

NOTEBOOK

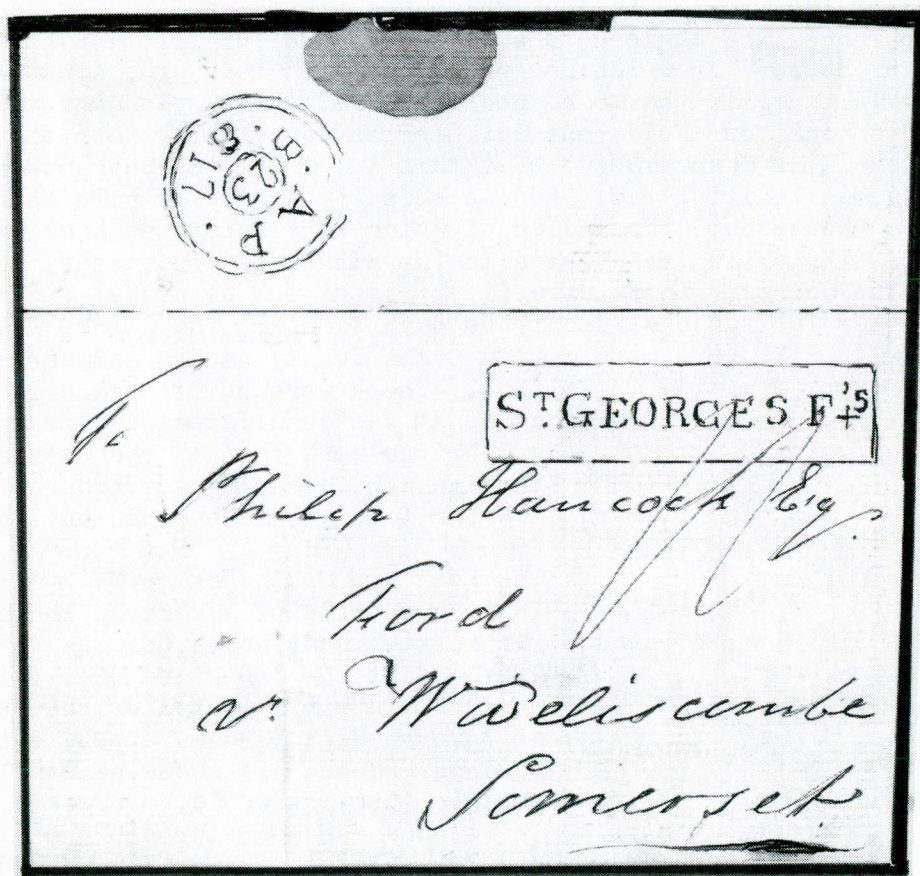
POSTAL HISTORY IS THE STUDY OF THE OPERATION OF POSTAL SERVICES
BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE AND THE PUBLICATION OF THE FRUITS OF
SUCH STUDY

IN THIS ISSUE.....

THE POSTAL HISTORY OF SOUTHWARK by A.J. Kirk

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The item, which leads into this major contribution, comes from George Crabb, who writes: This is one of two letters from a prisoner in Kings Bench Prison in 1817. Both have the boxed receiving house handstamp. I am not too sure about the " F+S " but it would appear to be just that. Both letters are to a Solicitor (this one dated 23rd April, 1817, the other 20th. August of the same year) and both apparently written from

(continued on back page)

THE POSTAL HISTORY OF SOUTHWARK by A.J. Kirk

Southwark is the oldest suburb of London, in fact it could be said to have grown up with the city. Sited, as it is, on the south side of London Bridge and at the junction of two Roman roads, Watling Street from Dover and Staine Street from Chichester and the South Coast, enhances its position in relation to the City itself. It was a marshy area but must have been populated from a very early date. In the past year or so the remains of a 4th. Century AD Roman settlement have been discovered in Southwark Street, complete with two skeletons. At the time of this settlement, it would have been on the banks of the River Thames, which was then much wider than it is today. The suburb seems to have declined somewhat after this period and the name of Southwark does not appear until the 10th. Century. In Domesday Book, the area is rated at £16. The Bishop of Winchester built a palace here in 1107 and large areas of Southwark were owned by the See of Winchester. The only evidence of the Bishop's Palace today is the remnant of a large oriel window, in Clink Street, which must have been a fine sight in its day.

In 1550 three sections of Southwark were sold to the City of London for £1,000. the land thus sold had originally belonged to the Monastery of Bermondsey and St. Mary Overy Church. They had lost these lands during the dissolution of the monasteries in the days of King Henry VIII. To distinguish these three areas from 'The City', they were known as 'The Borough' and this term is often used to this day to indicate the Borough of Southwark. By right it should apply only to the part bought by the City of London, which was around what is now Borough High Street. This purchase was to lead to a certain amount of friction between London and the County of Surrey, in which Southwark was situated. The area must have been a very lively place in the 16th. and 17th. Centuries, with its annual fair, a most boisterous occasion, held near St. Georges Church, its four theatres on Bankside, The Rose, The Swan, The Globe (this ' wooden O' of Shakespeare) with The Hope and its bear baiting pit. Add to this the brothels, also on Bankside. Pepys had a word about them, the ladies of which were sometimes known as " Winchester Geese ". They paid their rents to the Bishop of Winchester, whose Palace was just round the corner. There were five prisons in the area. The Marshalsea, Kings Bench (after 1837 Queens Bench) Borough Compter, The Clink, The White

Lion (the County gaol) and Horsemonger Lane. These were built here originally because it was considered the air was more salubrious here than in the City and thus the incidence of plague would be reduced. How far this was so one can only surmise.

The Post and Southwark go back a long way. In 1642 we read of a certain Thomas Barlow running the Post House for the Dover and Rye Road at the ' Dog and Bear ' in Southwark. This was situated on the west side of Borough High Street, opposite the Marshalsea Prison. It seems he still held the post in 1666 and would, therefore, have been there, one assumes, through the Civil War and Restoration period, somewhat unusual for those times. He may, of course, have been reinstated with Restoration or retained the post throughout. The Inn was destroyed in the 1700s but the name lived on for many years in ' The Dog and Bear Yard ' .(left)

A list of Receivers for the City of London dated 1652 shows a Thomas Simms at ' the sign of the Angel ' at Riddiff ftares. Rid-



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diff became Rotherhithe and, whilst not then part of Southwark, is so now. The Dockwra Penny Post, according to the "Smith's Current Intelligence", on 27th. March, 1680 and to the broadsheet published by William Dockwra in April, 1680 had Southwark as one of the areas in which the scheme was to operate. However, the "Mercurius Civicus" of the 6th. April, 1680 stated "messengers were to call at all Coffee Houses in the High Road and Streets every hour in some places and an hour and a half in the rest". We further read they will call at such establishments "From St. Georges Church in Southwark (sic) to London Bridge and then from Bridge -----to Shoreditch Church". It would thus appear the organisation of the Sorting Office and Receiving Houses was not set up from the outset.

