

# The Quarterly Circular of THE EGYPT STUDY CIRCLE



September Quarter 2015

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**Carmichael  
& Todd**  
**PHILATELISTS**  
PTS  
GREGORY C.G. TODD

**EGYPT.**

*De La Rue Ipi. ultramarine used on Advice of Receipt form #39, cancelled at Alexandria (June 8, 1886) with 'Tripoli/Syrie/Turquie' confirmation of arrival datestamp below (June 11, 1886). Reverse showing further Alexandria datestamp of distribution to sender (June 17, 1886). Rare.*

(نمبر ٣٩ ٨٩)  
ADMINISTRATION DES POSTES D'ÉGYPTE  
مصلحة البوستة المصرية

**AVIS DE RÉCEPTION** علم التسليم

L'Expéditeur de l'objet suivant (1) *Lettre recommandée*  
موسل لارسالية الاتي بيانها وهي (١)

portant le N<sup>o</sup> *24489* et l'adresse de M. *Ch. Saporio*  
*a Tuzadi*  
بوسم جناب روضو عليها نمرة

désire savoir s'il a été reçu. يوجب الاستعلام عما اذا كانت تسلمت ام كيف

L'Employé des Postes.  
مستخدم البوستة

*[Signature]*

L'envoi ci-dessus désigné m'a été remis contre reçu le *11 Juin 86*  
لارسالية الوصحة اعلاه تسلمت بالاىصال اللازم بتاريخ  
1886 سنة ١٨٨٠

Signature,  
لاعضا  
*[Signature]*

(1) Indiquer la nature de l'envoi, si c'est un objet recommandé, une lettre de valeur déclarée, ou un colis postal avec ou sans valeur déclarée.  
Cet avis doit être renvoyé, sous recommandation d'office, au bureau d'origine, muni de la signature du destinataire; si ce dernier ne consent pas à le signer son refus et la remise de l'envoi doivent être attestés par l'employé du bureau de destination, lequel utilise à cet effet la formule ci-dessus en la modifiant. Le bureau d'origine se charge, ensuite, de le faire tenir à l'expéditeur, comme objet recommandé.  
Au moment de l'expédition on doit attacher cette formule à l'envoi avec une épingle, excepté pour les colis postaux, pour lesquels elle doit être attachée au bulletin d'expédition.

(١) يتوضو نوع الارسالية اذا كانت مسجلة او خطاب ذا قيمة مقررة او طرد بوستة مؤمن او غير مؤمن عليه  
يصبر رد هذا العلم مسجلا رسميا للمكتب المرسل الاصلى بعد امضائه من المرسل اليه فان لم يقبل امضاه يتوضو من مستخدم المكتب المرسل اليه عن ذلك وعن تسليم الارسالية على هذا المطبوع بعد اجرا تعديله به ثم على المكتب المرسل الاصلى ان يسلم هذا مسجلا للمرسل منه  
يحال تصدير الارسالية يرفق بها هذا المطبوع مشموكا بدبوس انما تستثنى من ذلك طرود البوستة اذ يقتضي ارفاق المطبوع المذكور بحافظة ارسال

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### Meetings dates for 2015

The September meeting will be held at 2.30pm at **Stampex**, at the Design Centre in Islington (where members normally congregate a little earlier in the hope of a quick start to a two-hour meeting); and in November we meet 2pm in the **Victory Services Club**, Marble Arch, London (where members usually meet in the ground-floor bar from 1pm).

<b>Sep 19</b> 2.30-4.30pm	Stampex <i>Stampex Sept 16-19</i>	New Issues collection Revenues etc	Cyril Defriez Richard Wheatley
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<b>Nov 14</b> 2-5pm	Services Club	Consular Posts	John Davis
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### Meeting date for 2016

<b>May 29</b> 11am	World Stamp Show New York <i>May 28-June 4</i>	All Members
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### Report of the Meeting, July 18

John Sears (President), Peter Andrews (Chairman), John Davis (Deputy Chairman/Librarian), Mike Murphy (Secretary), Edmund Hall (Editor/Webmaster), Brian Sedgley (Treasurer), Jon Aitchison, Mike Bramwell, John Clarke, Cyril Defriez, Peter Grech, Paul Green, Neil Hitchens, Alan Jeyes, Sami Sadek.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Angela Child, Tony Chisholm, Pauline Gittoes, Greg Todd, Richard Wheatley.

The Chairman opened the meeting by passing on the invitation from the Philatelic Society of Cairo for all members to attend – and exhibit at – the forthcoming exhibition in Cairo to mark the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first Egyptian stamp *see page iii*. Following on from two successful preliminary exhibitions in January and June, the exhibition will run from December 31 to January 6, with a series of lectures and meetings surrounding the main celebrations on Post Day, January 2.

We have made several visits to Egypt in recent years, but this one promises to be special, marking such an important anniversary. The Chairman urged all members to attend if possible, and also to show their displays to support the Egyptian society. It is already known that the exhibition will be held in the Opera House complex in Zamalek, and that officials (and also ESC visitors) will be staying in the four-star Pyramisa Hotel just a few minutes away. The Secretary promised to email members with further detail as it comes to hand

As mentioned, one preliminary meeting and exhibition was held in early June, supported by displays from three British ESC members, whose results were as follows: Edmund Hall, *Egypt Military 1883-1983*, Gold and Special Prize; *Postcard Rates*, Silver. Mike Murphy, *Rural Service/Service Rural*, Gold; *Postmarks of the Dams Post Offices*, Silver; John Davis, *Posta Europea*, Vermeil. An extended report of the exhibition appears on page 149. Congratulations to all three exhibitors!

The Chairman made a special point of congratulating Mahmoud Ramadan of Cairo on his Gold medal for Egypt Officials 1893-1922 at Europhilex in London in May (more results, page 168).

The Secretary then put before the meeting a member application (and later received a delayed form that just missed the meeting so consulted the Committee before approving the application). So welcome to two new members in Hugh Jefferies (UK) and Brian Callan (Ireland).

He urged members to attend in Cairo, where they will be made extremely welcome, and on a show of hands ten of the 15 present indicated an interest. Those wishing to learn more should contact the Secretary.



*When the 6 mills letter rate was introduced in July 1940 there was no 6mill stamp; so until its issue in October, 1+5m was the solution – Edmund Hall collection*



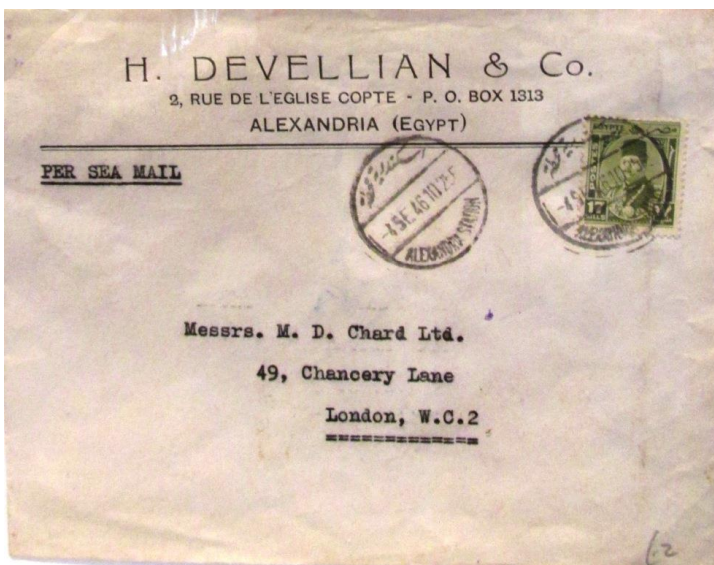
The question of a possible Facebook page was raised, with the Secretary announcing that Hani Sharestan, the instigator, had mocked up an admired front page, volunteered a good deal more information, especially about safeguards, and had also suggested a team of trusted and knowledgeable “page leaders” who would be responsible for approving new page members, disseminating ESC information, sharing knowledge and encouraging discussion. It is unfortunate that no member present felt confident enough to express a firm opinion on the topic: a small sub-committee comprising Mike Murphy, Edmund Hall and Sami Sadek was set up to consider the future of the suggested project.

The Secretary noted that the closing date for lists for the Autumn auction was August 15, and urged members to nominate material for sale, bearing in mind that commission from the two Auctions raises something of the order of £1000 each year towards Circle funds.

There were then three brief queries to deal with, after which Edmund Hall apologised to members for the technical hitch on the website caused by a change in the server system of the company hosting the site; if access to the online *QC* is difficult please contact him for a direct link.

Jon Aitchison then reminded members to bring material for the mini-auctions held regularly at each meeting; and reminded members that, as he is UK Commissioner for the World Stamp Show in New York between May 28 and June 4 next year, if you are thinking of exhibiting, he will require all application forms completed by August 15.

There were two speakers for the meeting proper, both dealing with postage rates, so there was an interesting interlinking between Edmund Hall’s land-based rates and John Sears’ airmail equivalents.



