London Postal History Group

Number 100

April 1992

NOTEBOOK

In This Issue

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EDITORIAL

A brief note to announce the next issue of Notebook as being the second part of the 1990 Gold Awards Duo, that of Miss G. Dove. The basic material is at hand and presenting it for publication is the somewhat daunting task yet to be undertaken. Before that, however, will be Peter Bathe's opus on The Bye and Cross Posts of London.

Your attention is drawn to the meeting in Portsmouth on Saturday June 27th., the full details on the enclosed form. Local societies are being invited but this is an opportunity for the many members to the south and west of London to meet fellow collectors. Do come.

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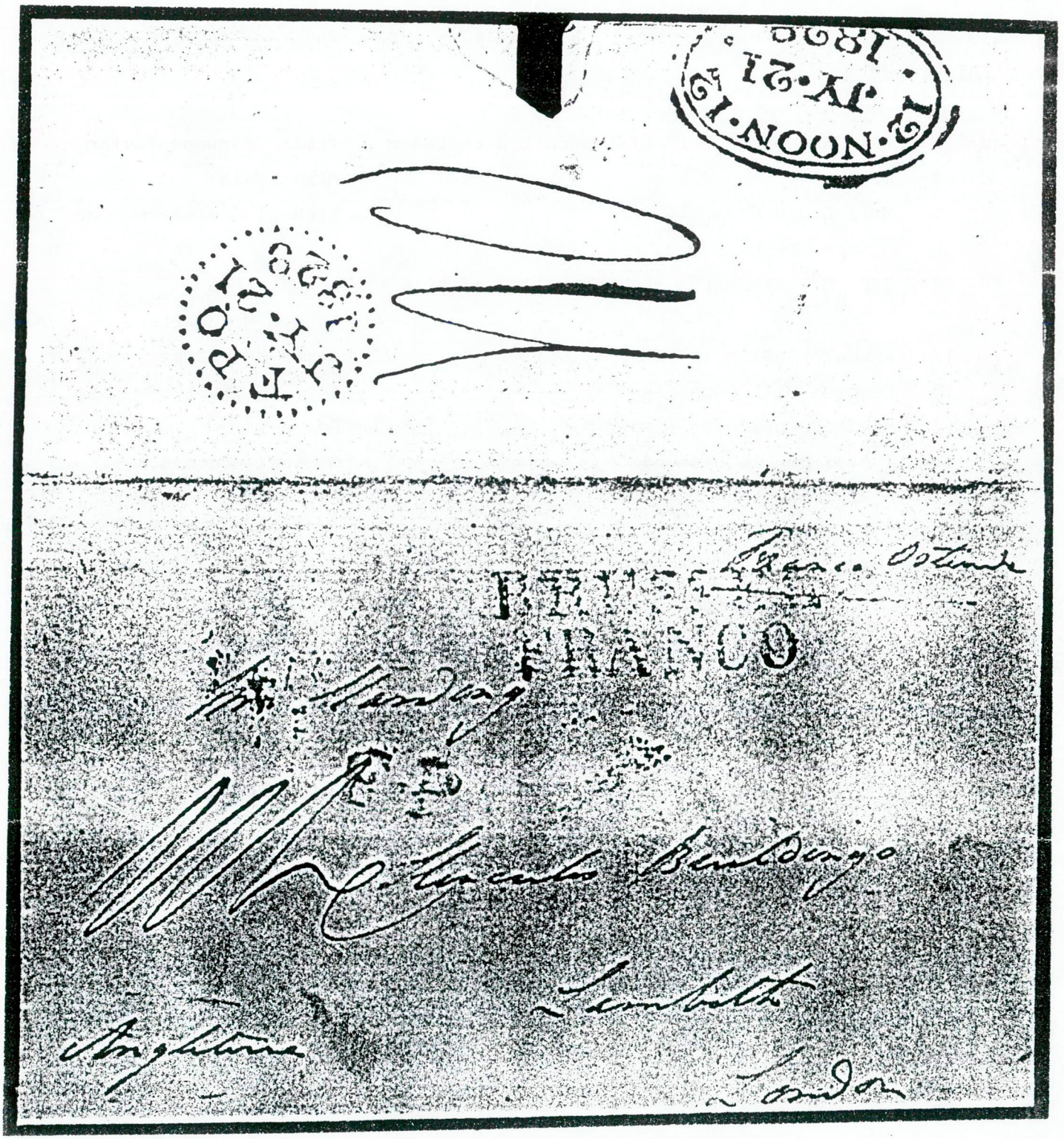
THE UNRECORDED "FP" OF LONDON

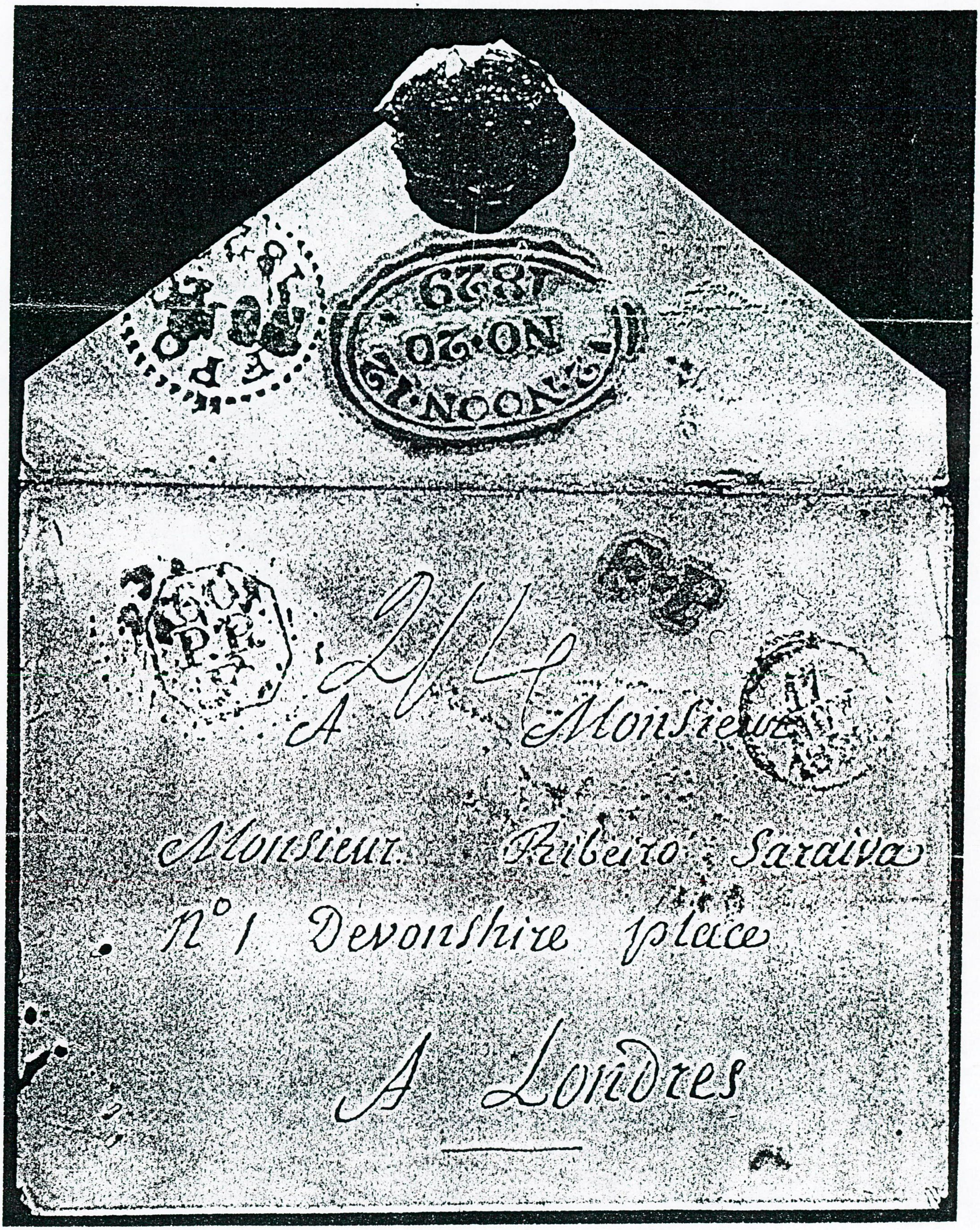
a response from James Grimwood-Taylor

In Notebook 90, page 12 [December 88], the Editor expressed doubts on the "FP" mark which had appeared in a Cavendish auction. The enlarged illustrations settle this firmly. Your attention is drawn to the clear triangular serif and flat top to the "F" which is quite unlike any "P".

