

The Quarterly Circular of **THE** **EGYPT** **STUDY CIRCLE**



March Quarter 2024 – Vol XXV No 5 – Whole Series No 288 – Pages 97-120

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Do you own a block of the 1872 20 para like this or larger?

An illustration of your block could be crucial to research. Please see appeal for help on **Page 100**



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Meetings Programme 2024

Sat March 9, 2-4	Union Jack Club	AGM plus Hany Salam	All members
Easter weekend March 28-30	UK National Exhibition	Hosted at the Royal Phil Soc London	
Saturday April 6	Zoom meeting	Bill Barclay – Star and Crescent pmks Ken Sanford – Air Crash mail	Hosted USA
April 18-21	Derby Hotel	Joint meeting with Sudan Study Group	Details from Sec
Saturday June 1	UK meeting	Topic / venue to be announced	
Saturday July 6	Zoom meeting	Malcolm Coe – Egypt/Sudan postal items (1890-1920) and their stories	Hosted London
Saturday Sept 7	UK meeting	Topic / venue to be announced	
Saturday Nov 2	Zoom meeting	Topic(s) to be announced	Hosted USA

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Facebook

Report of a meeting at the Union Jack Club, London, on 2 December 2023

It was a small but brave group that ventured into a dank, freezing and foggy London for our December meeting. Happily, they were met by a warm, convenient and welcoming new venue in the Union Jack Club, just opposite Waterloo Station, with a large bar, restaurant and comfortable meeting room with tea, coffee and frames already set up. Definitely a meeting place for the future. Sadly, however, we were a sparse group: David Ogden (Chairman), Mike Murphy (Secretary / Editor), Mike Bramwell, John Clarke, Keith Nickol, David Sutton. Guest: Letty Nickol. Apologies were received from John Davis (President), Sami Sadek (Treasurer / Auctioneer), Jon Aitchison (Committee), Brian Sedgley (Committee), Paul Green, Richard Wheatley.

The Chairman welcomed those present, and reported that the December *QC* was at the printers. He announced the astonishing work of Amr El-Etreby (ESC 688), who, as Editor of the *L'Orient Philatélique*, has taken on the mammoth task of bringing it up to date since it last ceased publication some eight or ten years ago – and has largely succeeded. He has put ALL back copies on Facebook at <http://tinyurl.com/muy2m8kv> - we congratulate him on a truly astonishing achievement.

Attention then turned to the schedule of meetings for 2024 after the chaos caused by covid: UK in-person meetings: Mar 2, June 1, Sept 7, Dec 7; UK Zoom meetings: Jan 7, July 6; US Zoom meetings: Apr 6, Nov 2. Needless to say, these dates may be subject to change. Each will need a speaker. And *QC* pages need to be filled. So every member can play a role. Since the meeting we have made a start on publishing Zoom meetings on the website and on YouTube, the aim to present every such meeting for members worldwide.

Zoom for all members

Thanks to Malcolm Coe and Neil Hitchens, we are able to watch four recent London Zoom meetings edited and placed on the website and on YouTube. You can find them here:

13 May 23 <https://youtu.be/zQK9Grh8oqY>
26 Aug 23 https://youtu.be/JAurbPCS_sw
21 Oct 23 <https://youtu.be/2zhDBvRsQW0>
7 Jan 24 <https://youtu.be/TsaDWW8HKiE>

In the past 20 years or so we have lost a whole generation of senior collectors and researchers who played an enormous part in maintaining Circle standards, integrity and ideals. To name but a few: John Firebrace, Peter Smith, Lars Alund, Bill Scheetz, Peter Feltus, Stanley Horesh, Peter Andrews, Keith Pogson, Charlie Hass, Bill Andrews, Pip Whetter, Robin Bertram, John Hobbs, Jurgen Settgast, John Grimmer, Dennis Clarke, Cyril Defriez, John Sears, Kurt Wolfsbauer, Hermann Kleinstück, Dick Wilson, Edmund Hall, Leon Balian, Anatole Ott, Tony Chisholm, Alan Jeyes, Peter Goodwin, Samir Fikry, Nabil el-Hadidi, Peter Heim, Sven Eriksson, Andreas Birken, Luca Biolato, Sherif el-Kerdany, Adel Farid, Jurgen Fricke, Ahmed Abu Mousa... overall, an immense loss to our fellowship.

Those hard-hitters are gone. Now it is time for the new generation of members to step up to the plate. We need you – all of you – to volunteer to help with admin, to enter worthwhile material into the Auction, to bid on the Auction, to send articles for the *QC* (research, queries, observations, all of it is interesting to your colleagues), to speak at face-to-face or Zoom meetings. We are all in this together. Every one of us can play a part. We are not yet talking of crisis. But we need volunteers to shore up our defences.

The schedule above should allow members to know where they stand, to suggest dates to attend meetings or even to present them. We earnestly urge all members to consider how best they can keep the Circle flourishing.

The meeting then turned to the informal “Ten Sheets” formula, with Mike Murphy presenting a recent packet of new issues from the Cairo Philatelic Bureau – beautifully produced FDCs in ever-increasing sizes, and almost a full year’s material (mainly 2022) in a single packet. An even larger packet with even larger 2023 FDCs has since been received. We hope to present new issues again when / if our new website is in action. Mike then presented two frames from his postmark studies – the Egyptian Parliament, as it went through various titles reflecting changes in government and governing style; and Government Ministries, headed by a fearsome letter from the taxman with all postal markings standing out in “warning” bright red ink.

The Chairman closed the meeting by wishing all members, present or not, happy collecting in the year to come.

Brian Sedgley (ESC 268): An Appreciation

The broad smile says it all – Brian Sedgley, keeper of the Study Circle purse for just a couple of months under 20 years, was always willing to look on the bright side ... not, admittedly, a common asset for a Treasurer, but one that suited the man and the way he lived and worked. We are saddened to have to report his passing on January 21 at the age of 85.

Brian joined the Circle in August 1982 and was a life-long enthusiast for the intricate postmarks of Egyptian offices both at home and abroad, consular on Egyptian soil and overseas around the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, always ready to show his treasures, and proud of finding an unrecorded Giza negative seal accompanied by a Type II-4n postmark on an 1869 wrapper. He contributed to whatever display was on show from his apparently inexhaustible collection and stepped into the breach with his trusty notebook and pencil when the Treasurer post became vacant in May 2004. For many years he was also a leading member of the Sudan Study Group.



Born in May 1938, he was an inveterate traveller, including National Service on Christmas Island nuclear test site and long spells working for BOAC and Middle East Airlines, which provided a “second home” in Beirut for Brian and his wife Sarah. The couple met when he was in the Army and she was still at school! Both loved cruise holidays, together with recent breaks in Abu Dhabi and Mexico – and there was always the flat on the Isle of Wight to enjoy with their four beautiful daughters and seven grandchildren.

Sarah and Brian, who recently celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary, enjoyed several of our Circle visits to Egypt, the most recent being in 2019 when Brian distinguished himself as a master raconteur and Sarah proved an adept haggler for the souvenir treasures of the Khan el-Khalili.

A keen enthusiast for rugby union, Brian was for years a member of the Weybridge Vandals club, where his infectious enthusiasm made him the centre of conversations serious and much less so, and this outlook on life gave him a special place too among Circle members. We are sorry to have lost a wonderful collector and researcher, a real enthusiast, but most of all a true gentleman and an excellent friend.

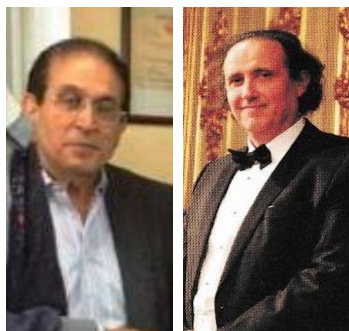
Mike Murphy

Change at the top in Cairo elections

There was keen voting and a change at the top in the recent elections for the Philatelic Society of Egypt, our sister group in Cairo. Hany Salam (ESC 580, *right below*) was elected President in place of Sherif Samra (ESC 311, *left*), who had headed the group since 2006.



