

ARABIAN GULF STATES

POSTAL HISTORY

QUARTERLY



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BAHRAIN datestamps 1949

The following letter to the editor of Postal History International November 1972, reproduced below, confirms that British style datestamps had yet to be introduced on the date shown. Those marked n/r have not, as far as I know, ever been recorded on cover. The 'BAHRAIN PAID' is a precursor of the later type 43 which has been recorded often but not exclusively on philatelic correspondence.

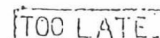
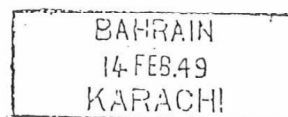
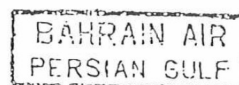
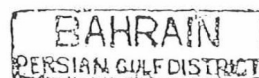
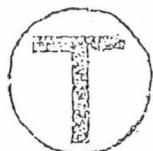
It is surprising that the type 6A killer is not amongst them as I have recorded it on cover dated 9.1.49 and Donaldson states in his supplement, page 32, that it was still in use during the first half of 1949. Please check the revised list of earliest dates of use of the British PO types on page 8.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BAHRAIN

Dear Editor,

You may be interested in all the proof impressions herewith of all the date stamps, etc., in the Bahrain Post Office on 14th February, 1949.
Mallorca; August, 1972 D. L. GORDON.



BAHRAIN

The 'TWO LATE' cachet was applied to items presented at the post office after the mail had been bagged ready for despatch. It is a standard Indian PO instructional mark and when seen on cover it is difficult to be certain at which post office it was applied.

Official List of BAHRAIN Post Offices , 2003

I received this list in spring 2003 and have yet to record a cover from No.12 Bahrain Mall PO. The opening dates of nos.1,2,3 accord with previously published information. The opening dates of the later PO's need checking. This may not be easy as I have already recorded in the last edition (page 19) Manama date stamps being used on registered mail from Central Market and Adliya PO's.

Also a post office is or was open in Hamad Town (Madinat Hamad), which is not on the list. I have one recorded cover from there dated 11.6.01.

LIST OF POSTAL BRANCHES IN KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN

BRANCH NAME	OPENING DATE
1) MANAMA POST OFFICE	AUGUST 1 ST 1884
2) MUHARRAQ POST OFFICE	JUNE 1 ST 1946
3) AWALI POST OFFICE	JULY 1 ST 1950
4) ISA TOWN POST OFFICE	NOVEMBER 13 1968
5) CENTRAL MARKET POST OFFICE	FEBRUARY 12 TH 1978
6) ADLIYA POST OFFICE	NOVEMBER 15 TH 1978
7) RIFFA POST OFFICE	OCTOBER 9 TH 1980
8) DURAZ POST OFFICE	SEPTEMBER 12 TH 1981
9) AIR PORT POST OFFICE	APRIL 1 ST 1984
10) HIDD POST OFFICE	JUNE 16 TH 1984
11) DIPLOMATIC AREA POST OFFICE	MAY 17 TH 1986
12) BAHRAIN MALL POST OFFICE	JUNE 11 TH 2002

Mumtaz Express cover



Mumtaz Express cover with Bahrain type 750



Postal markings from Bahrain

Continued from last edition.

type	number	dates recorded
44 (Manama)		27.8.78 - 15.-.83
On cover reg. Adliya		4.8.81 - 16.9.83
On cover reg. Central Market		27.-.80 - 10.12.81
Small double ring belted		
45 (Adliya , Bahrain)	1	6.9.85
45 (Diplomatic Area, Bahrain)	1	
45 (Bahrain)	14	
45 (Riffa, Bahrain)	2,3	20.11.85 - 15.1.92
45 (Diraz, Bahrain)	1	27. 3.94 - 30.8.00
45 (Hidd, Bahrain)	3	29.6.98
45 (Awali, Bahrain)	2	27.3.94 - 16.6.98
45 (Isa Town, Bahrain)	3	16.6.78
Machine canceller		
46 (Manama, Bahrain) diameter 21mm		22.11.67 - 9.12.68
Rectangular		
47 (State of Bahrain Reg.)	11	11.7.74
47 " " " ")	12	26.7.75
Single ring with coat of arms		
<i>(Name correction)</i>		
48 (Madinat Hamad)	1	11.6.01
Rectangular		
49 (State of Bahrain, Postal Directorate)		23.9.76 - 18.12.80

Barid Mumtaz (Express postal service)

This service is mainly for packages and documents but does include items small enough to be classed as letters.