*Franked 17 mills air mail rate for Alexandria Station to London. But endorsed “By Sea Mail”. Is this a duplicate letter sent by sea because air mail was considered risky? – Edmund Hall collection*

Both had much fascinating material to show, Edmund explaining that he set himself the task of finding each of Egypt’s definitives used alone on cover to express the correct rate echoing the stamp’s value. It was, he admitted, much more difficult than he had expected, in part because at some periods there were no stamps issued to cover a specific postal rate, or the rate was increased soon after a stamp issue, meaning that proper use during the short interim period was difficult to come by – and hence rather more valuable.,

He dealt with the Boy King and Marechal periods, noting that the internal postcard with a single 3m stamp is often very difficult to find – and that when the internal letter rate was increased from 5m to 6m in July 1940 there was no 6m stamp available. So until one was issued, in October of that year, a single-stamp franking was impossible. Usually 1m+5m was the answer.

Printed matter rates are not easy to find either – the 13m external postcard rate is elusive, and so is the 8 mills overseas printed matter rate. The 17 mills Empire concession rate made air mail so relatively inexpensive that virtually no covers travelled by land or sea – but Edmund showed a pair of 17m covers with instructions “By surface” and “By sea mail”

With the 22 mills overseas rate, Boy King issues were printed to suit a rate for the first time, a fact that continued into the Republican era, when all sorts of “odd values” – 32 mills, 37 mills, were issued to reflect actual postage rates.

Edmund also noted that commemoratives used to cover “normal” postage rates are quite uncommon, and was able to show a 40 mills Farouk Birthday stamp accurately reflecting the 40 mills Express rate.

John Sears showed a wide range of air mail material, explaining that air mail rates were based on the regular surface rate plus an air surcharge, and that increases in “air mail rates” were in fact more usually a result of an increase in the basic surface rate, with the air surcharge remaining unchanged.

He showed a plethora of different rates, however, resulting from different routes flown by the different airlines causing myriad calculations in surface rates, which must have taken the poor postal clerk an age to work out – but stated firmly that all the rates on display had been checked and were correct!

1934 produced an oddity when mail to the UK via Imperial Airways was subject to a reduced rate of 15 mills all in, but whether this was intended to publicise air mail generally, or Imperial in particular, is not known.

John also presented a mystery, with a 1934 air mail cover from Cicurel, the giant Cairo department store (and therefore taken for granted that it was posted at the correct rate) to Sudan – but franked with 3x5 mills stamps when the rate should have been 5 mills for surface despatch plus 15 mills air surcharge by Imperial. But why send air mail at all? Imperial flew only once a week, and the surface mail (at 5 mills only) would have got the letter there earlier.



*Air letters to other members of the Arab Postal Union were franked with the internal rate of the sending country plus the normal air mail surcharge. Left, 10+10m Alexandria to Jerusalem; right, 10+10m Alexandria to Libya – John Sears collection*

Both speakers were thanked warmly for their presentations, and the VERY mini-auction of only five items produced an equally tiny commission for the Circle. Must do better.

### Earliest Date for Egyptian Perfins

#### Amgad Bassili (ESC 564)



The earliest recorded date for Egyptian perfins so far is March 20, 1896, as reported by Vahe Varjabedian, on an “S.B.” (Société Anonyme Du Béhéra) 2 mills DLR (SG 59) example with Kafr el-Sheikh cancel. Now a new date, almost a year earlier, has been found, and used by the same firm. The example is a 1 piastre DLR (SG 54) copy with Alexandria cancel dated April 6, 1895.

### Philatelic Society of Egypt Exhibition June 2015

The Philatelic Society of Egypt held the Second Continental Philatelic Exhibition – a preliminary to the major exhibition in January 2016 marking the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first Egyptian postage stamp - in the very accommodating premises of the League of Arab States headquarters in Cairo between June 11 and 14. By all accounts it was a resounding success, filling both organisers and attendees with enthusiasm for the major exhibition to come.

Held under the auspices of the Arab League and the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, the Ministry of Antiquities and Egypt Post, the exhibition attracted no fewer than 44 exhibits to the well laid-out display frames, mainly from Egypt, of course (25 entries), but also from Cyprus (6), UK (5), Saudi Arabia (5), and Syria, Lebanon and Iraq one each.

After a little confusion about the venue (the original thought was to hold it in the Opera House complex on Zamalek, where the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary will indeed be held), the President of the PSE, Dr Sherif Samra, welcomed exhibitors and guests including the Communications Minister, Khaled Negm, and Dr Nabil el Araby of the Arab League.



*Hany Salam and Vahe Varjabedian taking their judging duties very seriously indeed*

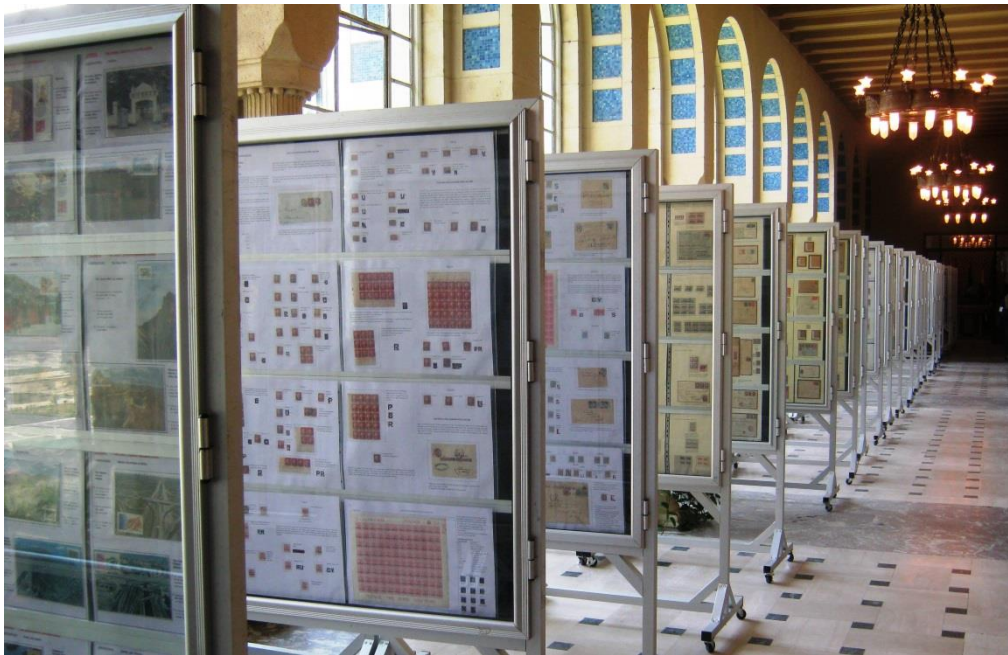
Dr Sherif told guests that Egypt was a founding member of the International Postal Union (now the UPU) in 1874, and that the PSE has been taking part in local, continental and international exhibitions in a continuing effort to expand philately and support philatelists both scientifically and literally as well as support cultural tourism in Egypt and attract youth towards the intellectual creativity of philately.

High security in the League HQ made access for visitors a little arduous, but three lectures supporting the exhibition – Egyptian Postal History through 150 years, The World of Maxicards 1872-2014 and Features of Egypt's History through Stamps – were all attractive and well attended. So also was the farewell dinner, at which medals – judged by a team of qualified jurors in traditional, postal history, aerophilately, astrophilately, thematic, youth and literature - were awarded.

Two European members of the ESC were able to attend. Both were happy and enthusiastic about the outcome. Here are their reports:

**Neil Hitchens** (UK, ESC 651): My first ever, but very brief, visit not only to Cairo but to Egypt itself, gave me just enough time to familiarise myself with the Egyptian capital ahead of my next proposed visit in conjunction with the 150th Anniversary at the end of the year, but most importantly I was able to attend the opening session of the June exhibition. I was made most welcome by Dr Sherif and his associates even if I inadvertently went first to the Opera House only to find that the exhibition was actually being held at the HQ of the League of Arab States (!) – A bit of a walk over the Qasr al-Nil Bridge in searing 35C+ heat in a suit and tie ... but worth it.

My being there for the opening was valuable for the Circle and despite being mistaken sometimes for a member of the Cypriot delegation I met quite a few ESC members both old and new, as well as members of other societies. Having worked out the logistics, future visits can and will be made.



*The exhibition hall in the League of Arab States headquarters was bathed in sunlight*

As well as being able to view the exhibition, which was wide ranging, extremely well organised and also extremely interesting, I was given the great privilege of meeting the minister for the postal services, and had my photograph taken with him as well as being asked to sign the visitors' book.

The exhibition, as can be seen from the photographs, was well presented which, while not purely Egypt, was arranged clearly and concisely. Amongst personal highlights was a very interesting exhibit of Graf Zeppelin flight covers (a weakness of mine) as well as a fascinating series of frames about the first Republican issues of 1954. However even the non-Egyptian exhibits were all interesting and very informative.

Going on from this, I will endeavour to write a [more] technical article with some ideas on some aspects and suggestions about presenting exhibition quality frames.

Memo to self – learn a bit more Arabic!

**Ronny Van Pellecom** (Belgium, ESC 618): First the exhibition was meant to be at the Opera in Zamalek but it changed to the Arab League Building near Tahrir Bridge and the old Nile Hilton. That was certainly not a bad choice. 144 frames (mostly Postal History) were displayed in a large room bathed in daylight.

