



الجمعية الدولية للطوابع البريدية العربية
ملاحظات عابرة

Arabian Philatelic Association International
Random Notes



December 2014

NUMBER 88

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(See article starting on [page 16](#))

The Arabian Philatelic Association International

The Arabian Philatelic Association (APA) was established in 1968 in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia by a group of Aramco employees particularly interested in Saudi Arabian philately. The APA had over 300 members and subscribers worldwide during most of its existence. Its journal (*APA Random Notes*), and *Reference Manual of Saudi Arabian Forgeries*, auctions and new issue service contributed to the large increase in the popularity of Saudi Arabian philately in the 1970s and 1980s. However, interest declined in the 1990s. An initial attempt to start up a conventional Saudi stamp society in the USA failed in the late 1990s. Since then, we have realized that an Internet-based society has a better prospect of success and we have founded the Arabian Philatelic Association International. (APAI). The APAI e-mail address arabphilassocin@aol.com is no longer in use, please contact Willie King at willieking@btinternet.com

A *Catalog of the Fiscal Stamps of Saudi Arabia* has been written and published by Rudy Thoden and updated as Thoden 2008.

Longer range, we hope to prepare a second edition of the *Reference Manual of Saudi Arabian Forgeries* to cover the issues not in the original edition, plus the many new forgery discoveries, including very dangerous ones created by modern computer technology.

The following members are currently serving the APAI in the capacities indicated:

Membership secretary and Random Notes distribution: Marwan Nusair

European representative: Willie King

USA representative: David Jessich

USA Distribution Manager: Marwan Nusair

Treasurer: David Jessich

Editor, Random Notes: Martin Lovegrove

Random Notes

The APAI's publication, *Random Notes*, will be issued three times a year, assuming sufficient material is available. The editor is Mr. M C Lovegrove, e-mail: martin@weatherings.fsnet.co.uk, (The Weatherings, East End, Gooderstone, KINGS LYNN, PE33 9DB, United Kingdom.) Articles on all aspects of Saudi Arabian philately are urgently needed for publication in *Random Notes*, and can be submitted in manuscript, as a text file, as an e-mail or a MS Word document. The right to edit or reject all submissions is reserved. Opinions expressed are those of the authors only. Material from this publication may be reprinted provided credit is given to "Arabian Philatelic Association International" and the author of the article. Please send a copy of the reprint to the editor.

Scott's (2015) and Stanley Gibbons (2009) catalog numbers are used with the kind permission of the copyright owners.

Several organizations and individuals have granted permission for their work to be reproduced in this journal; our thanks go to them and their details are given on the final page of this edition.

Reference may be made in this publication to the following books by their authors' names:

HAWORTH, W.B. and SARGENT, H. L.- *The Postal Issues of the Hejaz* (1922)

WARIN, D.F.- *The Postal Issues of Hejaz, Jeddah and Nejd*. (1927)

MAYO, M.M. - *Barid Al Sa'udiyah wa al Hijaz wa Najd* (1973)

DONALDSON, N- *The Postal Agencies in Eastern Arabia and the Gulf*. (1975)

WILSON, J.M.- *The Hejaz - A History in Stamps* (1982).

COLES, J.H. & WALKER, H.E – *Postal Cancellations of the Ottoman Empire Part 2* (1987)

THODEN, R. J- *A Catalog of the Fiscal Stamps of Saudi Arabia*, (2001), Thoden 2008

VON UEXKULL, J.- *The Early Postal History of Saudi Arabia* (2001).

Random Notes #88

Assembled by the Editor

Thanks to contributions from several members I have enough material for another issue. Once again I am pleased to be able to include a photograph from the APA days at Dhahran, and once more there are names of members who contributed so much to our knowledge of Saudi Arabian philately.

Now for the notes.

1. I will start with the photograph, and names, sent by Zahid Islam. Zahid writes:

An old picture taken on November 14, 1991 during APEX-19 held at ARAMCO, when APA meetings at Dhahran were hardly ever missed by the regular members. Two of the very active members, Rudy Thoden and Ralph Barracano, are no longer in our midst and very much missed by everyone who knew them.



Sitting from Left to Right: Marie Claire Barracano, Shilwan AlGhamdi, Launce Shearlaw, Adriane Smart.

Standing from Left to Right: Ramy Yaghmour, Zahid Islam, Ralph Barracano, Yusuf Aidroos, Bernard Smart, Samir Amr, Jim Kearney, Rudy Thoden, Willie King.



2. What happened to Scott L56a, inverted red 2-line on 1/8 qirsh zigzag roulette 13? Missing from their catalogues for a few years now but does exist as genuine stamp. Perhaps someone with influence can get Scott to relist it.



3. The barcode label type BC6 illustrated in Random Notes #85 provides quite a few varieties, but perhaps the most unusual is when used to seal an envelope; it was torn in half when the envelope was opened and some of it became attached to the inside. With a bit of digital manipulation I was able to piece together a couple of scans to produce a useful reference piece.



BC6 used for a printer test



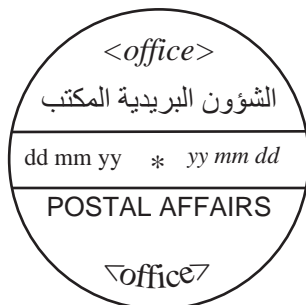
BC15

4. While on the subject of barcode labels, types BC2 and BC4 have been seen printed on Saudi Post labels. Also, a new type, similar to BC6, has been seen used in Jeddah (Al Musadiyah) and Riyadh. I refer to this as type BC15.

