

The Quarterly Circular of THE EGYPT STUDY CIRCLE



June Quarter 2024 – Vol XXV No 6 – Whole Series No 289 – Pages 121-144

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Egypt exhibition, Alexandria September 19-21

All members are invited to exhibit or to attend as visitors.

Contact the Secretary for more details as they are released
(egyptstudycircle@hotmail.com)



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Meetings Programme 2024

Saturday June 1	Union Jack Club Waterloo	Egypt postal stationery	Jon Aitchison
Saturday July 6	Zoom meeting	Malcolm Coe: Egypt/Sudan mail (1890-1920); Julian Bagwell: British Forces in Egypt 1932-41	Hosted London
Saturday Sept 7	UK meeting	Topic / venue to be announced – Zoom?	
Thur 19 to Sat 21 September	Meeting in Egypt provisional announcement	PSE and the Alexandria Philatelic Society	More information as available
Sat Oct 26 2-4pm	UK meeting - Stampex	Topic to be announced	All members
Saturday Nov 2	Zoom meeting	Topic(s) to be announced	Hosted USA

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Website: egyptstudycircle.org.uk



Facebook

Report of the Annual General Meeting, March 8 2024, at the Union Jack Club, London

The date of the Annual Meeting was changed to allow for the appearance of Hany Salam (ESC 580), recently elected President of the Philatelic Society of Egypt, to show some of his outstanding collection. Despite the presence of a VIP speaker, however, there was again a sparse attendance, with only nine members present - five of them Officers - reflecting the long-term malaise that seems to be affecting all similar organisations. There were several appeals during the meeting for members - and especially those in UK – to make more effort to attend meetings, write articles, take part in the auctions, overall to boost the life-blood of the Circle.

Those attending were David Ogden (Chairman), Hany Salam, Mike Murphy (Secretary / Editor), Sami Sadek (Treasurer / Auctioneer), Neil Hitchens (Deputy Chairman / Webmaster), Jon Aitchison (Committee), John Clarke, Keith Nickol, Atef Sarian. Guest: Mrs Letty Nickol.



Hany Salam... astonished members with his unique early Suez Canal markings and covers

The Chairman welcomed members and guests, congratulated Hany Salam on his success in the election for President of our Cairo colleagues, and in his annual report lamented the long list of those presenting apologies. He noted the loss during the year of two senior life members in John Sears and Brian Sedgley. On the positive side, he announced that a regular schedule of meetings involving four by Zoom (two each hosted by the US and London) and four face to face in the UK had replaced the haphazard programme caused by Covid and its aftermath. He hoped all meetings would be better attended and that members would come forward to share their collections by acting as speakers at the meetings. Especially welcome were recent Zoom meetings, now attracting about 20 members each; they are posted on YouTube.

The election of officers agenda item unfortunately drew a complete blank, with no member offering to take on any administrative role (but see below).

Reports from Hani Sharestan (Facebook co-ordinator), Trent Ruebush (US Agent), Tammie Aaron-Barada (US Zoom co-ordinator) and Paul Green (ESC 128), all of them offering suggestions about how to overcome the shortage of willing younger members, provided much food for thought, and the Committee will consider in more detail how some of those might be implemented. Officers thanked these members for their invaluable input.

Sami Sadek reported on Auctions 66 and 67, with 66 totalling 564 lots attracting £6,223 in bids (ESC commission £946) and total bids on 67, with fewer lots at 353, reaching £4,609 (commission £1,008). He thanked members for generous donations of lots and looked forward to larger auctions in the future.

As Treasurer, he announced an overall surplus for the year of £1,687.60, with the Auction commission some £1,000 higher than the previous year, in part offset by the fact that costs for our greatly enlarged schedule of meetings had exceeded 2022 by over £1,200. Printing and distributing the *QC* cost some £400 less than the previous year. Overall, our accumulated surplus stands at £26,979.88 (*See page iii*). The meeting passed a vote of gratitude to our accounts examiner, Andy Gould (ESC 393)

Neil Hitchens raised the spirits further by announcing that the recent series of Zoom meetings had been enormously successful, and thanks to the energy and the knowledge of Malcolm Coe (ESC 721), had been successfully transferred to YouTube for all to see. He revealed that plans for a new website based on a modern and more versatile platform were well advanced; he hoped to be able to show an early version in the very near future. With online tools like those provided by Wix or similar, we can optimize the site's visibility, ranking and online presence, attracting more visitors and increasing engagement.

Mike Murphy reported that membership was six down on last year at 164, with 13 members lost during the year and seven gained. As Editor, he reported no less than eight nominations for the MacArthur Award, which was won by Peter Grech (ESC 266, *right*) for his article on *Port-Said surcharges 1921: the 'Joffre' issue* (QC 286), winning by a single vote from Jos Strengtholt's Marc Pourpe research (QC 287). Four QCs had been published on time, and he thanked his regular contributors for continuing to fill the pages with innovative and authoritative material. There is always a space for your offering, long or short!



Mike also gave notice that, his arthritis becoming increasingly painful and limiting mobility to such a degree that his future visits to meetings were likely to become much less frequent, he would be standing down from one of his roles – Secretary and Editor – at the next Annual Meeting in 2025. It really is time for a volunteer to come forward.

John Davis, still recovering from major surgery, reported that the advent of the Facebook page, with its potential for instant answers to members' queries, has resulted in requests for books from the excellent and well-stocked Library falling to virtually nil. The literature, to which has now been added the Circle Record, is physically demanding in size, and he appealed for another member to take it over.

Hani Sharestan described his duties as “to maintain a pleasant and safe Facebook page for members and non-members”. But it is more than that: he vets all potential messages on the page, advertises ESC Auction lots, encourages members by showing recent purchases and scans of newly discovered errors/varieties and comments on other members' posts. The upshot is that membership is now rapidly approaching 800, at least a third of whom actually take part.

After the AGM we saw a stupendous display in very few pages from the Suez Canal section of Hany Salam's Maritime Mail after 1869 collection. Astounding material was shown and described with enormous enthusiasm: the only known cover posted from Sweden to the ceremony the day the Canal was opened, a Ballon Monté cover from Paris to a Canal Company official in Port Said. And Canal Company mail: the only recorded cover with the 40c stamp (pen cancelled from Kantara), one of only three covers with the Canal de Suez / Chantier VI CDS, the only Chantier VI cover sent overseas, a cover from the opening to Madrid from Ismailia, one of only two covers cancelled with Post Egiziane / Ramses, together with a pen-cancel from Chantier VI and examples of Ras el Ech and Kil 83 cds. Truly an astonishing display (*See next page*).

Hany's tour de force was followed by two more displays to round off a splendid afternoon – Jon Aitchison showed essays of early Egyptian postal stationery envelopes from about 1865, including a 1pi blue envelope intended for reply mail, forerunner of the International Reply Coupon; and Atef Sarian (ESC 639) on the Second Issue, showing a staggering 128 pages of stamps, essays, varieties and postal history.

Footnote: After the meeting two more ESC officers volunteered to join the “two jobs club” – David Ogden agreed to take on the Meetings Secretary role (as well as Chairman); and Neil Hitchens added to his Webmaster portfolio by volunteering to collect from John Davis and house the Circle Library and the Circle Record. We very much welcome these kind gestures and hope that both might soon be able to return to single-role working on behalf of the Circle. Anyone willing to volunteer?

Members' Matters

New Members:

ESC 763 Shivshankar Nair, 135 Holland Parke Avenue, London W11 4UT
(Archival material of Fuad/Farouk, Indian Feudatory States Revenues, Life member RPSL)

Change of address: ESC 759 Samuel Khela

9 Shebeen St. From El Imam Ali St, Ismailia Square, Heliopolis, Cairo (*See p.130*).

Lapsed: ESC 737 Jay Daschaudhuri

Resigned: ESC 678 Guy Dutau

Deceased: ESC 268 Brian Sedgley ESC 282 John G Patsalides ESC 730 Abdel-Rahman Daw

Treasures of the Suez Canal Company

Hany Salam (ESC 580)

It was important to me to be able to show a little of my collection to the Annual General Meeting of the Egypt Study Circle, because the Canal area, and the Company in particular, have always been a most important part of my wider "Maritime Mail after 1869" collection. Because I was travelling, it was not easy to bring a large sample of pages, but I hope that the chosen pages reflect the wide range of the collection.

