

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

The programme for 1982 should have reached members before this issue of ' Notebook ' and it is hoped that after eleven years, those attending will still find much of interest and still be able to show some of their own material. We are fortunate in having informal, friendly and entertaining meetings which seem to suit everyone, at least for most of the time. It would be enhanced if a few more could come along on Saturday afternoons to Red Lion Square, we do get at least one member popping over from France several times a year and no doubt others from nearer might be able to drop in from time to time.

The meetings, for those who have not yet managed to get along, have all those with something connected (more or less) to the subject announced, show what they have, be it one sheet or one hundred, all very welcome.

ANOTHER PROBLEM IN THE GREENWICH SORTING OFFICE, by R.M. Willcocks

I seem to have started something when I said in the meeting on South East London that I was convinced the Greenwich Sorting Office stamp was struck in the Blackheath office, not in Greenwich at all. This meant all handstamps in the Dartmouth Row office read BLACKHEATH, except the Sorting Office stamp, which was GREENWICH. Incidentally, can anyone tell me which letters received the Sorting Office stamp and which the normal office stamp? If they had a different name the point could be important. Derek Holliday has now found a number of other Sorting Office stamps which were not struck in the place named but I can go further - cancellations sent to Greenwich were struck in Blackheath.

A query from Barrie Jay about the use of the provincial type circular date stamp in London (my 441, fig. 181 with a two line date) made me check my two Blackheath examples and reminded me of the details. It seems Blackheath had the only Maltese Cross in the area and more remarkable the 20 numeral issued to Greenwich in 1844 was also struck at Blackheath. Details of the covers are :-



1. A letter sheet headed Crooms Hill, a6 Jan 1844 addressed to St. Germans Terrace, Blackheath. The 1d. red has a Maltese Cross in a grey-black, Blackheath serif c.d.s. in the same grey-black and two clear strikes of a lower case Greenwich (my fig.100 unframed) on the front and back in a clear deep black. Crooms Hill runs from Shooters Hill Road (the Dover Road) down to Greenwich whilst St. Germans Terrace is the Eastern (Kent) edge of the Heath. It seems Crooms Hill had not been numbered but Pigot 1839 lists him under Greenwich, not Blackheath, and he must have lived that end or the letter would not have gone to Greenwich. The inks are so different there is no doubt Greenwich struck their straight-line stamp and sent it up the hill uncanceled: Blackheath struck its c.d.s. code E of 16 Jan and cancelled the 1d. red.
2. Envelope, no clue to origin, to Mr Parker, Solr. Greenwich, Kent, with 1d.red perf. cancelled with the 20 numeral issued to Greenwich. The only other stamp is the Blackheath c.d.s. of 2nd.June, 1856 in the identical black-blue ink as the 20 cancellation, code M. Presumably this was posted in Blackheath for delivery in Greenwich and probably M & E are Morning and Evening. Considering the inks on the previous cover, it surely cannot be coincidence these distinctive inks are again the same.

Kenfington

100

I suggest, then, the Blackheath office held the only cancellation in this part of the world and all letters from Greenwich or Blackheath addressed locally or outwards on the Dover Road went to Blackheath office for cancelling (other mail being sent to the Chief Office uncanceled, of course). Incidentally, I remember when we first wondered if Maltese Crosses were issued to Suburban Offices, it was years before I found covers to prove it. Why then was it marked in the Impression Book as sent to Greenwich? I have the Woolwich 21 showing this outward use, addressed to Rochester, at this period but have not seen similar Greenwich 20, Eltham 22 or Bexley 23. These Woolwich to Rochester envelopes show the reversal of the Shooters Hill Cross Post, being sent at least 4 miles inwards to New Cross Gate Station to be entrusted to the newfangled Dover Railway (backstamped Deptford). An interesting aside on the Railway influence on mail - the Greenwich Railway was the first railway into central London and built London Bridge Station in 1836. Originally planned to go to Chatham at least and really Dover, it was stuck for 40 years by not being allowed to bisect Greenwich Park with a cutting. However, serious consideration was given in 1837-8 to bringing the cross-channel pack - ets up to Greenwich Pier and shipping all the Continental Mail from there, to be conveyed from London on the railway.

I think the mail Blackheath office was still on Dartmouth Tow, though moved from the

Another Problem in the Greenwich Sorting Office.....

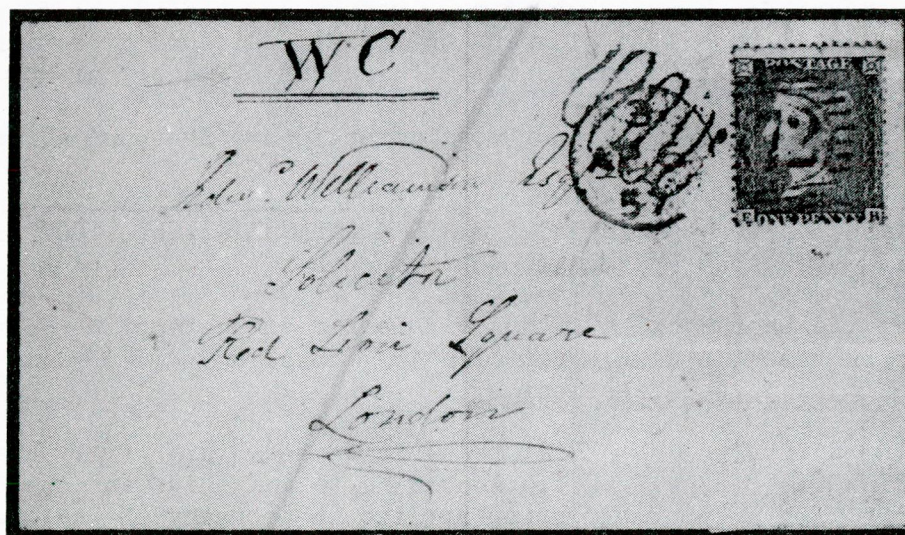
Dukes Head to a grocers shop with the general objection to all Post Offices being in Inns. Blackheath / Tran Vale stamp was used in the 1850's for the office in the village which had been Blackheath S.E. or E.O. (I think they were the same) and the main office was probably moved there when Bank Buildings was built by the Station in 1866. I will write more fully on the post in this area some time when I know more answers, including why this Dartmouth Row office seems unique in the whole of London in being listed as a General Office, with the 2d. Post Office 50 yards away on Blackheath Hill (this would mean you could post a Free letter there without paying the 3d. local post charge and when I think of all the fuss a Bishop kicked up in Bromley which was right on the edge of the London area, I wonder). It may have been connected with the supreme importance of the Dover Road throughout history but if so, why did they drop all the mail at Shooters Hill ? No, if I can confirm the Directories, I think it must have been connected with Queen Caroline living on the Heath. Right from 1796, when Princess Cahlotte was born and the Prince Regent deserted her for his array of mistresses, through the ' Delicate Investigation ' and her trial before the House of Lords, until he succeeded in forcing her to live abroad in 1813, Shooters Hill Road must have been very busy indeed with messengers and visitors: the Dartmouth Row Office was only 300 yards from her house.

I wonder.

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

LONDON DISTRICT POST CANCELLATION CANCELLED, contributed by James Grimwood-Taylor

This item presents yet another use of the cancelling device with which readers are no doubt familiar but in this case a rather unusual and unexplained use.

