

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.....

One of the main jobs undertaken by the Group has been the publication of sections for the " Handbook ". With the previous issue of ' Notebook ' a detailed list of the titles available was issued. Frankly, the response has been a little disappointing with seemingly many members yet to place their orders. In the hope and expectation the reprinting of the short list of titles available appears on page 20. In view of the investment of Group funds, your early orders will be most welcome.

Also on the subject of funds, the time has come when the A.G.M. in May will have to consider the level of subscriptions. We have for some time now enjoyed printing at rather less than a true commercial cost, a situation our printers have had to come to terms with and reflect more fairly the quality of the work in the price charged. The present cost of printing, packing and postage works out at about £4 per member. If we can recruit more members, this can be held as time passes but right now you will be invited to consider if you are prepared to pay the increased subscription to meet these rising costs. We suggest something near £5 would not be amiss but the decision is very much up to you, the individual member. The Treasurer will be putting the 1982 budget to the A.G.M. and unlike H.M.G. we have to enforce a money-twist policy and cannot indulge in too much deficit operating. Please think about it.

TWO VIEWS OF THE POST OFFICE, contributed by Ken Sargeant

One can find tourist guide books today which describe the various buildings of interest to be found in London. As the capital changes, no doubt these descriptions will allow postal historians of the future to see in the **imagination** structures no longer extant. An added dimension is the quality of language used to set the scene. The Editor has the unhappy impression created by the writings of today the literary quality may compare unfavorably as some of the buildings with that of 150 years ago.

From " A Topographical Dictionary of England, by Samuel Lewis, Third Edition, 1835

The New Post Office was completed in 1829, from a design by Sir Robert Smirke, and under an act passed in 1815, a great portion of the interval having been consumed in the purchase and removal of the houses which were crowded upon its site. It is an isolated massive structure of large dimensions, composed externally of Portland Stone, being about 389 feet long, 130 broad, and 64 high, and stands in an enclosed area of irregular figure, at the junction of the street called St.Martin's-le Grand with Newgate-street, a more central and convenient situation than which the old building occupied in Lombard-street, where, however, there is still a branch office. The facade towards St.Martin's-le-Grand is the only one in which there is any architectural display, and this is confined to three porticoes of the Ionic order, one at each end consisting of four columns, and one in the centre of six, the latter being surmounted by a pediment; on the frieze over the columns is the **inscription** Georgio Quarto Rege, MDCCCXXIX. Under the central portico, by an ascent of several steps, is the entrance to the grand public hall of the establishment, which extends through the building into Foster-lane, and is 80 feet long by about 60 feet wide, being divided by Ionic columns into a centre and two aisles. In the north aisle are the Inland, American, Ship-letter, and Newspaper offices; and at the east end is a staircase leading to the Dead, Mis-sent, and Returned Letter Offices. In the south are the Foreign and Twopenny post departments, the offices of the Receiver-General and Accountant, and the entrance to the Secretary's official residence. North of the centre, and in the east front, is the entrance or vestibule, where the bags are received from the mail-coaches. Communicating with the vestibule is the Inland Office, 88 feet long, 56 wide, and 28 high; and adjoining is that of the letter-carriers, 103 feet long, 35 feet wide, and 33 high. On the east side is an office appropriated expressly to the West India letters, near which are the Comptroller's and Mail-coach offices. The communication between the apartments in the north and south divisions of the building is by a subterraneous passage beneath the great hall, in which the letters are conveyed from one department to another by machinery, invented by Mr. Barrow. The Inland Office may be regulated to any temperature by a warm air apparatus, designed and fixed by Mr. Sylvester. On the first floor are the Board-room, the Secretary's rooms, and the Secretary's clerks' office; the Solicitor's office, and those for the Dead, Mis-sent, and Returned letters. On the second and third stories are lodging-rooms for the clerks of the Foreign office, who, from the uncertain arrival of the mails, are required to be always on the spot. On the basement, which is vaulted, and therefore fire-proof, are the mail guards' room and armoury; the servants' offices; the apparatus for warming the patent gasometer by Messrs.Crossleys, large enough to register 4000 cubic feet of gas per hour; and a " governor " by Mr.Clegg, for regulating the supply of gas to nearly 1000 argand burners: the gas is supplied by the City of London Gas Company. Several important improvements have taken place in this establishment within the last three years: the principal are, the consolidation of the post-offices of England, Scotland and **Ireland** and the abolition of the office of postmaster-general for each of the two latter; a new establishment for the General Post Office in London, and consolidation of the departments of account, with a diminution of 17 officers, an immediate saving of £ 5258 per annum, and a further prospective reduction of £ 1190; new establishments in Edinburgh and Dublin, with a diminution, in the latter, of about 50 officers, and of between £ 5000 and £ 6000 per annum in the expense; a daily post with France, and the correspondence with that kingdom passing by cross post accelerated 24 hours; the communication with Hamburg and Holland established by steam-vessels instead of sailing packets, and other beneficial alterations respecting continental intercourse; the general post delivery in London extended to a circle of three miles, and the twopenny post to a circle of twelve miles, from the post office, together with an acceleration of the delivery of general post letters throughout London, the delivery

Two Views of the Post Office.....

of the foreign mails with the inland letters some hours earlier than before, and the more expeditious distribution of letters by foreign mails arriving after the general delivery; the extension of time for the receipt of letters to be forwarded by the foreign mails, which are now taken in every evening as late as those for the United Kingdom; an earlier delivery of letters throughout the country districts of the two-penny post, and an additional delivery and collection every day at nearly all places round London; the establishment of several new post towns, and other local and horse posts, and various other alterations in Great Britain and Ireland, the West Indies, and British North America, all tending to accelerate the delivery of letters, to increase the efficacy and utility of the establishment, and to promote the convenience of the public. The present establishment of the post-office, including letter carriers (of whom there are 231) and mail guards (253), consists of 714 persons, as reduced by the late post-master-general, the Duke of Richmond, whose care in re-modelling this department of the public service is entitled to much praise. The number of steam-boats employed in its service is, daily between Liverpool and Dublin, four, of an aggregate burthen of 1229 tons, and 140-horse power each; twice a day between Holyhead and Dublin, six, of an aggregate burthen of 1409 tons, and 100-horse power each; daily between Milford and Waterford, four, of an aggregate burthen of 864 tons, and 80-horse power each; daily between Port Patrick and Donaghadee, two, of an aggregate burthen of 240 tons, and 40-horse power each; twice a week between Weymouth and Guernsey and Jersey, three, of an aggregate burthen of 481 tons, and 60-horse power each; and daily between Dover and Calais, three, of an aggregate burthen of 330 tons, and 50-horse power each; and four times a week between Dover and Ostend, two, of an aggregate burthen of 220 tons, and one of 50 and the other 60-horse power; making in all 24 steam-vessels, of an aggregate burthen of 4773 tons, and 2000-horse power. The gross receipts of the post-office, in 1833, amounted to £ 2,062,839, and the expense of management to £ 552,734, the net produce being £ 1,391,470. In 1832, the amount of postage collected in London only was £ 637,178.

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From " The Parliamentary Gazetteet of England and Wales " 1845

The General Post-office, in St.Martin's-le-Grand, is the most magnificent of all the public edifices, not ecclesiastical. It was begun in 1825, from designs by Sir R. Smirke, and completed in 1829. It is of the Ionic order. The basement is of granite, but the building is of brick, faced with Portland stone. It is 400 feet in length and 80 in depth. In the centre of the front is a portico, consisting of six columns of Portland stone, resting on pedestals of granite. The vestibule, or great hall, occupying the centre, forms a public thoroughfare from St.Martin's-le-Grand to Foster Lane. This hall is 80 feet long, 60 broad, and 53 in height. On both sides of it are receiving rooms for newspapers, inland and ship letters,&c., behind which are rooms for the letter-sorters and carriers. In the upper rows are apartments in which the foreign clerks reside. The basement story is fireproof. It contains the rooms of the mail-coach guards, and offices for the servants, with an armoury. The whole building is lighted with gas. The area is enclosed by a railing. At the northern extremity is a court-yard where the mail-coaches pull up and depart. The bustle which prevails at the post-office every evening from 6 to 7 o'clock is prodigious, and is thought to constitute one of the most interesting spectacles in London.

