

NOTEBOOK

Number 115 December 1994

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EDITORIAL

With the production of number 115, we mark the issue of over two thousand three hundred pages(!), representing twenty three years of the Editor poking around London postal history, accompanied by a number of like minded souls, who also chose to write about some of the things which they found of interest. By their contributions, we all gain in having access to the many gems which, otherwise, would remain unreported.

Make a resolution to add at least one page to Notebook in 1995.

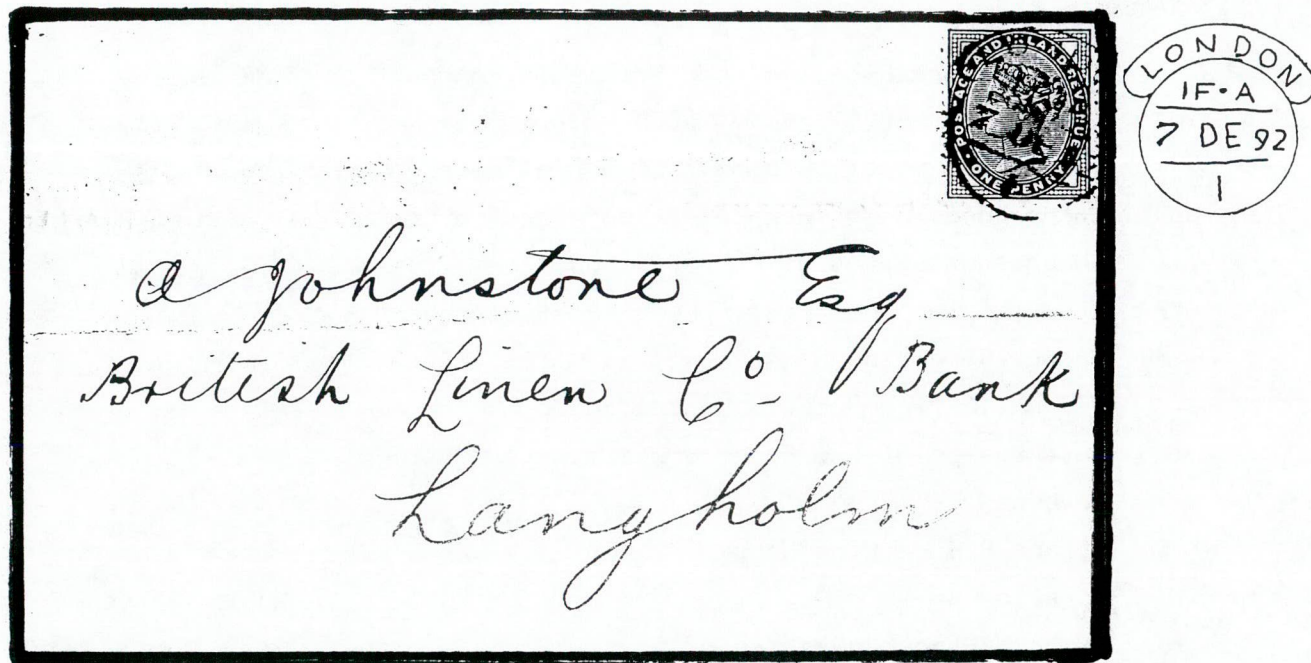
HAPPY NEW YEAR

- 115.1 -

With a final round up on Hooded Circles set for this year, two articles sent in by Simon Kelly, some time since, are now offered to encourage you *your* material is included in this long awaited Handbook section.

1892 TELEGRAPHIC TIME CODE TRIALS IN LONDON

I was going through a quantity of hoods bought a very long time ago in one of Derrick Muggleton's auctions. One item was put aside for recycling because the mark was so poor and, at first, I could not properly read it: fortunately I took a second, more detailed, look .



The adhesive is struck with a London Hood dated 7 DE 92, with lower code letter I but the amazing element is the time code, which reads IF.A (9.30AM). The dot is not very clear but I do not think it is an asterisk and the year is confirmed by the backstamp. Around this time there had been trials in Liverpool, with dot instead of asterisk but the telegraphic code, usually using the asterisk separator, did not come into full use in London until 1894. Although scrapped the same year in favour of the time in the clear, the dies did not start to be altered until the following year.

An initial problem was whether the lower figure was the letter I or the numeral 1, neither of which show seriffed features in the dies used in 1892. The lettered dies, issued in 1889, had single upper letters (A-Z) and single lower letters, which ran from D to Z, including I. The numeral series, issued in 1890, had only dies 1 and 2, which were used up 1894. These used the turning code during this period. The die number was the upper one, not the lower one, which had the turning numeral. Also, the die has a 22mm diameter circle with a total height 27mm. The lettered series dies had a 20-21mm diameter and the height varying between 24.5 and 25.5mm. The new telegraphic code example of 1892 belongs to the lettered series, having a diameter of 21mm and a height of 25mm., and not the numeral series. We can expect the lower code letter to change daily with any other examples which come to light.

On going through my notes from Post Office Archives (formerly Papers in Eng. 19712/00) I noted on the 8th. October, 1892 a Mr Crawford, Assistant Controller of the LPS (London Postal Service), stated there was to be a small scale trial, in London, of Mr Rich's Liverpool system ¹. Originally I had believed no evidence existed for the London trial having taken place.

John Moy broke much new ground in 1989 ² with a record of a number of examples of the code used in London, mainly 1894 and 1895, with stragglers continuing for some years. Unfortunately he was unable to find any evidence for the London trial of 1892. *I now have this !!* Perhaps readers can offer other examples allowing a fuller documentation.

My thanks to Post Office Archives for access to their records and John Moy for discussions on the 1892 trial.

¹ Moy 1991 : The Use of the 1894 Coded Time System in English Provincial Offices

² Moy 1989 : The Use of the 1894 Code Time System in London

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HOODED POSTMARKS : SOME NEW DEVELOPMENTS

In the past many have very kindly contributed by sending me details of hoods in their collections and with this short article comes a request for an update for the "old hands" and new contributions from those who, for some reason, have not yet provided material. The following notes include some new developments to encourage readers to re-examine the material in their collection and report further information. A questionnaire is enclosed for the information and a photocopy, as you appreciate, is worth a thousand words ! I am most happy to reimburse the cost.

The introductory notes were in Notebook 26, and these are reproduced (page 4) for easier reference.

SOME RECENT HOODS.....

Keith Romig sent me some cut-outs showing rubber dies were still in use in recent years on certain E.C. mail, such as registered and insured items (figs 1 and 2), There is, also, an Official Paid die (fig.3) for the Headquarters Post Room, complete with date, address, postcode and First Class !. The number of the address in Grosvenor Place is yet to be determined.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

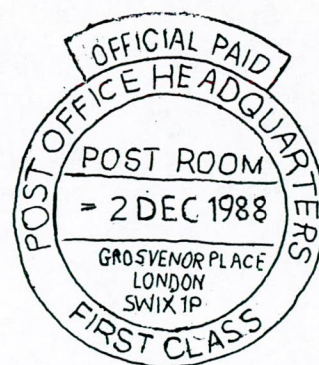


Fig. 3

REGISTERED.....

