

EGYPT STUDY CIRCLE.

THE QUARTERLY CIRCULAR.

GRYLLS MEMORIAL NUMBER.

VOL. III.No.5.(Whole Series No. 29.) March, 1948.

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T H E Q U A R T E R L Y C I R C U L A R .

Published by The Egypt Study Circle.

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Vol. III. No. 5. Page 57.

March, 1948.

Whole Series, No. 29.

It is with very deep sorrow that we record the sudden and unexpected death on January 6th, 1948, of Brigadier Glynn Grylls, O.B.E., one of the very early members of the Circle. He was a regular attendant at our meetings and his knowledge of the Middle East in general and of Egyptian philately in particular will be much missed by all.

He made the presentation to our Chairman at the 50th meeting on October 25th last whilst, on November 20th, 1947, in the absence of the Chairman, through illness, he led the Circle at the Postal History Society's meeting. Little did those who took part with him that evening think we should all, so soon, be mourning his loss.

As an appreciation of Grylls and an account of the Postal History Society evening comprise the greater part of this issue of The Quarterly Circular, it would seem fitting to name it "The Grylls Memorial Number" in affectionate regard for his memory.

Grylls' passing coincides with the end of our meetings at 92 Harley Street, the home of the Circle since its inception. In future we are to meet, by kind invitation of the President of "The Royal" - Mr. E. W. Mann - at 41, Devonshire Place, London, W.1., the house of The Royal Philatelic Society of London and, when we meet there for the first time on April 24th next we shall all feel a sense of gloom at the empty chair.

BRIGADIER GLYNN GRYLLES, O.B.E.

The sudden death of yet another members of the Circle made a sad beginning to 1948. To those of us who took part in the memorable 50th meeting on October 25th last Grylls seemed his usual cheery, active self. He made his speech with vigour and animation and subsequently took part in our discussions with all his usual vivacity and good humour. His loss will be sadly felt by us all and the Circle will be the poorer for his passing. Never did he come among us but we realised his clear perception of the point at issue, his balanced power of reasoning and his willingness to see the other fellow's point of view, though he had the courage of his convictions and thereby spoke his mind.

It is some consolation to learn from his son that Grylls continued his active life till the day of his death, as he was planning his work in the garden on the morning he died. To him his garden was a duty and a pleasure, for Grylls had a stern sense of what he owed to the community. He took an active part in local affairs and was always willing to come to the assistance of this in need. To his friends he was a tower of strength in their troubles and no effort was too great if he could bring them help.

To me, the announcement of his death was a great shock, as his son's letter telling me of his end reached me in the envelope which brought a letter Grylls had written to me the previous day, urging me to hurry with the report on the evening spent by the members of the Circle as guests of the Postal History Society; withal a friendly letter, containing no suspicion of what lay ahead. He and I had known each other since 1906, when we were serving as members of the Army of Occupation in Egypt. At that time Grylls was a subaltern in the Garrison Gunners, taking his work seriously and acquiring a knowledge of things Egyptian, with ever increasing understanding of the Oriental mind. After Egypt our lives drifted apart, only to come together again when Grylls joined the Egypt Study Circle at its inception, as member No. 5. From then onwards we saw much of each other and I have vivid recollections of the evening he dined with me at the time of the Munich crisis, when he told me of his struggles to find equipment from the Army, even being reduced to buying blankets from the big retail stores. And yet not a word of pessimism was in his talk; just anxiety, courage and determination. For such was the man.

As a philatelist, Grylls will be best remembered for his knowledge of the postal happenings of the Middle East and his writings on the stamps of that region will remain a monument to his powers of accurate observation and deduction. Siam was another of his favourites. Egypt and the Sudan particularly appealed to him as a region of great military happenings and at the time of his death he was engaged on a close study of the Postal Concession to the British Army in Egypt, a Report on which it is hoped soon to publish.

But his real monument will be the affectionate remembrance Grylls has left with his many friends. To them he was a genial companion, sympathetic and intelligent; a lover of his country which he served loyally to the end.

W. Byam. 3.2.48.

VISIT OF THE EGYPT STUDY CIRCLE

to

THE POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY.

On November 20th 1947, the evening of the Royal wedding, six members of the Egypt Study Circle were guests of the Postal History Society at Oddenino's Restaurant where they were entertained at dinner by Colonel Crouch, President of the Society, and later gave a combined display to illustrate the postal history of Egypt.