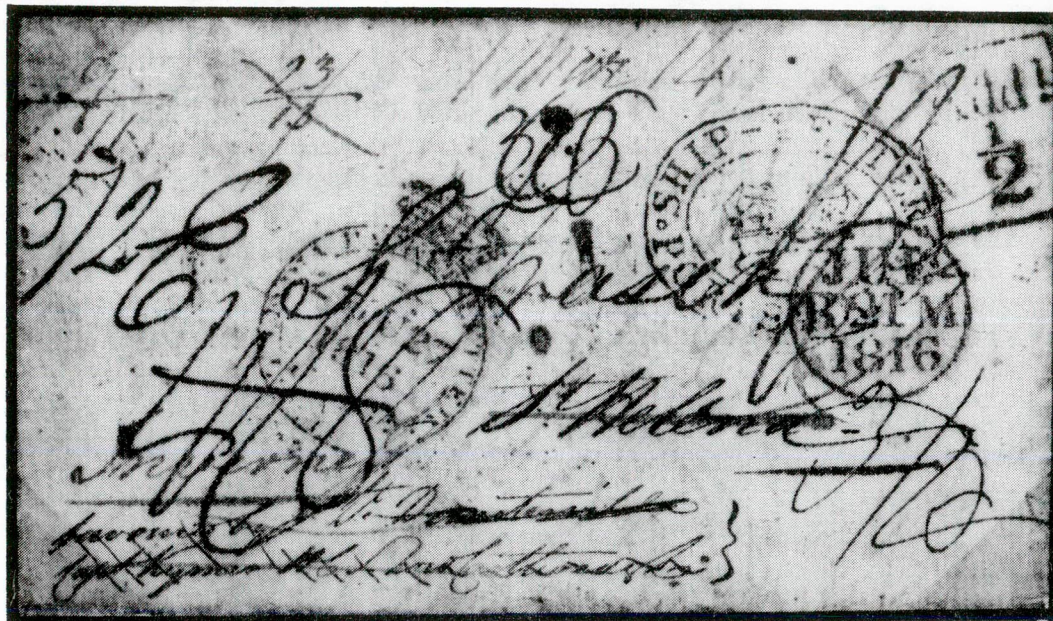


The reverse of the envelope shows, in blue, the receiving house of Brixton - N and the time stamp, code A for 2 in the afternoon of April 6th., 1857. The front has the new-fangled District coding top centre, very clear, even if in quite the wrong place. The 1d. red star adhesive is cancelled by the scarce London District Post 72E, code 3, and is struck in black. The date portion, code 3, is cancelled by the " snake ", which was applied in red. Presumably it should have been the unrecorded code 2. This way it makes a much more interesting item!!

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

SHIP LETTER TO SAINT HELENA

This particular item carries an example of the India Packet Letter (Robertson IN (3)) and a number of other stamps, including a SHIP-LETTER PORTSMOUTH. It is not until one tries to follow the letters travels do the puzzles begin.



It is not an entire but the outer contains a page or so of a large, sprawling hand, so much that the place of writing is far from clear. However, what text there is tends to confirm India as the start of the journey.

"...there can be no objection to James's coming out, but that in respect to his being able to provide for himself having a chance of making anything I conceive it out of the question, nevertheless that as the expence of coming out is a little, it will be best him to come & see & judge for himself, & stay or return as he finds best, while the voyage & seeing India will be only a pleasant amusement. Give my affectionate love to Alice. I'll not expect your return before the termination of this year not as I wish it.

6th. Feby, 1812
P.....ut

Your most affectionate/Brother/ W.Fraser. "

The seal is attractive, bearing the legend " SI JE M'ATTACHE J'IRAY LION " and the writer's initials WF below what appears to be an anchor with a flowering plant entwined.

For postal markings, the back shows a London single rim date stamp in red reading E / 28 FE 28 / 1814 and in black, a double rim JY / 18 (circled) / 816, with code C. The time interval is nearly seventeen months.

The front carries the Edinburgh JUL / B 21 M / 1816 in red, this partly over the black SHIP - LETTER / PORTSMOUTH (type S.10). According to AWR this went out of use in 1814, which shows the mark as probably being applied in February of that year. Since the India Packet Letter is dated 27th. June, 1816, one presumes the letter came from India, can it possibly have been written in 1812 ?, arriving in the UK en route to St. Helena in 1814. Then out to that remote place where it gets redirected to Inverness. This deletion of St. Helena and insertion of Inverness is in red ink, as is the manuscript date at the top of the letter 1 Mar 14 and the two fraction figures to the left of this dating. There is a 9/11 and a deleted 23/13. What are these ? Did this, then, go to St. Helena. There is a very faint boxed stamp running from the Packet Letter stamp to the Ship-Letter, seemingly overstruck by what looks like a ' J '.

As for the charge marks. The deleted manuscript entries are 3/3, 3/6, 4/8 and the final (?) charge of 5/2. In addition, there is the London type 1C ' Addl 1/2 '.

Ship Letter To Saint Helena....

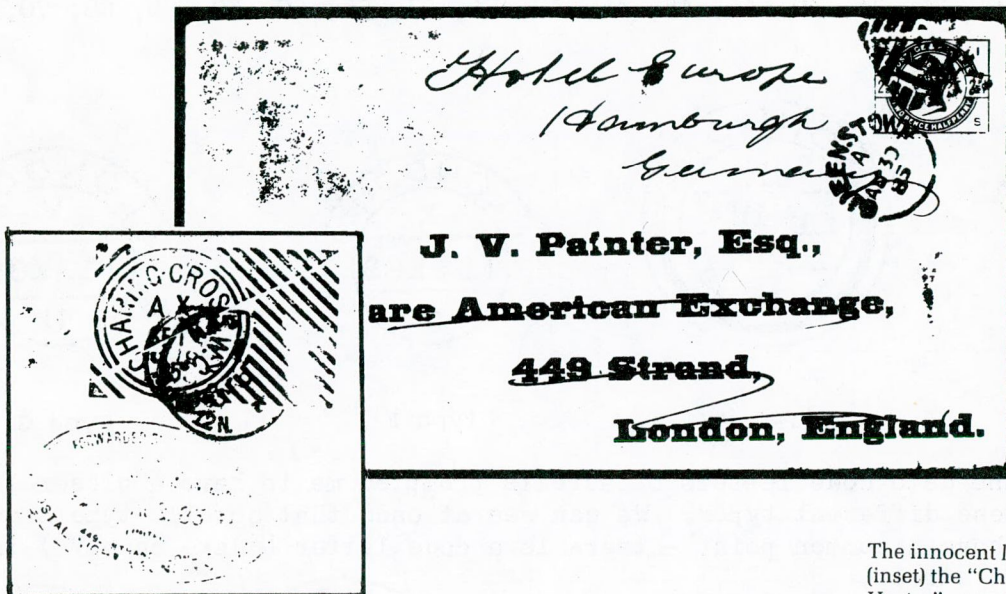
What is one to make of the rate of $5/2$? London to Inverness is some 657 miles, or rather was. The charge for 600 to 700 miles was $1/4$, which leaves $3/10$. The Packet Letter rate at this period was $3/6$, so quite what the Postal Clerk had in mind requires further consideration.

Altogether a delightful item, posing several questions, proving less answers.

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

NEW DATING FOR A HOSTER CANCELLATION, by Abbot Lutz

For a number of years there has been a three inch pile of postal cards and a few covers, all with London cancellations, sitting on a ledge in my office. Ted Proud, Angus Parker, Michael Goodman have been some of the many who have eyed the stack, asked the price (\$65), flipped through the pile and put it back, always with a " No, thank you ".



The innocent letter and (inset) the "Charing-Cross Hoster" cancellation on the obverse.

A short time ago I realized the dust was a bit thick on this little pile, so I picked it up to see what was in it and dust it off at the same time. On flipping through the stack I came across one cover that did not have a London cancellation. I pulled it out and turned it over - and experienced a small heart attack. There, on the obverse side was a " Charing-Cross Hoster " cancellation. Only five are known on cover and I now own two of them.

The earliest known usage for this cancellation is 16th. September, 1885. Now we have a new date of usage 1st. September, 1885. By the way, the balance of the stack is still worth \$65 in today's market. Ant takers ?

(Reprinted from "Collectors Club Philatelist Vol.60, No.3, May 1981, with thanks.)

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

NORTH DISTRICT DUPLEX

N/21 duplex code " U 7 " SP 13 84 has been report by R.K.C. Walters, Dubus Type 7, and not recorded in the original Handbook nor in the first supplement.

DATE CODE LETTERS OF LONDON SCROLLS AND THE EXPERIMENTAL DOUBLE CIRCLES

by Maurice Barette

Before I tackle the main subject of date code letters, I should like to mention the identification figures of scrolls type J and London experimental double circle (LEDC) type 9.