Southwark was one of the original seven Sorting Offices but where was it sited? In 1681 it was said to be "Near Church of St. Mary Overy". Brumell states that in 1682 it was at "New Buildings near the Borough", whereas the "Vade Mecum" of 1692 gives the address as "Fowl Lane in the Borough". In 1732 we find the address as at "Green Dragon Court Nr. St Mary Overy Church". The last address is given on Carey's map of 1791, which just states it was in "St Saviours Churchyard". The full name of Southwark Cathedral is the "Collegiate Church of St. Saviour and St Mary Ovaries", so I would suggest all the addresses mentioned above are more or less in the same place, near to where stands Southwark Cathedral. The Southwark office covered an area from Plumstead in the east to Richmond and Kew in the west, going as far south as Wallington, Carshalton and Croydon. It must have been a very busy office for, from early times, we note Redriff (Rotherhithe) had seven deliveries a day. This no doubt meant the rest of Southwark. From Lambeth Marsh to Fox-Hall (Vauxhall) deliveries were two in the morning and two in the afternoon, whilst the Woolwich and Plumstead area, Clapham, Chamberwell (Camberwell) and as far out as Richmond and Kew had a delivery at 8 in the morning and 2 o'clock in the afternoon. However, the road to Craydon (Croydon) via Streatham, Stockwell, Morden etc., had one delivery only each day. As the first delivery of the day, for all areas, was at 8 a.m., the letter carriers must have made an early start.

The first postal marking used was, of course, the well-known "Dockwra". However, in spite of the very large area covered by the Southwark office, there has not, so far, any record of the original stamp for this office. One would assume, from the other stamps employed, there would have been a large 'S' in the centre. Some claims have been made for the stamp with 'B' to have referred to 'Borough', though generally this is assigned to the Bishopsgate office. Two items with the 'B' which are in the Public Records Office do not assist with this question. The one dated 1681 is superscribed 'on board van Heering', suggesting a vessel moored in the Thames. The second, dated 1682, has no address of origin. It must be admitted the Willcocks catalogue shows 'B - Bishopsgate' and until some Southwark archive material comes to light which can challenge this allocation, there is must rest.

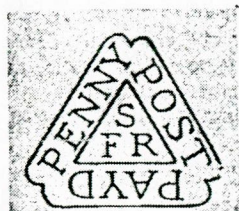


Fig.1



Fig.2



Fig.3

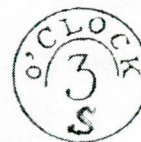


Fig.4

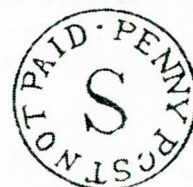


Fig.5

When the Post Office re-opened the Dockwra Penny Post, following the successful action to close the private venture, it used a mark similar to the original Dockwra, modified to show an office initial and the weekday in the centre, this in two or three letters. The Southwark office thus used the letter 'S' with the weekday letters (fig. 1). A variety peculiar to Southwark (fig. 2) shows the centre inverted. It was thought

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previously this mark was used about 1769 but one came on the market recently dated 1745. This inverted type is known for Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday. At one time it was thought there might be some significance in this format but now it is considered such variations were only at the whim of the engraver. The earliest use of the Southwark stamp would appear to be 1686 and they were in use until the office closed in 1794. Time stamps are known also used by the Southwark office. Between 1683 - 1709 they are as fig.3 and from 1763 - 1794 as fig.4. A circular NOT PAID PENNY POST with ' S ' in the centre (fig.5) was used on unpaid Penny Post letters put into the General Post. Figure 4 is also reported with the centre circle completed, used in 1784. Up until 1794 Receiving Houses did not have their own postmarks (namestamps) and the Receiver often signed letters passing through their hands. A few used specially made handstamps incorporating their name and the one seen most often from Southwark is Allen, a Stationer of Greenwich. This is a double ringed mark enclosing the word STATIONER with Allen across the centre.

Two of the earliest General Post Receivers I have found are Jeremiah Frost who, in 1718, was paid £45 p.a. and Simon Glassbrooke who was paid £90 p.a. in 1727. I have, however, been unable to find where their Receiving Houses were. Thanks to the efforts of Mr Barrie Jay, we do know more about General Post Receivers for later dates. William Baldwin, a hip merchant with premises in ' The George Inn ', is known from 1752 to 1766. On the 12th. December, 1764 he was appointed Deputy Postmaster for the Borough of Southwark, taking over from William Golding. In 1737 Golding was being paid at the rate of £90 p.a. He was still receiving this amount in 1751, so it is possible he had been Deputy Postmaster for sometime until he was succeeded by Baldwin, who held the office of Deputy Post-master until 1766, when it would appear he was succeeded by Mrs Baldwin, presumably his wife. Seems reasonable to assume William had died. Mrs Baldwin held the post for two years when she was followed by Bernard Ellis who, in 1768, was paid £66.4s. p.a. which, by 1774, had risen to £160.14.10. He held the post until about 1783 but, at the same time, there was another Receiver mentioned, named John Ellis: he would seem to have operated 1768 - 1770. Another Ellis, named Michael, is mentioned 1785 - 1792 and his Receiving House was at Spur Inn in the Borough High St., just south of the George Inn. It is possible Bernard and John were brothers and Michael, the son of one of them, possibly Bernard, but this is only supposition.

The last of the named Receivers of this period was John Harraden who, in 1792, received £288.3.7½ for his year's work. In view of the comparatively large sums paid to these people, it is possible they all held the post of either Deputy or Postmaster for the area.

It has not been possible to discover the names of Penny Post Receivers in this area at this time but some of the Receiving Houses are known. A list of the houses is shown on Carey's map of 1791 and this includes three Penny Post Receiving Houses in the area of Southwark, plus the address of the main office. In addition, there is one General Post Receiving House mentioned, being shown as ' Borough, near Union Street '. I would suggest this was in Spur Inn, mentioned above.