Among the exhibits were some that attracted real attention. There was a Posta Europea collection with an incoming letter from Livorno 11.08.1864 to Cairo. Sent through the Italian post with arrival ALESSANDRIA D'EGITTO 17 AGO 64 POSTE ITALIANE and boxed PIROSCAFI POSTALI ITALIANI of the Italian consular post office which handed it to the Posta Europea (both were in the same location) POSTA EUROPEA 17 AGOST: 64 ALESSANDRIA and arrival POSTA EUROPEA 18 AGOST: 64 CAIRO. Incoming letters are much scarcer than outgoing. There was also one frame of the Shibin el-Kom postmarks, which was also seen in the Europhilex 2015 exhibition in London.

The opening was well attended by the local press and invitees and in the afternoon a lecture was held by Dr Sherif Samra "Egypt Post history though 150 years". Surprisingly, there was again a lot of people on the morning of the second day. But perhaps this had to do with a small reception there. I was too late for it. A lecture by Mr Nicos Rangos (Cyprus) about Maxicards in the afternoon of this second day was well attended. A dinner and awards ceremony was held on the third day (Saturday 13 June) at the Automobile Club in Qasr el Nil street.



There was said to be also a fourth day with a lecture of Dr Sherif el-Kerdani on “Features of Egypt’s History Through Stamps”, but when I arrived in the morning the guards didn’t let me in, they said only “finito”.

The exhibition was done only with the Philatelic Society’s own resources, and they have succeeded in making it a nice event. It is hoped that they manage to find more support for the exhibition next year.

The Postal Museum might help here, perhaps by finding a location or lending some pieces for the duration of the exposition. I’m thinking about the letterbox which was displayed in the Alexandria Exposition of 1894, the letterbox of the Austrian Post Office of Alexandria, documents about the Posta Europea....

But sadly, I don’t have too good a feeling about it. The museum is now completely neglected. I have visited it for decades, and each time something is missing. It may be better to make scans of all documents so that everyone can consult them, and sell everything at auction so that collectors continue to honour the truly remarkable collection.

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### **The 2 mills on 3 mills Pictorial of 1915: A Spectacular Find**

**Anton Jansen (ESC 383)**

In *QC* 234 and 243 I was able to submit two responses to Edmund Hall’s original presentation of the 2 mills surcharge in *QC* 227 (and to which Alan Jeyes wrote a comment in issue 228): the use of a single stamp on outgoing printed matter, and of two stamps on an internal postcard. Peter Smith wrote in his *Treatise* that “(e)ven examples of use in multiples or with other values are hard to find”.

I found this cover on eBay; it carries ten copies of the 2/3 mills (two strips of 5 + a pair of the 3 mills which was used for making the supplementary 2 mills stamps. The cover is franked according to a second class tariff for foreign letters (1pi + 6 mills) + 1 pi for registration. It was sent to a well known stamp dealer in Berne, Switzerland, and censored.



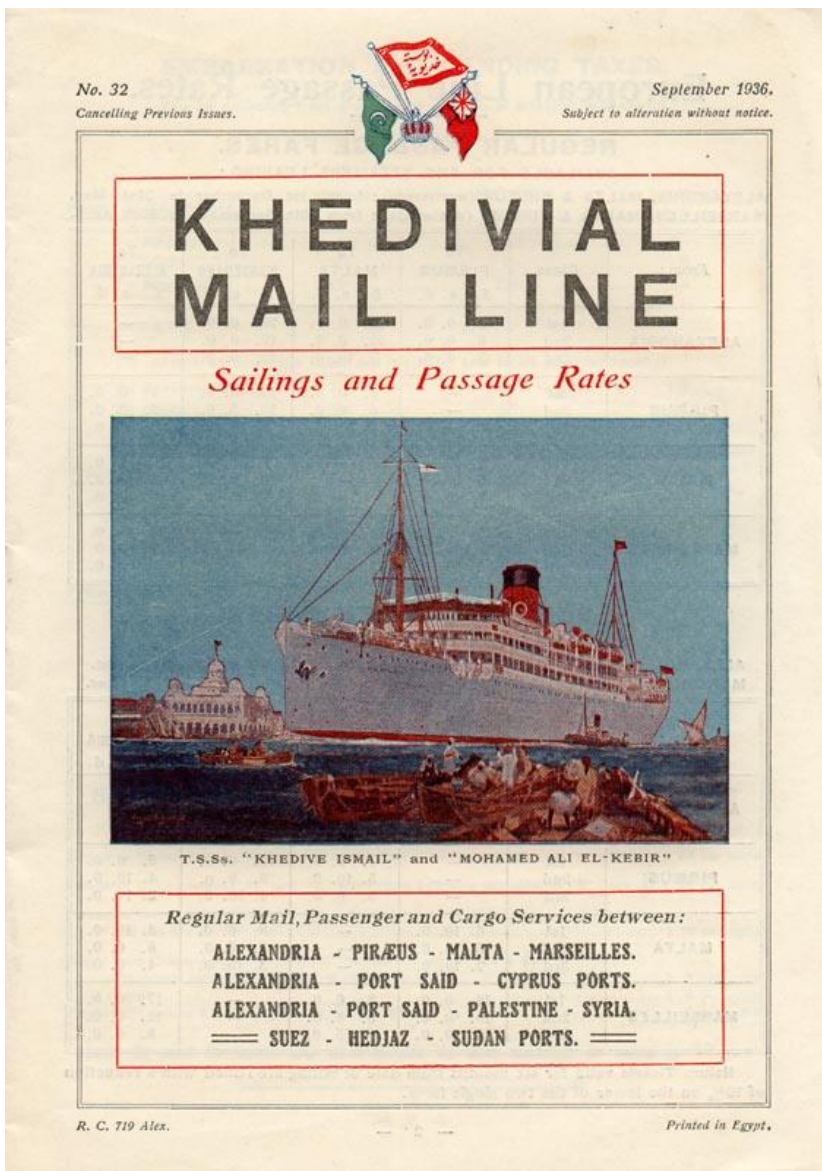
## Khedivial Mail Line and the S.S. Taif

Scott Van Horn (ESC 619)

The Khedivial Mail Steamship & Graving Dock Co. was formed in 1898, and flew under the British flag to operate both passenger and cargo services between Alexandria, Constantinople and Syrian ports, and between Suez and Red Sea ports. In 1919, the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company bought the Khedivial Mail Line, and in 1936, the company was re-formed as the Pharaonic Mail Line.

The Pharaonic Mail Line began transatlantic crossings to Boston and New York starting in 1948, and expanded the service in 1951 with stops at Charleston, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. In 1953, an eastern route was established from Port Said to Bombay via Karachi. The company became part of the United Arab Maritime Co. of Alexandria when Egyptian shipping lines were nationalised in 1961, and shortly afterwards the New York services were discontinued.

The Khedivial/Pharaonic Mail Line had at one time as many as six dozen ships in its fleet, ranging in size from a few hundred tons to over 8000. The S.S. *Taif* was a 1600-ton steel passenger and cargo steamship built in 1928 by Alexander Stephen & Sons Ltd., of Glasgow. She was built alongside her sister ship, the S.S. *Talodi*. Both were built for the Khedivial Mail Line, and both were shelled and sunk at Suez in 1969. Throughout her entire career, the S.S. *Taif* sailed in the northern Red Sea between Suez, El Wedj, Yambo, Jeddah, and Port Sudan.



An oval handstamp, measuring 45mm x 30mm, was employed to cancel mail carried aboard the S.S. *Taif*. It is known in various colours, including purple, red, and green.



*1936 Sailings and Passage Rates Catalog  
(Image from the collection of Björn Larsson)*

Her sister ship, the S.S. *Talodi*, used a circular handstamp in purple.

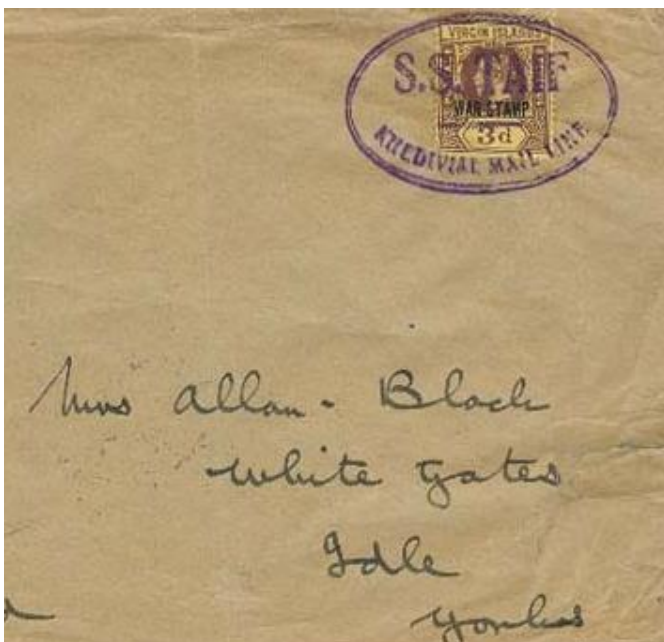
During the early 1930s, a man named F. Hendrey (John Sears, *QC* 160, pp. 218-221) created numerous covers with both the S.S. *Taif* and S.S. *Talodi* handstamps. Most of these covers violated UPU Congress rules on the use of stamps on covers posted at sea. Article 42, paragraph 3, of the 1924 UPU Congress states:



*Correspondence mailed on the high seas, in the box on board ship, or handed to postal agents on board or to the commanders of ships, may be prepaid, barring contrary agreement between the Administrations concerned, by means of the postage stamps and according to the postage rates of the country to which the said vessel belongs or by which it is maintained. If the mailing on board takes place during the stay at one of the two terminal points of the voyage or at one of the ports of call, the prepayment is valid only if it is effected by means of the postage stamps and according to the postage rates of the country in whose waters the vessel is stationed.*

The covers that Mr Hendrey produced carried stamps from such faraway countries as Gambia, Morocco, Australia, Belgian Congo, and South Africa; places in which neither the S.S. *Taif* nor the S.S. *Talodi* ever visited, or for that matter, even ventured close. Besides the origin of the stamps, the routes inferred by the covers are also rather odd. Take the following examples:

1927 15mil Cotton Congress to Ashland,  
Pennsylvania, via Beyrouth  
(posted in 1932)



1916 Virgin Island 3d King George V War Tax to  
Idle, Yorkshire, England, via Port Said  
(posted in 1931)



*1933 U.S. 1c Century of Progress to St. Petersburg, Florida,  
with Shellal-Halfa TPO backstamp (posted in 1934)*

The only possible way these covers could have been allowed to be accepted would be as favours to Mr Hendrey. But as Mr Sears has mentioned in an email correspondence, they also seemingly went through a post office upon landfall, and were accepted. But then again, maybe they weren't, and the addressee was merely added to make the covers appear to be legitimate.

