

NOTEBOOK

POSTAL HISTORY IS THE STUDY OF THE OPERATION OF POSTAL SERVICES
BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE AND THE PUBLICATION OF THE FRUITS OF
SUCH STUDY

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EDITORIAL

Have you managed to find any items for your collection recently. One or two items have come my way, in particular a fine example of the rare JAN^y 31 of 1787. It rather brought home how lucky are collectors of postal history when one considers the price of adhesive. Just how much would a GB item with just a handful of recorded examples cost the would be owner ? Consider the £1 PUC which, in fine used condition, currently runs at over £700. There always is at least one example to be found in the Strand, should that be your inclination. Try fininding a London Bishop in red! According to Alf Kirk on page 6, this is something of a rare bird yet the last (the only one I've seen to be honest) to be recorded went for markedly less than that rather expensive adhesive.

To put it in a nutshell, we should count our blessings that the material which so interests Group members is not yet afflicted by the full effects of supply and demand, however dubious the latter.

A PROBLEM FOR THE FOREIGN SECTION.

Ken Sargeant sent in the item shown below a long time ago and not knowing the meaning of the 2 R 215 the Editor promptly sent off the query to the postal authorities.

As can be seen the envelope is postmarked CRATER/ADEN and dated 21 Sep 1968, with the adhesive overprinted PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF SOUTHERN YEMEN. The address no doubt caused the use of the mis-sort machine backstamp. What, however, is the coded mark to the right.

From the Postmaster Controller's Office, EC and Foreign Sections, came the reply:

" After enquiry I am still unable to say definitely how the letter was processed. However, the datestamp on the back of the item indicates that the item was incorrectly received by the WESTERN District Office, sent for translation and then presumably delivered to the Foreign Office in SW1.

The numbering on the back of the letter is not postal - it could be a registry (post room) number and, as the use of pins is not encouraged * in the Post Office because it is considered an accident hazard, the pin holes could also have been made by the office to which it was delivered.

I trust that our interpretation will be of some interest. "

*

in the letter sent to the P.O. with the query, the pin holes were suggested to result from attaching a covering note of some sort from the P.O. to the recipient.

Once again the Post Office has shown the attention given to queries from collectors and due appreciation for this is recorded.



INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR 14 MONTHS: 1st. February, 1978 - 30 April, 1979INCOME

1977/78

SUBSCRIPTIONS

	Prior Years' Arrears		21.00
	Paid in Advance for 1979	9 26.00	
	Collected In the Year	133 399.00	
	Arrears carried forward	11 34.00	
363.28	Membership 1978/9	153 459.00	<u>459.00</u>
			480.00

PUBLICATIONS

98.93	Sales	315.91	
	Stock 1.2.78	241.60	
	Additions at Cost	<u>186.80</u>	
		428.40	
	Stock 30.4.79	<u>145.70</u>	
(97.98)	Cost of Sales & Stock writeoff	<u>282.70</u>	33.21

PACKETS

36.79	Commission, less Expenses		22.05
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AUCTIONS

13.25	Commissions, less Expenses		
	...L.P.H.G.	76.35	
12.05Share of Buntingford	<u>76.13</u>	152.48
9.39	<u>BUILDING SOCIETY INTEREST</u>		<u>6.35</u>
<u>434.81</u>			<u>694.09</u>

EXPENDITURE

5.18	Bank Charges		5.74
35.00	Meetings		35.51
363.99	Notebook and Notices		367.65
65.85	(Officers' Expenses		36.04
	(Postages/Phones		80.84
-	Printed Programme		<u>7.90</u>
470.02			533.68
(35.21)	Surplus(Deficit), to Accumated Funds Account.		<u>160.41</u>
<u>434.81</u>			<u>694.09</u>

TREASURER'S REPORT 1978/9

The opportunity has been taken to bring the Group financial year end nearer to the date of the Annual General Meeting, so the accounts, now made up to April 30th, more closely reflect the state of the Group finances at the time members receive them, rather than three months before.

The accounts accompanying this report thus show fourteen months activity, which should be borne in mind when looking at the comparative (twelve month) figures.

First and foremost you will see your generosity is shown in the Loan Fund of £372 and Donations of £100, which have been invested to finance future publications. This reflects, we hope, your appreciation of the Group's activities!

Closely allied to this is the phenominal increase in publication sales (£316 compared with a meagre £99) and in Auction Receipts (£152 as against £25).

During the period there has been one new publication - London Duplex. The cost of £80 and that of a substantial reprint to make up sets of early ' Notebooks ' in response to new member demand (£100) were both financed from the welcome cash flow. The surplus is after all stocks have been written off to a nominal figure of £1.

BALANCE SHEET AT 30TH. APRIL, 1979

<u>1978</u>		<u>CAPITAL</u>		£.p	
502.82		Accumulated Fund Account 1.2.78		467.61	
(35.21)		Surplus(Deficit) From the Year		<u>160.41</u>	
467.61				628.02	
-		Publications Reserve		109.50	
-		Loan Fund		<u>372.91</u>	
<u>467.61</u>				<u>1110.43</u>	
<u>REPRESENTED BY:</u>					
120.70		Cash in Hand and at Bank		131.10	
124.84		Deposit Account(Nationwide Building Society)	520.07		
(62.95)		LESS: Packet Receipts in Hand	<u>187.58</u>	332.49	
-		Publications Fund		<u>482.41</u>	
<u>182.59</u>		Cash Resources		946.00	
<u>Prepayments:</u>					
20.00		Room Hire	20.00		
10.00		Insurance	10.00		
40.00		Notebook Float	-	30.00	
<u>Stock of Publications</u>					
<u>Binders</u>					
241.60		Publications written down	141.70		
1.00		Library, Nominal Value	<u>4.00</u>	145.70	
-		<u>SUBSCRIPTIONS</u> , in Arrears		1.00	
<u>491.99</u>				<u>34.00</u>	
				1156.70	
<u>LESS:</u>					
(18.00)		Subscriptions Paid in Advance	42.00		
(6.38)		Creditors	<u>4.27</u>	46.27	
<u>467.61</u>				<u>1110.43</u>	

I took the opportunity, on taking over, to revise the membership register and found £81 of subscription arrears which were brought into account. Of this £21 was received and the remainder written off as irrecoverable. There are still 11 members unpaid for 1978/9 despite two reminders. Only half the current subscriptions had been received by October, necessitating reminders to 70 members, which cost £10!! Incidentally only one member uses the Giro transfer system. This saves you postage and, if you have a Giro account, bank charges. The Giro number is on the sub. reminder enclosed. This account can also be used for Packet payments.

My first year as your Treasurer has been made easier by the Editor's complex but clear financial statements which reflect the vast amount of work he does for the Group in organising production of ' Notebook ', researching features for it, handling its sale and distribution in addition to dealing with publication sales and the auction. Brian Smith has done wonders in having fifteen packets circulating during the period - just over one a month on average. Sales of nearly £800 and a falling nett commission reflect the small quantity of material contributed and the the low packet value. Members do not perhaps appreciate the packet is NOT restricted to London material, a reasonable quantity of general GB postal history is always acceptable.

My thanks, therefore, to Peter and Brian and all of you who have made my induction easy any my own membership worthwhile.

Reg Sanders
Hon. Treasurer.