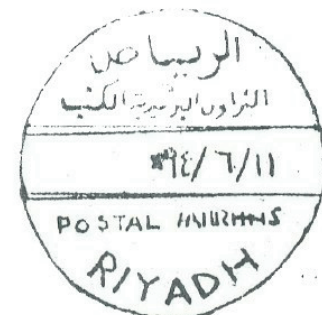


BC2 and BC4 on Saudi Post label

5. In RN52, Ken Knight illustrated a postmark (Problem 1) that he was unable to identify. I have seen an example of this on an official cover and as with Ken's example, it was not very clear. However, I believe it to be as type S170-L below and has only been seen as RIYADH in violet. This was not listed in RN87.



S170-L



Problem 1



6. Has anyone seen this type of thing before? It is a 'Fee Paid' device used to cancel stamps where, obviously, the fee has been paid? The Arabic at the top translates as 'Fee Paid' and at the bottom as 'Jeddah International Airport post'.



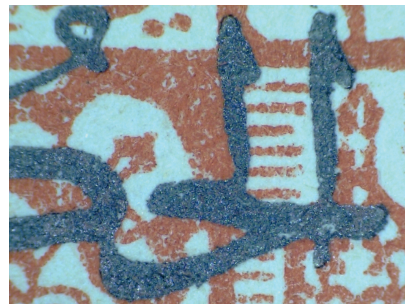
7. Now for two similar items worthy of a closer look:



On the left is a 3 qirsh Makkah Arms, position 32, with an inverted Jeddah 4-line overprint in black. As a bonus, it also has double perforations at right. The overprint looks good but does not plate against position 5, or any other position for that matter. It is actually a forgery type 4, one that can be difficult to recognize. The forgery manual notes that the 'alif' in the top line lacks a serif and that it barely crosses the letter 'haa'. Close inspection shows that the two parts of the 'alif' are mis-aligned more than is found in the genuine and I think that this is a good additional identification feature.



Forgery type 4



Genuine



The second stamp, a 3 qirsh Makkah Arms, position 15, also has an inverted Jeddah 4-line overprint, but this time in blue. As with the previous example, the overprint did not plate against the expected position (22), nor with any other position on the 1 qirsh plate. However it did plate against position 22 of the 10 qirsh plate and must have been printed from the state of the plate containing alternate rows of 1 and 10 qirsh which was illustrated in Random Notes 84.

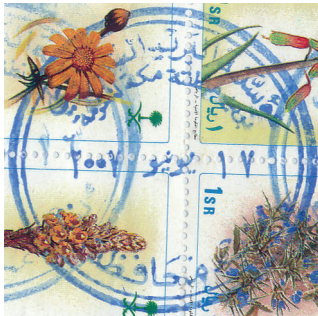
8. I have noticed Gregorian dates in Arabic script being used on some postmarks and thought that this had been introduced over the past few years. Actually, the earliest I can find in my collection dates back to 1965. Here are some examples and also a translation list:



Arafat, 11 April 1965



Usfan, 14 October 2008



Mahafazah Rabigh,
17 June 2007



Jeddah, 20 August 1992



Jeddah, 28 October 2007

| | |
|-----------|--------|
| January | يناير |
| February | فبراير |
| March | مارس |
| April | أبريل |
| May | مايو |
| June | يونيو |
| July | يوليو |
| August | أغسطس |
| September | سبتمبر |
| October | أكتوبر |
| November | نوفمبر |
| December | ديسمبر |

I am sure that these are going to become more common and the editor welcomes any help in compiling new postmark finds.



9. In Random Notes #52, David Graham wrote some comments on the Makkah Arms issue. These comments were triggered by Launce Shearlaw showing David an imperforate 1½ qirsh Makkah Arms in a shade of red very similar to the ½ qirsh. It was a stamp new to David. David managed to find another copy in the collection of Tarik Alireza along with some Makkah Arms essays. A couple of these stamps came to my attention recently and I am pleased to report that good images exist of them both.

Firstly, the Makkah Arms essay. It can be seen from the image below that there are many differences between the essay and the issued stamp, mainly in the side panels. This example is signed by David Graham and John Wilson.

The 1½ qirsh in red to me looks like a Nejd printing and probably printer's waste; it may even have been a colour trial. The lines are not as clean as the early Hejaz printings and there is a double offset on the reverse. The stamp plates to position 15.

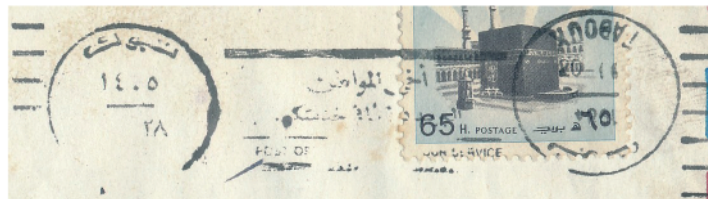


Essay



Printer's waste or colour trial?