The representatives of the Circle were led by Brigadier Glynn Grylls, O.B.E. who, in his opening remarks when introducing his team, thanked Colonel Crouch and the members of the Society for their genial hospitality and explained that at somewhat short notice he had taken the place of the Chairman of the Circle, Dr. Byam, who was reaping the benefits of a surgeon's skill in a London nursing home, from whence he sent greetings to those doing honour to the Circle and added his sincere regrets for absence; at the same time stressing his complete confidence in the six stalwarts selected to lay bare the secrets of Egypt's postal past. He also regretted the inability to attend of the Egyptian Legation, to whom a cordial invitation had been sent; the Royal wedding celebrations being the cause.

Grylls then proceeded briefly to depict the vast field from which the interest of Egypt's postal history derived, partly the result of the country's geographical position which constituted it a bridge between North and South, and East and West, but also because it had served as one of the fountain of culture from which civilisation in so many other lands had been enriched. While Byzantium remained as open gate-way for the spread of ideas to Europe the need of Egypt as a highway between East and West was less obvious, though even then envious eyes turned to the Valley of the Nile as a region of plenty and prosperity, but when the Moslem advance into Europe closed the Bosphorus and its approaches to the Christians it seemed, at first, that only the long sea passage round the Cape of Good Hope remained as a route for communication and commerce between Western Europe and the fabled regions of the East. Adventurous spirits from England, Holland, Portugal and elsewhere made this journey, founding the settlements from which trade developed and the demand for more rapid means of intercourse arose. The routes from India via the Persian gulf claimed first attention and this Grylls illustrated by a letter carried in 1785 via Aleppo, Galata and Vienna to England. He then passed to the history of the Isthmus of Suez and its eventual canalisation by the French in 1869, though he drew attention to the little faith displayed in the waterway by Britain who made no use of it for the transmission of mail till 1888.

Grylls alluded to the early Government Posts instituted by Mohamed Aly Pasha, primarily for his own use but which gradually did provided postal facilities for the general public. To illustrate his remarks he showed three examples the seal franks employed; the first as evidence of the prepayment of postal charges; the second as an obliterator at outposts of the Pasha's domain after the date when adhesives had been

introduced, this use seemingly being confined to sea ports and therefore, possibly to mail handled by vessels of the Government fleet; and the third as indication that the letter so stamped was official correspondence. That this early Government Post only persisted south of the Delta was explained by the greater reliability attained by the private courier post established by the Italians to handle the mail passing through the foreign consular offices. As Grylls explained, he made no further allusion to these services as the courier post or Posta Europe and the Consular Posts would be dealt with by other members of his team. He did, however, describe how the consular postal rights were established under the so called Capitulations, which remained as a curse unto Egypt until abrogated after the signature of the Anglo-Egyptian treaty in 1936. Though originally granted by Turkey, of which Egypt then formed a part, as protection to Christians willing to perform the necessary tasks of industry and commerce within the Turkish Empire, these Capitulations gradually enabled foreigners to entrench themselves so firmly that they lived secure from taxation and in a privileged position, largely immune from the law of the land. Their postal activities were many and interesting but undoubtedly led to the loss of revenue by Egypt and a sense of grievance because the sovereign rights of the country were thereby infringed.

Grylls then passed rapidly in review the remarkably efficient pigeon post organised by the Mamluks; the military campaigns and activities which made additions to postal history - the original extension of Egypt's postal system to serve the Sudan and the opening there of the many offices where the adhesive stamps of Egypt were used till the Dervish insurrection severed connections with the North; the campaigns to recover the Sudan; and finally the most interesting and unusual Postal Concession granted to the British Forces which is so little appreciated or understood but which we of the Egypt Study Circle hope will be more adequately recognised in the catalogues of the future, where should appear a listing of the Crown Circle franks employed, as well as the N.A.A.F.I. seals or stamps.

J. C. Besly then took up the story, giving brief details of the opening of the Overland Route through Egypt to the East - an adventure crammed with romance and made possible only by the courage and imagination of such pioneers as Thomas Waghorn who not only overcame the apparently insuperable obstacles offered by the desert journey but also won the support of the Pasha in sufficient degree to defeat the human vultures who ordinarily took toll of travellers along the waterless track.

Besly then went on to say he was personally particularly interested in the route through Egypt to India as he had spent many years in Suez, Aden and Bombay and because his great uncle was Waghorn's first Agent at Suez, George West who, in later years, became Consul General in Egypt. Besly told how he went to Suez over 50 years ago when the old rest houses along the route were still standing, castles as they were called because of the towers on which flares were lighted in inform Cairo of the arrival of the mail at Suez from Bombay. He described how the necessary coal for refuelling at Suez was shipped from England to Alexandria and carried overland, such caravans often consisting of more than 3,000 camels. Even so the coal was delivered on board at four shillings and sixpence a ton, having been carried to Egypt in ships preceding to the Black Sea to ship wheat for England. Aden did not become a British possession until 1839.

