

The Quarterly Circular of THE EGYPT STUDY CIRCLE



June Quarter 2025 – Vol XXV No 10 – Whole Series No 293 – Pages 217-240

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Circle members vote for change

Overwhelming ballot result chooses to explore
a digital way forward ... see pages 217-222



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Study Circle votes for the future

Thanks to all who voted in the recent online ballot in the wake of the Annual General Meeting. From our 165 members we received 54 votes (a third of those enfranchised), with 50 votes in favour of the Committee suggestions for taking us forward to a digital age, and 4 against. Do not expect anything to happen overnight. There is much to decide, much detail to plan, many movements to be made. We shall keep members informed, especially on the main change - ceasing production of the paper QC and replacing it with a digital email version for printing out at home - which will save the Circle a vast amount of time, effort and money.

Mike Murphy, Hon Secretary, Egypt Study Circle

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Committee	Jon Aitchison Old Tithe Hall, Start Hill, Nr Bishop's Stortford, Herts CM22 7TF jonaitchison.uk@outlook.com
Hon Life Members	Stephen Bunce

Members' Matters

New Members:

ESC 770 Hassan Ahmed Badry, 16 al-Nasr Street – Hassan Mohamed, Al-Ahram, Giza 12111, Egypt
(Official Royal sets), First, Second, Third Issues, Military issues)

ESC 771 Sherif Sayed Sobhi Hamza, 4 Mohamed el-Masry St, El-Malika St, Faisal – Giza 12111, Egypt
(Revenues, Fouad First/Second issues, postal agencies)

ESC 772 Kim Spurge, 30 Kebroyd Way, Kallaroo, WA 6025, Australia
(Egypt and Sudan overprint errors pre-1940, New Hebrides pre-1910)

Address corrected:

ESC 769 Roger Waivio, 4420 95th Ave N. Pinellas Park, FL USA 33782

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Facebook: facebook.com/groups/EgyptStudyCircle

Website: egyptstudycircle.org.uk

EGYPT STUDY CIRCLE

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT (GENERAL ACCOUNT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

	2024	2023
INCOME		
Subscriptions	£2,446.49	£3,150.59
Auction account ¹	£4,468.80	£2,496.76
Donations	£87.96	£113.20
Advertisements	£0.00	£329.35
	£7,003.25	£6,089.90
EXPENDITURE		
Meeting room hire	£701.35	£1,462.42
Cost of Quarterly Circular	£2,815.02	£2,714.58
Website costs	£0.00	£0.00
Officers' expenses	£458.73	£4.10
Insurance	£126.55	£127.20
ABPS subscription	£77.35	£94.00
	£4,179.00	£4,402.30
Surplus for the year	£2,824.25	£1,687.60
Surplus as at 1 January	£26,979.88	£25,292.28
Surplus at 31 December	£29,804.13	£26,979.88

BALANCE SHEET (GENERAL ACCOUNT) AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2024

	2024	2023
ASSETS		
Stamp collection	£500.00	£500.00
Circle Library & records	£2,000.00	£2,000.00
Cash in PayPal	£3,845.59	£919.18
Cash at bank on current account	£24,317.51	£24,371.19
	£30,663.10	£27,790.37
LIABILITIES		
Members subscriptions in advance	£858.97	£810.49
	£858.97	£810.49
Representing		
Accumulated surplus	£29,804.13	£26,979.88

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.

Note¹: The Auction Account is subject to outstanding remittances from buyers and to sellers from sale 69.

(signed) A W Gould FRPSL, 8 March 2025
Accounts Examiner

Countdown to the Study Circle's transition

The Committee of the Egypt Study Circle met by Zoom on the evening of May 25 in a much more optimistic frame of mind than before the all-members ballot which resulted (see details previous page) in an overwhelming support for taking the Circle forward into a more digital 21st century atmosphere. Committee members acknowledged the ballot result and ratified its conclusions.

So, what does it mean? Essentially, that the Circle will transition over the next few months into communicating with its members in a different manner, with much more emphasis on the website and the Facebook page. Sad though it is after 90 years playing various roles, the QC will no longer be printed in a paper version.

But the magazine is not lost. Instead of it being posted out only four times a year, members will in addition be able to read new articles on the refreshed website - relieved of its cobwebbed intricacies and given a new front page - as they are written, and with compilations sent out each three months (like the paper QC, but by email) to all full members. This will save us money but more importantly relieve massive pressure on overworked officers. Parts of the website will remain behind a members' password.

We appeal to all of you full Circle members to join in with the very active 900 Facebook members – (www.facebook.com/groups/EgyptStudyCircle) there is no fee – who are rapidly developing a lively question/answer forum, and to encourage new friends and colleagues to move on from there to full membership of the Circle. We expect to use Facebook even more for queries, society notices and the like, and encourage members to respond to posts on the site.

The Circle is keen to attract younger members, and is seeking articles aimed at those new to collecting Egypt, open to members and non-members alike, on both website and Facebook pages. A sub-title for the old-fashioned "Study Circle" that will reflect more directly our interest in stamps and postal history is being reviewed to widen the appeal to younger collectors.

All this does not happen in one day, and we will share future developments in the next couple of QCs. But the new website is crucial to our survival, and we all look forward to a bright new appearance and efficiency, with work behind the scenes already revealing myriad fascinating articles and reports hidden from view but ready to be offer fascinating new insights.

The decisions taken have not been easy. But they have been necessary. And they promise a bright future not only for the Circle's present members but also for the younger collectors we are working hard to attract and encourage to join us.

Mike Murphy, Hon Secretary

Report of the Annual General Meeting, 10 May 2025, at EuroPhilEx, National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham

After 18 months of frustration and negativity, it was most encouraging to see 12 members (including seven from overseas) at this important meeting, where crucial planning was debated. The slight mood change may have been triggered by the promise of something new and exciting on the horizon – coupled with the recognition that something HAD to change.

The meeting was delighted to welcome Hany Salam (ESC 580), President of the Philatelic Society of Egypt (PSE), whose exhibit of amazing early Maritime Mail was on display in the EuroPhilEx Court of Honour.

Attending were: David Ogden (Chairman), Hany Salam (Egypt), Sami Sadek (Treasurer/ Auctioneer), Neil Hitchens (Webmaster/ Librarian), Herb Cowley (New Zealand), Aly Gabr (Egypt), Nael Hamdy (Egypt), Ken Sanford (USA), Atef Sarian, Greg Todd (Ireland), Jan van Zelle (Netherlands), Richard Wheatley.

Apologies: John Davis, Mike Murphy, Jon Aitchison, Hani Sharestan, Trent Ruebush, Tammie Aaron Barrada, Tony Cakebread, Pierre Grech, Mike Bramwell, Vahe Varjabedian, Sue Claridge, Anabright Hay, Claude Poulson. Peter Newroth, Joe Chalhoub, Vincent Centonze, Michael Ryan, John Clarke, Patrick Moore, Scott Van Horn, Christopher Smith.

Chairman: David welcomed members present and congratulated Committee member Jon Aitchison (ESC 661) on receiving the highly regarded ABPS Congress Medal (*See page 222*) for his more than two years' work as Chairman and principal organiser of the EuroPhilEx exhibition. David congratulated Circle members who won awards for their wonderful displays.

His personal highlight of the year was the EgyPhila exhibition in Alexandria in September 2024. He thanked Greg Todd (ESC 585) for making a gift of his book *Egypt – 1866 First Issue Multiples* to all members.

David noted that three members had died during the year, including Ibrahim Shoukry (ESC 423), for long a stalwart of the PSE, expert in stamp issues and postal markings, generous with his knowledge; Tom Homa (ESC 303), one of the core collectors in North America over 50 years, specialist in the Third Issue; and Abdel-Rahman Daw (ESC 730), a young up-and-coming collector/dealer whose sudden and unexpected death shocked his Cairo colleagues.



Members at Birmingham: left, David Ogden and Hany Salam; right, Ken Sanford and his wreck mail display

Minutes of the last AGM: (6 March 2024, QC 289, pp 122-3) and matters arising were approved.

Election of Officers: Neil Hitchens' emergency move to Librarian was confirmed; and on the Committee Ali Abdelmegeid (ESC 746) was elected to replace Ibrahim Shoukry. Tammie Aaron-Barrada (ESC 643) was voted in place of Vahe Varjabedian (ESC 390), who was warmly thanked for his many years of long service. Remaining officers in situ.

Treasurer/ Auctioneer: Sami Sadek reported on two recent Auctions, with No 68 (545 lots offered) attracting 283 successful bids (53%) for a total sale value of £9,543 and ESC commission of £1,325; and No 69 (506 lots offered) attracting 203 successful bids (40%) for a total sale value of £8,080 and ESC commission of £1,431. As Treasurer, he reported an accumulated surplus of £26,979.88 after an annual surplus of £2,824.25 over 2023's £1,687.60. He appealed to all members to pay annual subscriptions (due January 1) by March 31; and to settle auction accounts in a timely manner. Sami proposed a vote of thanks for our accounts examiner Andy Gould (ESC 393), which was warmly approved.

Secretary/ Editor: In his absence Mike Murphy's report was read by David Ogden.

Membership 2024: We lost eight members but gained eight, and now stand at 164, same as two years ago. They comprise UK 39, Europe 31, Egypt 25, N.America 56, World 13. Those selecting the online QC, 35.