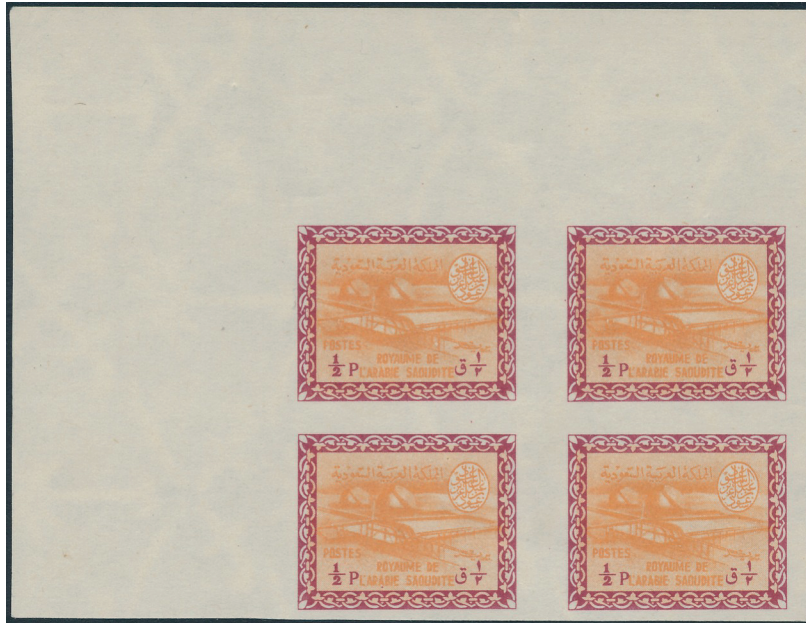
10. Tabouk seems to have had problems with its machine cancels. Below left is TABOUK 20 November 1984 type SS10R 'THE POST OFFICE...'. Note Hijra month missing and inverted office in RH circle. A few years later on 20 May 1989 the same slogan mark had the Arabic month, Shawwal, inserted in western numerals (10), and to make it worse it was inverted.



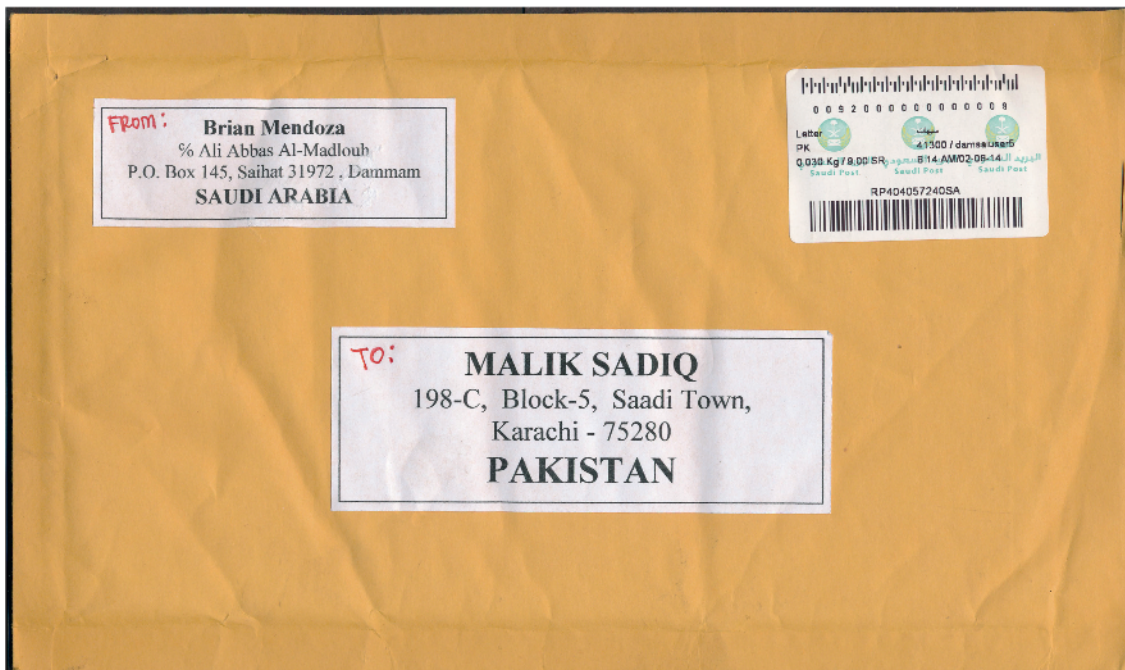
11. Not included in Ken Knights postmark articles in earlier Random Notes is this TABOUK type H20. The date is possibly 25 December 1933.



12. Not listed in Mayo are the Dar Al Isfahani large size DGA stamps imperforate but on the correct watermarked paper. These may have been mentioned, but not illustrated, in Random Notes #12 item 2, but I think Scott have done some renumbering since then. Illustrated below is the ½ qirsh, watermark sideways left. Can anyone confirm that all values in this series exist imperforate and possibly give me the watermark direction?



13. The cover below has no markings on the back, so is it going to be easy to determine its route to Pakistan? Well, yes!



Being a registered item it has a tracking number and Saudi Post offers a facility to track such items. However, you have to be quick as I think the details are erased after one year. The Track and Trace facility at the time of writing can be found at:

<http://www.sp.com.sa/English/SAUDIPOST/PRODUCTSSERVICES/Pages/RegisteredMail.aspx>

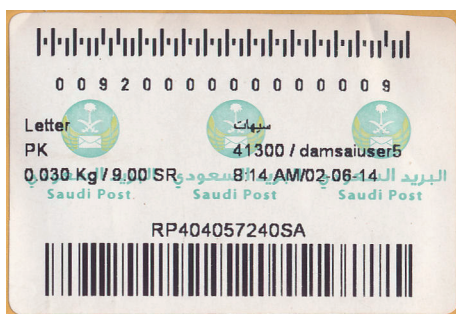
The information held about the item is, or was if you have waited too long:

Tracking number *

Submit Reset

| Shipment Status | | | |
|--|------------|------------|----------|
| Shipment Status | Office | Date | Time |
| Posting/Collecting | SIHAT | 2014-02-06 | 11:20:00 |
| Under distribution | SIHAT | 2014-02-06 | 11:25:09 |
| Arrived To Office | DAMMAM | 2014-02-09 | 08:36:25 |
| Departed to - RIYADH | DAMMAM | 2014-02-09 | 13:30:16 |
| Arrived To Office | RIYADH | 2014-02-10 | 19:08:44 |
| Departed to - ISALAMABAD | RIYADH | 2014-02-11 | 08:38:28 |
| Arrived To Office | ISALAMABAD | 2014-02-23 | 10:42:00 |
| Departure From InWard office of exchange | ISALAMABAD | 2014-02-23 | 11:57:00 |
| Arrived To Office | KARACHI | 2014-02-24 | 03:03:00 |

The route was therefore Sihat (on the northern edge of Dammam) - Dammam - Riyadh - Islamabad - Karachi.