The Twopenny Post Houses were as follows:

St. Saviours Churchyard. Main Office
Cupers Bridge Borough No. 156
Tooley Street No. 231
Borough opposite St George Church

St. Saviours Church eventually became Southwark Cathedral and the site of the main office had been in the vicinity of the church since the days of Dockwra. Cupers Bridge Borough No. 156 is something of a mystery. No. 156 Borough was opposite St. George's Church, at the corner of what is now Marshalsea Street. On the other hand Cupers Bridge was a bridge over a culvert near the site of the present day Waterloo Bridge. This was outside the Borough of Southwark and about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from 156 Borough

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and the connection had not yet been found. Again, since 156 Borough is opposite St. George's Church, where - precisely - was the Receiving House stated to be ' Opposite St. George's Church '? There are two places it could have been. Along the north side of the church ran a road and there was a Receiving House near this road at a later date. It is possible ' Opposite St. George's Church ' meant the Receiving House was on this road and not on the other side of the Borough. On the other hand, there was a Receiving House in Union Street from an early date and this was on the opposite of the Borough from the Church.

It is to be noted Brumell lists only two Penny Post Receiving Houses for the area in 1793, Tooley Street and Union Street. The next list of 1824 shows many more but from marks I have seen some of the Houses mentioned in this last list must have been opened in the 1800s.

The map shows the boundary of Southwark as it was in 1837, which has been super-imposed on a modern street plan. On this map I have marked the approximate position of all the known Receiving Houses and these have been numbered in accordance with the script.

1. Belvedere Place

On some stamps this is sometimes seen as Belvidere and I have seen it also rendered this way on old maps.

This was both a General and a Twopenny Post Receiving House and from an early date was within the confines of the King's Bench Prison which, from 1837, became the Queen's Bench Prison. There would appear to be some confusion as to when the Receiving House was opened. It has been reported that the inmates of the prison petitioned for a Receiving House in 1820. It first appears in the 1824 list and I have a ' Two Penny Post/ Unpaid/Belvidere P. Sk ' stamp (type 2) for 1818: I have also seen a General Post mark for this year. In addition, there is information of a Turnkey, named Moore, at King's Bench Prison had either died or absconded in 1685 owing the Post Office money. This would suggest some form of postal service from a very early date. Jumping ahead nearly 200 years to 1861, it would appear another Receiver at the Queen's Bench Prison was in trouble. The report is that ' the late Receiver, one Suretus, be allowed to liquidate his debt to the Post Office by instalments '.

Brumell mentions he had recorded stamps for St. George's Field for 1801 to 1806, which he suggests was perhaps Belvedere Place Receiving House. I have seen a Twopenny Post mark for 1816 (type 1) and a General Post item for 1817 (type 13), both with the words ' St. George's Fields '. In addition, I have seen a Twopenny Post stamp (type 2) which shows ' Circus '. Although Brumell placed this at the south end of the Minories with dates recorded 1803- 1821, Group Members have demonstrated this is unlikely, a more probable location being what is now the round-about at the south end of Blackfriars Road. The example I mention is superscribed ' Lambeth Road ' and the writer is obviously in prison. As shown by the illustration overleaf, St. George's Field did become St. George's Circus. It should be noted the P.O. Directory for 1826 lists ' Belvedere Place, St. George's Field; there is no doubt, from the map, these two places were very close.

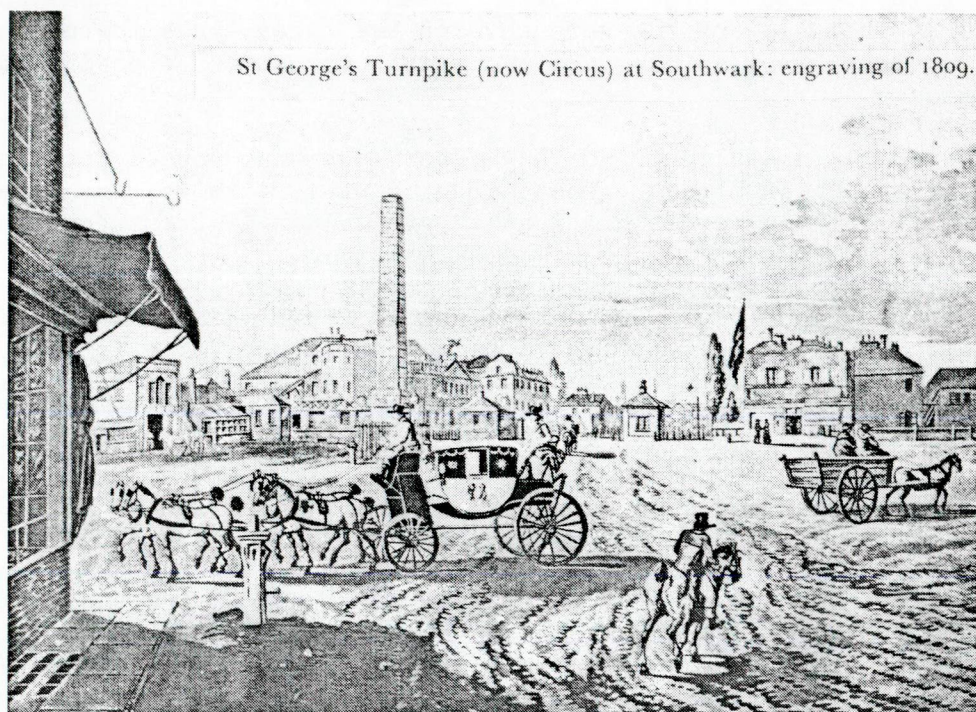
There are two versions of the General Post mark. The first is as type 13, the other has upper and lower case lettering and is rather larger. The latter is recorded 1818 to 1838, the former 1822 to 1830 (vide RMW).

This Receiving House used a number of different Twopenny Post stamps. The type 2 for 1818 I have already mentioned and the 2py P. Paid mark (type 5) is known used (in blue) in 1821. The stamps, originally issued for use on newspapers sent from the town to the country area, are also known used for Belvedere Place (type 4). This mark is, due to the low survival rate, very seldom seen nowadays on material dating before 1839. The only one I have seen for this office in one in a brownish ink on an

(the illustrations for these types appear on page 8)

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item dated 21st.July, 1843. So far all these stamps have been seen with the name rendered with an ' i ' instead of an ' e ' and the name is always followed by ' Sk ' signifying ' Southwark '. One wonders why so many of the stamps for the Receiving Houses of Southwark contained extra letters to indicate the area in which they were.



