

# NOTES

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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## MEETINGS

Our next meeting has been moved to

SATURDAY 24TH. NOVEMBER

to miss B.P.E. and to avoid the 10th  
which is the date of the GB section of the PHS Auction.

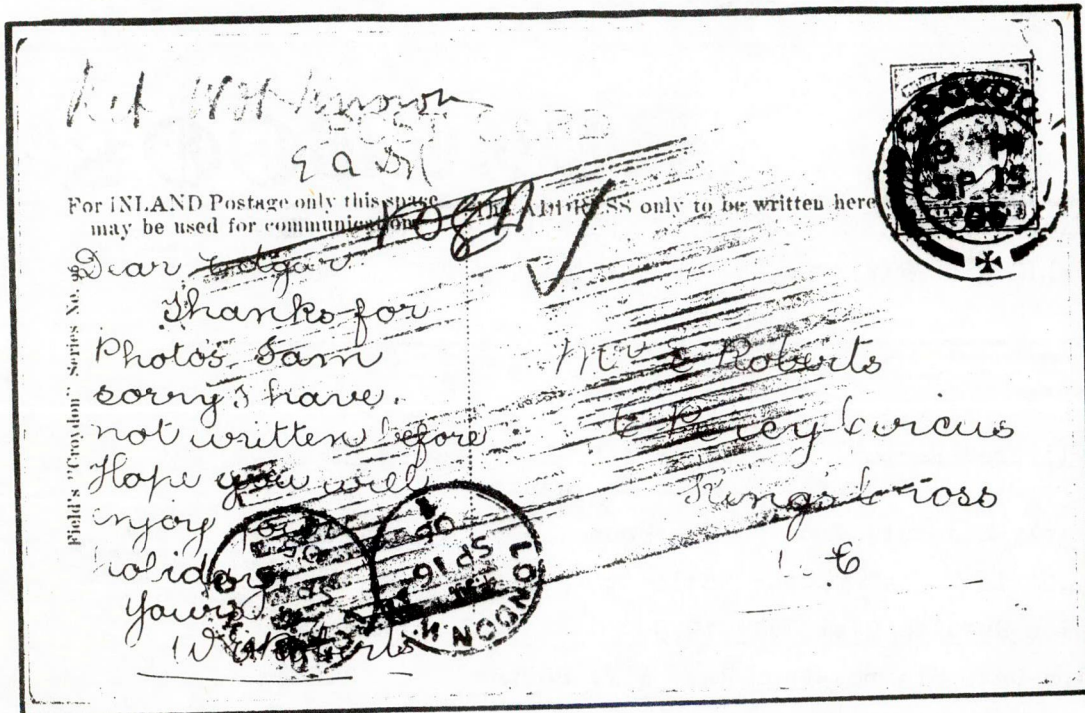
All meetings will now be in the much larger CLUB ROOM at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, with the exception of the January meeting which has to be in the NORTH ROOM, again larger than the Artists Room.

The printed programme for 1980 will be issued with the next Notebook, but meanwhile members might care to note the pattern is as usual, the third Saturday of the odd numbered months, e.g. January 19th.



**UNDELIVERED PICTURE POST CARDS : POST OFFICE TREATMENT, from Kenneth Sargeant**

What did the Post Office do with the Picture Postcards they could not deliver ?



This one from Croydon 15th. September, 1905 is addressed to a Mr. E. Roberts, 6 Percy Circus, Kings Cross, W.C. It is marked " Ret Not Known " and had two strikes of the LONDON W.C. /1 for 4.30 and 12.30 p.m., in red-brown, respectively.

Would the Dead Letter Office then apply the rectangle of thick black bars and wait until they had a few hundred cards for disposal before offering them either privately to a Postcard dealer or for sale by Tender or by Public Auction ? After all, 1905 was just about the peak of the postcard craze and I am sure there would be an easy market for such material.

-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-

**AN EARLY RIDEOUT. from Norman Mounsdon**

Although not as clear as one could wish, the item shown is a December 1858 dating for the number 2 machine, which pre-dates the timing given by Leon Dubus slightly.



-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-

**CHANGES IN POSTAL RATES**

The increases from 20th. August require a change in the ' Post Paid ' rates for Group publications.

London's Date Stamp Codes is being kept at £1

District and Branch Part II is now £2.60 for members ( £3.60 non members )

Rules For Receivers now 70pence

Binders are 76pence for one, 99pence for two

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AUCTION RESULTS 21st July, 1979

<u>Lot</u>	<u>Result</u> £	<u>Lot</u>	<u>Result</u> £	<u>Lot</u>	<u>Result</u> £	<u>Lot</u>	<u>Result</u> £	<u>Lot</u>	<u>Result</u> £
1	8.25	2	9	3	14.25	5	5.25	9	16.25
10	10.50	11	8	12	7.50	13	7	14	6
15	6	16	16	17	15	18	20	21	9
22	2.50	23	3	26	8.25	27	2	28	10
29	3	30	5	31	3	36	5	37	1.50
38	2.25	40	3	41	4	43	2.50	45	3.25
46	3.	47	1.50	50	6.75	51	30	52	6.25
53	5.50	54	2.25	55	20.75	56	25	57	3
58	5	60	3	63	6.25	65	5	66	7.50
67	7.50	75	7	76	7	77	19	78	9
79	10	81	3	82	3.50	83	3.25	84	2.50
85	4	87	3	89	2	90	3	91	5.25
92	2.50	93	7.25	94	6	95	3	96	5
97	4	98	3	100	7.75	104	3.75	105	8
106	6.25	107	3.25	108	3	109	7.25	114	5
115	3	116	4	117	4.25	119	2	120	2
121	3.25	124	5	126	4.50	127	2.50	128	3.75
129	6.25	131	9.50	134	7	135	2.50	136	12.25
137	3.25	141	4.50	143	4.25	146	5	147	4.50
148	10	149	11	150	11.75	151	3	153	3
154	5	156	3	157	6.50	162	3	163	3
165	3	166	5	167	9	168	5	173	4
174	2	175	2	177	4.25	178	8	179	3.25
181	2	182	3	183	4	184	2	185	2.50
187	4	188	4	189	5.50	190	4.75	191	5.50
192	3.25	195	2.50	201	2	202	10.75	205	5
206	3	211	5.50	212	4.50	213	3.75	214	5.25
215	5.50	216	5	217	7	218	5	219	2.75
220	4.75	221	3.25	222	2.25	223	5.10	224	3.25
225	4.25	226	8.25	227	8.25	228	1	229	4
230	2.50	232	4.25	233	2	235	1	237	3
238	2.75	239	3.50						

Total realisation was £880.35 with £436.85 coming from postal bids.

-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-

LONDON DATE STAMPS. from Rev. A.J. Potter

The so-called 'Creswell' (A & H fig.1294) appears in red, blue, black and violet. Reference books usually state the type " was normally employed in blue for evening duty and in red for morning duty, but we have seen specimens also in black and violet." (A & H). In the recently re-published work by Stitt Dibden, the record of stamps in use on 15th.

February, 1861 states fig.35 to be struck in blue for the evening duty and fig.41 to be struck in red for the morning duty of the 16th.

Is this a case of misreading the evidence? I suggest if members look again at the examples in their collections and in dealers' stocks they will struck for another possible function for the color.



Fig 35.