Society bylaws state that every member should vote to select nine of the 23 candidates, those nine forming the incoming Board. Its first duty is to organise an internal election to represent the group's officers. In the general assembly election 101 members voted, ranking the candidates as follows: Hany Salam, Mohamed Omar, Sherif Samra, Hisham Bassyouny (ESC 391), Ali Abdelmeguid (ESC 746), Khaled Moustapha (ESC 638), Akram Toubar, Hassan Elbadry, Samir Nabih (ESC 505), Sherif Hamza, Sherif Elfar, Essam Saleh (ESC 667), Ahmed Youssef, Dawood Messiha, Amr Eletreby (ESC 688), Mamdouh Mously, Khaled Abubakr, Mohamed Yehya, Yasser Omar, Ahmed Elkerdany, Nael Hamdy, Ibrahim Hanafy and Amir Elmalah. Sherif Hamza obtaining the same number of votes as Nabih, he conceded to the advantage of the latter.



The internal election for officer positions resulted in Hany Salam as President, Bassyouny as Vice President, Akram as Secretary and Elbadry Treasurer. After the vote Samra and Moustapha resigned from the Board, giving up their places to Hamza and Elfar. The Circle wishes all successful candidates *elf mabruk!*

The MacArthur plating of the 1872 20 para

An undiscovered setting or a MacArthur error?

A CALL FOR ADDITIONAL BLOCKS

Ramez Atiya (ESC 246)

Major E.L.G MacArthur's plating of the 20 para 1872 is one of the monumental studies of Egyptian philately. The 20 para is replete with flaws, allowing MacArthur to reconstruct the 20 para sheet almost completely. Since the 1970s his reconstruction has been accepted as the final word. However, a recent review of available blocks, consisting of more than one hundred different stamps, shows the conclusion to be premature. The block below shows a discrepancy between MacArthur's plating and the flaws on the block.



Does this block represent positions 63-65/73-75/83-85 ?

The corresponding positions as identified by MacArthur and those on the block are shown below. Flaws associated with positions 66, 76 and 86 were not determined by MacArthur. The comparison is therefore restricted to stamps of the first and third columns. We begin with the third column, positions 65, 75 and 85.



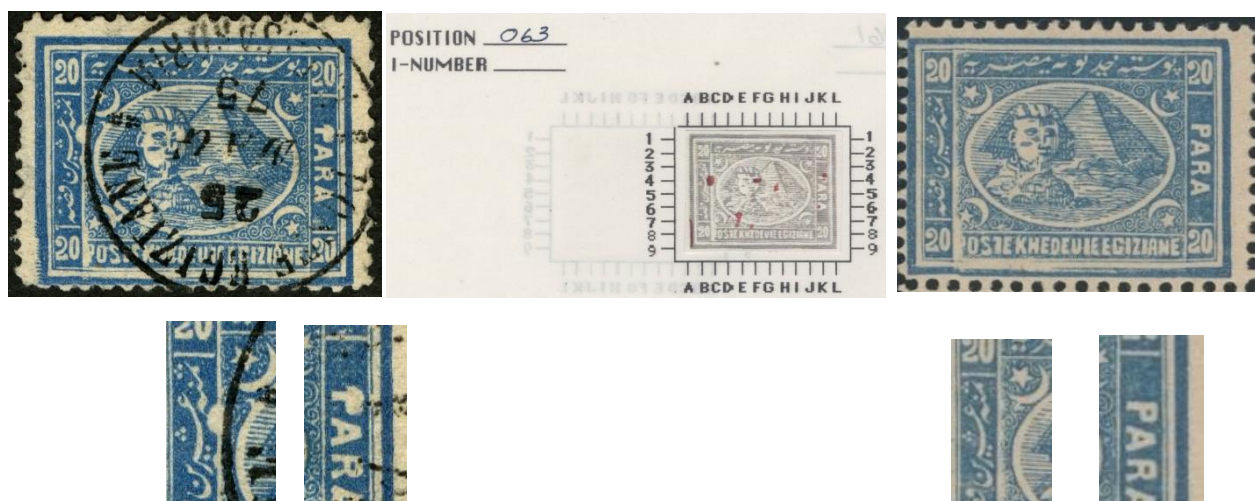
The identifying flaw on position 65 is the white flaw in the oval vignette above the Sphinx. The upper right hand corner stamp of our block should therefore be position 65. If it is, then the stamp below should be position 75 and should exhibit the identifying flaws determined by MacArthur. This is indeed the case, as can be seen in the illustration below. MacArthur shows several flaws, including a hole in the wig of the Sphinx and a white

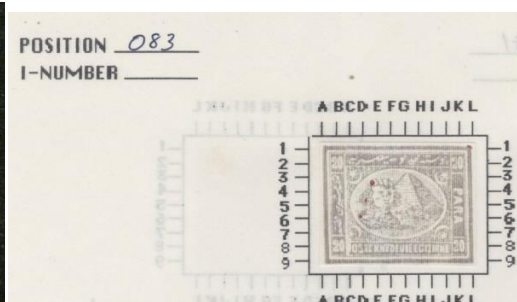
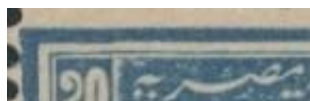
bar over its head. Moving down to position 85 shows the same flaws on the stamp as identified by MacArthur. Although there is some question, the flaws identified by MacArthur as position 85 seem also to match those on the lower right corner stamp. Thus, the stamps of the right column match position by position those in the MacArthur plating, showing the same flaws, and were therefore printed from the same stereotypes.



The middle column of stamps, anticipated to be 64, 74 and 84, were not plated by MacArthur. We therefore come to the left column, purportedly positions 63, 73 and 83. The MacArthur plating of these positions is shown below. It is evident that the stereotypes from which this block and those from which MacArthur determined his positional flaws are different. The differences are shown in enlargement for positions 63 and 73. Although not as pronounced, the flaws on 83 are also different. The corresponding positions do not share known constant flaws and were therefore printed from different stereotypes.

There are two explanations for these discrepancies. It could be that MacArthur simply misidentified column three of the sheet. After all, his plating was partially carried out by identifying irregularities in the perforations, not an easy task. A second possibility is that there was an as yet unidentified second setting of the 20 para! This would be a major discovery. Although this might seem *prima facie* unlikely, a plausible account for a second setting is now examined.





Was there another setting of the 20 para 1872 ?

It is a well-established fact that the positions of flaws on surface printed examples is different from those on the lithographed sheet. This is shown below on two blocks sharing the badly damaged frame of position 38 on the surface printed stamps.



Surface printed 37-38/47-48

Corresponding blocks



Lithographed block with flaw of surface printed position 38

The lower right hand corner stamp and position 38 of the surface printed sheet are the married pair shown in more detail below.



Position 38 - Surface printed



Corresponding flaw on litho printed

The remaining three stamps are not paired. The left hand surface printed stamp, position 37, shows dramatic constant flaws that are unmistakably absent in the lithographed block.



Position 37- Surface printed



Corresponding SW stamp on litho block



The surface printed stamps were the first to be printed. The design was then copied from the printing plate to a lithographic stone using transfer paper. It would have been very difficult to copy the entire plate using a single sheet of wet, inked transfer paper without creasing. The different arrangement of stamps on the lithographed and surface printed is evidence that the transfer was carried out in sections. This could have been done by inking blocks on the metal printing plate and then, using transfer paper, copying block after block on to the stone. If so, the image from the surface printed plate would not have been transferred to the same corresponding location on the lithographic stone. This would explain the positional mismatch between flaws on the lithographed and surface printed sheets.

Alternatively, the 200 stereo printing plate could have first been dismantled and smaller groups of stereos then rearranged into smaller blocks. Transfers could then have been carried out from these smaller blocks to the lithographic stone. This would also explain the different arrangement of flaws on the lithographic and surface printed sheets. Once the transfer was complete, the blocks of stereos could have been reassembled into the 200 stereo metal printing plate. However, the blocks need not have been arranged in their original positions. If so, the plate would be a new setting of the same stereos!