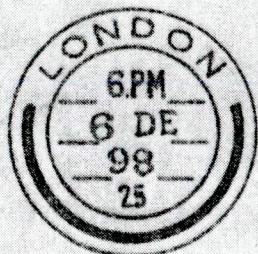
Derek Holliday and Simon Kelly have pointed out the link between these two: the range of numbers of the LEDC (26 to 35) is inserted in a gap of the series of the scrolls which runs 1 to 25, then 36 and beyond. Derek and Simon believe the LEDC No.25 is much scarcer than the others (Notebook Nos 25 and 48). I have now recorded this No. 25 with a 6 DE 98 dating.

As to the scrolls type J, John Chandler (Notebook No.26) mentions No.30, which seems to be an anomaly, being in the LEDC range. He also provided a list of the numbers recorded till then, (1976). This has, no doubt, been extended since but from the collections of French friends - members of the LPHG - we can now add the following:

1, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 14, 23, 39, 44, 45, 46, 49, 51, 53, 56, 60, 62, 66, 68, 70, 72, 74, 77, 78, 79.



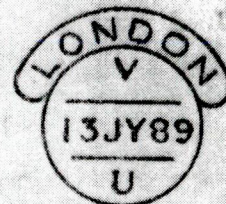
Type J



Type 9

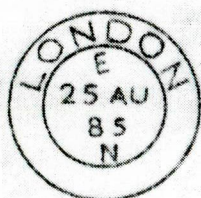


Type E

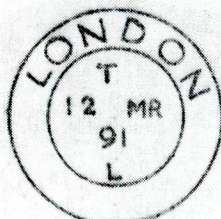


Type G

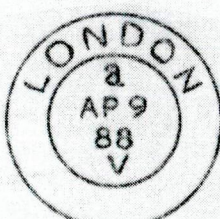
The studies on the date code letters of scrolls prompted me to have a closer look at the stamps of these different types. We can see at once that scrolls type E and G and LEDC 3, 4 and 8 have a common point - there is a code letter (date code ?) in the lower part of the circle.



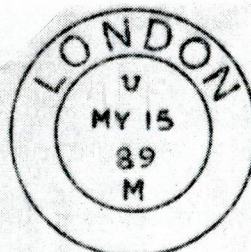
Type 3a



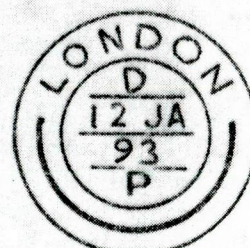
Type 3b



Type 4a



Type 4b



Type 8

Date code letters are common in London Postal History and consist of letters changed by rotation every day according to a fixed system. The letters of scrolls E and G are date code letters without doubt and I came across the key almost by accident. When writing down in date order stamps of those types I noticed for days the letters went in simple alphabetical order. It was a simple matter to tabulate the results in the form of a calendar, carefully noting when the Sundays occur from an almanac for the year.

An examination of the table shows the code letters used. Out of 202 scrolls E and G seen in the collections of the five French members of LPHG, all but one scroll complied with the following rule. There is a sequential use of 22 letters of the alphabet, from D to Z (excepting A, B, C, and Q), on each of the six working days of the week; after Z the letters start again at D, on so on.

On the following page is such a table for 1891. It was just a matter of time and patience to compile tables for other years (in fact 1884 to 1897 were prepared).

Date Code Letters.....

1 8 9 1

	JA	FE	MR	AP	MY	JU	JY	AU	SP	OC	NO	DE
1	WS	--	--	G	K	O	T	Y	VF	J	--	S
2	T	X	Z	H	L	P	U	--	G	K	O	KT
3	XU	Y	D	I	--	R	V	Z	H	L	P	U
4	--	Z	EE	J	M	S	W	D	I	--	R	V
5	V	WD	F	--	N	T	--	E	J	M	VS	W
6	W	E	G	K	O	U	X	F	--	N	T	--
7	?X	F	H	L	AP	--	Y	XG	K	O	U	X
8	Y	--	--	M	WR	DV	Z	H	L	P	--	Y
9	Z	G	I	N	S	W	D	--	VM	R	V	Z
10	D	H	J	VO	--	X	WE	I	N	ES	W	D
11	--	I	K	P	T	Y	F	J	O	--	X	E
12	E	J	TL	--	U	WZ	--	K	P	T	Y	F
13	F	K	M	R	V	D	G	L	--	U	Z	--
14	G	DL	N	S	W	--	H	M	R	VV	D	G
15	VH	--	--	T	X	E	I	N	S	XW	--	H
16	I	WM	O	?U	Y	F	J	--	VT	XX	E	XI
17	J	VN	P	V	--	G	?K	O	AU	Y	F	J
18	--	O	VAR	W	Z	H	L	P	V	--	G	K
19	K	P	S	--	ED	I	--	R	W	Z	H	L
20	L	R	T	X	E	J	M	S	--	D	I	--
21	M	S	U	Y	F	--	N	T	X	E	WJ	M
22	N	--	--	Z	G	K	O	U	Y	F	--	N
23	O	T	V	D	H	L	P	--	Z	G	K	O
24	P	U	W	VE	--	M	R	V	D	H	L	P
25	--	V	X	VF	I	N	S	W	EE	--	VM	R
26	R	W	Y	--	J	O	--	X	F	I	N	S
27	S	X	Z	G	K	P	T	Y	--	J	O	--
28	T	Y	D	H	L	--	U	Z	G	K	P	T
29	U	--	--	I	M	R	V	D	H	TL	--	U
30	V	--	--	E	J	N	S	W	--	I	M	R
31	W	--	--	F	--	--	--	X	E	N	--	W

Tables constructed for types E and G scrolls seem to prove the same code use. Both differ only in the style of letters and must have passed progressively from one series to another. The earliest type E I have seen is " H 9 AU 84 S ", the latest is for " R 25 MR 89 M ". For type G the dates are " W 27 MY 89 X " and " W 2 OC 94 D ".

Only one scroll of the 202 does not agree with the rule of coding, " W 15 SP 92 G " instead of the expected " Y ", probably a simple error in the preparation of the stamp.

When referring to " London Date Stamp Codes " by W.G. Stitt Dibden (republished by LPHG) it can be seen, by checking the years 1884, 5 and 6, the code of the scrolls type E and G follows the pattern of the Stitt Dibden code " C5 ".

When LPHG republished the "London Date Stamp Codes " Leon Dubus allowed the inclusion of his tables of codes of the Inland Branch from his " Cancellations of London ". It appears the code of these tables is again " C5 ". By combining all three items of research one can demonstrate code " C5 " had a life from 7th. February, 1859 (Dubus) to 2nd October, 1894 (above). No doubt these can be extended.

Turning now to the code letters of the LEDC I have made a study of the comparatively scarce type 4. I have seen only seven fully readable examples in the French collections, Simon Kelly illustrated two in Notebook No.48, one shown by Mackay in his

Date Code Letters.....

" English & Welsh Postmarks " and fig.1207 in the Alcock and Holland. Out of these eleven examples, two follow code " C5 ", seven do not, two have been used much later. With such a small sample it would be unwise to come to a firm conclusion but the results do suggest an incompatibility between code " C5 " and LEDC type 4. Could it be the letters represent an hour code ?

I give below the list of these eleven LEDC type 4 :

Type		Code C5
4a	a AP 9 88 V	OK
	a JA 25 90 L	G
	a JA 25 90 L	G
	e 20 AU 90 L	M
	a MY 11 02 S	S.R.A.Kelly
	? MY 7 05 S	
	e OC 15 05 S	
4b	k AP 27 88 C	O J.A.Mackay
	u MY 15 89 M	OK
	h 7 MR 94 B	X S.R.A.Kelly
	F OC 29 95 K	J A & H No.1207

Types 3 and 8 present another situation: out of 75 examples seen, 69 follow code "C5", over a period with a type 3a " F 13 JY 85 V " to " 3a E 7 SP 95 J ". One can add the three illustrations given by Simon Kelly (Notebook No.48), which also fit the code. On the other hand, six examples do not comply with the code, to which add the two shown by Mackay, some 8 " exceptions " out of 80 examples. Of these, one is a Sunday, which might explain one, leaving seven, rather too high a rate for simple error.