The two covers shown on pages 5,6 display the postal markings associated with this service ; types 50,53 and IS5.

Note: UAE Post Office also offers this service.

50 (Barid Mumtaz) struck in purple	10.12.83
53 (Postage Paid) struck in purple	undated

Instructional markings

The following have been recorded on cover :-

IS1 'Return to Sender' cachet on large cover from UK 21.7.86

Note: add IS 1 under illustration edition 13 page 21)

IS2 'Require Extra Postage' cachet on cover from Glasgow dated 1985.

IS3 'Taxed' 'T' in circle cachet should be labelled IS3.

IS4 'Return to Sender' on cover from UK .Edition 13 page 23.

IS5 'Business Papers' cachet on cover. Struck in purple.

IS6 Boxed 'AR' Advice of Receipt cachet struck in red. A printed 'Advice of Receipt' card is attached to these items with instructions that the card be returned to sender by the postal administration receiving it. This instruction is often ignored.

British Postal Agency datestamps

Relevant to the letter on page 2 is a list of earliest known sightings of the GPO types introduced by the BPA. This is an amended list first published in edition 7

BAHRAIN

type 21 (single ring with *)	21. 6.49
type 22 (single oval)	27.12.50
type 23 (Muharraq)	2.10.51
type 26 (killer)	2. 7.49

DUBAI

type 12 (killer)	30. 8.49
type 13 (single ring)	11. 6.50

KUWAIT

type 25 (Ahmadi double ring with *)	24.10.50
type 21 (single ring with *)	21. 7.49
type 22 (" " " 1)	10.10.49
type 23 (single oval)	8.10.52
type 24 (killer)	18. 7.49

MUSCAT

type 21 (killer)	- .8.50
type 22 (single ring)	12.10.49

Bahrain postal markings

This page shows more of the markings described on pages 7 and 8.



type 46



Type
48



type 53



type 47

وراق تجارية
BUSINESS PAPERS



IS5

IS6

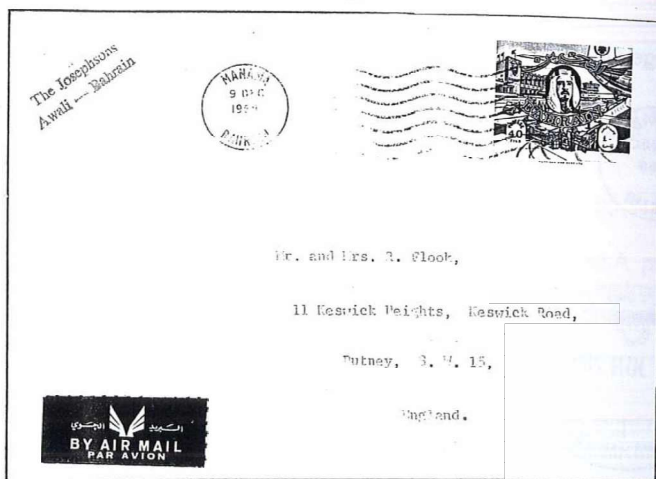
RETURNED TO SENDER
FOR REASON STATED
BAHRAIN

السبب

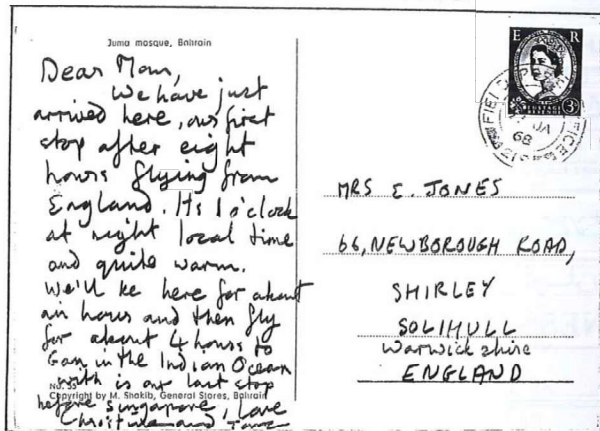
إعيبد للمرسى لاسيب الذكور إنشاه	
Not known	غير معروف
Refused	مرفوض
Gone away	فان
Unclaimed	لم يطلب
Insufficiently addressed	التران ناقص
DECEASED	توفي