The 120-mile Suez Canal was opened, creating a new waterway connecting the Mediterranean and the Red Sea and realising Ferdinand de Lesseps' dream of a new route from Europe to the East, on 15 November 1869 after ten years of work and the spending of millions. The opening ceremony included lavish illuminations, fireworks and a banquet aboard the yacht of the Khedive, Mohammed Said Pasha. Guest of honour was Empress Eugenie of France, with Franz Joseph I of Austria and the Crown Prince of Prussia in attendance.

To recoup the vast costs incurred by the Suez Canal Company - and even perhaps to make a profit - the General Manager of the Company's Postal and Telegraph Service, Gustave Riche, suggesting charging a fee to be collected by the introduction of postage stamps. An order for printing stamps was sent in April 1868 to the firm Chézaud Ainé et Tavernier of Paris. On 1 July 1868 the Company issued a set of four denominations which was granted recognition by the French consulates, but the Egyptian Government suppressed their use. The stamps were in use for only 40 days until the government took over the Company's postal service.



28 July 1868, letter sent by Mandine, negotiant, from Kantara (Suez Canal) to Port Said via the Suez Canal Company's Postal Service, franked 60 centimes, the third weight stage / 30g.
Pen-cancelled by two lines and the date.

The only known cover bearing the 40c Suez Canal Company issue.



July 1868, letter front Port Said to Suez via the Canal Company Postal Service. Franked 20c, paying the first weight stage / 10g letter rate. Cancelled by numeral 5129 of the French Post Office in Port Said.

One of only 12 covers recorded with the 20c Canal Company issue

5 November 1869, cover from Sweden to Port Said addressed to the Count Von Cronstedt "Care of the Swedish Consulate", aboard the Swedish frigate *Vanadis*, sent via Hamburg, Trieste and Alexandria.

First forwarded over Denmark, the Sund, Frederica, Seeland and Altona to Hamburg, then Railway Office No 3, Berlin-Hamburg over the North German union to

Austria, Trieset with the Austrian Lloyd to Alexandria, and finally to Port Said. Transit time 16 days.

Rate: 63 ore, equivalent to 7 Northern German groschen (5 ½ foreign rate, 1 ½ for Denmark), plus 4 Weiterfranco (1 for North German union, 3 for Austria and Austrian Lloyd – or 15 new kreuzer as noted on reverse). Germany looked after the accounting with Austria, according to the 1869 North Germany-Sweden convention. The Franca strike alongside indicates that the full rate to Egypt was covered in accordance with the 1868 Austro-Egypt convention.



The only known cover mailed to Port Said during the inauguration of the Canal
Only two covers known to exist from Sweden to Egypt in that period.

Maritime Mail after 1869

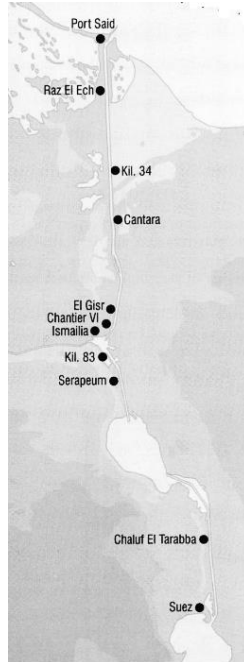
The Suez Canal

The Suez Canal Company: Postal Service, CHANTIER VI

Chantier VI was a rock-cut site that was closed shortly after the opening of the Canal. The date stamp CANAL DE SUEZ / CHANTIER VI was made for the Suez Canal Company, along with several others. Some of these are known cancelling Egyptian stamps in the final months of 1869.



Ras el Ech



Kil 34



Chantier VI



Kil 83

Construction sites of the Suez Canal project



27 May 1869, mixed franking letter from Chantier VI, thence via the Egyptian post office in Ismailia and overland to Alexandria, where forwarded to the French post office. Carried by Messageries impériales to Marseille June 4, then to Digoins June 5. Franked Egypt 40 para local postage, cancelled by CANAL DE SUEZ / 27 MAI / CHANTIER VI – plus 40 c to France.

One of only three covers bearing Chantier VI cachet and the only one travelling abroad.

Maritime Mail after 1869

The Suez Canal

The Suez Canal Company: Postal Service, CHANTIER VI



8 December 1868, letter from a Lavalley company engineer working at Chantier VI to the Port Said office, franked 40 para, paying the 10g inland letter rate. Cancelled by CANAL DE SUEZ / 8 DEC 68 / CHANTIER VI.

One of three covers known bearing Canal de Suez / Chantier VI / date stamp.

Maritime Mail after 1869

The Suez Canal: Ismailia and Ramses Egyptian post offices in the Canal Zone

Ismailia, one of the main post offices on the Canal, was founded in 1863 during the Canal's construction, to host the Canal Company headquarters. Ramses, named after the pharaoh, was sited where the Nile and the Bitter Lakes were linked in ancient times. The office was open for four years, serving mainly Company staff.



7 December 1869, letter from Ismailia, sent by a Spanish witness to the opening, to Vice-Admiral Joaquin Gutiérrez de Rubalcaba. Via Alexandria and Trieste, arriving in Madrid December 22. Transit 15 days. Rate: prepaid 10 piastres (quadruple rate). "Franca" indicates rate according to the 1868 Egypt-Austria convention, plus 46 centimes due on receipt.

The earliest cover recorded to Spain from Egypt



12 April 1875, letter from Ramses to Lyon, carried from Alexandria via the French Post Office on a Messageries Maritimes vessel to Marseilles, arriving April 20. Transit 8 days. Rate: franked 1 piastre local postage plus 80c to France.

One of two covers known bearing POST EGIZIANE / RAMSES date stamp

Maritime Mail after 1869

The Suez Canal: Port Said

Par Ballon monté

From 19 September 1870 to 28 January 1871 Paris was under siege by German forces during the Franco-Prussian War. Within days of the start of the blockade an ingenious method was developed to communicate with the outside world: the Director of Posts organized a system of postage carried out of the city by balloon. In all three million items of mail were carried on 66 balloon flights, as well as 160 people escaping the city.

The Paris head office of the Suez Canal Company used this service for sending instructions during the period of the siege to their staff and engineers working on the Canal project.



20 October 1870, letter from Paris to Port Said, flown by the *Garibaldi* balloon on October 22, which reached Marseilles on November 2. Then by the French steamer *Ebre* of Ligne U to Alexandria. Port Said was reached on November 15. Transit time 23 days. Rate: 40 centimes, the overseas rate to Egypt.

A new Fouad 1926 Birthday issue variety

Hani Sharestan (ESC 595)

Almost 90 years after the issuance of the popular 1926 King Fouad 58th Birthday 50 piastres stamp a new variety unlisted in any catalogues has come to light (*see right*). The stamp, which comes with a Carmichael and Todd certificate of authenticity (not illustrated) shows a variety “imperforate at bottom” from the lowest row of the sheet of 25. Similar varieties are catalogued showing imperforate at top (Nile Post C13g) as well as imperforate at bottom on the 1932 overprinted issue (NP D127g). The 1932 overprint confirms the imperforate at the bottom variety, so my interpretation of what happened is that a small number of sheets bearing the variety were printed in 1926 but only one of them survived to go into circulation. And so far only those examples with the overprint have been discovered. The sheet for this issue has



five stamps in the bottom row, so it is quite possible that there may be four other 1926 examples showing this variety from the sheet but still lying undiscovered. So start looking very closely in your collection: anyone spotting added information regarding this variety is encouraged to contact the author.



Pharaoh's face: A remarkable variety is reported by Lucien Toutounji (ESC 264), on a large envelope he received with a block of 7x2 of the 2002 125pi Pharaoh Psusennes I gold mask (NP D382). Unlike its fellows, the face of the centre stamp has no black colour. How could this happen? Astonishing variety, and good spot!

