

BOOKLETS GALORE

by P.E.Whetter (ESC 133)

It all started with a telephone call. "Would I be coming to the next meeting?" "Yes, indeed." "Well, there's a bit of a gap in the programme - do you think you could bring your Booklet Collection?"

I said "I suppose so", trying to put as much reluctance into my voice as I could, without actually saying 'No'. It isn't that I mind showing my bits and pieces but the fact is I hadn't got a Booklet Collection. At least, not the kind of collection that we drool over at Circle meetings - rare pieces (where do they find them?) beautifully written up with knowledgeable descriptions, plus an erudite commentary. What I had was a shoe box (nearly antique - 'best willow calf: 12/6d') full of booklets and odd notes on scraps of paper. Apart from additions here and there most of the contents hadn't seen the light of day for 30 years or more.

Armed with the fine article by Jean Boulad d'Humieres and A. John Revell in L.O.P. 127 - to whom many thanks - plus a French dictionary and H.R.Work's listing I could at least make a start by putting them all in date order. This done, how should I mount them? Would Circle members - always assuming they wanted to see the confounded things at all - prefer to see the cover, the stamps inside, or even the interleaving covered with unintelligible Arabic characters? Or should I "explode" them all - this would make mounting easier. No, I couldn't do this, exploding first and second issue booklets seems nothing short of vandalism - it wouldn't exactly increase their value, either! A dynamic decision: I will fix the back cover to the album page with photo corners - in the event, the staples and stitching were a bit of a nuisance - leaving the booklet free to be opened at will. Or so I thought. Putting the whole lot in glassine envelopes makes this a trifle difficult but I'll cross this bridge at the meeting.

I have finished. The duplicates are back in the shoe box and I have a collection - yes, a collection - not a hoard.

Some notes on selected items I intend to produce - or will have produced by the time this article appears - may not be out of place. I have one example of the first issue (Work No. 1) with each stamp overprinted "SPECIMEN" (Figure 1 on page 135). My notes say "believed to be unique" but I hesitate to claim that it is. If I am ever bold enough to claim a "latest date", to be sure someone will come along with a date so much later than mine that I have to alter my write-up to "early use"!

By the same token I expect to find not only that there are plenty of "SPECIMEN" books around but that there will be inverted overprints, double overprints, overprints in inverted commas and so on. I will continue to hope. The first issue booklet sold originally at a premium of 1 mill over the price of the stamps themselves which apparently proved unpopular with the public. In 1911 the premium was abolished, the official notice indicating that from 1st July 1916 the selling price would be 120 mills and that the price on existing booklets would be altered by hand. J.B.d'H. and A.J.R. say in French and loosely translates: "We have still not seen booklets on which the sale price has been corrected by hand, nor booklets on which the price printed on the cover is 120 milliemes. But that is not to say that they will not be found." I have two examples of the 120-mill booklet and it is interesting to note that the cover, printed black on blue, has been re-designed with the text in Arabic and English. (Figure 2 on page 135). Advertisements appear on the inside of the front cover, on both sides of the interleaving sheets and on rear cover, details as follow :-

	<u>Front</u>	<u>Back</u>
Cover	Description, Arabic, English Imprimerie Safarowsky Simonds Double Stout L.C.Smith Visible Typewriter Richard Preller, Relieur Luna Park, Heliopolis Finck & Bayloender, Succ.	Gasmotoren - Fabrik Deutz Rudolf Boehm & Co Reinhold Eichhorn Lawrence & Mayo - Opticians A. Preiner, Fils P. Dittrich, Photographer Tivoli, Cairo

Both of the books I have carry the same advertisements.

The second booklet issued, priced at 73 mills for 24 x 3-mill stamps was also unpopular and in 1907 the existing stock was passed to post office counters for the stamps to be removed and sold in the normal way. J.B.d'H. says: "this explains, without doubt, why they are so rare" and asks: "Who then are the present happy owners ?" I have one complete book - stapled left and with plain interleaving.

The third booklet issued was offered at 125 mills, a premium of 5 mills, until the 1st January 1919, when the price was reduced to 120 mills. J.B.d'H. and A.J.R. mention that they have not seen this booklet with the printed price 125 mills, that is, the first printing. I have one example of the first printing which is identical to the illustration on page 296 of *L.O.P.* 127, except that the price is shown as "125" in English and Arabic. Proof, if proof be needed, that they do exist ! The interleaving is plain, which suggests that only the second printing carried advertisements. I have one example of the 120-mill, 2nd issue Fuad (Work 8) which I do not think has been recorded. The inside front cover, one side of the interleaving and both sides of the back cover bear an advertisement in Arabic, English and French: "Space to let for Advertisements. For full particulars apply to G.P.O. Alexandria." (Figure 3 on page 135). In spite of this "advert for adverts" I do not recall having seen any Fuad or later booklets with commercial advertising.

John Revell in his article in *L.O.P.* 119, page 25, mentions that, during the printing of the 5m stamps for the 210-mill booklet in 1930, a small quantity of paper was fed into the printing press incorrectly. As a result Die Negative Type V was produced with inverted watermark and Die Negative Type III with upright watermark. A.J.R. adds: "Booklets are recorded containing one or two panes of the 5-mill value with these watermark errors on both types of the die negative. In complete booklet form they are rare, but in complete booklets with die negative Type V and Control Number they are extremely rare." I have booklets containing single panes of each error but have yet to find one with two panes or with a Control Number.

Booklets are so rarely offered for sale, either by dealers or by auctioneers, that it is extremely difficult to assess the relative scarcity of any particular booklet. If members care to let me know what booklets they have I will try to publish a "league table" in a future *Q.C.* which may throw some light on this problem. Auction realisations might be useful, too.

Whilst on the subject of values. I have long been intrigued by the Work listing of No. 18 - "Soldier with Bayonet". The booklet stitched right is valued at \$7½, but stitched left only \$5 (at 1958 prices). These were presumably manufactured in equal quantities. Is it that fewer "stitched right" have survived ? My shoe box contained 4 "stitched right" against 5 "stitched left". In the right direction but hardly conclusive !

Note by Editor: The H.R.Work listing of Egypt Booklets was reproduced in The *Q.C.* Vol. X, No. 5, Whole No. 109 (March 1979) together with an excellent review by Mr P.Andrews (ESC 122).