Then followed particulars of one of the paddle steamers specially built in 1840, S.S. Oriental, which plied between Egypt and India; structure wood, gross tons 1787, engines side lever, H.P. 420, steam pressure 71 lbs. per square inch.

An interesting extract from the journal of A. Dow provided the personal impressions of a traveller by the Overland Route in 1851.

“ July 6th, 1851: arrived at Boulac at 2.0 a.m. time from Alexandria 37 hours.

Drove to Shepherds by bus, the hotel is immense and the gardens occupy a mile of ground. Shepherd, the keeper, is a very interesting man and the Pacha has built this for him, for which he pays about £500 a year. The house is unnecessarily large, halls like streets with very lofty ceilings, many of which are as large as the largest ballroom at Liverpool.

There were six omnibuses to convey us across the desert; the second class passengers started at 6.0 a.m. The carriages were very clean and contained six cushioned seats, separated by elbows. Each carriage is on two wheels, the outside painted drab and the inside green; very good springs and pulled by four capital horses; one man drives the whole distance but there is also a conductor who is changed every the horses are changed. We started from Cairo at 12 noon and proceeded at a rapid pace towards the desert, overtaking a caravan with a portion of our luggage. The road for about 120 miles was macadamized but beyond that sand, the road being marked by stones alongside. We changed horses during our journey of about 80 miles sixteen times; the horses being galloped all the time are unable to stand more than four or five miles at a stretch. We had altogether nearly 400 horses in use with our small caravan, I believe the Pacha loses annually about three or four hundred horses crossing the desert.

We arrived at Suez at 7.0 a.m. (Time from Cairo 19 hours) “

Examples of the cachet applied by Waghorn's agents were displayed and were followed by specimens showing the markings used by the Egyptian Transit Company, the Government organisation which engulfed the individual private enterprise then carrying mail, passengers and merchandise through Egypt. Besly drew special attention to one entire bearing the Transit Company's Cairo cachet, the letter being written from Cairo, as evidence the company functioned as a postal service in the strict sense of the term and not merely as a carrier of mail in transit. He then sketched the development of cable communications through Egypt and made mention of such forwarding agents as Briggs, the representative of the P. & O. Company, who should also be considered as one of the early advocates of the Overland Route, though his name is better known for the enterprise in carrying forward by the British Post the information reaching Egypt by cable before a line had been laid onwards to the East.

A.S. Mackenzie-Low next took the lead and made allusion to the fifteen pages he had selected to summarise the activities of the Posta Europea, the highly efficient Italian controlled private enterprise which served the Consular Post Offices at Alexandria as collecting and delivery agent for the mail they handled, and developed pari passu with the railroad

so that it assumed the functions of an internal postal system throughout the Nile Delta and even acted as an Agent for the embryo postal system developing under the aegis of the French in the Isthmus of Suez. The first section of the State Railway was opened between Alexandria and Kafr-al-Zayat in 1854; extended to Tanta in 1855 and to Cairo in 1856. The confidence inspired by *Posta Europea* led to it supplanting the Government Post Throughout the area it served and its eventual purchase on January 2nd 1865 to form the basis of the modern postal system we know in Egypt to-day. Its proprietor at that time, Giacomo Muzzi became the first Postmaster General of Egypt and was created Bey.

On April 7th 1860 an agreement was signed at Alexandria by which the *Posta Europea* undertook to handle in Egypt outside the Canal area the mail of the Suez Canal Company for an annual payment. Offices nearest the zone situated, also at ZAGASIK and SUEZ.

The earliest official reference to postal rates is to be found in an official notice in Italian (shown in frame). The charges being according to weight and distance.

Correspondence carried by the *POSTA EUROPEA* was handstamped on the face of the letter with a franking cachet bearing the words *POSTA EUROPEA* and the name of the office of origin. There are six types of these franks. Postage charges were marked in blue or red pencil. Example, 30 = 30 Para; 1/20 = 1 P.T. 20 Para. Postage was prepaid. Written receipts were given for all letters handed in for dispatch and monthly financial statements were rendered to clients showing the charges made and received. (Specimen shown in frame).

The *Posta Europea* cachets had franking power in Egypt only. Examples of combined postage are found on letters forwarded by this service to Alexandria for transmission abroad, also on letters received from the Consular offices for delivery in Egypt.

The earliest reference to registration of letters by this service is in the *POSTA EUROPEA TARIFFA* of 1860 which states that the charge above ordinary postage was 2 P.T. Printed receipts were given to the sender. There are three types of registration markings. (Specimen shown).

Outstanding among the specimens displayed by Mackenzie-Low were the set of four essays for adhesive stamps proposed by Muzzi about 1863; a superb example of the earliest (Type 1) frank used at Alexandria; two covers marked with a *FRANCA* handstamp, one framed and the other unframed; and three particularly interesting examples of combined franking, France to Egypt, London to Egypt and Egypt to France, in each case clearly demonstrating the important standing of the *Posta Europea* at that time.