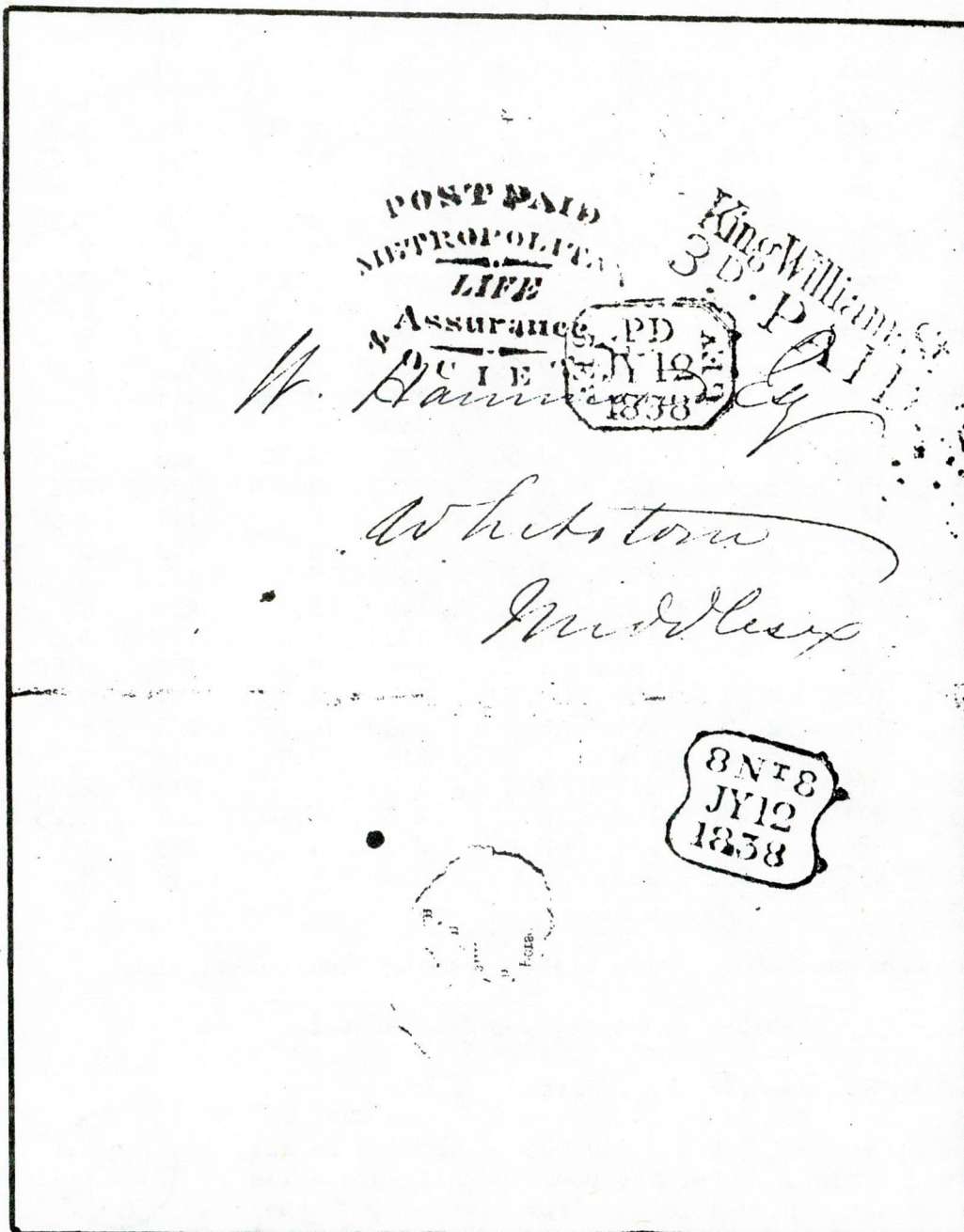
Could it be red was used on mail coming into London, blue on mail leaving London and black and violet being used for some other purpose? Let me have a list of all those you have; apart from the few to disturb, the pattern, direction rather than time will prove to be the purpose.

( culled from a note from Tony and subsequent conversations - Ed )



**TWOPENNY POST: THE ROUND TOP THREE PAID STAMP**

In his work on the local posts of London, Brumell mentions " An unusual variety is the 3d. stamp of Princes St. L-S, in which the 3 is round topped. Notebook has also recorded a similar stamp at Stockwell Green. Now another has come to light, this time King William St.



Norman Mounsdon produced the above item as one of a ' set ' of four, three having the ' Post Paid Metropolitan Life Assurance Society ' cachet, one of which carries the round top three. It seems odd that such a busy office should have not been noted by Brumell so one wonders if the stamp was a replacement cut in error. For the benefit of the forthcoming catalogue on London, a listing of this variation in style is a must. Any reference to be advised please, if possible with a photocopy.

In passing, the backstamp, always called a datestamp, is referred to in Post Office reports as an ' Hour Stamp '. Is it too late to correct the current incorrect term? The history of the development of these brass stamps has now been uncovered and will form the subject of an article in a future Notebook.



THE TWELVE MILE LIMIT

The original intention of researching on the Twopenny Post was to plough through every index in the P.M.G. Reports and then start reading the mass of papers. However, the subject of the twelve mile limit delayed the indexing somewhat. There are a number of references and two of the reports are given below as they contain a mass of detail of several of the offices involved. It is proposed to process all the references in due course and to publish a summary. The danger of using a summary is that which is not included by the compiler is the very item the reader wants.

PMG Reports No.37  
SMITH TO FREELING

Twopenny post Office  
17th. January 1834

Sir,

I beg to Report that Messrs Cary have completed the measurement of the new ground caused by the extension of the Country deliveries of this department, & a Warrant has been prepared for the payment of the contractor, calculated upon the additional distances.

The agreement entered into with the Contractor was, according to your suggestion, that in cases of extension when it would not require an additional horse, he should take the contract at a reduced rate, & he consented to do it for 5d per Mile, except from Brentford to Hounslow & there he was to have the full allowance, viz: 8d. pr Mile, because it was a Mail Cart & attended with greater expense; he was also to receive the same in all cases that an additional Horse was required.

The following are the additional distances and the rate pr Mile they are to be paid-

Blackheath to Bexley,	16 Miles	per diem,	@ 8d	pr Mile
Beckenham to Bromley,	4	D <sup>o</sup>	5d	D <sup>o</sup>
Mitcham to Carshalton,	6	D <sup>o</sup>	8d	D <sup>o</sup>
Wandsworth to Kingston,	12	D <sup>o</sup>	8d	D <sup>o</sup>
Brentford to Hounslow,	5	D <sup>o</sup>	5d	D <sup>o</sup>
Heston to Edgware	7	D <sup>o</sup>	5d	D <sup>o</sup>
Whitstone to Barnet,	4	D <sup>o</sup>	5d	D <sup>o</sup>
Stratford to Romford,	16	D <sup>o</sup>	8d	D <sup>o</sup>
	<u>70</u>	pr diem		

The charge for which will amount to £671-12-11 pr Annum - In my estimate I calculated the additional distance would be 68 miles pr day --

Having stated the additional charge for the Riding work caused by the extension, I now beg to add there are 11 regular Letter Carriers employed, 7 of which are Charge Takers who receive 3/ week each in addition, the annual charge for which will be £626.12 - there are also 2 Auxiliary Assistants at 12/- pr Week each. 8 at 10/ pr Week each, 3 at 8/ pr. Week & 4 at 6/ pr Week making a total charge of £394.4 for Assistants.