Circle wedding given stamp of approval

There have been many and various reasons to congratulate members of the Study Circle in recent months – but none more fitting than the Cairo wedding celebration of one of our younger members, Samuel Khela (ESC 759), and his bride Barbara, who chose to mark the occasion



by amending one of the most beautiful of Egyptian stamps – the Farouk 1938 Birthday £E1 – to fit their special circumstances. The artwork is beautifully created, and we are happy to recognise a remarkable piece of skill and philatelic imagination that made their special day all the more special.

- More congratulations go to Greg Todd (ESC 585), who won a Large Gold with 95 points for his eight frames of First Issue at Efiro 2024 in April in Bucharest, where Atef Sarian (ESC 639) scored 92 points and Gold for both his eight-frame entries, on the Second and Third Issues.
- John Aitchison (ESC 661) was awarded a Gold medal for a new five-frame exhibit, The Postal Cards of Egypt, in the National Stamp Exhibition at the RPSL, from March 28-30.
- Ahmed Abouesh (ESC 761) was off to a good start with Large Gold (91 points) at Westpex in his very first entry, a single frame on the 1934 Cairo UPU exhibition in San Francisco in April. And for good measure he won Vermeil with five frames of French Post Office as a bonus.

Mediterranean and Aegean shipwrecks 1917-18 – Part II

Ken Sanford (ESC 762)

This article concludes the exploration of shipwrecks from QC No 288 (March 2024, page iii)

Cachets from the *Kingstonian*:

English and French manuscript endorsements are known on covers salvaged from the *Kingstonian*, as are distressed covers without any cachet, label or manuscript notation from this incident. It is possible that these covers may have been forwarded together with other items, for instance. see Type 12c label [previous article]. Manuscript endorsements recorded include: *Regd letter / Salved from / Submerged mail / Recovered from the Sea / Salved from submerged mail / Bateau naufragé / pas taxer / Parvenue moulee et / avec les figurines / detaches a Toulon / and Torpillage du vapeur / Atlantique* beneath the Type 17 cachet.

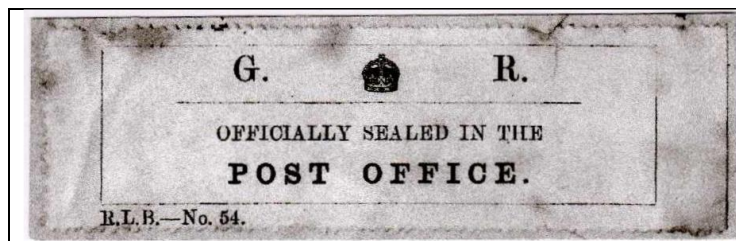
This latter item creates something of a problem. Addressed to Marseilles, it would otherwise appear to be the same as other mail attributed to the *Kingstonian*. The French steamer *Atlantique* was damaged in the Mediterranean on 9 May 1918 by U-boat UB-52 and was towed to Bizerta, Tunisia. Some covers, however, have been recorded as delivered or forwarded on May 8 and 11. This raises the questions: who added this endorsement, and when?

The Type 15 label is perforated. Several covers bearing the label have been recorded as missent to Buenos Aires, Argentina. All are from the same correspondence, posted at Port Said between March 29 and April 2, addressed to Bern, Switzerland. They were resealed using the Type 15 label and tied by the Buenos Aires circular datestamp 28 JAN 1918 (this appears to be an error, possibly for JUN – *Junio* the Spanish for June). They were returned to Europe and received in Bern on September 12.

The authors of *Maritime Disaster Mail* reported reference to covers originating from Cyprus and attributed to the loss of the British steamer *Kosseir*. Most of these covers had lost their stamps as a result of immersion and are thus undated. But one cover posted in Limassol on 18 March 1918 for Scotland had its stamps intact and it is possible that the *Kosseir* delivered the mails to Alexandria, where they were transferred to the *Kingstonian* for onward transmission. The *Kosseir* was sunk by U-boat UB-51 after she left Alexandria for Port Said on 20 July 1918.

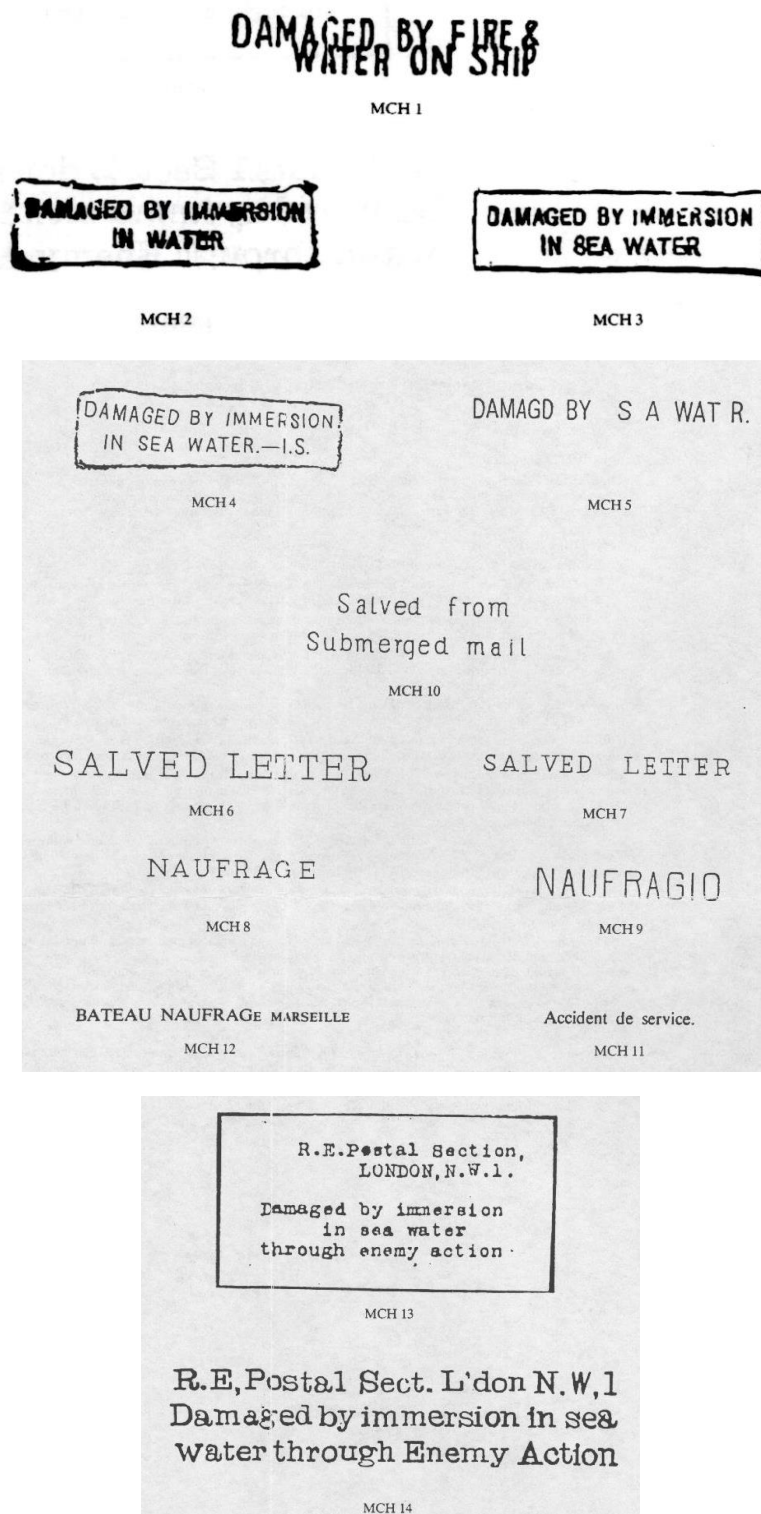
The Type 19 cachet is often illustrated with a small “E” at the end of “NAUFRAGE”, but the authors have not seen a clear example. Many examples of this cachet are poorly struck, with many of the letters weak, so it is difficult to dismiss this completely. The cachet must have been composed of loose type, as one major variation has been reported, but again without a clear example.