Captain G. L. Hearn followed with evidence of the Consular postal services which made the *Posta Europea* necessary. France, Greece, Austria, Great Britain, Russia and Italy have all operated a national post on Egyptian soil and are believed to have done so in that order. Captain Hearn also produced a fine series of the Egyptian stamps used overseas in other Turkish territories. He drew attention to two covers, bearing Egyptian

stamps, emanating from the Island of Rhodes where the Egyptian Post Office was only open during the summer months while the Khedive was in residence. Such covers with the Rodi postmark are extremely rare. The last of the Egyptian offices in Turkey were closed early in August 1881.

Brigadier C. D. Rawson came next, to add details regarding British postal activities and particularly the use of the Crown Circle Franks at Alexandria, Cairo and Suez. His specimen of the last of these three franks, used during the advance of the British force against Arabi Pasha in 1882, after the closure of the Consular Post Office at Suez, is of outstanding merit and the resurrection of this frank is evidence of the confusion reigning before the arrival of the Military Postal Units early in August.

Rawson made the following interesting statement :-

“ Up to the end of the Napoleonic wars sailing ships were hired by the General post Office from their owners or private syndicates to carry mail to the East. This system became so corrupt that in 1827 the Admiralty took over the service. The first admiralty steamship, the “Meteor” was used in 1830, and the service improved, but it was not until 1837 that a contract was given to the P. & O. S. N. Company, and a secure and punctual service was established. Imagine the little sailing brigs on the long sea route, armed against piracy, buffeted by storms in the Bay and moving coastwise past Portugal to Gibraltar, Malta and Alexandria, and thence the mail was forwarded under the aegis of Mr. Waghorn’s agency on camel and donkey to Suez and on by East India Company’s vessels to Bombay.

Again the overland route brings us the vision of the special coaches with their steel boxes of mails going at high speed from stage to stage via Calais or Boulogne to Marseilles, there to meet the Admiralty sailing packet to Malta where the mails were taken on board the long sea route vessel from England and carried to Alexandria.

The rise of Falmouth from a small fishing village to a big, busy and prosperous centre is accounted for by its selection as a terminus, chosen to prevent mailboats being stormbound by the heavy westerly gales.

The greater security and speed of mail traffic under this P. & O. contract led to more elaborate arrangements in Egypt, and in 1839 a packet agency was established at Alexandria by the General Post Office. A Circular Date Stamp was issued to this agent (Mr. Johnson) to be used on all letters which left or reached his agency. This Circular Date Stamp had no franking power. The rates of postage were inscribed in manuscript, sometimes hand stamped, on the front of the letter and the amount was either prepaid or collected at destination.

In May 1840 Great Britain issued her first adhesive postage stamp, the penny black. Many postmasters immediately clamoured for similar stamps for use at their office and the General Post Office eventually agreed to issue franking stamps to be employed at ports to which British vessels carried the mails. Alexandria received one in 1843. These postal markings, now known as Crown Circle stamps, had franking power and were struck on the letters in addition to the circular date stamp. They are, therefore, true

postage stamps. The postal charge, however, was still written on the letter.

A photograph of a fine cover of Besly's is shown in the frames. The Alexandria Crown Circle Frank is a double circle intersected at the top by a crown, with "Paid at Alexandria" in serifed capital in the centre. It is known struck in red and black.

For about four years Alexandria alone had these facilities, but in 1847, presumably owing to the increase in mail traffic, a postal agency was established at Suez, and a Crown Circle Frank stamp and a circular date stamp were issued to the agent. A photo I display of a cover belonging to Byam shows this frank stamp to be much smaller than that of Alexandria, but otherwise similar. Known struck in black and possibly red. The Circular date stamp seen on another cover is a double circle with the word Suez, the date and letter A below.

At some date after this, which I have been unable to discover, a postal agency was established at Cairo in the British Consulate, where letters were received and sorted by a consular official, and collected by the owners or their servants. This official had no other postal responsibility but was granted a gratuity of £20 a year in 1856. On the frame you will see another cover of Byam's bearing a Crown Circle Frank stamp and the date stamp issued to Cairo. The Frank is a single circle and known only in red.

When the mail traffic increased these Postal Agencies became Post Offices :-

Alexandria	17th March 1858.
Cairo	23rd February 1859.
Suez	Not till 1861.

