

Report of a meeting held at the Union Jack Club, London, on 1 June 2024

Jon Aitchison (ESC 661) presented a spectacular and fascinating display of postal stationery which deserved a far better audience. Reflecting recent meetings (and see Editorial on next page), only half a dozen members attended, half of them Officers.

The display covered three sessions, with envelopes, postal cards and cassette post envelopes, each of which had previously won gold medals nationally or internationally. All three included several unrecorded items and much new research, and erroneous information that had crept into catalogues was corrected. Many UPU Specimen overprinted envelopes and cards were shown together with examples uprated with adhesives by the Post Office to use remaining stocks after rate increases.

Envelope essays by Prevost, Penasson, the National Bank Note Company and Renard (particularly scarce) were not specifically aimed at postal stationery contracts but were printed to illustrate how stamps would appear when used. All envelope issues for the first 100 years were covered in depth, including the scarce UPU essay produced in response for a pre-paid return that led eventually to International Reply Coupons, along with essay artwork and die proofs with uncatalogued offsets, shades and paper types. The 1892 5m revalued overprints were displayed extensively including “error” settings, trial colours and trial type size.



1869 20 para essay envelope by Renard of Paris



1914 Harrison 10 mills pictorial card as sold in 1931, with uprating 3m stamp

The postal cards display covered all issues from the first in 1879 to the final “Soldier card” set in 1954. Unrecorded types were shown with unrecorded card stocks. Used examples included commercially printed fronts and backs, cut-outs on cover and reply cards used in both directions. The 1891 3m revaluation of 5m postal and reponse cards included “error” settings and unlisted varieties, with misplaced overprints and varieties on other issues. Multiple examples of the rare 1928 repurposed reply cards, the 1931 10m Harrison pictorial,

and the 1931 repurposing of the 1917 3m+3m reply cards were included. Post-revolution handling of the remaining stocks of monarchy-period cards were also explored.

The 6 mills post-revolution “Soldier cards” comprised 25 views, each in four colours, with photogravure printing on two card stocks and a lithographic printing. With mint and used, up to 600 items could be displayed! This exhibit showed examples of all designs, but not all 600, in 32 sheets.

The Cassette Post envelopes display started with a 1939 “Voice Record”, intended for recording a personal message in a booth, along with the wooden gramophone needles needed to play it, and a printed envelope used from Cairo. An actual cassette was shown - a mystery to many young people - with envelopes of all issues including mint, genuinely used, errors, printer’s waste, shades, varieties and missing colours. Others rubber-stamp cancelled for official use after the service ended were also on display.



1939 ‘Voice Record’ disc, precursor to the cassette post with wooden needles, sent from Cairo to Asyut

- A Zoom meeting held on July 6 had a better turnout with 21 members enjoying the display of Malcolm Coe (ESC 721) on Egypt/Sudan mail of 1890-1920 (see the website or tinyurl.com/bdzza3fy for YouTube). A scheduling mishap meant Julian Bagwell could not display his British Forces 1932-41, but will show his collection on Zoom on September 7.