IS4

10



Type 46 - small diameter



FPO 218 on postcard to UK from RAF Bahrain. Written by my sister en route to her posting in Singapore, January 1968.

11

Two Bahrain cachets

Above : IS2 Postage Due on incoming mail.

Below : IS6 A(dvice) of R(eceipt) on outgoing mail.



More from Bahrain

100
BAHRAIN
DINAR

10
BAHRAIN
DINAR

10
BAHRAIN
DINAR

10
BAHRAIN
DINAR

BAHRAIN A No 4721

BAHRAIN
42
POSTAGE
REVENUE
ANNAS
6

10/11/58
CHINA HONG KONG

DI
CENSOR.
SEKUR
OOPGEMAAK.

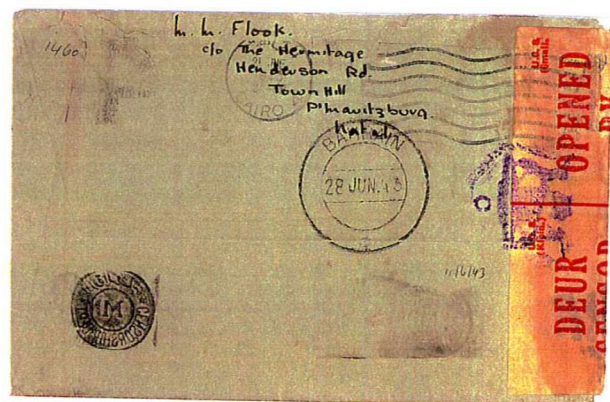
AIR MAIL
EXPRESS

POST OFFICE
FOR QUICK DELIVERY

5 Pictorial
SOUTH AFRICA

MR. R. J. FLOOK,
AWALI,
BAHRAIN ISLANDS,
PERSIAN GULF

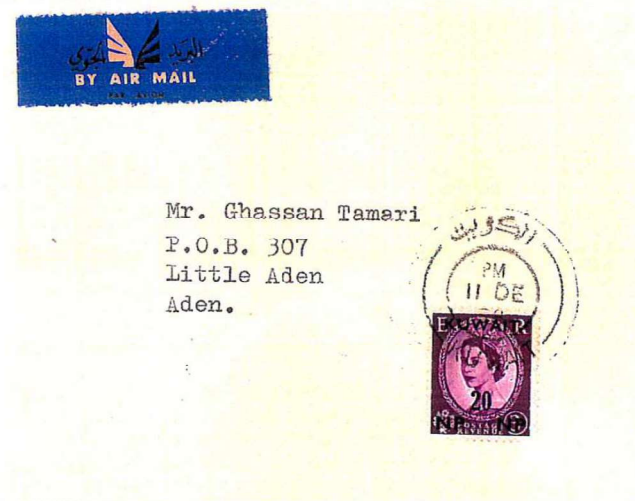
POST OFFICE
M
CHRONOPOST



Two covers from Kuwait 1958

Above : cancelled with Kuwait type 38(1), Safat P.O.

Below : cancelled with Kuwait type 38(2), P.O. not identified.



The Horseshoe Route

Pioneer aviators of the 20th century charted long distance routes over land and sea which formed the basis of the great network of airmail services which linked the British Empire with the mother country. The first and to many, including the British Government, greatest objective was to link India and Great Britain by air. This meant planning a route across Europe and the Middle East. Part of this story has already been told in previous editions (3 and 4) of this publication. More detailed information can be found in the proceedings of the Royal Central Asian Society :-

(1) 'The Political Aspects of Commercial Air Routes' by Col. H. Burchall, DSO. November 23rd., 1932.

