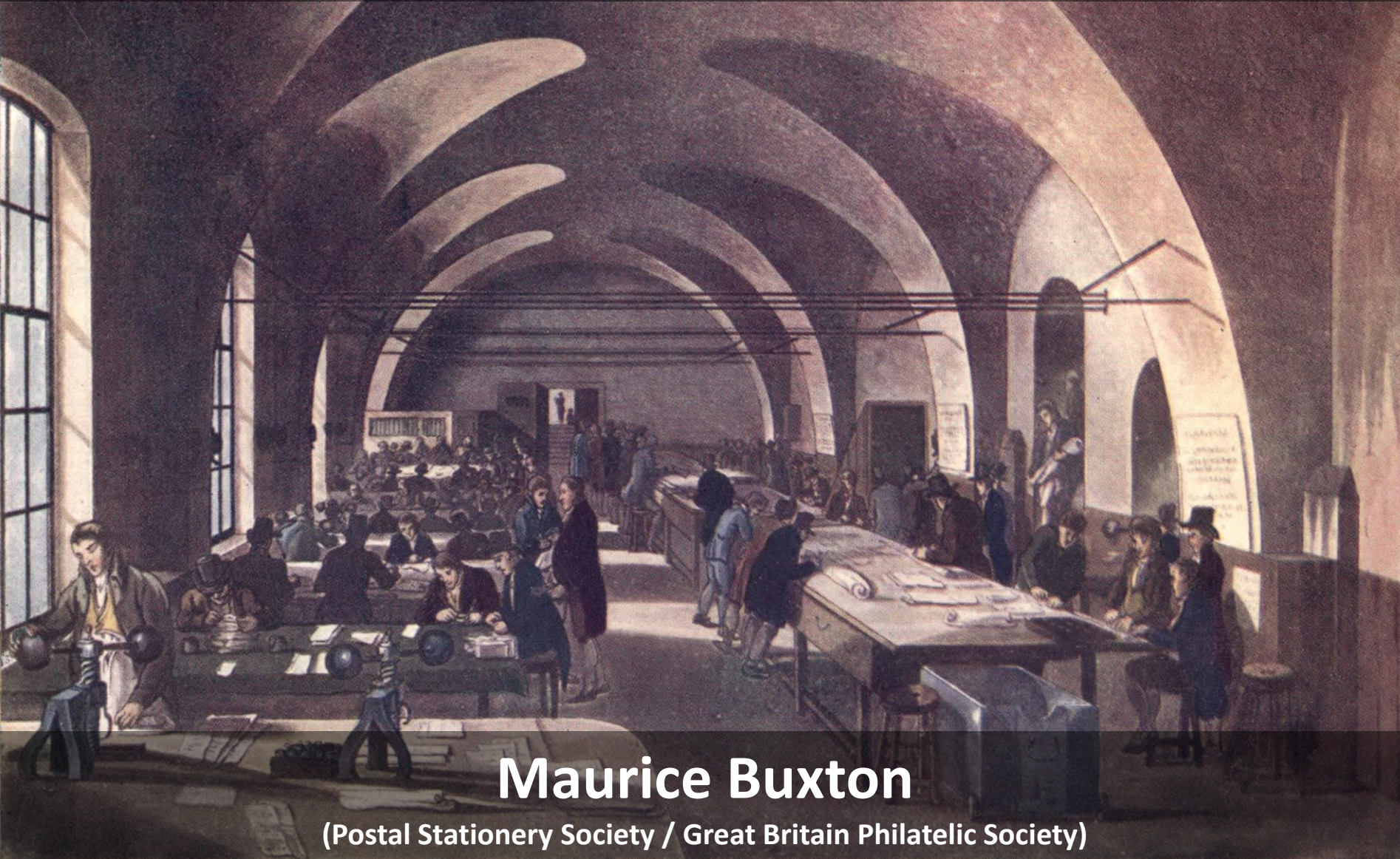


# Great Britain: Queen Victoria Stamped to Order Postcards



**Maurice Buxton**

(Postal Stationery Society / Great Britain Philatelic Society)



Zoom Presentation to a  
joint meeting:

Postal Stationery Society  
of Australia

Postal Stationery Society

11 July 2020



# First issue of GB postcards 1 October 1870 in two sizes



Originally planned size  $4\frac{3}{4}'' \times 3\frac{3}{8}''$



Subsequently added size  $4\frac{3}{4}'' \times 2\frac{7}{8}''$

Smaller size became standard postcard size  
(larger size discontinued after first printing)

# Small format PO cards were available in uncut sheets of 42



- Easier for customers to print what they needed on the reverse
- Option widely used by businesses and others for advertising etc
- Not however popular with stationery trade!

*Digital reconstruction of a sheet of cards*

# Committee of Wholesale and Retail Stationers Memorial to PMG, 1871

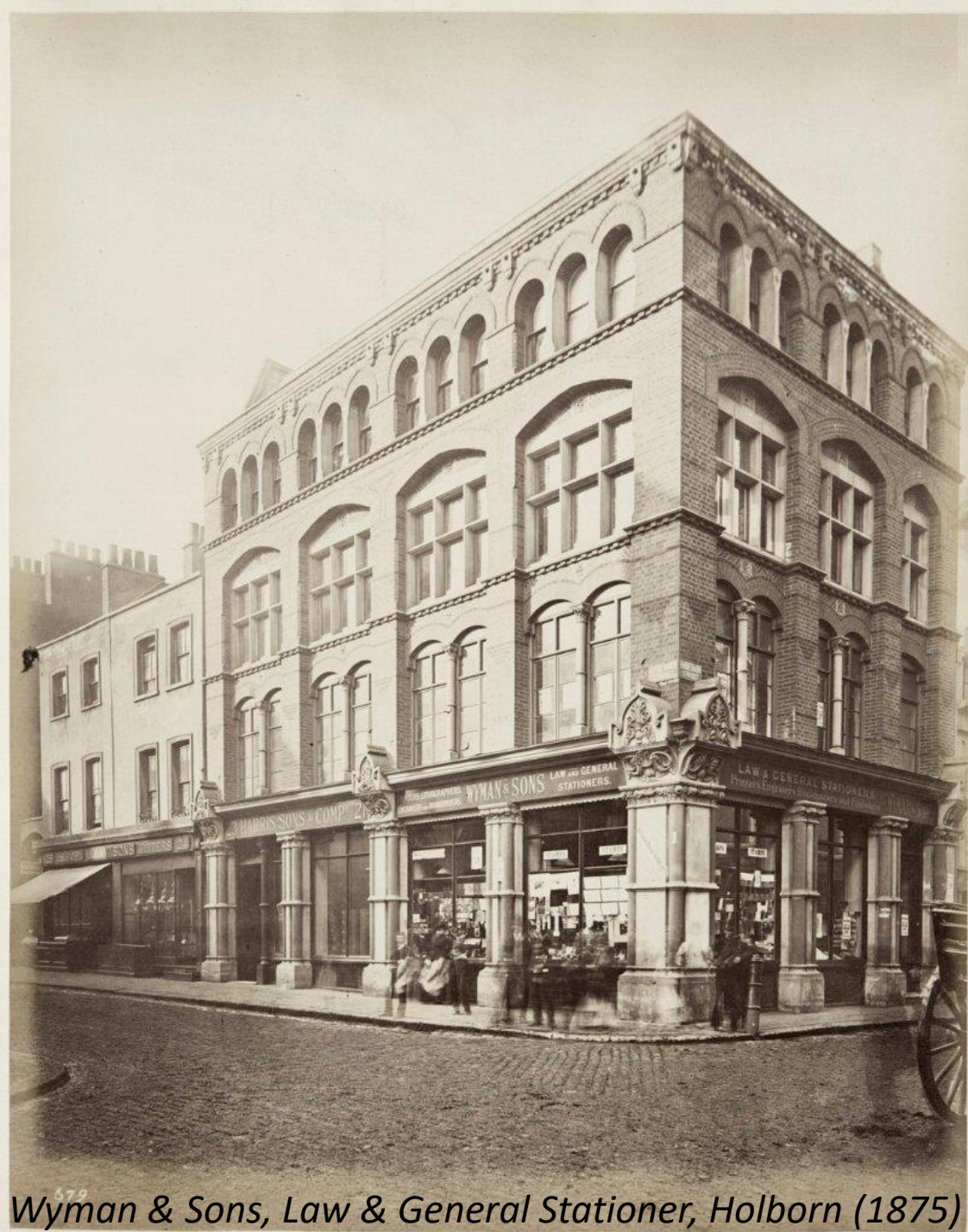
## *Main complaints*

- PO selling *any* postal stationery was unfair competition with stationery trade
- Postcards "*infinitely worse*" as the card itself was "*given away*" (i.e. sold at face value)

## *Proposed remedies*

- PO should cease selling all postal stationery
- Failing that, at least ask more than cost price
- ½d STO dies should be made available for stamping private postcards

The last two points were agreed on



Wyman & Sons, Law & General Stationer, Holborn (1875)



*Proof on thick paper in issued colour of pink  
(purpose unclear, may be working-up strike)*

## ½d embossed die for STO work

- Smaller size (c.f. contemporary ½d adhesive stamps)
- Colour trials submitted to PO 27 February 1872, pink chosen
- Purple of letterpress PO cards “*very expensive*” and “*not found to work well in the embossing machines*”
- But embossed die could only stamp single cards ...

## So why not use letterpress?

- STO work was handled in Somerset House by the Stamp Office ...
- ... which then had limited letterpress capability ...
- ... so embossing unfortunately only viable option



# Private Post Cards.

---

ON and after the 17th instant, Private Cards may be taken to the Office of Inland Revenue to be impressed with a Halfpenny Stamp, under conditions which may be learned on application at that Office; and, when thus impressed, but not otherwise (for adhesive Stamps will not be accepted in payment of the postage), they may be transmitted through the post between places in the United Kingdom under the following regulations:--

1. The words "Post Card" and "The address only to be written on "this side" must be printed on the front of the Cards, as in the case of the Official Post Card,—the Royal Arms being omitted; but there must be nothing else (the address excepted) printed, written, or otherwise impressed upon the face of the Cards.
2. Nothing whatever may be attached to the Cards.
3. The Cards must not be folded, nor may they be cut or in any way altered after they have been impressed with the Halfpenny Stamp at the Office of Inland Revenue.
4. On the back of the Cards any communication, whether of the nature of a letter or otherwise, may be written or printed; but such communication must not extend to the front side.

Private Cards will not be supplied to Postmasters for sale to the Public.

It must be distinctly understood, that no Cards, except those which are impressed with a Halfpenny Stamp at the Office of Inland Revenue, can pass through the Post for a postage of a halfpenny, if they have anything of the nature of a letter written upon them. There seems to be much misapprehension upon this point.

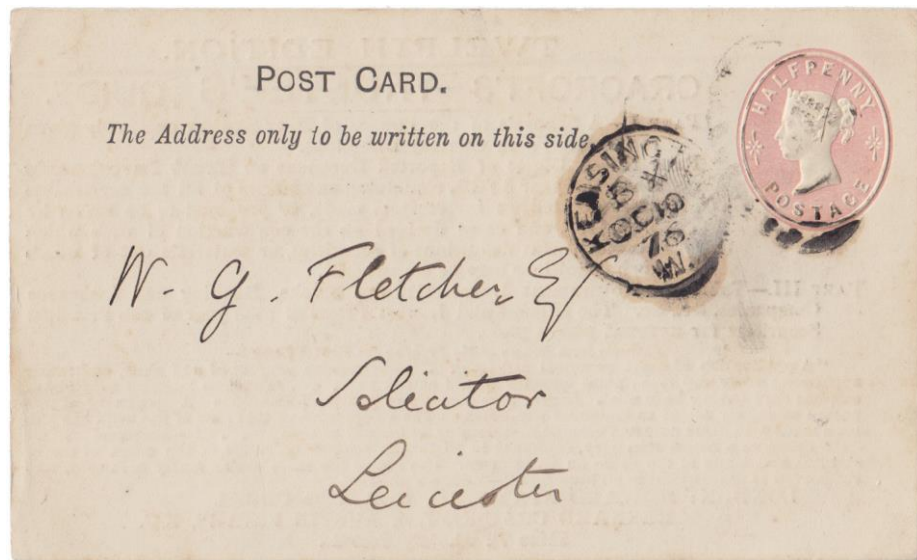
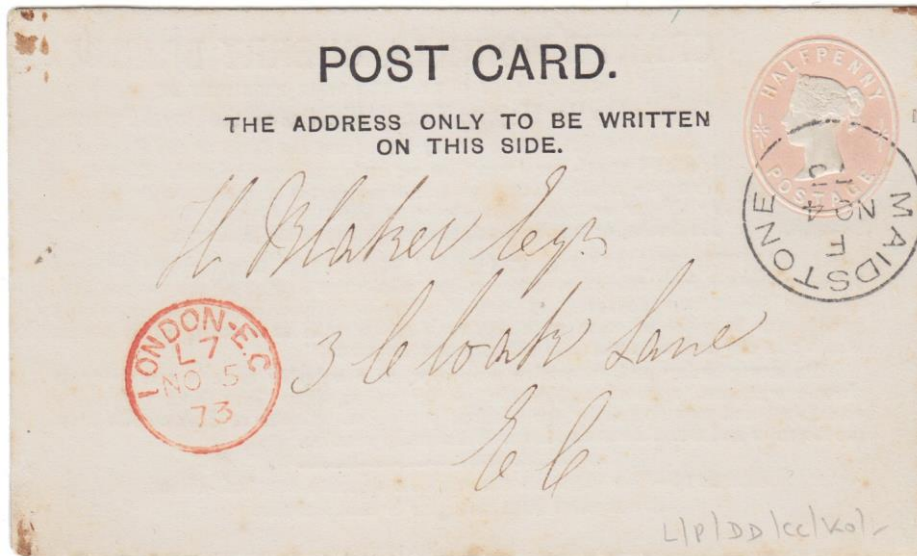
**By Command of the Postmaster-General.**

Stamping to order for cards was introduced 17 June 1872 ...