Mr. Rowland Hill, the author of the present system of penny postage, recently read a paper on its " results ", before the Statistical Society of London, wherein he shows that " the gross revenue for the year 1838, the last year totally unaffected by the great reduction of rate, was, in round numbers, £ 2,500,000; and that for the year 1840, the first and only complete year on the plan £ 1,350,000, showing a deficit of £1,000,000." " Now," adds Sir Hill,"as one million, the deficit, is equal to 74 per cent on £ 1,350,000 (the gross revenue for 1840), it is manifest that in order to restore the gross revenue to its former footing, the number of letters for 1840 must be augmented by 74 per cent upon that number. Now, I have already pointed out that the present rate of increase, as shown by a comparison between March 1840 and March 1841, is more than 21 per cent per annum. Supposing, therefore, this rate of increase to be main -

Two Views of the Post Office.....

tained - that is, supposing each succeeding year to bring an augmentation of 21 per. cent as compared with the year 1840 - it is obvious that the end in question - viz., the complete restoration of the gross revenue to its former footing, will be attained in about three years and a half from the present time, or in something less than five years from the reduction in the rates ". Sir Hill does not anticipate, under present circumstances, that such will actually be the result; but if additional facilities of transmission (which he points out) are afforded, he thinks it probable that the gross revenue will be restored to its former footing within the period mentioned.

(It should be noted the gross revenue did not recover until 1852.)

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CHARGE NOT PAID EC NO 4, from David Druett

It is often said how great things come in small packages; and the envelope shown here is a superb example.

Perhaps I ought to start with the one mark which appears on the front in a light purple, the framed "CHARGE NOT PAID / E C No 4".

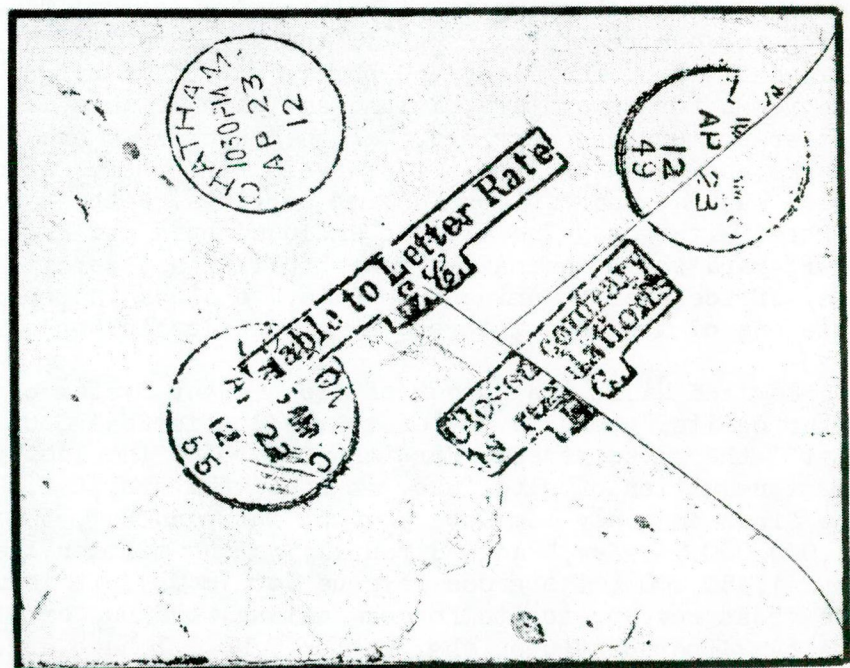
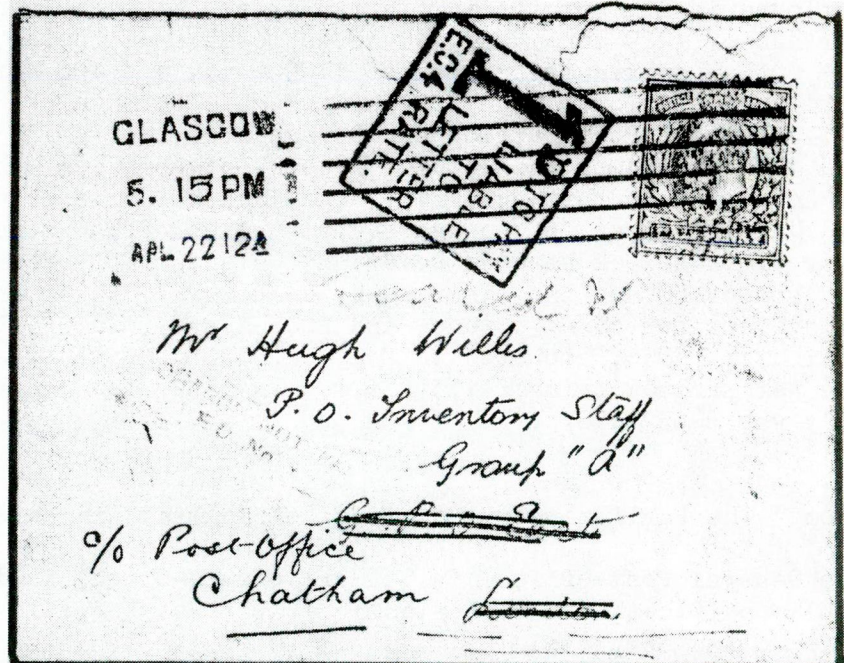
The letter was posted in Glasgow on April 22nd, 1912, prepaid only with a half - penny. As can be seen, it was addressed to a member of the P.O. Inventory Staff who had apparently been transferred to Chatham. On its way, someone noted the envelope was sealed, there is an endorsement in pencil to this effect. The charge for this was duly recorded with the handsome 1d stamp.

Not to be outdone, the reverse of envelope carries two EC stamps, "Liable to Letter Rate" and the "Closed contrary to regulations", two London EC date stamps, duty codes 49 & 55, plus the Chatham arrival datestamp for 10.30pm on the 23rd. April.

Although most of the several marks have been recorded elsewhere in reference books, I do not recall the small "CHARGE NOT PAID/EC No 4" and wonder if, in fact, it is a departmental rather than a "public" stamp.

Do any readers recall other examples ?

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THE GREAT EXHIBITION 1851

On the 10th. February, 1840 Prince Albert Francis Augustus Charles Emmanuel, Prince of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, married his cousin, Queen Victoria of England. The prince received the title of Royal Highness by patent and, in 1857, was proclaimed Prince Consort.

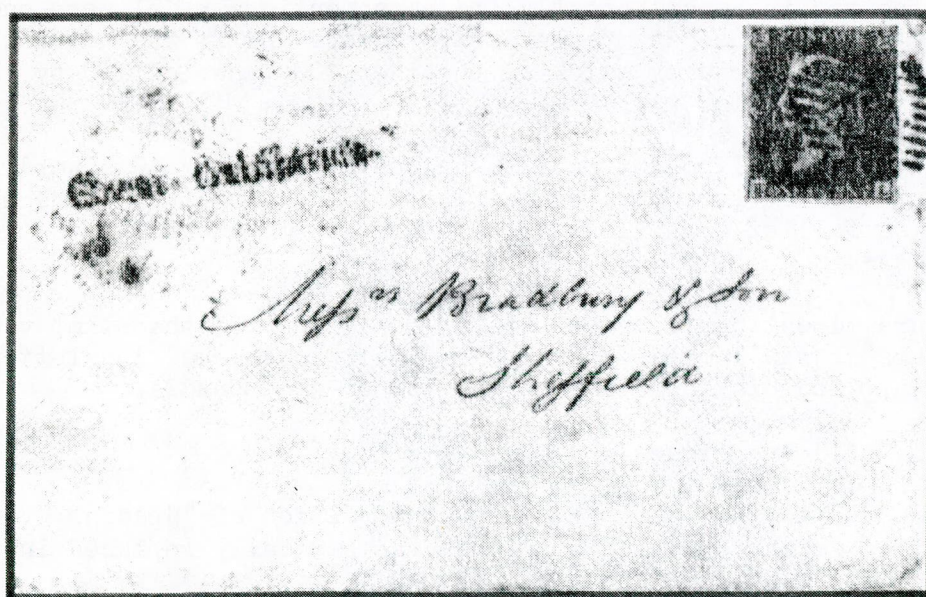
Prince Albert's services to the cause of science and art were very important; he presided over the commission appointed in 1841 to consider the best means of rebuilding the Houses of Parliament and the Great Exhibition of 1851 owed much of its success to his activity, knowledge and judgment.