At this stage, it is impossible to determine if MacArthur was in error or if indeed there is a second setting. More blocks are required: 112 stamps in blocks of four or larger have been examined. All but the block shown at the beginning match MacArthur's plating position by position. There are undoubtedly many more blocks in members' collections. In the best collaborative tradition of the Egypt Study Circle, we request that members send images of their multiples to our editor, Mike Murphy.

Chance for a royal station postmark?

Hot on the heels of the restoration of the Cairo central post office building with its magnificent postal museum and the old Aswan post office, the Egyptian government is opening up a new area of postal services – by turning King Fuad's private railway station in Kafr el-Sheikh into a post office. Fuad and the royal family often visited the area in



the north central Delta and in 1934 he ordered a station to be built on Gueish Street, close to his palace, to receive his guests. For many years it has been left to crumble quietly, but a seven-month restoration by the ministries of communications and transport has brought it back to life. And it seems there is more to come. The ministries plan to reclaim 13 more railway authority stations as post offices in Giza, Benha, Damanhour, Sidi Bishr, Hamoul, Suez, Asyut, Beni Suef, Sohag, Luxor and Edfu. A chance for a new series of Station postmarks?

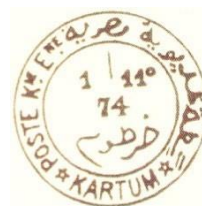
The 'philatelic nation' of Upper Egypt, Nubia & Sudan

Mahmoud Ramadan (ESC 358)

This article continues the exploration of early Egypt mails from QC 287, pp 78-83

Integration of the services of the Vice-Regal Egyptian Post and the Mohamed Aly Post had been completed by 1872-73. Middle Egypt was already served by PVRE before the Asyut office was opened in 1872, but the opening of further PVRE offices in towns and cities to the south created what might well be described as a "philatelic nation" in Upper Egypt, Nubia and Sudan.

The region of the "Philatelic Nation" had significantly different circumstances from the area to its north, most important of which was the extent of illiteracy, and the very small number of European residents. This compelled PVRE to focus on using Arabic as a main language in its "general purpose" cancellations while PVRE cancellers elsewhere were inscribed in Italian only, resulting in special cancellers unique to this region of Upper Egypt, Nubia and Sudan. The first of these are Smith Types IV-4 and IV-6, both of which are double-ring Arabic/Italian cancellations. Only the Khartoum cancel of the IV-4 series includes a date, all the others are undated. These cancellations were used only in the "philatelic nation" region, between October 1873 and the middle or end of 1874, varying according to the supply of the next generation of cancellers, Type V-4.



Folded letter, Khartoum to Cairo. Correctly franked 2 piasters and cancelled with the first cds used in Khartoum. Smith Type IV-4, dated 7 December 1873. Information strike to the right. Verso: Asyut transit 31.12.1873 and Cairo arrival 1.1.1874. The PVRE post office in Khartoum opened on 1 October 1873.

This cover was carried by the Mohamed Aly Post staff on camel-back to the Asyut PVRE office. There it entered the PVRE postal system for delivery to Cairo by rail. This is the earlier of only two covers recorded with this cancellation.

The very first PVRE cds used in Khartoum. Earliest recorded usage October 1873 on stamp. Latest November 1874. Stagg Type 9. Smith & Feltus Type IV-4. Also listed by Chaftar.









Peter Feltus reported on page 36 of the *Egyptian Postal Markings 1865 to 1879* study created for the Egypt Study Circle that Type IV-5 was initially reported as being a second "dated" cancellation for Wadi Halfe, but that it is now believed not to exist.










This Type IV-1 double-ring cancellation should not be confused with the smaller ones used only in Alexandria and Cairo, Smith Types IV-3 & IV-3.1, used during the same period.



Feltus and Ibrahim Chaftar agreed on the nine PVRE offices that used Type IV-4 cancellations (only Khartoum was dated) and the eight offices using Type IV-6. However Feltus also reported that an incomplete example for Kara(*skou*) with a double-ring cancellation on a Karaskou interpostal seal was included in the Smith auction at Corinthia on 28 May 2015. Accordingly a total of only ten post offices have been recorded using this type. They are believed to be the most difficult Egyptian cancellation to be found on entire or cover. The dated Type IV-4 Khartoum is illustrated on cover on the previous page.

The nine undated cancellations, listed geographically north to south: Suhag – Gherga – Kena – Luxor – Esna – Assouan – Karaskou – Wadi Halfe – Dongola.

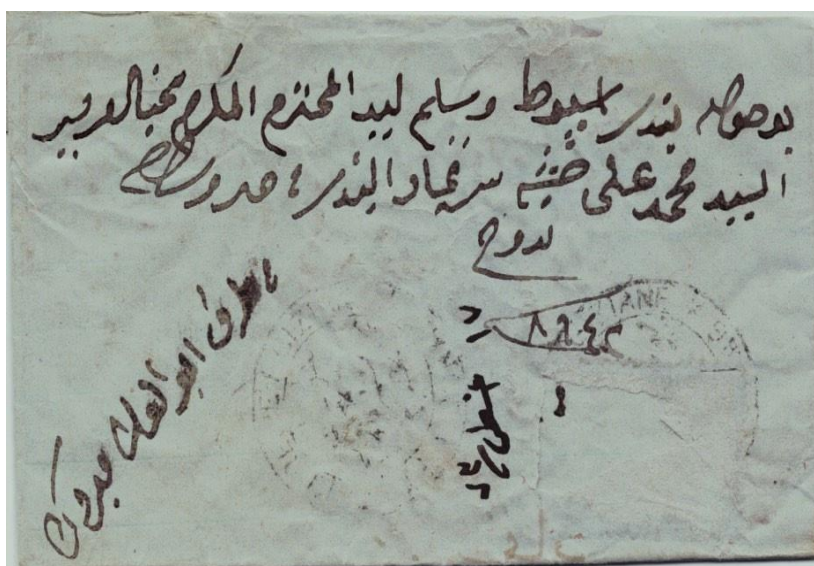
<p><u>SUHAG</u>: PVRE post office opened 1.10.1873. Interpostal seal Kehr Type V-a (1872-74) spells town as SOKAG! No clear or complete strikes known. Only one cover from the Asyut Find bearing this cancellation (<i>see below</i>). No MAP negative seal recorded.</p>	 <p><i>Copied from L'OP 86 April 1954, page 371</i></p>	 <p><i>Even when the two stamps are superimposed, K or H cannot be read. Colour variation is a scanning difficulty</i></p>
<p><u>GHERGA</u>: PVRE post office opened 1.10.1873. I have not seen any covers bearing this cds, and only one stamp, in my collection (<i>illustrated here</i>). No covers recorded. MAP negative seal recorded.</p>	 <p><i>Copied from same source</i></p>	 <p><i>The only example in my collection</i></p>
<p><u>KENA</u>: PVRE post office opened 1.10.1873. Only one cover in the Asyut Find bearing this cancellation. MAP negative seal recorded.</p>	 <p><i>Copied from same source</i></p>	
<p><u>LUXOR</u>: PVRE post office opened 1.10.1873. My collection has only one cover (ex Bolaffi, <i>see below</i>), no other cover has been seen. No MAP negative seal recorded.</p>	 <p><i>Copied from same source</i></p>	

