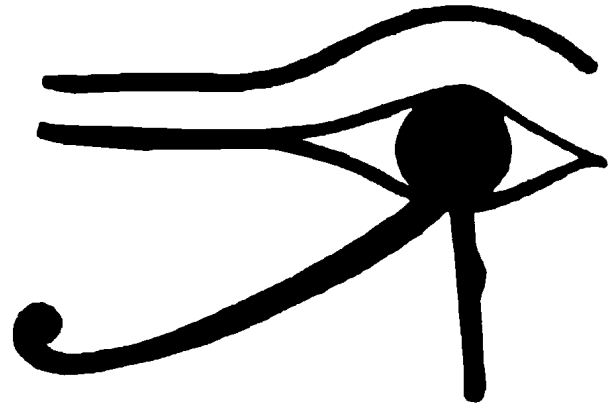


**The
Quarterly Circular
of**

ISSN 0269—252X

THE
EGYPT



STUDY CIRCLE

**March Quarter 2003
Volume XVIII No. 5**

**Whole Series No. 204
Pages 101 - 124**

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Cover of the Month: 1890 (June 17). Registered cover fully paid from Genoa to Alexandria. Arrived Alex (June 22) and delivered and signed for as registered. Opened in error and annotated in Italian manuscript to this effect. As a registered item it could not be dropped in a Postbox and was taken to Alexandria PO where the cover was re-sealed with Interpostals of 1884 (Kehr 731). These were cancelled by red wax seals 'Postes Egyptiennes-Alexandrie', one of which has been torn off on opening; received in Cairo on 10th July 1890.

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Forthcoming Meetings.

May 10 th .	AGM plus 10 sheets per member	All
July 19 th .	Egyptian Post Office documents	Robin Bertram
September 20 th .	Perfins	Vahe Varjabedian
	Egyptian labels	Alan Jeyes
November 15 th .	Egypt Military pre-1916	Stanley Horesh

Meetings are normally held at the Victory Club, Seymour Street, Marble Arch, London. Members usually congregate in the bar from 1.00pm onwards and meetings commence at 2.00pm.

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Report of Meeting January 11, 2003

PRESENT: John Sears (President), Robin Bertram (Chairman), Stanley Horesh (Deputy Chairman), Peter Andrews, John Clarke, John Davis, Edmund Hall, Hermann Kleinstuck (Germany), Lewis Said, Sami Sadek and Richard Wheatley.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence were received from the following: Yasser Amr, John Chellingsworth, Dennis Clarke, Cyril Defriez, Alan Jeyes and Mike Murphy.

The Chairman wished everyone present a "Happy New Year" and gave a special welcome to our guest speaker, Peter Bottrill, and his wife. He also said it was good to see our member 225 Dr Kleinstuck making another visit from Germany.

The Chairman informed members of the sad news of the death of "Pip" Whetter (ESC 133) and members stood in silence in remembrance of him. Our President and two other members had attended the funeral. An obituary was to appear at a later date in the Q.C.

The Chairman expressed his thanks to those members who had attended his lecture at the Egyptian Education and Cultural Bureau on January 9; and who had also provided material for display in the exhibition which accompanied the lecture. Mike Murphy was given a special "thank you" for organising the evening's event. Frank Parsons (ESC 455) was also given grateful thanks for his assistance in supplying the "Stampex" frames from the Sidcup Philatelic Society and in supervising their setting up. Although on a bitterly cold and icy evening there was not a big attendance the Chairman thought the event had been worthwhile.

With both the Secretary and Treasurer unable to attend the meeting, the Chairman covered their responsibilities. Five new membership applications put to the meeting were approved unanimously. Members were reminded that 2003 annual subscriptions were due on January 1 and if not paid to the Chairman at the meeting should be sent to Alan Jeyes forthwith.

The death of Geoffrey Manton (founder of Cavendish Auctions) was reported. He had passed away at the end of last year.

A letter sent by Poole Philatelic Society inviting the Study Circle to hold a regional meeting with them in September was read out. Members decided not to take up the invitation.

The Chairman mentioned that he had received a communication from our Antipodes Agent, Tony Chisholm, stating that the next ESC meeting in New Zealand would take place from February 23 (Monday) to 29 (Sunday) in 2004 and members wishing to attend should let Tony know as soon as possible.

The Editor, Edmund Hall, reported that the next *QC* (No 203) was imminent and would be accompanied by the 2003 programme card. He made an appeal for more material from members for No 204.

The Chairman then introduced our guest speaker, Peter Bottrill, whom most members already knew, and invited him to give his display on the Great Bitter Lakes Association 1967-1975.

Peter began by showing mail from the various United Nations contingents involved, and gave details of the various ships trapped in the Suez Canal. Many unique items of correspondence between the G.B.L.A. and the U.P.U. in Switzerland regarding the postal validity of the stamps were shown. Original and unique "linocut" designs for the original commemorative envelopes were shown. The stamps, some in proof form, some in complete sheets issued by each ship, were displayed. It was noted that mail coming in to the ships was very scarce.

Most of the mail emanating from the trapped ships appears to have been posted to England, and much of it carried only the GBLA adhesives. On the odd occasion the Egyptian postal authorities had struck the envelopes with a boxed "T" indicating postage due to be collected, but there was no evidence that any had been collected!

Peter accompanied his display with unique photographs of the ships and their crews. He also showed “race programmes” from events such as the GBLA Football World Cup held by crew members to pass away the boring hours.

A great deal of discussion took place, with many questions from members present regarding the purpose behind the stamps’ production and their validity. Members also wondered that as some of the ships were foreign (Polish, for example) did any mail exist posted to these countries and franked with GBLA stamps. Peter presumed this must be so and that there may be similar collections in those countries.

The Chairman thanked Peter for his unique display and members showed their appreciation in the usual way.

New members:

- ESC 352 **Stephen Kaplan**, 3238 Belvoir Blvd, Beachwood, Ohio 44122, United States
(Restored member: Meter marks of Egypt, Finland and Palestine)
- ESC 562 **Dr Ralf Dreyer**, EU Delegation, Pod Hradbami 17, 16000 Prague 6, Czech Republic
(Postal history of First to Fourth Issues, Foreign Post Offices)
- ESC 563 **Magdy Soliman**, 5905 W. Esplanade Avenue, Metairie, LA 70003, United States
(Egypt and Sudan)
- ESC 564 **Amgad Bassili**, 403-300 Regina Street N. Bldg #1, Waterloo, Ontario N2J 3B7, Canada
(Perfins, early cancellations, scarce FDC covers, errors and varieties)
- ESC 565 **Anne Burson-Tolpin**, 256 Glen Avenue, Millburn, NJ 07041, United States
(Egyptian philately in general, also Luxembourg and some WWII)
- ESC 566 **Robert Schoenstene**, 3321 N. Ottawa Avenue, Chicago, IL 60634, United States
(Stamps of US, Canada, Egypt and worldwide to 1940)
- ESC 567 **Dr Raouf Michel El Gawly**, Worthington House, 71 The Common, Parbold, Wigan, Lancashire WN8 7EA (General interest in Early period)
- ESC 568 **Mrs Margaret Chadwick**, 13 Glen Eldon Road, Lytham St Annes, Lancashire FY8 2AU
(All aspects of Egyptian stamps and postal stationery)
- ESC 569 **Sami Fereig**, 79 McDougall Road, Waterloo, Ontario N2L 2W4, Canada
(First to Third Issues, foreign Post Offices, Egyptian Offices abroad)
- ESC 570 **Bernard Fischer**, 18 Panionias Street, Glyfada 16561, Greece
(Postal history, Foreign POs in Egypt, Egyptian POs abroad, perfins, Dues)

Corrected details:

- ESC 561 **Alaa Massoud**, 11 El-deer Street, Cleopatra Hammamat, Alexandria, Egypt
(Apologies for mis-spelling of your name!)

Change of address:

- ESC 547 **Brian Lukanic**, 343 W. Goebel Drive, Lombard, IL 60148, United States
ESC 549 **Antonello Fumu**, via Sirte 37, 00199 Roma, Italy

Reinstated:

- ESC 462 **Morris Goodman** ESC 490 **Tony Pope** ESC 504 **Karim Darwaza**

Report of Meeting March 1, 2003

PRESENT: John Sears (President), Robin Bertram (Chairman), Stanley Horesh (Deputy Chairman), Peter Andrews, Mike Bramwell, Dennis Clarke, John Clarke, John Davis, Mostafa El-Dars, Peter Grech, Alan Jeyes, Bill Johns, Costas Kelemenis (Greece), Mike Murphy, Tony Schmidt and Vahe Varjabedian (Egypt).

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence were received from: Yasser Amr, John Chellingsworth, Cyril Defriez, Nabil El-Hadidi, Edmund Hall, Charlie Hass and Frank Parsons.

The Chairman welcomed members to Stampex, and in particular our overseas members Costas Kelemenis (ESC 249) and Vahe Varjabedian (ESC 390); and the meeting passed on its best wishes to two convalescents in Cyril Defriez (ESC 272) and Peter Goodwin (ESC 297).

Members were reminded that plans for the seventh Biennial Meeting in New Zealand were going ahead for February 23-29 2004, and the Chairman invited all those interested to contact either himself or the organiser, our Antipodes Agent, Tony Chisholm, at 3 Arden Way, Wilton, Wellington 6005, NZ (or by email on j_t_chisholm@clear.net.nz).