St George's Turnpike (now Circus) at Southwark: engraving of 1809.

Both the framed and unframed stepped types 7 and 9 are known used by this office and there would seem to be three different wordings employed. I have seen ' Belvidere P. Sk. ' used 2nd.December, 1823; ' Belvedere Pl.' in black on 12th. November, 1836 and in brown for 14th.July, 1843 and finally a ' Belvidere Pl^c ', date unknown. It would seem these stamps varied as they were re-cut. Coming to the adhesive period, we have the well known ' 1D PAID ' stamp (type 6) used on an envelope which did not have an adhesive though paid; these are known used from 1843 to 1845. Of the straight line marks, which came into use in the 1840s, I have seen a ' Belvidere Place ' in brown, for 30th.October, 1843; a later version, with an ' e ' was issued on 6th.May, 1846 and I have seen this used in black in 1849 and 1851. On the 30th.March, 1854 the stamp was re-issued but this time the letters were somewhat larger than the previous issue, this one being noted, in black, for 26th.May, 1854. The last stamp to be issued to this office was the small undated circular backstamp (type 8). I have never seen it used though the Post Office Impression Book gives a date of 16th.June, 1857.

The prison, with it the Receiving House, was demolished in 1879 but Belvedere Place lives on as a short street between Southwark Bridge Road and the Borough Road, which must be close to the site of the old prison.

2. Blackfriars Road

Twopenny Post Receiving House: this was listed in the Post Office list 1824 as Temple Place, Blackfriars Road. This was a block of buildings at the south end of the road at the junction with St. George's Circus.

There is an interesting copy of a letter in P.O. Records relating to the Blackfriars Road Receivership, written on 6th.April, 1804 from Stow to Freeling :

" I shall be glad to be permitted to offer the nomination to my respectable friend Mr.Peter Coxe who is most interested in the correspon-

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dence of that quarter than any other individual."

(Was Mr. Coxe an early postal historian ?) This letter would suggest there was a Receiving House here from a much earlier time than so far recorded. It must be remembered Blackfriars Bridge was not opened until 1769, so it unlikely there was a Receiving House in this road before this date.

In 1826 the address of this Receiving House is shown as 16 Phoenix Row, Blackfriars Road. This was on the other side of the Road almost opposite the original address of Temple Place. At this date, roads in London were divided up into Terraces and Rows, as the houses were built and there was not a continuous numbering of the houses.

With regard to the postmarks, I have seen the framed stepped type 7 used in 1825 and 1827 and the unframed step, type 9, used in 1841. The straight line unframed stamp has been reported used in 1856. On the 23rd. March, 1857 the small undated backstamp, type 9, but within a circle, was issued. The address at this time was 231 Blackfriars Road and the Receiver was named as Henry Johnson, a tea dealer. A counter stamp was issued on 21st. January, 1860 with the letter ' S ' at the base. This indicated the office was in the South District. On the 1st. February, 1870 another counter stamp was issued with the letters ' S.E. ' indicating the transfer of the office to the South East District when the South was eliminated, this being in 1868. The address was now given as 228 Blackfriars Road. These stamps were, of course, not used in the general cancelling of mail.

A Parcel Post label of 1896 shows this office, now a money Order and Savings Bank Office only, as being at 165 Blackfriars Road.

It is unfortunate so far very few letters have been seen with stamps of this office. However, from the length of time it was in operation and the range of marks used in other offices nearby, one assumes the full range will eventually be recorded.

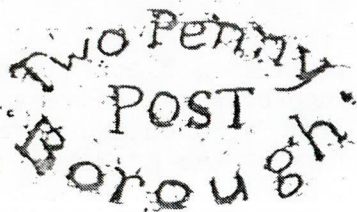
3. Blackman Street

This street has a long history. It is recorded that in the 1550s, seven men were discovered beating up a woman, probably a prostitute from the nearby Bankside. When the police of the day intervened, they too were attacked. Today the main police station of the area is in that part of Borough High Street which used to be called Blackman St.

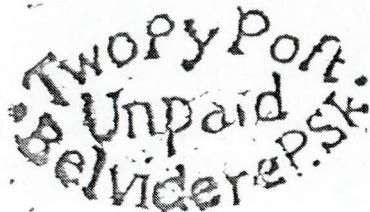
Twopenny Post Receiving House : once again this office appears in the Post Office list of 1824 but it must have been opened long before that date, as I have seen a stamp, type 2, dated 1812. Although it was a fairly busy office, by 1837 it handled some 5085 letters in a four week period, there have been - so far - very few stamps reported. Apart from the type 2 mentioned above, I have seen the framed and unframed step types (7 and 9) used both in red and black ink from 1823 to 1844. Type 4 is known in red for 1841. Type 5, also in red, has been seen used in 1830. The last stamp I have seen is type 6 but with a line between '1D' and 'PAID'. This was issued in 1844 and the one I have seen was in blue and dated 1850. There does not appear to have been one of the circular undated types issued but this may merely be awaiting discovery. It is possible this office closed before these were generally issued as there was a Branch Office almost next door in 1830 and the SE District Office opened quite nearby in 1857. In 1826 this Receiving House was located at 127 Blackman Street but by 1840 it had moved to 106 Blackman Street, near the junction with the Lant Street of today. At this time the Receiver was named as Jos. James Mahon, a bookseller and stationer. A General Post Branch Office was at 108 Blackman Street, almost next door. By 1856 the address was given as 109 Blackman Street with Wm. Bourne, a grocer, named as the Receiver. The change in numbering does not always indicate a change of location. In early days, when the authorities ' encouraged ' the numbering of houses consecutively, this was down one side and up the other. It was not until much later in the 19th. century property was numbered with the even numbers on one side, odd the other. There are still a few roads numbered in the old way, for example Tottenham Court Road.

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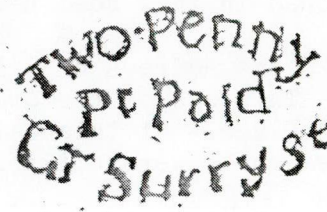
In 1837 there were six deliveries of the Twopenny Post from this office. 7.45 a.m., 9.50 a.m., 11.50 a.m., 1.50 p.m., 3.50 p.m., and 7.05 p.m. In addition it would appear also this office made two General Post deliveries, at 8.55 a.m. and 10.05 a.m.