The Great Exhibition of 1851 was the first International or "Great" Exhibition of the entire world. This memorable display was under the active patronage of Prince Albert and, for its accommodation, the "Crystal Palace" was erected in Hyde Park. It derived its name from the fact that it was constructed entirely of glass on steel frames and was the world's largest such Exhibition embracing, as it did, entire trees which were already growing in Hyde Park.

It was an extraordinary success and gave the exhibition movement an impetus which provided examples at New York (1853), Dublin (1853), Munich (1854), Melbourne (1854) and Paris (1855).

The Exhibition was open to the public for only 141 days in all, since, in Victorian England, no such "entertainment" could be made available on Sundays. It was officially opened on the 1st. of May, 1851, closed to the public on the 11th. of October and declared officially closed on the 15th. of October of the same year. The considerable and expansive wonders of this, the world's first International Exhibition, were therefore to be seen for less than six months.

In George Pearson's "Special Events Postmarks of the United Kingdom" 2nd edition published in 1973 under the heading ' 1851 The Great International Exhibition ' is "An example of what purports to be a postmark for this exhibition is known but as its status is in doubt, it is not given full listing".*



"Great Exhibition" 1851

The sight of a cover bearing the Great Exhibition handstamp in red was quite a surprise. The cover is addressed to Sheffield and bears a four margined penny red KL, tied by the London 14 Diamond; on the reverse is the Maltese Cross datestamp of Charing Cross 27 JU 27 1851 in red.

The type of the red Great Britain handstamp struck in the upper left corner of the

The Great Exhibition 1851.....

envelope is unlike any contemporary handstamp issued by the General Post Office.** One can therefore presume it was privately made for application on mail sent from the Exhibition to the nearest head post office, at Charing Cross.

With the aid of the London Library we were able to examine the " Corrected Edition " of the " Official Catalogue of the Great Exhibition of the works of industry of all Nations 1851 " which was published by the Royal Commission and bore the imprint of Spicer Brothers and W.Clowes & Sons. This volume contained 320 pages for one shilling. The edition we would have liked to study was illustrated and part I cost ten shillings.

There are no signs of a post office in the plans of the Exhibition but the representative of the Post Office Department was Mr. Osmond Jones (unfortunately P.O. Records have not been able to give me any information about him), the Registrar of Letters was Mr. Wade and the Electric Telegraph was Mr. Gamble. A slight post office connection was Henry Cole, who served on the Executive Committee. Such a vast organisation must have produced considerable amount of daily mail and if each letter had been struck with a handstamp then quantities would have survived and examples would have been found on the illustrated Exhibition envelope.

It would therefore appear certain that whoever used this handstamp, either struck it once on the top of a parcel of mail to denote its origin, or else had a small office where letters were few.

In another volume supplied by the London Library " HUNT'S HAND-BOOK to the Official Catalogue " we read a splendid description of the workings of the Envelope Fold Machine that produced 25,000 envelopes in a 10 hour day. The consumption of envelopes in those days was 600,000,000 which represented 24,000 days work each year, so roughly eighty machines would have been necessary to keep up with the demand.

PHILATELICALY the most exciting exhibit was made by T.D. Gill, of 27, Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square, who was an inventor. Robert Hunt described this as " a postage-stamp machine, contrived as an expedient for saving time. It is so arranged, that on dropping in a penny, the machine most honestly and conscientiously delivers one stamp." Now we are talking of 1861 when stamps were imperforate and it was not until 1912 the colis were issued, manufactured by sticking together 100 panes of 120 by the lower margin to produce twelve rolls.

As Mr. Gill was an inventor I do not believe he cut a sheet of 240 stampd into singles. He could have cut the sheet into vertical strips to make a roll, the one penny coin in-the-slot providing a fall of a guillotine and a forward movement for the next victim to move into place***.

It would be a natural location to have a pillar-box alongside the stamp vending machine. If so, perhaps it was looked after by Mr. Gill who checked the letters to see all were stamped, applied his handstamp on the top of each bundle.

Any brighter ideas would be welcome.

* original text amended to show comments in second edition of "Special Events "

** Champness type F1, which format this matches, was generally replaced in the early 1850's and completely so by 1857.

*** After all, a decade later, Lecoq invented his printing machine for production of stamps in rolls, rouletting them horizontally at the same time and puncturing the stamps with two tiny holes which facilitated the movement of the roll.

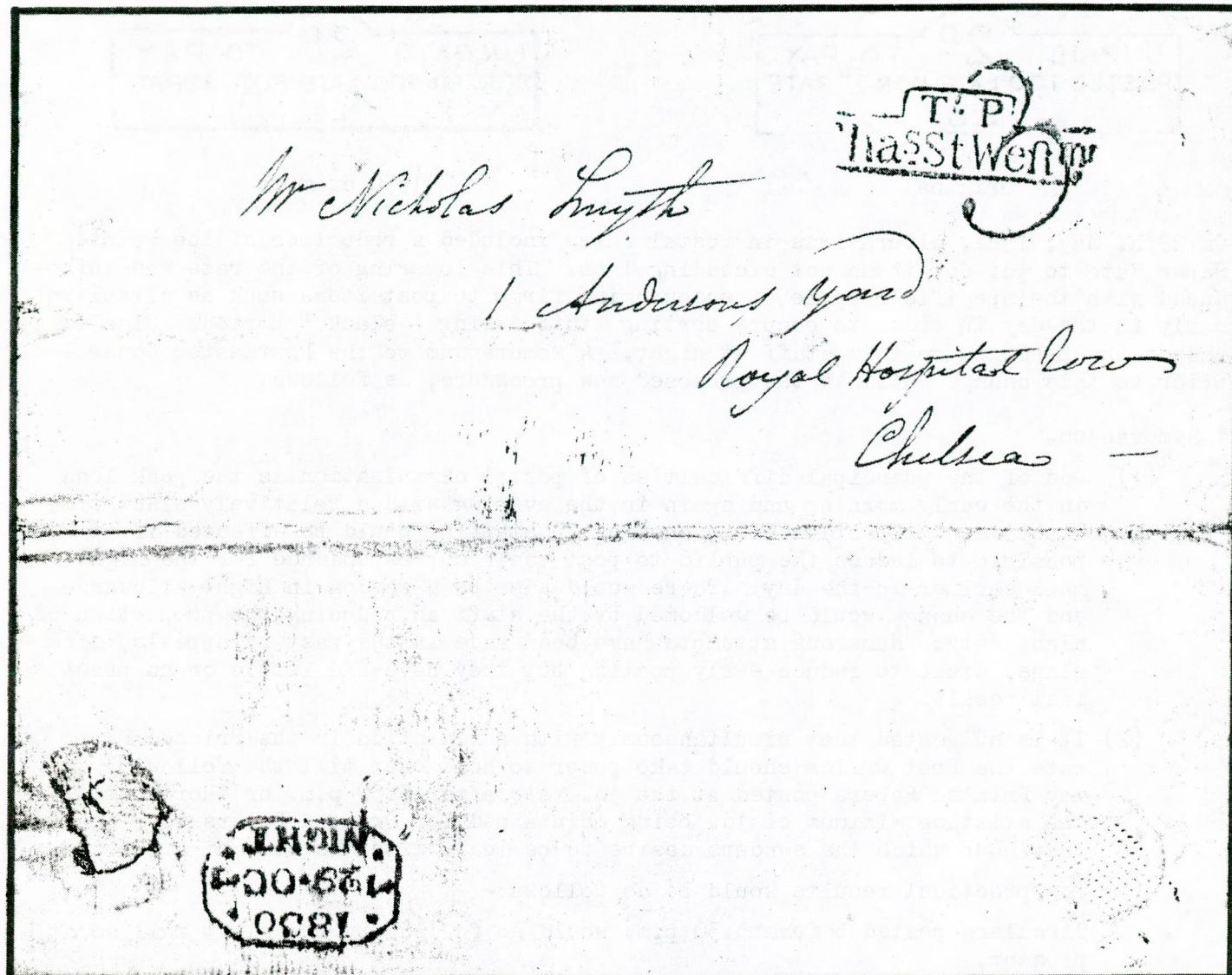
(*** is an original footnote: the other two added here)

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TWOPENNY POST:TRANSFER STAMPS

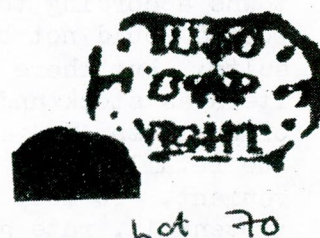
All the reference books give details of the reversal of the time as comprising the figures 12, 2, 4 and 7 and confined to 1823. The Post Office, with a prudent care for the public purse, had corrected stamps made but retained in use the errors. The four stamps, with the corrected layout and the story of Post Office reaction make an interesting element in any display.