Alan Jeyes, Treasurer, reported on the collection of subscriptions for 2003, which were due on January 1, and there was some discussion of members being lapsed from membership for non-payment and later returning to membership: a motion clarifying payment of subscriptions will go before the AGM.

John Sears, President, spoke briefly on his recent trip to Egypt, and after new members had been elected the Chairman urged members to vote for the annual MacArthur Award for the best *QC* article published in 2002. Votes may be sent with subscription cheques to the Treasurer, or direct to the Secretary, or via email at <http://freespace.virgin.net/edmund.hall/vote.html>, where a full list of articles may be found.

The Chairman then introduced our speaker, Tony Schmidt (ESC 198), and invited him to give his display on the Interpostals of Egypt.

Tony began with a brief introduction on Study Circle knowledge of the use and temporal extent of the coloured circular “tickets”, but it was not long before he introduced a wonderful recent find in a collection presumably formed by an Egyptian postal employee at the time the Interpostals were extant. It seems that the collection ended in about 1876.

As well as a set of *Posta Europea* essay markings - one of only two known - which Tony sadly had to forgo, the collection comprised Types I-IV complete, with only two examples missing from Type V - a remarkable collection of the earlier and less common types, and one which, on closer inspection, hid a real surprise.

The collector clearly enjoyed seeing mint Interpostals, but was not averse to “filling a hole” with a used example until a mint one came along. Thus it was that some of the stuck-down mint top examples were found to have as many as four used IPs stuck down underneath: an enormous task of soaking and lifting for Tony, but one well rewarded with a plethora of datestamps, including a Type III example dated 26 October 1866, the earliest known used IP.

Turning to the thorny and oft-debated question of usage of IPs, he quoted from contemporary Post Office regulations to indicate four possible uses:

- i. To seal the string binding around a packet of Post Office mail destined for a particular office (in other words, to indicate official usage for packets passing between post offices and containing mail for distribution by the destination office).
- ii. To be placed on the back of official Post Office mail addressed to the Director-General of Posts (which had also to be registered).
- iii. To receive the datestamp on linen bags packed with mail once they had been sealed and tied with string.
- iv. (from a memoir by an aged Post Office official) To seal the official envelopes carrying the - at that time - small amounts of Registered mail between offices.

Tony then showed many examples indicating their use in this way, including a remarkable 1867 cover to Post Office HQ owned by John Grimmer carrying on the reverse no fewer than five seals of Benha; and the only known cancelled IP on cover from an Overseas Post Office (Smirne; 14 FEB 80) - unfortunately on the reverse of an official envelope with a completely blank front! An astonishing selection of seals of Birket el-Sab (Types II/III, dated 1868) was displayed, virtually all of them showing clear signs of having been stuck down over string sealing; and two covers, one from the Michael Barker collection, in which IPs have been used with string to ensure closure of letters noted by PO officials in manuscript as having been “roughly opened” by the anti-Government rebels led by Arabi Pasha in the 1882 uprising.

The latter led to a discussion of IPs’ use as forerunners of today’s “Found Open and Officially Sealed” labels, with examples shown from Massawa and the wreck of the *SS Cairo* (1905) among others.

Examination of the rear of used IPs led to another fascinating conclusion, however - that the paper to which most adhered was not blank, as an envelope would have been, but printed. Most were seen to be printed official forms, leading to a refinement of the original four uses:

i. Official use, indicating that the mail enclosed was from a PO to HQ, or HQ to a user; ii. Usage over string to enclose the contents; iii. Usage on Post Office forms; iv. Usage as a resealing label.

A diversion into multiples - except for two blocks of six and four of Type IVb, only four proof sheets of 60 (and some smaller blocks) of Type IVA Alessandria and two proof sheets of 15 (14 different towns) of Type IX are known - led to the conclusion that individual offices were never issued with sheets of IPs but had them punched out at source and delivered as individual tickets. Tony was able to show two remarkable and incredibly delicate packets each of 150 IPs wrapped as a cylinder, clearly intended for delivery to an office.

Finally, he returned to the idea of their use to seal the string around a packet of mail. Because of the very existence of the four known examples of covers/pieces bearing IPs over string remnants - but noting that all are exceptional in being damaged mail - it has been assumed that the bundle of letters making up a packet was directly bound with string, and an IP applied over an intersection or the ends of the string on the reverse of the last letter in the bundle.

Tony did not believe this to be correct. He showed over 100 IPs with clear signs that they had been applied over string, including a selection from 78 Type VII Esneh used between June 1879 and March 1890. How could so many have been removed from the back of envelopes, and how and when would the postal clerks be able to do this? Just the application of an IP to the reverse of a letter would deface it, and the removal of the IP would be quite difficult and would require steaming or moistening, which would mark and/or damage the letter. The bundle of letters must have been wrapped in some postal form or wrapper (perhaps one clearly indicating the destination of the packet) before tying with string and applying the IP.

The Chairman thanked Tony for his astonishing display of wondrous early yet oft-bypassed material and the unique revelations stemming from it, and hoped that he might submit to the QC a report delving far deeper than this brief summary. Members showed their appreciation in the usual way.

Unravelling Hotel Secrets?

Anton Jansen (ESC 383)

The great attraction of a postal history study is that it never ends. There are always new discoveries or corrections and amendments to earlier studies to be made. A few months ago I had occasion to spend a whole day studying with the owner, Mr Alain Stragier, the hotel part of his extensive collection of the first De La Rue period, so finishing just before World War I. With my own collection, we could draw upon more than 400 cards and covers from this period for the post offices covered by Mike Murphy's list in *QC* XVII, 7 (September 2000, pp. 153-170). We were also able to make a great number of amendments to this list regarding first and latest dates which we have submitted to the study co-ordinator [Full account will be taken of Anton's information in a comprehensive updated list to appear in a forthcoming *QC* - MM].

Mena House: was there a post office in the hotel?

Both Boulad and Benians, the two most important authors in this field, mention 15 December 1891 as the opening date of a post office in the Mena House hotel. The post office would have been closed "somewhere between 1900 and 1904" according to Boulad¹, or "towards the end of the century" according to Benians², and then "replaced" by the office Pyramids just outside the hotel grounds. In Murphy's list 5 III 92 and 25 II 95 are given as the first and last dates of the only postmark mentioned for this hotel. All this leaves us with several questions, eg, What happened between 15 XII 91 and 5 III 92? And what happened after 25 II 95, as both authors quoted mention that the hotel post office was closed substantially later?

Let us first look at the situation before December 1891. In those years the guests of the hotel apparently could entrust their correspondence to the hotel desk. Here it was supplied with a dated hotel cachet (we have no idea when this practice started) and taken to the head post office in Cairo (*Fig. 1*). This cachet was probably applied to demonstrate to the receiver that no time had been lost, and perhaps also for publicity purposes.

On 15 December 1891 a post office was opened in or near the hotel. Before the first appearance of a Mena House postmark correspondence from the hotel was cancelled "Pyramids". Jack Graham (*QC* XVIII, 1, March 2002, page 9) mentions two dates known to him for this postmark, 15 January and 29 February 1892. *Fig. 2* provides another, registered specimen from this period, one of five covers in the Stragier collection, all between the dates provided by Graham. Graham, confronting the apparent anomaly of two different postmarks, suggests that "the two PYRAMIDS cancels that predate the first known PYRAMIDS / MENA HOUSE cancel suggest either that both post offices were in operation together during this two-month period, or that the opening of the office inside the Hotel might have been delayed until March". We think that both hypotheses have to be rejected. The first because it is highly unlikely that two post offices operating at the same time would have the same postmark. The second because, had the opening of the office been delayed, it would have been much more logical to continue for another two months the old practice of taking the mail to the head post office in Cairo. So we would suggest that it is one and the same office, first using the PYRAMIDS cancel, and a few months later having it replaced by the PYRAMIDS / MENA HOUSE cancel, most probably on the request of the proprietor, the hotel tycoon George Nungovich. Of course, this hypothesis would be greatly supported if covers were found bearing postmarks between 15 December 1891 and 15 January 1892.

The question where exactly the Mena House post office was located remains a tricky one. As long as we do not have a plan of the hotel (grounds) – or does anyone? – it will be difficult to establish its location without doubt. Gordon Ward apparently had his doubts when publishing his "Hotel Postmarks" in *L'Orient Philatélique* No 94 (April 1956). The Mena House postmark was the only one he commented on: "It is doubtful whether this ought to be included as an hotel P.O. The hotel, the post office and various shops were all in the one building, Mena House, and I am told that the P.O. was open to the public as well as to visitors to the hotel. The Pyramids post office seems to have taken its place." Although his argument is not very clear, the fact that the post office apparently was meant to serve the many visitors to the pyramids may have led to the decision to establish it just outside the hotel in order that good order in the hotel would not be disturbed.

According to both Boulad and Ward the new Pyramids office was definitely established outside the hotel grounds, but when was it opened? The Stragier collection comprises about 25 specimens of the Pyramids postmark (*Ahram* in Arabic), all from the period up till 1914. The earliest date is 27 December 1898, so it seems that the new post office was opened early in the winter season 1898/99. During the seasons 1895/6 to 1897/8 the hotel seems to have reverted to the old procedure of taking the mail of the hotel to the head office in Cairo, *Fig. 3* showing a nice example of this.

