

EGYPT STUDY CIRCLE

THE QUARTERLY CIRCULAR

Volume VIII No. 3

Whole Series No. 87

SEPTEMBER 1973

FUTURE MEETINGS

13th October 1973	...	Hotel Postmarks Presented by F.W. Benians.
1st December 1973	...	Third Issue 20 paras and 1 piastre, lithographed and typographed. Presented by E.L.G. MacArthur.
2nd February 1974	...	Subject to be announced.

E G Y P T S T U D Y C I R C L E

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

Volume VIII No. 3

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REPORT of the 147th Meeting of the Egypt Study Circle held at the Charing Cross Hotel, London, on the 2nd June 1973.

J.H.E. Gilbert presided, and the following members were present:-

C.W. Minett, K.C. Brown, G.P. Green, P.E. Woodland,
D.R. Beak, D. Turton, W.C. Andrews, J.S. Horesh,
P.E. Whetter, P. Andrews, B. Conway.

Apology for absence was received from R.A.G. Potter.

The subject of this meeting was the 'Bar' overprints of 1953, and Bill Andrews (E.S.C. No. 132) from Truro (Cornwall) opened his display by showing all values both mint and used of these issues.

Bill's main study was of the Air-Mail issue of 1947 with this overprint, and many varieties of the overprint were shown which may or may not have been due to different printers.

Double and treble overprints were shown and their relative status discussed. The lack of this material on cover, however, was making this study difficult and Bill asked that if any members have anything on cover of these issues would they please be good enough to let him have details, or better still a sight of the covers.

A report on this study will be found in this issue of the Quarterly Circular.

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REPORT of the 148th Meeting of the Egypt Study Circle held at 'The George', 2 George Court, Adelphi, London, on the 4th August 1973.

J.H.E. Gilbert presided and the following members were present:- P. Andrews, F.W. Benians, L. Bowyer, K.C. Brown, C.A. Gilders, G. Green, J.S. Horesh, C.W. Minett, P.E. Whetter and A.C. Crew who was welcomed by the Chairman to this, his first meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Mrs. Hide, J.A. Firebrace, E.L.G. MacArthur, R.A.G. Potter and E.D. Turton.

The main subject, the Hotel Postmarks of Egypt, was led by Jim Benians who produced an extensive collection supported by the collections of other members. In particular Jean Boulad d'Humieres had sent the draft of a new article of his and this contained a number of new dates.

The considerable variety of Hotel imprints on many of the covers provided a secondary point of interest. Time did not permit the complete coverage of the subject and the Hotels of Upper Egypt together with the datestamps of Cook's Tourist Office at Cairo and Simon Arzt's Store in Port Said were left for a future meeting.

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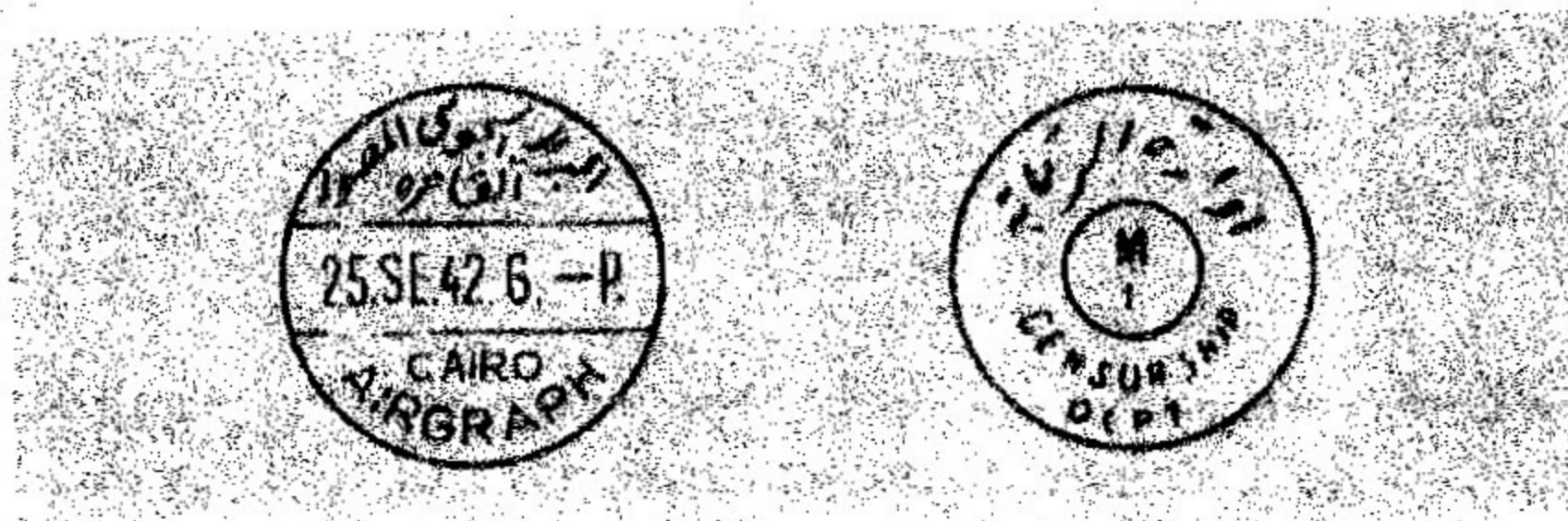
Charles W. Minett (E.S.C. No. 77)Balloon Flights

