

# The Quarterly Circular of THE EGYPT STUDY CIRCLE



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## Meetings Programme 2024-25

***As a result of truly depressing meeting attendances in UK and an absolute contrast with North American Zoom meetings (see page 174), all future face-to-face meetings dates have been suspended. Instead we shall concentrate on Zoom meetings arranged as and when possible. Exceptions are the equivalents of the two UK Stampex meetings, that is, EuroPhilex on May 10 and Autumn Stampex (between October 22 and 25). Zoom meetings will be publicised to all members by email.***

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## Notes on a philatelic visit to Alexandria

David Ogden (ESC 480)

EGYPHILA, the recent Egyptian stamp exhibition at the beautiful Graeco-Roman Museum in Alexandria, was held from 19-21 September. I was fortunate to attend the event with Jon Aitchison (ESC 661), who acted as the Egypt Study Circle commissioner.

Flying with Wizz Air, I was impressed with the newish Sphinx airport (opened 2018) near the Pyramids on the Giza side of Cairo. It was my first trip to Egypt for 24 years and my first major stamp exhibition apart from Stampex.

On the first day of my visit I took the opportunity to see the National Museum of Civilisation in Old Cairo, itself a stunning building quite apart from the treasures within. The Golden Parade of Pharaohs contains 20 amazing royal mummies, 18 kings and two queens, from between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> dynasties.

It was a short Uber trip to the recently refurbished Postal Museum of Egypt in Ataba Square. Visitors can enjoy a free guided tour of the countless rooms, filled with all elements of postal history including stamps, postboxes, uniforms etc, with a genuine railway carriage representing the Travelling Post Office. Other countries have made generous donations to make it a truly world class museum. The gift shop, which offers various “Egypt Post” themed items, is well worth a stop.

Hany Salam (ESC 580), President of the Philatelic Society of Egypt, and his colleagues were so welcoming and generous, looking after Jon and myself very well as we attended an auction at the PSE headquarters in Abdel-Khalek Sarwat Street in downtown Cairo. Lots of impressive material for sale.



***John Aitchison collected a double handful of awards from Hany Salam on behalf of John Davis, Grand Prix winner, at the Palmares luncheon. At right, Hany faces a crowd of enthusiasts at the exhibition opening***

The day before the exhibition opened Hany kindly drove us to Alexandria, where the salt lakes on the approach to the Mediterranean city made a spectacular sight. We went straight to the Graeco-Roman Museum to help to set up the exhibits. UK displays had sadly been retained at Cairo airport after a misunderstanding and we put up photocopies in their place.

On 19 September, the first EGYPHILA philatelic and postal history exhibition, under the patronage of the Minister of Communications and Information Technology, Dr Amr Talaat, was opened. It was organized by the PSE (founded 1929), which has a history of holding international exhibitions around the world. Hany described how it includes rare collections from international exhibitors, its own members, and other groups including the Study Circle and with participation from senior philatelists in the Arab countries.

### Awards of Merit – the Gold winners

**John Davis**, President of the Egypt Study Circle, impressed the judges with his eight frames on Early and Classical Egypt and he was awarded 97 points to take a Large Gold medal and the Grand Prix as best in show. Close at hand was **Aly Gabr**, whose Third Issue display scored 96 and another Large Gold. **Jon Aitchison's** Officially Sealed Mail won Large Gold with 95 points, and he went one point better with his display of 100 Years of Postal Stationery. **Yasser Omar** scored 95 and Large Gold for his eight frames on Fuad's First Portrait issue, as did **Sami Sadek** for his Travelling Post Offices analysis. Gold medals went to **Aly Gabr** (Forces postal concession, 93), **Ahmed Nabil** (Pictorial Definitives, 90) and **Khaled Mostafa** (Rural Post, 90), all in five frames, **Mohamed Elrayes** (Suez Canal postcards, 90) in eight frames. **Yasser Omar** (1884 surcharge, 93) and **Atef Sarian** (First Issue, 90, and Fuad Birthday, 90), won Gold medals for their single frame displays.



*A novel and beautiful Grand Prix award... John Davis' top "medal" was a stunning replica of the scarab god Kheper from the tomb of Tutankhamun*

Dr Eng Mohamed Omar, co-ordinator of the exhibition, explained that 52 exhibitors from Egypt, England, Algeria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Oman were taking part in the first exhibition of its kind to be held in Alexandria. In addition, court of honour displays included his own on the Graeco-Roman Museum, Hany Salam on the history of Alexandria's maritime routes up to 1850, and two by Samir Nabih (ESC 505), on the San Stefano and Gezireh Palace hotels

As chairman of the jury, Samir took time out from examining the diverse range of exhibits to explain that Khedive Ismail founded the Egyptian Post in 1865, at a period before stamps, when the value of the service fee was written on the envelope. In 1866 Egypt's first postage stamps were printed in Naples, with geometric decorative forms.

Dr Ali Abdelmegeid (ESC 746) played an invaluable part as official spokesman of the PSE in the exhibition: he was very visible, ensuring that everyone was kept informed. Local TV captured several people to interview, including myself!



*The high-level standard of the exhibits attracted the attention of visitors and officials alike with everyone interested to see the elements of Egypt's history before them. Visitors on opening day included enthusiasts from the world over, including, at right, Mazen Mira from Australia and Dr Mohammed el-Zard, who is new to Cairo*





***PSE Board members took the opportunity for a group photograph. From left, Khaled Abu Bakr, Samir Nabih, Hisham Bassiouny, Hany Salam, Mohammed Omar, Sherif Hamza, Ali Abdelmegeid, Hassan al-Badry. Below, the exhibition was opened by Eng Mohamed Zahra, head of the Philatelic Printing House, who met Alaa Massoud, President of the Alexandria Philatelic Society, and colleagues Khaled Shamaa, Osama Khayat, Adham Shaker., Mohamed Gaber.***



After the exhibition opening we were treated to a personal tour of the museum, which is housed in a wonderful Greek Revival-style building that opened in 1895 and was expanded in subsequent decades. It reopened in October 2023 after 18 years of renovations. Highlights include early Christian mummies, a temple to the crocodile god Sobek, and a courtyard full of statuary.

That evening the official dinner was held at the Nautical club, near the Qaitbay citadel, which was built in 1477 on the site of the Pharos, one of the ancient wonders of the world, in Alexandria's eastern harbour. I enjoyed meeting Dr Mohammed Omar, whose wide range of exhibits included the Mediterranean Games, postal rates and King Fouad. Dr Aly Gabr (ESC 726) was also very good company, telling me about the architecture of Alexandria's Abu al-Abbas al-Mursi mosque. He showed the Third Issue and the British Forces concession rate 1932-41. Vahe Varjabedian (ESC 390) kindly invited me to visit his apartment in Cairo the following week.



***Time to enjoy a meal together: right, Aly Gabr, David, Hisham and Zizi Bassiouny, Ahmed Nabil, Hany. In the Sheikh Ali pub, Hermine Varjabedian, Hany, Vahe Varjabedian, David, Jon, Hisham and Zizi Bassiouny.***

On September 20 many of us took the trip to Rosetta (Rashid), on the western branch of the Nile. We visited Fort Qaitbay, built in 1479, where the Rosetta Stone was unearthed in 1899 and now resides in the British Museum. Recording a decree of 196 BCE, it helped to play a crucial part in the deciphering of hieroglyphics. I enjoyed visiting the historic Ottoman mansions, covered in ornate mashrabiya (latticework). Most impressive is the House of Amasyali, built in 1808. We also saw the House of Shaheen, featuring a reconstructed mill.



***David took the chance to visit Rashid, where the Nile meets the sea, Dahshur and its Bent Pyramid, the Alexandria Catacombs, and even to make his debut on Egyptian broadcasting***



The Palmes lunch and awards ceremony took place on September 21. Hany Salam presented the awards, after highlighting the need to encourage younger collectors to become involved in the hobby. John Davis was awarded Large Gold and Grand Prix, and Jon Aitchison accepted several awards on behalf of the UK entrants. Later, Hany kindly drove us back to Cairo.

Back in the bustling capital, I visited the extensive Abdeen Palace museum, built by Khedive Ismail, then travelled on the excellent Metro service to Coptic Cairo. In Islamic Cairo, I was fascinated in Al Muizz Street by a film being shot about Saad Zaghloul, set in 1919 with the “threatening” British soldiers played by Egyptian actors! I hired a driver to take me to the Dahshur pyramids, south of Saqqara, and found myself almost the only sightseer.