Types of Stamps Used by the Southwark Receiving Houses

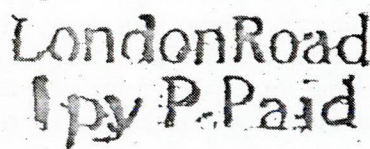
Type 1



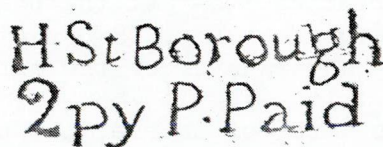
Type 2



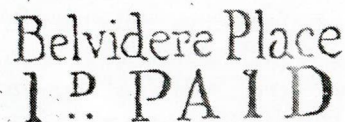
Type 3



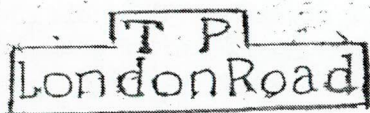
Type 4



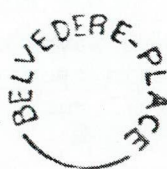
Type 5



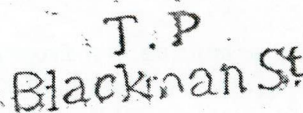
Type 6



Type 7



Type 8



Type 9



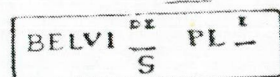
Type 10



Type 11



Type 12



Type 13

4. Borough

General Post Receiving House: this office must have come into being at a very early date. As has already been mentioned, General Post Receivers have been listed as far back as 1752, when the site of the office is given as the George Inn and by 1792 the Spur Inn. As I have pointed out, this last address must have been the place mentioned by Carey on his map of 1791 as being near Union Street. The inn was, in fact, sited almost opposite this street.

The earliest mark I have seen is an unframed oval RECEIVING HOUSE / BOROUGH dated 1795. This is a very rare mark, about which I have been able to discover nothing. There is no indication whether it is a General or Penny Post stamp. The next mark to appear is a straight line BOROUGH in a single frame (type 10). This was in use for a number of years and the earliest I have seen was for 1811. On the 25th. March, 1826, this stamp was re-issued but this time in a double frame. These two types were

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probably the only ones used, at this time, by Brough.

In 1830, the office, by then having been made a Branch Office, at 108 Blackman Street, it was issued with the well known Maltese Cross type back stamp. These are known in black, blue, green and red and were in use 1820 to 1850 (type 11). A PAID stamp in this type was issued in 1830, 1838, 1845 and 1850 and are known in red only. The 1838 issue is shown by type 12.

In 1826 the Receiving House was sited at 112 Borough High Street, which was - I believe - opposite St. Georges Church, nearly at the corner of the road on the north side of the church. In March 1857 it became the South Eastern District Office at 170 Borough High Street, almost the same place as the present District Office. The first General Post delivery was at 8.50 a.m. and the last at 10.00 p.m. The office would now be using all the duplex stamps and postmarking letters from the whole District.

5. Borough

Twopenny Post Receiving House: My earliest stamp, in red, is on an unpaid letter showing "TwoPenny/Post/Borough" (type 1) and dated 1802. Also seen the "TwoPyPost/Unpaid/Borough" (type 2) used in 1814, 1815 and 1817. The office is, again, listed by the P.O. in 1824, though clearly it was in operation long before that date. The step type, both framed and unframed (types 7 and 9) are known for this office. There is also a framed step type showing " T.P./H.St Boro " and an unframed " H.St.Borough/2py P Paid " (type 5) used in 1828.

In the adhesive period there is type 6 showing ' Borough/1D PAID ' for use on pre-paid letters without adhesive; I have two varieties of this. One, issued 5th.June, 1848 and noted used on 18th.July, 1848, has the word ' Borough ' 28mm long, whilst the other, used 1st.May, 1848, has ' Borough ' 26mm. The usual straight line unframed ' Borough ' for use on letters with adhesives is also recorded for Borough.

Once again the location of the office changed several times. In 1826 it is shown at 59 Borough High Street, whilst by 1842 the address is given as 55 Borough High Street, run by one Obadiah Blackman, a bootmaker. In 1856 the Receiving House had moved to 63 Borough High Street, the premises of White and Fairchild, wholesale grocers. The circular framed backstamp with the words ' Borough / 58 High St ' was issued in 1857.

The present Borough Branch Office, at 19a Borough High Street, is the direct descendent of this old Receiving House. I have a parcel post docket for this office dated 2nd. May, 1896.

The Borough Receiving House was the busiest Twopenny Post Office in this area. In 1837 it handled 6,094 letters in a four week period and the expenses were £25 p.a. The deliveries from this office were six per day at the same time as those shown for Blackman Street.

6. Great Dover Street

Twopenny Post Receiving House: whilst this Receiving House is not strictly within the boundary of the old Borough of Southwark (see map), it is only just outside, so I have included it. It is shown on the 1837 Post Office List but, once again, from the evidence of stamps it was opened some years before that date. All stamps show ' Gt. Dover Road ' until the small undated circular which shows ' Gr.Dover St. '.

The only mark I have seen is type 7, in green, dated 21st.January, 1833. Type 4 has been reported used, in black, on a cover dated 9th.March, 1841. On the 23rd.March, 1857 the small undated circular backstamp (type 8) was issued, here again with a frame. So far I have not seen this in use.

In 1850 this office was at 173 Great Dover Street, run by Edward Scoones, a bootmaker. By 1866, the address was 166 Great Dover Street, a chemist shop run by a Robert Berry

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Neblett. This must have been a very small office as it does not appear in the 1837 list of offices checked in respect of the numbers handled in a four week period.

7. Great Guildford Street

Twopenny Post Receiving House: this office is not listed by Brumell, nor does it appear in the 1837 list mentioned above. The only postal marking I have seen is a straight line stamp, in green, on the back of an envelope dated 3rd. December, 1857. The earliest date of its location I have been able to find is 1856, when it was at 20 Great Guildford Street and run by Timothy James, a bootmaker. An undated, circular framed backstamp was issued 21st. August, 1858 (late for this type). The stamp had the District initials 'S.E.' in the centre and is one of the rarer types for this issue. It is possible other stamps, in use generally during this period, were employed by the office but, thus far, none have come to my notice. Although I have called this a Twopenny Post Receiving House, it could well be only a London District R.H., opened when the great increase in volume following the advent of the Penny Post caused the massive expansion in offices all over the Capital.