<p><u>ESNA</u>: PVRE post office opened 1.10.1873. Asyut Find included three covers bearing this cancellation, one in good condition, two damaged. MAP negative seal is recorded.</p>	 <p><i>Copied from same source</i></p>	
<p><u>ASSOUAN</u>: PVRE post office opened 1.10.1873. Asyut Find included only one cover bearing this cancel. Stamps are also a rarity. MAP negative seal known.</p>	 <p><i>Copied from same source</i></p>	
<p><u>KARASKOU</u>: PVRE post office opened 1.10.1873. Also spelled Korosko. Currently under the waters of Lake Nasser.</p> <p>Believed, with Wadi Halfa and Dongola to be the rarest of all the Type IV-6 cancellations.</p>	<p>Not recorded by Chaftar. Recorded but not seen by Feltus.</p> <p>Smith auction included an interpostal Seal [Kehr Vc # 296] with incomplete strikes (see right)</p>	
<p><u>WADI HALFE</u>: PVRE post office opened 1.10.1873. Nile River port in north of Sudan.</p> <p>Two records of interpostal seals bearing cancellation IV-6, one by Chaftar, <i>LO'P</i> 86, April 1954, p 370, another in the Smith auction at Corinphila May 2015, Lot 5719.</p>	 <p><i>Copied from L'OP 86, April 1954, page 371</i></p>	 <p><i>Copied from Corinphila Auction May 2015</i></p>
<p><u>DONGOLA</u>: PVRE post office opened 1.10.1873. On the Nile south of Wadi Halfa.</p> <p>Can trace only one image of this cancellation used on a stamp, by Chaftar.</p>	 <p><i>Copied from same source</i></p>	 <p><i>Copied from L'OP 86, April 1954, page 370</i></p>

Type IV-4 and IV-6 cancellations deserve credit for being:

1. The RAREST of the PVRE circular obliterations to be found on cover, and possibly on stamps as well.
2. The first PVRE circular canceller with bilingual inscription.
3. The first PVRE circular canceller using Arabic in its inscription: that is, other than the all-Arabic negative seals previously produced and used by MAP.
4. The first PVRE “general purpose” circular cancellation handstamp that was issued for a specific region: that is, the region of the “philatelic nation”.
5. Type IV-6 is the first “general purpose” circular obliterator of the 19th century without a date: other than use of the retta as a “stamp canceller”, January-April 1866.
6. In use only 1872-1874, they appear only on Third Issue stamps of Egypt.

A postal announcement dated 25 June 1880, stated that *effective 30 June 1880 Postal Steamers will carry post between Asyut and Assouan, and that the post will no longer be carried by messengers*. It is my interpretation that these messengers are MAP couriers, now integrated with PVRE. Accordingly, all letters dispatched from within the “philatelic nation” before 30 June 1880 would have been physically hand carried by messengers [former MAP couriers].

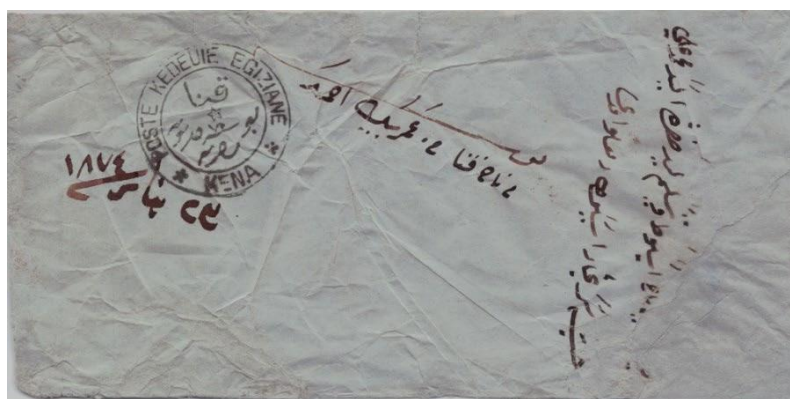


Folded entire from SUHAG to ASYUT. The only one from the Asyut Find bearing cancel Type IV-6, but with stamp removed by peeling, leaving a tear in the SE corner.

A complete faint strike at left. Arabic manuscript date between the two strikes states 17 August 73. Asyut arrival cds on reverse 18 August 1873.

I have not so far seen any cover bearing the cancellation Type IV-6 originating from Gherga and will now re-examine the damaged goods from the Asyut Find for traces of any such cover.

For clarification, both towns Suhag and Gherga fall in the same mudirieh, originally called Gherga mudirieh with its capital at Gherga. In the 1950s the area became Suhag Mudirieh, with its capital at Suhag.



Folded outer wrapper from Kena to Asyut bearing Type IV-6 cancellation on front [Above, restored at SE corner]. Below the cancel is the date 23 January 1874.

Reverse at left carries the franking with 1872 1 pi red. Cancelled with KENA Type IV-6, and arrival at Asyut on 26 GEN 1874. At the time Asyut was written SIUT.

Both images reduced.



Entire sent from Luxor to USA. Franked 1872 5 pi green cancelled Type IV-6 Luxor, information strike at left, with MS date 22/2/74.

Transit postmarks on back. Travelled to Asyut (Siut) by postal messenger, arrived 24/2/1874. Thence to Cairo and Alexandria by railway, arriving 26/2 and 27/2 respectively. Passed to British P.O. in Alexandria 1 MR 74 [4 of year is reversed sideways].

Front: London Paid 9 MR 74 via New York where credited 2 cents, to Taunton, Mass 23 March, and redirected to New Bedford with framed "Forwarded" and Due 3. Arrived New Bedford, Mass same day, 23 March 1874.

Ex Bolaffi collection. Reduced image.



Folded entire from Esna to Asyut. Franked 1872 red 1 pi. Cancelled ESNA Type IV-6. Rotate image 180 degrees to see cancellation upright. SIUT arrival on back 12.12.1873.

From the Asyut Find, along with another. Note that in both there was no information strike nor any manuscript date of dispatch. Carried to Esna by postal messenger.



A third folded entire from the Asyut Find, with stamp peeled off. Sent from Assouan to Asyut with a complete strike to the right of the stamp position.

**Manuscript date 27 August 73.
SUIT arrival 3 SET 1873 on reverse**

No covers cancelled with Type IV-6 have been seen for KARASKOU – WADI HALFE – DONGOLA.

Several of the above covers, specifically those from the Asyut Find of 2016, predate the post office opening date of 1.10.1873 stated by Feltus. Note for instance SUHAG dispatch 17.8.1873 and ASSOUAN dispatch 27.8.1873. These dates warrant a review of the opening dates, at least in Upper Egypt.

This article about sums up my study of cancellations Type IV-4 and IV-6. But the “philatelic nation” continues with Type V-4. Along with other odd cancels used in specific towns.

This review will be completed in the next issue of the QC, No 289 (June)

Marc Pourpe Cairo-Khartoum II: The mails

Jos Strengtholt (ESC 606)

This article forms the conclusion of the Marc Pourpe article in QC 287, pp.86-90

Paul Saulgrain describes in his important study *Un Pionnier de l'Aviation et du Service Postal Aérien*, Marc Pourpe a total of 28 postal items with the distinctive cachet that he had managed to find in private collections and through auctions. He did this shortly before the year 2000, when the internet did not have such helpful heuristics as today. The fact that he traced 28 pieces of mail was a feat. It was child's play that I managed to find two more with Pourpe's cachet.



What binds these postal items is the cachet. The franking and use of the 30 envelopes and cards gives a chaotic impression. Some are not franked, others are correctly or philatelically franked. A few seem never to have flown but were stamped by Pourpe as a nice souvenir. Clearly most of the mail items were really flown.

In this article I show eight mail items for which I was able to get hold of useful images and give a short description of each. I also indicate which mail items Saulgrain describes and which I add to his “catalog”.

Mail Item 1: Saulgrain shows this envelope from the renowned watchmaker L. Kramer, addressed to Lewa (General) Crawford Pacha, The Palace, Khartoum. The letter it contains is dated 22 December 1913, so right before Pourpe made a failed attempt at departure.

In 2016 this letter was offered for sale at the Argyll Etkin auction house. It is likely that the purple stamp was created and put on the envelope only after the December 22 flight had failed.



Mail Item 2: Pourpe wrote this letter himself, as we know from the handwriting to his friend and aviation journalist Mortane. The cancellation of the TPO Shallal-Halfa is 10 I 14, so Pourpe must have posted this envelope during his stay in Wadi Halfa (January 7-9). He bought the envelope with the pre-printed Sudanese stamp of 5 mills in Wadi Halfa, and had to add 5 mills for shipment to Paris. The mail went by train to Shallal (Aswan) and although the Pourpe cachet is on the letter I see no evidence that it ever flew unless he had already bought the pre-printed Sudan envelope in Egypt, which is very unlikely.

