



**Arabian Philatelic Association**  
c/o Aramco, Box 1929  
Dhahran, Saudi Arabia

Random Notes No. 9  
April 1977

Number 9 is attached. We don't have any more Handbook ready for you as yet, but lots more information. In addition to the Notes, there is an article by Mr. E.A. Sundberg quoting in full an announcement of June 19, 1931, concerning exchange rates in the Kingdom at that time. Also, we enclose an offprint of Mr. R. J. Thoden's article in The American Revenuer of January, 1977, entitled: "A Preliminary Listing of the Revenue Stamps of Saudi Arabia". Mr Thoden is anxious to correspond with anyone who can show him unlisted stamps, supply things he needs for his collection, or make other information available.

Coming up are more articles on forgeries: framed overprint, two-line overprints, (we've found some really excellent ones) and the Caliphate Issue. In all cases, there was more than one faker at work.

John M. Wilson  
Editor

15 April 1977

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RANDOM NOTES No. 9

1. Note 9 in Random Notes No. 8 mentioned reduced-size dots and extra blobs of color appearing in certain positions of the 4pi Islamic Solidarity Conference in Scientific and Technology. These varieties appear on only one of the two panes.

2. Scott No. 173-176 commemorate the meeting of King Abdul Aziz (Ibn Saud) and King Farouk of Egypt at Jebel Radwa, Saudi Arabia, January 24, 1945. Jebel Radwa, or more correctly, Radhwa, is inland from Yanbu' al-Bahr in the Yanbu' an-Nakhl area. The harbor illustrated on the stamps is apparently that of Yanbu' al-Bahr. (From Cal Ham)

3. Cal Ham also points out that whereas these Random Notes have referred to the Dammam Port issue of 1961 (Scott No. 240-242) as the first stamps printed by Dar al-Isfahani Press in Jeddah, this firm also printed the World Refugee Year Issue of October 30, 1960. For this issue, the paper used had yellowish gum and unwatermarked paper somewhat similar to that of the Cairo printings. Cal advises that the marginal inscription on these stamps reads: "Tasmiym wa Taufiyyz Dar al-Isfahani wa Shurakaa lil Ufsat, Jiddah" (Designed and executed by Dar al-Isfahani and Company for Offset Printing, Jiddah). Incidentally, there are two quite different papers: a white paper of medium thickness and a gray paper much thicker and rougher. All three values come on both papers.

4. Again from Cal Ham: postal affairs used to be in the hands of the Ministry of Communications, but last year a separate Ministry of Telegraph, Post and Telephones was created. The Minister is Dr. 'Alawi Darwish Kayyal.

5. Fred Benedict and Cal Ham called my attention to the fact that when certain values of GOSP, Dam, and Airplane sets were reprinted on watermarked paper in 1962, the plates were new plates with new plate numbers giving "62" as the year date. Further, the second printings of the 6pi, 9pi, and 10pi Dam on unwatermarked paper have this same new plate number:

<u>Unwatermarked</u>		<u>1960-61</u> <u>First Printing</u>	<u>1962-63</u> <u>Second Printing</u>
6pi	frame center	black carmine rose	black brown carmine rose
9pi	frame center	tan to orange tan metallic red	orange brown scarlet
10pi	frame center	blue green maroon	yellow green to olive maroon (warmer)

The new plates are apparently taken from the same original dies; no one has yet been able to find any design difference by which the plates can be distinguished.

6. I recently came across a clipping from The Sunday Times of March 21, 1937, containing an extract from "Orientations", by Sir Ronald Storrs. At the time the Hejaz was carved out of the Ottoman Empire, Sir Ronald was Oriental Secretary to the British Agency in Cairo and thus involved in the negotiations with the Hejaz from the very beginning. Sir Ronald clearly indicates in the quotation below the substantial contribution of Lawrence of Arabia to the 1916 stamps. Storrs writes:

"Shortly after the Arab Revolution we found that its success was being denied or blanketed by the enemy Press (which was of course quoted by neutrals); and we decided that the best proof that it had taken place would be provided by an issue of Hejaz postage-stamps, which would carry the Arab propaganda, self-paying and incontrovertible, to the four corners of the earth. Sir Henry MacMahon was quick to approve; and the Foreign Office approved him.