AN UNRECORDED U.P.P. FROM LONDON ???? from Jim Lovegrove

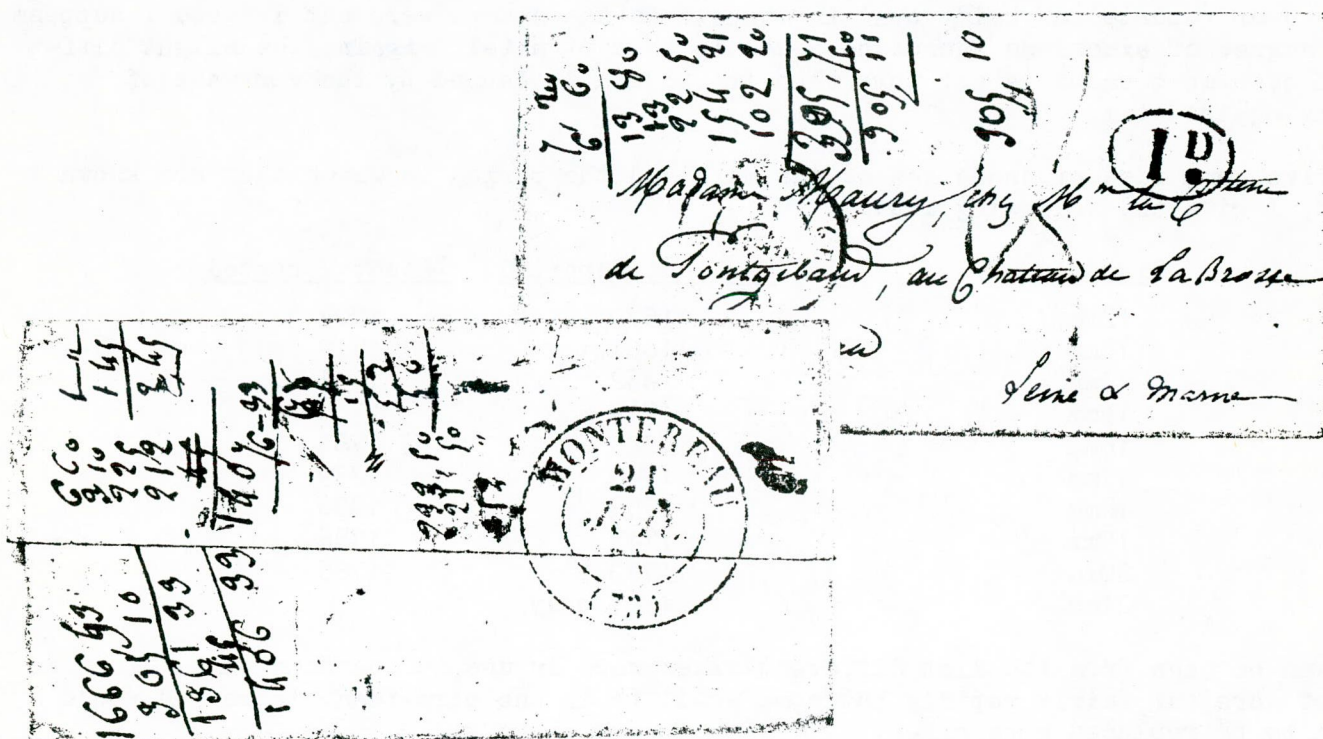
This item, reproduced below, recently came my way; it poses quite a problem.

It is a letter in French from the Secretary of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of France, dated Paris 21 July 1844. The address is that of his mother in Monterau, which is about 50 miles South East of Paris. The Paris handstamp on the front but the detail is illegible. On the reverse is the Monterau arrival stamp clearly of the same date as the manuscript in the letter. It is reasonable to suppose, therefore, it was posted in Paris on the 21st. July, arriving at Monterau latter the same day.

The question now arises - what is the stamp on 1d in a horizontal oval on the right of the letter front ?

I have shown it to one or two dealers in the Winchester area but, so far, can get no answer. It may be well known to collectors in London but it is a mystery to us country folk how an English 1d stamp appears on a letter which apparently remained within the French borders and not from the capital.

All postal markings, by the way, are in black, including the 1d.

Editor's note:

I must plead guilty to the title of this note from Jim Lovegrove, especially as I was caught myself by what appeared to be an English/London split charge mark which now appears likely to be Continental, probably German.

As rates are imperfectly understood, (the French did not fall into the trap of the equivalent of a one penny charge, having learned from Albion how to make a loss after forecasting a profit), and having been already bitten, a tentative suggestion is that we have here a "Fred" with a French Postal Clerk banging on a charge mark relating to mail to/from England. Alternatively, it is the result of the work of a later hoaxer, again suggested as the result of personal experience.

Suggestions, quoting chapter and verse if certainties, would be much appreciated.

THE LONDON BISHOP MARKS, by A.J. Kirk

A Preliminary Report.

My request for information in Notebook No.37 did not bring as many replies as I had hoped. However, I have seen - or had reported - over 300 of the marks and in the hope it will stimulate further information, I am giving this preliminary report.

The first thing that can be said is they are consistent in their inconsistency. According to most published reports, the sans-serifed items came into use in 1673. There would not appear to have been any particular date for the change as I have had reported items in October and November of that year in both serifed and non-serifed types. As August has been reported in serifed characters only it would appear likely that as the stamps became due for renewal in September onwards they were changed to sans-serif characters.

It is usually accepted sans serif characters were used with the issue of the second type in 1673, except for February, September and December. However, I have heard of serif characters in use for January, March, May, June, July, August and October from 1684 to 1786. These, of course in some cases, may be old marks still in use, or worn marks giving the impression of serif characters.

With regard to size, this again does now go in any recognisable sequence. A number have been reported as being oval in shape. As the stamps were cut in wood I suppose the degree of exactness cannot be equal to that of metal. Again, the slight difference, in most cases is not more than 1mm., could be caused by the very act of striking the stamp.

To give some idea of the sizes of the mark and the period in which they are known used, I give the following list:

<u>Diameter</u>	<u>Earliest Reported</u>	<u>Latest Reported</u>
12mm	1680	1709
13mm	1661	1712
14mm	1662	1734
15mm	1719	1765
16mm	1723	1783
17mm	1730	1779
18mm	1759	1786
19mm	1743	1786
20mm	1779	1786
21mm	1787 only	

As can be seen from the list different sizes were in use at the same time. They no doubt wore out fairly rapidly but some would be in use more than others and would have to be replaced more often.

With regard to the lettering, the reversed N has been reported for 1672, 1673, 1676, 1678, 1685, 1758, 1761 and 1762; there was one reversed 4, for 4th. July, 1759. MR for March was joined together for every mark except one on 8th. March, 1686. Both AV and AU are known for August, whilst IV seems to be the usual form of June though IU has been seen. MA for May is usually joined at the foot of the letters; sometimes the cross bar of A is missing.

Only one item in red has been reported; shows how scarce that is!

I have received very little information on the Foreign Marks but have seen a long run of correspondence for 1777 and 1778 where all the Bishop Marks, save one, measured 17mm. Once again, of the few marks I have seen, the sizes vary quite considerable but much more material is needed before any deductions can be made.

I hope this will encourage others to let me have details of their material and in the meantime I would like to thank those who already given so much information.