21st. July, 1828



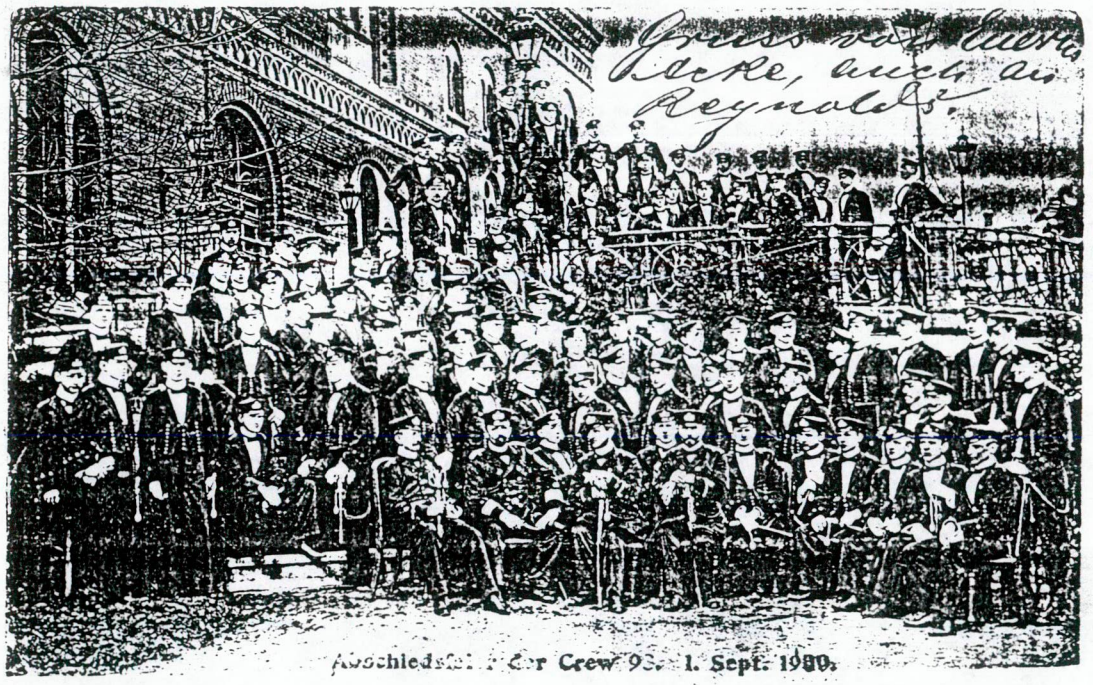
20th. November, 1829

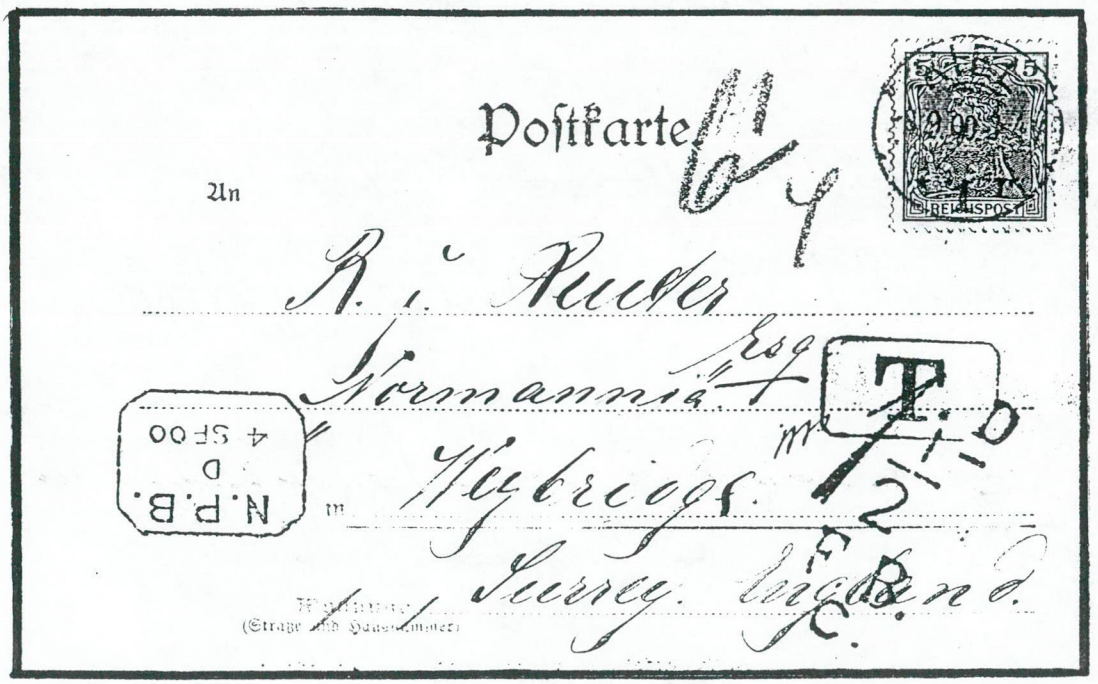


KIEL 1900

from Mike Bavin

Illustrated here is what appears to be a passing out group photograph [Abschiedsfeder der Crew 93. 1 Sept. 1900] posted from Kiel, using the internal 5pf rate, to Weybridge. Being underpaid, it received the 1½d charge mark and the chamfered edge N.P.B./D/4 SP 00 date stamp as the London stamp. Why this, rather than, say an "FS" date stamp, is not apparent.



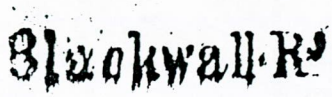


MAIL GUARD STAMPS

by Michael Champness

The observations on the "Blackwall - Ry" mail guard stamp and its somewhat debatable use as a missort mark are interesting [Notebook 97]. Certainly there was a receiving house at Blackwall. In 1854 Joseph Burley was in receipt of £1-15-0 per quarter and straight line undated marks are recorded in Volume 6 of the Proof Impressions as issued on the 6th. December, 1848, 25th. September, 1852 and 11th. April, 1855. The Blackwall-Ry mark is also shown in the same volume but, regrettably, is a cut out impression stuck to the page and is not dated. By implication it could have been issued at any date between 1851 and 1857, since proof impressions of other offices with dates of issue endorsed are nearby.

From the 1856 map of the London Postal District, with its sub divisions, the Blackwall railway is shown as running from Fenchurch Street through to Blackwall, with a short spur to the adjacent East India Dock gate. A connecting junction halfway provided a link to Stratford le Bow and the Eastern Counties Railway. Receiving houses were situated at 40 Fenchurch Street, Blackwall opposite Northumberland Wharf and a money order office was established at 4 Englefield Place off the East India Road. So it does not appear there was a static office using the "Blackwall-Ry" handstamp and it must have been used on mails carried by train.



My first example is struck in red on the obverse of a cover from London to Norwich, dated the 19th. December, 1854. Normally it would have travelled by train on the Eastern Counties Railway from Liverpool Street Station. If the stamp is a missort, then presumably it was sent, wrongly, to the Blackwall Railway, subsequently being sent up to Stratford le Bow to join the Eastern Counties line.

My second example is struck in black on the reverse of an envelope with a 4th. June, 1856 dating ; it is addressed to Rowley Regis in Staffordshire. The 1d. adhesive is cancelled with an indistinct Inland horizontal diamond 50. The envelope flap is impressed with a fancy embossed design incorporating " S & C ". Not much evidence there.

My third example is struck in red on the reverse of an envelope bearing the impressed albino seal of the "London and Blackwall Railway Company". The adhesive is cancelled with the 5/JU 15/57 duplex and the addressee is of our old friend Mr Mowatt, Secretary of the Great Northern Railway at Kings Cross.

How this could have been "missorted" is something of a mystery. There is no datestamp of receipt and no connecting rail link. The letter could have been put into the post at either end of the railway but since it does not have any receiving house namestamp, which would have been obligatory at that date, it is possible this really was a letter handed to their company guard and was not missorted in transit.

Editor's comment. The conclusion reached on the third item seems to be supported by the marks on the other two. Indeed, most telling is the requirement to mark the mails with the office of posting, namely the guard !

Although these Mail Guard stamps have been written up in other journals, members are urged to send in details of their examples: you may have hitherto unrecorded information.

A SHIP LETTER QUERY

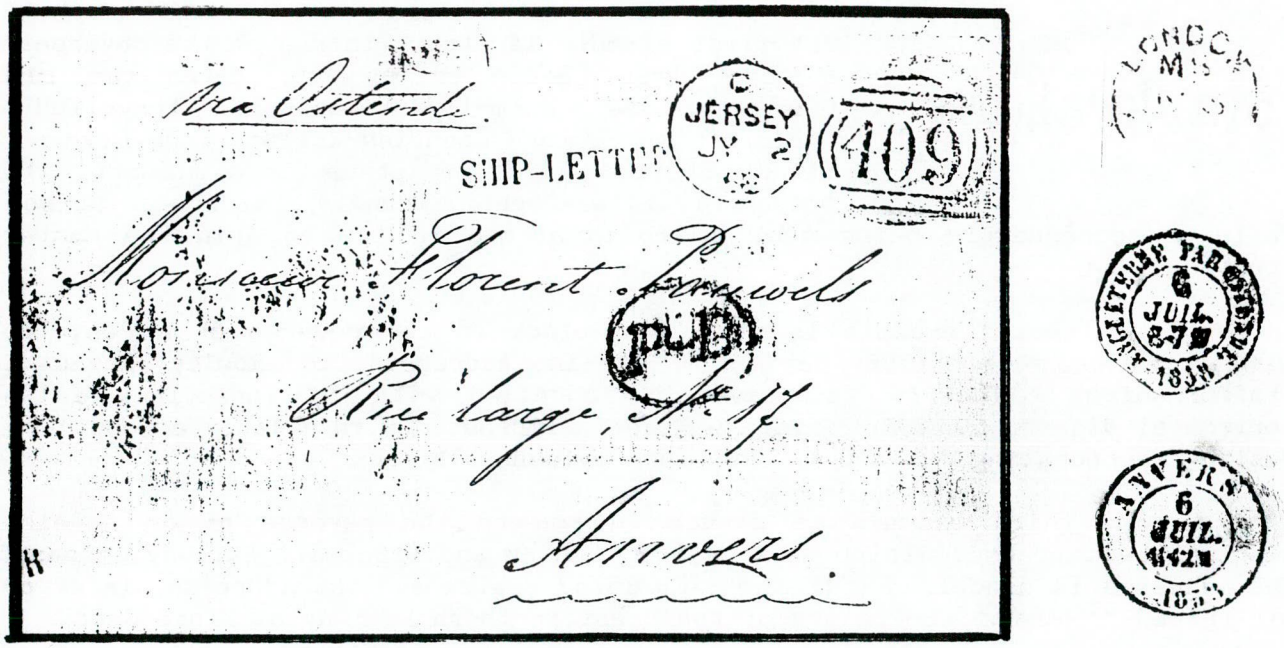
from A.N. Moorcroft

The very neat SHIP-LETTER stamp appearing on this cover from Jersey to Anvers via London is something of a puzzle.