There are a great many strikes from rubber and steel dies extant. I have a number of records but am sure many more must be lurking, hidden on the reverse of covers mounted to show the obverse. Especially required is information on some of the commoner marks from London - often hoods with double circles (rubber) in mauve or black and the steel hooded single circles in red

and black. Please check the reverse of all your registered mail - even into the Machin era. Whilst examples from London and London EC tend to be fairly common, there is a wealth of much scarcer offices, especially London SW. Other scarcer hoods include London WC, FS, LOMO (London Overseas Mail Office).

There are many duties for which Hoods have been used. Late, Official Paid, Registered Official paid, Parcel Post, TPOs, Military, Special Events and the so-called Royals

FILLING IN THE FORM.....

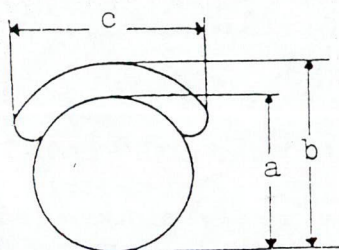


Fig. 4

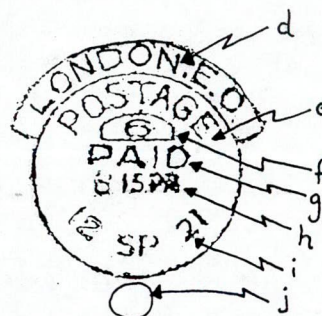


Fig. 5

Sorry, this is the tedious bit. Measurement (a,b,c, as in Fig.4) to be in millimetres, correct to the nearest half if possible. If there are two rings, just measure the outer one. The rest of the details (Fig/5; d to i) refer to the inscriptions within the hood and circle. The hood (d) details should also include the punctuation, especially in the London E.C. dies, where there are dots or dashes in the various positions. The date is usually in the centre or in an arc at base (g or i column). Insert it exactly as it is written in the postmark, do not convert it, e.g. 1.4.98. Do not swap the day and month round - the order is sometimes significant - as is the number of letters representing the month. Sometimes the year is in two lines. There may be horizontal lines above and below the date, up to three in some London EC dies. Finally, watch out for the FS which occurs below the circle in some Late postmarks (Fig.5 :j).

Do add any appropriate comments in the remarks column. For example, where the cover was going to/coming from; other cancellations/transit marks; Late Fee/Too Late; cut out on adhesive only etc.

If you are in any doubt about any part of the postmark, do not guess, put a question mark.

I would repeat, it is much easier to send a photocopy of the material, leaving me to do this tedious bit. Even a single item could be significant.

.....

THE HOODED SCROLL STAMPS: SOME PRELIMINARY NOTES

An edited Reprint from Notebook 26 of February 1976

John Chandler has spent much time and effort on the London Hooded Scroll and to his material is added, which -to be kind- may be described as "Editor's Jottings", for the London EC and other office stamps

THE LONDON HOODED SCROLLS.....



Type A.



Type B.

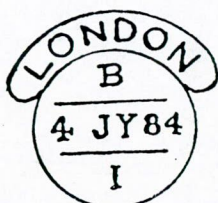


Type C.



Type D.

- A: Lettering sans serif with all strokes thin
 B: At least two sizes in this type (i) Hood 23mm and 25mm
 (ii) Circle 19mm and 20mm
 C: Turning figure time code - see separate note
 D: Roman style letters and figures, sans serif



Type E



Type F.



Type G.



Type H.

- E: Serif letters and figures with both thick and thin strokes
 F: Occasionally found with the date code letter on its side and the month put before the date, e.g. JA 21 91 - does this denote morning use?
 G: Types H and J are identical except for the use of code time in H and time in the clear in J. Note the illustration of both of stamp number 15.
 H: There are at least three sub types: (i) Hood 23mm (c.25mm) 27mm
 (ii) Circle 19mm 20mm 21mm



Type I.



Type J.



Type J.



Type J.

THE TURNING FIGURES : A TIME CODE ?

A & H 1210, types B,C and I all incorporate figures which exist within the range 1 to 12. These can be found in any of the four positions which a square plug could take - upright, inverted, face up, face down. Of some 90 copies examined, 12 were upright, 20 inverted, 36 face up and 22 face down. This wide variation seems to rule out error and, as the figures themselves do not exceed 12, there may be a connection with the time of day. Further, the period of use is one during which the Post Office was known to be experimenting with methods of recording the time at which the mail was handled.

It is suggested the four positions may be related to the four quarters of an hour: when time is shown "in the clear", Type J, it is normally shown to the nearest quarter hour.

Finally, time, as shown by this method, needs but one slug in the date stamp and could be used in small stamps (e.g Type A) which have no room to show time in full. P.M. times - by far the largest use - seem to have been shown by putting the date and date code in the normal positions, while A.M. was shown by putting the month before the day in the date and the date code letter on its side.

A & H 1210 LONDON HOODED SCROLLS

TYPE		KNOWN USED		ABOVE DATE	BELOW DATE	STYLE OF LETTERS
		FROM	TO			
A.	$\frac{XR}{27 DE 83}$ A	27 DE 82	2 JY 86	IDENTITY + DATE CODE LETTER LETTER A, E-Z except Q & T	A	SANS SERIF
B.	$\frac{DS}{6 OC 84}$ A	6 OC 84	3 DE 95	IDENTITY + TIME CODE LETTER FIGURE A-E 2-5, 11, 12	A	"
C.	$\frac{7E}{24 FE 94}$ A	10 JA 91	30 NO 95	IDENTITY + TIME CODE FIGURE FIGURE 1, 5-8 2-5	A	"
D.	$\frac{ZX}{14 JA 86}$ A	JA 19 86	JU 11 94	ZX [=TOO LATE]	A	"
E.	$\frac{E}{14 AU 84}$ W	30 JU 84	1 OC 88	IDENTITY CODE LETTER A-Z except M & Q	DATE CODE LETTER	SERIF
F.	$\frac{C}{17 FE 83}$ V.R.			IDENTITY OR TIME CODE LETTER A-D	V.R.	"
G.	$\frac{F}{21 JA 91}$ M	25 AP 89	15 JU 94	IDENTITY LETTER A-U EXCEPT D, F, Q.	DATE CODE LETTER	SANS SERIF
H.	$\frac{F \& P}{19 FE 95}$ 14	31 OC 94	19 FE 95	TIME CODE OF 1894	IDENTITY FIGURE 6, 14, 15	SANS SERIF
I.	$\frac{2}{7 AP 94}$ ZI	25 FE 93	16 MY 94	IDENTITY FIGURE 1, 2	TIME CODE FIGURE 11, 12	"
J.	$\frac{6. PM}{2 DE 95}$ 13	5 JU 94	28 MY 09	PLAIN TIME	IDENTITY FIGURE 1-YI (see below)	"

* seen: 2, 5, 7, 11-13, 15-22, 24, 25, 30, 36-38, 40-43, 47, 50, 55, 57, 59, 71

LONDON EC.....