Saulgrain describes this cover. I found an image on the Cherrystone Auctions website where it was sold in 2020. Additional information on that website reveals that the back of the envelope has the datestamp of Aswan, 11 I 14, and the arrival stamp in Paris 17 Janv 1914.

Mail item 3: Envelope written by Pourpe and addressed to a lady in Shoubra, Cairo. The envelope with preprinted Sudanese 5 mills stamp was bought in Sudan, perhaps during the stopover in Wadi Halfa (January 7-9) or Abu Hamed (January 9-12), or during Pourpe's week in Khartoum. Given the harsh nature of the return flight, it seems unlikely to me that Pourpe bought the envelope on his return flight and wrote a letter on the way back, but in theory it could have happened during stops at Atbara, Abu Hamed, Station 6 or Wadi Halfa.

The envelope was flown back to Cairo and on arrival at the Heliopolis post office the 3 mills stamp was added and datestamped (3 II 14, 5-6pm). It then went with the normal Egyptian mail to Shoubra, no doubt via the Cairo post office. This letter experienced at least part of the return flight from Sudan. Saulgrain describes this letter. The website of the auction house Corinthia shows that it was auctioned in 2018.

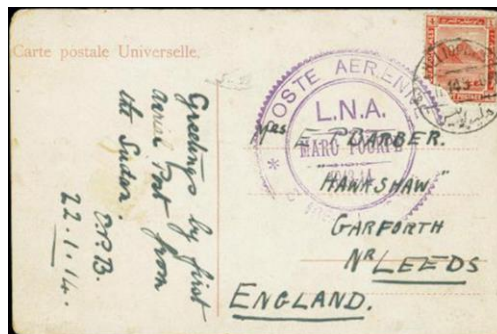


Mail Item 4: Pourpe sent this letter from Khartoum to Cairo, to Antoine Bianchi of the L.N.A. The envelope with a pre-printed Sudanese stamp of 5 mills is franked with 8 mills, which was too much for a letter to Cairo. Datestamped at the Khartoum post office (17 I 1914, 5pm), it was then carried by train to Cairo by the Sudanese and Egyptian postal services.

On arrival the date of receipt was stamped on the back: 21 JA 14, 8.30pm. The letter arrived in Cairo long before Pourpe returned by plane. I agree with Saulgrain that this letter never flew. The envelope is displayed on the Egypt Study Circle website.

Mail item 5: Dated 22 January 1914, when Pourpe flew back from Khartoum to Cairo. This card was probably given to him in Wadi Halfa. We know the sender, E.P. Barber; he worked for the railways and lived in Atbara, says Saulgrain in describing it. Did Barber himself frank the card with 4 mills?

On arrival at Heliopolis it is cancelled with 3 II 14, 5-6pm as the departure stamp. From there it was sent by the Egyptian postal service to Leeds, England. At least five other mail items were sent with Pourpe by Barber. This card was found on the Cherrystone Auctions website in 2020.



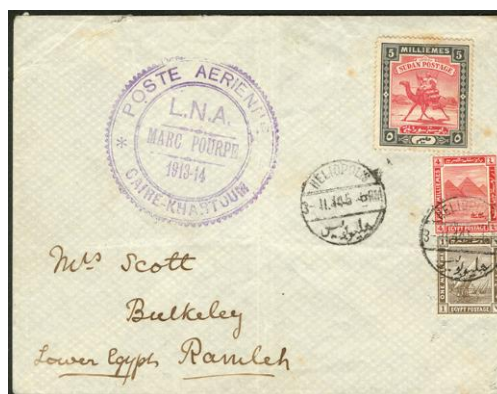
Mail item 6: At the auction of this item from the John Sears collection (2020), it was stated that this letter was given to Pourpe in Atbara, on the way back to Cairo. Saulgrain maintains that it was given to Pourpe on the way to Khartoum. I suspect that both base their opinions on data from a letter accompanying the envelope, but the cover itself does not provide this information.

In either case, it has travelled at least partly by air. The 5 mills Sudan stamp is not cancelled; on arrival the stamps were cancelled Heliopolis 3 II 14, 5-6pm. The letter continued by train and boat to Manchester, with an arrival date-stamp of 10 February

1914. This item was auctioned through the LOT-Art website.

Mail Item 7: This appears to have been sent by the person who sent Mail Item 6, given the handwriting and identical postage. Did the sender frank the letter by himself? Did he give both letters to Pourpe at the same time? It seems so. This cover was also partly carried by air. On arrival the stamps were cancelled (the usual 3 II 14, 5-6pm), to travel by train next day to Bulkely post office via Sidi Gaber, as witnessed on the reverse.

Saulgrain did not have this letter available when writing his book. I found this image on the Facebook page of the French auction house Roumet, dated 4 November 2021. The asking price was €3,500; the final price is not stated. In February 2023 the item was again for sale at Roumet, now starting at €2,000.



Mail Item 8: Written by Pourpe himself, judging by the handwriting, to Bristol, England. The envelope is provided only with an Egyptian stamp. Since it was mailed hours after arriving in Cairo (3 II 14, 5-6pm) and Pourpe must have been busy with the necessary festivities, it is likely that he wrote the letter before arriving in Heliopolis. So it may have flown some of the way. That there is no Sudanese stamp gives the impression that it was written when Pourpe was already on his way back in Egypt. That may have been in Aswan, Luxor or Assiut; in each of those places he rested one or more days. Saulgrain did not have this letter available; I came across it on the Grosvenor auction house website.

Airmail?

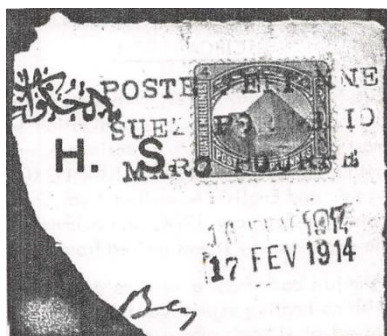
What is most striking, and it is strange that I do not read that conclusion anywhere in Saulgrain, is that not a single letter or card was cancelled on departure from Cairo. This applies not only to the items accompanying this article but also to all others shown by Saulgrain. On arrival in Khartoum, many items were franked with one or more Sudanese stamps, but these were cancelled only if Pourpe left them for further delivery by the postal service. When he took them on his plane, they had no cancellation from the postal services.

It seems clear to me from the 30 pieces of mail I saw that the post offices that placed their cancels on the items did so only if they were responsible for transporting that letter or card to the addressee through their own formal postal systems. Pourpe received no cancellations on the mail he transported by air, neither on departure nor on arrival. Most of the postmarks on the pieces are from Heliopolis, and all are dated February 3, 1914, 5-6PM, so those are departure postmarks formally unrelated to the mail flight.

Why would postal clerks put their cancel on stamps if their department was not to deliver them? This approach by the Egyptian and Sudanese postal services raises the question of whether we should regard these letters from Pourpe as airmail. Given the role Borton played in Cairo, and the fact that the post office in Khartoum gave Pourpe a package of letters, you would think so, but they stuck to their formal responsibilities. You cannot say that these post offices really co-operated with this first mail flight. The best we can say is that these were letters that were transported by air. But even that was still absolutely unique, and certainly a big step forward in the development of organised formal airmail.

It is not clear how the senders paid for the cards and envelopes. It seems that Pourpe received pre-addressed mail before he left Heliopolis and on stopovers, and then added the Marc Pourpe cachet. It is not clear whether the letters were franked by the sender or whether they paid Pourpe so that he could arrange the franking himself.

Some publications say that Pourpe actually flew to Egypt to take part in an "Aviation Week" at Heliopolis from 2-12 January 1914. Saulgrain says it was supposed to be an "aerial meeting" from 19-21 February. If this is correct, Pourpe does not seem to have been involved in that meeting after all. He was on his way to Khartoum in early January, and we know that he flew from Suez to Port Said on February 17. On that flight he also carried some mail. A cancellation stamp was made for this purpose, consisting of three lines.