Visiting Vahe and Hermine in Heliopolis brought a new experience, visiting the newly refurbished Hindu inspired Baron Empain Palace. My final visit was to the Egyptian Museum in Tahrir Square, where the Tutankhamun collection still shines. All too quickly this magical trip came to an end. But it won’t be long before I’m back in Egypt.



***... not forgetting the fantastic newly restored Postal Museum in Ataba Square***

●Additional reporting by Vahe Varjabedian and Ali Abdelmegeid. Thank you both.



**Dr Ibrahim**

**Shoukry**

**dies at 93**

We are deeply saddened to have to report the death after a long illness of Professor Ibrahim Shoukry (ESC 423) at his home in Zamalek. Dr Ibrahim, a specialist eye surgeon, was a much loved and avid collector of many areas of Egyptian philately, and especially the Rural postal service. He was 93. A full appreciation will appear in the next QC.



**Meetings gap leads to big changes**

On October 26 the Circle held a face-to-face meeting (Ten Sheets, for want of a speaker) at Autumn Stampex, normally one of our best-attended dates. Turnout was most disappointing: ten members were there, including Nael Hamdy from Egypt and Herb Cowley from New Zealand. We were entertained by Jon Aitchison and Atef Sarian, fresh from their Royal Challenge successes in winning display access to Europhilex with Stationery and First Issue and by Herb Cowley on wartime cartoons. The Secretary, Mike Murphy, announced – not for the first time – that he would be stepping down at the AGM. There was no rush of volunteers to fill the role.

Contrast this with a Zoom meeting hosted by our North American colleagues just a week later – two eager and knowledgeable speakers (Bill Barclay on Sudan forgeries and Ahmed Abouesh on early flights), well publicised in advance. The attendance was 27, including five from U, and the meeting full of cheery chat. Chalk and cheese. The British end has clearly run out of steam, lacking energy, woefully short of members willing to play any part.

There could only be one outcome. As a result of continuing poor UK attendances, the Committee has decided to suspend face-to-face meetings and concentrate instead on Zoom get-togethers from time to time. Given that email/WhatsApp communication is so easy, there is now a standing invitation to any member, anywhere in the world, to volunteer for senior positions. They will be welcomed. The alternative is too dire to contemplate.

London will make exceptions for the two Stampex dates each year, when we will try to hold full meetings again. The AGM will take place at Europhilex on May 10 (equivalent of Spring Stampex). We shall need to appoint a new Secretary. The QC will continue; please send in material.

Anyone willing to make a difference, please contact the Secretary.

**Members' Matters**

**New Members:**

**ESC 766 Michael Osborn**, 2827 Pitchblend Court, Grand Junction, Colorado 81503, United States  
(General issues of Egypt and military postal history)

**Address change: ESC 747 Adam Hafez**, Flat 2108, Plot 68/A, Majaz 2, Sharjah, UAE (adam@gritigo.com)

Congratulations to our member **Joe Chalhoub** (ESC 385) in Quebec for an outstanding permanent display of his collection in the online Museum of Philately ([www.museumofphilately.com/collections](http://www.museumofphilately.com/collections)). He has a dozen exhibits beautifully presented, on over 3,000 pages of excellent and fascinating material.

Congratulations to **Jan Van Zelle**m (ESC 758), our member in the Netherlands, for winning a Large Vermeil with 86 points for his entry on Egyptian TPOs at the Hafnia 24 European stamp exhibition in Copenhagen from October 17-20.

Congratulations to **Yannis Dimitriadis** (ESC 752), our member in Athens, for taking a Large Vermeil with 82 points for his five frames, on Postal Services of Port Said 1880-1950 at Balkanfila (November 13-16) in Thessaloniki.



## Forged covers of the Sudan Campaign

Paul Grigg (ESC 476)

During the campaign to wrest the Sudan from the Dervish forces an Anglo-Egyptian army led by Kitchener entered the country in 1897. Postal services travelled with the army and as they progressed south post offices were established or re-opened. The campaign, involving many Egyptian officers and men, lasted until 1899.

As stamps were not always available to the troops, a special arrangement was made allowing soldiers and non-commissioned officers to send letters unfranked, to be charged in Egypt at the normal rate of 3 millièmes instead of the normal postage due of 6 millièmes. At this time there was no 3 millièmes postage due stamp so an official decree of 14 February 1898 authorised use of a bisect 2 millièmes green postage due in conjunction with the same complete stamp to make up the 3mills rate. Later, on May 7 that year, the 1889-1907 2 piastre orange postage due was surcharged 3 millièmes in English and Arabic and use of the bisected stamp ceased.

One Victor Nahman, a self-styled dealer with bases in Cairo and Alexandria and a well-known character in Egyptian-Sudanese philately, “created” a number of attractive and spectacular forged covers with the bisect dues during the Reconquest / Military Period of the Sudan. He seems to have come from well-heeled stock.

A Robert Nahman was a well-known member of the large Jewish Nahman family of Alexandria. One of his uncles was a celebrated banker named Victor Nahman. Said to have been born in 1853 and died in 1915, he married Alice of the wealthy Rolo family of Alexandria. Another Victor Nahman, related to the above, is said however to have been born in 1866 and married one Elisa Arbib. Perhaps he was our forger?

To pass through the cut-price service the cover was required to be endorsed “Field Service, no stamps obtainable” and signed by the commanding officer. Details of the sender - soldier’s name, number and rank – also had to appear on the cover. Most of the forged covers have these endorsements, but – crucially – the forger could not spell the word field: it appears as “feild” on all his English version covers. In another hint at forgery, the covers occasionally included his monogram as a handstamp (*right*), appearing as VN.



**Figure 1. This cover, number 26 on the list, purports to have been written “From Pte. 1156 Peter Matson”. It includes “Feild Service / No Stamp / Obtainable” with the initials FB.**

**The MEROWI cancel is exactly as described by Dr Byam in QC 50 and the TANTA cancel also looks the same. This cover carries the VN monogram at top right and is addressed to Victor Nahman, Alexandria, but re-addressed to Tanta.**

**Eight covers are recorded as from Merowi; all are dated 16 MR 98 TI.**

Back in 1957 (*QC* 50, pages 18-21), Peter Smith and William Byam described certain covers as the creation of Victor Nahman. Richard Wilson later published a list of these covers in *QC* 241, page iii. Richard and I had some correspondence at that time and exchanged some photocopies.

Since then I have made an archive (direct scans and scans of photocopies, where available) of the covers and added to the list prepared by Richard: he recorded just 11 covers and now there are 33 (see below: items 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14 and 15 were on his original list).

**Figure 2. This cover, number 16 on the list, is written in Arabic with "Feild etc" scrawled in English and mainly covered by the stamps. The MEROWI datestamp is unclear but obviously the same as before.**

**Only four of these soldier's rate covers are recorded addressed in Arabic. This is the only one with an additional English note.**

**Among recorded covers only ten have the rate made up by a whole and a bisected 2mills stamp.**



As soon as the 3mills surcharged stamps became available Nahman used them on his forged covers. They are all the correct stamp, being those of the first issue released on 7 May 1898. We have photographic evidence of 21 fabricated covers by Nahman using this overprinted stamp (two more are mentioned on the list but no direct evidence has been recorded).

Nahman covers are sometimes seen in the market and members should be vigilant when buying material of the Reconquest period. We should however note that Nahman was at work when these stamps were current and so his fabrications are "of the period". In some instances purchase may be considered worthwhile (to illustrate usage or some such point, or simply just to own a Nahman cover). But remember always that the return at resale might well be a hefty loss.



**Left, No 27 on the list of forgeries and right, No 11. Both have been added to Richard Wilson's original list**



A few notes on the two covers above, both of them created by using the surcharged orange 2pi postage due: the HALFA postmark on these covers is a forgery, described by Peter Smith and recorded by the Sudan Study Group as type HLF-F3. The CAIRE postmark has the "8" of "98" upside down as identified on other Nahman covers. The Cairo date is actually 18 NO 98. This mark is also suspect and probably forged.

Most of Nahman's forged covers were never anywhere near a post office, although some suggest that the Egyptian marks are genuine. This is most unlikely, though all the stamps he used were genuine and it is not impossible that some of his well-placed contacts might have been willing to provide cancelling "by favour" for the fabricated items. The boxed-T tax mark is similar to one used in Egypt and Sudan at the time. The same mark appears on every one of his covers, however, and the likelihood that all offices should have identical marks is most doubtful.

On the next pages please find a list of all known Nahman covers.



