSTS OF GREAT BRITAIN IN EGYPT

By Brigadier C. D. Rawson.

S U M M A R Y .

I. THE BRITISH POST OFFICES IN EGYPT.

- (a) Alexandria.
- (b) Suez.
- (c) Cairo.

II. MAIL SERVICES BETWEEN EGYPT AND ENGLAND.

British Services.

III. CO-OPERATION WITH OTHER POSTAL ORGANISATIONS BEFORE THE FORMATION OF THE UNVIERSAL POSTAL UNION.

- (a) The Egyptian Transit Company.
- (b) Postal Services of France, Italy and Austria.
- (c) The Posta Europea.
- (d) Modern Egypt Post.

IV. BRITISH POST FROM EGYPT.

FRANKING OF MAIL.

- (a) Handstamps.
- (b) Adhesives.

V. POSTAL MARKINGS.

- (a) Alexandria.
- (b) Suez.
- (c) Cairo.

VI. POSTAL RATES BETWEEN EGYPT AND GREAT BRITAIN.

- (a) British Mail Service.
- (b) French Mail Service.
- (c) Austrian Mail Service.
- (d) Registration Rates.

VII. MAIL CARRIED BY GREAT BRITAIN FOR OTHER COUNTRIES.

- (a) France.
- (b) Italy.
- (c) Austria.

VIII. PHILATELIC MATERIAL AVAILABLE.

IX. SOME PROBLEMS AWAITING SOLUTION.

I. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BRITISH POST OFFICES IN EGYPT.

Three Post Offices were established in Egypt: at Alexandria, Suez and Cairo, in that order of precedence.

The railway between Suez and Cairo was completed in November 1858 and the mails and passengers then went by it from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean. The Suez Canal was opened in 1869 but it was not until 1888 that it was used for mails instead of the railways.

(a) Alexandria.

In August 1839 a British Packet Agency was opened, Mr. H. Johnson being appointed the British Agent. Johnson continued to serve until 17th March 1858, when he was succeeded by Mr. R. Thorne (1858 to 1866). With this change of personnel the Packet Agency became a Post Office.

On March 30th 1852 a treaty was signed with the Egyptian Government for the carriage of the mails through Egypt. The mails were carried in sealed bags on camels, the journey from Alexandria to Suez taking some 75 hours.

In 1858 as the railway was nearing completion, a new treaty was necessary and we are indebted to Anthony Trollope, the eminent novelist, who was then in the Postal Service for details of its development.

We learn from his autobiography that in early 1858 he was asked by the Directors of the G.P.O. to go to Egypt to make a treaty with the Pasha for the conveyance of our mails through the country by railway. Trollope journeyed across France to Marseilles, and thence to Alexandria, a terribly rough journey in those days. An arrival he met an Armenian called Nubar Bey, " a most courteous gentleman" he says—"who called at his hotel every other day, bringing him papers, servants and coffee". After much discussion they reached complete agreement except on one point, Trollope asked that the transit of mails through Egypt should not exceed 24 hours, but Number Bey wished 48 hours to be allowed. Eventually Nubar Bey gave way, and the 24 hours timing was thereafter punctually kept. (In the treaty of 1852, 65 hours was the agreed period of transit). Trollope was of opinion that the 48 hour period had been pressed for at the instigation of the P. & O.S.N.Coy. who were great paymasters on the railway, as it suited their traffic better. The discussions on the terms took nearly two months and the treaty was signed on 16th Jun 1858.

On 18th May 1873 the treaty was revised and the agreed time of transit was reduced to 16 hours between Alexandria and Suez, and 13 hours between Suez and Alexandria.

The Post Office at Alexandria was closed on 1 April 1878.

(b) Suez.

Mr. H. Levick was appointed the British Postal Agent on 8th January 1847 and held the post for no less than 32 years. He was succeeded by Mr. R. L. Hammond on 6 August 1860. Mr. Levick kept the Agency in his own house until 1861, when the opening of the railway necessitated the establishment of a Post Office. The cost of this was £2500, and "a stamping board, a safe, clock and set of Royal Arms" sent out for its embellishment.

The Post Office was closed in 1878 simultaneously with that at Alexandria and the following letter from the British Consul General to the Earl of Derby clearly explains the reasons.

POLITICAL

CAIRO

No 174.

10th June 1877.

(Ref. F.O.78:2638)

My Lord,

The success attending the administration of the Egyptian Posts by Mr. Caillard, an Englishman sent out from H.M. Post Office, and the great inconvenience arising from the multiplicity of the Post Offices at Alexandria which compels merchants and men of business to send all round the different Foreign Post Offices scattered in different parts of the town to collect their letters arriving either by British, Austrian, French or Italian mail boats, has emboldened Mr. Caillard to suggest to the Egyptian Government the abolition by mutual agreement between the Governments interested of all the Foreign Post Offices at Alexandria and Suez as was done in the case of Cairo (q.v. in (c) below). I enclose a preliminary draft of an Anglo-Egyptian Convention The advantages of this scheme (if all the Powers agree to it) would be the abolition of the inconvenience and the multiplicity of Post Offices at Alexandria and Suez, of which the merchants complain, and the economy of the expense of the staffs employed in them; while the surveillance of a travelling British Packet Agent would seem to afford a sufficient guarantee for the safety of the Indian mails.

(signed) C. Vivian.

P.S. If it recommends itself on its own merits, England need hardly wait for France and the other Powers who may cling to the questionable advantages of their own Post Offices. I think we can well afford to take the lead and leave the others to follow.

The Postmaster General saw no objection to the withdrawal of the British Post Offices at Alexandria and Suez and the substitution of British Postal Agents at these places. The new convention was signed in London on November 14th 1877 by Mr. Caillard on behalf of the Khedive and by Lord John Manners for the G.P.O.

(to be continued,)