POSTE AERIE
SUEZ - PORT SAID
MARC POURPE

Only one complete piece of mail is known to have been sent, from the French consulate in Suez to its Port Said counterpart, with the three-line handstamp cancelling the 5 mills adhesive and on the reverse. Furthermore, a fragment of a letter is known; in 1988 it was sold by the German auction house Heinrich Köhler for about \$5800.

On 4 March 1914 Pourpe returned to Marseille by boat from Port Said. Five months later, the First World War began. Pourpe enlisted with the French Air Force as a pilot to drop bombs on German targets. He served (*right*) with the Escadrille N23, which used the Morane-Saulniers aircraft he so trusted. In his interview in *Je Sais Tout* four months before the war he indicated that he believed flying would serve purposes other than pleasure. The L.N.A. to which he belonged had been founded in 1908 to make France militarily strong in aviation, in direct response to Count Zeppelin's creation of the German Air League.



As a Private Second Class, Pourpe had flown nearly 80 hours on 30 missions when he and his co-pilot, Lt. Eugène Vauglin, died on 2 December 1914. Their aircraft crashed on a reconnaissance flight over the Somme. The conclusion was that he was not used to the cold European climate after his adventures in the tropics. Even after his death, Pourpe was still remembered on French postcards (*at left, in the French trenches on the Somme*).



Finally, a small tribute to Raoul Lufbery (*right*). Pourpe could not have completed this flight and this interesting form of airmail without his mechanic. He would never have taken off from Cairo.

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marc_Pourpe (accessed May 3, 2022)
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 J.H.E. Gilbert, "Marc Pourpe (II)", in *L'Orient Philatélique* (Vol X No 100, Janvier-Avril 1959), pp. 741-747.
 Peter Smith, *Egypt: Stamps & Postal History - A Philatelic Treatise* (Limassol, 1999)
 Thierry Le Roy, *Marc Pourpe, L'Aviateur de L'Orient* (2021)

Various auction house websites are mentioned in the text. Provided that their company name was mentioned, those auction houses were happy to allow the usage of images from their websites.

Mediterranean and Aegean shipwrecks 1917-18: Part I

Ken Sanford (ESC 762)

A number of shipwrecks in the Mediterranean and Aegean in 1917-18 – most of them torpedoed by German U-boats – have an Egyptian connection. The aim of this article is to add information never before published in philatelic journals to the list of cachets and markings on recovered mails provided by John Firebrace (ESC 71) in his 1991 book *British Empire Campaigns and Occupations in the Near East, 1914-1924*, pages 433-34.

June 1917, Salonika, Greece

The French mail ship *Saint Louis V* sailed from Salonika on 3 June 1917 and was torpedoed by the U-boat UC-38 on June 15 off Taormina, Sicily. She was damaged and was towed into Messina, Italy, for repairs. Firebrace records four covers from this incident; a further small number of non-registered covers and at least one postcard are also recorded

London Inland Section cachets used in relation with *Saint Louis V* covers:

DAMAGED BY IMMERSION
IN SEA WATER.—I.S

Type 1: with APO SX 4 - 29 May 17
and FPO T 22 - 1 June 1917

DAMAGED BY IMMERSION
IN SEA WATER

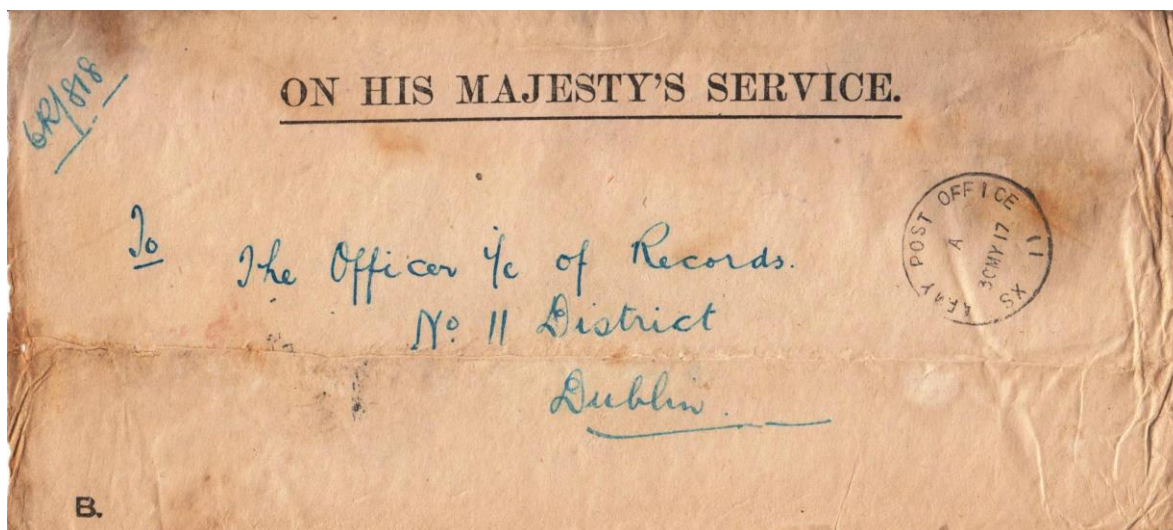
Type 2: with APO SX 11 - 31 May 17
and FPO T 27 – 1 June 1917

We examine several covers connected with the *Saint Louis V*, including (*below*) a cover with a Type I cachet, followed by two “Ambulance” covers that enclosed salvaged mails from the stricken vessel.



Cover with Type 1 cachet – ex George Crabb collection

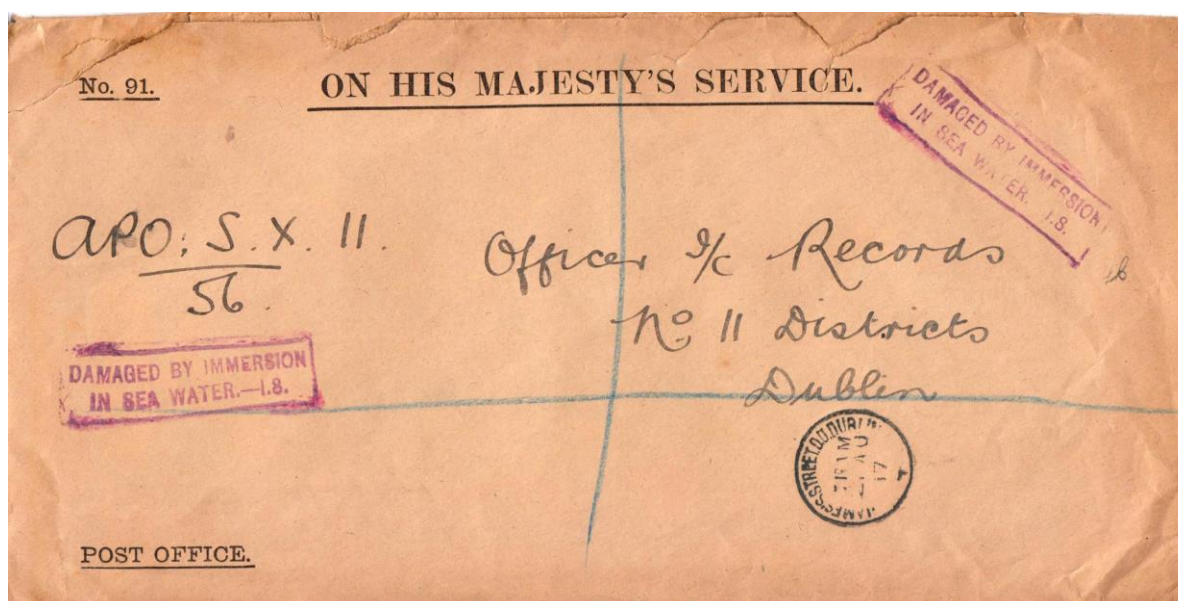
The OHMS “Ambulance” cover at the top of the next page is addressed to The Officer i/c of Records. No 11 District, Dublin. Cancelled APO SX 11 – Code A – 30 May 1917, it travelled via Base APO X as shown by a backstamp with the same date. Not censored.