With reference to my notes on Page 4 of the current Volume Dr. Winter draws my attention to the fact that the first balloon flight in Egypt was made on 10 frimaire an VII (30th November 1798) by M. Conte, an engineer, who was one of the many specialists and scientists accompanying Bonaparte during the French Campaign in Egypt. However, there is no evidence that the flight had any postal significance.

Egyptian Government Labels and Airgraphs

Further evidence that the type of official label described in the 'Quarterly Circular' Number 1 of the present Volume (page 3) was used to seal folded Airgraphs, prior to delivery in Egypt, has come from Dr. Winter (ESC No. 149) who most kindly has sent for inspection two examples from his collection.

i) Dated 1st September 1942 in England (but apparently posted somewhat later) and addressed to Ismailia. This one has been sealed with two imperforate labels with corner guide lines but otherwise exactly as the previous perforate ones (even down to minor printing flaws). The CAIRO/AIRGRAPH cds dated 25.SE. 42. 6-P. is similar to the one already illustrated but differs slightly since it is quite clearly from a second die; in particular the diameter is fractionally less and the Arabic inscription closer to the top of the circle (see illustration below). The slugs of the date line are slightly taller but this may not prove to be a constant feature.



The censor mark is as illustrated above and occurs partly under one of the sealing labels.

ii) Dated 10th July 1945 in London and addressed to Ismailia this one has been sealed by two of the perforate labels already described. The CAIRO/AIRGRAPH cds dated 16.JL.45. 6-15P. is also from the second die described above. The censor mark is of the heavy circular type which was illustrated in the previous 'Notes' but bears the number M/56.

These handstruck censor marks are found on various types of

incoming and outgoing mail over a period of years and their use also on processed Airgraphs indicates that all civilian correspondence passed through the one Censor's office in Cairo.

World War II - Civil Censorship

I seek enlightenment concerning the overprinting of a resealing label with the words 'BUT UNCENSORED' (in red) as illustrated below.

BUT UNCENSORED

The label is of the usual white continuous band type with, in blue lettering, the words 'EGYPTIAN CENSORSHIP' and 'OPENED BY CENSOR' in alternating rows (each surmounted by the equivalent in Arabic script). The overprinting is evenly spaced in three lines clearly cancelling out the three Arabic/English lines of blue printing.

This cover, by air mail (rate 48 milliemes) is addressed to "A.E. Sanders, R.N., Waterlooville, Hants, England" and bears the cds of 29 MR 41. II-30A / ALEXANDRIA / D-I and the Censorship Department machine mark applied in Cairo. On the reverse is the sender's name "C/O Maxims, Rue Cherif Pacha, Alexandria" in manuscript. Exceptionally for this period the resealing label is not tied by a further censor stamp.

The question which begs an answer is: When the censoring officer opened the cover, apparently unintentionally, why did his terms of reference (perhaps?) oblige him to draw attention to the fact by using a specially overprinted label instead of a normal one tied with his personal mark? I know of no similar example but consider others must exist.