I list below the stamps which do not comply with code " C5 "

Type		Code C5
3a	K 13 NO 84 S	L (+6)
	B 25 SP 87 D Sunday	
	H 4 DE 94 O	N (+1)
3b	K 13 SP 87 J	S (-8)
	Z SP 20 87 C Mackay	Y (C is not in code C5)
	C 4 JA 92 D	Z (+1)
	I 15 AU 94 H	G (+1)
8	T AP 18 89 O Mackay	L (+3)

One possible cause of these discrepancies is in those taken from illustrations where examples of rather than actual stamps contain an error. Hopefully readers can assist.

I would like to thank the contributions of my friends P. Langlois, M. Letailleur, A. Meunier and A. Pernin, all members of the Societe Philatelique Franco Britannique and the London P.H. Group and trust we members of the " French Section " of the LPHG can add this grain of knowledge to the mound of scholarship which their British friends are building.

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HIGHBURY SUBURBAN OFFICE

✓ Member R.K.C. Walters reports an example of the Highbury 15B, not recorded and rarity G.P.O. in the Handbook.

It would seem to have been employed very late, having a code " 7 " and dated JU 11 88

THE LONDON PROVINCIAL HANDSTAMPS, by John Harrison

The interest members have shown following my display of ' London Provincial Handstamps ' at the March meeting this year has been very encouraging, as has the Editor's decision to reprint my article on the subject which originally appeared in the October 1980 edition of " Stamps ".

Although I thought it was clear from the article, subsequent correspondence makes it necessary to emphasise the marks to which it refers were those struck by the Inland Branch of the London G.P.O. on letters of provincial origin on arrival in London or passing through London from one provincial town to another during the period 1800 to 1840 only.

During this period these marks were not normally struck on letters posted in London itself though, in certain circumstances, such letters do bear these marks. Examples of these include redirected mail of London origin travelling back to or passing through London on the second leg of their journey and, very rarely, on General Post letters wrongly posted into town area receiving houses of the Twopenny Post and transferred through the principal office of the T.P. to this section of the G.P.O. More information is still needed on these but I suspect transfer to this section was contrary to regulations as most such letters were transferred to that section of the G.P.O. dealing with letters posted correctly in General Post receiving houses.

It should be pointed out this article was not written for postal history specialists so certain aspects of the subject for which satisfactory explanations are not available were omitted, notably the ' N ' and the rare ' H ' coded stamps, both of which appear to have served a special, as yet undiscovered, purpose. Neither are the handstamps used by the Foreign Branch referred to. As this department was in the same building, the ease of transfer from there to the Inland Branch and vice versa must be borne in mind but evidence suggests the Foreign Branch may have used some similar handstamps.

The article is based on first hand examination of more than 100,000 items from which it was also very apparent that, from 1840, a complete reorganisation of the system took place, so the findings set out do not necessarily apply from this date and confusion has arisen in the past by researchers not having been aware of the 1840 change.

A great deal of research still remains to be done and I would appreciate as many recordings as possible, particularly of the following items :

1. Letters bearing a code other than A to G, S or a maltese cross and dated between 1800 and 1839 (both dates inclusive).
2. Letters posted in London prior to 1840 bearing " London Provincial Handstamps " other than redirected letters arriving in or passing through London on the second leg of their journey.
3. All items bearing similar marks from 1840 to, say, 1845 so - between us - we can get to grips with the later period.

Recordings should provide the following information :

- a. Date
- b. Type of " London Provincial " or similar handstamp (figure references as given in the article please).
- c. The code.
- d. If serif or sans-serif (only required if outside the 1800 - 1840 period).
n.b. 1843 had serifs; 1841/2 and 1844 onwards were sans-serif.
- e. Place of posting (Name of receiving house if London plus port of arrival if overseas origin).

The London Provincial Handstamps.....

- f. Place of destination.
- g. All other marks, manuscript endorsements etc., any or all of which may provide the vital clue.
- h. Color of the handstamp.

Please send your recordings to J.H.S. Harrison,
419 Earlham Road,
NORWICH,
Norfolk NR2 3RQ

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

THE LONDON PROVINCIAL HANDSTAMPS

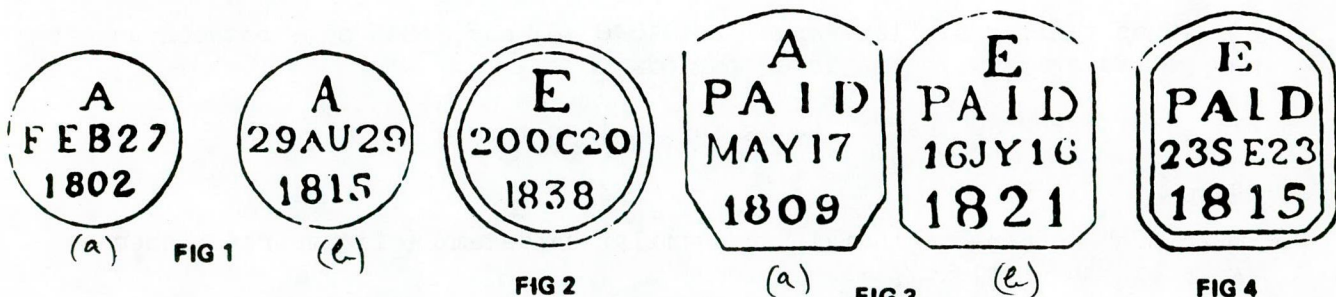
Reprinted from the October, 1980 issue of " STAMPS " with appreciation

Every collector of GB pre-adhesive covers is familiar with those marks which, because they were normally only struck in London on letters of provincial origin, can be called the London ' provincial ' handstamps. We are all thankful for them as a dating guide, after which most of us give them little further thought. However, these sadly neglected handstamps are of considerable interest in their own right and, with only a few exceptions, the basic material is both readily available and relatively inexpensive.

The handstamps applied by the Inland Office of the London GPO from 1800 to 1840 can be divided into three main categories: marks used on letters posted in London and handled by a different section of the GPO (for the sake of clarity it will be necessary to refer to some of these, but they are outside the scope of this study) ' free ' letter stamps (these were handled by yet another section of the GPO and, as they were also used on letters posted in London, do not qualify as London ' provincial ' handstamps); marks applied to ordinary paid and unpaid general post letters coming into or passing through London from the provinces. We are concerned here with this last section.

Transit Mark.....

Every letter arriving at the London GPO on the provincial mail coaches was stamped with a red arrival or transit mark. These are one and the same as far as the marks are concerned and the description ' arrival mark ' or ' transit mark ' used in reference to the London ' provincial ' handstamps is dependent upon the final destination of the letter.



There are two kinds of mark: the circular framed unpaid letter stamps (figs. 1 and 2) which were normally struck on the reverse and the descriptively named ' tombstone ' paid stamps (figs. 3 and 4), normally struck on the obverse. The single framed types were used on all letters from 1800 to 1810 and on letters stamped between midnight and midday from 1810 onwards. The double framed types were used on letters stamped between midday and midnight from 1810 onwards. The pre-adhesive catalogues describe these

The London Provincial Handstamps.....

single and double framed types as morning and afternoon duty stamps respectively but this is not quite correct as the double framed types were also used for evening duties. These catalogues further describe the circular framed paid stamps (fig. 5) as an evening duty mark. In fact this latter stamp was not used by this section of the GPO at all but was the paid mark for all duties on pre-paid letters posted in London General Post receiving houses only.



FIG 5

Code Letters.....