In compliance with the urgent solicitations of the Committee of Wholesale and Retail Stationers of the United Kingdom, permission was given, under certain restrictions, for private cards, impressed with a halfpenny stamp at the Office of Inland Revenue and serving as letters, to pass through the post like post cards issued by Government. But of this concession little use has been made. Private post cards.

*Report of the Postmaster General for the year 1872, p7*

... to an underwhelming response



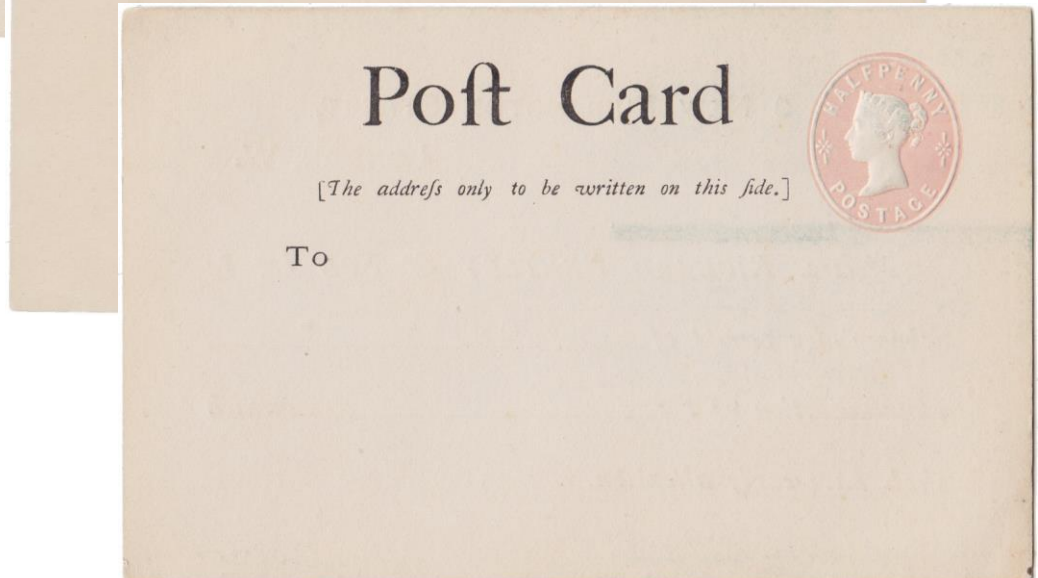
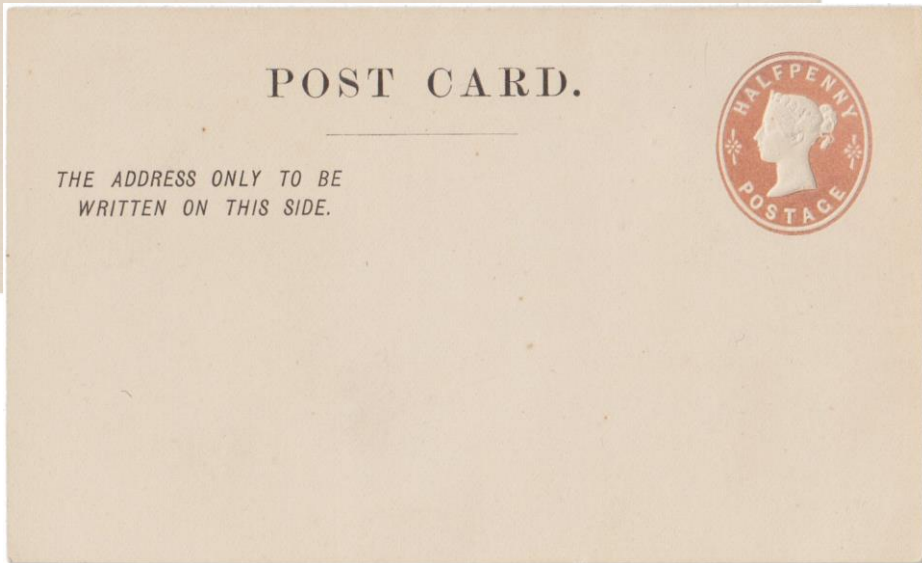
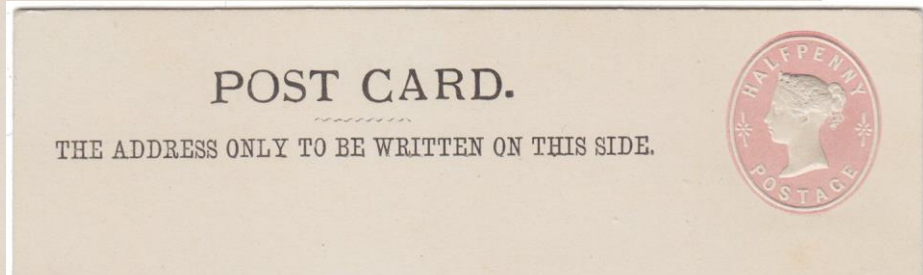
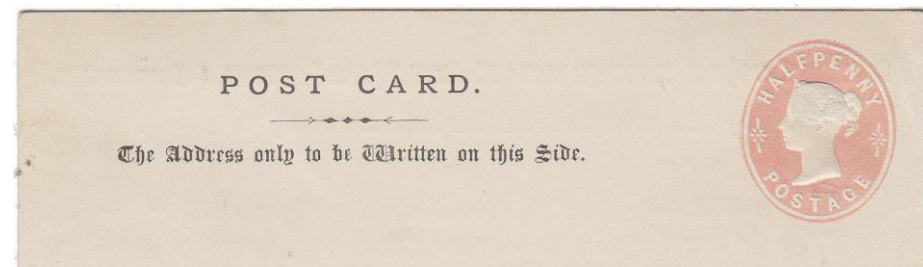
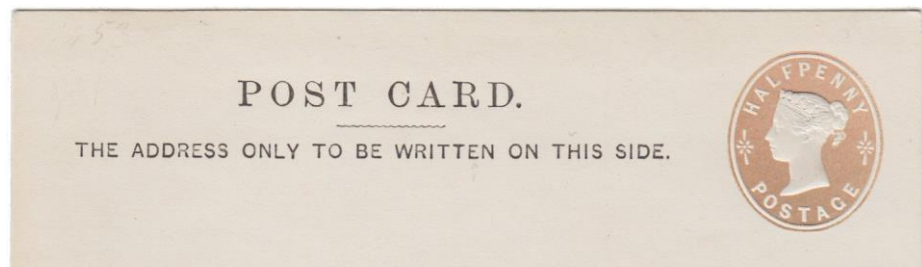
## Early STO cards

- STO cards had to be same dimensions as the PO issue cards ( $4\frac{3}{4}$ "  $\times$   $2\frac{7}{8}$ " )
- Could use thicker stock – between  $\frac{1}{120}$ " (PO cards) and  $\frac{1}{60}$ " (as telegraph cards)
- Used examples of STO cards uncommon before c.1880

## Why the limited use?

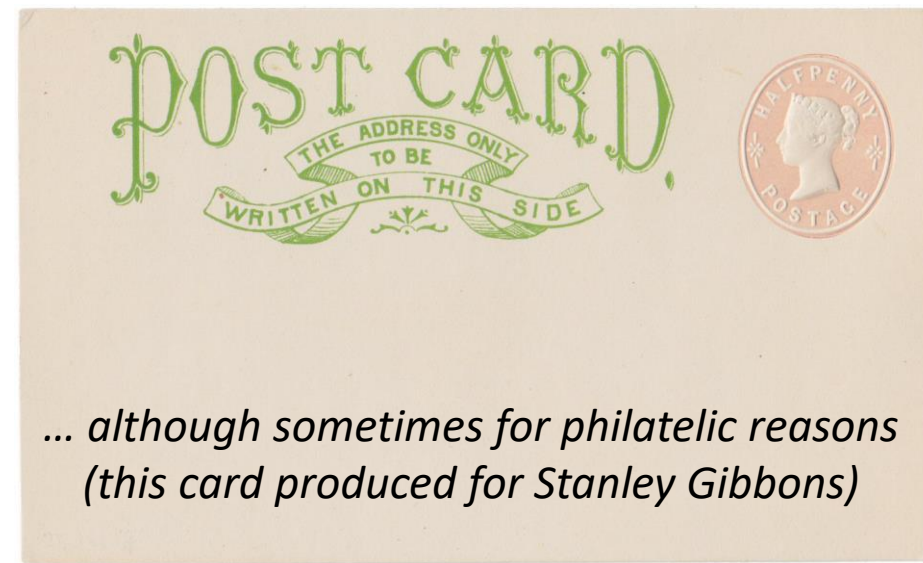
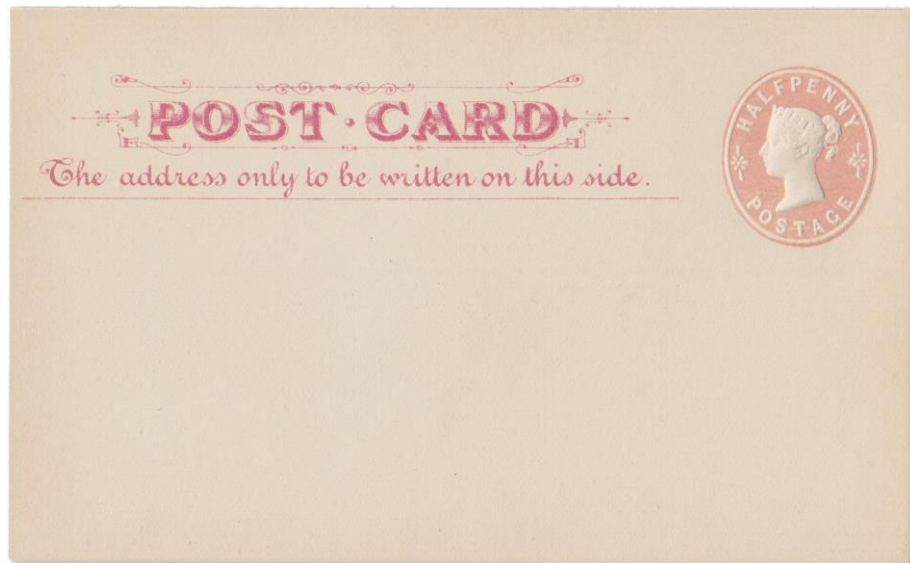
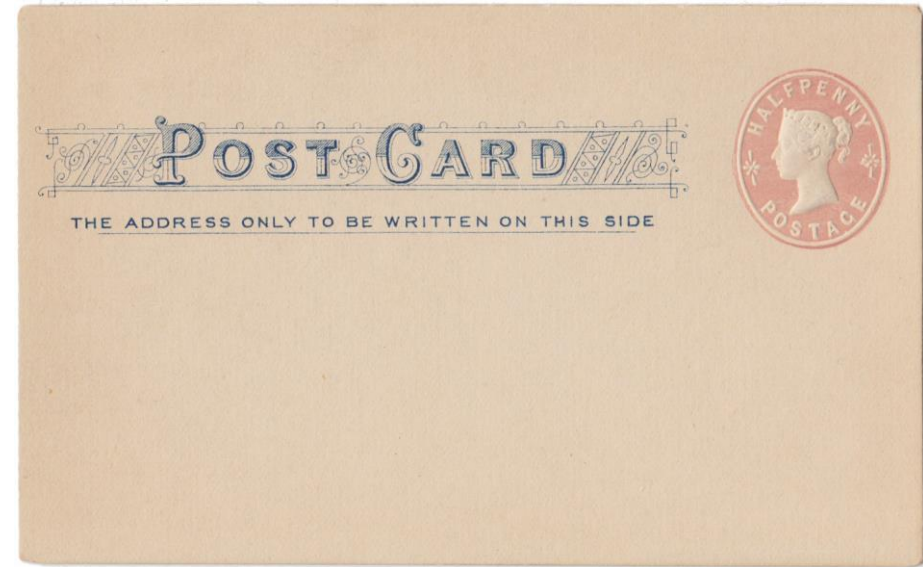
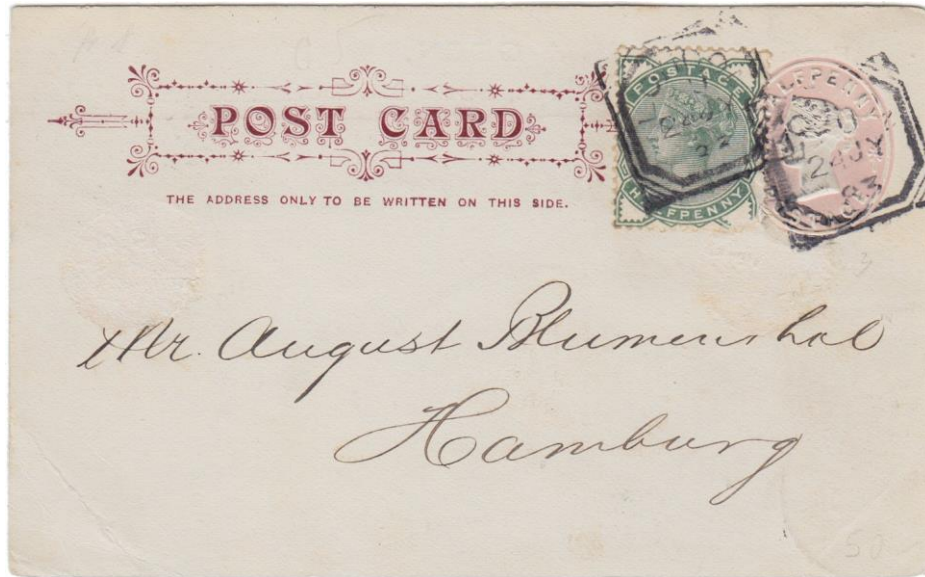
- PO card sheets likely more convenient if high quality card stock not needed
- Even this factor less important after PO introduced thicker, better quality "stout" cards (1875, in sheets from March 1877)