MacArthur Award for 2024: Member apathy was unfortunately echoed in the voting, with ballots cast for fewer QC articles than for many years. But there was no doubt about the runaway winner, which was "Notes from a philatelic visit to Alexandria" by David Ogden, which appeared in QC 291, December 2024, pp 170-3.

Mike's headline report stated: "This has been a most frustrating year, even more so than when I gave notice that I wished to step down from one or other position 18 months ago. Sadly, despite the Committee's best efforts, it has not been possible to find a volunteer to take over either role. So the Committee changed its direction of approach, by trying to ease the burden – David, Sami and Neil are in similar positions of being required to fill two demanding roles – to make continued occupation of both roles possible.

Attendances at face to face meetings have diminished rapidly since Covid, as have offers to present meetings. A move to online meetings via Zoom attracted new attendances, but again the potential number of presenters has dried up, to the point where it is very difficult to arrange meetings of any sort.

Which is in part why the proposals for the future are so drastic.... We are suggesting that we make much more use of the popular and lively Facebook page, and to cease publication of the paper QC and convert it to a digital publication supplied by email. Discussion of Agenda items offered potential solutions presenting a drastic step away from our long-held practices and at the same time preparing the way for moving forward to take advantage of advances in technology.

By sending more material to be Secretary will be relieved of some of notices, previews, auctions and the like. juggling articles and illustrations of jigsaw of 28 pages, by removing labels and visits to the post office, the time polishing articles and deepening renowned.

Next meeting
Our next face-to-face
meeting will be on
Saturday October 25,
10.30-12.30, at Stampex
in North London.
Don't miss it!

presented on Facebook, the the day-to-day routine of queries, By removing the necessity of many abilities and qualities into a purchases of envelopes, stamps, Editor will be able to spend more the research for which the QC is

By carrying out both exercises, we may be able to retain the services of a member who has grown into familiarity without realising it over the years – so many years that the burden has inexorably become overwhelming. For members in general, the technological advances involved are few and will quickly become familiar – the online QC can be printed out with the push of a button on your home computer; the website contains a wealth of unheralded potential research material; and the wide range of offerings from members and non-members alike on Facebook will prove a source of fascination for all.

The Circle is in the 21st century. Founded in 1935, it has survived for 90 years. Now is not the time to be stalled by a short-term unfamiliarity with technology that is developing into every aspect of our lives".

Mike also observed that if QC publication and distribution costs were cut as suggested, saving some £3,000, it should be possible to consider alternative uses for the resources freed up, perhaps in a reduction in the annual membership fee, or towards upgrading to a more robust website. Those decisions are something for the coming weeks, after the overall decision in principle is agreed.

Webmaster / Librarian: Neil Hitchens reported on the newly reconstituted website, not yet in operation, which meets contemporary web standards including modern coding. There is a wealth of material concealed in its archives that members may not realise is available. The Circle Library (of books) is now in store awaiting Neil's house move. He will update the catalogue list, as many items have been added since the last update.

Meeting continued....

Richard Wheatley suggested that we advertise in the QC for a specific role to assist the Editor in compiling the magazine: note that a similar appeal was made at the last AGM in 2024. Hany Salam suggested that the PSE could arrange to have each complete year's QC printed in Cairo and posted to members on request with attractive Egyptian stamps. Cost and demands on Editor to be determined.

PSE's Cairo headquarters: Hany Salam explained that the PSE is in the process of moving to new offices as a direct result of a change in the laws concerning rent control. It has been suggested that the ESC might contribute US\$5000 to buy one of 12 shares in the new office space. Joe Chalhoub (ESC 385) has volunteered to contribute an amount. Hany explained that any payment would be protected from any future liability. Members

Circle members strike Gold at Birmingham international

The Circle enjoyed a successful display at EuroPhilEx, with Jon Aitchison (ESC 661) topping the bill by receiving the Association of British Philatelic Societies' 2025 Congress Medal in recognition of his two years' work as Chairman and organiser of the exhibition, plus a grand total of two Large Gold and five Gold medals divided among members from around the world. Atef Sarian's early issues gained rewards of Large Gold and Gold, and Brian Callan also had top results for his Irish entries.

Court of Honour: **Hany Salam** (ESC 580, Egypt) - Egyptian Maritime postal history,

FEPA Grand Prix Class: **Akthem Al-Manaseer** (ESC 748, USA) - IEF 'D' and the war in Mesopotamia 1914-1918.



Jon Aitchison, centre, with John Davies, chairman of the ABPS, who presented his medal, and Chris King, right

Traditional: **Atef Sarian** (ESC 639, UK) - Second Issue, 95 points, Large Gold (8 frames); **Aly Gabr** (ESC 725, Egypt) - Third Issue, 91, Gold, with felicitation for research (8 frames); **Brian Callan** (ESC 694, Ireland) - British and Irish Telegraph Stamps, 90, Gold (8 frames); **Atef Sarian**, Third Issue, 90, Gold (8 frames); **Aly Gabr**, Postal Concession, 87, Large Vermeil (5 frames); **Atef Sarian**, First Issue, 86, Large Vermeil (5 frames); **Atef Sarian**, De La Rue 1879, 83, Vermeil (5 frames).

Postal history: **Brian Callan**, Cork Postal History 1696-1875, 95, Large Gold (8 frames); **Richard Wheatley** (ESC 168, UK), Netherlands East Indies World War One, 90, Gold (8 frames); **Sami Sadek** (ESC 559, UK) - Travelling Post Offices 1866-1922, 87, Large Vermeil (8 frames); **Gerrit Jan van Zelle** (ESC 758, Netherlands), Travelling Post Offices in Egypt, 82, Vermeil (5 frames),

Revenues: **Aly Abdelmegeid** (ESC 746, Egypt), First Revenue Stamped Papers 1843-1930s, 75, Large Silver (1 frame).

Postal stationery: **Brian Callan**, Irish Postal Stationery 1922-1970, 88, Large Vermeil (8 frames); **Jon Aitchison** (ESC 611, UK), Egypt registered envelopes, letter sheets, registered letter sheets, 85, Large Vermeil (5 frames),

Literature: **Laurence Kimpton** (ESC 591, UK), Airmails across the Middle East 1918-30, 93 points, Gold

Digital literature: **Sun-Yu Ng** (ESC 689, USA), Western Art & Architecture via Maximum Cards, 63, Bronze; **Sun-Yu Ng**, The Origins of Maximum Card precursor families, 63, Bronze.

favoured making a contribution, if necessary, but as discussions continue between the PSE and government officials any ESC decision will await the outcome of those talks. The meeting concluded with an interesting display by Ken Sanford (ESC 762) of Imperial Airways crash mails involving aircraft flying over Egypt.

- Those members in attendance were broadly in favour of the advantages of an online-only *QC* but decided that in light of the long-term importance of some of the matters under discussion, all members - including those not present - should have a voice. All were invited to vote online on the question:

“Are you in favour of using modern technology, including online preparation and distribution of the *QC*? The Committee hopes for your support and a move to digital delivery. As explained above, the current process is not sustainable.” *For voting result see page 217.*

The 1953 Queen Nefertiti issue

Scott Van Horn (ESC 619)

On 23 January 1953 the newly formed Republic of Egypt issued its first set of pictorial definitive stamps. They contained images displaying a farmer, a soldier, the Mosque and Madrasa of Sultan Hassan, and the famous bust of Queen Nefertiti. The Nefertiti stamps comprised the four highest values of the set at 100m, 200m and 500 milliemes, and £E1 (NP D207-D210), and are arguably my favourite issues of the post-Second World War era.

Also included in the set is the release by the United Arab Republic on 30 May 1960 of a 500 milliemes stamp of the same design but with a new colour scheme (NP D269). Its national insignia is also changed, from Postes d'Egypte to UAR (*al-gomhouriyah al-arabiyah al-motahida*).



Queen Nefertiti was the wife of the so-called "heretic" pharaoh Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten (1378-1372 BCE). The painted limestone bust has been said to be a "studio" model created by the master sculptor Thutmose and used for apprentice sculptors to copy. It was discovered by the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft (German Oriental Society) on 6 December 1912 at Tell El Amarna (the ancient capital city established by Akhenaten and known as Akhetaten).

The bust is at present on display in the Ägyptisches Museum in Berlin, but its removal to that institution immediately after its discovery has fuelled a controversy about the rightful owner which continues to the present day.

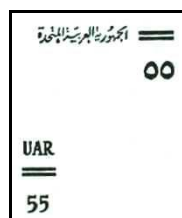
There are four bilingual overprints which were applied to the original 1953 four-value set in early 1956, one of them applied (in black or red, *Figure a*) on all four values for use in the Gaza Strip (NP PC53-PC56).

Two more were applied after the establishment of the United Arab Republic (UAR). One of them, released on 20 January 1959 (NP D252), revalues in black (*Figure b*) the 100m brown denomination to the unusual rate of 55m for registration and AR. The second UAR overprint, applied (in red, *Figure c*) to the £E1 green denomination (NP D270), was released on 22 February 1960.