In 1980 came the proverbial apple-cart upset when a reversed " 7 " dated 1830 came to light (at a price which clearly showed the vendor, currently operating a curious super market type operation not a million miles from the Waterloo Bridge, did not always see the obvious, for which all collectors are grateful!!).

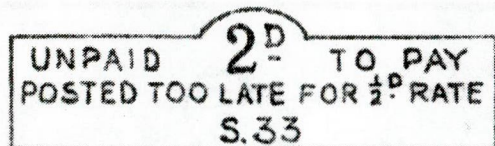
Was it just a freak? The contents of the letter confirm the date, so no room for error there. In brief notes to and from Barrie Jay it turned out not to be an item on its own, he having one, in black whereas the item shown is in red. His example is dated 29 OC 1830.

Finally, the cutting on the right taken from an auction catalogue, a page of which was put to one side for quite another item. Possibly a reader might recognise the item and be able to provide further information?

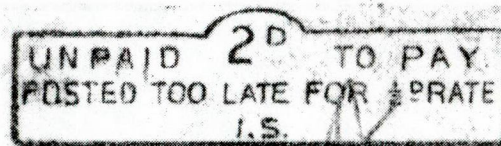


TOO LATE FOR $\frac{1}{2}$ d. RATE, by E. Keith Parker

The illustration of the " Too Late for $\frac{1}{2}$ d. Rate " mark on page 7 of P.J.G.B., March 1978, together with the author's observation that he did not recall seeing an example, prompts me to send the 1939 item illustrated and, in addition, to include these notes in explanation of the somewhat unusual wording of this handstamp.



original



1939 example

On 29th. May, 1922, alterations in postal rates included a reduction of the Printed Paper Rate to $\frac{1}{2}$ d. for items not exceeding 1 oz. This lowering of the rate was introduced with the specific purpose of encouraging firms to post items such as circulars early in the day in order to occupy sorting staff during ' slack ' periods, also to reduce the pressure on this staff at night. A memorandum to the Postmaster General prior to this change outlined the proposed new procedure, as follows:

" Memorandum.

- (1) One of the principal difficulties of postal organisation is the peak load in the early morning and again in the evening with a relatively slack time in between. Considerable economies in staffing could be effected if it were possible to induce the public to post their correspondence for the night mail earlier in the day. There would also be a saving in night allowance and the change would be welcomed by the staff as reducing the proportion of night duty. Numerous attempts have been made in the past by appeals, circulars, etc., to induce early posting but they have had little or no practical result.
- (2) It is suggested that simultaneously with a reduction in the Printed Paper rate the Post Office should take power to hold over till the following day any Printed Papers posted at the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. rate after 3.30 p.m. or thereabouts, the existing minimum of 1d. being maintained for Printed Papers posted after that hour which the senders desire to be dealt with the same night.
- (3) The practical results would be as follows:-

Circulars posted before 3.30 p.m. would go for $\frac{1}{2}$ d. by the night mail as at present.

Circulars bearing 1d. stamp posted after 3.30 p.m. and before the closing of the night mail would be dealt with in the same way.

Circulars posted after 3.30 p.m. bearing a $\frac{1}{2}$ d. stamp would, whenever convenient to the Post Office, be thrown out at an early stage and dealt with next morning.

.....

- (6) It is thought that the great bulk of printed matter could without much inconvenience be posted before 3.30 p.m. (the exact hour might vary in different towns according to the time of departure of the mail trains), or if not so posted would not be so urgent that delay until morning would have serious results. But there are certain classes of correspondence, in particular such items as stock and market quotations, which cannot be made up till the close of business, and certain wholesale invoices which are understood to govern the retail prices of the following day, where delay would be really inconvenient. To meet these special cases, it would be necessary to retain the present 1d. rate and it is suggested that in view of the additional cost of dealing with them during the rush hours a higher rate is not unreasonable. It may be noted that with a reduction to $\frac{1}{2}$ d. the whole of the Printed Paper post will be unremunerative and will in effect be paid for by Letter Post. "

Too Late For $\frac{1}{2}$ d. Rate

From examples in my collection, it seems that any **unpaid** items posted before the 3.30 p.m. ' cut - off ' time were charged 1d. Anything posted after this time should, if it was to be dealt with that night, have been prepaid 1d., and so unpaid items in this category were liable to a charge of 2d. This ' Too Late for $\frac{1}{2}$ d. Rate ' handstamp was thus produced to explain the reason for the higher surcharge. Not many examples would seem to have survived; I have seen three, the earliest dated 1st.October, 1925. They were applied in three different (large) offices - London, Inland Section and Edin - burgh, both of the type illustrated and London W.1. in the more usual square box type.

This early posting $\frac{1}{2}$ d. differential continued from 1922 until 16th.September, 1968 when Printed Papers as a separate inland cheap rate category of mail disappeared. During the period 1st.June, 1951 to 1st. June, 1956 when the minimum rate had become $1\frac{1}{2}$ d, a handstamp reading " 4D To Pay Posted Unpaid Too Late for $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. Rate." was used in various offices.

Reference. Memorandum is filed in P.O. Records M 12004/29;File 3.

Source: P.J.G.B. June 1978, published by Robson Lowe Ltd., acknowledged with appreciation.

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In March 1979 M.B.Evans records one used at Cambridge in 1932 and the other at Nott - ingham in 1936. He suggests the type was issued to all large post towns.

In September 1979, F. Stephens recorded an example at Manchester 14th.May,1929.

'Notebook ' readers are invited to send in details of any London examples of this mark.

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WHICH WERE THE FIRST SCROLLS ? by Maurice Barette

*Controller E.D.
13 Aug 1878*

I used to think the first hooded circle cancellations were the experimental LONDON VR and LIVERPOOL 466 dies issued on the 10th. July, 1882. I was surprised recently to find in Proof Book volume 33, p.17 * the impressions of two dies of the Stamford Mercury precancel dated 13th.August, 1878.

This stamp could have been the prototype of the scroll design as it shows the horizontal bars of the experimental type and it nearly a " living fossil " as it was not taken out of use some 15 years ago.

This is not the end of the story. Turning to volume 1 of the Proof Books, page 69, I was even more surprised to find the item reproduced below :



* Date Stamp Proof Impression Books held in the Post Office Archives, St. Martins-le-Grand.
Items reproduced by kind permission of the Post Office.

EARLY SQUARED CIRCLES AND "MASSEY TRIALS" by Maurice Barette

In matters such as Postal History, what you do not know is often more important than what you do. A well constructed, coherent theory can be produced from the pieces of information you have only to have new findings upset the fragile edifice.

On the subject of "Massey Trials" and Squared Circles, the authority cited most often is "Squared Circle Postmarks" by the late W.G. Stitt Dibden. Originally published in 1964, republished without changes in 1974 by Harry Hayes. An updating on the octagonal stamps was published by Jeremy Greenwood in "The British Mail Coach", N° 11, in 1976.

It was whilst researching in the Proof Impression Books held in both the Post Office Archives and the National Postal Museum, I was surprised to find a few discrepancies between what had been published and these records.

"At this time", writes Stitt Dibden, "a Mr. J.E. Massey... submitted to the Post Office an entirely new design conception consisting of a circular hinged stamp but with a spring catch for fastening the face plate." Jeremy Greenwood confirms this with : "The improvement consisted of substituting a spring catch for fastening the face plate of hinged stamp in lieu of the screw or pin formerly used." and gives the date 1879.