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CORRIGENDA.

Whole Number 86 (June 1973)

Page 13 3rd paragraph. The fifth line should read:-

"Chief Office dated 15th June 1874. The latest date so far recorded is 15th June 1875 (see photograph..)".

ADDENDUM to Index to Volume VII.

Page iv. Postal Markings. Hotel Postmarks - add pages 165,
196, 220-1.

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THE 1953 BAR OVERPRINTS ON AIRMAIL STAMPS

by

W. C. Andrews (ESC No. 132)

On Wednesday the 23rd July 1952 the "Free Officers" Movement carried out a military coup and took over the Government of Egypt. By the 26th July the coup had proved to be successful and King Farouk abdicated in favour of his infant son, Crown Prince Ahmed Fuad. The latter was proclaimed King and a Regency Council of three members appointed. Ahmed Fuad was King of Egypt until the 18th June 1953 when the country was decreed a Republic by the Revolution Command Council.

After Farouk had been deposed a new definitive issue of Republican stamps was ordered, the first of which was issued on 23rd January 1953 but, in the meanwhile, stamps bearing the ex-King's portrait were freely sold and used for postal purposes. There was a large stock of stamps in hand from printings extending back to 1937 which could be used and, as it was not possible immediately to supply a sufficient quantity of new stamps to satisfy demand, the Government ordered that the portrait on existing stamps be obliterated by overprinting. As soon as these overprinted stamps were in sufficient supply a decree was issued demonetizing undefaced stamps and arranging for stocks in private hands to be surrendered and exchanged for stamps with the portrait obliterated.

At that time all stamps were being printed by the Survey Department, Cairo, but as this establishment was virtually fully occupied with printing the new Republican issues it was not possible for them to overprint all existing stamps with obliterating marks in the quantities required for immediate use. To overcome this the printing was carried out by three organisations - The Survey Department Cairo, the National Printing Press Boulac, and the Railways Printing Press Cairo.

All the definitive stamps to be overprinted were of one of four different sizes, viz:-

1 mill. to 22 mill.	-	21.1mm.x 25.3mm.
30 mill. to 200 mill.	-	30.5mm.x 25.0mm.
50 PT. and £E1.	-	25.5mm.x 42.5mm.
Airmail series	-	42.5mm.x 25.5mm.

The obliterating bars were printed by typography or letterpress, as can be seen by careful examination of the stamps, and in order effectively to obliterate the portrait on the stamps of different sizes it was necessary to assemble at least four different typographic plates.

It would be convenient to assume that, as the overprinting was carried out by three firms, there should be three recognisably different types of overprint on all stamps. However, as one firm was too busy to undertake the whole of the work and the stamps were required for use as soon as they could be overprinted, this assumption seems illogical because if the stamps were distributed to each firm in mixed batches regardless of the size of stamp or format of the sheets, it would mean that each firm would have to assemble and print from at least four different plates.

It would appear to be more probable that all stamps of the same format were allocated to the same establishment to avoid duplication of effort and time in preparation of the overprinting plates and carrying out this work. This hypothesis is confirmed in part by the fact that all bar overprints on the airmail stamps were carried out by one firm as will be seen later.

The Air Mail Stamps in current use in 1953 were those first issued in 1947 although many had been overprinted "King of Egypt and Sudan" (in Arabic) in 1952 for use in Egypt, and "Palestine" in 1948 for use in the Gaza Strip.

The 1947 air mail issue was printed in photogravure by the Survey Department Cairo in sheets of 100 divided into two panes of 50 each (5 x 10), the different panes being recognised by a control number with dot and without dot. After the sheets had been printed the panes were separated, were perforated and the gutters on all four sides were guillotined. There is no clear indication in which order these last three operations were performed, but this does not effect the present research except in that the panes were separated after the original printing and that all subsequent overprints were applied to the panes of 50 and not to the complete sheets of 100 stamps. This can be verified because identical flaws appear on the same stamps on panes with controls with dot and without dot both in the "King of Egypt and Sudan" and the "Bar" overprints.