	£	s	d
Riding Work	671	12	11
Regular Letter Carriers	626	12	-
Auxiliary Assistants	395	4	-
	<u>£ 1693</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>11</u>

With reference to the Receivers I am not at present prepared to bring the subject before his Grace. There has been only 2 new ones appointed, one at Welling at £5 pr Annum, & one at Erith at £4 pr Annum. In all the other cases the Gen<sup>l</sup> post Receiving Houses have been made available for the Twopenny post, & it is my intention to bring the subject of their Salaries before his Grace, previous to the expiration of the present Quarter, by which time I shall be better able to judge of the quantity of duty they will have to perform & come to a more accurate know-



The Twelve Mile Limit.....

ledge at the rate of remuneration at which they should be paid, if this should not be approved I will immediately make my calculations.

I am / Sir, / your most obedient / humble Servant / Rfmith \*

\* Smith appeared to use a lower case s in the second s form rendered as an f here.

FREELING TO PMG

General Post Office  
17th January 1834

My Lord,

I lay before your Grace a report from the Superintendant of the Twopenny Post, stating the details of a large portion of the Expense incurred under the recent extension of that Department.

Your Grace has already in a former report sanctioned the principle & the rate of Mileage to be paid to the Contractor on the extended Rides; the additional distance it now appears is 70 miles per diem & the charge under this head £671.12.11 per annum -

Eleven more regular Letter Carriers are employed, and 17 Assistant Letter Carriers, at the different Wages specified, amounting to £1021..16..0.

The increase to be granted to the Salaries of the Receivers who will have had additional duty thrown upon them, will form the subject of another report, but from the details which have already been produced, I conceive that the total expense of the whole alteration may be calculated at about £1,800 per annum.

All which is humbly / submitted by / F. Freeling

The accommodation granted to the public is well worth this sum.  
Approved Richmond

( This report was followed in March giving the details for each of the offices.  
Freeling's letter largely repeated, in summary, what Smith records and Freeling's letter has accordingly be abridged.)

PMG Reports No.215  
SMITH TO FREELING

Twopenny post Office  
18th.March,1834

Sir,

With reference to my report dated the 17th.January last, in answer to your Letter directing me to state the expenses incurred for Riding Work, Letter Carriers, & Letter Receivers in the 12 Mile Circle. I took the liberty to suggest that it would be better to delay submitting a Scale of Salaries to the Deputy Post Masters & Receivers, where, Threepenny post offices had been opened, till the close of the present Quarter; by which time I should be better prepared to form an accurate judgment of the extent of the duty performed at each Office, & to make my calculations accordingly.

Previous to submitting the Scale, it is proper that I should observe that all the Offices ( with the exception of Eltham & Carshalton ) are held by Deputy Postmasters, or are Receivers under them, consequently the Salaries I have to propose, will be in addition to what they now receive from the General Post Office ---

In calculating the allowance to be paid to each Office, I have in the first place been guided by the number of Letters posted, secondly by the number of dispatches, thirdly the accommodation afforded to the Letter Carriers at the Sorting Offices, & lastly for any extra trouble in Assistance the Deputies have been called upon to perform by delivering letters at some of the distant Houses, ot by taking charge of Letters for persons living beyond the line of the Circle & from other causes by which the duties of the



The Twelve Mile Limit.....

Dep<sup>y</sup>, or, Office Keeper, have been much increased.

		£	s	d
Bexley Heath	This Office make up 2 Collections daily, but the Letters posted are not numerous	3	-	-
Bexley	This is a Sorting Office and Room is provided for the Letter Carriers to prepare their Letters for delivery Bags are dispatched twice a day, but the Letters posted are not numerous	12	-	-
Foots Cray	The Letters posted at this Office are not considerable, but the Receiver delivers the Letters at Lord Sydneys daily, which forwards the Letter Carrier 3 quarters of an hour: & enables him to deliver to(?) Marys-Cray & in time to collect	5	-	-
Bromley	The number of Letters posted at this Office are very considerable, the Deputy is also required to provide a room for the Letter Carriers to perform their duty, the Bags are dispatched twice a day & the applications at the Office very considerable.	20	-	-
Chiselhurst	This Office is under a Depy & from the additional duty to be attended to I consider he should be allowed	5	-	-
Hayes	This Office will justify an allowance of	3	-	-
Sutton	Two Collections are made up at this Office, there is also a considerable number of Letters posted & accomodation afforded to the Malden Assistants	5	-	-
Cheam	Two Collections are made up at this Office, but the Letters are not so numerous as at Sutton	3	-	-
Kingston	Bags are dispatched from this Office twice a day, a Room is also provided for the Letter Carriers, the Letters are numerous & the duty of the Deputy has considerably increased from applications.	20	-	-
Edgware	There are 2 dispatches from this Office every day. A Room is provided for the Letter Carriers, & the Depy sends the Letters to Redhill & Orange Hill daily, which enables the Stanmore Letter Carrier to deliver his Letters 1 Hour			



The Twelve Mile Limit.....

		£ .. s .. d
	earlier. The Letters at this Office are not numerous.	15 - -
Stanmore	This Office is under a Depy. There are 2 Collections and the Letters posted are considerable.	5 - -
Elstree	Only one Collection, the Letters posted are not numerous	2 - -
Barnet	Two dispatches daily, the Depy provides a Room for the Letter Carriers, the Letters are numerous, & the additional trouble from enquiries &c is consierable	20 - -
Potters Bar	Two Collections from this Office daily	3 - -
Waltham Cross	This is a post Town, the Letters are not numerous but the Depy accomodates 1 Letter Carrier	5 - -
Waltham Abbey	The Letters posted at this Office will justify an allowance of	3 - -
Romford	There are 2 dispatches from this Office & the Depy provides a room for the Letter Carriers. The Letters posted are not so numerous as at Kingston, Bromley &c.	15 - -
Dagenham	Only one Collection & the Letters light	2 - -
Rainham	Do Do	2 - -
Hounslow	Bags are dispatched twice a day, the Depy provides a Room for the Letter Carriers & the duty is much increased from the applications at the Office. The Letters posted are not so numerous as at some of the other Offices	18 - -
Heston	2 Collections daily	3 - -
Norwood Green	2 Do	3 - -
Southall	This Office is held by a Depy, the Letters are not very numerous, but being a post Town there are many enquiries	5 - -
Eltham	This was previously a Twopenny post Receiving House, it has been made a Sorting Office and a Bye Post Office	5 - -
Carshalton	This was only a Receiving House, it is now a Sorting Office	2 - -
Total		£ 184 - -



The Twelve Mile Limit.....

By the foregoing statement it will be seen there are 25 Offices, & that the proposed Salaries will amount to £184 pr Annum. I trust it will be considered that I have made my calculations with a due regard to economy; I have endeavoured, to the best of my judgment, to do justice to all the parties, but should his Grace consider in any case, that I have proposed too large a Salary, I shall be most happy to give any further explanation his Grace may think proper to require. I beg to add that by the accounts I have taken, I find that upwards of 11,000 Letters have been posted in the new districts in 4 weeks, all of which may be considered to be accelerated in their deliveries.

Should the above scale be approved of, I beg further to suggest that the Salary should be calculated from the time that each Office commenced its duties.