To this S-D adds : *"From 1879 controlled experiments were carried out in the London EC and Inland Branch offices with an entirely new pattern which is known all over the world today as the "squared circle" (fig. 1)". J.G. confirms with : "Massey provided two trial stamps..."*

The trials were satisfactory but for a corner problem and S.D. adds : *"A partial cure for this was attempted in the experimental type with thick corners (fig. 2). After the original Massey trials, a first order of twelve stamps was placed and these were fitted with dies as illustrated (fig. 2)". J.G. confirms the 12 stamps being ordered in March, 1880.*



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 5

The Post Office Date Stamp Book, Vol. 38, p. 5, records the "first" squared circle stamps were issued for Leeds, LEEDS/A2/SP19/79 (fig. 3) and LEEDS/B2/SP19/79. The next (also Vol.38, p. 26A) were for Liverpool, three in number of which fig. 4 is one.

To come back to the "Massey Trials" in London E.C., six of the squared circle (S.D. type 1) appear in the Stamp Book, vol.39, pp 48 and 49 : LONDON-E.C./C/NO26/79 (fig. 5). The circles had 17-18mm diameters with the squares 18-19.3mm. Were they the original Massey Trials ? Pierre Langlois has an example of this cancellation dated NO2879 on a 1d. plate (FA, 196). The stamp being sent to the E.C. Office on November 27th., this must be a first day of use (see fig. 6). Two more dies were issued of the same type 1, Stamp Book Vol. 39, p. 71: LONDON-E.C./H/AP16/80 (fig. 7) with the circle diameter 19 - 19.2 mm and the square 20.5 mm. The first record of the S.D. type 2 appears as late as 1884, Vol. 43, pp 113 and 114, with 12 impressions reading LONDON-E.C./C/JU17/84 (fig.8). The circle diameters were 19.3 - 19.8 mm and the squares 20.3 - 22.8 mm.

In the meantime, hundreds of squared circle stamps had been sent all over England and Wales, some as far as Cyprus and the Cape Colony. Even thicker corner varieties appeared.

What about Massey then ?

Early Squared Circles and "Massey Trials"...

Mr. K.L. Head, of the Patent Office, had the kindness to check the records and has confirmed only one patent was granted to J.E. Massey in the period 1870 - 1880, for *"Improvements in date and other stamps..."*. J.E. Massey was described as a *"Manufacturer of Patent Logs and Sounding Machines"*.

This patent, N° 1957 of 28th. May, 1875, is concerned with a handstamp carrying a hinged face plate, locked by a sliding or rotating device. A transverse bar sliding in a cylinder between handle and body of the stamp prevents any movement of the parts when locked. A spring may be added above the bar for extra safety. The patented improvement may be used with or without bar or spring. The patent is illustrated by the drawings of several models and various locking devices (eg figs 9, 10 and 11). According to the patent the handstamp was intended for *"general purpose of stamping"* and *"may be employed in connection with the double or obliterating mark used for postal purpose"*.



Fig. 6



Fig. 7

Fig. 8

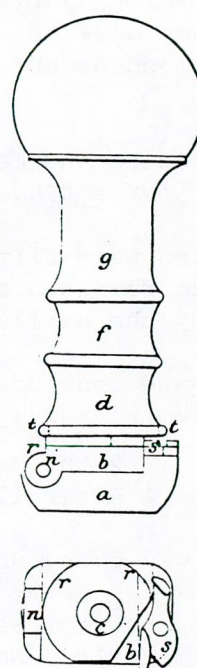
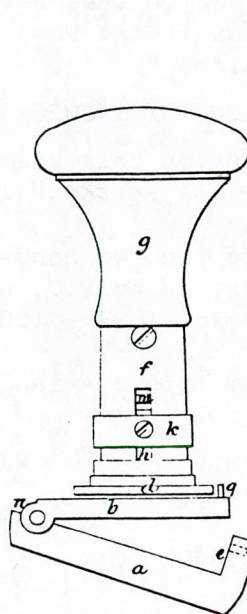
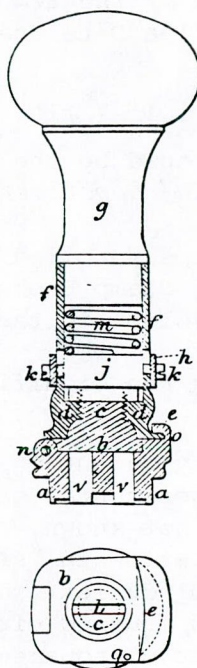


Fig. 9 Fig. 10 Fig. 11

What were the relations between Massey and the Post Office ? I was fortunate to find in the Post Office Archives a file which dealt with this aspect very fully (E.5361/80). The file subject is *"DATE STAMPS / Extended trials of patent spring hinge Stamp invented by Mr. J.E. Massey. / Reports on relative merits of various stamps, etc..."*.

The first item in the file is a letter dated 13th. December, 1879 from Massey to John Filley, Secretary of the Post Office, wherein he reminds Filley he obtained an appointment following his request on the 13th. May, 1878. He was asked to leave two of his stamps *"with Mr. Jeffery the Controller, for the purpose of being tested by trial in actual use in the office..."*. He adds : *"...In June of the present year (that is 1879) I was requested to furnish for the purpose of a more extended trial in the " Inland Department " another stamp, which I did, and subsequently I by desire supplied the Office with my prices, as per my letter of the 8th Sept^r last. Some considerable time having now elapsed, may I respectfully sollicite the favour of being informed as to the results of the various trials that have been made..."*. The time span was, in fact, nearly twenty months, May 1878 to December 1879.

The file contains 18 more pages of 26 reports and notes exchanged between the Secretary, the Controller, the Storekeeper and others about the respective merits of the hinge stamp (Berri), the screw stamp (De Lacy) and the spring stamp (Massey), the *" spring " feature being a way of differentiating between the old Berri and the new Massey stamps, both being hinged ones (see Notebook N° 52, p. 13).*

Early Squared Circles and " Massey Trials "

To record the detail of all this paperwork would be tedious. Let me sum up by saying that except for the Storekeeper (Mr. Fletcher) who in two long reports (23rd. January and 4th. February, 1880) expresses fierce opposition to the Massey handstamp and argues strongly in favour of the De Lacy for the single dies and Berri for the double, all others involved agreed on the superiority of the Massey device. On the 16th. April 1880 the matter was finalised : *" Mr. Jeffery " (Controller Circulation Department) " under your report of the 19th ultimo, the Secretary approves of the " Massey " stamp being employed altogether in the East Central Office..." with the decision on the 24th. April, "the arrangement is only to come into force gradually as new stamps are required".*

The National Postal Museum keeps a " Mount Pleasant Stamp Impression Book 1878 - 1900 ", which shows on the 10th. November, 1882, the impressions of two V.R scrolls, codes A and B, dated 24 NO 82, with the note : *" On trial only. N° 101 Massey Patent withdrawn "*.

A few pages earlier in the same book is a note reading : *" N° 101 Patent hinge double hand stamp brought into use on the evening of the 27th 6-79. See impression below "*. This stamp does not appear in the Post Office Date Stamp Impression Books or in the Dubus " London Cancellations ".

LONDON/tS/JU26/79 101 (fig. 12)

From the date and description this stamp could be the experimental one supplied by Massey " *for extended trials in the " Inland Department "*.

Which dies were fitted on the two handstamps supplied in 1878 to the E.C. Office is likely to remain a mystery as no E.C. Date Stamp Books for that year appear to have survived, the earliest being 1894 - 1907 volume in the National Postal Museum.

What can we conclude from this ? Arranging the significant points in date order is most illuminating :

28th. May, 1875	Massey patent
After 13th. May, 1878	2 experimental stamps in the E.C. Office, dies not known.
27th. June, 1879	1 experimental stamp in the Inland Department, N° 101 duplex.
19th. September, 1879	Leeds squared circle : 2 dies.
11th. November, 1879	Liverpool squared circle : 3 dies.
26th. November, 1879	London E.C. type 1 squared circle : 6 dies.
13th. December, 1879	Massey inquires on the results of his three handstamps.
18th. December, 1879	Official inquiry begins about the relative merits of the stamps.
16th. April, 1880	2 more E.C. type 1 squared circle.
16th. April, 1880	Secretary approves adoption of the Massey Stamp.
24th. April, 1880	Arrangements made to order Massey stamps as new ones are required.