"I had corresponded with King Hussein on the project, and he sent me by return of mail a design purporting to typify Islamic architecture, but to the layman indistinguishable from the Eddystone Lighthouse. I felt that would never do, and wandered with Lawrence round the Arab Museum in Cairo collecting suitable designs. "To make it self-evident that the series was not a survival or copy of the Ottoman postage-stamps in any form whatever, but an entirely new and independent national issue which had not moulded itself on any other Government, least of all on that of the Ottoman Empire, the design in wording, spirit, and ornament, to be as far as possible representative and reminiscent of a purely Arab source of inspiration. All existing designs of postage-stamps were disregarded, and designs never before adopted for stamps were drawn from beautiful specimens of Arab ornament. Pictures and views were avoided, for these never formed part of Arab decoration, and are foreign to its art. For the same reason European lettering was for the time being avoided."

"It was quickly apparent that Lawrence already possessed or had immediately assimilated a complete working technique of philatelic and three-colour reproduction, so that he was able to supervise the issue from start to finish..."

"These stamp designs (admirably carried out by the Survey Department of the Egyptian Government) drew him still more closely within the Arabian orbit..."

For further information, the reader is referred to the article: "Hejaz Stamps and Lawrence of Arabia", by Dr. Randall Baker, which appeared in Stamp Collecting of March 6, 1975, London.

7. We set up a committee to talk about the hard-to-get items in the several Dam-GOSP-Air series and speculate about relative values. We felt that our members needed a guide to pricing and scarcity. The notes that follow represent the consensus of the committee except where noted.

#### Cairo Printings (1960, 1962)

Of the two printings of the 6pi, 9pi, and 10pi, the earlier printings are the scarcer.

Imperforates are very scarce. I recall Gamil Atallah telling me that there were only 300 sets of the GOSP and Air imperforates. I have some of these, but none of the Dam. The committee thinks \$10 per pair reasonable considering that they are not issued stamps.

#### 1962 Watermarked Stamps

Inverted watermarked are very scarce. Price around \$3 each based on our last auction. Personally, I'd like to buy them at that price. I looked at over 500 copies of the 6pi air to find two or three copies with inverted watermarks.

#### 1963 Oversize (Dar al-Isfahani)

All are common including watermark either way.

#### 1965 Sa'ud Cartouche, Redrawn

Dam: 100pi, 200pi are somewhat harder to find. The 10pi also seems to be difficult.

GOSP: 50pi difficult; 200pi not as hard as you might think, and copies got to Stateside dealers. The 10pi is also hard to find.

Air: Very scarce: the 2pi and the 5pi; we think \$10 to \$15 each. We think \$2.50 for the 1pi and 23pi, and maybe \$5 for the 20pi. The 11pi sells in our auctions here for around SR30, or just under \$10, and it is also very hard to find.

Low values of all three sets will tend to be scarce because they get used up on local mail, of which there is a lot more than you would think, and includes greeting cards at both of the big annual holidays. A substantial premium should be paid for complete sets, even for the Air set without the 2pi and 5pi.

#### 1966 Faisal Unwatermarked

The 100pi and 200pi of all three designs are hard to find, but the 200pi air especially so. The 50pi GOSP is scarce. Scott prices for these are about twice face; the committee didn't price these items, but I think a 50% increase warranted on the items mentioned above. The 6pi Air is a tough stamps, but some US dealers seem to have it, so no change in price is warranted yet. The 20pi Air is scarce; price, \$3 in my opinion. Again, complete sets command a substantial premium; they're just never offered that way.

### 1967 Faisal Watermarked

Only a handful of copies are known of the 1pi Dam. Copies do turn up rarely at dealers - keep looking! I think \$5 about right for now. The 4pi is also relatively scarce. The GOSP 3pi is another very scarce item, and again I would say \$5 for the present. The 4pi GOSP is about as scarce as the 4pi Dam, and again, dealers occasionally have it.

Inverted watermarks are common on the 1pi and 2pi Air, but scarce on other values of these sets. The 23pi GOSP is less hard to find than the others. I have been asked for a listing of inverts, and here it is:

1962 Wmk I	Dam 5pi
	GOSP 1/2,4,5,6,9pi
	Air 1, 6pi
1967 Wmk II	Dam 2pi
	GOSP 2,5,6,10,23pi
	Air 1,2,9pi

Let me know if you can add to this list. I would prefer to look at the item if you can send it, and I will return it promptly registered air.