In 1859 British adhesives were sent out to Alexandria and Cairo, but Suez probably had only the Crown Circle stamp till 1861. These offices also received new circular date stamps. The Circular Date Stamps were remained until the offices were closed but at Alexandria and Suez a slight variation was adopted; probably new stamps being sent to replace those worn out. This later stamp used at Alexandria has a more solid appearance, and a thicker circumferential line, with longer limbs of E in Alexandria, the cross bar of the second A higher up the letter; and D and R more widely spaced. At Suez the new type was about half a millimetre larger in diameter and in height of letters.

At the same time as circular date stamps were issued, obliterators were sent to Alexandria (B01) and Suez (B02). These letters and numbers have no special significance. The markings at both places were similar, namely, a horizontal oval with three thin bars above and below, and two curved bars on either side. These obliterators were used with the circular date stamp but apparently never in duplex.

The Alexandria obliterator was renewed three Circa 1867; five bars, used in duplex, probably detachable as two covers exhibited show variation of the intervening space and mal-alignment. Circa 1871; four bars, never in duplex. Circa 1874: three bars, never in duplex. The Suez obliterator

was never changed, (covers exhibited show early use and specimens just before and after the formation of the U.P.U.) and remained in use until the office was closed in 1878.

Cairo was never issued with an obliterator and all letters were forwarded with adhesive stamps uncanceled, but bearing the circular date stamp of Cairo on the front, to Alexandria, or Suez. At these places the adhesives were obliterated by B01 and B02 respectively before departure. Presumably Alexandria and Suez were accountancy offices and Cairo had no other responsibility than to keep a record of stamps expended.

There are two other interesting items shown on the frames.

(a) A portion of an envelope marked with a Crown Circle Frank stamp of Suez and an accompanying circular date stamp of the British post office there. The Egypt Study Circle considers that this is a relic of the Arabi Pasha rebellion of 1882. Alexandria was bombarded by our fleet eleven days before this. The Egyptian postal agent at Suez, who as kept there merely to facilitate the passage of the Indian mails, having no adhesive stamps used the old Crown Circle Frank stamp, because it was the only means he had of franking a letter. The Expeditionary Force postal unit had not then arrived.

(b) Two postal telegrams from Suez to India. After many failures a cable was laid from Suez to Bombay in 1868. Prior to that telegrams to India had to be sent from Suez by post. The rate was 1/-. Great Britain 1/- stamps of 1856 and 1862 are shown.

John Gilbert then stood forth to wind up the story which makes the postal history of Egypt an enthralling philatelic study. His theme was the Air and he laid stress on three aspects entitling Egypt to a premier place in the field of Aerophilately; her early and efficient use of a Pigeon Post, in the Middle Ages, the speed of which was not exceeded by any post till the advent of the aeroplane; the organisation of one of the earliest internal aerial postal services performed by the planes of the Royal Flying Corps, in response to a state of emergency in the spring of 1919; and thirdly, the extreme importance of the country, both now and in the future, as a great aerial junction.

The first air mail in Egypt was flown by pigeon Post in the days of the Mamluks (1250 - 1517 A.D.) A series of watch towers, about ten miles apart was built en route from Cairo to Damascus and in other directions in Arabia. Each tower housed its homing pigeons from whence the birds flew back bearing the messages to their home tower. Each message was sent in duplicate, because if one bird was caught by a hawk the other pigeon generally got through. The material on which the message was written was limited in weight and it is believed that it was silk. It was fastened under the tail of the bird and not on the leg as in later times. Gilbert regretted being unable to show one of these earliest pigeongrammes, for it is doubtful if any has survived.

1910, The next occasion of importance in Aerophilately in Egypt was the first aviation meeting held at Heliopolis, near Cairo in February, 1910. It was attended by the leading pioneer airmen of the World. They arrived from France, Germany and Great Britain in their frail machines

and the World air speed record was broken during the meeting at 45 miles per hour, an incredible speed in those days. The altitude record was also broken at 381 feet. It is believed that mail was not actually flown at this meeting, but Gilbert showed postcards depicting the aerodrome postmark used at the special Post Office at Heliopolis; these, he suggested, should only be regarded as souvenirs of a most interesting occasion. It was also a matter of interest to note that a special vignette was issued unofficially and this was the forerunner of the Air Mail labels which are universally used today.

The year 1914 brought new flyers to Egypt and the famous French pioneer airman, Marc Pourpe and Vedrines, who are credited with flying the first mail by plane in Egypt. Marc Pourpe made his epoch making flight Cairo, up the Nile to Khartoum, of which Gilbert displayed some interesting photographs, depicting Marc Pourpe landing at Khartoum, and another showing him handing letters to Sir Reginald and Lady Wingate.

The few years between 1914 and 1918 saw a tremendous improvement in the range and performance of aircraft. In 1916, the first military planes were flown to Egypt to help in the defence of the Suez Canal, then being attacked by the Turkish Army and a photograph of the "Farman Short" plane taken in the desert at the time was shown.