Of particular interest to collectors of these barcode labels is that this is the only example seen by your editor that has the office name in Arabic.

The rate of 9.00 SR is for made up by the basic postage of 4.00 SR plus 5.00 SR for registration. There are different rate scales depending on whether the mail is domestic, to G.C.C or other Arab countries, or to the rest of the world.

Postal rates have been somewhat neglected in Random Notes and the editor would like to receive any information members may have and for any period.

The Saudi Government's Magazine Subscription to "The Economist"

By: D.E.Jessich



2p (SG O498, 3rd Officials) and 3p (SG504, 4th Officials)

I was recently the successful bidder on an eBay lot of 15 covers, all containing official stamps. I was hoping to get a cover representing each of the denominations. While I am still far from that goal, I did learn some interesting things about government postal history.

First, since the envelopes contained checks they were all sent by registered mail. However, only two covers had the word "Registered" on them (and this was typed by the sender). Instead they had the registration number handwritten in Arabic and English preceded by an English "R". The example above is registration number 816. I am surmising that two different individuals wrote them, as the writing was almost always mixed between pen and pencil and the shape of the "R" was invariably different. See Appendix A.

Second, for some reason, the check register number is noted on the outside of the envelope. This would be for internal use only, so perhaps it was required (and recorded) by the person affixing the postage. It was most commonly written below the return address. The example above is check number 1459. They range a simple number in Arabic only, to a complete Arabic/English control number. See Appendix B.

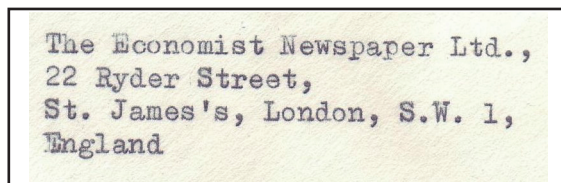
Third, The covers originate from several different ministries. Or the same ministry goes through several name changes. Or the receiving department moves from one ministry to another. The earliest ones appear to:

- Come from: Institute of Public Administration (Royal Decree 1961)
- Followed by: Ministry of Commerce and Industry (Royal Decree 1954-1969)
- And then: General Petroleum & Mineral Organization (Royal Decree 1968 1988)



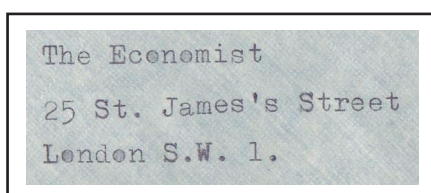
As none of the covers has a clear cancel, I had to Google the above organizations to see when they were in existence.

Fourth, somewhere along the line, the Economist changed their address from 22 Ryder Street to 25 St. James's Street. This is a street on the backside of the same building.



The Economist Newspaper Ltd.,
22 Ryder Street,
St. James's, London, S.W. 1,
England

To:



The Economist
25 St. James's Street
London S.W. 1.

Their current address is:



The Economist
25 St James's Street
London, SW1A 1HG
United Kingdom

The postage rates also varied quite a bit on the covers. The lowest rate seen was 5p. This increased to 6p on the later covers. (But a 6p was also found on an early cover addressed to 22 Ryder Street). A quarter of the covers had 20p postage. As they all appear to contain only checks, this change in rates is a mystery.

I did not find any early 4p stamps (3rd Officials) or any later 2p or 5p stamps (4th Officials). I did not see any 1p stamps at all. But they must be out there.

Rudy Thoden's article on his collection of Official covers in RN-58, pages 19-24, said that the postage rate was either 5p or 20p. From my 15 covers, I have nine that are 5p, two that are 6p and four that are 20p. Perhaps they ran out of 5p stamps and used 6p instead a couple of times.

The postage rates to the UK during this time (1970's) was 16p for 10 grams and 24p for 20 grams. The registration fee was an additional 6p. So perhaps they just used the internal Saudi rate of 5p (for a 20 gram letter) or maybe they used the European rate (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, etc.) thinking the UK was part of Europe which was 20p (again for a 20 gram letter).

If I included in the 6p registration fee (which all these covers were) and used 14p (the 10 gram letter rate to Europe) then I could also get up to 20p. But that still leaves all the 5p rates unexplained.



