

London

In This Issue.....

London Receiving House Stamps  
1794 - 1801

Postal History Group

NOTEBOOK

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EDITORIAL.....

We were pleased to observe this year's STAMPEX contained a number of London displays, with members receiving recognition for their efforts. In this matter Postal History students are often critical of the awards by which the judges praise, or otherwise, their efforts. That the judges due to their limited number and, let us be frank, knowledge, often fail to appreciate the true quality of what they are asked to assess, is a fact of life. Short of including such comments as 'only recorded example' or 'one of three known' in the write-up, coupled with a 'scarce' or 'rare' annotation - methods which we have been given to understand most judges do not regard in a kindly light - we are somewhat short on ideas for the easy resolution of the problem of rendering a fair verdict. The matter this year was further aggravated by showing one Silver award entry in reverse order, which detracted not a little from the pleasure of the visitor.

Although STAMPEX has become more of a market than an exhibition, the latter could be improved if at least one of the entries from each class of winner were shown in its full glory and not the truncated edition which surely presents the owner with a massive problem of selection. A useful addition would be a report from the judges with an analysis of markings, at least for the entries shown in full.

One last word - congratulations to the STAMPEX organisers for deciding to issue presentation cases. It may be the BPE awards (which actually are of the metal as named) in their neat cases encouraged the move, but this in no way detracts from the welcome afforded to the change.

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OUR NEXT MEETING....on May 5th deals with General Posts Towns and their Cross Posts within the London area. Barrie Jay will be leading the session and it promises to be most interesting. There will be a report on the low number Suburban Ovals to conclude the meeting.



From the pages of the Illustrated London News for the week ending Saturday June 22, 1844, brimming with references sufficient to infuriate the modern political sensibilities of popular reform, comes this splendid article on.....

#### POST OFFICE ESPIONAGE

Whether the present Home Secretary has deliberately planned out a scheme for making himself more unpopular than he is already, we know not, but he could not have hit on anything so likely to effect his purpose as to order, in a time of perfect domestic quiet, the detention and opening of letters committed to the care of the Post-office. No public establishment has so much in its power; the most unreserved of family communications, not to be profaned by the eye of a stranger; the most important commercial correspondence, the knowledge of which by others might involve whole establishments in ruin - all these are completely in the power of the Government officials. A fragile seal is all that stands between them and the secrets of a whole community. What has inspired that universal confidence which allows men without the slightest misgiving (as far as the Post Office is concerned) to put their very souls upon paper, and entrust even more than life and wealth to the care of her Majesty's Government? Simply the conviction, till now unshaken, that the seal which, like that of Solomon in the Eastern fabric, held in captivity so many spirits of good and evil, was sacred and inviolable. The statute which makes the detention or opening of a letter a misdemeanor had but little weight with the public. The disposition that is only withheld from crime by the fear of punishment, is the very last to be trusted, and the boundless confidence of the people was created by a long experience of official honesty. It is no slight injury to public morals that this confidence has been destroyed - not by a mere underling, but by the chief of the executive department of the Government - the officer who controls the administration of justice - the Secretary of State. The measure has all the objections that can apply to an official act, and in doing and defending it, Sir J. Graham has exhibited the worst faults which can be possessed by a public man. The act itself was unworthy, because petty and mean; and impolitic, as it was wholly uncalled for. In doing it the Home Secretary was unscrupulous, rash, and oppressive; and when called to account in Parliament, he, with as much bad taste as bad temper, refused to give a single reason for his conduct, obstinately confining himself to an assertion of two things which no one disputed - that he had the power and thought it proper to use it. Much more was necessary, by way of explanation of a proceeding so sure to excite public feeling. Government is armed with extraordinary powers, but they are to be used only on extraordinary occasions. In dealing with traitors and enemies of the public weal, a Government may be justified in getting information when and how it can. In war, an enemy's despatches are opened and read, if seized, as a matter of course; and the thing is so well known, that communications are often written and sent on purpose to be intercepted. The opening of a private letter from Charles I to his Queen, by Oliver Cromwell, is said to have been the cause of the final rupture between the King and the Parliament; it proved that in Charles no trust could be placed, and that he would be bound by no conditions. The captive King even then contemplated the execution of Cromwell; and the game thus being reduced to the desperate one of life against life, the warrior never felt a scruple sent to the scaffold the monarch without faith.

But war, whether foreign or civil, is, happily, an exception to the general rule, and society is not to exist in a period of foreign peace and domestic tranquillity, as if we were on the eve of social disorganisation. To foes we may act in the spirit of Shakespeare's Edgar, and say with him -

Leave, gentle wax,  
To know our enemies' minds, we'd rip their hearts,  
Their papers are more lawful!