The OHMS Post Office “Ambulance” cover No 91 (*below*) was used to forward the *Saint Louis V* cover shown above, addressed like the last to Officer i/c Records, No 11 District, Dublin.

Endorsed APO SX 11 No 56 in manuscript, it was despatched from London 20 August 1917 as shown by the London Registered backstamp, and received at JAMES STREET Dublin the next day.

Two strikes of the Type I cachet of the London Inland Section were applied.

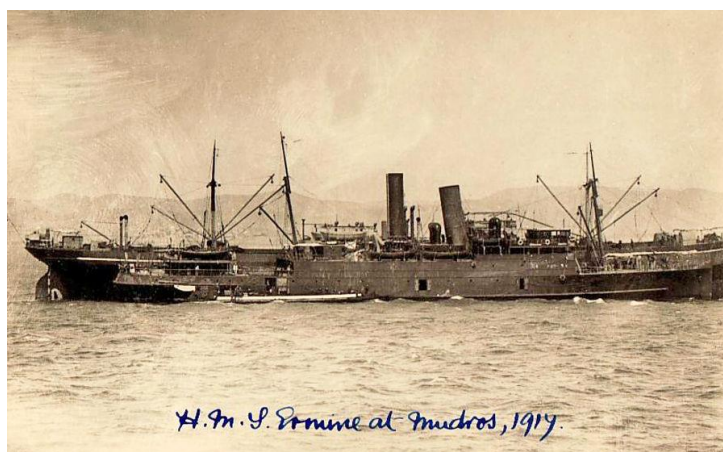


Blue crossed lines denote Registration

The majority of OHMS mail shows transit backstamps, suggesting that it was recorded and treated in the same way as Registered mails.

August 1917, Salonika, Greece

On 2 August 1917, the Fleet Messenger *HMS Ermine* was sunk by a torpedo from the German U-boat UC-23 in the north-west Aegean. A cover from APO SX 11 dated 1 August and addressed to 3 Royal Marines Battalion, Mudros, is known with manuscript endorsement in three lines in ink “Saved from Fleet Messenger ‘Ermine’ 2.8.17”. *Ermine* was a trawler armed with a single three-pounder gun.



H.M.S. Ermine with manuscript caption: at Mudros 1917

April 1918. E.E.F

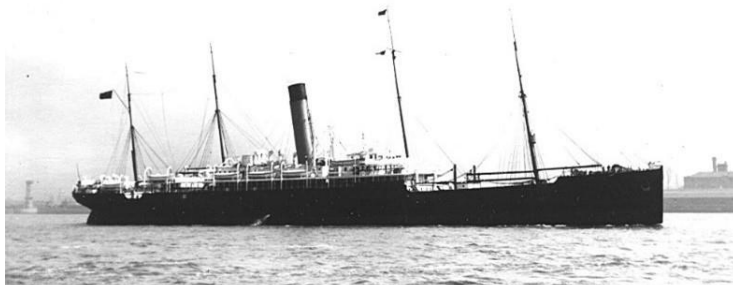
Post Office circular dated 23 April 1918 states:

Delay to Mails from Egypt. Considerable delay may be expected in the arrival of the mails which left Egypt on 4 April containing about a fortnight's correspondence from the Egypt and Palestine front, and possibly some of the mails have been lost."

Allowing for the time that it would take information to reach London and the fact that Post Office circulars were published weekly, the very distinct likelihood is that the casualty occurred between April 4 and 15.

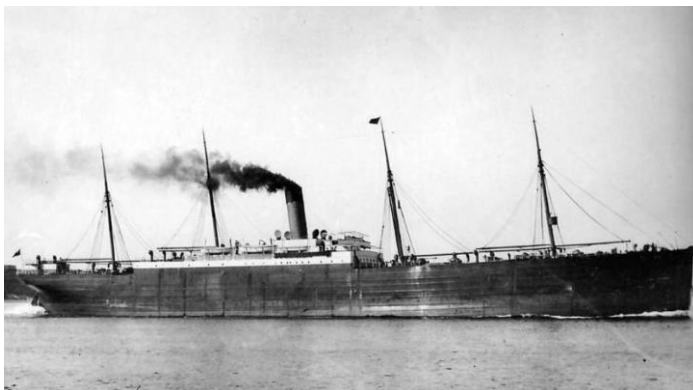
British Vessels Lost at Sea 1914-18 includes a section on merchant vessels attacked, reporting that four vessels were torpedoed by German submarines (U-boats) in the Mediterranean between April 4 and 15. Three of these vessels were beached and the fourth reached port. All four were noted in some detail:

- The *SS Airedale* was attacked on 10 April 1918 by a torpedo from the German U-boat UC-52 and beached herself. A tramp steamer of 3,044 gross tons, she was built in 1899 at West Hartlepool, England, by William Gray & Co., and was owned by Charles A. Stewart & Co., of London.
- The *SS Sunik* was attacked on April 9 by the same U-boat as the *Airedale* and beached. An attack by another German torpedo earlier in the month had missed. Built in 1915 by Armstrong Whitworth & Co., Liverpool, she was owned by the Sunik Oil Transport Co. of London. The *Sunik* was carrying bulk petroleum and was 5,017 gross tons.
- The *SS Warwickshire* (right) was attacked on April 10 by a torpedo from U-boat UB-68 but made port at Marettimo Island off Italy. Built in Belfast in 1902 by Harland & Wolff and owned by the Bibby Steamship Co. of Liverpool, she was 7,950 gross tons and carried about 200 passengers, cargo and mail with a speed of 15 knots. In the spring of 1918 the *Warwickshire* was passing through the Mediterranean on the Burma-Ceylon-UK mail route when a German torpedo passed right through her bows. The engines were stopped and her crew mustered on deck as prospects of keeping her afloat seemed remote.



Despite this, the master, Captain J. W. Sturgess, called for volunteers to go below and stoke the boilers: the crew responded to a man. Minutes later the engines were restarted and she headed for the Tunisian coast. Bizerta was safely made and emergency repairs allowed her to sail home for more permanent repairs. She returned to normal service until April 1919, when she was called on to assist the repatriation of Australian troops.

- The ***H.M.T. Kingstonian*** (below) was built by Hawthorn Leslie & Co. at Newcastle in 1901 and was owned by Frederick Leyland & Co. of Liverpool. Of 6,564 gross tons, she was 467 feet in length and carried cargo and 40 passengers. Her first experience of action was on 1 June 1917 when she was attacked by a German submarine torpedo: it missed, but she went ashore at Cape Granitola in Sicily. On 11 April 1918 she was torpedoed in the Mediterranean by German UB-68, with the loss of one life, and was towed in to Carloforte Roadstead, Sardinia. On April 28 the naval repair tug ***HMS Dalkeith*** arrived to start repairs, tying up to the starboard side of the *Kingstonian* with the reserve tug ***Moose*** on the outboard side. On April 29 UB-48 torpedoed both the *Kingstonian* and the *Dalkeith*. The torpedoes passed beneath the smaller tug before detonating on the *Kingstonian* and the larger tug: both became a total loss. One man was killed on the *Kingstonian* and nine on the *Dalkeith*.



This map shows Carloforte Bay on the south-west coast of Sardinia

Two of the four vessels, the *Airedale* and the *Sunik*, were definitely not carrying mails, but the *Kingstonian* and the *Warwickshire* are known to have had mail contracts. There is clear evidence indicating that the vessel which has up to recently escaped identification is the *Kingstonian*. She was built for the West Indies trade and a correctly dated cover, received at Kingston, Jamaica on 18 June 1918, is known with a three line cachet on the reverse “Observed to be / IN BAD CONDITION / G.P.O. JAMAICA”. At this date, 1 and 2 Battalions, the British West Indies Regiment were serving with the Egyptian Expeditionary Force.