Ghesireh Palace: only one postmark?

Like the Mena House, only one postmark is mentioned in all publications for the post office opened in autumn 1893 in the Ghesireh Palace Hotel. The earliest date known is 26 XII 93, while 22 XII 08 is given as the last date in Murphy's list. The latter date most probably is incorrect; in the Stragier collection the last date is 26 III 1902. Both Boulad and Benians give 1914 as the year when both hotel and post office were closed, and in the Postal Guides of both 1911 and 1914 the Ghesireh Palace Hotel is mentioned as the seat of a Class 2 post office. So the question is, which postmark was used in the long period between 1902 and 1914?

The cover shown in *Fig 4* provides a possible answer. It is a registered cover bearing the registration mark of the GHEZIREH PALACE HOTEL, but the stamps have been cancelled GHEZIREH / CAIRO, dated 9 V 03. There are many more specimen of this postmark in the Stragier collection, and in fact it is quite common, perhaps because, according to the Postal Guides of 1911 and 1914, the office at that time was open the whole year round. The first date found in the Stragier collection is 28 XII 02, which suggests that the new canceller was introduced at the beginning of the season 1902/1903. So, in our opinion this second postmark should be added to the list of Hotel postmarks. It should not be confused with the postmarks of the later established office Gisira (various spellings exist); in the Postal Guide of 1914 this office is not mentioned! It remains a matter of speculation why it was decided to omit the full name of the hotel in the new cancel.

Cataract Hotel: blue and black seasons

All postmarks of the hotel post offices in Upper Egypt (except HCA2) exist in two colours, black and blue. Peter Smith on page 530 of his Treatise remarks: "Black ink was used for the most part, but blue was occasionally used, ... *There seems to be no special significance to the color used.*" (our emphasis - AJ). Though we can agree with this remark as such, we were nonetheless intrigued by this apparently "occasional" use of blue ink. When carefully studying the covers postmarked HCA1 in our collections, it appeared that a neat "seasonal pattern" could be established: Type I of the Cataract Hotel was used in **black** between 29 I 01 and 22 II 08, and later on between 25 XI 09 and 3 IV 11. **Blue** postmarks were found between 3 XII 08 and 24 III 09, and later from 20 XI 11 onward. No postmark was found contradicting this logic! So it seems that the use of black or blue ink was just a question of the ink delivered; for unknown reasons this happened to be blue for the seasons 1908/09 and 1911/12 until World War I (the use of blue inks, of course, has also been established for later years).

The same "black-blue pattern" might also be established for the other hotel post offices in Upper Egypt (on another occasion we will try to do so). A first indication may be found in two picture postcards in my collection, both sent from the Winter Palace to the Cataract Hotel: both departure and arrival marks are in *blue* on 6 III 1909, and in *black* on 22 III 10!

1. Jean Boulad d'Humières, "Egypte - Les Cachets à Date des Bureaux de Poste des Hotels d'Egypte", in *L'Orient Philatélique* 114 (October 1964-January 1965, pp. 370-389).
2. F.W. Benians, "Proprietary Post Offices", in *The Quarterly Circular*, IX, 7-8 (Sept-Dec 1977), pp. 82-93; and X, 2 (June 1978), pp. 32-39.



Fig. 1 Letter sent from Mena House Hotel to Berlin: Mena House cachet dated 28 Feb 91, CAIRE D 1 III 91.



Fig. 2 Registered letter from Mena House Hotel (mentioned on back) to Berlin cancelled PYRAMIDS 22 I 92.



Fig. 3 Letter from Mena House Hotel to Bern, hotel cachet dated 28 Feb 98, CAIRE head office same date.



Fig. 4 Registered letter from Ghesireh Palace Hotel to Rouen, France; R-mark CAIRO GHEZIREH PALACE HOTEL, postmark GHEZIREH / CAIRO 9 V 03

Hotel Secrets Revisited

Mike Murphy (ESC 240)

Anton Jansen is absolutely right: the joy of researching postal history is that something new is always coming up, and as Hotels study co-ordinator I am grateful indeed for his article - which raises some interesting speculations - and for his list of amendments to the list of Hotel postmarks first and last dates. The latter will be dealt with fully in the forthcoming comprehensive update, but the former merits a speedy response.

Mena House

It is a great pity that no Mena House / Pyramids covers have yet come to light dated between the supposed opening date of December 15 1891 and the first recorded date of March 5 1892; and indeed after the latest recorded date of February 25 1895, which is well before the supposed closing date of the hotel post office.

That late date, incidentally, is taken from the late Jim Benians' Addendum to his two seminal articles, in *QC* X,5 (March 1979, page 114): his note is all we have to go on for the date since no visual evidence has survived in the Study Circle Record I inherited from him. Which raises a question I am increasingly facing when trying to reconcile old records of this type with more modern evidence ... gaps lead to queries, and then to speculation of the type Anton writes about. I don't for a second doubt the old masters, the Boulads and the Benians - but without visual evidence how can I *prove* that such-and-such a date recorded before my time, and with no supporting evidence today, is valid? It is a serious difficulty. What should I do? Try to keep two lists - one with visual evidence; one without - until eventually (perhaps) the "visual evidence" supersedes the "no-evidence" dates? This is an important question for record-keepers, and I should be grateful indeed for feedback from other members. Essentially the question is: Should I, in this day and age of easy photocopies and scans, accept listing information that is not supported by visual evidence?

I have no doubt whatever that there was indeed a Post Office within the Mena House - based in part on a long conversation I had in the late 1970s with an hotel employee (now long deceased) who in his youth helped to run that Post Office; and in part on a Note in Benians' Addendum mentioned above. I quote: *"There is now evidence to show that the public office 'PYRAMIDS' was operating throughout the period when the MENA HOUSE HOTEL PYRAMIDS office was open. F.W. Benians (ESC 123) has a double ring 'PYRAMIDS' cancellation dated 29.XII.91 and Prof. P.A.S. Smith (ESC 74) has cancellations of both offices of the same date (7.III.92)."*

This Note might also resolve the question of when the Pyramids Post Office was opened - Benians has 29.XII.91, Smith has 7.III.92, and I have visual evidence for 3.II.92, so late 1891 looks about right: there is, however, no more than anecdotal evidence of the Hotel PO having opened before March 1892. As to where it was placed, my 1885 Baedeker *Lower Egypt* has nothing; but the 1914 *Egypt* shows (map, page 123) a Post Office directly across the road from the main entrance to the Mena House, where it stood for many years. The guide also mentions that the hotel has a post and telegraph office, even at that late date!

Before the Hotel PO was opened, Anton's suggestion seems right - mail was delivered to the main Cairo PO for onward transmission; after it closed, there was no reason not to use the Pyramids PO at its gates which will have duplicated many of its services - and probably that office was among the reasons for the closure of the Hotel PO. But concrete evidence remains merely a matter of the accident of survival.

Ghezireh Palace

Five covers are recorded bearing the Ghezireh Palace Hotel registration cachet. Two of them, 26 III 01 (HG1, Anatole Ott) and 25 I 08 (HG1b, Dennis Clarke; *pictured, next page*), have their stamps cancelled with the Hotel's circular datestamp. Two others - that mentioned by Anton above (9 V 03) and another dated 19 III 06 (Ex Sven Eriksson, Karamitsos Lot 3968, Sale 158) - have the cds of the local district post office, Ghezireh / Cairo, which certainly from the 1930s was some 200 yards from the hotel entrance, on the other side of what is today 26 July Street, off Sharia Al-Barazil. A fifth, also owned by Dennis Clarke and dated 25 III 09, bears the successor CDS to the last, Gizira / Cairo.

Anton suggests that a different, non-Hotel, postmark was used after December 1902. But the Record contains visual evidence for HG1 of 22 III 04, Sven Eriksson owned HG1b of 12 XII 06, Boulad's original record (*L'OP* 114, page 378) has 22 XII 07, Dennis Clarke (as mentioned) has 25 I 08 for HG1b, and the latest date of 23 XII 08 is my own recording (admittedly without visual evidence!) from the collection of Ibrahim Shoukry (ESC 423).

So there is no need to seek a non-Hotel CDS until at the very earliest January 1908. But it is odd that, right through until after 1914, while the Postal Guides list the Hotel PO as a Class 2 there is no mention of the Gizireh/Gizira PO. So clearly something odd is going on. Why would three out of five Registered covers emanating from the hotel NOT carry the Hotel CDS? I fear that my answer must be just as speculative as others': perhaps the Hotel branch office kept normal office hours, but - crucially - some member of Hotel staff was empowered to accept Registered postage as a service to guests outside normal hours and to carry it to the nearest main PO? The fact that two covers DID carry the Hotel CDS - and at such widely spaced dates as 1901 and 1908 - makes clear that the Hotel PO was in operation throughout the period that some of its covers were marked Ghezireh/Gizira.



The Egyptian Post Office at the turn of the century went to almost infinite pains to ensure correct specification in the wording of its postmarks - on TPOs, Cash markings, Epargne Scolaire, etc etc, all of which makes collecting Egyptian markings so fascinating. I regard it as simply fantastic to suggest that a Hotel postmark would not carry the crucial word. But why the Postal Guides did not list Ghezireh/Gizira remains a matter for speculation.