### Army Post – King Farouk 3 mills green on cover: Census Update

**Andy Gould (ESC 393)**

The very welcome 2014 publication by John Davis *Egypt: From the Postal Concession until Suez 1932 to 1956* usefully includes a census of the small 3 mills green Army Post stamp on cover (Appendix F in John's book). I have a couple of recent discoveries to add.

The first cover is from GHQ in Cairo, with a Field Post Office 190 cancel dated 26<sup>th</sup> October 1940





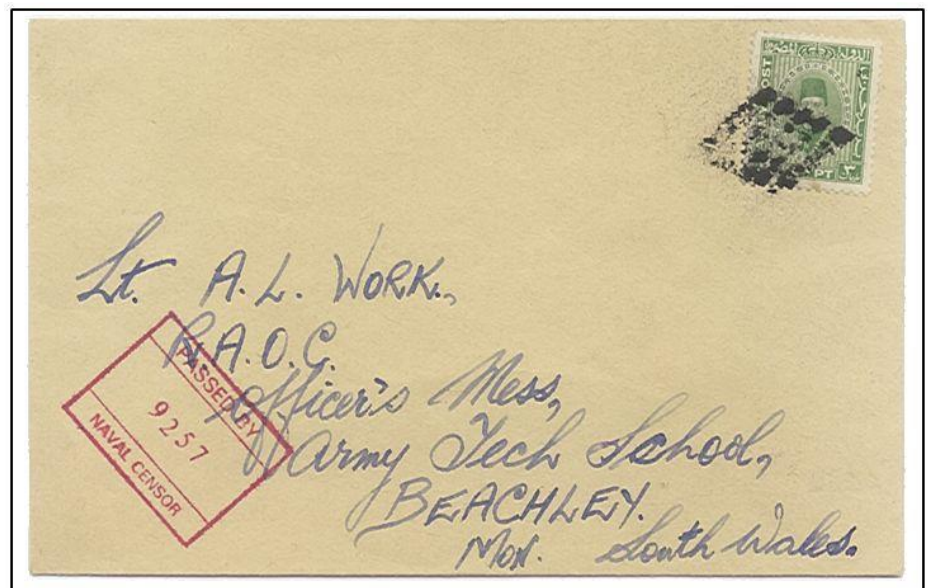
The second cover is from the New Zealand

FPO1 based at Port Tewfik dated 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1940

(Illustration courtesy John Fitzpatrick, Auckland, New Zealand)

The cover listed as number 33 in list A of the census is, in my opinion, of doubtful authenticity (*see illustration below, courtesy John Lea FRPSL*), and I shared my thoughts with John a few years ago when we discussed his Egypt Forces display.

On the plus side, the address looks OK(ish?). The Army Technical School was based at Beachley Barracks near Chepstow from 1924 until 1994 and a Lieutenant A L Work is recorded as being based there for part of 1937 before returning to the Royal Army Ordnance Corps where he remained until joining the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers as a captain in 1941. Also positive, mail from sailors on board HM ships was often cancelled with a retta and the 9257 Naval censor mark is recorded as being used in this period.



On the negative side, I have been offered similar covers to this one on more than one occasion; there is no date stamp; there are no markings on the reverse of the cover to help date it; and the item looks a little too contrived to me. Thoughts from other members would be welcome, as would further additions to the Census of 3 mills green covers.

#### References:

*Egypt: From the Postal Concession until Suez 1932 to 1956 part 1* by John Davis

*British Forces in Egypt Postal Service 1932 – 1940* by John E O Hobbs

Forces War Records website

## Reporting from the Suez Canal Zone

**John Davis (ESC 213)**

Some months ago I heard about an organised trip in the form of a reunion for those who served in the Suez Canal Zone during the early 1950s and was advised that it would be the last, of a hundred or so, because the organiser, Alf Avison, of the Middle East Land Forces (MELF) organisation, felt that one more would be one too many. With the probability that no future chance would arise to visit this area, one I had never been to despite many trips to Egypt over the years, I determined to take the opportunity. I was delighted to be joined by our Hon. Sec., Mike Murphy, and what follows is an account of what we got up to.

We flew from Heathrow Terminal 2 by Egyptair scheduled flight and spent our first night at Le Passage Hotel near the airport at Heliopolis. Next day we enjoyed a coach trip to the Egyptian Museum where Mike and I became engaged in conversation with a local over coffee, discussing the loss of a well known book-shop, that of Lehnert and Landrock, between the Museum and the Nile Hilton Hotel (now refitted and refurbished as the Ritz-Continental). Built in the old riverside grounds of the Museum was a burnt-out concrete building, formerly the headquarters of President Hosni Mubarak's political party. It is thought that when it is pulled down, perhaps the Museum could resume control of its old waterfront. Our newly acquired Egyptian friend seemed to agree with this with some enthusiasm. Whilst we missed seeing once more the many wonders of the Museum, the chance to bring ourselves up to date with activity in Tahrir Square was invaluable.



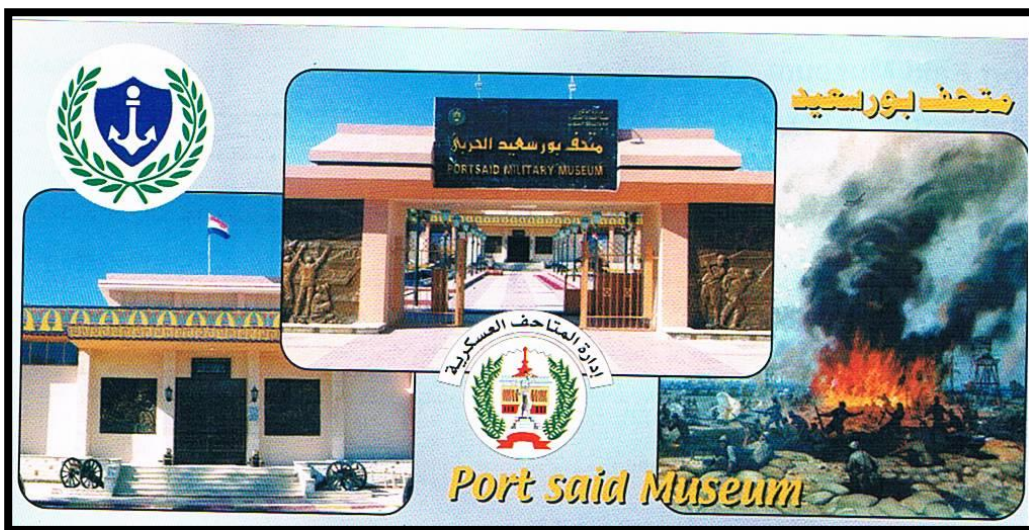
*Eight plus driver and guide pose for a photo-op at the Pyramids. Back, from left; John Philpott, Mike Murphy, John Davis, Colin Bailey, Keith Gamble, Alan Vaux, Ray Nicholson, our driver. Front, Alf Avison, MELF head honcho, and our guide with the label.*

We continued to the Pyramids at Giza where we saw that much construction work had been done since we last visited, largely to protect public access to the great heritage site: what had been built had been done very well and with respect for the monuments themselves. And at the junction of the main Alexandria road the Great Egyptian Museum is growing apace: plans are now being made for the move of Tutankhamun's treasures to the new site.

Returning to our hotel to pick up those who had remained behind, we then transferred by coach to the el-Morgan Hotel at Fayid in the Canal Zone, a couple of hours' journey. It must be emphasised that this is an area of Egypt strictly out of bounds for tourists or for practically everyone who does not actually live there. Egypt is taking its responsibilities of protecting the Canal very seriously indeed, the whole length of the Canal itself, some 106 miles, is in the absolute control of Egypt's Second Army. Special passes had to be obtained – the organisation of each trip had taken around ten months – but once we arrived at Fayid we could not move outside the hotel without a fully armed police or military escort, and sometimes both! We really did feel privileged to be there and, in my case, to talk to our fellows about their times serving in the forces during the 1950s troubles.