“BATEAU” is incorrectly spelled in the Type 19a cachet, and with an inverted and indecipherable small letter between “NAUFRAGE” and “MARSEILLE”, it is not clear whether “MARSEILLE” is complete or if one of its letters has been inverted and placed between the two words. It is thought that this indecipherable letter could be an S. In another of the examples, the T of “BATAEU” appears to be a Y.



Although many labels are illustrated in *Maritime Disaster Mail* as salvaged from the *Kingstonian*, the label on the reverse of this cover is not one of them. We are not certain which wreck it is from.

The following cachets are known on mail from various torpedoed ships in 1917-18.



Since the Firebrace book was written, another torpedoed ship carrying mail has been identified. *SS Sardinia* was contracted to carry mail, unlike several of the other noted ships, and the dates are encouraging. The *Sardinia* carried mails to and from the Far East, India, Aden and Egypt to England. She was attacked by German U-boat UB-52 in the Mediterranean on 4 February 1918 on a homeward journey, some 60 miles off

the Algerian coast. The ship did not sink, and most of the passengers and crew were transferred to a warship escorting the convoy. To stop one of her forward bulkheads from collapsing, she sailed backwards for the 60 miles (100km) at 3.5 knots, eventually arriving at the Algerian port of Oran, where temporary repairs were made. Permanent repairs then followed in Gibraltar. It is highly probable that the mails were offloaded in Oran and shipped to Marseilles and then across France. But this would not have been by the scheduled train service, which was arranged to meet the P&O / Orient ships on arrival. It is quite reasonable to imagine that the mails could take four weeks or so to be offloaded early in February and arrive in England on 7 March 1918.



Cover from the torpedoed SS Sardinia



Postmark F.P.O. 78 (Basra, Iraq), cancel date 19 DEC 17 (obscured by London sealing label)

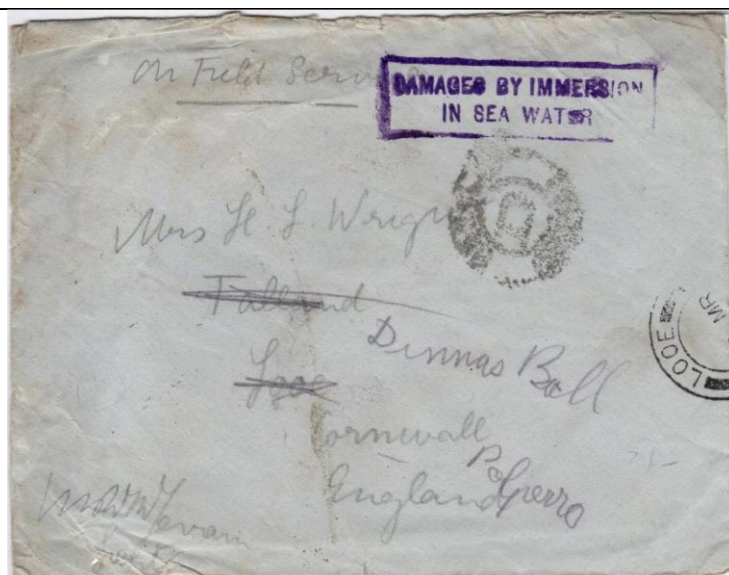


The P&O liner Sardinia ... sailed 100km backwards

A second cover is known, with an FPO 179 cancel (Jerusalem), dated 24 DEC 17 and addressed to the UK, but it has no wreck cachet. Two more ships torpedoed by German U-boats were the *HMT Minnetonka* and the *SS Karmala*.

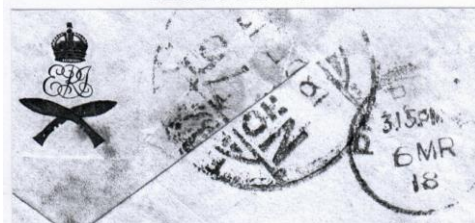
HMT Minnetonka. On 30 January 1918, the passenger ship *Minnetonka* (below) was torpedoed and sunk in the Mediterranean 40 nautical miles (74 km) east-north-east of Malta by U-boat U-64, with the loss of four lives. Ten survivors were taken as prisoners of war.





On Active Service cover from HMT Minnetonka to UK

On the reverse an Indian Army F.P.O.76 cancel from the 36 Bde. 14 Div. dated 18 December 1917, located in the Sharhraban Area of Iraq, with a single ring transit cancel dated 6 MR 18



There are only three covers recorded from this wreck

SS Karmala. During 1916 and 1917 the *Karmala* made at least two journeys from Australia to Egypt carrying, Australian troops as well as other cargo. On 17 March 1917 she was attacked by a U-boat just after passing through the Strait of Messina. Two torpedoes missed but then the submarine surfaced and attacked with gunfire. The ship replied with her only armament, an old 4.7-inch gun with very little range.

After a running fight the ship outstripped the submarine, doing well over her trial trip speed by screwing down the boiler safety valves and having extra men firing the boilers. Next day *Karmala* struck an uncharted rock off the Italian shore as the captain hugged the coast in case of further submarine attack. The ship was quite badly damaged forward and flooded to sea level as far as the forward reserve coal bunker. The water was 11 feet by the head as she made for Spezia, Italy, for repairs.

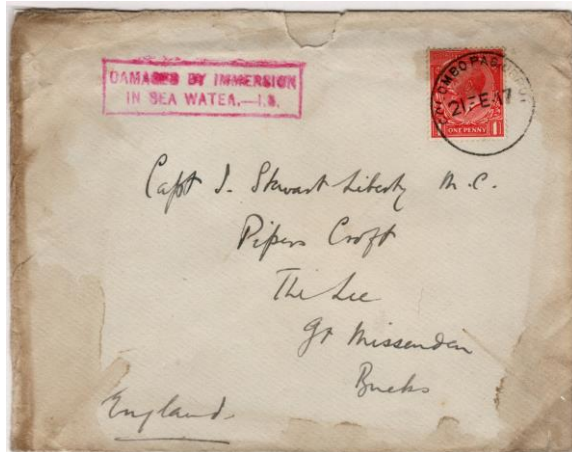


HMT Karmala – fought off a submarine and then hit a rock

The mails, from Australia, Ceylon and India, were offloaded at Spezia and probably went to London by rail. On arrival in London the recovered mails received a red boxed cachet:

DAMAGED BY IMMERSION / IN SEA WATER. – I.S.

Cover with
London
cachet in
red from
HMT
Karmala



This cachet in purple is also known on
Karmala covers

Unidentified ship. We have no more information than that on the sheet shown below, but include this item because in all probability the ship was sunk in the Mediterranean in February 1918. *SS Sturton* and *SS Balgray* are the two strong contenders. The *Sturton* was torpedoed and sunk by the U-boat UB-48 on February 7 and the *Balgray* by UB-52 on February 20.



The registered cover has an Indian 3 Annas stamp tied by a MADRAS cancel of 9 JAN 18, a date interpolated from the letter which was enclosed inside with the same date in manuscript (see second sheet)

The letter is addressed to a Mrs Sarah Walters of Clifton, Bristol.
The envelope has an incomplete boxed cachet :

DAMAGED BY IMMERSION
IN SEA WATER. --- I.S.