8. Great Surrey Street

Twopenny and General Post Receiving Houses: there were two Receiving Houses in Great Surrey Street, one for the General Post and the other for the Twopenny Post: it is proving difficult to decide the correct address for them. There was a Receiving House reported in 1840 at 44 Great Surrey Street and I think this was the Twopenny Post office. By 1842, it had become 111 Blackfriars Road, a haberdashers, run by a Mrs Sophia Higgins. Postmarks predate the 1824 listing with type 2 seen for 1812 and 1816. I have the scarce "Two Penny / Pt Paid / Gr Surrey St" (type 3) dated 1817. I have seen a report of an 1801 stamp (type 1) reading "St. Surrey St." but I suspect this to be erroneous, possibly caused by poor inking/strike. Type 5 is known used in 1824, whilst this type reading "3py P Paid" is recorded in 1818. Types 7 and 9 have been seen and in the adhesive period, "Gt. Surrey St / 1D PAID" (type 6) was in use, that is one pre-paid mail without adhesive. In 1852 a 'Gt Surrey St' in blue has been noted.

According to Brumell, this office was closed and amalgamated with the General Post Receiving House which was probably at 152 Great Surrey Street. However, as noted, the Twopenny Post handstamps continued to be used by the ever cost aware postal authorities!

This was a fairly busy office. In 1837 it was shown to be handling 4,718 letters during the sample four week check, with expenses at £24 p.a. An odd piece of information has come to light during these researches. In 1817 Great Surrey Street was 1,193½ yards long and contained 180 houses. It should be noted the stamps sometimes spell 'Surrey' as 'Surry'.

To add to the confusion associated with this office, there is a Surrey Street off the Strand. Quite a lot of mail exists with a Surrey Street address and a Strand Office stamp. It seems most unlikely but it has occurred to me more than once this Surrey Street off the Strand office had a stamp of its own, assuming that, in addition to the several offices in the Strand, there was one in the side street. I am fairly sure this was not the case but I mention it to remind readers not to assume the obvious.

9. London Road

Twopenny Post Receiving House: from the postal markings I have seen and recording, I would guess this office opened shortly before 1824 when it appears in the Post Office Lists.

The address, as with most of these offices, changed a number of times. In 1826 it

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is shown at 6 London Road and from 1840 to 1842 it is given as 7 London Road, run by T.E. Southie, a bookseller and stationer. By 1845 the address is 12 London Road and, in 1860, 118 London Road, a chemist shop run by John Hubbard. Prior to that date it was run from the same address by Wm.Ed.Tucker, another chemist.

The earliest mark I have seen is type 7, used in 1823. Type 5 has been noted used in 1827 and type 4 in 1840. The unframed type 9 is known, used in 1841 in red; type 6 has been seen on an 1851 item.

The last type of mark issued to this office would appear to have been a counter stamp, in the Proof Book as 1859. It has the 'S' for Southern District, at the bottom. With the disappearance of this District in 1868, this office was transferred to the South Eastern District and in 1870 a new counter stamp was issued showing " London Rd / Southwark / S.E. "

In 1837, this office handled 3,851 letters during the four week sample: expenses were recorded at £15 p.a.

10. Newington Causeway

General Post Receiving House: the earliest stamp I have found for this office is a " Newington / Causeway" within a double line rectangular frame, 47mm x 20mm. This was issued on the 26th. August, 1825. It was followed, on 25th. March, 1833, by a single frame rectangular stamp, 57mm x 19mm, enclosing " NEWINGTON / CAUSEWAY ", two lines and capital letters. The only copy I have of this is dated 11th. July, 1833. It is on a letter to Petersfield from 3 Marshall Street, London Road. There is a Marshall Gardens in London Road to this day. The letter is endorsed ' General Post Paid ' and carries a manuscript ' 8 '. A third stamp was issued on 27th. August, 1836. This too was a single line frame rectangular stamp, 47mm x 20mm, with the name in capitals and in two lines. Thus far I have seen only the second of these three stamps.

In 1826 the address of this office is given as 31 Newington Causeway but by 1833 it was at number 17. In 1842, still at this last address, the office is shown as being run by John Waite, a bootmaker. It is interesting to note the number of bootmakers who ran Receiving Houses in the area. Southwark was, in fact, the centre of the leather industry and to this day there is the Leather Exchange Tavern in Leathermarket Street.

In the Reports of the Management of the Post Office Departments for 1837 it is stated the cost of running this office was £14 p.a. This amount included £4 p.a. ' for bringing up the bags to the Chief Office or meeting the carts '. One would assume from this the volume of mail from this office was small and deliveries and collections to and from the office were not made.

This office should not be confused with the Twopenny Post Receiving House which was on the other side of Newington Causeway, in the Borough of St. Mary's Newington (see 'The British Mailcoach No.22').

11. New Kent Road

Twopenny Post Receiving House: this was another small Receiving House which, like Great Dover Street, was not actually in the Borough of Southwark. This first appears in the 1837 Post Office List at 7 Providence Buildings, New Kent Road. There are a number of New Kent or Kent Roads listed by Brumell but some of these were not in the Southwark boundaries. The only mark I have seen of this office is the step framed type 7, this being dated 1823, which seems rather early for this office. Until more postmarks come to light, it will not be possible to quote other examples or types, with the exception of an example, on envelope dated 28th. February, 1859, of the small undated circular framed type, reading NEW.KENT.ROAD with S.E across the centre, this in blue.

12. New Park Street

Twopenny Post Receiving House: this office was at 4 New Park Street, a very small

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office handling only 640 letters in the sample of 1837. Brumell states it first appeared in the 1838 Post Office List and he reports a stamp of 1843 as ' N.Park St.S.' This is probably the straight line type used on letters prepaid with an adhesive. The only mark I have seen was ' New Park St.Sk / 1D PAID '(type 6) used in 1844. Once again more information can only be recorded with the discovery of more postmarks.

13. Great Surrey St / Surrey St

General Post Receiving House: (see also comments under (8) on page 10). Postmarks for this office can be found with Surrey with and without the 'e'. I have put these two addresses together as I am convinced they were one and the same place, though my earlier comments should be recalled. The road itself was not opened before 1769 as it was then Blackfriars Bridge was built. On a map of 1799, Surrey Street is shown as being between Stamford Street and Christchurch, very short comprising some 30 houses. By 1817 it was said to be but 45 yards long with six houses.