Rules said nothing but “POST CARD” and an address instruction to be printed on front: typeface, formatting, and colour at user’s discretion



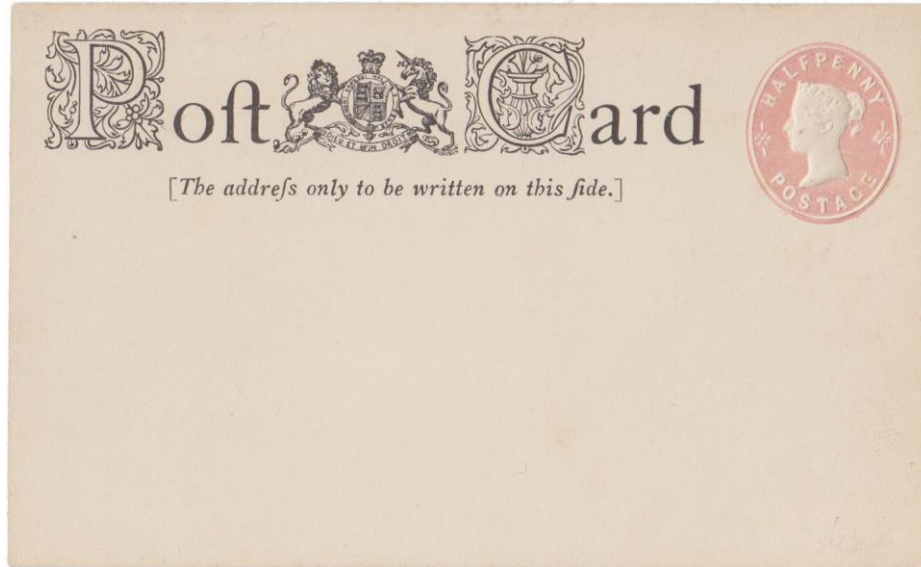


# Some people just couldn't help getting creative ...

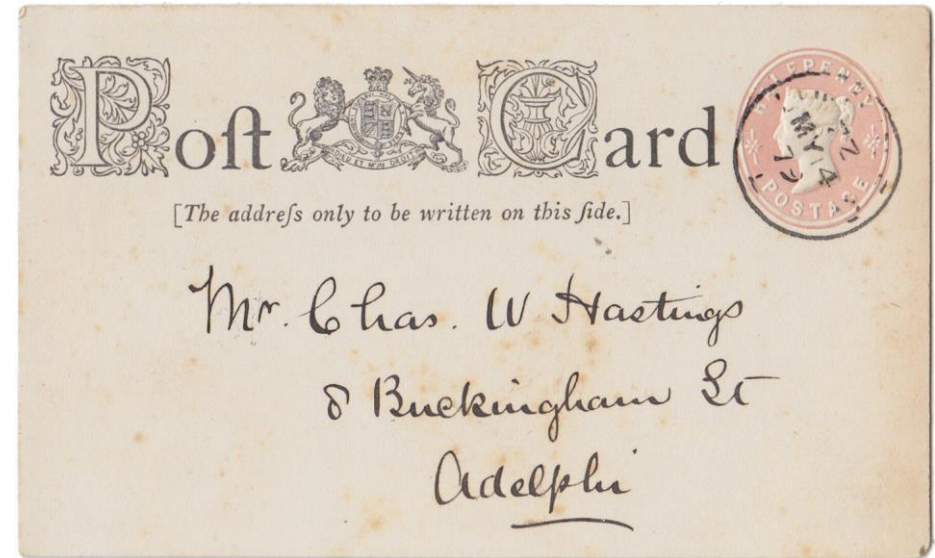


... although sometimes for philatelic reasons  
(this card produced for Stanley Gibbons)

Rules also said “*the Royal Arms being omitted*” – but that didn’t stop the Chiswick Press (of Cook’s Court, Chancery Lane)



*Plain back card as sold by stationers*

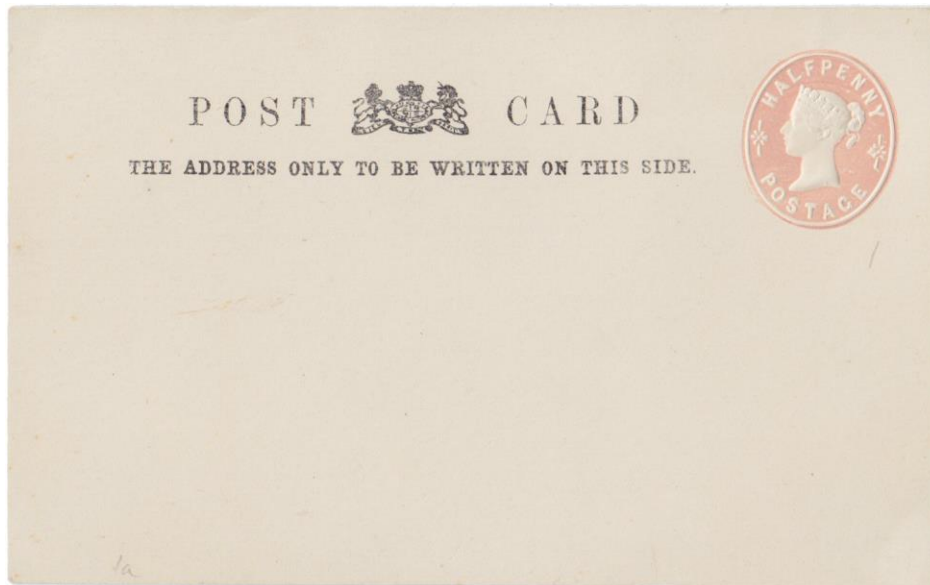
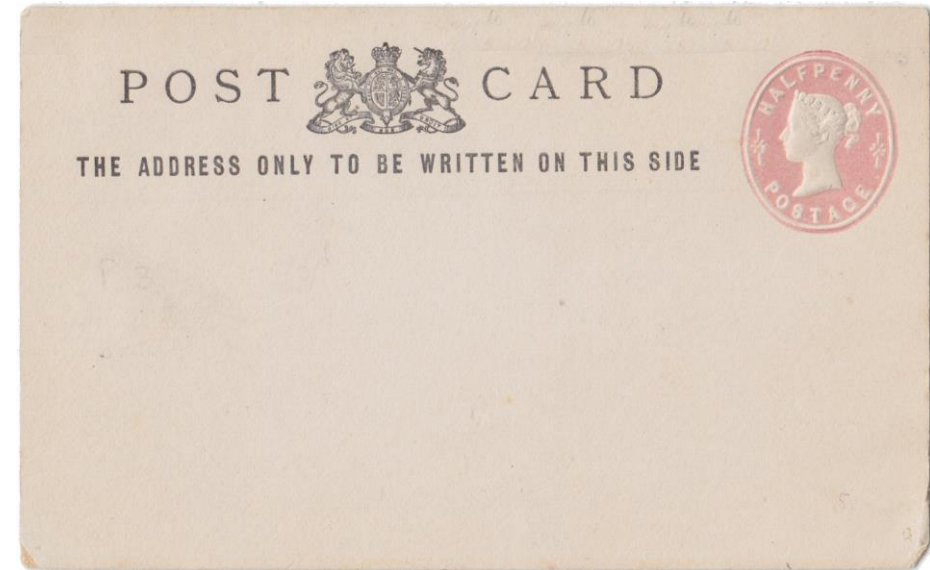


*Used card printed on back for  
Pulsometer Engineering Company*

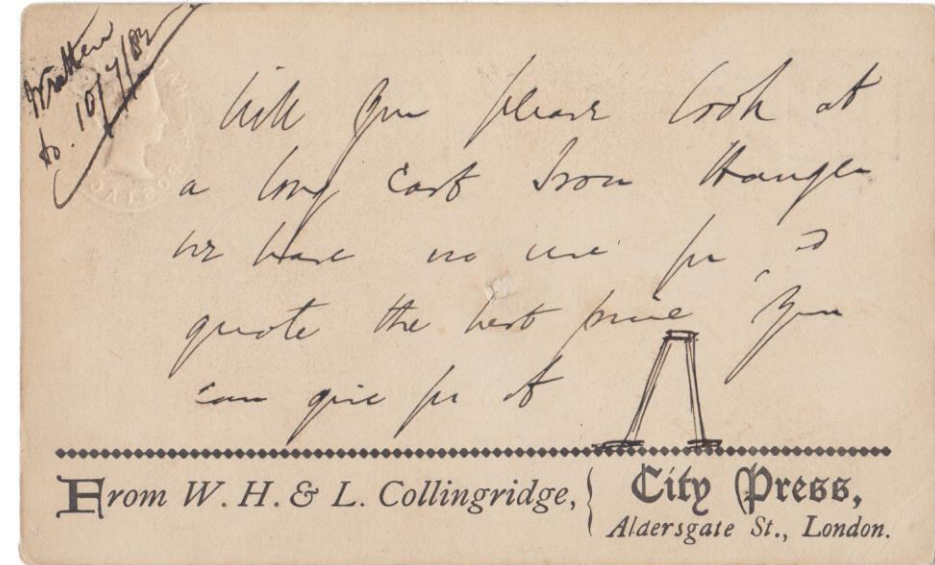
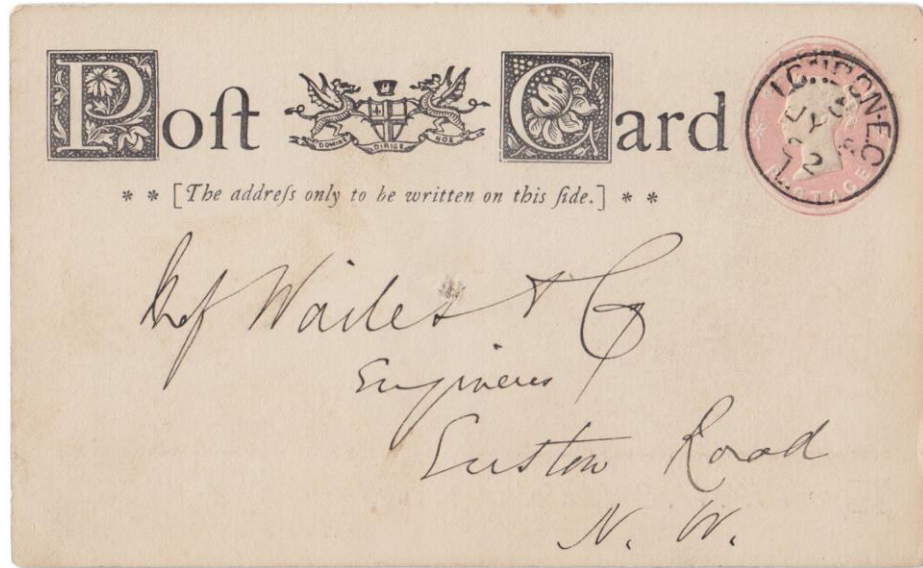
Acceptance of these cards for stamping (in error, presumably) set a precedent for use of Arms on STO cards

## Use of Royal Arms

Once precedent was set, others then included the Royal Arms in much less elaborate formats



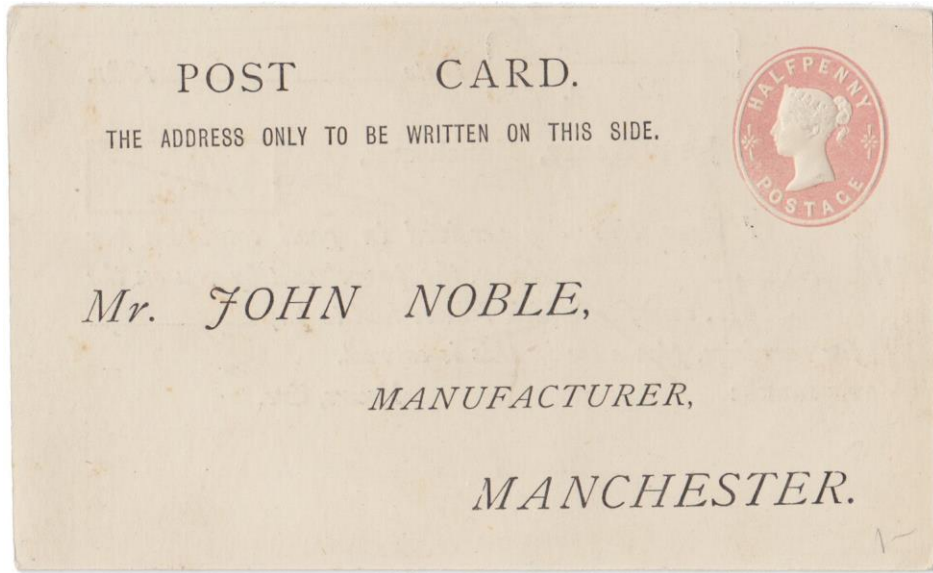
# An unusual alternative to the use of the Royal Arms ...