While I was trying to get first-hand knowledge of the area for Part III of my book: *Egypt; the Postal Concession until Suez, 1932-1952*, Mike actually had a slightly different agenda. Having spent two or three years as a young teenager in RAF Ismailia when his father was serving with the Air Ministry, he was trying to find the house (OMQ 466) in which he had lived all those years ago (if it was still standing!). On a specially organised trip with one of our number, Colin Bailey, who also served in RAF Ismailia, and with a local “guide/fixer” with the exotic name of “Tiger” (his real name: nimr in Arabic), he got to within 200 yards of the house - only to find that despite all efforts, access to the Egyptian military base could not be permitted.

The el-Morgan Hotel it seems was once known as Kensington Village and appears once to have been an officers’ social club; the outward appearance towards the road into Fayid town was somewhat run down but, once inside, the facilities were excellent. With the rear of the hotel facing the Great Bitter Lake, it boasted no less than three swimming pools, several restaurants including a fish restaurant in the immaculately kept gardens, a beach bar, and its own beach with sunshades, plenty of sun-loungers, and we didn’t even have to put out our own towels! Needless to say, much time was spent in discussion with our fellow travellers particularly over a Stella or three at the shaded beach bar.



*Entrance ticket for the Port Said Military Museum*

A special trip was led by “Tiger” to Port Said, where we noted the Navy House (as it used to be called – it is now the headquarters of the state-owned Suez Canal operation), Simon Arzt department store (although long since closed, the building is still there), and the base of the toppled statue to Ferdinand

Ferdinand

DeLesseps. We took advantage of the free ferry to cross to Port Fouad and back; and took time to visit the excellent Military Museum, in the grounds of which were a couple of American-supplied tanks destroyed by the Egyptians.

Another coach trip, again led by “Tiger”, took us to Suez where we saw an extraordinary “boulevard” style *corniche* with lighting from the Victorian era still in use; so much so that it could have been a promenade in Cannes, it really is a very beautiful seafront.

Our third “Tiger” trip took us to Ismailia which, with a population of some three million, is among the most beautiful of all Egyptian towns and cities. Large parts of it were built by the French builders of the Suez Canal to house the headquarters of the Company itself, a house for DeLesseps, and much of interest to French expatriates of the period. Still beautiful today, the city boasts shops and municipal buildings actually completed, mostly to European standards, in a land where, like Greece and Turkey, buildings not actually completed do not pay taxes. It is difficult now to see Ismailia as the very dangerous place for serving military men to visit, as it was in the early 1950s. There is a statue to Khedive Ismail, after whom the city was named, on a street crossroads near DeLesseps house.

Here we again crossed the Canal to visit an Egyptian Second Army memorial marking the 1973 war with Israel when Egyptian soldiers managed crucially to regain territory across the Canal into Sinai. Sadly the very ambitious fountains and other water systems appear not to have been completed, though a dramatic

diorama inside the memorial shows how Israeli defences were literally washed away by fire hoses. It was painted and signed by an artist from North Korea!

A bus journey to the Moascar Military Cemetery that lies within the old British base that is now the headquarters of the Second Army was going well until we ran into a road-block and were instructed to go round another way. This we did and eventually arrived at the appropriate entrance to this huge base. After discussions with guns pointed at us, we were allowed to proceed to the Cemetery. This was a particularly poignant time for one of our number, architect Alan Vaux, whose older brother was in effect murdered by an Egyptian mob while guarding a military truck at Ismailia in 1954, just a month before he was due to be demobbed. On entering the cemetery Alf recited, “At the going down of the sun, and in the morning . . . . . we will remember them” while we stood to respectful attention. Alan was able to find and photograph his brother’s headstone. The Moascar cemetery was of particular interest to our group as most of those buried there had died or been killed during the early 1950s.

We also visited the Memorial Cemetery at Fayid where over 1,200 graves are marked, some 300 of them being of Germans killed during World War II. All the graves bar two have been treated in exactly the same way – the headstones are set in linear flower beds surrounded by lawns, edges beautifully trimmed, the lawns mowed and watered every day. Although paid for by the British War Graves Commission, these cemeteries are controlled and maintained by Egyptian managers and gardeners; indeed havens of peace, they must be among the best kept cemeteries on the planet.

Our return journey to Cairo airport left us with half a day to enjoy the Le Passage Hotel shops, bars and restaurants but, having contacted Hisham Bassyouny, he came in his brand new people carrier (six days old, he tells us) with Ibrahim Shoukry and we spent a convivial hour or two over some rather good beers while trying to dodge the attendees at an Egyptian wedding. Hisham and Ibrahim were both in fine form. Next morning, after a 4am wake-up call, we were off to the airport.

**Mike Murphy adds:** After travelling all those miles, it was truly galling not to be allowed through the gates of Ismailia Galaa (Matar el Galaa, Evacuation Airfield) to try to find my old home ... but I could peek through the bars and see what I had known as derelict desert land now developed with tarmac and five-storey buildings – perhaps barracks? Sad though it was, it was easy to understand why we were refused .. can you imagine the same scene in reverse in Britain?

That disappointment apart, it was wonderful to be back in Ismailia, with memories of the Sweetwater Canal, the gently lapping waves of French Beach, where I learned to swim, and a general air of peace in a city that has seen more than its fair share of military disputes. The visit to the bayonet-topped 1973 memorial was astounding for its calm tranquillity in the wake of war. Ismailia has grown immeasurably in the 60 years since I was there, and is growing more, with massive shipbuilding and hideous orange and yellow tower blocks on the Suez Road awaiting occupation – but it will always retain its serenity.



*Another busy day at the office – it’s beach bar time*

I was too young for National Service – just – but the visit provided a wonderful opportunity to chat with those not much older who had actually been in the thick of it during the troubles. As a school-age child, there was much my brother, sister and I had missed or simply not noticed – though our Kalashnikov-wielding police escort brought back powerful memories of coach trips to the beach with squaddies armed with sten guns. Our group consisted largely of men in their eighties, but all of them able bodied, fit, full of memories – and full of wisecracks, particularly at the expense of “sergeant-major” Alf, the organiser, and his partner Kim.



That the Morgan is in a military zone is a great pity – it's a charming and well-run hotel, clean and efficient, with excellent food and drink, and more of the peace and quiet that Ismailia provided in abundance.

Looking wider, we saw no sign whatever of modern-day "troubles". There is a strongly manned gun position directly outside the Cairo Museum gates, and the occasional military vehicle in the streets of the large towns. But the whole of the Canal Zone is a military area, and it is full of camps, convoys and checkpoints – and ear-splitting fighter-aircraft manoeuvres disturbing our evening drinks! Not at all a place for a normal holiday. But this was by no means a normal holiday – and I wouldn't have missed it for the world.

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### Cancelled Backs: An Amazing New Discovery

**John Clarke (ESC 497)**

I was fortunate to be able to view some of Peter Smith's collection at Europhilex, and was particularly interested in his "Cancelled Backs" material. I was surprised at the number of lots, 31.



When I came to the 1937 Boy King lot I was stunned to find that the 200 mills was cancelled in Arabic on the back (*see illustration*). According to George Lee, Zeheri and *Nile Post*, this cannot be possible because the last printing was in 1946, control A/44 B/44 A/46, and Arabic was not introduced until March 1947. So how has this happened? On checking the catalogues, I noted that the Boy King 30 mills olive and the 50 mills greenish-blue were both printed in 1947, control A/46 A/47, so it is possible that both these values exist with Cancelled in Arabic. I also noted that the 100 mills and 200 mills Farouk Marechal were not printed until 1948, control A/48.

It would therefore appear that the 200 mills was printed in 1947. As the 200 mills exists with the Arabic Cancelled, could it be that the 100 mills also exists with Arabic Cancelled? Now the obvious question is: why has it not been recorded for the past 70 years? There must be other copies, and why has nobody found control blocks. Any information or suggestions welcome.

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### Membership changes

#### **New members:**

**ESC 693 Hugh Jefferies**, c/o Stanley Gibbons Ltd, 7 Parkside, Ringwood, Hants BH24 3SH  
(Commonwealth and GB stamps 1840-1960 including Egypt to 1972)

**ESC 694 Brian Callan**, Caherlag House, Caherlag, Glanmire, Cork, Ireland  
(Zeppelin mail, Allied Forces in Egypt, Nobel Prizes)

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### **Editorial**

Thanks for the response for articles but remember the next QC for December is to be made up from articles from first time contributors. OK if you haven't done one for ten years that will also count.

**In Search of Rifleman A Ferguson**

**Jack Graham (ESC 541)**

On April 25, 1915, the Allies landed troops on the Gallipoli peninsula in an attempt to secure the Strait of the Dardanelles and occupy Constantinople. After five months of heavy fighting against the Turkish army with no decisive results, it was decided to withdraw the troops and abandon the enterprise. By early January 1916, the evacuation was completed. Some 16 British Commonwealth divisions had taken part in the ill-fated campaign, suffering over 213,000 casualties.