Cataract blue and black

Anton's remarks on the "blue and black seasons" are intriguing, and I shall preface my findings from the record with only two remarks: 1, though Boulad reports HL1 "Vu aussi en bleu" I have never seen one and the Record does not contain one or a date for one; and although the other three Upper Egypt hotels opened in the winter season only (say, November to April), the Luxor Hotel was open all year round, so "seasonal variations" will be difficult to ascertain.

The record holds blue markings for the following seasons:

Luxor Hotel: from 1908 to 1910, oddly, all in the early part of the year.

Winter Palace: seasons 1907-08, 1908-09, 1909-10 (single example), 1911-12 (single), 1913-14, 1917-18 (single), 1920-21 (single), 1921-22, 1922-23, 1923-24 (single), 1927-28 (single), 1929-30 (single), 1931-32 (single), 1932-33, 1948-49 (single).

Cataract Hotel: seasons 1906-07 (single), 1907-08 (single), 1908-09, 1911-12, 1912-13, 1913-14, 1932-33, 1938-39 (single).

Savoy Aswan: seasons 1911-12 (single), 1912-13 (single), 1913-14.

It will take a good deal more work to confirm that there were no black markings struck in the periods mentioned, especially given the difficulties experienced with material in the Record (or not!) mentioned above; but certainly it appears that "seasonal variation" is a fascinating exercise well worth pursuing.

History and Stamps: Egypt's Stamps of Success, 1952 to early 1970s
An Alternative View of Stamp Collecting

George Anagnostoulis (ESC 501)

Historical events have always been a popular theme for stamps, in every country, and especially after the Second World War. This also applies to Egyptian stamps. Usually a nation's initial stamp issues refer to its Royal Family; in Egypt, of course, the Kingdom did not arrive until 56 years of stamp issues had passed. After that, although the family of Fuad and Farouk dominated stamp issues, there were always commemorative issues unconnected with the Royal Family. For example, the issues for the 1925 International Geographical Congress and the 1926 12th Industrial and Agricultural Exhibition made no connection with the royal house.

After the Revolution of July 23, 1952, which turned Egypt into a republic, the Royal Family, as expected, ceased to appear on stamps. From now on, and particularly until the death of President Nasser and for a short period afterwards, Republican themes dominate. The very first Republican set depicts themes of people and soldiers breaking the shackles of oppression.

What is of interest though, is that during each year from 1952 to 1970 (and for a couple of years afterwards, but with declining frequency), these Republican themes are combined with other themes referring to technological progress; international events; Arab and anti colonialist solidarity; Egyptian history; and, less frequently, Islamic tradition.

Examples of these combined themes are the 1953 Cairo Electronics Exhibition set; the 1955 and 1956 issues for the Arab Postal Union; the Afro-Asian Festival issue of 1957 and the Railway Centenary set, Mothers' Day and the Al-Azhar Millenary issues of the same year; in 1958 the International Cycle Race held in Egypt, the Egyptian Industries issue and the anniversary of the death of Sayed Darwish all followed similar themes. Later, in 1961 came the All-Africa Peoples' Conference set and another for Palestine Day; in 1962 the commemoration of Patrice Lumumba; and two years later the Tokyo Olympics.

This line of themes continued to dominate despite the various changes and ups and downs of President Nasser's alliances, which resulted in the short-lived formation of the United Arab Republic (UAR) with Syria and the disastrous (for Egypt) 1967 Six-Day War. Among examples from this period are the issue for Arab Solidarity for the Defence of Palestine (1967), in the next year the International Museums Campaign, the Mexico Olympics and World Childhood Day, followed by the issues for the International Labour Organisation, the International Year of African Tourism and the Millennium of Cairo in 1969. In 1970 issues for Africa Day and the Burning of the Al-Aqsa Mosque were followed by the 1972 set on Africa Day, but that was the last on that theme until 1983 and the twentieth anniversary of the Organisation of African Unity.

It could be argued that President Nasser's political activity and involvement in world politics, for example as a founder of the Non-Aligned Nations Movement, put Egypt on the world map, and this was reflected in the stamps of the period. Examples include sets on internationally celebrated events, or on Egypt's participation in international congresses or fairs (some of these mentioned above).

Moreover, for the first time in Egyptian history, its stamps showed examples of the achievement of actual economic reconstruction. Prime examples are the 1959 and 1961 Anniversaries of the Revolution Transport and Communication, and Economic Planning sets respectively. The 1962 10th Anniversary of the Revolution issue pictures the values of the Revolution: struggle for liberation, national pride, effort for education, effort for world peace, technological progress benefiting the people, and foreign trade.

It is of interest to note that although the majority of members of the governments between the Revolution and the death of President Nasser were of the Armed Forces, and although Egypt during that period initiated or at least took part in several military actions, military themes do not dominate in the stamp issues.

For those uninitiated in Nasser's political thinking, it may be surprising that stamps marking the Revolution depict almost entirely non-military themes, emphasising instead economic and technological progress. The reason is that President Nasser saw the Armed Forces as simply fulfilling the people's aspirations to

overthrow the corrupt royalist regime, which had left them in poverty. The new (republican) regime fought poverty with the introduction of new technologies and promoted social progress through education.

Moreover, most of the low- and middle-ranking commissioned officers came from the low or middle urban or rural strata of society: President Nasser’s own father was a Post Office employee. So as the Armed Forces simply fulfilled the people’s aspirations and acted as the people’s “proxy” in that respect, it was the achievements and the people and their government which were depicted on the stamps.

The Suez Canal was another popular theme, combining both national pride and income, with five issues from 1957 to 1969. The following table shows the increasing revenue from the Suez Canal tolls.

	£E (millions)*
1955	31.8
1956	29.3
1957	24.3
1958	43.0
1959	44.4
1960	50.1
1961	51.2
1962	53.7
1963	71.1
1964	77.0

*Sources: Central Bank of Egypt Research Department and Suez Canal Authority.

(Table from Peter Mansfield, *Nasser’s Egypt* (revised edn, 1969, Penguin African Library).

Below is a small selection of the stamps discussed. It is my belief that even though these stamps are highly accessible on account of their relatively low price, their artistic quality and value in terms of documenting a very important period in Egyptian modern history is no less than that of the Royal-era stamps which are more popular with non-Egyptian collectors. Perhaps it is worthwhile for us non-Egyptians to take a closer look at Egypt’s recent past through its stamps.



Misr Airwork S.A.E.
Also known as Misr Airlines and later Misrair

John Sears (ESC 188)

The company was formed in 1932, but first, it is necessary to consider the influence of the Misr Bank on its formation. Misr Bank was founded in 1920, the man responsible being Mohammed Talat Harb (1867-1941). The son of an employee of Egyptian Railways, he received a legal education, and became particularly hostile to the foreign economic domination of Egypt. The Bank was formed with an initial capital of £E80,000, 95 per cent of the subscribers being wealthy landowners. It was launched initially to finance the cotton industry in competition with the National Bank of Egypt and the Ionian Bank, both of which had British connections.

By the end of 1929, the Bank had 39,000 accounts and deposits of £E7,250,000. The 1930s saw a dynamic expansion of the Bank. It invested in a number of companies in various fields, eg, Misr Insurance, Misr Shipping, Misr Spinning & Weaving, Misr Ginning, Misr Airwork and others. Those concerned with textiles were profitable, the others were not, depending on Government subsidies for their continuance. It also led to the group becoming politicised, with members of political parties becoming directors.

During the late 1920s the British Government was again becoming concerned about the rise of Egyptian nationalism, and was encouraging Anglo-Egyptian commercial ventures. They were also concerned about the increasing influence of foreign airlines in the Eastern Mediterranean. In 1929 Imperial Airways approached Bank Misr with a view to forming a domestic Egyptian airline as a joint venture; they were rebuffed. However, an approach by Heston Airworks Ltd (a private company) was accepted. The new company would provide training for Egyptian pilots, construct airports and provide other flying services. In 1932 Misr Airwork SAE was formed with the Bank Misr having a majority shareholding, and Heston Airworks 40 per cent of the shares. It was registered in May as an Egyptian joint stock company. In return for an annual Government subsidy, and the promise of a monopoly of certain internal air services, Misr Airwork had to give a discount of 15 per cent to Government officials travelling on holiday!

The headquarters of the company was Almaza (Cairo), and it became a member of the International Air Traffic Association (I.A.T.A.). Apart from Almaza, flying schools were set up at Alexandria and Port Said, students coming from all over the Middle East. In prewar days the airmail and passenger services were operated by De Havilland DH 89s (Rapides) - twin-engine six-seater biplanes - and DH 86s (Expresses), four-engined, 14-seater biplanes. The precise numbers of each type owned by the company in the mid-1930s are not known.

Neither the Egyptian nor British governments really envisaged that it would become a major Middle Eastern airline, but Bank Misr and Airwork were keen to expand their domestic operations as follows:

July 1933 - a weekly service Cairo-Alexandria-Mersa Matruh

August 1933 - a twice daily service between Cairo & Alexandria (by 1935 increased to three times daily, and by 1944, four times a day)

December 1933 - A winter tourist service Cairo-Assiut-Luxor-Aswan, twice weekly.