(2) The Development of the Air Route in the Persian Gulf by Sqn. Leader G.W. Bentley, D.F.C., R.A.F. December 14th., 1932.

In 1938 the long planned 'Empire Airmail' scheme, also known as the 'All-Up' scheme, became operational and mail between Britain and its Empire could be sent airmail at a basic rate of 1 1/2 d. A new fleet of 32 flying boats was built to serve these routes and operated by the government backed Imperial Airways. Two of the routes were twice weekly services from Southampton to Durban and Karachi.

Unfortunately this fast and affordable scheme was ravaged by the outbreak of war and the eventual severing of direct air links between Great Britain and its eastern empire. The 'All-Up' scheme was abandoned and a premium service introduced whose object was to reduce demand and leave space for essential cargoes. The basic airmail rate became 1s 3d per 1/2 oz. In today's prices this would mean a rate of about £6.80 per letter.

One urgent problem which needed solving in February 1940 had nothing to do with the major wartime situation. It was an outbreak of hostilities between the sheikhs of Dubai and Sharjah. The flying boat landing area off-shore from Dubai came within range of the guns but the resourceful 'Airways' manager brokered a day-time truce which left the hours of darkness free for local activity.

No sooner had this difficulty been overcome Italy entered the war on 10.6.1940 and the Mediterranean area was effectively closed to civilian flights. The empire air routes to Britain were severed. A contingency plan was put to immediate effect with flying boats op-

erational and by excluding Great Britain from the airmail routes large parts of the empire remained in communication with each other. The route shown on the map defines the 'Horseshoe' which linked Durban with Auckland via Cairo. The Chavril press have published an excellent booklet in its Wartime Airmails series entitled 'The Horseshoe Route'. (ISBN 1 872744060; printed 1992). I acknowledge the help this booklet has given me in writing this article.

The cover shown on page 13 is a clear example of HORSESHOE mail. Details :

1. From Pietermaritzberg franked 1s3d (SG94) cancelled 11.6.43.
2. 'Opened by Censor' sealing strip Durban and tied by a violet 'Arms of Durban C' cachet.
3. Backstamped Cairo 21.6.43
4. Egyptian 'M' in circle censor mark
5. Backstamped Bahrain type 5 , 28.6.43

Extract from the Chavril booklet

By the 19th June 1940 the Horseshoe Route, linking sixteen countries between South Africa and Australia (Durban to Sydney) was operating with a weekly service in each direction.

Taking off from Durban, they flew along the East African coast with refuelling stops at Lourenco Marques and Beira and an overnight stop at Lumbo in Portuguese East Africa. The next day they followed the coast, with stops at Lindi and Dar-es-Salam in Tanganyika on to Mombasa in Kenya, then inland to Kisumu with an overnight stop at Port Bell in Uganda. On the third day they headed north to Laropi on the White Nile and then followed the Nile - Juba, Malakal and on to Khartoum. On the fourth day they continued along the course of the Nile to Wadi Halfa, Luxor and on to Cairo. Cairo was the Near East regional centre for British Overseas Airways, the successor company to Imperial Airways. On the fifth day they flew north east over the Suez Canal and the Sinai to Kallia on the Dead Sea and then to Lake Habbaniya, near Baghdad and the final leg to Basra for an overnight rest. On the sixth day they flew to Bahrain, refuelled at Dubai and on via the coast of Baluchistan to Karachi.

Six days from Durban to Bahrain but seventeen days for our cover! The route map is on page 22.

Kuwait covers , page 14

The search for information about Kuwait canceller type 38(2) listed in Edition 2, Winter 2001 continues. The covers shown on page 14 enable us to reduce the number of possible locations.

Recap - Kuwait State Postal Service opened 7 post offices in 1958. These accepted mail for local delivery using three stamps of local design, 5, 10, 40np (SG 131, 132, 136) and cancelled with bilingual date stamps incorporating the names of the six sub-offices ; Sharq, Mirgab, Salmiya, Hawalli, Fahaheel and Airport. However the first and main office, Safat, used a canceller which did not incorporate the office name; type 38(1). This canceller was used on ordinary mail and its location has been identified by Neil Donaldson.

Page 14 shows two covers, both sent in 1958.