No such stamp appears in Robertson's opus on maritime mail for Jersey, Southampton or London. Lacking the port name, it rather suggests London, the type applied in the Foreign Branch to Packet mail routed through London for overseas destinations.

Robertson has this to say on the Channel Islands Packet service which is of interest here :-

" The railway reached Southampton in June 1840 and the run between London and Southampton could be accomplished in about three hours. The Post Office thereupon granted permission for letters to travel from the Channel Islands via Southampton [instead of via the Weymouth packet and mail coach], providing such letters were endorsed "via Southampton by private steamer" [this soon became abbreviated to "via steamer"or just "via Southampton"]. These letters received the current Southampton Ship Letter handstamp but were charged only the now [1840] uniform "domestic" 1d. per ½ oz [and multiples] and not the standard ship letter charge of 8d. raised on ship letters from overseas."



July 2nd. [Jersey] was a Friday and the 5th. [London] a Monday, so allowing for the intervention of the Sunday mail handling restrictions, it seems the via Southampton routing would follow. Although the letter might have been carried by ship from Jersey to London but there is no evidence the Post Office ever employed this line.

I should like to think it was a Jersey mark but this is most unlikely. Southampton, at that time, employed a Southampton / Ship-Letter stamp, two lines, sans serif and there is, as far as I am aware, no evidence of that office employing an alternative anonymous stamp contemporaneously. This leaves London. Can a reader produce another copy or evidence as to the port applying the mark?

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The following article originally appeared in the Postal History Society journal and is reprinted here by kind permission of the Postal History Society and the author.

In discussing the article with John Harrison, the Editor was interested to learn there had been no challenge to the facts and conclusions reached.

Although it deals with matters relating to mails passing through London, the subject is one of interest to many members who will have such material in their London collections.

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G.B. MILEAGE MARKS AND THE RATING OF LETTERS THROUGH LONDON

by John H.S. Harrison

The belief held by most postal historians has always been, and still is, that the Post office decision to introduce handstamps incorporating a figure showing the post route distance of post towns and other places from London, now known as mileage marks, was a soundly based idea which, in theory, should have simplified the rating of letters.

For over two hundred years from the opening of the posts to the public in 1635 until Rowland Hill's reforms of 1839/40, subject only to minor and a few regional variations at certain periods, internal letters were charged according to the post route distance carried multiplied by the number of sheets (and/or enclosures) or by weight, if weighing an ounce or more, with an ounce rate equal to four sheets (and/or enclosures), with a further multiplication factor coming into force for each additional quarter ounce or part thereof. This latter fact is revealed by hundreds of such weight rated letters I have examined.

From this it will be seeone large single sheet letter, providing it was under one ounce in weight, could have passed through the post at a fraction the charge payable on a much smaller and lighter letter made up of several sheets. Great play was made of this anomaly in support of Rowland Hill's rating reforms. When a letter weighed one ounce or more, the correct postal charge for the distance it was to be carried would have been easy to ascertain but, for sealed letters not exceeding this weight, how the Post office decided on the number of sheets they comprised or enclosures they contained, if not stated by the sender on the outside, is not known and must, in most cases, have been little more than intelligent guesswork. It follows many multiple sheet letters and/or letters containing small enclosures, not declared as such and not arousing any suspicion from their make up or size, probably passed through the post for less than the correct charge.

Once the number of sheets (and/or enclosures) or weight decision had been made, it was still necessary to know the post route distance from the place of posting to the final destination before a letter could be rated. It is here many people believe mileage marks came to the rating clerks' assistance - but did they ? Before discussing this point further, let us look first at what actually happened when mileage marks came into use and also take a detailed look at a few examples of letters rated by the Post office during the relevant period.

The first series mileage marks came into use in 1784. It is well

documented that, because many of the distances shown on the stamps were incorrect, the marks were unpopular from the outset. As a result, they were soon discontinued and did not have a long enough proving period, on that occasion, to reveal the serious fault which could result from official insistence on charging letters according to the actual miles carried by the Post Office, rather than the normally known and recognised distance of the town of posting from the place of delivery.

As history shows, in spite of the failure of the first series, the authorities still thought mileage marks would work. It was the Postmaster General himself who instructed John Cary to survey and measure all principal post routes in the country, in preparation for the reintroduction of the system; this time on an updated and accurate basis, hopefully, to eliminate the faults which brought the first attempt to an end.

The second series mileage marks came into use in 1801. Based on Cary's newly measured, and probably well publicised, distances, they do not appear to have caused any serious problems during the early years. Unfortunately, the postal authorities had overlooked the need, from time to time, to change the postal routes radiating from what they regarded as the postal hub of London. All such changes of route resulted in adjustments being necessary to the mileage distances shown on the stamps of every post town on the route beyond the point of change. The closer to London these changes occurred, the greater the number of post towns involved.

On grounds of economy, the handstamps of those towns affected were not all changed immediately. Most places usually had to wait until their stamps were due for normal replacement before they were issued with amended versions. Larger towns, where greater use led to frequent replacement, received theirs fairly quickly but smaller places often had to wait years and, sometimes, never received an amended stamp at all. This resulted in local anomalies where two towns, considerable distances apart, would show only small differences in the distances from London on their stamps. This would have looked ridiculous to the letter writing public of the time, many of whom were influential gentry with political punch. There were inevitable errors which were occasionally made after the initial issue of 1801 and strange cases where two or more towns in an area shared the same mileage distances. For example Harling and Laringford sharing 98 in Norfolk; Blackpool and Preston 217 in Lancashire; Loughborough, Cavendish Bridge, Kegworth and Shardelow sharing 109, with Mountsorrel and Leicester with 97 each, to mention just a few. This caused renewed suspicion concerning the accuracy of mileage marks and rekindled the same hostility to them as for the first series of forty years earlier until, in 1829, postmasters were authorised to file off the offending mileage distances if they so wished.

No further mileage marks were issued, which brought to an end one of the most interesting periods of G.B. postal history. In its wake it left a legacy of mysteries and unanswered queries sufficient to provide postal historians of today, and of the future, with years of research spiced with the ever present likelihood of hitherto unknown handstamps being found and mysteries being solved.

Before considering the possible use, if any, of the mileage mark further, let us take a close look at a few letters themselves. A curious fact, revealed by the evidence of the rate marks on thousands of letters of the mileage mark period and later I have examined, shows most unpaid letters from one provincial town to another, which passed through London in transit, were marked by the office of origin (or more accurately by the nearest post town to the office of origin in the case of letters posted at sub-offices in outlying

villages) with a manuscript charge mark corresponding to the amount of postage payable from the town of origin to London. These are usually crossed out and re-rated in London for the entire distance to the town of arrival. The handwriting used on long runs of letters provides additional evidence and leaves me in no doubt as to where the charges were originally marked and subsequently amended. Readers should be aware that the charge due on the overall distance was not necessarily the same as the sum of the charge from the town of origin to London plus the charge from London to the town of destination.

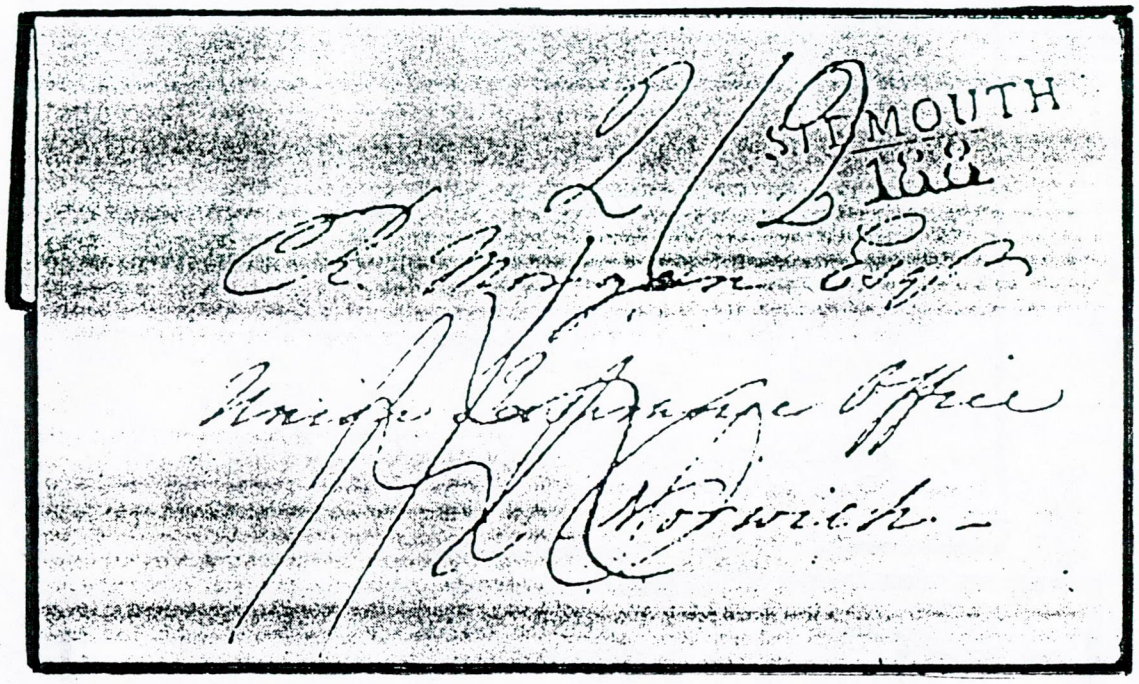

Fig. 1

Figure 1 shows a letter of 1814 from Sidmouth to Norwich with m/s "1/10" deleted and "2/2" substituted. The 1/10d. was the charge for a double (two sheet) letter over 188 miles to London. The charge for the letter from London to Norwich (post route distance 117 in 1814) would have been 1/6d. If added together, this would make a total of 3/4d. However, the amount of 2/2d. shown as the final charge on the letter is correct for the overall distance of 305 miles at this date.