With a few notable exceptions, every stamp applied to incoming and transit letters during the period with which we are concerned here, had a code letter ranging from A to G inclusive. Examination of these codes used in relationship to the towns at which the letters bearing them were posted shows that letters arriving from a particular post town are usually struck with a stamp bearing the same code, regardless of the type of stamp used. The reason for this was that as the volume of mails from most post towns was fairly constant, this was used to enable the allocation of work to be spread evenly and the mail bags from the same town were normally handled by the same stamping and initial examination desk. The codes used on the stamps refer to the desk at which this was done. Occasionally letters from a post town are found struck with a stamp bearing a different code to that normal for the town. The explanation of this would be the late arrival of a coach at a time when the normal desk was fully occupied with mails from other towns, an exceptional or unexpected workload at the usual desk or the undermanning of the desk as a result of sickness. It is also noted letters from some towns used one code up to a certain date and another thereafter, which indicates a re-adjustment or work allocation due to a change in the volume of mails received.

An exception to the ' one town one code ' rule is found in respect of some of the larger towns such as Bristol, Birmingham and Manchester for which stamping was spread over two or more desks.

The mail from a few places is sometimes found with both single and double framed stamps used on the same day but always with the same code. These would be the mails arriving on late morning coaches for which stamping was not completed by 12 noon when the change from single to double framed stamps was made.

Most mail coaches were timed to arrive in London in the early morning, so single frame stamps outnumber double by about three to one. As most letters were posted unpaid prior to the introduction of universal penny postage in 1840, the circular unpaid marks outnumber the paid by about eight to one. This means a double framed ' tombstone ' paid stamp is nearly 100 times as scarce as a single frame unpaid mark but this does not mean these ' scarce ' marks are of any great rarity as thousands of letters were handles every day over a period of forty years.

It is, however, by no means easy to assemble a complete, clearly struck set of paid and unpaid marks with all codes without having to pay the earth for the other marks on the cover - but it is a worthwhile exercise. A full collection on cover makes a lovely display when mounted and written up.

Supervisors' Stamp....

A non-standard code sometimes found is the Maltese Cross (fig. 6) which is sometimes whittled down to a ' + ' (fig. 7). These were supervisors' stamps. I have never

The London Provincial Handstamps.....

seen this code on a stamp with a double frame and am reasonably certain it does not exist in this form. Every letter stamped with this code mark is also usually struck on the obverse with a red four pointed ' out of course ' star (fig. 8) which can be



FIG 6

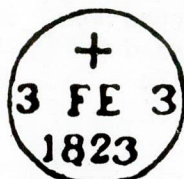


FIG 7



FIG 8

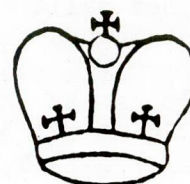


FIG 9

found in differing types and sizes. Similar stars were used also by the section of the G.P.O. handling letters posted in the London General Post receiving houses.

The exact meaning of ' out of course ' in the context of these stamps has never been defined but I believe these were put on letters removed by the stamping clerks as being in need of further inspection and possible correction and which, after checking, were found to be in order. Although I have no evidence of delay occurring due to such checking, this would undoubtedly have meant many such letters being held over until the following day it was essential to mark them in some way to enable the Post Office to know the reason in the event of any subsequent complaint over late delivery. There would have been no need to use this mark on letters found to need amendment as such amendment would be authorised by a red inspectors' crown (fig. 9), which also served the secondary purpose as an ' out of course ' stamp.

After application of the star, the letters were either stamped by the supervisor using his own cross coded stamp or, as appears to have been done with about half these letters, handed back on course to any stamping desk where they were dated with the normal stamp of that desk. Code C occurs more frequently than any other on these handed back letters from which it may be assumed this desk was nearest to the supervisors' area but whatever code used, the odds are against it being the code normal for the post town unless it happened to be a town handled by C desk. A different method was used to put letters with changed rates bearing crown stamps back on course and further research is needed on this.

Manuscript Marks.....

Readers may well find, in apparent contradiction of the above, those letters they have with an ' out of course ' star do show two manuscript rate marks, one of which has been deleted but this was normal on most unpaid letters passing through London from one provincial town to another and is another story altogether. (I am preparing an article giving more information of these changed rates.)

Sunday.....

Another non-standard code is the " S " for Sunday duty (figs. 10 and 11). Much has already been written about these and their limited use so I will not go into detail here. They are found with single frames only and collectors of English handstamps should look out for them because they have been considered of little importance in comparison with the main handstamps. They are more likely to be found in Scottish or Irish collections as it was, in the main, mail from these areas which received Sunday stamps. The paid Sunday marks in particular are not often seen and are now much sought after.



FIG 10



FIG 11

Odd Man Out.....

As with all early postal history, there is always the unusual and unexpected, one of

The London Provincial Handstamps.....

elements making the study of early letters and their handstamps so exciting. The London 'provincial' marks are no exception and I would like to refer to a solitary example of a single frame unpaid stamp in my own collection with a 'X' code. It is the only one I have ever seen or heard of from this period and it is applied as a transit mark on the reverse of an otherwise apparently normally handled letter of 11th. April, 1811 from Berkeley to Norwich (fig.12).



FIG 12

Mails Posted in London.....



FIG 13



(c)

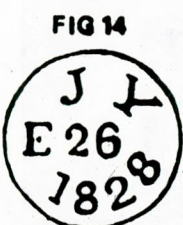


FIG 14



FIG 15

For the sake of clarity, I must conclude with a few observations on the stamps used by the section of the G.P.O. which dealt with the mails posted in London. I have already referred to the stamp used on pre-paid letters but most frequently seen are the unpaid letter stamps (figs. 13 and 14). These were always struck in black (the few known examples in red were probably struck in that color in error when not associated with an Inspectors' stamp). These are also easy to distinguish from the red stamp struck on letters of provincial origin. The later unpaid stamps (fig. 15) are not so easy to distinguish because of their similarity to the marks illustrated in fig.1. The most important difference is these marks on unpaid letters posted in London were always struck in black but there are also differences in layout and design which makes them easy to spot with a little patience. These stamps also carried a greater range of code letters throughout their period of use which was not extended beyond 'G' on the stamps for letters of provincial origin until the end of the 1830s.

If I have whetted your appetite, why not get together a collection of these marks before it is too late and prices for them start to take off ? My own examples, which include complete sets of both types of paid and unpaid marks, the supervisors' marks and stars, the Sunday marks and my 'X' code item, are displayed on a modest twelve sheets and I take great pride in showing them in spite of the relatively low outlay (perhaps because of this !) expended on their acquisition.

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Editor's Note.

In corresponding with John, several of my items were sent for inspection. One such with the thoughtful analysis by John makes further the point of the postal history interest behind what, at the time, was one of a batch. This appears elsewhere in this issue.

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TWOPENNY POST: COUNTRY SORTING OFFICES

Michael Goodman has drawn attention to an example of a CSO date stamp which appears to read DENHAM but on close inspection of the layout is very probably a mis-struck (SY)DENHAM.

Could this be the source of the alleged DENHAM which appears in some listings for Country Sorting Office stamps ? In any event, Denham seems an unlikely candidate for such a postal function.

Can any reader produce a clear, balanced layout version of Denham ?????

POST OFFICE MACHINES:METERED MAIL-COIN FED FOR PUBLIC USE, by Abbot Lutz

Between Postal History as a subject and experimental machine cancellation as a hobby, it is very easy to get into trouble. This writer collects G.B. experimental machines and got bitten by a coin-fed machine which was placed outside the main door of the G.P.O., King Edward Street, E.C., in January 25th., 1912. Put in your card or letter, face up at the bottom, drop a penny into the slot, pull the handle down and, "Eureka", it's done. Drop it in the box, go home, it will be delivered. (Those were the good old days.)