Forged covers of the Sudan Campaign – Nahman forgeries					
Postage Due covers. A. 1898, To Egypt at soldier's concession rate.					
	Cover date	CDS and SSG ref.	Sender and markings	Receiving CDS and comment	Stamps
1	30 VII 98	Atbara S.P.S. ATB-F1	Sergt. J. Sinclair R.F. Boxed T. Feild Service No Stamp Obtainable F.C.E.	Alexandria 27 VIII 98 Addressed to Victor Nahman, Esq. Probably Backstamped Alexandria.	3m on 2pt.
2	30 VII 98	Atbara S.P.S. ATB-F1	A. Savage Pte. 2474 R.F. Boxed T. Feild Service No Stamp Obtainable F.C.E.	Alexandria 27 VIII 98. Addressed to Victor Nahman, Esq. Probably backstamped Alexandria. VN monogram handstamp.	3m on 2pt.
3	30 VII 98	Atbara S.P.S. ATB-F1	Pte. 247 Wm. Wizard Boxed T. Feild Service No Stamp Obtainable F.C.E.	Alexandria 27 VIII 98. Addressed to Victor Nahman, Esq. Probably backstamped Alexandria.	3m on 2pt.
4	30 VII 98	Atbara S.P.S. ATB-F1	Pte. R. King. R.F. Boxed T. Feild Service No Stamp Obtainable F.C.E.	Alexandria 27 VIII 98. Addressed to Victor Nahman, Esq. Probably backstamped Alexandria. VN monogram handstamp.	3m on 2pt with interpane selvage.
5	3 VIII 98	Darmali S.P.S. DAR-F1	Corpl. J. Lyons Boxed T. (Presume Feild Service No Stamp Obtainable F.C.E.)	Alexandria 27 VIII 98. Addressed to Victor Nahman, Esq. Probably backstamped Alexandria. VN monogram handstamp.	3m on 2pt.
6	4 AV 98	Halfa HLF-F3	1763 Pt. Wm Watson Boxed T. Feild Service No Stamp Obtainable FB	Cairo 18 IV 98. Addressed to Victor Nahman, Esq. Probably backstamped Cairo.	3m on 2pt.
7	4 AV 98	Halfa HLF-F3	Pte. 967. A. Adams Boxed T. Feild Service No Stamp Obtainable FB	Cairo 18 IV 98. Addressed to Victor Nahman, Esq. Backstamped Cairo.	3m on 2pt.
8	4 AV 98	Halfa HLF-F3	Gr. No 74 W. Welshman. R.A. Boxed T. Feild Service No Stamp Obtainable FB	Cairo 18 IV 98. Addressed to Victor Nahman, Esq. Backstamped Cairo.	3m on 2pt.
9	4 AV 98	Halfa HLF-F3	Pte. 1314 Wm Devour (? obscured by cancel) Boxed T. Feild Service No Stamp Obtainable FB	Cairo 18 IV 98. Addressed to Victor Nahman, Esq. Backstamped Cairo.	3m on 2pt.
10	4 AV 98	Halfa HLF-F3	1424 Pte. James Dawson Boxed T. Feild Service No Stamp Obtainable FB	Cairo 18 IV 98. Addressed to Henry Nahman, Esq. Backstamped Cairo and boxed T	3m on 2pt.
11	4 AV 98	Halfa HLF-F3	Pte. 972 J J Dawkins Boxed T. Feild Service No Stamp Obtainable FB	Cairo 18 IV 98. Addressed to Victor Nahman, Esq. Probably backstamped Cairo. Photocopy front only.	3m on 2pt.
12	16 MR 98	Merowi MER-F2	Pte. William Adams Boxed T. Feild Service No Stamp Obtainable FB	Alexandria crossed out, readdressed Tanta 12 AV 98. Addressed to Victor Nahman, Esq. Backstamped Tanta. VN monogram handstamp.	2m + 2m bisect
13	16 MR 98	Merowi MER-F2	Corpl. A. Smith (? unclear) Boxed T. Feild Service No Stamp Obtainable FB	Alexandria crossed out, readdressed Tanta 12 AV 98. Addressed to Victor Nahman, Esq. Probably backstamped Tanta. VN monogram handstamp.	2m + 2m bisect
14	16 MR 98	Merowi MER-F2	Corpl. 1027 A. Carpenter Boxed T. Feild Service No Stamp Obtainable FB	Alexandria crossed out, readdressed Tanta 12 AV 98.	2m + 2m bisect

15	16 MR 98	Merowi MER-F2	Pte. M. Martin R.F. Boxed T. Feild Service No Stamp Obtainable FB	Alexandria crossed out, readdressed Tanta 12 AV 98. Addressed to Victor Nahman, Esq. (Presume backstamped Tanta).	2m + 2m bisect
16	16 MR 98	Merowi MER-F2	ARABIC. Boxed T. Feild Service No Stamp Obtainable (upside down, part obscured by stamps).	Addressed in Arabic to Tanta 12 AV 98	2m + 2m bisect
17	4 AV 98	Halfa HLF-F3	ARABIC. Boxed T.	Addressed in Arabic to Tanta 12 AV 98 plus an additional strike.	2m + 2m bisect
18	4 AV 98	Halfa HLF-F3	ARABIC. Boxed T. Feild Service No Stamp Obtainable	Addressed in Arabic to Tanta 12 AV 98.	2m + 2m bisect
19	3 VIII 98	Darmali S.P.S. DAR-F1	Sergt: James Jones. R.F. Boxed T. Presume Feild Service No Stamp Obtainable F.C.E.	Alexandria 27 VIII 98. Addressed to Victor Nahman, Esq. Probably backstamped Alexandria.	3m on 2pt.
20	3 VIII 98	Darmali S.P.S. DAR-F1	Sender omitted in picture. Boxed T. (Presume Feild Service No Stamp Obtainable F.C.E.)	Alexandria 27 VIII 98. Addressed to Victor Nahman, Esq. Probably backstamped Alexandria.	3m on 2pt with interpane selvage.
21	3 VIII 98	Darmali S.P.S. DAR-F1	Pte. 932 Thos. Jones Boxed T. (Presume Feild Service No Stamp Obtainable F.C.E.)	Alexandria 27 VIII 98. Addressed to Victor Nahman, Esq. Probably backstamped Alexandria.	3m on 2pt.
22	30 VII 98	Atbara S.P.S. ATB-F1	Pte. A. Wheeler R.F. Boxed T. Feild Service No Stamp Obtainable F.C.E.	Alexandria 27 VIII 98. Addressed to Victor Nahman, Esq. Backstamped Alexandria.	3m on 2pt.
23	30 VII 98	Atbara S.P.S. ATB-F1	Pte. T. Tucker R.F. Boxed T. Feild Service No Stamp Obtainable F.C.E.	Alexandria 27 VIII 98. Addressed to Victor Nahman, Esq. Backstamped Alexandria. VN monogram handstamp.	3m on 2pt.
24	Allocated to Alf Jenkins or Jenkinson (as mentioned in both <i>Camel Post</i> 12 and <i>Quarterly Circular</i> V, No 2) but not seen.				
25	16 MR 98	Merowi MER-F2	Pte. ?62 A Jenkinson Boxed T. Feild Service No Stamp Obtainable FB	Addressed to Alexandria but stamp cancelled Tanta 12 AV 98. Addressed to Victor Nahman, Esq. Backstamped Tanta.	2m + 2m bisect
26	16 MR 98	Merowi MER-F2	Pte. 1156 Peter Matson Boxed T. Feild Service No Stamp Obtainable FB	Alexandria crossed out, readdressed Tanta 12 AV 98. Addressed to Victor Nahman, Esq. (Presume backstamped Tanta).	2m + 2m bisect
27	4 AV 98	Halfa HLF-F3	Corpl. 1901 Wm Olivess Boxed T. Feild Service No Stamp Obtainable FB	Cairo 18 IV 98. Addressed to Victor Nahman, Esq. (Probably backstamped Cairo. Photocopy front only).	3m on 2pt.
28	4 AV 98	Halfa HLF-F3	Pte. 1574 Thos Martin (number unclear on copy) Boxed T. Feild Service No Stamp Obtainable FB	Cairo 18 IV 98. Addressed to Victor Nahman, Esq. (Probably backstamped Cairo. Photocopy front only).	3m on 2pt.
29	16 MR 98	Merowi MER-F2	ARABIC. Boxed T.	Tanta 12 AV 98 (two strikes). Addressed in Arabic. VN monogram handstamp (copy, front only).	2m + 2m bisect
30	Allocated to J. Nelson (as mentioned in <i>Camel Post</i> 12) but not seen.				