It must be admitted the first squared circles and the first " London E.C. squared circle Massey Trials " had no connection with the Massey handstamp. Since De Lacy was the supplier of handstamps at this time, we may assume these quite new stamp designs were fitted on De Lacy's equipment.

Post Office Archives have a file (N° E 6,346/1861) without date or signature. From its contents, rather than the file reference year, it could well have been written some time after 1893. The file title is *" Date stamps - Single, Double and Combined."* The purpose is to offer a short survey, without pretention to accuracy, of the new stamps, from the De Lacy's contract of 1871, with a very brief look at the Massey handstamp, which is described as *" a spring catch for fastening the face plate of Hinged*

Early Squared Circles and " Massey Trials "....

Stamps, in lieu of the screw or pin formerly used ", the adoption of the " Combined Stamps " of the squared circle pattern in April 1880 for Manchester and other towns (there is a sketch in the margin shown as figure 13), the supplying by Massey of 12 combined stamps of the " Spring " pattern in August 80, the proposal of " a number of fresh designs ", among which the trial of three " experimental " hooded circles with the date at the lowest part of the circle in ECO, IB and Liverpool. Again there is a sketch in the margin (fig. 14). Then follows the pattern with the date in the middle of the stamp, further modified with the bars being reduced in number, fig. 15 being the marginal sketch, plus the note " These stamps appear to have been supplied by Mr. Massey."



Fig. 12



Fig. 13

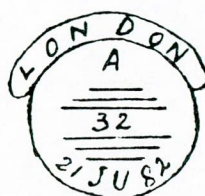


Fig. 14

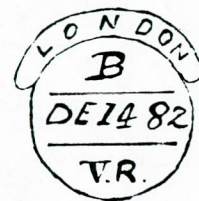


Fig. 15

The use of Massey handstamps for scrolls is confirmed by a note in the E.C. Date Book of 1894 - 1907, which reads : " This stamp " (double arc LONDON.E.C/172) " (also type) was rec^d 5-8-05 in place of N.O Massey (hooded) stamp beyond repair ". It is worth noting this " NO " code was an exception in the London E.C. scroll range, being the only one with the letter " N " ; I have seen this " NO " stamp used from 6th. March 1884, which means more than 21 years of faithful service.

Mention in the same E.C. Stamp Date Book of a " N^o 11 De Lacey (sic) Stamp supplied 16.5.1900 in place of E Massey Double ring stamp ". This one could be a London E.C. double ring stamp, code " E ", diameter 23 mm, which figures in a list of the handstamps of the E.C. office in 1895. In fact, after the 16th. April, 1880 decision, the Massey handstamps began being used on a large scale in the E.C. Office. A minute (1892/83) refers to the payment of a sum of £47 5/ to Massey for the supply of 30 handstamps " at the usual rate of 31 s./ 6 d. each. " (February 1883).

Coming back to the period preceding that decision, the chronology on the previous page shows the " Massey Trials " types 5 and " 7 " of March 5th. 1880 and 9A of April 16th. 1880 should have been De Lacy's stamps too ; but this is another story.

In the light of the documents I have studied in the Archives, I now have to state the experimental Massey handstamps were tried in the E.C. and I.B. offices before the adoption of the squared circle patterns, or the so-called " Massey Trials ", which HAD NO CONNECTION WITH THEM... until new evidence is unearthed which will destroy that theory too. Meanwhile I go on digging...

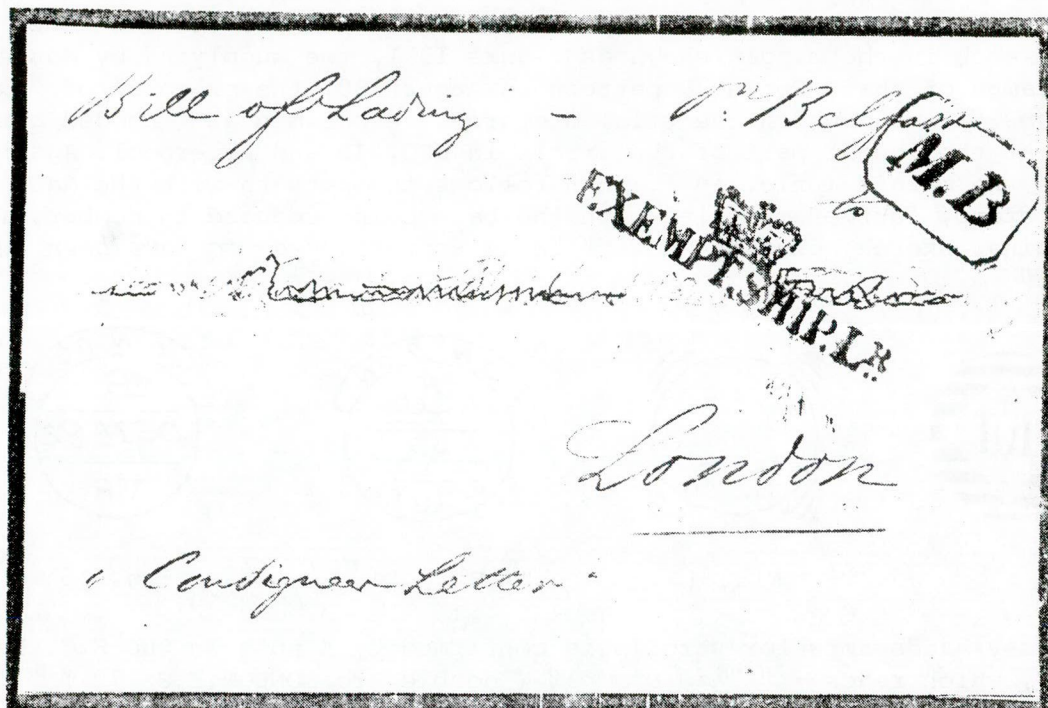
I wish to thank Mrs C.I. Constantinides, in charge of the Post Office Archives, and Mr. Raife Wellsted, Curator of the National Postal Museum, and their assistants for their great help with this research, not forgetting Mr. K.L. Head of the Patent Office, and Peter Forrestier Smith who had the kindness to translate my pidgin into a correct English language.

Illustration sources, which are gratefully acknowledged with appreciation :

Figs 1 and 2 from " Squared Circle Postmarks " of W.G. Stitt Dibden (Harry Hayes 1974)
 Figs 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8 from P.O. Date Stamp Impression Books, P.O. Archives.
 Figs 9, 10 and 11 are from the Massey patent held by the Patent Office.
 Fig 12 is from the Mount Pleasant Stamp Impression Book, National Postal Museum.
 Figs 13, 14 and 15 are from P.M.G. Minutes, Post Office Archives.

THE EXEMPT SHIP LETTER

An entire of 1845 which has that something extra to delight collectors is shown below.



This particular example, with some demented soul attempting to excise the actual address, carries not only the crowned Exempt Ship Lr but also a handsome framed M.B, both struck in black. The writer's endorsements are clearly intended to leave the Post Office in no doubt as to the nature of the communication. Across the top is " Bill of Lading - pr Belfast " and at the foot " Consignees Letter ". There is a manuscript date 12 July 1845 inside and a poor London datestamp for July 14th 1845.

A few remarks on the two handstamps and their use. The Exempt Ship Lr. is the second type, dated by Alan Robertson 1841 - 1855, appearing in both black and red for the whole at that period. His remarks on the history and background are worth repeating:

From the earliest days of the established Post Office, the merchant community resented the payment of postal charges on invoices, Bills, advices, etc., claiming this hampered, instead of encouraging, the development of trade. No concessions were granted in respect of letters carried within the kingdom but with the development of overseas trade in the early 18th. century, it was conceded and enacted in 1710 (9 Anne.1710 Cap.10) that " Letters of Merchants and Master Owners of any Ships, Barques or vessels of Merchandise or any cargo or Lading therein on board such Ships, whereof such Merchants or Masters are Owners, delivered by any such Masters of any such Ships, or by any other persons employed by them, for the carriage of such Letters according to their respective Directions, such letters to be delivered to the respective persons to whom they shall be directed, without paying or receiving any hire or reward, advantage or profit for the same in any wise ". A few years later the following Proviso was added ("Proviso for Merchants. By Stat. 6 Geo. I.c.21.f.52. This Proviso is confined to Merchants' Accounts, etc., sent to and from places beyond the seas, not within the King's Dominions ").....: XIII. " Provided always that all Merchants' Accounts, not exceeding one sheet of paper and all Bills of Exchange, Invoices and Bills of Lading, and and shall hereby be understood to be allowed without Rate in the price of Letters; and likewise the Covers of Letters not exceeding one fourth part of a sheet of paper, shall be understood to be allowed to pass without rate or payment for the same." This practice of " exemption " was, therefore, of very long standing. Subsequent Acts confirmed and modified the maximum total weight of letters exempt from ship letter charge sent by Owners, Charterers, or Consignees. The Consignee's name had to appear on the ship's manifest, proving he had goods aboard the vessel carrying his letters.