1936 - A service from Alexandria-Port Said-Cairo-Minia-Assiut.

During 1934 the company commenced operating outside Egypt. In July a service was opened to Palestine on a twice-weekly basis, Cairo to Lydda and Haifa. This became thrice weekly, but it is not clear if mail was carried. Indeed, there is no official record regarding carriage of mail within Egypt at this time

According to the autobiography of a former RAF pilot (G D Fleming) who joined Misr Airwork in 1936: *"It was a well run company with a dozen British pilots, several trainee Egyptian pilots, and Egyptian and British engineers."* He stated that during his five years with the company, their aircraft flew roughly 7,000,000 miles with no serious accident, and not one passenger injured, attributing this to the excellent maintenance schedules.

From a postal history point of view, it was not until 1935 that Misr Airwork came into prominence. However in the August there was a notice in the *Journal Officiel* announcing Air Mail Services to Cyprus and Palestine to commence from 23rd August. (Fig.1).



Fig.1 This is a 1st Flight (unsealed) cover to Palestine correctly franked 9 mills including 5m for the Air Mail Surcharge. Cancelled CAIRO 23 AU 35, Arrived HAIFA 24 AU 35. (Although Misr was already flying four times daily to Palestine, the Air Mail was on only one flight).

The service to Cyprus (Nicosia) was a weekly one, commencing on Saturday, 24th August from Cairo. It was intended for tourists, and continued only until 19th October. There has been something of a mystery regarding the commencement of air mail, with first flight covers from Cyprus to Egypt dated 10th August whereas those from Egypt are cancelled 23rd August, for the flight of the 24th. However this has now been explained (see *QC 200*): it seems that the Egyptian Government did not sign the Air Mail contract until some days after the Cypriots. (Fig. 2&3).

Obviously, there was a great deal of philatelic interest in these early flights, and there was even an attempt to cash in by commemorating the second Cyprus flight. Perhaps the dealer (Mr El Trilby) overlooked the first one ! (Fig.4).

As previously stated, this service was cancelled in October 1935, but it was reinstated each year as follows - 1936, 25th August to 30th September; 1937 - June 3rd to October 1st; 1938 - June 16th to September 26th; 1939 - June 1st until the outbreak of war. It may have been restored shortly after, but the exact date is not known.

First day covers are known for all these events (except September 1939).

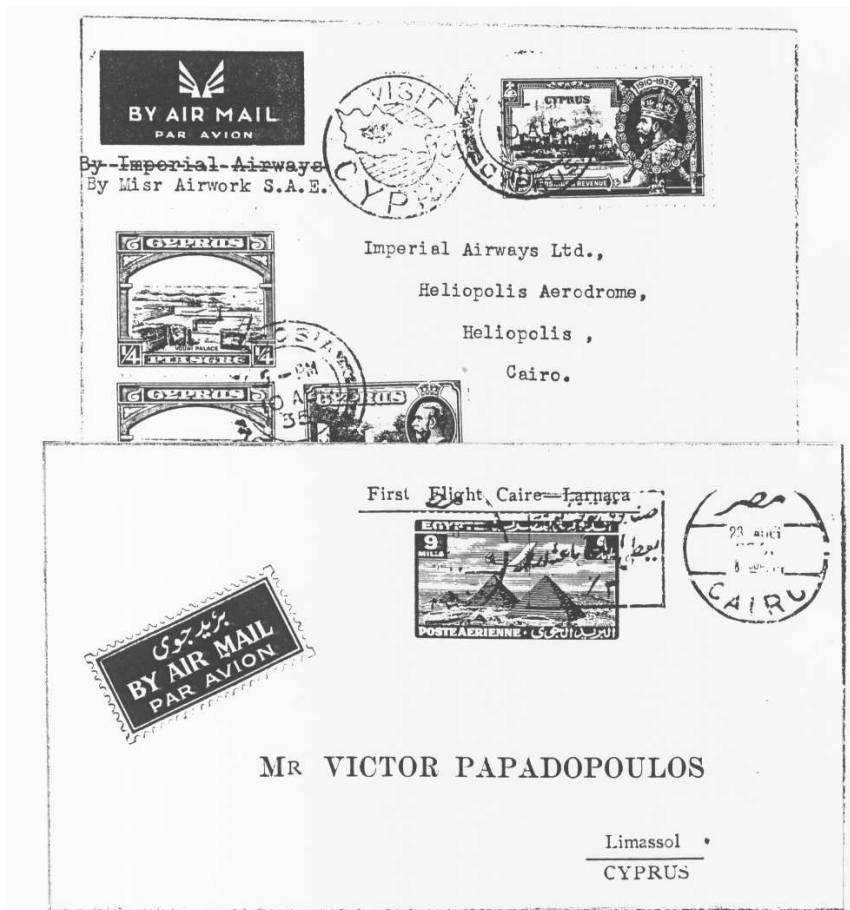


Fig 2 & 3. The cover from Cyprus has an arrival mark of CAIRO PAR AVION I I AU 35 on the reverse.

The cover from Egypt, correctly franked 9 mills (4m Printed Matter + 5m Air Mail Surcharge), has a transit mark of NICOSIA 24 AU 25 on the reverse.



Fig 4. Cancelled PORT SAID R.1. 30 AU 35; Transit mark – CAIRO 30 AU 35; Arrival mark – NICOSIA 31 AU 35. This cover is slightly over franked: it should have been only 29 mills, made up as follows - basic surface rate for unsealed matter - 4m; Registration - 20m : and Air mail surcharge - 5m.

The introduction of the Air Mail to Haifa prompted the commencement of a faster postal service for mail to Lebanon and Syria (Fig 5). The intention was that the mail be flown to Haifa and then carried overland by car to Beirut and Damascus, but this was very short lived. The Syrian authorities could not guarantee the transport of the mail by car to leave the same day as its arrival at Haifa and the service was discontinued from the 22nd September 1935

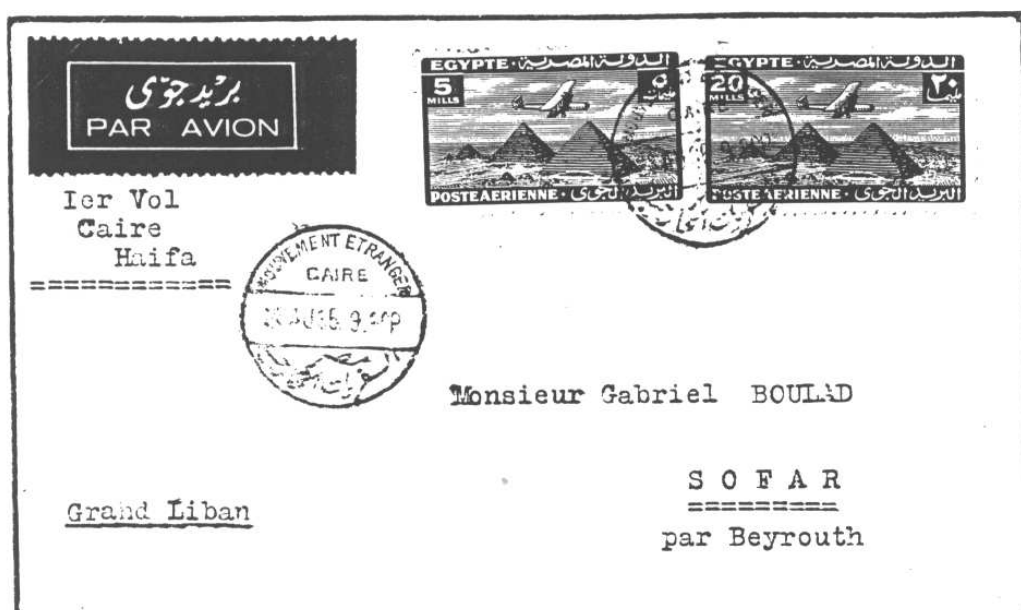


Fig 5. This cover is correctly franked 25 mills (20m basic plus 5m for the Air Mail surcharge to Haifa). Cancelled MOUVEMENT ETRANGER CAIRE 23 AU 35; Transit mark BEYROUTH 26.8.35; Arrival mark SOFAR (about 45km east of Beirut) 26. VIII.35

The company was beginning to experience problems in the receipt of the Government subsidies for which they were pressing on the grounds that Misr Airwork was in effect the national airline and should receive the same support as that afforded by other governments to their own airlines. The subsidies were becoming essential to offset operating losses. After extensive lobbying, agreement would be obtained for a subsidy, only for payment to be blocked by another ministry. After severe delays the subsidies were finally paid, only for the process to be repeated in subsequent years. At the same time, a co-managing director of Airwork, Muhammed Tahir Pasha (who was a member of the Royal family and President of the Royal Aero Club of Egypt), was conspiring with others to form a rival company, Horus Airlines, to fly between Egypt, Eastern Europe and Germany. Their hope was that Horus would eventually absorb Airwork. Tahir had connections with Germany as vice-chairman of Siemens Orient, and these developments worried the British, but the Horus scheme was dropped by the Egyptian Government.