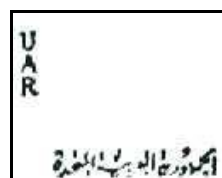
The remaining overprint, like the first intended for use in the Gaza Strip, was applied (in green, *Figure d*) on 20 January 1959. This was also used on the 55m-on-100m brown UAR overprint (NP PC68).



a. NP PC53-P56



b. NP D252



c. NP D270



d. NP PC68



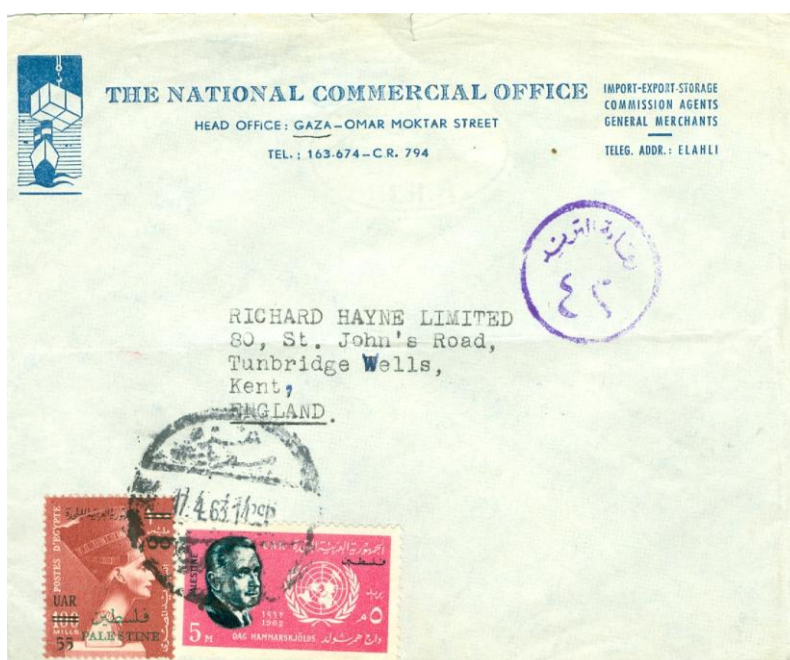
In-period airmail usage of the 100m issue (NP D207) on 23 February 1956 addressed to the Commonwealth Institute of Entomology (now CAB International) in London. The 100m denomination, combined with the 10m soldier (NP D197) and 2m agriculture (NP D237) values, make-up the 37m UPU surface rate, plus the 45m registration fee and the 30m air surcharge (over 10 grams) from Cairo.



Another in-period use with the 200m value (NP D208) on a parcel card dated 28 March 1957 with a 5m agriculture (NP D240) and three 1m general revenues from Mohamed Bey Farid in Cairo.



An in-country usage from Cairo of the 55m-on-100m surcharge overprint (NP D252) for a registered cover, after the creation of the UAR, dated 21 May 1959. The 55m makes up the 10m internal surface rate, the 25m registration fee and a presumed 20m Avis de Reception fee (remains of AR card adhesion top left).



A cover from Gaza to England showing the proper usage of the PALESTINE overprinted 55m-on-100m surcharge value (NP P68), with a 5m Dag Hammarskjöld commemorative (NP PC18). The cover is dated 17 April 1963 from GAZA, with a type 8 censor. The 60m usage makes up the 45m UPU surface rate, plus 15m air surcharge.

Finally, a large, registered airmail cover from the Philatelic Society of Egypt to New Jersey (USA). The cover is dated 23 January 1956 from Cairo, and uses the 50m (NP 206) Sultan Hassan Mosque, 100m (NP D207), 200m (NP D208), and 500m (NP 209) Nefertiti definitives, and the 5m (NP A52) Delta Barrage airmail definitive. The obverse of the envelope has 45 copies of the Arab Postal Union commemorative (NP C158-C160), so this is obviously drastically overpaid with postage totalling 2,645 milliemes.



Why such an amount? There are clues in sender and receiver... the cover was sent from our Cairo colleagues the Philatelic Society, with their distinctive oval "Control Committee" on the front, and is addressed to George Lee of Bernardsville, New Jersey, a leading American collector and former member who was at one time Egypt's "agent" in North America as well as author of the classic work on Royal Collection imperforates.

The reverse also has large red wax seals, normally indicating high-value contents, but there is no indication of any insurance charge raised and a pencil "107" on the face remains a mystery. The cover was censored in Egypt, but remarkably "Passed Customs Free" on arrival. Another pointer to its being philatelic is use of the Arab Postal Union stamps ... there are precisely 15 stamps of each denomination for a total of 780m. Perhaps someone just wanted to "wallpaper" a large envelope.



The Eye of Horus - Beginners' Corner 4 - with David Ogden. Our column giving newcomers to Egypt collecting an insight into its wide philatelic history today looks at special arrangements that were made for a lower-priced postal contact between British troops serving there and their families at home

British Forces in Egypt: Have you come across the strange looking stamps issued in the 1930s for British troops to use? Some collectors don't see them as genuine stamps, but they are listed in SG and other catalogues. Postal rates increased between 1932 and 1943, and Egypt issued special stamps (or "seals") for



British military use. Inscribed "British Forces in Egypt" or "Army Post", they were stuck on the back of the mail (like old wax seals on letters) and cancelled by a "retta" handstamp.



Egypt gained independence from Great Britain in 1922, but thousands of British Forces stayed to defend the crucial Suez Canal trade



route. In 1932 Egypt lifted its internal postal rate from 10 millièmes (about 2 1/2d at the time) to 15 millièmes. The increase met strong opposition from the troops, because it would cost more to send mail from Egypt to the UK. So an arrangement was agreed, with British military personnel given a postal concession that allowed them to write home at the old rate of 1 piastre (10 millièmes). In November 1932 the special stamps were made available for British troops to buy at NAAFI (Navy, Army, and Air Force Institute) canteens. The first "postal seal" was replaced in 1933 by one inscribed "letter seal" with the NAAFI seal on the left and the inscription "British Forces in Egypt" at the right. It was designed by Lt Col C. Fraser.

For Christmas and New Year mail special Xmas Seal 3 millieme stamps were produced in various colours between 1932 and 1935. A distinctive design showing a local figure with his camel in front of the Pyramids was prepared by Sgt. W. F. Lait, of the Service Corps. with the phrase "Xmas Seal" in the centre. These seals were valid only on unsealed holiday correspondence.



In 1934 Egypt released a carmine 1-piastre letter stamp designed by Miss Waugh showing a sphinx. "British Forces in Egypt" is written in gradient font with "letter stamp" outlined in black letters. The same design was issued in green later that year. The sphinx series was issued in blue in May 1935, diagonally over-printed "Jubilee Commemoration 1935" for the Silver Jubilee of King George V; and in red with "Xmas 1935 / 3 milliemes" overprint as a Christmas commemorative issue. Cancellations of military post offices most often seen on Christmas seals are those of Cairo,

Abu Suweir, Abuqir, Alexandria, Moascar, Port Said and Mersa Matruh.

Postal seals and stamps were discontinued after the introduction of Egyptian-produced Army Post stamps, first released in March 1936. They feature a portrait of King Fuad I, and were followed by a second Army Post series in December 1939 with the image of his son and successor, King Farouk. These stamps were withdrawn in 1941 but the concession, without the necessity for using special stamps, continued until 1951 when Egypt revoked the postal agreement.



1872 20 para lithographs

Robert C. Porter (ESC 340)

Back in the 1940s Dr William Byam, J.C. Besley, William C. Hinde and other ESC members took on the study of the 20 para stamp of the 1872 first printing. By examining thousands of this stamp they determined that almost all the typographically printed stamps contained faults that were constant and could be used to plate the issue. Additionally, they confirmed that the 20pa had also been printed by lithography. These lithos had been created by taking transfers from the typo plate, and so showed the same flaws as on the typos. It was written up as if at least two litho stones – designated as stones A and B – were used. The A stone showed the same flaws as the typos and showed no touch ups with one exception. The B stone, which showed much touching up especially of the outer frame lines, also showed matching flaws and was most probably the A stone after repairs had been made, thus becoming a new state of the A stone.

Before going further, we need to clarify the difference between a stone, a setting and a state. Use of the term stone should suggest that an entirely new image has been laid down on a physical stone. Whereas, as Ramez Atiya (ESC 246) has suggested, replacement of a stereo or full image on a stone creates a new setting for that stone. A rearrangement of images would be a different setting. A new state would result from a major modification of a stone.

In making the litho stone(s) a transfer was taken from the typo plate using a thin paper. Most probably, because of the difficulty in handling the thin paper and registering it on to the litho stone(s), it was cut into smaller pieces. In laying down these pieces no care was taken in placing them in the same positions as on the typo plate; so the positions of the lithos do not agree with those of the typo plate. This has been proved by studying the few known litho multiples.



Figure 1 – pos 107



Figure 2 – typo – pos 107



Figure 3 – litho – stone B – pos 107 – no touch



Figure 4 – litho – stone B – pos 107 – touch



Figure 5 – pos 123



Figure 6 – typo – pos 123



Figure 7 – litho – stone B – pos 123



Figure 8 – litho – stone A – pos 123

While our ESC forebears performed a very thorough and useful study of this stamp, they provided little information about the creation of the lithos and not much is known of their actual production. Various stamps in my collection provide several questions but no absolute answers. Below I show litho positions which lead us to question whether they were printed from separate stones or from different settings on an existing stone. I also offer a couple of suggestions as to how they might have been made. Further study of the 20pa litho stamps is necessary. It might be that we will never know for certain how the stamps were created.