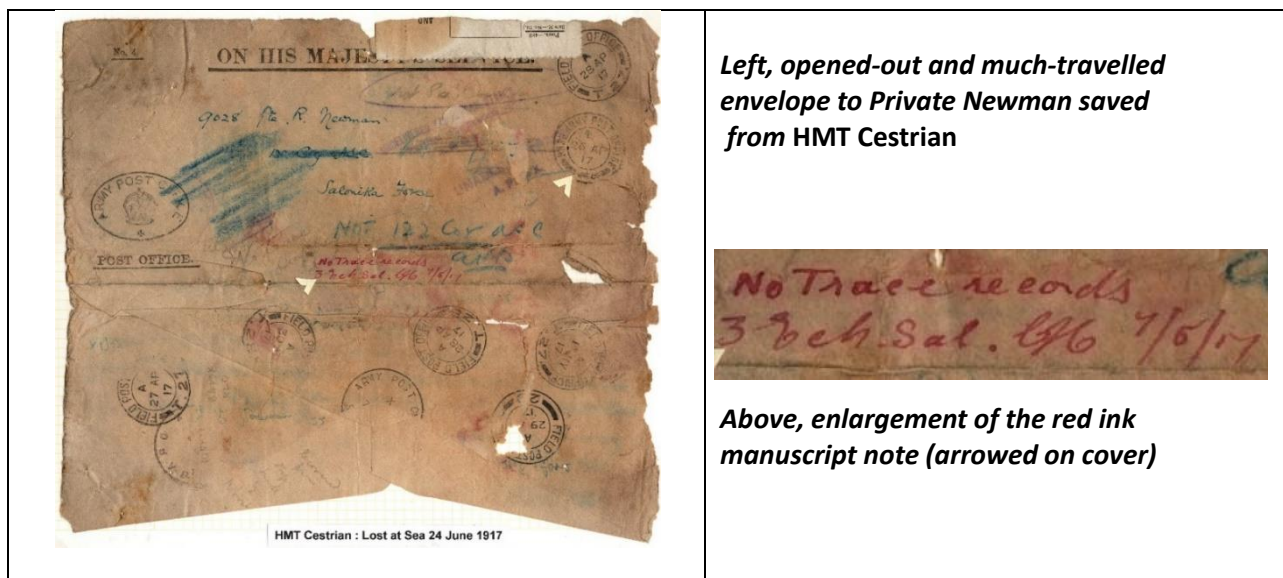


London registered oval cancellation
on the reverse of 2 MAR 18
together with a manuscript
'Torpedoed'

Other covers are known originating from Iraq and
Palestine, tying in with this arrival cancel in London of
2 MAR 18.

In all probability the incident happened in the
Mediterranean Sea in February of that year.

There are one or two possibilities as to which ship it
was, the *Sturton* and the *Balgray*, both cargo ships
that were torpedoed in this time frame



HMT Cestrian

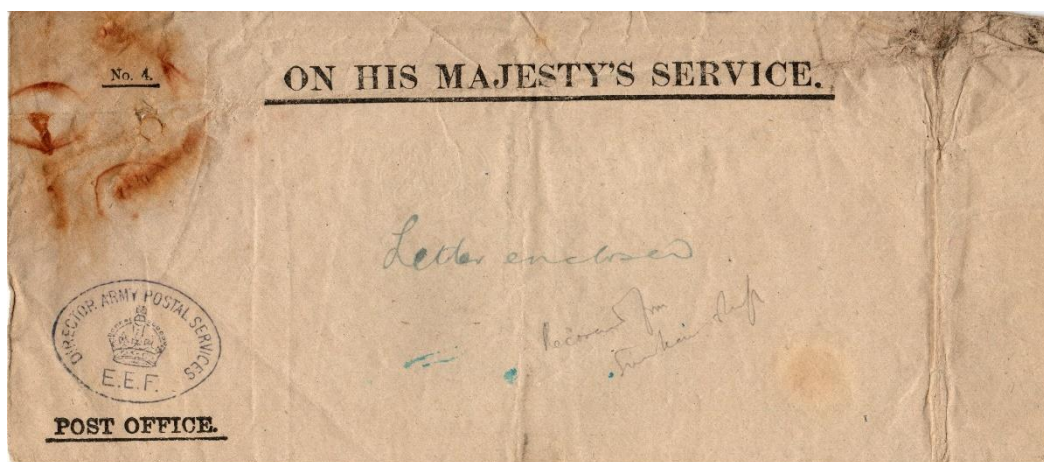
This cover is a standard size OHMS envelope. It has a partial official seal at the top but the flap (with the rest of the seal) is missing. A chronology of the cover's route and details of the addresses are given in the following notes, but in summary it was posted from a naval base at HQ Salonika and entered the postal system at base APO X on 26 April 1917 as noted in the datestamp (arrowed). The cover then circulated through eight further locations, ending at APO X SXII on 7 June 17 (see red handwritten mark, arrowed in cover illustration above). This was a stationary office serving the 3rd Echelon GHQ on the road near Lembet, Thessaloniki.

Tracking down which ship carried the mail was difficult. The red manuscript mark illustrated, giving the date 7 / 6 / 17, ties in with the incomplete APO X with the date 7 / - / (17), and the S in this mark can be extended to SX II, the stationary office on the road to Lemnos. With the date of 7 June 1917 established, the War Diary of the DDPS (Deputy Director Postal Services) records only the loss of *HMT Cestrian* during June of that year on the Salonika-Egypt route. She left Salonika on June 23 with five bags of mail for Alexandria and 11 for Port Said and was torpedoed on 24 June 1917 by U-boat UB-42 four miles southeast of Skyros in the Aegean Sea. Captain Edward Thomas was appointed MBE for getting his crew safely off the stricken vessel. The three men who died were killed by the explosion from the torpedo.



A photograph of the sinking Cestrian taken by Alfred W Patrick of the South Northamptonshire Hussars was later produced as a postcard

The “Ambulance” cover below is the one in which the damaged envelope to Private Newman was placed after salvage from *HMT Cestrian*, and taken to Egypt where the E.E.F. (Egyptian Expeditionary Force) cachet was applied, with the endorsement “*Letter enclosed*”. In pencil is the note “*Received from sunken ship*” in the same hand as the red ink note on the wreck cover. This OHMS envelope is the same as the wreck cover, but with the oval EEF cachet including the words DIRECTOR ARMY POSTAL SERVICES.



HMT Cestrian Ambulance cover endorsed “Received from sunken ship”

SS Le Gard

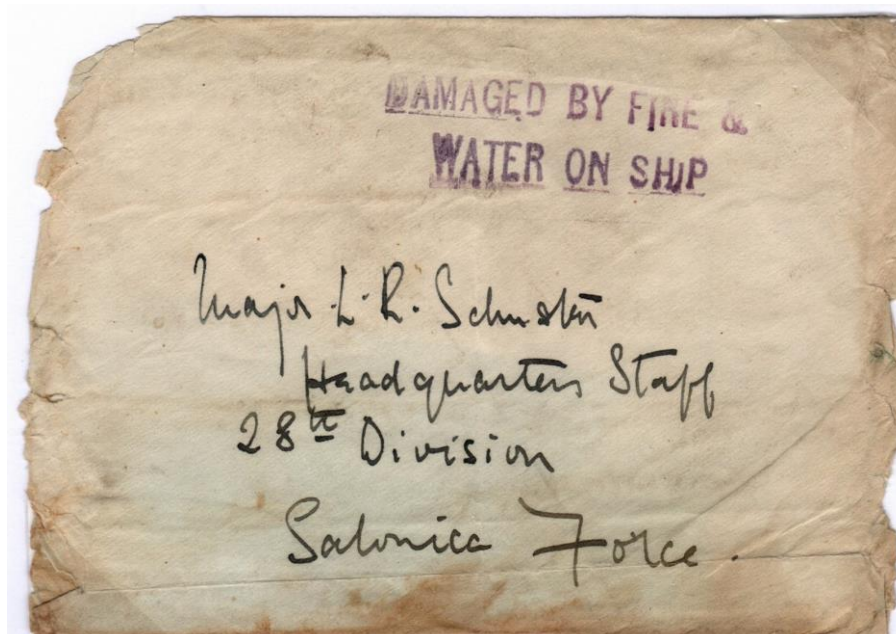
The steamer *SS Le Gard* was torpedoed and sunk by the U-boat UB-49 some 88 miles north-west of Cape Benngut, Algeria, on 26 May 1918. She was carrying passengers and mail from Marseilles to Algeria. No details of casualties are known. The only recorded cover from this wreck was offered in the Dutau sale of Soler y Llach in May 1996. Cancelled 21 May 1918 from Grenoble, France, to Tunis, it received a two-line French cachet as shown.



French cover to Tunis illustrated in Maritime Disaster Mail

SS Surada

A British ship owned by the British India Steam Navigation Co., the *Surada* was requisitioned by the Admiralty and used as a troop transport in World War 1. On 2 November 1918 she was torpedoed and sunk by the U-boat UC-74 in the Port Said swept channel, and has the unwanted distinction of being the last merchant ship sunk by a U-boat in World War I.