THE POST OFFICE AT WAR

The two cards shown below came to light whilst the accumulated papers of some seventy years or so were being sorted following a family bereavement. Quite by chance the Editor overheard a telephone conversation and by rudely interrupting managed to save a proportion which otherwise would have been destroyed.

A member of the family had been a post office employee for many years and served with a post office unit in France during World War I.

RULES FOR SIGNALLING.

A SPACE equal to two dots is left between letters; and a space equal to three dots between words and groups of figures, but in punching Wheatstone Slip four spaces should be allowed before and after mixed groups of figures.

Always begin with the "understand" signal (--- --), to give the receiving clerk time to get ready. Use the same signal also at the finish.

To CALL A STATION.—On all direct circuits, that is, circuits on which there are only two stations, the call is made by offering merely "S" or "X," according as the telegram is for delivery or transmission, and the office called will reply with "G" only. On circuits on which there are more than two offices, the call is made by signalling the code letters of the office to which the telegram is to be sent, not more than three times in succession, followed by the code letters of the forwarding office. The office called will reply by signalling its own code letters followed by "G."

Initial letters are followed by the full stop.

The ? signal (--- --) also signifies "repeat," thus—

--- -- (repeat word after)
 --- -- (repeat all after)
 --- -- (repeat all).

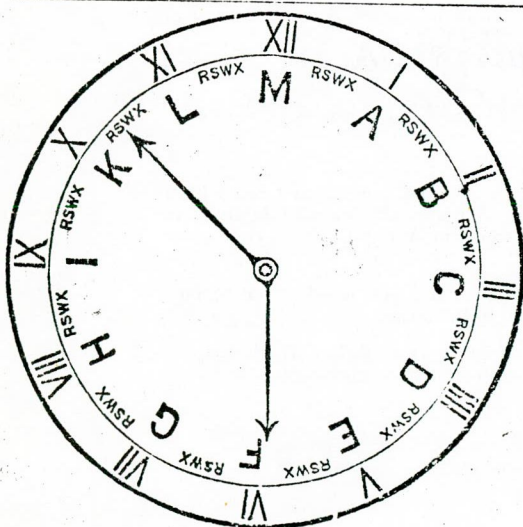
To correct wrong number of words, the receiving station gives number actually received; the forwarding station then repeats back the initial letter of each word until the missing, or added, word is discovered.

The receipt of each message is acknowledged on Single Needle, Acoustic Needle, Double Plate Sounder, and on Simplex Sounder, and Morse Circuits by the signal "R D" only. For A B C, Duplex and Wheatstone Circuits, see separate rules.

On Needle, D. P. S., Bell, and A. B. C. circuits numbers are expressed in words (with the signal F I before and F F after each group).

When the Morse or Sounder instrument requires re-adjustment ask the other station to send V's.

T.—No. 15.

POST OFFICE TELEGRAPHS.**TIME SIGNALS.**

Example—

Time, 5h. 52m.

Signal { E K S

[See back.]

Post Office Telegraphs.

T. No. 5.

THE MORSE ALPHABET.

A ---	H ---	O ---	U ---
B ---	I ---	P ---	V ---
C ---	J ---	Q ---	W ---
D ---	K ---	R ---	X ---
E ---	L ---	S ---	Y ---
F ---	M ---	T ---	Z ---
G ---	N ---		

Note.—On the needle instrument the dot of the above alphabet is represented by a beat to the left, and the dash by a beat to the right.

NUMERALS.

1 ---	4 ---	7 ---	0 ---
2 ---	5 ---	8 ---	
3 ---	6 ---	9 ---	

ABBREVIATED NUMERALS.

(For use only in the repetition of figures which immediately follows the signalling of the message.)

1 ---	4 ---	7 ---	0 ---
2 ---	5 ---	8 ---	
3 ---	6 ---	9 ---	

Bar of division (/)
 Fractional bar (—)
 Signal to be used between whole numbers and fractions

Full stop (.)	* Underline
Break signal (between the address and text, and between text and signature of sender, if any, and for fresh line)	* Parenthesis ()
Apostrophe (')	* Inverted " "
Hyphen (-)	* Comma
Interrogation (?)	* Understand or completion of telegram
Exclamation (!)	* Rub out
	* Go on
	* Wait
	* Acknowledgment
	* Clear of work

Note.—The signals marked * are sent before and after words so treated, and are counted as one additional word. See back.

[2844] 39435/2105 15m 12/15sv 10755 G & S 237

The hours from 1 o'clock to 12 o'clock—both night and day—are denoted by the first 12 letters of the alphabet (J being omitted), thus:—

Letter.	Signal.	Time.	Letter.	Signal.	Time.
A	---	denotes 1 A.M.	G	---	denotes 7 A.M.
B	---	" 2	H	---	" 8
C	---	" 3	I	---	" 9
D	---	" 4	K	---	" 10
E	---	" 5	L	---	" 11
F	---	" 6	M	---	" 12

The fact that M is the initial letter of midnight and midday will help the learner to remember that M is the code letter for twelve o'clock.

The twelve letters stand not only for the twelve hours, but for the twelve periods of five minutes each, of which each hour is composed. Thus, A stands for one o'clock and for one period of five minutes; B stands for two o'clock and for ten minutes; F stands for six o'clock and for thirty minutes.

If the letters be used singly, they show the hours only.

If they be used in combination they show the hours, and some number of periods of five minutes in addition to the hour.

Thus, M by itself denotes 12h., and M A denotes 12h. 5m.; A by itself denotes 1, and A A denotes 1h. 5m.; C by itself denotes 3h., and C H, 3h. 40m.

In order to denote the four intermediate minutes in every complete period of five minutes, the letters, R, S, W, X, are employed, R denoting the first, S the second, W the third, and X the fourth minute after each hour or after each complete period of five minutes.

Thus, M R means 12h. 1m., or one minute past twelve; M S means 12h. 2m., or two minutes past twelve; M W means 12h. 3m., or three minutes past twelve; and M X means 12h. 4m., or four minutes past twelve. So again M A R means 12h. 6m., or six minutes past twelve; F F S means 6h. 32m., or thirty-two minutes past six; and so on.

N.B.—At 1 p.m. exactly the code becomes A, and it remains A until a complete minute has expired, that is, until one minute past 1, when it becomes A R.

(7488) Wt. 32174—843. 4000. 10/16. Sir J. C. & S. Gp. 153. F102.

TREATMENT OF INTERNATIONAL POSTAGE DUE, from G.R. Stevens.

I collect local (Pinner and District) postal history in fair detail and an item of what seems some interest may also attract collectors of other localities.

As can be seen from the cover, I sent it the a friend in Hong Kong. Two days after posting it, the Harrow Post Office sent me their pro-forma card advising my cover had been underpaid. They had made up the deficiency (to save delaying the item) and would I now send them 5½p, which I duly did with thanks.



MR I.W. Harris
% Head Office Hong Kong + Shanghai Bank.
G.P.O. Box 64
HONG KONG



POST OFFICE

ANNEX A

Dear Sir/Madam

You recently posted an air mail letter to SOUTH AUSTRALIA
..... which was prepaid only at 13P
The correct postage was 21P.....

If we had forwarded the letter underpaid your correspondent would have been faced with a surcharge equivalent to the deficiency plus a collection fee. We were sure you would not have liked that to happen; so we made up the postage to the correct amount and sent on your letter fully stamped.