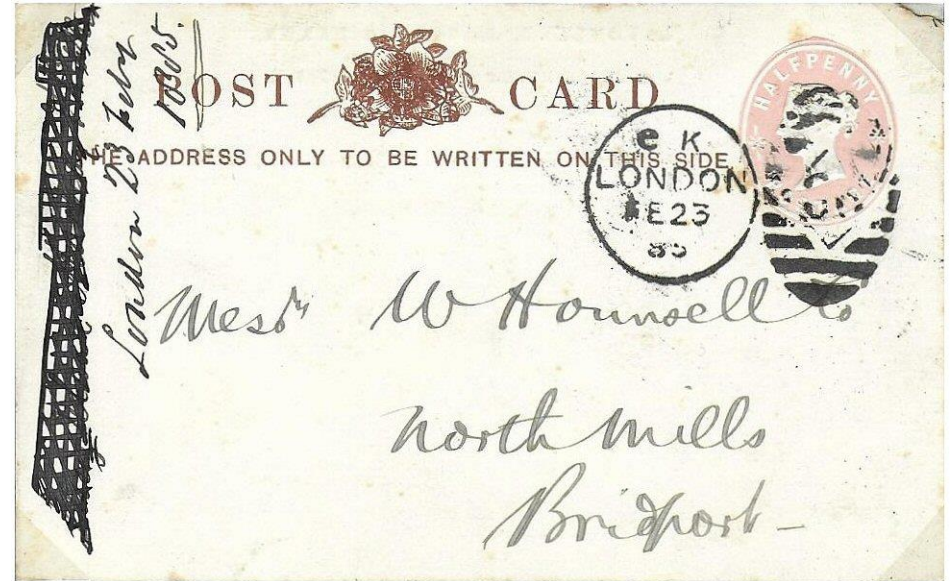
... the Arms of the City of London

*City Press* founded 1857 by W.H.Collingridge to provide a newspaper for the City of London. Card hence likely for their specific use, possibly self printed?

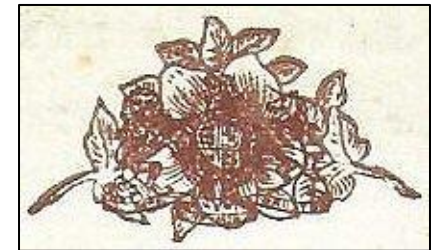
# Use of the Royal Arms was not *always* accepted



Arms removed from centre of  
forme leaving gap between words  
“POST CARD”

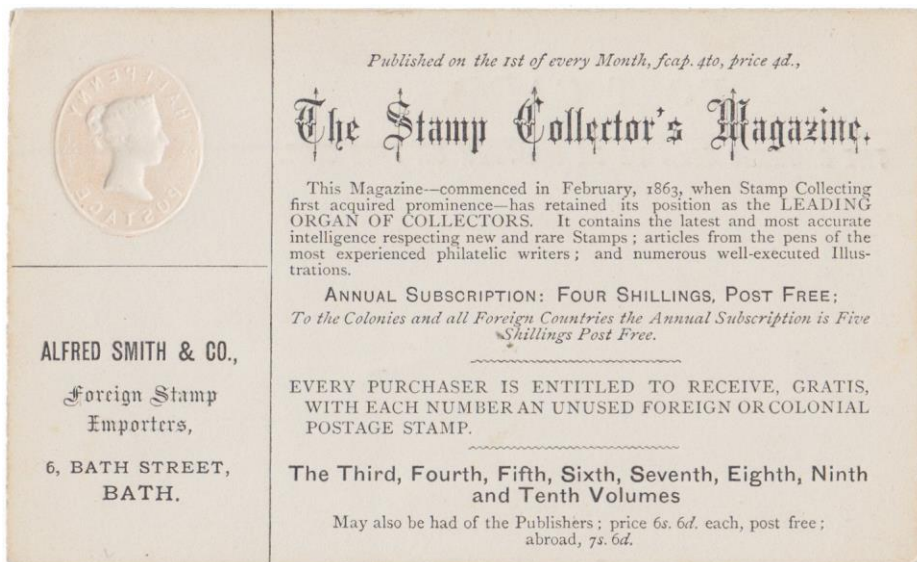
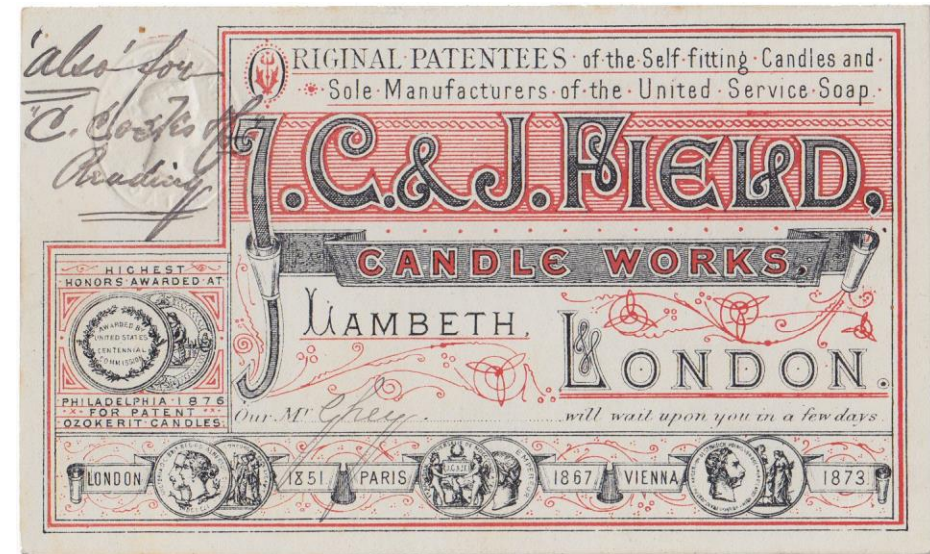


Arms printed but  
then obliterated  
by overprint



[Image courtesy Alan Huggins]

No printing to be in the “stamp space” on either side of the card



“At the right upper corner of the face of the card a space measuring 1¼ inches from the top edge of the card and 1 inch from the side must be left for the stamp, and this space must be free from print on the face and the underside”

# No printing in "stamp space", even on reverse of card?

.....WORKS. ....188

Order No.	Rolled Tons.	Passed Tons.	REMARKS.

To morrow in .....Works.  
Inspector.....

LONDON & NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY.  
GOODS DEPARTMENT.

Broad St. Station, E.C., 50 188  
In your reply Reference  
201/59294  
quote this reference. to your letter.

Sir,  
Referring to your favour  
of 28<sup>th</sup> Inst I beg  
to say the cask had  
been delivered in  
Northampton on 24<sup>th</sup>  
Inst in accordance  
with Mr. Hensman's  
instructions

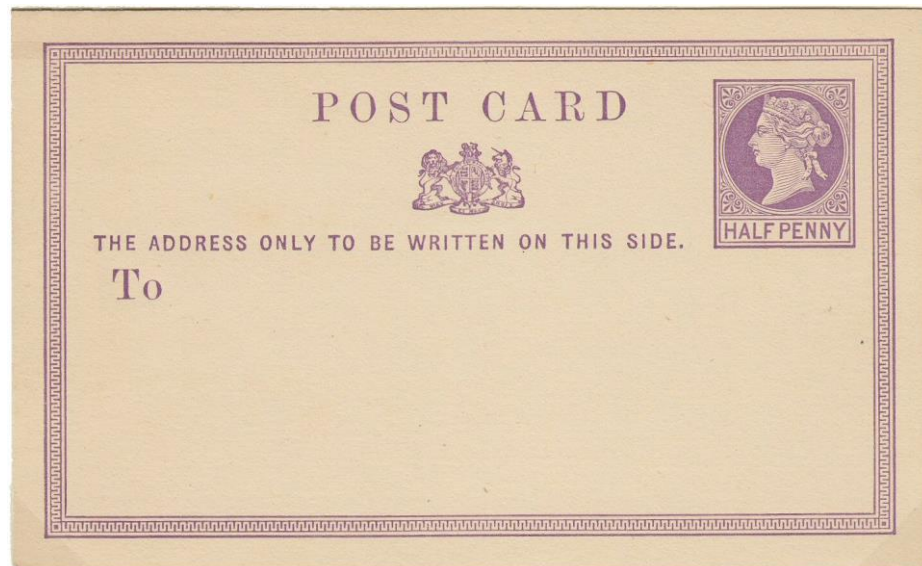
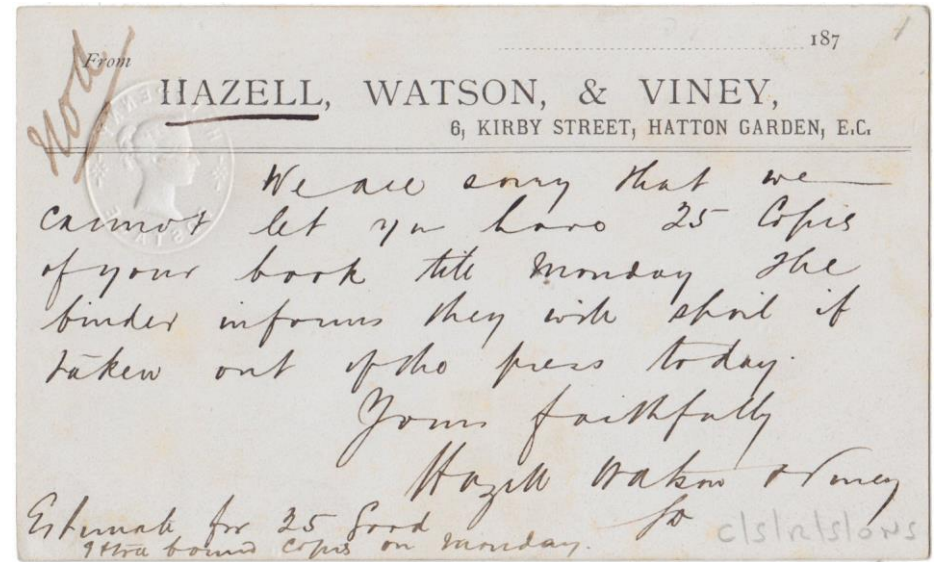
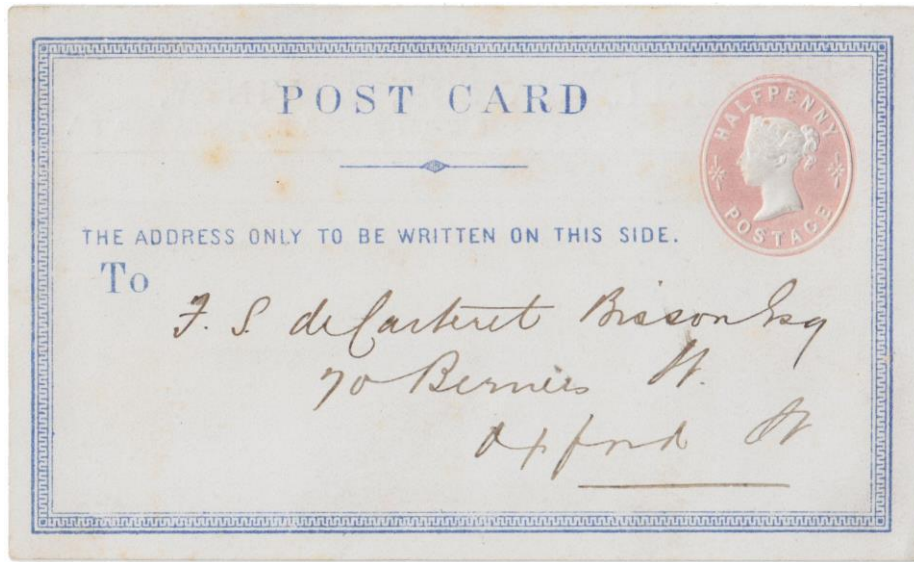
Your obedient Servant,  
G. HITCHENS.

FROM JOHN PORT,  
METALLIC BEDSTEAD AND SAFE MANUFACTURER,  
MILL STREET, ANCOATS, Manchester, .....1883.

Per "Globe Parcel Express," this day, Carriage Paid,  
I send my new Pattern Book of BRASS and IRON BEDSTEADS  
with Price Lists therein. Should it not arrive in due course,  
kindly let me know at once, and oblige.