The method approved and used to obliterate the portrait on the airmail stamps was by three horizontal bars measuring 11 mm. horizontally and 4.5 mm. overall vertically.

The horizontal distance between the same point on adjacent stamps is 42.5 mm. and the vertical distance 25.5 mm.

Therefore the distance between the sets of obliterating bars on the printing plate so that each set falls directly on the portrait on each stamp must be 31.5 mm. horizontally (i.e. 42.5 mm. minus 11 mm.) and 21 mm. vertically (i.e. 25.5 mm. minus 4.5 mm.). If a plate of 50 stereos is assembled to these measurements then upon being applied squarely to the pane of stamps each set of bars will fall in the same relative position on each stamp and, ipso facto, if one portrait is obliterated then all will be.

Conversely, if the printing plate was assembled incorrectly so

that one or more of the spaces between the sets of bars were not of the correct measurement then the stereos affected would fall in a position different from the others on the same pane. Such incorrect assemblies did occur and the various settings of the plates can be recognised in part by these variations.

A typographical printing plate can be assembled by various methods.

Firstly, the separate bars could have been individual type faces with a spacer between each bar but it is unlikely that this was the method used. Many errors were made in the spacing between the sets of bars and it is difficult to believe that no similar errors would have been made in the assembly of the individual bits. In fact no errors occur in the spacing or positioning of the individual bars in each set in relation one to the other. Again some bars are noticeably shorter than 11 mm. but in each case all three bars are short - this could hardly be expected if each set of bars was made of individual bits. Also when one bar in a set was damaged all three were replaced. This would not be necessary if each bar was a separate unit.

Secondly a plate could be assembled from moveable type and then for printing purposes a stereotype of the whole plate cast from a mould taken from the original moveable type. By this means several moulds could be made from the same plate or several stereotypes taken from one mould. In either case all the printing faces would be identical but as the plates used for printing the bars were not identical in many respects this method cannot have been used.

Finally a number of matrices of three bars could be made and individual stereos cast from these moulds. The stereos could then be assembled with appropriate spacing bars into a forme and secured in a chase for printing. This was without doubt the method used because in different settings individual stereos were damaged and only the damaged stereos were substituted by different ones. The stereos seem to have been cast from a very soft metal because they wore very badly and many broke or were damaged both during assembly of the plate and during printing.

Because this last method of plate assembly was used the actual printing must have been carried out on a flat bed and not a rotary printing machine.

The obliterating bars were of such a size horizontally that they would fit exactly within the coloured oval containing the portrait of Farouk and gave the most effective obliteration if the upper bar fell across the eyes and eyebrows, the centre bar across the base of the nose and mouth and the lower bar across the chin and upper neck. To position every sheet to be overprinted with such exactitude in the press was extremely difficult and proved impossible in practice.

Originally the stamps were printed in sheets of 100 which had

subsequently been split into two panes of 50, the margins or gutters on each pane then being guillotined. By examination of a number of panes it can readily be seen that although the gutters had contained guillotining marks this latter operation was not carried out accurately with the result that the width of the gutters varied considerably on different panes. The bar overprints were made on the panes without removing the gutters so that for printing purposes the position of each pane in the press was, of necessity, measured from the outside edge of the gutters. It can be seen that as the gutters varied in size the stamps in different panes fall in different relative positions in the printing press and the obliterating bars were impressed in different positions on the stamps.

It would appear that careful measurements were made of a number of panes from which it was calculated that, in the majority of cases, the portraits would be correctly obliterated if the left hand vertical row of bars started 41.5 mm. from the left outside edge of the left hand gutter and the top bar of the top horizontal row was printed 19.5 mm. from the top outside edge of the top gutter. Consequently if the plates had been assembled to the measurements previously given and the panes conformed to the immediately preceding measurements then all the overprints would have been perfect. Not surprisingly this happy state of affairs never occurred and incorrect measurements, very often in combination, gave a great variety in the printing of the bars, many of which are obvious in the most superficial examination.