But every discontented man is not an enemy, and to put the most objectionable part of the machinery of official power in operation for the very petty purpose of getting at the private thoughts of a Chartist orator, like Mr. Lovett, or of an unfortunate Italian, as we presume M. Mazzini, from his name, to be, seems contemptible. What need the State care for the private promulgation of the same mad theories of Government that have for years past been expressed in public? For the next two centuries, at least, our Constitution is not likely to be superseded by the "five points", nor is that state of the public mind at all favourable to a conspiracy for dethroning our gracious Queen. Neither do we believe there is any plan hatching for delivering up our fleet of war steamers into the hands of that "royal imp of fame", the Prince de Joinville. As far as any plot against the State is concerned, Sir James might have slept in as much security as the ticklish state of the ministerial majority would have allowed him. And what, we would beg to ask, are the internal squabbles of other States to us, that we should disgrace ourselves by making our Post-office an instrument of the detestable police of Italy and Austria - a system never to be named by an Englishman without abhorrence? Sir James Graham has doggedly refused to give any reason for his step, and the public mind is therefore left free to ascribe it to the worst possible motives. So it is currently stated that a sacred trust has been violated by the Executive, to oblige one of the Italian Governments. The late outbreaks have been confined to the Papal States and Sardinia; many victims have been shot, more imprisoned, and some have escaped. Those who remain may have friends and sympathisers in England, and the letters of these last might possibly give the Italian police a clue to some who, being implicated in the rising, may have managed to conceal themselves. But even if information could be afforded by this means, we say it is a base and cowardly act on the part of the Government of a great nation to betray the thoughts of those to whom our soil has given a refuge, and those persons not even a Secretary of State would dare to deliver up. There is to us an unspeakable baseness in it; it is gratuitous, mean, and useless treachery. Why should we condescend to aid the leaden despotism of Austria, or the miserable imbecility that seems to paralyse the temporal Government of the Pope? Under his sway, every liberty of thought, action, and speech, seems to be crushed, while his administration is at once so incapable and so corrupt that the people are, in addition to other evils, plundered and starved. The wiser Metternich manages to feed and amuse the people he oppresses, and though not free, they are contented. Still the espionage of Austria is incessant, and at present it is assisting the Pontiff to keep down his subjects, on the same principle that keenly interests a man in the extinguishing a fire next door. But we have nothing to do with their blunders or their crimes; England ought to scorn even the attempt to make either the spy or the policeman of any state on the face of the earth. The probability is, that it is the best and worthiest men who in these countries are driven to revolt, as in the case of Silvio Pellico and his comrades, and we should no more aid an Emperor or a Pope in perpetrating political vengeance now, than we assisted the National Convention of France to seize and guillotine the emigrant Royalists. On every account this tampering with letters for the benefit of a foreign power is an act of which we ought to be, as a nation, ashamed. Even as a means of detection, it is but a poor expedient. If it is once known to be resorted to, the Post-office simply ceases to be trusted, except for mere matters of business. A most striking instance of this is given in the case of the Marquis de Custine, the author of an able work on Russia. He knew that every letter of a foreigner is, as a matter of course, opened at the Russian Post-office, and that if he put on paper what he really thought, he would, within twenty-four hours, have been escorted to the frontiers. He baffled the Government by a very simple expedient; he sent through the post, letters written to be read, full of admiration of all and everything. The letters he should have sent, had he been free, he wrote at the same time also, but retained them, publishing them when he returned to France! Russia gained nothing by her jealousy; the opinions were recorded and given to the world, and given with the addition



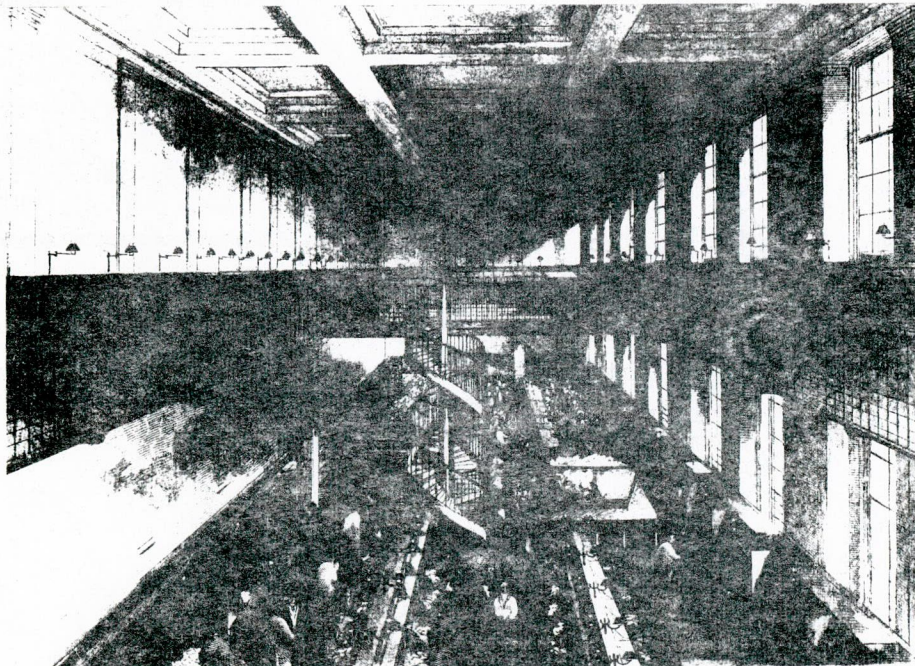
of the discredit to the Government of obliging itself to be so outwitted.

We attach no blame to the Post-office establishment, which could not do otherwise than obey orders; but we sincerely regret that it should have been so instructed. The whole question has been very well stated in a characteristic letter from Mr. Carlyle to the 'Times', and we conclude by quoting a portion of it, as anything from the pen of the eloquent author of the "French Revolution" must possess an interest:-

Whether the extraneous Austrian Emperor and miserable old chimera of a Pope shall maintain themselves in Italy, or be obliged to decamp from Italy, is not a question in the least vital to Englishmen. But it is a question vital to us that sealed letters in an English Post-office be, as we all fancied they were, respected as things sacred; that opening of men's letters, a practice near of kin to picking men's pockets, and to the other still vile and fataller forms of scoundrellism, be not resorted to in England, except in cases of the very last extremity. When some new Gunpowder Plot may be in the wind, some double eyed high treason, or imminent national wreck not avoidable otherwise, then let us open letters: not till then. To all Austrian Kaisers and such like, in their time of trouble, let us answer, as our fathers from old would have answered:- Not by such means of help here for you. Such means, allied to picking of pockets and viler forms of scoundrelism, are not permitted in this country for your behoof. The right hon. Secretary does himself detest such, and even is afraid to employ them. He dare not: it would be dangerous for him! All British men that might chance to come in view of such a transaction, would incline to spurn it, and trample on it, and indignantly ask him, what he meant by it?

The working of this great establishment being at all times interesting, and public attention being at the present moment so directly called to it, we have given views of the interior and management of the office, which will convey a clearer notion of the stupendous character of the arrangements than any description, however lengthened.

( note: the original illustration is far from clear but a very similar view bearing the annotation " General Post Office, Letter Carriers Room arranged for dispatch of Newspapers " was found in the Editorial Stock-Pot. )



General Post Office



## LONDON TWOPENNY POST: UNUSUAL DATE/TIME HANDSTAMP, by C.J. Adams

In the report published in Notebook No.10 on the Group meeting held on 14th. October, 1972, when the London Twopenny Post was the subject matter, an unrecorded variety of the Principal Office Paid date/time handstamp was shown. This was Brumell fig. 81 of the Westminster Office, modified for use at the Chief Office after the closure of the Gerrard Street Office in 1834. The period use extended till 1836.