This cachet is known on fewer than ten covers

Maritime Disaster Mail (pp. 165 & 166) ascribes this cachet to the *Surada*, but with a qualification. The authors note that the cover illustrated in their book was attributed to *SS Surada* in *A History of Wreck Covers*, by Hopkins (p. 77), but that they had not been able to find any evidence in Lloyd's records to substantiate that.

Covers from this period are often attributed to the wrong ship by dealers and auction houses. Hopefully this article will assist them in identifying the correct ship for a particular cover.

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Thanks to Tony Walker for many of the illustrations and details included in this article.

Thanks to Chris Grimshaw for information and covers from the *Saint Louis V*.

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Walker, Tony, "Wreck Cover from *HMT Cestrian* in the Aegean Sea 24 June 1917", FRPSL.

Mark, Graham, "Are Marking Varieties on Mail Ex *SS Kingstonian* Attributable to Different Post Offices in the UK, and Elsewhere?", *La Catastrophe*, October-December 1999.

- Anyone requiring copies of the articles from *La Catastrophe* can email the author at: kaerophil@gmail.com

The Philatelic Nation of Upper Egypt, Nubia & Sudan

Mahmoud Ramadan (ESC 358)

This article concludes the series of four contained in recent Quarterly Circulars

In this series of articles on the gradual integration of the Vice-Regal Egyptian Post and the Mohamed Aly Post (see *QCs* 286 pp 52-56, 287 pp 78-83 and 288 pp 104-109), we have so far come to the conclusion that the region of Upper Egypt [south of Mudireih Asyut], Nubia [south of Mudireih Assouan] and the Sudan had:

1. PVRE post offices opened in the area from the year 1873. The precise dates remain to be reviewed in light of new discoveries [such as the Asyut Find of 2016].
2. These offices were most probably manned by Egyptian MAP-staff, at least as far as the postal messengers carrying mail between towns on camel-back. Until, that is, 30 June 1880 when the PVRE started a postal steamer service on the Nile [erroneously stated in last article as 1873], first between Asyut and Assouan, then shortening the route to Gherga-Assouan as the railway extended southwards. Khartoum post office may have been an exception to this conclusion, and staffed differently to serve the local British community.
3. At that stage PVRE introduced new general-purpose obliterators, unique in many respects, which were classified by Smith as Types IV-4 (for Khartoum only) and IV-6 [please see previous article in *QC* 288].

It is my personal assessment that cancellers IV-4 and the undated IV-6 were intended as provisional and temporary. This assessment is based on:

- a. They are the only undated general-purpose cancellers issued by PVRE, contrary to their practice elsewhere before and after their issue.
- b. Their short life of less than one year. The earliest recorded are from late 1873, and usage ended with the supply to the “philatelic nation” region of a dated general-purpose canceller, Type V-4, in mid-1874.

Type V-4 was also unique as a circular datestamp. The town name is written in Italian and Arabic, the second bilingual obliator issued by PVRE for the region, but this time “dated” as was usual PVRE practice. It is, however, the only type expressing the date - using Gregorian calendar months but spelled out as pronounced in Italian rather than Arabic/Egyptian - in Arabic letters and figures. Here is what Smith [page 494] said about this type:

“Type V

..... Type V-4 is of particular interest, because it is bilingual; the office name is given in Arabic and Italian, and the date entirely in Arabic. It was issued only to offices in Upper Egypt and Sudan, where knowledge of European languages was rare. It apparently superseded Types IV-4 and IV-6 in mid 1874 and continued in use in some offices as late as December 1884 (the second cipher of the year was altered in manuscript after 1880, the die remaining fixed)

Chaftar [*LO’P* 86, April 1954] and Feltus [ESC study 1983] listed the 12 towns supplied with the cancellation V-4. These are the same ten towns for Type IV-4 (KHARTOUM) and Type IV-6 (SUHAG, GHERGA, KENA, LUXOR, ESNA, ASSOUAN, KARASKOU, WADI HALFE and DONGOLA), plus two new offices in Sudan, BARBAR and KASSALA.

Chaftar was kind enough to illustrate images of the 12 markings, each provided with a different month, to indicate the spelling of their Italian names in Arabic, while Feltus provided us with the earliest recorded dates. My own collection has only one earlier date, and one specific day. They are indicated below in red.

It is interesting to observe how names of all sorts were translated phonetically, resulting in the Italian spelling of town names on Type V-4 cancellers differing from those given in Types IV-4 and IV-6, although also written in Italian. Writing the names of months in Arabic as Italians pronounce them produced similar results (Type V-4).



Feltus:

22 AUG 1874

15 FEB 1875

4 DEC 1874

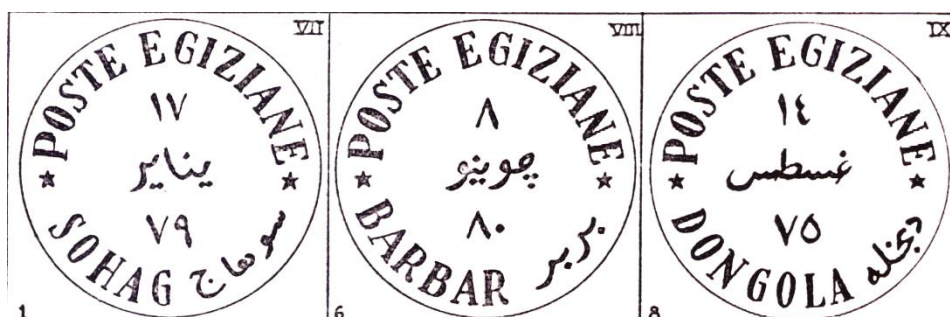


Feltus:

9 JUN 1875

JUN 1874

DEC 1874



Feltus:

22 AUG 1874

26 JAN 1875

14 AUG 1875



Feltus:

5 JUL 1874

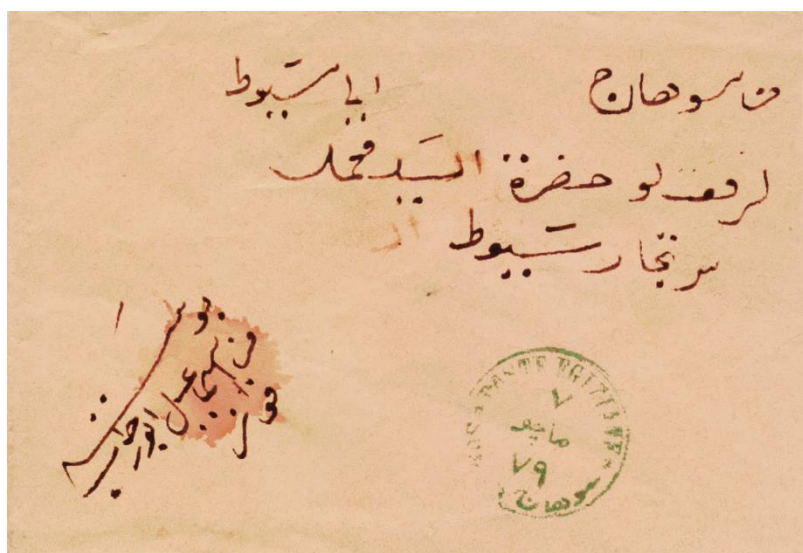
4 JUN 1875

12 FEB 1875

All datestamp images are copied from LO'P 86, April 1954, Page 364

Although this Type V-4 cancellation was in use for several years, issued in mid-1874 and withdrawn in 1880, it continued to be used in some offices until 1884. It seems to be as rare, or at least as difficult to find on cover, as Types IV-4 and IV-6. This observation is in agreement with Smith, who has given both types equal rarity factors [pages 520-521], though personally I believe that both should have much higher rarity values than those given by Smith.

The illustrated covers below follow the geographic route north to south, starting with Sohag.



The sole surviving cover from the Asyut Find originating from SOHAG and bearing Type V-4 cds. Addressed to Asyut, dated 7 May 1879.