You now owe us We should be grateful if you would stick postage stamps for this amount in the space below and post this card back to us.

You may like to have for reference the enclosed copy of our current leaflet which sets out the postage rates to countries overseas. If you require more information please ask at any Post Office.

Please write today's
date in ink across the
stamps

Yours faithfully

ma

TREATMENT OF INTERNATIONAL POSTAGE DUE, continued....

The example of Post Office card P2435X(Spl) shown is for a much later letter to South Australia but it illustrates the item. The front, printed, is addressed to " The Head Postmaster / Head Post Office / 51 College Road / HARROW / Middlessex / HA1 1AA and carries an Official Paid " stamp ". The only way to get an example is NOT to use the card when paying the deficiency. No doubt the Post Office get a large number of these sent back: what a pity no central authority collects a year's use and then puts them on sale at the Post Office stand at Stampex. They would sell very briskly, and more than pay for the cost of providing a very well worth while service.

A series of articles by E. Keith Parker under the title " International Postage Due and the U.P.U." appeared a year or so ago. The background to the service is given in Part III published on 26th. January, 1978.

From this I found the methods adopted for the collection of underpaid mail are very much a matter for each country. The United States, as readers may have noted from their own mail, return the offending letter to the sender with a request for so much to be added, the adhesives to be stuck over the request. International mail, though underpaid for transmission, either by the method chosen, in the case of air this usually results in going by sea, or just short paid for any method, I noted that the 1939 Buenos Aires Congress resolved such mail should be forwarded " in the interests of the reputation of the postal service " even when the shortfall could not be obtained from the sender and where the underpayment " is evidently due to a mistake by the latter " (i.e. the sender).

The Dutch Postal Authorities were apparently the first to introduce the scheme for collecting the deficiency after having sent the mail without delay to its destination. The British Post Office introduced the concept to the UK on May 24th., 1952, after an experimental period of two months.

Have readers examples from this early period for any location ? It would be of interest to establish changes, if any, in the method of advising the shortage and will serve to demonstrate, should anyone need convincing, that Postal History is being made all the time, to say nothing of new postal markings to search out. It is ironical to think that in ten or twenty years time, marks associated with the start of the scheme may well be greatly sort after and commanding the sort of price we shake our heads over for material from 140 years ago.

Editor's Note:

This article is an amalgamation of correspondence between Mr. Stevens and the Editor plus reference to " Stamp Collecting " of 26th. January, 1978.

-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-

AN ODD PARTINGTON, by A.J. Kirk

Recently there has come to light a letter which, against all the rules, bears the well known mark of ' Partington '. It is brought to your notice in the hope you might have a suggestion as to why this letter was so treated.

It was written from Huntingdon on Wednesday 23rd. January, 1765 and addressed to Bloomsbury Square, London. On the front is a manuscript 3 with a squiggle which could be either N or W. On the reverse are two Bishop Marks for 24/1A and 25/1A and the ' Partington '. This is, of course, a very early date for this stamp.

A letter from Huntingdon, at this time, would have cost 3d; it would have received a Bishop Mark on arrival in London. BUT how did it get into Partington's receiving house which was for the London General Post only ? Bloomsbury Square is close to Holborn where Partington lived.

No prizes for a correct answer but what did happen ?

-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-

THE HISTORY OF A QUILL PEN, contributed by M.R. Hewlett

The following article is reprinted from ' The Saturday Magazine ' for January 13th., 1838. Clearly not postal history, it is the type of associated material which is a source of delight for many and uncomprehending irritation for others. But then anyone daft enough to collect dirty bits of used paper is beyond **understanding!!**

It has been said, quaintly enough, that he who first introduced the use of goose-quills for pens, borrowed from the emblem of folly the instruments of wisdom. Without discussing the justice or injustice of this satire upon a poor goose, we cannot deny that quill pens have been the messengers of vast benefit to mankind, insomuch that it has been sarcastically remarked, that " had the ancients been acquainted with the art of employing quills as a material for pens, they would, probably, have dedicated to Minerva, - not the owl, but the goose." But some men have made the mistake of honouring the pen as the cause, instead of the mere instrument, of good. Thus, we have been told of one writer who had the pen with which he wrote one of his works, framed and glazed, and hung up over his mantel-piece; another pen was put into a golden casket by the over-zealous admirer of a celebrated writer; and no doubt it was with a feeling of much complacency and self-satisfaction that Holland, a physician of Coventry, who translated Pliny's ' Natural History ' into English, wrote the following lines:-

With one sole pen I wrote this book,
 Made of a gray goose quill.
 A pen it was when it I took --
 A pen I leave it still.

It appears from the best testimony, that the mode of writing in the earliest times was not by the use of a fluid like ink, but by marking with a blunt point on tablets covered with a surface of wax; but when the Egyptian papyrus was devised, and a coloured liquid found, which could be used as ink, a new mode of procedure was devised, more likely to leave permanent traces of the writing. The instrument employed was a reed, the nature of which is not precisely ascertained. Massey, in his " Treatise on the Origin of Letters ", mentions the use of reeds for writing among the Turks, Moors, and the oriental nations generally. The same author remarks, that whenever the word pen occurs in our English translation of the Old and New Testament, we must not understand it to mean a quill pen, but as an iron style or a reed, both of which the early nations used: the former was sharp at one end, like a pointed needle, and at the other end broad and blunt, to rub or scratch out what the writer wished to be erased.

Styles were much used among the Romans, they were made of different metals, also of ivory or bone. Wooden styles, or skewers, were found in the ink-horns at Herculaneum. The common material of styles was, however, iron; for we find that, as the Romans were not allowed to wear arms in the city, they often, in a fit of wrath, wounded each other with the writing-style, which they carried about them; hence the origin of the Italian " stiletto ". Respecting the reeds which were substituted for the blunt style and wax tablet, they are described as having been small, hard, round canes, about the size of a large swan's quill, and fashioned into shape much as we now do our quills. The supply of them used to be obtained chiefly from Cairo, Egypt, in Asia Minor, and Armenia. Chardin and Tournefort have described in their travels a sort of reed employed for this purpose, which grows in Persia, and which they considered as the best, at that time. These reeds are not originally hollow, but contain a pith, which, however, afterwards dries up in a manner similar to the membranous film in the barrels of our modern quills. These reeds are collected in some places bordering on the Persian Gulf, whence they are sent to every part of the East. They are said to be deposited for some months after they are cut, under a dung-hill, when they assume a mixed black and yellow colour, acquire a fine polish and a considerable degree of hardness; this latter quality, however, is rendered of less value, by the circumstances that it is accompanied with a want of that elasticity which is so valuable a property in quill pens.

The History of the Quill Pen....

This we can easily conceive, for although bamboo-reeds, and canes, are, in general, elastic in their complete form, yet when they are deprived of the internal parts by drying or any other process, the shell, or cylinder, is not likely to have much elastic property remaining.

Thus much for reed-pens, our information on which is but limited. Concerning quills, much doubt exists as to when they were first applied to the purposes of pens. An anonymous historian of Constantius says that they were so employed in the fifth century; but the oldest certain account is said to be a passage in some writings of Isidore, who died in the year 636; and who, in an enumeration of the materials used in writing mentions reeds and feathers. There exists, also, a poem "on a pen", written in the same century, and to be found in the works of Adhelinus, who died in 709, and who was the first Saxon who wrote in Latin. We supply the following translation:

Concerning The Pen of the Writer

The shining-white pelican (bittern) which sips with open throat,
The waters of the pool once produced one white.