31	4 AV 98	Halfa HLF-F3	Pte. John Sinclair Boxed T. Feild Service No Stamp Obtainable FB	Cairo 18 IV 98. Addressed to Henry Nahman, Esq. Probably backstamped Cairo.	3m on 2pt.
32	3 VIII 98	Darmali S.P.S. DAR-F1	Corpl. Thos. Thompson Boxed T. (Presume: Feild Service No Stamp Obtainable F.C.E.)	Alexandria 27 VIII 98. Addressed to Victor Nahman, Esq. Probably backstamped Alexandria. VN monogram handstamp.	3m on 2pt.
33	3 VIII 98	Darmali S.P.S. DAR-F1	Pte. 1607 James Orton Boxed T. (Presume: Feild Service No Stamp Obtainable F.C.E.)	Alexandria 27 VIII 98. Addressed to Victor Nahman, Esq. Probably backstamped Alexandria. VN monogram handstamp.	3m on 2pt.
<b><u>Postage Due covers.                      B. 1897, Sudan provisional postage dues.</u></b>					
1	6 XI 97	Halfa HLF-F2	ARABIC Boxed T. Tanta CDS on front. Halfa backstamp.	Addressed in Arabic	full set of 4 dues
2	6 XI 97	Halfa HLF-F2	Boxed T. Tanta CDS on front. Halfa backstamp.	Addressed to Houssein Ahmed, Wadi Halfa, Soudan	full set of 4 dues

**Notes:**

1. This list is adapted from a spreadsheet in which a little more detail, such as source of information, is available.
2. Images of the covers are often less than clear, making some of the handwriting undecipherable. This particularly affects the names of senders. Besides which, the handwriting needs some "getting used to". No image of item 6 Wm Watson has come to light.
3. Line references 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14 and 15 were on the list made by Richard Wilson dated 30/10/2007.
4. Line references 24 and 30 have only names of the senders. No other information is known and none has been seen.
5. With thanks to Richard Wilson for sending much information, including the original list and various photocopies, in 2007.
6. The spreadsheet was assembled by Paul Grigg on 1 June 2023
7. This list was first printed in the journal of the Sudan Study Group, *The Camel Post*, number 109.

## **No need to be shy!**

Do you believe your collection is boring or tedious? Not worth mentioning?  
Not interesting enough to share with your fellow members?

If you feel that way, this message is not for you. But if you believe you have  
fascinating Egypt material, in whatever field doesn't matter, then please take a  
moment to consider sharing your research, finds, discoveries, with fellow members.

For years the *Quarterly Circular* has been supported in the main by a small number  
of collectors willing to share their delight at their special treasures or to report  
a new discovery. But now we need your help to keep the QC entertaining,  
colourful, bright with new finds, rediscovering old ones.

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Without them, there will be no magazine. Not melodrama. Stark truth.

## Muzzi Medal - Lost and Found

**Pierre Louis Grech (ESC 266)**

Giacomo Muzzi was born in Bologna, on 4 November 1822. Having moved to Egypt, he joined Tito Chini at the Posta Europea in 1848 and rapidly grew to become a senior member of that mail service, heading its growth and development throughout Lower Egypt, and making full use of the expansion of the new railways. In 1864 Muzzi, by then general manager and part-owner of the Posta Europea, wrote to Khedive Ismail with a proposal for postal reform and the introduction of postage stamps. This made Ismail sit up and decide to acquire the Posta Europea and to convert it into an Egyptian State Post.

The sale went through in October, aided by the Alexandria-based French lawyer Edouard Dervieu, acting for the Khedive. But the price was well below what Muzzi had expected. To retain his services and sweeten the pill, Ismail gave Muzzi the title of Bey and made him Director General of the new Poste Vice-Realie Egiziane which came into being on 1 January 1865. Muzzi was allowed to keep all his major employees, who were mainly Italian, which is why that language was that used by the Posta Europea and it then continued into the Egyptian Post.

In 1876, further to Ismail's extravagance and huge debts, an Anglo-French "Dual Control" was set up to administer Egypt's financial affairs. As one of its early actions it had Muzzi retired and summarily replaced by a British official, Alfred Caillard Pacha, originally from the island of Guernsey. This new director sacked 70 Italian employees, reduced the salary of others and introduced French as the postal service language in place of Italian. On Muzzi's forced retirement, the Egyptian postal service employees joined together to offer him a medal in gratitude and to commemorate his service (but see "1871" comments below).

I first became acquainted with that medal many years ago during a visit to Dennis Clarke (ESC 165) at his home, as a guest for the weekend. There, in his *stamp room*, he proudly showed me that unique medal which he had acquired some time in the past. I do not recall the provenance he might have mentioned but that medal was illustrated on page 7 of *L'Orient Philatélique* No 109 of January 1963. Luca Daniele Biolato (ESC 417) in his magnificent 1996 volume "*La Posta Europea nel contesto della storia postale dell'Egitto nel Sec. XIX (1820-1865)*" shows a picture of the medal on page 324 mentioning that, at the time, it was in the collection of Dennis Clarke of the ESC in England.



**The Medal:** Made of bronze and engraved (inc.) by A. Albergo; his name is below Muzzi's bust.

Diameter 52.5 millimetres; thickness 5 mm; weight 76 grammes.

Inscriptions: *Front:* COMME<sup>RE</sup> MUZZI BEY - DIRETT. G<sup>E</sup> DELLE POSTE EGIZIANE (repeated in Arabic).

*Reverse:* GL'IMPIEGATI TUTTI IN SEGNO DI RISPETTO E GRATITUDINE OFFRONO - 1871. (The Arabic inscription is in the centre of the star, whereas on the front it is on the perimeter). Also Turkish crescent & star.



On the medal the date "1871" is a bit of a puzzle. Both the *L'OP* and Luca Biolato indicate that the medal was presented to Muzzi at his retirement, yet he continued in his position as Director until August 1876, when he was forcibly replaced by Caillard. Poring over Biolato's hugely detailed book, I have found no event in 1871 to justify the presentation of a medal so we can only assume that it was offered to him as a gift from his staff who had held him in deep reverence and affection. The medal states only "as a sign of respect and gratitude". If any ESC member has further information regarding the medal, it would be gratefully received. *Please send to the Editor of the QC.*

Dear Dennis Clarke passed away at the age of 80 in the summer of 2010. His extensive and numerous collections were mainly sold at auction. However, his beneficiaries asked the ESC if it would dispose on their behalf of part of his philatelic library and some residual items the auctioneers did not consider viable. These included a shoebox containing an eclectic accumulation of coins and medals of all sizes, origin and condition. The ESC Secretary at the time brought that box to the Victory Services Club and during the preamble to an ESC meeting offered the contents of the box for sale to members in attendance. I rummaged through the box and among other fine pieces I discovered the Muzzi medal, which I proceeded to purchase. So I am now the proud custodian of this small piece of Egyptian postal history.

This article was triggered by an amusing anecdote. In *QC* 179, December 1996, page 95 there is a notice: "MISSING BELIEVED STOLEN". An un-named ESC member reported as missing, believed stolen, a Hagner stock album with many rare postmarks, No-value stamps and Officials, of which a detailed description followed. *"Also missing (or stolen) at the same time was the unique Retirement Medal for G. Muzzi, presented to him by the staff at the Alexandria Post Office"*! (who was that ESC member?!).

However, a few issues later, in *QC* 184, March 1998, page 218, there was a follow-up note to "MISSING BELIEVED STOLEN" of December 1996. The items had simply been mislaid! The Editor was *"pleased to report that there is a happy ending, the material has been found safe and sound - within the member's own collections!"* Funny, but considering the many albums and recesses of Dennis Clarke's stamp room that was hardly surprising. So the Muzzi medal was safe and eventually found its way into that shoebox where I discovered it years later.



***The Cairo Postal Museum exhibits the original desk of Giacomo Muzzi Bey, Director-General of the Poste Egiziane, 1865-1876. This photograph was a kind personal gift from the Director of the Museum during a visit in 1979.***

After his dismissal Muzzi survived on a meagre pension. He was still in Egypt in 1882, but at some point he returned to Florence where he died on 13 May 1898, aged 75.

## Imperial Airways crash mail: the Egyptian connection II

Ken Sanford (ESC 762)

*(This article is continued from Part I in QC 290 (pages 159-165))*

Continuing our chronological survey of mishaps occurring to Imperial Airways aircraft flying via Egypt, we find:

On 1 October 1937 the Short S23 *Courtier* (G-ADVC), en route from Australia to Britain via Egypt, was making its scheduled landing at Phaleron Bay, Greece. The pilot was Captain E. Poole, first officer Jack S. “Ginger” Hall, radio operator A. T. Dunk and flight clerk G.A. Boughton. The pilot failed to flatten out the flying boat on landing and it struck the water with great force. The hull burst open, and it sank in a few minutes.