It is believed that mail was carried by various Service machines to the troops serving in Mesopotamia, but no regular service was organised.

The end of the war period saw the commencement of the epic flights of the famous Pioneers who blazed the trails for the air routes, the result of whose efforts enabled the regular Commercial Airline to run as they do today. No praise can be high enough for these brave men, who risked their all to improve transport, communications and mail services. The strategic importance of Egypt as the hub of the air lines will be immediately realised, especially after a study of these flights, for it will be noticed that every flight which connected the West with the East went via Egypt. The flights made to South Africa, India and Australia, and many other ports, all used Egypt as a port of call and, therefore, Egypt must be regarded as an essential link in the chain of any airways system.

Covers were shown which had been carried by some of the pioneer flyers on these record-making journey through Egypt :-

- 1918. Ross Smith's first flight from Egypt to India.
 MacLaren's first flight from Great Britain to India.
- 1919. Ross Smith's first flight from Great Britain to Australia.
- 1925. R. A. F. flight, Egypt to Nigeria, under Squadron-Leader
 Arthur Coningham.
 R. A. F. flight, Egypt to the Sudan.
 Alan Cobham's flight, London, Cairo to Cape Town.
- 1928. Lord Carbery's flight, Holland, Egypt to East Africa.

1931. The Airship " Graf Zeppelin's flight from Germany to Egypt and back.
1938. R. A. F. non-stop Formation Flight, Egypt to Australia, 7,158 miles in 48 hours, a record which stood for eight years.

First Air Mail Services :

- (1) The R.A.F. carried air mails from Baghdad to Egypt and covers were showing dated February 24th and March 11th, 1919, with a splendid cachet.
- (2) During the time of the serious riots in Egypt in March and April, 1919, the R.A.F. organised and carried out an Emergency Air Mail Service, which was one of the first half-dozen Air Mail Services organised in the World. This was in operation for about six weeks and a selection of these now rare covers was shown, bearing the three different types of cachets used. Also a photograph of an aerial leaflet which had been dropped by military planes during this same period, warning the rioters.
- (3) In 1921 the R.A.F., with planes and motor lorries blazed a trail under great difficulties across the 800 miles of desert between Cairo and Baghdad; photographs depicting the work being carried out were shown. It was found that if any plane made a forced landing off the direct route there was very little hope of it being found, so it was decided to plough furrows in a straight line across the desert, to act as a guide to the airmen and a photograph of a tractor pulling a plough across the desert was exhibited.

In 1922 the R.A.F., started a regular fortnightly service which carried mail between Cairo and Baghdad until 1926.

- (4) Imperial Airways took over the Cairo-Baghdad Air Service in 1926 and extended it to Basra in 1927. Later Imperial Airways extended services to India in 1929, also to the Sudan. In 1929 regular services were run between Egypt and Great Britain; In 1931 the service was extended to the Sudan and East Africa; In 1932 to South Africa and many other parts, thus gradually linking up the vast air network as we know it today.

In 1933 the Misr Airway, an all Egyptian Air Service, now named Misr Airlines was started.

1939 to 1945. A map was shown to demonstrate how the air mail routes had to be constantly changed owing to the vagaries of war. When France fell mail had to be taken round by the sea route from Great Britain to Egypt; and when Italy entered the war the Mediterranean was closed for Air Mails and the mail was sent by sea to the Cape and flown up through Africa to Egypt. Later, Flying Boats flew the mail to West Africa whence it was flown to Nigeria and the Sudan to Egypt. Mail to and from America was sent by the Southern bridge route, via Natal and Ascension Island and on from West Africa to Egypt.

All these long journeys considerably delayed the deliveries of mail and the men of the Eight Army in Libya were specially concerned because of the delay between Egypt and their homes in Great Britain.

In 1941 the wonderful emergency "Airgraph" Service was started with Egypt as the centre, whereby messages in Egypt were photographed in miniature and the films flown back to be developed, enlarged and printed in Great Britain. Later, messages were sent in the opposite direction and the developing and printing was done in Egypt. It is not generally appreciated that this service, which went on continuously until 1945, was the cheapest form of registered letter service in the world. If a plane carrying films was destroyed, a duplicate set was immediately prepared and dispatched, thereby delivery was guaranteed and the time taken in transit was reduced from up to six months by sea mail to 21 days and ultimately to about a third of that time by the "Airgraph" Service. After a time Egypt became the big distributing centre to the troops in Persia, Irak, Palestine, the Sudan and for a period in India.

First and last day "Airgraphs" were shown; also a German propaganda British £1 Note which was dropped over Cairo in 1942 and the display concluded with the new light-weight Air Mail Letter which is being used today, and has superseded the Airgraphs.