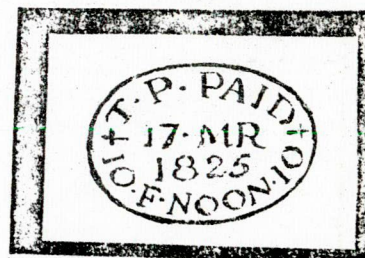
A further unrecorded variety has recently come to light used at the Westminster Office ( i.e. date before month ) in 1825 which would appear to be a mixture of Brumell figs. 77 and 79. There would seem to be a slight difference in the formation of the x to †.

Details of further examples of this handstamp would be appreciated.

All Struck in  
Red

The hitherto unrecorded  
date/time handstamp.

As Fig. 77, but with the  
cross for the dot



Introduced, according to  
Brumell, in 1823

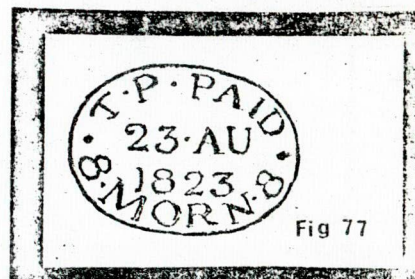


Fig 77

Introduced, according to  
Brumell, in 1826

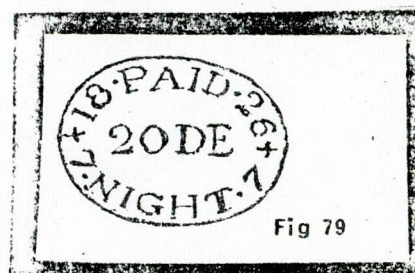


Fig 79

The cover bearing the new variety is illustrated overleaf.

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

## CORRECTIONS.....

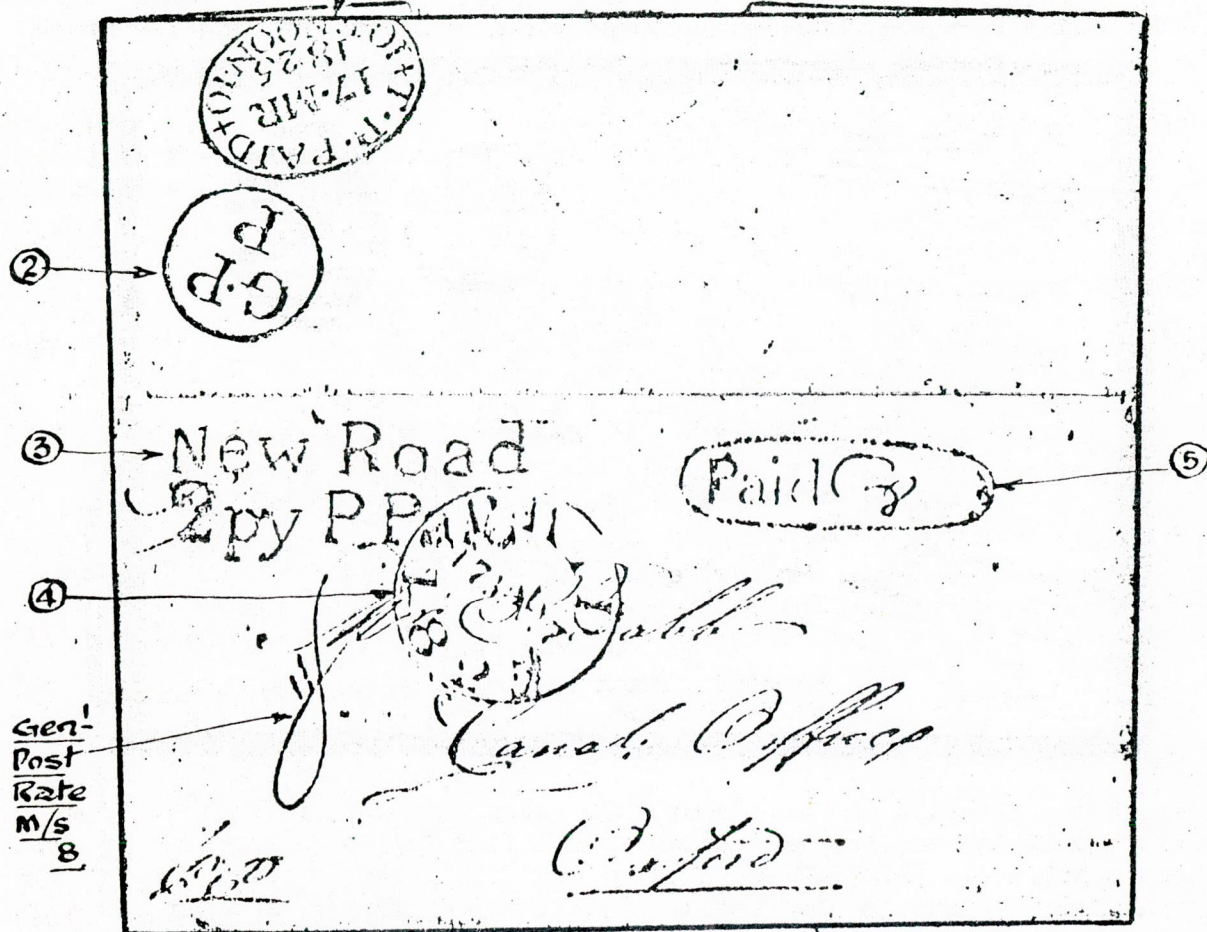
In Notebook No.6 on page 2 in the ' Experimental Marks ' article by John Adams the illustrated stamp is described in the text as being March. Please note this should be MAY.

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THE CROSS FOR DOT HANDSTAMP ( described on previous page )

① Westminster type Date/Time h/stamp - 17<sup>th</sup> March 1825.