I have a stone B litho that shows a touch flaw. This is a flaw caused by a tool, or most likely a finger, touching the stone. It has been suggested that this flaw occurred when the frame lines on stone A were being touched up. I also have a copy of the same stamp, a stone B, that does not show the touch. These stamps have been married to the typo from position 107.

In *Figure 1* above the image shows the nature of the flaws which mark this typo position. (Note: the red marks over the letters “IEE” in the lower label represent the touch and do not show as flaws on the typo or *Figure 3* litho). In *Figure 2* I show an image of the typo stamp from position 107. *Figure 3* is of the B stamp which marries to position 107 and does not show the touch. *Figure 4* is the stamp exhibiting the touch which also marries to this typo position. The constant flaw which best shows that these stamps are married can be seen as what looks like a scratch through the crescent in the NW corner of the vignette.

Notice that the outer frame lines on *Figure 3* are complete and show no splitting; on *Figure 4*, however, a small split can be seen in the top outer frame at its NE end and splitting can be seen on the right outer frame near the NE corner. This same splitting can be observed on the *Figure 2* typo. Also, on *Figure 4*, there is some retouching of the bottom frame line; it does not however match the retouching seen on the *Figure 3* stamp. If the *Figure 3* stamp preceded *Figure 4* then the outer frame lines of *Figure 4* would be complete. And if the *Figure 4* stamp preceded *Figure 3* then the touch would show on *Figure 3*. Therefore, neither litho stamp could have preceded and been a retouch of the other. So, which came first? Were they from two different stones? Is there an A stone litho stamp that does not show the touch?

I now want to show two more lithos, both of which are retouched and are married to the same typo. *Figure 5* is an image showing the nature of flaws that mark this typo as being from position 123 and are unique and constant. *Figure 6* is an example of the position 123 typo stamp. Notice the semicircular flaw touching the oval just under the NE crescent. This flaw can be seen on both the litho stamps shown in *Figures 7 and 8*.

One can see that both the litho stamps, *Figures 7-8*, have been retouched. In *Figure 8*, however, the retouches are quite different in appearance. The *Figure 7* stamp cannot be a retouch of *Figure 8* since the distance between the tips of the extensions at the ends of the top frame line of the *Figure 8* stamp exceed the total width of the top frame line on *Figure 7*. *Figure 8* cannot be a retouch of *Figure 7* because of irregularities in the top frame line and the right frame line. Again, perhaps two different stones?

Finally, I draw attention to a flaw discussed by Dr Byam in the *L'Orient Philatélique* Vol XI, No 102, Avril-Juillet 1960, The 'Byam Number'. He shows a litho that marries to typo position 200. The illustration has a white line running across the stamp, which is attributed to there having been a small vein of silicon contained in the stone used to print this stamp. The silicon does not retain lithographic ink and therefore does not print. A second stamp showing this same flaw is known and proves that it is constant. This stamp is not retouched and appears to be from stone A. Interestingly, many examples of this stone A stamp do not show the line. That could suggest that at least two different physical stones were made up.

Below, I include images from my collection of three examples of lithos which also show a silicon flaw. On all three stamps showing the unprinted line, it runs in about the same transverse upward direction, low on the left to higher on the right. I have not been able to marry any of these three stamps to a typo position with any sense of assurance. All three appear to be stone B lithos. In considering these three silicon flaws it might be thought that they all were from the same faulty stone which, when discovered early in the printing process, was taken out of production and discarded. This would help to explain the scarcity of these flawed stamps. I would be interested in knowing if anyone has stamps matching any of these. Unfortunately, the flaw does not show well in the *Figure 10 and 11* images.



Figure 9

On the *Figure 10* stamp the flaw can best be seen running through the left outer frame line then through the value tablet to the head. On *Figure 11* the flaw runs through the left value tablet to the oval and again from the oval through the right value tablet between the letters 'R' and 'A' and on through the right outer frame line.

In conclusion, I ask what possible explanations can there be for how these lithos came into existence? I can think of three possible scenarios for different retouched stamps matching the same typo position. First would be that there were more stones than A and B. In looking at *Figures 7 and 8* it should be noted that they are of different colour, suggesting different printings. This could mean that two litho stones were used. If two stones were made, one would expect that the number of instances of two lithos married to the same typo - but not precisely matching each other - would be much greater than what is recorded. So, where are the others?



Figure 10



Figure 11



In his essay on the Third Issue Byam does suggest that a third stone, X, might exist, based on his finding a small number of stamps exhibiting many small white spots, “snowstorm stamps”. *Figure 8* appears to be one of these. It is clear that the stamps showing the silicon flaws came from a second stone that was in use for a very short time. The few examples of the silicon flaw support this finding and tell us that the stone used to print these stamps was different from that used to print the A and perhaps also the B stamps

Second, after transfers were applied to a B stone, a damaged part of the stone was wiped and some positions re-applied from pieces of the transfer. I do not know if this is possible, and believe it would be very difficult.

Third, I would suggest that in preparing the litho stone, one or more small pieces of transfer paper were damaged, possibly torn, cut or creased. New transfers were then lifted from a section of the typo from which transfers had already been taken, leading to the same typo appearing on the litho stone more than once. There was no need to worry about lifting these new transfers from the same typo positions, leading to two or more images on the litho stone coming from the same position. What we have finally is a litho stone not showing all typo positions but having two or more of the same typo position.

Since there are most probably other explanations, I would challenge fellow members to share their ideas. A response in the *QC* would allow all colleagues to read your ideas.

The Mystery of QC Volume 1, Page 15

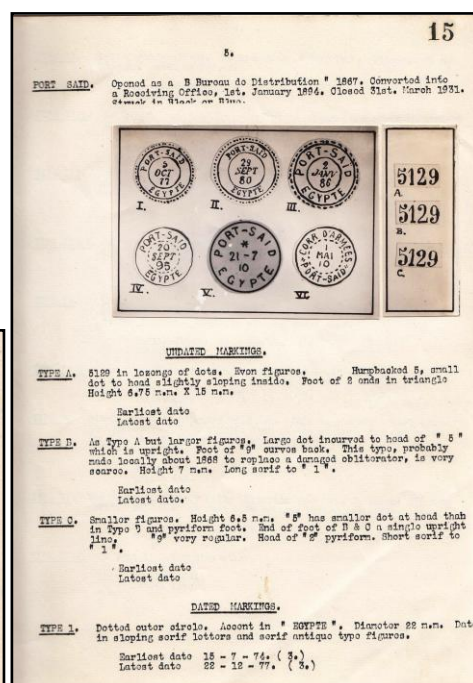
Pierre Louis (Peter) Grech (ESC 266)

While preparing material for the last *QC*, the Editor came across an anomaly in Peter Grech's article on the *Postmarks of the French P.O.s in Egypt* (*QC* 292 of March 2025, pp 207-213). In Table 5, "Port-Saïd Postmarks", beneath the 5129 GC cancellations, is a cross-reference to a *QC* article in Volume I, page 15. Intrigued, he investigated and found that on the ESC website, in the complete scanned issues of all the *QCs*, there was no Issue 1, Page 15, but that something relevant to the subject was on Issue 2, Page 5. He contacted the author for an explanation, and this was the reply.

The *QC* was created by a decision of the ESC on Saturday 15 January 1938, at the 21st meeting of the Circle, held in the home of the Chairman, Dr W. Byam, in Harley Street, London. This *Quarterly Circular* would be distributed to all members. It would ... "embody an account of the meetings... and brief notes on the Circle's work and one or two photographs of interesting items." In 1946 the ESC produced "A Classified List of the Contents of Volumes I and II of the *QC*." This 20-page document detailed all the articles, classified by subject, and on Page 2 it also had a section on "Pagination of the Two Volumes of the *QC*". This stated:

"It will be recalled that, in Volume I, pagination was by Issue, each number commencing with page 1, whereas Volume II was paginated as a complete volume. As those members who have had their "QCs" bound may find references under the existing pagination somewhat difficult ... it is thought that they may like to re-paginate their first volume on the lines of Volume II and, for their guidance, the following table gives the old and suggested new pagination...". That table is reproduced below.

Volume I.			
Issue.		Old Pagination.	New Suggested Pagination.
No. 1.	February, 1938.	1 - 10.	1 - 10.
2.	May, 1938.	1 - 11.	11 - 21.
3.	November, 1938.	1 - 11.	22 - 32.
4.	March, 1939.	1 - 9.	33 - 41.
5.	August, 1939.	1 - 6.	42 - 47.
6.	December, 1939.	1 - 13.	48 - 60.
7.	March, 1940.	1 - 15.	61 - 75.
8.	November, 1940.	1 - 18.	76 - 93.
9.	May, 1941.	1 - 13.	94 - 106.
10.	September, 1941.	1 - 15.	107 - 121.
11.	December, 1941.	1 - 11.	122 - 132.
12.	March, 1942.	1 - 18.	133 - 150.