Fig. 2 [page 10] illustrates similar amended rating figures on a single sheet letter of 1815 from Norwich to Congleton with "9" rate for 117 miles to London deleted and "1/-" for the overall 279 miles to Congleton substituted.

Fig. 3 [page 10] is a letter sent after the mileage mark period from Dereham to Chard in 1833. This shows the same practice was still being followed as it was, apparently, up until the 4d. post started in December, 1839. This letter shows the same m/s rates as the previous item for the 111 miles to London and overall distance of 253 miles to Chard respectively.

Fig. 4 [page 11] shows a single letter sheet of 1801 from Bath to Kincardine O'Neil with a superb strike of the very scarce "BATH/109" mileage mark [boxed figures] and a Sunday dated Edinburgh "Bishop" for 'JU/28'. The m/s "7" deleted was the rate in this year for the 109 miles to london. Because the rating of this letter was complex and obviously caused problems for the Post office, it is worth considering in depth.

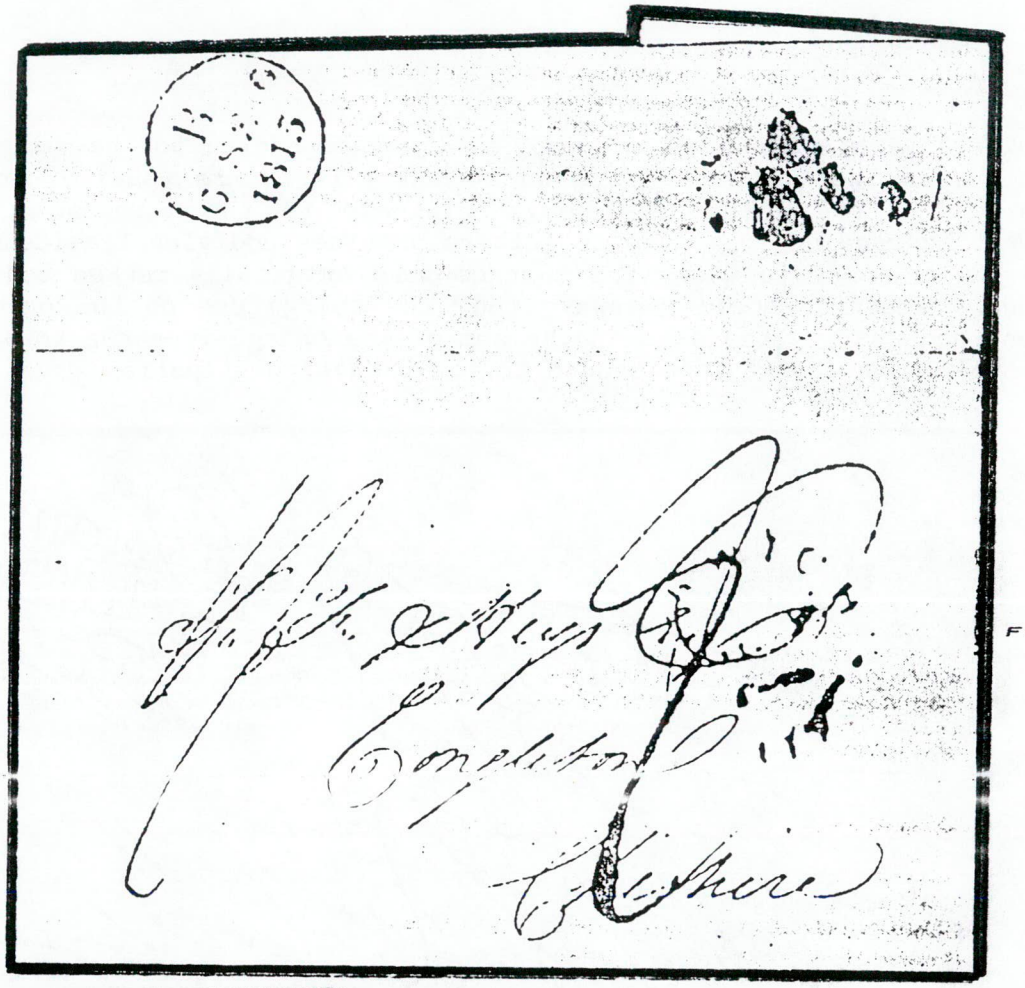

Fig. 2

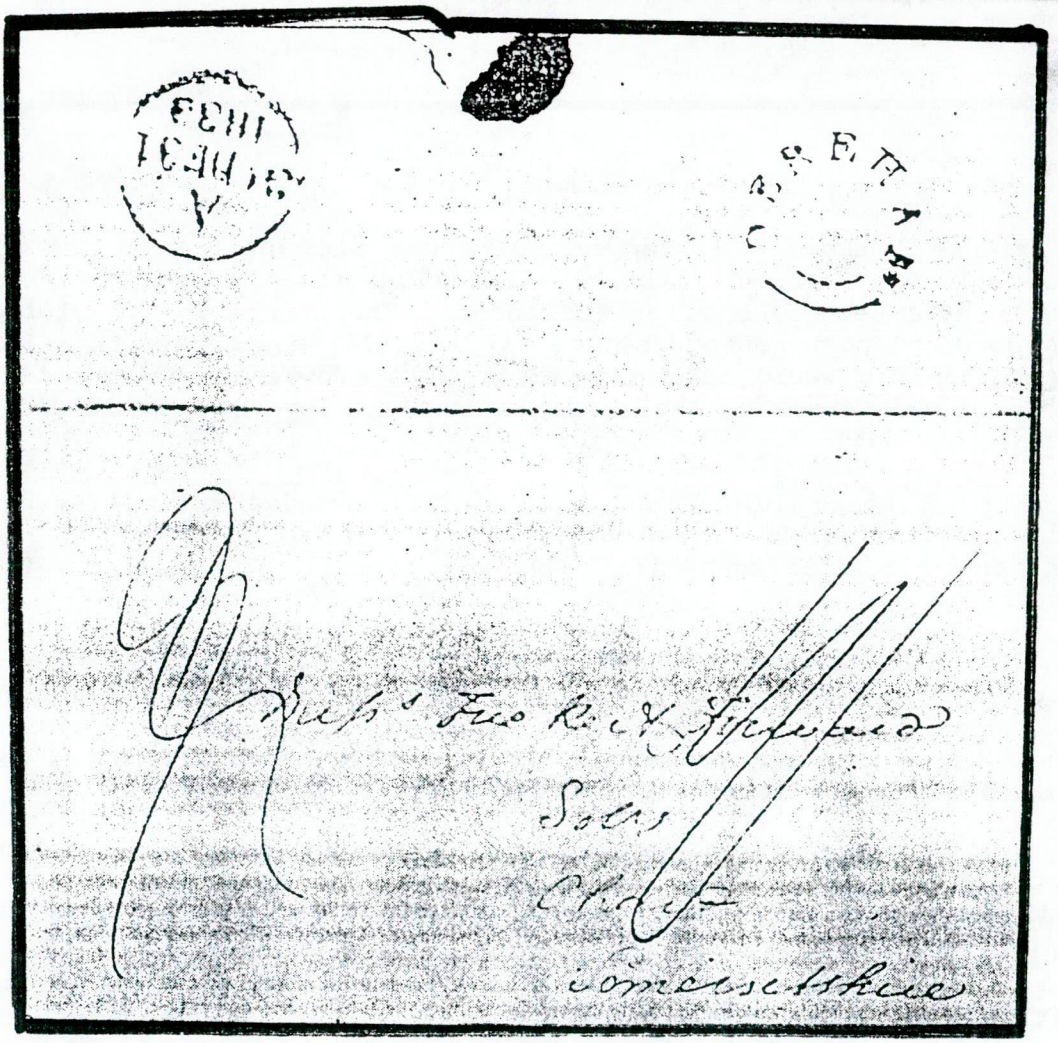

Fig. 3

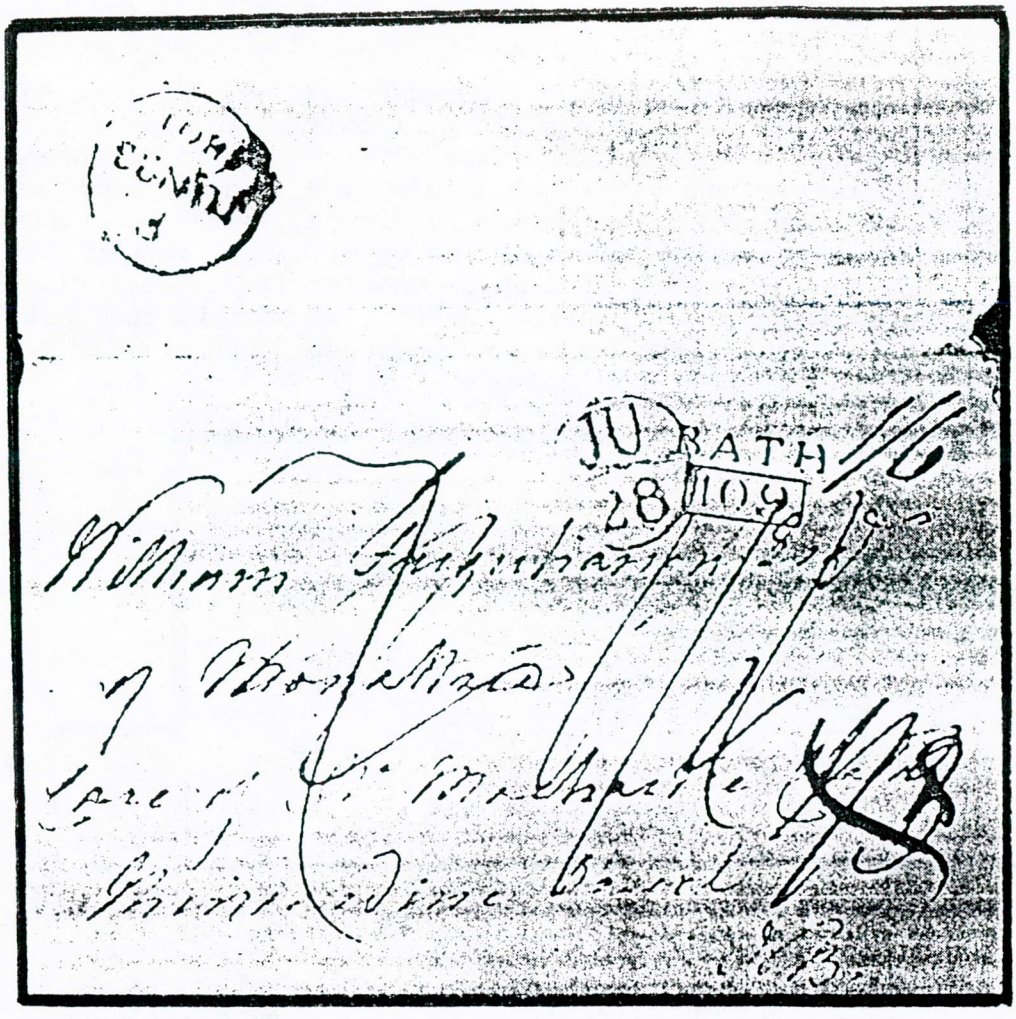

Fig. 4

As the charges laid down in the 1801 Act came into force on the 5th. April of that year, this letter should have been rated in accordance with these. My interpretation of the rates shown are that the 1/1d. was the charge from *London* to Kincardine O'Neil. After writing this on the face of the letter (in London), it was realised the additional distance of 109 miles from Bath to London had been overlooked and a further 2d. (1d. per 100 miles or part thereof on distances over 300 miles) added to make the charge of 1/3d. This, however, was also incorrect as the amount payable should have been rated on the total post route distance form Bath to Kincardine O'Neil.

I am indebted to Bruce Auckland for some useful assistance on the problem of this letter but it is unclear exactly what the total postal route distance was at the time. If one uses the 1796 distances of 111 from Edinburgh to Kincardine O'Neil and adds this to the 396 from London to Edinburgh and 109 from Bath to London or bases the total distance on that shown on the first Kincardine O'Neil mileage mark of 554 in 1809, the resulting distances of 616 or 663 should both have been charged at the same amount of 1/2d. (i.e. 10d. + 4d.).

The "1/6d" is a mystery. It may have been written on by the letter carrier and could have referred to the total charge to be collected for this letter plus another (or others) from the same addressee. The fact this was written on the *front* of the letter suggests otherwise as I cannot recall having seen what I believe to be manuscript "total to be collected" marks other than on the reverse of letters.

After further consideration of the problem in the light of my

interpretation of the rates, Bruce Auckland advises that, according to Dr. A.R.B. Haldane (see page 139 of his "Three Centuries of Scottish Posts"), the Deeside post, which included Kincardine O'Neil, was "Guaranteed by local proprietors" and suggest the extra 4d., making up a total of 1/6d. may have been the guaranteed post local delivery charge. There is even a possibility that, if the local post delivery charge was 4d., the total charge of 1/6d (written on at Edinburgh) would have been the correct amount for the overall distance. This unusual and interesting case involving several amendments does not affect the fact of the letter being first rated to London and then re-rated for the whole journey.

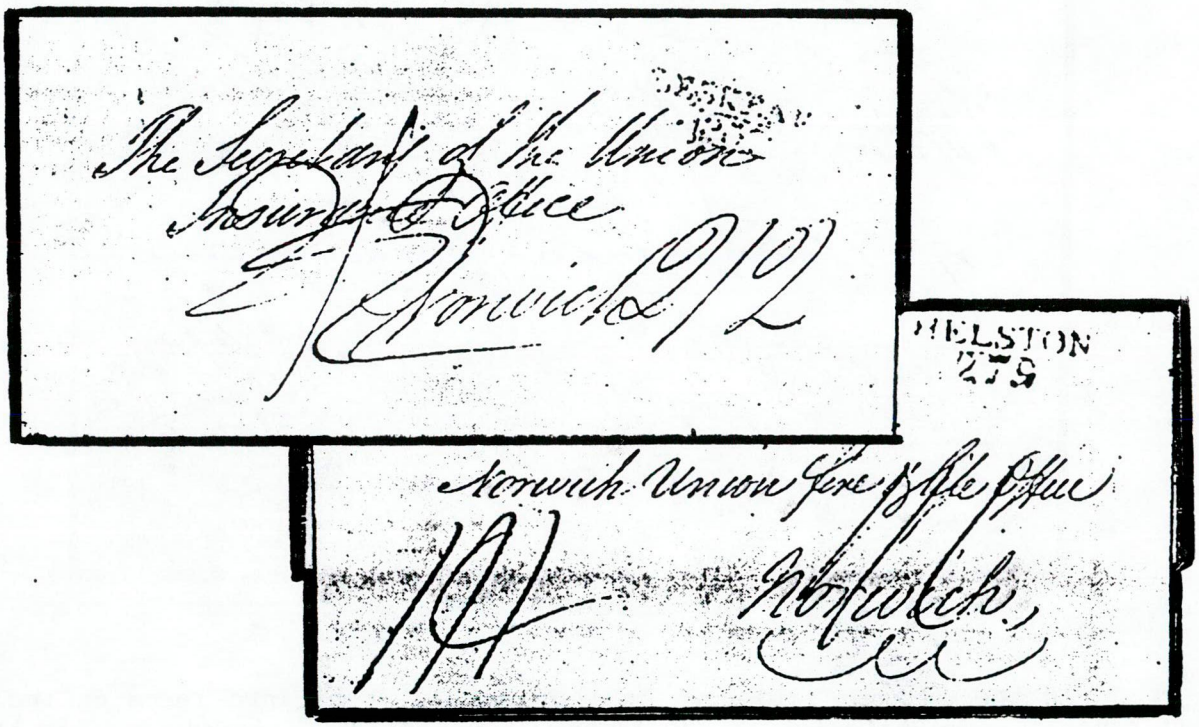

Fig. 5