I proceed direct to the whiting plains

And leave blue marks on the shining-white ground (i)

Shadowing the glistening grounds with darkened windings(ii).

Nor is it enough to open a track over the plains (iii);

But rather a path continue by numerous turns

Which has carried to the heights of Heaven, those who wander not.

(i) Blur ink upon white paper

(ii) Letters

(iii) Nor is it enough to merely scribble.

Another writer of the fifth century, quoted by Adrian de Valois, has been considered as affording proof of the use of quill pens at that time, by the following statement:- That Theodoric, King of the Ostrogoths, was so illiterate and stupid, that during the ten years of his reign he was not able to write five letters (THEOD) at the bottom of his edicts. For this reason the letters were cut for him, (we may suppose like our modern stencil plates,) in a plate of gold, and the plate being laid upon the paper, he then traced out the letters with a pen. The Emperor Justin, who flourished about the same period, is said to have shown a similar specimen of ignorance. Alquin, the friend and teacher of Charlemagne, mentions writing pens in the eighth century. After that time, proofs exist which put the question of their use beyond dispute. Mabillon saw a manuscript Gospel of the ninth century, in which the evangelists were represented with pens in their hands. Calami properly signify the reeds used by the ancients in writing; but modern authors have often used the term as a Latin word for pen, and it has been suggested that that was probably the proper term for quills, before their application to the purposes of pens. Reeds were used for a considerable time after the introduction of pens; and in monasteries and convents were frequently used for initial letters, as they made stronger marks than quills. By some letters of Erasmus to Reuchlin, we learn that the latter sent three writing reeds to Erasmus, who expressed a wish that Reuchlin, when he could procure more, would send some to a learned friend of his in England. Erasmus lived between 1467 and 1536, and it would from this appear that quills were quite scarce at that time. About the period of 1430, the familiar letters of the learned men of Italy, made mention of two inconveniences to which they were subject at that time, viz.; the difficulty of making good ink, and the scarcity of good quills.

The principal birds from which quills have been obtained for making pens, are the goose, the swan, and the crow. Pelicans, and other birds, have also at different times, helped to furnish a portion of quills; but of all these, the goose has furnished by far the larger portion. So immense has become the number of quills employed, that in 1832(notwithstanding the large consumption of steel pens,) thirty-three

The History of the Quill Pen.....

million, six hundred and sixty-eight thousand goose quills, were entered for home consumption, the greater part of which came from the Netherlands and Germany. An immense quantity is also imported from Russia and Poland, where vast flocks of geese are fed for the sake of their quills alone. The quantity exported from St. Petersburg varies from six to twenty-seven millions. We may form some idea of the number of geese which must be required to afford the supply, when we consider that each wing produces about five good quills, and that by proper management, a goose may afford twenty quills during the year. Hence, it is obvious, that the geese of Great Britain and Ireland could afford but a small supply.

The quills are the large feathers taken from the ends of the wing, and have different names according to the quality, which seem to depend principally on the part of the wing from which they are taken. The operation of preparing the quills is called quill-dressing, sometimes quill-dutching. The quills as they are taken from the bird, are covered with a membranous skin, and have a toughness and softness which prevents their being easily split. They are also opaque, and the vascular membrane on the interior of the barrel adheres to it so strongly, that it is with difficulty detached. To remedy these defects, and to fit the quills for their destined purpose, is the business of the quill-dresser. He takes a large bundle of the quills, just as they are taken from the bird, and proceeds to separate them into three parcels, - differing from each other in the size and quality of the quills. The value is estimated both by the length and the thickness of the barrel; those having the largest and longest barrels being called "primes", which fetch the highest price in the market; the next best in quality are designated as "seconds", and the third, or smallest size, are called "pinions". The process of sorting being completed, the workmen proceed to "clarify" the quills, the principal object of which is to remove the membranous skin. The quills are plunged for a short time into heated sand: the heat of the sand makes the outer skin crack and peel off, which is further aided by scraping them with a sharp instrument; while, at the same time, the internal membrane becomes shrivelled up, and falls down to the point of the quill. The barrel of the quill is also hardened and rendered transparent by this process, in consequence of the heat consuming or drying up the oily matter resident in it. This latter effect is increased by repeated heatings; and when done for the purpose of hardening the quill, is called dutching, probably from the circumstances that the process was first adopted in Holland. (The term Dutch pens, is frequently applied to quills that have been passed through hot ashes, to remove the grosser fat and moisture, and to render them more transparent.) For the best pens, the process of dutching is repeated several times; but care is necessary, in order that the heating should not be carried so far as to injure the barrel. The quills after this process, are either of the colour of fine thin horn, or of an impure white; but before they are brought to market they undergo another process, with the two-fold object of giving them an uniform yellow colour, and to make them split more easily. They are dipped into diluted aquafortis or nitric acid, which has the effect desired. It is however thought by some, that this process, although it improves their beauty, injures their quality by making them too brittle, so that the slit is apt to run up on pressing with moderate firmness; for this reason, many persons who write much, such as clerks in mercantile houses, &c., frequently prefer a quill which has not undergone this process, as being more durable. The quills having been thus dressed and finished, a portion of the barb is stripped off, to occupy less room in packing, and the quills are tied up into bundles of twenty-five or fifty each, for the market.

The process of preparing the quills is, however, subject to some variation. Some dressers adopt the following mode. The quills are first moistened, not by immersion, but by dipping their extremities into water, and allowing the remaining parts to absorb moisture by capillary attraction. They are then heated in the fire or in a charcoal chaffer, and are passed quickly under an instrument with a fine edge, which flattens them in such a manner as to render them apparently useless. They are then scraped and again exposed to heat, whereby they assume their original form. This is a remarkable fact, and may be illustrated by taking a feather and crushing it

The History of the Quill Pen.....

with the hand so as to destroy it to all appearance; if we now expose it to the action of steam or a similar temperature, it will speedily assume its former condition.

Many of the quills after this preparation are cut into pens by means of the pen-cutter's knife, and are also trimmed. A pen-cutter will cut in a day two-thirds of a long thousand, consisting of 1200 according to the stationer's computation. A house in Show-Lane, London, cuts generally about 6,000,000 of pens yearly; and during the year 1834, notwithstanding the introduction of steel pens, it cut many more than it had done in any previous year. It is calculated by pen-makers, not more than one pen in ten is ever mended.

Swan-quills, which are very large in the barrel, are sometimes employed for pens, and though expensive at first, are, perhaps, not dearer ultimately than the smaller quills, their length and capacity of barrel compensating for the larger charge. Crow-quills are generally employed in drawing and designing, on account of the fine point to which they can be brought. They are particularly useful in that kind of etching which is intended to imitate prints. Quills may be hardened by steeping them in alum-water, at a boiling temperature for a few minutes.