- ② - General Post prepaid h/stamp (Brumell fig 126)  
 & thought to have been applied at the  
 Principal Office of the Twopenny Post.
- ③ Twopenny Post Receiving House Paid namestamp.  
 (Brumell fig 98)
- ④ General Post datestamp.
- ⑤ General Post rate prepaid handstamp with  
 rate in M/s (applied at the Receiving House)  
 (Brumell fig 125)

CORRECTION.....

In Notebook No.9, page 13, 9th line down.....this should read

21 Charing Cross FOR TWOPENNY POST LETTERS ONLY, and not 58 as printed



## THE L OF LONDON.....

As a result of the " Par Ballon Monte " feature in Notebook No.11, some further information has come in from readers.

Mr. J.C. Walton forwarded the cover shown, which confirms the Late Fee usage.



It carries the TOO-LATE GPO in circle. To quote from Dubus..." If in error the markings L1, L2 or L4 were applied to a letter for which the late fee had not been paid, a TOO LATE GPO was applied and the letter was forwarded on the following day." - this in contrast to the opinion expressed at Group meetings, which was to the effect that the Late Fee was collected in the Office of receipt but arrived at the Foreign Branch too late for onwards transmission - known as having one's cake and eating it! Some clarification of this point by examination of dates would not be amiss.

Brigadier Viner suggests the L1 on the ex-Paris cover could signify an extra penny was paid by the hotel for the redirection - or could it be a late fee to go that evening to Worthing. He draws attention to the ' Z ' code of the London-W backstamp.

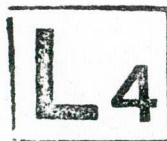
Turning again to ' London Cancellations ', by courtesy of M. Dubus we illustrate; readers are invited to send details of examples in their collections for publication ere too long.



1  
1865-75



2  
1865-75



3  
1868-69



5 bis



4  
1875-78



5  
1876



6  
en rouge 1869-72  
en noir 1869-79



6 bis



## EXPERIMENTAL HANDSTAMPS.....

Several members have, over the past few months, made mention of the hooded scroll and the double ring handstamps, both of which can fairly be regarded as experimental, at least for some designs.

Clearly the rather odd layout of the scroll ( fig 1 ) must have been for a specific purpose, otherwise why indulge in such a complex design, when the rather simpler version was already in use.

The double ring types ( two examples are illustrated by figs. 2 and 3 ) present less of a problem. They probably represent the first reluctant admission that the squared circle was a piece of unsound engineering and was liable to wear quickly. There appear to be a large number of these double rings available for study, unlike the scroll, which appear far from common.

Of particular interest will be any of the scroll type on cover for this could give some indication of their true function. These marks are similar to LATE FEE stamps of other towns and it has been suggested this is the purpose of the London issue, despite the absence of any wording to that effect.

Of no direct connection, apart from being a scroll, is the front cover of a small publication obtained from the Editor's Local Library recently. This is shown.

Readers are invited to send details of any of these in their collections, using the enclosed form. A summary of the information, with additional illustrations will be published in due course.



Fig 1

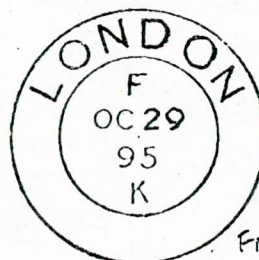
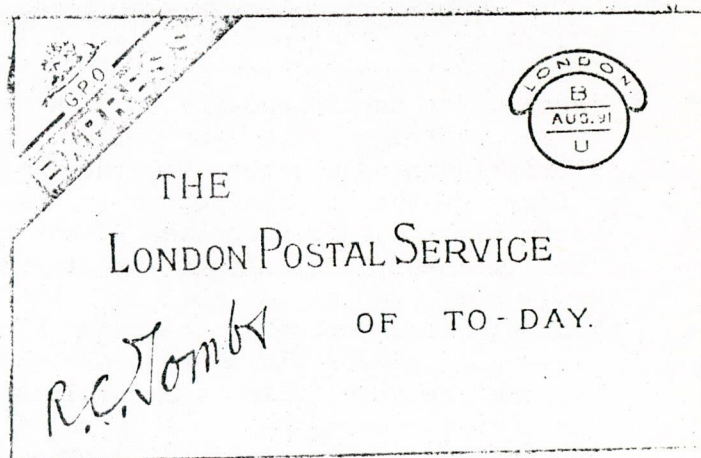


Fig 2



Fig 3



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

## PHILATELIC MAGAZINE.....

The Editor of the Philatelic Magazine has offered the Group a discount of 25% on each new subscription at £2 p.a. post paid. Since it went monthly two years ago the emphasis has been on specialised articles, including items on Postal History. If you are planning a subscription, please forward it through the Secretary..in this way the Group funds benefit by 50pence!

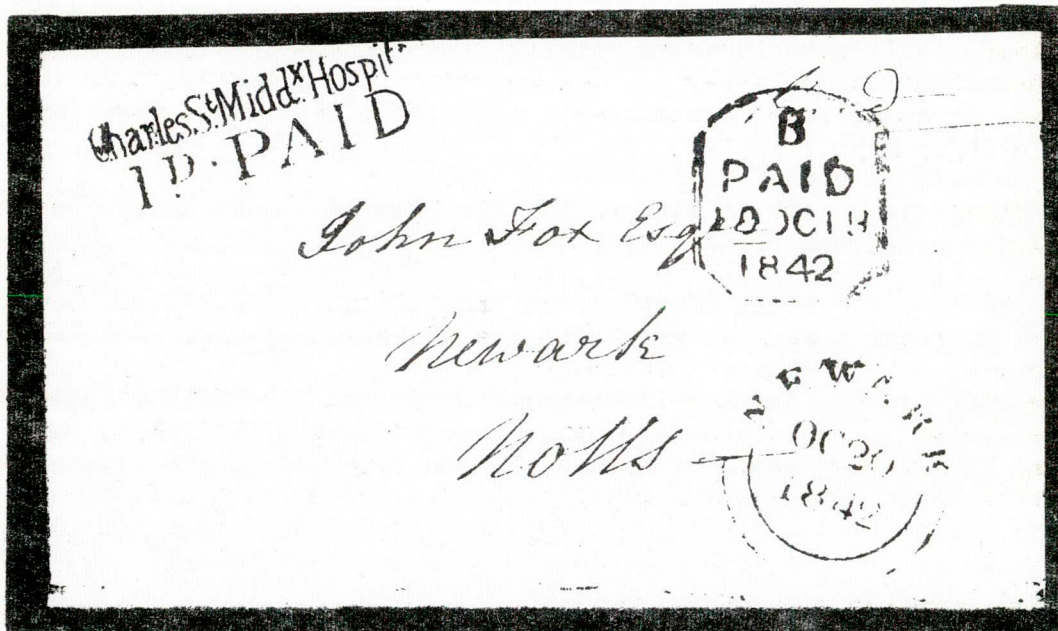
-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-