Prior to the 1830's no G.B. " Exempt Ship Letter " handstamps had been recorded (yet)

The Exempt Ship Letter.....

on incoming ship letters. The known handstamps appear to have been used at the London Ship Letter Office alone until 1840, at which date a " Liverpool Exempt Ship " stamp was issued there. Other ports of entry used a manuscript endorsement " Consignee's Letter " plus their own Ship Letter or ordinary datestamp.

The MB handstamp in the format shown had a limited period of use from 1844 to 1849, according to Robertson, though the new type introduced in 1856 suggests the period can be extended significantly. It comes in red and black, the black being scarcer.

The handstamp was introduced as a result of the Anglo-French Convention of 1st. June, 1843 when a new service for the posting of letters via private steamships sailing between certain French and English ports was started, though the bulk of the mail between the two countries was carried by the regular Post Office Packet vessels, mostly on the Calais-Dover channel route. Since the handstamp is not known before 1844, it may well be the service did not start until some months after the agreement.

The Moveable Box, literally that, would be placed in a prominent position for passengers to post their letters. On arrival of the ship the box would be carried by an authorised agent to the postmaster of the port of arrival, who unlocked the box, removed the letters, relocked and returned the box for the next sailing. It seems the boxes from the earlier period were mainly on steamers sailing from Le Havre to Southampton, London, Dover or Brighton (in that order of frequency). All these ports are known to have used the first ' MB ' handstamp. Folkestone is known with a different handstamp used from 1845; it may be their service did not start until then. With the ratification of the 1856 Treat, a new type of stamp was introduced.

Bringing these two handstamps together presents a curious picture. Someone puts goods on the cross Channel steamer, either himself or an agent travelling with the same ship and chooses to send a letter using the mobile box. Hmmm!

The extracts are taken from Alan Robertson's " The Maritime Postal Handstamps of Great Britain " with grateful acknowledgement.

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TWOPENNY POST: SUNDAY DELIVERY

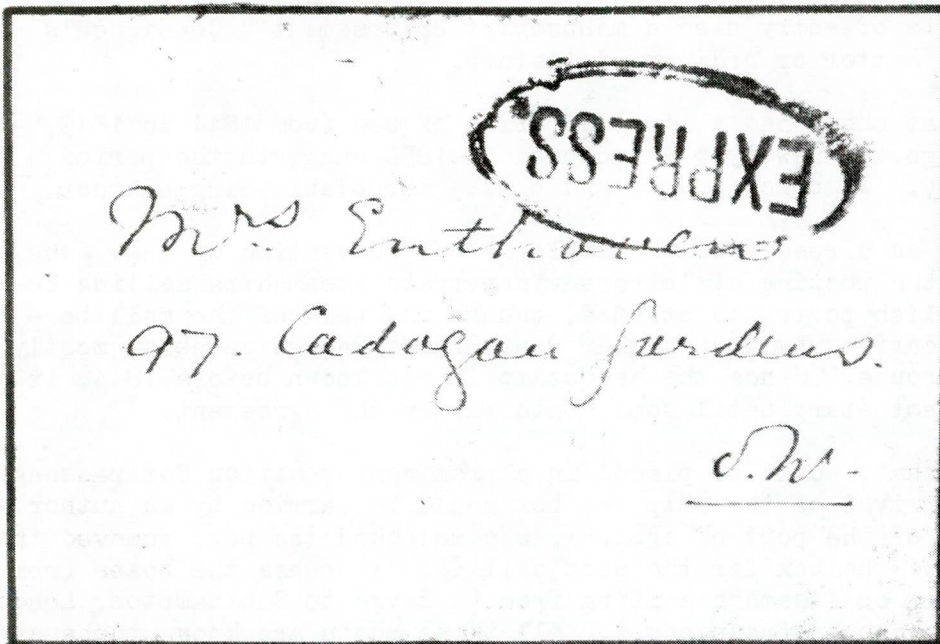
In response to the item appearing on page 20 in ' Notebook No. 54 ', Eric Quinn quite rightly points out March 12th., 1825 was not a Friday but a Saturday, which rather takes much of the steam out of the problem!!

According to Kents and Pigot's Directories, Eric writes, Hampton was served by the City Office in Lombard Street and had deliveries from London arriving $\frac{1}{2}$ past 8 and noon at 12 (sic). The letter received a time stamp at noon, so it was not possible to send it out that day. It is possible it was sorted at subsequently stamped for the evening dispatch at 4 p.m. via Brentford - which in fact did NOT go to Hampton but to Hanwell. When it was realised the evening dispatch was out of the question, it was further sorted for early dispatch on Sunday morning, arriving at Hampton at 8.30 a.m., probably leaving the Chief Office at 6 a.m.

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EXPRESS SERVICE: A COVER FROM LESLIE BOND

The cover sent in to " Notebook " is a good example of the Post Office Express service and, if one assumes the facility in 1924 was much the same as 1910, then the abstract



from the Guide will give a reasonably clear picture of the conditions under which the item was handled. The backstamp is not complete - perhaps a reader can provide the missing portion ?

This particular example appears to have been handled by Service I: Delivery by Express Messenger all the way.

The details, from the 1924 Guide, are as follows:

This service is performed on Week-days only.

In London, Postal Packets for express Delivery are accepted at all the more important Post Offices.

Charges:

- (a) The Express fee (including charges for any public conveyance, e.g., omnibus, tram-car, or railway) is :-
 - (i) For every mile or part of a mile from the Office of delivery to the address....6d
 - (ii) On each packet weighing more than 1 il. a weight fee of.. .. 3d.
 (Ordinary Postage is not charged)
- (b) If the sender desires, or it is otherwise necessary, that a cab or other special conveyance be used throughout (i.e., from the place of posting to the place of delivery), the actual fare or cost of the conveyance must be paid in addition to the mileage fee. The weight fee is not charged in such a case.
- (c) Cycles are used, wherever practicable, for the delivery of express packets of a size and weight suitable to be so carried.
- (d) When several packets are tendered by one sender for delivery by the same Messenger at different addresses, or to different persons at the same address, the Express Fee of 6d. a mile will be charged for the full distance to be traversed by the Messenger up to the delivery of the last packet, and an additional fixed charge of 1d. for each article above one. The number of articles delivered by one Messenger must not exceed ten. The sender may determine the order in which the packets are to be delivered. The weight fee will be charged upon each packet over 1 il. in weight, not on the aggregate weight.

Express Service.....

- (e) When several packets are tendered for delivery to one person, the sender may, if he chooses, tie them together so as to form one packet. In that case a weight fee will be chargeable upon the aggregate weight if over 1lb.
- (f) All charges must be prepaid in postage stamps, to be affixed to a form provided by the Post Office for the purpose.

Posting and Distinctive Marking.

- (a) Every packet must be handed in over the counter, or to an Officer authorized to receive it. In no case may it be placed in a letter box.
- (b) The word " Express " must be boldly and legibly written by the sender above the address in the left-hand corner of the cover.

Hours of Posting.

On week-days, when the offices are open for telegraph delivery, generally from 8 a.m. or 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. For offices open earlier and later see pages 468 to 487 as regards London.

Express Delivery Service I is not accepted in London for areas beyond a limit of 4 miles from the Central Telegraph Office and west Strand B.O. unless delivery can be effected by 8 p.m.

There is no Express Delivery by Messenger all the way (Service I) on Sunday, Good Friday, or Christmas Day, in England and Ireland, or on Sunday in Scotland.