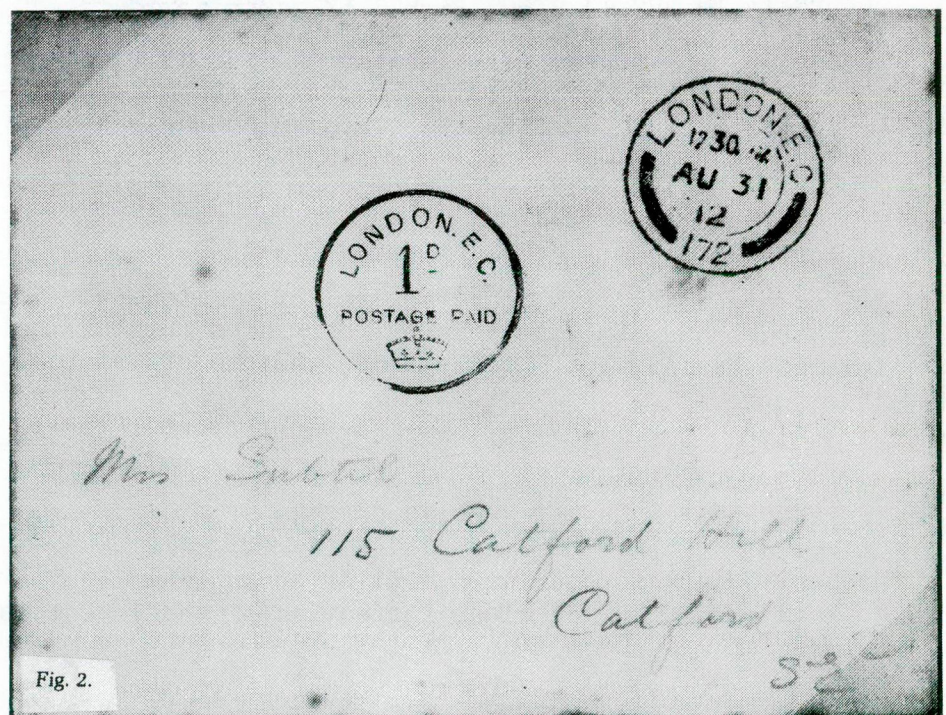
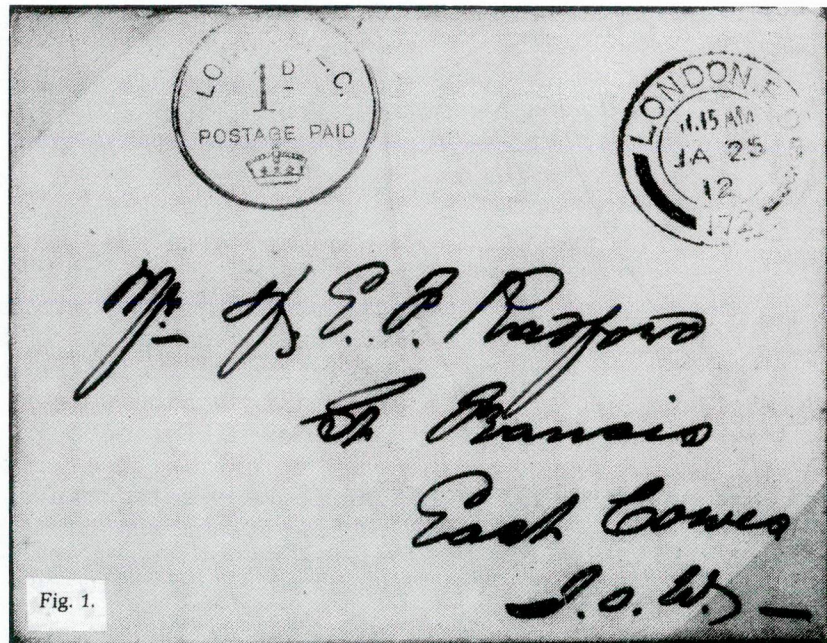
The contents of the box were cleared hourly by Postal Inspector Mr. N. Needham and a secondary London E.C. date stamp, code 172, applied. For the month of January, starting on the 25th., the machine impression was in red and the date stamp in black. As from February 1st., the date stamp was also in red until the last day of usage, August 31st., 1912.

Records show the first day saw 1060 letters and cards posted. Eventually the number dropped to an average of 112 pieces per day for the months of February, March and April. Finally the usage dropped to 20 or 30 pieces per day until the last day when it jumped to 55 pieces. In total, some 12,000 cards and envelopes were processed in this 219 day period, which averages 64 per day.

Mr Frank **Wilkinson**, of Braintree, Essex, a gentleman farmer, was the inventor of the machine with three patents: the first No.8567, 23rd.December,1908, the second No.11534, 9th.May, 1912 and the last was dated 1st.August,1912. He originally offered it to the Post Office in 1909. Finally an agreement was reached on 9th.November 1910 for two machines to be made at the Automatic Stamp Selling Co.Ltd. One machine was to be tried at the G.P.O. and the second machine was to be tested at the South Western District Office; however, the second machine was never put into use. The machine stood five feet high and came complete with very positive instructions to the public.

Mr. Wilkinson, saddened by the P.O. verdict against the use of his machine, continued to submit applications to the P.O. for a retrial until 1926, but to no avail.

By the time I had acquired the first(fig.1) and last(fig.2)day usage, I realised these



Post Office Machines: Metered Mail - Coin Fed for Public Use....

items really came under the heading of metered mail. In further research I found two other coin operated experiments pre-dated the London trial *.

In 1900 Charles A. **Kahrs** of Norway invented and manufactured a machine which was tested for just twenty-two days in the lobby of the head post office at Kristiania (Oslo) Norway. This machine had two coin slots - one for a five ore coin (giving a green impression) and the other slot for a ten ore coin (giving a red impression), The first day of usage was 24th. August, 1900 and the last day 14th. September, 1900. The impression (fig.3) had "Chra" at the top (for Christiania), then a post horn with the value in the ring of the horn, and "Aut.No.1" at the bottom. This last denoted it as automatic machine number 1.



Fig. 3.

The metered machine marking really had no meaning, as after one posted a letter or card in a special receiving box the post office affixed a regular adhesive stamp over the metered impression and then applied a cancellation over the stamp.

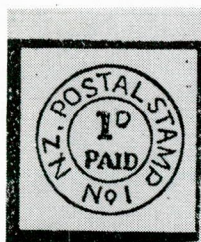


Fig. 4.

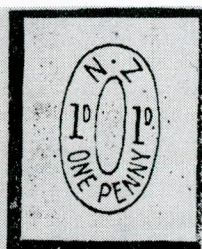


Fig. 5.

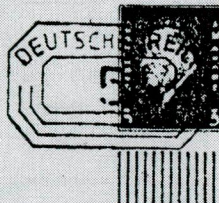


Fig. 6.



In 1904 New Zealand tried several experiments with coin-fed, metered mail machines. **Ernest Moss** developed a machine that was manufactured by the Automatic Franking Machine Co. (NZ) Ltd. It was tried outside the head post office at Christchurch for two weeks and for an additional three weeks at the head office in Wellington. The earliest date known is 31st. March, 1904 (fig.4).

On 7th. July, 1904 a different machine was tested at the Dunedin post office. The inventor and manufacturer are unknown. The only impressions seen are a proof (fig.5) on an envelope and one postally used first day cover. The failure of these machines was due to the use by the public of round discs and washers instead of the coin of the realm.

The final testing brings us to Germany 1931 where a Model C machine was made by Auto-franc. This electric machine had a long life and was used at Berlin W9 post office (fig.6) from 20th. April, 1931 to the middle of 1937. It could accept coins and notes and denote nine different values from 5 to 45 pfennig. A second and third machine, hand operated, only giving a value of 6 pfennig, was tried for a short period in 1933 at the Berlin-Charlottenburg 5 and Berlin-Wannsee (Beach Post Office). All were discontinued.

Going into the history of metered mail machines we found **Carle Bushe** of Paris acquired a British patent for a machine which would impress and register stamps in 1884. The forward for his patent reads: " It is indisputable that the adoption of postage stamps did away with a great deal of trouble and annoyance, but it is impossible for progress to stop there, for that system still presents numerous inconveniences not only for the Government but for the Public. In fact the application of adhesive stamps, which is so easy and convenient when a few only are to be used at one time, becomes a difficult matter and entails a serious loss of time when hundreds of letters, circulars, newspapers and so forth have to be dispatched daily."

Post Office Machines: Metered Mail - Coin Fed for Public Use.....