The basis for the type classification is the layout, that is, the number of short horizontal lines, the time recording above, the dating between and the duty code below. The sizes vary markedly within each type but this variation is treated only as a variation *within* the type.

The time codes above appear to be 1 to 12, X, Z, and ZZ. These are taken to be the hours, supplemented with "X" for a special collection, "Z" as late and "ZZ" as too late or a "late-late" collection. The "too late" is just speculation as many "ZZ" coded items can be found delivered first post the following morning at places many miles distant from London; the code could indicate a late fee payment.

As can be seen, apart from the experimental types 1 and 2, there are three methods of recording the time. Time codes, the use of the telegraphic code and time in the clear. The duty codes are one of two letters appearing in at least three print sizes, fine, medium or heavy.

The illustrations are intended to do no more than indicate !!

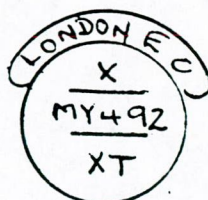
Type 1: Experimental, running in parallel with the others from 1882 to 1900. Letter above always A. When time in the clear was introduced the design was modified by the removal of the inner of the two side arcs.



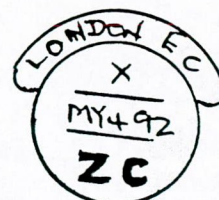
Type 2: Three lines above and below. A below is constant. Often a break in the horizontal line under the time code. Similarity to the Late Box (type 15) suggests connections with late fee. Unproven to date. Material on cover in quantity required.



Type: 3



4



5



6

Type 3: Single letter below, variations in thickness

Type 4: Two letters below; variation in thickness

Type 5: Two letters below, distinctly thicker

Type 6: Telegraphic time coding, very heavy letter below. There is probably a type with fine lettering.

Type 7: Telegraphic time coding, two letters below, variation in thickness
 Type 8: Time in the clear. Single heavy letter below
 Type 9: Time in the clear. Two letters below
 Type 10: Time in the clear, one letter below



Type: 7



8



9



10



Type: 11



12

Types 11 and 12: These are arrival marks. Type 11, with time letter above is always struck in red; type 12, with time in the clear is struck always in black. The letters below are, generally, heavier than the normal though no where near as, say, type 8.

Parcel Post Stamps.

These are all the same basic pattern, varying in size and, of course, in the name of the office in the scroll. The proof impression books indicate they were issued to all the stations and from a collectors point of view they are depressingly scarce.

There are other names in the scroll, for example GPO LONDON.

For ease of reference these Parcel Post Office stamps are Type 13



Station Late Fee Stamps

Type 14: Jeremy Greenwood in 'British Mail Coach' Number 4 provided a shock with the identification of Late Box scrolls stamps bearing the names of rail stations outside London as being London used.

These stamps were apparently issued to the London EC office.



Type 14

Other Late Fees

Type 15: The function of these stamps is always the same but there is a considerable variation in the layout.

The amount of the late fee does not always include the 'D' and the time is not always stated, to give but two examples. Further, this particular function for the scroll employed RUBBER stamps in quantity and due to the wear and nature of the material, they yield a wide range of 'types' which are often nothing of the sort.

Other Scrolls

Registered stamps continued in use as arrival back stamps through to the late 1950's. Although they vary somewhat in size, the LONDON EC examples noted thus far are much the same in layout as that shown to illustrate Type 16



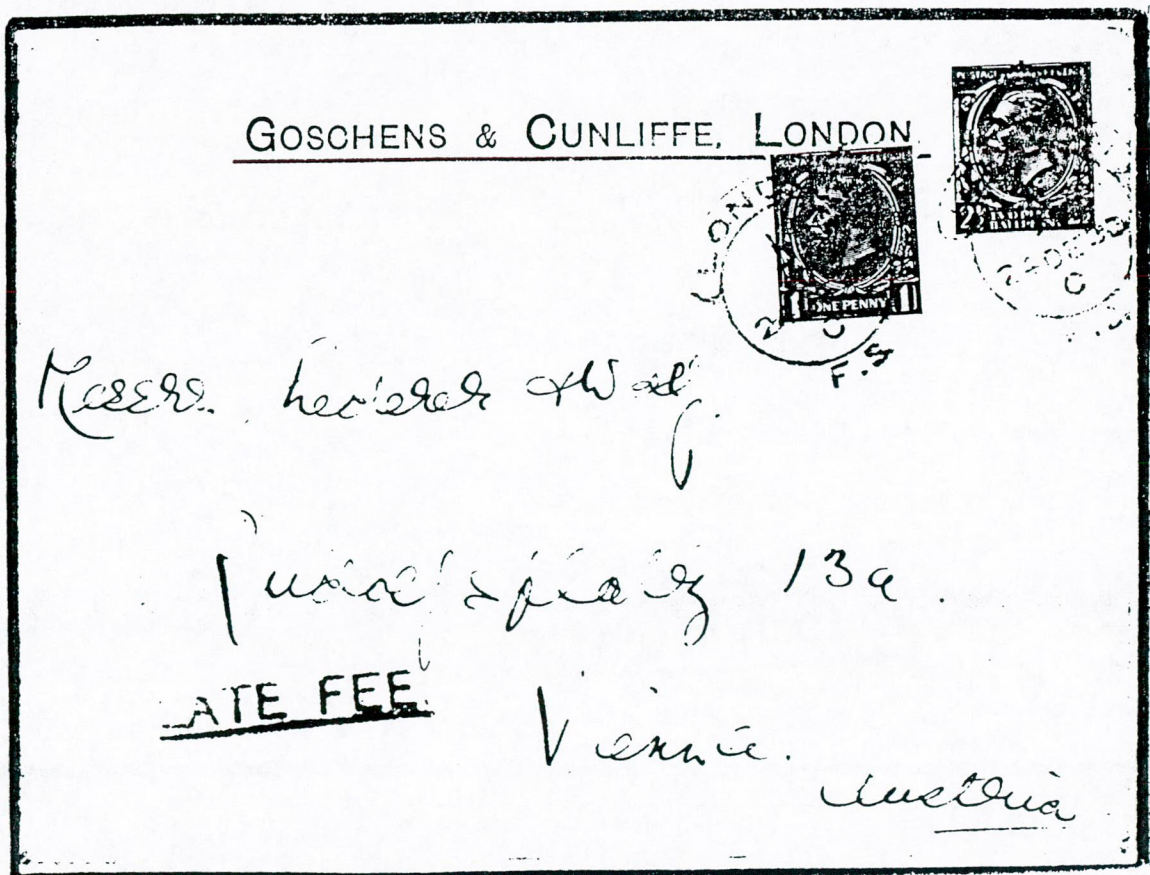
Type 15



Type 16

The Foreign Section late fee below is very much in a class of its own, with FS *below* the circle. They are recorded in the rubber stamp impression books during the late twenties and early thirties.