Fig. 5 shows two examples of unpaid letters which are, very occasionally, found rated through London on which the full postage to destination was marked on the letters at the towns of posting instead of the usual amounts due to London only. This method of dealing with these letters is comparatively rare and may well have been contrary to regulations. These double and single rated items of 1819 from Liskeard and Helston are included as scarce exceptions to the normal procedure to show that, even though the full distance amounts of 2/2d. and 1/1d. were originally shown, significantly the London G.P.O. still treated these letters as though they bore the usual mark corresponding to the rate to London only. It will be seen the original amounts were deleted even though they were the correct overall rates and the same amounts restated in London for onwards transmission to Norwich.

The basic fact revealed by these letters and by thousands of others I have examined like them is, on the vast majority, the crossed out charges are the postal rates from the towns of origin to London and the amended charges are for the overall distances to the towns of arrival. Their frequency and consistency of occurrence shows this method of rating to have been the normal procedure for unpaid letters through London. This proves they are not amendments made as a result of error as the first amounts were obviously deliberately calculated and written on at the towns of posting to record the amounts payable on letters from the towns of posting to London.

True rating errors picked up in the London G.P.O. were, normally, corrected by an inspector who authenticated his amendment by striking a red "crown" over the incorrect rate, adding his initials against the amendment. These "crowns" and initials never appear on the items under discussion here.

Whilst there is always a possibility this system of rating through London may have served some obscure accountancy purpose, in practice, the payment collected for such letters on delivery, being based on the overall distances, bore little relationship to the charge which would have been payable to London only. We are, therefore, left with the conclusion that, if mileage marks had any rating significance, many rating clerks must have been employed over several decades doing this apparently totally unnecessary task. This seems a strange lapse from the standards of efficiency for which the Post office of the time is credited. Alternatively, if mileage marks were not used for rating purposes and evidence strongly suggests this was the case, how did the Post Office justify the enormous expense that must have been incurred in their provision and updating over such a lengthy period ?

Before suggesting possible answers to the problem, let us first consider what other evidence is available to support the view , whatever the original intention may have been, mileage marks were unlikely to have been actually used for rating purposes.

Although very few have survived to the present time, it is now generally believed every Post Office in the country was provided with a printed book or a large printed sheet for wall display, probably both, at least at the larger offices. These books or wall charts listed every post town and "principal place" in the country against which were blank columns for local postmasters to fill in the charge from his own town and, in the case of wall charts, also the towns through which the letters should be routed (by no means was this always London). There is some difference of opinion amongst postal historians as to actually completed these columns in the books or on the wall charts. Some hold the view it was too much important a job to be entrusted to local postmasters, others believed it was a task the G.P.O. would have delegated to local postmasters who would have been better placed to handle it than the London office. This difference in learned opinion is not relevant here, suffice to point out the Post Office had such lists. Their low survival rate should not be taken to mean they may not have been provided in all offices. Such books and wall charts would have been useless once they were out of date and it would also have been dangerous to have them still around when a new set of rates came into force. I strongly suspect postmasters were instructed to return or destroy any such outdated material to prevent inadvertently taking rates from the wrong book or wall chart.