A twice weekly service, on Wednesdays and Fridays, from Port Said to Baghdad was started on 16th September, 1936 (Fig 6). One of the pilots has described the flight between Palestine and Baghdad as *“one of the foulest routes I ever flew on, in Summer it was infernally bumpy the weather was the worst I ever met. In Winter it was even worse as one had every kind of bad weather .”*

The first flight of mail Baghdad-Port Said did not take place until 10th December, 1936; perhaps the Iraqis had not signed the mail contract with Misr. (Fig.7)

It was not until 1937 that the postal service to Damascus, air up to Haifa then overland the same day, was re-introduced, the first flight being 20th May. (Fig 8)

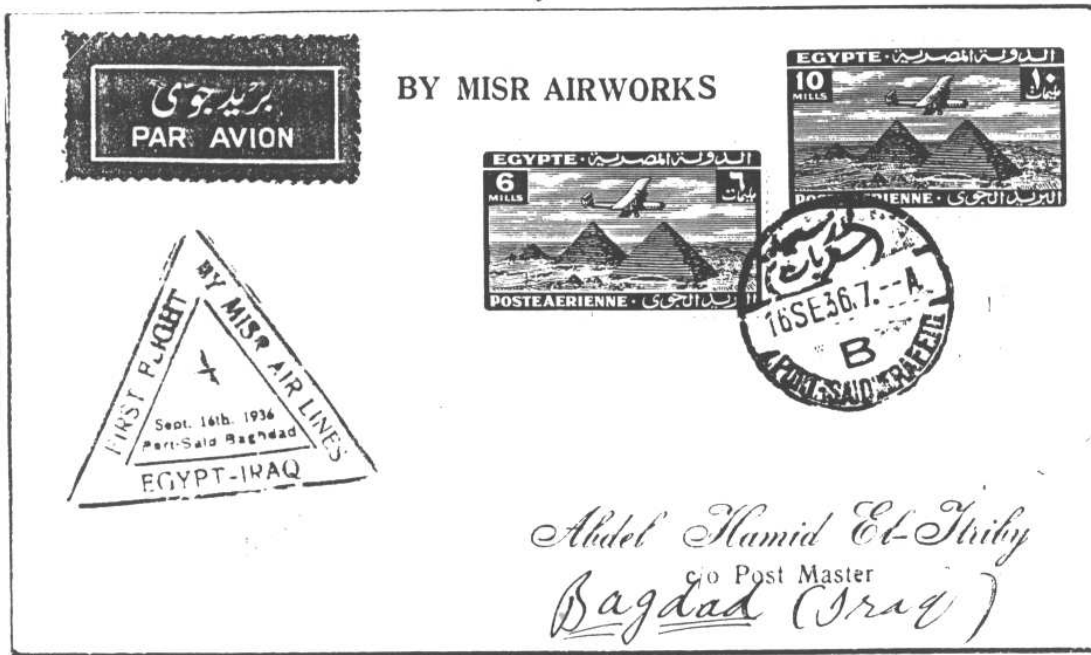


Fig 6 An unsealed letter correctly franked 16m, 4m basic + 12m Air surcharge. The triangular cachet is printed in green. Cancelled PORT SAID TRAFFIC 16 SE 36; Arrival mark - BAGHDAD DELIVERY 17 SEP 36.

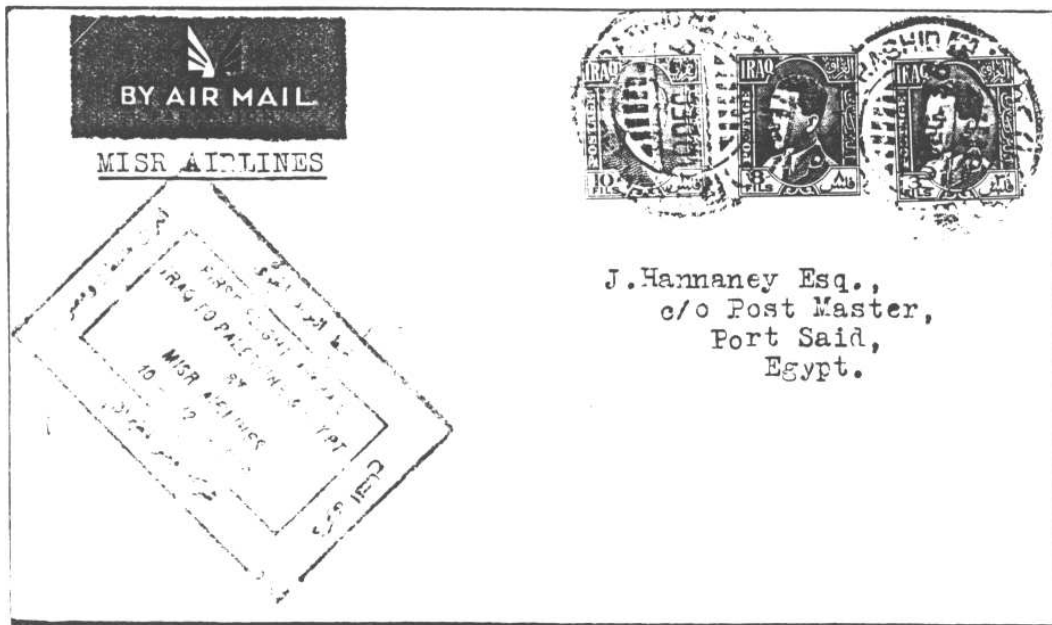


Fig 7. The cachet is again in green. Arrival mark of PORT SAID PAR AVION 11 DE 36.

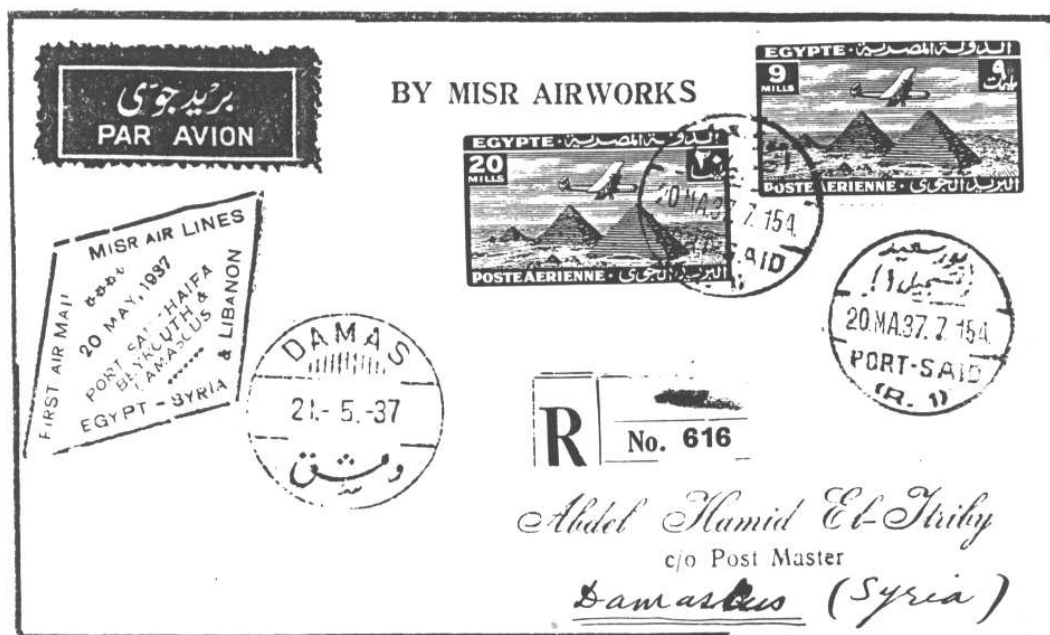


Fig 8. The cachet (probably unofficial like those used for the Baghdad flights) is in violet. Correctly franked 29 mills as follows: Basic rate for unsealed letters - 4m, plus Registration fee - 20m, plus Air surcharge (to Haifa) - 5m.

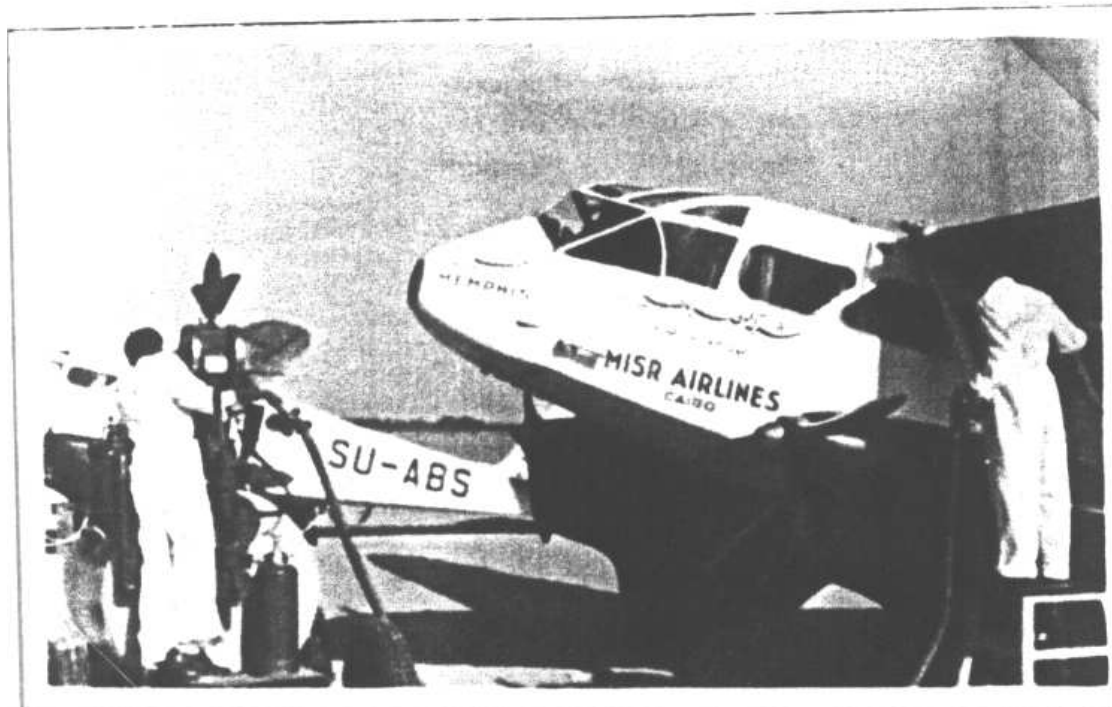


Fig 9. A De Havilland DH 89 being refuelled at Almaza

We therefore have comprehensive details of the Misr Airwork services, domestic and foreign, from their establishment until the outbreak of the Second World War, but details of their operations for the next 5/6 years are somewhat sketchy.