I am / Sir, / your most obedient / humble Servant Rfmith

( Freeling's covering minute, as usual, largely repeats what has gone before but is quoted for completeness and the odd additional detail. )

FREELING TO PMG

General Post Office  
20th.March,1834

My Lord,

In my Report No. 37 of the 17th. January last stating the expense of Riding Work and Additional Letter Carriers in the Arrangements for the extension of the Two-penny Post, I intimated that at a future time, I should have to submit to your Grace the Claims of the Postmasters and Receivers on whose Offices the extra Duty had been thrown. I now have the honor to enclose a Report from Mr. Smith upon the subject, proposing an Allowance in each case and stating the grounds on which it is recommended. They are as follows:

Bexley Heath	per annum £3
etc etc etc	
Total	<u>£184</u>

I have looked attentively at every Case and am bound to admit that the Sums recommended are fair and reasonable and in proportion to the Services rendered. Where they are highest it will be seen that the Postmasters in addition to their own increased duty provide rooms for the Letter Carriers &c. The total encreased expense will be £184 per Annum for remunerating 25 Officers and I presume Your Grace will authorize it.

At a proper time I shall lay before Yr Grace at one view the encreased Charge upon the Revenue of all the new Regulations together with an Account of the effect of the extension upon the Amount of Postage.

All which is humbly / submitted by / F Freeling

" Approved " Richmond

Editorial Note:

Readers will no doubt be aware of the oft repeated statement that the circle was in fact drawn 12 and one third miles from the GPO, not twelve only. Thus far no official reference has been found to this and it would be helpful if readers would write in to record either any official reference they have to this or comment by postal historians. It is reputed to have been an error but in view of the detailed Surveys carried out by Rfmith, it seems curious the error was not remarked upon at an early date.



FRANKING REGULATIONS IGNORED, from John Sharp

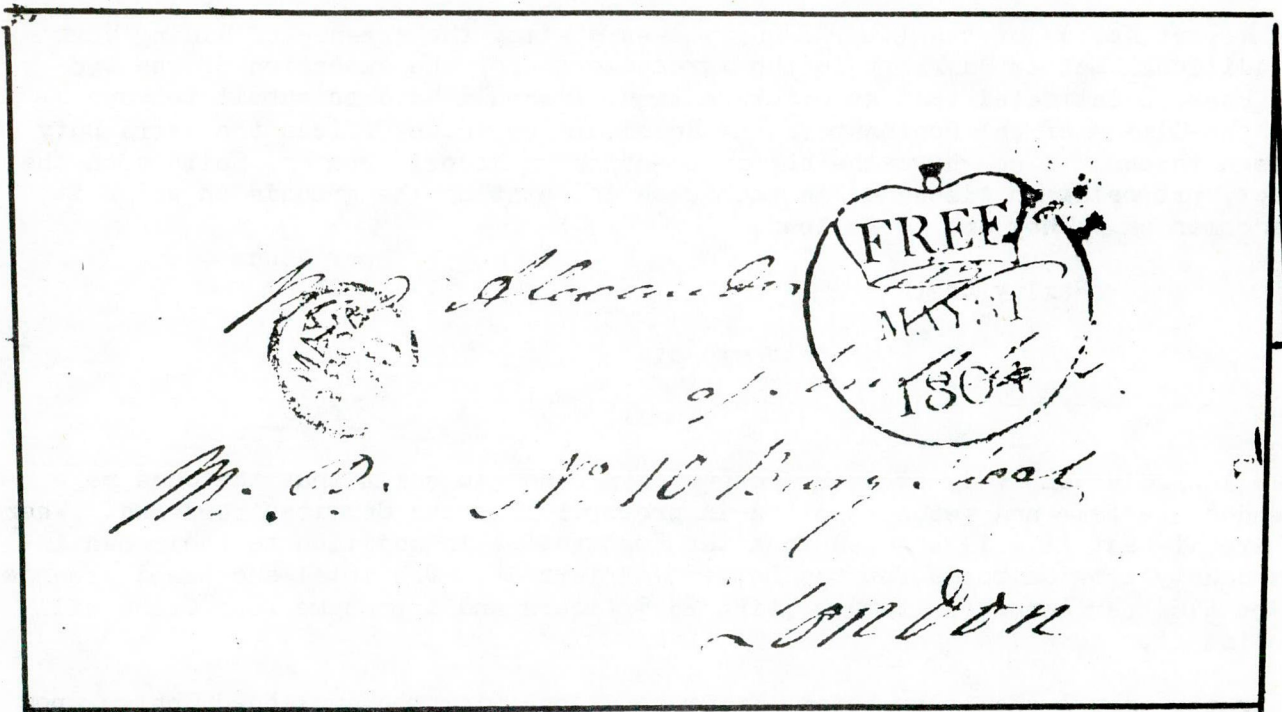
Although I have a rather meagre collection of FREE stamps, I was recently considering rewriting them and in consequence was looking more closely at the Franking system.

Jim Lovegrove, in his erudite work, under the heading " Letters Escaping Inspectors' Detection " has this to say...

" As I have already indicated the chances of letters improperly inscribed on the front obtaining the Frank were very remote, for not only was observance of the letter of the law strictly carried out by the staff of the Franking Office and every Postmaster in the provinces, but the Examiners and Surveyors of the Posts in their turn kept a sharp and sporadic watch on the actions of the departments. " He continues.....

"....I have seen only three kinds of mistake by Franking staff. First the human error of missing the wrong year at the very period when the guileless sender has made a similar error in writing it. Secondly a failure to enforce the rule that sender's corrections must be initialed...Thirdly the very rare occasion when the manuscript Free Frank words are not undersigned by the person holding the privilege."

However, it must be remembered that the provision of the Franking privilege was a two way affair. The item shown below makes the point very clearly. It bears none



of the endorsements necessary had it been the sender who had the right to Frank. In this case it is clear the addressee, being an MP, was entitled to receive mail free.

However, the item ( shown on the next page ) from Windsor appears to be one which escaped the scrutiny of all the officials, though the source might have had some influence on their treatment.

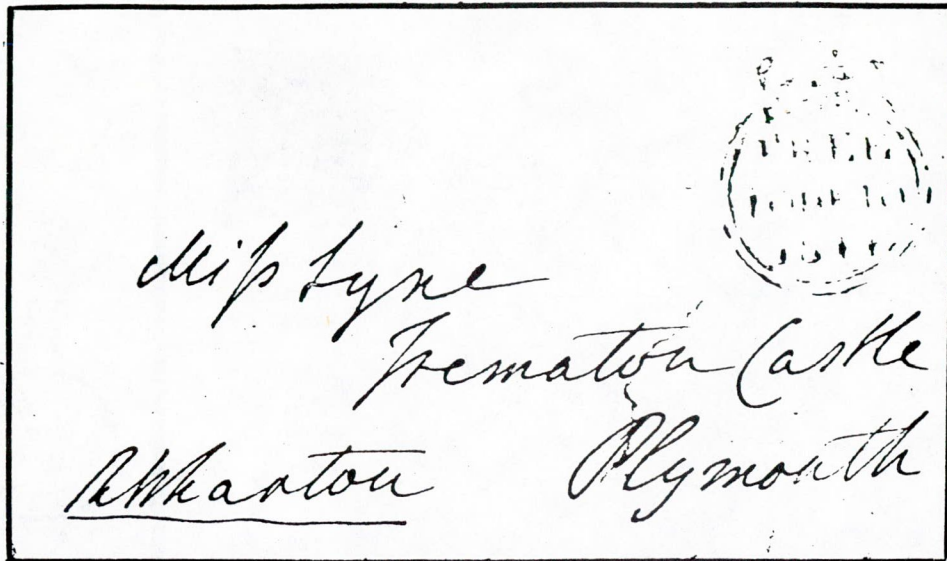
The letter is not without interest and an extract follows:

In the present state of things here all is uncertain, and what may the fate of this family in the ensuing years it is difficult to calculate. I dare say the Prince (1) will do all that is kind and affectionately considerate by the Queen and Principals; but great reductions and changes must naturally be expected; therefore I hardly