This regulation seems to have frequently been ignored ...

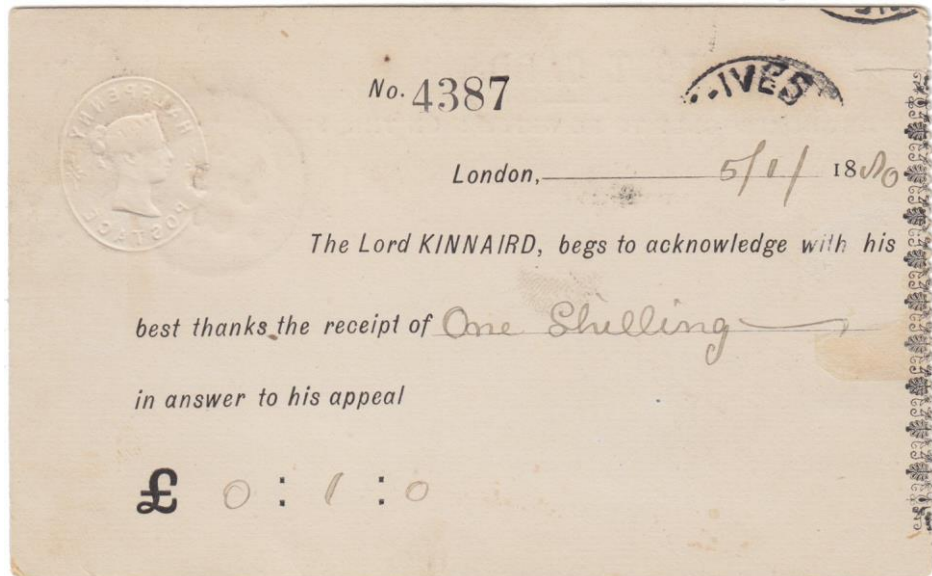
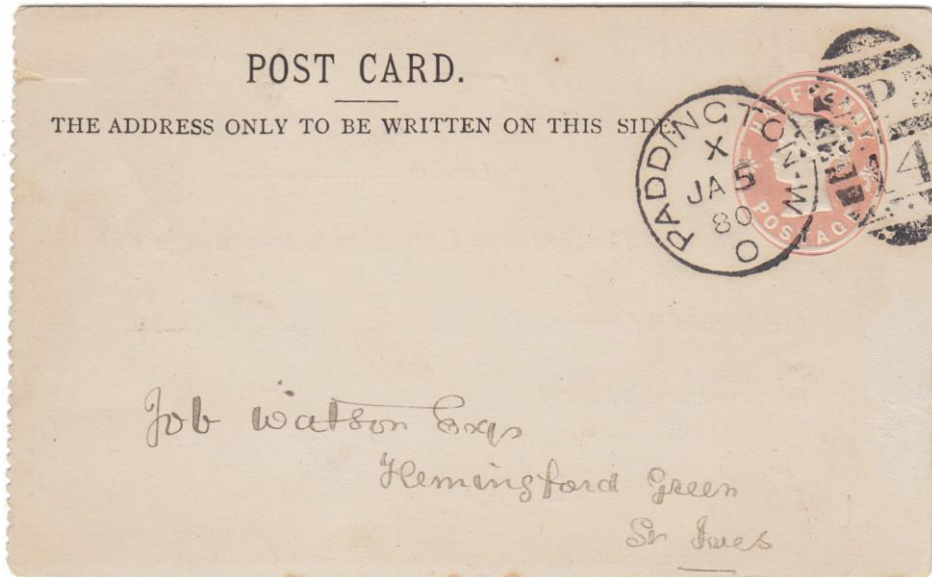
# Irregular use of printed border by firm of printers and publishers



Clearly meant to mimic the format (but not colour!) of official cards as closely as possible. Likely these cards were printed by the user for their specific use?



# Irregular perforated cards for Lord Kinnaird's Appeal

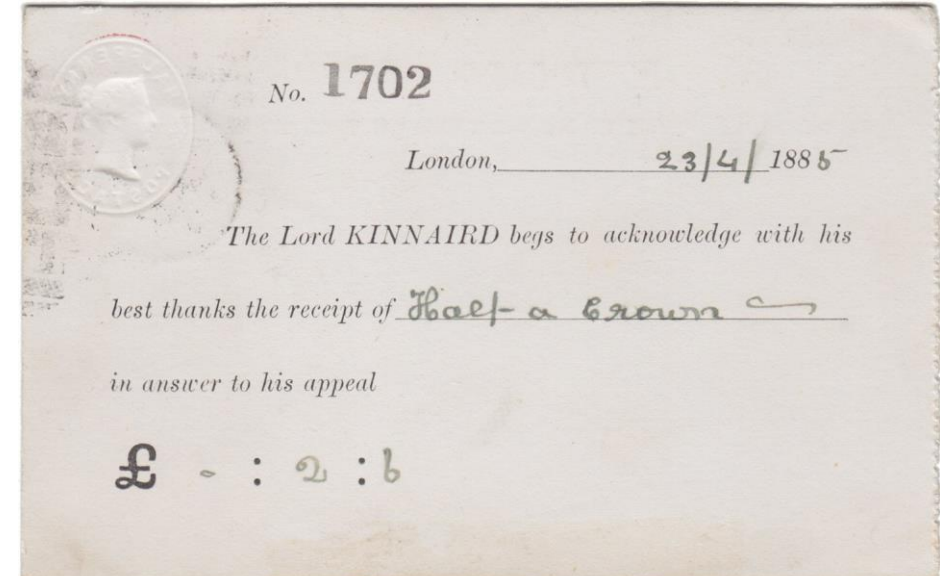
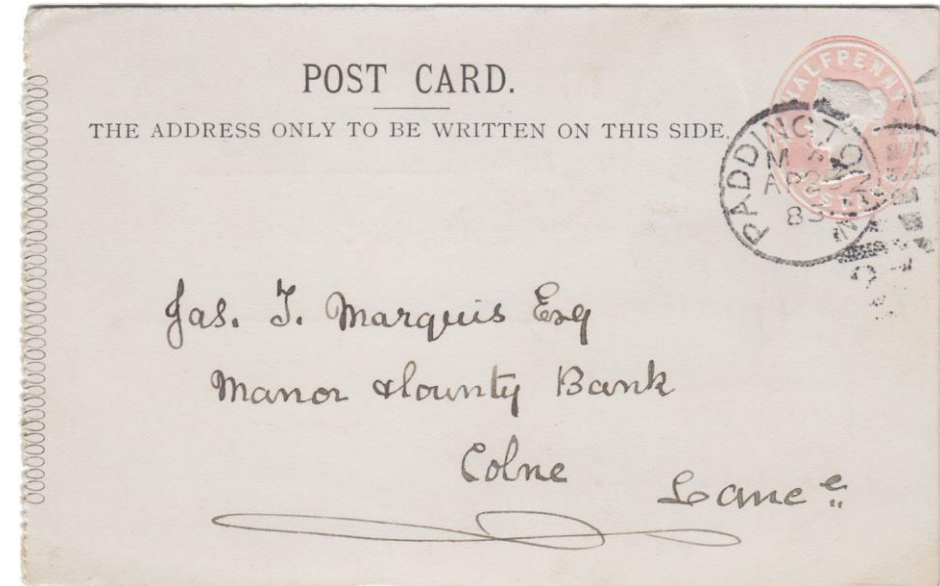


## 1880 and 1885 Receipt Cards

Perforated left side,  
presumably had tab  
attached originally to  
record the donation

Guilloche loops over  
join often done with  
tabbed receipts

*Lord Kinnaird: Scottish banker,  
politician and philanthropist.  
Raised funds for Lock Hospital  
and Asylum – possibly reason  
for preparation of these cards*



# Oversize Card with Tear-Off Tab for Dublin Collector General



- For paying Dublin rates, 1883
- Size approximately  $4\frac{7}{8}$ "  $\times$   $3\frac{1}{4}$ " as compared to normal  $4\frac{3}{4}$ "  $\times$   $2\frac{7}{8}$ "
- Individually numbered, appears to have had corresponding tab

This part is to be forwarded by the Ratepayer to the Collector-General, through the post. \_\_\_\_\_ WARD.

I hereby inform the Collector-General that I have this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 1883, paid Rates, as under:

YEAR.	MOIETY.	Amount.		
		£	s.	d.
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	£5	_____	_____

Rate Nos. \_\_\_\_\_

for No. \_\_\_\_\_ Street,

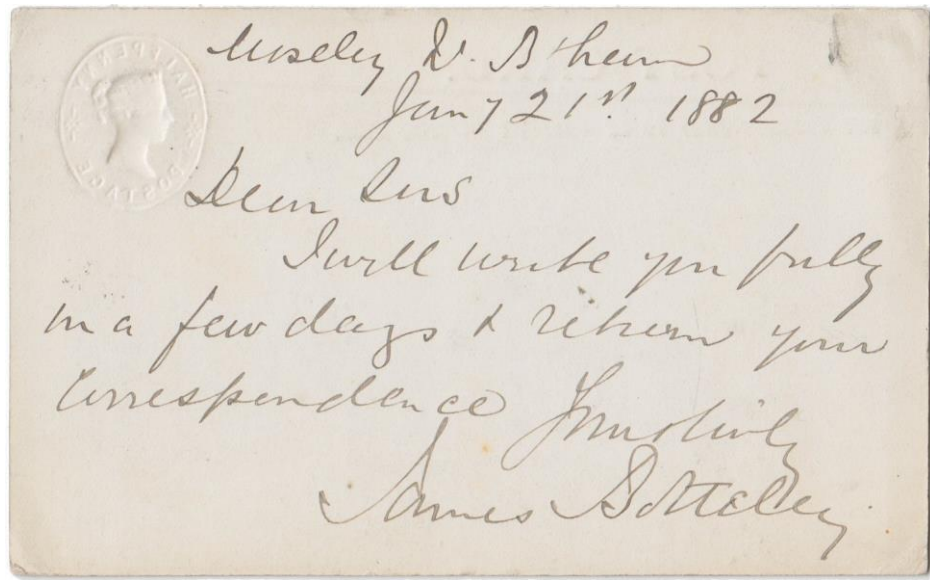
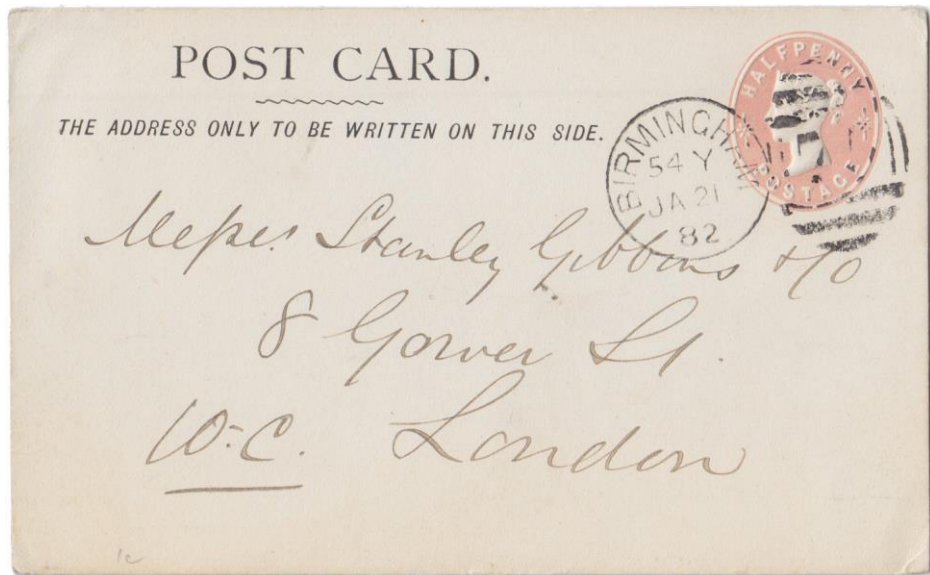
and have received from the Collector, Receipt No. **694**