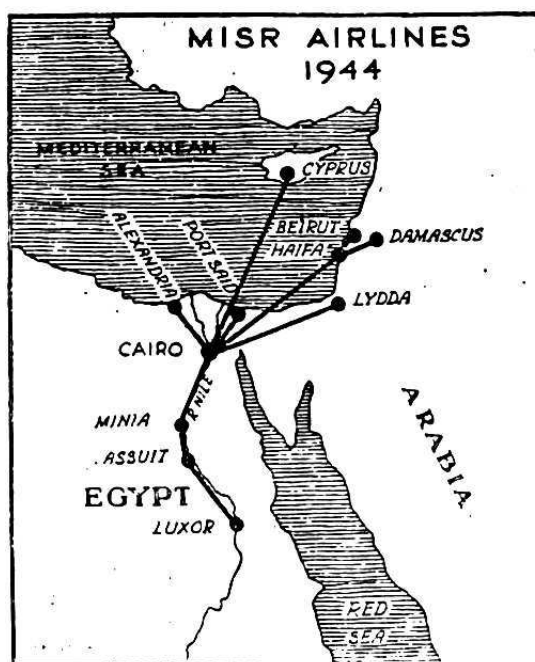
It is fairly certain that, in line with Imperial Airways, all flights ceased on 3rd September, but like IA they were probably restarted soon after. However, the Cyprus service did not start again until May 11th, 1940, and from this date there was no Air Mail surcharge levied on mail carried.

Misr aircraft were also used to carry Army officers and civil officials as required. After the fall of France in June 1940 mail to Greece and the Balkans was flown from Port Said to Cyprus and then to Adana (southern Turkey) and surface route from there. *Journal Officiel* reports this service as being available from 3rd August. with an Air Mail surcharge of 10 mills for 10 gms.

There was an uprising in Iraq between April and June 1941 which temporarily suspended air services to Baghdad, and there was action against the Vichy French forces in Syria (June and July 1941) which disrupted operations to Beirut and Damascus. German and Italian forces had entered Greece in April 1941. and on June 5th the flights from Cyprus to Turkey ceased and no air mail was accepted. However. Misr did maintain an irregular service for official and diplomatic mail only, flying direct from Port Said to Adana. This service was abandoned when the Allies had control over Syria again, mail being carried by rail.

During 1942. two new routes were opened (precise dates not known): Cairo-Beirut. twice weekly; Cairo-Khartoum weekly. In June 1944 a twice-weekly service Cairo-Damascus was started. (Fig 10).

Fig 10.



From 1935 until the third quarter of 1944, the planes of Misr Airwork had flown almost eight million miles on their scheduled services, as well as 3,000 miles of charter work. By the end of the war there was an airline fleet of 14 aeroplanes made up of two DH 89 Rapides, four DH 86 Expresses, two DH Dominies, three Avro Ansons, one DH 84 Dragon, and one DH 90 Dragonfly. (Fig 9).

Towards the very end of the war in Europe, Misr Airlines took over transport of Express Mail between the larger cities. The new service started 6th May, 1945, and illustrated is a First Day Cover (70 per cent) from Alexandria to Cairo (Fig 12).

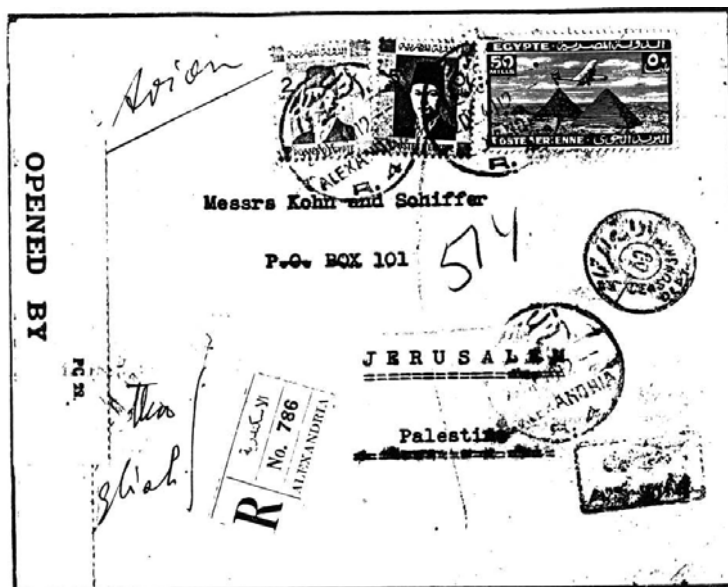


Fig 1. This is an example of mail flown by Misr during the war. Correctly franked 57 mills, made up as follows Basic rate (Palestine was not an 'Empire' destination) 22m; Registration 30m; Air Mail surcharge 5m. On the reverse there are transit marks of CAIRO 23 DE 40, and TEL AVIV 24 DE 40, with the Arrival mark of JERUSALEM 26 DE 40. Censored in Egypt and Palestine; the sealing strip is from the latter.

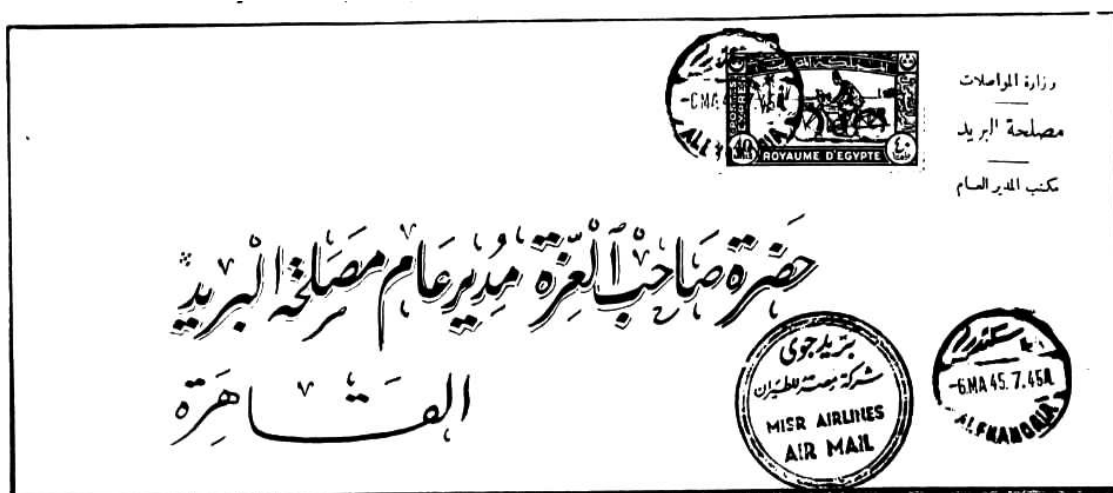


Fig 12. 40 mills was the correct rate, 30m being charged for the Express delivery



Fig 13. The cover of a passenger's ticket, Cairo to Alexandria, dated 9.6.48.

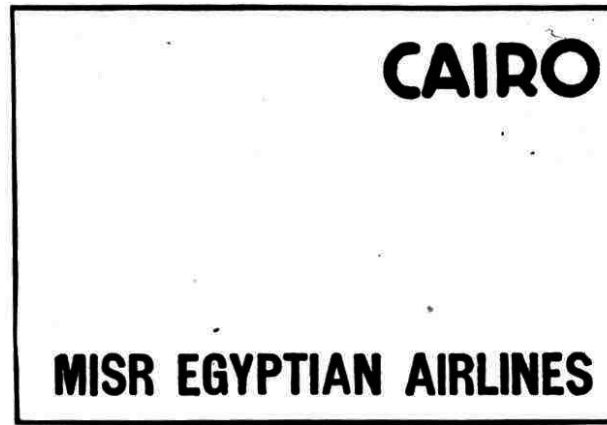


Fig 14. Adhesive luggage label black on yellow. Also known with red and green backgrounds.