Type 17



This PAID scroll is illustrated by kind permission of Post office Archives from the Steel Stamp Impression Books.

Type 18.

*I.W. Dist Office
(For the Imperial Institute Letters.)*

21.4.93



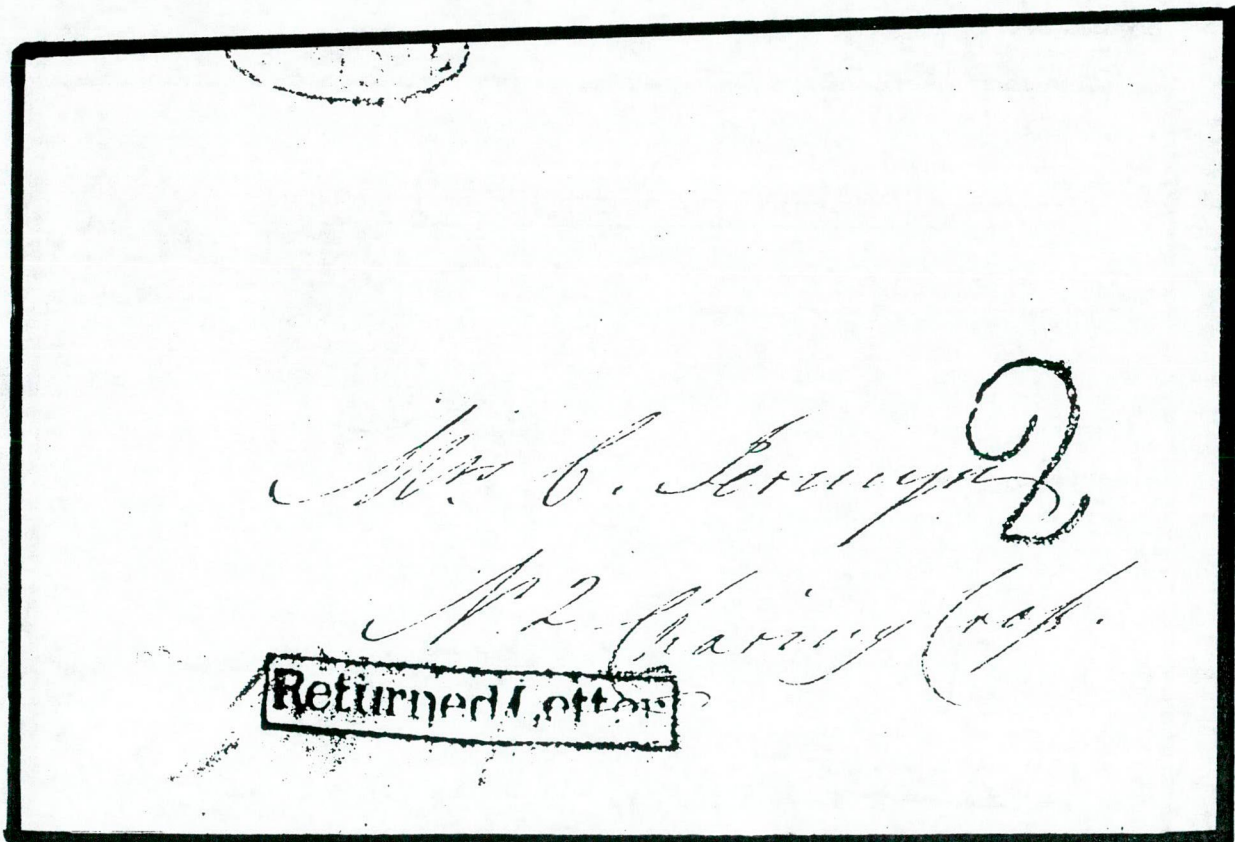
50,422/9.

Since this article was first printed, there have been many developments in the study of the Hooded Scrolls and numerous discoveries have been included in the pages of "Notebook". Nevertheless, it will serve adequately, as it was intended to originally, as an introduction to the subject.

.....

UNRECORDED HANDSTRUCK BOXED "Returned Letter"

Many years ago, when LPHG was not yet one year old, the Editor was informed, in no uncertain terms "there was nothing new to be found in London so I do not know why you should have a specialist society". It can be hoped the speaker eventually learned the basic lesson of postal history - there is ALWAYS something new to be learned.



By way of proving the point, Cavendish Philatelic Auctions, lot 1086 of their sale of 9/10 December produced the item illustrated opposite, with the following description.

UNRECORDED HANDSTRUCK BOXED "Returned Letter" MARK ON RETURNED LETTER WRAPPER; 1820 printed EL (reduced at one edge but with no loss of text) sent to Charing Cross with a v. fine h. s. "2" and a mostly v. fine matching black boxed "Returned Letter" (that we have not seen before) on the front. The "7 o'clock" backstamp has been partly lost off the edge. The contents are the usual printed "TWO PENNY POST OFFICE" notice for returned local London Letters. Very rare and an important discovery. PHOTO.

The last paragraph and dating of the printed letter give the earliest year for this item.

Illegal conveyance of Letters: By the 9th Queen Anne, cap. 10. "Any Person illegally conveying Letters, incurs a penalty of £5. for every offence, and £100. for every week the practice is continued." And by 42d. Geo. III. cap. 81. "The Sender also incurs a penalty of £5. for every offence with full Costs of Suit."

1820.

Printed by J. Harnell, Wine-office-court, Fleet-street, for His Majesty's Stationery Office

Cavendish kindly provided the photocopy. This offers a slight clue as to a dating range. The blunt toed "2" is recorded in Jay as 1824 - 38 (L603) but, just to confuse, the part time stamp which reads "7 o'clock" (L.455) has 1822 as the last year of use. It seems most likely the item can be dated 1820 - 22.

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CHANGES OF STATUS OF POST OFFICES

Relating the London Postal District

- FPO a Franchised Post Office, that is, controlled by a company owning the store in which the post office is located, Boots, Safeways etc. Handstamps may be inscribed "Post Office".
- MSPO a Modified Sub Post Office, that is, controlled by an individual in another store, local grocer, stationer etc. handstamps may be inscribed "MSPO".