Reply and Further Services.

On the delivery of an Express Packet, the Messenger may take a reply or perform a further Express delivery service within the authorised hours. Express fees at the usual rates must be prepaid either by the sender of the first service or by the sender of the reply or further service.

When a reply or further service is required by the sender, the words " Wait Reply " or " Wait Further Service " should be written by the sender above the address of the packet. The Messenger is allowed to wait for the reply 10 minutes free of charge; after that time 2d. is charged for every quarter of an hour or part of a quarter of an hour during which the Messenger is required to wait.

When a packet on a Reply or Further Service is taken to an address on the Messenger's homeward route, or to an address within a radius of half a mile of the Post Office from which the Messenger started on the original service, half only of the mileage rate is charged, and is calculated on the actual distance traversed by the Messenger in performing the reply or further service.

Acceptance of Express Packets by Telegraph Messenger.

A Telegraph Messenger, on delivering a telegram, may, if desired, and on receiving the Express charges, take back to the Post Office where he is employed a Packet for Express Delivery. The fee for this service will be charged as from the Residence of the sender and not from the Office where the Messenger is employed.

Acceptance of Telegrams by Express Messenger.

A Messenger on delivering an Express Packet may, if desired, carry an Inland Telegram to the nearest Telegraph Office for transmission. If the telegram is to be taken to his own Office no Express fee will be charged unless he be kept waiting for it more than ten minutes, in which case the usual charge for waiting will be made. If the telegram be taken to another Office, the usual Express fee as for a Reply or Further Service will be charged and must be prepaid by the sender of the telegram. An Express Messenger is not allowed to accept a telegram for a place abroad.

Express Service.....Exceptional Express Services.

Money and Jewellery are accepted, in sealed and unsealed packets or loose, for conveyance by Express Messenger all the way at the sender's risk without being registered.

Living animals can be accepted for express delivery, if confined in a suitable receptacle, and special arrangements may be made as to dogs.

Liquids are accepted, although contained in glass bottles, provided the bottles are properly closed, and that the packet bears some such label as " Liquid " or " Fragile, with care ".

Postmasters may arrange for the conduct of a person to an address by an Express Messenger.

Supplementary Service.

A Local Express Packet may be handed in at a Town Sub-Post Office which is not an Express Delivery Office under the following conditions :-

The packet, which must be of such a nature that it can be sent by the ordinary Inland Post, takes the ordinary course of post from the Office where it is handed in until it reaches the first Express Delivery Office on its route, and thence it is conveyed direct to destination by Express Messenger.

The Express fees are charged as from the Express Delivery Office, and not from the Office of Posting, and must be prepaid by the sender. Ordinary Postage is not charged.

It must be clearly understood that in such cases there may be some delay before this packet reaches the hands of the Express Messenger, so that where there is an Express Delivery Office within easy reach the sender is recommended to take his packet to that office.

Telegrams conveyed by Express Messengers from Football and Cricket Grounds, &c., to Post Offices for Transmission.

The local Postmaster on application will make arrangements, where circumstances allow, for Reporters at Football and Cricket Grounds, Public Meetings, and other like gatherings, to obtain the exclusive services of an Express Messenger to convey their telegrams to a Telegraph Office for transmission, on payment of the mileage fee, which is calculated on the full distance traversed by the Messenger in going from his Office to the ground or place of Meeting, and thence to the Telegraph Office. Where the messenger force at the disposal of the Postmaster is not adequate for such services to be provided for each applicant separately without detriment to the public interests, arrangements may be made at the Postmaster's discretion for a joint service.

If several journeys are made in immediate succession for the same person between the ground or place of Meeting and the Telegraph Office, they will be considered as one service, and be charged for according to the total distance covered by the Messenger in performing them all. If the Messenger be kept waiting for the telegrams more than 10 minutes in any case the usual charge for waiting, viz., 2d for each quarter of an hour or portion thereof beyond the first 10 minutes, will be levied.

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Just for the records, the other services available to the public are mentioned, very briefly, the P.O. Guide proving the usual full information.

Service II: Express Delivery after Transmission by Ordinary Post (at request of sender). Postal packets of any kind sent by the Ordinary Post may be delivered by Express Messenger :-

In London, from the General Post Office or a Head District Post Office at which the Mail Bag is first opened. This service requires the sender to pay in full with the adhesives affixed to the item concerned.

Service III: Special Delivery of Postal Packets in Advance of the Ordinary Deliveries at the request of the Addressee. Firms or Persons requiring early delivery of mail

Express Service.....

could make written application for this. Payment would be by adhesives affixed to a special form and to the Messenger in cash, if necessary. There would be no extra rate in adhesives on the mail processed by this service.

Service IV: Letters for Express Delivery on Sunday (at request of sender). The postage had to be prepaid and was one shilling in addition to the ordinary postage and express fee. The P.O. Guide gives a full list of fees for London. The adhesives would be on the cover

Service V: An Express letter telephoned to a Post Office, with a limit of 30 words, would be sent for the usual Express Fee.

Editor's Note:

There is growing interest in the Express Services provided over the years. Perhaps readers with an interest in this would care to drop a line and a list of those ' expressing ' an interest can be each respondent for easier exchange of information.

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INLAND BRANCH: A RARITY

Having just published a Handbook section dealing with the Inland Branch, needless to say, up comes an example of a rarity not recorded.

In the forthcoming postal sale from the collection of the late Monsieur Meunier is the item shown here. It is a cut out, not that the rest of the envelope would be of any postal history importance other than the preference of collectors.



It does not seem to fit in with any of the types recorded in use in 1866 using code L, Dubus types 6 and 7 having square cut central bars, whereas this example is indented. This variation within a standard series is shown in 3D6C, fig d - in particular. It might be we have a missing 12 or a missing 91: from the size of the bars more likely the latter.

In any event, an item to add considerably to the collection of anyone interested in this now much sought after period of postal history cancellations.

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LONDON PAID STAMP : A SURPRISE AT AUCTION

The Robson Lowe auctions for the 23rd. October, 1981 and the 18th. February this year contained an example of Willcocks fig.20 at 34mm., which according to the catalogue was in use 1787 to 1788, later use being at 29mm (1789 - 1791) and 31mm (February to September, 1791). The item in the sales, however, rather put the postal history cat amongst the pigeons, as it is dated 12th. November, 1791. The two descriptions are much the same, being an E.L. addressed to Wells in Somerset and since the October item was not sold, it might be there is but one of these surprises. If this is not the case, would any reader with details of both send these to ' Notebook ' for the record.

And of any others which hitherto might have gone un-remarked.

L.P.H.G. Publications Now Available:

<u>Ref</u>	<u>Detail</u>	<u>Price</u>	<u>Post</u>
1	Section G, Part 1: Classification of Types of Undated Namestamps	25p	40p
2	Section D, Part 1: Horizontal Ovals	65p	40p
	Part 2: The Duplex	65p	40p
3.	Introductory Papers: London Datestamp Codes	85p	46p
4.	Section J: District and Branch Cancellations from 1856		
	Part 1: East, West Central, West	£2.50	58p
	Part 2: North, North West, North East, South, South East, South West.	£2.30	64p
	Part 3: East Central	£1.50	52p
5.	Section B: Part 2 - Stamps of the Branch Offices 1829-1857	65p	46p
6.	Section K: Suburban Offices From December, 1856	£3.75	76p
7.	Section I: Inland Branch Cancellations		
	Part 1: Early Experimental Machine Cancellations	85p	46p
	Part 2: The Vertical Oval Cancellations	£1.70	52p
	Parts 1 and 2 combined	£2.50	58p
	Large capacity 4 ring binders	£2.50	£1.40
	Post and packing for two binders		£1.77

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A NEW CATALOGUE is on offer from one of our members. R.K.C. Walters has recently started to distribute a catalogue comprising postal history items from all over the country but with a range of London material included.

A free sample catalogue can be obtained by contacting

R.K.C. Walters
Avon House, 35 Church Street,
Hungerford,
Berks RG17 0JH or telephone (04886) 3854

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THE GROUP PACKET.....

Brian Smith would like to remind all members that he runs a packet for their benefit, both selling and buying. For those who would like to receive this service please contact him at

41 Cranleigh Drive,
Swanley,
Kent BR8 8NZ

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