Name of payer \_\_\_\_\_

Residence \_\_\_\_\_

05-1

*Tab missing, appears torn off not rouletted?*

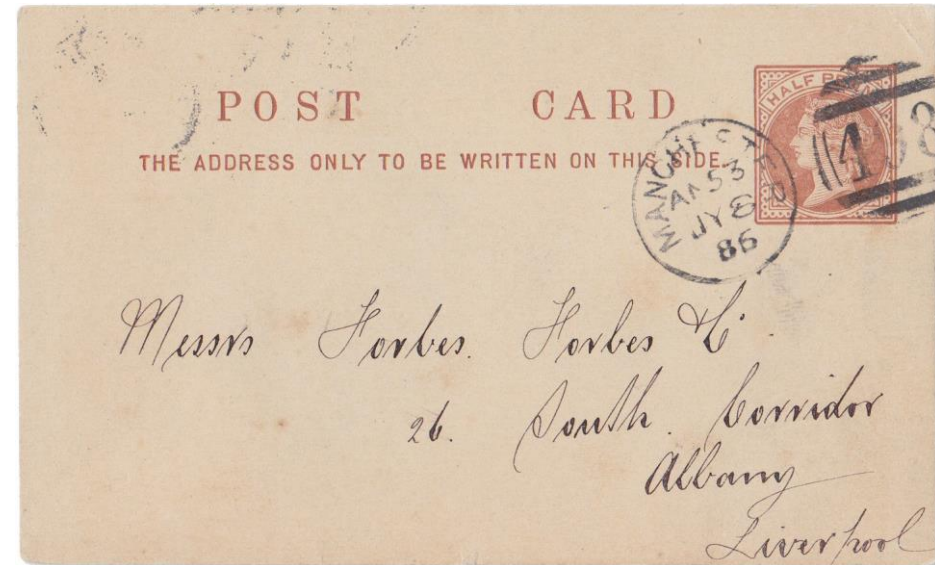
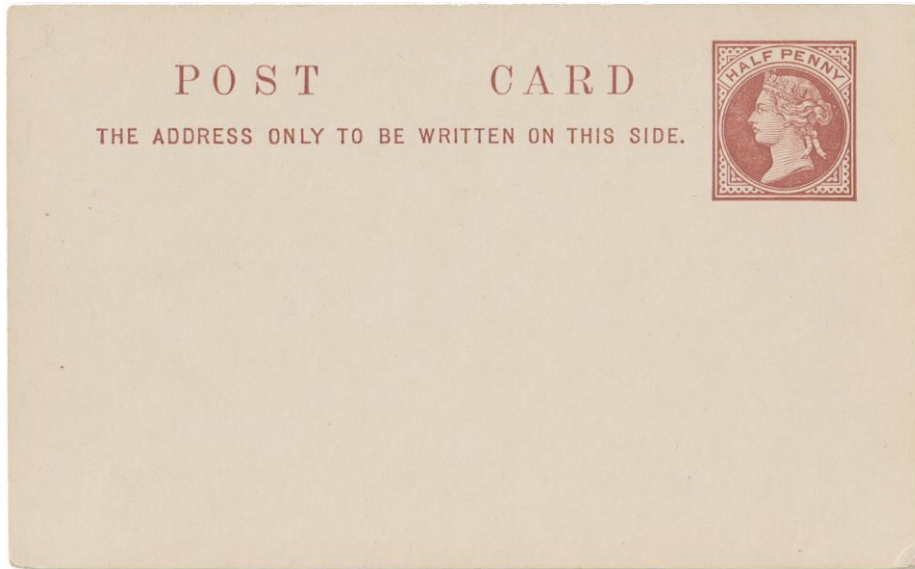


*Plain back card as sold by stationers, used for private message 1882*

## Competition from private STO cards

- Initially no charge made for stamping cards
- Stationers able to undercut price of PO cards or offer better quality card for higher price
- January 1883: stamping fee of 1s per 1000
- August 1883: stationers forbidden to charge more than PO prices for STO cards
- September 1883: PO servants only allowed to sell PO cards, not STO cards
- January 1884: fee raised to 1s 6d per 1000
- January 1884: licensed vendors forbidden to purchase stock of cards from private makers
- March 1884: Somerset House finally switch to letterpress printing in sheets for STO cards

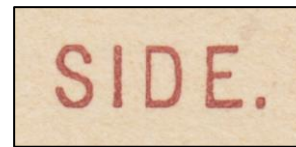
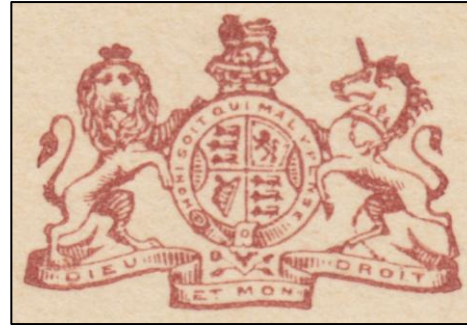
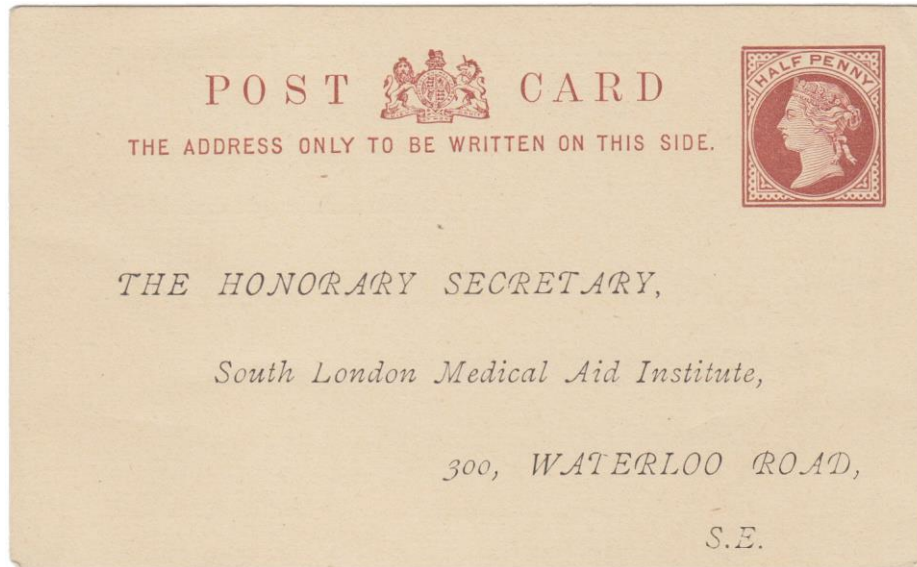
# Letterpress STO cards from March 1884



- Firm ruling made that Royal Arms could not be included
- Printing formes thus left a gap where Arms would have been
- However, Royal Arms allowed again from 1 November 1888



# Differences introduced to distinguish between PO and STO cards



## PO Cards

- Chain on unicorn's collar on coat of arms
- Full stop after "SIDE"  
[½d can be Die I, II, III (\*)]

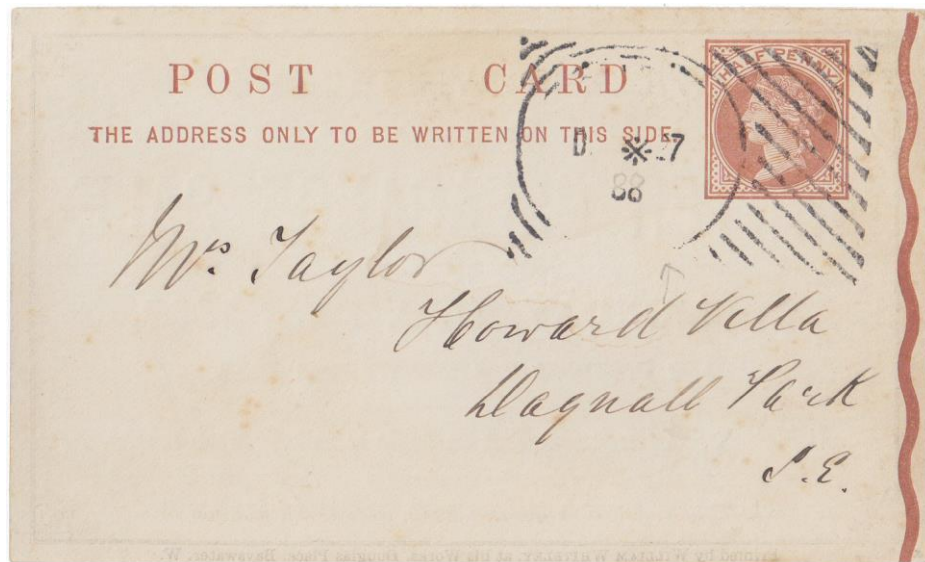
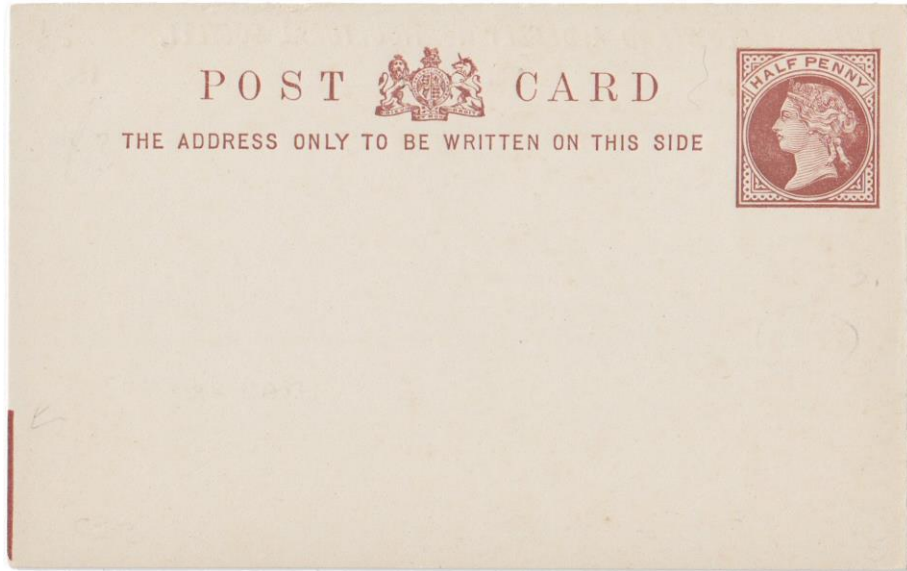


## STO Cards

- No chain on unicorn's collar on coat of arms
- No full stop after "SIDE"  
[½d is Die I only (\*)]

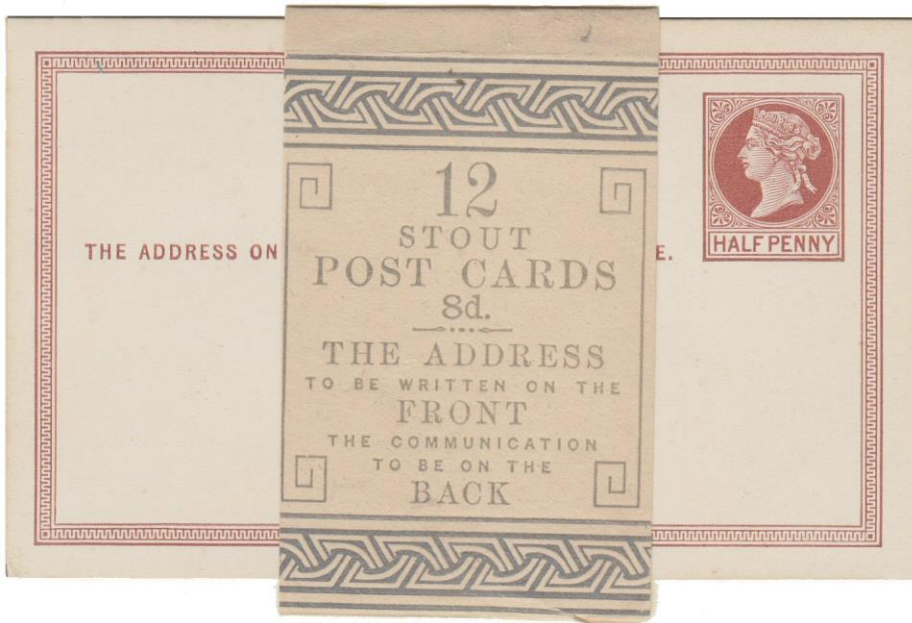
(\* ) see Huggins & Baker, Collect British Postal Stationery

Sheets were printed with guide lines, but cutting could be inaccurate!



# Sellers of STO cards could significantly undercut official prices

1875: PO price for “stout” cards  
8d per dozen (“thin” 7d per dozen)



Lower prices from stationers for intermediate  
quality STO cards per dozen ...

EXTRA QUALITY 7½d. DOZEN.—SOLD BY WILLIAM WALLACE, STATIONER, CAXTON HOUSE, LEICESTER.