The most obvious differences were caused by variations in the width of the left hand and top gutters of the panes. If the left gutter is narrow the bars fall towards the right of the portrait and, conversely, if this gutter is wide the bars fall towards the left of the portrait. Where the top gutter is narrow the bars fall towards the bottom of the portrait and where this gutter is wide the bars fall towards the top of the portrait. These differences can occur in combination. For example, if the left gutter is narrow and the top gutter is wide the bars fall high towards the right side of the portrait. Some of these displacements are very marked but rarely are they sufficient to warrant a second, or double bar, overprint.

Having considered the printing method used and calculated the measurements requisite to provide accurate overprinting it is now necessary to examine complete panes of stamps to establish the position of any flaws which occur and to compare and contrast different settings. I have been fortunate in that I have been able to obtain twelve panes for my own collection and have been privileged to examine a further twenty-five, most of which are owned by Peter Andrews (no relation!), together with many marginal and other positional blocks.

All these panes I have photographed and have measured the distances between bars on each stamp. As previously stated the spaces between the sets of bars should be 31.5 mm. horizontally and 21 mm. vertically, for them to fall in the same relative position on

each stamp. These accurate measurements were not achieved in practice on a complete pane at any time and the actual measurements show that there were three, and only three, different settings of the bars. With singular unoriginality I have called the settings A, B and C.

To illustrate some of the variations in the spacing between the bars in the different settings I have appended several examples.

HORIZONTAL measurements in millimetres.

Row 5. i.e. Stamps Nos. 21 to 25 in the pane.

Setting A	31 mm.	32 mm.	32 mm.	32 mm.
Setting B	31.5 mm.	32.5 mm.	31.5 mm.	31.5 mm.
Setting C	31.5 mm.	31.5 mm.	31 mm.	31 mm.

Row 10. i.e. Stamps Nos. 46 to 50 in the pane.

Setting A	31 mm.	32 mm.	32 mm.	32 mm.
Setting B	31.5 mm.	32.25 mm.	31.5 mm.	31.25 mm.
Setting C	31.5 mm.	31.5 mm.	31.5 mm.	31.5 mm.

VERTICAL measurements in millimetres.

Column 1. i.e. stamps Nos. 1, 6, 11 etc. to 46 in the pane.

Setting

A	21	21	21	21	20.5	21.5	21	20.75	20.75 mm.
B	21	21	21.5	20.5	21.5	20.5	21.5	20.5	20.75 mm.
C	21	21	20.75	21.5	20.5	20.5	22	20.5	20.5 mm.

These measurements are accurate on early printings but are subject to minor variations due to wear of the plates.

Variations in measurements of the above magnitude occur indiscriminately throughout each pane and by comparison of one setting with another it can be seen quite clearly that the positions of the overprints on the stamps in the same pane are inconsistent and that these irregularities occur in different positions in each of the three settings.

Having established the method of printing and the number of plate settings used, two major questions concerning the original supply of stamps still remain to be answered:-

- i) Were they printed by one or more firms?
- ii) If they were printed by one firm in which order were the different settings brought into use?

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To determine these requires a close examination of the actual bar overprints.

Each setting contains a number of flaws which were present before printing started and are present in the first state of the plates. Additional flaws caused by wear on the plates occurred during the course of printing. Some of these flaws are common to more than one plate whilst others occur on one plate only. As the flaws which are common to all three plates are in the same position on each plate and those which occur on two plates are in the same position on both plates it is inconceivable that these plates could have been prepared and used by more than one firm; the coincidence of including the same flaws in the same position during the assembly of the plates by different firms is too remote to be considered. Therefore I have concluded that all the printings were carried out by one firm.

Each plate shows a progressive increase in flaws. All three plate settings began with a number of flaws and further flaws appeared during printing when other cliches became badly worn or damaged. Several different states of printing can be recognised for each setting. Several of the damaged cliches in Setting A were substituted by new ones when the plate was reset for Setting B whilst others were not replaced but were included in Setting B. Some of these flaws show further progressive deterioration in Setting B. A number of flaws were continued in setting C but towards the end of its use this plate was so badly worn that the face of the type was ground down to provide a level printing surface and these flaws shown originally in plates A and B were removed whereas those peculiar to plate C only can still be seen.

Again I have concluded that the plates were used in the order in which I have called them - A, B and C as no other sequence will provide the correct pattern of damage and substitution of cliches.