Captain Poole claimed that the sun’s reflection on the still water of the bay blinded him and he thought the aircraft was touching down on the water. In fact it was still 50ft in the air. *Courtier* thus fell victim to the phenomenon known as “glassy calm”.

Rescue attempts were hampered by the propellers, which continued to turn in the water. Two passengers drowned, and five more were injured, one of them seriously. The remaining four passengers and crew were uninjured. An Air Ministry regulation followed the accident, requiring compulsory passenger seat belts in British aircraft. All the water-soaked mail was recovered, and 19 various cachets, markings and labels have been recorded. Field<sup>5</sup> reported that mails from India, Iraq and Egypt were on board.



**Avis de Reception registered cover from Alexandria to Greece**



**Paquebot cover from Port Said to England**

While taking off from Brindisi in a choppy sea on the Australia-Britain route on 5 December 1937 the Short S.23 *Cygnus* (G-ADUZ), with Captain Roger P. Mollard as pilot, acting captain F. U. Hollins, second officer Ralph Mountain, radio operator E. C. Barnes and flight clerk F. J. Hanscombe, the captain inadvertently set the flaps fully down, making the aircraft bounce off the water.

It dropped with a splash, bounced up again, and after rising 20 to 30ft dropped nose down, overturned and sank. The steward, F. L. Stoppani, and one passenger were killed. Five passengers were injured, including the Government Director of Imperial Airways, Air Marshal Sir John Salmond. An enquiry later blamed pilot



error, and Imperial was censured for failing to specify enough push-out windows and escape hatches when ordering flying boats. Most of the mail was recovered in water-soaked condition, and 29 different cachets, markings, labels and mimeographed explanations have been recorded.

Hopkins<sup>6</sup> commented: "A newspaper report at the time says that the whole of the mail had been salvaged, and that there were 100 bags with something like 120,000 letters. It is a good thing that most recipients throw them away immediately or collectors would be inundated with them!" He also reported a cover from the Hardemann Smith collection with a "DAMAGED BY SEA WATER" cachet in a box with the lower portion, including more wording, cut away. His opinion was that this was the same handstamp made in 1930 for covers from the wreck of the ship *Comorin* in Colombo harbor. Proud<sup>3</sup> reported mail from New Zealand, Australia, Ceylon, Malaya, Hong Kong, India, Iraq and Palestine. Field<sup>5</sup> also noted mail from Burma and Egypt.



***Amman to England cover with cachet***

On 15 January 1938 the Armstrong Whitworth Atalanta Class *Aurora* (VT-AEG) was on the Cairo-India route. An Indian newspaper reported:

"New Delhi, January 15, 1938. Imperial Airways mail plane from Karachi, which was due at Delhi today, was unable to land on Delhi Aerodrome owing to a heavy ground mist. It diverted to the Rohak District, north-west of Delhi, where it landed and damaged its undercarriage. Nobody was injured and the passengers and mail were brought to Delhi by a motor car. The mail and the passengers have left for Calcutta by relief plane which was sent from Karachi."

The pilot is unknown. Four covers without cachets (*below*) have been recorded.





On 23 January 1938 the Short S.23 'C' Class *Cordelia* (G-AEUD) was operating the Britain-Egypt route. *The Times* of London reported next day:

“The four-engined Imperial Airways flying-boat *Cordelia*, outward bound from England, was forced to come down on the sea at La Boule, near Saint-Nazair, France, yesterday by slight engine trouble, and was towed the 12 miles to the Imperial Airways base at Saint-Nazair by a launch.”

The pilot is unknown. One cover has been recorded without a cachet.



***Cover from England to Australia without cachet***

The Short S-23 *Corio* (VH-ABD) was on the Southampton-Athens-Alexandria-Basra-Sharjah route on 16 July 1938 when it was in a collision with the S23 *Cooee* (VH-ABF) while taxiing at Sharjah. The pilot is unknown. The S23 *Cordelia* (G-AEUD) took over the mail on July 17 and flew to Sydney, arriving on the 24th. Mail was backstamped July 25 at Sydney or Melbourne. At least eight covers carried by the *Corio* have been recorded, without cachets.



***Cover from England to Australia without cachet***

On 21 December 1939, the Lockheed Model 14-WF62 Super Electra (G-AFYU) was en route from Alexandria via Malta to London. The Captain was Peter C. Fair, first officer J.W.F. Beach, flight engineer J.J. Broome and radio officer G.R. Brentnall. After a scheduled stop at Sollum, on the Egyptian Mediterranean coast, the flight left at 8.14am for Malta.

The Malta wireless station received a routine message at 10.20am, but nothing more was heard from the flight, which had had to make a forced landing on the sea, floating for about 20 minutes. A nearby Maltese sailing boat picked up three crew members and three passengers who were transferred to a French ship, the *St Georges*, which arrived at Malta on December 23. Two crew members and three passengers were killed. Eisendrath<sup>8</sup> reported that a few letters for Britain were on board, sent from the Belgian Congo, all of which were lost. No covers have been recorded.

To complete the list of Imperial Airways accidents, on 1 March 1940, Handley Page HP42 Hannibal Class *Hannibal* (G-AAGX) was en route from Calcutta to Alexandria. The pilot was Captain N. Townsend, first officer G. J. Walsh and radio operator A. H. H. Tidsbury. The aircraft left Karachi for Jiwani, Baluchistan; it left Jiwani at 5.30am and was due at Sharjah at 10.35. At 8.50 the wireless operator reported that they were over Jask, Persia, flying at 1,000ft with a ground speed of 77 mph.

The last message received was at 10.10am, saying that they were trying to contact Sharjah. The aircraft was never seen again, despite a massive air and sea search in the Gulf of Oman. On March 4 wreckage was found by an Imperial flying boat about two miles east of Ras el-Kheimah, on the south coast of Persia. The flight was carrying four crew members and four passengers. The amount of mail is unknown, and no covers were recovered.

This was the last Imperial Airways crash. In 1939 Imperial merged with British Overseas Airways Corporation and on 1 April 1940 Imperial ceased to exist and BOAC started operations as a single company.

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2. *Movements of Aircraft on Imperial Airways African Route 1931-1939*, Peter Wingent, Winchester, UK, self-published, 1991.
3. *The Postal History of British Air Mails*, Edward B. Proud, pub. Proud-Bailey Co, Heathfield, East Sussex, 1991.
4. *Lloyd's List*, various issues.
5. *The Aero Field*, various issues, as noted in text. pub. Francis J. Field Ltd., Sutton Coldfield, UK.
6. *A History of Wreck Covers*, A. E. Hopkins. pub Robson Lowe Ltd, London, 1967
7. *Duncan Crewe*, miscellaneous correspondence.
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9. Various covers courtesy of Brian Peace.

# **EuroPhilEx Birmingham 2025**

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**The Eye of Horus - beginners' corner - with David Ogden.** Welcome back to our new column intended to give newcomers to Egypt collecting an insight into the country and its wondrous philatelic history. Today, we look at the all-important Suez Canal. Please let us know what you think of our new venture

## The Suez Canal – key link between two oceans

The Suez Canal is a man-made sea-level waterway connecting the Mediterranean and the Red Sea through the Isthmus of Suez and dividing Africa and Asia (and of course, the Sinai Peninsula from the rest of Egypt). The 120-mile canal is a key trade route between Europe and Asia. It is not the oldest such canal, however - ancient sources suggest that Pharaoh Senusret III built an early canal linking the Red Sea and the Nile River around 1850 BCE.

The French diplomat Ferdinand de Lesseps formed the Compagnie de Suez in 1858 for the express purpose of building the canal. Construction work took from 1859 to

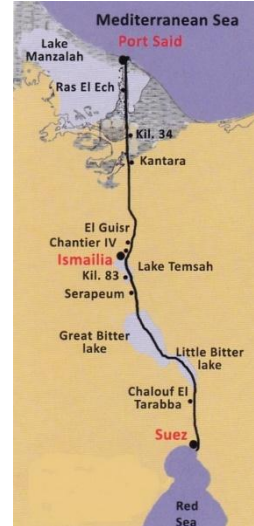


1869, and the canal officially opened on 17 November 1869. It was the property of the

Egyptian government, but European shareholders - mostly British and French - owned the concessionary company which operated the canal until July 1956, when

President Nasser nationalised it - an event which

led to the Suez Crisis of October-November 1956. Egypt closed the canal at the start of the Six-Day War on 5 June 1967, and it stayed closed for eight years, until 5 June 1975.



**Suez Canal Company stamps:** In 1859 the Compagnie Universelle du Canal Maritime de Suez set up its own postal system to convey administrative mail between its work sites and its offices in Alexandria, Port Said, Ismailia and Suez. In 1860 it formed an agreement with the Posta Europea for carrying its mail to the nearest Posta Europea office: Damietta, Suez or Zagazig.