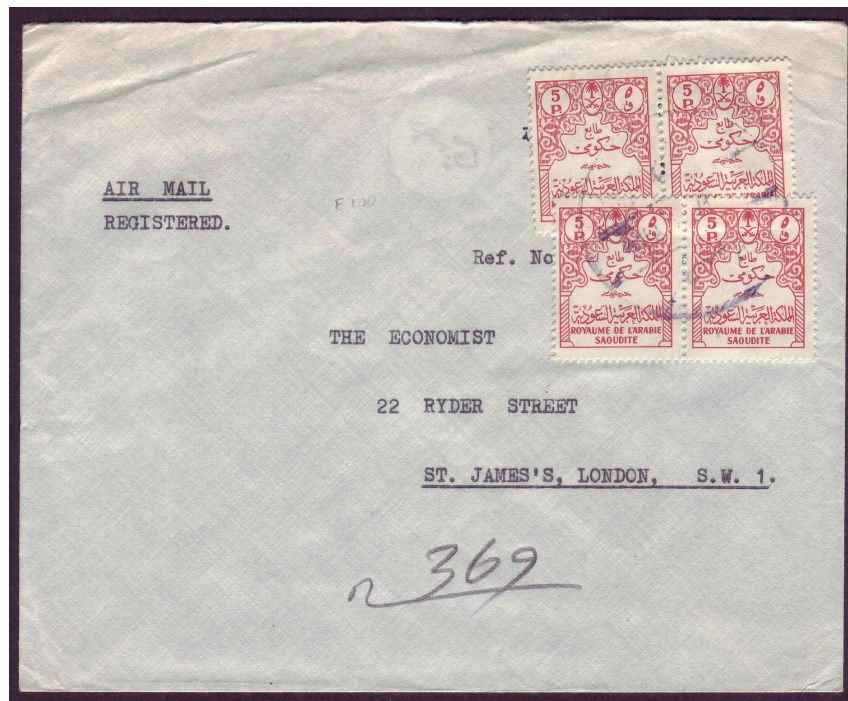


Early Cover with
2p and 3p (SG O498 and O499, 3rd Officials)
Showing 5p rate



Later (?) Cover with
6p (SG O507, 4th Officials)
With 6p rate





Early Cover with
4 x 5p (SG O501, 3rd Officials)
Showing 20p rate



Similar Early Cover with
10 x 2p (SG O498, 3rd Officials)
Also showing 20p rate





Another Early (?) Cover with
5 x 4p (SG O505, 4th Officials)

Again at the 20p rate



Cover from Petromin with
5p (SG O501, 3rd Officials)

At normal 5p rate

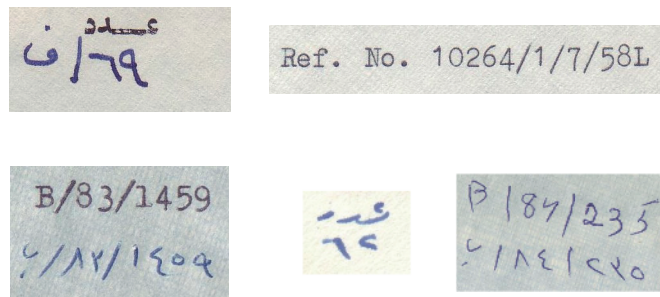


Appendix A



Examples of Registration Numbering

Appendix B



Examples of Check Numbering

Editor's note:

I believe that all official mail had a reference number as shown above and it may be a reference number in a ledger held in each official department that recorded the use of subsidised mail. It is apparent that different departments used different number formats.

We still have a lot to learn about official mail; can anyone help?

Scott L31i

By: J. I. Kearney

Scott lists a variety of L31 (the basic stamp is the 1 para lilac brown with framed overprint, surcharged 1 piaster) with the right-hand character of the surcharged inverted as L31i. When researching the history and previous reporting of this item, I found that Warin (page 29) uses the wording "right hand characters of surcharge inverted". Mayo lists as 46a and 46s "right hand character of surcharge inverted", and "right hand characters of surcharge inverted", respectively. Stanley Gibbons (38g) uses the terminology "right hand character". Wilson lists right hand "character" as 40sy and right hand "characters" as 40sx. So the question is are they talking about the same stamp or are there two different varieties.

Let's look at what I believe is the stamp in question. See position 27 from a large block removed from the sheet and illustrated on the next page. Actually the entire sheet was viewed but the large block became unattached.

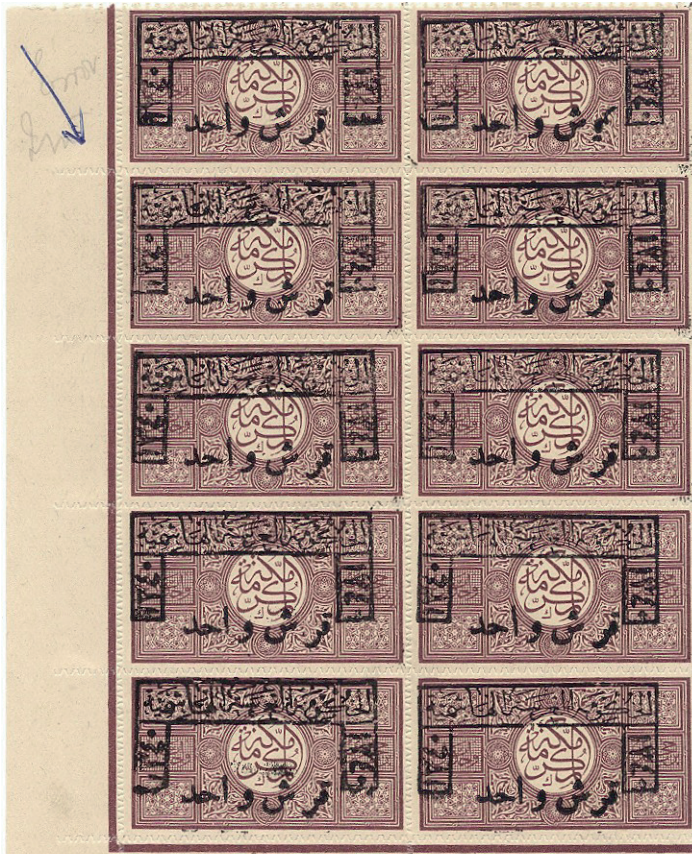
Part of the problem, in my opinion, is merely semantics. If you translated the surcharge from Arabic to English (remembering in English we write left to right) for each of the six symbols in the surcharge you would arrive at: kaf-ra sha wow alif ha da. So the kaf-ra is inverted. Is this two characters or one? It certainly to the untrained English eye it appears to be one "symbol". It is in fact two characters, because in the Arabic language the kaf and the ra are combined. So whether you want to say "character" as Gibbons and Scott say or whether you wish to say "characters" as Warin says, you can be considered correct. One problem is that both Mayo and Wilson list "character" and "characters". And that is incorrect in the author's opinion. Only one Mayo listing should be considered proper. And only one Wilson listing is proper. I would choose the Wilson 40sx listing as correct because he gives a position number, but I think his position number is incorrect. It should be position 27. As with most Saudi Arabia information, any comments would be appreciated. Contact me at jkearney004@yahoo.com.