Fig. 6 [overleaf] shows a portion from the top of columns 8, 9 and 10 of an 11 column wall chart headed "A List of Post Towns and Principal Places : with the full Postage of a Single letter to and from...according to the actual Routes of the Post" with "Falmouth" inserted in manuscript in the blank space. The document is undated but the rates and other evidence shows it to have been completed some time between 1812 and 1823. On the 6th. November, 1813 Christopher Saverland, Packet Agent and Postmaster of Falmouth, wrote to Francis Freeling, Secretary to the P.M.G. - "Please send half a dozen lists with London and cross post postage filled up" (Post 48 in Post Office Records). Could this document be the result of his request ?

From such book and wall charts it would have been possible to tell at a glance how much to rate and how to route nearly every letter. The availability of this information would have been essential also in respect of

any prepaid letters posted.

Mileage marks themselves also provide a vital clue. As collectors, we mount up only the good strikes for display (unless the mark is so rare it cannot be found in better condition). For this reason, dealers and auction houses prefer to stock and handle pre-adhesive letters bearing clearly struck handstamps. The result of this is most of us, whether looking at displays, rummaging through dealers' stocks or viewing auction lots, can easily come to the wrong conclusion the majority of early handstamps were well struck. This is

	RATE. Ch.	Fd.	HOW SENT.
Oxford		12	Lon.
Overton		11	"
PAdſtow	7	—	Bod
Painswick		11	Brist
Parkgate		13	"
Pembroke		10	"
Penkridge		15	"
Penrith		4	"
Penrhyn	4	—	Penry
Penzance	6	—	Penz.
Perſhore		12	Brist
Peterborough		13	Lond
Petersfield		12	Portsm
Petworth		12	Lon
Pewſey		11	"
Pickering		14	Brist
Plymouth	8	—	Plym
Plymouth-Dock	8	—	P. D.
Plympton	8	—	Plym
Pocklington		14	Brist
Pontefract		13	"
Poole		12	Lon
Porcheſter		11	"
Portland (Iſle)		10	"
Portſea	12		Ports
Portſmouth	12		—
Poulton		13	Brist
Preſcott		13	"
Preſteign		12	"
Preſton		13	"

	RATE. Ch.	Fd.	HOW SENT.
SAfronwalden		13	Lond
St. Albans		12	"
St. Aſaph		13	Brist
St. Auſtle	6	—	Scave
St Columb	6	—	St C.
St. Germains	8	—	Leſt
St. Mawes		7	Truro
St. Ives (Hunts.)		13	Lond
St. Ives (Corn.)	7	—	Hayle
St. Neots		13	Lond
Saliſbury		11	Lon
Saltaſh	8	—	Plym
Sandback		13	Brist
Sandwich		13	Lond
Sawbridgeworth		12	"
Saxmundham		13	"
Scarborough		14	Brist
Seaford		12	Lon
Selby		13	Brist
Settle		14	"
Seven-Oaks		12	Lond
Shaſteſbury		11	Lon
Sheerneſs		13	Lond
Sheffield		13	Brist
Shepton-Mallet		11	Lon
Sherborne		10	"
Shields N. & S.)		15	Brist
Shiffnal		12	"
Shipſtone		12	Lon
Shoreham		12	"
Shrewſbury		13	Brist

	RATE. Ch.	Fd.	HOW SENT.
Straſt-on-Avon		12	Brist
Stratton (Corn.)		10	Lon
Stratton (Norf.)		13	Lond
Stroud (Glos.)		12	Brist
Stroud (Kent)		13	Lond
Sudbury		13	"
Sunderland		15	Brist
Sutton-Coldfield		12	"
Swaffham		13	Lond
Swanage		12	Lon
Swanſey		12	Brist
Swindon		12	Lon
TAdcaſter		14	Brist
Tamworth		12	"
Tarpoley		13	"
Taunton		10	Lon
Taviſtock		9	Plym
Teignmouth E. and W.		9	P. D.
Tenbury		12	Brist
Tenby		13	"
Tenterden		13	Lond
Tetbury		11	Lon
Tetſworth		12	"
Tewkeſbury		12	Brist
Thame		12	Lon
Thetford		13	Lond
Thirſk		11	Brist
Thornbury	11		Brist
Thorne		13	Brist

Fig. 6

far from the case. Those amongst us who have been privileged to examine an untouched original run of early letters "as they passed through the post" fully appreciate that the "collectable quality" strikes we usually see and collect are greatly outnumbered by poorly struck and incomplete examples, the latter also to be discovered when examining the "browse box" material. Although staff at a few smaller offices went to great lengths to ensure their handstamps were legible, such diligence was unusual. I doubt if the actual mileage distances can be clearly and positively identified, without prior knowledge of what one is looking for on 20% of marks struck by some of the larger towns (e.g. Bristol, Manchester etc.). There is no way the Post Office could have relied on such

poorly struck marks for rating purposes.

Another important point to bear in mind is that a mileage mark could only been of any value if the letter on which it was struck was going to or passing through London. A check on the complete Falmouth wall chart shows that, out of 748 places listed, only 248 indicate routing through London, i.e. some 33%. Towns in other parts of the country would have indicatedrouting witheven lower percentages through London. True, this is a percentage of towns and not letters which may well have been greater to and from London. However, with rapid growth in both size and importance of the large provincial towns and cities continuing apace throughout the period in question and the, now, well known fact that large numbers of well organised and regular cross posts were in existence, mileage marks could only have had any meaningful significance to Londoners and people living in the South East corner of England.

From this mass of largely circumstantial evidence, even the most ardent supporters of the belief mileage marks were used for rating purposes must now have some doubts. To me, the obvious conclusion is, in spite of its "theoretical" usefulness, the mileage mark was almost certainly *not* used for rating purposes.

It has been suggested some experiments may have been made to rate letters using these marks in the early days of the first series of 1784. If they were, I have not been able to trace any proof or indication of this. Due to the scarcity of first type mileage marks in quantity I have, of necessity, done most of my research on large runs of material bearing second series marks from 1801 but, from what I have seen of the early marks, both series have much in common.

Supposedly in support of the accepted mileage mark theory is the undeniable fact that the postal authorities persevered with these marks in two separate attempts, spanning a period of over forty years. This only shows they were struck on letters and attempts made to keep them updated, though not very successfully and *not* that they were used to rate letters.

This now leaves us to try and solve the problem of why what appears to have been such a useless exercise was thought to be so important by the postal authorities. I can find no clear cut answer but can suggest a few possibilities. These are formulated in the light of the evidence. they also take into account views that have been expressed by others with whom I have discussed the matter.

The "Empire Building" Theory

Anyone who has ever worked in the administrative side of a large business organisation, particularly in what is now called the "public sector", has come across the ambitious member of staff whose overriding concern is to improve his personal standing and position. Usually possessed of a likeable and persuasive personality, he finds no difficulty in getting authorisation from his superiors to administer his own carefully thought out "job creation" scheme which, if he plays his cards right, gives cope to build up his own personal "empire" within the organisation. It has been cynically suggested mileage marks may have come about in this way.

The "Loss of Face" Theory

Not quite as cynical a suggestion is that mileage marks were the brainchild of someone at a very high level in the Post office organisation. This pre-supposes their intention was for the rating or checking of rates on

letters but, when the scheme did not work in practice, this theory suggests subsequent admission they were not such a good idea would involve unacceptable "loss of face" to the high placed official responsible.

The "Checking" Theory

Writing about the first series of 1783, Martin Willcocks states on page 50 of "England's Postal History" that mileage marks enabled the receiving clerks to check the charges endorsed on letters. It is interesting he does not say the marks were used for rating purposes. Unfortunately, the "checking" theory does not really hold water either. Certainly the marks could have been used as a check on the rate marked on a letter at the office of arrival - if the strike were clear enough to read and had not been struck by one of the many offices with inaccurate marks. Here again, it would have been quicker, easier and much more accurate for the same check to have been made by using the books or wall charts. The same rates would have applied in the reverse direction. It is possible rating books or wall charts were not issued until after the start of the mileage marks but these must have been available at every Post office to work out rates, otherwise prepaid letters could not have accepted.

The "Power Struggle" Theory

This theory suggests there was a power struggle within the Post Office. On one side were the supporters of a plan to change the rating system so that the rates could be put on at the office of receipt with the assistance of mileage marks. In opposition were those against such a radical change. If this were the position, history shows the supporters of the mileage mark eventually lost after more than forty years of struggling.

The "Public Relations" Theory

This theory is that mileage marks were never intended for rating or checking of rates on letters but were provided by the postal authorities for the benefit of the public and/or to assist local Postmasters in dealing with rating queries raised by members of the public. They would, of course, still only have been relevant on letters going to or passing through London. With postal headquarters situated in the heart of the capital, it is understandable, the system was so "London orientated". It would be interesting to know how much the public knew about and what they thought of mileage marks at the time. Has anyone ever found a letter, from an ordinary member of the public, that refers to mileage marks in any meaningful way ?

With these five different theories, I rest my case. In my view , the "Public relations" theory appears the most likely answer but, perhaps, some aspects of more than one could have been involved. It is now up to others to come forward with their views.

In addition to Bruce Auckland and the authors of the two books and publications already quoted, I must acknowledge the help afforded by the late Vernon Rowe and many others in formulating this article with their comments, some for and some against my controversial findings, but all of value. Special thanks must go to the late Miss M.E. Philbrick. Without her assistance in the early stages, the project would never have been attempted.

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Footnote. Readers are invited to send in copies of articles with a London connection. Most Editors are content to see a reprint and there must be much London information elsewhere of which your Editor is unaware.

SUNDAY WORKING IN THE POST OFFICE

a cover from James Beveridge

The cover has "lost" the adhesive in the course of its 136 years but for the postal historian offers something of interest.