Top cover shows a correct processed local cover posted at Safat PO, franked with a local stamp and cancelled with the bilingual type 38(1) 17.9.58. Ahmadi an Agency office until 31 January 1959, backstamped it with Agency type 25, which as previously noted has also been recorded for a short time after postal independence.

Lower cover is external mail to Aden and is correctly franked with an Agency stamp and cancelled 11.12.58 with type 38(2). It was not intended that the bilingual date stamps should be used to frank external mail during the interim period 1 February 1958 to 31 January 1959, unless registered. See cover on page 20 with type 39 bilingual registered cancellation. There are three possible conclusions :-

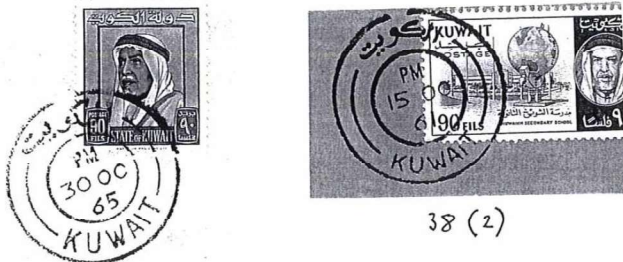
(1) The cover had been handed in at Kuwait Agency PO (renamed Sief on 1 February 1959), cancelled there and despatched.

Conclusion : type 38(2) was at the Agency office.

(2) The cover had been handed in at Safat office, which also sold Agency stamps for external mail, sent to Kuwait Agency PO for cancelling and despatch. This was the correct procedure. The canceller used by the Agency PO was usually killer type 24, and in rare instances type 38(1) was used. There is no record of type 38(2) being used by the Agency office.

(3) The cover was franked and cancelled at Safat office before being sent to The Kuwait Agency office for despatch. Therefore type 38(2) was located at Safat. I think (3) is the most likely conclusion.

However a doubt still lingers as to the location of type 38(2) because it is recorded in use until August 1967 which is five years after the Kuwait agency office (renamed Sief 1.2.59) closed on 14.7.62. Two possibilities exist. Either it was transferred to Safat when Sief closed or it was at Safat all the time along with type 38(1).



38 (2)

38 (1)

BAHRAIN FORCES MAIL 1957

Forces mail was franked with the surcharged Agency issues until the early 1960's.

The cover on page 19 is a typical example of this mail cancelled with FPO 941 dated 20.11.57 and bearing the return address RAF Bahrain, BFPO 63. (Donaldson type 42)

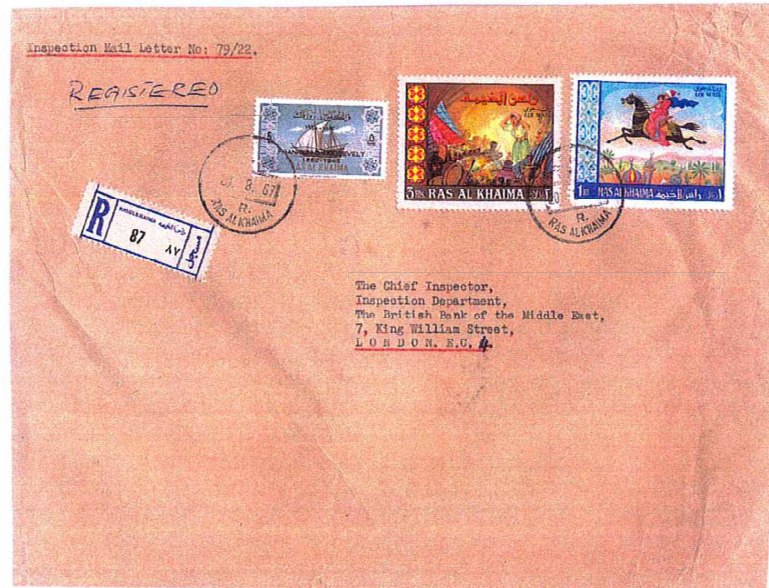
After which time ordinary GB stamps were on sale at the Forces PO and inland British rates applied to airmail letters. An example of this use is shown on page 1.