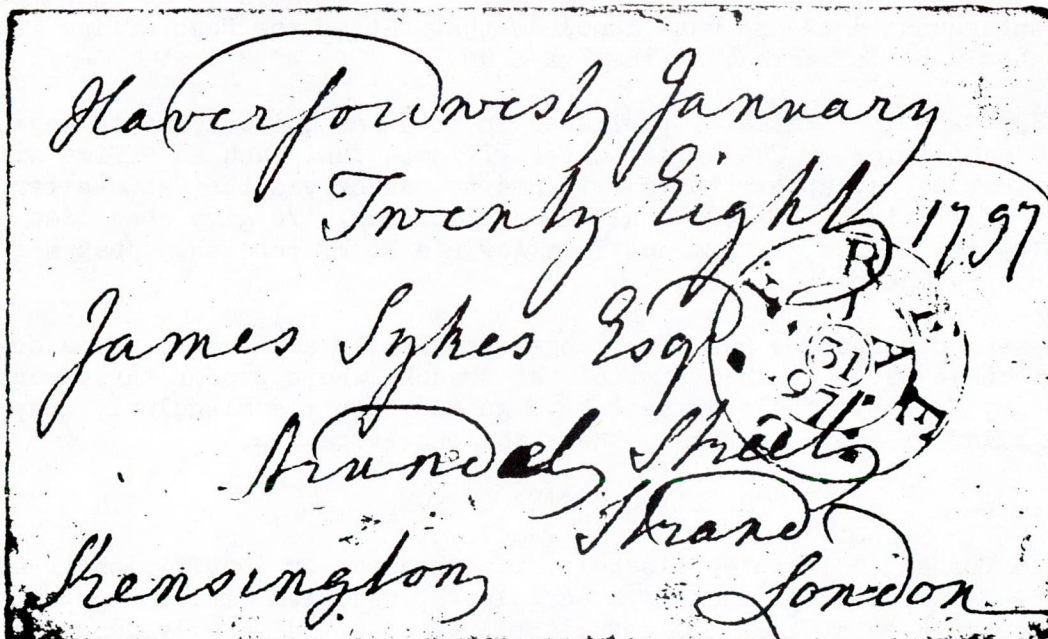
Franking Regulation Ignored.....

think a removal from hence will take place during the life of the poor King (2).  
There is no amendment whatever.



- (1) The King's eldest son, later to become King George IV, was made Prince Regent in 1811.
- (2) George III. Became insane in 1811.

On another, and not really related tack is an item from 1797. Letter C and towards



the end of its recorded life, it lacks the dots illustrated as JL11 as either side of the diamonds between the double rings. This may merely be wear or underinking but I would very much like to hear of any others in readers' collections.

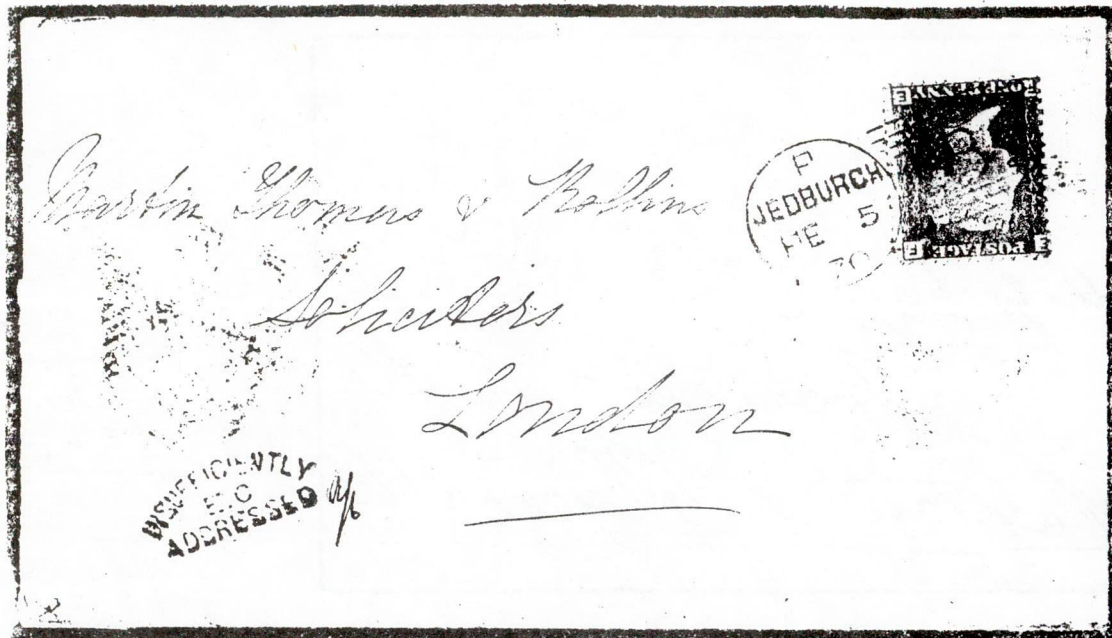
ref:

" Herewith My Frank " by J.W. Lovegrove 1975



BLIND BAG, or is it ?

The item illustrated carries on the reverse the oval framed B.B. stamp. This is shown in the Proof Impression Books in Post Office Records, but - as usual - they is no indication as to the function.



Taken in conjunction with the INSUFFICIENTLY ADDRESSED on the obverse, it required little imagination to associate the B.B. with delivery problems.

The envelope was posted in Jedburgh 5th. February, 1870 ( a Saturday ). Arrival noted by the London E.C. stamp for 7th ( struck in red ) and then, presumably to note the application of the B.B., with a date stamp for the 8th. As there is no Jedburgh backstamp of a subsequent date one must conclude that either the Post Office found out to whom it should be delivered, or they gave up.

Lewin's book ' Her Majesty's Mails ', published in 1865 has quite a lot to say on the difficulties and oddities of The Blind Letter Office. That such an office existed and that the letter did not appear to be returned to sender via the Dead Letter Office tends to support the notion that B.B. could mean Blind Bag. To give some idea of the work undertaken by the office, an extract from Lewin's book, published just a few years before B.B. was issued ( in 1868 ).

" Letters again, which cannot be read, or those imperfectly addressed, are also thrown on one side, and conveyed to another part of the branch, where two or three gentleman, whose extraordinary faculty of discernment have gained them the singularly inappropriate name of " blind officers ", pursue their tedious avocation.

#### THE BLIND LETTER OFFICE

is the receptacle for all illegible, misspelt, misdirected, or insufficiently addressed letters or packets. Here the clerk, or clerks, selected from amongst the most experienced offices, guess at what ordinary intelligence would readily denominate insoluble riddles. Large numbers of letters are posted daily with superscriptions which the sorters cannot decipher, and which the great majority of people would not be able to read. Others, again, are received with perhaps only the name of some small village, the writers thinking it a work of supererogation to add some neighbouring town, or even a county. Numberless, for instance, are the letters bearing such addresses as " John Smith, gardener, Flowerdale, " or " Thorogmorton Hall, Worcester-shire." Circulars, by the thousand, are posted in London and other large towns without hesitancy, and with the greatest confidence in the " final perseverance " principle of the Post-office people, with addresses not more explicit than the fore-



Blind Bag, or is it ?.....

going. Many country gentlemen would seem to cherish the idea that the names of their mansions should be known equally far and near from their manoral acres, and somehow they seem to inoculate their correspondents with the same absurd notion. If, however, it be possible to reduce to hieroglyphics on some strange letter to ordinary every-day English, or find, from diligent search in his library of reference, information relative to some imperfectly-addressed letters ( information which might have been given much more easily by the senders ), our readers may be sure the the cunning gentleman of the Blind Office, justly known for his patience and sagacity, will do it, unless, indeed, the letter be " stone blind ", or hopelessly incomplete. As a genuine example of stone blind letters, take the following, the first of a batch which has been known to pass through the blind-room of the General Post-office:-

Uncle John / Hopposite the Church / London. Hingland.