## CHARLES STREET.....

The Reports of the P.M.G. quoted in ' Notebook ' have contained several references to the difficulties arising from street nomenclature. One such can be demonstrated by the name " Charles Street " for in the 1857 ' Principal Streets and Places in London ' published by the Post Office, appear no fewer than twentythree ' Charles Streets ' plus a ' Charles Street East ' and a ' Charles Street ( Old ) '!

The possibility of a hospital having its own Receiving House, or at least one on its premises occurred to LPHG member W. John Baker whose attention and interest was drawn to a ' Charles St. Middx Hospital/1d PAID ' handstamp.



In response to his enquiry the hospital commented:

" The Middlesex has been on its present site since 1755, but the portion in front of the hospital which is now Mortimer Street was Charles Street, and the streets on either side of the hospital were Norfolk, now Cleveland and on the west side Suffolk Street, now incorporated in the hospital.

" I have looked through the Board Minutes of 1841 - 42. Unfortunately they are not indexed and in any case the accounts were not given in any detail. There are no detailed accounts now in existence. "

The letter is signed by W.R. Winterton, Archivist to The Middlesex Hospital.

It would seem to confirm the use of ' Middx Hospital ' in the handstamp was just a device to identify the office more precisely. One shudders to contemplate the confusion arising from an inaccurately addressed letter with a selection of twenty three to choose from.

Despite this, could there be a Receiving House established in or near some large institution ( the Editor knows of a nearby College with a sub office in the lodge ). With a significant volume of mail, this course might commend itself to the Postal Authorities.



**LONDON RECEIVING HOUSE STAMPS, 1794 - 1801, by Barrie Jay.**

The reorganisation of the London Penny Post in 1794 resulted in the production of a number of interesting, and in some cases uncommon, handstamps. One of the more interesting, controvertial and sought-after handstamps in this period is that with the name of a receiving house followed by the number 1, 2 or 3, ( Alcock & Holland figs. 133-135; Robson Lowe fig 119 - Cat. nos 294 - 297; Willcocks fig. 95 - Cat. nos 210 - 213 ).

Various explanations as to the significance of these marks have been given, none of which are entirely satisfactory. The two most popular explanations are that these marks refer to receiving houses or that they refer to walks from the receiving house. The first of these explanation is difficult to uphold as many of these areas where the number 3 is known do not appear to have had three difficult receiving houses ( Dew/Blackmoor St 3, in particular cannot be explained in this way ). The second of these explanations does not account for the known fact that many of these receiving houses were served by six walks a day.

Blackmoor Street is unique in also giving the name of the Receiver, Dew, a wax-chandler.

The ' N ' and ' S ' of FLEET STREET are abbreviations for North and South, while the ' ET ' and ' WT ' of WHITEHALL are abbreviations for East and West.

In an attempt to gather further information about this facinating group of handstamps I have appended a list of all marks in this group I have in my collection, that I have seen, or that have been recorded in the literature. I would welcome hearing of any other marks in this group, or of any additions or corrections to this list. The earliest recorded date on which this handstamp was used is 17 June 1794, the latest is 6 February 1801.

ACTON/2	1795-1796
ALDERS <sup>E</sup> /ST 1	1794
ALDERS <sup>E</sup> /ST 2	1795
BERK <sup>Y</sup> /S <sup>Q</sup> 1	1795
BETHNAL/G <sup>N</sup> 1	1799
B-GATE/W <sup>N</sup> 2	
B-GATE/W <sup>T</sup> 1	1794
DEW/BLACKMOOR ST 3	1795
BLOOMS/B <sup>Y</sup> 3	1796-1798
BRENTF <sup>D</sup> /2	1794-1795
CAMB <sup>L</sup> /1	1795
CATEA/TON ST 1	1794
CATEA/TON S <sup>T</sup> 2	1794
CATEA/TON S <sup>T</sup> 3	1797



CHELSEA/3	1794
CLAPHAM/1	1794
COVT G <sup>N</sup> 2	
COVT G <sup>N</sup> 3	
EALING/3	1794
ENFIELD/1	
FINSB <sup>Y</sup> /S <sup>Q</sup> 1	1801
FLEET/S <sup>T</sup> N-1	1797
FLEET/S <sup>T</sup> S-1	1794-1797
FULHAM/1	1797
FULHAM/2	1797
GOLD <sup>N</sup> /HILL-1	1795
GOLDEN/SQ 1	1796
GOLDEN/S <sup>Q</sup> 3	1795
GOOD <sup>S</sup> /F <sup>S</sup> 1	1795-1797
GOODM <sup>S</sup> /F <sup>S</sup> 2	1794
GREENW <sup>H</sup> /1	1794-1795
HAMMER <sup>H</sup> /1	1795
HAMMER <sup>H</sup> /3	1794
HAMPSTEAD/1	
HENDON/2	1795
HOLB <sup>N</sup> /HILL 1	1795-1796
HOLBORN/HILL 2	1796-1797
HOLBORN/HILL 3	1796
KENSING <sup>N</sup> /1	1794
LINCS INN/2	1794
LINCS INN/3	1794
MORTL <sup>E</sup> /2	
MORTL <sup>E</sup> /3	1794
PADD <sup>N</sup> /1	1795
PORT/S <sup>Q</sup> 2	1795-1796
PORT <sup>D</sup> /ST 2	1796