The cancellation is for Saturday 6th. September, 1856 with the time stamp for 8 M[orning]g for Monday the 8th. The address is quite clear, so why it should have been misdirected is not clear; one can assume a simple missort was the problem.

An initial reaction could be that the missort was the cause of the delay but it is suggested this was not so. The reason for the delay in the dating is that, given the letter was posted on the Saturday, it was not possible for Charing Cross to put the item back into the system until the Monday. It is thought there was no provision, in 1856, for any sorting between offices on Sundays.

Following representations by Lord Salisbury, Parliament approved the cessation of all Post Office activity throughout the Country and the Post Office put this into effect from the 23rd. June, 1856.

However, there was an outcry from the public and the complete stoppage remained in force for only a few weeks, although London was not allowed to open any of its offices or to do more than forward the mails to the Provinces and [presumably] abroad. London, seemingly, observed Sunday restrictions far more than other parts of the country prior to 1850 and, presumably, continued so to do thereafter.

According to a report by the Commissioner on Sunday Labour in 1887, only 1,534 of the 22,000 Post Office employees in London worked on Sundays, and that on a voluntary basis only.

From all this it seems reasonable to suggest the dating of this item results from the Sunday work restrictions.

In 1992 Sunday work restrictions still make headlines.

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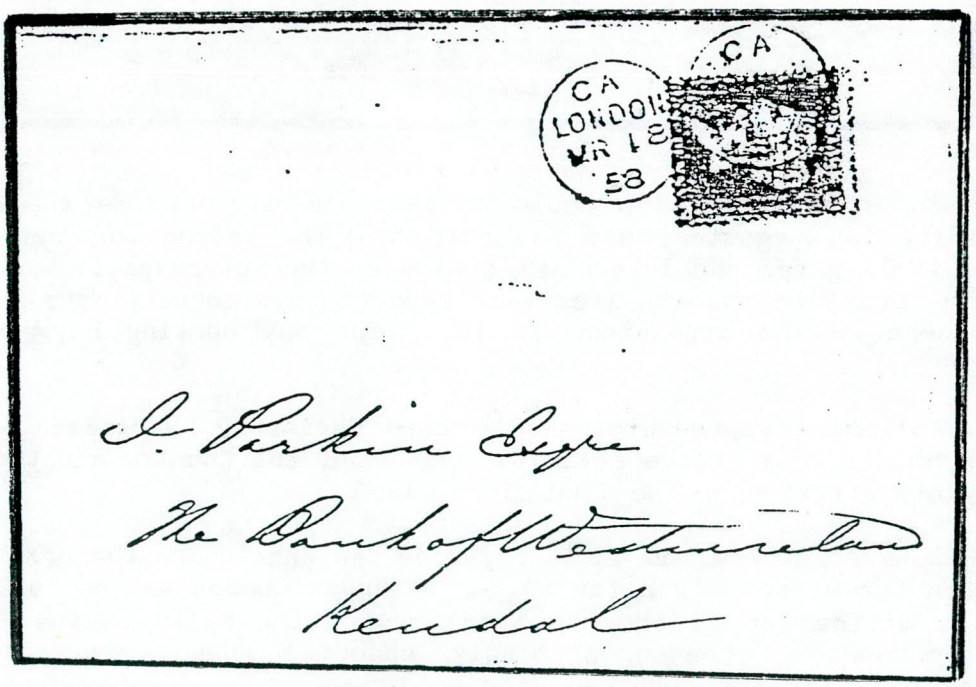
PEARSON HILL MACHINES

from Jerry H. Miller

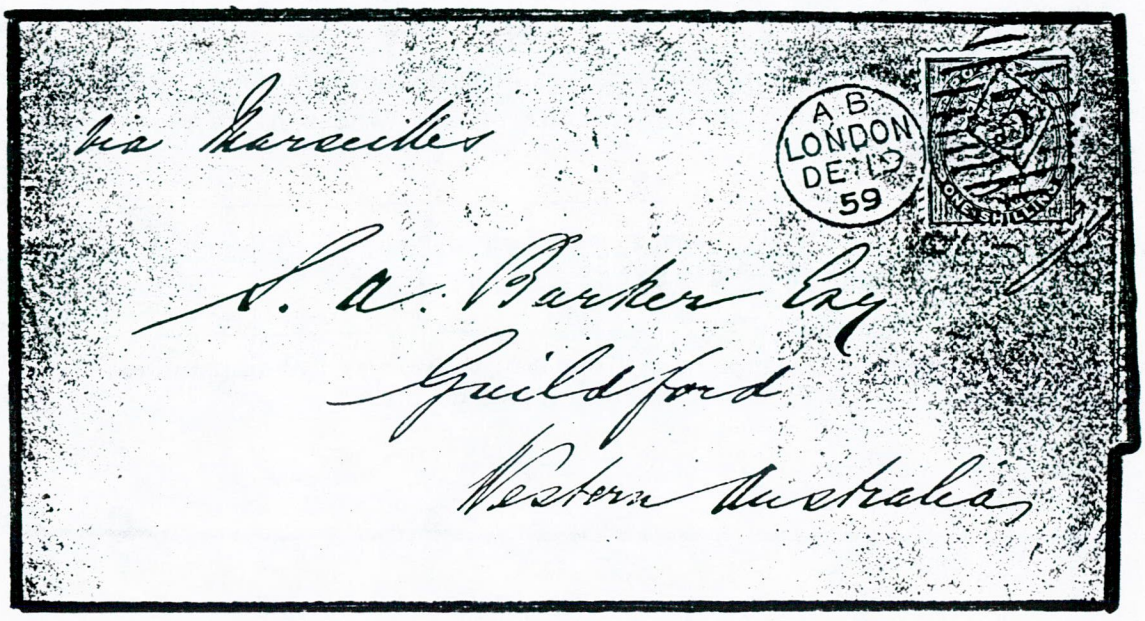
The collection of the Pearson hill machine cancellations from the early period is always filled with the possibility of acquiring examples which extend the dates or show a curious quirk upon which one can speculate. In the case of PHT3, the neat double circular date stamp, there is just one piece in my collection which shows code "CC" but with a March 14th., 1858 date. This appears to present a number of problems for the postal historian. The "Handbook" has March 8th. as code "CA", 10th. as "CC", 12th. as "CB" and "CC on the 13th. How then "CC" on the 14th ?

This could be "Fred" at it again but if one consults the calendar for 1858, the Sunday factor emerges once more. Is it not un - reasonable to assume the Post office re - peated the Saturday coding on Sunday ?

From an old Robson Lowe catalogue I can offer an example dated 18th. March with code "CA". March 18th was a Thursday and if one assumes "CC" was repeated on Sunday, this would fit nicely.



Moving on a little through the Handbook to PHT 8 I can offer code "AB" for 19th. December, 1859 and appears on a cover, addressed to Western Australia, bearing a one shilling adhesive cancelled with PHT 8. The "LONDON" at 16mm confirms the type. Did this continue through into 1860 when the machines were brought into general use ?



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LONDON MARITIME MAIL

The Editor is looking forward to getting back to the Handbook section on London Maritime Mail.

It has been a long time since he sought details of items in members' collections and he would very much appreciate details of all items YOU have.

Please supply the Robertson reference number/Jay catalogue number
The PLACE from whence it was [a] written [b] posted
The DATE in was [a] written [b] posted
The London DATE, if not already given.
The COLOUR of the mark.
The SIZE of the mark.
The DATE of arrival and any other markings.
A PHOTOCOPY ALL AT MARKS IS MOST HELPFUL : MANY THANKS

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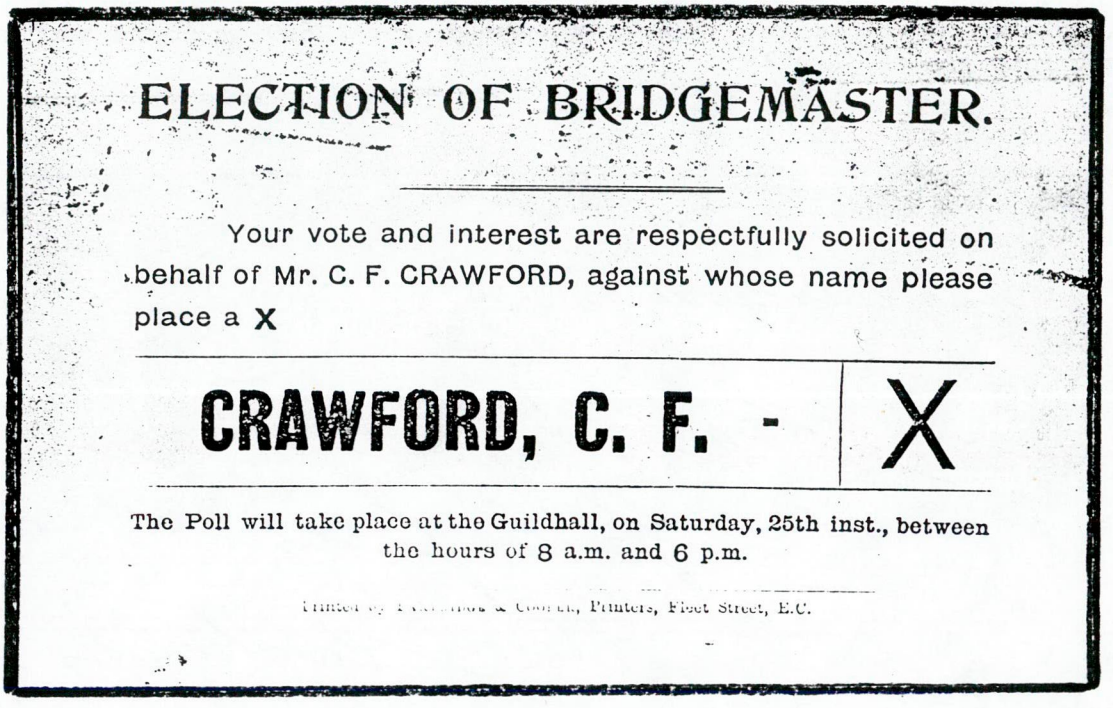
ELECTION OF BRIDGEMASTER

For no other reason than the name "Crawford" was the same as that of a post card dealer from whom the Editor had just purchased a wedge of locomotive

cards, this piece of London's social/political history was purchased [all of 50 pence].