Gilbert concluded by saying how sorry he was that time only allowed a brief survey of such a big subject, but he hoped that all present recognised the extreme importance of Egypt, both now and in the future, as a meeting place of the Air Lines connecting all parts of the World and destined to link mankind more intimately than ever before.

Thus ended an extremely pleasant and interesting evening, for which the members of the Egypt Study Circle wish to thank their hosts.

M A R K E T J O T T I N G S .

By

W. BYAM.

The auction by H. R. Harmer on February 23rd, 1948, when 156 Lots of Egypt were offered for sale, provided useful information about a class of material which is rapidly becoming appreciated as essential to the serious study of stamps, as opposed to the mere formation of a collection. I refer to artists' drawings, essays, die proofs, colour trials and the other forms of evidence telling the story of how a stamp was made. Such pieces also add greatly to the interest of a collection and, as their numbers must be strictly limited, owing to the very nature of the material it is not surprising that the market values are constantly rising and it requires no great skill as a prophet to predict that they will continue to mount.

A set of seven printing stone proofs of the 1865 issue (the 1 P.T.

was damaged) realised just over 6/- a copy, compared with the recognised price of 2/- each when I started to collect.

The eight De La Rue die proofs on glazed cards, covering the period of the Sphinx and Pyramid design, fetched just over an average of £9 each.

The set of ten imperf. Plate proofs for the 1914 stamps, on unwatermarked paper, was bought for £5, or 10/- a copy.

The British Army Postal Seals provided some of the most spirited bidding of the sale. The artist's original perforated composite proof, estimated by Harmer to be worth £30-£40, fell to a dealer for £70. A block of four of the imperf. proof of the same stamp realised £46. Of the Letter stamp of 1st June 1934 there were four imperf. pairs of colour trials, in pale brown, pale reddish brown, pale violet and in the accepted colour of the stamp. These, respectively, fetched £32, £35, £33, and £25. They were all bought by one of our members, Robert Leslie, and so are fortunately available for study by the Circle. This same collector secured a proof in green, imperf. of the Letter Stamp of 5th December 1934 for £8-15.0 and also an imperf, horizontal pair of proofs of the Jubilee Stamp, without overprint but in the issued colour, for £70. It would seem that Leslie now possess one of the finest arrays of this military material and we must hope he will display it at a Circle meeting for the edification of our members.

Other notable items sold that day were 1866 1 P.T. a mint block of twelve perf 12½ - £77-10-0; a used set of the Port Fouad Commemoratives, the 15 mills, being the rare variety of surcharge with "double bar" - £105; a used set of the 1929 Prince's Birthday stamps in the "wrong colours" - £40; a mint pair of the overprinted Princess Ferial stamps, one with 1493 in place of 1943 in Arabic, £25; the 1944/46 10 mills. Violet "Printed on the gummed side", an unused block of four - £5; two entires from Constantinople to Meteline franked respectively with a pair of 20 para and a single 1 P.T. rose of 1879 - £18-10-0; two entires between the same offices, but in the reverse direction, both franked with a single copy 1 P.T. of 1879-£21; thirty five Egyptian stamps 1867 to 1879, all used abroad, but off cover-£17.

The block of 1 P.T. 1866 was a perfect specimen, well centred and of fresh colour, and is one of the largest blocks known. That it fetched nearly double Harmer's estimate value of £40 is not surprising but I have reason to know that one bidder was prepared to pay £100 to £120 for this highly piece. The prices realised for the "used abroad" specimens is also justification of the interest taken by the Circle in the study of postal history. That a collection of this magnitude did not contain items from the *Posta Europea* period of letters carried by the Foreign Consular Posts in Egypt is a matter worthy of note.

THE OVERLAND MAIL, 1841 - 1842.

By

J. K. SIDEBOTTOM.

Notwithstanding Mr. Hurt's vast experience and knowledge relating to world covers, I consider that his sateen in the Quarterly Circular of December 1947 that -

“ The Overland Mailis generally considered to have been designedprimarily as a speedier means of communication in connection with the British Forces “ etc. can hardly be substantiated.

Prior to 1842 records show many isolated cases of official mails being conveyed in the Red Sea. Troops were landed at Cossier and Suez, on their way to Cairo, by the “leopard” in 1801. Important dispatches were conveyed from Suez to Mocha, and then forwarded on to India by the “Panther” in 1805.

An experimental mail service was in operation across the Isthmus of Suez between 1826 and 1830; the “Enterprise” carried mails to Suez from India, and the “High Lindsay” made it six experimental journey also from India to Suez in 1829 and 1830.

Generally speaking, however, there was no established service in the Red Sea prior to the Peninsular and Oriental services by the S.S. “Hindusthan” and other vessels which commenced in 1842.