PUTNEY/1	1794-1797
PUTNEY/2	1794
PUTNEY/3	1796
RICHM <sup>D</sup> /1	1794-1795
RICHM <sup>D</sup> /2	1794-1795
S <sup>T</sup> JAMES'S/1	1795
S <sup>T</sup> JAMES'S/3	1794-1797
SHORED <sup>H</sup> /1	1795
S-NEWING <sup>N</sup> /1	1794
THAMES/S <sup>T</sup> 1	1794
THAMES S <sup>T</sup> 3	1798
TITCHF <sup>D</sup> /S 1	
TITCHF <sup>D</sup> /ST 3	1794
TOOTING/2	1796
TOTT <sup>M</sup> C-R/1	1794
TOTT <sup>M</sup> C-R/2	1794
WANDS <sup>H</sup> /1	1795
WAPPING/1	1794
WATLING/S <sup>T</sup> 1	1796
WATLING/S <sup>T</sup> 3	1794-1795
W-HALL/E <sup>T</sup> 1	1796
W-HALL/E <sup>T</sup> 2	
W-HALL/E <sup>T</sup> 3	1795
W-HALL/W <sup>T</sup> 2	1794-1797
WOOLW <sup>H</sup> /2	1794-1795
WOOLW <sup>H</sup> /3	1795







**MAILS IN THE GREAT PLAGUE OF LONDON,** by M.V.D. Champness.

The pestilences of Europe were no rare occurrences during the 15th., 16th., & 17th. centuries, but after having been relatively free from plague for some years the first cases which occurred towards the end of 1664 were considered isolated examples. By May 1665 however the disease began to spread slowly through the Metropolis. Boghurst, a contemporary doctor, recorded that it crept down Holborn and took six months to travel from the western suburbs to the Eastern through the City. The mortality rate rose from 43 in May to 590 in June; 6,137 in July; 17,036 in August; 31,159 in September, after which it started to decline. The number of deaths directly attributed to the plague in 1665 was 68,596 in a total population of 460,000, out of whom  $\frac{2}{3}$  are supposed to have fled to escape the contagion. By December there was a big drop in the death rate, and London's population began to drift back from their country retreats.

From the State Papers Domestic it is possible to reconstruct some of the difficulties experienced in the transmission of letters, so as to avoid the affected districts, particularly London.

- 1665 Aug. 5 Sir P. Frowde ( Secretary of the Post Office ) to Williamson. Knows not how to help him on the other side of the river, but on this side will take care letters are aired at Hounslow. Send a memorial how letters are managed to avoid passage through London.
- Aug.14 James Hickes informs Williamson that he has written to P.M. of Huntingdon instructing him to air Williamson's letters over vinegar before despatching them. The P.O. is so fumed that they can hardly see each other but had the contagion been catching by letters they had been dead long ago. Hopes to be presented in their important public work from the stroke of the destroying angel.
- Sep.27 During the Plague the Court was removed to Oxford, when to avoid London various stages and posts were established such as that from Oxford to Towcester, which necessitated the establishment of a Postmaster at Brackley, where it joined the Chester Road.
- James Hickes says that all are well at Newcastle but sickness hot at Harwich: in London it is abated 1500. Has established a Postmaster at Brackley between Oxford and Towcester for King's concerns to Ireland etc. The burials have decreased 1873 during the week.
- Oct.14 Secretary of State to Sir P. Frowde. That it would be inconvenient that during the King's residence at Oxford his correspondence from North and West of the Kingdom should pass through London, it would lose time and run the hazard of bringing the infection to Oxford. On account of the letter office through which the letters did usually pass being visited with the sickness they accordingly desire that a post be fixed between Oxford and Newbury for the Western Road, and at Towcester to correspond with Chester Road, and orders were given for those stages to be established immediately, all other letters sent to Oxford from London or from any other parts passing through London were to be put in separate bags and dealt with in some healthful place in the Suburbs without going to the General Letter Office.
- Oct.16 Hickes to attend to alterations in post to and from Oxford, but knows not how to do it, unless Office be removed to Oxford. The Clerk of the Oxford Road has just died but all others are well. Knows no place round London that is not infected, nor any place in London more healthy than theirs.



Nov.11 Lord Arlington to Mr. Bennet, Postmaster of Sherborne, writes to him to remove the P.O. at Sherborne as the house next to his is stricken with sickness. Has ordered Justices etc of Dorset and Somerset to allow watchmen to receive packets sent by his horse and foot posts and bring back others till the visitation be removed from the town.

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

# DEVELOPMENT OF THE OBLIQUE IN EXPRESSING SHILLINGS AND PENCE,

by John A. Grimmer.

I believe the familiar oblique stroke, used to separate shillings and pence, thus making it unnecessary to use words or abbreviations for the denominations, was invented by Post Clerks.

Outward unpaid mail from London, around 1770 to 1780, often bears marks such as :-

6N3 8N6

The ' translation ' is that the letter ' N ' is a corruption of the word ' AND ' Semi-literates would write what they heard: SIX 'N THREE ( pronounced just as written ). It was not required to say SIX SHILLINGS AND THREE PENCE, since all concerned knew what was intended.

In the decade to about 1780, the forming of the marks as above was usually done with great care, and probably at no great speed. During the following to about 1790. the marks became less scrupulously formed and this may be attributed to the greater volume of mail handled.

By 1820, or even earlier, the marks are usually in the form we ourselves used until decimalisation. Many of the marks of this period are evidently hurried, surely an indication of the greater volume being handled. I have one or two covers from the middle years of the degeneration of the letter ' N ' and I believe more examples would trace the transition from a clear letter ' N ' to an equally clear ' / '.

N2

= 1/2

2/

= 2/-

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

## LONDON CANCELLATIONS.....

Members will be pleased to learn the Group have purchased a copy of the two volume work by M. Dubus, indeed the last copy held by Robson Lowe Ltd. This will greatly assist in our work, and quotations from it appear in this issue of Notebook. It is hoped to make both volumes available to members, but the method to be adopted to achieve this has yet to be established.