There is a modern contrivance by which six or eight pens may be made out of one large quill. The narrow end, and also the stalk of the pen being cut off, leaving the barrel only remaining, the latter has a cylinder inserted through it, a little smaller than its own diameter. It is then placed in a machine in such a way that two cutting edges pass along the barrel, one on each side, by which the quill is cut longitudinally into two semi-cylindrical halves. These pieces are then placed in a groove with the convex side undermost, and the edges are made straight and smooth by having a plane run along them. These half-cylinders of quill are then cut into three or four pieces, according to their length, and each piece is operated on by the nibbing-machine, which is a sort of cutting press. A few strokes with a pen-knife then brings each little piece to the form of a pen, which, fixed in a handle, is fit for use.

-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-

HEREWITH MY FRANK.....

A Review of Supplement No.2

When Jim Lovegrove published the main work it was quite certain there would be a flurry of further information from those who had previously not been contacted in the initial work. ' Notebook ' carried a number of articles on the subject matter and we saw the publication of the first supplement which presented the latest data.

It had been thought the stamps in the range JL23 to JL 36 had been changed every six months regardless. By the careful examination of thousands of examples, reduced to 1,524 of the clearest impressions, Jim Lovegrove has refuted this cherished belief and produced a detailed study covering the period August 1807 to January 1840. The study contains a page of illustrations, preceded by a two page introduction and followed by 17 pages of findings. Even for newcomers to the Free stamp there should be no problems with following the clear layout, which includes a rating code.

For all collectors of FREES or just London, this further study is a must.

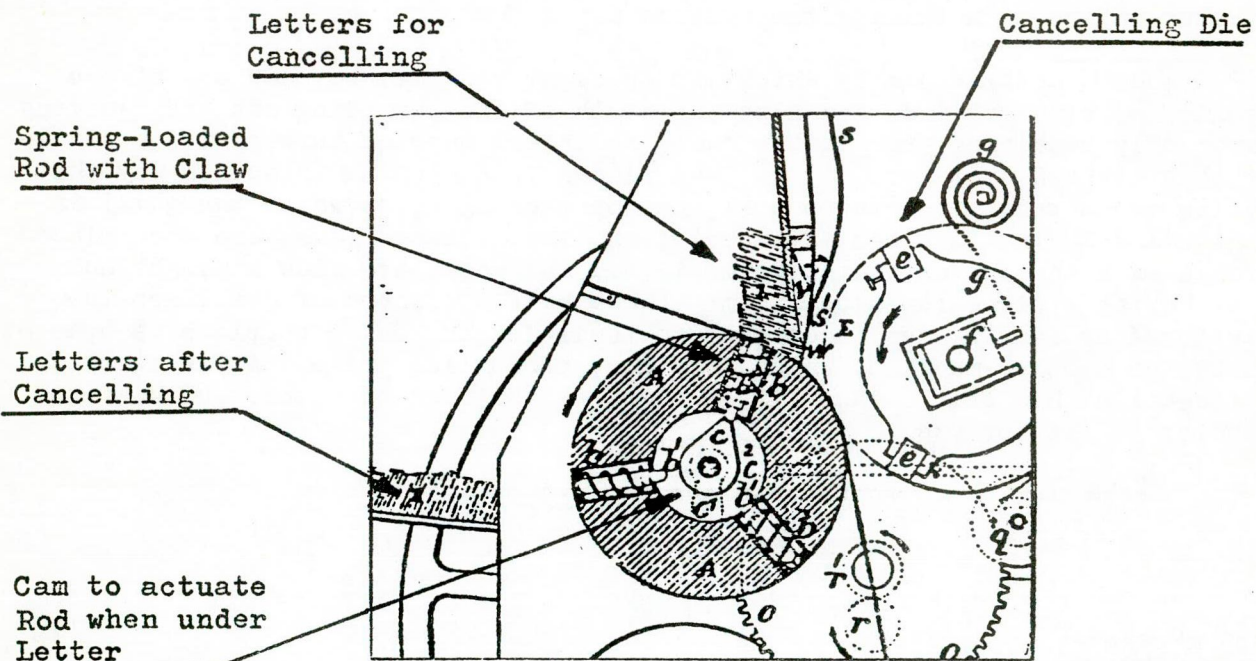
-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-

GETTING THE CLAWS ON THE COVER, by Jack Peach

A trip to the Post Office Records Department will enable inspection of the patent granted to Francis Worth in 1867 in respect of ' An improved machine for stamping letters '. This became known in this country as the Azemar machine after the agent who introduced it to the Post Office.

Part of the Provisional Specification reads 'this roller is furnished with pins or claws arranged to project through its surface and take hold of each of the letters lying thereon; these claws bring the letters into the proper position for another roller with gutta percha guide wheels to seize and press them against the first roller while the stamps which are carried by the second roller are printed distinctly on the said letters;.... '

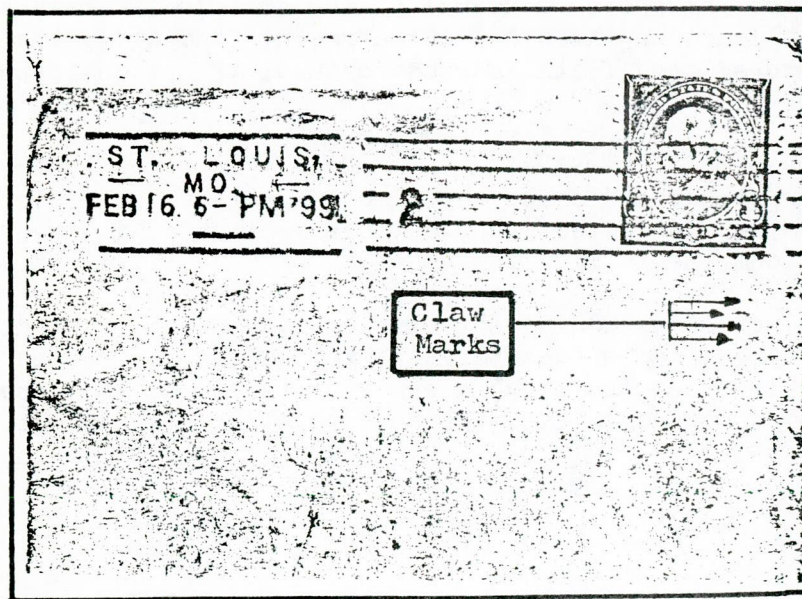
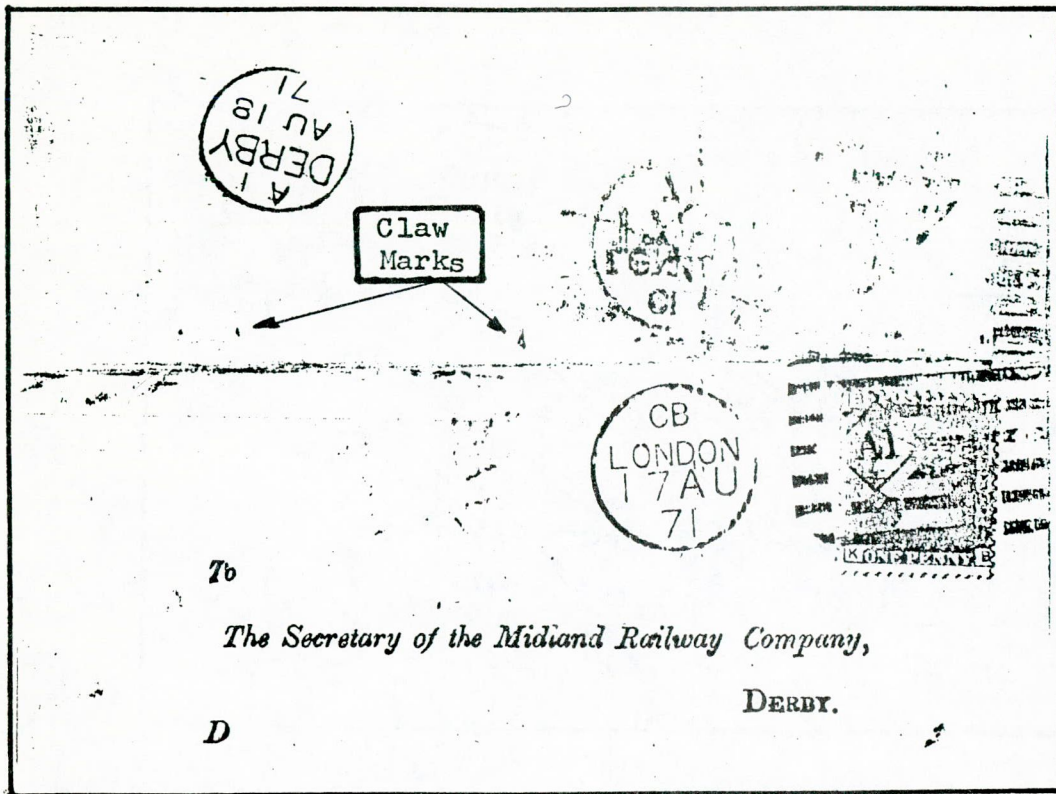
The relevant part of the drawing accompanying the patent illustrates the means of operation. As the first roller containing the spring loaded rod on which the claws were mounted came under a letter to be cancelled the fixed cam around which the roller rotated caused the rod to be ejected and move the letter between the