Every effort had been made previously to get the Government, the Admiralty and the East India Company to establish steam communication between India and Suez; bitter attacks and accusations were also made, but all without effect.

Interesting as are the details of the six naval officers' letters, described in Mr. Hurt's article, they carry no data to show that they were carried overland at all, across the Isthmus of Suez.

Lieutenant Waghorn, his successors and eventually the Egyptian Oriental Transit Company made provision for the transmission of letters etc. overland prior to the P. & O., and it is quite understandable that these letters would be endorsed “Overland” in the hope that they would be forwarded by same service to Suez, and across the desert to Alexandria and so to England, as a service was in operation, but the absence of any cachets of the Alexandria, Mediterranean area, especially remembering the Malta and Marseilles Lazeret regulation, makes their transport exceedingly unlikely by the Overland Route.

The transit periods are far from being a guide and actually tend to indicate that the Cape of Good Hope route was that used for the average transit time from India to England via Alexandria in 1839 and 1840 was from 60 to 65 days; so one can hardly account for the large balances of transit times being spent either on the journey to India from the seat of

the war or in delays in waiting for ships, in India, for conveyance to England.

Finally, I think it is generally realised that the "Overland Route", pioneered by Lie. Waghorn and eventually worked for the British Post Office by the P. & O. Service was definitely brought into existence primarily for commercial purposes, and not for speedier communication for the British Forces, or for that matter, the suppression of the opium traffic.

That the Opium traffic was paramount however at that period it may be of interest to quote part of the text of a letter (Which happens to have been conveyed " To the care of Mr. Waghorn") from a Mr. Edmund of Bombay, September 12th 1839, which reads as follows :-

" Do not be led away by the declamation of half informed people in England with regards to the Opium trade It cannot be annihilated either by the Chinese Government, or by the British Governmentfor I conceive it can only be judiciously legislated for by the Supreme Government of India.

Commenting upon the account of the visit of the Egypt Study Circle to the Postal History Society which appeared in their journal and which, it is presumed, will be identical with the account given on pages 59 - 68 of this issue Mr. Sidebottom writes :-

Dear Mumford,

I expect you will have seen the report of the E.S.C's visit to the P.H.S. on Nov. 20th which I was unfortunately unable to attend.

I am not wishing to criticise Miss Margot Woodside & Dr. Byam on their work on this article - always rather a difficult subject - but there are one or two obvious errors in some of the statements made by the Circle's members which can lead to conflicting views: especially as my book is about to be published, I have just received the final pull for checking and indexing, so I shall expect many kicks myself. However, for the Circle's benefit here goes :-

p 5, para 2.

Besly must have meant £4-3-6 Waghorn's cost. The P. & O. reckoned 35/- till Nile Steamers were provided, then 25/- per ton. (G.P.O. records)

p 5, para 9

The Egyptian Transit Company received a % charge on the profits of the conveyance of mails, passengers etc. from the P. & O. who carried them, so it is hardly correct to use " engulfed " .

page 6, 4th para from bottom, Rawson.

The contract was not given to the P. & O. in 1837 etc. etc, (Meteor is correct). The P. & O. did not extend their service to Alexandria until 1840. at the request of the Government who had in 1839 made arrangements for transport of mails to the East across France, this was not satisfactory so a charter was applied for April 23rd 1840. ls sailing Sept, 1st 1840, Charter granted Dec. 1840, and "Oriental " added.

Hill's service also should be added to Waghorn's agency at the end of the para (a minor detail).

Most of these details can be checked in Boyd Cable's book to which I subscribed some details.

Incidentally this confusion about the P. & O's Mediterranean service has always existed, and if I remember rightly, I corrected it at the meeting I attended on this subject.

(signed) J. K. Sidebottom.

CAPTAIN DOUGLAS McNEILLIE.

It is with propound sorrow that the Secretary reports the receipt of the following letter from the Chairman.

Guernsey, 1 - 4 - 48.

My dear Mumford,

I have just received an Air Mail from M. de Termes in Cairo, dated 23rd March, telling me Douglas Mc Neille died in hospital at Alexandria on 22nd March - pneumonia & heart failure. Another sad blow for the Circle and he has done such excellent work on the First Fouad Portrait Issues, on the Carriage of Official Mail and more particularly on the stamps of Egypt overprinted for Official use.

This is just a line to pass the sad news, in the hope that you can add it, possibly as a foot note if otherwise too late, to your Editorial.

McNeille was just about to retire and was looking forward to taking a more active part in our work, as he intended to live in London. He was a bachelor.

Maurice de Termes is an Englishman & is the Official representative of the Royal in Egypt - Hence his letter to me,

Yours ever,

(signed) W. Byam.

P.S. McNeill was buried at Alex on 23rd March.