*Post Cards  
as this  
7d. per dozen,  
W. F. Mack,  
Park st. Bristol.*

*Post Cards  
as this  
6½d for 12  
supplied by  
FULLFORD  
Stationer.  
KINGS CROSS.N*

1 July 1889: PO price reduced to 6d for 10 (= 7½d for 12)  
STO stamping fee raised to 2s 6d per 1000

# Printing paid adverts on the cards lowered prices “below face”

<b>CAVILLE AND WOODWARD.</b> SPECIALITÉ TROUSERS 18s. Two Pairs 26s. Patterns by Post. 62, HIGH ST., CLAPHAM.	Shirts Re-fitted 2s. Felt Hats from 1s. <b>C. FAWKES,</b> HATTER & HOSIER, 108, HIGH STREET PECKHAM.	<b>RANDALL,</b> BUILDER AND DECORATOR, 51 QUEEN'S RD. PECKHAM Estimates Free to all parts.	<b>J. H. BINNINGTON'S</b> 44 in. French Merino, all Wool, 1/0 3/4 32 in. Noted Pure Calico 3/4 3/4 per doz 112 & 114, HIGH ST., PECKHAM.	<b>T. BAILY &amp; CO.</b> FAMILY BREWERS AND SPIRIT MERCHANTS, BERKSHIRE BREWERY, CAMBERWELL.	<b>G. C. HAWKEY,</b> COMPLETE House Furnisher, 2 & 4, HIGH ST., CLAPHAM.
<p><i>Underwent operation under chloroform safely this afternoon going well for</i></p> <p><i>H.C. May</i></p> <p><i>W. J. Holden</i></p> <p><i>May 10/89</i></p>					
<b>AUSTIN'S</b> NOTED LAMPS. SAFETY ASTRAL OIL, 1s 6d. RYE LANE, PECKHAM. FOR CHEAP & WELL CONDUCTED Funerals go to <b>D. J. PITT,</b> PLUMSTEAD, BEXLEY HEATH & ERITH. Copyright by Royal Letters Patent No. 2618.	Printed by Kempell & Brizinchaw, 128, Southwark St., S.E.				<b>Benedetti &amp; Co.</b> GROUPS & ALL OUT-DOOR PHOTOGRAPHY. Speciality for Children. RYE LANE, and 31, 39, Lee High Rd., S.E.
<b>Mr. FRANCIS,</b> 185, HIGH STREET, PECKHAM, IS AGENT FOR THE CELEBRATED HAIR RENEWER, <b>COGIA,</b> 1/-	<b>LAWRENCE &amp; CO.</b> RENOVATE WORN PIANOS FOR ONE GUINEA 149, RYE LANE, PECKHAM.	<b>Pritchard, Sharp, &amp; Co.'s</b> BOOTS & SHOES. FIT AND QUALITY GUARANTEED. 8 & 10, RYE LANE, PECKHAM.		<b>J. T. KENNETT</b> WATCH & CLOCK MAKER JEWELLER AND OPTICIAN. Repairs done on the Premises. Opposite Rye Lane, HIGH ST., PECKHAM.	<b>DANSIES' SPECIAL FLAKEGINE</b> FLOUR (regd.) RYE LANE, AND CAMBERWELL. <b>LIBERATOR BUILDING SOC. ETY.</b> 29, BUDGE ROW SHARES, £30. Deposits, 25 and Upwards.

Farthing Letter Co. Ltd. – ¼d per card  
Printing in red, also known in blue

- Various firms tried this in the late 1880s, with little success
- Important to source own card and use STO to keep costs low!

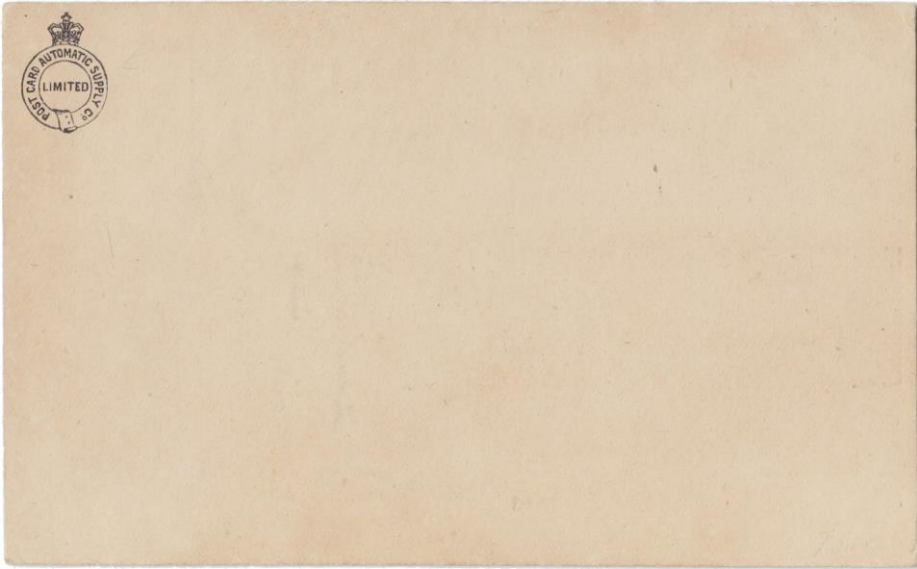
<b>R. FROWEN &amp; CO.,</b> — 48 — Queen Victoria St., LONDON, E.C.	Our guaranteed PURE CREAM (without Sugar), delicious for Tea and Coffee, as well as for Cooking, is an invaluable food for Invalids and Babies, equal in nourishment to mother's milk, very digestible, highly recommended, and prepared	under the supervision of Medical authorities. Can be kept for years, and always ready for use. Can be obtained from all grocers. Price 9d., 1/6, 2/6 PER BOTTLE.	<b>R. FROWEN &amp; CO.,</b> — 48 — Queen Victoria St., LONDON, E.C.
<b>FRANK THOMAS,</b> Auctioneer, Hotel Valuer, and Estate Agent, — 48 — Southampton Buildings, CHANCERY LANE LONDON, W.C. N.B.—Money advanced at the rate of 5 per cent.	Issue No. 19. Rd. No. 114, 117.] The Anglo-Colonial Letter Co., Limited, 18 for 1d. For 10,000.		<b>GEO. BONNEY AND CO.,</b> — 4 & 5, — Horse Shoe Court, LUDGATE HILL, E.C.
<p><b>A BEAUTIFUL FIGURE.</b></p> <p>All bodies of imperfect form should send stamped address for full instructions (free). How to produce that development of form and bust which is so essential to female beauty.</p> <p>Offices—1, South John-st., Liverpool; 3, Agar-st., Strand, London, W.C.</p> <p><b>AARON, SONS &amp; CO.,</b> 18, JEWIN ST., LONDON, E.C. Braces, Belts, Mufflers. Wholesale only.</p> <p><b>SHAFTESBURY CIGAR STORES,</b> Corner of Warlow St. &amp; Shaftesbury Avenue, Cigar Merchants and Tobacconists MANAGER, HARRY MILNER.</p> <p>OFFICES CLEARED on the shortest notice.</p>			

Anglo-Colonial Letter Co. Ltd. – 3 cards for 1d  
Pale pink ink to allow writing on top?

- Adverts greatly reduced the already small writing space
- Used examples are rarely seen so presumably not popular



# STO cards pioneered a major commercial development



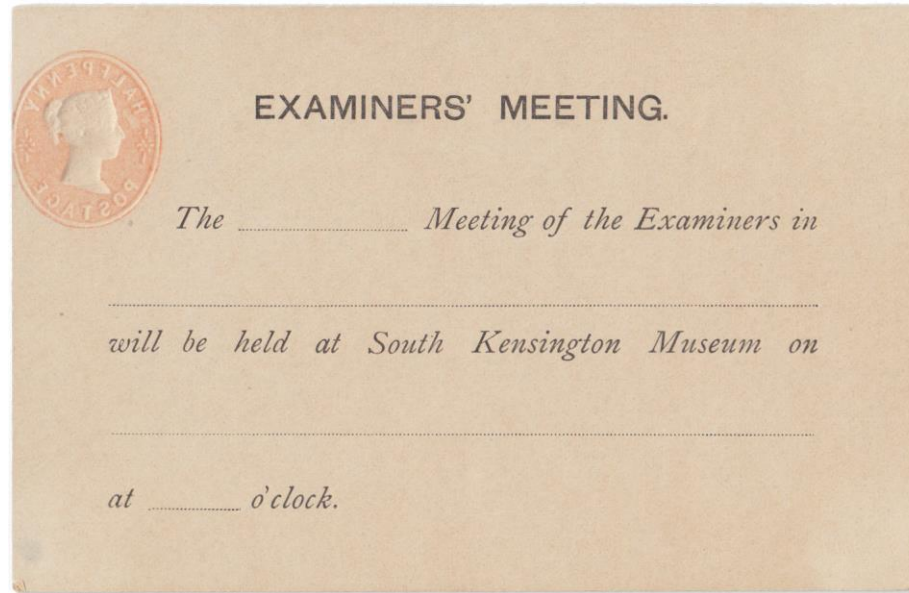
## Postcard Automatic Supply Co. Ltd.

- Coin-operated postcard vending machine invented in 1883 by one Percival Everitt
- Introduced in London dispensing postcards, envelopes, notepaper
- Soon became widespread feature at railway stations, post offices
- The first modern coin-operated vending machines, principle soon extended to many other products
- Again important to source own card for STO to keep costs low!



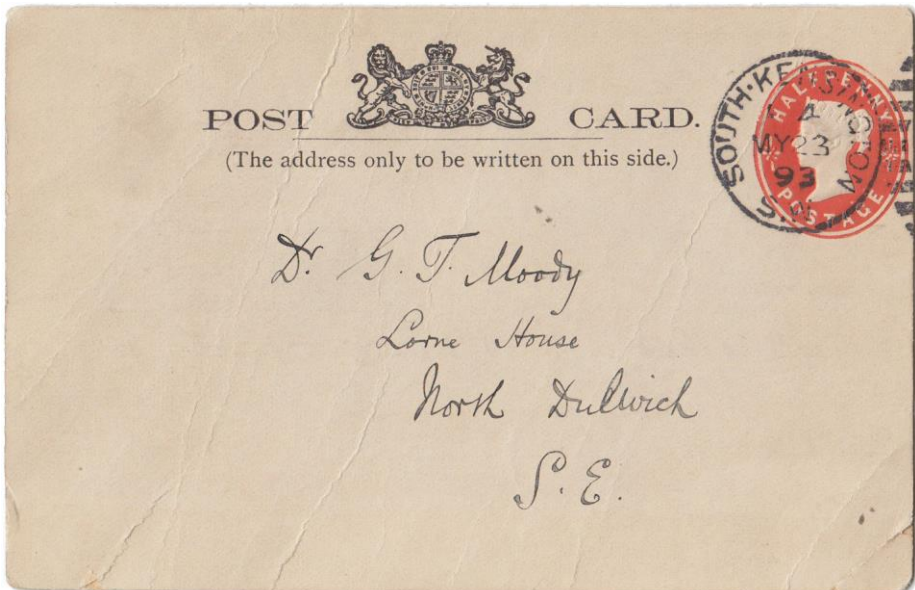
*Small logo of company was printed top left of postcards and envelopes sold*