It would certainly have been a wonderful triumph of skill to have put this letter in a fair way of delivery: for once the blind officer would acknowledge himself beaten; and then the Dead Letter Officers would endeavour to find " Uncle John's " relative, intimating to the said relative that greater explicitness was needed if " Uncle John " must be found.

But they manage better with the next letter in the batch.

Coneyach lunentick / a siliam

is part of the address of a letter which the sorter no doubt threw away from him with some impatience. The blind officer, however, reads it instantly, strikes his pen, perhaps, through the address, and writes on the envelope, " Colney Hatch, Lunatic Asylum, " and passes it out for delivery.

Obern yenen.

is seen in an instant to be meant for " Holborn Union ". " Isle of Wight " is, in like manner, written on a letter improperly addressed as follows :

Ann M----- / Oileywhite / Amshire

The probability is that the last-mentioned letter will come back to the Dead Letter-office, on account of no town being given in the address; still, the usual course is to send it out to the local district designated, there always being the possibility that certain individuals may be locally known.

" Ashby-de-la-Zouch " is a town to spell which gives infinite trouble to letter writers; but the Post-office official is especially lenient and patient in cases of this kind. There are fifty different ways of spelling the name, and few letters except those of the better classes, give it rightly spelt. " Hasbedellar-such " is the ordinary spelling among the poor living at a distance.

Ash Bedles in such / for John Horsel, grinder / in the county of Lestysheer is a copy of a veritable address meant for the above town.

The blind-letter officers of an earlier date succumbed before the following letter:-  
For Mister Willy wot brinds de Baber / in Lang-Gaster ware te gal is

but the dead-letter officers were enabled from the contents to make out that it was meant for the editor of a Lancaster paper, " where the gaol is ". The communication enclosed was an essay written by a foreigner against public schools !

The blind officers are supplied with all the principal London and provincial directories, court guides, gazetteers, &c; and by the help of this, their library of reference, added to their own experience and intelligence, they are generally able to put again into circulation without the necessity of opening them, five out of six of all the letters which are handed over to them. The addresses of some letters are at once seen to be the result of mistake on the part of senders. Letters



Blind Bag, or is it ?.....

addressed " Lombard Street, Manchester ", " St. Paul's Churchyard, Liverpool ", both obviously intended for London, are sent out for trial by the letter-carriers at what are believed to be their real destinations ( see Ninth Report ). Letters, again, for persons of rank and eminence, dignitaries of the Church, prominent officers of the army or navy, whose correct addresses are known, or can be ascertained, are immediately sent out for delivery to their right destination, however erroneously directed, without question or examination of contents. The following strange letters, meant for the eye of royalty, would not be impeded in their progress in any way :-

Keen Vic Tory at / Winer Casel

and Mrs Prince Albert / Balmory Castle  
Scotland

and another:- Miss / Queene Victoria / of England

would go to Windsor Castle and Balmoral without fail; while the following, posted in London at the breaking-out of the Polish Insurrection, would find its way to St. Petersburg as fast as the packet could carry it:-

To the King of Rusheya / Feoren, with speed.

-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-

AN UNRECORDED U.P.P. FROM LONDON ??????

Readers left the Editor in no doubt on this one !!

The encircled 1<sup>D</sup> is the charge of a decime in respect of the French ' Serive Rural ' According to " Catalogue des Estampilles et Obliterations Postales de France et des Colonies Francais " Yvert, 1929, there are three colors, black, red and blue, the last being ( then ) priced most highly than the other two. According to the Editor's dubious translation of the French it appears the mark was struck in black for those items entering the Rural Service area and in red for those leaving. The purpose of the blue color is not given.

Many thanks to all those who provided the answer to this one.

-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-

REGISTERED S.C.I.T.

This provoked less response but it was generally agreed Special Commissioners of Income Tax fitted the bill, thus making it - presumably - a Departmental Stamp justifying the use of the Official Paid. Seen rather less than most other Govt. cachets, this possibly being due to the reaction of the addressee !!

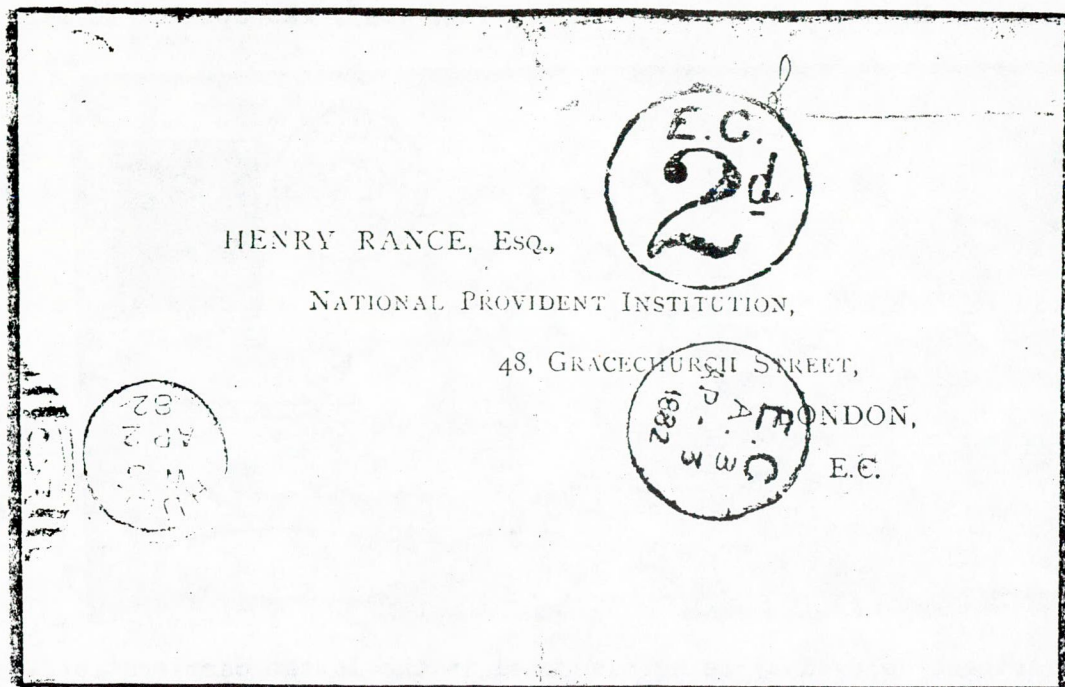
-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-

LIST OF MEMBERS

The list of members, with their advised interests is sent out with this issue of Notebook. Where there is a blank space this is do to lack of information from the member concerned. It is suggested it is to the benefit of all, not the least the members who have not yet advised their particular London interests, for the more immediate exchange of information ( possibly material also ). The publication may serve to encourage further information and as the details become available, a suitable note will appear in the pages of the journal.

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LONDON E.C. DATESTAMP OF 1881

For most collectors the interest in the item illustrated would be the undoubtedly handsome 2d charge mark with the E.C. initials above the value. However, closer examination poses two problems, and, unless more volumes from the E.C. office turn up, one is forced to guess.