To conclude this part of the study I have listed the major flaws which can be found and the state of the plate when they first occur. Unless otherwise stated any flaws which appear remain for the rest of the use of that plate: e.g. flaws in Setting B State I can still be seen in Setting B State IV.

SETTING 'A'

State I Stamp No. 16 Notch in top bar at top left corner.
33 Top bar bent downwards at left.
36 Damage between centre and bottom bar at left.
43 Very heavy impression.
47 Hole under top bar towards right.

State II

All flaws in state I still present.
10 Hole developing in top bar to right of centre.
32 Horizontal split under top bar towards left.
44 Top bar bent downwards at right end.

State IIa

All above flaws still present.
Many bars distorted and becoming thick at ends.

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SETTING 'B'

- State I No. 10 Hole in top bar to right of centre.
 15 Centre bar split diagonally across centre.
 16 Notch in top bar at top left corner.
 33 Top bar bent downwards at left.
 36 Damage between centre and bottom bar at left.
 43 Very heavy impression.
 47 Hole under top bar towards right.
- State II All flaws in state I still present.
 32 Bottom bar splitting at left, forming hook.
 43 Top bar splitting diagonally from top centre to left.
- State III All above flaws still present.
 26 Hole in top bar to right of centre.
 31 Very badly worn producing spade ends to bars.
 32 State II flaw more pronounced and bars distorted.
- State IV All above flaws still present.
 12 Top bar bent upwards at left.
 32 Ends of bars disintegrating and very distorted.
 39 Damage to top of bottom bar at left - joins centre
 41 Notch under right end of centre bar. (bar.
 Ends of many bars disintegrating and giving rough
 ends to them.

SETTING 'C'

- State I 10 Hole in top bar to right of centre.
 13 Short bars 10.5 mm. wide instead of normal 11 mm.
 32 Top bar long and left half bent downwards.
 33 Wide notch in top centre of top bar.
 35 Short bars 10.5 mm. wide instead of normal 11 mm.
 36 Damage between centre and bottom bar at left.
 38 Small notch in top centre of top bar.
 43 End of top bar bent down at left.
 45 Bars short - 10 mm. instead of normal 11 mm.
 47 Hole under top bar towards right.
 50 Underneath of bottom bar very jagged at right.
- State II All flaws in state I still present.
 Many substituted bars in this setting wearing to
 square ends and spreading to join adjacent bars,
 particularly stamp Nos. 35, 40, 43 and 45.
- State III Surface of whole plate scraped or rubbed down
 causing bars to become very thick and dark and
 erasing most of previous flaws except those
 which are shown below. Several new prominent
 flaws occur in this state.
- 6 Right hand top corner of bottom bar flat and
 forming hook.
 13 Short bars - 10.5 mm. instead of normal 11 mm.
 22 Circular hole at right end of centre bar.
 32 Top bar bent downwards at left end.

Setting 'C' State III (continued)

- No. 33 Wide notch in top centre of top bar.
 35 Short bars 10.5 mm. instead of normal 11 mm.
 45 Short bars 10 mm. instead of normal 11 mm.
 46 Bottom bar turns upwards at right end.

The great majority of these bars are distorted and of unequal thickness throughout their length. Many are squared off at one end and taper to normal size at the other, others are thick at each end and narrower in the centre.

State IV

I have seen only three positional blocks of this state and can only give the flaws I can positively identify. As this printing appears to be towards the end of the whole operation when the plates were extremely badly worn there are no doubt other faults to be found.

- 19 Circular hole at left end of top bar and hook forming under left end bottom bar.
 37 Circular hole at top of right end of top bar forming hook. Hole in extreme end (right) of centre bar. Two holes in right half of bottom bar.
 46 Bottom bar bent up at right end.

Although I have examined a large number of panes, large blocks and smaller positional blocks, I have not necessarily seen all states of all printings. Further major flaws may still occur in late printings which I have not seen. There are, of course, many minor flaws which I have not yet listed in addition to the above.

To complete this article it is intended to publish at a later date:-

Photographic illustrations of all the above flaws.
 Specimen overprints.
 Double overprints.
 Forgeries compared with unofficial bars.
 Commercial mail with barred stamps thereon.
 Bibliography.

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