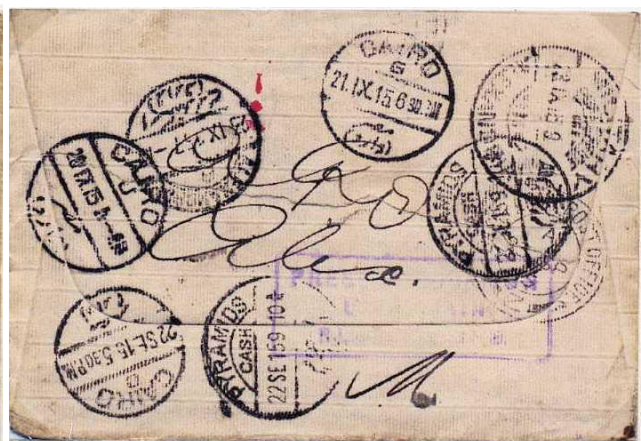
Albert Ferguson, of the 6th Royal Irish Rifles, was one of the casualties. Wounded in early September, he was sent to Egypt for treatment. The two envelopes featured here received a host of handwritten notations and cancellations as they travelled around Egypt in search of Rifleman A. Ferguson.

Rifleman Ferguson did recover from his wounds, for included with the envelopes was a 1933 postcard to Mr Ferguson in Belfast, Ireland.

Posted at Larne, Northern Ireland, on 7 August 1915, this cover (right) has no indication from the notations and handstamps where Ferguson was when he finally received the letter. Written notations include "wounded", "Unknown 2nd Gen Hos (Cairo)" and "Mustapha Con Dep". A violet handstamp was applied at Alexandria "NOT AT CONVALESCENT DEPOT MUSTAPHA". The envelope is backstamped "FIELD POST OFFICE 29 / 28/AU/15" and handstamped "PRESENT LOCATION UNCERTAIN". At that time FPO 29 was at Gallipoli with the 10th (Irish) Infantry Division.

The second letter (below) is postmarked "LARNE / 27 AU 15" and addressed to "No 5 Ward". Handwritten notations include "6", "Ward 6", "To Mena / 23 8 15", "wounded At A" and "A.P.O. Alex".

The reverse is a wonderful collection of military and local cancellations acquired as the envelope travelled from Cairo to Mena to Alexandria in search of Rifleman A. Ferguson.



## Postcards and/or Pictures of Post Offices

**John Davis (ESC 213)**

In browsing a book recently I came across an old picture of the Post Office at Ismailia and thought it might be a good idea to ask members whether they collect such material. To set things going, I show photographs of Egyptian post offices of several towns and would suggest, if I may be so bold, that the listing could be included on the Circle website for members who wish to illustrate their collections. I give quite a lot of displays to societies and have found that collectors are much more interested in one's display if pictures of



locations are included, particularly if the picture represents somewhere where a particular cancellation was used. Post offices therefore seem to be a good place to start. One word of warning however; it is illegal to photograph any Egyptian state-owned building, so postcards would seem to be the answer.

*Fig.1. The Post Office at Ismailia, taken during the 1950s*

When I took these photographs I was unaware of the legal position, but the first two were taken as long ago as 1989. The first is of Luxor main post office in a side street running parallel to the Corniche (See Fig. 2). Aswan main post office on the road north out of the city is shown at Fig. 3. We were staying in a hotel to the south and, unaware of the location of the post office, asked a local who said: "It's two minutes that way." So, knowing that we were due on an excursion to the unfinished obelisk quarry in about half an hour, we set off on foot. Clearly the local meant two minutes by car! I was not the most popular passenger on the coach when, eventually, we set off for the unfinished obelisk!



*Fig.2. The main post office at Luxor*



*Fig.3. Aswan main post office, 1989*

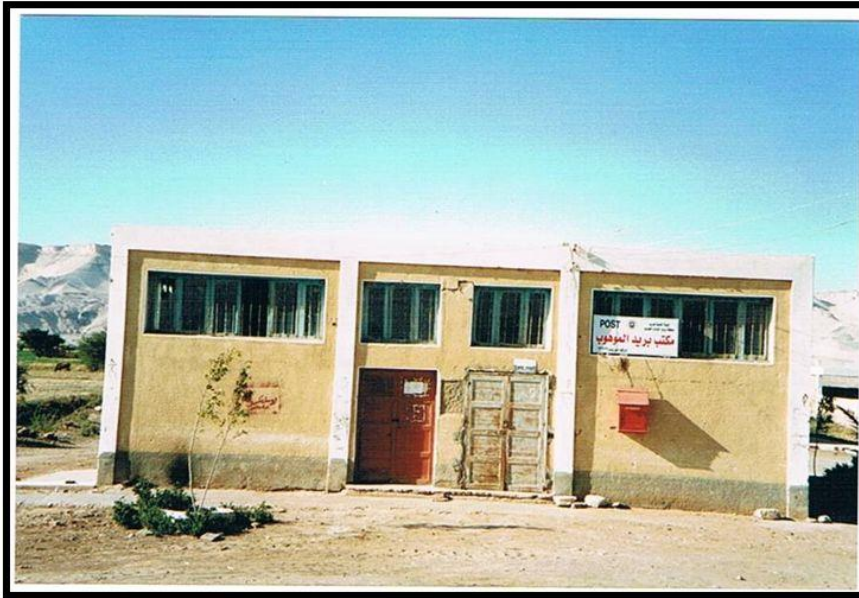


Fig.4. Which post office is this?

Touring in a camping trip through the Western Desert oases, and also before I became aware of the law, I took these two photographs of post offices in the towns within the oases such as Bawiti (Bahariya Oasis), Al-Farafra (Farafra Oasis), Mut and Balat (Dakhla Oasis) or Baris (near the Kharga Oasis) around 1997 but, unfortunately, I am unable to distinguish between them. Can anyone help (Figs. 4-5)?

Lastly, I have a photograph given to me some time ago, and by whom I cannot now recollect, on the back of which I have written “Post Office at Eilat, (Jordanian?)”, at the border crossing. Can anyone confirm please?

All the above, apart from Ismailia, have the modern Egyptian post office logo – which is how I recognised them, but the possibly Jordanian post office (Fig. 6) clearly has, in both Arabic and English, the wording “Post Office” but no logo, so I must assume that this particular one is not Egyptian – unless you know otherwise.



Fig.5. Where?



Fig.6. Allegedly post office at Eilat (Israel-Jordan border).

Does anyone else have such an accumulation of either photographs or postcards? If these are of interest, I shall happily submit another item with postcards of post offices, assuming that we can somehow start a trend.

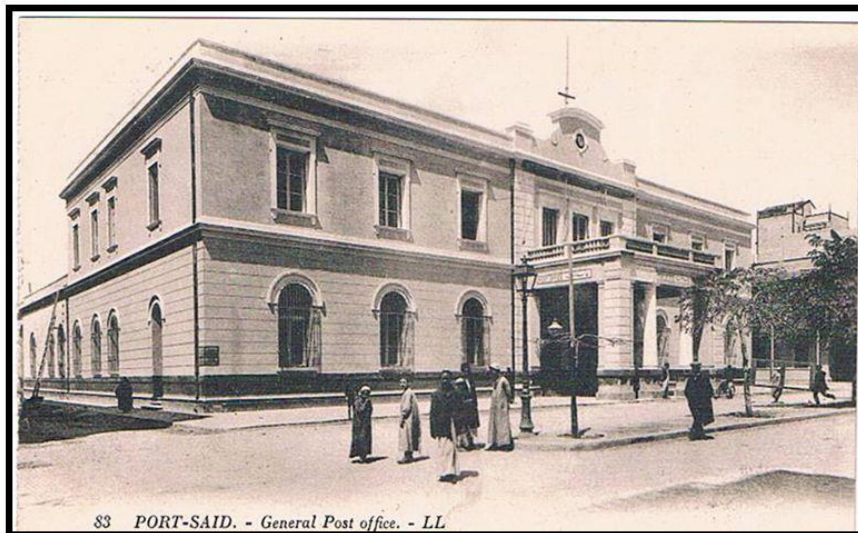
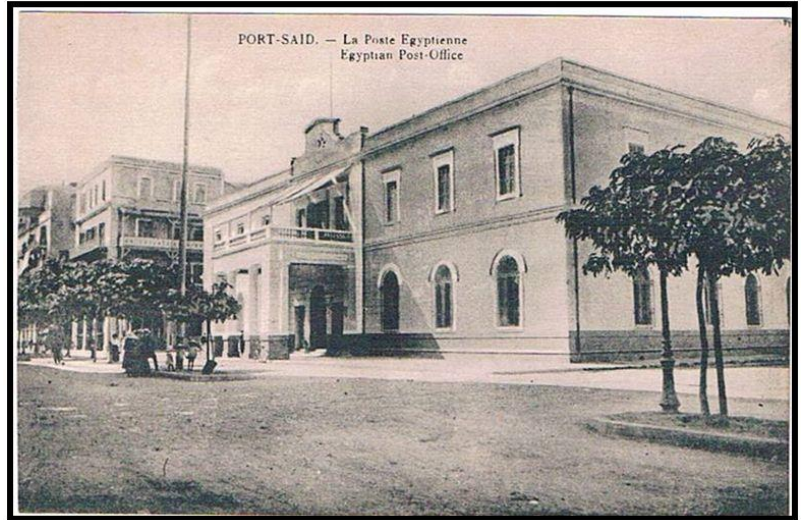
### Egypt's post offices on postcards from my collection

#### Port Said

First, the Egyptian post office that, according to the late Peter Feltus, was opened on 16<sup>th</sup> August 1868 with a postmark in Italian reading Porto Said.