Peter has the original *QC* issues of Volume I and II, which were bound together many years ago by their previous owner, Jean Boulad d'Humières (ESC 16), including the "Contents List" of 1946. That illustrious collector followed the ESC instruction and had Volume I repaginated, the page numbers being inserted in large characters at top right of every page. And Page 15, reproduced here, is where the Port-Saïd postmarks are found. It includes two actual photographs of the postmarks, glued side-by-side, as was done in the distant days. This is the cross-reference mentioned by Peter in his book on the French POs, and in Table 5 of his *QC* 292 article, which is extracted from it. Peter's book was written long ago, before there was any suggestion of scanning the collection of *QCs*, and putting them online for the benefit of all the membership.

The original issues of the *QC*, printed in small quantity, were photocopied as necessary, repeatedly over the years. What is now on the Circle website is one such reproduction, produced some time in the past, and which is not quite in the format of the original *QC*. For ESC readers who do not have access to the original, but who might be interested in consulting the details of the GC 5129 cancellations, this can now be found online at *QC* Volume I, issue 2, page 5 onwards. Note that the "Dated Markings" at the top of this page 5 belong to the description of the French P.O. in Cairo, on the previous page of the original *QC*, and have slipped down in this reproduction. Hopefully Page 15 is now no longer shrouded in mystery.

The Fayoum Light Railways Company

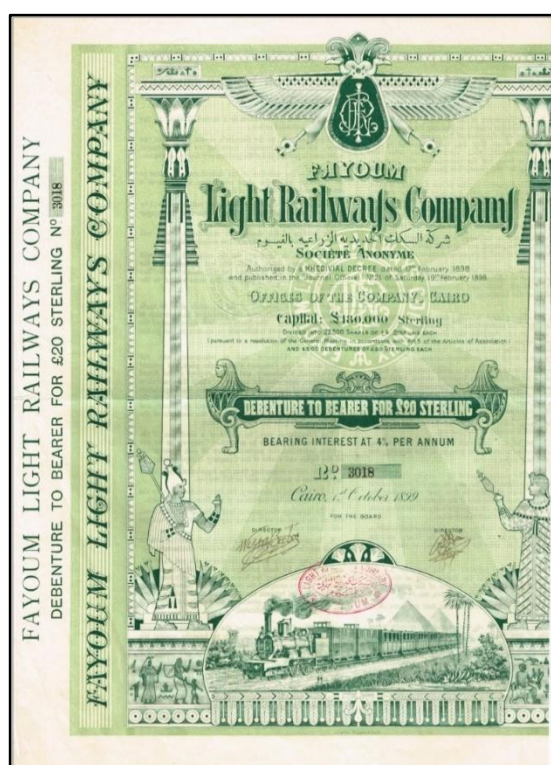
Ronny Van Pellecom (ESC 618) and Alain Stragier (ESC 241)

Fayoum (also Faiyum, Fayum) is an oasis of about 1827 square kilometres some 100 km south and west of the capital, Cairo.

In 1900 this province had 371,006 inhabitants spread over three districts (Fayoum, Etsa and Sannoures), with 25 towns and villages as well as 1,021 hamlets and large estates. The owners of these estates practically all lived in Cairo and came to Fayoum only sporadically, and then usually for hunting. The royal family also owned an estate near Lake Qaroun, the largest saltwater lake in Egypt.

Fayoum was, and still is, known as the garden of Cairo. In the past, sugar cane was the main crop, some of which was processed on site. Today citrus, nuts, olives and vegetables are grown here.

After the expulsion of the French army from Egypt in 1801, Mohamed Ali (1769-1849) began the modernisation of the country, which was continued by his descendants. In 1853 Egypt became the first African country with a railway, the third in the world. Belgian and especially British companies were active, and their influence was further extended after the British occupation in 1882.



So it is extraordinary that in 1898 local Egyptian Copts founded the Fayoum Light Railways Company based on the Western model and with the aim of building and operating a network in Fayoum on a 750 mm narrow-gauge track (standard gauge was 1435 mm).

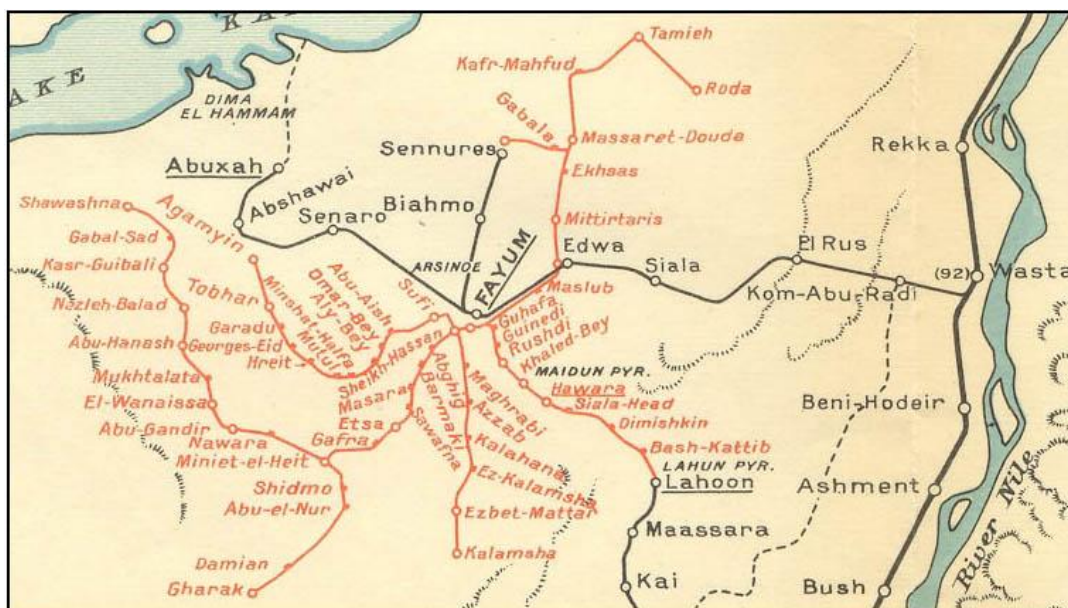
Three sections of this line were put into operation in 1899: from Fayoum to Gharac (el Sultani, in the south of the oasis), to Lahoun (south-east, with its pyramid) and to Nazlet-el-Wadi (today part of the Wadi el-Rayan, west of the oasis and a top eco-tourism destination).

Left, share certificate of £20 sterling, dated 1 October 1899 and signed by Wissam Boctor and Chaled Bin Loutfy

The British in Egypt already had had a challenging time with the Belgian competition and even more so with the local competition, which was not sparing in its criticism. *The Egyptian Gazette* wrote on 8 June 1901:

The foregoing, in brief, is the history, as most of the public know it, of the Fayoum Light Railway Company. Indeed from the start it has been a catalogue of blunders, bickering and bad feeling; rails laid at a cost of over L.E. 20 per kilometre that now cost less than L.E. 12; roofing for sheds ordered that would cover far more than the necessary space, the superfluous quantity now lying useless; great quantities of wood that cannot be used whose present destiny is worms and thieves; debts, difficulties, disasters, and complications

for which almost the closest enquiry cannot find the blameworthy person. Yet the genesis of the undertaking was under the most favourable influences, indeed, it was said, the concession was given to an Egyptian syndicate with the willing approval of H.H. the Khedive. Disputes, however, arose on all hands. Strained relations in management and difficulties with shareholders made confusion worse confounded, and the Company's affairs rapidly drifted to an impasse. Offers of purchase were made from without, but none, it was thought, could be profitably accepted. Finally a courageous attempt at internal reform was undertaken and those who were unable to contribute their share towards the cost of completing construction received offers of purchase, many of which were accepted. At present, we are told, Mr. Wissa Boctor of Assiout and his friends hold seventy-four per cent of the entire capital of the Company. The English Manager left in January last, and now that the control is in the hands of a few the situation is not complicated by a multitude of counsellors. As a matter of detail, they say, receipts are up and working expenses down. So we have a very simple and serious test of case of native management where the control is in the hands of those who must pay the piper. Of course we neglect the very small holding of shares held by the public. Either then the work under these new conditions must be given time and the amplest possible trial, or we must accept its failure as disastrous evidence that the native mind is not yet sufficiently trained to serve as a useful contributing item to corporate business body.



**The extent of the tracks of the Fayoum Light Railway (in red), built between 1899 and 1902
(Lionel Wiener: L' Egypte et ses chemins de fer, 1932)**

The Belgians enter the action

All this unwelcome news was not without consequence and, as a result, negotiations for a takeover were started by Lambert & Ralli and Georges Eid for a yet-to-be-formed new entity, the Anglo-Belgian Company.



**Georges Eid,
Belgian consul**



**It is interesting that a railway stop
was named after Georges Eid**

Composition of the Board of Directors after the Anglo-Belgian Company of Egypt took control of the Fayoum Light Railways Company¹

ANGLO-BELGIAN COMPANY OF EGYPT

Baron George de Reuter, chairman, London
 James Dalison Alexander, London (1846-1914)
 John Finlayson, à Beckenham (London)
 Francis Fitzgerald, lawyer, London
 Jules-Gilbert Fréson, engineer, Liège
 Florent Lambert, doctor of law, Brussels
 Edouard Wiener, Brussels, deputy director
 of Crédit Général Liégeois
 Gustave Lambert, Brussels
 Léon Carton de Wiart, lawyer, Cairo (1854-1915)

Signature of Baron George de Reuter as seen on a share certificate of the Anglo-Belgian Company of 1907



Baron George de Reuter
(Men of the Day.
No 1179.
"The Wicked Baron")
by Leslie Ward
Published in
Vanity Fair 1909



Edouard Wiener
 (1850-1930)

A short obituary appeared in the *Kent & Sussex Courier* (23 October 1914): "The death occurred suddenly on Wednesday morning of Mr James Dalison Alexander, Deputy Lieutenant for Kent, at the age of sixty-eight. He was formerly a Captain in the West Kent Yeomanry. He married in 1885 Lady Emily Boyle."