The stamp placed on the reverse to seal the envelope was later peeled off. SIUT arrival cds 8 May 1879.

Note the spelling of SOHAG, which previously was SUHAG. On the interpostal seal it is SOKAG!



Complete strike of the GHIRGHEH [previous spelling GHERGA] Type V-4 on a block of four showing two vertical tête-bêche pairs. Third Issue 10 para, 1874/75, perforation 13 1/3 x 12 1/2. Remains of original envelope on reverse. The cds is dated 6 July 1878, with a partial SIUT arrival or transit cds. I have not recorded any covers with Type V-4 cds. Ex Smith [Corinphila May 2015] and Chalhoub.



Front [left] and back [right] of an entire cover from KENA to Brooklyn, USA. Franked 1 piastre red Third Issue, Bulaq 1874/75. Cancelled Type V-4 Arabic-dated cds 16 January 1879, with information strike to the left.

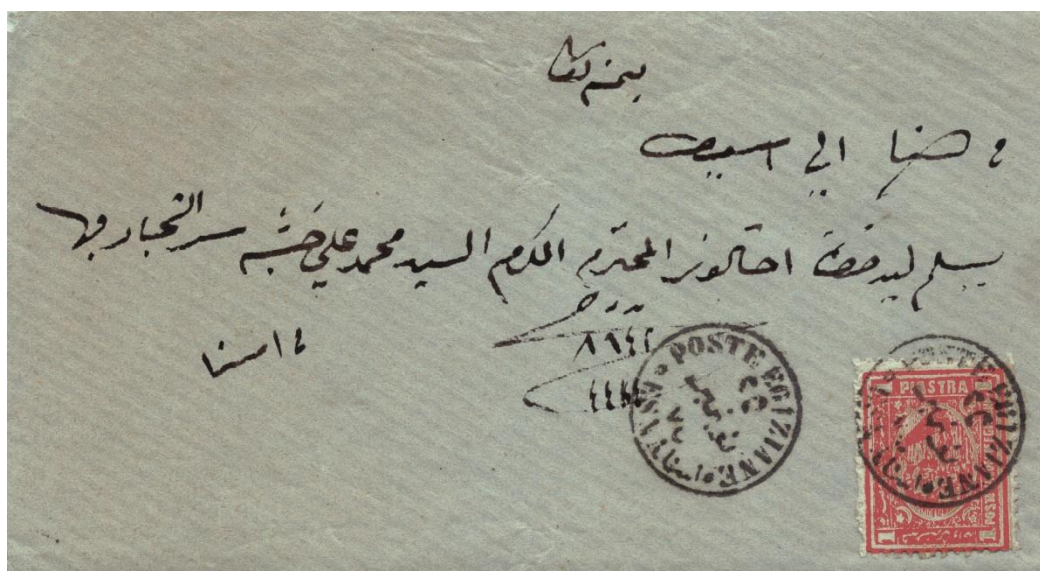
Back shows transit and arrival handstamps of SIUT 18 January 79 [by postal messenger]. ALESSANDRIA 21 January 79 [by rail], NAPOLI, NEW YORK, and finally BROOKLYN 15 February.



Entire cover from LUXOR to Boston, USA. Franked 2 x 2 1/2 piastres Third Issue Bulaq 1874/75, perforation 12 1/2 x 13 1/3. Cancelled Type V-4 Arabic-dated cds 20 January 1875, with information strike lower left. Front shows red BOSTON arrival FEB 17 PAID and stamps tied by framed "PD". LONDON PAID transit and 2 cents red-credit mark on face.

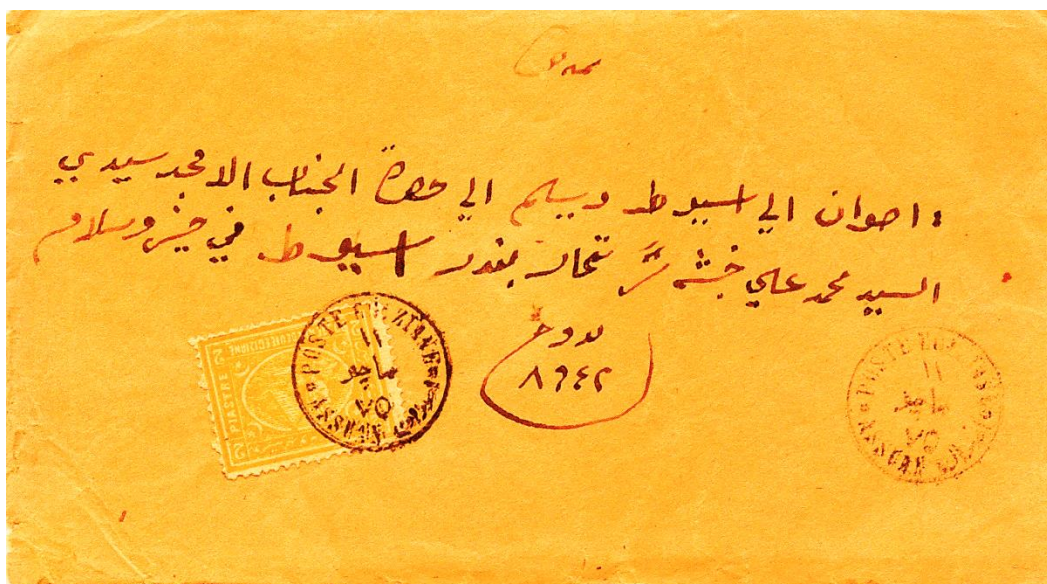
Back shows transit handstamps of SIUT 24 January 75 [postal messenger], ALESSANDRIA 26 January 75 [by rail], British P.O. at Alexandria 26 January 75.

Manuscript front left edge: Thebes – On the Nile / January 18 -1875.
Ex Smith Corinthila May 2015 Lot 5268.



Entire cover from ESNA to Asyut, with contents. Franked 1 piastre red Third Issue, Bulaq 1874/75. Cancelled by Type V-4 Arabic-dated cds 25 January 1875, with information strike to left.

Travelled to Asyut by postal messenger on camel. Arrival SUIT 28 January 1875 (on reverse). Part of the 2016 Asyut Find.



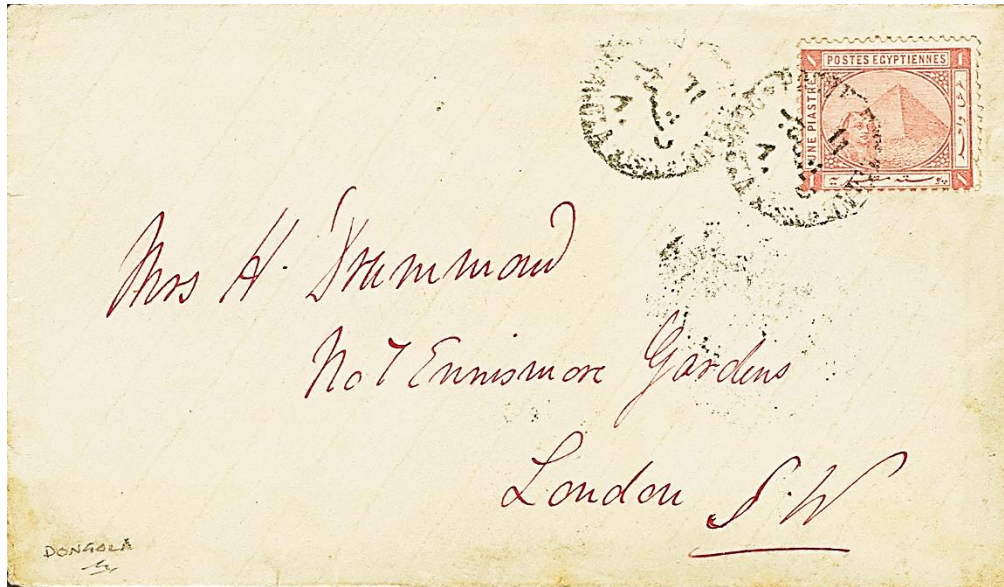
Entire cover from ASSUAN [previously ASSOUAN] to Asyut, with contents, franked 2 piastre yellow Third Issue Bulaq 1874/75 print. Cancelled by Type V-4 Arabic-dated cds 11 May 1875, with further strike lower right. Travelled to Asyut by postal messenger on camel.