CORRESPONDENCE

Ras al Khaima

I have been sent a photostat of an interesting registered cover from RAK franked with the Arabian Nights issue 1R (Flying horse), 5R (Ali-Baba & the 40 thieves) and SG 23. Date stamped 20.8.67.

The cover which is shown opposite is headed 'Inspection Mail Letter No. 79/22' which rang a bell because I have found the same heading on some RAK pieces and didn't know this referred to a bank department. I had originally down graded the pieces to test letter status from a philatelic source.

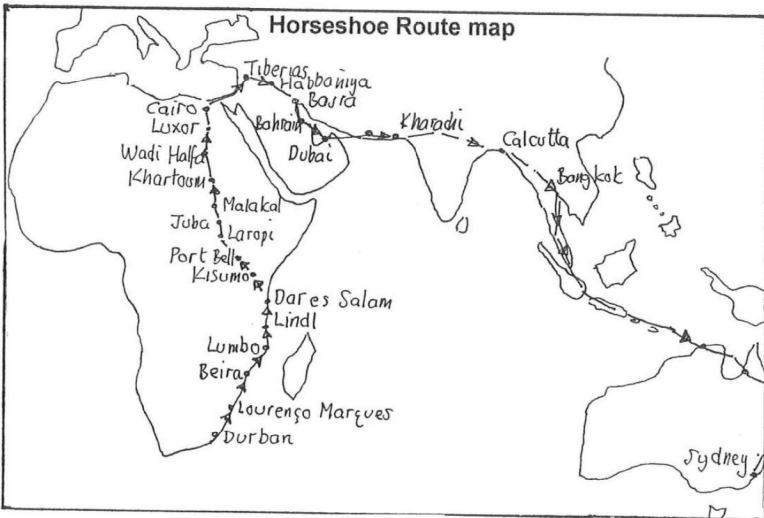


Editorial

As you have probably guessed I don't plan the contents of each edition in great detail although one long term objective is to list as many post-Agency date stamps and instructional markings as I can and record their dates of use. There are still unanswered questions about Agency date stamps from fifty years ago and of course from Kuwait in the late 1950's. I have recently looked through some packets of rather scruffy pieces and found some fairly early dates of use from Bahrain which are on page 8. I have published some data from most of the states except Qatar and UAE and this issue contains more on Bahrain and Kuwait.

The result of my rather haphazard approach to content is that this is largely a Bahrain issue, which will please at least one reader. And almost as soon as I came across the Horseshoe cover I was sent a copy of the Chavril publication which gives an excellently written account of this airmail service. Knowledge is power to your elbow in postal history and even the reporting of a tiny bit of information may lead to big investigations and encourage people to have another look at what they have.

Horseshoe Route map



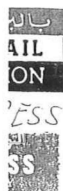
Kuwait type 45

Very large double oval cancellers

Only three post offices have yet been recorded with this type. Dimensions : 50mm(horiz. dia.) x 37mm(vert. dia.) The smaller double oval type 43 : 42mm(" ") x 32mm(" "). See edition 4.

P.O.	dates
45(Safat - registered)	25. 9.62 - 12. 3.78
45(G.P.O. Kuwait - Registered)	25.10.76 - 21.12.82
45(Shamiyah)	13.7.81

The cover from the G.P.O. is dated 21.3.79.



REGISTERED

The Manager.
 Grindlays bank Limited,
 23, Fenchurch Street,
 London, EC3P 3ED,
 England.

da SILVA.
 J.A. & COMPANY W.L.L.
 No. 3069

814384
 4 KT (A/B ALLUM)



Kuwait

British Postal Agency cancellers

Mabarakya Street P.O.

This office closed 31st Jan. 1959 on the same day as the Kuwait Postal Agency. On 14th July 1962 a State PO, Mubarakiya opened at the same location and used the old Agency type 34 until a new bilingual canceller was supplied. (Edition 3, page 5) A further strike of this canceller has been recorded 22nd Feb. 1982, nearly 20 years after its official retirement. I queried this at the time with the post office whose official reply was 'inadvertent use, since been withdrawn.'

Type 35 also made a comeback in 1965/6. An example on piece is shown below along with Ahmadi type 25 which continued in use for a short period after the Agency closure.