# Occasional later uses of ½d embossed die in vermilion on cards



*Curl open*

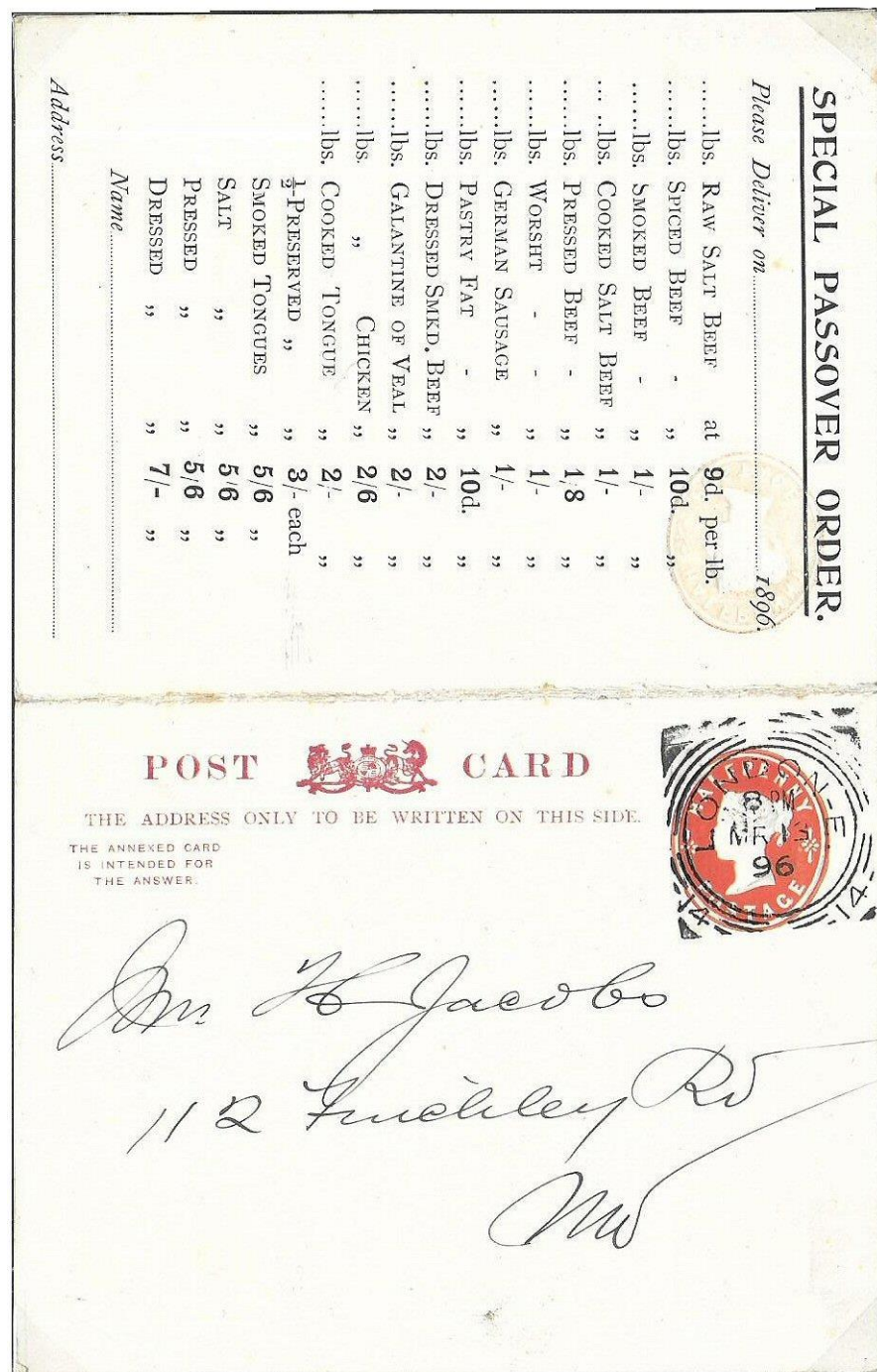
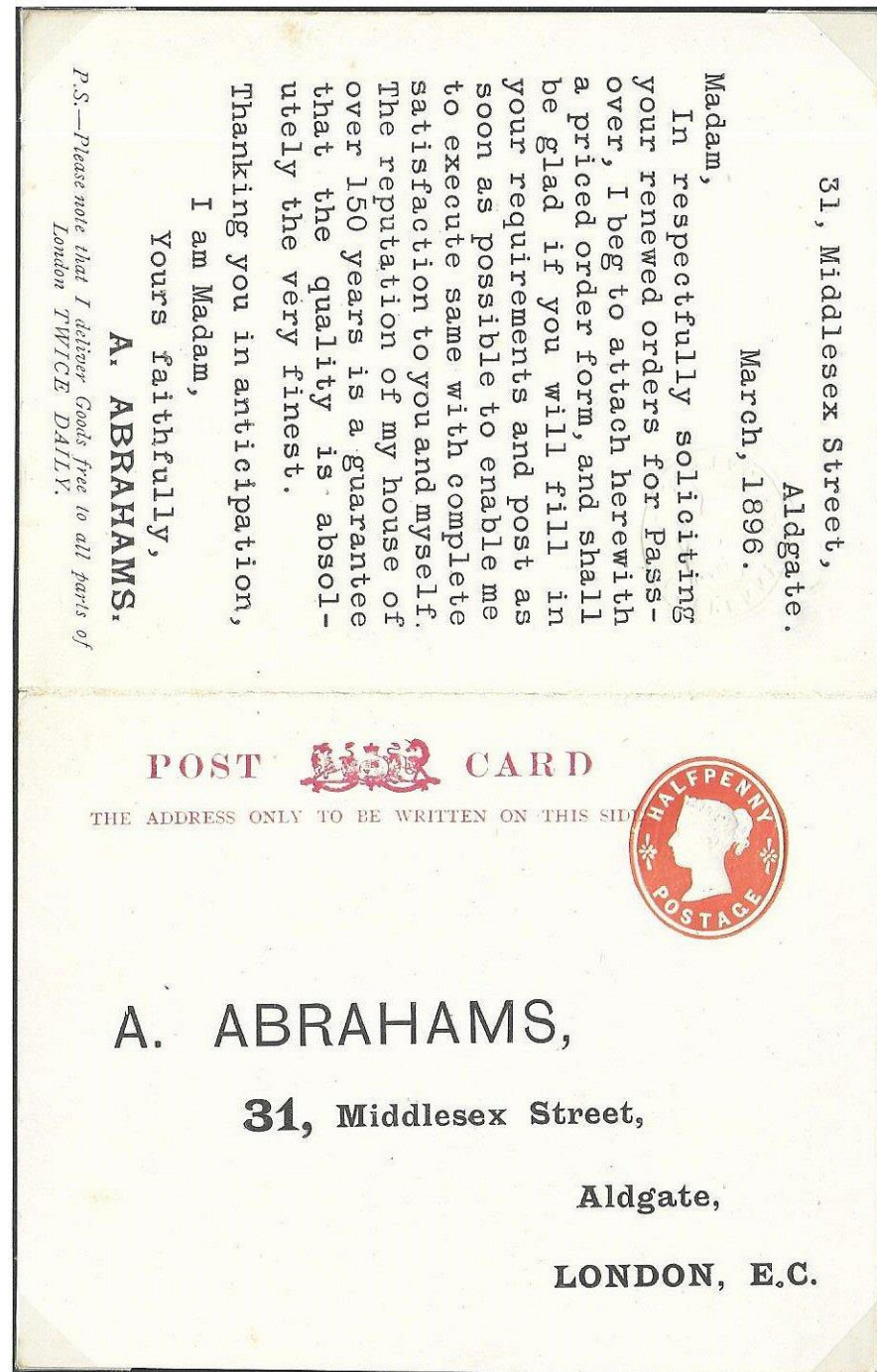
- New ½d embossed dies made in 1892, mainly for envelopes
- Presumably needed for cards already cut into singles
- “Pendant curl” differs from earlier 1872 and 1883 dies



*Curl closed*

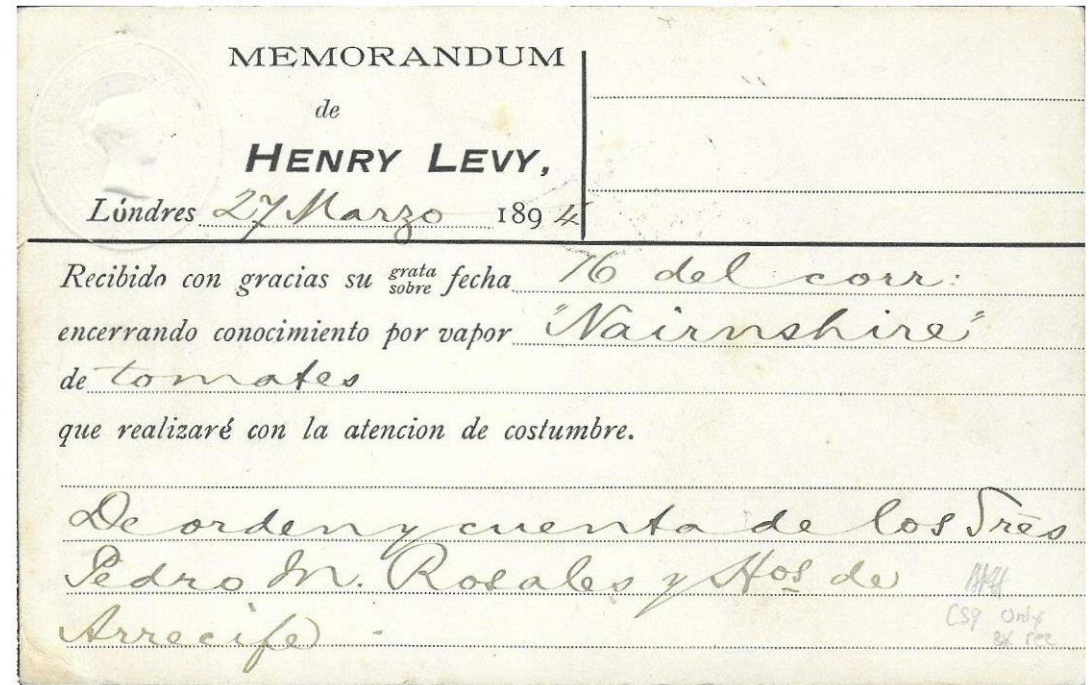
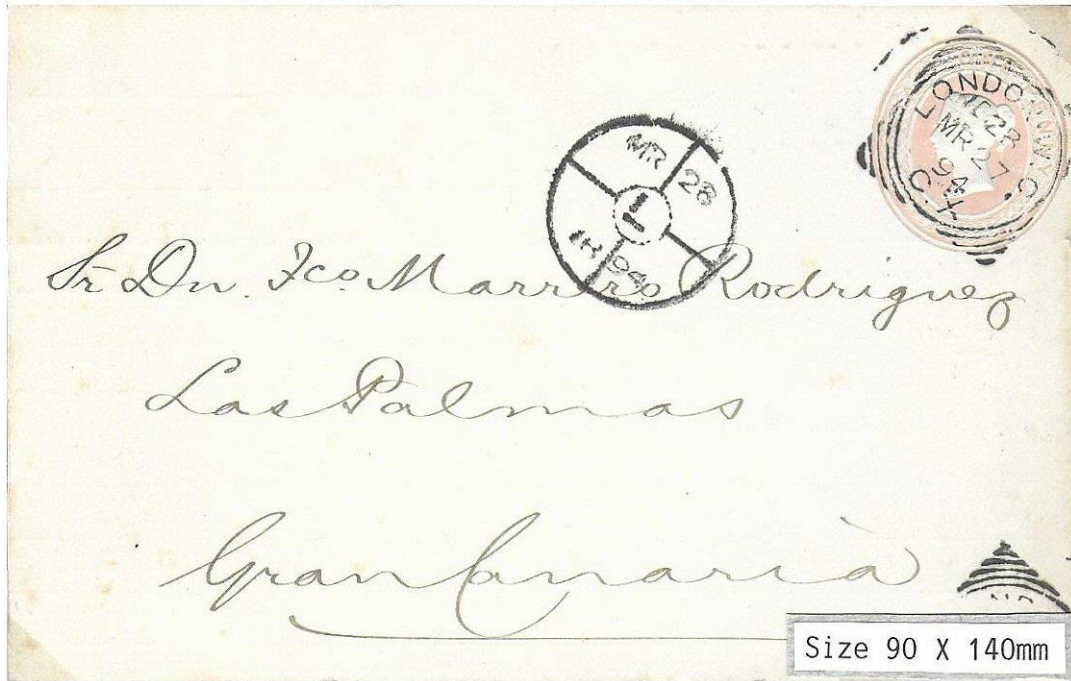
# Reply cards with embossed dies

- Special case usage, probably only done for this one client
- Presumably had to be embossed as cards pre-cut, and Stamp Office had no formes for reply cards anyway!



[Images courtesy Alan Huggins]

# Overseas rate STO card with standard 1d pink embossed die



[Images courtesy Alan Huggins]

- Another special case usage, probably also only done for this one client
- Stamp Office had no formes for overseas cards either
- Stamped at postcard rate, but not in proper format (no heading)
- Card listed by Robson Lowe (1952), but sole example is recent rediscovery

POST  CARD



POST  CARD



*Top right corner "block of 4" court size cards without "ADDRESS ONLY" line*

POST  CARD



The Secretary,

Army & Navy Co-operative Society, Limited,

105, Victoria Street,

LONDON, S.W.

ST  CARD



*Card in large format of PO thin cards  
(size is only approximate, as cutting  
accuracy variable with STO cards!)*

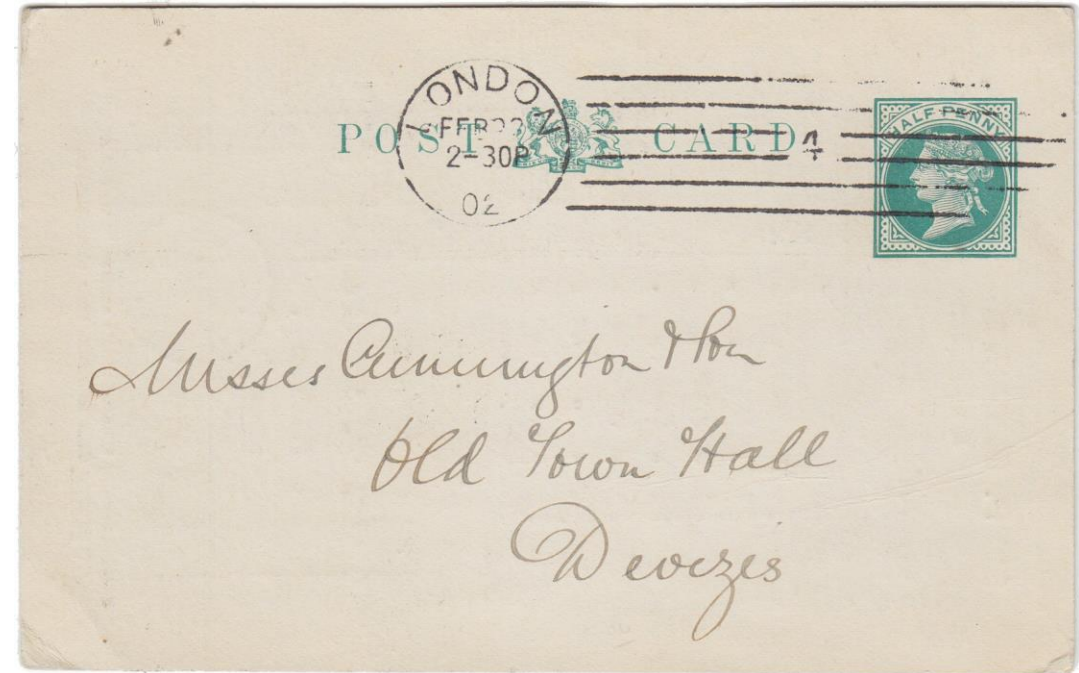
## Changes following PO cards

- PO stout cards issued in squarer "court" size (4½" × 3½") as from 21 January 1895
- PO thin cards issued in common international size (5½" × 3½") from 1 November 1899
- STO cards could now use these sizes as well
- "THE ADDRESS ONLY" line removed from formes 1897 as UPU changes relaxed the restriction

# Green ink used from 1901 to match required UPU postcard colour



*Court size card (inaccurately cut with stamp and heading too close to top)*



*International size card (with early machine cancel from London "Boston" No.4 machine)*

This followed the colour change of adhesive stamps in 1900 and was the final change to Queen Victoria cards

# Any questions?



[www.postalstationery.org.uk](http://www.postalstationery.org.uk)



[www.gbps.org.uk](http://www.gbps.org.uk)