It was **Karl Uchermann** of Norway who originated the metered franking system for private firms as we know it today. His machines were manufactured by Krag Maskinfabrik of Kristiania and the earliest known date of usage is 15th. June, 1903. We show a 1904 of this marking (fig. 7).

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Early Stamp Machines, W.G.Stitt Dibden
Special Series No.17, The Postal History Society (1964).

The Metered Postage Stamp Catalogue, S.D. Barfoot, B.Sc., and Werner Simon,
Universal Postal Frankers Ltd.,
London (1960).

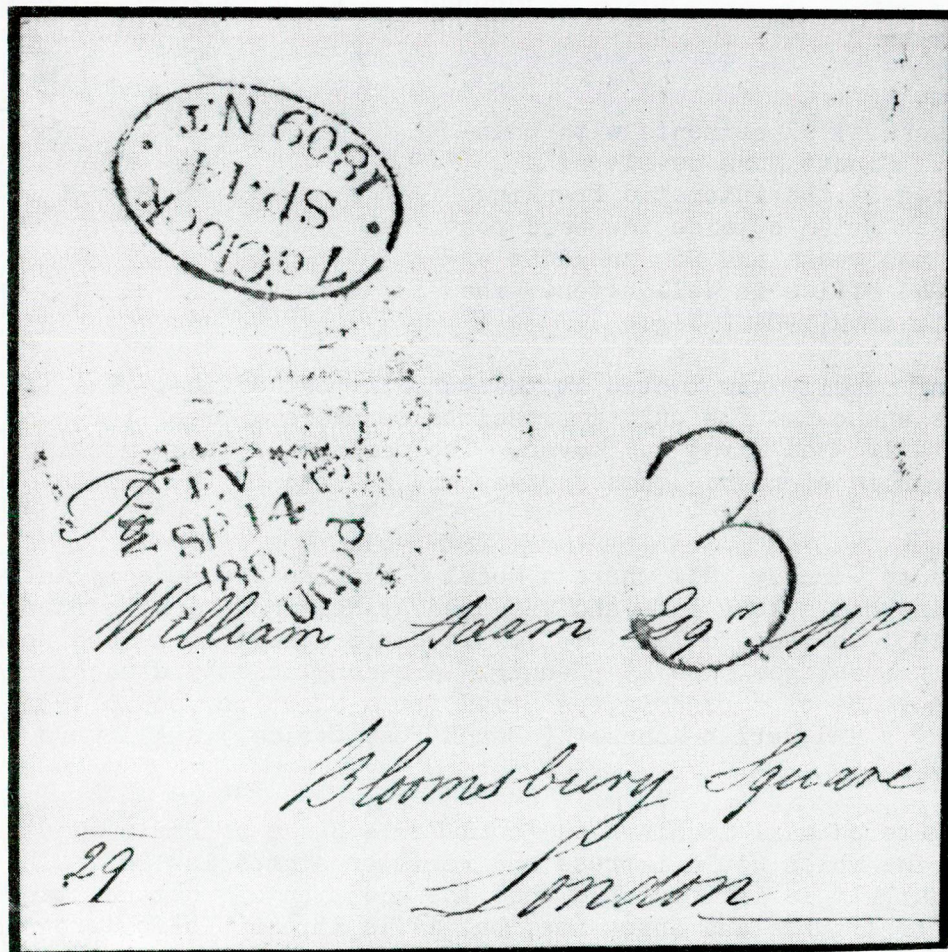
(reprinted from Collectors Club Philatelist, July 1981, Vol.60 Number 4, with thanks)

*The Editor recalls reading of a coin fed machine in use in Ware, Herts, in the pre-adhesive period, which although not providing any postal markings, is worth noting.

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TWOPENNY POST: A NEW COUNTRY DATE STAMP

In 1980 John Sharp, keeping his eyes rather better peeled than others, purchased at the Buntingford auction a hitherto unrecorded type of Country Sorting Office dated handstamp. The cover, with a full reconstruction alongside, is shown below.



There is not a great deal to say: John allowed the reconstruction was slightly speculative but seemed reasonable. Would another turn up. It was not impossible though after all the years of research one might be forgiven for assuming he had an very short lived experimental type, confined to one office which has a very high survival rate - one can usually find a Mortlake C.S.O. handstamp on offer.

Twopenny Post: A New Country Date Stamp...

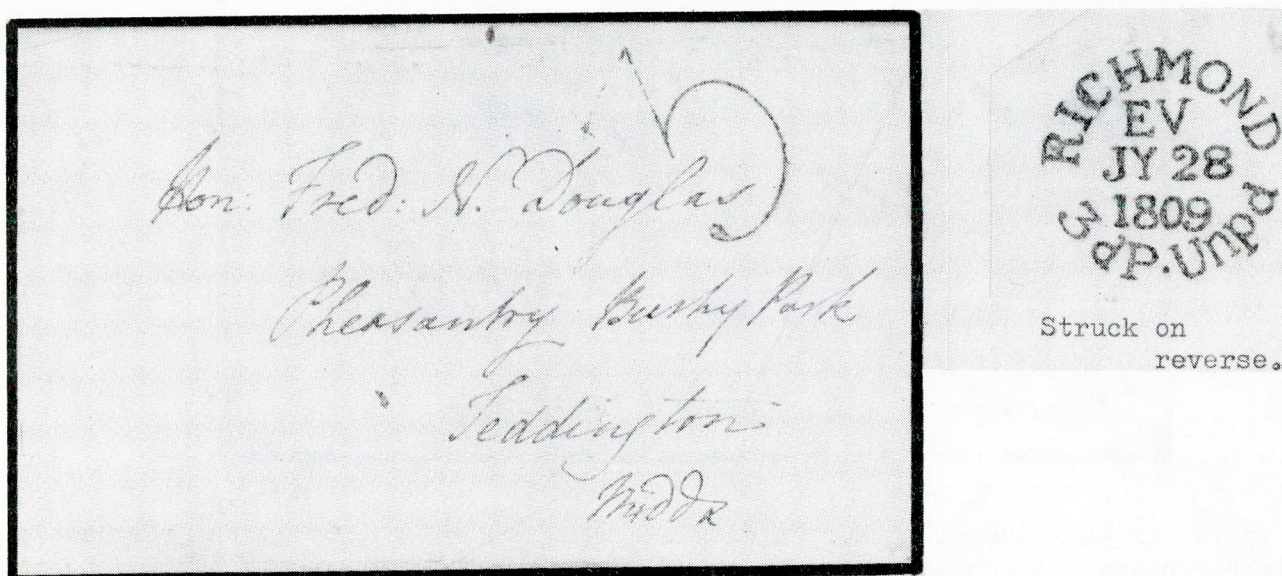
It was with much pleasure such forecasts proved wrong. Keith Romig sent news of TWO more, and the details he provides are here recorded.

Whilst viewing this summer at a Phillips manuscript auction of letters of the Earl of Sheffield and his descendents, I came across two further examples of this mark in a lot, which I was later fortunate to secure.

One is a further example of Mortlake, EV OC 2 1809 in red and is a bye-letter with a flat topped 3, also in red. The cover is endorsed " Cross Post Monday Morning ".

The other, shown below , is of RICHMOND EV JY 28 1809, in black and is also a bye letter. The bye-post system was introduced experimentally on the Hampton ride on 5th July, 1809 and was followed by the other rides over the next two years. It has always been presumed the large Country Sorting Office datestamps were introduced in 1809 when the bye-post was started. However, the earliest recorded date I have for a CSO datestamp is 1810. It would appear at first this type of mark was used for a while on unpaid letters and was replaced shortly after by the standard CSO stamp.

As can be seen, the Richmond cover was posted only 23 days after the bye-post scheme and is, therefore, a very early example of a London bye post letter - could it be the earliest recorded ?



Information on other early bye letters would be welcome, including those with the standard CSO handstamp.

Editor's Note:

Barrie Jay, who is working on the London Catalogue, agrees this is a completely new type and it is the first time he has seen a CSO for 1809.

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CANCELLATION QUERY, from Alf Kirk



This cancellation appears on a KG. V 9d Agate with Royal Cypher watermark, issued in 1913.