James Dalison Alexander



A share certificate for £5
issued in connection
with a capital increase,
dated London
27 February 1907

¹ *Les entreprises Belges en Egypte*, 1907, Henry de Saint-Omer

**The new board of the Fayoum Light Railways Company
as part of the Anglo-Belgian Company¹ in 1907**

Baron George de Reuter, chairman, London (1863 – ?)

Jules Fréson, engineer, Liège

Florent Lambert, doctor of law, Brussels

Ch. Thonet, engineer, Liège

Jacques Desoer, lawyer Liège

S. de Bilinski, engineer, Cairo

Chaled Ben Loutfy², landlord, Cairo

The Anglo-Belgian Company takeover included practically all the Fayoum Light Railways shares, with only one of the previous shareholders retaining his holding. Fayoum Light Railways may have become part of Anglo-Belgian, but day-to-day management remained largely in the hands of the Belgians and the list of directors reveals a clear link to the city of Liège.

We have been fortunate enough to discover correspondence from Mr Albert Livron, who started his career as an engineer with the Fayoum Light Railways and eventually became general manager of the whole railway.

Fayoum Light Railways C°

✽ شركة السكك الحديدية الزراعية بالقىوم ✽



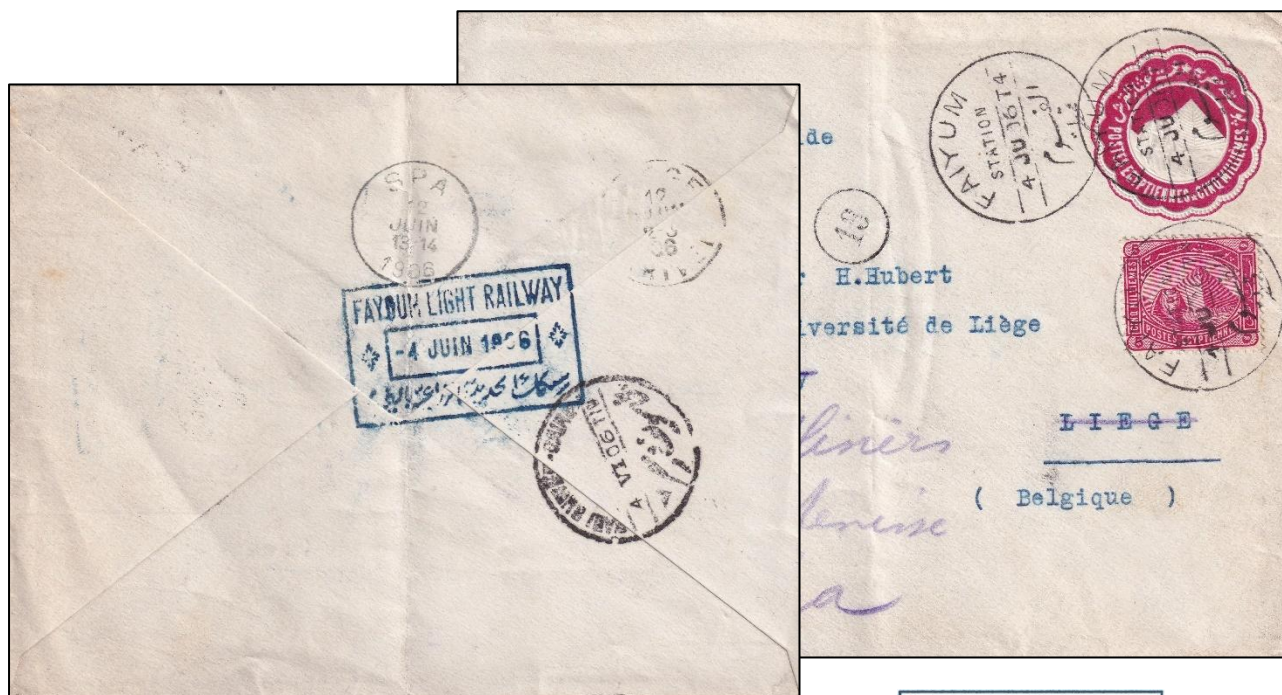
*Envelope printed
bilingually for the
Fayoum Light
Railways C°*

**FAIYUM
STATION
14 X 06
to Paris**

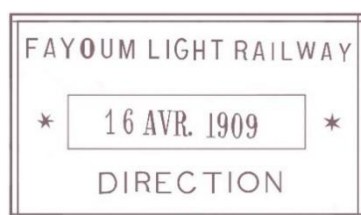
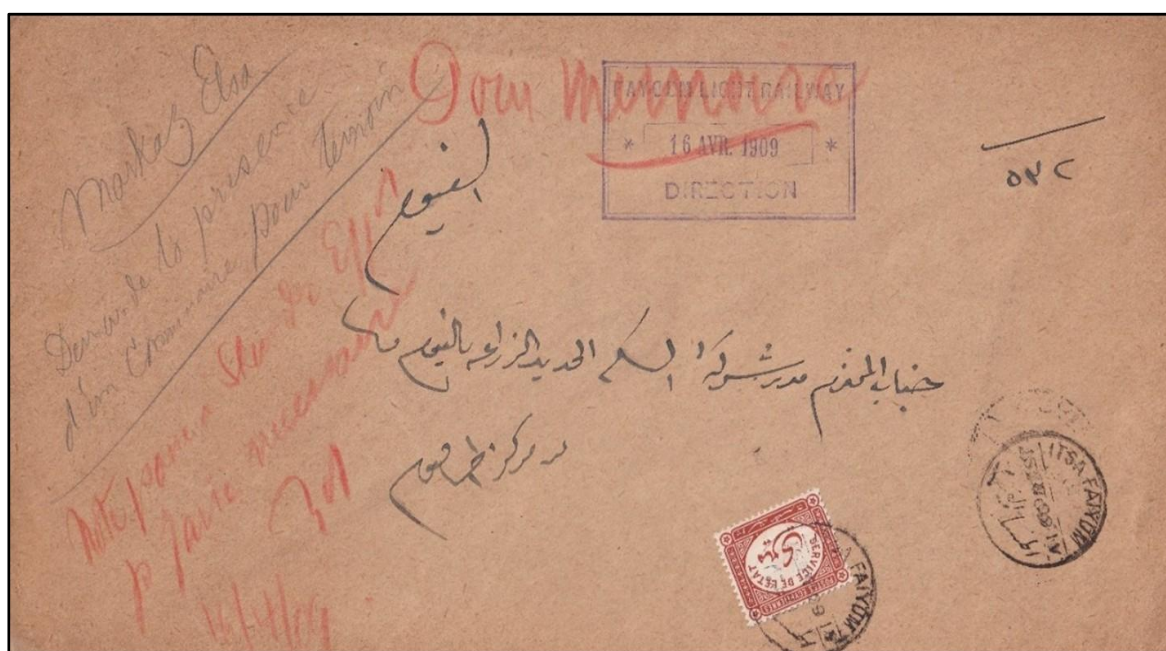
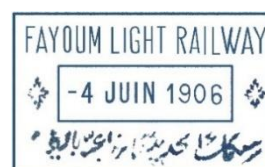
*International tariff
1 piastre
(= 10 millièmes)*

¹ *Les entreprises Belges en Egypte*, 1907, Henry de Saint-Omer

² The Anglo-Belgian Company acquired 80 per cent of the shares. Chaled Ben Loutfy, one of the founders of the Fayoum Light Railways, did not sell his shares and remained on the board of directors.



FAIYUM STATION 4 JU 06 to LIEGE (Belgium) and re-addressed to SPA, bearing the company stamp on the reverse of the envelope



**Official letter from ITSA FAIYÛM to the director of the Fayoum Light Railway
 Franked with a MIRI seal (No-value Official stamp)
 ITSA FAIYÛM 15 IV 09
 The administrative handstamp of the Fayoum Light Railway was added on arrival**

FAYOUM LIGHT RAILWAYS COMPANY
 شركة سكاك حدديد الفيوم الزراعية

CERTIFICAT — CERTIFICATE شهادة

Le soussigné certifie que
 The undersigned certifies that

a servi la Compagnie comme
 has served the above Company in the

du 1.1.900 au 1.4.07
 from to

Il quitte le service de la Compagnie libre de tout engagement.
 He left the Company's service free of all engagements.