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



## FIFTH REPORT OF THE POSTMASTER GENERAL ON THE POST OFFICE ( 1858 )

## London Districts.....

Although it has not yet been practicable, owing to difficulties of various kinds, to provide in every London District a suitable building for a permanent Chief Post Office, yet every District not so furnished has been supplied at least with a temporary office. An interchange of bags is now, therefore, made between all the Districts; and greater rapidity of communication between house and house, which formed a chief object of the division of London into Postal Districts, will, I hope, be soon fully attained.

As regards the town portions of the Districts, in every case ( provided they bear the District initials ) the letters posted at a Receiving Office or Road Letter Box for the same District are at once selected at the District Office for delivery; and the process will soon be further accelerated, so as to reduce almost to a minimum the time between the posting and delivery of a letter properly addressed.

Much has been done in carrying forward the postal improvements which have for some time been in progress in the towns and villages round London; though, owing to the vast amount of detail, much still remains to be done. New Sorting Offices have been opened, from which the letter carriers work with more facility and expedition; in many cases the times for posting have been extended new deliveries and collections have been established; and the intervals between the despatches from London have been made more equal.

That the public have largely availed themselves of the increased facility of postal communication in the London District consequent on the recent improvements is shown by the great increase in the number of district letters. During the ten years previous to 1857, when the improvements effected, though continuous and important, were comparatively small, the annual rate of increase was somewhat less than a million and a half; while during the last two years the increase has been as follows:-

	Increase of Letters During the Year.
In 1857 - - - - -	4,239,000
In 1858 - - - - -	6,270,000

and since the commencement of 1859 the rate of increase has been still higher.

The augmentation of this class of letters during the last two years has thus afforded an increase of about 48,000£ per annum in the gross revenue.

I feel pleasure in noticing the extensive compliance by the public with the wishes of the Department that the addresses of letters to London or its neighbourhood should include the initials of the Postal District in which they are to be delivered; and in its desire that when, as in the London Receiving Offices, there are two separate letter boxes for different classes of letters, care should be taken, in posting, to drop the letters into the right box.

By readiness of this kind on the part of the public to co-operate with the Department, the sorting, despatch, and ultimately the delivery of letters are much expedited.

At all the newly erected District Offices, and at all other new Sorting Offices, arrangements have been made for providing the letter carriers with much better accommodation than formerly; and the sanitary state of many of the old offices has been improved.



Some further progress has been made in improving the nomenclature of the streets in London and the numbering of houses; but the main work has still to be accomplished.

ESTIMATED NUMBER of CHARGEABLE LETTERS delivered in the UNITED KINGDOM in the Year immediately preceding the first general Reduction of Postage on the 5th Day of December 1839, and in the Years subsequent thereto; also (in the first Year) the Number of Franks.

Number of Franks.

APPENDIX (A)	Delivered in England and Wales.						Total in England and Wales.	Increase per cent. per annum.	Total in Ireland.	Increase per cent. per annum.	Total in Scotland.	Increase per cent. per annum.	Total in United Kingdom.	Increase per cent. per annum.
	Year ending 31st December.	By Country Offices.	Increase per cent. per annum.	In London District, exclusive of Local Letters.	Increase per cent. per annum.	Local Letters in London District.								
Estimated No. of letters, 1839	—	—	—	—	13,000,000	—	59,983,000	—	8,302,000	—	7,623,000	—	75,908,000	—
Estimated No. of Franks, 1839	—	—	—	—	—	—	5,172,000	—	1,055,000	—	336,000	—	6,563,000	—
Estimated No. of letters, 1840	88,071,000	—	23,560,000	—	20,372,000	—	132,003,000	120	18,211,000	110½	18,554,000	143½	168,768,000	122½
Average of 5 years, 1841-45	121,708,000	10½	31,587,000	9	25,838,000	8½	179,133,000	10½	24,226,000	9½	24,419,000	9½	227,777,000	10
" " 1846-50	179,651,000	5½	41,089,000	5½	34,883,000	5½	258,622,000	5½	34,757,000	5	33,627,000	4½	327,006,000	5
" " 1851-55	232,569,000	6½	54,043,000	5½	43,168,000	3½	329,783,000	6	39,384,000	3½	40,999,000	5½	410,166,000	5½
Estimated No. of letters, 1856	275,451,000	4½	64,961,000	9	47,895,000	4½	388,310,000	5½	41,851,000	Nil.	48,233,000	5	478,394,000	4½
" " 1857	291,636,000	5½	66,233,000	2	52,134,000	8½	410,003,000	5½	42,806,000	2½	51,612,000	7	504,421,000	5½
" " 1858	300,506,000	3	68,961,000	4	58,404,000	12	427,871,000	4½	44,208,000	3½	50,795,000	1½ Dec.	522,874,000	3½

ESTIMATED NUMBER of BOOK PACKETS and CHARGEABLE NEWSPAPERS\* delivered in the UNITED KINGDOM in the Years 1856, 1857 and 1858.

APPENDIX (B)	Delivered in England and Wales.						Total in England and Wales.	Increase per cent. on the previous Year.	Total in Ireland.	Increase per cent. on the previous Year.	Total in Scotland.	Increase per cent. on the previous Year.	Total in United Kingdom.	Increase per cent. on the previous Year.
	Year ending 31st December.	By Country Offices.	Increase per cent. on the previous Year.	In London District, exclusive of Local Book Packets and Chargeable Newspapers.	Increase per cent. on the previous Year.	Local Book Packets and Chargeable Newspapers in London District.								
	Estimated No. of Book Packets and Chargeable Newspapers - 1856	12,386,000	—	1,197,000	—	1,904,000	—	—	1,766,000	—	2,996,000	—	20,249,000	—
	" " 1857	15,386,000	24½	1,405,000	17½	2,495,000	31	24½	2,284,000	29½	3,623,000	21	25,193,000	24½
	" " 1858	17,573,000	14½	1,919,000	36½	2,567,000	3	14½	2,525,000	10½	3,800,000	5	28,384,000	12½

\* By "Chargeable Newspapers" are meant Newspapers not bearing the impressed newspaper stamp, and the postage of which is consequently paid in postage stamps or money.

ESTIMATED NUMBER of FREE NEWSPAPERS\* delivered in the UNITED KINGDOM in the Years 1856, 1857 and 1858.