### Tourist Issues

The truly scarce item is the 3pi Expansion of the Prophet's Mosque, original frame, with Watermark II pointing up, (NB original RN9 wrongly states WMK I) instead of left or right. Only a few copies have been reported. I have looked through stacks of these without finding one. None has ever been sold here, and all we can say is that you will have to pay. The 2pi redrawn frame with either the Prophet's Mosque or Expansion of the Prophet's Mosque center is relatively scarce on the first watermark, although common on the second. The 3pi Expansion of the Mecca Mosque is now difficult to locate, and I would guess that about \$1.50 to \$2 is a correct price. The falcon airmails are getting scarcer all the time, and I recommend that you get yours soon. My own stocks sold out long ago. The 20pi, which doesn't seem to have been released here, is still available in dealers' hands from time to time, but you have to look around.

We have seen a few copies of the 1pi Expansion of the Prophet's Mosque with a short or damaged transfer at the top of the stamp. We have lately seen some copies of these Tourist stamps with blue center instead of green; these are color changelings.

8. As Dr. Randall Baker pointed out last time, 1976 was a year in which February, the second month of the Christian year, corresponded exactly to the second Hijra month, Safar; the 29 days of February marched step by step with the 29 days of Safar. This is possible, as Dr. Baker explained, only in leap year, when February has the requisite 29 days. One of our computer geniuses has come up with the following list of years in which the calculations say that this did or will occur;

Gregorian years; 1064, 1292, 1520, 1748\*, 1976\*, 2204, 2628,  
2856, 3084, 3312, 3540, 3768, and 3964.  
\*Actual so far as we know

Please note that the formula can only approximate the actual situation; religious leaders determine key dates, and these can differ from calculated dates in such a way as to negate mathematical matching.

9. Our member in Jiddah, Tarik Ali Alireza, reports a cover with a cancellation of Qunfidhah on one-quarter of a 2-piastre stamp of the 1917-20 Hejaz issues, roulette 13.

10. I have just seen the 6pi official stamp from the 1970-71 set (Scott No. 53) on the first watermark paper. I can list the following at this point in time:

<u>Piaster</u>	<u>Wmk I</u>		<u>Wmk II</u>	
	<u>right</u>	<u>left</u>	<u>up</u>	<u>down</u>
1			x	x
2			x	x
3			x	x
4			x	x
5			x	x
6	xx not recorded whether left or right			
7				
8	--Seen in hands of postmaster - watermark not recorded or seen			
9				
10			x	x
20		x	x	x
31			x	
100			x	Green; 2pi is dark green

Watermark I is as seen face down in the watermark detector. If you have other values or watermarks than those listed, please send the item for my inspection.

11. I was browsing through some old copies of the Arabian Sun and Flare, Aramco's weekly newspaper for its employees, when I came across some articles setting out the beginnings of stamp clubs in Aramco. From the issue of August 29, 1948: "Thirty-one members attended the first organizational meeting on August 24" in Dhahran. The first officers, elected at the second meeting on September 7, were;

President	Derek Mortlock
Vice President	Bruce Grantier
Secretary	Frank Bonnet

They called themselves "Arabian American Philatelists", not a bad name at all. The first two gentlemen I knew, and Derek's French classical stamps were a real treat to see. All have long since left the company for retirement or other pastures. Our own APA was founded, after the original club had been inactive for a number of years, on January 23, 1968.

12. On Thursday, March 3, 1977, a set of two stamps was issued in honor of His Majesty, King Khalid: 20 halalah and 80 halalah. The stamps featured a portrait of the King. Friday was the day of rest; on Saturday, March 5, the issue was withdrawn. Local officials worked hard going around to large customers and getting back what had been sent to them but not yet used or sold. Aramco returned the full quantity and sold none. However, some stamps were in fact sold and used on mail. Why was the issue withdrawn? How many stamps were sold to the public?