two rollers where it received the impression from the cancelling die. The writer thought he would check for claw marks on the back of the covers bearing Azemar cancellations and sure enough there they were ! The illustration of an opened out circular shows two claw marks, one very clearly. According to the patent specification there were three rods at each position making nine in all.

At least one other type of rapid cancelling machine used this method of feeding letters to the cancelling head. This was a machine patented by William Barry in 1894 in the U.S.A. but as far as is known it was never used in this country. The claw marks can normally be seen at the right hand end and below the cancellation as shown in the illustration.

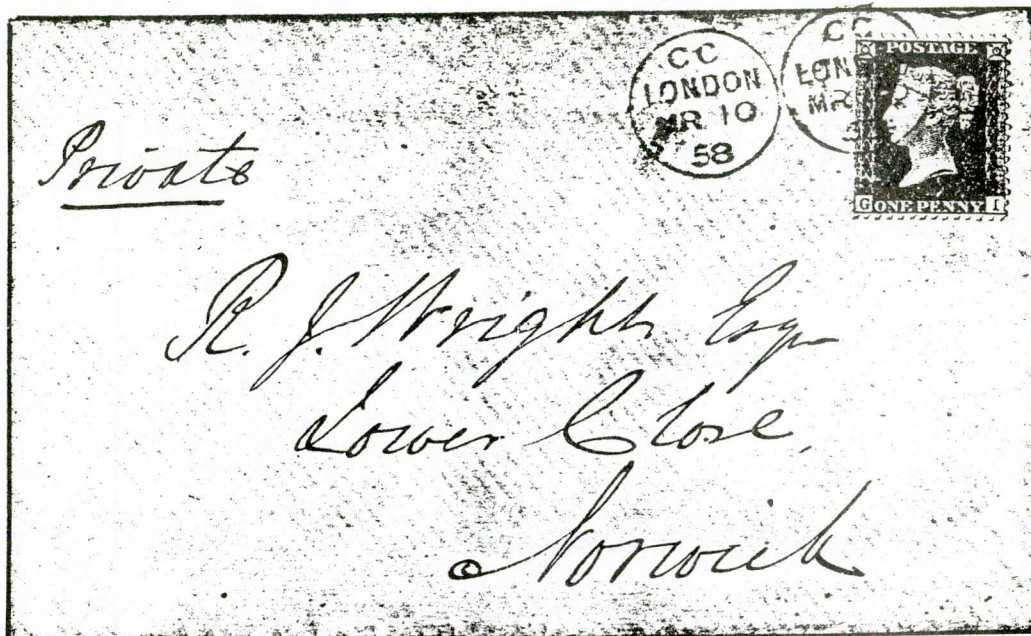
GETTING THE CLAWS ON THE COVER: Illustrations



THE BARRY MACHINE IN U.S.A.

THE EXPERIMENTAL ' CRESWELL '

Readers will no doubt recall the article by F.M. Johnson in Notebook 33 in which



he put forward the case for this ' Creswell ' tag being replaced by ' Pearson Hill '. Very little information came forward as a result of the article (surely some of the Group members must have at least one item !) but a recent find at an auction, which is illustrated above, restored ones faith in good fortune, if not collectors' records.

Mr. Johnson commented :

- " It is wonderfully clear strike and shows the almost identical characteristics to the Pearson Hill date stamp described in my article reproduced in ' Notebook ' (my fig.2 - left hand component).
- " Unfortunately its date precludes adding nay more to my studies.....I am still trying to find either type dated between March 13th. and March 22nd but perhaps the nine missing days were when the machine was withdrawn from its first trial (with two c.d.s.) and modified to take the No.3 right hand component. "

-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-

FOREIGN NEWSPAPER OFFICE, from John Chandler

Re: Notebook No.36 (March 1978) p.19 - I also have a part strike of the 77 Inland Office Double Stamp, on a 1d plate 102.

As far as I can judge from photocopies, it agrees very well with the one Derek Holliday has.



REGISTERED S.C.I.T. from Simon Kelly

The cover you sent me and which I now return, addressed to Dr. G. Rotter - Director of Explosives Research (!) is very interesting. Although originating in the U.S.A. it has a LONDON X registration label and cachet of R(OVERSEAS)/WAR OFFICE in blue and is therefore probably of military significance. The hooded mark dated 9 SP 42 with upper code large 3 was issued to RLD IS in late 1920, early 1921. I have a poor strike of a similar mark dated 1922 which appears to have been issued in February 1916. My example is on an envelope that contained medals and the registered label reads W.O.M.E.D.S. These are the only two examples of this type I know of and both have military connections.