The first problem is the two back stamps. Nothing particularly odd about them. Both single ring, both LONDON E.C. round the top, the size of lettering differs. Code over month, day, over year. One, code 7H, the other code 9, the latter with an additional code letter, B or P ( it is just on the flap and not clear). Why the two date/time stamps ? This could be the Post Office carefully carrying out the avowed policy of being able to trace an item throughout its passage in the mails. First stamped on arrival in EC, absence of charges noted, transferred to charge section, dealt with, transferred back to the main stream, at which point it has the second date/time stamp applied.

Should that be the explanation, it seems to rather gild the lily to apply, on the obverse, the E.C /A.3 /AP - 3 / 1882 single ring stamp. Without a code book to hand, the recent reprint by the Group does not cover the duty aspect, one cannot offer any explanation. Two date stamps of this type were issued on the 27th. October, 1881 with codes BC and AE ( Proof Impression Book Vol 39, p.145 ). As is usually the case, the function is not stated.

In any event, the use of the stamp appears to have been very restricted and falls into the ' rarely seen ' category. Readers are invited to prove this is not the case and that the stamp is met with in conjunction with a particular activity. Collectors of charge and explanatory marks in particular should have something to offer.

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

WANTED

LONDON MARITIME MAIL in good condition, preferably on entires but outer wrapper most acceptable. Also required are items relating to any WELLINGTON campaigns from serving officers or soldiers, port of entry immaterial.

Peter Forrestier Smith.

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



LETTER CARRIERS OFFICE

According to Alcock and Hooland, the encircles LC, fig. 1843, was applied to mail at



at Birmingham on letters delayed by being missorted in the letter carriers' office. The item illustrated was sent to the Editor by Denis Vandervelde who wondered if the mark could have been applied in London, Birmingham or where. As it addressed to Birmingham, it seems likely that any missorted would have occurred there. The London Letter Carriers' missort is fig.1841, the encircled L, so it would seem Birmingham is most likely. A & H give an 1843 date for one struck in green on a small piece and 1850 for another, presumably in black. Knowing how many readers have wide ranging collections they may well be able to offer some dates and further confirmation of a non-London use.

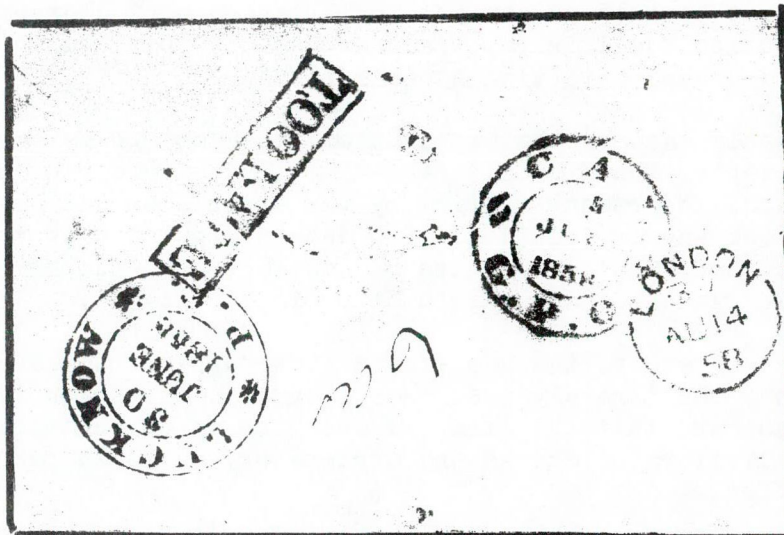
—O—O—O—O—O—O—O—O—O—O—O—O—O—O—O—O—

OVERLAND MAIL FROM INDIA

The title makes an assumption, namely that the item shown on the right came overland and not by the long sea route from India.

The transit time is under 50 days, as shown by the back-stamps. The Lucknow P.O. is 30 June 1858 and the London stamp for August 14th.

The addressee is Lady Howard, 17 Belgrave Square, London



and the envelope is endorsed 'via Marseilles with C.C.F.'

( and just what does that mean ? ) Of London interest is the use of A & H fig.1293 as the arrival mark. In the 1900's this stamp is recorded in the EC Duty Book as being used for Ship Letters and indeed is often seen at that time cancelling adhesives on post cards from abroad. However, this item appears to have travelled by land for much of the journey, at least that is suggested by the transit time. Can a reader more versed in such matters offer the facts behind the item ?

—O—O—O—O—O—O—O—O—O—O—O—O—O—O—O—O—



THE POST OFFICE. by J.C. Platt

A contemporary picture published in 1851, take from Volume III of 'London', Edited by Charles Knight.

Of all the public departments under the direction and management of the State, the Post Office is at once the most popular and the most interesting in its operation and influence. In consequence of recent changes, it can scarcely be any longer regarded as an engine of taxation, but its vast machinery is put into action almost solely for the advantage of the public. In its social influence, such an institution is only second in value and importance to the art of writing. If the millions of letters which it is now employed in transmitting from one part of the earth to another - from kingdom to kingdom, from the metropolis to the most obscure hamlet, and from the latter to the antipodes - were suddenly deprived of the means of reaching their destination, and all the resources for accomplishing this end were to be broken up, the whole world would be thrown backward in civilization, and all the springs by which it is urged onward would lose some portion of their elasticity. Such a prospect need not, however, be contemplated.

The Post Office is not a very ancient institution in England. For many centuries a great proportion of the population lived and died near the spot which gave them birth; and long after a change in that state of society, writing was not a very common accomplishment. The business of Government could not, however, be carried on without some correspondence; and when the King summoned Parliaments, or addressed the sheriffs, or the governors of his castles, officers were employed called "Nuncii". They carried their despatches on horse-back, and the payment of sums of money to them for the carriage of letters is mentioned in various rolls, from the days of King John through subsequent reigns. The principal nobles, whose large estates were often at a great distance from each other, also maintained "Nuncii". In the 'Paston Letters', and in the 'Household Books' of various families, down to the end of the sixteenth century, the practice of transmitting letters from their country-seats to London, or elsewhere, by their own servants, is frequently mentioned. After a day's journey they halted for the night at the ancient hostelry. Before this period, however, there were post-stations on the great roads. Gale states that during the Scottish war, Edward IV. (1461-83) established such stations, at distances of twenty miles from each other. On arriving at one of these, the messenger delivered his despatches to another horseman, who conveyed them to the next station; and so they passed from one station to another, each messenger travelling only a stage of about twenty miles. By this means letters were expedited about two hundred miles in two days. Cyrus, the first King of Persia, established an exactly similar mode of communication through his dominions. The superscription of "Haste, post haste", often met with in letters of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth centuries, shows that letters were not unfrequently transmitted through horsemen attached to a line of post-houses. In the 'Household Book' of the Le Stranges of Hunstanton, Norfolk, there is an entry, in 1520, by Lady Le Strange, of 9s.3d. "for cost of riding up to London with a letter to my son Nycholas". In this case a servant of the family might ride up to London himself, procuring relays of horses at the different post-houses, or he might place his letter in the hands of an authorised messenger travelling to London with other Letters. In these arrangements the rudiments of a regular Post Office began to appear. Two persons having each a letter to send to London would be enabled to do so at one-half the expense by employing one public messenger; four persons would do so at one quarter of the expense; and so on. The carriers of goods were also carriers of letters. The right of hire for post-horses was fixed at a penny a-mile by a statute of 1548 (2 and 3 Edw. VI. c 3).