The reason for the withdrawal is an error in one of the Gregorian dates. It reads 1975-3-13, but should have read 1975-3-25. The stamp trade has been told that the stamps will be reissued, but we have not been able to check that here. The price in New York is about \$20 a set with not too many being offered. We have not been able to find out how many were sold, except here in the Eastern Province. The normal distribution of the average printing of 400,000 for any commemorative issue is:

Dammam	100,000	Medina	25,000
Jeddah	100,000	Abha	25,000
Riyadh	100,000	Qasim	25,000

The above totals 375,000. The other 25,000 are apparently held out for distribution to the Universal Postal Union and others. Of the 100,000 King Khalid sets sent to the Eastern Province, the following quantities were actually sold:

20 halalah	21,455
80 halalah	4,710

The APA new issue service has so far not been able to get enough to meet the demand or even to supply one set to each member. We're still trying. If you can locate any for us, please advise.

13. Mr. H.C. Chapman and Mr. J.I. Kearney both reported to me on a lot of seven Saudi Arabian covers sold as Lot #1566 in Robson Lowe's Bournemouth Sale of March 4, 1977. The covers were:

- Scott L36 on cover Jeddah to Cairo
- Scott L34, strip of three on cover Jeddah to Cairo with nice cancellations and route markings.
- The three-line overprints of 1925 (the photocopy I have does not show the overprint color) on 1/2 and 1 1/2pi Arms on cover Jeddah to Cairo bearing printed heading of the Hejazi National Party, addressed to 'Abd ar-Ra'uf as-Sabban, the party's delegate living in Cairo.
- Nejd, Scott 61 Capture of Medina on cover Medina to Cairo
- Nejd, first handstamp on Scott 22-24 or 25 (color of overprint not known) plus this handstamp on the 3 pi red; Registered cover Jeddah to Cairo, addressed to Albert Eid.
- Nejd, second handstamp, Scott 51, and 52, on cover Jeddah to Cairo.
- Nejd, second handstamp, Scott 39, pair, and 52 on cover Mecca-Cairo.

The cover with the Hejazi National Party heading has historical significance; the cover with the Capture of Medina is a rarity, and so is the Eid cover with the first Nejd handstamp, rare on cover. The valuation was L30; the lot sold for L420. This would be equivalent to L100 each for the three good covers plus L30 each for the rest.



Let's look at Stanley Gibbons's auction of November 19, 1976. I don't have pictures, but will describe:

<u>Lot</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Pounds Sterling Realization</u>
733	1917 Hejaz cover	17
734	1925 Hejaz cover (SG 109)	60
736	Nejd second handstamp, nothing rare. This is Gibbon's 218b, the 'black' overprint on the railroad tax stamp - not rare in my book!	125
737	Another second handstamp cover	72
738	Same	17
739	1926 Nejd stamps, incl postage due	38
740	1926 Nejd stamps	60

Now for two lots from a recent Gibbons-Merkur sale in Frankfurt:

- Albert Eid cover with block of four of Scott 38 DM250
- Nejd cover with second handstamps DM250

DM250 is about \$100. The moral of all this is clear: if you want the better grade Hejaz and Nejd covers, you're going to have to pay. The examples given show that the prices can vary widely depending on condition, the particular stamps and markings involved, and the interest in the auction room. I notice that the price isn't lowered any at all because the cover is one of the philatelic creations of Mr. Albert Eid.

14. How many of you noticed the full-page ad in the yellow pages at the back of Scott's Catalogue, Volume 2, for 1977?

15. If I have promised to send you back issues of these Random Notes and have not done so, please let me know.

J. M. Wilson

April 15, 1977

Retyped Jan. 1977

W.A. King

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT  
OF KING ABDUL AZIZ  
CONCERNING EXCHANGE  
RATES JUNE 19 1931

MEMBERS OF APA,

The attached announcement is reproduced for your information concerning exchange rates effective in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in June 1931.

One pound sterling was set to equal 220 common qirsh used in civil exchanges. For government usage, 2 common qirsh equal 1 royal qirsh or one riyal equaled 11 royal qirsh. Since the royal qirsh was used for postage purposes one pound sterling equaled 110 royal qirsh which was equal to SR 10.

Thus in the Heir Apparent set of 1934, the top value 1 sovereign was equal to SR 10. The Treasurer's Department indicates the Gold sovereign weighed 0.235419 oz. gold and hence was worth \$4.8661. (In 1932 gold was raised to \$35/ounce so the sovereign was then worth \$8.2397.)

The Heir Apparent set therefore cost \$11.78 or SR 24.2. The 3 1/2 qirsh stamp used for international mail cost 15 1/2 U.S. cents.

E. A. Sundberg