Has any reader seen it before and have they any idea what it is, perhaps an example showing the complete mark ??

LONDON ' PROVINCIAL ' HANDSTAMPS

Following John Harrison's most interesting display in March, several items plucked from the Editor's collection of ' Unpaid Datestamps ' were described and sent for inspection . Of the several on which John commented is the one shown below. It is merely a part front and part back but hopefully shows all the stamps. In any event the comments are well worth recording, both for the immediate interest and the display of what a study of a particular aspect can impart by way of understanding.



The letter is addressed to " Her Majesty's Librarian /Palace, Brighton / or Castle / Windsor, an unusual form of alternative address with two towns, both outside London. It was (incorrectly) posted unpaid at Clarendon Square T.P. Receiving House in the Town area (it should have gone into a General Post R.H.). It was passed to the Chief Office of the TP in the usual way, which then re-routed it into the General Post. No transfer stamp was used at the Chief Office on this item as these transfer stamps ceased to be used on transferred letters from the town area in April 1831 when the charge for the conveyance of such letters in the Twopenny Post was abolished.

The 10 forenoon time stamp was applied - presumably to record passage through the Chief Office of the T.P. Normally such letters would be routed into that section of the G.P.O. handling mail posted in London, where they would be struck with the usual black datestamp. This letter did not receive such a mark and it seems clear it was routed to the section dealing with mail coming in from the provinces. Whilst there appears to be no reason why these letters should not have been dealt with in this way and then included in the bags from this section (they would, no doubt, all be brought together anyway at a later stage as it seems unlikely a separate bag would be put on the coaches for mail posted in London and mail in transit through London), it is, nevertheless, rare to find letters transferred in this way. I do have a note of a few transferred from the TP to the GP are know similarly dealt with but it was not normal

London ' Provincial ' Handstamps.....

and probably contrary to regulations. Possibly because of the unusual nature of the transfer the letter was taken out of course for checking by a supervisor who cleared it with his " maltese cross " coded stamp before it was sent out to Windsor. On arrival, this was found to be the wrong town of the two possibles in the alternative style address. After adding " Not at Windsor Castle " and amending the address in red by deletions and underlining, the letter was sent to Brighton. This, of course, meant returning to London first. On arrival back in London the letter was again taken out of course for inspection and given a further " maltese cross " coded stamp before being sent to Brighton. No out of course star was used on this letter on either of the occasions when it might be expected. As noted in the article, every letter stamped with a " cross coded " stamp is usually struck on the obverse with an out of course star but many were not. My belief is these stars may only have been applied to delayed mail which, no doubt, have normally been the case. Dated evidence of any such delay is, however, almost impossible to come across but it is clear, in this case.

First time through the letter reached Windsor in excellent time as it was apparently posted, passed to the TP Chief Office, transferred to the General Post and received in Windsor all on the 31st. December. The second " maltese cross " coded stamp it was back in London on the following day and, no doubt, on its way to Brighton. In this case there is also the possibility no such out of course star was considered necessary as it was obvious from the address delay could be expected.

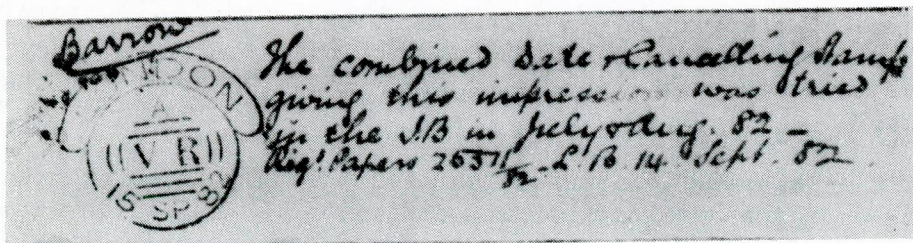
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POST OFFICE SUGGESTIONS

A facinating series of extracts under this heading appeared the ' P.J.G.B. ' over a number of years. These were introduced thus:

" A battered volume has come our way entitled ' Record of Suggestions, Proposals, &c made by the Public and Others ' which is an official index in manuscript covering the years 1872 to 1889. Some of the suggestions have since been adopted in some forms: each entry in annotated with the file number or Letter Book reference."

With Simon Kelly working towards completion of his research into ' Scrolls ', ' Hooded Circles ' or whatever, it was interesting to note the following for 1882:



There was only one 1882 entry under the title " Barrow " - " The combined date and cancelling stamp giving this impression was tried in the I.B. in July & Aug. 82 ".

source

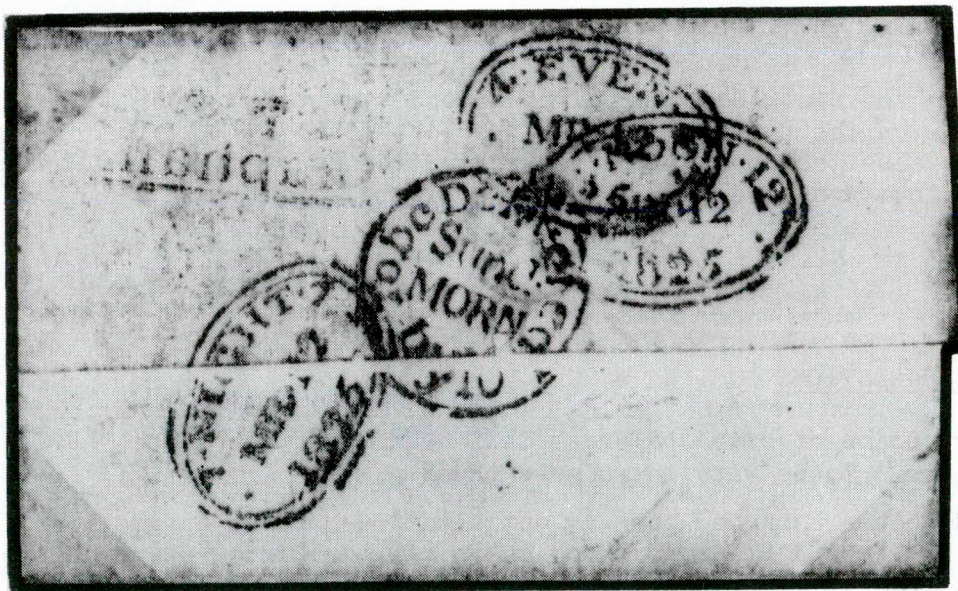
P.J.G.B. March, 1978, published by Robson Lowe Ltd.
acknowledged with appreciation.

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TWOPENNY POST: SUNDAY DELIVERY

According to both Brumell and Willcocks, the Sunday stamps with instruction to deliver by ten on Sunday morning (there are four of these in various format and wording), were probably to prevent any cause for critics to charge the Post Office with preventing employees from attending church services.

These stamps were in use from 1797 to 1834: the introduction to meet the critics can be understood but why, in 1834, was it thought possible to drop them ? Lewins in his book " History of the Post Office " gives the distinct impression that London had no Sunday delivery, though there were some in the provinces. He writes of a Commission of Enquiry consisting of "Lord Clanricarde, Mr. Labouchere, and the late Sir George Cornwall Lewis". Their report seemingly contained a full and detailed record of the Sunday services provided by the Post Office and one presumes a reading would make all clear. Can any one assist ?



The example above is rather a curious item of mail for the postal historian. The front carries the framed TP/Clapham and the round top hand struck 3, with an address in Hampton. It is the various time stamps which give cause for thought.

There are three time stamps, all dated 12th March, 1825. This was a FRIDAY, yet the need for the Sunday delivery was to accommodate the dispatch on Saturday night. If there were but one time stamp it might be an error but not three, variously at 12 Noon, 4 Even and 7 Night.

What confusion at the Chief Office caused the need to apply three stamps ? Why was the letter not delivered on the Saturday morning and given it was delivered on Sunday, thus demanding the Sunday cautionary stamp, what happened to a Saturday time stamp ? Could the instructional stamp have been applied in error - with such special use on a Saturday night it seems unlikely.

Solutions to this problem would be welcome.

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