الموقع أدناه يشهد بان
 Department

خدم الشركة في قسم
 من

ترك خدمة الشركة خالي الطرف

free

Emploi à l'entrée au service
 Rank on entering the service
 Emploi à la sortie du service
 Rank on leaving the service

Démisionnaire
 ou
 Renvoyé
 Resigned
 or
 Discharged

مستقفي أو
 مرافق

Cleaner
 Engine driver

الوظيفة عند دخوله الخدمة
 الوظيفة عند خروجه من الخدمة

Discharged

Le Chef de Service, Chief of the Department, رئيس القسم

DATE 13.5 1907
 1907 غيرة في

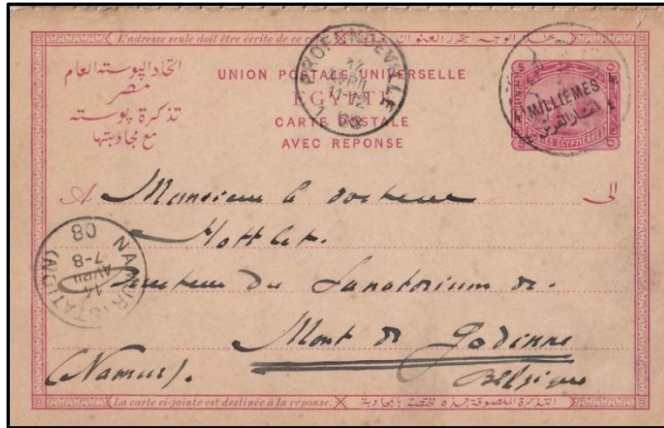
VU : نظر
 Le Directeur, The Director, المدير

**Certificate of discharge for an employee who started as a cleaner
 and ended seven years later as an engine driver, from
 the Fayoum Light Railway, dated 13 May 1907**

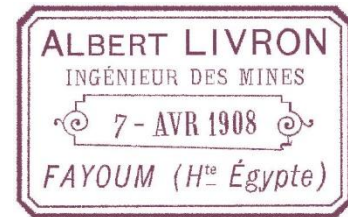


**Multi-franked
 registered mail with
 printed letterhead
 from Brussels of
 ALBERT LIVRON /
 INGÉNIEUR DES MINES
 used from FAIYUM 22 II 07
 to Liège**

**Overseas rate is 3 piastres
 or 30 millièmes
 (postage doubled
 to 2 piastres, plus
 1 piastre registration)**

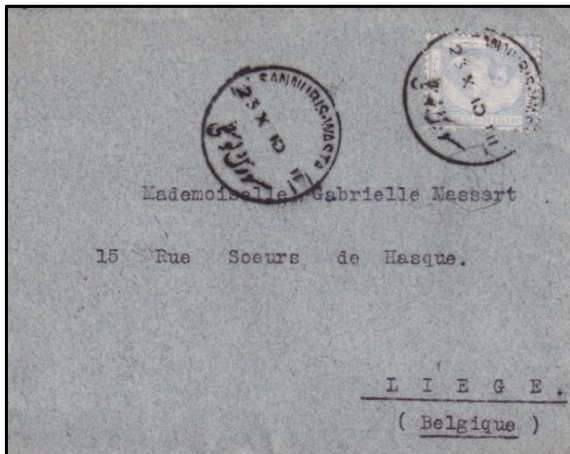


Postal card (H&G 10) via initial cancel by the FAIYÛM-CAIRO railway TPO (date illegible). Then from CAIRO STATION 7 IV 08 to Mont Godinne (Belgium) via NAMUR STATION 14 AVRIL 08 and PROFONDEVILLE 14 AVRIL 1908



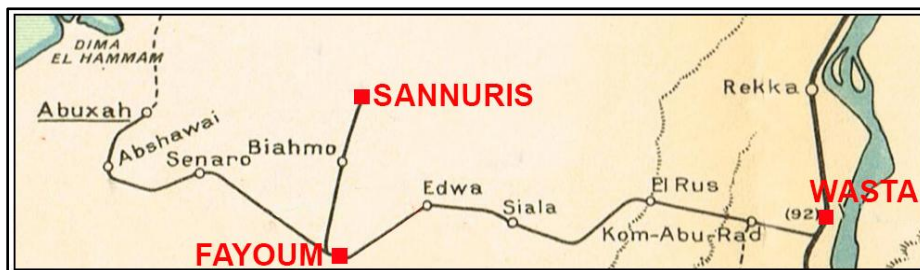
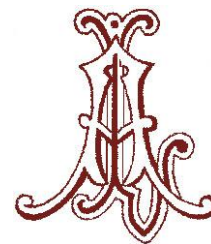
Name stamp on the reverse of the card

ALBERT LIVRON
MINING ENGINEER

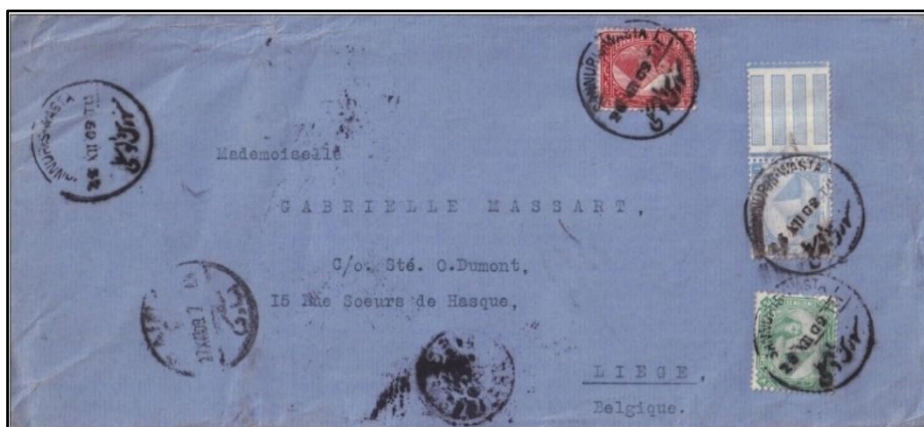


Printed envelope of Albert Livron, with his initials 'AL' in ornamental script on the reverse

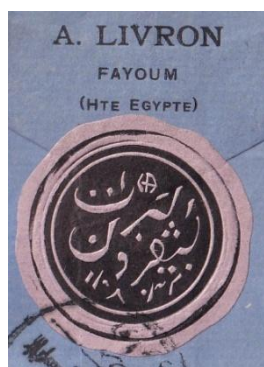
TPO of SANNURIS WASTA 23 X 10
via CAIRO STATION 23 X 10 to
LIEGE 2 XI 910 ARRIVEE



The (state) railway route between SANNURIS and WASTA that carried the TPO



SANNURIS WASTA 25 XII 09 to LIEGE 2 JANV 10 ARRIVEE
1 piastre 6 milliemes (double postage) for the tariff abroad from 1908

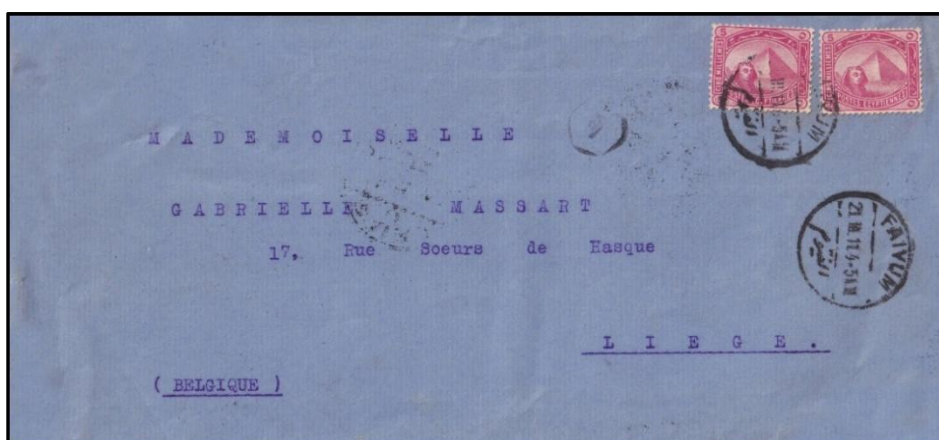


Printed on envelope reverse :

A. LIVRON
 FAYOUM
 (HTE EGYPT)
 (HTE = Haute)

Below, pink seal attached, reading in Arabic:

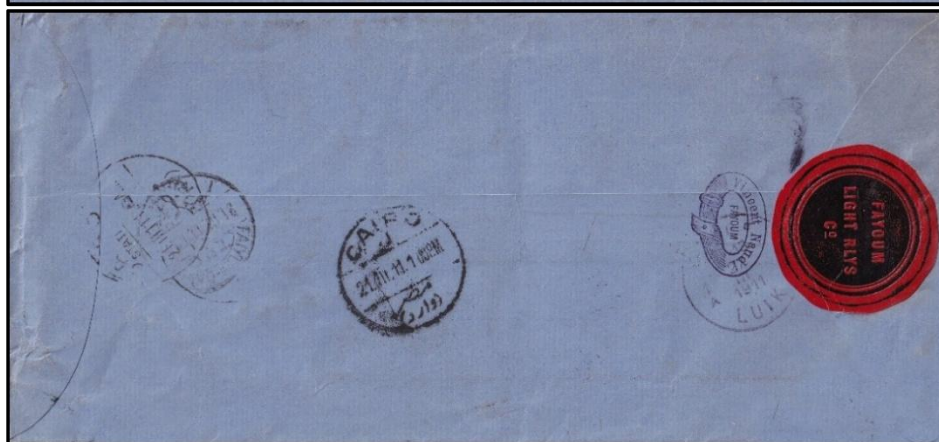
A. LIVRON
 FAYOUM LIGHT RAILWAY

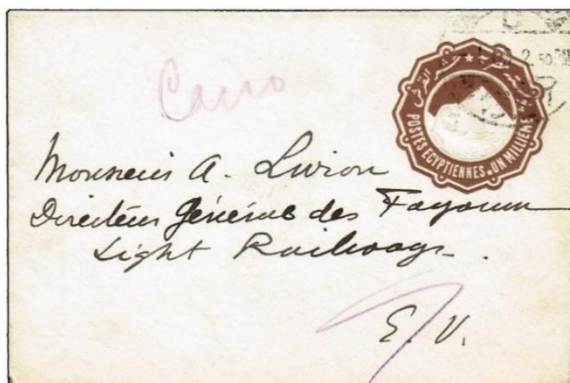


Cover from
FAIYUM 21 III 11
via the railway
FAIYUM-CAIRO
T.P.O. 21 III 11
to CAIRO STATION
21 III 11
and CAIRO 21 III 11
to LIEGE 27 III 1911