Acton, Hanbury Road TSO, London W3	closed	23/12/92
reopened, renamed Bollo Bridge Road TSO, London W3		04/03/93
Belsize Park BO, London NW3 replaced by	MSPO	01/03/93
Blackheath Village BO, London SE3 replaced in same premises	FPO	31/03/94
Brent Park FPO, Neasdon, London NW10	opened	06/12/93
Cannon Street (33) BO, EC4 replaced by		
Cheapside MSPO (in Wood St) London EC2	MSPO	25/04/94
Forest Gate BO, London E7 replaced by	MSPO	27/06/94
Fulham Road 256 BO, London SW10 replaced by		
MSPO at No. 369 E & F in complex of shops opposite the new Chelsea & Westminster Hospital.	MSPO	24/04/93
Gloucester Road (152) BO, London SW7 replaced by		
Gloucester Road FPO	FPO	28/03/94
Leytonstone BO, London E11 replaced by	MSPO	28/03/94
Maida Vale BO, London W9 replaced by	MSPO	28/03/94
Moorgate BO, London EC2	closed	18/06/93
replaced by new BO in new shopping centre and designated		

Broadgate B0 EC2	21/06/93
Norbury B0, London SW16 replaced in same premises by	MSPO 20/09/93
Penge B0, London SE20, replaced in same premises by	MSPO 11/11/93
Portman Square B0, London W1 closed	06/07/93
replaced by bureau de change	FPO 12/07/93
South Lambeth B0, London SW8 replaced by	MSPO 21/03/94
Stratford B0, London E15 replaced by	MSPO 05/04/94
Streatham High Road 225 B0 replaced by	
Streatham High Road 330	MSPO 23/08/93
Streatham Hill B0, London SW2 replaced by	MSPO 12/07/93
Upper Edmonton B0, London N18 replaced by (in Safeway)	FPO 25/03/93
Whitechapel B0, London E1 replaced in same premises by	MSPO 22/03/93
York Road B0, London SW11 replaced by	
York Road MSPO (NOT in York Rd!)	MSPO 29/03/93

This information culled from the pages of
 "British Postmarks Society Quarterly Bulletin",
 July 1993 to October 1994, with our thanks.

Readers are urged to advise the Editor of changes in their local areas, wherever that might be.

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LONDON'S TWOPENNY POST : LOCAL POST CHARGES

From a series of letters addressed to Sir Francis Freeling comes the following from Lord Amhurst referring to the "To pay only 2^d" stamp. (L.804)

Hastings

Wednesday 5th Augt 1807

Sir,

Upon my return to this place, the Postmaster shewed me your letter, & I am much obliged to you for having directed him so to do.

*I still think that I did right to demur paying the 2^d postage - This letter does not appear to have put into the twopenny post office directed to Hastings. Had it been so, I imagine there would have been a stamp upon it similar to many I receive with the words "To pay only 2^d" But I conclude this letter to have been sent by the twopenny post to Grosvenor Street, where my servant will have taken it in and payed the postage - then have alter'd the direction from Grosvenor Street (as you will see) to Hastings & put it into the General post -
 I have no doubt this letter will have been paid four pence before it reached me.*

I am Sir

Your most obedient humble Servant

Amherst

Francis Freeling Esq^r

.....

Editor's Note: A number of these Freeling letters have "escaped" over the years. If you have any, please share them with LPHG Notebook readers.

HARROW RECEIVING HOUSE

The London catalogue lists the first recorded Twopenny Post Stamp as the framed TP Harrow (from 1825) This letter offers thanks for the boon.

4 July 1824

Harrow

The Rev Henry Drury

My dear Sir

I am not more obliged to you
for the boon of a twopenny post,
than I am for your Consideration in
letting me be the channel of Communication.
Two deliveries a day is much more,
assuredly, than we could have expected.

Ever yours,
Hen: Drury

Harrow July 4. 1824.

"I am not more obliged to you for the boon of a twopenny post,
than I am for your Consideration in letting me the channel of Communication. Tw
o deliveries a day is much more, assuredly, than we could have expected."

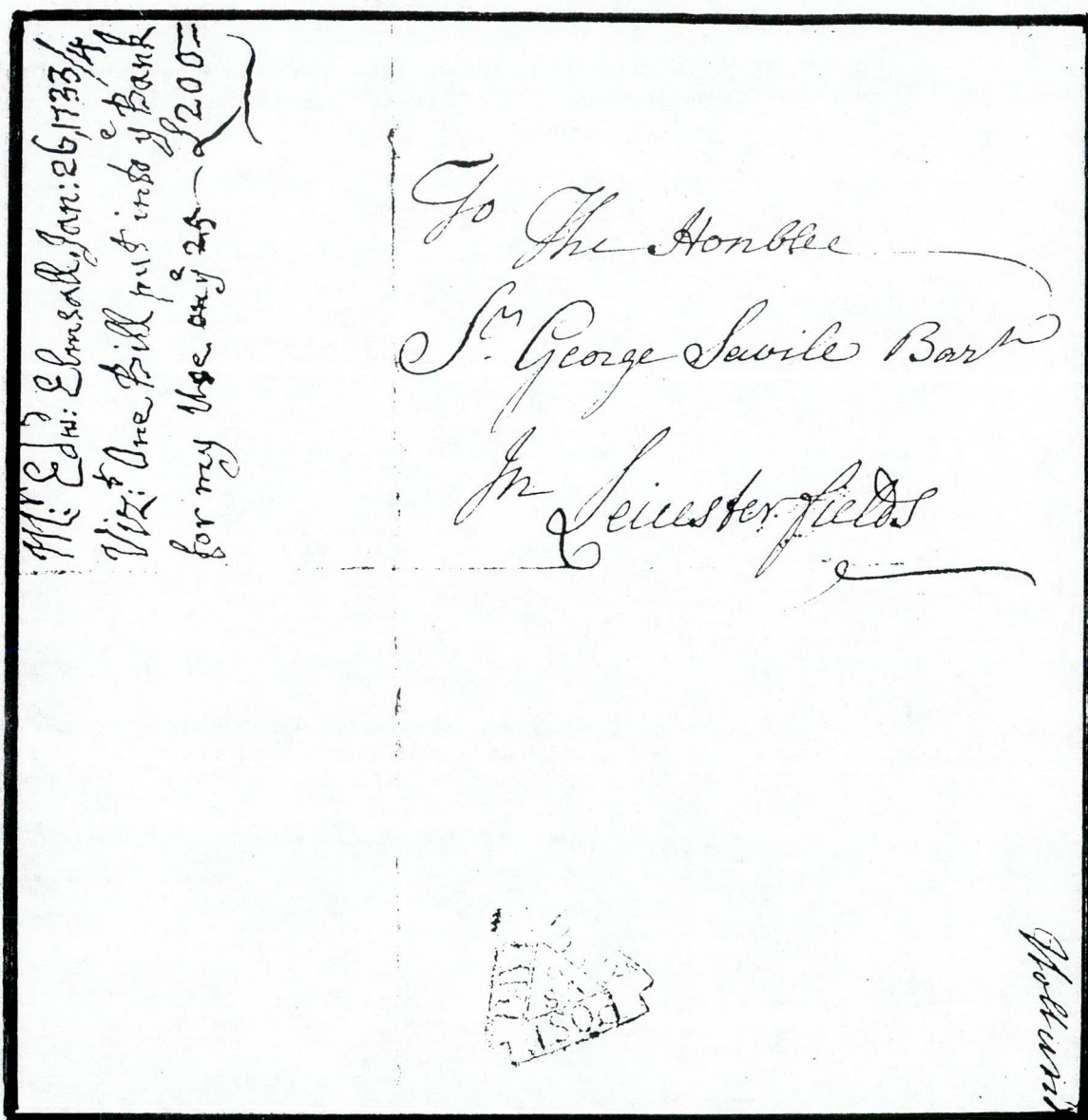
Harrow July 4. 1824

GENERAL OFFICE DOCKWRA UNCATALOGUED

The item illustrated overleaf of the General Office has PAYD at
the left, although the layout is otherwise that of type 3b (L.3315a).