Two postcards, taken from different angles, show this rather elegant building,

Until 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1931, the French Postal Administration had a post office at Port Said, as well as one at Alexandria, and the next illustration is of the former where, at the time of closure, the postmaster was M André Navarre.



The office originally opened at 15 Boulevard Eugénie during the period of the Consular Post Offices, and apparently remained at the same location until it closed.



## Ismailia

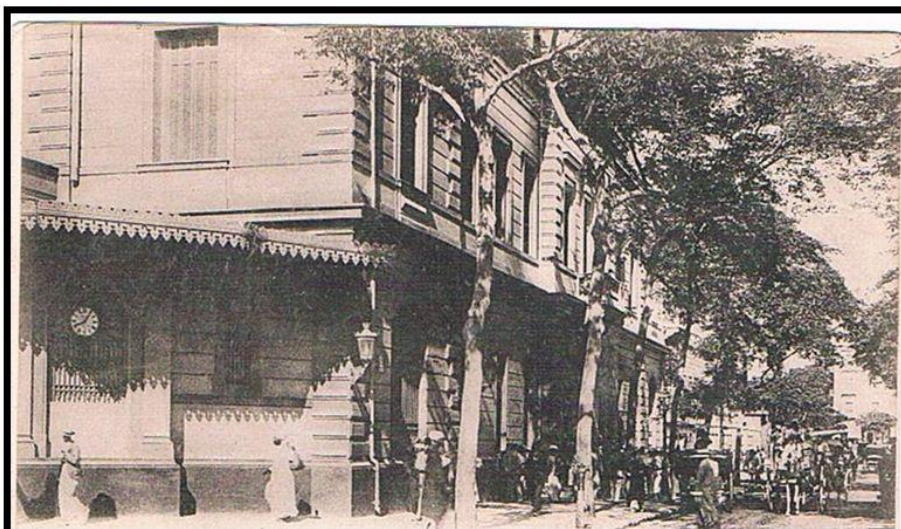
Built in a style typical of the French buildings of the period, the office opened on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1868, again according to Feltus. Ismailia, which I had the privilege to visit recently despite being in the Suez Canal zone controlled by the Egyptian 2<sup>nd</sup> Army, currently has a population of approximately 3 million, and must be one of the more beautiful of Egyptian cities.

At the end of the street, on the extreme left of the postcard, Ismailia railway station can just be made out. That is of course another site where postmarks would have been struck ... another subject for a *QC* article?



## Cairo

Two postcards, the first coloured, shows the street in which the post office was located, while the second, in monochrome, show that the post office itself lay on the left hand side of the street as we look at it. The Egyptian post office in Cairo was opened as early as 1843 (Feltus) by the Italian owned company *Posta Europea* that was of course bought for the state by Khedive Ismail in 1865 – the reason why the first Egyptian postmarks are in Italian.



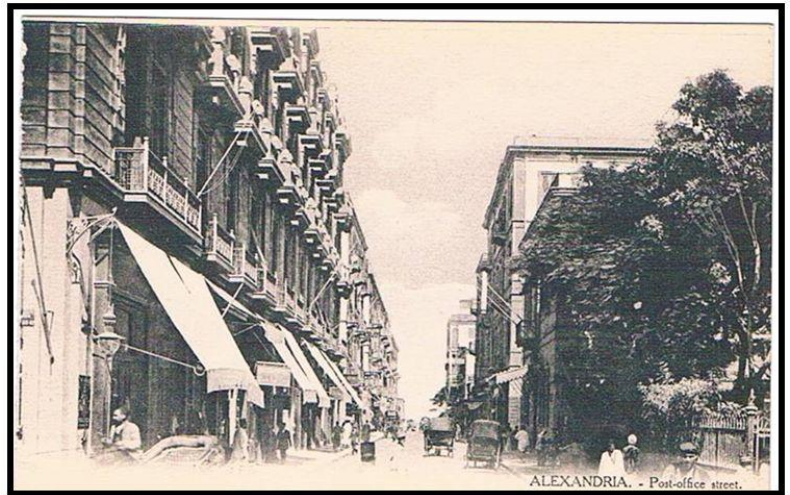
*Above, top, street leading to Post Office, left, office itself in Cairo.*

There were several post offices located within Cairo prior to 1843 including a British Post Office located at the Consulate, and a French *bureau de recette* near the French Consulate in the Ezbekiyeh. While both had handstamps for use on entire letters, neither office had the full postal facilities available at their Alexandria counterparts.

It is believed that it was this building that was destroyed by fire, together with most of the records of the Postal Administration, which is why the early bulletins issued by the Post Office (*Journaux Officiels*), and with many copies acquired by the Egypt Study Circle, are invaluable in providing information on the early postal activities of Egypt.

**Alexandria**

Like Port Said, one of the major ports of Egypt, Alexandria had Consular Post Offices or their equivalent, of Austria (technically the Austro-Hungarian Empire), Great Britain, France, Greece, Italy and a Russian office using stamps especially printed for their Levantine post offices. This postcard depicts the street in which the Egyptian post office was located; it opened in 1820 under the auspices of the *Posta Europea*, although the earliest Egyptian postmarks date from April 1865 when it was taken over by Khedive Ismail.



*Post Office Street at Alexandria.*



The British and Italian consulates were almost adjacent to one another at Ramleh on the Alexandria-Ramleh tramline and it was therefore convenient, if the departure of the Italian or British steamer was missed, to take the mail to the alternative consulate to catch the next available sailing. I have an entire letter written in English and addressed to England, on which a 6d stamp has been crossed out by the writer and the letter subsequently posted at the Italian Consulate as the postmark, dated 1867, is of that office. In addition the letter has in manuscript “English steamer via Marseilles” and a boxed cachet reading “Piroscafi Postali Italiani” meaning Italian Postal Paquebot.

*Above: the Italian Consulate; right, British Consulate at Alexandria.*



**Beni Suef**

Located on the Nile some 72 miles south of Cairo, Beni Suef opened its post office on 1<sup>st</sup> August 1867; it was usually the first stop for steam-driven boats sailing up the Nile from Cairo. Such boats often carried mail, although by 1867 much of the mail was being carried by the railways.



**Reference:** *Egyptian Postal Markings of 1865-1879* by Peter Feltus, 1983.

**Query 120:** Unusual mute cancellation - **Anton Jansen** (ESC 383)

Has anyone seen such a cancellation before? The PPC, which appears to have received three strikes of seven narrow parallel bars to cancel the 120 mills of franking, was apparently sent from Luxor; no date provided.





## Travels of an Early Airmail Cover to India

Scott Van Horn (ESC 619)

The following rather busy-looking cover took a long trip, and ended up not getting anywhere at all. The cover is addressed to Mr J. Butterworth of Calcutta, and franked with five King Fouad 2<sup>nd</sup> portrait stamps (NP D112C), and a series 1924 air mail label; the stamps are all cancelled by a “CAIRO / K 9 AP 29” CDS. The cover departed on the 2<sup>nd</sup> flight to Karachi by Imperial Airlines via Alexandria, which left 10 Apr 1929, and arrived 13 Apr 1929.



At the time of mailing, the postage rate to India was 10 mills plus 25 mills air surcharge, and with only 25 mills in postage, the cover was 10 mills underpaid. This was annotated with a purple manuscript “T-50C” on the front, and the two-line “FOREIGN POSTAGE DUE / ANNAS 45 PIES” box marking on the front, lower-left (a clearer example is shown at right). The conversion rate at this time is: 25c = 10 mills = 1.9 annas = 22.8 pies, and the double underpayment = 20 mills (50c or 45 pies).

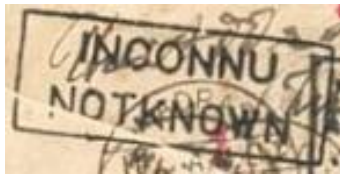


After landing in Karachi, the cover travelled by land, and arrived in Calcutta four days later on 17 Apr 1929, as indicated by the octagonal unpaid post office handstamp “CALCUTTA G.P.O. UNPAID / 17 APR 29” on

the reverse. The Calcutta PO attempted delivery, but the cover was handed to the Calcutta dead-letter office on 19 Apr 1929, as shown by the “CALCUTTA G.P.O. DELIVERY / [?] APR 1929”, and “D.L.O. / CALCUTTA / 19 APR 29” handstamps.

The Calcutta PO apparently had some new information that Mr Butterworth was now residing in Chandernagore (just north of Calcutta, now Chandannagar), and attempted delivery there on 20 Apr 1929 (as shown by the “CHANDERNAGORE / DELY. 20 APR 29” CDS). But he was apparently not living in that location either, and the cover was returned, and departed the Chinsura PO (Chinsurah or Hooghly-Chinsura, just north of Calcutta) on 26 Apr 1929 (as shown by the “CHINSURA / DEP 26 AP 29” CDS).

The cover was then returned to the Calcutta dead-letter office on 29 Apr 1929 (“D.L.O. / CALCUTTA / 29 APR 29”), and held there awaiting disposition until 30 May 1929 (“D.L.O. / CALCUTTA / 30 MAY 29”),



when it was transferred to the Bombay dead-letter office on 1 Jun 1929 (“D.L.O. / BOMBAY / 1 JUN 29”). It was held in Bombay until 6 Jun 1929 (“D.L.O. / BOMBAY / 6 JUN 29”), and marked with the two-line “INCONNU / NOT KNOWN” box marking on the reverse (a more clear example is shown at left).