Postmarks of Surrey Street are known from as early as 1796. There is a stamp of three lines 'GPO / Gt. Surry St / BFR' dated 1793. A very few other offices had this particular format and they are all very rare. (See RMW 32.)

The earliest ' Surrey Street ' stamp I have seen is in two lines reading ' Surrey St / Blackfriars', within a double frame rectangle, dated 1796 and later in 1799. This is followed by a straight line 'SURRY STREET' in a double frame rectangle; I note RMW has his fig 17f as 'SURREY STREET' (i.e., with the ' E '). There are two sizes known to me, 45mm x 15mm and 43mm x 10mm and have seen them used in 1800, 1818, 1802, 1824, 1831 and 1828. The single frame rectangle (type 10) with 'Surrey Street' in 1808 is also recorded. Another distinctive type I have is a rectangle 21mm x 16mm showing 'Surrey/ Street', this dated 1813. As the Post Office Proof Books date from only 1826 there are no copies of these marks shown. However, on the 18th. April, 1826, a double frame rectangle with ' Great Surrey / Street ' is shown as issued. This was followed on the 30th. May, 1834 with a single frame rectangle reading ' GREAT SURRY ST.' (type 10). Once again, I must say I have, so far, not seen either of these stamps in use.

The location of this office is very difficult to determine. In 1826 an office is located at 152 Great Surrey Street, which by 1840 had become 152 Blackfriars Road. Since in 1838 the Twopenny and General Post Receiving Houses were amalgamated, the next address of 111 Blackfriars Road (Mrs Sophia Higgins) must, perforce, be the General Post address. In 1837 the reports state this office had expenses of £14 p.a. As with Newington Causeway, £4 was for bringing the bags to the Chief Office or meeting the carts. One wonders if this was because the mail was not routed down Blackfriars Road at this time, though presumably the mail went over that bridge to the Chief Office, (or was it over London Bridge ?) with the meeting of the carts somewhere in the Borough High Street.

14. Tooley Street

Twopenny Post Receiving House: this is one of the oldest local post Receiving Houses in the district. It appears in the Post Office List of 1793 and Carey's map of 1791 shows it at 231 Tooley Street. It would, therefore, have been extant in 1794 when the major reforms took place. Thus, whilst I have not seen them, Brumell's type 53 and 55 should be waiting discovery. The earliest stamp I have seen is the type 2, "Two Penny Post / Unpaid / Tooley St", dated 1817. The type 5, in red, has been seen for 1832 and, although I have not seen it, I imagine type 4 was used. The stepped frame, type 7, is recorded for 1822, 1825, 1828, 1839 and 1838. Again, though as yet not seen, one presumes the unframed stamp, generally issued 1830, will eventually be located.

There are two varieties of type 6. In 1847 the stamp shows ' 1D PAID ' extended so it is longer than ' Tooley St.'; in 1850 the line are of equal length, noted in green. The straight line unframed stamp is noted as used in black (1848) and blue (1849).

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It was a busy office. In the 1837 four week sample, it recorded 4,352 letters passing through and the annual cost was shown at £22.

I can find no trace of the small undated backstamp (in general issue 1857-9 period) but in 1870 this office was issued with the usual counter stamp as, by that date, it was a Money Order and Savings Bank. The address from 1840 to 1856 was 106 Tooley St., and at the latter date the Receiver was shown as Joseph Henry Chapman, yet another bootmaker.

15. Union Street

Twopenny Post Receiving House: this office is shown on the 1793 Post Office List and one would expect to find Penny and Twopenny stamps employed. However, apart from a type 2 used in 1821, I have not come across any of the early marks. In 1844 type 6, reading " Union St Boro / 1D PAID " was issued and I have a straight line " Union St SK " used on a cover dated 1856. From such a paucity of extant material, these being the only marks I have seen from this office, one can but assume its business was very low keyed. This is partly confirmed by the figures in the 1837 census, only 1,489 letters for the four week period and the annual cost shown at a modest £7.

Despite this small volume, on the 9th.March, 1858 , the small,framed,circular,undated backstamp , type 8, was issued. The 1870 counter stamp read " Union St / Southwark / S.E. ".

The earliest location for the office established thus far is for 1826 when it was at 139 Union Street. In 1841 the address is shown as 60 Union Street, run by a tobacconist and snuff maker, named Wm. Manger. In 1856 we find the address as being 48 Union Street, the premises being that of an oil and color merchant called as John Chubb.

16. Whitecross Street

Twopenny Post Receiving House: this is another small Receiving House which first appears in the Post Office List of 1824 and is noted " within a prison ". This was, no doubt, part of the Marshalsea Prison. Once again very few postal markings have been seen. A framed step type 7 for 1827, in blue, and the unframed straight line type has been recorded on an envelope dated 3rd.December, 1842. Type 4 has been found on an envelope, without adhesive, dated 15th.December, 1842. In all these cases the word " cross " is indicated by a seriffed +.

Being a prison, the exact location is not shown in Post Office Directories, although the 1826 edition mentions the street without indicating the number of the house.

The low use of the office is confirmed in the 1837 sample which records 1,328 letters in the four week period with an annual cost of £10.

The Marshalsea Prison was demolished in 1849 and Whitecross Street disappeared from the map but in the area there is, at the present time, a block of Council flats known as Marshalsea Buildings.

In Conclusion.....

We have now covered the Receiving Houses but before this article is completed, mention must be made of three other stamps issued for this area. On 20th.January, 1857 appeared a straight line " Southwark Branch " and this was followed on the 12th.February, 1857 by a similar mark but with smaller letters. On the 31st.March, 1857 the third one was issued " S.E. / SOUTHWARK BRANCH ". I have seen a " SOUTHWARK BRANCH / S.E. " used on a local letter dated 16th.June, 1857 but none of the others have been recorded in use. It is possible these were used on mis-directed mail after the withdrawal of the ' SK ' initial stamp but until further covers come to light, it is not possible to be sure of their official function. In passing, the ' SK ' has been reported for 26th.August, 1854 and the 24th.January, 1856, which would fit the sequential theory.