The writer dated the letter January 26th., 1734 but merely gave
"London" as his address, which does not assist in locating the actual office of
posting; the Receiver signed the letter "Holland" (lower right hand corner).
When the next edition of the catalogue is produced this might be listed at
L335b?

GENERAL OFFICE DOCKWRA UNCATALOGUED



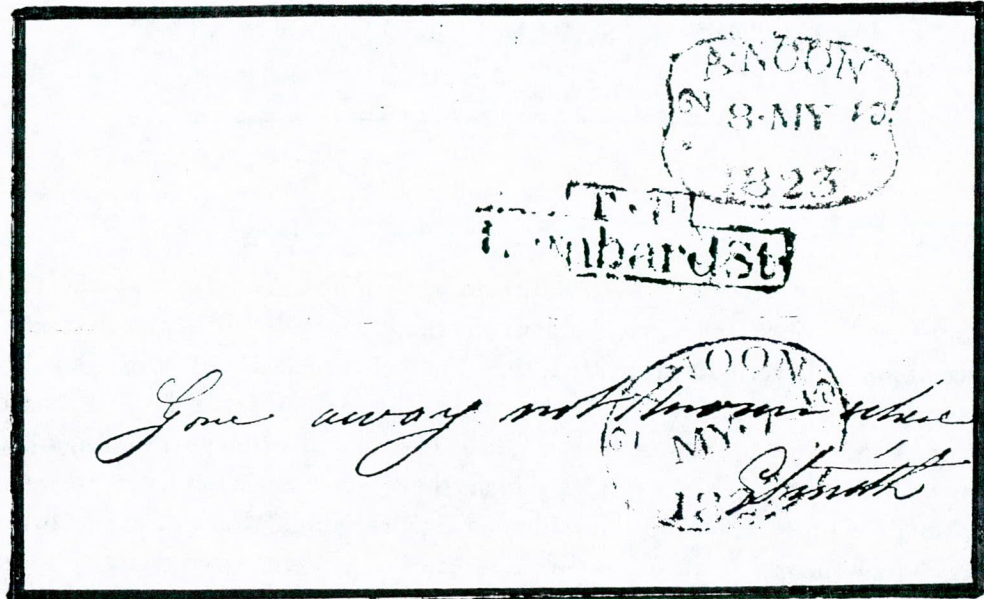
DATE STAMPS OF THE CHIEF AND WESTMINSTER OFFICES : REVERSED "2"

The letter comprised a report from the Thames and Severn Navigation and was sent, initially, to Weymouth Street and then redirected to Wimpole Street.

The obverse carries a filing note, in a different hand to that of the forwarding address, which suggests the item was successfully delivered.

The Report was posted at the Lombard Street TP Receiving House with the Chief Office date stamp for 2 A. NOON 7 MY 1823 ("2" reversed). Passing through the Westminster Office to Wimpole Street, the letter was struck with the datestamp 2 A NOON MY 8 1823 ("2" reversed)

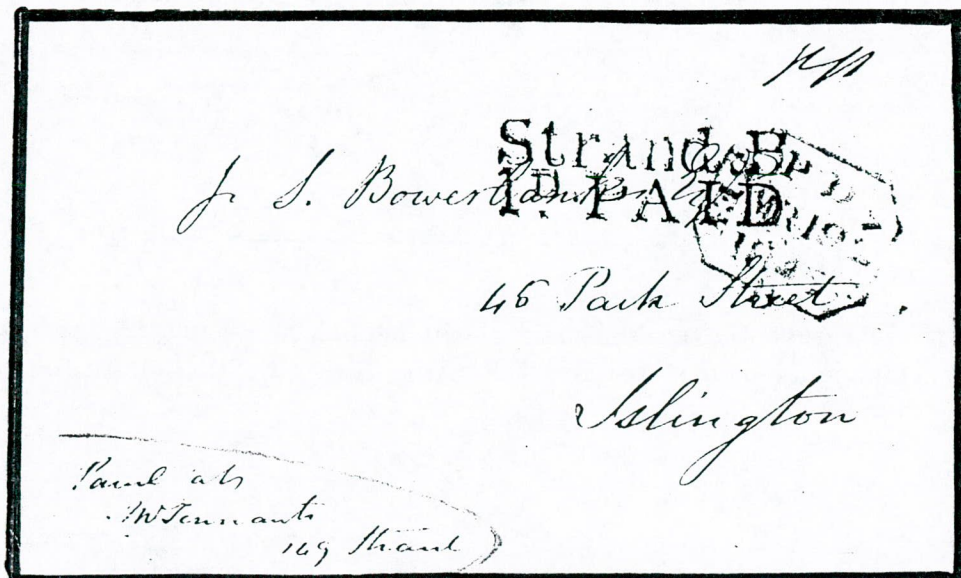
"Gone away not known where G Smith" may have been written by the first Letter Carrier with a Postal Clerk in the office entering the new address. The absence of a date stamp in black tends to confirm the letter did reach the addressee.



The Report is given on page 16: a fine example of "jam tomorrow"

.....
STRAND B RECEIVING HOUSE

Writer's endorsements on letters can provide useful information on so many obscure points of postal history. Although the actual location of offices is often well documented, it is interesting to find the endorsement "Paid at Mr Tennants 149 Strand"



However, this contradicts TALLIS and the General Post cash books which shows Henry Burfield, Chemist & Druggist, as Receiver 1839-1849

.....

JAM TOMORROW.....(see p. 13)

THAMES AND SEVERN CANAL NAVIGATION.

SIR,

I AM directed to inform you, that at the GENERAL ASSEMBLY of this COMPANY, holden on the 22nd day of April instant, at the Freemason's Tavern, it appeared that the net proceeds of this Canal (after deducting the current and extra expences of repairs) for the year ending the 1st of April, 1822, amounted to £1,459 17s. and for the year ending the 1st of April, 1823, to £1,463 — 6d.; which they have again resolved to retain for the purpose of carrying on the system of repairs which they commenced in 1821. They are happy to state, that by this means they have been enabled to effect a great part of the plan without borrowing any part of the £10,000 which it was proposed to apply for to Government; and they can further state, that they have in their hands a sum of money which will it is hoped enable them to continue their exertions without borrowing.