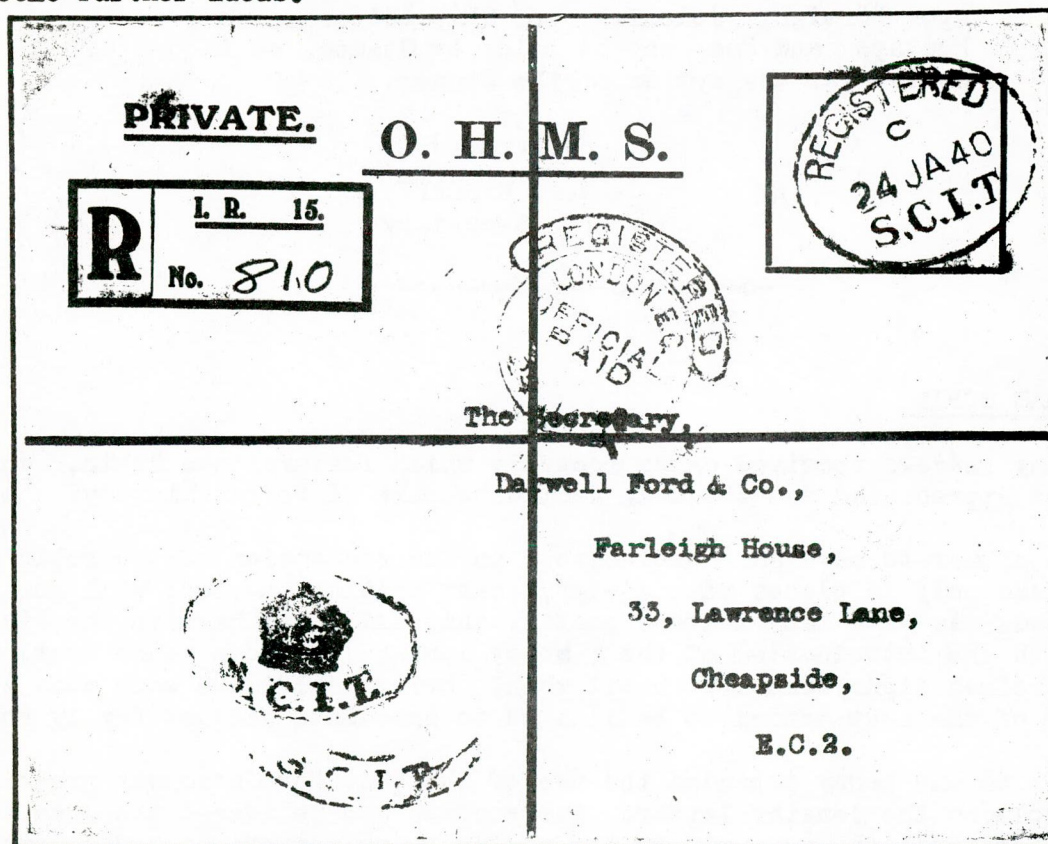
IF NOT DELIVERED IN 5 DAYS
RETURN TO
P. O. Box 680, BENJAMIN FRANKLIN STATION
WASHINGTON, D. C.



R (OVERSEAS)
WAR OFFICE



I also enclose the mark I mentioned to you some time ago with the initials S.C.I.T., in the registered oval. I suspect the cover contained something to do with the Inland Revenue from the printed registration label. The S and C in the registered oval puzzle me (Southern Counties ?) although the I.T. is likely to be Inspector of Taxes. It is in format of a GPO registered oval but is on a more crimson color that the adjacent regeistered hood. Perhaps an illustration in ' Notebook ' may produce some further ideas.



Editor's Note:

The above, as the reader will gather, is a letter from Simon the the Editor. It also serves to illustrate how queries provide something of interest for a much wider audience.

BRANCH OFFICE FACILITIES IN 1842

From the hitherto largely untapped Presidents' Order Books, submitted by Vivien Sussex (looking for something quite different for her own East Anglian research) comes the following notice. The original is too large for a straight reprint.

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

GENERAL POST OFFICE,
5th.MARCH, 1842

On and after the 10th Instant
THE BRANCH OFFICES at
CHARING CROSS
OLD CAVENDISH STREET
AND

THE BOROUGH,
will be kept open for the reception of Letters,
Without Fee, until 6 P.M.
instead of the present hour of 5 - 45 P.M. :
and the same Offices will remain open for the
reception of Paid Letters of every description,
until 6-30 P.M. instead of the present hour of
6-15 P.M., under the following Regulations,
namely, that all Letters so posted between
6 P.M. and 6-30 P.M. will be subject to a Fee
of One Penny each, which Fee as well as the
Postage, must, as regards Inland Letters, be
paid by Stamps affixed to the Letters, though
upon Foreign, Colonial, or Ship Letters, the
Postage and Fee may be paid by Stamps, or in
Money, at the option of the Sender.

By Command,
W.L. MABERLY,
Secretary

-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-

THE CHRISTMAS ROBIN

No doubt many readers received cards recently which featured the Robin. What was probably not appreciated was these in fact were part of Postal Histoty.

The British appear to have an ' exclusive ' on the connection of the robin and Christmas, and only in places with a significant British interest will one find the bird featured. As with many matters postal, this all dates back to the Victorian period. With the introduction of the (money losing) Uniform Penny Post, the level of mail increased significantly. Until then, Christmas letters were much the fashion but in view of the cost tended to be limited to immediate distant family and friends.

Postage down to one penny expanded the use of the post for Christmas greetings and the card replaced the lengthy letter. The postmen who delivered these cards were known as ' robins ', the red uniform apparently being the origin. The connection of the postal robin and Christmas was established and some enterprising designer linked the two by putting the bird on the card the man delivered. One of the typical designs would be to show the bird carrying the letter/card with suitable greetings.

continued at foot of next page

LONDON'S CROSS AND BYE POSTS: The Shooters Hill Office, from Peter Bathe

Although my interest is centred on Shooters Hill, the contribution in the previous issue of ' Notebook ' contained a number of items which were new to me. The term " Voucher Town " had been missed. In return, I must draw your attention to a discrepancy in the Records, which appears to have been missed.

The mistake is in Freeling's covering letter to the PMG of February 14, 1835 (No.87) - Notebook page 9, 7 lines from foot of the page - which reads..." Another messenger will proceed from Blackheath to Limehouse.....".

Ehen one thinks about it this cannot be right. Smith's letter to Freeling of the previous day (the 13th) 3 lines from foot of page 11) puts the position correctly by saying " Blackheath to Lewisham ". Indeed, the ' Limehouse error occurs in one copy only of Freeling's letter, whereas the other (in Post 40) actually does say Lewisham. Obviously Freeling's clerk made the mistake when copying the original; I wonder how many other mistakes like that have lead postal historians astray over the years ?

It seems important to stress this as readers might think ' Limehouse ' was a misprint for ' Limekilns ', a Greenwich office which would fit logically into the text.

As a postscript to the Post 40 and 42 records the following appears in Post 35/20 PMG Minutes Vol.38, No.6862:

Shooters Hill arrangement commenced, letter from Mr.Smith, 7 March, 1835.

Freeling: " A fortunate commencement of the Kentish Regulation " 7.3.1835

Maryborough: " I have no doubt of this proving a very beneficial arrangement " 8.3.35

I have been, as you know, been working on a monograph on Shooters Hill. It has been re-written and re-arranged several sections but there is still some way to go. Any references or source material readers find will always be very welcome.

Editor's Note:

This article is an edited version of a letter from Peter Bathe to myself: I trust it reflects the original to a fair degree.

-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-

THE CHRISTMAS ROBIN, continued from page 18

Despite the change of color to dark blue in 1861, as result of complaints of the red looking soiled quickly (dark blue presumably did not show the dirt!) and even more was the connection of the red with the military. Ever since Cromwell the English had a distrust of a standing army and the innocent postmen in his red tended to suggest there was such a force. Punch, as ever, was fond of likening the dress to that of the fire-brigade.

Although the connection became lost with the passing of the years, the robin has remained as the Christmas bird, though probably not one in several thousand knows of the connection.

-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-

London Postal History Group

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R. Hake	21 Broomhill, TIVERTON, Devon, EX16 5AR
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