This arrangement ran until 1865, when the Posta Europea was taken over by the government, after which the company resumed operation of its own postal system. It was decided to make a charge for the carriage of private mail, to take effect in July 1868. As a result, the company headquarters in Paris placed an order locally for postage stamps with values of 1, 5, 20 and 40 centimes. All had the same design except for denomination and colour. They were imperforate and printed from four lithographic stones.

The stamps were sent to Egypt in June 1868, but did not arrive in Ismailia until perhaps July 8 or 9, just over a week too late for the introduction of the postage fees. The Canal Company stamps were in use for less than 40 days, making genuinely used examples extremely rare with only a few covers known. Genuine copies are hard to find and expensive, but forgeries are readily available as space fillers. The real stamps show a distinctive “crackling” of the gum. Many of the forgeries have smooth gum.



**Egypt stamps:** Some stunning designs have featured on commemorative stamps featuring the Canal. In 1956, after nationalisation, a 10 mills stamp included a ship and map of the canal. Unfortunately, it shows the canal linking with Lake Manzala. In fact, it does not! This was followed later that year by another 10 mills stamp featuring the defence of Port Said. In 1957 an overprinted version of the defence stamp celebrated the evacuation of UK and French troops.



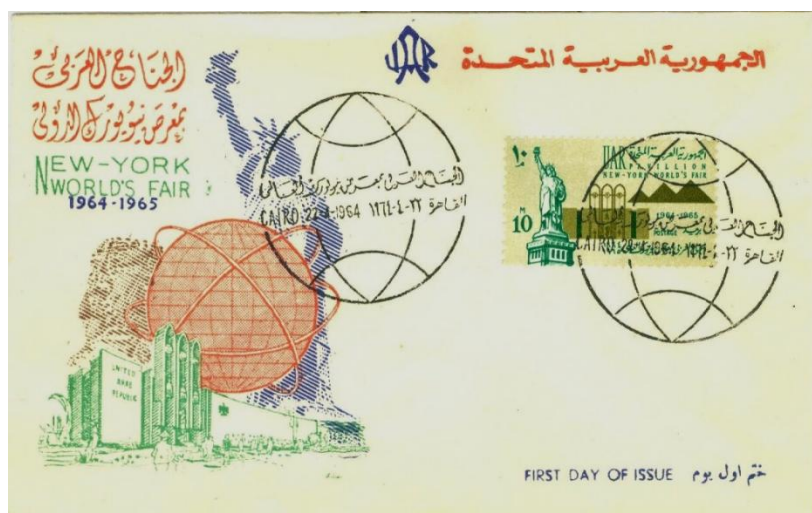
**Online resource:** The [Egypt Study Circle Facebook page](#) is a tremendous resource for seeking advice from expert Egypt stamp collectors and members who can read the Arabic markings.



## UAR at the 1964 New York World's Fair

Scott Van Horn (ESC 619)

To mark the occasion of the 1964-65 New York World's Fair, the United Arab Republic issued a 10 millièmes commemorative stamp (NP C349) on the opening of the Fair on 22 April 1964. Printed in photogravure by the Postal Printing House, it was perforated 11 ½ x 11, with the large eagle watermark. The stamp was olive, olive-brown, and green, and displayed the Statue of Liberty, the Giza Pyramids, and the UAR Pavilion.



The New York World's Fair was held on 650 acres in Flushing Meadows Park in Queens, New York, the same location as the previous 1939-40 New York World's Fair. The theme was "Peace Through Understanding", and the Fair was host to 80 countries, including the United Arab Republic (although by the time of the Fair Egypt was the only country in the alliance as Syria had seceded in September 1961). A display of artefacts from the Tomb of Tutankhamun – the first to be shown outside Cairo – was to prove unexpectedly controversial.

The earliest documentation found referencing the beginnings of Egypt's participation is an article in the *Middle East Record*, Volume 2 (1961), concerning an Arab Economic Council meeting held in Damascus from 17-24 June 1961, which stated:

*The council advocated measures to frustrate Israel's entry into the Common Market and recommended the setting-up of a technical committee to follow Israel's progress in this respect. It recommended that the Arab States should participate with a joint pavilion in the 1964 World's Fair in New York.*

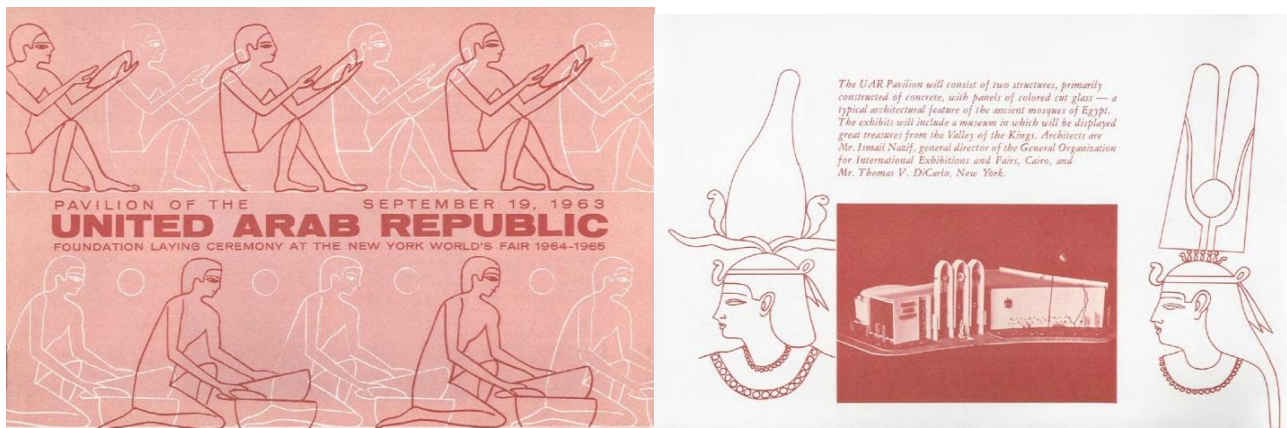
This was obviously carried out in-part, but there was to be no joint Arab States pavilion. Instead, separate pavilions were constructed only for the U.A.R., Jordan and Sudan. Not much information is available for the early planning of the U.A.R. pavilion, except that the architects were Ismail Nazif (general director, General Organization for International Exhibitions and Fairs, Cairo), and Thomas V. DiCarlo (New York).



**In-period usage (1 Jun 1964) to pay part of 80 mills  
postage to England (60m surface plus 20m air surcharge)**

The Fair included 139 pavilions with exhibits by 80 nations, 24 US states and 350 corporations. Exhibits were split across five regions—the Federal and State, International, Transportation, Amusement, and Industrial areas—all of which centre on Unisphere, the 140ft high steel representation of the earth which acted as the focal point.

The foundation for the pavilion was laid on 19 September 1963, with an elaborate ceremony. It was opened by a speech from Ambassador Richard C. Patterson, Jr., followed by Charles Poletti, former Governor of New York and current World's Fair vice president for international affairs and exhibits. Governor Poletti said he had “made a great effort to persuade the United Arab Republic to come to this Fair”, adding that there “aren’t many countries that have made great contributions to the civilization of the world – but certainly the UAR is one.” He had asked that the UAR exhibit not only past history, but also show “the new Egypt – the new UAR”.



**The programme for the foundation-laying ceremony described one section of the pavilion as providing a museum with treasures from the Valley of the Kings**

Ambassador Patterson introduced His Excellency Mohamed H. El-Zayyat, Deputy Ambassador to the United Nations, and after a short speech expanding on Governor Poletti’s comments, His Excellency Dr Mostafa Kamel, Ambassador to the United Nations, spoke of the “desire to participate in the activities of international society”, and how “the United Arab Republic is pleased to be a part of this great event, as it will always be pleased to be a part of constructive co-operation between nations”.