The duties of the office of chief Postmaster of England at first related rather to the superintendence of the system for facilities travelling, by the establishment and regulation of post-houses, and had little or no immediate connexion with the collection and distribution of letters. It does not appear certain when he undertook the latter task. In 1514 the aliens resident in London appointed their own Postmaster. Letters were committed to his charge, and it devolved upon him to provide the means of forwarding them to their destination. Sometimes the Flemmings,



The Post Office.....

at other times the Italiens, appointed one of their own countrymen to this office; but his nomination was confirmed by the Postmaster of England. At length the aliens of London presumed upon exercising their choice as a matter of right, and in 1568 a Spaniard was appointed their Postmaster through the influence of the Spanish ambassador; but the Flemmings had at the same time chosen one of their own countrymen, who was confirmed in his office by the Postmaster for England; and to decide the matter an appeal was made to the Privy Council, the substance of which is given in a paper entitled 'Articles touching the Office of the Post Of London'. In this document it was alleged that "The strangers that had been Postmasters of London had always been occasion of many injuries and much damage unto the merchants of England, as well by means of staying and keeping their letters a day, twain, or more, and in the mean time delivering the letters of strangers; and also by staying the ordinary post a day, three, or four, that in the mean time one extraordinary might be despatched by the strangers to prevent the market". Other abuses were alleged, and the petition concluded by a desire that an Englishman might be placed in the office. The English merchants suggested that, "for quietness' sake", an agreement should be made between the Postmasters of London and Antwerp, that one-half of the "runners" employed should be foreigners, though it was stated that under the former arrangement not one Englishment was engaged. How the dispute was settled we do not know; but in letters patent of Charles I., in 1632, it is stated that King James had constituted an office called the Postmaster of England for Foreign Parts. He had "the sole taking up, sending, and conveying of all packets and letters, concerning his service or business, to be despatched to foreign parts, with power to grant moderate salaries"; and no preson besides was to take upon himself these duties.

In 1635 a proclamation was issued "for settling of the letter office of England and Scotland", which is the first attempt to place the Post Office system on its modern footing. It stated that hitherto "there hath been no certain or constant intercourse between the kingdoms of England and Scotland", and commands "Thomas Witherings, his Majesty's Postmaster of England for foreign parts, to settle a running post or two, to run night and day between Edinburgh and Scotland and the City of London, to go thither and come back in six days"; and all postmasters are "to have ready in their stables one or two horses". Bye-posts were to be established with places lying at a distance from the great roads; with Hull, Lincoln, &c., on the road to the north. Similar arrangements were to be carried out on the road to Dublin through Holyhead, and to Plymouth through Exeter; and Oxford, Bristol, Colchester, and Norwich, were to enjoy corresponding advantages with as little delay as possible. The pre-established system set on foot by private parties for the tranmission of letters was not summarily put down, the Government contending itself for the present by enunciating its exclusive title to the business of conveying letters. In 1640, Witherings, the Postmaster was superseded by the Long Parliament for having interfered with the private adventures who undertook the transmission of letters, his interference being declared contrary to the liberty and freedom of the subject; and the duties of his successors were to be exercised under the superintendence of the Secretary of State. But when, in 1649, the Common Council of the City of London proceeded to set up an office of their own for the despatch of letters, the Commons passed a resolution asserting their exclusive right to the control of such establishments. A struggle now took place between the Government posts and those carried on by companies of private individuals. The latter not only established more frequent posts than the Government, but carried letters at a cheaper rate. Prideau, a member of the Coomons, who had been appointed postmaster, threatened to seize the letters which passed through their hands, but the 'New Undertakers', so far from being deterred, stated that they were resolved, "by the help of God, to continue their management", and announced that many new places would be included in their arrangements. Beside Tuesday and Saturday, they established an additional post-day on the Thursday, so that they had three posts a-week, while the Government had only one; and they charged only threepence where the charge of the Government was sixpence. Prideaux was empowered to reduce the Government rates, and the private carriers were subsequently put down by an order



The Post Office.....

for the seizure of their letters. The revenue derived from the postage on letters soon became of some importance, and during the Protectorate various improvements were introduced calculated to render it more productive.

The authority of the Government posts was fully established by an Act passed in 1656 " to settle the postage of England, Scotland, Scotland, and Ireland ". The preamble showed that " the erecting of one General Post Office for the speedy conveying and re-carrying of letters by post to and from all places within England, Scotland and Ireland, and into several parts beyond the seas, hath been and is the best means not only to maintain a certain and constant intercourse of trade and commerce between all the said places, to the great benefit of the people of these nations, but also to convey the public despatches, and to discover and prevent many dangerous and wicked designs which have been and are daily contrived against the peace and welfare of this commonwealth, the intelligence whereof cannot well be communicated but by letter of escript ". The Act provides " that there shall be one General Post Office, and one officer styled the Postmaster-General of England and Comptroller of the Post Office ". The horsing of all " through " posts, and persons " riding in post ", was to be placed under his control. Rates were fixed for English, Scotch, Irish and foreign letters, and for post-horses. The Post Office had now assumed the character and exercised the functions which it does at present.

When Prideau was made Postmaster the revenue of the Post Office is supposed scarcely to have exceeded 5000£ a-year. It was farmed at 10,000£ in 1653, and at 14,000£ in 1659; at 21,000£ in 1663, at which period it was settled on the Duke of York; in 1674 at 43,000£; and in 1685 at 65,000£. The Duke was now James II., and an Act was passed granting to him and his heirs the revenue of the Post Office independent of the control of Parliament. This profligate grant was resumed at the Revolution, though it was settled on the King, but it could not be alienated beyond his life. In the following reigns a certain proportion of this revenue was applied for the purposes of the state; but it was not until the settlement of the Civil List, at the accession of George III., that the claims of the sovereign were finally relinquished. In 1724 the net revenue of the Post Office amounted to 96,399£; in 1764 to 116,182£; in 1784 to 196,513£; in 1794 to 463,000£; in 1804 to 952,893£; in 1814 to 1,532,153£, after which time it remained nearly stationary. The gross revenue from 1815 to 1820 averaged 2,190,517£., and from 1832 to 1837, 2,251,424£.

The modern history of the Post Office may be divided into three distinct periods: 1st, before 1784; 2nd, from that year to 1839; and 3rd, from 1839 to the present time. In the first period the mails were conveyed on horseback or in light carts, and the robbery of the mail was one of the most common of the higher class of offences. The service was very inefficiently performed, and the rate of travelling did not often exceed four miles an hour. A time-bill for the year 1717 has been preserved, addressed " to the several postmasters betwixt London and East Grinstead ". It is headed " Haste, haste, post haste! " from which it might be inferred that extraordinary expedition was not only enforced but would be accomplished. The mails, conveyed either on horseback or in a cart, departed " from the letter-office in London, July 7th, 1717, at half-an-hour past two in the morning ", and reached East Grinstead, distant forty-six miles, at half-an-hour after three in the afternoon. There were stoppages of half-an-hour each at Epsom, Dorking, and Reigate, and of a quarter-of-an-hour at Leatherhead, so that the rate of travelling exclusive of stoppages, was a fraction above four miles an hour. But even nearly fifty years afterwards, and on the great roads, five miles an hour was considered as quite " going a-head ". " Letters are conveyed in so short a time, by night as well as by day, that every twenty-four hours the post goes one hundred and twenty miles, and in five or six days an answer to a letter may be had from a place three hundred miles from London ".

And that seems a good point to add..." to be continued ".....



# London Postal History Group

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