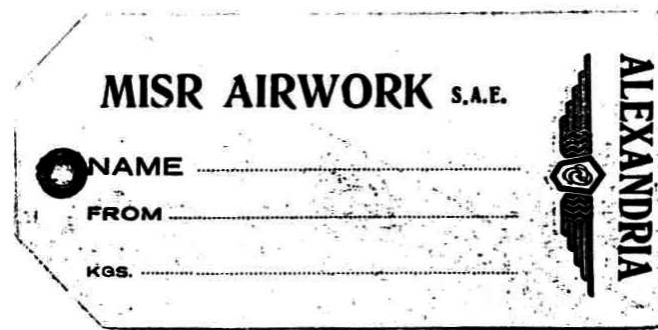


Fig 15 & 16. Mailbag(?) labels, back and front red on green. Also known for Assouan - they must have been used at Cairo as well.

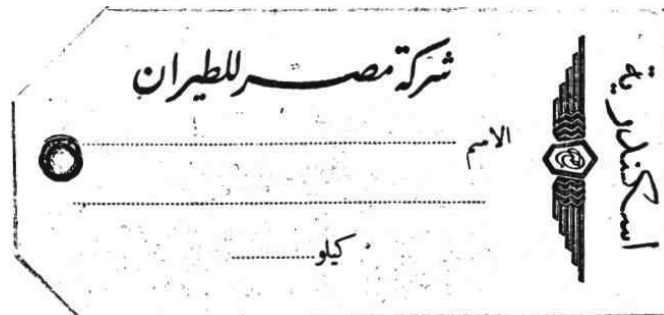


Fig 17. Triangular adhesive, white on green, the "wings" are in yellow.

Misr Airwork maintained its headquarters at Almaza until 1956, when it moved operations to the Cairo International Airport, which was originally a United States wartime air base known as Payne's Field in another part of Heliopolis. Apparently, King Farouk was able to purchase Payne's Field shortly after the war, and it became Aeroport Farouk. The Post Office in that name was in use from June 1947 until August 1952, however, the aerodrome was known as Payne's Field to local people until the 1960s. The last date of usage we have recorded of the post office at Almaza is September 1966: the airport is still there, but used for military and official purposes only. In 1949 (by which time Heston's stake was down to 10 per cent as a result of various capital reorganisations) the company was fully nationalised, and became known as Misrair.

In 1958, the countries of Egypt and Syria merged to become the United Arab Republic, Syrian Airways joined with Misrair to become United Arab Airlines, but Syria withdrew from the union in 1961, and presumably took its airline with it. However, United Arab Airlines remained the name of the Egyptian national airline until 1971 when it was renamed EgyptAir, as it is known today. (Fig 18).

At this time the Soviet Union had great influence in Egypt, and the airline was using Russian aircraft, but by 1976 relations had cooled off and EgyptAir began to purchase aircraft from the West. It now serves over 60 destinations worldwide.

Sources and Acknowledgements.

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The Time Shrinkers - Africa, by David Jones (Beaumont, 1977).

The Aeroplane, March 30 1945.

Journal Officiel, 1935-1940.

P L Grech (ESC 266); B Watterson (ESC 409), QC 200.

John Havers, aviation historian, Honiton, Devon.

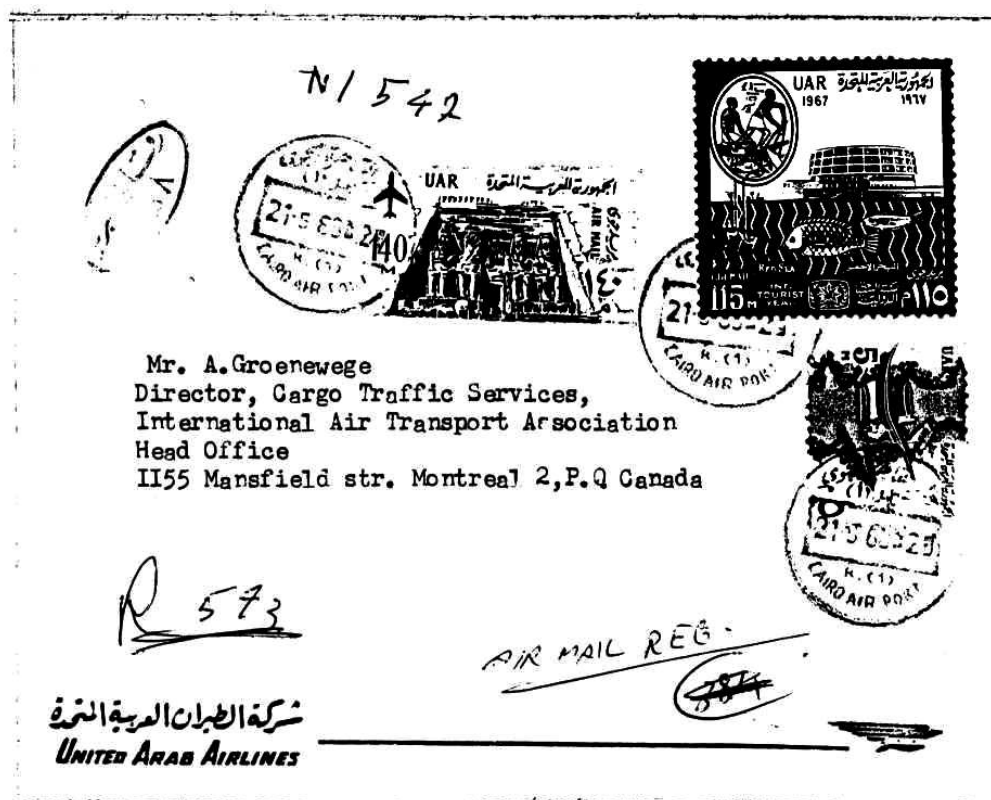


Fig 18. A stationery envelope of United Arab Airlines still being used in 1968.

P.E. "Pip" Whetter (ESC 133)

Although he had been ill for almost two years, we were very sorry to hear of the death of Pip Whetter just before Christmas 2002. He had been a member since 1967 and until recent years was a regular attendant at our meetings. He was also a member of the Philatelic Society of Egypt, and took over the position of UK Agent from John Revell until the early 1970s.

Pip, who was 88 when he died, served during the War in MI5 and then resumed his career in the Post Office, reaching a very senior position before retirement, when he moved from Beckenham in southeast London to Cheltenham

He had collected the Stamps and Postal History of Egypt for about 70 years, and had naturally built up a strong general collection. One of his favourite pastimes was going to auctions where - having persuaded his bank manager to set him up an "investment account" - he bought collections, extracting what he wanted from them and selling the remainder, sometimes back into auction, or in the form of "Club" booklets. Our members benefited from the latter by seeing the books before they went into the circuits.

With Peter Andrews, Pip became involved with the Expertising Committee after the retirement of Major E.L.G. MacArthur. He was also a founder member of the Circle Auction team, and was for some years responsible for the despatch of lots to successful buyers. He maintained his enthusiasm for the activities of the Circle throughout his life, and was always very ready to guide and assist new members. He will be greatly missed by us all.

Our sincere condolences go to Joanne, and the rest of his family.

Dennis Clarke (ESC 165)

'AR' - Advice of Receipt (Avis de Reception) Service

Robin Bertram (ESC 137)

I have been given to understand from one of our members in Egypt that the 'Advice of Receipt' service for mail posted abroad from Egypt no longer exists. As readers will know, there were three different bands of this service - a) mail posted for delivery within Egypt, b) mail posted to other Arab countries and c) mail posted to the rest of the world.

I have been informed that services (b) and (c) above were done away with sometime towards the end of 2001, and all mail posted abroad cannot now be sent by the 'AR' service. I further understand that the current charge for (a), the remaining internal service, is now 90 piastres, over and above any other postal (e.g. registration) charge. Perhaps one of our members in Egypt could confirm and report back the exact dates when services (b) & (c) officially ceased?

EGYPT STUDY CIRCLE - ACCOUNTS FOR AUCTIONS IN 2002

Profit & Loss Accounts	Auction 33	Auction 34
	£ .	£ .
Net Sales	<u>8632.80</u>	<u>5943.10</u>
INCOME:-		
10% Com on Purchases	863.28	594.31
5% Com on Sales	431.64	297.15
Invoiced Postages	<u>22.67</u>	<u>32.84</u>
	1317.59	924.30
EXPENDITURE:-		
Catalogues (Typing, printing postage)	302.96	280.25
Postage of Lots	108.94	97.02
Sundry expenses	43.96	58.99
Insurance for the year	<u> </u>	<u>105.00</u>
	455.86	541.26
NET PROFIT	861.73	383.04
	<u>1317.59</u>	<u>924.30</u>

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 28TH FEBRUARY 2003

NET ASSETS

Balance at Bank	2363.89
Less amounts due to members	<u>671.98</u>
	<u>1691.91</u>

AUCTION FUND

Amount brought forward from January 2001	1447.14
Net Profit, Auction 33	861.73
Net Profit, Auction 34	<u>383.04</u>
	2691.91
Less Transfer to General A/C, December 2002	1000.00
	1691.91

Very favourable results from 2002, although Auction 33 had the benefit of a year's gap from Auction 32. We are always happy to receive Lots for sale, please send details to Mike Murphy.

As ever, the Circle is indebted to the Auction team for their continuing hard work - Peter Andrews, Mike Bramwell and Mike Murphy - where would we be without them ?