Editor's notes

All of my examples are position 27. A block of ten stamps from a sheet that appeared at a Harmers of London auction in 2005 is shown on the next page. This stamp displays a normal surcharge at position 27. Close examination of the surcharge reveals different spacing between the characters, indicating that different settings or plates were used. Note that on position 41, the characters **و** and **ش** are much closer on the Harmers block. I tender the theory that because the plate comprised individual pieces of type, the plate was dismantled after the print run was complete. Any further orders would require a new plate to be produced. Whether the subject characters were inserted inverted when the plate was constructed, or fell out and were incorrectly replaced, is not known. If I am correct about the plate construction, expertizing will be very difficult for normal surcharges as a full sheet of each print run would be required.





١٩-ث



Position 27
with the variety

Block from sheet auctioned by
Harmers of London in 2005.

Position 41



١٩-ث



Interesting CASOC Cover

By: J. I. Kearney

This is a CASOC cover from Bahrain to California cancelled 24 Sep 1941 by the Bahrain-Air Persian Gulf 27 mm. wavy line cds (Donaldson type 8). Postage was 47½as. representing the air fee of 44as. plus the 3½as. surface rate. This cover has the new “Via B.O.A.C. to Singapore Pacific Clipper to Sanfrancisco” handstamp. The earliest known usage of this handstamp that I could determine, having seen very few of these handstamps, was 24 September 1941. I believe the BOAC flight was NE123 which departed Bahrain 25 September and arrived Singapore 29 or 30 September. Then the Pacific Clipper (the actual name of the aircraft) departed Singapore between 03-05 October and arrived San Francisco 16 October. Thanks to Aitink & Hovenkamp in their book “Bridging The Continents In Wartime”.



It is interesting to note that the earliest reported usage of the 27mm cds with wavy lines was 24 September 1941. Censored Calcutta and Singapore. The 44as. airmail fee began 23 May 1941 until 24 December 1941. The first departure of the Singapore-Manila leg started 09-11 May 1941 and was known as FAM-14.

Meter Marks

By Martin Lovegrove

As far back as Random Notes #78 I introduced the types of meter marks encountered on mail originating from Saudi Arabia; this article adds details to the basic types illustrated in that edition.

The usage dates quoted are from examples in the author's collection and are offered as guidance only.

The precise reason for the introduction of some types is not known; some may have been trials and others attempts by manufacturers to promote their products. It is possible that references have been made in the pages of *Umm al Qura* newspaper; perhaps some of our Saudi readers will have seen some.

Hijra dates are used by all of the meter types and Gregorian dates have been seen on only one type and only from a few locations.

The type numbers used are those used by the author and may or may not become the standard.

Type MPB01

Pitney Bowes-GB "5000" series. The serial numbers comprise three or four digits following PB or P.B. and have been seen in the range from 0001 to 1830; sometimes one dot may be missing. Normally a meter machine is associated with an office, but some re-allocation occurred in Jeddah, e.g. P.B.0947 has been associated with JEDDAH-12, JEDDAH-70 and JEDDAH-73. P.B.0953 also appeared as PB953; is it the same machine?

Dates seen range from 1978 to 2012 and as such would suggest that this type was the first to be introduced and is probably still in use at the time of writing. MPB01 was the early workhorse of meter machines. The 1978 usage in the author's collection is from Riyadh, Jeddah, Dammam, Makkah and Medina.

Date Formats



Western numerals



Arabic numerals

The dates first appeared in western numerals in the format DD.MM.YY and at the turn of the century became DD.MM.YYY. These were replaced by Arabic numbers in all but a few cases. The latest cover with the three digit year in the author's collection is from Taif and dated 21.6.411 (8 January 1991). There are a few exceptions to the rule of the year changing to three digits after the turn of the century and these can be found with date formats DD.MM.YY and YY.MM.DD.

The handling of days and months with single digits varied and often included hyphens, but the underscore character has also been seen.



Use of Western numerals

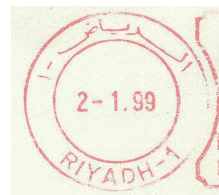
Examples of dates using western numerals prior to 1400H



Normal



Use of hyphen



Examples of dates using western numerals after the beginning of 1400H (Three-digit year)



Normal



Use of hyphen



Use of underscore

Examples of dates using western numerals after the beginning of 1400H (Two-digit year)



Format DD.MM.YY



Format YY.MM.DD

Office

Serial

Office

Serial

DAMMAM

P.B.0373

TABOUK-7

P.B.252

TABOUK-8

P.B.253

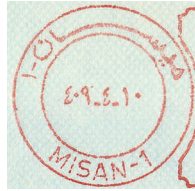
There is also a strange ABHA-13 serial P.B 293 (the second dot is missing) with the date 24-5-24. This was seen on a cover to Egypt where the arrival date was 7-5-1422H (28 July 2001), so the date is incorrect and the format cannot be determined.



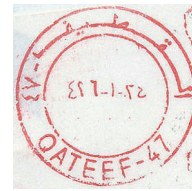
Use of Arabic numerals

Two different styles of numerals were used for the date in this type of meter mark:

1. Neatly formed characters
2. Thin, inconsistent style, rather like handwriting



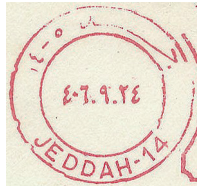
Neatly formed characters in date



Thin, inconsistent characters in date

The normal date format used is a three-character year followed by month and day, each separated by either a dot or underscore. There are a few variations and examples are shown below.