Below, black on red
wafer seal from
reverse reading

FAYOUM
 LIGHT RLYS
 CO





1 millieme prepaid business card envelope, sent from ALEXANDRIA -1 I 09 to A. Livron, Directeur Général des Fayoum Light Railways

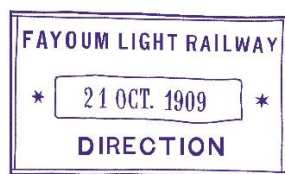
Addressed E.V. (En Ville), and forwarded to Cairo



Postcard from ABUKSA-WASTA 22 AV 09 to Denise Livron Pensionnat des Dames de la Sainte Famille, Helmet, BRUXELLES 29 AVRIL ARRIVEE



Pensionnat des Dames de la Sainte Famille, commissioned by Les Dames de la Sainte Famille of Schaerbeek (Helmet), designed by J. De Vroey



Crédit Général Liégeois cover from LIEGE 14 OCTO 09 to Albert Livron, General Manager, via ALEXANDRIA 20 X 09 and arrived FAIYUM 21 X 09

Taxed on arrival with 1 piastre 2 milliemes. Original franking 10c, but overseas rate was 25c, 15c short. 15 x 2 = 30 c = 1.2 piastres



Edouard Wiener, deputy director of the Crédit Général Liégeois, was a director of the Anglo-Belgian Company, the holding company of the Fayoum Light Railways.

The research presented here is limited to 1914, but that was not the end of the company. The concession given was designated for 70 years, until 1972, but the company ceased its activities shortly after 1945.

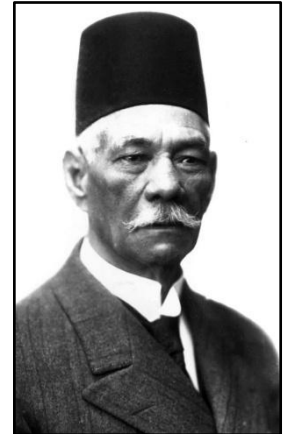
• This article is part of our new book: *FAYOUM – A postal historical study during the De La Rue Issue 1879 – 1914*, which will be reviewed in the next QC.

Stamps that tell a story 2: Sa'ad Zaghloul Pasha

David Ogden (ESC 480)

Sa'ad Zaghloul Pasha, the renowned Egyptian nationalist leader, appears on the 1977 20 millimes stamp SG 1321. It features his portrait in a dark blue green and violet brown design. I was keen to learn more about him after last year seeing a film, set during the 1919 revolution, being made in Al-Mu'izz Street, Old Cairo.

Other nationalists, such as Mustafa Kamil, Muhammed Farid and Hafni Nasif, have also been honoured on Egypt stamps (issued in 1958 and 1969), even though they died before the age of Arabism and socialism. A centenary £E4 stamp featuring Zaghloul was issued in 2019 on the 100th anniversary of the revolution



Sa'ad Zaghloul Pasha ibn Ibrahim (lived 1857-1927) was an Egyptian revolutionary and statesman born in the village of Ibyana on the west bank of the Nile (in today's governorate of Kafr al-Sheikh), north of Cairo. His father Ibrahim was a local notable who owned vast areas of agricultural land.

Zaghloul, a leading lawyer, was furious that Egypt's representatives were refused a voice at the Versailles peace talks at the end of the First War and so founded the Wafd (ie, "Delegation") Party. He led a civil disobedience campaign aimed at freeing Egypt (and Sudan) from British rule and played a key role in the 1919 Egyptian revolution which brought striking workers to the streets of Cairo and closed the country's crucial railway network.

He was exiled by the British, first to Malta, then to the Seychelles. On his return he was deeply involved in prompting the British Unilateral Declaration of Egyptian Independence in 1922, which freed Egypt from the British protectorate and created a kingdom. He served briefly as Prime Minister in 1924.

When the Wafd won a vast majority in parliamentary elections (See, right, a 2019 first day cover, featuring the Parliament building), King Fuad I dismissed the assembly and delayed calling new voting to conceal evidence of Zaghloul's popular appeal.



Popular lore says that on his deathbed in 1927 Zaghloul Pasha took a long hard look at the sad state of affairs in the Arab world before turning to his wife and saying: "It's just no use Safiyya. Cover me!" The Wafd party was banned, with all other Egyptian political parties, in 1953 by Gamal Abdel Nasser after the Free Officers Revolution of 1952. The party newspaper, *Al Misri*, was closed down in 1954.



You can visit Beit El-Umma (House of the People, left), Zaghloul's biographical mausoleum in Mounira, Cairo, which features the furniture and lifestyle of the Egyptian political elite of his time. It has an Art Nouveau dining room, Louis XV style reception rooms, an Arab style living room, Turkish baths and a library with more than 5,000 books.

School in Heliopolis and home at RAF Moascar set the scene for a life-long love of Egypt, its way of life and especially its countryfolk. Via archaeology, newspapers and postal history, the path was clear



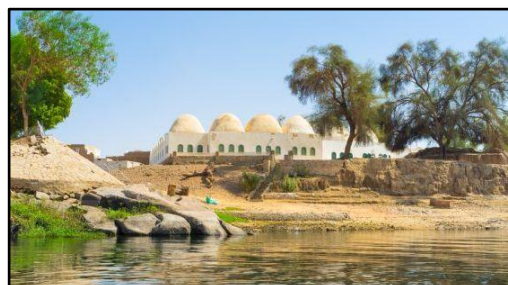
Why I collect Egypt – Mike Murphy (ESC 240) – SE London, UK

I blame Fawzan Mudarres and George Papadimitriou. They were senior prefects at the English School, Cairo (spot the initials?) in the early Fifties when a group of 50 British boarders were sent from the Canal Zone to replace pupils whose parents had been prompted to leave for overseas by Gamal Abdel Nasser. Fawzan was dormitory leader for 12 of us, and though the school was brilliant for the incomers, with visits every weekend, to the Citadel, the mosques, boating on the river, even a “walk” from the Pyramids to Saqqara – there was still a little time to kill.

So George invented a stamp club, as mentioned in the school magazine. He brought stamps from his father’s business, but we most enjoyed exploring Egypt’s issues and searching back through the kings to pre-ciceroy issues. My favourites were the 1933 Airmails, with the British-built Handley Page H.P.42 of Imperial Airways edging its long tortoise-nose past the Pyramids. That little club was the key that opened the door.



But it was a half-falling out of love with journalism that pushed that door open. After a move to Sydney I felt a real surge for archaeology and spent four university years studying ancient Cyprus in daytime while designing *The Sydney Morning Herald* at night. Then back to London, qualified to start a PhD on Egypt’s ancient origins. Challenging work all over Egypt, including Saqqara, Maadi, Abydos and even a blistering summer stay with Alfie Henry at the quaint old museum (*left below*) in Aswan – the best place on earth – living in the German dig house with a mummy at my door on the west side of Elephantine (*right below*) and eventually being rowed back through the Nile down to catch the Cairo train with Labib Habachi.



But the lure of Fleet Street proved too strong, and soon it was back to newspapers – with a wonderful opportunity to report for *The Times* from Alexandria on Franck Goddio’s discovery of “Cleopatra’s Palace” in the eastern Harbour... but by now I had learned to pace myself, and after assuring Chairman Mac MacArthur that I had no stamps but plenty of enthusiasm it was thanks to Dennis Clarke, Jim Benians, John Sears, John Grimmer and the like that I was welcomed to the Circle in the mid-Seventies.

I immediately fell in love with researching Egypt’s endless spread of towns and villages and their fascinating postal connections, which led on to Mohamed Shams ed-Din, who sold me 100 countrywide covers at £1 apiece at Cairo 1991, and then to the late great Ibrahim Shoukry, who so gently and patiently guided me through the pitfalls and the delights of the Rural postal service.

Convivial lunch in Covent Garden, then meeting upstairs in the gloomy room above the Peacock pub... for me those were the great days of the Circle! Meetings were well attended, and stunning presentations well received. We have lost a whole generation of wonderful senior members since then, and Covid’s onslaught has led to a sad apathy that remains to be beaten. Our joint love of all things Egypt will win out, of course, but it is going to be quite a battle....!

● **We welcome all members’ stories to make this column a regular feature of the QC**