I am directed to remind you, that by the Act of the 23rd George III. Cap. 38. Sect. 41. every Proprietor not attending the GENERAL ASSEMBLIES, either in person or by proxy, is liable to forfeit the sum of 5s. for each share he may hold in the Undertaking, to be stopped out of the dividend which may arise from the profits, and which it may be necessary to enforce if sufficient Proprietors do not attend.

By Order of the General Assembly,

JOHN LANE, Clerk.

London, 30th April, 1823.

P.S. The next GENERAL ASSEMBLY will be holden on the 22nd of October, at the house of the Treasurer J. S. SALT, Esq. No, 20, Lombard-Street.

MORE TO PAY

A. G. M. Batten

The use of anonymous stamps can present problems to collectors and the oval framed MORE / TO PAY used on the envelope from the Orange Free State in 1873 is such a stamp.



The particulars of this cover can be simply tabulated thus :

POSTAL MARKINGS.....

Orange Free State.....

Sixteen bar numeral canceller No. 4
Fauresmith arc type datestamp for 4 JUN 1873

Cape of Good Hope.....

Barred rectangle boxed numeral 1
c.d.s. Cape town for 10 Jul 1873
m/s "8"

Great Britain.....

London cds, red and black, 13 Aug 1873
Oval framed MORE TO PAY

POSTAL RATES.....

Orange Free State : letter rate ½ ounce	6d
Cape of Good Hope : letter rate ½ ounce	4d
..Packet letter rate to England ½ ounce	1s 0d
Total charge	1s 10d
Prepaid by adhesives	1s 4d
Underpaid	4d
Double deficiency entered in manuscript	8d

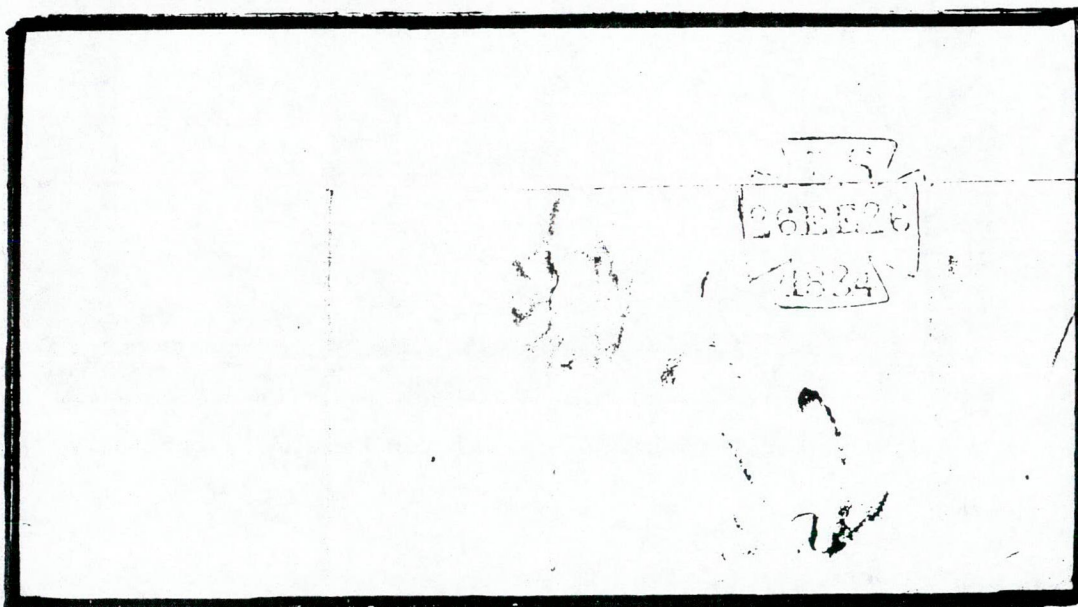
Martin Willcocks commented that his example has a French "More to Pay" as well, which rather suggests the postal authorities in southern Africa did not apply the stamp, so this oval MORE TO PAY must be London? Both Orange Free State and Cape Town must have recognised the underpayment. Did they merely enter the manuscript "8" with London adding the MORE TO PAY? He *thought* he had seen, in the Proof Impression Books, these ovals as issued to Packet offices abroad, especially South America but needs to verify this.

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LOMBARD STREET DATE ERROR

Keith Romig

Given the registration of the stamps to be used for the day and the impressions then checked by a supervising officer, it is unusual to find those casual errors.



That Lombard Street Branch Office should have allowed the one shown here to slip through is curious. At least, it provides an item of interest for the collector in an area which, although not simple to collect, rarely presents major difficulties. In short, find another !!

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LONDON TO DOVER DAY MAIL

G.F. Oxley

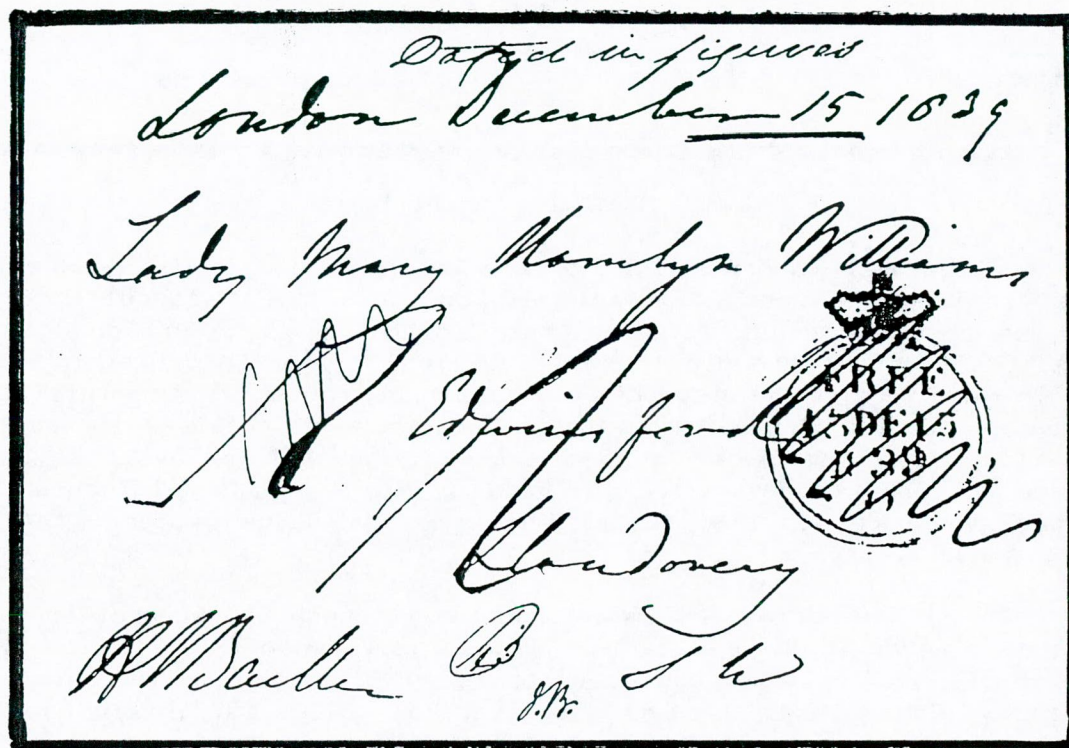


In the Circulation Order book for 1860, held in the Post Office Archives, is the information that a dated stamp had been provided (on the 30th. May) for the use of Officers employed in the Travelling Post Office from London to Dover. This was to stamp letters posted of the London Bridge Station and any other letter which they may have receive unstamped.. The Senior Travelling Officer was to take care the type was set each day. In addition, the stamp was used to date the list of bags for the Commander of the Packet and as well as the lists sent to the Foreign Branch with the bags made up on the journey. F.D.M. probably means *Foreign Day Mail*. Countries other than France were served by the Dover packets.