Dot separator



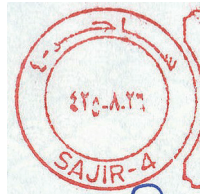
Underscore separator



Separator variations



Both missing



Underscore and dot



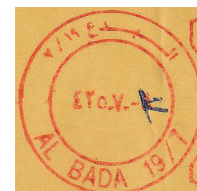
One separator missing

Other date variations



Small digit in day

Day amended in manuscript



Franking values of odd amounts are quite rare. The SR 0.81 illustrated below was from a standard airmail letter to England.



Unusual franking



Free postage?

Meter marks with a value of zero are not rare; they are usually found on covers requiring registration and taken to the post office with the registered mail rate covered by postage stamps. The meter mark is applied when the counter clerk records the registration details. The example above however, was found on an Aramco cover with no other stamps.



Almost at the limit of 99.99

The maximum value that MPB01 can display is SR 99.99, so for values in excess of that, multiple impressions were used or a single one in conjunction with adhesives. These high values were usually found on parcels and express mail (*barid al mumtaaz*). An example is on the next page. Just to add another dimension to it, I have a parcel card with SR 50 in adhesives with a meter mark for only SR 0.50 to make up the required amount.

Type MPB11

This is type MPB01 but with a slogan added. They are the same physical pieces of equipment and are likely to have the same varieties as MPB01. The earliest in the author's collection is dated 21-10-1403 so none may exist with a two-digit year. The latest is from Al Qurayyat 28 November 2004. The slogans are those found in the SS10 series:

- CLEAR AND LEGIBLE ADDRESS IS IMPORTANT
- IT IS BETTER TO USE ORDINARY MAIL FOR YOUR CORRESPONDENCE
- DON'T FORGET TO INSERT THE POSTAL CODE
- PROPER USAGE OF STAMP DISPENSERS IS FOR YOUR BENEFIT
- POSTAL CODE HELPS TO EXPEDITE DELIVERY
- SUFFICIENT ADDRESS ENSURES PROPER DELIVERY
- THE POST OFFICE ALWAYS AT YOUR SERVICE



Type MPB02

Pitney Bowes-GB "6300" series. Not as common as MPB01. The author has seen usage from 20 October 1982 to 31 December 2005. All examples seen have Arabic dates with neat numerals in the formats YYYY.MM.DD or YYYY_MM_DD.

Serial numbers appear in the middle of some of the sequences allocated to MPB01; those seen have been in the range P.B.0996 to 1146.



MPB02

Type MPB12

As with type MPB01, MPB02 appeared with a slogan added and has been allocated the type MPB12. Dates seen range from 9 December 1982 to 25 November 1985. Date format and type style are the same as MPB02.

The slogans seen are:

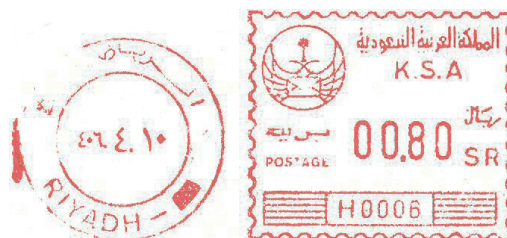
PROPER USAGE OF STAMP DISPENSERS IS FOR YOUR BENEFIT
THE POST OFFICE ALWAYS AT YOUR SERVICE



MPB12

Type MH01

Hasler "Mailmaster". Only serial FH0006 from RIYADH has been seen by the author with dates ranging from 29 August 1984 to 14 April 1986. Note the irregular size of the date numerals in the example below.



Type MFH01

Francotyp-Postalia MS5. This is quite a rare type. The author has seen usage from 30 October 1988 to 31 March 1997. All examples seen have Arabic dates with thin irregular numerals in the format YYYY.MM.DD.

Serial numbers seen have been in the range F.H.0034 to 0132.

The only variety seen is an example with 'SR' and Arabic 'riyal' missing.



MFH01

Missing SR and word 'riyal'

Type MHP01

Hasler "Mailmaster". Dates seen range from 4 June 1990 to 4 February 2012 and is probably still in use. The dates seen have all been in Arabic in the format YYYY MM DD but with various characters separating the elements. Separators seen have been a space, comma, dot and underscore. The date numerals are a mix of neat and irregular, large and small.

The serial number is a small HP followed at first by a small four-digit number and later by large digits. Serial numbers seen are in the range HP 0004 to 0101 (small) and HP 0102 to 1046 (large). An example from Makkah shows the serial as 9115 but it is probably meant to be 0115 (large).

Quite a few varieties have been seen on this type and examples are shown of some. The example from MADINAH shown below displays a mix of neat and irregular numerals. The example from HAFR ELBATEN shows the year split horizontally. Do these examples show that the neat numbers were originally on a rotary selector that gave problems and the date part affected was replaced with a hand-drawn item?

HAFR ELBATEN also had a problem in 2004 with the year missing from device serial HP 0091; the author has several examples from 21 April 2004 to 27 September 2004.



Mix of neat and irregular numerals

Year split horizontally

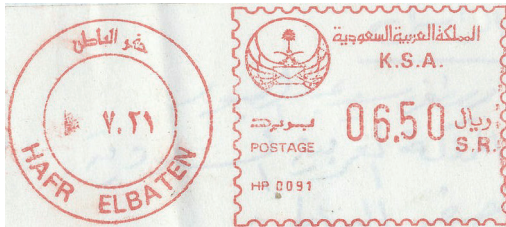




Serial shown as HP 9115



A messy example from AL HASA



Year missing



Word HOFUF split

A single example of this type has been seen with an AL-AHSA postal agency slogan incorporated with the meter mark. Further information about this is required.