In the New York’s Fair Official Guide the UAR Pavilion was described as:

*Three towering arches stand at the entrance to this pavilion, which reflects a culture that has lasted from the time of the pharaohs to the present. A museum holds treasures of the past, not only ancient Egyptian objects but also others representing the Greco-Roman, early Christian and Islamic eras in the history of Egypt. Among the artifacts are some of the objects found in the tomb of King Tutankhamun, who died about 1344 B.C. Inside the main building, the United Arab Republic of today is represented by numerous industrial, agricultural, handicraft and cultural exhibits. A small souvenir shop sells handicrafts of the Middle East, and free samples of Arab food are*

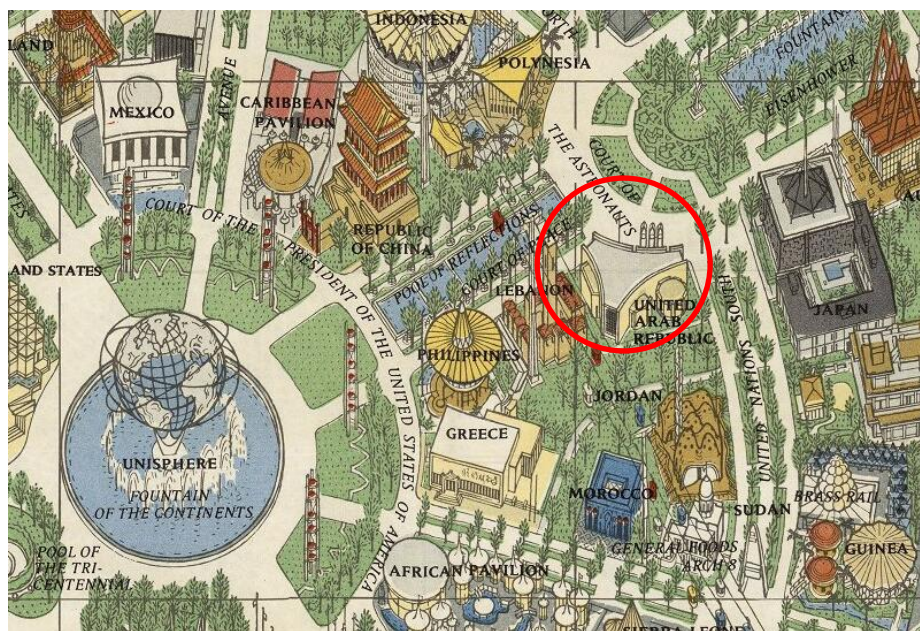




*offered to visitors. Admission: free to the pavilion; museum 50 cents. Motion pictures, maps, models, displays and fashion shows provide a panorama of the U.A.R.'s agricultural and industrial achievements. One section of the exhibit floor is devoted to an internationally sponsored program, now in progress, that will raise the 3,200-year-old temples of Ramses II and Queen Nefertari at Abu Simbel above the anticipated water level of the Aswan High Dam.*

The Tutankhamun artefacts on display at the U.A.R. pavilion were available only during the 1964 session of the World's Fair. The travelling exhibition, which was circulated by the Smithsonian Institution and sponsored by the American Association of Museums, was the first such display of any of the Tomb of Tutankhamun treasures to be exhibited outside Cairo, and made its way to numerous cities in the United States and Canada during its run from 1961 to 1964.

The exhibit displayed 34 artifacts not only from Tutankhamun's burial but also others from King Sheshonk from Tanis in the eastern Delta. Highlights of the exhibition were a gold dagger and sheath, a miniature gold coffin, a gold pectoral, and the gold and blue glass crook and flail.



***The U.A.R. Pavilion and its position within the Flushing Meadows fairgrounds***

During the Fair each day was presented as an occasion, or otherwise designated as something special. One day in August 1964 it was United Arab Republic Day, as noted in the New York World's Fair Newsletter, No. 46 of August 3:

*United Arab Republic Day at the New York World's Fair recently was the occasion for a reception and buffet dinner hosted by the U.A.R. consul general in New York, Mr Mohamed Kamel Ahmed, at the U.A.R. Pavilion.*

*Heading the list of 300 dignitaries who attended the affair: His Excellency Dr. Mostafa Kamel, Ambassador of the U.A.R. to the U.S.; His Excellency Mohamed Awad El Kouny, Ambassador to the United Nations and head of the U.A.R. Permanent Delegation; His Excellency Ambassador Amin Hilmy II, Deputy Permanent Representative of the U.A.R. to the United Nations.*

Most of the structures, including the U.A.R. pavilion, were demolished shortly after the Fair closed on 17 October 1965. In the years that have passed, many studies and articles have been written about the Fair, especially with regard to how its organizers were constantly working to persuade exhibitors to include artworks in their pavilions. In a paper by Julie Nicoletta entitled "Art Out of Place: International Art Exhibits at the New York World's Fair of 1964-1965" (SIAS Faculty Publications, Paper 14, 2010), she states:



When nations agreed to display art, they did so not just to exhibit their culture, but also to whet the appetites of tourists and demonstrate their worthiness for foreign investment.

Such was the case with the Pavilion of the United Arab Republic (UAR), as Egypt was known at the time. Inside the pavilion, models of the Suez Canal and the Aswan High Dam under construction highlighted the nation's technological and economic achievements. In contrast to the displays of modern Egypt stood an exhibit called "Egypt Through the Ages", comprising works dating back to 3000 B. C. Having gained full independence from Great Britain in 1952, Egypt erected a pavilion that reflected the nation's desire to be seen as modernizing while still deeply rooted in the past.

Although the fair was not the first North American venue for the works from King Tut's tomb, the pieces made up the most extensive collection ever displayed outside of Egypt. For this reason, the media frequently noted them among the must-see works of art on display at the fair. Yet some critics considered the selection – all works of superb quality, but of small scale – to be underwhelming because the objects were displayed out of the context of the entire collection of Tut treasures.

Even some of the fair's own staff believed the display of small works was not really worth the fifty-cent admission charge. In 1965, the UAR's exhibitors rescinded the admission fee, making the artwork accessible to a wider audience. Nevertheless, the Egyptians saw the King Tut pieces as their major attraction at the fair and exploited their aesthetic, cultural, and commercial value, even as the works had to compete with the Metropolitan Museum of Art's extensive Egyptian collection.

### El Tor, was there a regular sea postal service?

Michael Knaubert (ESC 745)

I should like to present you with a printed stationery postcard from El Tor in Sinai to Zurich, which I acquired on eBay a few years ago. Endeavouring to work out its postal route caused me some difficulties.

The card was written and cancelled in El Tor [see return address on reverse, Djebel el-Tor] on 23 August 1892 and was given a transit postmark at Suez on August 25. According to the *Bulletin Hebdomadaire* [Dec 26 1888], El-Tor post office was opened on 1 January 1889; a notice of Jan 3 1889 advised that it was served by regular camel couriers leaving on the seventh and 21<sup>st</sup> of each month and reaching Suez on the tenth and 24<sup>th</sup>.



**Addressed to Anton Schulthess-Rechenberg, a Zurich doctor and entomologist, the card asks him to identify some insects and complains of the loss of part of Kaiser's collection, eaten by gnawing wasps**

These dates indicate that the card could not have been carried by this regular service. A dating error is excluded because the departure date is documented twice, by the writer of the card and by post office cancellation on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, and by transit marks of Suez (25<sup>th</sup>) and Alexandria (26<sup>th</sup>). From El-Tor to Suez is 220km as the crow flies, so a two-day camel journey is simply not possible.



After the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 there was a great increase in the number of pilgrims crossing Sinai en route to Mecca and as usual in 1890 a quarantine camp was set up at El Tor during the pilgrimage season. During that brief period the postal service was served by sea, reverting to the camel service when pilgrimage was over [*Bulletin*, Dec 4 1890]. Though El Tor possessed a small harbour, the low local literacy rate will have precluded the necessity for a regular postal service by ship. The inhabitants of Sinai were Bedouin tribes, monks of St Catherine and other monasteries together with a supply station at the camp. So how did the postcard travel?

I see two possible solutions. Either a local small boat from El Tor could have carried out a mail bag to a

passing steamer, or a bag could have been carried by a supply vessel. I tend to the second option, because the sender was Alfred Kaiser (*above*), who headed a research station at El Kurum south of El Tor from 1890 until about 1898. This, however, would have been a private postal service and should not have been postmarked at El Tor but on arrival in Suez. I assume that the postcard was then carried by train to Alexandria, stamped on August 26, and then by steamer to Europe. Which sea route it travelled to Zurich, arriving on 1 September, I don't know.

**1. — Itinéraire du service entre Suez et El-Tor.**

Par suite de l'ouverture d'un bureau à El-Tor depuis le 1<sup>er</sup> Janvier courant (voir Bulletin du 26 Décembre 1888, N° 51, Art. 1) les communications postales entre cette localité et Suez sont maintenues au moyen d'un service bi-mensuel de courriers à dromadaires, dont l'itinéraire est fixé comme suit :

ALLER			
DÉPARTS DE SUEZ		ARRIVÉES A EL-TOR	
1 <sup>er</sup> de chaque mois, 9 h. du m.		4 de chaque mois	
15       »       »       »		18       »       »	
RETOUR			
DÉPARTS DE EL-TOR		ARRIVÉES A SUEZ	
7 de chaque mois, 7 h. du m.		10 de chaque mois	
21       »       »       »		24       »       »	

***Bulletin Hebdomadaire, 3 Jan 1889, announcing the opening of El-Tor office and the twice-monthly camel post service***

Alfred Kaiser was a Swiss naturalist and a specialist on Sinai. Born in 1862, he went to Egypt at 18 and worked in various jobs while becoming fascinated by desert life on leisure visits. He returned home in 1882 and for two years trained in taxidermy. In 1890 he was appointed curator of the Khedive's natural science collections and founded the research station at El Kurum, which rapidly became a hostel for German-speaking researchers.