ELECTION OF BRIDGEMASTER.

Your vote and interest are respectfully solicited on behalf of Mr. C. F. CRAWFORD, against whose name please place a X

CRAWFORD, C. F. -	X

The Poll will take place at the Guildhall, on Saturday, 25th inst., between the hours of 8 a.m. and 6 p.m.

Printed by [illegible], Printers, Fleet Street, E.C.

However, the title and function of a "Bridgemaster" was a puzzle and the Editor, following his own sage advice, sought information from a reliable source, namely the keeper of Printed books, Thomas Shaw, at the Guildhall Library.

Mr Shaw's letter gave a brief summary and he forwarded a copy of information contained in "The Corporation of London : its origin, constitution, powers and duties"... 1950 pp 130 - 131.

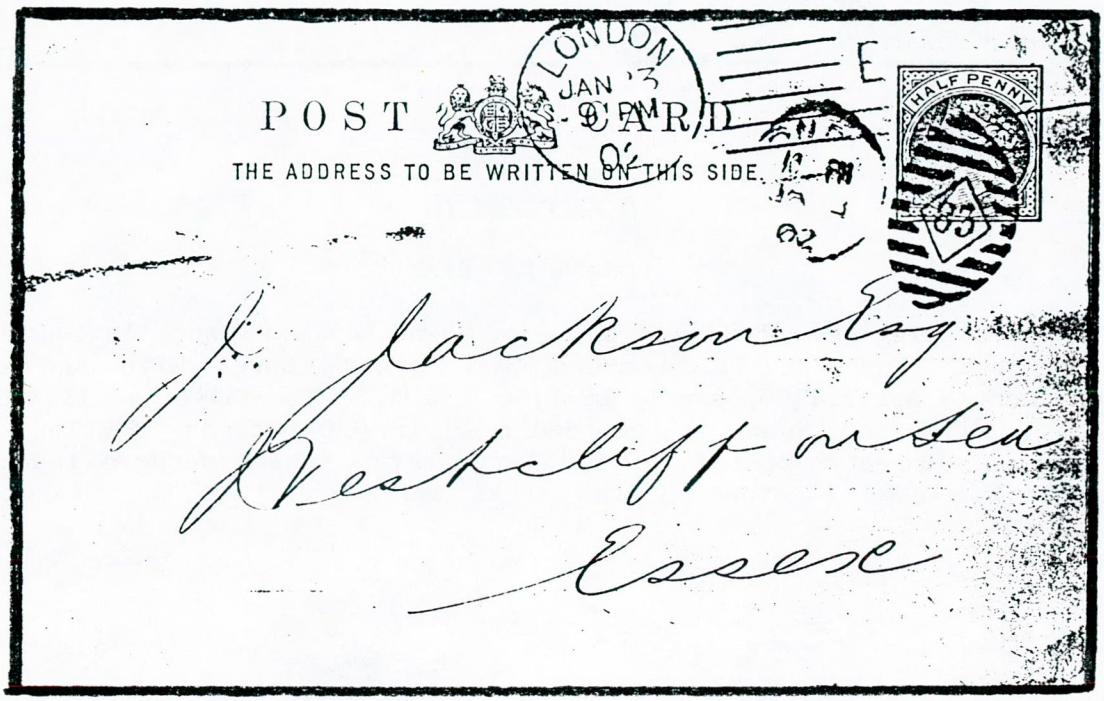
He writes : "Bridgemasters are elected on Midsummer Day - 24th. June - at the same election ceremony in Guildhall for the Sheriffs and several other Corporation officers. The Bridgemasters are elected by the Liverymen of the City companies and must offer themselves for re-election each year. It may be of interest to note that from 1973 it has been provided by Act of Common Council that when Midsummer Day falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the election will take place on the following Monday.

The canvas card in your possession relates to a special election which took place on 25th. January, 1902. A piece on this is to be found in the City press, 29th. Jan., 1902 p. 4, when it was reported that Mr C F Crawford was elected Bridgemaster in the place of Mr H. A. Towse, who died in office."

Under a chapter heading "BRIDGES" in the "Corporation of London.." is this paragraph :

"For a short period during the reign of Henry III the rents and profits from the Bridge House Estates were paid into the Royal Exchequer to a royal nominee, such as Queen Eleanor. In 1274 a Commission of Justices sitting at the Tower inquired into the custody of the revenue of London Bridge and found that the control of the same had been exercised from ancient times by the citizens. Thenceforth the citizens continued to appoint two Wardens (later

styled Bridgemasters) to receive the rents, manage the estate, and repair the bridge, a right confirmed by charter in 1319. Subject to very occasional direction from the Common Council, the powers of the Wardens was almost absolute, but their accounts were audited by citizens appointed annually in Common Hall. Until the sixteenth century leases of the estates were made by the Bridgemasters with the concurrence of the Court of Aldermen, the Charter of 1319 having stipulated that no Alderman should be chosen as Bridgemaster. In the latter half of the century the Common Council, as representing the citizens more closely then the Aldermen, began to take a greater interest in the administration of the corporate estates and, in 1592, established a committee with full power to make, bargain and conclude all leases. Eventually this committee met on a separate day for the business relating to the Bridge Estates. This arrangement continued until 1818 when the Common Council resolved that the committee for letting City Lands and Bridge House Estates should be constituted as two separate committees with different personnel. The responsibilities of the Bridgemasters ceased for all practical purposes in 1855 but two persons are still elected annually by the Common Hall to what is now an honorary office."



Reverting briefly to the cancellations, these comprise the 9 pm Bickerdike being supplemented by the 10 pm Inland 83 duplex, both dated January 23rd, 1902: the election date, you are reminded was the 25th.

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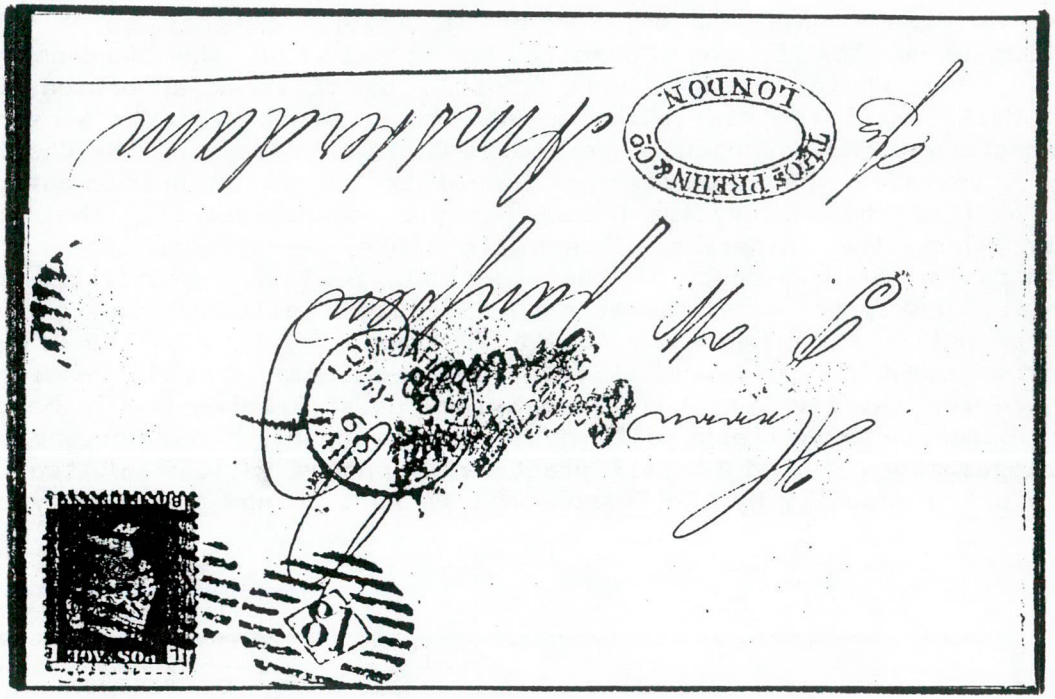
THE 81 DOUBLE DIAMOND

from Michael Goodman

The new publication on Horizontal Diamonds [page 76] mentions an example of the double 81 diamond and this we illustrate on the next page. It came from the Griffiths collection and featured in a Robson Lowe sale



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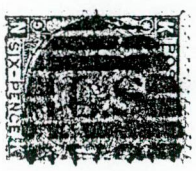
A V2 DROPS IN

from A.J. Kirk

According to Westley, and our own "Branch Cancellations of the District Post" (Section J), Lombard Street was issued with two distinct obliterators in April 1866, namely LS/V1 and LS/V2. The latter is listed in the Handbook as V2D2 and shown as recorded only in GPO records. Westley comments these stamps were accompanied by registered marks, which perhaps indicates he had seen them used together or the marks were issued to the Branch Office simultaneously.

V2D2



Example

A copy of the LS/V2 in my possession is, unfortunately, on adhesive only, resulting in only a portion of the mark visible: this is on SG97 (1865-67) the 6d. surface printed. I have registered covers from the period just before this time carrying ten pence, generally made up with one x four pence and one x six pence*. This offers a reason for a survivor being found on the sixpenny value.

Would readers with registered and/or surface printed material of the 1860s check to see if they have hitherto overlooked examples.

* denarius. not a "p" !!