Type MPB03

Pitney Bowes-GB "A900" series. The last type to be introduced with dates seen from 16 January 1998 to 23 July 2013 and probably still in use. This continued the work of MPB01 in being the workhorse of meter mail and the main difference in design being that KSA now appears at the bottom.

Serial Numbers

Generally the serial number is PB followed by five digits, but there are exceptions. There are some that continue the sequence of MPB01, and those seen by the author are in the range 1808 to 1851 with a prefix of either PB or P.B. Can we make the assumption that these were the first of a new order?



There are some anomalies in this batch. RIYADH-1 PB1812 has a serial of PB20039 but RIYADH-1 PB1813 has a serial number of PB1813. There are other examples for the enthusiast to discover.

There are further batches and numbers seen are in the ranges:

PB20002 - 20325

PB60009 - 60588

Date Formats

Only Hijra dates in Arabic have been seen on this type, but in various formats.



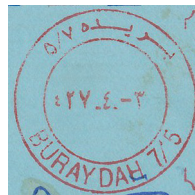
The standard type of MPB03



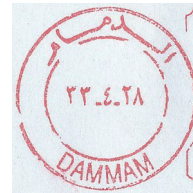
Incorrect month corrected in manuscript



YYYY.MM_DD



YYYY_MM.DD
Small 4 in year



YY_MM_DD



Meter mark type MPB03 for SR 00.00 placed over SR 07.00 to conceal incorrect date



Office Names

Many of the office names used in this type have a two-part number; the second of which refers to the postal region. The two parts of the number are usually separated by a forward slash, e.g. MADINAH 11/3 but an exception has been seen in ABASAUD 4-11. The postal regions are:

| | | | |
|---|-----------|----|-------------------|
| 1 | Riyadh | 8 | Hail |
| 2 | Makkah | 9 | Northern Frontier |
| 3 | Medina | 10 | Jizan |
| 4 | Eastern | 11 | Najran |
| 5 | Al Qassim | 12 | Al Baha |
| 6 | Asir | 13 | Al Jouf |
| 7 | Tabouk | | |



Combination of MPB01 and MPB03



It took three attempts to get the registered rate to Egypt!



Use by Postal Agencies

An unknown number of MPB03 machines are, or were, in use at postal agencies, but two are known to have added slogans; both of these are from Al Hassa. The agencies are:

Al-Ahsa Agency, licence 9/31

Al -Saei Agency for Postal Services



As far as the author is aware, AL HASSA-1 is an office name covering several different machines at different locations and it is possible that they are all postal agencies. The serial numbers seen with this office identifier are:

PB20067 with AL-AHSA slogan and later without.

PB20068 with AL-AHSA slogan.

PB20082 with AL-SAEI slogan and later without.

PB20140 with AL-SAEI slogan.

Type MPB13

MPB03 appeared at a number of locations with a Saudi Arabia, Kingdom of Humanity slogan added and has been allocated the type MPB13. Dates seen range from 27 February 2006 to 21 May 2006, however this did cover only 14 items. The only date format seen is YYYY_MM_DD and all had a small Arabic number 4 for the century. The date numerals are all neat.



And finally...

A list of locations using these meter machines and the serial numbers used is in the attachment to these notes.

The author would like to hear from any member who can add to the information contained in this article.

Where is Dammam?

By Martin Lovegrove

I thought I knew, but Saudi Post may have other ideas. My interest was aroused when I received a cover with a registration label that I had described in Random Notes #85 as Dammam type BC5 but with the town code in the bottom left corner of R7. The stamps were cancelled with a 24 hour clock agency cancel having unclear Arabic text. To me it looks as though the text is Agency services in Abha. Is there an Abha district of Dammam? I could not find one. I needed to get a clearer image of the postmark.



Agency cancel, image reduced to 75%

The clearer image has still eluded me but what did appear was a cover from Abha with the Dammam type BC5 with code R7. So to me it looks as though this R7 label was used in Abha, but why? Did the agency have an office in Dammam and send labels to Abha?



The covers I have with this R7 barcode label date from 1st January to 4th June 2012. All went quiet for a while until two covers, both from Abha, arrived bearing registration labels that were new to me. The labels are Saudi Post with code RC in the top left corner and R7 at bottom left. I have allocated BC13 to this type. So we now have another connection between R7 and Abha. These two covers are earlier, 1st August 2009 and 28th December 2010, so why were they superceded by labels inscribed Dammam? Was there a printing error or have I got it all wrong? Is Abha really in Dammam (or vice-versa). The Saudi Post map shows three post offices in Abha. One in the town, one at the airport and one at the King Khalid University. Does a postal agency operate from one of those locations? Can someone put me out of my misery?



RN

FREE ADLETS

Random Notes will publish as many free adlets in each issue as will fit on one page. Adlets will run for one issue only but can be renewed by sending a request by email to the editor. There is a maximum of five lines per adlet. The adlet must be relevant to Saudi Arabian philately and the editor's decision is final as to whether an adlet is suitable.

If the adlets can fill a full page, they will appear as the last page in the journal, but partial pages may be used as fillers as required.

APAI (and former APA Dhahran member) seeks copies of Random Notes 51 to 55 to complete a full set of 'RN'. Originals welcome, good photocopies also welcome. In the first instance, please contact me to establish costs and postage. E-mail Richard Fagence at kandr.fagence@btinternet.com

Bound copies of Kenneth Knight's series 'The Postal Markings of Hejaz, Nejd, Hejaz and Nejd, and Saudi Arabia' are available for USD 20 (includes postage) from the editor (eMail martin@weatherings.fsnet.co.uk).

Acknowledgements and Contacts

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