

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

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

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

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

Zoom for all members

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

13 May 23 <https://youtu.be/zQK9Grh8oqY>
26 Aug 23 https://youtu.be/JAurbPCS_sw
21 Oct 23 <https://youtu.be/2zhDBvRsQW0>
7 Jan 24 <https://youtu.be/TsaDWW8HKIE>

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

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

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

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

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