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It is surprising such a busy area of London as the Borough of Southwark has so far produced such a small number of postal markings but it is hoped this article will encourage other members or the Group (or any non member for that matter) to put on record any material they have in their collections.

I would like to thank all those members who have given information on the marks they have. Their help is greatly appreciated. I would, however, like particularly to thank Maurice Bristow for letting me rummage through his large collection of this area and John Harrison for taking the trouble to send me two and a half A4 pages, closely typed with most detailed information of the items he has in his collection.

On the following pages appear the map of the area showing the site of the various offices described in the previous pages, and a selection of prints from the series published by the Libraries Department, London Borough of Southwark.

The first is of the Elephant and Castle, after a drawing by Thomas Rowlandson, c. 1800, in the Victoria and Albert Museum, published in the " Illustrated London News" 8th.November, 1879. (page 16 *)

The print shows the old Elephant and Castle inn before it was rebuilt in 1818. The view is looking south down Newington Butts. On the right are the Fishmongers Alms-houses.

The second is of Borough High Street and is entitled " The Bridgefoot, Southwark " the illustration being from " Old and New London " by Edward Walford, 1897. Based approximately on a wash drawing " High Street Southwark and London Bridge " by J.C. Buckler, 1827, in the Guildhall Library. (page 17)

The view shows Old London Bridge. The houses on it had been removed in 1757. The old bridge was demolished when the new bridge was built to the west of it in 1831 and Borough High Street was then realigned.

The next scene, St. George's Circus, c.1835, and is of the Indigent Blind School, lithographed by L. Hague after a sketch by J. Johnson, published by Day & Hague, Lithographer to the King, Gate Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields. (page 18)

This interesting street view at St.George's Circus shows the Obelisk, erected there in 1771, which now stands in the grounds of the Imperial War Museum, two early horse-buses, a waggon and a crossing-sweeper. The School for the Indigent Blind was founded in 1800. These new premises were erected in 1835-38.

Finally, from " The Penny Magazine of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge ", published every Saturday. No. 355 of October 14th., 1837. (page 19)

The view is looking north towards Southwark Cathedral. In the foreground is St. George the Martyr, the ' Little Dorrit ' Church, described by Dickens. Borough High Street was the centre of the hop trade and in the street are carts laden with hop sacks.

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The prints taken from " Scenes from the Past " with appreciative acknowledgement to Southwark Libraries and to Mr. K.A. Doughty, Borough Librarian and Curator for his kind permission to reproduce them in this issue of " Notebook ".

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* the pages have not been numbered



The old Elephant and Castle



Borough High Street 1827



St. George's Circus c.1835



Borough High Street. 1837

" Daveys Coffee House, Borough, London ". Bryant Lillywhite, in his " London Coffee Houses " states " Davis's Coffee House, King's Bench Prison, St. George's Fields, Borough. This house, in all probability, succeeded the one known as King's Bench Coffee House from 1754 to 1808, although the latter date needs confirmation. "

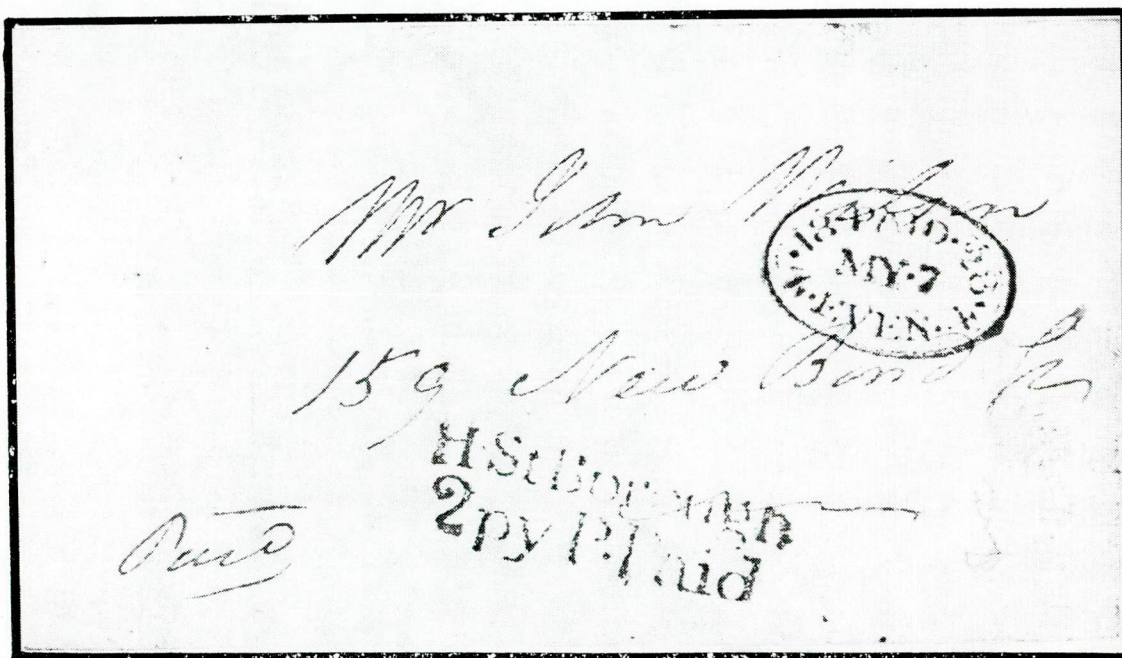
Although the word " prison " does not occur, the writer mentions that not having received the cost to which he was entitled...' hope you would not refuse to send me a £5 note by return....it is a matter of great importance that I should go out this term and without it I don't know how to accomplish it ".

The August letter refers to it being " a matter of great convenience to have the business settled. You must be aware of my position in this place." He again asks for a " £5 note ".

Lillywhite mentions an example dated 22nd August 1817, addressed to " Mr.Holloway, Davis's Coffee-house, Borough " in which the following appears: '...I am sorry to find you still in K.B.P. - I was in hopes the decision of suit would have liberated you long ago. '

A further item comes from James Grimwood-Taylor, which came his way recently and is addressed in the same hand to the same solicitor, though dated 1816. The stamp though appears to read " F+ ", struck in red. The letter describes a meeting with a debtor, in the King's Bench Prison, who faces starvation and has but 1s.2d. to live on for a fortnight, has to sleep on the floor also.

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The Twopenny Post Receiving House, type 5, reading H.St.Borough / 2 py P Paid, used on 7th.May, 1828 on a letter to New Bond Street.