The following is an extract from *Maritime Disaster Mail* by Norman Hoggarth and Robin Gwynn:

“This is probably the most controversial of all the First World War casualties...

“There is no definite proof that this vessel, or any of the other candidates that have been put forward, were carrying mail. But on the balance of probabilities it would seem the *Kingstonian* is the most likely vessel to have been involved.

“The number of different cachets and labels used on these salvaged mails appears only to have been exceeded by those used on the mails salvaged from the Imperial Airways flying boats in the late 1930s.

“In this case controversy is carried on to the cachets etc. attributed to the wreck. Previous writers on this subject only had a representative collection of the cachets and labels emanating from the wreck. That is also true in our own case...

“While the present author and experts on the 1917/1918 torpedoed ships agree that some if not all of the mail so frequently seen posted in the south-eastern Mediterranean in March 1918 and less frequently early April, with wreck cachets are from the *Kingstonian*, we differ between ourselves as to whether all can have come from one vessel. However, if another ship was involved, we cannot identify it.”

We show some *Kingstonian* covers below:



Single ring originating datestamp ARMY POST OFFICE / SZ 10 / dated 2 AP 18, with a boxed violet **DAMAGED BY IMMERSION / IN WATER** There is evidence of other markings, mostly washed off



Originating ring cancel APO SZ II (Kennedy & Crabb SB2) dated 23 March 18 allocated to Mustapha Pasha Camp, Alexandria, with single line cachet **SALVED LETTER**



Originating ring cancel BAPO K (Kennedy & Crabb SA3) dated 28 March 18 from Egypt to Edinburgh, with larger single line cachet **SALVED LETTER**



Cover postmarked Alexandria 28 MR 18 and carried on the *Kingstonian*. A rare example of mail to the USA, it received two cachets applied in New York

The square cachet at top right reads "POSTAGE STAMP / REMOVED / BEFORE RECEIPT / AT THE NYPO / PENN. TEM. STA. / FOREIGN SECT". The two line cachet in red reads "Received in bad condition at / N. Y. P. O. PENN TERM. STA." There is divided opinion on the amount of mail carried on the *Kingstonian*, as there is a considerable number and variety of covers in circulation. More than 20 cachets are

illustrated in *Maritime Disaster Mail*, though the authors were not in total agreement, suggesting that the ship is probably the most controversial of all WW1 casualties.

The following cachets have been recorded on *Kingstonian* covers. All taken from *Maritime Disaster Mail*, they are not intended to be to scale.

<div>DAMAGED BY IMMERSION IN WATER</div> <p><i>Kingstonian Type 1</i></p>	<div>DAMAGED BY IMMERSION IN SEA WATER</div> <p><i>Kingstonian Type 2</i></p>
<div>DAMAGED BY IMMERSION IN SEA WATER.—I.S.</div> <p><i>Kingstonian Type 3</i></p>	<div>DAMAGED BY S A W A T R</div> <p><i>Kingstonian Type 4 - missing letters</i></p>
<div>SALVED LETTER</div> <p><i>Kingstonian Type 5 – 3x48mm; F for E found in both words</i></p>	<div>SALVED LETTER</div> <p><i>Kingstonian Type 6 - 5x66 mm, large lettering</i></p>
<div>Salved letter</div> <p><i>Kingstonian Type 7</i></p>	<div>(S)ALVED FRO(M) SUBMERGED MAIL</div> <p><i>Kingstonian Type 8 – letters S, M and E added or amended in manuscript</i></p>
<div>Salved from submerged mail</div> <p><i>Kingstonian Type 9</i></p>	<div>R.E, Postal Sect. L'don N. W, 1 Damaged by immersion in sea water through Enemy Action</div> <p><i>Kingstonian Type 10</i></p>
<div>R. E. Postal Section, LONDON, N. W. 1. Damaged by immersion in sea water through enemy action.</div> <p><i>Kingstonian Type 11 label</i></p>	<div>R. E. Postal Section, LONDON, N. W. 1. Damaged by immersion</div> <p><i>Kingstonian Type 11a label</i></p>

 <p>Kingstonian Type 12 label</p>	 <p>Kingstonian Type 12a label</p>
 <p>Kingstonian Type 12b label</p>	 <p>Kingstonian Type 12c label - manuscript amendments</p>
<p>Received in bad condition at N. Y. P. O. PENN TERN. STA.</p>  <p>Kingstonian Types 13-14</p>	 <p>Kingstonian Type 15 label</p>
<p>ACCIDENT DE SERVICE</p> <p>Kingstonian Type 16 - often illustrated with lower-case lettering</p>	<p>NAUFRAGE</p> <p>Kingstonian Type 17 – 6x29 mm</p>
<p>NAUFRAGE</p> <p>Kingstonian Type 18 – 4x34 mm</p>	<p>BATEAU NAUFRAGE MARSEILLE</p> <p>Kingstonian Type 19</p>
<p>BATAEU NAUFRAGE MARSEILLE</p> <p>Kingstonian Type 19a</p>	<p>NAUFRAGIO</p> <p>Kingstonian Type 20</p>

This article will be concluded in the next QC, No 289 (June issue)

Technical engineering work involving testing for the Suez Canal Company and the purchase of a set of stamps connecting Egypt and Sudan sparked Paul Grigg's interest, which was given impetus by an unknown lady speaker



Why I collect Egypt. – Paul Grigg (ESC 476) – Gloucestershire, UK

I had already been a collector of Sudan for many years when I decided that perhaps I should have a set of the Egyptian stamps that were overprinted "Soudan". These were primarily for use during military operations against the Mahdi in 1897 and the advance of the Anglo-Egyptian force into the Sudan.

At the same time I had an interest in the Suez Canal because my work involved much business with the Canal Company. We supplied marine diesel engines and on-board generating sets for their ships, boats and cranes. They insisted on works tests and inspections, so many interesting contacts were made.



A Nahman cover, so-called, used from MEROWI 16 MR 98, sent by Pte.1156 Peter Matson, endorsed "Feild service no stamps obtainable", addressed to Alexandria but redirected to Tanta. Boxed "T" tax mark and 3mm postage dues affixed using a whole 2mm and a bisected 2mm, cancelled TANTA 12 AV 98. All marks are forged but the stamps are genuine. Victor Nahman never could spell 'feild'! His monogram is in the top right corner, but the cover has obviously never been anywhere near a post office.

We were blessed at his time with several local stamp shops – all gone now - where one could browse through heaps of odd album pages often picked up for a few shillings each. One shop in Christmas Steps in Bristol was a favourite: there were always sheets of Egypt and the odd Suez Canal stamp to be found. Even in those days I had enough knowledge to look out for the genuine characteristics and today I am amazed at how many genuine 20c copies I found. This does not seem to happen these days!

I was very much encouraged by Charlie Hass, at that time president of the Sudan Study Group. He was most helpful with his knowledge of the First Issue and also ran a small auction where I obtained a few examples. My Suez Canal collection was coming along, not just stamps but all sorts of ephemera including maps and postcards, some of which came courtesy of my work contacts. More recently the opening of the new parallel canal section provided much technical information.

As my Egypt collection expanded - stamps only to start with - I needed more help. At our local

stamp club one evening the visiting speaker was a lady who displayed Egypt. Sadly, I don't recall her name, but I am very grateful to her as she introduced me to the *Quarterly Circular*; in fact she gave me a couple of copies. It was from this encounter that I decided in March 1996 to apply for membership, and all I can say is "thank you" to all who make this wonderful philatelic society what it is and for all the joy it has brought to me over the years. I have really enjoyed the *QC* and the auctions.

My Egyptian interests have widened to take in many aspects, such as French and other foreign post offices in Alexandria, Cairo, Port Said and Suez; Overland mail, which arises from the Suez Canal interest; "Paquebots de la Mediterranée" and paquebots in general; and Forgeries, in particular Nahman covers of which I have identified 34, all, so it is said, from Sudan to Egypt.