APPENDIX (C.)	Delivered in England and Wales.				Total in England and Wales.	Decrease per cent. on the previous Year.	Total in Ireland.	Decrease per cent. on the previous Year.	Total in Scotland.	Decrease per cent. on the previous Year.	Total in United Kingdom.	Decrease per cent. on the previous Year.
	Year ending 31st December.	By Country Offices.	Decrease per cent. on the previous Year.	In London District.								
	Estimated Number of Free Newspapers - 1856	31,423,000	—	4,425,000	—	—	10,066,000	—	7,870,000	—	53,790,000	—
	" " 1857	30,547,000	2½	4,456,000	½ Inc.	35,003,000	2½	7	7,245,000	8	51,616,000	4
	" " 1858	29,714,000	2½	4,404,000	1½ Dec.	34,118,000	2½	1½	6,704,000	7½	50,058,000	3

\* By "Free Newspapers" are meant all British Newspapers and Publications bearing the impressed newspaper stamp, and all newspapers from abroad upon which no charge has to be made in this Country.



THE LONDON EXCHANGE.....

WANTED...London straight line Receivers marks; also a used envelope relating to the " Conversazione at the Guildhall " to celebrate the Jubilee of Penny Post in 1890.

W.V. Evans, 31 Balmoral Road,  
Kingston upon Thames. KT1 2TY

DISPOSING.....by exchange of a varied collection of GB Postal History. Am now concentrating on items relating to LEICESTERSHIRE and HINCKLEY in particular also re-addressed, cartoon and ' much travelled ' covers. Will exchange or buy based on Willcocks for Leicestershire items plus 50% in your favour for any Hinckley strikes. Let me know what you collect.

Jon Baker, 13 Station Road, Hinckley, Leics.

WANTED.....to buy ( or exchange for German material, used or mint stamps ) London Penny/Two penny Post, Receiving House marks etc. In fact anything connected with London up to the 1890 period. Payment by UK cheque.

E. Shaw, 2082 Uetersen/Holst.,Hafenstrasse 8, Germany.

INFORMATION.....please on COLUMBIA LONDON MACHINE CANCELLATIONS. Types, dates, District initials, sizes of circles etc etc.

( Have several for exchange )

R.A. Keneally, 1/2 Middlegate, Penrith, Cumberland.

WANTED.....Material, articles, photographs etc. connected with the 1890 Jubilee of Penny Postage. Also postmarks or other items connected with Exhibitions or Special Events ( Victorian period only )

P.G. Day, 56 St. Michaels Road,  
Long Startton, Norwich NOR 72W

WANTED.....Any local Penny/Two penny/Threepenny Post Receiving House marks of: Beckenham; Bexley; Bromley; Chislehurst; Crayford; Foots Cray; Hayes; St. Mary Cray; South End; Sydenham; West Wickham.

Michael M. English, 50 Somerden Road,  
Orpington, Kent. BR5 4HT

WANTED.....Precancelled stamps and postal stationery, especially A & H types 1583 to 1590 inclusive.

R.D. Lee, 23 St. Andrews Road,  
Cranbrook, Ilford, Essex.

INFORMATION.....wanted re any postal markings of the HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT in connection with a study of Parliamentary Postal History. Any information, esp dates of use most welcome. All postages refunded.

David Trapnell, Brendon,  
Lyndale, London NW2 2NY

WANTED.....HOSTERS - Types 1d,II and X ( as recorded in Notebook No.8 )

Abbot Lutz, Rockefeller Center,  
1270 Avenue of the Americas,  
New York. NY 10020. USA



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LONDON POSTAL HISTORY GROUP

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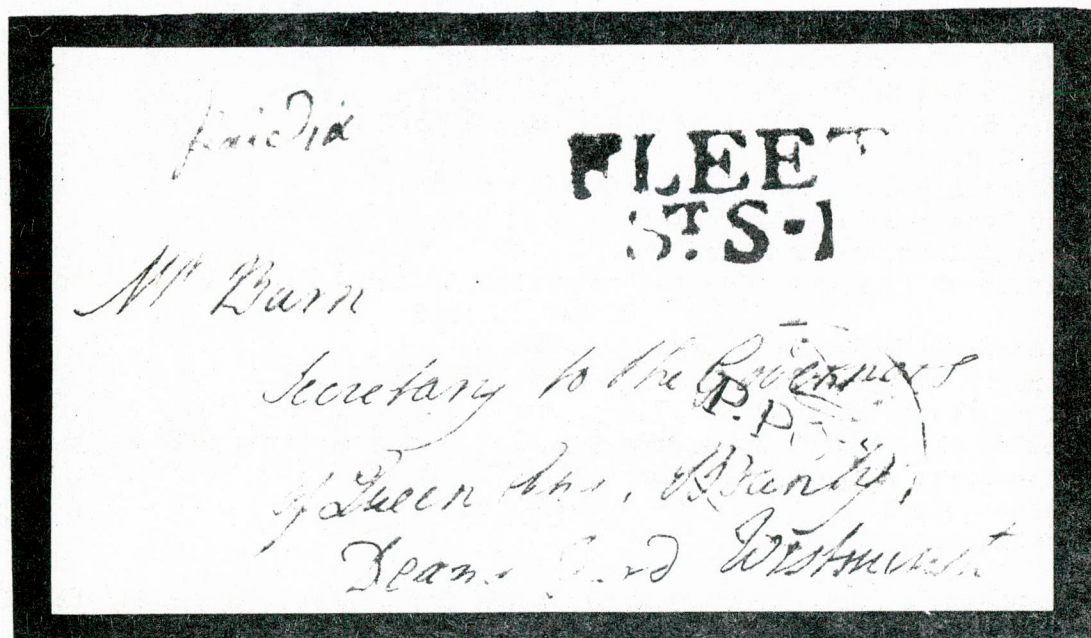
There are a number of Study Groups and readers are invited to contact the Hon. Secretary for details.

Back numbers of " Notebook " may be obtained from the Chairman.

One copy 35 pence; one year's issues £2.00 post paid.

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LONDON RECEIVING HOUSE STAMPS, 1794 - 1801, see page 9.