Arrival SUIT 17 May 1875 on reverse. From Asyut Find 2016.



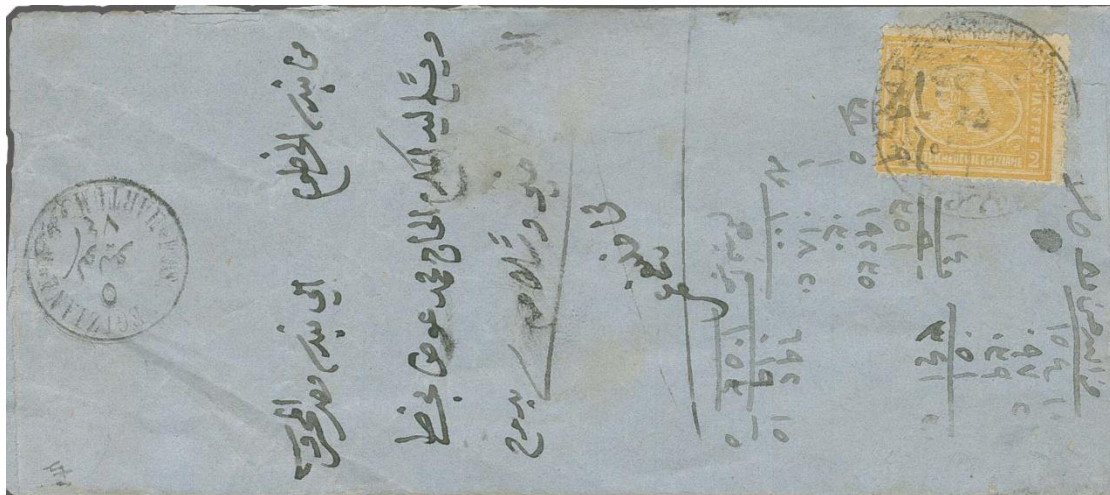
Entire cover from KARASKON [previously KARASKOU] to Ohio, USA, franked 1 piastre red Third Issue Bulaq 1874/75. Cancelled by Type V-4 Arabic-dated cds 22 January 1879, with further strike to the left, and LONDON PAID 15 FEB 79.

On reverse, transit SUIT 7 FEB 79, ALESSANDRIA same day, NEW YORK 28 FEB.



Entire cover from DONGOLA [Sudan] to London, franked Fourth Issue 1 piastre rose. Cancelled Type V-4 Arabic-dated cds 11 December 1880. London arrival on reverse, 29 December 1880.

Ex Smith. Image reproduced from Corinthila auction 198, 28 May 2015, online catalogue.



Entire cover from KARTUM/HARTUM to Cairo, franked Third Issue 2 piastre yellow. Cancelled Type IV-4 undated double ring, with information strike, left, Arabic-dated cds 5 July 75 [earliest recorded]. SIUT transit 27 July and CAIRO arrival 28 July on back.

Ex Smith. Image from Corinthila auction 198, 28 May 2015, online catalogue, Lot 5707.

No images of intact covers from Barbar, Kassala or Wadi Halfa are available at present.

The “philatelic nation” was created as an after-effect of the Egyptian Viceroy’s decree to award the Posta Europea a franchise to carry postal correspondence in the Delta region and Alexandria. South of Cairo was serviced by MAP, first using negative intaglio seals, followed by the gradual integration with PVRE, when the two postal systems collaborated, and then the introduction of the two distinct cancellers of 1873 and 1874. The romance of the “philatelic nation” was disrupted from the north by the advance of the railways and from the south by the success of the Mahdist uprising.

EGYPT STUDY CIRCLE

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT (GENERAL ACCOUNT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

	2023	2022
INCOME		
Subscriptions	£3,150.59	£2,986.37
Auction account	£2,496.76	£1,430.32
Donations	£113.20	£777.27
Advertisements	£329.35	£60.00
	£6,089.90	£5,253.96
EXPENDITURE		
Meeting room hire	£1,462.42	£195.95
Cost of Quarterly Circular	£2,714.58	£3,158.24
Website costs	£0.00	£0.00
Officers' expenses	£4.10	£662.14
Insurance	£127.20	£125.30
ABPS subscription	£94.00	£61.50
	£4,402.30	£4,203.13
Surplus for the year	£1,687.60	£1,050.83
Surplus as at 1 January	£25,292.28	£24,241.45
Surplus at 31 December	£26,979.88	£25,292.28

BALANCE SHEET (GENERAL ACCOUNT) AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023

	2023	2022
ASSETS		
Stamp collection	£500.00	£500.00
Circle Library & records	£2,000.00	£2,000.00
Cash in PayPal	£919.18	£4,616.30
Cash at bank on current account	£24,371.19	£18,940.25
Cash in hand (Room Auction)	£0.00	£139.00
	£27,790.37	£26,195.55
LIABILITIES		
Members subscriptions in advance	£810.49	£903.27
	£810.49	£903.27
Representing		
Accumulated surplus	£26,979.88	£25,292.28

I have prepared the Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet from the records and explanations provided to me and confirm that they are in accordance therewith.

(signed) A W Gould FRPSL, 16 February 2024
Accounts Examiner

Inspired by a classic horror movie, John Hayes chose Egyptology over mathematics. A summer in Cairo and a boy on a bicycle with bread on his head led to a fascination with Egypt's daily life ancient and modern



Why I collect Egypt – John L Hayes (ESC 698) – Oakland, California

I enjoy learning about the many different facets of Egypt, both ancient and modern. All this started when I was a kid, in the mid-1950s. My family got their first television set, and I saw the original *The Mummy*, starring Boris Karloff. That movie, on a teeny black-and-white TV, resonated with me. I remember looking through the TV Guide to see if it would show up again on one of the stations showing monster movies. This was way before cable and VCRs!

Now I have it on DVD, and still watch it to relax, even though I can replay the entire movie in my head... “He died laughing! In a straitjacket!”...“I dislike being touched. An Eastern prejudice?”...“Her father is Governor-General of the Sudan. English, of course”. I can even hum the music when the Princess is at a Ball, overlooking “this dreadful modern Cairo”, “with all those young Englishmen”.

Coming from a working-class family, it never occurred to me that people could actually travel to Egypt. After high-school, I attended a junior college in Santa Monica. When it was time to apply to UCLA, I wasn't sure if I wanted to study math or Egyptology. I realized that I spent more time reading about ancient Egypt, so in my first year at UCLA I plunged into ancient Egyptian, which led on to Arabic and Semitic linguistics in general, with Egyptian somewhat falling by the wayside.



Teaching at Cal from 1985 involved both classical Arabic and Semitics. Then in 1989 I spent a summer at the American University in Cairo. This was my first trip to Egypt, and it had a profound effect on me. I thought I would be interested mainly in the Pyramids and in pharaonic Egypt, but found that daily life was even more interesting.

I remember walking across the bridge every day from my dorm room in Zamalek to downtown and the University. I would see a kid on a bicycle, with his sister in tow, with a plate of bread on his head, going the wrong direction on the bridge. I've been back to

Egypt a couple of dozen times since, sometimes alone, sometimes with my wife, and still find the daily scene fascinating.

I got my first stamps from a neighbour kid, probably a little after I first saw *The Mummy*. He gave me a box of his duplicates. My father had a few stamps from Morocco, where his destroyer stopped off in WW II. We moved around a lot back then; I wonder where those first stamps are?

I started collecting again when in college, and now could afford to buy stamps from dealers. I consider myself a “collector” not a “philatelist”, which is why I am a lurker! I collect stamps of Egypt, but also of the other Arab states, and also of Mexico. I especially enjoy looking at the designs on Egyptian stamps, trying to identify the people, places and objects.

My favourite set of Egypt? Scott 105-7, with Thoth carving the name of King Fuad in hieroglyphs. Truly beautiful stamps!

● We hope to make this column a regular feature of the QC, and will welcome all members' stories