VINDICATION OF GEORGE BRUMELL

James W. Lovegrove

Researches in the 1970s for 'Herewith My Frank..' (1st. edition 1975) were greatly assisted by a team of volunteer analysts. Their role was to measure dates and dimensions of the FREE examples in their own collections. One of them was Frank Bottomly and it seems appropriate an item he spotted in a recent auction and found curious has proved to be the 'missing link' in the 'O Code' controversy. It is shown here - a 'front' as usual - from a letter dated 15th. December, 1839 between London and 'Llandovery SW' (South Wales).

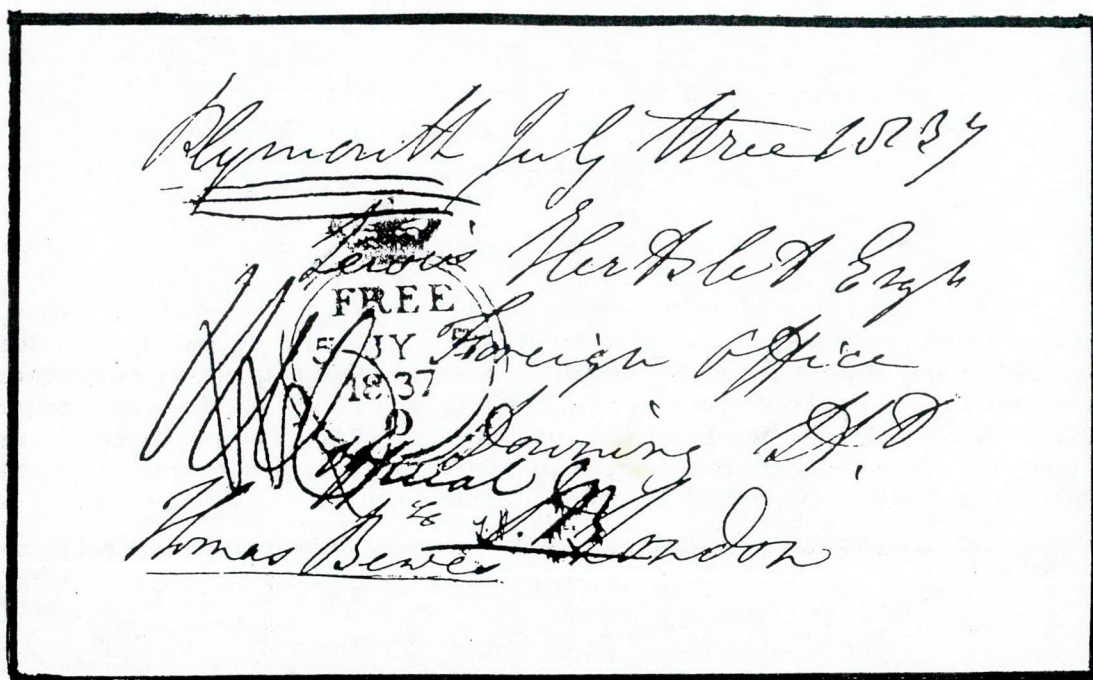


By an error of superscription, figures were used instead of words for a day date. This was a breach of franking regulations, the FREE, with its 'O' code, was cancelled and a charge reimposed.

Debate of more than sixty years among postal historians had been unable to conclude why, among all red FREE stamps, the 'O' code had been so attractive to the souvenir market. Under examination most examples of it could be shown to be spurious. Many remain unproven but the one neither Brumell nor Ray nor any of his colleagues could explain away and which one sensed was the key to all the fuss was used for the dust jacket of 'Herewith My Frank'. (p. 20)

It was from a letter of 1837 sent by Thomas Bewes, MP for Plymouth, to Lewis Hertslet at the Foreign Office. The piece had belonged to Leslie Ray before the 1939/45 war and was well known to George Brumell, who discussed it in his book of 1934. I acquired it, with other dubious FREE fronts and some Brumell correspondence on the subject, in the 1960s. Not until 1990 was I able to examine the matter of Brumell's 'Secret Office' of the Post Office and Press references to its disclosure to the House of Commons in 1844 and involvement by Cabinet Ministers in its control.

Section 7 Part VI of the 1990 edition of 'Herewith My Frank' is mainly a summary of that enquiry. Even then no corroboration had surfaced to warrant credence in a tenuous Ray/Brumell premise of the 'O' for 'Official' and



Dust Jacket Illustration 'Herewith My Frank' (1975)

secret sections within departments at the Chief Office. It was deduced from Post Office Archives the word 'Official' and initials 'J.B.' cancelling the postal charge on Ray's original item had been written by John Brewer, Inspector of Franks. Observations stopped there. It seemed trivial that Brewer's action had been, in some way, acknowledged by other hands, of which the initials 'L.H.', may have identified the addressee Lewis Hertslet. The three appear quite clearly in my illustration on page 100 of the book. They did not evoke any comment at the time but the Llandovery example exalts detail into significance. There are only two signatures to the latter. The upper is a true cipher - the lower 'in clear' reads 'J.B.'.

Reflecting on former wrangles I thought to preempt the inevitable airing of a theory and go straight for what is known of Post Office procedures. First of all a FREE stamp could be applied only at the London Chief Office of the General Post, in the Franking Office, of which John Brewer had a post of authority. Cancellation of the postal charge, seen to the left of the address, and applying the FREE must have preceded the reaction to the breach of regulations for which the charge needs must be re-imposed, hence the subsequent deletion of the FREE. The Free Franking statutes to which 'J.B.' must defer were fundamental principles of his Office.

This sequence can, therefore, be reconstructed from the scribbles above, to the left and at the centre of the front, resulting in cancellation of the FREE, which - as it happened - bore an 'O' Code plug. At what stage the initials were added at the foot cannot be determined on the basis of two examples. Protocol noted in the first case points to the addressee as author of the cipher in the second but the timing quibble obscures the far more important impact of procedures with grounds to withhold an applied FREE, to prove the case for the 'O' code used with authority to its own purpose. This all gives a substance to the 'O' for 'Official' in these examples.

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