Kaiser was a particularly good artist and taxidermist. He also mastered the various dialects of Bedouin tribes in Sinai, and converted to Islam, all facets very much required of foreign explorers. In 1893 his wife and son died from cholera spread from the El Tor quarantine camp. He was famously engaged as a leader on two major naturalist expeditions in Eastern-Equatorial and South Africa. After coming home to Europe, he became a member of the German West Cameroun Society, and married again in 1899.

In 1909 he became a trade agent for Egypt. After the First War he retired in 1919, then documented his research results until he died on 4 April 1930 in Arbon, his birthplace. He published 35 articles and books, and was well known as an Africa and Sinai specialist.

Kaiser's plant collections were deposited in the Geneva herbarium and *Alfred Kaiser's Sinai Herbarium* was published by the Swedish botanist Vivi Täckholm in 1969, enumerating 450 Kaiser specimens. She noted that his was the "finest collection ever made in Sinai" and that he was the discoverer of the only wild orchid known in Egypt.

- Vivi Täckholm was a good friend of Egypt, and as Professor of Botany at the University of Cairo she laboured tirelessly to establish its Herbarium, and worked in close collaboration with the Circle's late Egypt Agent, Professor Nabil el-Hadidi, who succeeded her in her university role.

A keen collector lacking direction found inspiration not so much in the stamps on a letter but in the secrets hidden in the cancellations and discovered that he was able to trace its rail journey from beginning to end



### Why I collect Egypt – Sami Sadek (ESC 559) – Portsmouth, UK

As a schoolboy I collected stamps from all over the world and dutifully stuck them in their rightful place in Catalogues. Then I lapsed. University took over, and stamp books were stored.

On immigrating to the UK in 1980 my interest in the stamps and history of my country of birth was rekindled and I started looking on eBay and buying Egyptian stamps with Balian catalogue in hand. But I was browsing with no clear direction. That is when I joined the Study Circle many years ago. The meetings were well attended, with incredible and wonderful material on show explained by real experts. It opened my eyes to a whole new dimension of collecting and research

Although stamps per se remained core to my collecting, my true fascination was with postal history and the letter's journey from writer to receiver. But a clear direction of research remained elusive.

Then one day my stamp dealer friend in Cairo, the late Raouf Ramzy, gave me a 1939 rail timetable whose detail included not only the Egyptian State Railways but more importantly the rare narrow-gauge routes. I had a small collection of travelling post office covers and started to look more closely at the cancellations, I soon discovered that by combining the train number in the cancellation (T 16 in



the illustration) and the detailed timetable I could actually track the full geographic route of the cover.

**TPO Cancel ALES - CAIRO**      Type Date Range FEB 1875- FEB 80  
**Type 1**  
**VERY RARE**  
 Letter posted from the Greek Island of Kefalonia on 29 March 1878 to Cairo (no CDS), via the Port of Alexandria, and the travelling post office from Alexandria to Cairo.  
 Paid 30 Greek Lepta, transit time to TPO CDS 11 days



**Route Comment**

- 1) Letter posted in Lixourion on the Island of Kefalonia 29 March 1878
- 2) Transit in Argostoli on Kefalonia, same day
- 3) Transferred to the Port of Corfu on 30 March 1878 to be shipped to Alexandria
- 4) Arriving Alexandria 8 April 1878

Peter Smith's 1983 monograph on TPOs, classifying them by cancellation type. was my constant companion. I was hooked. I acquired as many collections as I could afford (and bought some that I could not !!)

I started to learn the geography of Egypt and looked up obscure town names on the maps, spending hours tracing the routes and gaining immense satisfaction from untangling the arcane but well-planned movements of a letter travelling a three-TPO journey. TPOs continue to fascinate me. I have other projects and material, but I still find hidden TPO gems. My latest discovery was the first documented cover bearing not just three but four TPO cancels.

Finally, here is one of my favourite covers.

It has the first Egyptian TPO (ALES-CAIRO) marking. It was posted in Greece. So I asked a Greek friend to read the various cancellations. He took a quick look and said: "I was born in Kefalonia."

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





## MacArthur Award 2024 - it's time to vote

Members can encourage their colleagues (and the Editor!) to make the *Quarterly Circular* even better and brighter by voting for their favourite article of the past 12 months as the MacArthur Award winner of the year. The Seated Scribe winner will be announced in the March QC. Numbers of votes submitted have been increasing, and this year we expect more than ever.

To support our writers' efforts, please add a vote for the best article of 2024 to your PayPal or postal subscription note for next year. Or drop include a nomination for your favourite by email to [egyptstudycircle@hotmail.com](mailto:egyptstudycircle@hotmail.com). Or better still, who not contribute a piece on your own collection, perhaps a new discovery, a query to solve? Below is a list of major articles from 2024 you might like to vote for:

### **Issue 288 -- March**

MacArthur Plating of the 1872 20pa	Ramez Atiya	pp100-103
Philatelic Nation: Egypt-Nubia-Sudan	Mahmoud Ramadan	pp 104-109
Marc Pourpe Cairo-Khartoum II	Jos Strengtholt	pp 110-113
Med/Aegean Shipwrecks 1917-18	Ken Sanford	pp 114-iii

### **Issue 289 – June**

Treasures of the Suez Canal Co	Hany Salam	pp 124-129
Med/Aegean Shipwrecks 1917-18 II	Ken Sanford (Continued from QC 288)	pp 131-138
Philatelic Nation: Egypt-Nubia-Sudan II	Mahmoud Ramadan (Continued from QC 288)	pp 139-144

### **Issue 290 – September**

Editorial: Circle faces the future	Mike Murphy	p 147
Suez Canal forgeries by Saatjian	Paul Grigg	pp 151-154
MacArthur Plating of the 1872 20pa II	Ramez Atiya (Continued from QC 288)	pp 155-157
Imperial Airways crash mail	Ken Sanford	pp 159-165

### **Issue 291 – December**

A philatelic visit to Alexandria	David Ogden	pp 170-173
Forged covers of the Sudan Campaign	Paul Grigg	pp 175-179
Muzzi Medal – Lost and Found	Pierre Louis Grech	pp 180-181
Imperial Airways crash mail	Ken Sanford (Continued from QC 290)	pp 182-185

Or.... perhaps nominate your own choice

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## **It's very nearly 2025 ... time to renew your Study Circle subscriptions**

Without your annual subscription, the Egypt Study Circle could not survive. The amounts paid barely cover the cost of printing and posting the *Quarterly Circular*, and we work hard to gain extra annual income in the form of commission from Auction buyers and sellers.

So it is time to remind you that the subscription season is close at hand. We are grateful to have your annual £20 subscriptions paid promptly – plus a bit more to offset PayPal fees, or a bit less if you read the QC online – rather than having to waste time by chasing up late papers or non-payers.

So here's the reminder.

Please pay the regular team – Sami Sadek in UK, Trent Ruebush in North America, Tony Cakebread for Australasia, Ibrahim Shoukry / Sherif Samra in Egypt, and via PayPal for most of us. Most convenient would be for all those with a British bank account to set up a standing order – and then forget all about it. The bank looks after a payment every year, and you can concentrate on stamps and postal history instead.

If you want to resign your membership, please let us know... but if you are happy to stick with a group of friendly and like-minded individuals, don't forget that the due date is:

### **January 1 2025**

All members are given some leeway, but if we don't receive your payment before the AGM (May this year) we will cut off your membership - no more QCs, no auctions, no website. And a penalty to pay if membership is to be restored. Taking into account PayPal fees, please choose from the amounts below when sending your subscription:

If you pay in ...	GBP	EUR	USD
For a printed QC, paying by cheque/bank draft	20	22	27
For a printed QC and paying by PayPal	21	23	27
To read the digital QC, however you pay	15	16	20

Payment via PayPal should be made to our Egypt Study Circle account, while cash, cheque or bank drafts may be made to Treasurer Sami Sadek or Trent Ruebush. All addresses are on the first page of every QC.

Please keep up to date. It is painful and sad to have to chase members, and later to cancel their membership. Much better that we all pay up on time.