The cover finally left the continent via Karachi, presumably by Imperial Airways, on/about 15 Jun 1929, and arrived in Alexandria on/about 18 Jun 1929. It received a Cairo Station and Giza handstamp on 19 Jun 1929 as shown by the “CAIRO STATION / 19 JUN 29 3-4P” and “GIZA / T 19 JU 29 6--P” CDS on the reverse. And finally the cover was stamped with the oval “RETURN TO SENDER / 19-JU-29” after a three-month round trip.

### ESC successes at Europhilex 2015

Several Circle members were successful in gaining good awards at Europhilex, the biggest philatelic event in Europe this year, which was held at the Design Centre in Islington from May 13-16 – they included several of our Egyptian colleagues, but there was not a single Egyptian exhibit by a non-Egyptian member.

We are delighted to congratulate Mahmoud Ramadan (ESC 358) for a Gold medal for his *Egyptian Official Stamps 1893-1922*, which scored 90 points, while Yasser Elshamy (ESC 685) and new member Tarek Mokhtar (ESC 689) both scored 80 points for Vermeil with *Egypt Air Mail Postal History 1926-1939* and – most unusually – *Shibin El-Kom Postmarks 1870-1922*.

In more traditional areas, Richard Wheatley (ESC 168) scored 95 points for a Large Gold with his *Netherland East Indies Mail 1789-1877*, and Stephen Schumann (ESC 679) 90 and Gold for *New Zealand Stamped to Order from Queen Victoria through the Reign of King George VI*.

Jon Aitchison (ESC 661) was marked 87 for *Guernsey Adhesive Revenue Stamps* and 86 for *The Isle of Man Before Postal Independence* for two Large Vermeils; and Greg Todd (ESC 585) scored 83 for a Vermeil for *Venezuela, the Map Issue*. Plaudits to all our winners.

### Another New Definitive and Suez Issue



Sometime during April/May a new definitive appeared for sale. Following the ancient Egyptian theme, it portrays a statue of Amenhotep, son of Hapu, who was an architect, a priest, a scribe, and a public official who held a number of offices under Amenhotep III. Sadly, the artistic merit is not quite as some of the well-designed stamps that have emanated from Egypt over the last two years. The face is indistinct and one only has to compare the stamp with the statue from which it was taken and the Statistical Congress issue of 1927 which also used Amenhotep. The stamp only adds to the puzzle of the reasoning behind this latest definitive set (see *QC* 250 p64,).



It's the same size as the previous 50-piastre stamp but has a £E3 denomination. This is the third £E3 stamp issued in the last two years. Might it reflect another rise in rates, or perhaps printing the much-used £E3 value in a smaller format is to save printing costs. Any ideas?

After the fun of the Suez issue early this year a new se-tenant set was issued to coincide with the early opening of the new section of the Suez canal on August 8<sup>th</sup>. Egypt is to be highly congratulated on this magnificent achievement coming in before the stated completion time. The first day cover also has an accompanying mini sheet and is a large stiffish envelope. There is a 'rumour' this is a limited issue and I wonder if the envelope was used to house an invitation to the opening ceremony. Any ideas on this from Egypt? **Edmund Hall**



•The Philatelic Society of Egypt is organising a Third Continental Philatelic Exhibition to mark the 150th anniversary of the first Egyptian postage stamp.

•The exhibition will be held in the Opera House conference centre on Gezira island in Cairo between December 31 2015 and January 6 2016. Post Day is January 2.

•Study Circle members are invited not only to attend but also to exhibit. ESC member 661 Jon Aitchison is co-ordinating exhibition entries and has entry forms. There will be competitive classes in Traditional Philately, Postal History, Postal Stationery, Aerophilately, Astrophilately, Thematic Philately, Maximaphily, Youth Philately and Revenues. There is a one-frame category for all classes that can be entered without prior qualification. If your exhibit has previously achieved a large vermeil award or higher at a national exhibition you can enter five frames and if it has achieved that level at an international exhibition then you may enter 8 frames.

•Philatelic Society and exhibition officials will be staying at the Pyramisa Hotel just a few minutes' walk from the exhibition centre. We have been able to arrange double rooms (bed and breakfast) for \$67 (\$52 plus \$15 holiday-period supplement) per person per night from December 31 to January 4, while single rooms are \$109 (\$94+\$15 supplement) per night. Bookings outside these dates do not pay the supplement.

•We are still in negotiation over EgyptAir discounts with Cairo travel agents, but direct-flight fares from London at that time appear to be £400 to £500. Flying with a stopover will cost about £300 - but the flight may take much longer.

•Members interested in visiting Cairo for the exhibition should contact Mike Murphy on [egyptstudycircle@hotmail.com](mailto:egyptstudycircle@hotmail.com); those intending to exhibit should contact Jon Aitchison. [britishlocals@aol.com](mailto:britishlocals@aol.com); phone 01279 870488.

## BOOK REVIEW

### **Alexandria - Ramleh - Its development and Postal History, 1863-1929. Second edition (2015).**

By **Ronny Van Pellecom, Peter Grech and Alain Stragier**. 220 pages, A4, hardbound. Published by Ronny Van Pellecom, Antwerp.

Price to ESC members: £60 - €83 - \$92. Non-members: £65 - €90 - \$100. All plus postage & packing. Available from [ronny.van.pellecom@telenet.be](mailto:ronny.van.pellecom@telenet.be).

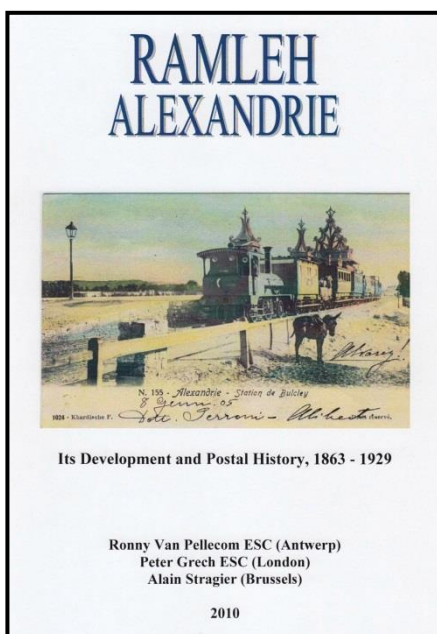
The first edition of this work, *Ramleh - Alexandrie*, published in 2010, was reviewed by Mike Murphy in *QC 233*, and received very positive comments. It spanned 152 pages, and it was asked at the time: "What more can be said about this suburb of Alexandria, with its few post offices on a narrow strip of beaches?"

Well, Ronny Van Pellecom has answered that by finding an additional 50 pages of maps, documents, letters and postcards, squeezed into this de luxe second edition, hardbound in faux-leather.

Packed with illustrations, most of them in colour, it reprises the contents of the first edition, brought up to date with new information from various contributors (in particular the late Peter A.S. Smith), and with additional material discovered by Ronny during many hours of persistent and diligent research in Egypt. A real *tour-de-force*. If there is a minor criticism of the presentation, it is that some pages are over-filled with too much material and that the type-face used is rather small.

The book recounts the story of the evolution of the privately owned Ramleh railway, from its inception (1863) with horse-drawn carriages, via the introduction of steam engines later that year and its conversion to an electric tramway (1903), to its take-over by the Municipality of Alexandria (1929). Thanks to that railway the isolated villas which it originally connected grew into communities. These neighbourhoods needed post offices and their development is fully reported here, with all the known postmarks (and some new ones) systematically tabulated and with examples on cover. Numerous maps and documents bring the story to life, with biographical notes on characters and details of establishments providing fascinating background. The San Stefano Hotel in particular receives extended treatment.

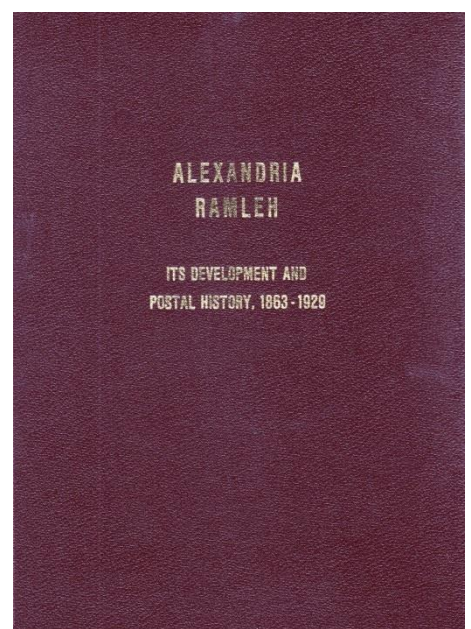
The work retains the original text by Ronny Van Pellecom and Peter Grech, duly expanded in parts. However for this second edition the study of the stations follows the historical extension of the railway, rather than the sequential location of the stations along the final route, as was the case in the first edition. This better highlights the many intermediate stops created later with the urbanisation of the area.



The volume is packed with exciting new photographs unearthed by Ronny, a favourite being the full page picture of one of the steam locomotives in 1886.

Even to those who do not collect that particular area, the book provides much cross-related information about Egypt's social and postal history.

This is a very limited second edition and will no doubt be snapped up, particularly by the many collectors who failed to obtain the sold-out first edition, but also by those who did.



Highly recommended. **Pierre Louis Grech** ESC 266.